



Students' Learning Experience in Constructivist Learning: A Case Study on Islamic Cultural History Subject at Madrasah Aliyah in Pekanbaru

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Abstrak

Paradigma pembelajaran yang menempatkan peserta didik sebagai subjek dapat memberikan kesempatan bagi mereka untuk aktif secara fisik dan mental dalam proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengalaman belajar peserta didik dalam pembelajaran konstruktivis. Penelitian ini penting untuk mengembangkan metode pembelajaran yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan pendidikan kontemporer dan meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran di Madrasah Aliyah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Metode pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis melalui proses reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran konstruktivistik memberikan berbagai pengalaman belajar bagi peserta didik, termasuk peningkatan partisipasi aktif, pengembangan keterampilan berpikir kritis, pengambilan keputusan yang fleksibel dari berbagai perspektif, keterlibatan dalam merancang pembelajaran, membangun pengetahuan, dan belajar secara kolaboratif. Penelitian ini mengemukakan pengetahuan baru tentang pembelajaran konstruktivistik dalam konteks mata pelajaran SKI di Madrasah Aliyah, yang menunjukkan pentingnya dalam memperdalam pemahaman praktis. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi berharga bagi literatur pendidikan Islam dengan menawarkan perspektif baru yang relevan untuk pengembangan kurikulum dan praktik pembelajaran. Langkah penelitian selanjutnya dapat mencakup evaluasi lebih lanjut mengenai efektivitas penerapan pembelajaran konstruktivistik dan penerapannya dalam meningkatkan hasil belajar peserta didik.

Kata Kunci: Teori Belajar Konstruktivisme, Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam, Madrasah Aliyah.

Abstract

The learning paradigm that places students as subjects can provide opportunities for them to be physically and mentally active in the learning process. This research aims to analyze students' learning experience in constructivist learning. This research is important for developing learning methods that align with the needs of contemporary education and enhancing the quality of learning in Madrasah Aliyah. This research employs a qualitative research method using a case study approach. Data collection methods included observation, interviews, and documentation. The collected data underwent analysis involving data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of this study show that constructivist learning provides various learning experiences for students, including increased active participation, development of critical thinking skills, making flexible decisions from various perspectives, being involved in designing learning, constructing knowledge, and learning collaboratively. This research puts forward new knowledge about constructivist learning in the context of SKI subject in Madrasah Aliyah, showing its significance in deepening practical understanding. It makes a valuable contribution to Islamic education literature by offering new perspectives relevant for curriculum development and learning practices. Future research steps could include further evaluation of the effectiveness of constructivist implementation and its applicability in improving student learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Constructivism Learning Theory, History of Islamic Culture Lesson, Madrasah Aliyah.*

Introduction

Nowadays, it is important to organize student-centered and democratic learning environments that facilitate students' development in various areas. A traditional learning environment, where students only memorize information without asking questions and conducting research will result in negative consequences (Kieu Oanh & Hong Nhung, 2022). In contrast, a learning paradigm that places students as subjects will provide opportunities for them to be physically and mentally active in the learning process. With this approach, teachers can create an environment that allows students to develop critical, creative, and innovative thinking skills, as well as be independent in managing the learning process, both individually and in groups (Solichin, 2021).

Learning is an active process initiated by the learner, rather than something that is forced upon them (Fernando & Marikar, 2017). Students, as learners, actively process information and construct meaning, rather than merely receiving external stimuli passively or being objects of indoctrination (Qiu, 2019). Therefore, as Bada & Olusegun (2015) argue, teachers are unable to merely transfer knowledge to students; instead, students must actively engage in constructing knowledge on their own. This process involves students designing problems, solving them, evaluating their solutions, questioning outcomes, and observing/reading others' contributions. When students engage in designing problems, it enhances their understanding of the subject and directs their focus towards assessing their own knowledge. Additionally, student feedback aids instructors in refining learning materials. Active student involvement in problem formulation, solution development, evaluation, and debate, along with reviewing peers' work, facilitates thorough internalization of the subject matter (Shen et al., 2004).

