

ANALYSIS OF CONSTRUCTIVIST LEARNING THEORY IN THE LEARNING PROCESS AT RUMAH MATAHARI NATURAL SCHOOL

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Abstract

This research or case study with observation is carried out to find out what learning theory is used in learning at Rumah Matahari Natural School. The purpose of this observation is to find out the learning theory used in learning at Rumah Matahari Natural School. This research is motivated by the need to identify and understand the learning theory underlying instructional practices at Rumah Matahari Natural School, particularly in learning environments that provide students with freedom to choose learning activities according to their interests. The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative is a research method that moves to a simple qualitative approach with an inductive path, that is, it begins with an explanatory process or event that can finally be drawn as a generalization which is a conclusion from the process or event. The steps for collecting qualitative descriptive data involve three stages, namely data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions. Make direct observations of the way children learn who are given the freedom to choose a way of learning according to their interests. In accordance with constructivist learning theory where this theory handles the saturation of students by increasing the active participation of students during the learning process. This constructivist learning theory can make students think more critically in the learning process and be more creative in expressing opinions and in expressing ideas.

Keywords: constructivism, learning, natural school, observation



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INTRODUCTION

Family and parents play an important and most influential role in the parenting process for children. Therefore, it is only natural that every parent wants their children to grow up to be educated and well-charactered individuals, capable of becoming whole human beings. To achieve this, parents wholeheartedly provide and choose the best education for their children. Moreover, with the development of the times and the increasingly free flow of social interactions, parents' anxieties have grown. Consequently, parents are very careful in choosing educational institutions for their children. This often leads to considerations such as the quality of teachers, the environment, the curriculum, and even the methods and processes of learning.

It is no longer surprising if parents are willing to spend a large amount of money to educate their children, with the hope that their children will receive the best education and teaching for their future. However, nowadays, education in Indonesia is considered to still face many problems. Schools play an important role in developing students' abilities. A good quality school will also produce the best graduates. However, currently, most existing schools prioritize developing the cognitive aspects of their students in the teaching and learning process. Most schools also prioritize evaluations solely on academic abilities. However, there are things more important than just these abilities, such as the ability to obtain information or data, understand, manage, and utilize it so that students are able to face challenges and solve problems in life.

Nature schools (Sekolah alam) are one of the solutions because their nature-based learning model includes a problem-based learning approach. Through this problem-based approach model, students will be brought into the real world, which can be directly experienced visually by the students. Nature schools are conducted by learning in natural environments, thus students can more easily understand the learning material presented. It's not just about conveying knowledge from teacher to student, but the learning process in nature schools takes place naturally in shaping students' activities of working and experiencing. Thus, students will gain real experiences and be able to integrate theory with actual conditions in the field, making it easy to remember, strong, and long-lasting within the students. (Hidayat, 2020).

Constructivist Theory is a theory that is no stranger to the world of education (Ardiansyah & Ujihanti, 2017; Romdhon et al., 2024; Zajda, 2021). Constructivism itself is constructive, in the context of educational philosophy, constructivism is an effort to build a way of life that is modern and cultured (Hullatul Luthfiyah et al., 2024; Rosita et al., 2024; Saminan et al., 2017). Based on the explanation above, constructivism is a theory that is constructive, namely building from the aspect of ability, aspect of understanding, in the learning process. Because by having a constructive nature, it is hoped that the activeness of students will increase their intelligence. Shymansky stated that constructivism is an active activity, where students actively construct their own knowledge, seek meaning from what they learn, and it is a process of resolving new concepts and ideas with the framework they already possess.

Based on the opinion above, it can be understood that constructivism is a theory on how to activate students by providing the widest possible space to understand what they have learned by applying the concepts they know and then practicing them in their daily lives. Based on the expert opinion above, a conclusion can be drawn, namely constructivism is a theory that provides breadth of thought to students and requires students to practice the theories they already know in their lives.

Constructivism is a learning theory that greatly influences knowledge and develops from the activity of constructing, not through transfer or relocation (Khairani, (n.d.)). Constructivist learning theory views that learning is more than just receiving and processing information conveyed by the teacher (Sujarwanto, 2016; Suwandayani et al., 2021). Constructivism considers that knowledge is not obtained passively, but is actively constructed by individuals. The ideas held by the teacher are not easily conveyed directly to students; rather, students must be able to think creatively and innovatively in forming ideas within themselves.

The novelty of this study lies in its focused analysis of constructivist learning theory as it is naturally implemented within a nature-based school context. Unlike previous studies that predominantly discuss constructivist learning at a theoretical level or within formal classroom settings, this research provides empirical insights derived from direct observation of daily learning practices at Rumah Matahari Natural School. By examining how constructivist principles are reflected in students' freedom of choice, active participation, and experiential learning processes, this study contributes a contextualized understanding of constructivist learning in alternative education settings, particularly natural schools in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design. Qualitative descriptive research is commonly used for studies that aim to describe social phenomena and explore events or experiences in depth. It focuses on answering research questions related to who, what, where, and how an event occurs, and then identifying emerging patterns from the collected data (Kim et al., 2017). This method follows an inductive flow, beginning with specific observations or explanatory processes that lead to broader generalizations or conclusions. Before data collection, the researcher ensured data trustworthiness through qualitative validity techniques. Trustworthiness testing is crucial to guarantee the validity, reliability, and credibility of the data obtained (Sugiyono, 2017). The technique used in this study was triangulation, which involves checking data from various sources through different methods. Triangulation strengthens evidence by comparing field notes, observations, interviews, and documentation to increase the accuracy and credibility of the study.

