

Implementation of a Deep Learning-Based Islamic Religious Education Curriculum to Foster Meaningful Learning

Muhammad Afhamul Ulum^{1*}, Khalimatus Sa'diyah²

Universitas Islam Nahdhatul Ulama Jepara^{*1, 2}

^{*1}email: afhamulafham@gmail.com

²email: elkhasya@unisnu.ac.id

Abstract: This study aims to comprehensively analyze the implementation of the PAI curriculum based on deep learning and its contribution to realizing meaningful learning. The study used a qualitative approach with a library research design through a critical review of books, reputable scientific journal articles, and relevant curriculum policy documents. Data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis techniques, applying source triangulation to maintain the validity of the findings. The results of the study indicate that the integration of deep learning principles in the PAI curriculum can encourage the simultaneous involvement of students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills, so that Islamic values are not only understood conceptually but also internalized in attitudes and behavior. This approach has been proven to strengthen higher-order thinking skills, religious character, and the ability to transfer learning in responding to contemporary issues.

Keywords: Deep Learning; PAI Curriculum; Meaningful Learning; Islamic Education; 21st Century.

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara komprehensif implementasi kurikulum PAI berbasis deep learning serta kontribusinya dalam mewujudkan pembelajaran bermakna. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kepustakaan (library research) melalui telaah kritis terhadap buku, artikel jurnal ilmiah bereputasi, dan dokumen kebijakan kurikulum yang relevan. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis isi dan analisis tematik dengan menerapkan triangulasi sumber untuk menjaga validitas temuan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi prinsip deep learning dalam kurikulum PAI mampu mendorong keterlibatan kognitif, afektif, dan psikomotorik peserta didik secara simultan, sehingga nilai-nilai keislaman tidak hanya dipahami secara konseptual, tetapi juga terinternalisasi dalam sikap dan perilaku. Pendekatan ini terbukti memperkuat kemampuan berpikir tingkat tinggi, karakter religius, serta kemampuan transfer pembelajaran dalam

merespons persoalan kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Deep Learning; Kurikulum PAI; Pembelajaran Bermakna; Pendidikan Islam; Abad ke-21.

A. Introduction

Fundamentally, education is a planned process with a scope of objectives that extends beyond merely enhancing learners' intellectual capacity. It also plays a role in cultivating character, building morality, and developing the various skills needed to navigate life's challenges. Rapid social change and continuous technological advancement require education systems to adjust their learning orientations. Learning can no longer be understood simply as the transmission of information from educator to learner; instead, it must focus on enabling learners to grasp the meaning of knowledge, engage in reflection, and connect what they learn to real-life situations. Consequently, instruction needs to evolve into a meaningful learning experience, allowing students to link acquired knowledge with their own experiences, needs, and the various issues encountered in daily life (Ambarita et al., 2025).

The need for such meaningful learning is particularly crucial in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). PAI is not solely oriented toward mastering knowledge of religious teachings; it also serves to shape students by fostering faith, good character, and a sense of care and responsibility toward their social environment. Therefore, PAI instruction must effectively bridge religious understanding with daily behavior and practices. Achieving these goals requires a curriculum and instructional process that integrally develop knowledge, attitudes, and skills. One approach that supports this need is "deep learning," which emphasizes a process of profound understanding through student engagement, reflective activities, critical thinking, and the application of learned values within real-world contexts (Rizal & M, 2024).

Given these circumstances, integrating a deep learning approach into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is a relevant area for scholarly attention in the field of education. Its implementation goes beyond merely employing specific teaching methods; it encompasses the holistic application of deep learning principles across the entire educational process from formulating objectives and selecting content to

conducting instruction and carrying out assessments. Such integration aims to steer PAI instruction away from a focus on the mere recall and theoretical understanding of material, fostering instead the ability to discover meaning, cultivate awareness, and consistently apply Islamic values. Consequently, research into the implementation of a deep learning-based PAI curriculum is essential to assess its potential for creating more meaningful learning experiences and to understand the conditions and factors that either facilitate or hinder its adoption in contemporary education (Ambarita et al., 2025).

