

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEEP LEARNING APPROACH IN ENHANCING THE UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS VALUES IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (PAI) SUBJECT AT SMPN 1 PLUMBON CIREBON REGENCY

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Abstract. The urgency of this research stems from the phenomenon of the weak internalization of Islamic religious values among students in the digital era, particularly at SMPN 1 Plumbon Cirebon Regency. Students tend to understand religious teachings only at the cognitive level, while the implementation of values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility is not fully reflected in their daily behavior. This condition is exacerbated by a learning pattern that is still teacher-centered and provides little space for students to perform deep reflection. Therefore, a learning model is needed that can encourage meaningful understanding and consistent practice of Islamic values, one of which is through the deep learning approach. The objectives of this study are to determine how the deep learning approach is implemented in PAI learning at SMPN 1 Plumbon, to find out the increase in students' understanding of Islamic values through this approach, and to determine the effect of deep learning on the practice of Islamic values in students' daily lives. The research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Data were analyzed through the stages of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the application of deep learning is carried out through reflective learning activities, value projects, contextual discussions, and strengthening students' spiritual experiences. The teacher acts as a value facilitator who encourages students to connect religious concepts with life realities. The implementation of this approach resulted in a significant increase in students' conceptual understanding, including the ability to think critically about religious teachings and phenomena. Furthermore, there were positive changes in the practice of Islamic values such as discipline in worship, attitude of responsibility, cooperation, and social care. The conclusion of this study indicates that the deep learning approach is effective in integratively enhancing the understanding and practice of Islamic values. Meaningful, reflective, and contextual learning is able to shape students who not only understand religious values but also internalize and apply them in daily life. This approach is worthy of being an alternative PAI learning model in the modern era.

Keywords: Deep learning; Islamic Religious Education; Understanding of Islamic values; Practice of Islamic values

I. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is marked by a technological and information revolution that fundamentally changes how individuals learn, interact, and give meaning to life. In the context of national education, the demand for graduates who possess critical thinking, creative, collaborative, and communicative skills (4C) is a necessity. Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as a moral and spiritual foundation, holds a crucial role in ensuring that cognitive and technological advances are balanced with spiritual depth and moral fortitude (Sodikin, 2025). Referring to Permendikbud No. 37 of 2018, the goal of PAI is to foster faith, piety, and noble character.

However, in its practical implementation across various educational levels, including at SMPN 1 Plumbon, a

phenomenon of dissonance between students' cognitive understanding and behavioral practice is found (Sugiyanto, 2020). Students are able to answer questions about the pillars of faith and the pillars of Islam, but often fail to practice core values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility in daily life (Taufikurrahman & Setyowati, 2024). PAI learning tends to be stagnant in the pattern of surface learning which only touches the surface of memory (memorization) without encouraging deep reflection

This condition requires radical pedagogical intervention. The deep learning approach, introduced by Michael Fullan and colleagues, offers a framework that focuses on six global competencies: character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. In PAI, deep

learning means facilitating students to: (1) find meaning, (2) apply knowledge to new situations (transfer), and (3) actively participate in the learning process (ownership). This approach is in line with the Qur'anic teachings on tadabbur (contemplation) and tafaquh fi al-din (deepening of religious knowledge) (Japendi, 2024). By adopting deep learning, PAI learning shifts from merely teaching "what" (concept) to teaching "why" and "how" (meaning and application). The ultimate goal is to transform understanding into internalization, and internalization into consistent practice (Siti Rabiatal Aliyah & Nuni Norlianti, 2025).

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because the researcher intends to deeply (holistically and comprehensively) understand the phenomenon of deep learning implementation in the natural context of PAI learning, and to interpret the process of value internalization in students (Putri & Murhayati, 2022). The research results focus on narrative descriptions and deep interpretation, not statistical figures.

Location and Subjects of Research

The research location is SMP Negeri 1 Plumbon Cirebon Regency, which was chosen because it has shown initial initiative in implementing more interactive and reflective learning. The Research Subjects were selected using the purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of informants who best understand and are involved in the phenomenon under study. Subjects include:

1. The PAI subject teacher as the main actor in the deep learning implementation.
2. Several groups of students (grades 7 and 8) who were the object of learning intervention.
3. The school principal or Vice Principal for Curriculum/Student Affairs as informants on policy and general observation.

