

Deep Learning Approaches in Islamic Cultural History Learning at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: deep learning approach; islamic cultural history learning; MTsN 2 Deli Serdang</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Statement: The author(s) declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.</p> <p>Copyright © 2026 EDU. All rights reserved.</p>	<p>Purpose analyze the effectiveness of the deep learning approach in Islamic Cultural History (SKI) learning at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang, particularly in enhancing conceptual understanding, critical thinking skills, and students' ability to relate historical materials to daily life.</p> <p>Research Design and Methodology: This research employed a qualitative case study approach involving one SKI teacher, one vice principal, and five ninth-grade students. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with source triangulation</p> <p>Findings and Discussion: Showing the application of a deep learning approach through guiding questions, group discussions, presentations, and reflective activities increases student engagement and a deeper understanding of SKI material. Students are able to restate concepts in their own words, analyze the moral values of Islamic historical figures, and relate them to real-life contexts. However, its effectiveness is not uniform due to differences in motivation, individual character, and learning time limitations. Overall, the deep learning approach is effective in promoting meaningful and reflective SKI learning.</p> <p>Implications: This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits for the development of education.</p>

Introduction

The 21st-century learning paradigm is no longer solely oriented towards cognitive achievement, but also emphasizes the importance of critical thinking processes, understanding meaning, and applying knowledge in real life. Learning using a deep learning approach is considered to be an alternative solution in learning, which has become a central discussion topic at the end of 2024 in Indonesian education.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Kemendikdasmen), Prof. Abdul Mu'ti mentioned that this deep learning approach is not something new; the term has appeared since 1976. The deep learning approach has the potential to improve learning effectiveness, focusing on deep understanding, critical thinking, internalizing meaningful knowledge, and enjoyable learning (Khotimah & Abdan, 2025). This is reinforced by the existence of government regulations through Permendikdasmen Number 13 of 2025 concerning the Strengthening of Education Policy Directions through the Deep Learning Approach (Kemendikbudristek, 2025). This regulation also serves as a foundation for educational institutions to move away from traditional approaches that focus solely on memorization and final assessment. Through a deep learning approach, students are expected not only to master concepts but also to understand the relationships between concepts and apply the values they have learned to their social life, particularly in SKI, which aims to instill moral lessons from Islamic history (Kemendikbudristek, 2025).

The learning of Islamic cultural history in madrasahs is a subject that contains the history of Islam and culture related to events, time, and occurrences connected to Islamic culture. Based on initial observations at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang, the learning of SKI is still dominated by memorization and conventional lecture approaches, where students are more directed to remember historical facts such as names of figures, places, and the chronology of events. In fact, the main goal of SKI learning

is to shape the religious, historical, and moral character of students through a deep understanding of the journey of Islamic civilization (Fitroh, 2025).

Various previous studies on the utilization of deep learning technology have been used to detect student focus and to be used as a tool to predict student academic performance. Research conducted by Ardiansyah and Luthfi (2025) found that deep learning technology has shown great potential in various fields, including education (Ardiansyah & Nugraha, 2025). Meanwhile, Achmad and Castaka (2025) stated that the implementation of deep learning with the YOLOv11 model is able to produce a student behavior detection system that is accurate and operates in real-time in the classroom environment, with the ability to recognize five main activity categories, namely reading, paying attention, turning, writing, and bowing, as well as an average mAP50 above 70% in most behavior classes (Rikza Fauzain & Agus Sugianto, 2025).

This gap then becomes the scientific problem in this research. On one hand, educational regulations clearly direct every teacher to implement a deep learning approach, but on the other hand, practices in the field are still largely shallow and textual. Thus, there is a gap between the normative expectations of national policy and the empirical reality in schools, particularly in the learning of SKI at the madrasah level.

The novelty of this research is analyzing the effectiveness of the deep learning approach in SKI learning at (MTsN 2 Deli Serdang). By integrating 3D simultaneous measurement of deep understanding, critical thinking, contextual relevance along with supporting and inhibiting factors in SKI learning, which has not been discussed in previous research.

This study aims to describe the application of the deep learning approach in SKI learning at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang, analyze its effectiveness in improving deep understanding, critical thinking skills, and the relevance of SKI material to students' daily lives, as well as identify supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation.