The research was conducted at the school where the participating teachers work. The data collection process took place during scheduled interview sessions and document reviews. The school environment served as the primary setting for gathering information related to the research focus.

Research Target/Subject

The subjects of this study were teachers who were considered to have relevant knowledge and experience related to the research topic. A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that the selected participants could provide rich and accurate data. These teachers served as key informants who contributed essential insights through interviews and document sharing.

Research Procedure

The research procedure followed several sequential stages. First, the researcher identified key informants who met the inclusion criteria. Interviews were then conducted to collect detailed explanations regarding the research topic. At the same time, relevant documents—such as instructional materials, school records, and written reports—were gathered and reviewed. Once the data were collected, they were organized and prepared for further analysis.

Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using two primary instruments. Interview guides, designed to facilitate semi-structured interviews with teachers. These guides allowed flexibility in deepening the discussion while ensuring that essential topics were addressed. Document analysis sheets, used to record information obtained from relevant written materials. The combination of interviews and document analysis enabled data triangulation, enhancing the credibility of the findings.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis process consisted of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, simplifying, and focusing the data relevant to the research objectives. This process began from the formulation of the research questions and continued throughout data collection. Data display was the stage where the reduced data were organized and presented in descriptive form, such as brief narratives, charts, or categorized summaries, to facilitate understanding and interpretation.

Conclusion drawing and verification were conducted continuously throughout the research process. According to Sugiyono (2017), initial conclusions are provisional and may change if not supported by strong evidence. However, when consistent and valid findings emerge during repeated data collection, the conclusions become credible. Based on this analysis process, conclusions in qualitative descriptive research may or may not directly answer the initially formulated research questions. This is because the problems and questions in qualitative studies may evolve as the researcher gains deeper understanding in the field. The final conclusion is expected to present new findings that have not been previously identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

"Sekolah Alam Rumah Matahari" (Matahari House Nature School), located in East Java, is a school that uses a learning method focused on children's potential and a relaxed learning process. The reason for the establishment of Sekolah Alam Rumah Matahari was due to limited funds. Eventually, with existing human resources, there was an initiative to create an institution called Sekolah Alam Rumah Matahari, based on community trust, to educate children with a learning model that gives them freedom to express themselves, without stress from excessive homework that becomes a burden at home. This often makes children uncomfortable with learning, hindering their self-expression. What differentiates nature schools from formal schools is, among other things, providing children with comfort in learning through a relaxed learning technique and direct two-way communication. For children with issues like school trauma, those who have learning trauma are not immediately pushed to learn, but are first asked about their preferences and introduced to the nature school environment, which gradually builds their interest in learning on their own.

The primary goal is to develop students into individuals with good character. Sekolah Alam Rumah Matahari has a classroom that directly faces a very wide rice field. This school, established in 2008, adheres to the PKB system in its curriculum. Sekolah Alam Rumah Matahari also has a vision: to change civilization by shaping character and giving meaning to the homeland, and a mission to spread knowledge through educational institutions, striving for students to have noble character, be independent, and achieve optimal performance. Students are given freedom in attending lessons and are not pressured at all. Sekolah Alam Rumah Matahari also instills habits in its students to be capable, responsive, active, religious, and responsible for themselves and their affairs. Currently, the school, founded by Heri Suwignyo according to the Basic Education Data for 2023, has 5 teachers, 1 educational staff member, and 101 students. Sekolah Alam Rumah Matahari educates with the aim of transforming individuals from not good to good, from not knowing to knowing, from not being able to being able to, and from having problems to experiencing happiness.



Figure 1. Reading a book

Conducting direct observations of children's learning methods given the freedom to choose their preferred learning style. This aligns with constructivist learning theory, which addresses learner boredom by increasing learner participation during the learning process, thereby making learners interested in studying and motivated to maximize their academic achievement, as well as presenting useful learning knowledge (Aminullah, 2018). The basic key to constructivist learning is the active role of students (Suparlan, 2019).

According to Diver and Oldham (1994), constructivist-based learning has several characteristics, including: 1) Orientation, which provides opportunities for students to increase their enthusiasm for examining and observing a topic; 2) Elicitation, which conveys ideas through writing, discussion, drawing, and the like; 3) Restructuring of ideas, which involves grouping ideas with others' ideas to produce new ideas and evaluating them; 4) Application, which involves applying new ideas in various situations; 5) Review, which involves improving ideas or knowledge by adding or subtracting. Thus, constructivist theory assumes that learners actively collaborate to construct their own knowledge and require teachers to develop learning methods (Suparlan, 2019).

Learning strategies enable students to learn in various enjoyable ways to avoid student boredom, thus creating a comfortable learning atmosphere. The constructivist approach assumes that students can construct their own knowledge through various available media. The teacher's role is merely as a mediator between students and their learning objects or resources (Waseso, 2018). Therefore, implementing the constructivist approach is more effective than direct instruction.

CONCLUSION

In the learning activities at this Rumah Matahari nature school, teachers strive to make students active using various methods. By using a constructivist approach, several factors slightly influence the learning process. Among the influencing factors are the differing characteristics of each student.

Therefore, a teacher must pay attention to several things to improve learning to achieve the intended goals. Among these, educators must utilize appropriate approaches, strategies, and learning methods based on all situations and conditions in the classroom, as well as the readiness of students with their various different characteristics.

However, the application of learning theories by teachers at Rumah Matahari Nature School has had a good impact on the academic achievement of its students, overcoming several influencing factors quite well. Therefore, this constructivist learning theory can make students think more critically in the learning process and be more creative in expressing opinions and articulating ideas.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Investigation; Project administration; Validation; Writing – review and editing; Data curation; Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing – original draft; Resources; Visualization.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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