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EFFECT OF PBL METHOD ON CRITICAL THINKING
IN MATHEMATICS PROBLEM SOLVING AMONG
MATRICULATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

K THIRUCHELVAM KANDIAH



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to study the effect of PBL method in promoting critical thinking in mathematical problem solving among students in matriculation colleges. This quantitative study was conducted using quasi experiment design. The study population consists of mathematics students from Malaysian matriculation colleges. The sample for the study was selected from one of the fifteen matriculation colleges using the convenience sampling method. Research respondents consisted of 159 students who were allocated to experimental group and 162 students allocated to control group. Both groups were given an assignment to solve mathematics problems in number system, sequence and series using respective intervention methods. Data for critical thinking were obtained using five criteria which are observation and inference; listing information; finding strategies; assessing accuracy and finding alternative solutions. Reliability and validity of the instrument used to study critical thinking were determined through a pilot test. This instrument had a Cronbach- α value of 0.958. The findings showed that PBL teaching and learning method was effective in promoting critical thinking among Malaysia matriculation college students. PBL method was found to be effective in encouraging all critical thinking criteria except in finding alternative methods of solutions to given problems. The results also showed that students from the routine method group did slightly better in solving mathematics problems compared to PBL method group. The implication of this study was that PBL method has potential to be used as an alternative pedagogy to encourage critical thinking in Malaysian matriculation college students. This method can also be used for subjects other than mathematics.



KESAN KAEDAH PBL PADA PEMIKIRAN SECARA KRITIS DALAM MENYELESAIKAN MASALAH MATEMATIK DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR KOLEJ MATRIKULASI

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah mengkaji kesan kaedah PBL dalam menggalakkan pemikiran secara kritis bagi menyelesaikan masalah matematik dalam kalangan pelajar kolej matrikulasi. Kajian kuantitatif ini dijalankan menggunakan reka bentuk uji kaji kuasi. Populasi kajian ini terdiri daripada pelajar matematik dari kolej-kolej matrikulasi Malaysia. Sampel kajian telah dipilih daripada salah satu daripada lima belas kolej matrikulasi dengan menggunakan kaedah persampelan mudah. Responden kajian terdiri daripada 159 pelajar yang dibahagikan kepada kumpulan eksperimen dan 162 pelajar dibahagikan kepada kumpulan kawalan. Kedua-dua kumpulan telah diberi tugas untuk menyelesaikan masalah matematik dalam sistem nombor, jujukan dan siri dengan menggunakan kaedah intervensi masing-masing. Data bagi pemikiran kritis telah diperoleh menggunakan lima kriteria, iaitu pemerhatian dan inferens; menyenaraikan maklumat; mencari strategi; menilai ketepatan dan mencari kaedah penyelesaian alternatif. Kebolehpercayaan dan kesahan instrumen yang digunakan untuk kaji pemikiran secara kritis ditentukan melalui ujian rintis. Instrumen ini telah mencapai nilai Cronbach- α sebanyak 0.958. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kaedah pengajaran dan pembelajaran PBL adalah efektif dalam menggalakkan pemikiran secara kritis dalam pelajar kolej matrikulasi Malaysia. Kaedah PBL didapati berkesan dalam menggalakkan semua kriteria pemikiran secara kritis kecuali dalam usaha mencari kaedah penyelesaian alternatif untuk masalah yang diberi. Keputusan juga menunjukkan bahawa pelajar dalam kumpulan kaedah rutin telah menunjukkan prestasi yang baik sedikit dalam menyelesaikan masalah matematik berbanding kumpulan kaedah PBL. Implikasi kajian ini adalah kaedah PBL berpotensi digunakan sebagai pedagogi alternatif untuk menggalakkan pemikiran secara kritis di kolej-kolej matrikulasi Malaysia. Kaedah ini boleh juga digunakan untuk matapelajaran selain daripada matematik.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ABSTRAK	v
CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xxiv
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background	1
1.1.1 Teaching Critical Thinking	2
1.1.2 Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Mathematics	7
1.1.3 Teaching Mathematics Problem Solving	9
1.1.4 PBL in Malaysian Context	11
1.1.5 Employability and PBL	12
1.1.6 Malaysian Students and Learning Problems	15
1.2 Malaysian Matriculation Colleges	17

