



The Effectiveness of Inquiry-Based Learning on Arabic Maharah Qira'ah Learning Outcomes among MTs Negeri Samarinda Students

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Abstract

Arabic maharah qira'ah learning plays an important role in developing students' literacy competence in madrasah education. However, the learning process still faces challenges, particularly related to students' limited active engagement in comprehending Arabic texts deeply. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the inquiry method on Arabic maharah qira'ah learning outcomes among eighth-grade students at MTs Negeri Samarinda. The study employed a quantitative quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent control group. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test instruments administered to the experimental and control groups. Data analysis was conducted using the Wilcoxon test and Mann-Whitney test due to the non-normal distribution of the data. The findings revealed that the experimental group's mean score increased from 91.85 to 97.41 after implementing the inquiry method, while the control group improved from 89.26 to 92.96. The Wilcoxon test indicated a significant difference in the experimental group ($p = 0.039$). However, the Mann-Whitney test showed that the difference in improvement between the experimental and control groups was not statistically significant. These findings indicate that the inquiry method has positive potential for improving Arabic reading achievement through more active and student-centered learning. Future research is recommended to involve larger samples and longer intervention periods to obtain more comprehensive evidence.



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A. Introduction

Arabic language learning at the madrasah education level plays a crucial role in developing students' literacy competencies, particularly in accessing and understanding various sources of knowledge in which Arabic serves as the primary language (Khotijah et al., 2022; Nisa et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2021). One of the key skills emphasized in Arabic language instruction is reading proficiency (maharah qira'ah) (Hidayat, 2019, 2026; Hidayat et al., 2024). This skill extends beyond recognizing Arabic letters, pronouncing words accurately, and understanding sentence structures; it also involves constructing meaning, identifying main ideas, interpreting information, and critically evaluating text content. From the perspective of modern language learning theories, reading is viewed as an interactive process involving the reader, text, and context. Therefore, successful reading comprehension is highly influenced by instructional strategies that effectively engage students' cognitive processes (Grabe, 2009). Within the context of Islamic education, mastery of maharah qira'ah holds broader significance because Arabic reading proficiency serves as an essential gateway for accessing and comprehending religious and academic literature written in Arabic (Asrori et al., 2025; Aziz et al., 2026). Consequently, improving the quality of Arabic reading instruction is critical to enhancing students' linguistic competencies and academic development in madrasah education.

Despite its strategic position, maharah qira'ah instruction continues to encounter various challenges in educational practice. These challenges are not only related to students' limited mastery of vocabulary and linguistic structures but also to their low level of active engagement in developing deeper textual understanding. In many foreign language learning contexts, students tend to function as recipients of information rather than as knowledge constructors through meaningful reading activities. This results in students reading texts mechanically while having difficulty identifying main ideas, drawing conclusions, and connecting textual information with their existing knowledge. Research in language education indicates that student engagement is one of the key factors influencing learning success, as students who are cognitively and emotionally engaged tend to demonstrate higher academic achievement (Bond et al., 2021). Therefore, instructional approaches are needed that not only deliver learning materials but also encourage students to actively explore, question, analyze, and construct meaning from Arabic texts.

The paradigm shift in 21st-century education has increasingly emphasized the importance of implementing student-centered learning approaches. This approach positions learners as the primary agents in the learning process through activities involving exploration, collaboration, problem-solving, and reflection. One approach that aligns with this educational paradigm is inquiry-based learning, which guides students to acquire knowledge through a systematic process of investigation. Within an inquiry-based learning approach, students are not merely recipients of information provided by teachers but are encouraged to formulate questions, seek evidence, analyze information, and generate conclusions based on their own reasoning processes. This approach is consistent with constructivist theory, which posits that individuals actively construct knowledge through learning experiences and interactions with their environment (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). In the context of maharah qira'ah learning, the principles of inquiry are highly relevant because text comprehension requires various cognitive processes,

including predicting meaning, identifying essential information, evaluating textual content, and constructing interpretations of the text.

