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Integration of Connectivism-Inquiry Based Learning in PAK and Its Impact on Student Engagement

Elsjani Adelin Langi[1*], Hermin Ranting[2], Hizkia Joel Kambong[3]
[1,2,3]Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Transformasi Indonesia Manado, Manado, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the application of connectivism theory integration in the IBL model in Christian Religious Education learning, as well as to analyse its impact on the learning activity of ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan. The method used was a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The research subjects were PAK teachers and ninth-grade students. The study results indicate that the integration of Connectivism and IBL encourages students to be more active in exploring the material, building understanding through interaction with various digital and social sources, and enhancing critical and reflective thinking skills. The students demonstrated improvements in discussion participation, question formulation skills, and independence in completing project-based tasks. It can be concluded that the integration of connectivism theory into the IBL model contributes positively to increasing student activity in PAK learning while creating a more contextual, collaborative, and 21st-century learning experience. Therefore, this approach is recommended for wider application in religious education at the secondary-school level. The novelty of this research lies in the combination of two different but complementary educational approaches, namely Connectivism and IBL, in the context of Christian Religious Education learning at the junior high school level.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has changed the paradigm of learning, where students no longer rely solely on teachers as their main source of knowledge but also utilise available information networks. Connectivism theory, developed by Siemens, emphasises the importance of network connections in the learning process, where knowledge is constructed through interaction with various sources and collaboration (Ranting et al., 2025). This theory is relevant to 21st-century learning, particularly in the Enquiry-Based Learning (IBL) model, which encourages students to actively explore, question, and find answers through the process of enquiry (Liud et al., 2024). Thus, the theory of connectivism proposed by Siemens provides a conceptual framework that emphasises that knowledge is constructed through connections with various sources of information and collaboration between learners and the wider community. This is in line with the demands of 21st-century learning, which emphasises critical, collaborative and creative thinking skills.

PAK learning has often remained conventional, with a dominant lecture-based approach, thereby failing to encourage student engagement (Rakim et al., 2025). However, PAK requires an approach that connects religious values with everyday life, including the use of technology (Nendissa, 2024). The integration of connectivism into IBL is expected to create a dynamic learning environment in which students are not merely passive recipients of material but actively engage in seeking, analysing, and sharing knowledge related to the Christian faith through various digital platforms.

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The digital generation has grown and developed in an environment heavily influenced by advances in information technology (Nendissa, 2021). Their characteristics reflect their familiarity with the use of digital devices, social media, and quick access to various types of information (Tonapa et al., 2025). This often makes conventional teaching approaches ineffective in capturing their attention, ultimately leading to decreased participation and engagement in learning activities, including in Christian Religious Education (CRE) classes (Wohon et al., 2024). The digital generation is known to prefer learning that allows exploration, interaction, and direct involvement (Zainal Fatoni, 2021). They are more motivated by collaborative, dynamic, and experiential learning activities. Therefore, traditional methods, such as lectures and memorisation, are often considered ineffective in meeting their needs. In this context, PAK teachers must adapt their teaching methods to better align with the characteristics of today's students. One approach that has the potential to address this challenge is the enquiry-based learning (IBL) model.

Enquiry-based learning is an educational approach that places students at the centre of the learning process, encouraging them to actively seek and construct knowledge through questioning, exploration, and discovery (Blessinger & Carfora, 2015). This approach aligns with the learning style of the digital generation, which tends to prefer open, technology-based learning processes. In PAK education, IBL can be implemented through open-ended questions that prompt students to explore biblical values, reflect on them in a contemporary context, and discuss them with their peers (Blessinger & Carfora, 2014). In addition to increasing student participation, IBL contributes to developing critical thinking skills, creativity, and collaboration abilities, which are important competencies in the digital age (Kidman & Casinader, 2017). Learning is no longer focused solely on memorising Bible verses but on students' ability to apply those values in real life (Puddu, 2017). The implementation of IBL also opens opportunities for the use of technology in learning, such as digital Bible apps, educational videos, and online discussion platforms that are more appealing to the digital generation than traditional methods.

This condition can be directly observed in Grade IX of SMP Negeri I Kauditan, where students show a low level of engagement in the PAK learning process. This low participation is influenced by several factors, such as the continued use of one-way (teacher-centred) learning methods, minimal integration of digital media in the delivery of material, and a lack of relevance between the lesson content and the students' everyday lives. If this situation is not addressed appropriately, it will affect students' understanding of Christian values and their application in life. SMP Negeri I Kauditan was chosen as the research location because it is representative in terms of technology access and the need for learning innovations. Student activity is an important indicator that reflects their involvement in the learning process. If this integration is successful, it is expected to enhance the motivation, understanding, and application of PAK values in students' lives. This study aimed to test the effectiveness of this approach in creating more interactive and meaningful learning.

