

The Relevance of Constructivist Learning Theory to the Application of Independent Learning

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Abstract

This article aims to improve understanding of the relevance between constructivist theory and the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesia. This study uses a literature study method to describe the relationship between Constructivist theory and the Independent Curriculum. The analysis results show that three things generally reflect the relevance between the two. First, implementing the Independent Curriculum can increase social interaction in learning, in line with the Constructivist emphasis on the role of social interaction in the knowledge construction process. Second, the role of teachers in the Independent Curriculum as facilitators and companions (scaffolding) supports the Constructivist concept of students' actual and potential development zones. Third, the Independent Curriculum provides opportunities for developing students' social skills by strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile through the view of Constructivist Theory regarding the importance of the social environment in shaping children's social and cognitive abilities. Further research is recommended to investigate empirical evidence regarding the effect of project-based learning on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and teachers' readiness to act as facilitators (scaffolders) in the curriculum context.

Keywords: Relevance, Constructivist Theory, Independent Learning

INTRODUCTION

Learning is one of the aspects that supports the success of education. Education is a very important thing in human life. Education is not only limited to the application of learning theory and learning in the classroom, but learning is very meaningful in life (Abdiyah & Subiyantoro, 2021). Learning is a process activity and is a very fundamental aspect of education. As a whole of the educational process, learning is a very basic and important artifact in the entire educational process. A sentence once put forward by Havighurst (1953) quoted in Latifah Abdiyah's article that *living is learning*, gives the view that learning is very important, so it is not surprising that many people or experts talk about learning problems (Abdiyah & Subiyantoro, 2021).

In the learning process, teachers are required to be able to adjust to the development of students. An educator cannot transfer his knowledge to his students, but the educator guides his students so that they can build their own knowledge; besides that, an educator is required to be able to understand the way of thinking or how to teach his students. This means that teachers no longer consider students as educational objects but see students as educational subjects. If the teacher only provides information and expects students to take notes, memorize, and remember, this will make students passive. As a result, students will not be able to develop the knowledge they have (Insriani, 2015)

In fact, many teachers still teach only by the lecture method and expect students to sit still, listen, take notes, and memorize. In this case, students also lack attention from the aspect of receiving lesson messages because, basically, students have various ways of receiving or responding to the lessons given. Talking about these problems, there are many theories in learning from the discovery of learning figures and learning theories, such as behavioristic, cognitive, constructivist, humanistic, and cybernetic learning theories, that can be used in learning, one of which is constructivist learning theory.

Constructivism is a school of philosophy of knowledge that emphasizes that knowledge is the result of construction (formation). Knowledge is always the result of a cognitive construct of reality that occurs through one's activities. Based on the constructivist view, learning is a process of knowledge formation. This formation must be done by the individual who learns. He must actively carry out activities, think, formulate concepts, and give

meaning to his learning (Islamiati, 2017). Constructivist theory is a theory that can activate the learning process of students by relying on students' initial experiences to construct or build their own knowledge. However, this learning approach takes a long time to construct students' knowledge. This is because the mindset of each individual is different; some are quick to construct or understand what the teacher explains or asks, and some are slow to construct what the teacher has explained.

Based on the Constructive Learning Theory above, if we relate it to Education at this time, especially the use of the new Independent Learning Curriculum, how relevant are the two? The Independent Learning Curriculum itself is a curriculum with diverse extracurricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies; Teachers have the flexibility to choose.

METHOD

This research uses a library research approach, which is research that utilizes literature sources to obtain data and information relevant to the topic being studied. Data sources are books, journal articles, and official documents related to constructivist learning theory and the Independent Curriculum. Data analysis techniques by: Literature Identification Gather relevant literature from libraries, online journals, and other trustworthy sources. Data Classification: The literature obtained is classified based on the main topics, such as constructivist theory, the Independent Curriculum, and its application in the learning of Islamic Religious Education. Document Analysis: Conduct content analysis of selected literature to obtain relevant information according to the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section contains the results and discussion of the research topic, which can be made in advance of the research methodology. This section also represents explanations in the form of explanations, pictures, tables, and others. The number of words in this section ranges.

