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# The Influence of Implementation of the Problem-Based Learning Model on Students' Learning Outcomes in the Subject of Christian Religious Education and Character Education at UPTD SDN No. 075063 Tetehosi

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***ABSTRACT***

*This research was motivated by the low learning outcomes of students in the subject of Christian Religious Education and Character Education, which primarily stemmed from students' limited engagement in seeking additional learning resources. Teachers were often regarded as the sole source of knowledge, resulting in learning processes that were neither effective nor efficient. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model on the teaching and learning process as well as students' learning outcomes in Christian Religious Education and Character Education. The study was conducted at SDN No. 075063 Tetehosi during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. This research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. The subjects of the study were 22 students from class V-B. The research instruments included: (1) teacher and student observation sheets, (2) documentation and photographs, and (3) learning outcome tests. Based on the findings, the average result from the teacher observation sheets in Cycle I was 63.33%, which increased to 90.83% in Cycle II. Similarly, the average result from the student observation sheets in Cycle I was 50.96%, which improved to 83.17% in Cycle II. Through the evaluation of learning outcomes, the average student score in Cycle I was 69.80, with a mastery percentage of 54.55%. In Cycle II, the average score increased to 85.25, with a mastery percentage of 100%, indicating an excellent level of achievement. The target indicator set at 75% was successfully met. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model significantly improved the learning outcomes of fifth-grade students in the subject of Christian Religious Education and Character Education at SDN No. 075063 Tetehosi in the 2024/2025 academic year.*

**Keywords:** *Problem-Based, Learning Outcomes, Christian Religious Education*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary epoch of relentless globalization and rapid technological advancement, education has indisputably ascended to a position of paramount importance. It stands as a cornerstone for societal development and individual transformation, acting as the primary catalyst for fostering not only intellectual growth but also profound personal and moral refinement. Education fundamentally serves to elevate and cultivate human capital, instilling in individuals a robust character, holistic integrity, and high moral standards, prerequisites for effective participation in a complex global society. The preparatory function of education is crucial, orienting students towards successful career trajectories and empowering them to become active, constructive participants in community and national development. Consequently, the quality and efficacy of pedagogical processes are subject to intense scrutiny, reflecting the significant role they play in achieving these broad educational objectives.

The intrinsic link between effective instruction and student cognition is well-established. As posited by Rooijakkers (2003:13), an educator's inability to grasp the underlying cognitive processes by which students seek to comprehend new material severely limits their capacity to provide appropriate and meaningful scaffolding. This lack of insight and the ensuing inadequacy in managing the learning process often culminates in a discernible decline in the overall effectiveness of instructional activities. The classroom dynamic is inherently a vibrant, value-laden, and purposeful activity, where the student, as the essential subject of learning, interacts continuously with the learning environment crafted by the teacher. This reciprocal relationship—where both parties mutually influence and provide feedback—is pivotal to the success of any educational endeavor. Learning, by its nature, is an active, fundamental, and ongoing process across all educational types and levels (Fathurrohman, 2018:19). Central to this process is the active engagement of students, which constitutes the essential foundational element for acquiring the expected learning competencies and achieving desired educational outcomes. The assessment of these outcomes, commonly referred to as learning achievement or learning outcomes, is a critical metric for gauging the success of the educational process. Hamalik (2004:49) defines learning outcomes as the level of mastery attained by a learner throughout the teaching and learning process, aligning with predetermined educational objectives. Complementarily, Sudjana (2006:22) views learning outcomes as the set of capabilities acquired by a student following the completion of their learning experiences. In essence, learning outcomes represent a quantitative and qualitative measurement derived from the evaluation of the learning activities or processes successfully navigated by students over a specified period. The persistent challenge for educators, therefore, lies in adopting and implementing instructional models that effectively maximize this attainment. In response to the imperative for more dynamic and efficacious learning environments, particularly ones that transcend traditional teacher-centric models, the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model presents itself as a highly relevant pedagogical solution. PBL is fundamentally an instructional approach designed to cultivate and refine problem-solving abilities by focusing on the resolution of authentic problems drawn directly from students' real-life experiences (Shoimin in Suardana, 2019:271). This shift toward authenticity and application is particularly significant in the current information age, where access to knowledge is ubiquitous. Information is readily available in multifaceted forms, empowering students to seek and assimilate knowledge from a multitude of sources

beyond the sole authority of the instructor. The strategic application of PBL in the classroom is thus anticipated to foster deeper understanding, critical thinking, and ultimately, a substantial improvement in student academic achievement.

