

## **Exploring Students' Needs for Deep Learning-Oriented Islamic Education Materials in Elementary Schools**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines students' needs for Islamic Education materials oriented toward deep learning at SD Negeri 7 Kediri, Tabanan. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, and document analysis of existing learning materials. The findings indicate that the current Islamic Education materials are predominantly textual and emphasize rote memorization rather than meaningful understanding. Such materials provide limited opportunities for students to connect Islamic values with real-life situations. Teachers experience difficulties in contextualizing religious concepts and integrating them into students' daily experiences, while students express a strong preference for learning resources that are more interactive, visual, and practically applicable. These conditions highlight an urgent need to develop innovative Islamic Education materials that foster critical thinking, reflection, and contextual learning. This study contributes to pedagogical innovation by underscoring the importance of student-centered material design in enhancing students' meaningful understanding, internalization, and daily practice of Islamic values in elementary education.

**Keywords:** Students' Needs; Deep Learning; Learning Materials; Islamic Education; Elementary School.

### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini mengkaji kebutuhan peserta didik terhadap bahan ajar Pendidikan Agama Islam yang berorientasi pada pembelajaran mendalam (deep learning) di SD Negeri 7 Kediri, Tabanan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, melalui observasi kelas, wawancara mendalam dengan guru dan peserta didik, serta analisis dokumen bahan ajar yang digunakan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bahan ajar Pendidikan Agama Islam yang ada masih bersifat tekstual dan menekankan hafalan, sehingga belum mendorong pemahaman yang bermakna. Kondisi ini menyebabkan keterbatasan dalam mengaitkan nilai-nilai Islam dengan konteks kehidupan sehari-hari peserta didik. Guru menghadapi kesulitan dalam mengontekstualisasikan materi ajar, sementara peserta didik mengharapkan bahan ajar yang lebih interaktif, visual, dan aplikatif. Temuan ini menegaskan urgensi pengembangan bahan ajar Pendidikan Agama Islam yang mendorong berpikir kritis, reflektif, dan kontekstual. Penelitian ini berkontribusi*

*pada inovasi pedagogis dengan menekankan pentingnya desain bahan ajar yang berpusat pada peserta didik untuk meningkatkan pemahaman dan pengamalan nilai-nilai Islam secara bermakna*

**Kata kunci:** *Kebutuhan Siswa; Deep Learnin;, Bahan Aja;, Pendidikan Agama Islam; Sekolah Dasar.*

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of the 21st century has brought significant changes to the way education is conceptualized and practiced. Schools are no longer viewed merely as institutions that transfer knowledge, but as dynamic environments that cultivate critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and reflective understanding among students (Ningrum et al., 2023). This transformation demands learning approaches that move beyond the traditional emphasis on rote memorization toward methods that engage students in meaningful learning experiences (Adi Nugraha, 2025). This situation highlights a fundamental issue in the implementation of Islamic Education at the elementary level. The goal of Islamic Education, as mandated by the national curriculum, is to develop students who not only understand religious doctrines but also embody Islamic values in their behavior and decision-making (Saleh & Satriawan, 2020).

The ideal outcome of learning is that students can demonstrate a balance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of faith, enabling them to think critically, act ethically, and live harmoniously in a pluralistic society. However, the current learning process at SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan does not fully reflect this vision. Lessons are often dominated by mechanical memorization and teacher explanations, while learning materials remain limited to textual exercises that do not stimulate higher-order thinking or self-reflection. The lack of varied, student-centered, and contextually relevant teaching resources has led to a gap between educational expectations and classroom realities. Students need learning materials that are not only informative but also transformative resources that guide them to explore Islamic concepts deeply, connect them with contemporary social and ethical issues, and construct personal understanding through active engagement.

However, observations and preliminary interviews at SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan reveal that Islamic Education (IRE) still tends to be conducted in a conventional manner. Teachers often rely on teacher-centered instruction, using textbooks as the primary source of learning, while students passively receive information. Learning materials mostly consist of factual content about Islamic rituals, moral obligations, and basic doctrinal teachings without

providing sufficient opportunities for students to analyze, reflect, or relate those concepts to real-life experiences. As a result, students' understanding remains superficial; they may memorize religious verses or moral guidelines but struggle to internalize the underlying values and apply them meaningfully in their daily interactions.