Type and Source of Data

1. Primary Data: Data obtained directly from the field, including the results of observations of the teaching and learning process (KBM), transcripts of in-depth interviews with subjects, and field notes containing teacher and student reflections (Putri & Murhayati, 2022).
2. Secondary Data: Supporting data, including school documents (PAI Lesson Plans/Teaching Modules (RPP/Modul Ajar PAI), School Operational Curriculum (KOSP)), reports of religious activities, grade lists, and class journals.

Data Collection Techniques

1. Participatory Observation: The researcher was directly involved in several PAI learning sessions to observe in detail the implementation of deep learning (e.g., discussion activities, value reflection, and changes in student attitudes) (Sugiyono, 2023).

2. In-Depth Interview: Conducted structurally and non-structurally with teachers, students, and school officials to explore perceptions, experiences, challenges, and results achieved from the deep learning application.

3. Documentation: Collecting written and visual archives (activity photos, learning videos, RPP, student reflection questionnaires) relevant to the research focus.

Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data analysis was performed interactively and continuously throughout the research process, following the Miles and Huberman model (Sari et al., 2024):

1. Data Reduction: The process of selecting, focusing attention, simplifying, and abstracting raw data from the field to focus on the implementation of deep learning and its impact on Islamic values.
2. Data Presentation: The reduced data is presented in the form of organized narratives, tables, or matrices, making it easier to draw conclusions.

Conclusion Drawing/Verification: The researcher draws initial conclusions and verifies them with the available field data until a credible and tested conclusion is reached.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Deep Learning Approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Learning.

The implementation of the deep learning approach in PAI learning at SMPN 1 Plumbon Cirebon Regency is a strategic response to the challenge of value internalization in the digital era (Sodikin, 2025). This implementation process fundamentally changes the teacher's role from a transferer of knowledge to a facilitator of meaning, focusing on the six global competencies (6 Cs): character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking (Siti Rabiatal Aliyah, Nuni Norlianti, M., 2025).

Learning planning, reflected in the PAI Teaching Module (MA), is no longer oriented towards mere material completion, but towards achieving goals that require students to be able to transfer conceptual religious understanding into the context of real life. Teachers explicitly design activities that encourage students to ask "why" and "how" these values are relevant, moving away from superficial learning methods (surface learning) that rely only on memorization (Japendi, 2024).

The learning process in the classroom is dominated by reflective approaches and contextual discussions. In certain materials, for example, the teacher invites students to analyze social media ethics case studies from the perspective of Islamic teachings, which demands the use of Critical Thinking skills. Observations show that classroom interaction is active and conducive, where the majority of students are seen listening well and not interrupting their friends' speech, an early indication of the growth of effective Collaboration and Communication values (Khotimah & Abdan, 2025).

At the end of each session, students are required to create a personal reflection journal that summarizes the meaning they found and how they plan to apply the learned value in the coming week. This reflective activity is the core of deep learning, which is the effort to connect cognition with

affective experience (Ahmad Munadirin et al., 2023). Furthermore, the implementation of deep learning is strengthened through value project-based activities. Instead of just completing theoretical assignments, students are faced with projects that demand value application. For example, learning about zakat is implemented through a small fundraising project to be distributed, which directly trains social responsibility, care (Character), and Islamic citizenship.

In addition, the school consistently strengthens students' spiritual experiences through the habituation of congregational prayers, tadarus, kultum, and the habit of greeting. Documentation of these activities affirms that this approach does not stop in the classroom but is integrated into the school culture as a whole (Sugiyanto, 2020). Various learning media such as video illustrations of worship and digital whiteboards are also utilized optimally by teachers to help students understand abstract material, in line with recommendations to integrate technology in PAI (Santoso, 2025).

