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Deep learning-based instructional innovation in pancasila education for meaningful student learning outcomes

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the implementation of deep learning-based instructional innovation in Pancasila Education at State Junior High School 1 of Solok City. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed involving 13 purposively selected informants consisting of one principal, four Pancasila Education teachers, and eight students. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model with triangulation to ensure trustworthiness. Deep learning was implemented through contextual learning, project-based activities, authentic assessment, reflective learning, and digital media integration. These practices enhanced student engagement, critical thinking, collaboration, and the internalization of Pancasila values despite challenges related to teacher readiness, limited instructional time, technology, and curriculum demands. Deep learning effectively strengthens instructional quality and character development in Pancasila Education, although sustained implementation requires continuous professional development and institutional support.



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Introduction

Pancasila Education plays a strategic role in developing democratic citizenship, ethical reasoning, national identity, and responsible participation among Indonesian students (Khastini & Maryani, 2025; A. A. Putri, 2026). Within the Merdeka Curriculum, it is expected to promote higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), collaboration, reflection, and the application of Pancasila values in authentic social contexts. However, classroom practices in many Indonesian schools remain predominantly teacher-centered and memorization-oriented, limiting opportunities for inquiry, critical thinking, and meaningful learning (Idrus, 2025; Puspitorini et al., 2025). This discrepancy indicates the need for instructional approaches that enable students to actively construct knowledge while connecting civic concepts with real-life experiences.

Deep learning has emerged as a key pedagogical approach supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum through the integration of mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning (Amali et al., 2025; Raihani et al., 2025; Tapung, 2025). These dimensions encourage reflective thinking, contextual understanding, active engagement, and positive learning experiences that are closely aligned with the objectives of Pancasila Education. Previous studies also associate deep learning with inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, authentic assessment, collaborative learning, and reflective practice, which collectively enhance conceptual

understanding and transferable competencies beyond factual memorization (Jumanto et al., 2026; Naqiba, 2025). Consequently, deep learning offers a strong pedagogical foundation for integrating cognitive development, character education, and active citizenship.

Previous studies have reported that contextual learning, project-based learning, authentic assessment, and technology-supported instruction improve student engagement, critical thinking, collaboration, and learning motivation (Brawijaya et al., 2026; Nurihayati, 2026). Similarly, research in Indonesia highlights the contribution of innovative pedagogies to implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (Harjanti et al., 2026; N. E. Wardani et al., 2025; Wildan et al., 2025). Nevertheless, most studies focus on general pedagogical contexts or evaluate learning outcomes without explaining how teachers implement mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning throughout lesson planning, classroom instruction, and assessment. As a result, empirical evidence remains limited regarding the instructional processes and contextual factors that shape successful deep learning implementation in Pancasila Education.

This limitation reveals an important research gap. Existing literature has not comprehensively examined the integration of instructional innovation, teacher readiness, institutional support, student responses, implementation barriers, and instructional fidelity within a single analytical framework. Furthermore, limited evidence explains how deep learning facilitates the internalization of Pancasila values while promoting critical thinking and active participation in authentic classroom settings (Priambudi & Wardhani, 2026; Rahayu & Dewi, 2026). Consequently, a more comprehensive investigation is needed to explain the mechanisms through which deep learning is implemented in Pancasila Education and the factors influencing its effectiveness (Astuti et al., 2024; Laurens, 2025; Permatasari et al., 2025).