The implementation of IBL in PAK learning is expected to increase the learning activity of Grade IX students at SMP Negeri I Kauditan, North Minahasa. Using this approach, students are not only passive recipients of information but also active participants in the learning process. For example, teachers can facilitate discussions on topics such as "How to apply kindness in the digital age?" or "What are the challenges

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of living honestly on social media?" Students are encouraged to explore their answers through group discussions, mini-research projects and presentations that incorporate digital technology. Given the challenges and potential involved, further research is needed on the implementation of Inquiry-Based Learning in PAK instruction for Grade IX students at SMP Negeri I Kauditan. If this model can be effectively implemented, it will not only increase student participation but also foster a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the subject matter and its application in daily life. Thus, innovative approaches, such as IBL, can make PAK learning more engaging, contextual, and relevant for the digital generation. This will support the primary objective of PAK, which is to shape Christian character reflected in students' behaviour, not only through theoretical knowledge but also through the application of faith values in the realities of contemporary life.

The author found three previous studies by Damai and Endang on "Connectivism Theory and Its Implications for the Use of E-Learning in Elementary School Learning" (Kontesa & Fauziati, 2022). The results of the study show that the connectivism approach encourages students to build knowledge networks by utilising various digital resources, including educational videos, online discussion forums and interactive learning applications. This approach makes learning more dynamic and collaborative, enabling students to connect with information more broadly. Margus et al. researched "Phases of inquiry-based learning: Definitions and the inquiry cycle" (Pedaste et al., 2015). The research results above consist of five main stages in the enquiry cycle: (1) Orientation as the initial stage to build interest and context; (2) Conceptualisation, which involves formulating questions and hypotheses; (3) Investigation, where students collect and analyse data; (4) Conclusion as the result of synthesising findings; and (5) Discussion to reflect on and communicate learning outcomes. Ester researched "Integration of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Improving the Quality of Christian Religious Education in the 2013 Curriculum" (Ester, 2022). The results indicate that the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach encourages students to actively explore and seek solutions to real-world problems relevant to their daily lives, including in the spiritual, moral, and faith-related domains. Based on the three previous studies mentioned above, this research differs significantly and introduces novelty by combining the two theories of connectivism and the Inquiry-Based Learning model. Thus, this study aims to explore the application of the integration of the theory of Connectivism in the IBL model in learning Christian Religious Education, as well as analysing its impact on the learning activities of ninth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study was a descriptive qualitative approach, which aimed to examine a phenomenon in depth based on information obtained from the participants (Sarmini, Aminkun Imam Rafli, 2021). The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan, focusing on ninth-grade students, Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers, and several selected students who were used as key informants. The selection of the research location and subjects was based on their relevance to the issues being studied, as teachers and students are the main actors in the learning process and are expected to provide in-depth insights into the research topic (Ghony & Almanshur, 2010).

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Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight teachers, including one Christian religious education teacher, and 19 grade IX students, consisting of 10 girls and nine boys, which allowed the researcher to explore information broadly while still referring to the question guidelines (Moleong, 2010). Teachers were selected because they play a strategic role as direct participants in the educational process, understand classroom dynamics, and can provide insights from the perspective of educators regarding the subject matter, methods, and learning interactions. The involvement of one PAK teacher was aimed at obtaining a more in-depth and contextual perspective on the dimensions of religious education that were the focus of the study. The selection of ninth-grade students was made because they are at a critical stage of adolescent development, where the influence of education and social environment is highly significant.

The composition of 10 male and 9 female students was maintained to ensure gender balance, enabling researchers to identify potential differences in experiences and perceptions between the two groups. This strategy aligns with the principles of purposive sampling in qualitative research, which prioritises the selection of informants based on the relevance and depth of information they can provide rather than merely the number of informants, ensuring that the data obtained possesses sufficient depth and contextual validity (Creswell, 2017). This technique was designed so that the informants could convey their experiences and views freely, but still in a focused manner. The qualitative data obtained were analysed using a thematic approach involving three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In the data reduction stage, the researcher filtered the most significant information; then, the data were organised systematically to facilitate further analysis, and finally, the researcher drew conclusions by identifying patterns and themes that emerged from the field findings (Sarosa, 2021).

