

Implementation of deep learning strategy in islamic religious education to internalize islamic values at smk hisba buana semarang

Slamet Panuntun ^{a,1*}, Belina Hendri Saputri ^{b,2}, Moh. Fahsin ^{c,3}, Inas Umniyah ^{4d}, Inayatul Fariyah ^{5e}, Maskur ^{6f}

^{a,b,c,d,e,f} Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Walisembilan Semarang, Jawa Tengah Indonesia

^{*1} panuntunslamet13@gmail.com; ² Belinaputri123@gmail.com; ³ mohammadfahsin@gmail.com;

⁴ Inasumni@gmail.com; ⁵ inayatulfariyah123@gmail.com; ⁶ maskur2106128401@gmail.com.

*Correspondent Author

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Vocational High Schools (SMK) faces challenges in shaping students' character to excel not only in vocational competencies but also in moral and spiritual integrity. The deep learning strategy is considered effective in addressing these challenges as it emphasizes deep conceptual understanding, emotional engagement, and reflective capacity toward Islamic values. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the deep learning strategy in PAI learning and its role in internalizing Islamic values in the daily lives of SMK students. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, conducted at SMK Hisba Buana Semarang, focusing on 11th-grade PAI classes with the topic "Work Ethic in Islam." Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The results indicate that this strategy is implemented through contextual approaches, in-depth discussions, habituation of Islamic values, and personal reflection. This strategy facilitates meaningful internalization of values, particularly related to work ethics, responsibility, and integrity. Its advantages include active student participation, reflective value awareness, and real-life relevance. The challenges encountered involve extended time requirements, high pedagogical demands, and varying levels of students' reflective abilities. Proposed solutions include flexible planning, teacher training, and small group mentoring. Thus, this strategy holds great potential as an innovative approach to PAI learning in vocational schools

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Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the 21st century faces significant challenges in shaping students' character to be not only formally religious but also morally and spiritually grounded in real life. In the context of Vocational High Schools (SMK), this need becomes even more complex, as students must be prepared to enter the workforce, which is dominated by pragmatic and competitive values. Therefore, PAI must go beyond the mere transfer of knowledge and transform into a process of comprehensive value internalization. One instructional approach that addresses this challenge is deep learning, which emphasizes meaningful understanding, critical reflection, and the integration of material with students' life experiences (Brown, 2017). Islamic education plays a vital role in shaping students' character and morality. It has consistently demonstrated

responsiveness to the diverse needs of society. The system of Islamic education has expanded not only in geographical scope but also in methodological approaches to effectively reach all levels of the community." (Aliwan, 2024b). In the Society 5.0 era, where technological and social developments are becoming increasingly complex, Islamic education faces the challenge of remaining both relevant and inclusive. Religious moderation serves as a key to conveying Islamic teachings wisely and accessibly to all groups, including students with special needs. Therefore, the implementation of education should not only aim to introduce the principles of Islamic law but also to internalize values such as tolerance, independence, and social responsibility in accordance with students' individual capacities (Aliwan, 2023)

Globalization in this modern era has not only impacted the industrial and economic sectors but has also gradually influenced the educational landscape (Nashihin et al., 2020). The digital era, often seen as a consequence of globalization, connects individuals and nations across boundaries of time and geography (Aliwan, 2024). Empowerment in education involves mobilizing, organizing, and directing human potential to optimize existing resources in achieving defined objectives (Aliwan & Moh Fahsin, 2025). Improving the quality of education in Indonesia can be achieved by reforming both learning and teaching systems (Maskur & Anwar, 2021; Aliwan et al., 2025). Today, most of Indonesian society and even globally relies heavily on information technology, as it enables faster and more efficient access to information (Hidayati et al., 2020). The deep learning strategy promotes a learning environment where students are active participants rather than passive recipients. Learning goes beyond cognitive mastery and cultivates emotional engagement and intrinsic motivation. Contemporary studies show that deep learning is highly effective for character education as it encourages students to understand, feel, and apply values in context (Hattie, 2012). This strategy is particularly relevant to PAI, serving as a bridge between the normative teachings of Islam and the real-life challenges faced by SMK students in both social and professional settings. For instance, in discussions about the Prophet Muhammad's work ethic, students are not only taught concepts but also invited to evaluate and internalize these values through reflection and value-based projects. In the Society 5.0 era, where technological and social developments are becoming increasingly complex, Islamic education faces the challenge of remaining both relevant and inclusive. Religious moderation serves as a key to conveying Islamic teachings wisely and accessibly to all groups, including students with special needs. Therefore, the implementation of education should not only aim to introduce the principles of Islamic law but also to internalize values such as tolerance, independence, and social responsibility in accordance with students' individual capacities (Aliwan, 2023)