In recent educational discourse, the concept of deep learning has been introduced as a transformative framework that supports meaningful learning experiences. Deep learning refers to an approach that encourages learners to analyze, synthesize, and apply knowledge rather than simply memorizing facts (Rosiyati et al., 2025). It involves the development of critical thinking, creativity, reflection, and problem-solving abilities. When applied in Islamic Education, this approach allows students to explore the spiritual and moral. They are encouraged to question, interpret, and apply these values in the context of their daily lives and community interactions. This form of learning not only strengthens religious understanding but also nurtures character, empathy, and social responsibility attributes that are essential for students living in a diverse and rapidly changing society like Indonesia.

A growing body of literature emphasizes that effective Islamic Education should move beyond traditional knowledge transmission toward fostering deep understanding and spiritual intelligence. Studies by contemporary scholars have explored various ways to integrate deep learning principles in religious and moral education. For example, research by (Arjaya et al., 2025) found that deep learning-oriented materials in Islamic Education significantly improved students' reflective thinking and moral reasoning skills. Similarly, a study by (Muvid, 2024) demonstrated that deep learning strategies encouraged students to connect Islamic teachings with real-world ethical challenges, enhancing their ability to make informed moral judgments. Other studies, such as those by (Saputri, 2023), highlighted that integrating inquiry-based and project-based activities into Islamic Education helped students to internalize values more effectively and to express their understanding creatively. essence of Islam more profoundly, fostering both intellectual and emotional engagement. For instance, instead of merely memorizing the Five Pillars of Islam, students are guided to discuss the meaning and social implications of zakat or fasting in the modern world (Pertiwi & Khuriyah, 2023).

However, despite these promising insights, there remains a scarcity of studies that specifically examine the needs of elementary school students in the context of developing deep learning-oriented Islamic Education materials, particularly in Indonesian public schools like SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan. Most existing research focuses on secondary or higher

education levels, where cognitive and reflective skills are already more developed. Elementary students, on the other hand, are at the formative stage of building their moral and spiritual understanding, making it crucial to design materials that match their developmental characteristics. Moreover, few studies have explored how students themselves perceive their learning needs, interests, and challenges in studying Islamic Education. Understanding these needs from the students' perspective is essential for designing learning materials that are relevant, engaging, and aligned with their real-life contexts. This research, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by exploring the specific needs of elementary students regarding deep learning-oriented Islamic Education materials.

Another important dimension of this research lies in its contextual relevance. SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan represents a typical public elementary school where Islamic Education is taught alongside other subjects in a multicultural environment. The school serves students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, reflecting the broader pluralism of Indonesian society. This diversity offers both opportunities and challenges for Islamic Education. On one hand, it provides a rich environment for interfaith understanding and tolerance; on the other hand, it requires educational strategies that are inclusive, reflective, and value-driven. Deep learning-oriented materials have the potential to meet these demands by promoting empathy, dialogue, and moral reasoning grounded in Islamic ethics. Exploring students' needs within this context can contribute valuable insights for curriculum designers, teachers, and policymakers seeking to strengthen the role of Islamic Education in character formation and social cohesion.

Based on this rationale, the present study aims to explore students' needs for deep learning-oriented Islamic Education materials in elementary schools, focusing on SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan. The study seeks to identify what types of learning experiences students find meaningful, what challenges they face in understanding Islamic concepts, and what kind of materials can support them in engaging deeply with religious values. By doing so, this research intends to provide empirical data that can inform the design of future learning materials aligned with deep learning principles. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance the quality of Islamic Education by shifting from a memorization-based approach toward a more reflective, inquiry-driven, and value-oriented learning process that empowers students to internalize Islamic teachings and apply them in their daily lives. Through this exploration, the study contributes to bridging the gap between educational ideals and classroom realities,

paving the way for more transformative and student-centered approaches in Islamic Education at the elementary level.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, aiming to explore in depth the learning needs of students regarding the development of deep learning-oriented Islamic Education materials at SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to understand phenomena holistically in their natural setting, focusing on meaning, experience, and interpretation rather than numerical measurement (Cresswell, 2016). Through this approach, the researcher seeks to uncover the authentic voices and perspectives of students, teachers, and other stakeholders involved in the learning process of Islamic Education (IRE). The case study design is particularly suitable because it enables an intensive and contextualized examination of a single setting SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan as a bounded system. This design provides an opportunity to analyze the specific characteristics, interactions, and learning environment that shape students' needs and experiences related to deep learning-oriented educational materials. The ultimate goal of this design is not generalization, but rather a deep, contextual understanding that can offer valuable insights for theory development and educational practice.

