

## **Towards transformative *fiqh* education: a deep learning pedagogical approach in the digital era**

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**Abstract:** The persistence of teacher-centered and memorization-oriented approaches in fiqh education has limited students' conceptual understanding and critical engagement with Islamic legal knowledge, particularly within contemporary digital contexts. This study aims to examine the implementation of a deep learning pedagogical approach in fiqh instruction at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level and its impact on students' conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis involving teachers and students at madrasah tsanawiyah. The findings reveal that deep learning fosters an interactive, contextual, and student-centered learning environment, significantly enhancing students' ability to analyze legal sources, relate fiqh concepts to everyday practices, and engage in collaborative reasoning. Despite these positive outcomes, the study is constrained by limited infrastructure, the absence of quantitative validation, and varying levels of teacher readiness. These limitations suggest the need for institutional support and professional development to sustain pedagogical transformation. The study implies that integrating deep learning with Islamic educational values can strengthen both cognitive and ethical dimensions of learning. The novelty of this research lies in conceptualizing deep learning as a holistic Islamic pedagogical framework that integrates case-based inquiry, digital literacy, and value internalization in fiqh education.

**Keywords:** Deep learning approach, fiqh learning, Islamic education, critical thinking skill, student centered-learning.

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### **Introduction**

In this modern era, the learning process requires students not only to receive information, but also to analyze, internalize, and apply that knowledge in everyday situations. In this context, learning strategies must be implemented to provide meaningful, reflective, and comprehensive learning experiences. Nevertheless, the reality in this field is that the study of law at some madrasas, including MTs, remains teacher-centered and focused on memorizing legal texts and their interpretations (Rizki & Achadi, 2024; Tambak et al., 2025; Abdullah et al., 2025). Santiani (2025), argues that education should focus on learning experiences that are enlightening, meaningful, and enjoyable to help students achieve a more comprehensive conceptual understanding. A fun learning approach uses elements of games, stories, and collaboration integrated with deep learning principles to foster conceptual understanding, deep reflection, and the transfer of knowledge to real-world situations (Andayanie et al., 2025; Firdaus et al., 2025; Chapakiya et al., 2025; Tambak & Sukenti, 2024). To effectively adapt to various global challenges,

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Indonesia's education system requires innovative teaching methods that focus not only on curriculum aspects but also consider how education is delivered.

One learning method that is currently receiving increased attention is deep learning, as taught by Abdul Mu'ti, Minister of Primary and Secondary Education. According to the research by Khotimah & Abdan (2025), the deep learning approach itself is not a new concept; the term has been in use since 1976. The deep learning model was first introduced by Marton and Säljö in 1976; it is a learning approach that emphasizes a comprehensive understanding of the meaning and relationships between concepts. According to Wijaya et al., as cited in the research by Riyadi et al. (2025), deep learning (DL)-based learning models can be used for personalized adaptive education systems.

Deep learning methods are designed to foster a deeper understanding of topics through comprehensive learning experiences, in which students become more emotionally and intellectually engaged in their educational journey (Tambak et al., 2024; Namora et al., 2025; Rasyidi et al., 2025). These methods aim to transform the conventional approach to learning which often prioritizes rote repetition and memorization of information into a more holistic and critical-thinking-oriented learning experience. In Indonesia, the implementation of deep learning is closely linked to the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes freedom in learning and a focus on project-based learning (Sukenti & Tambak, 2025; Yasin et al., 2025). This curriculum provides students with the opportunity to explore learning topics in a more contextual and in-depth manner, in line with their interests and potential. Therefore, the deep learning approach, which prioritizes meaningful and mindful learning experiences, is highly suitable for implementation in the Indonesian education system (Widodo et al., 2025; Sukenti & Fauzan, 2024).

Although this method offers great potential for improving the quality of education, there are challenges that cannot be ignored in its implementation in Indonesia. One of the main challenges is the lack of adequate educational infrastructure, particularly in remote areas. Many schools in Indonesia still lack the necessary facilities to support technology-based learning, which is a crucial element of the deep learning method (Tambak & Sukenti, 2024; Rasyidi et al., 2025; Chapakiya et al., 2025). Therefore, while there are many benefits to this method, these challenges must first be addressed to ensure its successful implementation. Additionally, the readiness of educators is another key factor influencing the success of deep learning. Teachers in Indonesia often face difficulties in implementing new learning methods, particularly those requiring a more dynamic and technology-focused approach. Deep learning-based education requires educators not only to understand the content but also to possess the ability to create deep and meaningful learning experiences for students.