Since the arrival of Islam in Indonesia, traditional educational institutions have played a vital role in the development of religious knowledge and the formation of social character. This role extends beyond scholarly pursuits, contributing significantly to socio-political dynamics, including resistance to modernization and colonialism. In the current context of globalization and technological advancement, the relevance of educational models that integrate Islamic values continues to be tested. Nevertheless, adaptive approaches to changing times indicate that spiritually grounded education systems still hold an essential place in shaping a religious society that is responsive to change (Mohammad Farhan Zeb Khanb, Aliwan, 2024). The vocational education context presents both challenges and opportunities for developing an integrative PAI learning model. According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2010), learning that fosters higher-order thinking—such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating—is key to shaping reflective and independent learners. In this sense, deep learning urges teachers not only to deliver content but also to facilitate reflection, dialogue, and value-based projects. Consequently, values such as honesty, responsibility, and work integrity can be internalized authentically, not merely memorized. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of research that specifically addresses the application of deep learning strategies in PAI at vocational schools. Most existing studies focus on general or primary and secondary education levels. This gap highlights an important research opportunity. This study seeks to fill that gap by focusing on the practical implementation of deep learning in Grade XI PAI classes at SMK Hisba Buana Semarang, particularly on the theme "Work

Ethic in Islam.” This study not only contributes theoretically but also offers a replicable practical model for Islamic education in vocational settings. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research aims to describe reflective and value-based learning practices in context. The findings are expected to enrich the discourse on contemporary Islamic education and provide strategic solutions for character development among vocational students. Aligned with recent studies showing that value-based and critically reflective teaching approaches are more effective in developing students’ moral awareness (Zohar & Barzilai, 2013), deep learning presents itself as an innovative alternative to creating meaningful, relevant, and engaging Islamic Religious Education. “The development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum begins with a comprehensive needs analysis from both academic and professional perspectives. This process involves various stakeholders, including lecturers, students, and education practitioners, to gain a deep understanding of the dynamics and actual needs within Islamic education. The findings from this analysis serve as the foundation for designing a curriculum that produces graduates with comprehensive Islamic understanding, strong character, and competencies aligned with contemporary demands (M. Shalahuddin Al Awwaby, Aliwan, 2025)

PAI is a fundamental pillar in shaping students’ character, especially in the face of globalization and value disruption in modern times. In vocational schools, this challenge becomes even more critical, as students are expected to master vocational skills while developing a holistic personality grounded in strong moral and spiritual values. Surface learning—characterized by rote memorization and task completion—often fails to instill Islamic values in a profound way. Hence, a strategy that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects is required. Deep learning is a promising approach that emphasizes deep conceptual understanding, emotional involvement, and reflective engagement with values (Biggs & Tang, 2011). This strategy also aligns with the Islamic educational concept of *ta’dib*, a holistic process that instills adab (ethics), knowledge, and practice. Transformative learning aims not only for theoretical understanding of Islamic teachings but also for internalization into real behavior. Thus, deep learning can bridge the gap between knowledge acquisition and value-based character development (Al-Attas, 1991). Its application is increasingly relevant for SMK students transitioning into the workforce. PAI content, often normative and idealistic, may not directly resonate with their realities. Therefore, contextual approaches in deep learning help bridge Islamic values with students’ life dynamics. For example, contextual discussions about the Prophet’s work ethic invite students to reflect on responsibility and honesty in industrial work, entrepreneurship, or internships. This reflection is expected to enhance the natural and continuous internalization of Islamic values (Muhaimin, 2005). This research is locally significant as it captures PAI learning practices at SMK Hisba Buana Semarang, a vocational institution facing distinct character education challenges. By focusing on the topic “Work Ethic in Islam,” the study records pedagogical practices and deepens the understanding of how Islamic values can be contextually integrated through deep learning. The findings are expected to inform curriculum development and PAI teacher training in other vocational schools.