The implementation of deep learning strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should not be viewed merely as a temporary pedagogical trend, but rather as a fundamental necessity for reorienting the learning process shifting from a focus on rote knowledge acquisition toward deep understanding and the embodiment of values. From this perspective, PAI instruction is no longer measured by the quantity of verses or legal rulings students memorize, but by their ability to connect Islamic values with the social dynamics encountered in daily life. The deep learning approach places dialogic interaction at the core of instruction, with teachers acting as facilitators who stimulate critical thinking through reflective questioning and value-based, moral problem-solving. Consequently, religious teachings do not remain at a purely cognitive level but become deeply internalized within the students' attitudes and behaviors (akhlak). Furthermore, applying deep learning in PAI creates opportunities for students to examine the connections between religious texts and various contemporary issues, such as technological advancements, environmental concerns, and humanitarian challenges. This type of learning process fosters critical reflection, enabling students to grasp the relevance of Islamic teachings in cultivating empathy, social responsibility, and personal integrity. When students understand the rationale behind acts of worship and their implications for social harmony, their motivation to learn becomes intrinsic and enduring. Therefore, transforming the PAI curriculum based on deep learning principles holds the potential to produce a generation that is not only intellectually excellent but also possesses spiritual depth and social sensitivity aligning with national education goals that emphasize a balance among cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Prihantoro, 2025).

Several previous studies have shown the relevance of applying deep learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. A study conducted by (Prihantoro, 2025) for instance, it has been revealed that a deep learning approach can strengthen students' religious character through a process of value reflection that is deeper than that of conventional instruction, which tends to be oriented toward rote memorization. However, such research has primarily focused on strengthening religious character in general; it has not yet specifically examined the systematic link between deep learning and the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, nor the implications for holistic, meaningful learning.

Another study conducted at MTs Al Ma'ruf Denpasar demonstrated that integrating deep learning into PAI instruction can foster inclusive and empathetic attitudes amidst student diversity. Nevertheless, that study placed greater emphasis on cultivating a pluralistic character, while the quality of the PAI curriculum and the process of meaningful learning key focuses of modern curriculum studies were not examined in depth (Umroh & Arjiman, 2025). Furthermore, research (Toha et al., 2025) which combines deep learning with the Problem-Based Learning model in Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) instruction, demonstrates an increase in student participation and engagement. However, this research remains limited to the application of specific instructional strategies and has not comprehensively addressed a deep learning-based curriculum framework for Islamic Religious Education (PAI).

Other literature also links the application of deep learning in PAI to enhanced critical thinking skills and learner motivation across various educational levels as observed at SMKN Pringkuku and SMAN 61 Jakarta. Nevertheless, these studies tend to be descriptive regarding classroom instructional practices and have not positioned the design and implementation of a deep learning-integrated curriculum as the primary focus of PAI curriculum policy (Khotimah & Abdan, 2025). Meanwhile, other studies view deep learning as a relevant approach to addressing 21st-century educational challenges through contextual and reflective learning. However, these studies have not specifically examined the gap between ideal Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum policies and the reality of their implementation in schools regarding the

realization of meaningful learning (Qolbiyah, 2022).

Although previous studies have indicated that deep learning approaches hold potential for enhancing the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), certain aspects remain under-researched. One such aspect concerns how deep thinking processes can be channeled toward the internalization and practice of Islamic values within a structured curricular framework. Existing research generally addresses deep learning in the context of improving critical thinking skills, strengthening religious character, developing instructional materials, or utilizing specific learning models. However, there is a need for further in-depth study regarding the use of deep learning as a foundation for comprehensively redesigning the PAI curriculum encompassing the formulation of objectives, the integration of reflective activities, the cultivation of moral awareness, and the assessment of students' evolving thought processes, attitudes, and behaviors (Della et al., 2025).

This situation suggests that the concept of meaningful learning in PAI should not be measured solely by students' mastery of subject matter or their level of participation during lessons. Meaningful learning is also reflected in the extent to which students can embody and apply Islamic values when navigating various real-life situations. Consequently, a deep-learning-based PAI curriculum must address several interconnected dimensions, such as continuous reflection, the development of ethical awareness, the application of higher-order thinking skills, and the ability to respond to various social issues. Based on this premise, this study aims to examine deep learning not merely as an instructional approach, but as a transformative framework capable of bridging deep thinking with the internalization and application of Islamic teachings in students' lives (Sera & Shidqi, 2025).

