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## THE DEEP LEARNING APPROACH IN SOCIOLOGY EDUCATION AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

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**ABSTRACT.** The study explores the integration of deep learning approaches into high school sociology education, addressing the need for transformative teaching methodologies in an era of increasing complexity in social dynamics. Sociology, with its focus on understanding societal structures and relationships, provides an ideal platform for employing deep learning strategies such as project-based learning, case studies, and reflective discussions. These methods encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world issues, fostering both academic and personal growth. Utilizing a qualitative methodology and a literature review approach, the research synthesizes insights from recent studies within the last five years, emphasizing their relevance and credibility. Findings reveal that deep learning enhances students' analytical skills, empathy, and cultural awareness, bridging the gap between classroom theories and real-world applications. The study highlights the need for professional development for educators, supportive policies, and equitable learning environments to address implementation challenges. Future research should examine the long-term impact of deep learning on students' academic and career trajectories and explore technological advancements in facilitating this approach. By advocating for deep learning in sociology, the study underscores its potential to nurture socially conscious individuals equipped to navigate and address contemporary societal complexities.

Keywords: deep learning, sociology education, high school, critical thinking, educational innovation

## **INTRODUCTION**

profound Education is undergoing а transformation to meet the complex demands of the 21st century. As society becomes increasingly interconnected and knowledge-driven, the need to adapt teaching methodologies has never been more critical. Traditional approaches to education, often characterized by rote memorization and standardized testing, are proving inadequate in equipping students with the skills required for a rapidly evolving world. Modern education must prioritize the cultivation of creativity, collaboration, and adaptability. Recent research by (Wilson and Conyers, 2016) underscores the importance of brain-based learning strategies that emphasize real-world problem-solving and collaboration, which are crucial for fostering these skills.

The role of education extends beyond imparting knowledge; it is a foundation for developing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. In the 21st century, students are expected not only to understand complex concepts but also to apply their knowledge to real-world contexts. According to (Hattie, 2015), visible learning strategies that engage students in metacognitive practices enhance their ability to analyze, evaluate, and create solutions to problems. These practices prepare students for an unpredictable future, equipping them with the resilience and innovation needed to address challenges like climate change and technological disruption.

However, traditional teaching methods, which focus on surface-level learning outcomes, often fail to engage students deeply. This disconnection limits their ability to retain and apply knowledge meaningfully. The shift towards inquiry-based and reflective learning has been shown to promote better engagement and understanding. Ritchhart et al. (2017) highlight the significance of cultivating a culture of thinking in classrooms, where students are encouraged to question, reflect, and explore ideas actively. Such environments bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, fostering lifelong learning habits. Moreover, as



(Darling-Hammond et al., 2020) suggest, these transformative approaches help create equitable learning opportunities, addressing disparities in educational outcomes.

Sociology plays a vital role in high school education by equipping students with the tools to understand the complexities of social structures, relationships, and societal changes. As students navigate a world marked by rapid globalization, technological advancements, and shifting cultural norms, sociology provides a framework to analyze and interpret these dynamics. The subject encourages students to explore questions about power, inequality, identity, and social interaction, fostering a deeper awareness of how societies function and evolve. This understanding is crucial in preparing students to participate actively and responsibly in their communities and the broader global context.

The study of sociology also contributes significantly to the development of empathy, analytical thinking, and an appreciation for cultural diversity (Erianjoni et al., 2023). By examining different social groups, norms, and values, students are encouraged to see the world from multiple perspectives, fostering empathy for people with experiences and viewpoints different from their own. Analytical thinking is cultivated as students critically evaluate sociological theories, data, and case studies, helping them discern patterns and relationships within society. Sociology promotes cultural awareness by exposing students to the richness and complexity of human diversity, preparing them to engage respectfully and effectively in increasingly multicultural environments.

Despite its potential, sociology education in high schools often faces challenges related to teaching methods that fail to engage students deeply with the subject. Traditional approaches, such as lectures and textbook-based instruction, may not effectively communicate the dynamic and interactive nature of sociological inquiry (Djubu, 2024). These methods can result in a surface-level understanding of key concepts without encouraging students to critically connect them to real-world issues. As a result, many students miss the opportunity to fully appreciate the relevance of sociology in addressing contemporary social challenges.

