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The Approach of *Tafakkur* in *Sirah* Education

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ABSTRACT

The approaches of *da'wah* play an important role in Islamic education. Various approaches can be used in educating the students. *Sirah* education requires a special approach to provide the students with the ability to remember and emulate the taught knowledge in life, until it leads to the process of emulation as emphasized in the Islamic education curriculum in Malaysia. Therefore, through the concept of reflection that is mentioned in the Quran, the *tafakkur* approach is very relevant to be applied in *da'wah* education. Teachers of Islamic education as *dais* will not be only bound with the traditional approaches and should not necessarily evaluate the students based on their excellence in examinations. Through a qualitative study that followed an analytical method, the current research paper examines the *tafakkur* approach in the education of *sirah*. The current study is important to ensure that the *sirah* education is favoured more, delivered it to the souls, and touches the heart of the student and the *mad'us*. The findings show that by looking forward to Allah's pleasure, linking the chain of events, and understanding the moral are appropriate *tafakkur* approaches that fulfil the aspects stated in the Qur'an.

Keywords: *Approaches, Tafakkur, Islamic education, Sirah education*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers must possess high level thinking skills. In accordance with the needs and requirements of the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025) and its aspirations demands the students to have thinking skills. Teachers need to be creative and innovative in pursuing this goal. Building the generation of the new millennium is not an easy task; it demands sacrifices, high thinking, and a determination to implement it. This article will discuss the *tafakkur* approach, which is appropriate to be applied by Islamic education teachers in particular. It not only gives students knowledge, but also stimulates students to think outside the box and to have a high level of thinking.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The approach of teaching the *sirah* should not be merely storytelling and rote memorization (Norzaharah Yahaya, 2011; Wan Mat bin Sulaiman, 2011). Depending on teachers and excellent exam results does not guarantee that the knowledge acquired by the students will be applied in life. The teacher's role is very important, and according to Kailany (1986), teachers who apply a teaching method must make sure that the method is in accordance with the goals, habits, and age, presentable by the teachers, takes an adequate time, and has enough facilities (Kamarul Azmi Jasmi & Mohd Deri Che Noh, 2013). Teachers of Islamic education are directly involved in realizing the goals, philosophies, and the demands of the National Education Philosophy that aims to develop the students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor potentials (Razak et al., 2015). For example, the Prophet SAW has emphasized the quality of teachers who will teach the Quran, as it affects the quality of teaching and learning (Salleh & Abdullah, 2014).

The approach of teaching the *sirah* must be appropriate and in line with other academic subjects to attract students who tend to understand and appreciate the Sunnah so that it becomes more effective and works to move the hearts of the student towards the practice of all actions shown in the *sirah* of the Prophet. Teachers of Islamic education as a *da'i* must play a more creative and innovative role in driving and pointing the direction for the students to ensure that the knowledge is constantly sought after (Khazri Osman, Badlihisam Mohd Nasir, Siti Rugayah Aibek, 2015; Norliza et al., 2013) experienced, practiced, and applied until it reaches the stage of becoming a habit in life. Very skilled and highly motivated teachers will build a human capital and will achieve the aspirations of the country (Kassim & Zakaria, 2015).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Sirah education effectively provides great results and impacts on life. By studying the Prophet's *sirah*, Muslims learn the full extent of Islam through political, cultural, and social aspects. These aspects have given examples and models in the Messenger of Allah SAW through his life journey and contributions, which is still beneficial until now (Luwaihiq, 2015). However, the teaching of the *sirah* is a field in Islamic education that is