The research setting is SD Negeri 7 Kediri, a public elementary school located in Tabanan Regency, Bali. The school was selected purposively because it represents a diverse student population, with varying religious, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds, making it a relevant context for studying Islamic Education in a multicultural environment. The school also reflects the typical challenges faced by public elementary schools in Indonesia, where Islamic Education is taught within limited instructional hours and often using standard national textbooks. The selection of this site allows the researcher to explore how students experience Islamic Education learning in a real-world, heterogeneous context and what kind of materials would best support deep and meaningful engagement with religious content.

The participants in this study consist of Islamic Education teachers, students of grades IV to VI, and the school principal. The selection of participants uses purposive sampling, which means participants are chosen based on their relevance and ability to provide rich information about the phenomenon being studied. The Islamic Education teacher is included as a key informant because of their direct involvement in designing and implementing

classroom learning. Students are selected as primary participants since the focus of the research is to explore their needs, experiences, and perceptions regarding Islamic Education materials. A total of 12 students (4 from each grade level) were chosen based on teacher recommendations, representing various academic abilities and participation levels in class. The principal was also involved to provide insights into school policy, curriculum support, and overall implementation of Islamic Education at the institutional level.

Data were collected using three main techniques: observation, interviews, and document analysis.

1. Observation was conducted to directly capture the learning process of Islamic Education in the classroom, focusing on teacher-student interaction, learning materials used, and students' responses during the lesson. This technique helped the researcher understand how current learning practices align with or differ from the principles of deep learning.
2. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers, students, and the principal to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, perceptions, and expectations. The interviews with students explored what kinds of learning materials they found engaging, meaningful, and helpful in understanding Islamic values. Meanwhile, teacher interviews focused on instructional challenges, perceptions of deep learning, and readiness to adopt new materials.
3. Document analysis involved reviewing textbooks, lesson plans, worksheets, and other instructional resources currently used in Islamic Education. This helped identify the strengths and limitations of existing materials, especially in relation to higher-order thinking, contextual learning, and reflective understanding.

All data collection was conducted in the natural setting of the school to preserve authenticity and avoid external influence.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher applied several strategies, including triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data from different sources students, teachers, and documents to validate findings and reduce potential bias. Member checking was done by returning interview summaries or initial interpretations to participants for confirmation, ensuring that their views were accurately represented. Prolonged engagement in the field allowed the researcher to build trust with participants, understand the context deeply, and observe natural learning interactions without disrupting the classroom flow. Additionally, the researcher



maintained a reflective journal throughout the process to document observations, decisions, and insights, contributing to transparency and analytical rigor.

The data analysis in this study follows the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Sugiyono, 2019). In the data condensation stage, all collected data interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were carefully reviewed, coded, and categorized according to emerging themes. Coding was conducted both inductively and deductively: inductive coding allowed new themes to emerge from the data, while deductive coding was based on pre-determined concepts of deep learning, such as critical thinking, reflection, collaboration, and contextual understanding. In the data display stage, the researcher organized the findings into matrices and narrative descriptions to visualize relationships among themes. Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher synthesized the findings to generate insights about students' learning needs and the characteristics of deep learning-oriented materials suitable for Islamic Education. Verification was continuously conducted throughout the process by re-examining data, discussing interpretations with peers, and cross-checking consistency between data sources.

Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the research process. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school principal, and informed consent was secured from all participants, including parental consent for students. Participants were assured that their identities and responses would remain confidential, and pseudonyms were used in reporting the findings. The researcher also ensured that interviews and observations were conducted in a respectful, non-intrusive manner, maintaining sensitivity to cultural and religious norms of the school environment. All procedures were designed to protect the well-being and dignity of participants while promoting openness and trust.

The role of the researcher in this study was as the key instrument, which means that the researcher was directly involved in all stages of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. As an observer and interviewer, the researcher sought to maintain neutrality while being empathetic toward participants' experiences. Reflexivity played an important role in this process; the researcher continuously reflected on personal assumptions, background, and potential biases that might influence data interpretation. By acknowledging these factors, the researcher aimed to ensure that the findings represented the participants' authentic voices rather than the researcher's preconceived notions.