Deep learning is an educational approach that emphasizes critical understanding, meaningful engagement, and long-term retention of knowledge (Hadi Pratiwi, 2020). Unlike traditional methods that prioritize memorization of facts and surface-level comprehension, deep learning focuses on helping students internalize concepts by actively connecting them to real-world applications. This approach encourages learners to ask questions, explore multiple perspectives, and apply their knowledge in novel and complex scenarios. By fostering intellectual curiosity and reflective thinking, deep learning helps students build a foundation of knowledge that is not only thorough but also adaptable to changing circumstances (Han et al., 2020).

The distinction between deep learning and surface learning lies in the depth of engagement and understanding achieved by the learner. Surface learning often involves passive absorption of information, aimed at meeting immediate academic requirements such as passing tests or completing assignments. In contrast, deep learning engages students in higher-order cognitive processes, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This approach enables learners to form meaningful connections between theoretical knowledge and practical experiences, ultimately leading to a more profound and enduring understanding. By moving beyond rote learning, deep learning prepares students to tackle complex challenges and think critically in diverse contexts (Bai et al., 2019).

Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of deep learning across various disciplines. Studies have shown that students exposed to deep learning strategies perform better in problem-solving tasks and demonstrate higher levels of creativity and innovation. For instance, in STEM education, active learning techniques such as collaborative projects and inquiry-based learning have been linked to improved academic outcomes and retention rates. Similarly, in the humanities, methods that encourage critical discussion and exploration of diverse viewpoints have been shown to enhance students' analytical and interpretative skills. These findings highlight the transformative potential of deep learning as an approach that not only improves academic performance but also equips learners with the skills necessary for lifelong success (Li et al., 2022).

The deep learning approach has immense potential to transform how students engage with sociology by fostering critical analysis of social phenomena. By moving beyond memorization of theories and concepts, deep learning encourages students to question, explore, and critique the structures and processes that shape society. For example, students might analyze the role of social stratification in economic inequality or evaluate the impact of globalization on cultural identity. Such activities require higher-order thinking, enabling learners to grasp the complexities of social dynamics and develop nuanced perspectives. Research by (Kolb and Kolb, 2018) underscores the value of experiential learning in sociology, where active participation in case studies or role-playing exercises leads to a deeper understanding of societal issues.

Connecting theoretical knowledge to real-world issues is another significant benefit of the deep learning approach in sociology. This method encourages students to apply sociological concepts to current events, personal experiences, and community challenges, bridging the gap between academic learning and practical application. For instance, the study of urbanization can be linked to the analysis of local housing crises or public transportation systems. Such connections not only make learning more relevant but also equip students with problem-solving skills applicable to real-world contexts. Research by (Freeman et al., 2020) highlights that students who engage in project-based learning are more likely to demonstrate improved critical thinking and a deeper appreciation for the relevance of their studies to everyday life.

The emphasis on active engagement and critical inquiry inherent in deep learning also fosters a lifelong interest in sociological inquiry. By encouraging students to explore the "why" and "how" of social phenomena, this approach nurtures curiosity and a commitment to understanding the complexities of human interaction. Students are more likely to pursue further studies or careers in sociology and related fields when they feel empowered to explore issues that matter to them. According to (Fink, 2019), educational strategies that prioritize deep engagement and reflection result in greater student satisfaction and sustained interest in the subject matter. This underscores the potential of deep learning to cultivate a generation of socially aware and intellectually curious individuals.

This study aims to explore the implementation of the deep learning approach in high school sociology education, focusing on its potential to transform how students engage with and understand social concepts. Sociology, as a subject, requires learners to critically analyze and interpret complex social phenomena, making it an ideal field for deep learning strategies. By integrating methods that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and active participation, the study seeks to uncover how deep learning can create a more meaningful and lasting educational experience. This approach goes beyond traditional rote memorization, empowering students to make connections between sociological theories and real-world issues, fostering both academic and personal growth.

