



Implementation of the Constructivist Approach in Fiqh Learning: A Case Study of Prayer Material for Grade VI Students of MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of the constructivism approach in learning Islamic jurisprudence on prayer material for sixth grade students of MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti according to John Dewey's constructivism theory and its implications. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the constructivism approach in learning Islamic jurisprudence on prayer material has been carried out well by fifth grade Islamic jurisprudence teachers of MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti Brondong Lamongan, by applying the principles of constructivism developed by John Dewey "learning by doing (learning by doing), Experiential Learning (Learning Based on Experience), Reflective Thinking (Reflective Thinking), Democratic Education (Democratic Education), Problem-Based Learning (Problem-Based Learning), Social Interaction in Learning (Learning through Social Interaction)". Students' reflective and critical thinking skills develop through discussion and question and answer. Thus, constructivist-based learning is proven to be effective in developing students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level plays an important role in shaping students' understanding of worship practices and religious character from an early age. One of the most crucial core materials is the learning of fiqh, particularly the procedures and meanings of performing prayer (sholat) (Rusydi 2022). Fiqh is a discipline that discusses Islamic legal rulings that are amaliyah or practical in nature, such as procedures for worship (Usroh et al. 2023). At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, fiqh learning focuses on introducing and training basic acts of worship, including sholat. The main objective is not only for students to understand fiqh rulings, but also to be able to practice them in their daily lives (Departemen Agama RI 2006). However, in practice, fiqh instruction is often still dominated by a lecture-based (teacher-centered) approach, causing students to merely memorize concepts without understanding their meanings. Therefore, a more participatory and contextual approach, such as constructivism, is needed so that students are actively involved in learning and truly understand and practice fiqh teachings (Setiyawan et al. 2021b); (Nafisah et al. 2022).

Sholat is one of the pillars of Islam and constitutes a core subject in fiqh learning at MI. Learning sholat includes cognitive aspects (knowledge of requirements, pillars, and recitations of prayer), affective aspects (attitudes and understanding of the meaning of worship), and psychomotor aspects (the practice of prayer movements and recitations) (Sodikin and Ashom 2021); (Ramadhan 2023). The implementation of a constructivist approach in sholat material enables students to discuss the meaning of prayer, engage in direct practice in groups, reflect on the importance of worship in life, and build understanding through experience rather than mere memorization. Thus, this approach is considered more effective than traditional methods in instilling understanding and worship skills among sixth-grade MI students (Safrina et al. 2025).

In response to these challenges, constructivist learning theory offers a framework that positions students as “constructors” of their own knowledge through active activities, experiences, social interaction, and reflection by observing, questioning, experimenting, reasoning, and communicating (Novita et al. 2022). In the context of Islamic Religious Education, a constructivist approach allows students not only to know the procedures of prayer but also to understand why and how worship is performed in everyday life, making learning more meaningful and contextual (Salsa et al. 2021).

Several previous studies have demonstrated the success of this approach. Nafisah (2022), in her research at MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin, found that the application of constructivism in fiqh learning could increase students' learning activities, independence, and conceptual understanding (Subhan and Ningsih 2020). Similar findings were also reported by Ainy (2021), who stated that a constructivist approach provides space for learners to explore religious values through discussion, practice, and reflection, rather than merely listening to lectures from teachers (Setiyawan et al. 2021); (Lissafrina and Hidayah 2025). Although several studies have examined the application of constructivism in fiqh

learning, most were conducted at the MTs or senior high school level. Research at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level, particularly related to sholat material as a fiqh subject using John Dewey's constructivist theory, remains limited.