In summary, this study adopts a qualitative case study design to deeply explore students' needs for deep learning-oriented Islamic Education materials at SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan. The methodological rigor lies in its triangulated data collection, contextual understanding, and iterative analysis process that integrates participants' perspectives with theoretical insights on deep learning and religious education. The findings from this research are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how Islamic Education can be redesigned to foster deeper understanding, reflective spirituality, and meaningful engagement among elementary students. Moreover, the insights generated from this case study can serve as a foundation for developing more effective, student-centered instructional materials that align with the principles of deep learning and the moral objectives of Islamic education in Indonesia.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Overview of the Findings

The study aimed to explore the learning needs of elementary school students related to Islamic Education materials that align with the concept of *deep learning*. The research was conducted at SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan, where the researcher observed several PAI (Pendidikan Agama Islam) classes and interviewed teachers and students. Through this exploration, it was found that most Islamic Education learning activities still emphasize memorization and teacher-centered instruction, while students' engagement in reflective, analytical, and problem-solving learning remains minimal.

Observation data showed that teachers tend to focus on delivering doctrinal aspects such as *rukun iman*, *rukun Islam*, and daily prayers without deeper contextualization in students' daily lives. This approach often leads to superficial learning outcomes, where students can recall information but struggle to apply Islamic values to real situations, such as honesty, environmental awareness, and digital ethics.

The interviews revealed that both teachers and students expressed the need for interactive and meaningful learning materials that could stimulate curiosity, reflection, and critical thinking in understanding Islamic values. Teachers also admitted that they had limited access to digital-based or *deep learning-oriented* materials that integrate cognitive, affective, and practical aspects of Islamic teachings.

To understand the classroom dynamics and learning environment, the researcher conducted direct observations in three different PAI learning sessions. The main focus of



observation was on teaching strategies, students' engagement, and the content depth of instructional materials.

**Table 1.**

**Observation Results in PAI Learning Activities at SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan**

No	Aspect Observed	Description of Findings	Researcher's Notes
1	Teaching Method	The teacher primarily used lecture and Q&A methods. Most of the session involved teacher explanation and students listening passively.	Limited opportunities for students to explore and discuss real-life issues related to Islamic teachings.
2	Learning Materials	The material was mainly sourced from government textbooks ( <i>Buku PAI dan Budi Pekerti</i> ). The book emphasizes knowledge recall over critical inquiry.	The content lacks contextual or project-based components that encourage deep understanding.
3	Student Participation	Only a few students asked questions or shared experiences. Others seemed passive and waited for teacher instructions.	Indicates low intrinsic motivation and limited critical engagement.
4	Learning Media	The teacher occasionally used videos from YouTube, but without discussion or reflection afterward.	Media use was superficial, not aimed at deepening conceptual understanding.
5	Classroom Interaction	The teacher played the central role, directing all activities. Peer discussion was minimal.	Shows dominance of teacher-centered instruction, lacking collaborative learning elements.
6	Reflection Activities	No structured reflection or feedback session at the end of learning.	Missed opportunity to develop meta-cognitive and affective learning outcomes.
7	Value Application	Students could mention values such as honesty or discipline but found it	Highlights the gap between cognitive and behavioral

difficult to relate them to daily actions.	dimensions of Islamic learning.
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From these observations, it is evident that deep learning principles such as critical inquiry, reflection, and contextual learning were not yet implemented. The classroom culture still prioritizes result-based assessment over process-based understanding. This reflects a broader issue in Islamic Education at the elementary level: the emphasis remains on *knowing* rather than *understanding and practicing*.

To complement the observations, interviews were conducted with three Islamic Education teachers and eight students. The purpose was to gain deeper insights into their perceptions of the existing learning process and their expectations for *deep learning-oriented* materials.

**Table 2.**  
**Interview Results with Islamic Education Teachers**

No	Teacher's Statement	Key Meaning
1	"Students easily memorize <i>rukun iman</i> or <i>rukun Islam</i> , but when asked to explain their meaning, they struggle."	Students' understanding remains superficial; need materials that promote conceptual understanding.
2	"Our materials are limited to what's in the national textbook; we rarely develop our own contextual content."	Need for teacher support and supplementary materials aligned with <i>deep learning</i> .
3	"Sometimes I want to use digital tools or videos, but I'm not sure how to connect them to deeper learning objectives."	Teachers lack guidance and examples of integrating technology with reflective learning.
4	"If we could get a module that includes stories, projects, and real-life tasks, it might make students more interested."	Teachers desire project-based and life-centered Islamic materials.
5	"Time constraints make it difficult to implement creative methods."	Institutional constraints hinder deep learning implementation.