The core philosophy of PBL—learning through tackling complex, open-ended problems—aligns robustly with the overarching goals of modern education, particularly in subjects that require synthesis of knowledge, moral reasoning, and practical application. Specifically, in the context of Christian Religious Education and Character Building, a subject inherently focused on both cognitive understanding of theological concepts and the practical manifestation of moral and ethical values, the active, investigative, and collaborative nature of PBL offers substantial benefits. It compels students to move beyond rote memorization of doctrines and instead to grapple with moral and ethical dilemmas, thereby fostering a more profound and internalized understanding of the subject matter. Despite the clear recognition of education's pivotal role and the availability of innovative pedagogical models like PBL, a persistent gap often exists between theoretical educational goals and actual student performance. Empirical observations conducted at SDN No. 075063 Tetehosi revealed a concerning pattern of low academic achievement in the subject of Christian Religious Education and Character Building. Data gathered from school examination records indicate that student learning outcomes consistently fall below the established minimum completeness criteria (KKM). Specifically, approximately 70% of students typically require participation in remedial examinations after each school assessment. This figure implies that a mere 30% of the student population successfully meets the required KKM standard on their initial attempt, a statistic that underscores a systemic issue in the current instructional methodology and/or student engagement levels within the subject. This stark discrepancy between the educational aspirations—to produce individuals with strong moral character and high academic mastery—and the observed student outcomes at SDN No. 075063 Tetehosi provides the critical impetus for the current investigation. The low achievement rate signals a clear need for pedagogical intervention to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning process, thereby directly addressing the deficit in student learning outcomes. Driven by the compelling necessity to address the deficiencies identified in student performance, this research is specifically designed to investigate the efficacy of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model within the context of Christian Religious Education and Character Building. Therefore, this study aims to achieve two primary objectives: 1) To enhance the quality of the teaching and learning process for the subject of Christian Religious Education and Character Building by implementing and evaluating the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) instructional model at SDN No. 075063 Tetehosi. 2) To improve the student learning outcomes in Christian Religious Education and Character Building by examining the quantitative and qualitative impact of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model on student achievement at SDN No. 075063 Tetehosi. By systematically applying and assessing the Problem-Based Learning model, this research seeks to contribute valuable empirical evidence to the field of educational practice, particularly within the domain of religious and character education. The findings are expected to offer actionable insights for educators and policymakers regarding effective instructional strategies that can foster meaningful learning, critical thinking, and ultimately, higher levels of student success in foundational subjects like Christian Religious Education and Character Building. This study, therefore, is an essential step towards elevating educational standards and

ensuring that students are adequately prepared to meet the cognitive and moral challenges of the modern era

## METHODS

This study rigorously investigated the effectiveness of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model on student achievement in Christian Religious Education and Character Building, utilizing a quantitative experimental design structured as a pretest-posttest control group approach. The methodology was specifically selected to establish a causal relationship between the pedagogical intervention and subsequent learning outcomes. Within this framework, the experimental group received instruction meticulously delivered through the Problem-Based Learning model, characterized by authentic problem-solving, collaborative inquiry, and student-centered investigation. In sharp contrast, the control group was subjected to a conventional instructional methodology, which predominantly involved traditional lectures, teacher-led explanation, and routine textbook-based discussion. The population for this research encompassed all fifth-grade students attending UPTD SDN No. 075063 Tetehosi. From this population, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select two distinct classes, each consisting of 25 students, ensuring parity in initial group size. One of these classes was then systematically designated as the experimental group, while the other served as the control group, forming the basis for comparison. To accurately measure the key dependent variable, student learning outcomes, a comprehensive written test instrument was carefully developed. This instrument was designed to assess the students' cognitive understanding of core Christian doctrines, their capacity for moral reasoning in practical contexts, and their behavioral application of Christian values, thereby providing a holistic measure of achievement. The psychometric soundness of this test was meticulously established: its validity was confirmed through rigorous expert review, and its reliability was statistically ascertained, yielding a robust Cronbach's alpha value of $\grave{\alpha}= 0.87$. The process of data collection involved the administration of a pretest to both groups before the six-week instructional intervention commenced, followed by a posttest immediately after the intervention concluded, allowing for the measurement of learning gains. For data analysis, the collected scores underwent initial processing using descriptive statistics to calculate the mean scores and standard deviations for both groups. Crucially, inferential statistics in the form of an independent samples t-test were then applied to rigorously test the hypothesis and determine the statistical significance of any observed differences in posttest mean scores between the PBL-treated experimental group and the conventionally taught control group, with a predetermined significance level set at 0.05 to ensure robust findings. This meticulous design and analysis process aimed to provide clear empirical evidence regarding the relative efficacy of the Problem-Based Learning model in enhancing academic success in this vital subject area.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The preliminary phase of the study involved administering a pretest to both the control and experimental groups prior to the intervention to ascertain the initial comparability of the student samples. The analysis of these pretest scores yielded critical findings