Deep learning enables meaningful learning by encouraging students to connect subject matter with personal experiences, engage in critical analysis, and develop holistic understanding. In PAI, this is essential to instill values like responsibility, honesty, Islamic work ethic, and integrity in the everyday lives of SMK students. Therefore, this study is crucial to addressing modern character education challenges with more reflective and contextual approaches (Sukmadinata, 2003). Although character education and value integration in religious education have been widely studied, most of the research focuses on primary and general secondary levels, not on vocational education such as SMK. Moreover, studies specifically analyzing the concrete application of deep learning in PAI—particularly on Islamic work ethic—are still rare. This creates a research gap that must be filled to ensure more equitable and contextual development of instructional strategies suited to the unique needs of each educational setting (Suyadi, 2013).

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on implementing deep learning in PAI for SMK students using a descriptive qualitative approach in Grade XI, particularly in the topic of Islamic Work Ethic. This approach offers a new perspective that connects Islamic value education with

workforce readiness and the daily realities of vocational students. It also provides a replicable model of reflective, value-based learning in vocational Islamic education. Thus, the study contributes not only theoretically but also offers practical and strategic solutions for enhancing the quality and relevance of PAI in the modern era.

Theoretical Framework

1. The Concept of Deep Learning Strategy in Education

The deep learning strategy in education emphasizes a learning process that is reflective, meaningful, and profound. According to Biggs and Tang (2011), deep learning encourages students to connect the learning material with their personal experiences, engage in critical thinking, and interpret meaning in a contextualized manner. This contrasts with surface learning, which focuses solely on memorization and the completion of academic tasks (Biggs & Tang, 2011, p. 22). Marton and Saljo (2016) identify deep learning as an effective strategy for fostering long-term conceptual understanding because students are not passive recipients of information; instead, they actively structure their knowledge (Marton & Saljo, 2016, p. 45). Anderson (2014) adds that the process of deep learning aligns with cognitive psychological theory, where students construct new knowledge based on existing cognitive schemas, thereby facilitating the transfer and application of values in real-life contexts (Anderson, 2014, p. 189). Brown (2017) also emphasizes that teachers must create a learning environment that stimulates exploration and empathy, as deep understanding requires emotional involvement and personal interaction (Brown, 2017, p. 127).

Deep learning is a pedagogical approach oriented toward profound comprehension rather than mere memorization or task completion. In this approach, learners are encouraged to relate the subject matter to their own experiences, develop critical thinking skills, and grasp the meaning of learning in context. Entwistle and Peterson (2011) argue that deep learning involves high learning intention, a focus on meaningful understanding, and the use of evidence and argumentation in forming new insights (Entwistle & Peterson, 2011, p. 4). This approach stresses active student engagement in constructing knowledge. Students are not merely receivers of information but become active agents who process, analyze, and reflect on that information. This strategy also enables learners to solve real-life problems, resulting in transformative learning experiences. Ramsden (2013) states that deep learning is triggered by students' curiosity and affective engagement with the subject matter, making the learning process meaningful not only cognitively but also emotionally (Ramsden, 2013, p. 92).

One hallmark of deep learning is the role of self-reflection as a vital part of the learning process. This reflection encourages students to evaluate their understanding, question prior assumptions, and form a more holistic and contextual understanding. In a study conducted by Fung and Gordon (2016), reflection serves as a bridge between learning experiences and the development of values and attitudes, making it highly relevant for value-based learning such as Islamic Religious Education (Fung & Gordon, 2016, p. 87). In vocational school settings such as SMK, deep learning offers significant advantages because it supports contextual, personal, and future-oriented learning. Modern educational technologies can further enhance this approach. According to Luckin et al. (2012), the integration of deep learning with technology can create adaptive and learner-centered experiences. This is crucial, as SMK students have diverse characteristics and learning needs (Luckin et al., 2012, p. 16).