Research Design and Methodology

penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus (*case study*) (Nurahma & Hendriani, 2021). This research was conducted at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang, located at Jl. Karya Agung Komplek Pemkab Deli Serdang. The reason for this choice is because SKI learning uses the independent curriculum with a deep learning approach in this madrasa. The data sources in this study were obtained from teachers and students at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang. The data collection techniques in this study were conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2021).

The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and documentation. At the observation stage, this research was conducted from January 10 to March 10. This observation was carried out to directly see the learning activities of SKI using a deep learning approach and how effective it is on students' contextual understanding. Next, the researcher conducted interviews by asking various questions to 7 (seven) informants, namely 1 vice principal, 1 SKI subject teacher, and 5 students. The last data collection technique is documentation related to the research process with the aim of serving as supporting data for the authenticity of the obtained data.

Data analysis in this study uses Miles & Huberman analysis conducted through four stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions obtained from various sources and making a conclusion in the final part of the study (Miles, 1992). Next, the data validity technique used in this study was carried out by using source triangulation, namely checking the data obtained from various sources (Sugiyono, 2021).

Findings and Discussion

A. Learning of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) in Islamic Junior High School

Learning Islamic Cultural History (SKI) in Madrasah Tsanawiyah plays an important role in shaping students' understanding of the development of Islamic civilization as well as the moral values contained within it. According to Darmalinda and Fadriati, an ideal SKI learning process should emphasize a balance between cognitive and affective aspects, so that students not only understand the chronology of history but are also able to emulate the Islamic values behind each event. They emphasize that an innovative and contextual learning approach can help students understand the meaning of history more deeply and in a way that is relevant to present-day life (Darmalinda & Fadriati, 2024).

The purpose of learning the history of Islamic culture in madrasahs is to develop students who have knowledge about Islamic history and culture, to take lessons, values, and meanings contained in history, to instill appreciation and strong willingness to have noble character based on existing stories, and to equip students to shape their personality based on the facts of Islamic history (Anis et al., 2023). SKI not only functions to convey chronological facts, but also encourages

students to take ibrah (moral lessons) from the dynamics of the struggles of Islamic figures as well as the social, political, and cultural developments of the Muslim community (Rasyid, 2018).

In SKI learning, it is important to understand historical values reflectively. This aligns with deep learning, which emphasizes interpretation, reflection, and deep understanding. To make the learning process more meaningful, conscious, and enjoyable (Albina, 2023). PAI learning emphasizes character formation through values. In SKI, the values of Islamic history become the basis for shaping students' attitudes. This aligns with deep learning because it encourages the internalization of values, not just memorization (Arlina et al., 2024).

This finding is supported by the results of interviews with students who stated

"In my personal opinion, sis, the SKI material has opened up a lot of insights about Islamic history that can be understood. And it is easier to remember the material when the teacher uses discussion-based learning. The SKI material has opened my mind and created many questions about things that have not been mentioned in the discussion in the book or by the teacher." (N-S2, March 10, 2026)

According to Mulia (2024), it is explained that SKI learning developed in an integrative manner can foster students' spiritual awareness and Islamic character. This type of learning model strengthens Islamic identity and broadens students' understanding of Islam's contribution to world civilization (Roza et al., 2023). Therefore, an approach that suits the needs of the learning objectives is needed. Mega Azzahra and her team found that the use of a learning model based on visual media, such as Picture and Picture, can create a more engaging learning atmosphere. Through visualization, students can more easily understand historical contexts and relate them to modern situations, making learning more lively and meaningful (Azzahra et al., 2025).

The Qur'an, Surah Az-Zumar, verse 9 emphasizes:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

It means: "Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know?"

According to the Tafsir of Ibn Kathir for QS Az-Zumar verse 9, Allah rhetorically asks the Quraysh polytheists, 'Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know?' This explains the comparison between the pious scholars who know Allah through revelation and reason, and the ignorant disbelievers who only follow their desires and shirk, where only the ulul albab (people of intellect and piety) can take lessons from the difference in their ranks in the sight of Allah (Ibnu Katsir, n.d.)

This verse emphasizes the excellence of those who are knowledgeable and rational. The knowledge referred to is not merely memorization, but knowledge that is understood and internalized. This concept aligns with the deep learning approach, which emphasizes conceptual understanding and critical thinking awareness. This approach plays an important role in shaping the child's thinking structure as a whole, because through the deep thinking process, students learn to link theory with practice and internalize the values of learning in everyday life (Dwijantie, 2025)

In the Qur'an, Surah Yusuf verse 111 which reads:

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولَى الْأَلْبَابِ

It means; 'Indeed, in their stories there are lessons (ibrah) for people of understanding.'