Based on the background above, through a case study at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti involving sixth-grade students, this research aims to describe the implementation of constructivist-based fiqh learning on sholat material and the implications of this approach for fiqh learning on sholat. The results are expected to serve as a basis for recommendations for fiqh teachers and curriculum developers in madrasahs so that fiqh learning becomes more effective, active, and meaningful for students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Constructivist Theory According to John Dewey

Constructivist theory holds that knowledge is actively constructed by individuals based on their experiences and interactions with the environment. John Dewey (1859–1952), an American philosopher and progressive education figure, is considered one of the pioneers of this approach. According to Dewey, learning is an active process in which learners construct knowledge through direct experience and reflection on that experience (Dewey 1938).

John Dewey emphasized that learning becomes more meaningful when learners are directly involved in real activities. Several concepts developed by Dewey include: *learning by doing*, *experiential learning*, *reflective thinking*, *democratic education*, *problem-based learning*, and *social interaction in learning* (John Dewey 1910); (John Dewey 1986); (J. Dewey 1916); (Dewey 1933).

Furthermore, according to Dewey, the teacher's role is that of a facilitator, guide, and motivator, rather than merely a transmitter of information. Teachers are responsible for creating a learning environment that encourages students to think critically, explore their own experiences, and independently discover meaning from learning. Consequently, the learning process becomes active, contextual, and democratic, in line with the principles of progressive education proposed by Dewey (John Dewey 2024).

Implementation of John Dewey's Constructivist Approach in Fiqh Learning

From an epistemological perspective—which examines the origin, process, and validity of knowledge—effective learning occurs when students actively construct their own knowledge through experience (Kivimäki, 2023). John Dewey emphasized that knowledge is not merely information passively received, but rather something generated through the interaction between learners' experiences and the learning environment (Dewey, 1916; Dewey, 1938). In other words, knowledge is acquired through reflection on real experiences, not merely through memorization or abstract theory. This approach is essential because it enables students to develop deep and meaningful understanding rather than simply recalling facts.

The implementation of Dewey's constructivist theory in fiqh learning on prayer (*sholat*) material incorporates several key concepts developed by Dewey, including *learning by doing*, *experiential learning*, *reflective thinking*, *democratic education*, *problem-based learning*, and *social interaction in learning*. In practice,

students are encouraged to perform the movements of prayer and then engage in collective reflection on the meaning of each movement and its connection to values of piety (*taqwa*), social responsibility, and ethics. Subsequently, the teacher facilitates group discussions in which students compare their prayer experiences, share their feelings, identify challenges encountered, and reflect on how the prayer movements represent spiritual awareness and social responsibility. Based on these activities, students are asked to design concrete actions, such as leading congregational prayers, observing younger students who are learning to pray, or facilitating mini workshops on prayer etiquette within the school or mosque environment (Schulz, 2025; Hermanto & Jayana, 2024a).

Thus, knowledge of prayer is not merely stored as information, but constructed through meaningful experiences, reflection, and social interaction. Students who reflect on these experiences are better able to understand the meaning of worship, correct procedures, and the spiritual values underlying these practices. This process emphasizes the interconnection between experience, reflection, and knowledge, making learning contextual and relevant to everyday life (Hermanto & Jayana, 2024).

According to Dewey's epistemology, effective learning aims to produce living, applicable, and enduring knowledge. Students not only know *what* to do, but also understand *why* and *how* to do it. For example, they do not merely memorize prayer movements, but also comprehend the meaning of each pillar and the correct procedures, resulting in integrative knowledge that connects cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Tubbs, 2023).

The importance of effective learning within an epistemological framework lies in preparing students to become critical, independent, and adaptive individuals. Knowledge constructed through active experience is more readily applied to real-life problem solving, decision making, and ethical social interaction (Tamayo Alzate, 2025). In the long term, according to Dewey, this approach supports character development, reflective thinking skills, and adaptability to change, which constitute the fundamental goals of education (Dewey, 1933).

Therefore, effective learning is not merely about "mastering subject matter," but about building students' intellectual, moral, and social capacities. This is the essence of Deweyan epistemology: knowledge is not simply information, but the active outcome of reflected and deeply understood experience (Black et al., 1950).