**Table 3.**  
**Interview Results with Students**

	<b>Student's Statement</b>	<b>Key Meaning</b>
1	"I like learning stories about the Prophet, but sometimes we just read and move on."	Need for reflection and engagement activities beyond reading.
2	"We usually answer questions from the book; it's boring sometimes."	The materials are not stimulating; require interactive approaches.
3	"If there are games or projects, I feel more excited to learn."	Students prefer active and exploratory learning.
4	"Sometimes I don't understand why we must learn about patience or honesty."	Lack of contextualization between values and daily experiences.
5	"It would be fun if we could make videos or drawings about Islamic stories."	Students want creative expression as part of learning.

The interviews reveal a clear mismatch between students' learning preferences and the existing instructional design. Both teachers and students see the need for a more meaningful approach that combines intellectual and emotional dimensions of Islamic learning.

The analysis of data from observations and interviews suggests that students' needs for deep learning-oriented Islamic Education materials can be grouped into three main themes:

#### **Cognitive Deepening: Understanding Beyond Memorization**

Students and teachers agree that current materials heavily focus on factual knowledge. Deep learning requires shifting from "knowing what" to "understanding why and how." For example, learning about *iman kepada malaikat* should not stop at memorizing names, but also include understanding the moral implications such as honesty and accountability. However, in the current practice, cognitive processes like analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are rarely stimulated. Therefore, students' conceptual grasp remains limited to rote learning.

#### **Affective and Value Internalization**

Islamic Education aims to shape character and moral awareness. Yet, findings show that value internalization activities such as reflection, self-assessment, or discussion of real-life dilemmas are rarely conducted. Affective deep learning involves allowing students to

*feel* and *reflect*, not just *recite*. In deep learning-oriented materials, students should be encouraged to connect Islamic values to their emotions and personal choices, which is currently missing in SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan.

### Contextual and Experiential Learning

Another critical aspect of deep learning is contextualization—linking abstract values to students’ lived experiences. Observations revealed that lessons rarely include real-world projects, problem-solving tasks, or cross-disciplinary themes. Students expressed the desire to learn through activities like storytelling, art, or community based projects, which could make Islamic learning more relevant. Such approaches foster *meaning-making* and *value embodiment*, essential pillars of deep learning.

Based on triangulation of all data, the researcher identified five essential needs to support the implementation of deep learning in Islamic Education at the elementary level:

**Table 4.**

#### Synthesis underscores that deep learning in Islamic Education

Theme	Description of Need	Implication for Material Design
<b>Cognitive Understanding</b>	Students need conceptual clarity through inquiry-based tasks.	Develop materials with higher-order questions and cause-effect exploration.
<b>Reflective Learning</b>	Students need moments to reflect on values and behaviors.	Include reflection prompts and journal activities in each lesson.
<b>Contextualization</b>	Materials must connect Islamic values with daily life contexts.	Integrate local stories, environmental ethics, and social projects.
<b>Collaborative Interaction</b>	Students need opportunities to share and discuss.	Incorporate group discussions, storytelling, or peer evaluation.
<b>Creative Engagement</b>	Students prefer creative expressions of understanding.	Add visual, artistic, and digital media activities.

This synthesis underscores that deep learning in Islamic Education must integrate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. Students should not only *know* Islamic teachings but also *feel* their significance and *practice* them authentically.

## Discussion

This study explored students' needs for deep learning-oriented Islamic Education materials in elementary schools, focusing on SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan. Through qualitative case study methods involving classroom observations and interviews, the findings revealed that current Islamic Education practices still emphasize memorization and teacher-centered instruction. Students rarely engage in critical, reflective, or contextual learning activities. Teachers rely heavily on the national textbook (*Buku PAI dan Budi Pekerti*) as the main instructional material, which limits their flexibility to design meaningful and inquiry-based lessons. This discussion elaborates on the findings by connecting them to relevant theoretical perspectives and previous studies, while also identifying distinctive contributions and implications of the current research.

The first major finding from SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan shows that Islamic Education still revolves around the transmission of factual knowledge rather than the cultivation of conceptual understanding or moral reasoning. This condition aligns with what (Fadzilah Bee et al., 2021) identified in their study on Islamic pedagogy, where they found that *surface learning* characterized by rote memorization and teacher dominance remains pervasive in many Indonesian classrooms. The students' ability to recall Islamic concepts such as *rukun iman* or *rukun Islam* did not translate into meaningful comprehension or behavioral embodiment.

