

**TAFAKUR AND ITS EFFECT ON THE FORMATION
OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS
(A Semantic-Psychological Study)**

Muhamad Jaeni¹, Syafiq Yagdhon Alfani², Nur Indah Laely³,
IAIN Pekalongan¹, IAIN Pekalongan², IAIN Pekalongan³,
m.jaeni@iainpekalongan.ac.id¹, Syafiqalfani21@gmail.com², indahlaely56@gmail.com³.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to describe the definition of “*tafakur*” in the semantic-psychological studies. The object and function of *tafakur* is also an important focus of study. Finally, this study focuses on how *tafakur* as a thinking activity can have implications for students' daily attitudes and behaviours. The method of analysis in this study used a literature review. In this study, it is explained that according to its depth, *tafakur* is different from ordinary thinking activities (*tafkir*) which are only objected to world problems that are not based on faith. Students also need to be directed to think about their own objects, nature, and also non-empirical objects such as heaven, hell and so on (except for thinking about the Essence of God). *Tafakur* has a great influence on students in terms of; the process of contemplation, awareness of God's power, introspection, and the cognitive and affective unity referred to in the *Qur'an* as *ululalbab*.

Keywords: Tafakur, Students' Attitudes, Semantic-Psychological Study

INTRODUCTION

From the modern psychology point of view, *tafakur* is the part of the psychology of thinking, the central field of traditional psychological studies in the days before behaviourism dominated psychology. In the early days, psychology focused a lot on the study of the mind, the feelings, and the structure of the human mind. The discussion of learning problems was only studied through those themes. Then, the school of behaviourism emerged with its famous and influential concepts pioneered by Watson. This school finally changed the previous views on a large scale, then placed the study of the human learning process, through the stimuli and responses that arise, into a psychological theme. Feelings, element of reasoning, and thoughts are considered as problems that cannot be reached and studied directly, as are the methods used to study them, such as the method of introspection, are criticized because they cannot be proven empirically. The adherents of behaviourism want psychology as an empirical science based on outward phenomena that

can be studied in the laboratory (Badri Yatim, 1996:5). Therefore, as a scientific experimental science imagined by the adherents of behaviouristics theory, psychology removes humans from feelings, elements of reasoning, and complex thoughts, as previous behaviourists have removed the spiritual element from humans. Few of these concepts and views are applied in the learning process of students in several educational institutions.

Thus, psychologists argue that the adherents of behaviourism have failed to explain the various problems posed. Various modern studies in the fields of psychology, biology, and cognitive psychology prove the weakness of his view of the conception and experience of behaviour. This is evident, especially in the areas of language processing, concept formation, problem solving, and the sharing of human knowledge. For this reason, since the beginning of the second half of this century, psychology has begun to pay more attention to thought processes and cognitive activities. Their attention also grew back to the tools related to reason that humans use to analyze

and share knowledge drawn from their environment, and to design things that are their goals. This new school has an important meaning in showing the value of thinking from the point of view of knowledge and religion. This cognitive school is considered as a psychological school that returns to its original concept. However, the methods he uses today are based on modern tools that have been achieved by humans through behavioural studies and other experimental empirical sciences, including through the computer revolution. The views above have a lot of influence on the students' learning practices, where the development and cognitive studies change and direct the limitations of the human mechanical conception to the concept of humans as sharing and processing information to solve problems in achieving their goals. Modern scientists, in turn, liken the human mind and memory to computers. This is because humans receive various stimuli from their environment, then code, divide, and store them in memory; after that take it back when needed to solve new problems faced by humans (Badri

Yatim, 1996: 8-9). Thus, the study of thinking activities in the concept of Islamic education becomes important to discuss. One of them is the concept of *tafakur* as a thinking activity that is closely related and also has implications for the attitudes and behaviour of students. *Tafakur* is a separate study in the study of Islamic psychology. In other words, the failures of modern psychology have given birth to the development of a new science in psychology. The development of Islamic psychology can be an alternative science to answer things that are not studied by modern psychology. Fuad Nashari mentions several reasons for the need for a psychology building based on the Islamic world view: (1) Islamic psychology is a new perspective in terms of seeing the relationship or relationship between humans and God; (2) Islamic psychology has the potential to answer the challenges of modern society; (3) Islamic psychology encourages humans to do actual roles to improve the real situation of human life (Fuad Nashari, 2000:228-230). Thus, studies of religious teachings that are closely related to human behavior are

waiting to be studied more deeply. The phenomena of patience, gratitude, *khauf*, *raja'*, *tafakur*, and so on are important studies that must be studied, researched and of course need to continue to be developed within the framework of the concept of Islamic education, which in turn can help solve students' life problems at school.

