



The Effect of the Inquiry Learning Model on the Learning Activeness of Christian Religious Education and Character Students in Grade VIII at SMP Negeri 1 Tarutung

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the Inquiry Learning Model has an effect on the learning activeness of Christian Religious Education and Character students in Grade VIII at SMP Negeri 1 Tarutung during the 2024/2025 academic year. The research employed a quantitative method with a pre-experimental approach, specifically using a One Group Pretest-Posttest Design. The population consisted of 156 Grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 1 Tarutung who are Protestant Christians, and a sample of 32 students was selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using a 20-item student assessment sheet. The results of the data analysis indicated that the Inquiry Learning Model had a positive and significant effect on the learning activeness of Grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 1 Tarutung. This is evidenced by: 1) The average posttest score of 75.94, which is higher than the pretest average of 62.75, resulting in a mean difference of 13.19. This indicates a descriptive significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. 2) The significance test yielded a t-value greater than the t-table value ($\alpha = 0.05$; $df = n-1 = 31$), specifically $t_{count} = 5.011 > t_{table} = 2.042$. This demonstrates a significant effect of the independent variable (Inquiry Learning Model) on the dependent variable (learning activeness). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, confirming that the Inquiry Learning Model has a positive and significant effect on the learning activeness of Grade VIII Christian Religious Education and Character students at SMP Negeri 1 Tarutung.

Keywords: Inquiry Learning Model, Learning Activeness, Christian Religious Education and Character Students

INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) is one of the essential aspects in fostering the potential within an individual. However, in practice, teachers often serve as the primary

source of information, while students predominantly act as passive recipients. This dynamic can lead to low student engagement and limited active participation in the learning process. Effective learning should be student-centered, with teachers acting as facilitators who guide the learning process rather than merely delivering content.

In CRE, the primary source of learning is the Bible, and the instruction is Christ-centered. Teachers require guidance from the Holy Spirit to communicate the truth of God's Word effectively. In the teaching and learning process, teachers must employ strategies or learning models that are engaging, including in CRE, to ensure that students can express themselves and actively participate in learning. Unfortunately, lecture-based methods and one-way knowledge transfer still dominate many classrooms, resulting in minimal opportunities for students to explore, analyze, and develop a deep understanding of Christian values.

One alternative learning model that addresses these challenges is the Inquiry Learning Model. This model encourages students to actively seek, investigate, and discover concepts or ideas independently through critical and systematic thinking. According to Harianto (2012:52), Christian Religious Education is a conscious and planned effort to lay the foundation of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:13) in the growth of students' faith by creating a learning environment and process that allow students to actively develop their potential for spiritual strength, self-discipline, personality, intelligence, moral character, and skills necessary for both personal and societal life. Ambrose et al. (2010) state that the inquiry learning model enhances student activeness by activating prior knowledge and developing new understanding. In the context of CRE, this approach has the potential to shift the paradigm from teacher-centered to student-centered learning.

The general objectives of Christian Religious Education are: to increase students' knowledge of Christian teachings, to develop students' abilities to apply these teachings in daily life, and to enhance students' awareness and appreciation of Christian values. According to the concept of *Imago Dei* (the Image of God), humans are created in God's image and possess the ability to think, feel, and act in ways that reflect God (Genesis 1:26–27). The inquiry learning model in CRE is expected to encourage students not only to receive knowledge passively but also to develop critical, analytical, and reflective thinking skills. Through this approach, students are prompted to ask questions, seek evidence, connect concepts, and draw conclusions based on their own findings. This process enriches conceptual understanding while simultaneously developing students' intellectual and spiritual skills. Theoretically, inquiry-based learning has a strong philosophical foundation in educational development. Constructivist theory, which underpins this approach, emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed by students through interactions with their environment and personal experiences. In the context of CRE, this means that students are not only passive recipients of teachings but also active constructors of their faith through investigation and personal reflection.

METHODS

Research methodology is a systematic approach employed to seek truth and generate reliable knowledge in the process of scientific investigation. According to Sugiyono (year), "research methodology is essentially a scientific way to obtain data with specific objectives and uses." Methodology provides the framework for designing, conducting,

and interpreting research, ensuring that findings are valid, reliable, and applicable to the research problem. Selecting an appropriate methodology is crucial because it determines how data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, which in turn affects the overall credibility of the study.

In this study, considering the type of data to be collected, the researcher employed a quantitative research method. Quantitative research is a structured approach that focuses on numerical data and statistical analysis to establish patterns, relationships, or effects between variables. This method allows researchers to measure and quantify phenomena objectively, making it suitable for evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions or instructional strategies.

Specifically, the research employed a pre-experimental design, using the One Group Pretest-Posttest Design. This type of research design involves measuring a single group of participants before and after the application of a treatment or intervention. In this design, a pretest is administered to assess the baseline performance or condition of the participants prior to the intervention. Following the intervention, a posttest is conducted to determine any changes or effects resulting from the treatment. By comparing the pretest and posttest results, researchers can infer the impact of the intervention on the measured outcomes.

