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Implementation of Constructivist Theory in Social Studies Learning in Middle Schools (Case Study at SMP Negeri 1 Jenggawah-Jember)

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Abstract*: Effective social studies learning requires the teacher's role as a facilitator who is able to apply a constructivist approach. Constructivist theory emphasizes the important role of teachers in creating a learning environment that encourages students to actively build knowledge through interaction, exploration and reflection. This research aims to analyze the implementation of constructivist theory by teachers in social studies learning in junior high schools (SMP) and its influence on learning effectiveness. This research uses quantitative methods with a survey design. The research subjects were social studies teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Jenggawah. Data was collected through a questionnaire designed to measure the level of application of constructivist methods in teaching and classroom observations to validate the data obtained. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive and inferential statistics to measure the relationship between the level of implementation of constructivist theory and the effectiveness of the resulting learning. The research results show that the level of implementation of constructivist theory by social studies teachers is in the medium to high category. Teachers who consistently apply a constructivist approach tend to create a learning atmosphere that is interactive, collaborative, and student-centered. Statistical analysis shows that there is a positive and significant influence between the level of implementation of constructivist theory by teachers and increased student involvement and understanding of social studies material. These findings recommend the need for training and mentoring for teachers to better understand and apply constructivist principles in learning. In addition, education policies need to support the development of innovative learning strategies*

Keywords : ***implementation, constructivist, social studies teacher, active learning.***

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is an important element in developing quality human resources. In the context of education in Indonesia, effective learning at the Junior High School (SMP) level greatly determines the development of students' cognitive abilities and social skills. One subject that has an important role in developing social understanding and critical thinking skills is Social Sciences (IPS). Social studies learning provides insight into history, geography, economics and sociology, which are very relevant to students' daily lives. However, in practice, social studies learning in many junior high schools is still dominated by conventional teacher-centred approaches, such as lectures and limited use of media. This causes students to tend to be passive and less involved in learning.

Ideally, learning in junior high school should not only focus on teaching theory, but also on developing students' critical thinking skills in problem solving. Ideal learning in junior high school classes is one that can encourage active involvement of students through discussion, experimentation and collaboration. Constructivist theory is a very suitable approach to achieve this, because students are required to build their own understanding through experience and social interaction. In the constructivist learning model, students not only listen to the teacher, but are also active in exploring, testing, and reflecting on their knowledge.

The application of active learning in the Indonesian education system is in accordance with **Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System [5]**. Article 3 of this law states that the aim of national education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who are faithful, devout, have noble character, are intelligent, skilled, physically and spiritually healthy, and have the ability to contribute to society. Active learning supports this goal by focusing on student involvement in the learning process, encouraging students to think critically, and take an active role in discovering and constructing their own knowledge. Active learning, as a learner-centered approach, is in line with the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes learning that is more flexible, creative, and based on real experiences. This learning involves methods such as discussion, problem-based learning, collaborative-based projects, and problem solving, all of which encourage students to become active and independent learners.

Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 8 of 2024 regulates Content Standards for early childhood education, basic education levels and secondary education. This regulation emphasizes the importance of formulating learning materials that are in accordance with graduate competencies and scientific developments. At the primary and secondary education levels, the scope of material includes several mandatory contents in accordance with statutory provisions, including religious education, Pancasila, citizenship, language, mathematics, natural and social sciences, as well as arts and culture.

In reality, learning at SMP 1 Jenggawah still faces several challenges in terms of student involvement and the use of methods that are appropriate to current developments. Most teachers, especially those in the social sciences field of study, in the learning process still tend to give lectures or assignments that do not encourage students to think critically or collaborate. This can cause a lack of motivation and active participation of students in learning. In this conventional approach, students receive more information even though it is continued with the discussion method, but the proportion still provides more explanations. As a result, students do not develop the critical thinking skills needed to analyze and understand the social phenomena around them. In addition, they often have difficulty connecting the concepts they learn with the social reality in their environment. This condition demands a new approach that can overcome these weaknesses.

Education in the 21st century demands an approach that encourages students to become active learners. One approach that suits this demand is constructivist theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of students' active role in building knowledge through direct experience, collaboration, and reflection (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of learning Social Sciences (IPS) in Junior High Schools (SMP), the application of constructivist theory is expected to increase students' understanding of social concepts and critical thinking skills [21].