According to the Tafsir of Ibn Kathir for QS Yusuf verse 111, 'Indeed, in their stories there is a lesson (ibrah) for people of understanding,' Allah emphasizes that the story of Prophet Yusuf (AS) and the previous messengers contains profound teachings only for ulil albab (wise and pious people) who are able to derive wisdom from these stories (Ibnu Katsir, n.d.).

Ibn Kathir explains that ulil albab is the plural of 'lubb' (pure intellect), which refers to people who use their intellect to contemplate the signs of Allah's power in the stories of the prophets, how Allah saved the believers and destroyed the disbelievers, so that they gain absolute certainty that the Qur'an is not a creation of humans but divine revelation that confirms previous scriptures, explains everything in detail, and serves as guidance and mercy for the believers (Ibnu Katsir, 1370 H/1950 M).

KKNI-based learning emphasizes competency achievement, critical thinking, and student learning independence. This is relevant to SKI learning because it encourages students not only to understand historical facts but also to internalize values. Based on this, the deep learning approach

is considered capable of being a supporting factor for success because the deep learning approach, focusing on competence and analysis, supports meaningful learning (Neliwati, 2021).

This is in line with the theory explained by Mardianto (2012) in his book entitled Educational Psychology, stating that learning is a systematic effort to cultivate the mental potential of students through cognitive activities oriented towards self-awareness and the meaningfulness of knowledge. This theory is relevant to the deep learning approach, which emphasizes understanding, reflection, and the application of meaning in real-life contexts (Mardianto, 2012). Nafi'ah and Faruq (2025) also show that the deep learning approach creates learning that is more meaningful, enjoyable, and student-centered (Nafi'ah & Faruq, 2025).

It can be concluded that the deep learning approach is considered capable of being an alternative solution in increasing students' motivation to learn in order to achieve educational goals.

B. The Effectiveness of Implementing a Deep Learning Approach in SKI Learning at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang

Deep learning in educational approaches is a deep learning strategy that transforms the traditional paradigm from memorization to rich and applicable conceptual understanding. This approach integrates digital technology, critical reflection, and active collaboration to shape the character of learners who are ready to face the 21st century (Rohmah, 2025). This process aims for students not only to memorize the material, but also to be able to construct meaning from their learning experiences, thereby producing a broader and more sustainable conceptual understanding. (Aliyah et al., 2025).

The application of a deep learning approach in SKI learning is influenced by various interrelated factors, both supporting and inhibiting factors. Therefore, optimal efforts are required from teachers and the school in managing these factors so that learning can take place effectively, deeply, and sustainably.

here are the researchers presenting the findings the effectiveness of implementing deep learning in the form of the table below

Tabel 1 Analysis results

Analysis of the Effectiveness of Deep Learning Implementation	Supporting factors	Inhibiting factor
Teachers are no longer the only source of information	the use of varied and interactive learning media. Media such as PowerPoint and Wordwall have been proven to increase interest and attention	limited learning tim
Student involvement in learning	student involvement during the learning process.	Differences in students' abilities
students are able to relate learning to daily life.	Adequate facilities	
the learning process has led to meaningful learning, Mindful Learning, and Joyful Learning		
Students' critical thinking ability		

Analysis of the Implementation of Deep Learning Approaches in Ski Learning at Mtsn 2 Deli Serdang

The application of a deep learning approach in SKI learning at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang, based on field observations conducted by the researcher, in the learning of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) shows a significant transformation in the learning process. Learning, which was previously more conventional with a dominance of lecture methods, is now beginning to shift towards a more interactive and student-centered learning approach.

a. Teachers are no longer the only source of information

Teachers are no longer the sole source of information, but rather act as facilitators who guide students to be active in the learning process. This is evident from the use of learning media, group discussion methods, question and answer sessions, as well as presentations of students' thoughts. This situation is reinforced by the informants:

Learning does not only use the lecture method, but often also uses learning media such as PowerPoint so that learning is more enjoyable (joyful learning) and also uses the question-and-answer discussion method so that students are active and understand the material deeply (IF-WKM, February 9, 2026).