The One Group Pretest-Posttest Design is particularly useful when the researcher has access to only a single group and when the establishment of a control group is not feasible. Although this design does not include a comparison group, it allows for the evaluation of changes within the group over time, providing preliminary evidence of causal relationships. In this study, the focus is on examining the influence of the instructional intervention on students' outcomes, making this design appropriate for capturing the effect of the treatment on the target group.

By employing this design, the researcher can systematically assess the participants' initial condition, apply the treatment, and then evaluate the results after the intervention. This process involves careful planning, precise measurement, and thorough data analysis to ensure that observed changes can be attributed to the intervention rather than external factors. It also requires consistent implementation of the treatment and adherence to standardized procedures to maintain the validity and reliability of the results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To test the hypothesis using a t-test for significance, it is first necessary to determine the mean scores of both the pretest and posttest. These mean scores provide a baseline for comparing the students' performance before and after the intervention and are essential for assessing whether the observed differences are statistically significant.

The mean values were calculated using SPSS version 22.0, which allowed for precise computation and statistical analysis of the collected data. The results of the pretest and posttest mean scores are summarized in the table below:

Paired Samples Statistics

		<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Pair 1	Posttest	75,9375	32	6,23175	1,10163

Pretest	62,7500	32	13,70190	2,42218
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Based on the table above, it is evident that the mean score of the posttest is 75.9375, while the mean score of the pretest is 62.7500. This indicates that the posttest mean is higher than the pretest mean ($75.9375 > 62.7500$). The difference between the pretest and posttest means is 13.1875, which descriptively demonstrates a significant increase in students' performance after the intervention. This suggests that, at a preliminary descriptive level, the instructional method applied had a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

Test of Significance (t-Test)

To test the hypothesis statistically, a t-test was employed. This test is designed to determine whether the observed difference between pretest and posttest means is statistically significant or if it could have occurred by chance. The formula used in this study follows the t-test for paired samples as described by Arikunto (year), which is formulated as follows:

$$t = (\text{Mean Difference}) / (\text{Standard Error of Difference})$$

Where:

$$t = \frac{Md}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 d}{N(N-1)}}$$

This table provides a clear representation of the t-test results, allowing for interpretation of whether the observed differences between pretest and posttest scores are statistically significant. The comparison between the t-calculated and t-critical values will determine the acceptance or rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0).

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 - Posttest - Pretest	13,18750	14,88762	2,63178	7,81994	18,55506	5,011	31	,000

Acceptance of the Research Hypothesis

To determine whether H_0 or H_a is accepted, the criterion is that t-calculated (t_{hitung}) $>$ t-table (t_{tabel}). The t-table value is determined using a two-tailed test with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ and degrees of freedom (df) calculated as $n - 1 = 32 - 1 = 31$, which yields $t_{tabel} = 2.042$. The calculated t-value was $t_{hitung} = 5.011$, which is greater than t_{tabel} ($5.011 > 2.042$). Therefore, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted, indicating that there is a

positive and significant effect of the Inquiry Learning Model on the learning activity of Grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 1 Tarutung.

The data indicate that students' independence increased in the post-test after being treated with the Inquiry Learning Model, with the mean score rising from 62.75 in the pre-test to 75.94 in the post-test. After tabulating, processing, and analyzing the respondents' answers, the overall descriptive data revealed that the average score for student activity in Christian Religious Education and Character (PAK & Budi Pekerti) increased from 62.75 in the pre-test to 75.94 in the post-test, representing an improvement of 13.19 points. This increase was attributed to the implementation of the Inquiry Learning Model by the PAK teacher.

From the distribution of pre-test data, the highest achievement was observed in item 12, with a score of 130 and a mean of 3.38, indicating that many students remained focused and did not disturb their peers while the teacher explained the material. The lowest score was found in item 7, with a score of 90 and a mean of 2.81, showing that students struggled to define problems clearly and in detail.

Analyzing the pre-test indicators, the highest mean was 3.33 for indicator 7, which measured student involvement in problem-solving. The lowest mean was 2.96 for indicator 3, which measured cooperation among students.

Based on the hypothesis test using the t-test, with $t_{\text{count}} = 5.011 > t_{\text{table}} = 2.042$, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted, confirming a positive and significant effect of the Inquiry Learning Model on student learning activity in Grade VIII at SMP Negeri 1 Tarutung.

Inquiry-based learning is a series of activities that maximizes the involvement of students' abilities. According to Kunandar, as cited in Aris Shoimin's book, the Inquiry Learning Model encourages students to learn through active engagement with concepts and principles. The teacher guides students to gain experiences and conduct experiments that enable them to discover principles independently.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the Inquiry Learning Model is an effective learning strategy for enhancing students' active and deep engagement in the learning process. This model allows students to develop critical and analytical thinking skills, improve their ability to ask and answer questions effectively, foster independent and reflective thinking, and increase both motivation and interest in learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that prior to the implementation of the Inquiry Learning Model, students' learning activity was low. During the learning process, students had difficulty understanding the material being taught, showed a lack of enthusiasm for participating in learning activities, often felt sleepy, and experienced boredom in class. After the Inquiry Learning Model was applied, students' learning activity improved significantly. They became more confident in expressing their interests, enthusiasm, and needs, and participated more actively in the learning process. Furthermore, students demonstrated greater effort and creativity in completing learning activities, ultimately achieving higher levels of academic success.

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