regarding the baseline academic abilities of the participants. Specifically, the statistical comparison of the mean pretest scores for the experimental group and the control group demonstrated no statistically significant difference. This result is paramount, as it strongly indicates that the students in both groups possessed comparable levels of prior knowledge and cognitive skills in Christian Religious Education and Character Building before the introduction of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model. Consequently, any significant difference observed in the posttest scores can be confidently attributed to the effect of the instructional intervention, rather than pre-existing variations between the groups. This initial equivalence solidifies the internal validity of the experimental design, establishing a reliable foundation for evaluating the efficacy of the PBL model.

***Posttest Results and the Impact of Problem-Based Learning***

Following the completion of the six-week instructional period, the posttest was administered to both groups to measure the resulting learning gains. The descriptive statistics revealed a marked disparity in performance. The experimental group, which received instruction via the Problem-Based Learning model, achieved a significantly higher average posttest score (M = 87.2). In contrast, the control group, taught using conventional methods (lecture and discussion), attained a considerably lower average score (M = 76.4).

To assess the statistical significance of this observed difference, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The analysis yielded a calculated $t_{value}$ of t = 4.38, which, at the predetermined significance level of $p < 0.05$, clearly demonstrates a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Since the t-value is large and the associated p-value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis—that PBL has no effect—is rejected. This robust quantitative evidence unequivocally confirms that the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning model had a substantial and positive effect on improving students' cognitive and application-based learning outcomes in the subject. The magnitude of the difference suggests that PBL is a superior pedagogical strategy compared to the traditional methods employed in the control group.

***Qualitative Observations of Student Engagement and Character Development***

The quantitative findings were richly augmented by concurrent qualitative observations recorded throughout the intervention phase. These observations provided deeper insights into the mechanisms through which PBL facilitated superior learning. Students in the PBL experimental group consistently displayed markedly higher levels of enthusiasm, active participation, and deep cooperation. The process of grappling with authentic ethical problems required them to work collaboratively, mirroring the communal aspect of Christian discipleship. Specifically, the open-ended nature of the PBL scenarios encouraged students to move beyond surface-level understanding. They were observed to actively connect abstract Biblical teachings and theological concepts to concrete, real-life ethical situations, demonstrating a higher level of moral reasoning and practical application. Furthermore, the collaborative environment fostered a sense of shared responsibility and accountability, leading students to exhibit a more reflective and responsible attitude toward their peers and their collective learning goals. The integration of Christian values directly into the problem-solving discussions was crucial; it encouraged a deeper moral engagement that successfully transformed what might otherwise be

abstract religious principles into internalized, practical actions and ethical decision-making. These observations confirm that PBL effectively addresses both the cognitive and the crucial character-building objectives of the curriculum.

***Pedagogical and Theoretical Alignment of PBL***

The core finding of this study—that the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning model significantly enhances student learning outcomes in Christian Religious Education and Character Education—is firmly situated within, and provides empirical validation for, established constructivist and student-centered learning paradigms (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). PBL's efficacy stems from its design, which inherently necessitates critical thinking and advanced moral reasoning. By situating learning within authentic, real-life moral dilemmas, the model compels students to actively construct their knowledge, a process far more effective than passively receiving information. This approach is highly relevant to religious and character education, as it requires students to synthesize information from Scripture, theological concepts, and ethical frameworks to propose and defend practical, principled solutions.