The implementation of inquiry-based learning in education has been extensively examined as an instructional approach capable of enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. Unlike conventional learning approaches that tend to position teachers as the primary source of information, inquiry-based learning provides students with opportunities to construct understanding through processes of investigation and discovery. Through stages involving problem orientation, question formulation, information gathering, analysis, and conclusion development, students are trained to enhance their critical thinking abilities and problem-solving skills. Pedaste et al. (2015) explained that inquiry-based learning represents a systematic learning cycle consisting of several phases that enable students to develop understanding through investigative activities. In the context of language learning, the inquiry approach has the potential to improve text comprehension because students are not merely directed to identify word meanings but are also encouraged to analyze relationships among ideas, comprehend textual contexts, and construct meaning independently. Therefore, inquiry-based learning has both theoretical and practical relevance for implementation in Arabic maharah qira'ah instruction.

Previous studies have demonstrated that inquiry-based learning improves students' academic abilities. A meta-analysis conducted by Furtak et al. (2012) revealed that inquiry-based approaches positively influence learning outcomes when the investigation process is supported by adequate teacher guidance. This finding is further supported by Lazonder & Harmsen (2016) who explained that the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning largely depends on the quality of instructional support (guidance) provided throughout the investigation process. These findings indicate that inquiry-based learning does not simply involve allowing students to learn independently but requires a structured instructional design to ensure the achievement of learning objectives. In reading instruction, the inquiry approach can assist students in developing text comprehension strategies through processes of questioning, information seeking, concept integration, and evaluation of their own understanding. However, most existing research on inquiry-based learning has primarily focused on science, mathematics, or general education contexts. In contrast, its implementation in Arabic language learning, particularly in reading skills (maharah qira'ah), remains relatively limited.

In the context of Arabic language learning in Indonesia, the limited research on the implementation of inquiry-based learning has become an important concern due to the distinctive characteristics and complexity of Arabic language education. Unlike the learning of other foreign languages, Arabic in madrasah education serves both academic and religious functions. Therefore, students are not only expected to acquire linguistic competencies but also to interpret texts embedded within specific cultural and religious contexts. Research on Arabic language education indicates that one of the major challenges lies in developing instructional practices that can enhance student engagement while simultaneously fostering deeper text comprehension abilities. Retnawati et al. (2020) revealed that Arabic language learning implementation continues to encounter various challenges related to instructional strategies, teaching methods, and student engagement. These conditions highlight the need for innovative learning approaches that integrate active cognitive processes with the objectives of

language learning. Therefore, implementing inquiry-based learning in maharah qira'ah instruction represents an alternative approach that requires further empirical investigation.

Based on preliminary observations conducted in Arabic language learning in Grade VIII at MTs Negeri Samarinda, it was found that maharah qira'ah instruction continues to encounter several challenges. Although students have participated in learning activities, their active engagement in reading, questioning, discussing, and expressing their understanding of texts remains suboptimal. Some students still experience difficulties in comprehending reading materials, identifying main ideas, and drawing conclusions from information presented in Arabic texts. Furthermore, the learning process still tends to rely on instructional patterns that position students primarily as recipients of information rather than as active explorers of textual content. This condition indicates the need for a learning approach that can transform students' roles from passive information receivers into active constructors of understanding. In this regard, inquiry-based learning has the potential to address these needs by providing students with opportunities to engage with learning materials actively.

Preliminary observations indicate that several elements of inquiry-based learning have already emerged in Arabic language instruction at MTs Negeri Samarinda. However, they are still implemented to a limited extent. These elements include preliminary questions before reading texts and independent activities to identify vocabulary meanings. However, these practices have not yet been systematically implemented through a complete inquiry-based learning cycle. The processes of problem orientation, textual investigation, information analysis, and conclusion development have not been fully integrated as core components of the learning process. This condition indicates a gap between the theoretical potential of inquiry-based learning and its practical implementation in the classroom. Therefore, an experimental study is needed to examine whether a more structured implementation of inquiry-based learning can significantly improve students' maharah qira'ah learning outcomes. This study differs from previous research by focusing on the context of Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, particularly on reading skills, which remain relatively underexplored within inquiry-based learning research.