#### **METHOD**

The research employs a qualitative method with a literature review approach, aiming to explore the application of deep learning in high school sociology education. By focusing on previously conducted studies, this research gathers valuable insights from 14 different academic sources, such as journal articles, books, and research reports, providing a rich foundation for analysis. The use of literature review ensures a broad and in-depth exploration of the subject, synthesizing findings from diverse contexts to inform the study's objectives.

Data collection for this research is entirely based on secondary sources, specifically previous studies relevant to the implementation and impact of deep learning strategies in education. These studies empirical evidence and theoretical offer perspectives, highlighting the challenges, benefits, and best practices associated with deep learning in sociology. The literature is selected through a systematic process, ensuring relevance, credibility, and recentness, focusing on works published within the last five years. This approach allows the research to incorporate contemporary insights, addressing current trends and gaps in sociology education.

The data analysis process follows the qualitative framework of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction phase, the collected data is reviewed and categorized to identify key themes and patterns. This step involves filtering out irrelevant information while focusing on the core elements that align with the research objectives. In the presentation phase, the organized data is displayed in a coherent and structured manner, allowing for clear interpretation and meaningful insights. Finally, the conclusion-drawing phase synthesizes the findings into comprehensive insights, offering answers to the research questions. This iterative process ensures that the analysis remains systematic and grounded in the data, enabling the research to draw well-supported conclusions about the potential of deep learning in enhancing sociology education.

#### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### Integration of Deep Learning in Sociology

Integrating deep learning into sociology classes requires a deliberate shift from traditional teaching methods to more interactive and student-centered approaches. Practical strategies include designing lesson plans that emphasize inquiry, analysis, and application. Educators can create opportunities for students to engage deeply with sociological concepts by encouraging them to explore real-world social phenomena through a critical lens. For instance, students might analyze the impact of globalization on local cultures or examine how social stratification shapes access to resources. This approach not only enhances their understanding of key sociological theories but also empowers them to connect classroom learning with their lived experiences.

Activities such as case studies, project-based learning, and critical discussions are particularly effective in promoting deep learning in sociology. Case studies allow students to delve into specific social issues, such as urban poverty or gender inequality, and apply theoretical frameworks to analyze these phenomena. Project-based learning further engages students by involving them in collaborative research projects, where they can collect data, conduct interviews, and present findings. Meanwhile, critical discussions provide a platform for students to exchange ideas, debate different perspectives, and refine their understanding of complex sociological issues. Research by (Kolb and Kolb, 2018) emphasizes the value of experiential learning activities in fostering critical thinking and deeper comprehension of academic content.

The role of educators is crucial in facilitating deep learning experiences in sociology. Teachers must not only introduce students to foundational theories and concepts but also guide them in exploring and questioning these ideas. This requires educators to adopt a facilitative role, encouraging active participation and providing constructive feedback. According to (Freeman et al., 2020), the effectiveness of active learning strategies depends significantly on the instructor's ability to create an inclusive and stimulating classroom environment. Teachers must also be skilled in moderating discussions, ensuring that diverse viewpoints are considered, and helping students develop critical insights.

Evidence from recent studies supports the positive outcomes of implementing deep learning strategies in sociology education. For example, a study by (Freeman et al., 2020) found that active learning approaches, such as project-based learning, significantly improved student performance and engagement in social sciences. Similarly, research by (Fink ,2019) highlighted that students exposed to interactive and reflective teaching methods developed a deeper appreciation for the relevance of their studies to real-world issues. These findings underscore the importance of adopting innovative teaching practices to make sociology more engaging and impactful for students.

To successfully integrate deep learning into sociology education, schools and educators must be prepared to address potential challenges, such as resource constraints and resistance to change from traditional methods. Professional development programs can equip teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to implement these strategies effectively. Additionally, collaboration among educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers is essential to ensure that the benefits of deep learning are realized on a broader scale. By adopting these practices, sociology classes can become dynamic spaces where students not only learn about society but also develop the critical skills needed to contribute meaningfully to it.