1.2.1	Background of Malaysian Matriculation Colleges	17
1.2.2	Teaching and Learning Mathematics in Malaysian Matriculation Colleges	19
1.2.3	HOTS and Critical Thinking	22
1.3	Statement of Problem	24
1.4	Research Objectives	32
1.5	Research Questions	34
1.6	Hypotheses of the Research	36
1.7	Significance of Research	40
1.8	Conceptual Framework	42
1.8.1	Routine Teaching and Learning Method	43
1.8.2	Components in PBL Method	47
1.8.3	PBL Method of Teaching	49
1.8.4	Comparing Routine Method and PBL Method	50
1.9	Definition of Terms and Phrases	51
1.10	Summary of Chapter 1	56

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	59
2.2	Problem Solving	60
2.2.1	Problem Solving in PBL Method	60
2.2.2	Problem Solving and Critical Thinking	63
2.2.3	Teaching Problem Solving	65
2.3	Critical Thinking	67

2.3.1	What is Critical Thinking?	67
2.3.2	Other Definitions of Critical Thinking	69
2.3.3	Developing Critical Thinking	72
2.3.4	Components in Critical Thinking	76
2.3.5	Models of Critical Thinking	78
2.3.6	Paul-Zerba Model for Critical Thinking	87
2.3.7	Assessment of Critical Thinking Processes	90
2.4	Problem-based Learning (PBL)	93
2.4.1	Background of PBL	93
2.4.2	Basic Concepts in Problem-based Learning	95
2.4.3	Principles of Problem-based Learning	97
2.4.4	Variations in PBL	98
2.4.5	Process of Problem-based Learning	101
2.4.6	Other Soft Skills Related to PBL	102
2.5	Theoretical Framework of PBL Method	104
2.5.1	Background of PBL Theory	105
2.5.2	Behaviorist Learning Theory and PBL Method	106
2.5.3	Cognitive Theories and PBL Method	108
2.5.4	Constructivist Learning Theory	109
2.5.5	Constructivism and PBL Method	112
2.6	Advantages of PBL Method	114
2.6.1	Useful Features of PBL Method	114
2.6.2	Small Group Teaching and PBL Method	116

2.7	PBL Process	117
2.7.1	The Processes in Traditional PBL	118
2.7.2	Comparing Other Models of PBL and PBL Method	120
2.7.3	Process Checklist	124
2.8	Students' Role in PBL Method	125
2.8.1	Changes in Perception of the Learning Process	125
2.8.2	Changes in Roles and Responsibilities of Students in PBL Method	127
2.8.3	Individual Roles and Responsibilities in PBL Method	127
2.8.4	Group Roles and Responsibilities in PBL Method	130
2.9	Role of Facilitators in PBL Method	131
2.9.1	General Skills for Facilitation of PBL Method	131
2.9.2	Specific Skills for Facilitation of PBL Method	133
2.9.3	Facilitator as a Stimulator and Enabler of PBL Method	134
2.9.4	Facilitator Expertise	136
2.10	Adoption and Adaptation of Temasek Polytechnic's PBL Framework	137
2.10.1	Role of Temasek Polytechnic Model in PBL Method	138
2.10.2	Processes in PBL Method	140
2.10.3	Use of FILA Chart in PBL Method	143
2.10.4	Designing Problems for PBL Method	145
2.10.5	Activities for PBL Method	148

2.11	Assessment and Evaluation in PBL Method	155
2.11.1	Principles of Assessment	155
2.11.2	Formative Feedback	156
2.11.3	Summative Feedback	157
2.11.4	Assessment in PBL Method	157
2.12	Summary of Chapter 2	158

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	161
3.2	Research Focus	162
3.3	Research Design	163
3.4	Research Population	166
3.5	Research Sample	167
3.5.1	Deciding on the Sample	167
3.5.2	Sample Size	168
3.5.3	Power Analysis	170
3.6	Research Instruments	172
3.6.1	Intervention Stimulus	172
3.6.2	FILA Chart	175
3.6.3	Critical Thinking Evaluation Form	176
3.7	Research Procedure and Data Collection	181
3.7.1	Research Intervention	182
3.7.2	Facilitators and Sample Groups	184

3.7.3	Analysis of Homogeneity of Sample Groups in the Research	187
3.7.4	Training of Facilitators	188
3.7.5	Research Intervention Process	190
3.7.6	Evaluation of Critical Thinking	191
3.7.7	Collection of Pre-intervention Data	210
3.7.8	Collection of Post-intervention Data	210
3.8	Data Analysis	211
3.9	Threats to Validity and Reliability	213
3.9.1	Threats to Internal Validity	214
3.9.2	Threats to External Validity	219
3.10	Limitations and Assumptions	222
3.10.1	Limitations in Sample Selection	222
3.10.2	Assumptions in Pedagogical Practices	223
3.10.3	Assumptions in Learning Practices	224
3.11	Pilot Study	225
3.12	Summary of Chapter 3	229