Qualitative data analysis was conducted primarily through a process of theme identification, beginning with in-depth exploration and ending with interview transcripts to find consistent patterns of meaning related to Connectivism-Inquiry-Based Learning in PAK. The identified data is then systematically coded using a thematic approach, where each text segment is labeled to represent specific concepts or phenomena, such as “connectivism theory,” “impact on student engagement,” and “Inquiry-Based Learning.” Coding was conducted iteratively, allowing the researchers to merge or separate codes based on the depth of the findings and their relevance to the theoretical framework of connectivism and enquiry. Theme validation was conducted through data triangulation, which involved comparing coding results from various data sources, as well as through member checks by asking participants to review the researchers' interpretations to ensure the accuracy of meaning. This process ensured that the resulting themes not only accurately represented the data but also had credibility and reliability in explaining the relationship between the application of the learning model and the level of student engagement (Huberman, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Changes in PAK Learning Patterns From Traditional to Digital-Connective

Based on the interview results, the transformation of Christian Religious Education from a conventional approach to a connective-digital model is a response to technological

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developments and student needs in the contemporary era. These findings are in line with Darti's opinion that education is dominated by lecture methods, memorisation of Bible verses, and limited class discussions (Darti et al., 2023). In this model, teachers play a central role as the main conveyors of material, while students tend to be passive and less involved in critical thinking processes or contextualising their faith in the complexities of modern life.

One teacher said that the development of digital technology has driven significant changes in the approach to PAK's learning. The connective-digital model allows learning to be more interactive and relevant, utilising media such as Bible apps, educational videos, online discussion platforms, and social media sites. In line with the advantages of this model is its flexibility, which provides unlimited access to learning regardless of time and place (Nendissa et al., 2025). This allows students to learn at their own pace and facilitates the understanding of theological concepts through multimedia tailored to the visual and auditory characteristics of the digital generation.

Based on the results of an interview with one of the teachers, the role of educators in the digital-connective approach has undergone fundamental changes. Teachers are no longer merely conveyors of information but rather facilitators of learning who guide students to explore material independently and collaboratively. Through teacher guidance, students are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills regarding digital content and relate them to Christian principles. In line with the above findings, online discussion forums provide a space for interaction where students can express their thoughts on ethical issues based on Christian values, with teachers acting as moderators who keep the discussion theological and reflective (Romika dkk, 2025). Furthermore, the digital-connective model makes PAK learning more inclusive and opens up space for cross-cultural interactions (Pangaribuan & Rumetor, 2024). By utilising virtual platforms such as Zoom or Google Classroom, students can interact and discuss with Christian communities from various countries, thereby broadening their understanding of faith practices in different cultural contexts (Wohon et al. 2025). Thus, digital project-based learning, such as creating reflective blogs, video testimonials, or thematic presentations, allows students to develop creativity and strengthen their collaboration within the broader learning community.

Overall, the shift from a traditional approach to a digital-connective model in PAK is a strategic step to adapt to the demands of the current times. This approach not only enhances the relevance and quality of learning but also has the potential to strengthen the development of critical, contextual, and practical Christian character in a digital world. However, the success of this transformation heavily depends on wise implementation and remaining grounded in the primary purpose of PAK as a means of fostering faith and life values consistent with the teachings of Christ.

Application of Connectivism Theory in the Context of PAK Learning

The connectivism theory introduced by George Siemens and Stephen Downes provides a highly relevant approach to PAK learning in the digital age. The core of this theory is that the learning process occurs through networks of connections between individuals and between individuals and various sources of knowledge (Yasin, 2024). In the context of PAK, connectivism can be used as a basis for designing dynamic and interactive learning experiences in line with the needs of 21st-century learners.

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Traditional approaches to PAK typically rely on lecture-based methods, memorisation, and closed-book Bible study. In contrast, connectivism encourages the use of digital technology and extensive information networking. The learning process is no longer limited to physical classrooms but can be developed through digital media, such as online discussion forums, virtual theological communities, and even broader inter-Christian community collaborations (Sulaiman, 2024). This provides learners with the opportunity to engage in broader dialogues and directly access diverse theological perspectives. Connectivism also emphasises the importance of responding to ever-changing information flows. In the context of a dynamic life, Christian teachings and values also need to be reexamined in relation to current issues. Therefore, students must possess digital literacy and critical thinking skills to assess the validity of the religious information they receive (Danim, 2024). Through a connectivist approach, they can actively enrich their understanding of faith by connecting it to contemporary issues, such as technology, environmental crises, and social justice. The role of PAK teachers in the context of connectivism has fundamentally changed. Teachers no longer act as the sole authoritative source of knowledge but as facilitators who help students build independent learning networks (Saksono, 2023). Teachers can guide students in selecting reliable information sources, train critical thinking and digital literacy skills, and encourage reflective processes regarding the religious content they access online. Thus, learning becomes more student-centred and participatory in nature.

