Level of Critical Thinking Skills among Students of Tahfiz School

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Abstract: ***The purpose of this study is to identify the level of critical thinking skills among students of Tahfiz school from the science stream tahfiz and religious tahfiz. A total of 124 students had answered surveys under the Malaysian Critical Thinking Skills Instrument (MyCT) comprising 62 items from four sub-constructs (which are evaluation, analytical and logical, disposition and assumptions) derived from the results of a study conducted by SitiRahayah (2003). The quantitative data of the survey were analysed descriptively by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to get the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings show that the level of mastery of critical thinking is average. The conclusion of the study shows that individuals who had the ability to think critically were from all level of students of the Tahfiz school whether they are from the science and religious stream or otherwise. This is because their exposure to the "al-fahm" memorization technique in the hafazan (memorisation) studies had trained them to analyse and understand the meaning and the interpretation of the verse being memorized. The implication of this study shows that mastery in critical thinking must be impressed on the students of tahfiz schools through the methods of "al-fahm" in hafazan.***

Keywords: critical thinking, tahfiz student, tahfiz school.

I. INTRODUCTION

Those who have memorized the Quran (*hafiz)* must come to the forefront in solving the issues of the society, so that their presence within the community is felt (Mohd Yusof 2009). This is in accordance with the Quranic principles of guiding mankind to think, seek answers and guidance in respect of any difficulties (Luqman 2007). Effective and valid thinking skills must exist in every Muslim to assist in resolving any issues (Wan Haslan 2011). This shows that the ability to think to solve problems in the matters tasked to a *hafiz* (memoriser of Quran) is a valuable skill which must be cultivated. The tahfiz school learning scenarios in Malaysia can be seen through the establishment of Ma'hadTahfiz al-Quran wal Qiraat, JAKIM in the year 1966 followed by the rapid expansion of other tahfiz institute of learning in Malaysia (Syed AlwiTarmizi et al., 2005). All of these tahfiz institutions offer their own unique system of education with a varied curriculum (Noor Hisham 2014). The integrative learning system which is incorporated into the tahfiz learning curriculum emphasise a set of values forming the foundation of scientific thinking, and showed how good values are a guide to creating scholars, scientists and technology experts (Noor Hisham 2014). Individuals with advanced critical thinking skills will be able to compete not only nationally but as a global player, in a variety of areas. Logical thought, disposition and assumptions are vital constructs to measure a student's mastery of critical thinking (SitiRahayahAriffin. et al., 2008) and assists the individual's effort towards having a structured and organized thinking in order to solve problems that arise in studying and daily tasks (Cornell Critical Thinking Test, 2004, California Critical Thinking Skill Test, 1998). The expansion in Quran memorization studies in Malaysia have through previous studies, revealed the variety in patterns of critical thinking of an individual student (hafiz). Thus, this study will focuses on the tahfiz student's grasp of critical thinking, based on the four constructs of critical thinking. In addition, this study aims to identify the mastery level of critical thought amongst the tahfiz students.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a questionnaire method to obtain the required data and information, by utilising surveys with purposive sampling under the existing MyICT instrument (SitiRahayah Ariffin. et al., 2008) to assess the mastery of critical thinking. Subsequently, this level of mastery is measured based on the marks given by the Ministry of Education Malaysia as follows:

Table 1.1 . Determination Level Marking Range for Mastery of Skill

Range of Marks (%)	Level of Mastery
Excellent	80-100
Good	60-79
Average	40-59
Poor	20-39
Very Poor	0-19

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Differential inference data in this study uses the method of the t-Test. Analysis of the difference in grasp of critical thinking here is based on demographic factors of the tahfiz students, comprising gender.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The student's level of mastery of critical thought has four constructs, which are skills of evaluation, analytical and logical, disposition and assumptive skills.

Table 1.2 . Summary of Mastery Level of Student's Critical Thinking

Constructs	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
Evaluation	2.12	0.69	Moderately Low
Analytical and Logical	1.95	0.64	Low
Assumption	3.77	0.48	Moderately High
Disposition	2.09	0.90	Moderately Low
Total Mean	**2.48**	**0.52**	**Moderately Low**

IV. INFERENTIAL FINDINGS ANALYSIS

No significant difference is found between the differential mean score of critical thinking mastery level based on gender.

Table 1.2. T-Test Differences in Mastery Level of Critical Thinking Based on Gender

Construct	Factor	N	Mean	S.D	T Value	Sig. P
Evaluation	Male	12	1.70	0.53	3.919	*0.050
	Female	44	2.47	0.61		
Analytical and Logical	Male	12	1.66	0.51	0.079	0.779
	Female	44	2.20	0.64		
Assumption	Male	12	1.40	0.65	0.000	0.984
	Female	44	2.68	0.63		
Disposition	Male	12	3.67	0.54	14.88	*0.000
	Female	44	3.86	0.40		

*Significant at the level of p<0.05

Table 1.3 . Overall T-Test Differences in Mastery Level of Critical Thinking Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	T Value	Sig. P
Male	57	2.11	0.43	-9.73	*0.021
Female	67	2.80	0.36	-9.58	

*Significant at the level of p<0.05

The T-test shows that the mean paired differs significantly in the evaluation construct for male students (Mean=1.70, S.D=0.53), and female (Mean=2.47, S.D=0.61) with a significant difference in mean percentage (P= 0.050, p<0.05). Further, the mean pairs are significantly different in the critical thinking construct of disposition between male students (Mean=3.67, S.D=0.54) and female students (Mean=3.86, S.D=0.40) with a significant difference in mean percentage (P=0.050, p<0.00). T-Test extracts from all construct showing the percentage of mean for female respondents (Mean=2.80, S.D=0.36) is higher compared to the mean percentage of male respondents (Mean=2.11, S.D=0.43).

V. DISCUSSION

In general, the results of this study shows that the students' mastery of critical thinking is not yet satisfactory. This is evidenced by the interpretation of total mean which is moderately low. The skills of analytical and logical thinking have not yet to meet expectations, with the results of the study showing a low level of interpretation. Students have not yet mastered the abilities of evaluation or disposition, and this is proven by both skills showing a moderately low mean.

Following the above, the results from the data analysis disclosed that the percentage of mean for female students as compared to male students was higher for all four constructs that were tested (reasoning, analytical and logical, disposition dan assumption). This shows that female students have a higher level of critical thinking compared to male students. Previous studies show that male and female students have different dispositions and style of learning when following or solving learning issues (SitiRahayah and Noriah 2006; SitiRahayah, Noriah, Abdul Ghafur, Rosadah, Norshidah&Rohaty 2005; SitiRahayah, T. Subahan, Norasmah& Ibrahim 2004; SitiRahayah and Salbiah 2000).

Nonetheless, significant difference was only shown in the reasoning and disposition skills. Azman (2000) stated that traditional learning methods were also capable of elevating students' excellence in comparison with those who have not gone through traditional system of learning.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study enables educators to be aware that tahfiz students possess good critical

thinking ability. However more attention must be given to the analytical and logical skills as these were still at a very poor level of mastery. The method of learning which is student centric must be diversified to encourage students to take part in the learning process. Educators are responsible in nurturing these critical thinking skills across subjects and disciplines (Richard 2006). Developing the elements of critical thinking in tahfiz education is relevant and meets the current needs. Tahfiz education is synonymous with the concept of critical thought as recommended by the Quran, referred to as accurate and valid in proving any fact that it puts forward.

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