

Deep Learning Curriculum Innovation: Realizing Fun and Student-Centered Learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of deep learning curriculum innovations in realizing fun and student-centered learning in grade IV of MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung, Bandar Mataram District, Central Lampung Regency. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The research subjects include grade IV teachers, madrasah heads, and students. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn, with data validity through triangulation. The results of the study show that learning planning has been designed contextually and oriented towards meaningful learning experiences. The implementation of learning is carried out through active, collaborative, and fun strategies that are able to increase student engagement. Learning has also shifted to a student-centered learning approach with teachers as facilitators. Learning evaluation uses authentic assessments that comprehensively assess learning processes and outcomes. The implementation of deep learning curriculum innovations has a positive impact on increasing students' activeness, motivation, confidence, and critical thinking skills. Thus, this curriculum innovation is effective in creating meaningful and relevant learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

Keywords: curriculum innovation, deep learning, fun learning, student-centered learning, madrasah ibtidaiyah

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi inovasi kurikulum deep learning dalam mewujudkan pembelajaran yang menyenangkan dan berpusat pada siswa di kelas IV MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung, Kecamatan Bandar Mataram, Kabupaten Lampung Tengah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Subjek penelitian meliputi guru kelas IV, kepala madrasah, dan siswa. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña, yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, dengan validitas data melalui triangulasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perencanaan pembelajaran telah dirancang secara kontekstual dan berorientasi pada pengalaman belajar bermakna. Implementasi pembelajaran dilakukan melalui strategi aktif, kolaboratif, dan menyenangkan yang mampu meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa. Pembelajaran juga telah beralih ke pendekatan student-centered

learning dengan guru sebagai fasilitator. Evaluasi pembelajaran menggunakan penilaian autentik yang menilai proses dan hasil belajar secara komprehensif. Penerapan inovasi kurikulum deep learning memberikan dampak positif terhadap peningkatan keaktifan, motivasi, kepercayaan diri, inovasi kurikulum, deep learning, pembelajaran menyenangkan, student-centered learning, madrasah ibtidaiyah dan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa. Dengan demikian, inovasi kurikulum ini efektif dalam menciptakan pembelajaran yang bermakna dan relevan di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

Kata Kunci: *inovasi kurikulum, deep learning, pembelajaran menyenangkan, student-centered learning, madrasah ibtidaiyah*

INTRODUCTION

Primary education, especially in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), is currently facing a major challenge in delivering learning that is not only oriented towards cognitive achievement, but also able to create a meaningful and enjoyable learning experience for students (Mustgfiroh et al., 2025). In practice, classroom learning is still often dominated by conventional teacher-centered methods, so students lack room to actively explore (González-Salamanca dkk., 2020). This condition has an impact on low student involvement in the learning process and less optimal development of higher order thinking skills (Fahrudin dkk., 2025; Ng dkk., 2021). This phenomenon is in line with the findings Hattie, (2023) in Visible Learning, which states that the active involvement of students is a major factor in improving learning outcomes.

Along with the development of the 21st century educational paradigm, the deep learning approach is beginning to gain attention as an alternative to curriculum innovation that is able to integrate conceptual understanding, critical thinking skills, and meaningful learning experiences (S. Hidayat, 2026; Muzaini & Khabib, 2026). According to Huda et al., (2025) In the study of global education, deep learning emphasizes the mastery of essential competencies such as creativity, collaboration, communication, and character. This approach is believed to be able to answer the needs of modern learning that requires students not only to understand the material, but also to be able to apply it in real life.

In the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, the implementation of deep learning-based curriculum innovation still faces various challenges, such as limited resources, teacher readiness, and a learning culture that has not fully supported active learning (Huda et al., 2025). However, there are some MIs that are starting to show significant progress in adopting innovative curricula (F. N. Hidayat & Munir, 2026; Zhang dkk., 2025), one of which is MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung in Bandar Mataram District, Central Lampung Regency. This madrasah shows progress in curriculum management and improvement in the quality of facilities and infrastructure, so it becomes interesting to study further.

Class IV at MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung was chosen as the focus of the research because at this level students begin to enter the stage of concrete operational cognitive development towards formal (Piaget), which allows them to understand concepts more deeply. In addition, grade IV teachers in this madrasah are considered to have quite good competence in implementing the latest curriculum, so that it becomes a relevant context to examine how deep learning curriculum innovation can be realized in fun and student-centered learning practices.

A number of studies have examined the concept of deep learning in the context of modern education. Research results by Li et al., (2023) shows that the application of deep learning is able to increase student engagement and produce more meaningful learning through the integration of global competencies. This study confirms that learning oriented

towards deep understanding can encourage students to become active and independent learners.