Addressing this research gap, this study aims to make a conceptual contribution by synthesizing the interrelationships between the implementation of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum based on "deep learning," the process of deep thinking, and the realization of meaningful learning. The research focus extends beyond merely describing the application of deep learning in instructional activities; it also examines the resulting shift in the orientation of PAI moving from the simple

transmission of religious knowledge toward a process of value internalization reflected in students' mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors. Furthermore, critical and reflective thinking skills are analyzed as essential intellectual capacities enabling students to comprehend and respond to social issues and the various demands of life in the digital era. Through this perspective, the study seeks to strengthen PAI curriculum development moving beyond the pursuit of academic achievement to foster ethical awareness, spiritual growth, and student concern for their social environment.

In summary, while considerable research has been conducted on deep learning within the context of PAI particularly regarding instructional processes and character building studies that systematically integrate deep learning principles into PAI curriculum design to comprehensively achieve meaningful learning remain relatively limited. This research gap encompasses aspects such as curriculum design, the integration of deep learning into learning objectives, processes, and assessment, as well as the measurement of its impact on the quality of meaningful learning across various educational levels.

Addressing this gap, this study was formulated to answer several key questions: how the deep learning based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is implemented in classroom practice; to what extent the integration of deep learning principles within the PAI curriculum fosters meaningful learning for students; and what factors facilitate or hinder the implementation of this curriculum in achieving meaningful learning outcomes. The study aims to comprehensively analyze the implementation of the deep learning based PAI curriculum and identify its contribution to realizing meaningful learning; the findings are expected to serve as a reference for developing a PAI curriculum that is more adaptive and responsive to the demands of 21st-century education.

B. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design aimed at critically examining literature regarding the implementation of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum based on deep learning. The research relies on secondary

data obtained from various authoritative sources, such as reference books, indexed scholarly journal articles, curriculum policy documents, and other publications relevant to the concept of meaningful learning within the context of PAI.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic document search utilizing online databases, including Google Scholar, SINTA, and Scopus. The literature search process employed selected keywords related to the PAI curriculum, deep learning, pedagogy, and the integration of technology in learning. The retrieved sources were subsequently selected based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the study's research focus.

In this study, the researcher serves as the primary instrument responsible for identifying, categorizing, and interpreting the literature. Data analysis was conducted in stages, employing both content analysis and thematic analysis. The analytical process involved organizing the literature into key themes, synthesizing concepts and theories to reveal the connections between deep learning principles and the objectives of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), and critically examining the opportunities and challenges associated with their implementation in fostering meaningful learning.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this study employed source triangulation by comparing various theoretical perspectives and research outcomes from experts. This strategy was adopted to minimize potential researcher subjectivity and to ensure that the resulting conclusions are objective, consistent, and comprehensive.

C. Result and Discussion

In the realm of pedagogy, deep learning is understood as an instructional approach that emphasizes a learner's ability to construct meaningful understanding and to integrate various concepts. Elbashbishy asserts that the core of this approach lies in cognitive flexibility specifically, the student's ability to detach a concept from its original context and reapply it to different situations or problems. Thus, deep learning goes beyond the mere ability to recall information; instead, it focuses on mastering a knowledge framework that enables learners to recognize the conceptual patterns underlying various learning phenomena. (Azahra et al., 2025).

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), deep learning emerges as an approach that contrasts with superficial learning, which emphasizes only the cognitive surface. This approach entails a deeper engagement with meaning, inviting learners to examine subject matter critically and reflectively by connecting it to personal and social values. The process can be understood as a form of spiritual deepening, wherein religious knowledge is not merely stored in memory but is tested for its relevance and practical application in shaping attitudes and behavior. Within this framework, Islamic teachings are positioned as a holistic and dynamic value system; for instance, the concept of Tawhid (Divine Oneness) is not interpreted solely as a theological affirmation but is transformed into an ethical principle that reflects justice, equality, and freedom of thought in daily life (Azima et al., 2023).

Theoretically, the application of deep learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is closely linked to David Ausubel's theory of Meaningful Learning. Ausubel emphasized that effective learning occurs when new information is integrated into a learner's existing cognitive structure through the process of subsumption. In PAI instruction, a deep learning approach ensures that religious values are not treated as isolated knowledge but rather become part of the meaning systems already present within the students. By way of illustration, lessons on Zakat (obligatory almsgiving) are not merely presented as a set of technical rules; instead, they are connected to the students' own experiences of social empathy, allowing the concept to be internalized as an understanding of distributive justice and human solidarity.

