

Challenges and Opportunities for Implementing Student-Centered Learning Methods at Koinonia Sentani High School

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Abstract

The SCL method collaborates with learning that focuses on the context and needs of students. Its implementation requires constructive learning. This study investigates the Challenges and Opportunities of Koinonia-Sentani High School in applying the SCL Method, especially in Christian Religious Education. The method used was qualitative descriptive. Data were obtained from observations, interviews, and document reviews. The results show that adapting the SCL method at Koinonia Sentani High School brings both challenges and opportunities. Challenges include student readiness and resource utilization. Learning readiness is influenced by physical, mental, and socio-emotional factors. Resource use includes technology integration, teacher and student participation, and methods. Opportunities to apply the SCL method are found in school regulations and cultures that balance tradition and global challenges. This study is expected to contribute to constructive learning implementation through the SCL method that focuses on student needs.

Keywords: *Challenges; Opportunities; SCL Method; Christian Religious Education, SMA Koinonia Sentani;*

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INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic and philosophical challenges in education are the colors faced by the educational world in confronting the 21st century. (A Sudiarja, 2014) revealed that both pragmatic and philosophical challenges must be promptly followed up to create conducive environments for the workplace and learning. Pragmatic challenges encompass various issues encountered in education such as policy implementation, school management, teaching strategies, and even daily interactions within educational environments. Meanwhile, philosophical issues relate to the goals, essence, and values of education. The combination of these challenges commonly encountered in the field includes human resources, technology adoption, teaching quality, curriculum implementation, and teaching methods relevant to students' needs.

The pragmatic and philosophical challenges were revealed by (Bu'tu dan Tasijawa, 2022) in Jayapura, stating that Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Sentani face issues regarding the realization of teacher competencies. They indicated that all required competencies for teachers were not implemented in a professional and optimal manner.

Furthermore, considering the 5 work cultures according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, PAK teachers in Sentani-Jayapura have significant weaknesses in terms of adapting to regulations and innovations (Gainau dan Pentury, 2023). These findings highlight serious issues currently faced by CRE teachers, especially those in Sentani-Jayapura.

In addition in describing issues related to teacher competencies and innovation culture in education, curriculum changes also bring negative impacts both to teachers and students. The success and failure of implementing the curriculum depend on educators' ability to perceive, interpret, and translate curriculum guidelines (Aprianti & Maulia, 2023). The implementation of curriculum changes does not solve educational problems but rather creates new one (Nurwiatin, 2022). This indicates that curriculum changes form a spiral pattern where there is no continuity of programs supporting the previous curriculum, thus seeming to start anew when a new curriculum is implemented. This phenomenon contrasts sharply with the global challenges adapted into education that continually provide updates in line with the changing times. One such adaptation is the implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) methods introduced at the beginning of Curriculum-13 (K-13), where students are at the center of learning.

The SCL method is an instructional approach that places students at the center of learning. Several learning methods derived from SCL include small group discussion (SGD), role play-simulation, discovery learning, self-directed learning, cooperative learning, contextual learning (CL), problem-based learning (PBL), collaborative learning (CBL), and project-based learning (PJBL) (Budiyanto, 2014). The demands of SCL include active participation, addressing students' contextual needs, collaboration, proficiency in independent work, critical thinking, exploration, and producing work (Phillips et al., 1999). These demands align with the constructivist methods proposed by Jean Piaget and Vygotsky, where learners independently build competencies, cognitive knowledge, and skills. The SCL is an approach to learning, both individually and in groups, aimed at enhancing students' autonomy, proficiency, and resilience in learning (Muliarta, 2018). The SCL learning model enables students to become active and independent learners, responsible, and proactive in recognizing their learning needs. Moreover, students are expected to discover sources of information to solve problems in their learning process. Behind the planning proficiency of the SCL method lies a substantial question: can this approach be applied to Indigenous Papuan students? If considering (Silitonga et al., 2023) who found that the literacy culture of reading and writing among Indigenous students in university still low, this raises the question of whether students can adapt to the SCL learning approach.