The situation in most madrasahs shows that the teaching of fiqh often focuses on lectures and memorization. This affects students' ability to think critically and apply legal principles to everyday situations. In Madrasah Tsanawiyah, a common problem is poor student performance, which hinders in-depth learning. Students lack the courage to ask questions and struggle to conduct in-depth analysis of scholars' opinions. The fiqh subject, which is part of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, is quite complex. This is because fiqh instruction does not focus solely on knowledge (cognitive aspect) but also encompasses attitudes (affective aspect) and skills (psychomotor aspect). Fiqh has its own distinct characteristics and is often considered difficult by students because it requires a deep understanding as well as the ability to apply religious values in daily life. The theoretical nature of the material often makes students less interested in studying it (Nafiisah et al., 2025; Tambak et al., 2018; Firdaus et al., 2025; Namora et al., 2025).

Based on Handayani & Fauzi (2023), conventional fiqh education leads to a decline in students' conceptual understanding. This study proposes an innovative approach using deep learning methods in fiqh instruction, particularly in the chapters on purification (Thaharah), ritual cleansing (Istinja'), and types of impurities. This method provides students with the opportunity to observe and examine real-life situations, search for and analyze relevant fiqh evidence, and strengthen their critical thinking skills in addressing future challenges they may encounter. According to research Maulana et al. (2024), notes that active learning helps students better understand fiqh material through their participation in discussions, debates, and practical

activities. Additionally, Ismail et al. (2024), highlight that the effectiveness of the demonstration method can enhance students' motivation in studying purification (thaharah) material. Meanwhile, in the study by Debrianti et al. (2025), the importance of the teacher's role in helping students understand purification practices through a contextual and participatory approach is emphasized. These findings reinforce the importance of using deep learning methods in fiqh studies.

Based on the above, this study aims to analyze the implementation of deep learning in the fiqh curriculum at MTs Mizanul Kubra. MTs Mizanul Kubra is an educational institution located in Cengkeh Turi Village, Binjai Utara Subdistrict, Binjai Municipality (North Sumatra), ZIP Code 20747. This school was established on the initiative of the Ralas Ananda Foundation to foster religious life, particularly among the working-class community. During the period 2011–2022, this Islamic boarding school experienced significant growth, including the implementation of life skills education for students. With a focus on education for orphans and religious instruction, MTs Mizanul Kubro functions as an educational institution that integrates Islamic teachings with the social needs of the surrounding community. This institution was established and intended as a means of spreading compassion to the less fortunate through charity and educational support for orphans, particularly those from underprivileged families, who require an education equivalent to MTs and MA levels.

Close attention is given to how students develop deep understanding through case analysis, exploration of Islamic legal principles, group discussions, and learning reflections. This study not only offers more relevant teaching methods but also provides practical contributions to fiqh teachers in the development of learning materials and assessment strategies that align with the requirements of the Merdeka Curriculum. By combining deep learning and problem-solving, this study provides teachers with the opportunity to design learning experiences that connect fiqh with students' social realities, while helping to develop their integrity, critical thinking, and collaborative skills. Thus, this study is expected to provide new insights into how fiqh instruction can be transformed into a more vibrant, meaningful, and applicable experience through the integration of a deep learning approach. Additionally, the findings of this study are also expected to serve as a reference for teachers, schools, and other researchers in developing more effective and relevant learning innovations tailored to the needs of today's students.

Previous research has shown that the study of fiqh in Islamic schools should not focus solely on the memorization of legal texts, but should also encourage students to develop a deep conceptual understanding and the ability to relate Islamic law to their daily lives. Consequently, this approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of deep conceptual understanding, the interconnection of ideas, reflection on meaning, and the application of knowledge to real-world contexts (Ramsden, 2003; Tambak & Sukenti, 2025; Gusrianto et al., 2025; Abdullah et al., 2025; Widodo et al., 2025). However, in practice, fiqh instruction in various madrasahs is still dominated by lecture-based methods and teacher-centered approaches, resulting in students tending to be passive and lacking critical thinking skills when analyzing contextual fiqh issues. Several studies have also discussed the application of active learning methods and deep learning approaches in education; however, research specifically examining the implementation of deep learning methods in fiqh instruction at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level remains relatively limited, particularly studies that explore the integration of real-world case analysis, the search for evidence from the Qur'an and hadith, and the utilization of digital resources in the learning process.