Furthermore, deep learning expands upon Ausubel's framework by emphasizing the formation of multidimensional networks of meaning. Unlike traditional learning, which tends to be linear, the relationships between concepts in deep learning are complex and interconnected. Learners are guided to understand the functional links between various concepts such as the relationship between Tawhid (divine oneness) and the responsibility for environmental preservation within the perspective of fiqh al-bi'ah (Islamic environmental jurisprudence), or the relevance of the value of honesty (siddiq) from the history of the prophets to the ethics of data and information management in the digital age. This process fosters cross-disciplinary cognitive integration, enabling

students to synthesize diverse perspectives and gain a comprehensive understanding of Islamic law and morality (Mohan et al., 2025).

The affective aspect plays a crucial role in the success of this approach. Without adequate emotional engagement, religious values struggle to evolve into enduring character traits. Deep learning facilitates such engagement through reflective activities that foster empathy, challenging students to confront dilemmas that require decision-making based on Islamic ethics. This approach aligns with constructivism, which posits that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through the interaction between prior knowledge and new experiences. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), constructivism is reflected in students' ability to reconstruct the meaning of classical Islamic texts, ensuring their continued relevance in addressing contemporary challenges such as environmental crises and social inequality (Azis & Tamimi, 2025).

The empirical findings of this study indicate that the effectiveness of implementing deep learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) relies heavily on the ability to simultaneously integrate three learning domains: the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Through a mindful learning approach, students are encouraged to engage fully and consciously in the learning process, ensuring that religious teachings are not perceived merely as a static set of rules, but rather as a meaningful and contextual guide for life. Meanwhile, the principle of joyful learning fosters a positive atmosphere by alleviating the boredom and anxiety often associated with lecture-based instruction. This conducive learning environment empowers students to ask questions and openly explore their intellectual uncertainties. The synergy between these two approaches culminates in meaningful learning, wherein religious knowledge connects with the students' personal experiences; consequently, this knowledge is more firmly encoded in long-term memory and can be functionally applied in daily life (Aliyah et al., 2025).

The recurrence of similar findings across various educational institutions ranging from SMKN Pringkuku to SMAN 1 Krembung indicates that the deep learning approach possesses strong external validity as an alternative to the stagnation of pedagogical practices in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). At SMKN Pringkuku, for

instance, the implementation of deep learning transformed classroom dynamics into a more dialogic environment. Students no longer acted as passive recipients of information but instead engaged actively as subjects who helped construct the meaning of their learning. The increased intensity of interaction between teachers and students demonstrates that this approach can break down communication barriers and create a safe learning space, allowing students to express their spiritual understanding without fear of negative judgment. The learning experience fostered in this context focuses not merely on mastering subject matter, but also on the process of students discovering their own identities and reflective voices as they internalize religious values (Khotimah & Abdan, 2025).

The implementation of deep learning at SMAN 1 Krembung highlights another equally important dimension: the fostering of creativity and collaboration through Project-Based Learning. Integrating Islamic values into contextual projects such as digital-based social campaigns or the design of ethical solutions for local issues requires students to move beyond mere textual understanding. In this process, students synthesize religious norms with practical realities, simultaneously honing their critical thinking skills. The success of this model demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds strategic potential as a vehicle for developing creativity, where spiritual values are not only studied but also serve as a source of inspiration for tangible projects that yield social benefits (Hasanuddin et al., 2025).

Implementing deep learning strategies within the madrasah environment represents a paradigm shift moving beyond the mere fulfillment of curriculum requirements toward achieving the essential, transformative goals of Islamic education. By integrating the principles of mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning, madrasahs can address perennial issues such as low student engagement and boredom with material perceived as overly normative or theoretical. In Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) lessons, for instance, a mindful learning approach encourages students to grasp the spiritual significance underlying acts of worship, ensuring these activities are not viewed merely as physical routines. In Al-Qur'an Hadith classes, the principle of meaningful learning links scriptural messages to contemporary issues, enabling students to interpret sacred

texts as sources of solutions for modern-day challenges. Similar approaches are evident in subjects such as the History of Islamic Civilization (SKI) and Akidah Akhlak (Islamic Creed and Ethics). In SKI, deep learning guides students to reflect on historical values of leadership and civilization, contextualizing them for future challenges. Meanwhile, in Akidah Akhlak, the application of joyful learning fosters an inclusive and empathetic atmosphere, allowing discussions on moral dilemmas to unfold openly and enjoyably. This positive psychological state is crucial for internalizing ethical values, as character is more readily shaped when learning occurs in a supportive environment free from pressure (Syafi'i & Darnaningsih, 2025).