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1	Introduction	233
4.2	Report of Research	234
4.2.1	Techniques of Data Analyses for the Research	234
4.2.2	Data Analysis for Critical Thinking (CT)	235
4.2.3	Data Analysis for Mathematics	255



Problem Solving (PS)

4.2.4	Data Analysis for Collective Learning Aspects of PBL Method (CLA)	260
4.2.5	Data Analysis for Correlation between CT and PS	265
4.3	Summary of Chapter 4	265

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	Introduction	268
5.2	Summary of Research Findings	269
5.3	Discussions	272
5.3.1	Discussion on Critical Thinking	272
5.3.2	Discussion on Problem Solving	289
5.3.3	Discussion on Collective Learning Aspects (CLA) of PBL Method	293
5.3.4	Discussion on Correlation Analysis	293
5.4	Implications	296
5.4.1	Implications for PBL Method as an Alternative Pedagogy	297
5.4.2	Implications for PBL Method as a Means to Empower Students	299
5.4.3	Implications for PBL Method as a Means to Promote Critical Thinking Skills	302
5.4.4	Implications for PBL Method as a Means to Promote Teamwork	312



5.4.5	Implications for PBL Method in Promoting Positive Attitude towards Mathematics	313
5.4.6	Implications for PBL Method as a Means to Promote Independent Learning	315
5.4.7	Implications for Instrument Used to Assess Critical Thinking	317
5.4.8	Implications for PBL Method to be Applied in Other Domains.	318
5.5	Recommendations for Future Research and Actions	319
5.5.1	Research on Alternative Solutions	320
5.5.2	Assessing Critical Thinking	321
5.5.3	Critical Thinking and Other Soft Skills in PBL Method	322
5.5.4	Attitudes Towards PBL Method	324
5.5.5	Recommendations for Further Actions	324
5.6	Conclusions	326
REFERENCES		330
LIST OF PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS		355

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.		Page
1.1	Analysis of mathematics performance by Malaysian students in TIMSS (Zul & Anas, 2013)	2
1.2	Comparison of routine method and PBL method	51
2.1	Bloom's taxonomy and Paul's criteria of CT	72
2.2	Similarities in traditional PBL & PBL method	123
2.3	Differences between traditional PBL & PBL method	123
2.4	FILA Chart (Temasek Polytechnic, 2006)	144
2.5	Problem design principles in PBL method (Adapted from Savin-Baden & Major, 2004)	147
3.1	Summary of variables in this research	164
3.2	Dr. John Curry's "rule of thumb" on sample size (Yount, 2006)	169
3.3	Power analysis to determine effect size for CT (t-test) in pilot study	171
3.4	General guide to effect values (Cohen, 1988)	171
3.5	Likert Scale scoring criteria for CT	179
3.6	Summary of the two stages of research	182
3.7	Schedule for X intervention during the full research	183
3.8	Schedule for C intervention during the full research	183
3.9	Allocation of sample groups for X	186
3.10	Allocation of sample groups for C	186

3.11	Group Statistics for mean	187
3.12	Group Statistics (t- test)	188
3.13	Tests of Normality	188
3.14a	Rubric for making observations and inferences for CT scores	204
3.14b	Rubric for listing information for CT scores	204
3.14c	Rubric for drawing strategies and making a decision for CT scores	205
3.14d	Rubric for making evaluation for accuracy for CT scores	205
3.14e	Rubric for finding alternative methods of solutions for CT scores	206
3.15	Combinations of variables and methods of data analyses for research	213
3.16	Case Processing Summary for Appendix A1 in the pilot study	227
3.17	Reliability Statistics for Appendix A1 in the pilot study	228
4.1	Normality test for the mean of overall CT scores before and after intervention	238
4.2	Comparing the means of overall scores for CT within groups (C & X) before and after intervention using paired sample t-test	241
4.3	Comparing the medians of overall scores for CT within groups before and after intervention using Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	241
4.4	Comparing the means of overall scores for CT between groups (C & X) before and after intervention using independent t-test	242
4.5	Comparing the medians of overall scores for CT between groups (C & X) before and after intervention using Mann-Whitney U test	242
4.6	Comparing the mean scores for observation and inference in CT within groups (X & C) before and after intervention using paired sample t-test	244
4.7	Comparing the median scores for observation and inference in CT	244