The implementation of connectivism in PAK also opens up opportunities to create more inclusive learning that embraces diversity and inclusivity. Through digital platforms, students from different cultural backgrounds, denominations, and geographical locations can connect and share their faith experiences with one another. This interaction not only broadens their understanding of Christian teachings but also instills the values of tolerance and unity amidst the diversity of believers. Connectivism provides a pedagogical framework that is adequate for actualising PAK learning to remain relevant without losing its spiritual depth. By leveraging technology and strengthening knowledge networks, students can build faith that is not only reflective and critical but also capable of engaging meaningfully with global realities. This approach equips them to navigate the dynamics of the times while strengthening their Christian faith in daily life.

Discussion

Design of Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) Model Integrated with Connectivism Theory

Based on interviews with school principals, the Enquiry-Based Learning (IBL) model, integrated with connectivism theory, offers a pedagogical approach that combines independent exploration with the use of digital technology-based knowledge networks to enhance learning. In line with Abdul's thinking, this approach encourages students to actively develop questions, formulate problems, and find solutions independently while connecting with various sources of information, both human and technological (Abdul Jalil, 2025). Kokom added that one of the key elements of this model is the central role of digital technology as the main driver of the enquiry process (Komalasari, 2011). Harasim then stated that from a connectivist perspective, knowledge is distributed across various nodes, including individuals, digital media, algorithms, and bold platforms (Harasim, 2017). Therefore, participants are encouraged to access non-traditional knowledge sources, such as Google Scholar, YouTube, and other social media platforms, to obtain

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richer and more up-to-date information on the subject. This approach helps them build a deeper and more verified understanding by relying on effective digital information-navigation skills. According to the author, through this integration, the learning process becomes more dynamic and collaborative, as knowledge is acquired not only through individual effort but also through interaction with a broader learning community, including online forums, academic social networks, and other digital sources.

Field findings on one PAK teacher revealed that the learning process began with a trigger in the form of questions or contextual problems relevant to students' lives. These findings are in line with Lumantow's view that teachers act as facilitators who support the exploration process without providing direct answers (Lumantow, 2022). According to the author, through the principle of connectivism, they are also involved in online collaboration using platforms such as Google Classroom, which allows them to exchange information, discuss, and provide feedback in real time, thereby enriching their understanding and digital skills (Sumual & Palempung, 2021). Through the principle of connectivism, they also engage in online collaboration using platforms such as Google Classroom, which allows them to exchange information, discuss ideas, and provide real-time feedback, thereby enriching their understanding and enhancing their digital skills.

The PAK teacher stated that evaluation in the connectivism-based IBL model was comprehensive and continuous. The focus of assessment is not only on the final outcome but also on the entire investigative process, including how students access and utilise knowledge networks, assess the credibility of information, and synthesise diverse perspectives. This aligns with Lee's approach, where evaluation techniques are authentic and multimodal, such as digital portfolios, blog-based reflections, and multimedia presentations (Lee & Gaffney, 2008). Thus, feedback from the community, both online and offline, plays a crucial role in helping students continuously improve and reflect on their understanding of the subject.

According to the author, by integrating IBL and connectivism, this learning model not only equips students with conceptual understanding but also with 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy skills. In an era characterised by high connectivity and rapid information flow, this approach is increasingly relevant as it emphasises that knowledge is dynamic and evolves through social interaction and digital networks. As a result, learners are guided to become individuals who not only absorb knowledge but also create and share it with others.

The Impact of Connectivism-IBL Integration on Student Activeness

One teacher mentioned that before the integration of these two approaches, only a few students were actively involved in class, while most remained passive. However, after the Connectivism and IBL approaches were implemented together, there was a significant change in classroom dynamics. PAK teachers also highlighted the important role of technology in connectivism, which allows students to access various learning resources outside the classroom. They use online discussion forums, learning videos, and collaborative platforms between schools. This broadens students' horizons and increases their curiosity. In line with the connectivism theory, which emphasises digital network-based learning, it provides students with access to self-directed learning (Kontesa & Fauziati, 2022). Meanwhile, IBL stimulates curiosity by encouraging students to actively investigate and find answers on their own (Blessinger & Carfora, 2015). According to the authors, the combination of both promotes greater engagement because students not only

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receive information but also contribute to building knowledge through interaction and content exploration. When curiosity arises, the IBL approach facilitates the process of questioning, collecting data, and analysing information. As a result, learning becomes more meaningful and participatory because students feel that they have control over their learning process.

Teachers agreed that the integration of Connectivism and IBL positively impacted student learning activities. In line with IBL theory, students become more enthusiastic about participating in learning and show significant progress in mastering 21st-century skills, including digital literacy, critical thinking, and collaboration (Kidman & Casinader, 2017). Although there are still challenges in its implementation, such as infrastructure limitations and student readiness, the benefits experienced by teachers and students far outweigh these challenges. Thus, the combination of Connectivism and IBL approaches can create a more dynamic and participatory learning ecosystem. Students are not merely recipients of information; they actively participate as creators and managers of knowledge. Increased engagement occurs because students feel directly involved, have autonomy in their learning, and can connect course material to real-world contexts through technology and enquiry-based activities. Therefore, this integration is highly relevant for addressing the need for more meaningful and contextualised modern learning.