Constructivist theory emphasizes the active process of building knowledge, where students not only receive information, but also engage in activities that allow them to discover and construct their own knowledge. According to Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, active learning can encourage students' cognitive development, because they are given the opportunity to interact with the ideas and concepts they learn through direct experience, discussion and collaboration with their peers. This constructivist approach can be applied using methods such as group discussions, problem solving, and collaborative projects that encourage students to think critically.

Constructivist theory, initiated by figures such as Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner, offers a learning approach that allows students to build their own understanding through active learning experiences. Through this approach, students are expected to be able to develop critical thinking skills and build knowledge independently, according to the context of their social life. By applying constructivist theory in social studies learning, teachers act as facilitators who help students explore, discover and develop understanding through discussion, collaboration and exploration [21].

Even though constructivist theory has great potential to improve the quality of learning, its implementation in social studies learning in junior high schools is still limited. Several factors that hinder the implementation of constructivist theory are limited time, lack of supporting learning resources, and limited understanding by some teachers regarding the application of constructivist methods. However, the implementation of constructivist theory by social studies teachers in junior high schools still has challenges, especially in creating a learning environment that supports active collaboration and the application of appropriate learning strategies. This research aims to analyze how social studies teachers in junior high schools implement constructivist theory in learning and how this implementation affects the quality of social studies learning. Therefore, this research focuses on how constructivist theory can be implemented in social studies learning in junior high schools and the extent to which its application can improve learning outcomes and students' critical thinking skills.

This research aims to answer these challenges by exploring how the implementation of constructivist theory can be practically applied in social studies learning in junior high schools. This research will also analyze the application of constructivist theory as seen from improving students' critical thinking skills, in overcoming learning problems that are still passive.

Based on the background above, there are several problems that can be identified, including:

- The implementation of constructivist theory in social studies learning in junior high schools is not yet optimal.
- There is limited information about the learning outcomes of students who take constructivist theory-based learning compared to conventional methods in social studies subjects.
- There is a lack of information regarding the level of critical thinking skills of students who take part in constructivist theory-based learning in social studies subjects.

Based on problem identification, the problem formulation in this research is:

1. How is constructivist theory applied in social studies learning in junior high schools?
2. How does the application of constructivist methods affect student involvement and motivation in social studies learning in junior high schools?
3. What are the challenges faced by teachers in implementing constructivist learning methods in social studies learning in junior high schools?

The aims of this research are:

1. Analyzing the implementation of constructivist theory in social studies learning at SMP Negeri 1 Jenggawah.
2. Analyzing the effect of applying constructivist methods on student involvement and motivation in social studies learning at SMP Negeri 1 Jenggawah
3. Knowing the challenges faced by teachers in implementing constructivist learning methods in social studies learning at SMP Negeri 1 Jenggawah.

This research is expected to provide the following benefits:

a. Theoretical Benefits:
   Contributing to the development of constructivist theory in education, especially in social studies learning at SMP Negeri 1 Jenggawah.
b. Empirical Benefits:
   Can provide a real picture of the implementation of constructivist theory in social studies learning, as well as the effectiveness of this approach in increasing student involvement, which in turn can be used to design curriculum and learning strategies that are better and more appropriate to student needs.

2. LITERATUR REVIEW AND THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Literature Review

Literature review is very useful for the process of preparing this thesis. The function of a literature review is to show the differences and positions of research. After conducting the study, the author has not found research that is the same as the author's research title, namely "Implementation of Constructivist Theory in Middle School Social Studies Learning". However, there are several studies that the author found related to the author's research, including:

1. In the article **"Constructivism and Social Constructivism in the Internet and Education"** by Kim (2001). The result of the study is the application of social constructivism, which focuses on how social interaction in the learning environment, both directly and through digital media, helps shape students' understanding and knowledge. Collaboration through online discussion forums or virtual group work supports learning processes based on social experiences [10].
2. Sarifah F. and Nurita, they implemented a guided inquiry learning model to improve students' critical thinking and collaboration skills. This model emphasizes the active participation of students in the scientific investigation process to find answers to the questions presented. Different from traditional learning models, teachers act as facilitators who help students think analytically, logically and critically, and encourage collaboration in groups (Sarifah & Nurita, 2023) [19]
3. Subarjo and Michael Doni, entitled *Analysis of the Application of the Constructivist Learning Theory Approach to the Critical Thinking Abilities of Elementary School Students*, they emphasize that constructivism theory does not only focus on the transfer of knowledge from teachers to students, but rather on the process of students actively constructing knowledge. Constructivism teaches that knowledge is built through real experience and social interaction, where students actively explore, observe, and formulate new concepts based on what has been previously understood [20].
4. Manik, Yuni Mariani, and Darwin Bangun's research discusses the effectiveness of the cooperative learning model, specifically the Gallery Walk method, in enhancing learning outcomes for Economics students in high school (SMA Negeri 1 Perbaungan). The study highlights how this model promotes active student engagement, improves group collaboration, and facilitates a better understanding of the material through interactive and dynamic learning. The results suggest that students who participated in the Gallery Walk method exhibited better comprehension and retention of the lesson content compared to those using traditional teaching methods. The cooperative nature of the activity allows students to take on more responsibility for their own learning, which leads to an improvement in academic performance [12].
5. Nasution and Ketut Prasetyo discussed the validity of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)-based learning tools in social studies subjects in junior high schools. This research uses a 4D development model, which includes the design of learning tools such as lesson plans, teaching materials, worksheets and test questions. An assessment of the validity of this learning tool was carried out by experts, showing that the tool is effective for use in teaching that supports sustainable education goals [15].
6. Cholida, Maya. "Development of LKPD Based on Problem Based Learning on International Trade Material to Improve Students' Critical Thinking Skills." *Journal of Dialectics of Social Sciences Education* 4.3 (2024): 56-70. Based on the presentation of the research results, it can be concluded that this LKPD is very feasible and quite effective for use in social studies learning to improve critical thinking skills. This is based on the results of a feasibility test by experts in the field of materials, media and education practitioners [4].
7. Voon and Amran (2021), the application of constructivism theory in mathematics learning, which is also relevant for social studies learning, emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process. They explained that this theory emphasizes active learning, where students build their knowledge through experience and interaction with the environment and fellow students. This is in line with the basic principles of constructivism which emphasizes that knowledge is not just taken for granted, but is constructed by individuals according to their understanding of the world around them [22].
8. Lathifah, Azizah, and their colleagues, they studied the application of constructivist theory in learning at various levels of education, including elementary school. This research shows that constructivist theory is very relevant to be applied in thematic learning, because it requires active participation of students. This is in accordance with the basic principle of constructivism, namely "learning by doing", where students are directly involved in the learning process to discover their own knowledge, rather than just passively receiving information [11].

9. Agnestia, M. I., & Nuryani, P. Application of Piaget's Cognitive Constructivism Theory in Learning Green Chemistry and Sustainable Development 2030 (Phenomenological Study at Sman 2 Padalarang). *Trends, Culture and Insights*, 162. The results of data analysis using Quirkos software obtained 155. From the results of this research, a collection of statements was obtained which were then coded into 21 Quirks. Furthermore, the 21 Quirks overlap into 3 main themes, namely: 1) independent curriculum; 2) Piaget's theory; and 3) employment. There are similarities in the text segments between Green Chemistry and sustainable development, constructivism, Piaget's theory, and waste. Apart from that, Piaget's theory also has text segments in common with cognitive, chemistry and PjBL [1].
10. "Constructivism in Education: A Critical Evaluation" by Yilmaz (2008). Even though the challenges are quite large, the application of constructivism has been proven to improve students' critical thinking abilities and problem-solving skills. This approach also encourages students to take more responsibility for their own learning, which has the potential to improve long-term learning outcomes [23].
11. **"Designing Constructivist Learning Environments"** by Jonassen (1999). The results of Jonassen's study suggest that to create an effective learning environment according to constructivist principles, teachers need to design activities that emphasize problem solving, collaboration, and the use of technology, and allow students to actively construct their own knowledge [8].
12. **Jonassen, D.H.** (1999). *Designing Constructivist Learning Environments*. In C. M. Reigeluth (Ed.), *Instructional-Design Theories and Models: A New Paradigm of Instructional Theory* (Vol. II). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. His study offers guidance on how to design learning environments that support constructivism, including in the context of social learning and social studies (IPS), as well as the application of technology in learning [9].