considered boring and with no place in the hearts of students (Norzaharah Yahaya, 2011). *Sirah* education is often associated with traditional teaching patterns, memorization and student-centred learning (Noraini Omar, from Che Mohd Noh Mohd Isa Hamzah, 2014; Norliza et al., 2013). This is contrary to the philosophy of Islamic Education that applies Islamic values and realizes its results in the field of human and social development in accordance with the guidelines outlined by Allah SWT. According to Syaibani Omar (1991), Islamic education is a subject to form the appreciation of the spiritual and spiritual values. Teachers of Islamic education should be in pace with the government's policy that always implements educational transformations from time to time in accordance with the demands and needs of the 21st century teaching and learning. Therefore, based on the studies, the approach of *tafakkur* is capable of guiding the teachers to develop higher order thinking skills. This *tafakkur* approach is the most suitable for *sirah* education as stated by Norfadelah and Ahmad Tijani (2015).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To discover the concept of *tafakkur* stated in the Quran.
2. To discover the *sirah* education in elementary schools.
3. To review the *tafakkur* approach that can be applied by all Islamic education teachers in the teaching of *sirah*.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study was composed of a descriptive analysis that aimed to identify the *tafakkur* approach that can be applied in *sirah* education. Document analysis method was used by utilizing facts, data, information and materials such as books, journal articles and papers. This method of data collection was followed to understand the concepts and the related theories.

THE CONCEPT OF TAFAKKUR ACCORDING TO THE QURAN

The skill of thinking from the Islamic perspective is based on Iman. Al-Ghazali refers to a gradual thinking that is based on three stages, namely *taakkul*, *tafakkur*, and *tadabbur* (Tuan Rahayu et al., 2017). *Tafakkur* comes from the word *fakara*, which means the strength or power that

attains knowledge (Al-Aṣḥānī, M502H). From the perspective of Malay language, the word *tafakkur* has been borrowed from Arabic, which means to means to contemplate (Malay Literary Reference Centre, 2011). According to Mohammad Ismail (2014), *tafakkur* is the process of using the power of intellect to find knowledge. Moreover, he stated that *tafakkur* is the process of understanding the truth of an order between; either good or bad, reap their benefits and learn from both.

The Quran encourages the use of rational strategies with a number of terminologies, such as *tafakkur*. According to Halimatus Sakdiah (2016), *Tafakkur* is using thought to achieve and to ponder. The study of Aliyah (2013) stated that the Quran has taught two things to man, namely *tafakkur* and *tashakkur*. *Tafakkur* means to reflect on Allah's creations in the heavens and on the earth, then to execute certain laws contained in the universe, while *tashakkur* is to utilize the bounties and gifts of Allah using intellect to increase their quantity.

The Quran stated that the ability of *tafakkur* is meant for self-reflection, and to increase knowledge and faith in Allah SWT as in the following verse,

“And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith]. And in yourselves. Then will you not see?” (Al-Zariyat, 51: 20-21)

Table 1: The use of the term *Tafakkur* in the Quran

No.	Word	Surah and verse number	Word form	Word type	Type of verse	Meaning of the verse
1	<i>Fakkara</i>	Al-Muddaththir, 74:18	Past tense verb	Singular	Makkiyyah	The reflection and inference of Walid bin Al-Mughirah.
2	<i>Tatafakkarūn</i>	Saba', 34:46	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	The command of thinking about Prophet Muhammad who is not a madman.
3		Al-An'am, 6:50	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	The command of giving thought about the difference between the blind the seeing.
4		Al-Rum, 30:21	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	The creations of Allah are signs for people who give thought.
5	<i>Yatafakkarūn</i>	Al-A'raf, 7:176	Present	Plural	Makkiyyah	The example of

		tense verb				those who belied the verses of Allah.
6		Al-A'raf, 7:184	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	To think about Muhammad who is not a madman.
7		Al-Rum, 30:8	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	Human, heaven, earth and what is between them
8		Nuh, 10:24	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	The similarity of earthly life.
9		Al-Nahl, 16:11	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	A variety of fruits
10		Al-Nahl, 16:44	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	The Quran
11		Al-Nahl, 16:69	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	The specialties of bees.
12		Al-Zumar 39:42	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	The sleep and death of man.
13		Al-Jathiah, 45:13	Present tense verb	Plural	Makkiyyah	Signs on the heavens and the earth.
14	<i>Tatafakkarūnī</i>	Al-Baqarah, 2:219	Present tense verb	Plural	Mad harvest	Wine, gambling, and what needs to be spent.
15	<i>Tatafakkarūn</i>	Al-Baqarah, 2:266	Present tense verb	Plural	Madaniyyah	The example of people who spend their wealth out of riya'.
16		Al-Ra'd, 13:3	Present tense verb	Plural	Madaniyyah	Earth, mountain, river, fruit, night and day.
17	<i>Yatafakkarūn</i>	Al-Imran, 3:191	Present tense verb	Plural	Madaniyyah	Creation of heaven and earth
18		Al-Hashr, 59:21	Present tense verb	Plural	Madaniyyah	The Qur'anic parable