The integration of these two approaches is considered capable of overcoming the challenges posed by differences in students' learning styles. Students with visual learning tendencies can utilise media such as videos or infographics, whereas students with analytical tendencies can channel their potential through investigative activities in IBL. This flexible approach allows more students to participate actively because it suits their individual learning preferences and schedules. Previously, some students were less engaged because they felt that the teaching methods used did not align with their needs, but this approach can accommodate such diversity. In terms of evaluation, teachers reported that student activities were now assessed more comprehensively. Not only through verbal presence in class but also through critical thinking skills, teamwork, and creativity in problem-solving. Connectivism enables evaluation based on digital activities such as bold discussions or collaborative projects, whereas IBL provides space for teachers to assess the thinking process through investigations and presentations. Thus, this approach provides a more comprehensive picture of student development than conventional assessment methods.

Perceptions of Grade IX Students of SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan towards the Applied Learning Model

Interviews with ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Auditan revealed a variety of views on the learning models used in the school. In general, students recognised the importance of diverse learning strategies in supporting their understanding of the subject matter. However, they also highlighted various challenges and preferences related to the methods applied by teachers. Most students appreciate teachers' initiatives in using various learning approaches, such as group discussions, project-based learning, and technology integration. According to them, group discussions are very helpful in understanding the material because there is an exchange of opinions and explanations among peers. One student stated that discussions were easier to understand than just listening to the teacher's explanations. However, there is criticism regarding the lack of

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active participation from all group members, resulting in an uneven workload. The findings from interviews with ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan reflect the essence of connectivism theory, which emphasises the importance of knowledge networks formed through social interaction, technology utilisation, and diversity of information sources. Students' appreciation of strategies such as group discussions, project-based learning, and the use of technology reflects a shift in the learning paradigm from a teacher-centred linear model to a dynamic process shaped by interaction with the learning environment. Group discussions, for example, illustrate how understanding is built through collaboration and information exchange among students, which, in the framework of connectivism, is seen as a process of expanding and strengthening individual cognitive networks (Harasim, 2017). Thus, according to the author, knowledge in the digital age is not only stored in human memory but is also dispersed across various digital media that are widely accessible to learners. Although there are challenges, such as uneven participation in group activities, this highlights the importance of developing connective literacy, which is the ability of individuals to manage, select, and form effective learning connections within complex learning communities.

One student said that the integration of technology in learning, such as the use of PowerPoint, educational videos, and digital platforms such as Google Classroom, is greatly appreciated by students. They believe that the use of visual and interactive media can increase their interest in learning. One student mentioned that the videos helped them clarify the material. However, they also noted obstacles, such as unstable Internet connections and teachers' limitations in utilising technology, as barriers to the implementation of digital-based learning. Conversely, conventional teaching methods, such as lectures and individual assignments, are still widely used in some classes. Some students feel that lectures tend to be boring and make it difficult to concentrate, especially if the teacher does not actively involve them. They stated that lectures without interaction made it easy for them to lose focus. However, some students acknowledged that this method is still necessary for explaining complex material, provided that it is interspersed with concrete examples or question-and-answer sessions. In addition, students' perceptions of individual assignments varied. Some believe that independent assignments encourage independent learning, while others consider them monotonous and lacking collaboration. Some students mentioned that too many repetitive assignments caused them to lose motivation. They suggested that teachers be more creative in designing assignments, such as by integrating exploratory elements or small project-based activities. Students also expressed their hopes for future learning experiences. They want learning to be more varied, interactive, and provide opportunities for hands-on practice. Additionally, they hope teachers will actively utilise innovative digital media, such as online quizzes or educational apps, to enhance their engagement in the learning process.

The findings above, reflected in students' responses to the use of technology in learning, are consistent with the basic principles of connectivism theory, which emphasises that knowledge is constructed through networks involving interactions between humans, technology, and various sources of information. The use of media such as PowerPoint, educational videos, and digital platforms such as Google Classroom creates a learning ecosystem that supports the interconnection of information and diverse learning experiences for students. These interactive and visual media not only enhance learning motivation but also expand students' access to information that may be difficult

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to obtain through traditional approaches. In this context, educational videos serve as nodes in students' knowledge networks, enabling the integration of new information with existing understanding (Donnelly et al., 2010). However, challenges such as limited technological infrastructure and low digital literacy among teachers indicate that the effectiveness of the connectivism approach is greatly influenced by the overall readiness of the learning environment. Conversely, the dominant lecture method, which lacks interactivity, often fails to form an active knowledge network because it does not encourage the interconnection of ideas or student participation.

