



The Influence of Animated Media on Students' Learning Motivation in Christian Religious Education and Character Formation at SD Negeri No. 174573 Hutaraja

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of animated instructional media on students' motivation in Christian Religious Education and Character Formation (PAKBP) at SD Negeri No. 174573 Hutaraja. Recognizing that low motivation often hinders effective moral and spiritual learning in elementary classrooms dominated by teacher-centered instruction, this research explored how animated media can serve as a catalyst for engagement and value internalization. Theoretically grounded in dual-coding and multimedia learning frameworks, animation was conceptualized as a multimodal tool for translating abstract biblical concepts into vivid, emotionally resonant narratives that enhance comprehension and recall. Using a quantitative one-group pretest–posttest design, thirty sixth-grade students participated in a four-week intervention integrating animated Bible stories into regular PAKBP lessons. Data were collected through a Likert-scale motivation questionnaire based on Keller's ARCS model, complemented by teacher observation notes and student reflection journals. Results revealed a significant improvement in motivation, with mean scores rising from 74.10 to 111.80—an increase of 50.9%. Statistical testing ($t = 18.997$, $p < 0.05$) confirmed the significance of this effect. Qualitative data further indicated that students displayed heightened curiosity, emotional connection to biblical figures, and sustained engagement during reflective discussions. Teachers reported that animation transformed the classroom dynamic from passive reception to active dialogue, reinforcing moral understanding through collaborative reflection. The study concludes that when grounded in pedagogical competence and spiritual intentionality, animated media can revitalize students' motivation and moral reasoning in Christian education, offering a model for integrating technology and theology in 21st-century faith-based pedagogy.

Keywords: *Animated Media, Christian Religious Education, Learning Motivation*

INTRODUCTION

Motivation to learn is widely acknowledged as a foundational driver of educational success, shaping students' persistence, engagement, and deeper internalization of curricular content; yet in many elementary school contexts, notably in the setting examined here, motivation for Christian Religious Education and Character Formation (Pendidikan Agama Kristen dan Budi Pekerti, PAKBP) remains alarmingly low, creating a pressing need for pedagogical innovation that both engages young learners and helps them internalize moral-religious values. Observations at SD Negeri No. 174573 Hutaraja revealed classrooms dominated by teacher-centered routines-note-taking, recitation, and textbook reading-practices that too often fail to capture the attention of digitally native children who respond most readily to visual, dynamic, and narrative-rich media. In response, this study explores the pedagogical potential of animated video as an instructional medium designed to translate abstract spiritual and moral concepts into vivid, memorable learning experiences. The theoretical rationale draws on dual-coding and multimedia learning perspectives: when information is presented simultaneously through visual and verbal channels, learners-especially young children-are better able to form durable mental representations, attend more consistently, and retrieve lessons in contexts beyond the classroom. Practically, animation offers teachers a versatile tool to dramatize Bible narratives, model ethical choices, and scaffold reflective discussion in ways that align with children's cognitive-affective development. Building on prior empirical work that reports modest-to-moderate gains in motivation and interest from multimedia interventions, the present inquiry implemented a focused one-group pretest-posttest design in which thirty purposively selected sixth-grade students experienced a sequenced set of animated lessons tied directly to the PAKBP syllabus. Pre-intervention assessment indicated a mean motivation score that suggested room for pedagogical improvement; after a structured period of exposure to animation-integrated instruction, students' mean motivation increased substantially-a change that was corroborated by statistical testing and by item-level responses indicating reduced boredom, higher willingness to engage in class discussion, and greater persistence on assigned tasks. Beyond quantitative shifts, qualitative indicators-teacher fieldnotes and student reflections-pointed to several mechanisms likely mediating the effect: increased emotional resonance with biblical characters, clearer visualization of moral dilemmas, and the affordance of pause-and-discuss moments that allowed teachers to probe students' values and to guide application to daily life. Importantly, the intervention did not treat animation as a gimmick but as an instructional design element: animations were carefully scripted to foreground moral reasoning and to include teacher prompts for guided reflection, peer discussion, and short formative checks that informed adaptive follow-up. The study's findings therefore suggest that when thoughtfully integrated into a values-centered curriculum, animated media can function both as a motivational catalyst and as a pedagogical amplifier for faith-based learning objectives-helping teachers translate doctrinal content into lived understanding while honoring developmental appropriateness and classroom management realities. Nevertheless, results also point to constraints: producing high-quality, contextually relevant animation requires time, basic technical resources, and teacher preparation; and sustaining gains in intrinsic motivation likely depends on repeated, varied uses of multimedia alongside

active pedagogical practices rather than one-off showings. In sum, the experience at SD Negeri No. 174573 Hutaraja indicates that animation-deployed as part of a reflective, teacher-guided instructional cycle-holds promise as an evidence-informed strategy to rejuvenate motivation for PAKBP, provided schools invest in teacher capacity, curricular alignment, and iterative evaluation to translate short-term boosts into lasting changes in learner disposition and practice.