Source: Zainorih Kadri, 2015

Based on the table, the word *tafakkur* has been mentioned in the Quran 18 times. Verses that are related to *tafakkur* were revealed more in Makkah than Medina. This statement shows that Allah intended to strengthen the faith of the believers through the concept of *tafakkur*. Through this method, the approach of *tafakkur* is very relevant to be applied in *sirah* education. According to studies, Surah Al-Muddaththir verse 18, Al-Rum verse 8, and Al-Nahl verse 44 are significant in the context of the teaching the *sirah* using the elements of thinking skills through *tafakkur*.

THE CURRICULUM OF SIRAH EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The *sirah* of Prophet Muhammad is taught specifically in primary schools as a knowledge that needs to be appreciated by the students. Through the personality and character of the Prophet SAW, students should put him as a role model and an exemplary icon. The task of conveying this knowledge is tough and needs to be carried out by completely by Islamic studies teachers. Islamic education teachers must attempt to diversify the techniques and approaches to ensure that teaching of the *sirah* is not only taught in the classroom, but it could also be appreciated outside of the classroom.

Table 2: The Curriculum Of Sirah Education In Primary Schools

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6
The Birth of Allah's Beloved. Emulate the Honesty of Prophet Muhammad. Know the Family of Prophet Muhammad.	The Purity of the Heart of Allah's Beloved. Prophet Muhammad the Trustworthy. Prophet Muhammad the True Companion.	The First Revelation. The Plan of the Prophet's Da'wah. Looking for Safety in Abyssinia. The Icon of Protecting Islam.	The Efficiency of the Da'wah of Prophet Muhammad. Commencement of the Obligation of Prayer. The Pledge of loyalty during the Hajj season. The Hijrah.	Establishment of the State of Medina. Prophet Muhammad the Great Leader.	The Hudaibiah Treaty. The Conquest of Makkah. The Spread of Islam After the Conquest of Makkah. The Farewell Pilgrimage. The death of Prophet Muhammad

Source: Islamic Education Textbook, Standard Based Curriculum for Primary Schools (KSSR).

Teaching the *sirah*, especially in primary schools under the Ministry of Education (MOE) is focused on a curriculum that revolves around the life of Prophet Muhammad. Starting with his birth until his death. Typically,

Islamic education teachers use particular methods of teaching the *sirah*, such as storytelling. Students are taught to understand and remember the delivered stories and are expected to be able to answer questions when given.

The approaches used with primary school students should particularly require wisdom (Mohd Syaubari Bin Othman & Ahmad Yunus Bin Kassim, 2017). The Quran has been revealed to man as a guide to the life of man to achieve happiness this world and the hereafter. The current study provides an exposure to four verses of the Quran that use the word *tafakkur* that is appropriate to teach the *sirah* in school.

THE APPROACH OF *TAFAKKUR* IN *SIRAH* EDUCATION

The competency of Islamic education teachers is strongly required to ensure that the approach or teaching technique used to teach the *sirah* is the best. A study shows that the effective method of teaching the *sirah* is storytelling, exercises, and group discussions (Ab. Halim, 2012). However, following the changing times and aiming towards high-level thinking skills, it is worth taking on the challenge of producing more effective and relevant teaching so that teachers become more rational and professional.

The Quran has used the word *tafakkur* in some situations. Among them is the following verse:

“Indeed, he thought and deliberated”. (Surah Al-Muddaththir 74:18).

The circumstance of revealing this verse (*asbab an-nuzul*) shows that Walid bin Al-Mughirah was condemned for having thoughts that oppose the Quran, even though he is well known among the tribes of Makhzum of the Quraysh tribe to be dependable and powerful in war (Wahbah al-Zuhaili, 2004). Teachers as guiders and facilitators should educate the students with the blessings and pleasure of knowledge. In this way, students will learn sincerely and without emphasizing on the excellence of the results, and fear if the acquired knowledge is not applied in life. This approach is the starting point in the process of acceptance of knowledge. Without the sincerity and motivation to seek knowledge for the benefit, the gained knowledge will be useless, and it will not pass through to the next generation. The reality is that teachers must place sincerity in students to learn before they start teaching.