Overall, the ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan showed a positive attitude toward innovation in learning, but they still hoped for improvements in the implementation of these methods. They understood that there is no single ideal learning model for all situations; therefore, a mixed approach that considers students' interests and needs is considered more effective. It is hoped that teachers can continue to develop themselves and be open to feedback from students to achieve a more optimal learning process. These findings emphasise the importance of good communication between teachers and students in designing and evaluating the learning models. Students want to feel involved in determining the learning methods that best suit their character and learning styles. Therefore, a partnership between educators and students in developing learning strategies can be the key to improving the quality of education in the school environment.

Analysis of Connectivism Integration in Inquiry Based Learning

1. The mechanism of combining Connectivism theory in Inquiry Based Learning

Based on the interview results, improving the quality of learning requires a shift from a teacher-centred approach to a model that places students as active participants in constructing knowledge. One strategy that can be applied is the integration of connectivism theory with the Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) model to create an independent, collaborative, and technology-based learning environment. Through this combination, students are encouraged to explore various sources of information, interact with peers, and develop critical and analytical thinking abilities. In this context, the teacher's role transforms into that of a facilitator who guides students in connecting the information they obtain through broader learning experiences. These findings align with the principles of enquiry-based learning (IB), which positions students as active researchers who independently and collaboratively formulate questions, seek answers, and build understanding through an exploratory process (Pedaste et al., 2015). The integration of these two approaches results in a learning model that is adaptive to the complexity of 21st-century information, encouraging students to learn independently, build knowledge through dialogue and interaction, and utilise technology as a connecting tool to access and integrate information. Within this framework, teachers are no longer the central authority of knowledge but rather facilitators who guide students in building understanding, navigating vast information sources, and developing critical and reflective thinking skills to navigate an ever-changing world.

The vice-principal believes that as educators, there are three main processes applied in guiding students: supervision, support, and digital literacy improvement. Supervision is carried out by converging student activities to access information from various sources. Support aims to guide students to become more independent in their learning. Digital literacy improvement focuses on developing critical thinking skills so that students can

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discern and disseminate accurate and relevant information. Additionally, one teacher revealed that adapting connectivism theory in Inquiry-Based Learning by building learning networks and utilising technology can support the learning process. Both findings are in line with connectivism theory, which emphasises that the Inquiry-Based Learning approach emphasises the development of student independence in searching for and managing information independently (Blessinger & Carfora, 2014). According to the author, in their role as facilitators, teachers guide students to access and utilise various learning resources, including continuously evolving digital technology. Furthermore, regular evaluation is an important element in assessing the effectiveness of this method in achieving the set learning objectives of the course.

Thus, the above findings conclude that teachers play an active role in guiding students to be more independent in learning. By monitoring the information search process, providing the necessary support, and improving digital literacy, students are encouraged to be more critical in filtering and understanding the information they obtain. The integration of connectivism theory in Inquiry-Based Learning allows students to be more independent and active in their learning. By building learning networks and leveraging technology, students can access a broader range of information. This mechanism also helps students develop critical thinking and collaboration skills, while teachers continue to act as facilitators. Continuous evaluation ensures that this approach is effective in improving the quality of learning and is relevant to students' needs in the digital age.

2. Teacher strategies in integrating Connectivism theories in Inquiry Based Learning into Learning

Teachers play an important role in integrating connectivism theory into Inquiry Based Learning to make learning more effective and relevant. The strategies applied focus not only on the use of technology but also on creating a learning environment that encourages collaboration, exploration, and problem solving. Through proper guidance, teachers help students build connections with various learning resources, whether from books, digital media or discussions with peers. This approach aims to improve critical thinking skills, independence, and students' ability to filter and manage information effectively. As stated by one of the teacher respondents in applying learning strategies using trending case studies, namely by utilising videos and current news articles, students are encouraged to connect religious lessons with the realities they face in their daily lives. The importance of a Bible-based, contextual, discussion, and reflection approach. By applying this strategy, students not only understand religious teachings theoretically, but can also apply them in their daily lives. Discussion and reflection help students explore deeper meanings of learning, while the contextual approach ensures that the material taught is relevant to their reality. This approach not only makes learning more engaging but also trains students to analyse information and understand religious values in the context of modern life.