Furthermore, in today's digital age, students are frequently exposed to various religious information from social media that may not necessarily have a strong scholarly foundation; thus, a learning approach is needed that can equip students with deeper analytical skills and a more profound understanding of fiqh. For these reasons, this study was conducted to analyze the implementation of deep learning methods in fiqh instruction at MTs Mizanul Kubro Binjai as an effort to enhance conceptual understanding, critical thinking skills, and the application of Islamic legal principles in daily life. Furthermore, this study highlights the novelty of the shift in the learning paradigm from the original teacher-centered approach to a student-centered one. In this context, teachers no longer function as the sole source of knowledge but rather as facilitators who guide, direct, and organize students' understanding. This transformation of roles contributes to

the more effective development of students' critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills within the Fiqh learning process.

## Literature Review

### Deep learning methods

Deep learning is an innovative approach that emphasizes the need for learners to understand, integrate, and connect knowledge with real-world experiences, thereby fostering a comprehensive conceptual understanding within them. In the context of educational transformation, deep learning is not merely a teaching approach focused on mastering subject matter but also a foundation for developing more reflective, critical, and applied ways of thinking (Fullan et al., 2018; Tambak et al., 2025; Firdaus et al., 2025). Santiani (2025), explains that deep learning requires mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning experiences so that students do not merely memorize but truly understand the meaning of a concept. The Qur'an encourages humanity to reflect deeply on knowledge and derive wisdom from every piece of knowledge learned. This is as stated by Allah in Surah Shad, verse 29:

كَتَبْنَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ ۖ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Which explains that the Qur'an was revealed so that people might reflect on its verses and thereby draw lessons for those of sound mind. This principle indicates that the learning process in Islam emphasizes not only the textual mastery of knowledge but also a deep understanding capable of fostering critical thinking and practical application in daily life. Suwandi et al. (2024), add that this approach fosters higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, creativity, and problem-solving—core competencies in modern educational processes. Key concepts in deep learning include mindful learning, which helps students truly understand how they learn and take control of their own motivation and engagement (Currie, 2020).

When students understand their preferred learning styles, they can develop more effective methods for understanding and applying the material. This awareness also helps students better self-regulate their learning, enabling them to independently overcome academic challenges (Malecka et al., 2022). This aligns with Vygotsky (1978), constructivist theory, which states that learning is most effective when students can connect new information to real-world experiences they have encountered. The key to the success of a teaching-learning process is creating a learning environment that encourages every student to be active and collaborative in their learning. In the context of fiqh education, the deep learning method helps students connect Islamic legal concepts with the realities of daily life, making their understanding more practical, meaningful, and long-lasting.

### Fiqh learning

Learning is the assistance provided by educators to facilitate the process of mastering knowledge and skills, as well as the development of attitudes and beliefs in students. In other words, fiqh learning is a process that helps students understand the subject of fiqh well. The objective of fiqh learning is for students to be able to comprehend, understand, and apply Islamic Law, which plays a vital role in daily life, both in religious practices and other aspects. Islamic law guides people in their worship and also influences how they live, work, and interact with others (Abdillah Syukur, 2020). Fiqh education plays a vital role in building students' understanding of Islamic teachings, particularly those related to Sharia laws and their application in daily life. The process of learning fiqh in madrasahs does not only focus on mastering legal material but also aims to develop critical, analytical, and reflective thinking skills. Therefore, students are expected to deeply understand the principles of Islamic Sharia, consider various issues they face, and make decisions in accordance with the values of Islamic teachings.

At the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, the study of fiqh serves as the primary foundation for fostering an understanding of Islamic law that is not only consistent with the texts of Islamic teachings but also relevant to the developments and challenges of modern life (Suhartini et al.,

2023). However, the reality on the ground shows that fiqh curriculum in various madrasahs, including MTs, still prioritizes a teacher-centered approach and focuses on memorizing legal texts along with their supporting evidence. Students are more often directed to memorize legal provisions without being given sufficient opportunity and space to explain the rationale, wisdom, and implications of those provisions. This situation makes students more passive, less skilled in analyzing complex fiqh issues, and unable to develop critical thinking skills effectively. This situation is reinforced by research by Debrianti et al. (2025), which reveals that the teacher's role is crucial to success in the practice of *thaharah*, especially when learning is contextualized within real-life situations and examples.

### **The digital age**

Today, humanity is experiencing rapid technological advancements in the digital age. The availability of sophisticated modern tools to help with daily tasks has made life easier for people. Without technology, it would be difficult for people to survive. The digital age refers to an era in which all activities that support daily life have become easier thanks to technological advancements (Zis et al., 2021). Year after year, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has developed at a rapid pace, encompassing both hardware and software. One of the major changes brought about by advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a significant transformation in the field of education (Mustari, 2023). According to Jean Baudrillard, as cited in Study Asharudin (2023), thanks to advanced technology, contemporary society can be described as a society living in the postmodern era, where people no longer focus so much on what they need, but rather prioritize their appearance and lifestyle as a means to achieve their goals. This increasingly diverse lifestyle is the result of rapid advances in communication and information technology, which have driven the general public to enter the world of information technology, offering a variety of benefits, challenges, and opportunities (Wijaya & Mashud, 2020).