Based on Surah Rum, verse 8, the word *yatafakkarun* involves thinking and contemplating (Zainorah, 2015). This word encourages

people to use the power of reason in an affair and compile a known problem to know something that has not been known before. Allah says in the Quran:

“Do they not contemplate within themselves? Allah has not created the heavens and the earth and what is between them except in truth and for a specified term. And indeed, many of the people, in [the matter of] the meeting with their Lord, are disbelievers”.(al-Rum 30:8)

This verse has been revealed in Makkah, and according to Ibn Kathir (1978), the use of intellect is to think, ponder, and observe everything starts from the beginning to the end of the universe and what is within it. Every occurrence created by Allah has its own cause and effect and has the implied meaning, which requires deep thinking. According to Mohammad Ismail (2014), the verses of the Quran that use the term *fakkara* intends to a call man to think of concrete things to reach to metaphysical matters. Man must be able to think about the greatness of Allah, the truth of the prophethood and the message of Islam, the stature of miracles of the Quran through the concept of *tadabbur* and wisdom, and everything that is commanded.

Through this verse, the teacher must be able to invite students to think through *tafakkur* by associating things before and after an incident in the *sirah*. This thinking ability is able to invite students to think by relating current things to things that are related to the lessons learned. This way the students will think of a way to apply the conditions learned in the *sirah* to everyday life.

For example, teachers who teach year 4 students about building of Masjid Quba' as the first Masjid to be was established after the migration. The connection between the construction of the Masjid until its occupation will stimulate students to think about the importance of the mosque and the need to occupy it. As previously mentioned, effective *tafakkur* will produce students who received knowledge with open minds and hearts and apply the knowledge in action.

According to Surah al- Nahl verse 44:

“[We sent them] with clear proofs and written ordinances. And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought”.
(al-Nahl 16:44)

Tafakkur also inspires students to take *ibrah* or the moral of a certain event. Sayyid Qutb (2000) interpreted the word *yatafakkarun* in Surah Al-Nahl, verse 44, as a call to mankind to think of the Quranic verse, to take lessons, to awaken the mind, and to stir the motions. The process of *tafakkur* necessitates deep thinking and the *ibrah* will produce the implicit meaning of the explicit. Thus, presenting a new topic that is different from what has been learned. In the process of taking this *ibrah*, teachers need to be creative to open the minds of the students using questioning techniques and *al-amthal* techniques (giving parables), as written by Syaubari in his study of high-level thinking skills (2017).

Teachers' abilities can be seen through the approaches they use when teaching events of the battle of *Al-Khandak* (the trench) to year 5 students in primary schools. Based on this story, students can evaluate and take lessons that consultations and strategies play an important role in a prospering society and to defend the nation. The Prophet was willing to accept the views of the ordinary people to dig the trenches to ensure Islam was not attacked.

Through the process *tafakkur*, the mind, heart, and body of the student are integrated in order to achieve the necessary level of education to understand the lessons of history. Through this integration, students can apply *tafakkur* and achieve the level of thinking skills that is recommended today. Students are taught to understand the truth and to benefit and understand the disadvantages and take lessons through the taught events about the Prophet SAW.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, teaching the *sirah* through *tafakkur* will produce excellent students and will fulfil the principles as a *khalifah*. Obedience, faith and *taqwa* ensure the formation of the desired *Rabbani* generation. The teaching process that can link what is before after the events can stimulate the students' intellect to think in a *tafakkur* manner. With the approach of receiving the knowledge by remembering, conveying it to the heart, the heart will stimulate organs to react with action. Taking the *ibrah* from the events of Prophet Muhammad will also produce a student who loves the Prophet and makes the Prophet as an idol in life. Therefore, the role of teachers, especially teachers of Islamic education need to take this approach and applying it in teaching, to create a knowledgeable, faithful, and devoted generation.

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