	within groups (X & C) before and after intervention using Wilcosxon signed rank test	
4.8	Comparing the mean scores for observation and inference in CT between groups (X & C) before and after intervention using independent t-test	245
4.9	Comparing the median scores for observation and inference in CT between groups (X & C) before and after intervention using Mann-Whitney test	245
4.10	Comparing the mean scores for listing information in CT within groups (X & C) before and after intervention using paired sample t-test	246
4.11	Comparing the median scores for listing information in CT within groups (X & C) before and after intervention using Wilcosxon signed rank test	247
4.12	Comparing the mean scores for listing information in CT between groups (X & C) before and after intervention using independent t-test	247
4.13	Comparing the median scores for listing information in CT between groups (X & C) before and after intervention using Mann-Whitney test	247
4.14	Comparing the mean scores for drawing strategy and making a decision in CT within groups (X & C) before and after intervention using paired sample t-test	249
4.15	Comparing the median scores for drawing strategy and making a decision in CT within groups (X & C) before and after intervention using Wilcosxon signed rank test	249
4.16	Comparing the mean scores for drawing strategy and making a decision in CT between groups (X & C) before and after intervention using independent t-test	249
4.17	Comparing the median scores for drawing strategy and making a decision in CT between groups (X & C) before and after intervention using Mann-Whitney test	249

4.18	Comparing the mean scores for evaluation for accuracy in CT within groups (X & C) before and after intervention using paired sample t-test	251
4.19	Comparing the median scores for making an evaluation of accuracy in CT within groups (X & C) before and after intervention using Wilcosxon signed rank test	251
4.20	Comparing the mean scores for making an evaluation of accuracy in CT between groups (X & C) before and after intervention using independent t-test	251
4.21	Comparing the median scores for making an evaluation of accuracy in CT between groups (X & C) before and after intervention using Mann-Whitney test	252
4.22	Comparing the mean scores for finding alternative methods of solutions in CT within groups (X & C) before and after intervention using paired sample t-test	253
4.23	Comparing the median scores for finding alternative methods of solutions in CT within groups (X & C) before and after intervention using Wilcosxon signed rank test	253
4.24	Comparing the mean scores for finding alternative methods of solutions in CT between groups (X & C) before and after intervention using independent t-test	254
4.25	Comparing the median scores for finding alternative methods of solutions in CT between groups (X & C) before and after intervention using Mann-Whitney test	254
4.26	Normality test for the mean of PS scores in pre-test and the post test	257
4.27	Comparing the mean scores in pre and post tests for PS using paired sample t-test	260
4.28	Comparing the mean scores for C and X for PS using independent t-test	260
4.29	Descriptive Statistics for MANOVA on CLA of PBL method	263

4.30	Box's M test of equality of covariance matrices for MANOVA on CLA	263
4.31	Multivariate Tests for MANOVA on CLA	264
4.32	Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for MANOVA on CLA	264
4.33	Correlation between PS and CT	265
5.1.	Summary of research hypotheses analysis	270
5.2.	Summary of MANOVA for DVs Combined	271
5.3.	Summary of correlation analyses of DVs	272
5.4	Suitability, Feasibility & Flexibility Matrix (Problem solving, (n.d.))	320

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Page
1.1 Routine teaching & learning method	43
1.2 Conceptual frameworks: PBL method for CT	47
2.1 Polya's quote	65
2.2 Paul's critical thinking model	79
2.3 Adapted version of Paul's model	81
2.4 Zerba's (2001) critical thinking cyclic model	84
2.5 Adapted version of Zerba's model	87
2.6 Paul-Zerba model for critical thinking	89
2.7 Critical thinking evaluation standards	90
2.8 PBL workshop with Dr. Anette Kolmos	95
2.9 Steps in PBL	119
2.10 Flow chart of PBL method	154
3.1 The nonequivalent control group design Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006)	165
3.2 Problems used in the stimulus	174
3.3a Responses for facts in Problem 1	193
3.3b Responses for ideas in Problem 1	193
3.3c Responses for learning issues in Problem 1	193