DISCUSSION

Definition of Tafakur and its Framework

Semantically, the word "Tafakur" (تفكر) is an Arabic loan word. Derivatively, the word "Tafakur" is in the form of *mashdar*, whose verb form is "Tafakkara-Yatafakkaru-Tafakkuran". Lexically, this word means "to think". Thinking referred to an activity that combines the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual components of humans in contemplating a phenomenon and aims to find answers to the phenomenon in question. Thus ontologically, *tafakur* is more likely to mean contemplation than thinking. According to its depth, *tafakur* is different from ordinary thinking activities, *tafkir* (تفكير) which only

focuses on world problems that are not based on faith. Someone who contemplates will be able to pass through the reality of the world to the hereafter, from creation to the Creator, which in the end produces a valuable wisdom. *Tafakur* will drive both external and internal individual knowledge activities. Individuals who do *tafakur* will take an advantage of their past experiences, then with their perceptions they will associate all experiences with the creatures that are the object of their *tafakur*. All these dynamics occur filled with emotion as a servant of God (Malik Badri, 2001:57).

Within its framework, *tafakur* includes four interrelated phases: the first phase: human begins with the knowledge they acquire through direct perception by using sight, hearing, touch and other five senses and indirect way by imagination or pure intellectual activity. The second phase: If human try to observe the object of their *tafakur* further by paying attention to its beauties, it means that they have moved from cold knowledge to amazement at the beauty and greatness of the creation. This phase is a time when humans

feel a surge within themselves that thrills the heart. The third phase: A phase where the inner rage increases towards awareness and recognition of God's majestic attributes. This adds solemnity and human feels very closed to his God. The fourth phase: When the previous stages are often done and become a deep-rooted habit. Everything that used to seem ordinary, has now turned into a source of wealth in thinking, presenting a sense of preoccupation and contemplation of the various blessings of Allah. In this phase, everything in his environment has turned into a stimulus for him to always think and reflect. At this phase, he also reaches the opening of the door of witnessing to the majesty of God and the door of witnessing the day of resurrection. He sees creatures moving according to His commands and wills, submitting to Him. Everything he witnessed would strengthen his sincerity in religion (Malik Badri, 2001:60-63).

Meanwhile, UtamiMunandar, as quoted by Nancy, stated that the *tafakur* process includes the thoughts, emotions and perceptions of a person. It includes all

psychological, cognitive and spiritual activities. *Tafakur* utilizes all knowledge facilities used by humans in the thought process. Through the process of contemplation, a person makes use of his past experiences and relates them to his perception of all creation that he is contemplating. According to Munandar, this process is similar with the creative process as the ability to make new combinations based on previous knowledge and experience. In addition, the condition of being free and independent in seeing and imagining is a motivating factor for constructive creativity. *Tafakur* is an intuitive mind wandering that can revive and illuminate the heart when the mind breaks through the walls of signs of Allah's power in the universe towards the Creator. Thus, it is clear that the dimensions of the *tafakur* process are the same as the dimensions of the creative process, so tafakur allows and facilitates the emergence of a creative process that greatly assists humans in solving problems (Nancy Indah Mawarni, 2006:53). As for the practice, the level of thought of every human being is certainly different. This is

due to several factors, such as depth of faith, ability to concentrate thoughts, emotional and rational conditions, environmental factors, level of knowledge about the object of *tafakur*, good examples and social influences, essence of something, and level of behaviour towards objects. (Malik Badri, 2001:79). That is all a brief explanation of the meaning of *tafakur* and how human do it.

The Semantic Meaning of Tafakur and Thinking (tafkir)

According to Nashori, there is a difference between *tafakur* and thinking (*tafkir*). *Tafakur* is a thinking process that is able to pass the reality of the world to the hereafter, by involving the affective aspect so that it creates a special sensation in humans to God and in the end adds higher quality knowledge in terms of belief in God. Through *tafakur*, humans are freed from material confinement to unlimited spiritual freedom, which then moves all individual knowledge activities. The person will get benefit from his past experiences, then with his perception of all those experiences is associated with the

beings who are the object of his *tafakur*. Through the discovery of God's verses in nature, an individual is said to have found wisdom (*'ibrah*) and *ilham*, a kind of knowledge that is bestowed by God on a person and imprinted on his heart, so that some secrets are revealed to him and part of reality is visible to him (Nancy Indah Mawarni, 2006:52). *Tafakur* is one way to deepen esoteric teachings in Islam, where someone is invited to understand something that is not only empirical, but more than that, namely a transcendental understanding (SetiyoPurwanto). Meanwhile, ordinary thinking activities (*tafkir*) are limited to solving worldly problems, which may be far from touching feelings and emotions. (Malik Badri, 2001:57). It is clear that the process of *tafakur* includes thought, emotion, and perception of a believer. It includes all psychological, cognitive and spiritual activities. Therefore, *tafakur* has the close relationship with *al -dhikr* (الذكر), so it is difficult to say that a person always does *dhikr* to Allah SWT, but at the same time he is contemplative about His creation. Vice versa, people who always