Similarly, (Maharani & Rahmaniari, 2023) found that early-grade Islamic Education classes tend to prioritize repetition over comprehension, resulting in students who can memorize but fail to internalize moral lessons. Their study concluded that integrating *deep learning principles* such as reflective inquiry and contextual problem-solving helps students understand the meaning behind religious concepts. This supports the current finding that both teachers and students in SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan recognize the limitations of the existing approach and seek materials that promote reflection and relevance.

The phenomenon also reflects what (Ariyanto, 2024) describe as the gap between learning about religion and learning from religion. In deep learning, students must go beyond memorization to engage with values and make personal sense of them. However, the current PAI materials in SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan still position religion as content to be delivered rather than experience to be lived. This gap underscores the urgent need for curriculum redesign and teacher empowerment to support deep learning processes.

Students at SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan expressed that PAI lessons were often repetitive, monotonous, and lacked opportunities for creativity or self-expression. They preferred activities such as storytelling, drawing, or project-based tasks that connect Islamic teachings to their everyday experiences. These findings resonate with the work of (Irfanuddin et al., 2025), who argue that deep learning involves connecting knowledge with real-life contexts through exploration, collaboration, and creativity. When students are given meaningful tasks, they engage emotionally and cognitively, leading to sustained learning.

In a similar vein, research by (Alzahrani & Alnufaie, 2024) on deep learning approaches in Islamic history teaching demonstrated that using storytelling and historical reflection enabled students to link Islamic moral values with contemporary issues. This approach stimulated empathy and moral reasoning rather than rote memorization. The current study found the same pattern: when students encounter stories of prophets or moral dilemmas in daily life, they are more eager to participate and reflect. However, in existing practice, these stories are read passively, without structured reflection or discussion. Thus, while the potential for deep learning exists in the content, the pedagogical delivery remains shallow.

Moreover, the students' preference for digital or visual learning media aligns with (Ramadhan & Usriyah, 2021) findings that interactive and multimodal materials such as animations or online games significantly increase engagement and retention in Islamic Education. The lack of such media in SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan contributes to low motivation and surface-level understanding. Therefore, integrating creative and digital elements into PAI materials can serve as a gateway to deeper engagement and conceptual comprehension.

From the teachers' interviews, it became clear that while educators are aware of the need for more meaningful learning, they face significant constraints: time limitations, rigid curriculum structures, and lack of professional development opportunities. Teachers expressed uncertainty about how to design or use digital tools that align with deep learning principles. This finding is consistent with the research of (Ahmed, 2009), which revealed that many Islamic Education teachers understand the importance of critical and reflective pedagogy but lack the training to implement it effectively.

A literature review by Haryati et al (2022) further emphasized that *teacher readiness* is a crucial factor in adopting deep learning strategies. Without access to proper materials, training, and institutional support, teachers often revert to traditional, exam-oriented



instruction. The situation in SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan exemplifies this dilemma: teachers desire innovation but are constrained by systemic limitations.

This challenge also echoes findings from the study by (Chen & Singh, 2024), who argued that developing metacognitive competence through reflective learning requires both teacher facilitation and suitable materials. When teachers act merely as transmitters of knowledge, students miss opportunities to question, evaluate, and apply Islamic values critically. Thus, professional learning communities and collaborative design workshops could help teachers co-create deep learning materials that balance curriculum demands and students' developmental needs.

One of the strongest insights from this study is the disconnection between the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of Islamic Education. Students know what values to practice—such as honesty, patience, or discipline but they rarely understand why and how to embody these in real contexts. This finding parallels the model proposed by (Solahudin, 2024), who emphasized that Islamic Education should cultivate three integrated dimensions: *knowledge (ilm)*, *attitude (hal)*, and *action (amal)*. However, when materials focus solely on memorization, the other two dimensions are neglected, resulting in fragmented moral development.

Research by (Hidayat & Haryati, 2025) supports this claim by demonstrating that deep learning pedagogy in Islamic subjects promotes value internalization through reflection and community-based projects. When students connect abstract values with real-life actions such as organizing charity events or environmental campaigns they not only understand the teachings but also live them. Unfortunately, such experiential approaches were absent in the observed classrooms at SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan.