These findings are in line with connectivism theory, which emphasises the importance of knowledge networks and individuals' ability to connect various sources of information. This is highly relevant to the Inquiry-Based Learning approach that encourages active exploration, critical enquiry, and the search for answers through open-ended questions and deep reflection (Jones, 2015). In this context, teachers function as facilitators who build a collaborative learning environment, enabling students to interact

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not only with information from books and digital media but also through dialogue with their peers. The use of contextual media, such as videos and news articles, supports the formation of meaningful connections between religious learning materials and the social conditions faced by students, in line with the main principle of connectivism regarding the importance of information connectivity in a dynamic world. This approach also plays a role in developing students' critical thinking and independence skills, especially when they are invited to interpret biblical teachings through actual contexts, case analysis, and spiritual reflection. Therefore, the integration of connectivism principles in IBL not only deepens students' conceptual understanding of religious teachings but also equips them with the ability to apply these values contextually in their daily lives.

A strategy often used to integrate connectivism theory into Inquiry Based Learning is to have students search Google/Platform for answers to questions based on their understanding of the material taught. The strategy used by Christian Religious Education teachers demonstrates an approach that encourages students to be more active in the learning process. By asking relevant questions that require a deep understanding, students are encouraged to think critically, explore information from various sources, and build their own understanding. This is in line with the principles of enquiry-based learning, which positions students as seekers of knowledge rather than mere recipients of information. This approach reinforces the connectivism theory by encouraging students to utilise technology and discussions beyond textbooks. This strategy enhances independence and analytical thinking and ensures relevant and contextual learning.

3. *Challenges in the integration process*

The integration of connectivism theory into Inquiry Based Learning poses challenges that must be overcome to ensure effective learning. Teachers must not only master technology but also guide students in sorting out relevant and credible information. However, students' readiness to adapt to more independent learning methods and limitations in facilities and infrastructure also influence its success. Despite this, the implementation of this theory in schools has been successful, although further efforts are required to improve its effectiveness. One important aspect that needs to be considered is the readiness of the infrastructure and human resources to support technology- and connectivity-based learning processes.

The principal of SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan stated in a structured interview that the biggest challenge faced by the school in supporting this learning method is the availability of adequate technological facilities and the readiness of teachers and students to use them. The main challenge faced by schools in implementing this learning method lies in the limited availability of technological facilities and the level of readiness of teachers and students to use them. Not all students have equal access to digital devices, and their ability to access and evaluate information varies. However, educators are required to keep up with technological developments to provide optimal guidance. To overcome these obstacles, the school has made various efforts, such as organising training for teachers, improving technological infrastructure, and encouraging more active collaboration in the teaching and learning processes.

The application of connectivism theory in Inquiry-Based Learning does not always run smoothly, especially due to differences in students' abilities and involvement in the learning process. Some students are able to understand, develop, and relate the material to their lives, while others find it difficult to participate actively. As stated by the religion

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teacher, there are students who can accept and develop the material well, but there are also those who are less active in the learning process. In applying this method, PAK teachers face the challenge of differences in student participation. Some students show high levels of activity, understand the material well, and can even develop it in the context of PAK learning. However, some students still have difficulty developing the material because they are not yet able to actively engage in the learning process.

This indicates that not all students have the same level of learning independence and still require more intensive guidance to actively participate in the learning process. Additionally, the lack of motivation among students is a factor that needs to be considered to optimise the implementation of this method.

Efforts to improve the effectiveness of connectivism-based learning in Inquiry Based Learning require comprehensive strategies. In addition to ensuring the availability of facilities and improving teacher skills, it is also important to build student motivation and learning independence so that they are more active in the learning process. With optimal support from schools, teachers, and the learning environment, existing challenges can be gradually overcome to achieve more inclusive and effective learning.

The mechanism of integrating Connectivism theory in Inquiry Based Learning

An interview with a PAK teacher at SMP Negeri I Kauditan revealed that a learning approach that integrates connectivism theory with the Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) model reflects new dynamics in teaching practices. The teacher highlighted that the main challenge in education today is designing learning experiences that encourage active student participation rather than simply conveying information in a one-way manner. In the ninth grade, the teacher applied the Inquiry-Based Learning model as a strategy to cultivate students' critical thinking skills and facilitate the exploration of meaningful questions directly related to their personal interests and contexts in learning PAK. However, the teacher emphasized that the effectiveness of IBL requires integration with learning theories appropriate to the characteristics of the digital age, such as connectivism.

Connectivism theory emphasises the importance of information networks in learning (Kontesa & Fauziati, 2022). According to the teacher, students no longer rely solely on teachers or books as their primary sources of information. They access various digital sources, online communities, and social media to expand their understanding of the subject. In practice, teachers encourage students to develop the ability to evaluate and integrate information from various digital sources through self-designed questions they design themselves in the enquiry process.