Accordingly, this study investigates the implementation of deep learning-based instructional innovation in Pancasila Education at State Junior High School 1 of Solok City. Specifically, it examines instructional innovations in planning, learning, and assessment, identifies pedagogical and institutional challenges, and analyzes teachers' adaptive strategies during implementation. The novelty of this study lies in integrating instructional innovation, implementation barriers, and adaptive strategies into a comprehensive framework while examining the alignment between instructional design and classroom practice. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize learning outcomes, this research provides a more holistic understanding of how mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning are operationalized in Pancasila Education, thereby contributing both to the development of civic education pedagogy and to evidence-based implementation of deep learning within the Merdeka Curriculum.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to explore the implementation of deep learning-based instructional innovation in Pancasila Education at State Junior High School 1 of Solok City, Indonesia. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of instructional practices, teachers' experiences, and contextual factors influencing the implementation of deep learning. The study was conducted from January to June 2026 at a public junior high school that has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum since the 2022/2023 academic year, where all Pancasila Education teachers had participated in professional development related to deep learning and the school was supported by adequate digital learning facilities, including Interactive Flat Panels (IFP), Chromebooks, LCD projectors, and internet access. The research site was purposively selected because it represented a school actively implementing deep learning within the Merdeka Curriculum. Participants were also selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in planning, implementing, supervising, and experiencing deep learning-based instruction. The participants consisted of one principal, four Pancasila Education teachers, and eight students from Grades VII–IX who were actively engaged in classroom learning. These participants were considered capable of providing comprehensive information regarding instructional innovation, implementation challenges, and adaptive strategies.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to ensure data triangulation. Classroom observations were conducted repeatedly during Pancasila Education lessons to examine teacher–student interactions, the implementation of mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning, the use of digital learning media, and authentic assessment practices. Semi-structured interviews with the principal, teachers, and students explored instructional innovations, implementation barriers, and solution strategies, while document analysis examined teaching modules, lesson plans, assessment instruments, school documents, and learning media to verify the consistency between instructional planning and classroom practice. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Interview transcripts, observation field notes, and documentary

evidence were systematically coded, categorized, and organized into three themes: instructional innovation, implementation challenges, and adaptive strategies. The credibility of the findings was strengthened through methodological, source, and time triangulation, member checking with participating teachers, and continuous comparison between empirical findings and the theoretical framework of deep learning to ensure the trustworthiness and analytical rigor of the study.

Results and Discussions

This study explored the implementation of deep learning-based innovation in Pancasila Education at State Junior High School 1 of Solok City through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving the principal, four Pancasila teachers, and students. The qualitative analysis generated three overarching themes: (1) instructional innovations adopted in planning, implementation, and assessment; (2) challenges encountered during implementation; and (3) strategies developed to overcome these challenges. These themes collectively illustrate the ongoing pedagogical transformation from teacher-centered instruction toward meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Research Context

Aspect	Findings
Research site	State Junior High School 1 of Solok City
Research participants	Principal, four Pancasila Education teachers, and students
School implementation	Kurikulum Merdeka since 2022/2023
Supporting facilities	Interactive Flat Panel (IFP), Chromebooks, LCD projectors, internet facilities
Teacher preparation	All Pancasila teachers had attended Deep Learning workshops or professional training

The findings indicate that the school possesses a relatively supportive educational environment for implementing deep learning. All participating teachers had previously attended professional development programs related to deep learning, while the school also provided sufficient digital infrastructure, including Interactive Flat Panels, Chromebooks, and multimedia projectors. These conditions created favorable institutional readiness for pedagogical innovation, although differences remained in teachers' levels of implementation.

Table 2. Forms of Deep Learning-Based Instructional Innovation

Dimension	Major Findings
Planning	Development of teaching modules integrating HOTS, essential content, authentic assessment, and digital media
Learning activities	Case-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, inquiry, contextual discussion, classroom constitution project
Learning media	Interactive Flat Panel, Canva, Quizizz, Wordwall, YouTube, Google Classroom, CapCut
Reflection	Structured reflective activities and differentiated reflection
Assessment	Authentic assessment, performance assessment, case analysis, reflective assessment

The data demonstrate that instructional innovation extended beyond the use of digital technology to include redesigning lesson planning, classroom activities, and assessment strategies. Teachers increasingly emphasized authentic learning experiences that encouraged critical thinking, contextual problem-solving, and value internalization instead of memorization. Although the degree of adoption varied across teachers, the instructional innovations consistently reflected the integration of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning principles.

Table 3. Classroom Implementation of Mindful, Meaningful, and Joyful Learning

Deep Learning Dimension	Classroom Practices
Mindful Learning	Emotional check-in, reflective questioning, self-awareness activities
Meaningful Learning	Real-life issues, national identity cases, contextual discussions, local experiences
Joyful Learning	Interactive quizzes, educational games, videos, collaborative discussion, digital learning media

Higher-Order Thinking	Open-ended questions, argument construction, dilemma analysis, authentic problem solving
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The implementation of deep learning was characterized by learning experiences closely connected to students' daily lives. Teachers integrated authentic social issues, collaborative discussions, and technology-supported learning activities to promote higher-order thinking. Mindful learning was initiated through reflective activities, while meaningful and joyful learning emerged through contextual learning experiences and interactive digital media that increased student engagement.