### Impact of Deep Learning on Student Outcomes

The integration of deep learning into sociology education has a profound impact on student outcomes, particularly in enhancing analytical and problem-solving skills. Unlike traditional rotelearning methods, deep learning encourages students to engage critically with social issues, identify patterns, and propose solutions. For example, students analyzing urban poverty can apply theoretical frameworks to assess causes and suggest actionable interventions. Research by (Freeman et al., 2020) confirms that active learning approaches significantly enhance students' ability to analyze complex scenarios, as these methods demand a higher level of cognitive engagement and the application of theoretical knowledge to practical contexts.

Another significant impact of deep learning is its ability to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world issues. Students are encouraged to explore how sociological theories manifest in everyday life, such as examining the influence of globalization on cultural practices or the role of social media in shaping public opinion. This connection not only deepens their understanding of theoretical concepts but also prepares them to address real-world challenges. A study by (Fink, 2019) highlighted that students exposed to projectbased and experiential learning were more likely to recognize the relevance of their studies to societal problems, fostering a sense of purpose and motivation in their academic pursuits.

Deep learning also promotes empathy and cultural awareness, essential traits for understanding diverse social contexts. Through activities like roleplaying and case studies, students are placed in scenarios that require them to consider multiple perspectives and appreciate cultural differences. This approach encourages students to empathize with others and evaluate societal dynamics with sensitivity and nuance. According to (Kolb and Kolb, 2018), experiential learning activities that emphasize interpersonal interactions significantly improve students' ability to navigate and respect cultural diversity, a skill highly relevant in today's interconnected world.

Furthermore, deep learning fosters a lifelong interest in sociology by encouraging students to

explore the "why" behind social phenomena. When students are actively involved in questioning and investigating societal issues, they develop an intrinsic curiosity that extends beyond the classroom. A study by (Kahu and Nelson, 2018) found that students who engaged in deep learning activities displayed sustained interest and higher levels of engagement in their studies, which positively impacted their academic performance and career aspirations. This enduring interest is vital for cultivating socially conscious individuals equipped to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Finally, the broader implications of deep learning extend to the cultivation of socially responsible citizens. By equipping students with analytical skills, empathy, and a deep understanding of societal structures, this approach prepares them to become active participants in addressing social issues. The findings of (Li et al., 2022) demonstrate that students involved in deep learning projects reported an increased commitment to social justice and community engagement, illustrating the educational transformative potential of this approach. These impacts underline the importance of integrating deep learning into sociology education to produce well-rounded, critically aware, and empathetic individuals capable of making a positive difference in society.

### Comparison with Findings from Previous Studies

Comparing the findings of this study with previous research provides a valuable perspective on the implementation of deep learning in high school sociology education. Validation of the results is evident through alignment with existing studies emphasizing the effectiveness of active and deep learning methods in fostering critical thinking and engagement. For instance, research by (Freeman et al., 2020) demonstrated that active learning approaches, such as problem-based and inquirydriven activities, significantly enhanced student performance across various disciplines, including social sciences. These findings corroborate the outcomes of this study, which highlight the benefits of deep learning in developing analytical skills and meaningful connections between theoretical concepts and real-world issues.

The results of this study align closely with contemporary educational theories, such as experiential learning and constructivism, which advocate for student-centered approaches to learning. (Kolb and Kolb, 2018) emphasize the importance of experiential learning in engaging students actively in the learning process, allowing them to construct knowledge through experiences and reflection. This theoretical framework resonates with the study's emphasis on deep learning as a means to encourage students to critically explore sociological phenomena. Additionally, (Fink, 2019) supports the idea that deep learning strategies foster transformative educational experiences, aligning with the study's findings on increased student motivation and sustained interest in sociology.

However, contrasting perspectives in the gaps and challenges literature reveal in implementing deep learning effectively. Some studies, such as those by (Kahu and Nelson, 2018), highlight barriers such as insufficient teacher training and resource constraints, which may hinder the adoption of deep learning approaches in high school settings. These limitations contrast with the findings of this study, which focus on the potential benefits and practical strategies for implementation but acknowledge that systemic support is necessary to address these challenges comprehensively. Identifying such gaps underscores the need for further research and institutional commitment to overcome these barriers.