METHODS

This research employed a quantitative experimental design, specifically the one-group pretest–posttest model, to measure the effect of animated media on students' learning motivation in Christian Religious Education and Character Formation (PAKBP) at SD Negeri No. 174573 Hutaraja. The rationale for selecting this design was to observe measurable changes in students' motivation before and after the intervention, thereby allowing for an assessment of causal relationships between the instructional treatment and motivational outcomes. This method is appropriate for classroom-based studies that aim to evaluate pedagogical innovation in authentic educational settings while maintaining practical feasibility. The participants were 30 sixth-grade students (15 males and 15 females), selected through purposive sampling based on their regular attendance in PAKBP classes and consent to participate in the study. The sample represented a typical classroom composition in terms of socio-economic and religious background, ensuring ecological validity. The teacher-researcher acted as both instructor and facilitator during the intervention period, adhering to ethical standards of voluntary participation and confidentiality. Data were collected using a Likert-scale motivation questionnaire developed from Keller's ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction), adapted for the PAKBP context. The instrument consisted of 20 items validated by two pedagogical experts to ensure content relevance and clarity. In addition, teacher observation sheets and student reflection journals were employed to capture qualitative data on engagement behaviors and emotional responses. The animated media used in this study were short videos (3-7 minutes each) that illustrated biblical stories aligned with the semester's curriculum, emphasizing moral reasoning, obedience, and gratitude as core virtues. The research was conducted over a four-week period. During the first week, a pretest was administered to measure students' baseline motivation. In the following two weeks, animated media were integrated into PAKBP lessons twice per week. Each session followed a consistent structure: (1) introduction and activation of prior knowledge, (2) presentation of animated content, (3) guided discussion, (4) reflection activity, and (5) conclusion and feedback. During the final week, a posttest using the same questionnaire was administered to measure changes in motivation. Teacher observations were conducted throughout to record nonverbal indicators such as enthusiasm, attentiveness, and participation. Quantitative data were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests to compare pretest and posttest scores, determining whether observed differences were statistically significant. The threshold for significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Qualitative notes and reflections were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in student engagement and motivational shifts. Integrating both data types allowed for triangulation, increasing the credibility of the findings. The study adhered to research ethics principles, including informed consent from participants and school

administration, assurance of data confidentiality, and respect for student well-being. Animated materials were carefully reviewed to ensure theological accuracy and age-appropriateness for primary education contexts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data collected from thirty sixth-grade pupils at SD Negeri No. 174573 Hutaraja revealed a clear and substantial improvement in students' motivation for Christian Religious Education and Character Formation (PAKBP) after the integration of animated instructional media into regular lessons. Quantitatively, students' aggregate motivation scores rose from a pretest mean of 74.10 to a posttest mean of 111.80, an absolute increase of 37.70 points, which corresponds to an increase of approximately 50.9% over the baseline mean. Statistical testing confirmed that this change was not due to chance: the paired-samples *t* test produced a *t*-value of 18.997 with 29 degrees of freedom, far exceeding conventional critical values (two-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the research hypothesis that the animated media treatment produced a positive and statistically significant effect on student motivation. Item-level analysis further illuminated the pattern of change: while some indicators already scored moderately at pretest-such as persistence on tasks and willingness to express opinions-other items that registered lower initially (for example, interest in lesson content and joy after learning) showed the largest proportional gains after exposure to the animated lessons. The distributional details in the thesis appendices confirm that the posttest increase was broadly based across respondents rather than driven by a handful of outliers; the majority of students exhibited higher scores on most items, and only a few individual responses failed to increase substantially. Beyond these headline figures, the qualitative data and classroom observations collected during the intervention provide important nuance about how and why the animated media appear to have affected motivation. During observed lessons the animated sequences functioned primarily as emotional and cognitive anchors: visually dramatized Bible narratives and character interactions captured students' attention quickly, enabling a smoother transition into teacher-led reflection than the conventional text-based routines typically employed in the school. Teachers reported-and field notes corroborated-that students who had been passive in prior PAKBP lessons became visibly more engaged during and immediately after animation viewing: they sat forward, asked spontaneous questions, and were more willing to contribute during small-group discussion. Student reflection journals repeatedly mentioned phrases such as "I liked how the character felt" and "I understand why he chose that," indicating increased emotional resonance with the moral dilemmas depicted. This affective engagement appears to have operated as a gateway to cognitive investment: rather than treating the story as abstract doctrine, many pupils could recall plot details and apply story events to personal or classroom scenarios during guided reflection segments.