tafakur, but at the same time he does a little *dhikr* to Allah SWT. This is the benefit of doing *tafakur* where this activity helps the believer reach the high level of awareness. According to Al-Ghazali, *tafakur* is the key to all goodness because it will shape all cognitive activities of a believer with the *dhikr* to Allah (ذكر الله), introduction to His majesty, *tafakur* and understanding of the wisdom contained in the wonders of all His creation from all sides. *Tafakur* is a stabilizer of faith and a differentiator in the faith of *muttaqiin*. Allah SWT created the mind, completed its journey with revelation, then ordered its owner to look at all of His creation through *tafakur*, taking lessons from all the miracles contained in His creation (Al- Ghazali , 1984:13). From the explanation above, the writer can emphasize that *tafakur* is a process of dialogue with the knowledge and feelings (heart) possessed by humans. Therefore, the results of *tafakur* will produce good things. *Tafakur* is a deep thought process since whoever does it will certainly get life lessons.

Reflection Object

Something that becomes the object of *tafakur* is all of Allah's creations, both in the heavens and on earth. Reflecting on Allah's creation is a noble worship that Islam calls for, so that humans really understand the signs of God's power and majesty. The first thing that humans need to think about is humans themselves. Many verses of the Qur'an encourage people to think for themselves. Humans are the most important creation, even the Qur'an explicitly states that humans are the most beautiful and perfect creation of Allah. In the verses, of course, many specifically discuss humans. As in the letter Al-Mu'minun stated; " *And verily We have created man from an essence (derived) from clay. Then We made the essence of semen (stored) in a firm place (womb). Then We made the semen a clot of blood, then We made the clot of blood into a lump of flesh, and We made the lump of flesh into bones, then We covered the bones with flesh. Then We made him a different (shaped) creature. So Glory be to Allah, the Best Creator*" (Surah 23:12-14). In another verse, Allah says: " *Indeed, We have created man in the best form* "

(Qur'an 95:4). And many more verses of the Qur'an that call on people to think about themselves so that they can understand the greatness and majesty of His God. Even among Sufi experts there are teachings that are truly held, namely teachings that command one to think and think about oneself, because by thinking herself he can really understand and understand His Lord; "*man 'arafa nafsahu, 'arafa Rabbahu*".

Natural objects are also something that humans have to think about. The Qur'an, in several verses instructs people to think about nature and can take lessons (*'ibrah*) in it. As in Surah An-Naml verse 65; "*And Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky and with it He gives life to the earth after its death. Verily in that there are indeed signs (of God's greatness) for those who listen (lessons)*". (Sura 16:65). In another verse it is stated; "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for people of understanding, (ie) those who remember Allah while standing or sitting or lying down and they think*

about the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying): "Our God, You did not create this in vain. Glory be to You, so protect us from their torment" (Surah 3:190-191). And many other verses that discuss the importance of humans thinking and contemplating this universe.

Animal and plant objects are also one thing that should not escape the human mind. In the verse of the Qur'an it is stated: "*Then do they not pay attention to the camel how he was created. And the sky, how is it exalted? And the mountains, how are they upheld? And the Earth, how is it spread out*" (Surah 88:17-20). In another verse: "*And he has created cattle for you; in it there is (feather) that warms and distributes the benefits and the other part you eat. And you get a beautiful view of him when you bring him back to the stables and when you release him to the pasture*" (Surah 16:5-6). There are many other verses which instruct humans to think of animals and plants as His creation and majesty.

In addition, humans are also ordered to think about things that are unseen, except about the Essence of Allah SWT. It is He who "*There is*

none like Him, and He is the All-Hearing and All-Seeing” (Qur'an 42:11). The things that humans can think about are death, Heaven, Hell, the womb, the condition of the fetus, and so on. There are many verses that talk about this in the Qur'an.