The transformation of the teacher's role in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) regarding the implementation of deep learning reflects a fundamental paradigm shift: moving from mere curriculum executors to reflective, meaning-oriented instructional designers. Initially, many teachers faced conceptual confusion, largely due to the misconception that deep learning is synonymous with high-cost technology or complex teaching materials. This situation highlighted a gap between the direction of curriculum policy and practical pedagogical understanding at the school level. Through the Guru Penggerak (Driving Teacher) Program, this gap is being bridged via a collaborative approach among teachers, where the learning process is not top-down but rather evolves through shared discussion and reflection. In this process, teachers come to realize that the essence of deep learning lies not in the sophistication of instructional media, but in the teacher's ability to craft meaningful questions that foster students' curiosity and critical thinking skills (Khofifah et al., 2025).

The application of contextual strategies such as storytelling and the integration of local culture has proven effective in adapting the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka (Independent Curriculum) to the madrasah context. At the Islamic primary education level, storytelling serves as a means to explore the values and character of Islamic figures, subsequently linking them to social and cultural realities familiar to the students. Integrating these local elements brings the learning process closer to the students' lived experiences, thereby fostering a strong emotional connection. Students no longer view Islamic Religious Education (PAI) merely as the transmission of abstract

teachings, but rather as a process of self-discovery. This emotional engagement encourages active participation and collaboration among students, ultimately transforming the classroom into a dialogic, inclusive, and dynamic learning environment (Khofifah et al., 2025).

The application of a deep learning approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has significant implications for the development of Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) specifically the abilities to analyze, evaluate, and create. Research findings from SMAN 61 Jakarta indicate that when students are presented with learning scenarios requiring the analysis of social issues through a theological lens, they simultaneously hone their intellectual acuity. In the context of PAI, critical thinking is not interpreted as questioning the veracity of divine revelation, but rather as the ability to distinguish between the absolute principles of Islamic teachings and contextual human interpretations. This understanding helps students avoid simplistic perspectives and encourages them to grasp the complexities of social reality in a more comprehensive and discerning manner (Rahmawati et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the relevance of deep learning to 21st-century competencies is reflected in the development of transferable skills. The habit of engaging in deep reflection within Islamic Religious Education (PAI) equips students with a critical mindset applicable to other subjects and social life. The ability to assess the validity of information, recognize bias, and weigh benefits and harms during decision-making constitutes a concrete example of the complex thinking competencies fostered by deep learning-based PAI. Active-reflective learning activities such as guided discussions on contemporary ethical issues or community service projects grounded in religious values encourage students to apply their knowledge within dynamic, real-world contexts. Thus, PAI transforms into a learning space that functions as an intellectual laboratory, shaping not only ritual piety but also preparing students to become cognitively resilient and adaptive individuals capable of navigating global challenges and the tide of information disruption (Rahmawati et al., 2025).

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the ability to transfer knowledge is a crucial factor determining the quality of learning. Students engaging in a

“deep learning” approach do not merely grasp the regulations regarding zakat at a normative level; they are also able to extract its fundamental values such as social justice and the equitable distribution of welfare and analyze them in the context of contemporary issues, including the sharing economy and local poverty challenges. This process of knowledge transfer requires high-level cognitive engagement, such as abstraction and analogical reasoning. When learning reaches this stage, religious knowledge ceases to be static or confined to texts; instead, it evolves into knowledge that is adaptive and applicable to the new issues that continually emerge as times change (Kurnia et al., 2025).

The integration of deep learning into the study of Islamic history (Tarikh) gives rise to a pedagogical approach that not only serves to transmit collective memory but also shapes students’ situational intelligence. Within this framework, history is not presented as a dry collection of chronological facts but as a space for exploring values; students are encouraged to critically examine the decisions of historical figures, understand the relationship between divine revelation and culture, and evaluate the ethical consequences of pivotal events. This process fosters a historical consciousness that enables students to perceive Islam as a dynamic faith relevant across eras. Such awareness instills a sense of moral responsibility in students to carry forward the values of Islamic civilization within the context of modern life. Consequently, religion is understood as a system of values flexible in implementation yet steadfast in principle thereby equipping students with a resilient identity amidst the currents of globalization. This profound interpretation of religious values transforms acts of worship from mere routine into a source of moral energy for tangible social transformation, allowing students to embody the spirit of rahmatan lil ‘alamin (a mercy to the worlds) in their engagement with society (Hoeruman et al., 2025).