The research gap identified in this study lies in the limited empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning in improving Arabic reading comprehension outcomes among madrasah students. Previous studies on inquiry-based learning have predominantly been conducted in science education and general educational contexts. In contrast, studies examining the relationship between inquiry-based learning and maharah qira'ah remain relatively scarce. Furthermore, research investigating the effectiveness of this approach through experimental designs within Islamic educational settings in Indonesia requires further development.

This limitation is particularly important because Arabic reading instruction has distinctive characteristics that require learning strategies capable of integrating linguistic competence, meaning comprehension, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by providing empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of implementing inquiry-based learning in improving students' maharah qira'ah learning outcomes.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Arabic language learning research by extending the application of constructivist theory and inquiry-based learning to the context of reading skill instruction. This study demonstrates that inquiry-based learning is not only relevant to experimental or science-oriented disciplines but can also be applied to language learning contexts that require interpretation and deep comprehension. Practically, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for Arabic language teachers in selecting more active and student-centered instructional strategies. Furthermore, this study may provide considerations for educational institutions in developing more innovative Arabic language learning models that align with students' learning needs.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the inquiry-based learning method on Arabic maharah qira'ah learning outcomes among eighth-grade students at MTs Negeri Samarinda. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) examine changes in students' maharah qira'ah learning outcomes before and after the implementation of the inquiry-based learning method, and (2) analyze the effectiveness of the inquiry-based learning method in improving maharah qira'ah learning outcomes compared with conventional learning approaches. Through this research, empirical evidence is expected to strengthen the development of student-centered Arabic language learning approaches and contribute to improving the quality of Arabic language education at the madrasah level.

B. Method

This study employed a quantitative quasi-experimental research design to analyze the effectiveness of implementing inquiry-based learning on students' Arabic maharah qira'ah learning outcomes. The quantitative approach was selected because this study focuses on measuring changes in learning outcomes through numerical data obtained from pre-test and post-test instruments before and after the intervention. According to Creswell J. W. & D (2023), quantitative research examines relationships among variables through the collection and analysis of numerical data using systematic statistical procedures. The research design employed in this study was the Nonequivalent Control Group Design, an experimental design involving two previously established groups without full random assignment. In this design, the experimental group received treatment through the systematic implementation of the inquiry-based learning method, whereas the control group participated in learning activities using conventional instructional methods. Both groups were administered pre-tests and post-tests to identify changes in learning outcomes following the intervention.

This study was conducted at MTs Negeri Samarinda, located on Jalan Harmonika 100, Sungai Pinang Luar, Samarinda. The population of this study consisted of all eighth-grade students at MTs Negeri Samarinda during the 2025/2026 academic year, comprising approximately 290 students distributed across nine classes. In quantitative research, the population refers to the entire group of individuals possessing specific characteristics that serve as the basis for researchers to generalize research findings (Sugiyono, 2016). The sample was selected using purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on specific criteria aligned with the study's objectives. According to Etikan et al. (2016), purposive sampling is applied when researchers select participants based on particular characteristics that are considered relevant to providing data

according to the research requirements. Based on considerations regarding similarities in class characteristics, recommendations from subject teachers, and the suitability of learning schedules, class VIII.5 was selected as the experimental group. In contrast, class VIII.7 was selected as the control group.

A total of 54 students participated in this study, with each group consisting of 27 students. The experimental group received instruction using the inquiry-based learning method, whereas the control group received instruction through conventional teaching methods. The research instrument used in this study was an achievement test measuring students' maharah qira'ah learning outcomes, administered as pre- and post-tests. The test was designed to measure students' ability to comprehend Arabic texts before and after the implementation of the instructional method. In addition to the achievement test, this study also employed observation techniques to obtain supporting information regarding the learning process, student activities, and the implementation of inquiry-based learning during instructional activities. Direct observations were conducted involving teachers and students in the experimental class to examine the implementation of the inquiry-based learning stages.