The Effect of Tafakur on Students' Attitudes and Behaviors

As mentioned above, *tafakur* is a psychological activity. The activities of *tafakur* and some of the meanings obtained from it will greatly affect a person's behavior. The meanings that have been collected from the influence of *tafakur* on behavior: (1) *Tafakur* is a reflection (contemplation); (2) Through *tafakur*, a person will be able to realize the existence of God and His attributes; (3) *Tafakur* as a deep search process; (4) The dynamics of *tafakur* raises peak experiences (in Maslow's humanistic psychology called peak experiences ; called things according to the context of Sufism) namely the fear of the greatness of God (*khauf* ; (5) The dynamics of *tafakur* raises another type of peak experience, namely a sense of hope (*raja'a*) on God's grace; (6) The dynamics of

tafakur raises introspection (*muraqabah*) in individuals; (7) *Tafakur* as a means of complaining about life's problems to ask God for help; (8) Through meditation, the subject gets God's help (*ma'una*) in the form of a way out of the problem. life that is being faced; (9) *Tafakur* as a way to strengthen faith; (10) Through *tafakur*, the person gets religious experience in the form of the ability to see and hear something supernatural, as well as things related to the emotional atmosphere; (11) The guidance of God is a factor that affects the time of doing *tafakur* and the variation of the object of *tafakur*; (12) *Tafakur* as a supporter of contemplative *dhikr*; (13) The habituation of *tafakur* to train the soul; (14) Through *tafakur*, the subject learns in himself from the life experiences he experiences; (15) The dynamics of *tafakur* contains the unity between the cognitive and affective aspects that referred to in the Quran as *ulul albab* (Nancy Indah Mawarni , 2006:58). By reflecting on all of Allah's creations, one's faith will be stronger. Likewise, the sense of admiration for God is increasing too. These attitudes will

ultimately affect the behavior to be better. Like always being grateful, alert, always eager to study, being humble (not arrogant), speaking well, and so on.

The function of Tafakur

Psychologically, Usman Najati as quoted by Abdur Rahman Shaleh revealed that the function of thinking is to sort out truth and falsehood, between virtue and evil, to respond to reality, gain knowledge and elevate human beings to the level of development and perfection, so when someone comes to this state, his thought will be of great value in life. This confirms that this is a natural and thinking function (Abdur Rahman Salih, 2004:237). More than that, looking at some of the things that become the object of *tafakur* as explained above, it seems that the function of thinking is to know and understand all of God's creations, both those in the heavens and those on earth. Humans are commanded by Allah to be able to know and understand themselves, the universe, animals and plants, even things that are unseen (except the Essence of Allah) humans are commanded to know and understand

. All of this can be obtained through meditation activities. Then from the knowledge and understanding that results from this thought, it is hoped that awareness and full confidence will arise in the greatness and majesty of God through all of His creation.

The Implementation the Concept of Tafakur in Education

One of the most important components of education is students. They are children who need attention, especially in developing their potential. Three main things that are important to note from students, namely the formation of attitudes, behavior, knowledge and skills. At the cognitive level, students are expected to have a good way of thinking, more than that how educators can shape students to always think in seeing all the realities around them. However, in the process of Islamic education, the thinking process of students is not only sufficient at the empirical level but also thinks about matters related to faith/belief, so that the process and the results of thinking will have strong implications for their attitudes and behavior in life.

Students also need to be conditioned to always want to think about objects or realities that are closely related to their lives. As well as thinking about himself, nature, animals and plants, all of which are the creation of Allah SWT. Likewise, teachers try to condition students to want to think about things that are supernatural or non-empirical, such as thinking about heaven, hell, Jinn and other supernatural beings and realms. Of course, thinking of this unseen world is beyond thinking about the Essence of Allah SWT. The process of thinking habits like this is expected by students to be able to understand knowledge which in turn is expected to have implications for attitudes and behavior in their lives. Islam itself teaches that one of the goals of seeking knowledge is to know God and draw closer to Him. By studying, humans will know themselves, know their surroundings and know their God. *Tafakur* is a technique that can be practiced by Muslims in forming emotional calm and self-welfare (Nur Yani Che Hussin, 2022: 93).

The implication of thinking to attitude and behavior becomes

destination function at a time destination main from the *tafakur* process for students. *Tafakur* functions as the separator between truth and falsehood, between virtue and evil, to respond to reality, acquire knowledge and elevate human beings to the level of development and perfection, so that when a person reaches this state, thoughts will be of great value in life. Teacher needs to emphasize such things to students.

CONCLUSION

That is all the description of the concept of *tafakur* seen from a psychological framework.

Theoretically, *tafakur* activities have their own meanings, separate functions and different ways of working from thinking activities in general. Likewise, the objects of *tafakur* are quite clear. All of which have been outlined by religious teachings. *Tafakur* activities themselves can produce meaning which in turn can affect the attitudes and behavior of individuals who do it. *Wallahu 'Alam.*

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