

Strategies for Fostering Teacher Professionalism in Adopting the Deep Learning Approach in Islamic-Based Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze teacher professionalism development strategies in adapting the deep learning approach in an Islamic-based elementary school. The study employed a qualitative approach with a case study method at SD Amaliah Ciawi Bogor. The research informants consisted of the principal, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, and six teachers selected purposively. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, and were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data trustworthiness was strengthened through source and technique triangulation. The findings reveal that teachers' understanding of deep learning has begun to develop as meaningful, mindful, joyful, contextual, and student-centered learning, although it is not yet evenly distributed. Teacher professionalism development is implemented through in-house training, workshops, teacher working groups, training, dissemination, professional learning communities, lesson planning assistance, academic supervision, curriculum monitoring, and Islamic value development. The main barriers include varied conceptual understanding, mindset shifts, limited time, administrative workload, digital literacy, student characteristics, and the need for continuous mentoring. This study synthesizes an integrated development strategy that combines conceptual strengthening, competency development, collaboration, supervision, evaluation, and Islamic values as the foundation of teacher professionalism in adapting deep learning.

Keywords: Teacher Professionalism Development, Deep Learning, Academic Supervision

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INTRODUCTION

The landscape of 21st-century education is characterized by a complex, rapidly changing, uncertain, and ambiguous environment. These conditions are often described using the acronym VUCA: volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. In an educational context, this situation requires schools to produce students who not only master knowledge but also possess the ability to think critically, reflectively, and adaptively, as well as solve problems within a specific context (Bellei & Munoz, 2023; Sahid et al., 2021). Primary education serves as a strategic level, as it is the stage where the foundations of students' thinking skills, character, and learning habits are established.

One response to this challenge is a shift in the learning paradigm from surface learning to deep learning. In an educational context, deep learning refers to a learning approach that emphasizes profound understanding, the interconnection of concepts, reflection, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world situations. Guslyakova (2021) asserts that quality learning lies not

merely in the delivery of material, but in how teachers assist students in understanding, processing, and utilizing knowledge. Amalia and Wilis (2021) further explain that deep learning is linked to the development of 21st-century competencies, such as creativity, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

In the Indonesian context, the deep learning approach has gained momentum following the government's push for its implementation as a means to enhance the quality of learning. A summary of the Regulation of the Minister of Basic and Secondary Education Number 13 of 2025 explains that deep learning emphasizes comprehensive conceptual understanding, critical thinking skills, reflective capabilities, and the meaningful application of knowledge in real-life situations. This regulation also situates deep learning within the framework of curricular reforms across early childhood, basic, and secondary education levels (Bunyamin et al., 2020; Epifanić et al., 2021). Consequently, deep learning should be understood as a learning approach rather than a standalone new curriculum.

However, the successful implementation of deep learning relies heavily on the readiness and professionalism of teachers. It is not enough for teachers merely to understand the term "deep learning"; they must also be able to translate it into lesson planning, method selection, the use of instructional media, assessment, reflection, and classroom management. Liu and Yin (2020) emphasize that effective teacher professional development must help teachers connect pedagogical knowledge with actual instructional practice. This is crucial because deep learning requires teachers to act as facilitators who encourage students to think, discuss, explore, and reflect on their learning experiences.

On the other hand, teachers often face limitations when adapting instructional innovations. Pauw et al. (2022) explain that teacher professionalism is influenced not only by individual capabilities but also by school culture, leadership, collaboration, and professional development systems. Consequently, strategies for fostering teacher professionalism must be understood as a planned school management process rather than merely a series of one-off training sessions. Teacher development efforts need to focus on addressing actual classroom needs, providing continuous mentoring and academic supervision, fostering learning communities, and evaluating instructional practices.

From the perspective of Islamic educational management, fostering teacher professionalism involves not only the development of pedagogical and professional competencies but also the cultivation of moral and spiritual integrity. Islamic educational management is grounded in the values of *tauhid* (divine oneness), *amanah* (trustworthiness), justice, and responsibility (Bunyamin et al., 2020; Huda et al., 2020; Sahid et al., 2021). Fitri (2022) further emphasizes the need for Islamic educational management to systematically integrate institutional aspects, human resources, and Islamic values. Consequently, teacher development in Islamic-based primary schools must combine competence, collaboration, supervision, and Islamic values—such as trustworthiness, sincerity, responsibility, and exemplary conduct.

