

The Meaning Of Truth According To Pragmatism In The Context Of Christian Education

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Abstract

This article discusses the meaning of truth according to the school of pragmatism and its relevance in the context of Christian education. Pragmatism views truth as something that is evaluated based on its practical usefulness and its impact on real-life situations, rather than solely on theoretical conformity. In the field of education, particularly Christian education, this perspective is important because learning is not only aimed at the transfer of knowledge but also at shaping attitudes, character, and actions that reflect Christian values. This article employs a literature review approach by analyzing the thoughts of pragmatic philosophers alongside Christian theological principles. The findings indicate that although pragmatism emphasizes truth based on outcomes and benefits, Christian education must continue to place absolute truth, rooted in the Word of God, as its primary foundation. Therefore, pragmatic truth can be critically understood as a contextual tool in the learning process, as long as it remains directed toward the transformation of students' lives in accordance with the teachings of Christ. This article is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of Christian Religious Education that is relevant, contextual, and grounded in Christian faith.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Truth is a fundamental concept in philosophy, science, and Christian theology. Each philosophical school has its own perspective on understanding truth, including pragmatism, which emphasizes its utility and practical impact on human life. In pragmatism, truth is not understood as something absolute and fixed, but rather as something that is judged true to the extent that it brings benefits, can be applied, and produces real change in life. (Tung, 2021) This understanding has evolved in line with the dynamics of modern society, which demands that knowledge and education be contextual, applicable, and relevant to real needs.

In the context of education, particularly Christian education, the concept of truth is not only related to the intellectual acquisition of knowledge but also to the formation of students' character, attitudes, and behavior. Christian education aims to instill Christian values derived from God's Word and to help students live according to Christ's teachings in their daily lives (Halawa et al., 2024). Therefore, an important question arises as to how the concept of truth according to pragmatism can

be critically understood and integrated without shifting the absolute truth that is the foundation of the Christian faith.

On the one hand, a pragmatic approach offers a positive contribution to the world of education, particularly in encouraging active, reflective, and practice-oriented learning. However, on the other hand, if not handled carefully, an understanding of truth that is solely measured by benefits and outcomes can potentially conflict with the absolute principles of biblical truth (Sri Haryanto, n.d.). Therefore, Christian education needs to deeply examine the relevance of pragmatism so that it can be utilized as a pedagogical approach without sacrificing the theological foundations of the Christian faith.

Based on this background, this article aims to examine the meaning of truth according to pragmatism and its relevance in the context of Christian education. This study is expected to provide a balanced understanding of philosophical approaches and theological foundations, enabling Christian education to deliver contextual, meaningful learning that remains rooted in the truth of God's Word. (Bilo, 2020)

2. METHOD

This article was written using literature. Data were obtained from books, scientific journals, and Christian theological sources relevant to the concept of truth according to pragmatism and Christian education. Data analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically by critically examining pragmatist thought in light of Christian theological principles to see its relevance in the context of Christian education (Buka, 2023).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic concepts of the Pragmatist school of philosophy and views of truth

The philosophical school of pragmatism emphasizes that the truth of an idea is determined by its utility and practical impact in real life. Truth is not understood as something static and absolute, but rather as the result of a process of experience, testing, and applying ideas in concrete contexts (Satiri et al., 2024). Knowledge is considered true to the extent that it can function effectively and provide solutions to human problems. Therefore, pragmatism views truth as dynamic, contextual, and open to change according to the times and societal needs.

A. Basic Concept of Truth in Pragmatism

In pragmatism, truth arises from the relationship between ideas, experiences, and the practical results obtained. A statement or theory is considered true if it is proven to be useful, applicable, and brings real benefits in life. (Maiauweng, 2013) Truth is not solely tested through logic or abstract theory, but through empirical experience and the resulting practical consequences. Thus, truth according to pragmatism is temporary and contextual, and can be revised if it is no longer relevant or effective in addressing new problems that arise.

B. The Relevance of Pragmatist Truth in Christian Education

In the context of Christian education, pragmatism makes a significant contribution by emphasizing meaningful and applicable learning. Christian education is oriented not only toward mastering theological knowledge but also toward developing character, attitudes, and actions that reflect Christian values. (Lontoh, 2025) A pragmatic understanding of truth encourages students to live

out the teachings of the Christian faith in their daily lives through concrete actions, such as love, justice, and social responsibility.