The Role of Teachers and the Learning Environment

In the application of a constructivist approach, teachers do not function as the central source of information, but rather as facilitators who assist students in constructing meaning from their learning experiences. Teachers design learning situations that enable exploration, reflection, and collaboration. Nurul Mawaddah explains that teachers in Islamic Religious Education should facilitate critical thinking and value internalization, rather than merely teaching memorization of fiqh rulings. In the context of prayer instruction, for example, teachers may guide students in practicing prayer movements and then engage them in discussions about the wisdom (*hikmah*) behind each pillar and recitation.

Through this process, students develop a more reflective and personal understanding of the values of worship (Mawaddah, 2023). According to Zukhrufin, the successful implementation of a constructivist approach depends on teachers' ability to design active and meaningful learning strategies, as well as the availability of adequate madrasah facilities (Zukhrufin, 2024).

The learning environment also plays a vital role in supporting the implementation of constructivism. A conducive environment enables social interaction, collaboration, and meaningful contextual learning. Riyadhul Jannah (2023) emphasizes that in Islamic Religious Education, an open and dialogical learning environment encourages students to actively construct knowledge through direct experience. In the context of prayer instruction, spaces such as school prayer rooms (*musala*) or worship practice areas can function as spiritual laboratories where students learn by doing, feeling, and reflecting. This reinforces the constructivist principle that knowledge is built through interaction between individuals and their environment (Ilma et al., 2025).

The synergy between the teacher's role and the learning environment is a determining factor in the successful implementation of a constructivist approach in fiqh learning. Teachers create challenging and meaningful learning experiences, while the learning environment provides the space and context for students to internalize religious values. Risman and Hanafi (2024) argue that Islamic educational environments should foster ethical social interaction, where values of worship and morality develop naturally through practice. Consequently, fiqh learning on prayer material for sixth-grade students serves not only as a means of acquiring religious knowledge, but also as a process of forming spiritual and social character rooted in real experience and deep self-reflection (Risman & Hanafi, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. This approach was chosen because the research aimed to provide an in-depth description of the process of implementing the constructivist approach in Fiqh learning, particularly prayer (*sholat*) instruction, at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti. The qualitative approach enables researchers to understand learning phenomena holistically through direct interaction with research subjects in their natural context (Moleong, 2012).

The research was conducted at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti, Brondong District, Lamongan Regency. The study was carried out over three days in October 2025, covering the stages of preliminary observation, data collection, and analysis of research findings.

The research subjects consisted of the Fiqh teacher and sixth-grade students at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti. The object of the research was the implementation of John Dewey's constructivist approach in Fiqh learning, specifically in relation to prayer (*sholat*) worship material.

Data collection techniques were carried out through three stages:

1. **Observation**, conducted to directly observe the Fiqh learning process in the classroom, particularly how the teacher implemented the constructivist approach through activities such as group discussions, prayer simulations, and experiential reflection.
2. **Interviews**, conducted with the Fiqh teacher and several students to obtain information regarding their experiences, perceptions, and responses to the implementation of the constructivist approach.
3. **Documentation**, used to complement observation and interview data, including lesson plans (RPP), activity photographs, students' learning records, and relevant school documents.

The main instrument in qualitative research was the researcher him- or herself (*human instrument*), who played a role in all stages of the research process, from planning to data analysis. The researcher was supported by auxiliary instruments such as observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation sheets.

Data analysis followed the model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019), which consists of three stages:

1. **Data reduction**, involving the selection and simplification of relevant data;
2. **Data display**, presenting data in a descriptive manner; and
3. **Conclusion drawing**, interpreting the data to identify meanings and research patterns.

To ensure data validity, source and technique triangulation were employed, and member checking was conducted with informants to ensure the data accurately reflected field conditions (Sugiyono, 2019).