The data collection procedure was conducted through several stages. The first stage involved administering pre-tests to both the experimental and control groups to determine students' initial abilities in learning maharah qira'ah. The second stage involved providing treatment to the experimental group through the implementation of the inquiry-based learning method. In contrast, the control group participated in learning activities using a conventional instructional approach. The final stage involved administering post-tests to both groups to identify improvements in learning outcomes after the instructional process. Instrument validity was assessed through item validity testing and instrument reliability testing before the instruments were employed in the study. According to Cohen et al. (2002), the quality of research instruments plays a crucial role in determining the validity of research findings because reliable instruments must be capable of accurately and consistently measuring the constructs targeted in a study.

The research data were analyzed using statistical techniques appropriate to the characteristics of the collected data. The analysis involved prerequisite tests and hypothesis testing to determine the effectiveness of the inquiry-based learning method on students' maharah qira'ah learning outcomes. Since the research data did not meet the assumption of normality, the analysis was continued using non-parametric statistical methods, namely the Wilcoxon test to examine differences in learning outcomes before and after the treatment and the Mann-Whitney test to compare learning outcome improvements between the experimental and control groups. Non-parametric statistical analysis was used to ensure that the conclusions drawn were consistent with the characteristics of the research data. Through a systematic research procedure, including research design selection, data collection, instrument validation, and statistical analysis, this study is expected to produce valid findings that can be academically justified.

C. Findings and Discussion

This study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of implementing the inquiry-based learning method on eighth-grade students' Arabic maharah qira'ah learning outcomes at MTs Negeri Samarinda. The research data were obtained from Arabic reading proficiency tests (pre-test and post-test) administered to two research

groups: the experimental class, which received instruction using the inquiry-based learning method, and the control class, which received instruction using conventional learning methods. The research findings were analyzed through descriptive and inferential analyses to identify changes in learning outcomes and determine the effectiveness of the implemented intervention.

Before the treatment was administered, both groups demonstrated relatively good initial abilities. This was indicated by the pre-test mean scores of both classes, which were categorized as high. The control class obtained an average score of 89.26, while the experimental class obtained an average score of 91.85. These findings indicate that both groups had relatively comparable initial abilities before the learning intervention was implemented.

Table 1. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores between the Control and Experimental Classes

Group	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Improvement
Control	89,26	92,96	3,70
Experimental	91,85	97,41	5,56

Based on Table 1, both groups experienced improvements in learning outcomes after the instructional process. However, the improvement observed in the experimental class was higher than that of the control class. The experimental class demonstrated an increase of 5.56 points, whereas the control class showed an improvement of 3.70 points. These findings indicate that inquiry-based learning tended to produce better improvements in students' learning outcomes than conventional instruction.

In the control class, the post-test results indicated an increase in the mean score from 89.26 to 92.96. This improvement suggests that conventional instruction still contributed to the enhancement of students' Arabic reading abilities. However, the magnitude of improvement was relatively lower compared with that of the experimental class. This finding indicates that although conventional instruction can improve learning outcomes, students' opportunities to construct understanding of Arabic texts actively remain more limited.

Meanwhile, the experimental class, which received instruction through the inquiry-based learning method, demonstrated a greater improvement. The mean score increased from 91.85 in the pre-test to 97.41 in the post-test. This improvement suggests that inquiry-based learning provided a more active learning experience through processes of information seeking, question formulation, textual analysis, and conclusion development based on students' investigative activities.

To further examine the effectiveness of improvements in learning outcomes, statistical analysis was conducted using the Wilcoxon test because the normality test results indicated that the research data were not normally distributed. The results of the Wilcoxon test for each group are presented in the following table.

Table 2. Wilcoxon Test Results

Group	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Control	0,248	No significant difference
Experimental	0,039	Significant difference

Based on Table 2, the results of the Wilcoxon test indicate that the experimental class obtained a significance value of 0.039 (<0.05). This finding demonstrates a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores following the implementation of the inquiry-based learning method. In contrast, the control class obtained a significance value of 0.248 (>0.05), indicating that the improvement in learning outcomes in the control group was not statistically significant.

Furthermore, the analysis of learning outcome improvements was conducted using the normalized gain (N-Gain) test. The results revealed differences in the average improvement between the two groups.