3.3d	Completed solution to Problem 1	193
3.3e	Alternative solutions to Problem 1(a) and (b)	194
3.3f	Alternative solutions to Problem 1(c)	195
3.4a	Responses for facts in Problem 2	196
3.4b	Responses for ideas in Problem 2	196
3.4c	Responses for learning issues in Problem 2	196
3.4d	Completed solution to Problem 2	197
3.4e	Alternative solutions to Problem 2	197
3.5a	Responses for facts in Problem 3	198
3.5b	Responses for ideas in Problem 3	198
3.5c	Responses for learning issues in Problem 3	198
3.5d	Completed solution to Problem 3	199
3.5e	Alternative solutions to Problem 3	199
3.6a	Responses for facts in Problem 4	200
3.6b	Responses for ideas in Problem 4	200
3.6c	Responses for learning issues in Problem 4	200
3.6d	Completed solution to Problem 4	201
3.6e	Alternative solution (I) to Problem 4	201
3.6f	Alternative solution (II) to Problem 4	202
3.7a	Sample assessment of CT for FILA chart responses of Problem 1(X group)	207
3.7b	Sample assessment of CT for full solution of Problem 1 (X group)	207

3.8a	Sample assessment of CT for FILA chart responses of Problem 2 (X group)	208
3.8b	Sample assessment of CT for full solution of Problem 2 (X group)	208
3.9	Sample assessment of CT for full solution of Problem 1 (C group)	209
3.10	Sample assessment of CT for full solution of Problem 2 (C group)	209
4.1	Normality of C for overall scores for CT (skewed to right)	239
4.2	Normality of X for overall scores for CT (skewed to left)	239
4.3	Effect size for CT analysis in the research	242
4.4	Normality of C for Pre-test PS score (skewed to right)	257
4.5	Normality of X for Pre-test PS score (skewed to right)	258
4.6	Normality of C for Post-test PS score	258
4.7	Normality of X for Post-test PS score	259

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AKEPT	<i>Akademi Kepimpinan Pengajian Tinggi</i> (Higher Education Leadership Academy)
C	Control group (routine method group)
CLA	Collective learning aspects of PBL method
CT	Critical thinking
DP	Dependent variable
E	Evaluating the solution for accuracy
FILA	Facts, Ideas, learning outcomes and action plan
HOTS	Higher order thinking skills
I	Information on the facts of the problem
IHE	Institutions of higher education
IRR	Inter-rater reliability
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
MEBP	Malaysia Education Blue Print 2013-2025
MOE	Ministry of Education, Malaysia
O	Observation and inference on the problems
OBE	Outcome Based Education
PBL	Problem-based Learning
PBL method	Problem-based Learning method
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment



PS	Problem solving
RQ	Research questions
RT	Routine method of teaching and learning
S	Drawing up a strategy to solve the problem
SCL	Student centered learning
SPM	<i>Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Certificate Of Education)
SPSS	Statistical Packages For The Social Science
STPM	<i>Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Higher Certificate Of Education)
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UPS	<i>Ujian Pertengahan Semester</i> (Mid Semester Test)
X	Experimental group (PBL method group)

LIST OF APPENDICES

A1	Assessment of critical thinking (Pilot study)
A2	Assessment of critical thinking (Amended)
B1	Lesson plan 1 for pilot test (experimental group)
B2	Lesson plan 2 for pilot test (experimental group)
B3	Lesson plan 1 for pilot test (control group)
B4	Lesson plan 2 for pilot test (control group)
B5	Lesson plan 1 for demonstration 1
B6	Lesson plan 2 for demonstration 2
B7	Lesson plan 1 for intervention (X group)
B8	Lesson plan 2 for intervention (X group)
B9	Lesson plan 1 for intervention (C group)
B10	Lesson plan 2 for intervention (C group)
C1	Stimulus (for pilot test Pre-test)
C2	Stimulus (for pilot test post-test)
C3	Stimulus (for demonstration)
C4	Stimulus (for pretest)
C5	Stimulus (for posttest)
C6	Intervention stimuli for X
C7	Intervention stimuli for C
D	FILA chart



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E

Gaant's Chart

F

Minutes of briefing of facilitators

G

Audit trail report



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The traditional version of Problem-based Learning (PBL) approach of teaching has been adopted and modified in this research to aid in the holistic teaching of mathematics among the Malaysian matriculation college students. The main issues addressed by the modified PBL method of teaching are critical thinking in mathematics and mathematics problem solving. In assessing critical thinking, five main components of critical thinking are considered (Paul 2006). They are: 1) making *observation and inference*, 2) *listing out information*, 3) *drawing problem solving strategies and making a decision*, 4) *evaluating for accuracy* and 5) *finding alternative methods of solution*. While the main principles of traditional PBL are adhered to in the modified version of PBL method, some implementation aspects are changed to suit the requirements of Malaysian matriculation