The research procedure consisted of four main stages:

1. Pre-research (initial observation);
2. Data collection (observation, interviews, and documentation);
3. Data analysis; and
4. Preparation of the research report based on field findings.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This research was conducted at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti and focused on the implementation of Dewey's constructivist approach in Fiqh learning, particularly in prayer (*sholat*) instruction. The researcher observed how students constructed their own knowledge and skills through direct experience, in accordance with the principle of *learning by doing* proposed by Dewey (1938). Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, it was found that the implementation of the constructivist approach in Fiqh learning, especially in

prayer instruction for sixth-grade students, was carried out gradually and in a structured manner.

The implementation of the constructivist approach in Fiqh learning on prayer material was conducted through several main stages. The first stage was apperception and initial exploration, in which the teacher elicited students' prior understanding of prayer and their experiences in performing it. The second stage was the core learning activities, during which students directly practiced prayer movements and recitations under the teacher's guidance. At this stage, students were also invited to discuss common mistakes, the wisdom behind each movement, and values that could be applied in daily life. The third stage was reflection and conclusion, in which students expressed or wrote down the new understandings they gained from the learning experience. Through these stages, learning became more interactive, contextual, and meaningful for students.

Interview results with the teacher indicated that the success of the constructivist approach strongly depended on the teacher's ability to create an open and collaborative learning atmosphere. The teacher sought to facilitate each student's active participation in discussions and encouraged them to express their opinions, even when differences in understanding arose. In addition, learning environments such as the school prayer room (*mushola*), classrooms, and worship practice areas provided tangible support for experiential learning. These environments enabled students to learn in authentic contexts, in line with constructivist principles that emphasize the connection between religious theory and practice.

Based on observations and teacher reflections, the implementation of the constructivist approach had a positive impact on students' religious understanding and attitudes. Students demonstrated improvement in prayer practice skills, the ability to explain the meaning of each pillar of prayer, and awareness of the importance of performing prayer correctly and with *khushu'* (devotion). Moreover, students became more active in the learning process, more open in discussions, and showed mutual respect in group activities. Thus, the application of the constructivist approach not only enhanced cognitive learning outcomes but also shaped students' affective and social aspects in developing a deeper understanding of prayer worship.

Implementation of the Learning by Doing Principle

Observation of Fiqh learning on prayer material showed that the teacher invited students to directly practice prayer movements. Students were divided into small groups and took turns leading and demonstrating congregational prayer movements. This activity enabled students to learn through experience (*experiential learning*), rather than merely memorizing theory.

Field Findings:

Students appeared more enthusiastic and found it easier to understand the sequence and meaning of prayer movements when learning through direct practice. They learned to correct their recitations and body positions through guidance from the teacher and peers. This activity reflects Dewey's principle that effective education should position students as active agents in constructing their own knowledge, rather than passive recipients of instruction.

Social Interaction in Learning

Classroom observations indicated that Fiqh learning on prayer material was developed collaboratively through group discussions and student cooperation. The teacher assigned students to discuss the meaning of the pillars of prayer, the conditions for valid prayer, and common mistakes in worship.

Field Findings:

Students engaged in discussion, shared personal experiences, and assisted peers who had not yet mastered the sequence of prayer movements. The teacher acted as a facilitator who guided discussions to remain focused on learning objectives. Through these social activities, students not only understood the subject matter but also developed cooperation, responsibility, and tolerance.

Experiential Learning

The teacher began lessons by providing students with opportunities to directly practice prayer procedures. After the practice session, students were invited to reflect on and discuss their experiences. The teacher asked reflective questions such as, "*What did you feel when performing rukū'?*" Students were then guided to draw conclusions or construct new concepts based on their experiences and reflections.

Field Findings:

Students expressed their impressions and difficulties encountered during prayer practice. They were also encouraged to apply the habit of performing prayers on time at home and to report their experiences in the next meeting. Prayer instruction using an experiential learning approach is consistent with John Dewey's principles in *Experience and Education* (1938).