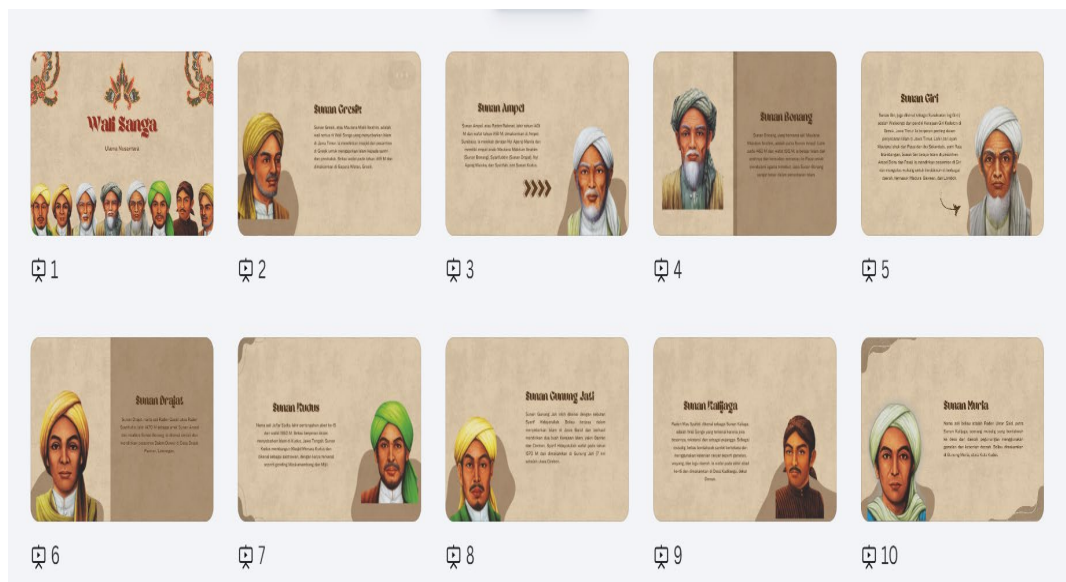
b. Student involvement in learning

The SKI subject teacher also emphasized that learning is designed to encourage active student involvement, with the teacher's role as a facilitator being a key factor in overcoming various obstacles that arise in the learning process. Teachers are required to be able to design adaptive, creative, and innovative learning strategies in order to accommodate differences in students' abilities as well as the existing time limitations. Student involvement in the learning process also shows a significant increase. Students not only listen, but also actively participate in expressing opinions, providing responses, and asking questions about material that has not been understood. This is reinforced by the informant's statement.:

Studying through discussion is easier to understand, because you can ask each other questions and share opinions with friends (IF-S3, March 2, 2025).

c. students are able to relate learning to daily life

From the results of field observations, it shows that students not only memorize the material, but are also invited to understand the meaning of historical events and relate them to daily life. This is seen from the discussions, analysis, and reflections carried out in the learning process.



Picture 1 media deep learning CANVA

The teacher revealed that the learning is designed to connect the material with real-life contexts:

The Wali Songo material is linked to current culture, whether it is still preserved or has already undergone acculturation (IF-G1, February 23, 2026).

Students also expressed their opinions that:

SKI material is easier to understand because if it is understood, it is remembered better, not just memorized (IF-S1, March 2, 2026).

This is also reinforced by students' statements:

The values from Islamic history can be applied in daily life, such as honesty and tolerance (IF-S2, March 10, 2026)

d. meaningful learning, Mindful Learning, and Joyful Learning

Supported by documentation studies, there is evidence of the use of learning media such as PowerPoint and Wordwall, group discussion activities, as well as student presentations that show the learning process takes place actively and variably. Learning documentation also shows activities of reflection and emphasis on values in the material, which reinforce meaningful learning. The learning process takes place actively and variably.