In this rapidly advancing digital era, the world of education faces serious and increasingly complex challenges in its efforts to create effective and meaningful learning processes (Nafiisah et al., 2025). Therefore, learning methods or approaches are needed to address learning challenges, particularly in this digital era. In the digital age of education, institutions, educators, learners, and parents must be prepared to promote and utilize computer-based technologies. This digital approach to education offers numerous benefits, including increasingly modern curricula, improved learning outcomes through digital data analysis, the creation of engaging collaborative learning environments, and easier assessment of student performance. The integration of this technology enables more personalized adaptive learning, allowing materials to adapt to each student's pace and learning style. Furthermore, the use of digital media significantly contributes to the development of 21st-century skills—such as critical thinking and creativity—that are highly sought after in the workplace. Therefore, the shift toward digital-based education is no longer merely an option; it is essential for producing a competitive workforce.

### **Method**

This study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method as the primary framework for analyzing the application of the deep learning approach in fiqh instruction at MTs Mizanul Kubro. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides the researcher with the opportunity to explore learning phenomena in a natural and contextual manner, in line with the characteristics of qualitative research that emphasize meaning, experience, and direct interaction between the researcher and the research subjects. Abdullah et al. (2022), explain that qualitative methods are used to deeply understand social phenomena through observation, interpretation, and analysis of issues in the field. Qualitative research methods are based on the philosophy of positivism or post-positivism and are used to study natural environments. The researcher plays a key role as an instrument in this process.

The subjects of this study consist of fiqh teachers and ninth-grade students at MTs Mizanul Kubro Binjai. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves selecting informants based on specific considerations relevant to the research objectives. The primary informants in this study are a fiqh teacher named Mrs. Astika Mayasari, S.Si, and 10 ninth-

grade students who actively participate in the fiqh learning process in the classroom. The criteria for selecting informants included: (1) teachers who teach fiqh and apply a deep learning approach in the learning process; and (2) students who actively participate in discussions, case analyses, and fiqh learning activities. This study was conducted during the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at MTs Mizanul Kubro, located in Binjai City, North Sumatra.

Data collection utilized a combination of techniques known as triangulation. Data analysis was conducted inductively, meaning it began with specific observations and moved toward broader patterns. The research findings focused more on understanding the meaning behind the findings than on making generalizations (Sugiyono, 2019). Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with fiqh teachers and several students to gain a broader understanding of their learning experiences. Damayanty Syamsul et al. (2023), state that the use of data collection techniques is necessary to enhance the credibility and relevance of research findings. Meanwhile, secondary data was collected from syllabi, lesson plans, worksheets, activity photos, field notes, and academic literature related to deep learning, Islamic pedagogy, and the development of critical thinking, with source triangulation used to ensure the validity and reliability of the data.

The data analysis process was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, as described Wada et al. (2024), data reduction was performed by selecting significant information from the results of observations and interviews, then organizing it into themes consistent with the research objectives. Conclusions were then drawn gradually throughout the course of the research. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher applied triangulation of sources and methods, so that the data obtained would be reliable and accurately reflect classroom learning conditions and situations (Wada et al., 2024).

## Result

### **The purpose of implementing deep learning methods in fiqh education**

Deep learning is an innovative approach that emphasizes the need for learners to understand, integrate, and connect knowledge with real-world experiences, thereby fostering a comprehensive conceptual understanding within students. According to Tsingos et al. (2015), deep learning is often presented as a core concept or learning approach that influences the entire education system in terms of the level of understanding, as distinct from individual learning styles. Broadly speaking, the implementation of deep learning methods in fiqh education aims to foster conceptual understanding of the subject matter, particularly in the study of fiqh.

The primary goal of implementing deep learning is to shift students' focus from surface learning (mere memorization) toward deep understanding. In the context of fiqh, this objective is crucial. Furthermore, the subject of fiqh does not focus solely on knowledge (cognitive aspect) but also encompasses attitudes (affective aspect) and skills (psychomotor aspect). Consequently, students require deep understanding as well as the ability to apply religious values in daily life. The deep learning method is also considered capable of enhancing digital literacy and information literacy skills related to learning. As observed at the research site, students are often exposed to superficial or misleading religious content on social media. Through the deep learning method, teachers strive to equip students with digital literacy skills. Moreover, the implementation of the deep learning method bridges the gap between theory and practice, particularly in daily life.