Constructivist Learning Theory

1. Definition of Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivism is one of the schools of philosophy of knowledge that emphasizes that knowledge is the result of construction (formation). Constructivism theory understands learning as the process of forming (constructing) knowledge by the learner himself. According to the view of constructivism, learning is a process of knowledge formation. Learning in constructivist theory is more directed at *experimental learning*, which is the adaptation of humanity based on concrete experiences such as discussions with classmates, which are then formulated and used as ideas and develop new concepts. Therefore, educational and teaching activities are not focused on educators but on students. The things that are prioritized in constructivist learning are: 1) learning that is real in a relevant context; 2) process; 3) learning in the context of social experience; 4) learning is carried out in an effort to construct experiences. (Islamiati, 2017)

2. Resources and Teaching Materials for the Application of Constructivist Learning Theory

The source and teaching materials in the application of the constructivist learning model are the use of the environment as a learning resource. The environment is one of the most important learning resources and has very valuable values in the context of the student learning process. The environment can enrich learning materials and activities. The environment that can be used as a learning resource consists of the social and physical environments (natural). In addition, the use of the environment can be done by bringing the environment into the classroom, such as presenting resource persons to deliver material in the classroom. (Abdiyah & Subiyantoro, 2021)

3. Advantages and disadvantages of Constructivist Learning Theory

The advantages of using constructivist theory namely providing a positive impact on learning, increasing student activity, and can also think critically in the learning process to achieve an increase in learning outcomes. Meanwhile, the disadvantage of using constructivism theory namely that this theory instills students to build their own knowledge, so it takes a long time, especially for lazy students. (Anjani 2020).

4 Steps to apply Constructivist Theory in learning

The theory of constructivist learning in classroom learning appears in the following five steps, namely, (1) activating existing knowledge (activating knowledge); (2) acquiring knowledge is carried out in its entirety, not in separate packages; (3) understanding knowledge in understanding learning knowledge, investigating and testing all possible things from that new knowledge; (4) applying knowledge, students need time to expand and refine their knowledge structure by using it authentically through solving or solving problems; and 5) reflecting on knowledge, if knowledge is fully understood and widely applied, then the knowledge is contextualized, and this result requires reflection. (Kusuma & Nisa, 2019).

5. The Impact of Constructivist Theory on Learning in Schools

a. Students can study independently

Independent learning is learning based on thoughts constructed by oneself. Learning independence is needed in the education system in order to achieve a learning goal that can pressure active participants to develop their potential. According to Nurhayati, a person's learning independence can be shown by having confidence in the ability to solve various kinds of problems that exist during the activity, without help from others and also not controlled by their decision-making in solving problems (problems). It is the same with Desmita's statement that students' learning independence arises when students find themselves in a position of increased confidence. Therefore, according to Nurhayati, the characteristics of learning that have learning independence are, namely, (1) students have a responsibility, (2) have faith, (3) are not easily influenced by others, (4) if they encounter problems trying to solve them themselves, (5) they can make good use of time. (Pratiwi & Laksmiwati, 2016).

Therefore, we can know, in accordance with what has been described above, that students who have high confidence will be able to manage their own learning well without the help of others in finding and solving existing problems. For this reason, in this case, the independence of students in the learning process is very similar to the constructivist learning theory, known as a modern learning theory. Constructivist learning theory pressures students to construct their knowledge as proof that they can think critically, creatively, and actively in ongoing learning. This is in accordance with research conducted by Larasati revealing that the constructivist learning theory understands learning as a process of knowledge formation by the students themselves. (Larasati, 2020).

b. Critical thinking

Critical thinking is the concept of responding to a thought that students can accept. Berger and Luckmann are of the view that constructivist learning is a critical thinking process to construct the knowledge that it has received through the objective process of knowledge. According to Bloom, critical thinking has the same meaning as a higher level of thinking; in this case, Bloom also lists six levels from the simplest to the most complex levels of critical thinking; the list starts with knowledge and moves upwards toward mastery, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. (Rahayu, 2019).

Meanwhile, according to Suparno, in the case of constructivists, good critical thinking is more important than having the right answer to a problem being studied. Students who have a good way of thinking in the sense that their way of thinking can be used to deal with a new phenomenon will be able to find solutions (problems) in dealing with other problems. Therefore, teaching in this context is about helping a person think correctly by letting him think for himself.

From the learning activities above, we can see that carrying out the learning process using constructivist learning theory in sociology subjects requires quite complicated learning stages and takes a long time for students to accept and understand what the teacher gives. This is in order to gain a way of thinking critically in the students themselves. (Syahrul & Wardana, 2018).

c. Creative

Creative students are students who are able to create new things in their learning, both the ability to develop information obtained from educators (teachers) in the teaching and learning process, which can be in the form of knowledge so that they can make new combinations. According to Munandar, students think creatively as the ability to see various things to solve a problem. According to Munandar, students' creative thinking ability includes four criteria: fluency, flexibility, and originality in thinking in developing ideas (Larasati, 2020).