Problem-Based Learning

As a discussion trigger, the teacher presented a contextual problem: "Why are some students still reluctant to perform congregational prayer?" Interviews with the teacher revealed that this approach helped students become more critical and active because they were directly involved in seeking religious answers and solutions based on their personal experiences and the religious texts they had learned.

Field Findings:

Through guided discussion, students were able to formulate practical and religiously grounded solutions, such as increasing dhikr, managing study time more effectively, and performing congregational prayer at home and at school. By presenting problems relevant to everyday life, students became more reflective, independent, and capable of connecting religious teachings with social realities.

Democratic Education

During the opening stage (initial dialogue), the teacher began with the question: "In your opinion, why is congregational prayer considered more virtuous than praying individually?" This question invited diverse opinions and stimulated students' critical reflection. Students were divided into several groups to discuss the issue, with each group democratically selecting a leader and a note-taker.

Field Findings:

The teacher provided opportunities for every student to express opinions and actively participate in learning activities. Students were encouraged to discuss and convey their personal views regarding the meaning of worship and the obstacles they encountered in its implementation. The teacher then facilitated the discussion to ensure that it remained grounded in Islamic teachings and ethical conduct.

Reflective Thinking

After conducting prayer simulations, the teacher invited students to reflect on their experiences by asking questions about which aspects had been performed correctly, which needed improvement, and how to maintain *khushu'* (concentration and devotion) **during prayer.**

Field Findings:

Students were able to articulate their understanding verbally, such as realizing the importance of intention (*niyyah*) and inner calm during prayer. Some students even connected the learning experience with their personal lives at home, for example, by acting as an imam within their families. This reflective activity aligns with Dewey's concept of reflective thinking (1933), in which learners process learning experiences into meaningful and sustainable understanding.

The Teacher's Role as a Facilitator

The Fiqh teacher at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti effectively fulfilled the role of facilitator. The teacher did not merely explain theory but also guided, motivated, and provided feedback on students' learning outcomes. Students were given the freedom to experiment during prayer practice while still being guided to remain within the boundaries of Islamic law.

Field Findings:

The teacher actively assisted student groups, corrected incorrect movements, and encouraged students to build confidence in practicing prayer. The teacher also emphasized that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process.

Implications of the Constructivist Approach (John Dewey) in Fiqh Learning on Prayer Material

The implementation of the constructivist approach based on Dewey's theory resulted in several positive outcomes, including:

1. increased student activity and motivation in learning Fiqh prayer material;
2. significant improvement in both conceptual and practical understanding of prayer procedures;
3. development of students' reflective and critical thinking skills through discussion and questioning; and
4. growth of religious and social values such as discipline, cooperation, and sincerity.

Overall, the findings indicate that the implementation of John Dewey's constructivist approach in Fiqh learning at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti was effective. Students learned through direct experience (learning by doing), reflection (reflective thinking), and social interaction (social learning), with the teacher acting as a facilitator. This process not only enhanced students' mastery of prayer material but also fostered religious, independent, and collaborative character development.

Thus, Dewey's constructivist approach proved to be relevant and applicable in Fiqh learning on prayer material, as it connects learning experiences with students' real-life contexts and nurtures deep spiritual awareness.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Constructivist Approach in Fiqh Learning Based on John Dewey's Theory

The research findings demonstrate that Fiqh learning on prayer material in Grade VI at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti effectively applied the principles of the constructivist approach. According to John Dewey's constructivist theory, learning is not a passive activity of receiving information from teachers, but an active process of constructing knowledge through direct experience and reflection on that experience (Dewey, 1938).

Learning by Doing

Dewey emphasized that learning becomes meaningful when students are actively involved in real activities. The findings indicate that students learned Fiqh through simulation and practice of prayer movements rather than through lectures or memorization alone. This practical activity aligns with Dewey's learning by doing principle, in which students construct religious understanding through direct experience. Consequently, prayer is understood not only cognitively but also enacted through concrete practice.