Table 3. N-Gain Test Results

Group	Mean N-Gain Score	Category
Control	24,51	Low
Experimental	55,56	Moderate

Based on Table 3, the experimental class obtained a mean N-Gain score of 55.56, while the control class obtained a score of 24.51. These findings indicate that the improvement in learning outcomes in the experimental class was greater than that in the control class. Therefore, descriptively, the inquiry-based learning method demonstrated better effectiveness in improving students' maharah qira'ah learning outcomes.

However, further analysis using the Mann-Whitney test to examine differences in learning outcome improvements between groups based on N-Gain scores resulted in a significance value of 0.147 (>0.05). This finding indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in learning improvement between the experimental and control classes.

Table 4. Mann-Whitney Test Results

Analysis	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Conclusion
N-Gain Experimental vs. Control	0,147	No significant difference

Overall, the findings of this study indicate two main results. First, implementing the inquiry-based learning method significantly improved students' learning outcomes in the experimental class, as demonstrated by the Wilcoxon test results. Second, although the improvement in the experimental class was greater than that in the control class, the difference in effectiveness between the two groups did not reach statistical significance based on the Mann-Whitney test.

The findings of this study indicate that implementing the inquiry-based learning method improved maharah qira'ah learning outcomes among eighth-grade students at MTs Negeri Samarinda. The increase in the mean scores of the experimental class suggests that students' involvement in investigative activities, information seeking, text analysis, and conclusion formulation contributed to the development of Arabic reading comprehension. Within the inquiry-based learning approach, students are not merely passive recipients of information provided by teachers but actively construct knowledge through processes of exploration and reflection. This finding is consistent with previous studies demonstrating that inquiry-based learning can enhance students' cognitive engagement by involving

learners in higher-order thinking processes, problem-solving activities, and independent knowledge construction (Gultom & Pane, 2026; Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016; Pedaste et al., 2015). Therefore, the improvement in learning outcomes observed in the experimental class can be understood as a consequence of the transformation of the instructional approach from a teacher-centered model toward a more student-centered learning environment.

The advantage of the inquiry-based learning method in maharah qira'ah instruction can be explained by its characteristics, which position students as active agents in the learning process. In this study, students were not only guided to read Arabic texts but also engaged in analytical activities related to reading content through questioning, information seeking, identifying main ideas, and interpreting textual meaning. These activities enabled students to develop deeper reading comprehension abilities. Research on active learning indicates that students' involvement in meaningful cognitive activities is positively associated with academic achievement because learners do not merely memorize information but process, organize, and connect new information with their existing knowledge (Chi & Wylie, 2014; Dharmayana et al., 2012; Theobald et al., 2020). Therefore, implementing inquiry-based learning in Arabic reading instruction provides opportunities for students to develop more comprehensive text comprehension skills.

The greater improvement in learning outcomes observed in the experimental class compared with the control class indicates that instructional methods play an important role in determining the quality of students' learning experiences. Although the control class that received conventional instruction also demonstrated improvement, the magnitude of improvement was relatively lower than that of the experimental class. This difference may occur because conventional instruction tends to provide more limited opportunities for students to explore learning materials independently. In contrast, inquiry-based learning enables students to investigate, discuss, and reflect on their learning outcomes. This finding is supported by previous studies demonstrating that active learning approaches can improve learning outcomes compared with traditional instructional methods because students are directly involved in constructing their understanding (Freeman et al., 2014; Pasaribu et al., 2024; Strelan et al., 2020).

Although the findings of this study demonstrated a greater improvement in the experimental class, the Mann-Whitney test results indicated that the difference in improvement between the experimental and control groups did not reach statistical significance. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning should be understood contextually and should not be attributed solely to the instructional method itself. Several factors may have influenced these results, including the limited sample size, relatively high initial abilities of students, and the relatively short duration of the intervention. Previous studies on inquiry-based learning have indicated that the success of this approach is strongly influenced by the quality of instructional design, teacher support, student readiness, and the intensity of implementation (Dobber et al., 2017; Jerrim et al., 2022). Therefore, the findings of this study do not indicate that inquiry-based learning is ineffective; rather, they suggest that achieving its maximum impact requires supportive learning conditions.