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Constructivist Theory in Learning

Constructivist theory emphasizes that knowledge is built by students through active interaction with the environment. In learning, this theory provides space for students to construct their own understanding based on experience, observation and reflection. The main figures of constructivist theory such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky emphasized the important role of students as learning subjects.

Piaget proposed that learning occurs through a process of assimilation and accommodation [18], while Vygotsky emphasized the importance of social interaction and *scaffolding* in cognitive development. In the context of social studies learning in junior high schools, the application of this theory aims to help students understand social, economic, cultural and historical phenomena through an approach that is relevant to their daily lives.

2.2.2 Philosophical Foundations of Constructivist Theory

Constructivist theory is rooted in a philosophical view which states that knowledge is the result of human construction based on experience and interaction with the environment. The philosophical foundation of this theory includes various aspects that form the basis of understanding of how individuals learn and understand the world.

1. Ontology: Knowledge as Construction

- Constructivist ontology views reality as something that is not absolute, but is formed based on individual interpretation.
- Knowledge is considered as the result of an individual's active process of understanding and organizing information through experience and reflection.
- This view emphasizes that reality is understood subjectively by each individual.

2. Epistemology: Knowledge Through Activity

- Constructivist epistemology rejects the idea that knowledge can be transferred directly from teachers to students.
- Knowledge is obtained through an active process of thinking, exploring, and interacting with the environment.
- In education, students are considered as builders of their own knowledge, while teachers act as facilitators who help students connect new information with previous knowledge.

3. Axiology: Focus on the Learning Process

- Constructivist axiology emphasizes the importance of the learning process rather than just the final result.
- The main value in this approach is developing a deep understanding, not just memorizing facts.
- Learning is directed at developing critical, creative and collaborative thinking skills.

2.2.3 Basic Principles of Constructivist Theory

Constructivist theory is rooted in the idea that students are active subjects in the learning process. They build understanding based on experience, prior knowledge, and interactions with others. Constructivism is a movement that strengthens cognitivist beliefs. Constructivists consider the maturity of students to interpret experiences as the essence of learning. Switching from passive to active transfer of information to solve problems. Constructivists emphasize that students can create their own interpretation of the world of information. They have a different view from behaviorists and cognitivists, who state that minds can be mapped by educators [17].

According to **Wheatley (1991)**, in the context of constructivist learning theory, learning is an active process in which individuals build new understanding or knowledge based on previous experiences and interactions with the world around them. Wheatley emphasizes that knowledge is not transferred directly from teachers to students, but is constructed by the students themselves through experience, exploration and reflection.

According to **Twomey Fosnot**, constructivism is an approach to education that emphasizes that learning is a process of building understanding through experience, reflection, and interaction with the environment. In his view, learning is not just the accumulation of information, but the transformation of students' way of thinking which involves the process of developing new ideas and concepts.

According to **Wray and Lewis**, constructivist theory emphasizes that learning is an active process in which students build new knowledge based on previous experiences. They view learning as a learner-centered activity, where they engage in a process of exploration, analysis, and reflection [7].

In social studies learning, this principle is applied by:

1. **Problem Based Learning Activities**
   Teachers use social problems or historical phenomena as learning material. Students are invited to analyze, discuss and solve these problems.
2. **Contextual Learning**
   The material is adapted to students' real lives, such as local economic development issues or social conflicts in the surrounding community.
3. **Collaborative Interaction**
   Through group discussions, students can share perspectives and develop a common understanding of complex social studies concepts.

The application of constructivist theory in social studies learning can be done with various strategies:

1. **Metode Inquiry**
   The teacher starts with a relevant question or problem, such as "What are the causes of social conflict in our environment?" Students are then invited to search for data, analyze and conclude independently.
2. **Project-Based Learning (PjBL)**
   Students are given projects, for example making a social map or a report on the impact of development in their area. This involves exploration, research, and presentation of results [3].
3. **Role Play and Simulation**
   By playing the role of a historical figure or social actor, students can understand different points of view and their relationship to social studies concepts.

Constructivist-based social studies learning requires media and learning resources that support students' exploration activities, including:

1. **Digital Technology**
   E-learning platforms, digital simulations, or interactive learning videos help students understand the material in an interesting and in-depth way.
2. **Local Source**
   Teachers can utilize local data or events, such as local cultural traditions or social phenomena that occur in students' environments.
3. **Concept Maps and Infographics**
   Students are invited to make diagrams or visualizations that illustrate the relationships between concepts in social studies material.