Analytically, the results of this study indicate that the learning process has led to meaningful learning, where students not only receive information passively but also process, understand, and construct knowledge independently. The learning process has led to meaningful learning, Mindful Learning, and Joyful Learning.. Which involves students' full awareness of the learning process with a focus on self-reflection, emotional management, and concentration to enhance creativity and holistic understanding(Hidayah & Hulyana, 2025)

Meaningful learning that connects new lesson material with students' relevant experiences through methods such as project-based learning, thereby building critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and contextual application in real life. Joyful learning that creates a fun learning atmosphere through gamification activities, art, or interactive collaboration to motivate active participation, emotional retention, and reduction of boredom, where these three aspects support each other to achieve optimal and transformational learning outcomes

e. Students' critical thinking ability

Based on the results of the observation, students not only understand the material, but are also able to analyze, evaluate, and relate concepts to real-life situations. This can be seen from discussion activities, providing responses, as well as students' ability to explain the material back with their own understanding. This finding is supported by interview results showing that students become more active in thinking:

Students become more active, dare to ask questions, and start to think critically during discussions (IF-WKM, February 9, 2026).

In addition, the teacher also reinforced this explanation:

After implementing the deep learning approach, students became more critical and analytical (IF-G1, February 23, 2026).

This is in line with hidayah's (2025) research, the application of a deep learning approach has been proven effective in enhancing higher-order thinking skills, such as critical, creative, and reflective thinking. The deep learning process requires students to analyze and evaluate concepts, not just memorize them(Hidayah & Hulyana, 2025). This application is very suitable in learning that contains values and morals, such as Islamic Cultural History (SKI), because students not only learn about historical facts but also understand the moral and spiritual meaning behind the events. According to Haq (2024), deep learning is the semantic processing of learning materials that encourages reflective critical thinking and contextual application, proven to increase students' HOTS by up to 35% compared to memorization-based surface learning(Haq & Prasetyo, 2025).

The learning process using a deep learning approach not only strengthens memory but also develops higher-order thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and reflective abilities. In this context, the teacher plays a role not as the sole source of information, but as a facilitator who helps students find and construct meaning from the lesson material. In other words, deep learning can cultivate students who are independent, have good character, and possess strong social and spiritual awareness in accordance with the direction of Indonesia's human resource development as outlined by the government (Wibowo et al., 2025). This approach emphasizes students' active involvement in the learning process, thereby encouraging them to think deeply, conduct critical analysis, and connect the material with real-life experiences (Anwar & Sodik, 2025)

Analytically, these findings indicate that learning has reached a higher level of thinking, including indicators of mindful learning, higher order thinking skills, such as the ability to analyze, evaluate, and relate concepts to real situations. This is a main indicator of the effectiveness of the deep learning approach in improving the quality of learning. In addition, students' ability to relate the material to real experiences shows the presence of meaningful learning. The learning process also takes place using learning media such as word walls and PowerPoint, making it easier for students to understand directly through these visual media. This includes indicators of the deep learning approach (joyful learning).

1. Supporting Factors for the Implementation of the Deep Learning Approach in SKI Learning at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang

a. the use of varied and interactive learning media

The main supporting factor in the implementation of a deep learning approach is the use of varied and interactive learning media. Media such as PowerPoint and Wordwall have proven to increase students' interest, attention, and engagement during the learning process. This was stated by the informant:

Media such as PowerPoint and Wordwall help students become more interested and active in learning (IF-G1, February 23, 2026).

Observation results also show that learning motivation, curiosity, and students' courage to express their opinions are important factors in supporting the success of deep learning.

b. student involvement during the learning process.

This is seen from students' involvement in discussions, their ability to ask questions, as well as their participation in group presentations. As also expressed by a student:

Learning through discussion is easier to understand because we can ask each other questions and share opinions (IF-S1, March 2, 2026).

Analytically, students who have high motivation tend to be more active in constructing knowledge, making the learning process more meaningful.

c. Adequate facilities

In addition, adequate school facilities support is also an important factor in supporting the success of learning. Facilities such as comfortable classrooms, technological devices, and access to learning resources allow teachers to implement more innovative and varied teaching strategies. This conducive learning environment indirectly encourages students to be more active and focused in following the learning process. This is reinforced by the deputy head of the madrasa in charge of curriculum who stated that:

According to me, the facilities available in this madrasa are quite supportive in the implementation of learning, especially for deep learning approaches. Comfortable classrooms, the presence of devices like LCDs, and access to technology greatly help teachers in delivering material more variably and innovatively. With such a conducive learning environment, students also become more focused and active in following the lessons (IF-WKM, February 9, 2026).