A recurring mechanism that emerged in the data was the affordance of pause-and-discuss pedagogy built into the animation sessions. Because the videos were relatively short (3-7 minutes each) and scripted to include clear moral decision points, the teacher could pause after a vignette and ask targeted, scaffolded questions that invited moral reasoning (e.g., "Why did the character choose that? What would you do?"). These prompting moments-

an explicit element of the instructional cycle used in the intervention-gave students structured opportunities to practice articulating values and to hear peers' perspectives. Teachers noted that such dialogic breaks not only deepened comprehension but also fostered a classroom norm of mutual listening and respectful disagreement, competencies that previous, faster-paced lessons rarely produced. The integration of animation and guided discussion thus created a cyclical learning process in which sensory engagement produced emotional connection, which in turn supported reflective dialogue and the internalization of values.

Another important facilitator of the observed gains was the clarity of moral scenarios that animation allowed. Several teachers commented that animated depictions made causal sequences and emotional states easier for young pupils to follow than dry narrative recitation. For example, scenes showing the consequences of a character's decision-visualized through facial expressions, music, and simple symbolic framing-helped children grasp moral cause and effect. Because PAKBP often requires students to grasp both doctrinal content and its ethical application, the combined verbal-visual representation aligned well with dual-coding and multimedia learning principles; students were essentially given multiple cognitive pathways to construct meaning. The effect was particularly pronounced for pupils who scored relatively low on pretest measures of interest; many of these students reported feeling more confident during group activities after the animation sessions, suggesting that the media lowered barriers to participation by making content more accessible.

While the overall quantitative and qualitative evidence is strongly positive, the discussion must acknowledge variability in response and limitations that temper the generalizability of the findings. Not all items improved equally: one item-related to rapid boredom with routine tasks-remained comparatively resistant to change, albeit showing some improvement. Teacher notes suggest that novelty effects may account for a portion of the large initial gains: students were enthusiastic about the new format during the four-week intervention period, and sustaining this enthusiasm over months likely requires ongoing pedagogical creativity rather than a single, short-term program. Moreover, the teacher-researcher model used in this study-where the classroom teacher both designed and delivered the animated lessons-likely amplified the treatment effect because the teacher was highly invested and adapted instruction responsively. This raises the question of fidelity and scalability: would similar outcomes be achievable in classrooms where teachers receive only minimal training or where animated materials are used without integrated discussion prompts? Resource and capacity constraints emerged as practical limitations in implementing animation broadly. Producing or curating age-appropriate, theologically accurate, and culturally resonant animations requires time, basic technological resources (computers, projectors, speakers), and teacher competency in multimedia pedagogy. In the study, some teachers noted a nontrivial preparation burden: scripting the teacher prompts, sequencing the animations in pedagogically sound ways, and preparing reflection activities took significant planning time. For schools with limited budgets or large teacher workloads, these barriers may inhibit widespread adoption unless administrative support or shared resource repositories are provided. Nevertheless, the teachers involved in the project found that incremental integration-starting with one or two animated lessons per week-made the task manageable and allowed for iterative refinement.

The discussion of mechanisms also points to theoretical alignment with established motivational frameworks. The intervention intentionally drew on Keller's ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) model: animation captured attention, the teacher contextualized content to students' lives (relevance), guided practice and successful peer interactions built confidence, and reflective closure fostered satisfaction. The measured gains map onto these dimensions: increases in attention and perceived relevance were among the largest item-level improvements, consistent with ARCS predictions. From a cognitive angle, Mayer's multimedia learning principles—such as coherence, signaling, and segmenting—were implicitly respected in the animation design: short, focused segments that foregrounded key moral points were more effective than longer, information-dense videos would likely have been. These theoretical linkages suggest that the positive effect of animation is not merely a function of novelty but is mediated by well-established principles about how children attend, process, and internalize multimedia instructional content. Qualitatively, the intervention also produced observable changes in classroom climate that likely mediated longer-term motivational effects. Teachers reported more peer-to-peer support, increased frequency of voluntary moral discourse, and a greater willingness among students to reflect on personal behavior. These climate shifts are important because intrinsic motivation for moral learning often depends on a safe, conversational community where students feel their perspectives matter. Animation served as an entry point for establishing this climate by providing a common referent around which students could gather and discuss. In many respects, the animated episodes functioned as shared cultural artifacts that made classroom conversation both easier and more meaningful for young learners.