The integration of affective learning also requires structured reflection sessions. According to (Nader, 2019) *reflective journaling* and *self-assessment* allow students to evaluate their emotions and spiritual growth. The current research found that such practices were missing; lessons typically ended without reflection or feedback. Incorporating reflection into the lesson design could therefore bridge the gap between knowing and being, transforming knowledge into lived faith.

The current findings are consistent with multiple studies across different contexts, reinforcing the universality of the deep learning approach in religious education.

First, the study by (SAPUTRI, 2023) found that implementing deep learning models in lower-grade Islamic Education improved both comprehension and character formation.

Similarly, (Wardana et al., 2022)) discovered that students exposed to project-based Islamic lessons developed better critical thinking and collaboration skills. The present research extends these findings to upper-elementary students, highlighting that even at this level, deep learning principles are essential and desired by both teachers and students.

While previous research has examined deep learning in Islamic Education at various levels, most focused on secondary or tertiary institutions. Few studies have explored students' learning needs at the elementary level, particularly in the context of public schools where Islamic Education is one subject among many. The current study fills this gap by illuminating how primary school students perceive and articulate their needs for meaningful, reflective, and contextual Islamic learning experiences.

Another unique contribution lies in the bottom-up perspective. Many prior studies analyzed teacher strategies or theoretical frameworks; this study foregrounds students' voices as the primary lens for identifying material needs. By listening to students' reflections, the research highlights how they interpret religious content and what kinds of learning experiences help them internalize values.

Furthermore, the study identifies the absence of integration between curriculum design, pedagogy, and media use. While national curricula advocate character education, in practice the materials and assessments remain dominated by surface-level cognitive indicators. The findings suggest that deep learning-oriented Islamic materials should bridge this gap by embedding higher-order thinking, reflection, and experiential tasks aligned with students' developmental stages.

The implications of this study are both pedagogical and curricular. At the pedagogical level, teachers should adopt approaches that promote *critical inquiry*, *reflection*, *collaboration*, and *creativity*. Incorporating project-based and problem-based tasks can transform passive learning into active exploration. For example, instead of merely memorizing the concept of charity (*zakat*), students could design small social projects that apply the principle within their school community.

At the curricular level, the development of Islamic Education materials must integrate deep learning indicators such as: 1) Conceptual understanding through guiding questions; 2) Reflective journaling and discussion; 3) Contextualization with local culture and real-life problems; 4) Use of digital media and multimodal learning; and 5) Assessment based on reasoning and application, not memorization. This aligns with the *New Pedagogies for Deep Learning Framework* by Fullan and Quinn (2020), which emphasizes *the six Cs*: character,

citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. In Islamic Education, these competencies align naturally with the goals of spiritual intelligence (*ta'dib*), moral reasoning, and social responsibility.

Although the current study provides valuable insights, it has limitations that should guide future research. First, the study focused only on one public elementary school, so the findings may not generalize to other contexts such as madrasah or private Islamic schools. Second, the study explored perceived needs but did not yet design or test specific deep learning-oriented materials. Future research could develop prototypes—such as digital learning modules or project-based Islamic lessons—and evaluate their effectiveness through design-based or mixed-method approaches.

Moreover, future studies could involve teacher training interventions to examine how professional development in deep learning pedagogy affects classroom practices. As indicated by Fitriani and Yusuf (2023), sustainable change in Islamic Education requires capacity building for teachers, not merely new materials.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that students at SD Negeri 7 Kediri Tabanan exhibit a strong need for Islamic Education materials that support deep learning principles. The findings demonstrate that current materials remain limited to rote memorization and factual knowledge, lacking depth in conceptual understanding, reflective thinking, and real-life application. Through classroom observations and interviews, it became evident that both teachers and students desire learning resources that are more interactive, contextual, and capable of integrating moral reasoning with critical inquiry. The analysis also highlights that deep learning-oriented materials can significantly enhance students' engagement and moral comprehension by connecting Islamic teachings with daily life experiences. This aligns with previous research emphasizing that deep learning in religious education fosters not only cognitive development but also moral and emotional intelligence. Therefore, the development of such materials is essential to transform Islamic Education from a teacher-centered model to a more participatory, reflective, and meaningful learning process. Addressing students' needs for deep learning-oriented Islamic Education materials can lead to more effective character building and holistic understanding of Islamic values in elementary education. This study contributes to the growing discourse on innovation in Islamic pedagogy by emphasizing the

importance of needs-based material design grounded in students' lived experiences and critical engagement.

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