Implementing deep learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) necessitates comprehensive structural changes within the education system, where all learning components are integrated to achieve depth of meaning. Regarding the curriculum, adaptability extends beyond merely adjusting administrative documents; it entails redesigning learning outcomes to foster student exploration and independent learning. A

flexible curriculum enables teachers to select and manage content that is most relevant to actual needs, ensuring that PAI is not perceived as detached from contemporary realities. Shifting the focus from the breadth of material to the depth of understanding allows students to engage in critical reflection (*tadabbur*) on every concept studied, thereby laying a solid foundation for the development of robust spiritual competence (Aribah et al., 2025).

From an epistemological perspective, the effectiveness of deep learning in shaping religious character lies in a value-internalization process that transcends mere cognitive aspects. In conventional instruction, moral values often remain at the stage of conceptual understanding (“moral knowing”), whereas the deep learning approach guides students toward the stages of internalizing values (“moral feeling”) and manifesting them through concrete actions (“moral action”). When students reflect on the concept of *ihsan*, for instance, the learning process does not stop at rote memorization of definitions; instead, it encourages them to examine the implications of this God-consciousness for their daily behavior, including in situations where they are not under the supervision of others. This reflective process fosters a more stable and authentic religious character, as the values emerge from the students’ own internal awareness rather than merely from external pressure (Prihantoro, 2025).

A significant outcome of implementing deep learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is the strengthening of Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) capabilities essential for navigating the complex challenges of the disruption era. Through instruction designed to foster deep understanding, students are trained to engage in comparison, analyze historical contexts, and synthesize moral values when addressing contemporary issues such as bullying, the spread of misinformation, and environmental degradation. By involving students in continuous value-based reflection, educational institutions ranging from primary to secondary levels produce graduates who not only possess textual knowledge of religious tenets but also demonstrate ethical sensitivity and moral responsibility in their actions. These findings underscore that deep learning-based PAI positions religion as a dynamic, transformative force in social life, rather than merely a formal, administrative subject (Khotimah & Abdan, 2025).

The enduring impact of integrating deep learning into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is reflected in the development of an emancipatory form of religious literacy. Students accustomed to reflective and analytical thinking demonstrate greater resilience against superficial or extremist religious interpretations particularly those disseminated via digital media. Their capacity to clarify and validate values (tashih al-qiyam) evolves alongside a mindset oriented toward seeking the substance of meaning rather than mere textual acceptance. Within this framework, PAI transforms from a subject based on rote memorization into a space for intellectual-spiritual dialogue that resonates with the identity struggles of modern adolescents. Deep learning serves as a conceptual bridge between normative revelatory teachings and social reality, thereby fostering a student profile that harmonizes ritual observance with social sensitivity and tangible contributions to community life (Julianah et al., 2025).

The massive advancement of digital technology has fundamentally shifted the educational paradigm, compelling Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to reconstruct its pedagogical approaches to align with the characteristics of the digital generation. The utilization of Artificial Intelligence specifically within a deep learning framework offers opportunities for more adaptive, personalized learning, allowing Islamic educational content to be tailored to the individual learner's pace and cognitive tendencies. AI-driven systems provide students with greater scope to independently explore complex theological concepts. However, technology should not be viewed merely as a tool for instructional efficiency; rather, its implementation requires ethical oversight to ensure the spiritual dimension is not lost. A critical challenge lies in ensuring that artificial intelligence serves as a means to cultivate wisdom (hikmah), rather than functioning merely as a mechanistic engine for information accumulation (Apriliyana, 2025).

Amidst the unstoppable flow of digital information, character education serves as a strategic element in maintaining students' moral orientation. The era of disruption introduces new ethical complexities, such as the relativism of truth and the erosion of empathy in virtual interactions. Consequently, contemporary learning approaches must integrate technological sophistication with the internalization of moral values. In deep learning practices, AI can be utilized to spark ethical reflection through case studies

involving moral dilemmas such as applying the value of honesty within digital algorithms or embodying Islamic etiquette in media interactions. This approach ensures that students not only possess technological competence but also develop into moral agents capable of navigating cyberspace with a solid spiritual foundation (Hasanah et al., 2025).