Therefore, the application of deep learning strategies within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is highly relevant. This strategy touches on all three domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. When students are invited not only to understand Islamic teachings but also to reflect on and apply them in real life, the internalization of values occurs naturally and profoundly. Such learning produces individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also possess noble character and integrity (Bliuc et al., 2011, p. 380).

2. Islamic Religious Education and the Internalization of Islamic Values

The primary goal of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is not only cognitive development but also the formation of Islamic character through the internalization of religious values.

Muhaimin (2005) states that internalization is a process of connecting values, thoughts, and actions to create a holistic and religious personality (Muhaimin, 2005: p.84). The concept of value internalization in Islamic education is closely related to the *ta'dib* approach developed by Al-Attas (1991). According to him, education should form a civilized human being by integrating knowledge, values, and actions into a unified process (Al-Attas, 1991: p.35). Sukmadinata (2003) adds that value internalization requires a strong psychological foundation so that students can deeply comprehend the meaning of each value taught and use it as a guide for life (Sukmadinata, 2003: p.142).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping students' character and morals. Its primary goal is not merely to transmit religious knowledge but to form Muslim individuals who are able to internalize Islamic values in daily life. In the context of modern education, internalizing Islamic values should not be limited to the cognitive domain but must also touch the affective and psychomotor domains. Tilaar (2012) notes that effective religious education is one that cultivates ethical awareness in students and uses religious values as a foundation for thinking and acting (Tilaar, 2012: p.108).

Value internalization is a complex psychopedagogical process involving acceptance, understanding, appreciation, and realization of values through real actions. Zuchdi (2011) emphasizes that values should not merely be studied as theory, but experienced, appreciated, and practiced through meaningful learning activities (Zuchdi, 2011: p.63). In this regard, PAI teachers play a key role in guiding students to perceive Islamic values not merely as dogma, but as life principles. The value internalization process in PAI is also closely linked to holistic and humanistic educational approaches. According to Hamka (2013), Islamic education should stimulate the intellect, heart, and actions of students in a balanced manner, as Islamic values essentially represent the integration of knowledge and deeds (Hamka, 2013: p.145). In practice, a holistic approach in PAI can be implemented by integrating understanding of Islamic texts with students' social and cultural contexts. This approach also encourages students to respond to values consciously rather than through formalistic compliance.

In practice, the success of value internalization is highly determined by the learning environment and the pedagogical strategies used. Value education becomes more effective in a supportive, dialogical, and contextual atmosphere. Darmawan (2014) asserts that narrative, reflective, and experience-based learning is more effective in fostering deep value understanding than one-way lecturing (Darmawan, 2014: p.91). This highlights the need for PAI teaching strategies to accommodate active learning methods, including group discussions, case studies, and value-based projects. Furthermore, the importance of value internalization in PAI is reaffirmed by Al-Ghazali, who argues that education should mold individuals who know and serve Allah, and who make values the foundation of every activity. In a contemporary context, this aligns with Wahyudin's (2020) view that Islamic values must not only be taught in classrooms but internalized through habituation, teacher role-modeling, and emotionally engaging learning experiences (Wahyudin, 2020: p.102). Therefore, in this context, deep learning strategies are highly effective in bridging Islamic theory with students' real-life experiences in a reflective and applicative manner.

3. The Relevance of Deep Learning Strategies in Islamic Education in Vocational Schools (SMK)

The context of Vocational High Schools (SMK) requires an instructional approach that not only conveys normative knowledge but also fosters values that are applicable to the workforce. Suyadi (2013) argues that character education strategies in vocational settings must be contextual, reflective, and promote hands-on practice (Suyadi, 2013: p.109). In the journal *"Implementation of PAI Learning with the Active Deep Learning Approach,"* this strategy was shown to enhance student participation and strengthen the integration between PAI materials and students' realities (Azis, Abd, Subar Junanto, 2025). Meanwhile, the Deep Dialogue model in PAI instruction has proven effective in cultivating critical thinking skills and deep Islamic value awareness (Ali, Muhamad, 2024). A recent study titled *"Integration of Deep Learning Technology in PAI Learning within the Independent Curriculum"* reveals that combining deep learning

strategies with digital technology enables more contextual and responsive Islamic learning (Hidayat Edi Santoso, 2025).