Differences between Behaviorism and Progressivism

- The view of absolute truth sees truth as something that is fixed, absolute, and unchanging, while pragmatism sees truth as something that depends on its usefulness and practical impact in real life.
- In absolute truth, truth is determined by its conformity to objective reality and universal principles, while in pragmatism, truth is tested through experience, practice, and the application of an idea in the context of everyday life.
- Absolute truth is theoretical and final, so it is not influenced by changes in situations, while pragmatic truth is dynamic, contextual, and open to re-examination in accordance with developments in the times and human needs.
- These two views show different approaches in understanding truth, where absolute truth emphasizes the certainty and permanence of values, while pragmatism prioritizes the function, usefulness, and relevance of truth in science and life practice.

Key Figures and Important Ideas in the Pragmatist School of Philosophy

1. Main Figures and Ideas of Pragmatism

In the context of pragmatism's understanding of truth, truth is understood as something that is judged based on its practical utility and impact in real life. Truth is not only tested through theoretical thinking, but also through experience, action, and application in concrete situations. (Satiri et al., 2024) This view has had a significant influence in the field of education, including efforts to understand truth contextually in Christian education.

❖ Charles Sanders Peirce

Considered a pioneer of pragmatism, Peirce introduced the principle that the meaning and truth of a concept must be understood through its practical consequences. In an educational context, this thinking emphasizes the importance of understanding truth through practical application in the learning process.

❖ William James

Developing the idea of pragmatism, James emphasized that truth is something that "works." According to James, an idea is considered true when it has proven beneficial in human experience. This view encourages education to assess truth based on its impact on the growth and development of students.

❖ John Dewey

Developing pragmatism broadly in education, Dewey emphasized learning through experience (learning by doing), problem-solving, and reflection. In the context of Christian education, Dewey's thinking is relevant in encouraging active and contextual learning, so that faith values are not only understood theoretically but also realized in concrete actions.

❖ George Herbert Mead

Emphasizes the role of social interaction in the formation of meaning, knowledge, and truth. According to Mead, truth develops through social relationships and experiences. This view is relevant in Christian education, which emphasizes community, loving relationships, and character formation through shared life.

Overall, the core idea of pragmatism asserts that truth is dynamic, contextual, and always open to reexamination through experience and practical application. In the context of Christian education, this view can be critically utilized as a pedagogical approach, as long as pragmatic truth remains guided and subordinated to the truth of God's Word as the foundation of Christian faith.

Main Figures and Ideas of Pragmatism in the Context of Christian Education

Pragmatism in philosophy views truth as determined by the utility, experience, and practical impact of an idea in real life. In the context of Christian education, this understanding emphasizes that the truths of faith are not only learned theoretically but also lived and embodied in concrete actions that reflect Christian values. (Tung, 2021)

- ❖ John Dewey: Emphasized that truth in education is dynamic and arises from the process of experience, reflection, and solving real-world problems. In Christian education, this idea encourages active and contextual learning, enabling students to apply the teachings of faith in everyday life.
- ❖ William James: Developed the view that truth is something that “works” and is proven true through human experience. In the context of Christian education, the truth of faith is understood as something living and real when Christ's teachings produce changes in the attitudes, character, and behavior of students.
- ❖ Charles Sanders Peirce: As a pioneer of pragmatism, he emphasized that the meaning and truth of a concept must be seen in the practical consequences it produces. This thinking is relevant in Christian education, assessing the extent to which faith values are applied in real life in both personal and social life.

Implementation of Pragmatism in Christian Education

Pragmatism makes a significant contribution to the practice of Christian education because it emphasizes the meaning of truth realized through experience, concrete actions, and life change. (Samho & Princessa, 2025) In the context of Christian education, truth is not only taught as a theological concept but also lived out through attitudes, character, and actions that reflect Christian values. The implementation of pragmatism in Christian education can be realized through the following approaches:

1. Faith-Based Experiential Learning

Christian education encourages students to learn through real-life experiences in the life of faith. Students not only study Christian teachings theoretically, but are also invited to reflect on God's Word, engage in simple service, discuss life experiences, and practice the value of love (Konda et al., 2025). Through these experiences, the truths of faith are tested and understood more deeply and meaningfully.