The results of the observation indicate that deep learning approaches can invigorate the classroom atmosphere during fiqh lessons. There was a noticeable increase in student participation in responding to opening questions, particularly when the lesson material was linked to daily activities, such as the use of water for ritual purification, the method of *Istinja'*, and the identification of various types of impurities. Student interest increased because the lesson began with questions relevant to their lives, so that they did not merely listen to the teacher's explanations but also reflected on or visualized concrete, real-life examples drawn from their personal experiences. Researchers are conducting in-depth interviews with teachers and students—as key sources of information—in addition to relying on observational data, in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the implementation of deep learning methods in Fiqh education. These interviews aim to explore experiences, perceptions, and direct reactions to the learning processes taking place in the classroom. Consequently, the data obtained is not only

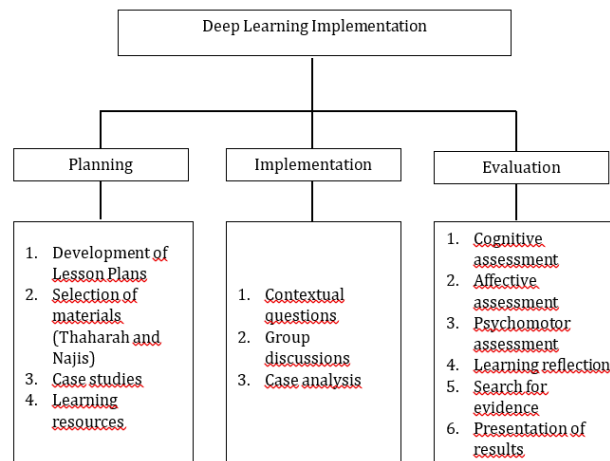
descriptive but also reflective and contextual, based on the experiences of the subjects studied. As expressed by Mrs. Astika Mayasari, a law teacher:

*"In the past, fiqh instruction tended to rely on lectures and rote memorization, but now there is a greater emphasis on discussion using this in-depth learning method. This method helps students relate the material to their daily lives, such as in the case of thaharah or light cleaning of unclean items. Questions and case studies are very effective for exploring students' understanding, and our role as teachers is now that of facilitators guiding students' thought processes. However, there are sometimes obstacles, such as differences in critical thinking abilities or time constraints. However, after using the deep learning method, students became more active in classroom discussions and were able to relate the material to their daily lives."*

This is also consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Wafa et al. (2025), which found that the application of the deep learning method brings significant changes in how teachers teach. Furthermore, the group discussions conducted by the students were very active; they critically connected religious values with social phenomena occurring around them. The group discussion phase revealed a significant increase in collaboration, with each group analyzing real-life case studies, such as how to purify clothing from impurities or the types of water permissible for wudu. The students then searched for evidence from the Qur'an, Hadith, and the opinions of scholars using textbooks and digital sources. They divided responsibilities into different roles: some gathered references, some conducted analyses, and others formulated conclusions. This demonstrates that understanding develops not in isolation, but through the exchange of ideas with peers, which fosters critical thinking skills.

### The implementation process of deep learning methods in fiqh education

Based on observations at MTs Mizanul Kubro, the implementation of the deep learning method in fiqh instruction takes place through the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation.



**Figure 1. Stages of the Deep Learning Method Implementation Process in Fiqh Instruction in the Digital Age at MTs Mizanul Kubro**

In this study, we systematically implement deep learning methods by selecting materials closely related to daily life—such as taharah and impurity—to create syllabi and lesson plans through teacher planning, implementation, and evaluation, while also designing discussion activities, case studies, and problem-solving exercises to foster a deep understanding of fiqh concepts. In contrast to previous studies, which tended to be conceptual or fragmented, this study integrates three stages as a whole by focusing on fiqh materials—such as taharah and uncleanness—that are contextually close to students' daily lives, ensuring that learning is more relevant and meaningful. The process begins with learning during the implementation stage, where students' questions regarding purification are followed by group discussions analyzing

their personal experiences, leading to the formulation of arguments. These three elements provide a space not only for the theoretical understanding of fiqh concepts but also for cultivating critical analytical skills to examine Islamic law more comprehensively based on the Quran, Hadith discussions, and scholarly opinions. Teachers act as facilitators who guide discussions, reinforce concepts, and correct misunderstandings, fostering active, dynamic, and interactive learning.