One of high schools which has a high percentage of Indigenous Papuan students is SMA Koinonia-Sentani, this school emphasizes inclusive education. According to data from the academic year 2023-2024, there are 227 students in grades X to XI, all of whom are Indigenous Papuan students. The school maintains a learning atmosphere that blends local traditions with Christian traditions, distinguishing it from other schools. The predominant learning method applied at SMA Koinonia is conventional or Teacher-Centered Learning (TCL). This is because students enjoy learning more through classical methods such as lectures, discussions, and question-and-answer sessions. Moreover, these methods are deemed more effective given the students' preferences and conditions. However, maintaining the tradition of using conventional methods has led to decreased student engagement and direct participation in learning activities (Kambu et al., 2024). There is concern that continuing with conventional teaching methods may cause students to regress or even experience trauma when facing global challenges, and they may continue to feel left behind in adapting to regulations and technology.

Several studies have highlighted the educational challenges in the 21st century, including research conducted by (Melyani, 2023) who observed how Christian Religious Education (CRE) can be implemented in an era of rapid technological development. Both pragmatic and philosophical challenges in education, concerning policy implementation and the essence of education, are primary concerns. Along similar lines Melyani, Sipahutar & Naibaho, (2023) described various challenges faced by teachers, ranging from infrastructure and access issues to their capacity for innovation.. The objective of their research was to evaluate the existence of

challenges and opportunities faced by PAK teachers in developing professionalism in the digital era. The findings suggest significant opportunities for PAK teachers to enhance their professional competencies through broad access to learning resources, online learning platforms, collaborative networks, and the integration of technology in teaching.

From the perspective of implementing Student-Centered Learning (SCL) that can have positive impacts on learning, as highlighted by Nisak & Trifauzi (2024) the implementation of SCL methods has been shown to enhance students' critical thinking abilities at MI Sunan Giri. However, there are still challenges to overcome in improving students' critical abilities, such as varying IQ levels, laziness, and adapting to technology. Indriyani et al., (2024) also affirm that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) successfully improves students' reading abilities and understanding. Hakim et al.,(2023) reveal that PBL can enhance students' self-efficacy, their belief in their abilities, which in turn improves learning outcomes.

Similarly, Hidayati & Purwaningsih (2023)) assert that PBL is effective in enhancing students' critical thinking abilities. Furthermore, the implementation of SCL through Project-Based Inquiry Learning (PjBI), as conducted Sigit (2023) to measure students' creative thinking skills at a private high school in Tangerang, shows that this model effectively enhances students' creative thinking skills. Measurement was conducted by comparing two cognitive group levels: "independent" with high cognitive levels and "guided" with low cognitive levels. The results indicate that the "independent" group demonstrates more creativity in independent thinking with the PjBI model, while the "guided" group excels in creative thinking when receiving intensive guidance using the PjBI model.

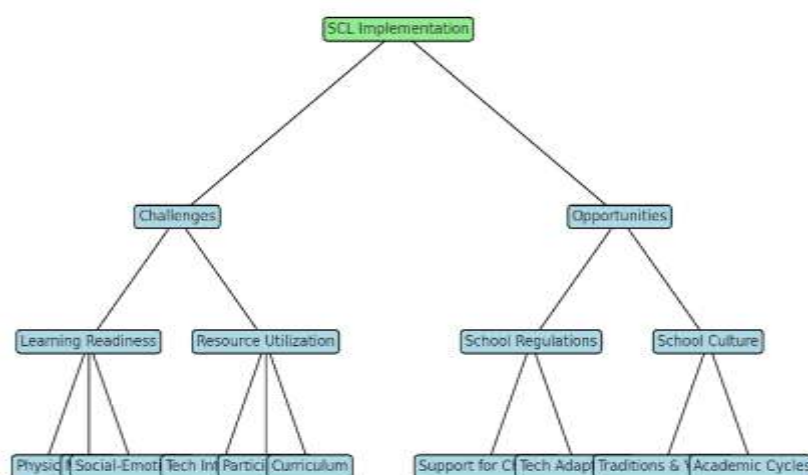
From previous studies, it can be divided into two perspectives, namely the integration of technology in education and implementation of SCL methods. The implementation of SCL with PBL and PJBL models provides a positive nuance in the world of education. However, it is noteworthy that each school and individual have different qualities (Lyngstad et al., 2022). From that perspective and relevant studies, none have mentioned the application of the SCL approach to indigenous students in certain areas. Therefore, this research will elaborate on the question of whether high school students at Koinonia Sentani are capable of implementing and adapting the constructive method, which is the SCL method, in CRE learning. This question outlines the challenges and opportunities faced in applying the SCL method.