Other research by Mirghani dkk., (2022) In the framework of Constructive Alignment, it emphasizes that deep learning can be achieved through alignment between learning objectives, learning activities, and assessment. In this context, teachers have an important role to play in designing learning experiences that allow students to actively construct knowledge. These findings are supported by a study Chosya & Takiddin, (2025) which shows that a student-oriented approach to teaching significantly improves the quality of learning.

In addition, research by Akhsan et al., (2020) In its meta-analysis, it is shown that learning strategies that actively involve students have a high effect on improving learning outcomes. The research underscores the importance of the role of teachers as facilitators who are able to create a conducive and enjoyable learning environment. In the context of basic education, this approach has become very relevant to support students' cognitive and affective development in a balanced manner.

Although various studies have examined deep learning, most studies still focus on the context of secondary and higher education, and not many have specifically examined its implementation in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. In fact, the characteristics of MI students who are in the early stages of development require a different and more contextual learning approach. This shows that there is a research gap in the application of deep learning at the level of religious-based basic education.

In addition, previous research has tended to focus on the theoretical and conceptual aspects of deep learning, while empirical studies that examine real implementation in the classroom are still limited. According to Jin et al., (2021), curriculum innovation often faces gaps between concepts and practice in the field, especially in terms of teacher readiness and learning environment support. Therefore, research is needed that is able to concretely describe how deep learning curriculum innovations are applied in a real context.

On the other hand, there has not been much research that integrates the concept of deep learning with the principles of joyful learning and student-centered in one complete study framework. In fact, these three aspects are interrelated and are key to creating effective learning in elementary schools. Thus, this research is here to fill this gap by examining in depth the implementation of deep learning curriculum innovations at MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung.

This study aims to analyze and describe the implementation of deep learning curriculum innovations in realizing fun and student-centered learning in grade IV of MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung. In particular, this study focuses on how teachers design, implement, and evaluate deep learning-based learning in the context of madrasahs.

The contribution of this research is expected to provide benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of deep learning curriculum innovation in the context of Islamic basic education. Practically, the results of this research can be a reference for teachers and madrasah managers in developing more innovative, fun, and student-centered learning strategies, so as to be able to improve the quality of education at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

METHODS

Research Approach and Type

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of case study research (Muzaini, 2026a), which aims to deeply understand the implementation of deep learning curriculum innovation in learning in grade IV of MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung, Bandar Mataram District, Central Lampung Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen because it was able to explore phenomena contextually and naturalistically according to field conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Case studies are used to intensively explore a system, activity, or event in a particular context (Yin, 2018).

Subjects and Informants

The research subjects include grade IV teachers, madrasah heads, and grade IV students as the main informants. The sampling technique uses purposive sampling, which is the selection of subjects based on certain considerations such as the teacher's competence in implementing the curriculum and student involvement in learning (Scott, 2020). This approach is also in line with research by Creswell, (2018) which emphasizes that the selection of informants in qualitative studies is based on the relevance and depth of information that can be provided.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques in this study include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation to obtain comprehensive data (Muzaini, 2026b). Observations were carried out to directly observe the deep learning-based learning process, while interviews were used to explore the perspectives of teachers and students regarding meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences. Documentation is used as supporting data in the form of learning tools, photos of activities, and school archives. Data analysis was carried out using an interactive model Miles dkk., (2014) which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions repeatedly until the validity of the data is achieved. To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses source and method triangulation techniques.

Data Validity Techniques

This is reinforced by the findings Grove & Gray, (2022) in qualitative studies that state that triangulation is an important strategy to increase the credibility of research results, and is supported by researchers Nowell dkk., (2017) which confirms that systematic thematic analysis can lead to more accurate and reliable interpretation of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Deep Learning Curriculum Planning in Learning

Deep learning-based learning planning in grade IV of MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung shows a transformation from conventional planning to a learning design that is more oriented towards students' deep understanding. Teachers not only compile lesson plans as administrative documents, but also design learning experiences that integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. This is in line with the concept of deep learning which emphasizes the integration of knowledge and meaningful learning experiences (Budhiarti et al., 2025).

Based on the results of the interview, the fourth grade teacher stated: "We focus not only on the material, but on how students can understand and relate the lessons to everyday life."

This statement suggests that learning planning has led to a contextual approach that is a hallmark of deep learning. This approach is also supported by Zhang dkk., (2025) in the concept of constructive alignment.

The results of the observation showed that teachers developed learning tools by incorporating exploratory activities such as group discussions, simple projects, and learning reflections. This activity allows students to be active in building their own knowledge. These findings are in line with research by M. Li, (2025) which emphasizes the importance of student-centered learning design.