The process of implementing deep learning in Fiqh instruction, as illustrated in the research findings, demonstrates systematic stages oriented toward meaningful learning. Instruction begins with contextual questions linking Fiqh material to students' real-life experiences, such as the practice of purification in daily life. This stage aligns with the principle of Iqra' and the development of critical thinking as contained in QS. Al-'Alaq: 1-5:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

*Meaning: "Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created man from a clot of blood. Read, for your Lord is the Most Generous. Who taught (man) with the pen. He taught man what he did not know.*

As the verse above emphasizes the importance of reading, studying, and understanding deeply. Furthermore, Fiqh learning based on discussion through real-life case studies is conducted by presenting contextual problems relevant to students' lives, such as the case of a toddler who urinated on a prayer mat and was only rinsed with water without being washed repeatedly. The teacher uses this case as a starting point to assess the alignment of the practice with Fiqh legal rulings, then divides the students into groups to identify the type of impurity, trace the evidence from the Qur'an and Hadith, and examine the opinions of scholars regarding the proper method of purification. During the exploration phase, students used textbooks and digital resources to distinguish between categories of impurity such as mukhaffafah, mutawassithah, and mughallazhah, and to analyze whether the toddler had consumed food other than breast milk or not.

The results of the discussion are then presented and responded to among groups in a scientific dialogue forum led by the students, while the teacher acts as a facilitator who clarifies arguments and reinforces conclusions based on sound reasoning. Through this process, students not only grasp concepts theoretically but also integrate fiqh principles with daily life practices, systematically and reflectively developing critical, argumentative, and collaborative thinking skills. Consequently, learning becomes more active, contextual, and meaningful—aligning with the principle of Tafaqquh fiddin as outlined in Surah At-Taubah: 122. According to Ibn Kathir, Tafaqquh fiddin is the study of what Allah has revealed to His Messenger, listening to what has happened to humanity and what Allah has revealed to them; broadly speaking, this concept aims to encourage Muslims to deepen their understanding of religion comprehensively.



**Figure 2. Stages of Implementing the Deep Learning Method During the Discussion Phase**

The evaluation phase was conducted through comprehensive authentic assessment, including written tests, discussions, attitude assessments, and evaluations of students' practical worship skills, always accompanied by reflection at the end of each lesson. Observation results indicate that students not only master basic concepts but are also able to interpret, compare, and apply fiqh principles in daily life. Overall, the implementation of the deep learning method has proven effective in fostering contextual, collaborative, and reflective learning. This success is evident in the improved quality of fiqh education at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah, where students are encouraged not only to understand the theory but to internalize it through direct experience. This method has successfully shifted the learning paradigm from one that was previously teacher-centered to one that is student-centered. Consequently, this approach fosters a more critical and practical character in students as they practice Islamic law.



**Figure 3. Results of Applying Deep Learning Methods to Fiqh Instruction at MTs Mizanul Kubro**

Learning assessment is conducted systematically and continuously through an authentic assessment approach that covers three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. In the cognitive domain, teachers administer written tests based on contextual case studies to measure students' ability to identify problems, analyze types of laws, and present arguments based on verses from the Qur'an, Hadith, and the opinions of scholars. In the affective domain, evaluation is conducted through observation during discussion sessions, using an attitude assessment rubric to evaluate active participation, respect for others' opinions, responsibility, and ethical argumentation. In the psychomotor domain, teachers conduct practical assessments, such as demonstrations of purification rituals or the removal of impurities according to fiqh regulations, using clear and structured rubrics. Additionally, individual and class-wide reflection activities are conducted at the end of the lesson to determine the level of understanding, difficulties encountered, and feedback on the learning process. Through this mechanism, evaluation serves not only as a tool to measure learning outcomes but also as a means for continuous improvement in enhancing the quality of students' contextual and practical understanding and application of fiqh.

At the end of the lesson, the evaluation showed that the students' understanding of fiqh concepts had improved and become more structured. A number of students successfully connected theoretical foundations with real-world practices around them; for example, when discussing the purifying nature of holy water, they related it to situations at home, in the mosque, or at the wudu station, as well as at school. Additionally, the students were confident enough to challenge and critique analyses from other groups using relevant fiqh arguments based on the textual evidence and texts they had studied. These research findings are also consistent with the study by Saadah et al. (2025), which states that the application of the deep learning method demonstrates improvements in several key indicators of critical thinking skills, including: the ability to independently identify fiqh-related issues; the ability to analyze Islamic legal sources logically and systematically; and the ability to critically evaluate the opinions of Islamic scholars.

In general, the implementation of deep learning can foster an active learning environment by successfully creating a dynamic, interactive, and relevant learning setting. These findings align

with the opinion of one of the ninth-grade students, who noted that deep learning methods in the study of Islamic law are very interesting.