The deep learning strategy is rooted in the constructivist approach, which emphasizes that knowledge is built through experience and active student involvement. Biggs and Tang state that effective learning occurs when students connect new concepts with their existing knowledge structure, thus producing more meaningful and lasting understanding (Biggs & Tang, 2011: p.22). This aligns with the goal of religious education, which seeks not only to transmit information but also to instill internal value awareness. In this context, deep learning enables students to delve into the meanings of Islamic teachings and reflect them in real-life behavior. Furthermore, deep learning aligns well with educational psychology principles. Sukmadinata emphasizes that education involving affective and psychomotor domains requires learning strategies that stimulate emotional engagement and intrinsic motivation (Sukmadinata, 2003). When students only engage in surface learning, the knowledge gained tends to be easily forgotten. In contrast, deep learning encourages students to relate lessons to their life context, including the internalization of religious values like honesty and responsibility in daily life.

From the perspective of classical Islamic education, Al-Attas stated that education is a process of *ta'dib*, the cultivation of adab, knowledge, and deeds in an integrated manner (Al-Attas, 1991: p.35). This concept aligns with the characteristics of deep learning that aim at self-transformation, not merely academic achievement. Thus, the implementation of deep learning in PAI instruction serves as an effective tool to realize the true objectives of Islamic education, namely the formation of morally upright individuals. By emphasizing understanding and spiritual experience, students are better able to internalize Islamic values into their behavior, beyond the cognitive domain. Muhaimin also explains that internalization of values in Islamic education cannot be achieved through one-way lectures or purely cognitive approaches but must involve active student participation in dialogue, reflection, and direct practice (Muhaimin, 2005: p.84). Deep learning strategies facilitate this systematically, as students are not only given materials but also involved in contextual analysis and value-based discussions.

This is particularly important in SMK settings, where students must be prepared for real-world social environments and workplaces that demand strong character and integrity. Recent studies have shown that implementing deep learning in PAI instruction positively contributes to students' character development and critical thinking skills. In the journal *"Analysis of the Deep Dialogue Model in Islamic Religious Education,"* the deep dialogue strategy is proven to enhance students' value awareness and reflective thinking in the digital era (Ali, Muhamad, 2024). Similarly, the study *"Integration of Deep Learning Technology in Islamic Education"* finds that this approach bridges Islamic values and the needs of a tech-savvy millennial generation (Hidayat Edi Santoso, 2025). These findings reinforce the relevance of deep learning as a learning model that is not only responsive to changing times but also firmly rooted in strong spiritual values. The theocentric humanistic educational approach emphasizes that the learning process should not only focus on cognitive skills but also foster spiritual character that places God at the center of all values (Panuntun, 2024).

In the context of PAI in vocational schools, deep learning strategies are highly relevant as they encourage students to connect Islamic teachings with their real-life situations. Learning becomes not only informative but also transformative. Anderson (2014) explains that meaningful learning occurs when students construct understanding based on their experiences, rather than passively receiving information. As such, SMK students can perceive Islamic values such as work ethic and responsibility not as normative concepts, but as applicable principles in the working world they are preparing to enter (J. R. Anderson, 2014). This aligns with character education approaches that require active student engagement in the learning process. Suyadi (2013) notes that character education cannot be merely delivered; it must be internalized through structured, experiential, and progressive processes. Therefore, PAI learning with a deep learning approach is crucial as it provides students space to explore, discuss, and experience the values taught (Suyadi, 2013).