In addition, the head of the madrasah also provides support in the form of academic supervision and teacher training related to the latest curriculum. In an interview, the head of the madrasah stated: *"We continue to encourage teachers to innovate so that learning is not monotonous."* This institutional support is an important factor in the successful implementation of innovative curriculum.

Thus, the planning of the deep learning curriculum at MI has shown alignment between learning objectives, processes, and evaluations. This is in line with the findings O'Bannon & Judge, (2021) which states that the success of curriculum innovation is highly dependent on the quality of planning and teacher readiness.

Fun Deep Learning Implementation

The implementation of deep learning learning in grade IV of MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung shows a significant change in learning practices that are more fun and interactive. Teachers apply various active learning strategies such as project-based learning, group discussions, and educational games to increase student engagement.

Based on observations, students seem enthusiastic about participating in learning. They actively ask questions, discuss, and express opinions. One of the students stated in an interview: *"Learning now is more exciting because we can discuss and play while learning."* This shows that learning has created a fun atmosphere.

These findings are in line with research Fatmasari, (2026) which states that the active involvement of students has a great influence on learning success. In addition, a study by Muzaini et al., (2024) It also shows that students' emotional engagement contributes to improved learning outcomes.

Teachers also integrate a variety of learning media, such as pictures, videos, and simple props. This aims to help students understand concepts in a more concrete way. In the interview, the teacher stated: *"We try to use the media so that students don't get bored and understand the material more easily."*

Thus, the implementation of deep learning in grade IV not only improves student understanding, but also creates a pleasant learning atmosphere. This supports the theory that fun learning can improve students' motivation and learning outcomes Zuo & Wang, (2021).

Student-Centered Learning

Deep learning-based learning at MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung shows a paradigm shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. Teachers play the role of facilitators who provide space for students to be active in the learning process.

The results of the interviews show that teachers give students the freedom to explore ideas and express opinions. The teacher stated: *"We give students the opportunity to ask questions*

and express their opinions so that they are more confident." This shows a change in the role of teachers in learning.

Observations in the classroom show that students work in groups to complete project assignments. They discuss and share ideas. This activity reflects the principle of collaboration in deep learning. These findings are in line with research by Muzaini, Prastowo, et al., (2024) which emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning.

In addition, students are also involved in the process of learning reflection. They were asked to convey what they had learned and the difficulties they faced. This helps students develop metacognitive abilities. Research by Adi & Fathoni, (2019) shows that reflection is an important part of self-learning.

Thus, student-centered learning at MI has gone well and has had a positive impact on students' learning activity and independence. This supports the findings OECD, (2019) that student-centered learning is able to improve the overall quality of education.

Evaluation and Impact of Deep Learning

The evaluation of deep learning-based learning at MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung does not only focus on the final results, but also on the learning process. Teachers use various forms of assessment such as project assessment, portfolio, and observation.

In an interview, the teacher stated: *"Assessment is not only from test scores, but also from the activities and development of students during learning."* This shows that the evaluation has led to an authentic assessment.

The results of the observation showed that students were more active and confident in participating in learning. They are able to express opinions and work together in groups. One student stated: *"I have become more courageous in speaking in front of my friends."*

These findings are in line with research Adje et al., (2023) which states that formative assessments can improve the quality of learning. In addition, research by Firdaus et al., (2023) It also shows that authentic assessments are able to measure student competencies more comprehensively.

Overall, the implementation of deep learning has a positive impact on improving learning outcomes, student engagement, and a more enjoyable learning atmosphere. Thus, this curriculum innovation can be a model for other madrassas in improving the quality of learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the innovation of the deep learning curriculum in grade IV of MI Al Mubarak Uman Agung has been successfully realized through structured and contextual learning planning, the implementation of active and fun learning, the application of a student-centered learning approach, and an authentic and process-oriented evaluation system. Teachers act as facilitators who are able to create meaningful learning experiences through exploratory, collaborative, and reflective activities, so that students not only understand the material conceptually but are also able to relate it to daily life. The impact of the implementation of this innovation can be seen in increasing student involvement, activeness, confidence, and critical thinking skills. Thus, the deep learning curriculum has proven to be effective in realizing fun and student-centered learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The implications of this study show that the implementation of the deep learning curriculum can be a strategic alternative in improving the quality of learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, especially in creating meaningful and relevant learning to the needs of the 21st century. Practically, teachers need to continue to improve their competence in designing innovative learning, utilizing varied media, and implementing authentic assessments on an ongoing basis. The madrasah is also expected to provide support through academic supervision, training, and the provision of adequate infrastructure. Theoretically, this research strengthens the importance of integrating deep learning approaches, fun learning, and student-centered learning in one complete curriculum framework, so that it can be a reference for the development of education policies and further research at the basic education level, especially madrasahs.

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