The implementation of constructivist theory places teachers as facilitators, mediators and motivators in the learning process. Teachers not only convey information but also:

- Guiding students to explore knowledge independently.
- Facilitate group discussions and help students solve problems.
- Provide constructive feedback to improve student understanding.

Constructivist learning evaluation places more emphasis on student learning processes and outcomes. Appropriate forms of evaluation include:

1. **Authentic Assessment**
   Project assessment, portfolio and presentation of group work results.
2. **Performance Rubric**
   Assessment that includes aspects of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and problem solving.
3. **Self Reflection**
   Invite students to evaluate their learning process, both individually and in groups.

The implementation of constructivist theory in social studies learning in junior high schools is based on the following principles:

1. **Students as Learning Centers**
   The teacher acts as a facilitator, while students actively explore knowledge through discussion, exploration and reflection.
2. **Contextualization of Material**
   Learning is adapted to the social and cultural context of students so that the material is more relevant and easy to understand.
3. **Collaboration and Social Interaction**
   Learning encourages students to work in groups, share ideas, and support each other in solving problems.
4. **Reflective Process**
   Students are invited to reflect on their learning experiences so that understanding becomes deeper.
5. **Scaffolding**
   Wray and Lewis really emphasize the importance of scaffolding in learning, namely:

- Teachers provide sufficient support to help students understand concepts or complete tasks that are beyond their independent abilities.
- Scaffolding is carried out in stages, where support is reduced as students' understanding increases.

2.2.4 Theory about Social Studies Learning

Social Sciences (IPS) is a field of study designed to develop students' understanding of humans in social, cultural, economic and environmental contexts. Social Sciences integrates various scientific disciplines such as history, geography, economics, sociology and anthropology to provide insight into solving holistic social problems regarding human life and society and to shape students into critical, caring and responsible citizens.

John U. Michaelis, Social studies is education designed to study humans in the context of their social relationships, including social institutions, the environment and societal challenges [9].

NCSS (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994) Social studies is a field of education that focuses on developing citizenship through understanding the social environment, both local and global, by integrating social sciences and humanities [16].

1. Philosophical Foundations of Social Studies Learning

Social studies learning is based on an educational philosophy that combines empirical, humanistic and pragmatic approaches:

- **Empirical**: Emphasizes facts and data about social phenomena.
- **Humanistic**: Encourage understanding of values, ethics and humanity.
- **Pragmatic**: Oriented to the development of practical skills to deal with social problems.

2. Social Studies Learning Objectives

1. Equip students with knowledge and understanding of social concepts.
2. Develop critical and analytical thinking skills on social issues.
3. Growing Global and Local Awareness. Social studies learning encourages students to understand global issues such as globalization, climate change and peace, as well as appreciate cultural diversity at the local level.
4. Preparing students as responsible citizens.

5. Strategy for Implementing Constructivist Theory in Social Studies Learning

To apply constructivist theory, the following strategies can be applied:

1. **Problem-Based Learning (Problem-Based Learning)**
   Teachers provide contextual problems related to social studies topics, such as the impact of globalization, for students to discuss and solve [6].
2. **Cooperative Learning**
   Learners work in groups to explore material such as social change or cultural conflict, using methods such as group discussion, jigsaw, or think-pair-share.
3. **Case study**
   Learners analyze real situations, such as poverty or urbanization, to understand the causes, impacts, and relevant solutions.
4. **Investigation-Based Project (Inquiry-Based Project)**
   Students design projects related to social studies themes, such as researching local history or compiling an economic map of their region [3].
5. **Utilization of Digital Technology**
   Teachers use interactive learning resources such as videos, simulations, or map-based applications to facilitate student exploration.

2.2.5 Theoretical Implications in Social Studies Learning

a. **Curriculum Design**: Integrate multidisciplinary concepts that are relevant to students' lives.
b. **Learning strategies**: Involves group discussions, debates, case analysis, and role-playing to bring social material to life.
c. **Instructional Media**: Using maps, infographics, documentaries and digital learning resources.
d. **Authentic Assessment**: Based on projects, portfolios, or observations of student involvement in social activities.