Munandar stated the characteristics of creative students as follows: (a) fluency in thinking, which is the ability to produce many ideas that come out of one's thinking quickly; (b) flexibility in thinking, which is the ability to produce questions and answers or questions that vary and be able to use various approaches or ways of thinking, (c) originality, which is the ability to generate unique ideas or originate original ideas, (d) elaboration, the ability to develop ideas in detail from an object so that it becomes more interesting. (Maskur et al., 2012).

From the description above, we can express that students' creative abilities are things that have been possessed since birth and must be developed and trained. One of the learning theories that can be used as an alternative to learning so that students are more active in learning is by using the theory of constructivist learning.

Independent Learning Curriculum

Based on the official website of the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the Independent Curriculum is a curriculum that provides flexibility to teachers in arranging learning that suits the needs and learning environment of students without compromising quality. The main characteristics of the Independent Curriculum are to develop soft skills and student character by strengthening the Pancasila student profile, focusing on essential materials, and flexibility in learning.

The Relevance Between Constructivist Learning Theory and Independent Learning in Learning the Qur'an Hadith

1. Increasing Social Interaction in Learning

In the view of constructive criticism theory, problem-solving is divided into two, namely problem-solving that students can do on their own and problem-solving that they can solve with the help of adults or more competent peers. Thus, based on Constructivist theory, skilled advocates and rich social interaction can help students improve their problem-solving abilities. Through help, gradual instruction, and communication that occurs in a social context, students can develop better critical thinking, analytical, and problem-solving skills.

The emphasis on social interaction in solving problems in Constructivist Theory is in line with what is stressed in the Independent Curriculum. The Independent Curriculum emphasizes focusing on essential materials and developing student competencies with learning that is much more relevant and interactive and involves the exploration of actual environmental issues through project-based learning. (Hartoyo & Rahmadayanti, 2022). Project-based learning (PjBL) is one of the learning models that is the main character of the Independent Curriculum. (Sari et al., 2023). PjBL has many benefits that are aligned with the increase in student social interaction during the teaching and learning process. First, PjBL helps students become more active in learning. With higher activity, students will be encouraged to participate in discussions and collaborate with classmates and teachers. Second, PjBL makes students' interest in learning increase. With a higher interest in learning, students will be more active in learning and more open to collaborating with classmates and teachers. Third, PjBL can improve students' science process skills. Through PjBL, students will learn to develop science process skills through projects they work on together. In this process, students will learn to collaborate and communicate with group mates, thereby increasing social interaction between students. (Sari et al., 2023).

Collaboration in the Independent Learning Curriculum has several important pillars: encouraging teamwork, developing social skills, developing creativity and innovation, fostering a sense of responsibility, and encouraging deeper learning. In collaboration, learners work together in teams, build communication skills, divide tasks, and learn from the perspective of others. They also develop creativity and innovation through inspiration and sharing ideas within the team. Collaboration also teaches responsibility and supports deeper learning through mutual learning from each other's experiences and knowledge. Teachers act as collaboration facilitators who help students build good cooperation and communication skills and overcome obstacles that arise. (Sidik, 2016).

2. The role of teachers as facilitators or companions

The concept of *scaffolding* in constructivist theory refers to the help or support provided by a more skilled or competent person to a child with the aim that the child is able to complete a task or problem of

higher complexity than the actual level of cognitive development of the child. Scaffolding can also be interpreted as providing guidance to students to achieve what must be understood from what is now known. In learning, the concept of scaffolding emphasizes step-by-step support for learning and problem-solving as an essential thing in modern constructivist thinking. Scaffolding is often used to help students reach the upper limit of their proximal developmental zone. In early childhood education, scaffolding plays a very important role in the learning process in every aspect of achieving the stage of child development.

In the Independent Curriculum, the role of teachers is no longer the only source of learning. Teachers are responsible for creating a conducive learning environment, facilitating active and participatory learning, and encouraging student independence, creativity, and initiative. In addition, teachers are expected to be able to adapt the curriculum to existing conditions, play an active role in supporting curriculum implementation, and utilize technology as a teaching aid. Teachers also play the role of learning facilitators, interpreting basic competencies into assessments, and developing curriculum and learning processes. In addition to being educators who teach, teachers also play a role in independent learning on the Merdeka Mengajar platform, contributing to the Merdeka Belajar platform, and sharing knowledge with fellow teachers. (Suhandi & Robi'ah, 2024).