*“In my opinion, learning through discussion is more interesting than simply memorizing, because I understand the reasoning behind Fiqh law, which allows me to gain a deeper understanding than just listening to the teacher’s explanations. Furthermore, I have the courage to ask questions and express my own opinions, and since the material is relevant to daily life, it is easy to understand. However, I still find it difficult to identify points for discussion and analyze cases independently.”*

Direct observations reveal that students not only master foundational material and concepts but also possess the ability to interpret, compare, and apply the principles of fiqh in their daily lives. In this process, the mentor teacher plays a crucial role as a facilitator who guides the discussion and reinforces students’ understanding, without taking over the learning process. This positive shift in students’ learning behavior serves as significant evidence that this deep learning approach is effective in improving the quality of students’ fiqh learning at the madrasah.

## Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of deep learning in fiqh education represents a significant shift from traditional teacher-centered pedagogy toward a more constructivist and student-centered paradigm. This transformation is consistent with contemporary educational theory, particularly the notion that meaningful learning occurs when students actively construct knowledge through engagement and reflection rather than passive reception (Fullan et al., 2018; Tsingos et al., 2015). Within the framework of Islamic education, this shift aligns with the principle of *tafaqquh fī al-dīn*, which emphasizes deep understanding and the internalization of religious knowledge. The Qur’anic concept of *tadabbur* further reinforces this orientation by encouraging critical reflection on revealed knowledge. Empirically, the increased student participation observed in this study suggests that deep learning fosters higher-order thinking skills and conceptual understanding. These findings are in line with previous research demonstrating that student-centered approaches significantly enhance critical thinking and engagement (Rasyidi et al., 2025; Saadah et al., 2025). Thus, the study confirms that pedagogical transformation is essential for improving the quality of fiqh education.

Moreover, the use of real-life case analysis in fiqh instruction illustrates the effectiveness of contextual learning in bridging theory and practice. This approach reflects the principles of situated learning, where knowledge is constructed through authentic experiences and social interaction (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In Islamic pedagogy, such an approach is closely related to the concept of *‘ilm nāfi‘*, which prioritizes knowledge that is applicable and beneficial in daily life. The integration of cases related to *thaharah* demonstrates how abstract legal concepts can be internalized through practical application. Additionally, the collaborative discussion model reflects the Islamic value of *shūrā*, which emphasizes collective reasoning and dialogue. Research in educational psychology has shown that collaborative learning enhances both cognitive and metacognitive development (Malecka et al., 2022). The findings of this study support this argument by showing increased student engagement and analytical ability during group discussions. Therefore, contextual and collaborative learning emerges as a key component in effective fiqh instruction.

The transformation of the teacher’s role from knowledge transmitter to facilitator represents another critical finding of this study. This shift is consistent with socio-constructivist theory, particularly Vygotsky’s concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, which highlights the importance of guided interaction in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of Islamic education, this role aligns with the concept of *murabbi*, a teacher who nurtures students’ intellectual and moral development. The findings indicate that when teachers act as facilitators, students become more active and confident in expressing their ideas. However, the study also reveals challenges related to teacher readiness and pedagogical competence. This is consistent with previous studies showing that teacher professional development is a key factor in the success of innovative learning approaches (Tambak & Sukenti, 2025; Widodo et al., 2025). Without adequate training and support, the implementation of deep learning may not achieve optimal results. Therefore, strengthening teacher capacity is essential for sustaining pedagogical innovation.

The integration of digital resources in fiqh learning further highlights the relevance of technology in contemporary Islamic education. The use of digital platforms to access Qur'anic and Hadith references reflects the growing importance of digital literacy in the learning process. This finding aligns with research indicating that technology-enhanced learning can improve access to information and support personalized learning experiences (Mustari, 2023; Wijaya & Mashud, 2020). However, from an Islamic perspective, the use of technology must be guided by ethical considerations to ensure the authenticity and validity of knowledge. The concept of *hikmah* is particularly relevant in this context, as students must be able to critically evaluate information obtained from digital sources. The study shows that deep learning can facilitate this process by encouraging analytical thinking and reflection. This is particularly important in the digital era, where students are exposed to diverse and sometimes unreliable religious content. Therefore, integrating digital literacy with Islamic values is crucial for developing responsible and critical learners.

Another important aspect highlighted in this study is the use of holistic assessment strategies that encompass cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. This approach is consistent with Bloom's taxonomy, which emphasizes the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the learning process (Sukenti et al., 2025). In Islamic education, this reflects the concept of *insān kāmil*, which aims to develop balanced individuals with comprehensive competencies. The use of authentic assessment methods, such as practical demonstrations and reflective activities, indicates a shift toward more meaningful evaluation practices. Research has shown that authentic assessment enhances students' ability to apply knowledge in real-life contexts (Sukenti & Tambak, 2020). Furthermore, reflective activities align with the Islamic principle of *muhāsabah*, which encourages self-evaluation and continuous improvement. The findings suggest that such assessment practices contribute to deeper learning and character development. Therefore, evaluation should be viewed as an integral part of the learning process rather than merely a measurement tool.