Wheatley's views in constructivist theory can be applied in social studies learning in junior high schools by:

- Encourage students to analyze complex social, cultural, or historical events and find solutions based on group discussions.
- Provide project-based assignments that are relevant to students' local context, such as research on social change in surrounding communities.
- Create a learning environment that encourages exploration and reflection, with teachers acting as facilitators and motivators.

Twomey Fosnot's views can be applied in social studies learning in junior high schools through:

- **Case study**: Students study historical events or social phenomena and try to analyze causes, impacts and solutions.
- **Group Discussion**: Encourage students to discuss social issues such as social change, cultural conflict, or globalization.
- **Contextual Projects**: Provide project assignments, such as creating local development impact reports or

analyzing changes in the social structure in their area.

Wray and Lewis's views can be applied in social studies learning in junior high schools through:

1. **Problem Based Assignment**
   Teachers can provide real cases, such as social conflicts or environmental issues, that are relevant to the students' context. Scaffolding is applied to help students analyze and solve problems.
2. **Collaborative Project**
   Students work in groups to prepare reports about social change or the impact of globalization, while discussing the data and their findings.
3. **Use of Literacy in Social Sciences**
   Teachers encourage students to read articles, analyze content, and write reports on topics such as history or economic development.

2.2.6 Implementation Steps in Social Sciences Learning

1. **Identify Relevant Issues or Themes**
   Teachers choose contextual social studies topics, such as "The Impact of Globalization" or "Social Inequality," which are close to students' experiences.
2. **Using a Project-Based Approach (Project-Based Learning)**
   Students are given assignments to explore local issues, such as waste management or cultural diversity in their environment. This activity connects theory with real practice [3].
3. **Utilizing Media and Technology**
   Teachers provide interactive learning resources such as documentary videos, digital maps, or social simulation applications to enrich the learning experience.
4. **Facilitate Discussion and Group Work**
   Students discuss in groups to solve problems, make reports, or make presentations. These activities encourage collective understanding and social skills.
5. **Reflection**
   After the learning process, students are invited to reflect on what they have learned, relate it to personal experiences, and evaluate how they solve problems.

Implementation Example

In the topic "Social Inequality in Indonesia," teachers can:

- Provide case studies about areas with high levels of poverty.
- Ask students to identify factors that cause inequality and propose solutions.
- Using statistical data or simple interviews with local people.
- Engage students in economic simulations to understand the impact of resource distribution.

Benefits of Implementation

1. **Improved Critical Thinking Skills**
   Students are trained to analyze problems in depth and find solutions based on data.
2. **Strengthening Collaboration**
   Through group work, students learn to respect other people's opinions and work as a team.
3. **Mastery of More Meaningful Knowledge**
   Students understand social studies material more contextually and relevant to their lives.
4. **Development of Learning Independence**
   By playing an active role in the learning process, students are more independent and responsible for their learning.

Challenges and Solutions

1. **Teacher Readiness**
   Teachers need training to master constructivist-based facilitation techniques.
2. **Limited Learning Resources**
   The solution is to utilize local sources, such as data from the community or the internet, as an alternative.
3. **Various Levels of Understanding of Students**
   Teachers need to apply differentiation strategies to adapt learning to students' needs.

Social studies learning aims to produce students who not only understand social phenomena, but are also able to contribute positively to social life. By applying relevant theories and approaches, social studies learning becomes an effective means of forming a critical, creative and caring generation.

2.2.7 Definition of Junior High School (SMP)

Junior High School (SMP) is a formal education level at the junior secondary level after Elementary School (SD). SMP is part of the national education system which is designed to provide further basic education for students in the early teenage age range, namely around 12–15 years.

Definition of Junior High School (SMP) according to Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System is explained in Article 17, which reads:

1. Secondary education consists of general education and vocational education.
2. General education at the secondary education level takes the form of Junior High School (SMP) and Senior High School (SMA).

SMP aims to shape students into human beings who believe, are devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Article 3 of Law No. 20 of 2003) [5].

Mulyasa (2007), SMP is a formal educational institution that aims to guide students at the transitional age from childhood to adolescence to form more complex character, knowledge and skills in accordance with their cognitive and emotional development [14].