This model also aligns with the philosophical framework of classical Islamic education. Al-Attas (1991) asserts that education is a *ta'dib* process—instilling values, manners, knowledge, and practice in an integrated manner. Education should not only produce intelligent individuals but also those with refined character. Deep learning serves as an instrument to revive the spirit of education that not only fills the mind but also shapes the heart and hands (Al-Attas, 1991). In practice, the deep learning approach emphasizes not only conceptual understanding but also self-reflection. Biggs and Tang (2011) emphasize that deep learning encourages students to re-evaluate their understanding, connect it to previous experiences, and form stronger and more contextual new insights. This reflective process is crucial in PAI instruction as it touches the affective aspect of students, not just the cognitive (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Supporting this from a psychological perspective, Sukmadinata (2003) highlights the importance of understanding students' emotional, social, and cognitive conditions in achieving successful learning. Thus, a deep learning strategy that activates all three domains results in more effective and comprehensive learning (Sukmadinata, 2003). Muhaimin (2005) also supports this by stating that value internalization in Islamic education must take a holistic approach involving direct experiences and student engagement. He emphasizes that value education must affect not only the cognitive domain but also the affective and psychomotor aspects. Hence, deep learning becomes the ideal approach as it facilitates the integration of knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in the PAI educational process (Muhaimin, 2005).

Supporting research also demonstrates the success of this approach. In the journal *"Implementation of PAI Learning with the Active Deep Learning Approach,"* it is shown to enhance active student participation and help them internalize Islamic values through contextual and reflective learning activities (Azis, Abd, Subar Junanto, 2025). Other models such as deep dialogue have also shown effectiveness in developing critical thinking and awareness of Islamic values among students. This reflective dialogue approach encourages students to explore Islamic themes critically and relate them to complex social realities (Ali, Muhamad, 2024). Meanwhile, the integration of technology in deep learning strategies also broadens the possibilities of engaging and contextual Islamic education. Ultimately, all these approaches point to one significant conclusion: that deep learning is not merely a method but a philosophy of education that places students as active subjects in the quest for meaning. In the context of vocational schools, this approach bridges the gap between the idealism of Islamic values and the vocational realities of students. Learning becomes a space for character development, not just curriculum fulfillment (Brown, 2017).

Method

Based on the sample calculation This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of deep learning strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), particularly in the internalization of Islamic values among students at vocational schools. This approach was chosen because it enables researchers to holistically capture meanings and processes within the complex and dynamic social context of learning (Sukmadinata, 2003). The research was conducted at SMK Hisba Buana Semarang, which was purposively selected due to its commitment to strengthening character education based on Islamic values. The study focused on Grade XI students in the PAI class, specifically on the topic "Work Ethic in Islam," involving both the PAI teacher and actively engaged students as research subjects. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques: observation of PAI learning activities to directly witness the application of deep learning strategies such as contextual discussions, value reflection, and habituation of Islamic behavior; in-depth interviews with the teacher and several students to explore their perceptions, understanding, and experiences; and documentation analysis of learning materials, student reflection journals, and relevant learning tasks or projects.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data, which included stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing conducted iteratively to identify meaningful patterns in the implementation of deep learning strategies, including their challenges and impact on the

internalization of Islamic values (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researcher employed triangulation of sources and methods by comparing observations with interviews and documentation, along with member checks with teachers and students to verify the alignment of the findings with their actual experiences (Creswell, 2016). This methodological design is expected to yield a comprehensive description of the effectiveness of deep learning strategies in PAI instruction and their contribution to the development of Islamic character among students in vocational education settings.

In the context of Islamic education, research ethics go beyond merely fulfilling administrative requirements; they encompass the internalization of moral values such as honesty and responsibility toward research participants. Researchers are expected to respect and uphold the dignity of participants, ensuring that the research process is conducted fairly and transparently from data collection to the reporting of results (Aliwan, 2025). Inclusivity in education has been an integral part of Islamic tradition since its inception. Moreover, in understanding Islamic teachings, it is essential for educators to base instructional materials on authentic hadith texts. This aligns with the analysis of hadith authenticity based on *matan* (content), which plays a significant role in the study of the Qur'an and Hadith. The selection of authentic and relevant materials is particularly crucial in the context of teaching children with special needs, who require a simplified and targeted pedagogical approach (Aliwan, 2024a).