Table 4. Challenges in Implementing Deep Learning

Category	Identified Challenges
Pedagogical	Difficulty designing HOTS-oriented assessment and meaningful learning activities
Student factors	Passive learning habits, low confidence, limited critical thinking skills
Time	Insufficient instructional time for deep discussion and reflection
Technology	Limited equipment availability and unstable internet connection
Classroom condition	Large class size reducing teacher facilitation effectiveness
Curriculum	Pressure to complete curriculum targets
Teacher readiness	Different levels of understanding regarding deep learning implementation
Implementation	Gap between lesson planning and classroom practice

The interviews consistently revealed that implementing deep learning involved multidimensional challenges. Teachers experienced difficulties balancing curriculum demands with meaningful learning activities, while students required gradual adaptation to more active learning approaches. Furthermore, technological limitations, large class sizes, and inconsistent implementation across teachers contributed to an implementation gap between instructional planning and actual classroom practice.

Table 5. Strategies for Overcoming Implementation Challenges

Challenge	Strategy Implemented
Passive students	Contextual problems, visual media, classroom discussion
Low critical thinking	Gradual scaffolding and guided inquiry
Limited time	Flipped classroom and prioritization of essential learning materials
Large class size	Small-group collaborative learning and structured discussion
Assessment	Authentic performance assessment and reflective assessment
Teacher competence	Collaboration through MGMP and professional learning communities
Technology	Utilization of available digital platforms and learning management systems

Teachers adopted various adaptive strategies to sustain deep learning implementation despite existing constraints. Gradual scaffolding enabled students to transition from passive recipients to active participants, while contextual case discussions increased engagement and reasoning skills. Professional collaboration among teachers, together with authentic assessment and digital learning platforms, further strengthened instructional quality and consistency across classrooms.

Table 6. Perceived Outcomes of Deep Learning-Based Pancasila Education

Aspect	Observed Outcomes
Student engagement	Increased classroom participation and discussion
Critical thinking	Improved analytical reasoning and argumentation
Collaboration	Stronger teamwork and democratic discussion
Character development	Better internalization of Pancasila values
Teacher role	Shift from information transmitter to learning facilitator
Learning atmosphere	More interactive, contextual, and enjoyable classroom environment

The implementation of deep learning transformed classroom practices from teacher-centered instruction into student-centered learning. Teachers reported greater student participation, while students perceived learning as more meaningful because classroom activities were connected to real-life experiences. The integration of authentic assessment, contextual inquiry, and collaborative learning contributed to stronger critical thinking, value internalization, and active participation, indicating that deep learning effectively supports the objectives of Pancasila Education.

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of deep learning in Pancasila Education has promoted a substantial pedagogical transformation from teacher-centered instruction toward student-centered learning. This transformation was supported by a favorable institutional context, including 72 teachers, 1,003 students

distributed across 31 classrooms, and adequate digital infrastructure consisting of 90 Chromebooks, Interactive Flat Panels (IFP), and multimedia projectors. Moreover, all four Pancasila Education teachers participating in this study had attended professional development programs related to deep learning, providing an important foundation for instructional innovation. Nevertheless, variations in implementation were still evident, indicating that participation in professional training alone does not automatically guarantee consistent classroom practice. Instead, teachers' pedagogical competence and reflective practice appear to determine the extent to which deep learning principles are translated into authentic classroom experiences. These findings are consistent with the argument that successful educational innovation depends not only on technological readiness but also on teachers' professional capacity to redesign learning environments that promote meaningful cognitive engagement (Meliyawati & Dinata, 2025; Puspaningrum et al., 2025; Sugesti & Hidayat, 2026; Zubaidi et al., 2026).

The instructional innovations identified in this study indicate that deep learning extends beyond the integration of digital technology into a comprehensive redesign of lesson planning, classroom instruction, and assessment. Teachers implemented contextual strategies such as Case-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, inquiry activities, classroom constitution projects, reflective learning, and authentic performance assessment while utilizing digital platforms including Quizizz, Canva, Google Classroom, Wordwall, YouTube, and CapCut. These innovations were intentionally designed to facilitate the three dimensions of deep learning: mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning, which encouraged students to analyze authentic societal issues rather than merely memorize Pancasila concepts. Such instructional practices support the development of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), civic reasoning, and value internalization, confirming that contextual and collaborative learning experiences foster deeper conceptual understanding than traditional knowledge transmission. Similar conclusions have been reported by Aini & Husna, (2025); Rahma et al., (2025); Rahmawanti & Dinata, (2025), who emphasize that meaningful learning emerges when students actively construct knowledge through authentic inquiry, collaboration, and reflection rather than passive information reception.