The process of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) teachers adapting to deep learning reflects a significant paradigm shift moving from an administrative role to that of a designer of reflective learning experiences. The initial implementation phase is often marked by conceptual confusion, stemming largely from the misconception that deep learning is synonymous with the use of advanced technology or complex subject matter. This situation indicates a gap between curriculum policy and pedagogical understanding at the practical level. Through the Guru Penggerak (Driving Teacher) program, this transformation is facilitated via teacher collaboration rather than hierarchical instruction. In this process, educators come to realize that the essence of deep learning lies in the ability to craft meaningful questions that stimulate students' curiosity and critical thinking, rather than in the sophistication of the instructional media employed (Khofifah et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, empirical studies reveal varying findings regarding the effectiveness of deep learning in enhancing the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) instruction. Some research indicates that the adoption of this approach has been uneven across educational institutions, influenced by factors such as teachers' professional readiness, limited supporting resources, and the consistency of curriculum policies. Other findings suggest that without strengthened pedagogical competence and adequate infrastructure support, the implementation of deep learning tends to remain at a conceptual level, failing to translate into sustainable instructional practices that significantly impact students' character development (Qolbiyah, 2022).

Overall, the results of this study affirm that deep learning can no longer be viewed merely as an optional approach; rather, it constitutes a conceptual prerequisite for the reform of contemporary Islamic Religious Education curricula. The research findings provide a robust scientific basis demonstrating that the quality of value internalization

depends heavily on the depth of the thinking processes experienced by learners. The study's primary contribution to the field of educational scholarship lies in its ability to elucidate the functional link between high-level cognitive activity and the formation of enduring moral character. This paradigm shift moving from rote-memorization-based learning toward reflective understanding reorients Islamic Religious Education away from the verbal transmission of doctrine and toward a process of cultivating values that resonate within the students' own consciousness. These findings reinforce the empirical argument that the success of religious education should be measured by a learner's ability to employ Islamic values as an interpretive framework for understanding increasingly complex social realities, rather than solely by academic performance in written assessments.

Another significant implication is the strengthening of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as a field of study responsive to the educational challenges of the 21st century. Within the landscape of educational science and technology, this research presents a conceptual model for integrating pedagogy and technology to foster advanced, meaningful learning. Through a "deep learning" approach, the critical thinking skills cultivated in religious education can be transferred across contexts, serving as an intellectual asset for navigating various forms of disruption such as the prevalence of digital misinformation and the identity crises facing the younger generation. Thus, this study positions PAI as a strategic element of the national education system, playing a pivotal role in shaping individuals who are intellectually competitive yet grounded in a robust ethical orientation, thereby enabling them to respond to technological advancements with wisdom and responsibility.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that implementing an Islamic Religious Education curriculum grounded in „deep learning“ is a key element in fostering learning characterized by depth of meaning. Significant findings indicate that the deeper the thinking process experienced by students, the stronger the resulting internalization of Islamic values. With this approach, religious education is no longer confined to the mastery of normative concepts; instead, it shifts toward cultivating an ethical

consciousness that develops through continuous reflection and meaningful learning experiences. Consequently, Islamic Religious Education undergoes a shift in orientation moving from the mere transmission of teachings to the fostering of values integrated into the students' mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors.

Integrating deep learning principles into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum underscores the subject's capacity to foster higher-order thinking skills while simultaneously strengthening religious character. Islamic values are not treated merely as normative texts but are utilized as a conceptual lens for understanding and responding to the complexities of social issues. Consequently, the success of PAI is measured not solely by formal academic achievements, but by the students' ability to internalize religious values as a foundation for ethical considerations in decision-making and social interactions.

Furthermore, the findings of this study reinforce the position of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as a field of study that is both relevant and adaptive to the educational challenges of the 21st century. A curriculum oriented towards deep learning facilitates the transfer of learning across contexts; the critical and reflective thinking skills cultivated through religious instruction serve as intellectual assets for navigating the dynamics of the digital era, including issues such as information disruption and the search for personal identity. Thus, PAI not only contributes to the cultivation of personal piety but also plays a strategic role in preparing a generation characterized by intellectual excellence, spiritual resilience, and wisdom in responding to advancements in science and technology.

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