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Reseacrh Methods

The subjects of this research are teachers. The research methodology used to explore the application of constructivist theory in social studies learning in junior high schools can be divided into two main approaches: **quantitative approach** And **qualitative approach**. These two approaches can provide a comprehensive picture of how teachers implement constructivist theory in their learning practices.

The quantitative approach in this research aims to measure the extent to which the application of constructivist theory by teachers is related to student learning outcomes or changes in the teacher's own teaching practices. Quantitative research can be carried out using instruments that can collect numerical data that can be analyzed statistically.

Research Design:

- **Quantitative Survey:** One design that can be used is a survey to measure the application of constructivist theory by teachers. This survey may involve questions regarding the teaching methods used, the frequency of use of constructivist methods, and the teacher's level of understanding of constructivist theory.
- **Quasi Experiment:** Researchers can conduct quasi-experiments by comparing two groups of teachers—teachers who actively use constructivist methods and teachers who use traditional methods—to see differences in student performance or in the development of teachers' teaching competencies.
- **Pre-Test and Post-Test Analysis:** Teachers involved in research may be given tests before and after training or intervention on the use of constructivist theory to measure changes in understanding and application of the theory.
- **Case study:** Researchers can conduct case studies of one or more teachers who apply constructivist theory in teaching social studies. Researchers will observe the teaching process, talk to teachers, and analyze teaching documents or notes to see how constructivism is applied in real contexts.
- **Phenomenology:** This approach focuses on teachers' subjective experiences in implementing constructivism. Researchers will conduct in-depth interviews to explore teachers' understanding of constructivism and how their experiences influence the way they teach social studies.

3.2 Data Collections Instrumen and Technique

3.2.1 Data Collection Instruments:

- **Questionnaire for Teachers:** Questionnaires can contain closed or open questions to find out how teachers understand and implement constructivist principles in their classes. For example, a questionnaire may include questions about the use of methods such as problem-based learning, group discussions, or projects in teaching social studies.
- **Student Assessment:** Tests or assessments of student learning outcomes can be used to evaluate the impact of using constructivist methods on student understanding and achievement. This data was then compared with the results from teachers who used the traditional approach.
- **In-depth Interview:** Semi-structured interviews with teachers will provide an understanding of how they view constructivism, what methods they use, and the challenges they face in implementing it [2]. This interview may include questions such as:
  - What motivates you to use a constructivist approach in learning social studies?
  - Which constructivist learning method do you most often use in social studies classes? Why?
  - What are the biggest challenges you face in implementing constructivist theory in the classroom?
- **Class Observation:** Researchers can observe directly how teachers teach using constructivist methods in the classroom. This will help identify applications of theory in practice, such as the use of problem-based learning, group discussions, or collaborative projects.
- **Teaching Documents:** Documents such as lesson plans, assignments, and teaching materials can be analyzed to see the extent to which constructivist principles are integrated in social studies teaching.

3.2.3 Data Analysis Techniques:

- **Descriptive and Inferential Statistics:** Data obtained from questionnaires or tests can be analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, median, or standard deviation) to describe general trends in teachers' implementation of constructivism. The t test or ANOVA can be used to compare differences between the experimental group (teachers who use constructivist methods) and controls (teachers who use traditional methods).
- **Thematic Analysis:** Data collected from interviews and observations can be analyzed using the thematic analysis method, where researchers identify emerging patterns or themes related to the application of constructivism in social studies teaching. This helps understand how teachers construct knowledge and the challenges they face.
- **Narrative Analysis:** This technique can be used to explore narratives of teachers' experiences in implementing constructivist theory. It provides deep

insight into the teacher's learning journey and its impact on students.

4. RESULT

In this research, which focuses on the implementation of constructivist theory by teachers in social studies learning in junior high schools, several important findings were identified through both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This discussion presents the results of these two approaches and analyzes how teachers apply constructivist principles and their impact on social studies learning.

1. Results of Discussion of the Quantitative Approach

Through surveys and measuring student learning outcomes, several results were found that illustrate the application of constructivist theory by teachers in social studies classes.

a. Application of Constructivist Methods by Teachers:

The survey results show that the majority of teachers in junior high schools who are research subjects apply constructivist methods regularly, although with variations in the level of depth and frequency of use. The most frequently used methods are:

- Problem-based learning (PBL): 70% of teachers use PBL to develop students' critical thinking skills in analyzing social, economic or political issues.
- Group discussions and collaboration: 60% of teachers integrate group discussions as a way to allow students to interact, share ideas, and build knowledge together.