Despite these positive findings, the study also identifies several challenges in the implementation of deep learning. These include limited infrastructure, time constraints, and variations in students' critical thinking abilities. Such challenges are consistent with previous research highlighting the difficulties of implementing innovative pedagogies in resource-constrained environments (Tambak & Sukenti, 2024; Rizki & Achadi, 2024). From an Islamic perspective, these challenges can be understood within the framework of *ijtihad*, which emphasizes continuous effort and adaptation in addressing new problems. The variability in student readiness also indicates the need for differentiated instruction to accommodate diverse learning needs. Additionally, the lack of longitudinal data limits the ability to assess the long-term impact of the approach. Therefore, future studies should adopt more robust research designs to address these limitations. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring the sustainability of deep learning implementation.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the development of Islamic education by demonstrating the effectiveness of deep learning in enhancing fiqh instruction. It shows that integrating cognitive, affective, and contextual dimensions of learning can create more meaningful and transformative educational experiences. This aligns with the broader goals of Islamic education, which aim to develop individuals who are intellectually competent and morally grounded. The findings also highlight the importance of combining traditional Islamic values with modern pedagogical approaches. Future research should explore the scalability of this approach across different educational contexts. Additionally, further studies are needed to examine its long-term impact on students' intellectual and spiritual development. Ultimately, this study reinforces the need for a holistic and integrative approach to Islamic education in the contemporary era.

## Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the implementation of deep learning methods in fiqh instruction at MTs Mizanul Kubro, in response to the challenge of unsatisfactory student performance in this subject, which is considered complex. The deep learning method was implemented to shift the focus from surface learning to deep understanding, in line with the student-centered and project-based principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. The application of this method proved capable of creating a highly engaging and transformative classroom environment, fostering increased participation and the development of critical thinking skills among students. Students are encouraged to analyze cases, identify legal principles, and connect Islamic legal concepts (such as

thaharah and najis) to their daily lives, making their understanding of fiqh more practical and meaningful. Observations reveal significant collaboration during group discussions, where students effectively share responsibilities for gathering references and formulating conclusions.

The process of implementing deep learning at MTs Mizanul Kubro follows three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. During the planning stage, teachers select materials that are relevant to students' lives and design in-depth case studies and problem-solving activities. The implementation stage begins with a prompt question relevant to real-life experiences, sparking reflection, and is followed by an intensive group discussion to analyze the case study and identify the legal basis from various sources, including digital ones. Teachers act as facilitators, guiding the discussion and correcting misconceptions, ensuring the creation of an active and dynamic learning environment. Improved understanding is evident in students' ability to interpret, compare, and apply fiqh principles in a structured manner, such as relating the concept of the purifying nature of clean water to situations at home or school. Additionally, students demonstrate the courage to challenge and critique other groups' analyses with fiqh arguments supported by relevant evidence, indicating the development of solid critical thinking skills.

The implications of this study suggest that deep learning is an effective approach for improving the quality of fiqh education, as this method bridges the gap between fiqh legal theory and its practical application in daily life. Although it offers great potential, this study also highlights significant challenges that must be addressed, including the need for adequate educational infrastructure and teachers' professional readiness to adopt more dynamic, technology-based methods in the digital age. These challenges are particularly relevant given that conventional fiqh learning processes are often still dominated by lecture-based and rote-memorization methods. Practically, this research makes a significant contribution to fiqh teachers in designing contextual learning experiences and assessment strategies aligned with the requirements of the Merdeka Curriculum. Overall, deep learning has proven to foster students' integrity, critical thinking, and collaborative skills, transforming fiqh into a more vibrant and practical learning experience, and serving as a benchmark for future learning innovations.

## **Declarations**

### **Author contribution statement**

Contributions of the authors in this article: First author, contributed as concepts and drafters of the article, data analyzers, interpreters, writing the manuscript and critically revising the article; Second author, as the critically revising the article, and editing of the language of manuscript, collecting data and critically revising the article. All authors agree to take responsibility for all aspects of this work. Both authors contributed equally and approved the final version of the article for publication.

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### **Data availability statement**

The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

### **Declaration of interests statement**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

### **Declaration of use artificial intelligence**

The author uses generative artificial intelligence in this paper for the data analysis process.

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