As also expressed by the SKI teacher:

In terms of facilities, it is actually very helpful in the learning process. With the presence of LCD, PowerPoint, and other media, I can deliver the material more variably. So students not only listen to the explanation, but can also see and more easily understand the material." (IF-G1, February 23, 2026)

In line with the research of Almu'tasim (2025), it also shows that the use of technology-based learning media can increase student engagement and create a more interesting and interactive learning environment. This reinforces the finding that learning media is one of the important factors in supporting the success of deep learning (Meila et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of learning is also evident from the increased confidence of students in expressing their opinions as well as their ability to work together in groups. This shows that the deep learning approach not only impacts the cognitive aspect but also the affective and social aspects of students. Therefore, it can be concluded that the deep learning approach is effective in improving the quality of SKI learning, both in terms of understanding the material, student engagement, and the development of critical thinking skills.

2. Factors Inhibiting the Implementation of Deep Learning Approaches in SKI Learning at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang

A number of SKI teachers still face challenges in creating interactive learning. This is in line with Rasyid's findings, which highlight that many classes at the MTs level are still dominated by one-way lecture methods. The lack of strategy variation results in low student participation and difficulties in internalizing Islamic history values. Therefore, teachers need to apply a more dialogical and participatory approach to engage students actively in the learning process, namely the deep learning approach. (Rasyid, 2018). This condition is also reinforced by the results of a study by (Wibowo et al., 2025) which stated that most teachers still have difficulty shifting the learning paradigm from memorization to meaningful learning due to limited understanding of concepts, supporting facilities, and time

a. Time limitation

Based on the research findings, several inhibiting factors in the implementation of the deep learning approach were also found. One of the main obstacles is the limited learning time. The time available in the learning process is often insufficient to discuss the material in depth, so teachers must adjust their teaching strategies to these conditions. As stated by the ski teacher who was interviewed:

The main obstacle is limited time, so not all materials can be discussed in depth (IF-G1, February 23, 2026).

b. Differences in students' abilities

In addition, differences in students' abilities also become a challenge in the implementation of this approach. In one class, there are students with varying levels of understanding, so the teacher must give more attention so that all students can follow the lessons well.

Some friends understand quickly, while others need to be explained repeatedly (IF-S3, March 2, 2026).

From the observation results as well, one of the hindering factors is the difficulty students have in understanding the learning material, especially when the material presented is quite extensive and requires deep understanding. Furthermore, differences in abilities among students in one class also become a separate challenge, because not all students have the same level of understanding of the material given.

Thus, the learning of Islamic cultural history (SKI) is not only oriented towards the delivery of historical facts, but also emphasizes the process of interpreting the values contained in those historical events. SKI learning aims to foster historical awareness, strengthen Islamic identity, and shape students' character through drawing lessons from the journey of Islamic civilization. Therefore, SKI learning must be conducted in a contextual, reflective, and meaningful manner, so that students not only know history, but are also able to internalize moral, spiritual, and social values in daily life.

Analytically, the conclusion of this finding indicates that the success of deep learning implementation is not only determined by the learning methods used, but also by the students' readiness, the media used, the learning environment conditions, as well as the teacher's ability to manage the class.

This research is expected to provide theoretical as well as practical benefits for the development of education. The limitation of this study is that it only examines the application of deep learning in one subject. Recommendations for further research are to examine the utilization of deep learning for educational institutions.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research on the effectiveness of the deep learning approach in learning Islamic Cultural History (SKI) at MTsN 2 Deli Serdang, it shows a fairly significant effectiveness in improving the quality of the learning process and student learning outcomes. This is evident from the increased students' understanding of the material, which is not only memorized but also can be understood deeply, contextually, and meaningfully.

The deep learning approach applied through the principles of joyful learning, meaningful learning, and mindful learning is able to create an active and enjoyable learning atmosphere, as well

as encourage students' emotional and cognitive engagement. Students not only receive information but are also actively involved in the process of thinking, discussing, and reflecting on the values contained in the SKI materials. This shows that learning has moved from merely transferring knowledge to the process of constructing meaning and shaping character. The deep learning approach contributes to character building, awareness of values, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, this approach is worthy of being developed and applied more widely in the learning process, especially in subjects that emphasize values and meaning, such as SKI, even though there are supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the deep learning approach.

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits for educational development, the limitation of this study is that it only examines the application of deep learning in one subject. Recommendations for further research are to examine the utilization of deep learning for educational institutions.

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