Based on data collection through interviews, observation and documentation, several important findings were found which can be explained as follows:

- Collaborative-based projects: 50% of teachers implement projects that allow students to work together to complete real-world context-based tasks.

b. Impact on Student Learning Outcomes:

The results of the pre-test and post-test show a significant increase in understanding of social studies material by students who were taught using the constructivist method. This increase is seen in:

- Improved cognitive test scores: The average post-learning test score for the group taught with constructivist methods increased by 20% compared to the pre-learning test.
- Critical thinking skills: Students who engage in problem-based learning show an increase in the ability to analyze and provide solutions to given socio-economic issues.

c. Difference between Experimental and Control Group:

The t test analysis between the group of teachers who applied constructivist theory and the control group showed significant differences in student learning outcomes. Students taught using constructivist methods show better results in understanding basic social studies concepts and critical thinking skills.

2. Results of Discussion of the Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach provides deeper insight into teachers' experiences and perspectives in applying constructivism in social studies learning.

a. Teacher Perceptions of Constructivism:

Interviews with teachers show that most teachers understand constructivism as an approach that encourages students to be active in learning and build their knowledge through experience. However, teachers also expressed challenges in implementing this method:

- Time and material constraints: Some teachers feel that constructivist methods require more time, which sometimes conflicts with the time constraints inherent in a busy curriculum.
- Limited resources: Some teachers stated that they were constrained by a lack of resources, both in the form of technology and teaching materials that support the application of project-based methods or group discussions.

b. Teachers' Experiences in Using Constructivist Learning:

Teachers who were more experienced in using constructivist methods reported more positive results. They feel more confident in using techniques such as problem-based learning or inquiry-based learning. They also report that students are more engaged and motivated when they are given the opportunity to investigate real problems or work in groups.

c. Challenges Faced by Teachers:

The main challenges faced by teachers in implementing constructivist theory are:

- Inability to manage time effectively: Teachers find it difficult to complete material on time because the constructivist approach requires more time for discussion and collaboration.
- Varied student readiness: Not all students have the same readiness or skills in collaborating and thinking critically. Some students need more intensive guidance to understand more complex concepts.
- Lack of professional training: Some teachers expressed that they were not trained enough in applying constructivist methods effectively and needed more in-depth training.

d. Changes in Teacher Teaching Quality:

Teachers who apply constructivist theory report changes in their approach to teaching. They focus more on providing opportunities for students to explore topics independently and work in groups. They also become more flexible in preparing lesson plans, adapting learning to the needs of diverse students.

5. Conclusion

The application of constructivist theory to social studies learning in junior high schools can increase student involvement and the quality of learning. With the right strategy, students not only understand social concepts but are also able to apply them in everyday life. Teachers play an important role in creating an interactive, relevant and contextual learning environment.

a. **Strengthening 21st Century Skills**
Implementation of constructivist theory allows students to develop critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills. These skills are indispensable for understanding and analyzing complex social phenomena

b. **Implementation of Authentic Strategy**
Through methods such as *project-based learning* and group discussions, students are invited to relate learning to real life. This increases the attractiveness and relevance of the material.

c. **Improved Learning Outcomes**
The constructivist approach has been proven to increase students' conceptual understanding and ability to solve problems. Social interaction and collaboration also support students' cognitive and affective development.

d. **Implementation Challenges**
Even though it brings many benefits, implementing this theory requires teacher readiness, supportive learning tools, and good classroom management. With adequate training and resources, these challenges can be overcome [6].

Overall, constructivist theory provides a very strong framework for social studies learning in middle school. With proper implementation, this approach can prepare students to become individuals who are critical, creative, and able to face social challenges in the future. An experience-based approach and social interaction makes learning more contextual, so that students can understand and apply knowledge in real situations.

Thank-you note

We would like to thank the educators who continue to innovate to provide meaningful learning experiences for students. Hopefully this article can be an inspiration and guide in implementing constructivist theory in social studies learning at SMP Negeri 1 Jenggawah. Support and collaboration from all parties is very important in creating a young generation who is critical, creative and cares about their community.

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