2. Life Transformation as a Measure of Truth

From a pragmatist perspective, truth is measured by its impact and results. In Christian education, the truth of faith is declared true when it produces positive changes in students' attitudes and behavior, such as love, honesty, responsibility, and social concern. Thus, truth is not only known but also embodied in everyday life. (Tung, 2021)

3. Contextual Learning Based on Christian Values

Christian education emphasizes the importance of linking learning materials to the context of students' lives. Teachers connect biblical teachings with social and cultural realities and the challenges of the times. This approach helps students understand that the truth of God's Word is relevant and applicable to various life situations. (Konda et al., 2025)

4. Process-Based Evaluation and Faith Growth

Assessment in Christian Education focuses not only on academic outcomes but also on the process and growth of students' faith. Evaluation includes understanding of faith values, reflective skills, application of Christian teachings, and tangible impacts on daily life. Thus, Christian Education serves as a means of forming faith, character, and a life in harmony with the teachings of Christ (Rangga, 2024).

Implementation of the Meaning of Pragmatist Truth in the Context of Christian Education

The meaning of truth according to pragmatism in the context of Christian Education emphasizes that the truth of faith is not only understood theoretically, but is assessed through its usefulness, experience, and practical impact in the lives of students. Christian Education aims to help students live the truth of God's word in real life in their daily attitudes, character, and actions. (Bilo, 2020) The implementation of the meaning of truth of pragmatism in Christian Education can be realized as follows:

A. Real Faith Experience-Based Learning

Christian education encourages learning through concrete faith experiences. Students not only learn Christian teachings conceptually, but are also encouraged to engage in biblical reflection, simple service, life case discussions, and the application of the value of love. Through these experiences, the truths of faith are tested and understood more meaningfully. (Konda et al., 2025)

B. Life Change as a Measure of Truth

In pragmatism, truth is judged by its impact and results. In Christian education, the truth of faith is declared true when it results in life changes, such as the growth of love, honesty, responsibility, and concern for others. Thus, truth is not only known but also realized in concrete actions.

C. Contextual Learning Based on Christian Values

Christian education emphasizes the connection between the teachings of faith and the context of students' lives. Teachers connect God's Word to social and cultural realities and the challenges of our time. This approach helps students understand that the truth of God's Word is relevant and applicable to various life situations.

D. Process-Based Evaluation and Faith Growth

Assessment in Christian Education emphasizes not only academic outcomes but also the process of faith and character formation. Students are assessed based on their understanding of Christian values, their ability to reflect, their application of faith teachings, and their tangible impact on daily life. Thus, Christian Education serves as a means of developing a living and contextual faith. (Halawa et al., 2024)

Analysis of the Application of the Meaning of Pragmatist Truth in the Context of Christian Education

1. Analysis of the Application of Pragmatism in PAK Philosophy

Pragmatism is a philosophical school that interprets truth based on its utility, experience, and practical impact on human life. In the context of Christian education, this view provides a framework that emphasizes that the truth of faith is not merely understood as a theoretical theological concept, but as a reality that must be experienced, tested, and realized in everyday life. (Bilo, 2020) Christian education is thus understood as a process of forming a living and relevant faith, not simply the transmission of doctrinal teachings.

2. Analysis of the Application of Pragmatism in PAK Philosophy

The meaning of truth according to pragmatism in Christian education emphasizes that the truth of God's word must be internalized through experiences of faith and concrete actions. Christian education learning does not stop at mastering biblical knowledge, but is directed at how Christ's teachings have a real impact on students' attitudes, character, and decision-making. Students are encouraged to reflect on their life experiences, relate them to Christian values, and discover the meaning of the truth of faith in the context of their lives. (Simanjuntak, 2021)

In practice, Christian educators act as guides and facilitators, helping students understand the truths of their faith through contextual learning experiences, reflective dialogue, and moral problem-solving. Students are encouraged to test the truth of their faith through concrete practices, such as loving others, being honest, fair, responsible, and caring for the social environment. Thus, the truths of their faith are declared true not only because they are taught, but because they are proven to bring positive change and benefit both their personal and social lives.

3. The Relevance of Pragmatism for PAK Learning

The relevance of pragmatism in Christian education is evident in its ability to bridge the teachings of faith with the realities of modern life. This approach helps students apply the truth of God's Word to real-life challenges, such as social relations, ethical responsibilities, and the dynamics of a changing society. Through a pragmatic understanding of truth, Christian education becomes a contextual, reflective, and meaningful learning process.