The phenomenon of traditional learning, where students are often objectified and passive in learning, is still common in many schools. In traditional classrooms, typically the teacher maintains direct and exclusive control over the classroom environment. The traditional approach operates under the assumption that there exists a defined body of knowledge that students need to acquire. Students are generally anticipated to accept the information presented by the instructor passively, without engaging in questioning or critical examination. This method

often results in teachers transferring knowledge to students without fostering discussion or exploration of concepts, thereby neglecting critical thinking skills essential for genuine scientific literacy. Moreover, this approach assumes uniformity in students' prior knowledge and their ability to grasp the material at a uniform pace (Umida et al., 2020).

Teachers as learning implementation planners, should be able to choose learning models that place students as subjects, not objects. The teacher's ability to adjust the implementation of learning is very important to improve student achievement (Shahril et al., 2023). In learning, it is also necessary to consider the prior knowledge of students as part of building new knowledge and designing meaningful learning for students by connecting learning topics with everyday life (Candra & Retnawati, 2020). One of the learning theories offered is the theory of constructivism. Brooks & Brooks (1993) urge that constructivist practices in the classroom are essential. They propose that teachers should respect and foster students' autonomy and initiative, listen to their responses and adapt teaching accordingly, encourage students to ask questions, create opportunities for dialogue and communication among students, and promote exploration of the uncertainty of knowledge.

Constructivism can be understood as knowledge that humans gradually build and expand within specific contexts (Argarini et al., 2020). This theory posits that individuals develop their understanding and knowledge of the world through their own experiences (Golder, 2018) and reflection on those experiences (Li, 2012). In other words, this theory states that students not only make sense of the information they encounter but also engage in organizing and giving meaning to all the accumulated information based on prior experience and knowledge (Shah, 2019), their mental structures, and their beliefs (Ormrod, 2012).

Constructivism is a student-centered educational theory (Kekang, 1997; Kieu Oanh & Hong Nhung, 2022) where students play an important role in the teaching and learning process (June et al., 2014). This theory emphasizes that students have an active role in learning, utilizing their adaptive cognitive structures and organizing knowledge through real-life experiences, rather than acquiring knowledge passively (Wheatley, 1991). The

objective of the constructivist educator is to offer guidance and assistance while students actively participate in constructing their own knowledge (Boghossian, 2006).

In previous studies, such as research conducted by Nugroho & Wulandari (2017) mentioned that constructivistic learning practices are proven to create an active learning environment, students' active participation, and learning responsibility which ultimately affect students' worldview and the quality of their academic skills and knowledge. According to Herdi & Santika (2020), the constructivist approach has the potential to enhance students' reading comprehension. Factors influencing students' improvement in understanding descriptive texts through this approach include the strategies employed by teachers and the educational media utilized. Research on constructivistic learning was also conducted by Candra & Retnawati (2020), the results of their research showed that the relationship between constructivist learning and student learning outcomes in social science proved to be very strong. The student-centered learning approach ensures that students are not passive in their knowledge development, making it highly effective to consider learning that prioritizes socio-cultural issues in shaping individual understanding.

Constructivism has significantly influenced education worldwide over the last two decades. In many cases, these concepts have been used as a basic framework for reforming traditional educational methods (Kieu Oanh & Hong Nhung, 2022). In contrast to previous studies, this research will examine students' experiences in constructivistic learning. The study was conducted in the subject of Islamic Culture History at Madrasah Aliyah in Pekanbaru, Riau. This research is important for developing learning methods that align with the needs of contemporary education and enhancing the quality of learning in Madrasah Aliyah.

Method

This research is a qualitative method research with a case study approach. A case study is a research approach in which the researcher collects and assesses all the evidence present in the research environment to understand a phenomenon in depth in its original context. Researchers work inductively,

developing theories based on evidence found in the field (Gillham, 2000).

This research was conducted at one of the State Madrasah Aliyah in Pekanbaru, Riau. The informants in this study were several teachers of Islamic Culture History subjects in the Madrasah Aliyah. The research time, namely February and March of 2024.