Despite these positive innovations, the study identified several multidimensional barriers that constrained effective implementation. The qualitative findings revealed challenges related to pedagogical readiness, passive learning habits, limited instructional time, technological constraints, large class sizes, curriculum pressure, and inconsistencies between instructional planning and classroom implementation. Interviews with the 13 informants, consisting of four teachers, one principal, and eight students, consistently indicated that deep learning requires considerably more classroom time than conventional instruction because it involves exploration, discussion, reflection, and authentic assessment. Teachers also highlighted the difficulty of simultaneously achieving curriculum coverage and facilitating meaningful inquiry, while students acknowledged that adapting from memorization-oriented learning toward analytical reasoning required gradual support. These findings reinforce previous studies suggesting that educational reform frequently encounters an "implementation gap," in which curriculum documents promote innovative pedagogies, but classroom practice remains constrained by institutional routines, assessment traditions, and time limitations (Anggrayni et al., 2025; Fernandes et al., 2025; Risal et al., 2025; Wibisono et al., 2026).

An important contribution of this study lies in identifying adaptive instructional strategies that enabled teachers to sustain deep learning despite these constraints. Teachers implemented gradual scaffolding, contextual problem-based instruction, flipped classroom approaches, accountable collaborative learning groups, authentic performance assessment, and continuous professional collaboration through MGMP and school learning communities. These strategies gradually shifted students from passive recipients of knowledge toward active participants capable of questioning, arguing, and reflecting critically on social issues. The classroom constitution project represents a particularly noteworthy example because it integrated democratic participation, collaborative problem solving, reflective practice, and authentic assessment within a single instructional activity, thereby facilitating the internalization of Pancasila values through direct experience. Such findings support socio-constructivist perspectives, which argue that deep conceptual understanding develops progressively through guided participation, collaborative interaction, and structured scaffolding provided by knowledgeable facilitators (Roisa et al., 2027; Ruyadi et al., 2026; Sofiani et al., 2025; Sudarmin et al., 2024).

Overall, the present findings indicate that deep learning constitutes a promising pedagogical approach for strengthening both cognitive competence and character development in Pancasila Education. Participants consistently perceived classrooms as becoming more interactive, contextual, collaborative, and enjoyable after implementing deep learning, while students demonstrated greater willingness to participate in discussions, formulate arguments, and relate Pancasila values to contemporary societal issues. However, sustaining these positive outcomes requires continuous teacher professional development, stronger institutional support, improved digital infrastructure, and assessment systems that prioritize authentic learning outcomes over content coverage. Consequently, successful implementation of deep learning should be understood as a comprehensive

process of pedagogical transformation rather than merely the adoption of new instructional technologies. This finding contributes to the growing body of literature emphasizing that meaningful educational reform requires simultaneous changes in teacher beliefs, instructional design, assessment practices, and school culture to produce sustainable improvements in student learning and character formation (Dwirisnanda, 2025; Umar et al., 2023; Utami et al., 2025; H. K. Wardani et al., 2023).

Conclusions

This study concludes that the implementation of deep learning-based instructional innovation in Pancasila Education at State Junior High School 1 of Solok City has facilitated a shift from teacher-centered instruction toward a more student-centered learning environment characterized by mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning. Teachers implemented various instructional innovations in lesson planning, classroom activities, and authentic assessment through contextual learning, digital technology integration, project-based activities, case-based discussions, and reflective learning. Although the implementation was constrained by pedagogical, technological, institutional, and curricular challenges including limited instructional time, varying teacher readiness, large class sizes, and inconsistencies between instructional planning and classroom practice teachers adopted adaptive strategies such as scaffolding, collaborative learning, authentic assessment, and professional collaboration to address these barriers. Overall, the findings demonstrate that deep learning provides an effective pedagogical framework for strengthening students' critical thinking, active participation, collaborative learning, and internalization of Pancasila values. These findings highlight the importance of continuous teacher professional development, institutional support, and systematic implementation to maximize the effectiveness and sustainability of deep learning within the Merdeka Curriculum.

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