Enhancement of Students' Understanding of Islamic Values

The application of the deep learning approach is proven to result in a significant enhancement of students' understanding of Islamic values. This increase is not only measured in the cognitive dimension (test scores), but more importantly in the dimension of Critical Thinking and Knowledge Transfer Ability. Through reflection questionnaires, the majority of students stated that PAI learning became easier to understand, meaningful, joyful, and full of conscious awareness (mindful learning). This shows that the learning focus has shifted from merely "what to memorize" to "what is the meaning and how to apply it".

This increase in transfer ability is crucial because it reflects students' ability to connect religious concepts (e.g., the concept of ikhlas) with the challenges of daily life (e.g., helping without expecting praise), which was previously a major gap in traditional PAI learning (Taufikurrahman & Setyowati, 2024). This shift is supported by the findings of Hoeruman et al. (2025) who stated that deep learning is very effective in strengthening the value of exemplary conduct in a deeper way than conventional methods. Students, who previously only knew the definition of concepts, are now able to analyze the implications and consequences of that value. For example, after delving into the value of honesty, they are able to identify various forms of dishonesty in the school environment and formulate preventive solutions. This enhancement is concrete evidence of the success of pedagogy centered on the discovery of meaning and active construction of knowledge by students, in line with contemporary education principles that demand graduates be able to think outside the box and solve complex problems (Pasi, 2019).

The largest increase occurred in Knowledge Transfer Ability and Value Critical Thinking. This confirms that the focus of deep learning on meaningful learning successfully bridges the gap between theory and relevance. Students no longer view PAI as a memorization subject but as a life guide that can be applied in every situation (Ahmad Munadirin et al., 2023).

Table 1. Comparison of Student Understanding Before and After Deep Learning Implementation (Quoted from Reflection Questionnaire)

The Influence of the Deep Learning Approach on the Practice of Islamic Values

The influence of the deep learning approach on the practice of Islamic values is evident in the changes in student behavior and Character formation. Based on participatory observation and interviews, there was a consistent increase in three main aspects: discipline in worship and responsibility, social care and empathy, and attitude of respect and self-control.

Discipline in Worship and Responsibility became the most prominent aspect, where concrete actions such as performing shalat (prayer) on time became the primary choice of students in the behavior questionnaire. This increase is due to the teacher's reflective approach which links shalat not only as a ritual obligation but as a manifestation of individual responsibility towards spiritual commitment (Hasanuddin et al., 2025).

In the aspect of Social Care and Empathy, field findings show a higher initiative from students to help their friends without being asked, both in academic contexts (helping explain material) and non-academic contexts (arranging group seating). This attitude shows that the values of empathy and cooperation taught in PAI are no longer theoretical but have been internalized, in line with the principle of Collaboration which is the main focus of deep learning (Siti Rabiatal Aliyah, Nuni Norlianti, M., 2025).

Nevertheless, the aspect of Self-Control and Respect still requires attention. The majority of students have shown a positive attitude and do not underestimate the teacher, and are able to control their emotions when differences of opinion occur in discussions (as stated in the observation results), but there is still a minority of students who require gentle direction from the teacher to refocus, indicating that the process of character formation is a continuous effort that requires consistency in learning intervention (Taufikurrahman & Setyowati, 2024).

Overall, the impact of deep learning strengthens the thesis that learning centered on meaning-making and knowledge transfer is superior in character formation. When students understand why they must be honest (not just what honesty is), the value will be more solid and consistently applied. Thus, deep learning functions as a bridge between the cognitive domain and the psychomotor/affective domain, ensuring that the goal of PAI, which is to form students with noble character, can be achieved holistically.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the description of the implementation and analysis of the results, it can be concluded that the deep learning approach is a highly effective and relevant learning model for integratively enhancing the understanding and practice of Islamic Religious values at SMPN 1 Plumbon

Cirebon Regency. The main pillars of this success lie in: Transformation of the Teacher's Role: The teacher changes from merely an information deliverer to a facilitator of meaning and values (Japendi, 2024). Contextual Learning: Religious knowledge is directly linked to the reality of life and contemporary student issues, triggering Critical Thinking (Siti Rabiatul Aliyah & Nuni Norlianti, 2025). Character Strengthening: The presence of reflective activities and knowledge transfer-based value projects successfully transforms cognitive understanding into real behavior, reflected in the increase in student discipline and responsibility.

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