This research data was obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to observe the learning process. Interviews to extract information from informants, by combining semi-structured and unstructured interviews. While documentation, to review related documents such as syllabus, lesson plans, and evaluation instruments.

This research utilizes data analysis methods based on the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman (1992), which involves stages such as data reduction, data presentation, and field conclusions/verification. Data reduction consists of ongoing processes of selecting, concentrating, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data derived from field notes. Data presentation consists of organizing and explaining the reduced data into sentences that are structured systematically according to themes and classifications related to the subject matter. The processes of data verification and drawing conclusions are conducted to ensure the validity and accuracy of the data.

Result

Based on observations, interviews with informants, and documentation, several learning experiences of students in constructivistic learning were found. These learning experiences are increasing active participation, developing critical thinking skills, making flexible decisions from various perspectives, being involved in designing learning, constructing knowledge, and learning collaboratively.

1. Increased Active Participation

In constructivistic learning, students act as active participants who are directly involved in the learning process. This active participation is not just physical presence in class, but includes various activities that make students mentally and emotionally involved in learning. Students actively participate by being directly involved in the process of discovery and exploration of material, in this context related to Islamic

Cultural History material. Students are given the opportunity to conduct independent or group research on a particular topic, such as the influence of Islamic culture in Andalusia or the development of science during the Abbasid period. They can conduct literature searches, or collect data from various primary and secondary sources. In addition, students participate in class discussions, debates and presentations that allow them to communicate their findings and get feedback from classmates and teachers.

2. Development of Critical Thinking Skills

In constructivistic learning, students are taught to develop critical thinking skills. Students learn to think critically about their own ideas and the ideas of others, in this context related to Islamic Cultural History. As with debate activities and class discussions, students listen to others' perspectives, and defend their positions with strong evidence. In this process, students analyze different sources of information, then evaluate the validity and bias of each source. Then students are encouraged to identify weaknesses in arguments and ask relevant and insightful questions. These questions could be clarification, causation or further exploration of the topic. For example, when studying the role of Muslim scientists in the development of science, students are invited to critique different views and theories and look for evidence that supports or rejects these claims. They are also invited to consider different perspectives and historical contexts, which helps them develop deep and thorough analytical skills.

3. Make Flexible Decisions from Various Perspectives

In constructivistic learning in Islamic Cultural History class, students are trained to make flexible decisions through presentation and discussion activities. In this activity, students prepare presentations based on their research results from various references. After the presentation is complete, a discussion session begins, where other students ask questions and offer various perspectives on the material presented. The presenting students must respond to these questions and comments by considering the different points of view raised. They re-evaluate their initial conclusions based on the feedback received and consider the consequences of each perspective discussed. Through this process, students learn to be more adaptive and responsive, and develop skills in

managing diverse information and making informed decisions in dynamic situations.

4. Engage in Designing Learning

In constructivistic learning in the subject of Islamic Cultural History, students are actively involved in designing learning such as sub-discussions in material presentations. Students have the opportunity to select and plan specific parts of the presentation topic that they want to explore in more depth. For example, students may choose to investigate the role of Muslim scientists in science during a particular historical period. After deciding on the subtopics, they then design their own presentation plan, setting specific learning objectives for each subtopic, and choosing appropriate methods to present the information in a clear and structured manner. In this process, students learn to develop skills in planning and presenting material effectively, while maintaining focus on the academic needs and learning objectives that have been set.

5. Constructing Knowledge

Constructivistic learning in Islamic Cultural History subjects provides experiences for students to construct their own knowledge, by connecting new information with their prior knowledge. For example, when learning about the glory of the Abbasid Dynasty, students are invited to link new information about the contribution of Muslim scientists with their understanding of the development of science in the Western world. This process is reflected in the activities of creating concept maps, writing reflections, and conducting group discussions that help students organize knowledge systematically and coherently. Thus, students do not just memorize facts, but also develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the material studied.