Numerous studies have been conducted on fostering teacher professionalism, particularly regarding training, supervision, and competency development. However, research specifically linking the cultivation of teacher professionalism to the adoption of a "deep learning" approach within Islamic primary schools remains limited. Studies on deep learning generally emphasize its impact on student learning outcomes, whereas research on teacher professionalism often addresses teacher competencies in general terms without relating them to the specific demands of particular instructional approaches. Consequently, this study offers a novel contribution by formulating a strategy for fostering teacher professionalism that integrates the adoption of deep learning with the values of Islamic educational management. This study aims to analyze strategies

for fostering teacher professionalism in adapting the deep learning approach at SD Amaliah Ciawi, Bogor. Specifically, the study examines teachers' understanding of deep learning, the implementation of professional development, obstacles to adopting deep learning, and the roles of the principal and the deputy principal for curriculum affairs in managing teacher development.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach utilizing the case study method. A qualitative approach was selected because the research seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the informants' experiences, perspectives, and practices within a natural setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study method was chosen because the research focuses on a single case—SD Amaliah Ciawi Bogor—an Islamic elementary school that is currently adopting a "deep learning" approach to instruction. The case study method is appropriate for examining contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context cannot be clearly distinguished.

The study was conducted in April 2026. There were eight informants, comprising one school principal, one deputy principal for curriculum affairs, and six teachers. Informants were selected using purposive sampling due to their roles, experience, and direct involvement in fostering teacher professionalism and implementing instruction. The principal served as an informant regarding policy, leadership, supervision, and teacher development. The deputy principal for curriculum affairs provided information on planning, support for instructional materials, monitoring, and the evaluation of instruction. Teachers served as informants regarding their understanding of deep learning, professional development experiences, instructional practices, challenges, and professional development needs.

Data analysis employed the Miles et al. (2015) model, comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview data underwent repeated readings and initial coding (open coding), grouping (axial coding), and synthesis (selective coding) to address the research focus. Data presentation took the form of thematic narratives, coding matrices, and source triangulation. Data validity was reinforced through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, increased persistence, and member checking. Source triangulation involved comparing data from the principal, the vice-principal for curriculum affairs, and teachers, while methodological triangulation entailed comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Researchers need to inform several important (original) field data obtained from interviews, observations, questionnaires, surveys, documents, and other data collection techniques. The findings are presented in full and are related to the pre-determined scope of research. Findings can be supplemented with tables, graphs, and/or diagrams. Tables and figures are numbered and titled.

Based on interviews with six teachers, the deputy principal for curriculum (DI), and the principal (WRM), teachers' understanding of the deep learning approach at SD Amaliah is beginning to take shape but is not yet uniform across the board. Teachers interpret deep learning as an approach that goes beyond rote memorization to foster conceptual understanding, connect subject matter with real-life experiences, and encourage critical thinking, discussion, and the expression of opinions, all within a framework of meaningful and enjoyable learning. DI outlined three guiding elements for the school—meaningful learning, mindful learning, and joyful learning—while WRM emphasized the need for instruction to resonate more deeply with students. Variations in understanding and implementation remain influenced by factors such as teaching experience,

participation in training, pedagogical skills, readiness for change, and access to learning communities.

These findings indicate that teachers are shifting from merely understanding terminology to grasping the essential nature of the learning process itself. Deep learning with conceptual understanding, knowledge transfer, and the application of knowledge in broader contexts, whereas Creativity, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving. At the primary school level, this approach must be realized through concrete experiences that align with students' developmental stages (Aningsih et al., 2022; Çakır, 2020). Therefore, reinforcing both conceptual and practical understanding remains essential to ensure that deep learning is not reduced to the mere use of active methods or instructional media, but is instead holistically integrated into learning objectives, activities, assessments, and reflection.

Teacher professionalism development at SD Amaliah is conducted through in-house training (IHT), workshops, seminars, Teacher Working Groups (KKG), training sessions, dissemination activities, learning communities, peer discussions, instructional material support, academic supervision, curriculum monitoring, and spiritual guidance. Six teachers gained an understanding of "deep learning" through seminars, training, school-based briefings, digital platforms, the internet, and teacher forums, while also identifying needs for practical training, ongoing mentoring, learning resources, and spaces for peer discussion. DI outlined the support provided for annual and semester programs, learning outcomes, learning objectives, teaching modules, and teaching journals, whereas WRM emphasized continuous training, technological development, supervision, and motivation.

In practice, the adoption of deep learning still faces obstacles regarding conceptual, pedagogical, technical, and managerial aspects, as well as the need for a shift in perspective. These obstacles include uneven understanding, the need for a mindset shift, time constraints, administrative burdens, variations in student ability and motivation, diverse levels of digital literacy, and facilities that are not yet fully optimal. Teachers also require thorough preparation to analyze learning outcomes and student characteristics, design activities, select methods and media, formulate open-ended questions, and develop assessments (Damayanti & Fariyah, 2023). DI highlights the shift in mindset and limited time for guidance, while WRM adds resistance to change, inadequate dissemination of information, teacher motivation, and technological proficiency to the list of challenges. Educational change requires sustained support. Thus, the obstacles to adoption must be understood as issues of change management and professional development, rather than merely matters of individual teacher competence.