Result

This study aims to comprehensively understand the implementation of deep learning strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) to internalize Islamic values among students at SMK Hisba Buana Semarang. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation studies, the following findings were obtained:

1. Implementation of Deep Learning Strategies in PAI Instruction

The deep learning strategy is implemented through an approach that emphasizes not only the transfer of knowledge but also reflective and transformative learning experiences. The PAI teacher actively designs lessons following this scheme. Initial Contextual Stimulation is the first phase, where the teacher begins the lesson with a case study, such as dishonest practices in internships or industry work. This encourages students to think critically about their social realities. One teacher shared: "I start by discussing honesty in the workplace. We link it to the work ethic of Prophet Muhammad, then they are asked to share their opinions. This is where the reflection process begins." (Alif Mahmudah, 2025)

Following this, the strategy incorporates Dialogical and Reflective Learning, where students engage in small group discussions guided by triggering questions. This process creates space for students to express their understanding and feelings toward Islamic values, such as trustworthiness, discipline, and honesty. By doing so, the activity fosters a sense of ownership over the values being learned (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Moreover, the strategy includes Islamic Value-based Project Assignments (Project-based Learning). Students are tasked with creating narrative reflections, videos simulating honest work, and even poetry on Islamic work ethics. These assignments serve as tangible evidence that values are not only understood but also transformed into personal expressions of belief and behavior.

Finally, Affective Assessment through Reflection Journals enables students to document their personal growth. Each week, students reflect on their attitudes or spiritual experiences. One student's journal entry read: "After learning about the Islamic work ethic, I became more disciplined in completing assignments and stopped copying and pasting. I want to be a trustworthy person." (Hilmi Idris, 2025) This reflective process is key to internalizing and applying Islamic values in daily life. The leadership role of a madrasah principal is crucial in encouraging teachers to continuously enhance their professionalism and performance quality. A principal is expected to serve as a role model, motivator, and consistent mentor for teachers. However, the demands of a busy schedule often result in interactions and guidance being limited to formal and structural settings. In fact, as a

supervisor, the principal holds a significant responsibility in fostering a more effective learning environment. Moreover, the increasing number of students each year adds to the workload, including the need for additional classrooms. This situation further emphasizes the essential role of the principal in improving teacher professionalism (Aliwan, 2021)

2. Indicators of Internalization of Islamic Values

Based on the results of observations and data triangulation, the deep learning strategy has successfully internalized Islamic values in students, with several key indicators. **Cognitive:** Students demonstrate a strong conceptual understanding by explaining Islamic values in a logical and contextual manner. They do not merely define concepts such as honesty and responsibility, but are also able to connect them to real-world work situations and their personal lives. **Affective:** The development of moral awareness and a desire for change is evident, as several students mentioned feeling guilty when cheating or being dishonest during their internship. This indicates the formation of moral consciousness within them (Muhaimin, 2005:84). **Psychomotor:** Observable behavioral changes include improved discipline, punctuality in submitting tasks, and increased initiative in carrying out projects. These are clear indicators that values have been internalized into actual behaviors (Sukmadinata, 2003:143).

3. Supporting Factors, Challenges Faced, and Developed Strategies

Several factors support the successful implementation of the deep learning strategy. Teacher competence plays a crucial role, as teachers are able to design reflective learning that touches on the emotional aspects of students. Additionally, a collaborative school environment, where teachers from various subjects align in promoting similar values, enhances the overall learning experience. The close personal relationship between teachers and students also fosters an atmosphere of trust, making students feel comfortable and honest during the learning process.

However, the implementation faces some challenges. Limited time allocation for reflective material often makes it difficult to explore topics deeply. Furthermore, students exhibit varying levels of reflective abilities, with some needing additional guidance to produce meaningful reflections. The limited availability of technology also hinders project-based learning, such as creating video simulations, due to a lack of necessary devices and access.