6. Learn Collaboratively

Constructivistic learning in the Islamic Cultural History classroom also provides collaborative learning experiences. Students are divided into groups to explore specific topics. For example, in a research project on Islamic civilization during the Ottoman Empire, each group is tasked with collecting data from various sources, such as textbooks, articles and historical documents. Next, they analyze their findings together to reach a deeper understanding. In this process, students learn to interact with each other, share ideas and give feedback to each other. This collaboration not only allows students to learn from each other and incorporate different perspectives, but also

develops effective communication skills and cooperation within the group.

Discussion

Based on the results of the above research, constructivistic learning in Islamic Cultural History subjects has placed students as subjects, not objects. Teachers respect and encourage students' autonomy and initiative, listen to students' responses and teach accordingly, encourage students to ask questions, create opportunities for conversation and communication between students. The teacher only plays a guiding role in the learning process to help students construct meaning. This aligns with the principles of constructivist learning, which highlight the active involvement of students using adaptive cognitive frameworks and organizing knowledge based on their experiences, emphasizing that knowledge is not passively acquired (Wheatley, 1991). In addition, the findings in this study demonstrate the success of constructivist educators in facilitating support while students engage actively in constructing knowledge. (Boghossian, 2006).

The results in this study prove a number of theories about the influence, purpose and benefits of constructivistic learning. Among these are encouraging critical thinking, creating motivated and independent students (Bhattacharjee, 2015), improving students' understanding (Topolovčan & Matijević, 2016), and increasing learning motivation (Leidner & Jarvenpaa, 1995). Honebein (1996) in Koohang et al. (2009) mentioned that constructivism-based learning aims to (a) provide experience with the knowledge construction process, (b) provide experience and appreciation of various perspectives, (c) conduct learning in a realistic and relevant context, (d) express opinions in the learning process, (e) apply learning in social experiences, (f) encourage the use of various modes of representation, and (g) encourage awareness of the knowledge construction process. Furthermore, (Bada & Olusegun, 2015) proposed several benefits of constructivistic teaching, namely (a) making students active, (b) enhancing critical thinkers, (c) developing flexible decision-making, (d) providing student empowerment, (e) promoting knowledge building, and (f) facilitating collaboration skills. Thus, the results of this study provide strong empirical support to

theories that direct the positive influence, purpose, and benefits of constructivistic learning in the modern educational context.

Related to previous research, the results of this study are relevant to research conducted by Nugroho & Wulandari (2017), that constructivistic learning practices create an active learning environment, active student participation, and learning responsibility. The findings of this study are also relevant to the research of Herdi & Santika (2020) that constructivist approach can improve students' reading comprehension. But more than that, this study not only proves the improvement of reading comprehension, but also increases other understanding through presentation and discussion. Furthermore, the findings of this study are also relevant to the research of Candra & Retnawati (2020) where constructivistic learning is student-centered, making students actively participate (not passive) in developing their knowledge.

Conclusion

Constructivism is a student-centered educational theory, where students act as active learning subjects, not just objects. It promotes the belief that learning is an active, constructive process that occurs within a socio-cultural context. In this approach, students are designed to actively create meaning through real activities. The teacher acts as a learning designer, facilitator and motivator, helping students to renegotiate their roles, relationships and responsibilities in the learning process. The active involvement of teachers and students is essential to increase participation and ownership of learning. When learning is implemented in accordance with the principles of constructivism, it can provide various learning experiences for students, including increased active participation, development of critical thinking skills, making flexible decisions from various perspectives, being involved in designing learning, constructing knowledge, and learning collaboratively.

Thus, the implementation of constructivism learning theory in learning Islamic Cultural History at Madrasah Aliyah in Pekanbaru City provides a deeper and more meaningful learning experience for students, and supports the development of important skills that are relevant to the needs of modern education. The implementation of constructivist

theory demonstrates that a student-centered approach can establish a learning environment that is more flexible and tailored to individual student needs. The findings of this research suggest that educators and educational institutions may consider adopting similar approaches to enhance the overall quality of

education. Moreover, this study creates opportunities for further research into applying constructivist theory in different contexts and disciplines, aiming to achieve more comprehensive and enduring educational objectives.

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