METHODS

This research applies a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach, then describes the challenges, opportunities, and balance of implementing the SCL method in CRE learning at SMA Koinonia Sentani. This study processes data from three sources namely interviews, documents, and observations. Data validation using triangulation techniques allows researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding through cross-checking and analyzing diverse data from different sources (Anselem Strauss,2003). Data from interviews are obtained using structured interview techniques with teacher and student representatives. The results of these interviews undergo a transcription process from oral to written form and are then processed through reduction to retain data that reflect the challenges and opportunities in implementing constructive learning with the SCL method. These results are subsequently input into a table. Observational data are obtained using structured techniques where there are guidelines on what needs to be observed during the learning process. The results of these observations are classified into fulfilled and unfulfilled parts based on pre-designed observation guidelines. Meanwhile, data from documents are processed using coding techniques that highlight opportunities and challenges. The results from each data source are integrated into a table that summarizes the data, containing classifications of opportunities and challenges faced by students and schools in implementing constructive learning through the SCL method. These data are presented in a ready-to-analyze format and are discussed academically.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

The transformation of education integrating the application of technology in CRE learning in Papua is still in its developmental stages (Kambu et al., 2024). This integration process has not been carried out inclusively and holistically, creating the impression that the adaptation of technology in PAK education has not been optimally implemented. SCL is one method that often applies technology as it is tailored to the needs and developments of the times. Unfortunately, the implementation of SCL at SMA Koinonia Sentani has a different tone than expected. There are challenges that make SCL difficult to apply in CRE education at SMA Koinonia Sentani. These challenges include students' readiness to learn and the utilization of resources. Challenges and opportunities can be seen such diagram bellows:



Graph 1: Chalanges and Opprtunities in Implemting SCL in SMA Koinonia Sentani

1. Challenges of SCL for Indegenous Students at SMA Koinonia Sentani

The first challenge is *learning readiness*, it is the condition of an individual being prepared to receive and face learning. Being ready means being prepared for all possibilities. The state of readiness affects mental development, student concentration, and learning effectiveness (Aldabbus, 2018). This is in line with Roragabar & Banga (2024) who state that learning readiness highly depends on both physical and psychological dimensions. The physical dimension is directly related to the individual and their daily environment, including family support. Meanwhile, the psychological dimension relates to the external environment, such as learning patterns, school environment, learning methods at school, and cultural intervention influences. Both of these aspects contribute to shaping students' readiness and learning achievement.

Learning readiness at SMA Koinonia Sentani will be reviewed from physical, mental, and social conditions to evaluate the implementation of the SCL method. Physically, the geographical location of SMA Koinonia Sentani, being far from noise pollution, ensures that the learning process will run smoothly. The pristine environment supports outdoor learning and allows for education tailored to students' needs. However, from a health perspective and students' background, there is a noticeable unpreparedness in actualizing constructive education. This perspective results in discontinuity in learning, which subsequently impacts adaptation and learning outcomes.

From a mental perspective, the learning readiness of students at SMA Koinonia Sentani is evaluated based on cognitive levels and concentration in learning. Cognitive level refers to the stages of mental development that relate to the speed of receiving, processing information, and providing responses and solutions. Cognition involves stages of knowledge that range from simple to complex levels (Marinda, 2020). Meanwhile, performance is the cause-and-effect relationship of concentration. Riinawati (2021) explains that under any condition, if students have good attention and concentration, it will correlate with their performance. At SMA Koinonia Sentani, students have weaknesses in quickly processing information in CRE learning. This is evident from the effectiveness of the language used in oral and written communication. The structuring of paragraphs in both group and individual assignments, as recorded in portfolio tasks, shows this weakness. It is demonstrated by the low literacy levels of students and the interference of the local language that frames the structure and style of language, affecting students' effective reasoning. Additionally, the level of concentration and attention of students in learning CRE is also still low.

On the emotional and social perspective, the learning readiness at SMA Koinonia Sentani can be seen from cooperation and communication. In terms of cooperation, students tend to be non-participative, meaning they do not establish a cooperative learning system. Students tend to work independently. In terms of communication, it is dominated by certain students. There is no clear evidence of students' self-confidence and self-esteem in receiving education. This is supported by students' lack of acceptance of media and culture, which shapes a negative self-perception.