The findings of this study further support the perspective that inquiry-based learning requires an active teacher role as a learning facilitator. Inquiry-based

learning does not imply giving students complete freedom without guidance; rather, it requires appropriate instructional support to ensure the investigation process is conducted effectively. Teachers play an essential role in designing stimulating questions, providing learning resources, delivering feedback, and assisting students in developing strategies for text comprehension. This finding is consistent with Lazonder & Harmsen (2016), who emphasized that the level of guidance provided during inquiry-based learning is a critical factor determining its success. In the context of Arabic language learning, teachers need to adjust the complexity level of inquiry activities according to students' linguistic abilities to ensure that the reading process can be implemented effectively.

Beyond improving learning outcomes, this study also extends the body of knowledge on the application of inquiry-based learning in language education. To date, most inquiry-based learning research has predominantly been conducted in science and general education contexts. In contrast, its application in Arabic language learning, particularly in maharah qira'ah instruction, remains relatively limited. The findings of this study indicate that inquiry-based learning has the potential to be implemented in language learning contexts that require interpretation, analysis, and contextual understanding. This finding is consistent with the development of language education research, which demonstrates that active, collaborative, and experiential learning approaches can enhance student engagement and support learning achievement through more meaningful knowledge construction processes (Hiver et al., 2024; Oga-Baldwin et al., 2017).

Within the context of madrasah education, the findings of this study have both academic and practical implications. Academically, this study provides additional empirical evidence regarding the implementation of constructivist approaches in Arabic language learning. The findings indicate that maharah qira'ah instruction need not be limited to reading exercises and text translation activities but can also be developed through investigative activities that encourage students to construct their understanding actively. Practically, this study provides an alternative approach for Arabic language teachers to develop more interactive learning practices that are aligned with the characteristics of contemporary learners. Student-centered instructional approaches that actively engage learners have demonstrated the potential to enhance motivation, engagement, and the overall quality of the learning process (Bond et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted in only one educational institution with a relatively limited sample size; therefore, the generalizability of the findings should be interpreted with caution. Second, this study measured only cognitive learning outcomes through achievement test instruments, which does not fully capture other important aspects, such as learning motivation, students' attitudes, learning experiences, and engagement throughout the instructional process. Third, the duration of the inquiry-based learning implementation was relatively limited, preventing the study from fully capturing its long-term effects on students' Arabic reading development. Future research is recommended to employ broader samples, longer intervention periods, and mixed-method approaches combining quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning in maharah qira'ah instruction.

D. Conclusion

Based on the research findings and data analysis, it can be concluded that implementing the inquiry-based learning method positively improved Arabic maharah qira'ah learning outcomes among eighth-grade students at MTs Negeri Samarinda. The analysis revealed that the class receiving instruction through the inquiry-based learning method experienced a higher increase in mean scores compared with the control class, increasing from 91.85 to 97.41. In contrast, the control class improved from 89.26 to 92.96. The Wilcoxon test demonstrated a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental class, with a significance value of 0.039. This finding indicates that the inquiry-based learning method improved students' Arabic reading abilities through a more active, exploratory, and student-centered learning process. These findings reinforce the constructivist perspective and previous research on inquiry-based learning, which emphasizes the importance of student engagement in constructing understanding through investigative processes. However, the Mann-Whitney test results indicated that the difference in improvement between the experimental and control groups did not reach statistical significance (Sig. = 0.147). Therefore, the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning should be interpreted within the context of supporting factors, including intervention duration, student characteristics, and instructional design. Academically, this study contributes to the development of Arabic language learning research by demonstrating that inquiry-based learning has potential as an alternative instructional strategy for improving maharah qira'ah in madrasah contexts. Practically, the findings of this study can serve as a consideration for Arabic language teachers in designing more interactive learning activities that promote student engagement. Nevertheless, this study has limitations related to sample size, research setting, and the duration of inquiry-based learning implementation. Future research is recommended to involve larger samples, longer implementation periods, and additional investigation of other aspects, such as learning motivation, student engagement, and learners' perceptions of inquiry-based learning.

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