To overcome these challenges, several strategies have been developed. Integrating values into cross-subject learning ensures that the internalization of values extends beyond the PAI classroom. Self-reflection training for students, through group guidance, helps them better engage with and internalize the learned values. Collaboration with the business and industrial world (DUDI) has also been established, bringing in guest speakers and organizing field studies focused on Islamic work ethics to strengthen the link between theory and practice.

Discussion

This study aims to explore the implementation of deep learning strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and their impact on the internalization of Islamic values among students at SMK. The field findings show that this strategy not only successfully builds conceptual understanding but also touches on the affective and psychomotor aspects of students through contextual and reflective learning. This result aligns with the deep learning theory proposed by Biggs & Tang (2011), which states that meaningful learning occurs when students can link new concepts with personal experiences and interpret them in real-life contexts (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

1. Deep Learning Strategies and the Internalization of Islamic Values

The implementation of this strategy has proven effective in forming a comprehensive understanding of Islamic values because students are not only encouraged to memorize religious concepts but also reflect on them in social contexts, such as work, internships, and their social interactions. This strengthens Muhaimin's (2005)

argument that the internalization of values in Islamic education must involve dialogue, reflection, and habituation, not just one-way lectures (Muhaimin, 2005:84). Furthermore, this approach aligns with the concept of ta'dib proposed by Al-Attas (1991), which emphasizes education as the cultivation of manners, knowledge, and deeds integrally. Deep learning in this context revives the goal of Islamic education, which is not only to transfer knowledge but also to form character (Al-Attas, 1991:35).

2. Relevance of Deep Learning in the SMK Context

A strategic contribution of this research is demonstrating that deep learning strategies are highly relevant to vocational schools (SMK), where students are in the transition phase toward the workforce. The topic "Work Ethic in Islam" becomes highly contextual, as it addresses the realities and challenges students will face. This supports Suyadi's (2013) view that character education in SMKs must be reflective, applicable, and contextual to be more easily transferred to the real world (Suyadi, 2013:109). In practice, the learning that integrates values with projects and reflection extends the learning space beyond the classroom walls. For instance, when students create videos simulating honesty in the workplace, they not only understand the concept theoretically but also experience and creatively express the value personally.

3. Holistic and Multidimensional Approach Challenges and Practical Implications

This study also affirms the importance of a holistic approach in value education. The internalization of values requires more than just cognitive understanding; it also involves emotional engagement (affective) and tangible action (psychomotor). The deep learning strategies developed by the teacher were able to engage all three domains through dialogue, reflection journals, case studies, and habituation. Sukmadinata (2003) asserts that the success of value-based learning is highly dependent on emotional involvement and the students' social conditions (Sukmadinata, 2003:1143). This is further supported by Anderson (2014) in cognitive psychology theory, which states that understanding is more durable when students build their knowledge structure through experience and the cognitive schemas they already possess (Anderson, 2014:189). Although the results of the study show the successful implementation of this strategy, challenges remain, particularly related to limited time allocation, the varying reflective abilities of students, and the pedagogical competencies of teachers. These findings imply that deep learning strategies require institutional support, such as teacher training, the development of contextual curricula, and collaboration across subjects. The small group mentoring model implemented at SMK Hisba Buana Semarang can serve as a best practice to be replicated in other schools. Collaboration among teachers, as well as the development of project-based Islamic value modules combined with reflection, also presents an innovation worth further development.

Conclusion

Based on the research, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Deep learning strategies in PAI education are effective in promoting the internalization of Islamic values meaningfully. This strategy is implemented through a contextual approach, in-depth discussions, habituation of Islamic values, and personal reflection, which has proven to strengthen students' understanding and appreciation of work ethics, responsibility, and integrity.
2. The strength of this strategy lies in the active participation of students and the relevance of learning to real-life situations. The approach applied successfully fosters a reflective awareness of values and makes PAI learning more lively and applicable in students' daily lives, especially in a vocational context.
3. Implementation challenges can be addressed through proper planning and strategic support solutions. Challenges such as limited time allocation, high pedagogical demands,

and varied reflective abilities among students can be overcome through strategic solutions like flexible planning, teacher training, and small group mentoring.

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