Based on the review of learning readiness, which includes physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects, SMA Koinonia Sentani has discontinuities in learning materials influenced by physical factors, particularly students' frequently disrupted health. Additionally, students face challenges in processing information quickly and providing effective responses. This is evident from the diction and language structure used in oral and written communication during direct communication and assignments. This is primarily due to students' low literacy levels and interference from the local language. The low concentration of students also impacts their performance. Furthermore, the acceptance of popular media and culture leads to a lack of self-confidence among students, which also affects their self-esteem. These challenges in learning readiness at SMA Koinonia may hinder the achievement of learning goals using the SCL method.

In addition to learning readiness, the second challenge is *the utilization of resources*. The resources that hinder the implementation of SCL include the application of technology, student and teacher participation, and the curriculum. The first aspect is the integration of technology in learning. The learning method that emphasizes technology is the hybrid or blended learning method. This method can increase students' motivation and interest in learning (Abroto et al., 2021). Furthermore, Hidayat & Khotimah (2019) revealed that the integration of technology in learning can improve interest in learning, the quality of the learning process, and learning outcomes, provided there is full attention from students. The integration of technology into CRE learning at SMA Koinonia Sentani shows a tendency that technology is not optimized in the learning process. Teachers tend to use learning resources such as books and teaching modules. Learning methods that rely on these resources indirectly do not develop students' digital skills.

The second aspect is the participation of students and teachers in implementing the SCL method, seen through their collaboration and engagement. In this regard, the school and teachers do not collaborate with external parties that could stimulate students' interest in learning. In terms of participation, learning requires students to engage both physically and mentally to create a learning experience that enables effective understanding (Firmansyah & Jiwandono, 2022). A good learning experience leaves lasting impressions and memories in students' minds. Unfortunately, this has not been emphasized at SMA Koinonia Sentani. Learning is more teacher-centered, thus the expected learning experiences for students have not been created. On the other hand, teachers do not receive support from the school to develop themselves, such as attending curriculum and learning method training. Therefore, methods that focus on teachers continue to be prioritized.

The third aspect is the curriculum and teaching methods, which directly correlate with students' comprehension levels. The curriculum in this context relates to relevant teaching methods tailored to the students' age and learning needs. A relevant learning model for high school, according to constructivist theory, is problem-based and inquiry-based learning (Saputro & Pakpahan, 2021). This contrasts sharply with the more classical or conventional learning approaches that emphasize lectures, discussions, and question-and-answer sessions. On the other hand, SMA Koinonia considers that classical methods are still more effective within the context of Papua students. If this perspective continues, there will be no congruence between the national curriculum and the implementation of teaching methods, which may lead to students lacking competence.

2. Opportunity for Implementing SCL for Indigenous Students at SMA Koinonia Sentani

In addition to the challenges faced, there are also opportunities that can support the optimal implementation of constructive, student-centered learning at SMA Koinonia Sentani. One such opportunity is the school's regulations and culture that foster resilience to change. Regulations that support resilience and directly provide opportunities to optimize SCL methods at SMA Koinonia Sentani include academic and administrative adaptation to technology as expressed in the school's vision and mission. Additionally, there is an opportunity for the development of teacher competencies that support the learning process.

School culture refers to the traditions formed within a school that encompass values, norms, and the school environment. School culture directly contributes to the learning cycle, the quality of education, and both academic and non-academic achievements of students (Efianingrum, 2013). The completeness of learning tools and the regular academic supervision conducted by the school principal are forms of school readiness in establishing a good academic cycle. Lesson plans (RPP) designed by teachers are

comprehensive and include improvements based on feedback from academic supervision by the school principal. The content of the materials is highly relevant to the needs and context of the students. However, a challenge in the implementation of learning is student engagement and attention.

CONCLUSION

Students at SMA Koinonia Sentani follow the national curriculum (K-13), balanced with the school's traditions and culture. SCL (Student-Centered Learning) is one of the methods aligned with the demands of K-13. The urgency of SCL as a learning method lies in its constructive nature, which enables students to adapt to curriculum demands. Constructivism required in K-13 includes students' ability to learn through problem-solving and project-based approaches. This aspect is not yet fully met by students at SMA Koinonia Sentani in CRE learning due to challenges that have become the focus for school principals and teachers in enhancing students' cognitive abilities. These challenges include student readiness and attention, teacher and student participation due to lack of training and competency development, and curriculum translation to present suitable methods. However, on the other hand, there are opportunities that serve as triggers to strengthen constructive learning models, such as regulations and the vision-mission content emphasizing the balance between traditions and global challenges at SMA Koinonia Sentani.

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