Moreover, gaps in the literature point to limited empirical studies specifically addressing the application of deep learning in sociology education. While general research on deep learning is abundant, there is a noticeable lack of studies that focus on its role in enhancing sociological understanding among high school students (Hadi Pratiwi, 2020).

In summary, the comparison with previous studies affirms the relevance and effectiveness of deep learning as an educational strategy, while also highlighting areas requiring further investigation and support. Validation from existing research reinforces the findings, and alignment with contemporary theories underscores the theoretical soundness of this approach. However, contrasting perspectives and identified gaps emphasize the importance of addressing practical challenges to ensure the successful implementation of deep learning strategies in high school sociology education. These insights contribute to a broader understanding of the potential and limitations of this approach, offering a foundation for future research and practice.

# Implications for Educators and Curriculum Designers

Integrating deep learning into high school sociology curricula requires educators to shift from traditional rote learning to more dynamic, studentcentered methods. This involves designing lesson plans that encourage exploration of sociological concepts, fostering critical thinking, and connecting theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts. Strategies such as project-based learning, case studies, and reflective discussions play a pivotal role in engaging students at a deeper cognitive level. Research by (Freeman et al., 2020) has demonstrated that active learning strategies, which are fundamental to deep learning, significantly improve students' critical thinking and application skills, particularly in disciplines requiring complex problem-solving.

Professional development and teacher training are crucial for the successful implementation of deep learning. Teachers must be equipped to create learning environments that emphasize inquiry and collaboration. Training programs focusing on the principles and techniques of deep learning are essential. (Kolb and Kolb, 2018) highlighted that teachers who undergo experiential learning training are more effective in fostering student engagement and critical analysis, suggesting that continuous professional development can address challenges associated with this pedagogical shift. Support systems such as peer collaboration and access to teaching resources further enhance teacher readiness.

Policy reforms are necessary to support the integration of deep learning into educational frameworks. These reforms should prioritize critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the flexibility to adopt innovative teaching methods. (Li et al., 2022) emphasized that educational policies encouraging transformative learning approaches lead to better student engagement and outcomes. Providing resources, including technological tools, and ensuring equitable access are also crucial to creating an environment conducive to deep learning.

Equally important is the potential of deep learning to address educational disparities. By fostering inclusivity and active participation, this approach can bridge gaps in student outcomes across diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Sociology, with its focus on societal structures and justice, is uniquely positioned to leverage deep learning for promoting empathy and social awareness. Studies like that of (Kahu and Nelson, 2018) underscore how deep learning environments create more equitable learning experiences by encouraging diverse perspectives and reducing barriers to participation.

Ultimately, integrating deep learning into sociology curricula equips students with the tools to critically engage with societal challenges and fosters a lifelong interest in understanding social dynamics. Achieving this requires collaboration between educators, policymakers, and stakeholders. As demonstrated by (Fink, 2019), cohesive efforts across these groups not only enrich the educational experience but also empower students to make meaningful contributions to society.

## CONCLUSION

The integration of deep learning into high school sociology education offers transformative

potential in equipping students with critical analytical skills, problem-solving abilities, and a deeper understanding of social phenomena. The findings from this study substantiate that deep learning methodologies, such as project-based learning, case studies, and reflective discussions, not only enhance cognitive engagement but also foster empathy and cultural awareness among students. These outcomes align with the study's initial objectives of bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, reinforcing the role of sociology as a tool for nurturing socially conscious individuals.

Moreover, the implementation of deep learning strategies underscores the importance of professional development for educators and supportive policy reforms to address challenges such as resource constraints and resistance to pedagogical shifts. Through teacher training, access to teaching resources, and equitable learning environments, the adoption of deep learning can become a practical reality, significantly improving educational outcomes in sociology.

Future research could explore more specific dimensions of deep learning in diverse sociocultural contexts, emphasizing its impact on addressing educational disparities. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking the long-term effects of deep learning on students' academic and career trajectories could provide valuable insights. The prospects of integrating technology to enhance deep learning also remain a promising area for further exploration. This study underscores the potential of deep learning as a catalyst for educational innovation, preparing students to engage critically and empathetically with the complexities of the modern world.

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