The school principal and the deputy principal for curriculum affairs perform complementary roles in professional guidance and development. The principal acts as a policy director, facilitator, motivator, supervisor, architect of a collaborative culture, and reinforcer of Islamic values, while the deputy principal handles technical curriculum management, instructional support, coordination of guidance activities, monitoring, and evaluation. These roles are evident in the encouragement of training participation, the development of teaching methods and media, instructional supervision, the provision of recognition, the preparation of instructional materials, the review of teaching journals, and the monitoring of student learning outcomes. Characterize school leadership as a force for direction, capacity building, and the shaping of organizational culture. From the perspective of Islamic educational management, this guidance also integrates the principles of *tauhid* (divine oneness), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *ikhlas* (sincerity), responsibility, and exemplary conduct through practices such as habitual acts of worship, teacher study circles, congregational prayers, the recitation of the *Asmaul Husna* (Beautiful Names of Allah), and a culture of mutual reminders.

The strategy for fostering teacher professionalism at SD Amaliah can be synthesized as an integrated and continuous management process. This set of strategies encompasses strengthening conceptual understanding; developing competencies through in-house training (IHT), workshops, Teacher Working Groups (KKG), and external training; providing support for instructional materials; strengthening learning communities; conducting academic supervision, curriculum monitoring, and evaluation with follow-up actions; and integrating Islamic values. These strategies position professional development not merely as a one-off training event, but as a process linking conceptual strengthening with classroom practice and continuous improvement, driven by the synergy between the principal, the vice-principal for curriculum affairs, and the teachers. Table 2 summarizes the interrelationships among the development components, implementation methods, objectives, and their impact on the adoption of deep learning.

Table 1. A synthesis of strategies for fostering teacher professionalism in adapting to deep learning

Component	Implementation	Contribution
Reinforcement of concepts	Awareness-raising, training, discussion, dissemination	Aligning understanding of deep learning.
Competence development	In-house training, workshops, seminars, teacher working groups (KKG), technology training	Enhancing pedagogical and professional competence.
Support for teaching materials	Learning Outcomes, Learning Objectives, modules, media, assessments, journals	Incorporating deep learning into instructional design.
Learning community	Discussions, Teacher Working Group (KKG) sessions, meetings, sharing of practices	Strengthening collaboration and resolving obstacles.
Academic supervision	Classroom observation, feedback, evaluation	Guiding improvements in instructional practices.
Curriculum monitoring	Instructional materials, journals, implementation, learning outcomes	Monitoring the implementation of deep learning adoption.
Evaluation and follow-up	Reflection and improvement plan	Ensure the continuity of development and guidance.
Integration of Islamic values	Recitation, worship, example, trust, sincerity	Fostering professionalism with character.

Table 1 shows that the teacher professional development strategy at Amaliah Elementary School operates as an interconnected system, not as a stand-alone activity. Conceptual reinforcement serves as the foundation for competency development, which is further strengthened through the support of learning tools, learning communities, academic supervision, and monitoring and follow-up. This sequence demonstrates that successful adaptation to deep learning depends heavily on the continuity between understanding, application skills, mentoring, reflection, and improvement of learning practices. The integration of Islamic values also provides a character dimension to teacher professionalism, so that competency development is oriented not only toward improving pedagogical quality but also toward shaping attitudes, role models, responsibility, and integrity. Thus, the professional development strategy at Amaliah Elementary School can be understood as a collaborative, sustainable, and contextual process of change, in which school leadership plays a role in creating conditions that enable teachers to develop and gradually internalize deep learning principles in their daily learning practices.

CONCLUSION

Teacher professional development in adapting the deep learning approach at Amaliah Elementary School has been carried out through an integrated, sustainable, and collaboration-based strategy. Strengthening conceptual understanding, increasing competency through training,

providing learning tools, developing learning communities, academic supervision, monitoring and evaluation, and integrating Islamic values are mutually supportive components in driving changes in learning practices. Although there are still obstacles such as heterogeneity of understanding, time constraints, administrative burdens, technological readiness, and resistance to change, the role of the principal and vice principal in curriculum is a crucial factor in providing ongoing direction, mentoring, motivation, and support. Thus, adapting deep learning cannot be achieved through short-term training but requires a consistent, collaborative, and reflective professional development ecosystem oriented towards improving learning practices and building student character.

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