Analysis:

Simulation and worship practice activities reinforce Dewey's view that experience lies at the core of the learning process. Through direct action, students engage in contextual and meaningful learning.

Social Interaction in Learning

In Fiqh learning on prayer material, social interaction was manifested through group work, congregational prayer practice, and school religious activities. Through these interactions, students learned cooperation, mutual respect, and empathy.

Analysis:

Collaborative learning activities increased students' enthusiasm for worship and strengthened ukhuwah Islamiyah (Islamic brotherhood) among students. Dewey believed that learning occurs through social interaction among students, teachers, and the environment.

Experiential Learning

In practice, the teacher invited students to perform ablution, conduct congregational prayer, and then reflect on its meaning. Interview results showed that students better understood why they perform prayer, not merely how to do

it. This indicates that learning proceeded in an experiential and reflective manner.

According to Dewey's theory in *Experience and Education* (1938), experience is the essence of learning. Students construct knowledge through real experience, reflection, and application.

Problem-Based Learning

Problem-based learning encouraged students to think critically in solving religious issues. The teacher presented contextual problems, after which students discussed, searched for religious evidence, and formulated solutions based on Islamic teachings.

Observations showed that this method enhanced critical thinking skills, collaboration, and deep understanding of worship values. This aligns with Dewey's (1938) view that genuine learning occurs through meaningful and contextual problem-solving experiences.

Democratic Education

In Fiqh learning on prayer material, democratic education was implemented through group discussions, classroom deliberation, and the open selection of group leaders. The teacher encouraged students to express opinions respectfully and to listen to others' perspectives.

Field findings indicate that students became more confident in expressing opinions, more respectful of differences, and accustomed to deliberation based on Islamic values. These results support Dewey's view that democratic education is an effective means of training learners to become critical, ethical, and socially responsible members of society.

Reflective Thinking

In this study, the teacher provided time for students to reflect on their learning experiences after prayer simulations, such as discussing difficulties in maintaining concentration or correcting recitations. This reflective process helped students discover personal meaning in learning and strengthened their religious attitudes.

Analysis:

Post-learning reflection demonstrates the practical application of Dewey's reflective thinking principle, in which students not only perform physical activities but also develop deeper understanding and self-awareness of worship practices.

Impact on Student Development

The results show that the constructivist approach had a positive impact on:

1. Active student engagement in learning;
2. Deeper understanding of prayer concepts;
3. Improved practical worship skills; and
4. The formation of religious attitudes and discipline in worship.

These impacts reflect Dewey's educational goals, which emphasize balanced development of thinking, action, and social behavior through meaningful learning experiences. Constructivism in Fiqh learning at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti has been implemented in accordance with the core principles of learning by doing, experiential learning, reflective thinking,

democratic education, problem-based learning, and social interaction in learning. Based on John Dewey's constructivist theory, this approach positions students as active subjects in constructing knowledge, ensuring that learning is not merely information transfer but also a process of forming sustained spiritual experience and religious character.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti and analyzed using John Dewey's constructivist theory, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. The implementation of the constructivist approach in Fiqh learning on prayer (*sholat*) material was carried out effectively by the Grade V Fiqh teacher at MI Muhammadiyah 15 Sidomukti, Brondong, Lamongan. The teacher applied constructivist principles developed by John Dewey, namely *learning by doing*, *experiential learning*, *reflective thinking*, *democratic education*, *problem-based learning*, and *social interaction in learning*. Through active, reflective, and collaborative learning activities, students did not merely receive knowledge from the teacher but constructed their own understanding through direct experiences such as prayer movement simulations, group discussions, and collective reflection.
2. The implementation of the constructivist approach in Fiqh learning on prayer material had positive implications for students. These included increased student activity and motivation in learning, strengthened conceptual understanding and practical skills in performing prayer, and the development of religious attitudes, discipline, and social cooperation. Students' reflective and critical thinking skills also improved through discussion and question-and-answer activities. Thus, constructivist-based learning proved effective in developing students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner.

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