Thus, the meaning of truth according to pragmatism makes a significant contribution to the development of Christian education rooted in faith yet relevant to the contemporary context. Christian education not only shapes religious knowledge and habits but also shapes the character and lives of students who are able to live out the truths of faith in a concrete, responsible, and impactful way for others.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Pragmatism in the Context of Christian Education

1. The advantage of pragmatism in the context of Christian education lies in its ability to interpret the truths of faith contextually and practically. This approach helps students understand the truths of God's Word not merely as conceptual theological teachings, but as real and relevant life values in everyday experiences. Through a pragmatic approach, students are encouraged to live out the truths of the Christian faith in concrete actions, such as loving others, being honest, being responsible, and caring for the social environment. Thus, Christian education learning becomes more meaningful, contextual,

and encourages active student involvement in the growth of Christian faith and character.

2. However, the shortcomings of pragmatism in Christian education arise when the truth of faith is judged solely by its practical benefits. If not balanced with a strong theological understanding, a pragmatic approach has the potential to reduce the truth of Christian faith to merely functional aspects and ignore the divine and transcendent dimensions of faith. This can lead students to lack the understanding that Christian truth is not only measured by visible results but is also rooted in God's revelation and the absolute teachings of the Bible.
3. Therefore, the application of the meaning of truth according to pragmatism in the context of Christian education must be done critically, balanced, and wisely. Pragmatism should be used as a pedagogical approach to help students internalize and apply the truths of faith in real life, without shifting the truth of God's Word as the primary foundation. With the proper integration of life experiences, practical application, and biblical theological foundations, Christian education can shape students with mature faith, Christian character, and relevance to the challenges of the times.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Meaning of Pragmatist Truth in the Context of Christian Education

1. The meaning of truth according to pragmatism in the context of Christian education emphasizes that the truth of faith is not merely understood conceptually but also lived and proven through concrete experiences and actions in everyday life. This approach helps students connect Christian teachings with the realities of life, so that faith does not stop at theoretical understanding but is manifested in attitudes, character, and behavior that reflect Christian values. (Simanjuntak, 2021)
2. The advantage of the pragmatist approach lies in its ability to make Christian education learning more contextual and meaningful. Students are encouraged to actively reflect on their life experiences, test the truth of their faith through practice, and apply Christ's teachings in acts of love, justice, honesty, and social responsibility. Thus, the truth of faith is not only known but also experienced and lived out in everyday life. (Tonapa et al., 2025)
3. However, the shortcomings of pragmatism in the context of Christian education arise when the truth of faith is judged solely by its practical benefits. This approach has the potential to obscure the understanding that the truth of Christian faith is also transcendent, normative, and derived from God's Word. If not balanced with a strong theological foundation, students may lack a grasp of the spiritual and absolute dimensions of Christian truth. (Tung, 2021) Therefore, the application of the meaning of pragmatism in Christian education must be balanced with biblical teaching, so that Christian education continues to foster a holistic, reflective, and responsible faith in accordance with Christian values.

A Biblical View of the Meaning of Pragmatist Truth in the Context of Christian Education

The Bible values truth manifested through concrete actions and a fruitful life. This principle aligns with the pragmatist view, which emphasizes that truth is tested through its practical impact and benefits in human life. Jesus' teachings affirm that true faith must be seen in deeds, as stated that a tree is known by its fruit (Matthew 7:16) and that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). (Maiaweng, 2013) This shows that the truth of the Christian faith is not only acknowledged verbally or theoretically, but must be experienced and realized in everyday life.

However, the Bible also firmly states that truth is not solely determined by human experience or practical utility. God's Word is understood as truth that comes from God and is permanent and absolute, as stated in Psalm 119:160 and John 17:17. Therefore, in the context of Christian Education, the meaning of truth according to pragmatism needs to be applied critically and carefully so that the assessment of truth is not only based on utility, but remains rooted in the truth of God's Word as the basis of faith.

Thus, pragmatism can be utilized as an approach to help students live out the truths of faith in a concrete and relevant way to the challenges of modern life. However, this approach must always be aligned with biblical teachings so that Christian education does not lose its spiritual and transcendent dimension. Ideally, Christian education integrates the practical application of faith with the truth of God's Word, thereby shaping the faith and character of students holistically, reflectively, and responsibly in accordance with Christian values. (Lontoh, 2025)

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion describes the answers to the research hypothesis and/or objectives, or the scientific findings obtained. The conclusion does not contain a repetition of the results and discussion, but rather a summary of the findings as expected in the objectives or hypothesis.

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