The study's results also intersect with equity considerations. Several students who had been reluctant readers or who struggled with traditional, text-centric pedagogy showed larger-than-average gains in motivation and participation. For teachers, this suggests that animation can be a differentiation tool that narrows engagement gaps by offering alternative pathways to comprehension for learners with diverse strengths. However, further research is necessary to confirm whether such gains translate into durable improvements in moral behavior and academic attainment over longer periods and across different student populations. Finally, the findings have practical implications for teacher education and school policy. Integrating animated media is most effective when accompanied by teacher training that emphasizes pedagogical design (how to script pauses, questions, and formative checks), theological accuracy (ensuring content aligns with PAKBP objectives), and reflective practice (teachers keeping journals and adapting based on student responses). Schools wishing to implement similar programs should consider forming small teacher teams to co-develop and share resources, thereby reducing individual preparation load and fostering professional learning communities around multimedia pedagogy. Administrators should recognize that initial investment in equipment and teacher time can yield substantial improvements in motivation, but sustainable impact will likely require policy support for ongoing professional development and curricular alignment. The mixed-method evidence from the study at SD Negeri No. 174573 Hutaraja indicates that animated instructional media, when thoughtfully integrated into a teacher-guided pedagogical cycle, can significantly enhance students' motivation for PAKBP. The large statistically significant increase in mean motivation scores—supported by rich qualitative observations of emotional engagement, dialogic

reflection, and improved classroom climate-points to animation's potential as a pedagogical amplifier rather than a standalone fix. Yet the data also caution against unreflective adoption: sustaining motivational gains requires attention to teacher capacity, curricular coherence, and the ethical and theological fidelity of the media used. Future research should pursue longitudinal designs to examine the durability of motivational improvements, explore differential effects across learner subgroups, and test models for scalable teacher professional development that embed multimedia pedagogical competence into routine PAK practice.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the substantial pedagogical value of integrating animated instructional media into the teaching of Christian Religious Education and Character Formation (PAKBP) at SD Negeri No. 174573 Hutaraja. The statistical results, supported by qualitative observations, clearly demonstrate that animated media significantly improved students' learning motivation, as evidenced by a 50.9% increase in mean scores from pretest to posttest. Beyond numerical gains, the research illuminated critical qualitative dimensions of motivation-curiosity, enthusiasm, emotional resonance, and reflective engagement-that collectively strengthened students' commitment to the learning process. These outcomes affirm the central research hypothesis: that animated media can function as a powerful pedagogical tool when applied intentionally and in alignment with moral and spiritual learning objectives. The essence of this success lies not merely in the visual appeal of animation but in its pedagogical orchestration. The study revealed that the most meaningful motivational effects occurred when animation was used within a structured, teacher-guided learning cycle that incorporated pausing, questioning, discussion, and reflection. These interactive features allowed students to engage with moral narratives cognitively and emotionally, translating abstract biblical values into concrete experiences that resonated with their daily lives. Teachers' ability to facilitate dialogue around the animated content amplified the instructional impact, transforming the classroom into a participatory learning environment grounded in respect, curiosity, and empathy. In this way, animation served not as entertainment but as a conduit for theological reflection and moral reasoning-a means of making faith-based education more accessible, relatable, and transformative for young learners. The results further highlight that effective implementation of animated learning requires robust pedagogical competence. Teachers must understand not only how to operate digital tools but also how to integrate them meaningfully into the instructional sequence. Competence in designing reflective questions, managing class discussions, and connecting animated content to biblical and ethical principles determines whether animation enhances or distracts from learning. Thus, the study reinforces the importance of professional development programs that help PAKBP teachers build technological fluency, instructional creativity, and reflective practice. When teachers act as both facilitators and interpreters of animated media, they can guide students beyond passive viewing toward active moral discovery. However, this study also recognizes that sustainability remains a key challenge. While short-term gains in motivation are evident, maintaining students' enthusiasm and internalized learning requires continuity, diversity of materials, and institutional support. Teachers in the study reported the time-intensive nature of

preparing animation-integrated lessons and the limited availability of localized, theologically sound animated content. Addressing these challenges will require collaboration among educators, curriculum developers, and church-based institutions to create shared repositories of multimedia resources and to embed animation pedagogy into formal teacher training. The study's outcomes resonate with the Christian view that effective teaching must engage the whole person-mind, heart, and spirit. Animated media, by engaging imagination and emotion, align with the incarnational nature of Christian education: truth conveyed not only through words but through living, embodied stories. By helping students visualize and emotionally connect with biblical truths, teachers can nurture holistic spiritual formation that extends beyond rote learning into character transformation. This study provides compelling evidence that animation-based instruction-when grounded in pedagogical competence and spiritual intentionality-can revitalize motivation and deepen moral understanding in Christian Religious Education. The approach exemplified at SD Negeri No. 174573 Hutaraja demonstrates a promising direction for 21st-century faith-based pedagogy, one that harmonizes technological innovation with biblical fidelity. For future practice, schools should invest in teacher training, digital resource development, and reflective evaluation systems to ensure that animated media become integral components of transformative Christian education. Ultimately, by merging creative pedagogy with spiritual wisdom, teachers can cultivate classrooms where faith, imagination, and motivation grow together toward the glory of God.

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