For example, when discussing the topic “Love in Christ's Teachings”, students are asked to formulate questions based on social issues they encounter in their daily lives. Teachers only facilitate the discussion, while students are directed to independently search for information through the Internet, digital Bibles, and online Christian forums. This process involves a comparative analysis from various perspectives and a collaborative presentation of findings in class. The integration of connectivism is evident as students build learning networks through interactions with various information and digital communities (Malikah et al., 2022). Teachers state that student engagement increases when students are given the freedom to explore topics relevant to them. This aligns with the IBL principle, which focuses on students' questions as the starting point for learning.

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Teachers also highlighted the importance of the teacher's role as a facilitator in this approach. Teachers are no longer the sole source of information but provide learning tools that enable students to collaborate, discuss, and access learning networks, both online and offline. In practice, students are asked to create group blogs to document enquiry outcomes and share them through the school's digital platform. Furthermore, teachers conveyed that connectivism theory offers a relevant theoretical framework for understanding how the digital generation learns. Knowledge is no longer viewed as static within individuals but as part of a dynamic network that continues to evolve. In PAK learning, this means that students do not merely memorise teachings but develop a contextual spiritual understanding open to current social and cultural realities. The Inquiry-Based Learning model supports this process by creating space for students to learn reflectively and actively. Students are encouraged to explore Christian values in relation to the social challenges they face through their own questions (Puddu, 2017). This process strengthens meaningful learning and encourages relevant spiritual development. Teachers also revealed that the integration of connectivism and IBL positively impacted the development of students' digital literacy. They learn to search for information effectively, evaluate the credibility of sources, avoid misinformation and express opinions ethically. This is particularly important for learning Christian values in the digital age, which is fraught with moral and spiritual challenges.

In the learning process, evaluation focuses not only on final outcomes, such as reports or presentations, but also on the enquiry process students undergo. Teachers assess how students collaborate, access information, and connect their learning to real-world experiences. Reflection through discussions and digital journals shows that students are developing metacognitive awareness. However, teachers are not blind to the challenges of implementation, especially regarding limited access to technology and students' digital readiness. To overcome these obstacles, teachers provide additional time in the computer lab and facilitate group work, as well as involve parents by providing guidance on the importance of digital engagement in their children's learning.

According to the author, the integration of connectivism theory with the Inquiry Based Learning model has encouraged increased independence and participation among students in the learning process. They have become more reflective, critical, and open to different perspectives, grounded in strong faith. This approach is not merely a new methodology but a paradigm shift in Christian education that prepares students to face the modern world as lifelong learners.

CONCLUSION

The integration of the Inquiry-Based Learning model with connectivism theory in Grade IX at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan has been proven to enhance student engagement, self-confidence, and collaboration in the learning process. This approach encourages students to actively discuss, ask questions, seek information independently, and utilise technology, such as Google Classroom and WhatsApp Groups, as learning tools. The teacher's role as a motivator, facilitator, mentor, and observer creates a conducive, interactive, and collaborative learning environment. Interviews with the school principal, teachers, and students revealed significant improvements in participation, communication, and group work, contributing to a deeper understanding of the material and the development of critical thinking and collaboration skills.

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This study has several limitations that need to be critically considered. First, the scope of the study is limited to one school with a Christian social, cultural, and religious context; therefore, generalising the findings to other schools with different backgrounds should be done with caution. Second, the duration of the Connectivism-based IBL implementation was relatively short, so it was not able to capture the long-term effects on the development of student learning activity and independence. Additionally, the measurement instruments for student activity are more focused on subjective interviews, leaving room for potential biases in assessment.

For future research, it is recommended to involve more schools with varying demographics and religious backgrounds to increase the validity of the findings. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to assess the impact of this learning model on student engagement and learning skills. Measurement instruments can be enriched with triangulation methods such as portfolio analysis, recordings of courageous discussion processes, or performance-based evaluations. In educational practice, PAK teachers can provide intensive training on learning design that integrates Connectivism and IBL principles with the use of relevant digital technology. Additionally, schools need to support infrastructure, including adequate Internet access and supporting devices, to ensure the optimal implementation of this model and truly promote sustained active student participation.

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* **Elsjani Adelin Langi (Corresponding Author)**
Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Transformasi Indonesia Manado
Jl. Aer Terang No.4, Lingkungan VI, Malalayang Satu Timur, Kota Manado, Sulawesi Utara
Email: elsjaniadelin@gmail.com

Hermin Ranting
Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Transformasi Indonesia Manado
Jl. Aer Terang No.4, Lingkungan VI, Malalayang Satu Timur, Kota Manado, Sulawesi Utara
Email: herminranting42@gmail.com

Hizkia Joel Kambong
Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Transformasi Indonesia Manado
Jl. Aer Terang No.4, Lingkungan VI, Malalayang Satu Timur, Kota Manado, Sulawesi Utara
Email: kambongh@gmail.com