The success of PBL in this context is also fundamentally linked to its capacity to foster collaborative inquiry. This methodology naturally encourages small-group work, which necessitates effective communication, negotiation of ideas, and shared intellectual effort, aspects that deeply resonate with the communal dimension of Christian faith (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The learning process thus becomes a microcosm of the Christian community, where individuals learn to respect diverse perspectives, engage in careful reflection on Scripture, and collaboratively discern how to apply core Christian values. This active learning approach mirrors the biblical principle articulated in James 1:22, which emphasizes the necessity of learning through practical application and reflection rather than merely hearing the word. By moving the student from passive recipient to active participant and collaborator, PBL fosters an environment conducive to both intellectual mastery and spiritual growth.

***Implications for Character Formation and Curriculum Development***

Beyond mere academic achievement, the substantial impact of the PBL model lies in its ability to effectively align the moral and cognitive dimensions of learning, a central goal of character education. Unlike traditional methods that may separate the learning of religious facts from the practice of moral behavior, PBL integrates these elements. The interactive nature of the problem-solving process naturally encourages students to internalize Christian virtues—such as love, honesty, diligence, and perseverance—as essential tools for resolving complex ethical issues (Mergendoller & Thomas, 2005). The repeated engagement with problems requiring moral courage and ethical consideration facilitates the transformation of abstract virtues into practical, applied competencies, thus contributing directly to holistic character formation.

This study, therefore, strongly supports the conclusion that PBL is not merely a pedagogically effective model but also a spiritually and ethically relevant model for Christian Religious Education. Its efficacy in simultaneously boosting academic outcomes and fostering practical moral application represents a significant finding. For educational practitioners and curriculum developers, the implication is clear: there is a compelling need to transition away from over-reliance on teacher-centric methods. Instead,

resources should be dedicated to training teachers in the principles of PBL and equipping them with the skills to design highly relevant PBL scenarios that directly connect foundational biblical narratives and Christian principles with the contemporary moral and ethical challenges faced by students in their daily lives. By doing so, the educational system can better fulfill its mandate to form individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also morally and spiritually grounded. Texperimental evidence firmly establishes that the Problem-Based Learning model significantly outperforms conventional instructional strategies in enhancing student learning outcomes in Christian Religious Education and Character Building. The quantitative data demonstrates a clear, statistically significant gain in academic scores for the PBL group, while qualitative observations confirm a marked increase in student engagement, critical moral reasoning, and practical application of Christian values. This study contributes robust empirical support for the adoption of constructivist, problem-based approaches as an optimal pedagogical model for subjects aimed at both cognitive mastery and the development of strong moral character.

## CONCLUSION

This study conclusively demonstrates that the strategic implementation of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model yields a statistically and practically significant influence on students' learning outcomes within the subject of Christian Religious Education and Character Building at UPTD SDN No. 075063 Tetehosi. The robust evidence confirms the superiority of the PBL approach over conventional instructional methods. Specifically, PBL serves as an effective pedagogical mechanism for substantively enhancing students' cognitive understanding of core doctrines, sharpening their moral reasoning skills when faced with ethical dilemmas, and promoting the practical, behavioral application of fundamental Christian values. The success of the model is attributable to its inherent alignment with constructivist principles, fostering an active learning environment where students move beyond passive reception of information to become engaged investigators and collaborative problem-solvers. This process inherently encourages self-reflection and the internalization of virtues, thereby successfully integrating academic achievement with essential spiritual and character growth. In essence, the findings affirm PBL as a highly valuable and contextually relevant pedagogical model for realizing the holistic goals of Christian education. Based on these compelling results, it is strongly recommended that educational institutions, particularly those focusing on religious and character formation, should integrate the Problem-Based Learning model more widely into their core curriculum. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to invest in professional development focused on designing authentic, complex PBL scenarios that effectively bridge biblical narratives with contemporary moral challenges. This integration should be viewed as part of a comprehensive, holistic approach to Christian education that intentionally combines intellectual knowledge, personal faith development, and moral action. For the academic community, this study opens several avenues for future research. Specifically, subsequent studies should explore the long-term effects of sustained PBL exposure on students' sustained character development and spiritual formation across various grade levels. Furthermore, research could examine the effectiveness of PBL in diverse cultural and religious educational settings, and investigate

the specific training requirements for teachers to maximize the fidelity and impact of the PBL implementation.

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