As a facilitator and scaffolding, there is a lot that teachers can do for their students. There are two types of scaffolding levels: instrumental scaffolding and instrumental relational. In instrumental scaffolding, several strategies are used to help students understand the problem, such as reading the problem repeatedly, providing an understanding of related concepts, and asking directional questions. This process also involves reflection on answers, discussions, and work improvements. Meanwhile, in instrumental relational, there is variation in the level of relationality and instrumentality. On strong relational and strong instrumentals, no special scaffolding is given. However, in strong relational and weak instrumentals, several strategies such as reflection, discussion, understanding checking, and work improvement are used. Strategies such as reading questions, understanding concepts, and asking directional questions are carried out in weak relational and strong instrumentals. Finally, in weak relational and weak instrumental, a complete strategy is used which includes reading the problem, providing concept understanding, reflection, discussion, checking understanding, and improving work (Sidik, 2016).

The above explanation illustrates that the role of teachers as scaffolding is relevant to the learning demands of active students in the Independent Curriculum. By providing instruction and assistance in the context of learning, teachers can provide structured support for students' ability to solve problems. If students are left alone without help, they may lose focus on the main goal of learning.

3. Development of students' social skills

The Independent Curriculum equips students with the development of social skills through the development of character and competency of Pancasila student profiles. Considering that Pancasila is the ideology and philosophy of the Indonesian state which is a guideline for the life of society, nation, and state, the development of this character is an important provision for students in carrying out their social role as an Indonesian citizen.

The Pancasila Student Profile aims to shape the character and abilities of students through school culture, intracurricular learning, co-curricular activities, and extracurriculars. The development of Pancasila student profiles focuses on cultivating character, such as diversity, teamwork, creativity, responsibility, critical thinking, and noble character. This is done through contextual learning experiences, interaction with the surrounding environment, and project-based learning. The Pancasila student profile strengthening project provides opportunities for students to "experience knowledge", learn from the surrounding environment, and take real action related to important issues such as climate change, anti-radicalism, mental health, culture, entrepreneurship, technology, and democratic life. (Maruti et al., 2023), (Rachmawati et al., 2022), (Setiyaningsih & Wiryanto, 2022).

The Pancasila Student Profile is a translation of national education goals that are a reference in education policy. Pancasila students are representatives of Indonesian students who are competent, have character, and behave in accordance with Pancasila values. The Pancasila Student Profile comprises six dimensions: faith and noble character, global diversity, cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, and

creativity. Each dimension has more detailed elements to shape the character of Pancasila Students, such as morality, diversity, cooperation, independence, critical thinking skills, and creativity. The entire dimension of the Pancasila Student Profile is a complete unit, not seen separately. Its development is carried out thoroughly and is the goal of interdisciplinary learning.

According to Suhardi (2022), there are four principles for strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. *First*, holistic principles require considering everything thoroughly and wholly, seeing interrelated relationships, and understanding the reality of everyday life. *Second*, contextual principles encourage the use of real experiences in learning by relating them to the environment and the reality of students' lives. *Third*, the principle of being student-centered by directed learning that encourages students to become active subjects, learn independently, and open opportunities to explore and solve problems. *Fourth*, the exploratory principle opens a wide learning space, not tied to an intracurricular structure, with a wide scope of exploration in materials, time, and learning objectives. Educators are expected to be able to create project activities in a structured and integrated manner. This exploratory principle can stimulate the role of the Pancasila Student Strengthening Project to improve students' abilities in extracurricular lessons (Wulandari et al., 2022).

Based on the various explanations above, the implementation of the Pancasila student profile in the Independent Curriculum is an effort to help students develop good character, contribute positively to the surrounding environment, and be able to answer various important problems faced by the community. Therefore, the direction of learning in the Independent Curriculum aligns with the Constructivist theory that children's development is inseparable from their interaction with their social environment. Social skills are an absolute provision for children to interact and collaborate with their social environment.

CONCLUSION

Constructivist theory is almost a century old, but it is still relevant to learning in the modern era, one of which is the Independent Curriculum. Active and collaborative learning, which is the hallmark of this theory, aligns with the independent curriculum's learning process. In general, three things can illustrate the relevance between constructivist theory and the Independent Curriculum: increasing social interaction in learning, the role of teachers as facilitators and companions (scaffolding), and the development of students' social skills. However, further research needs to be carried out to test the effectiveness of project-based learning in the Independent Curriculum and prepare teachers to play the role of scaffolder in the implementation of this curriculum. Educators and researchers can enrich learning practices in Indonesia and advance education as a whole with a deeper understanding of the relevance between Constitutive theories and the Independent Curriculum.

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