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University of Setif (Algeria)

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**FAITH IN ACTION: PSYCHOMOTOR ASSESSMENT IN CHRISTIAN
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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Abstract

Assessment in Christian Religious Education (CRE) has predominantly emphasized the cognitive domain, while the affective and psychomotor domains have received limited attention. This condition has led CRE learning to focus more on the acquisition of religious knowledge than on the formation of faith as manifested in concrete attitudes and practices. In fact, the essence of CRE lies in holistic education that integrates the development of knowledge, values, and Christian living practices. In response to this issue, this study aims to conceptualize a psychomotor assessment model that is relevant, contextual, and theologically grounded within Christian Religious Education. This study employs a conceptual research method through a critical literature review of educational assessment theories, learning taxonomies, and theological foundations of CRE. The findings indicate that psychomotor assessment in CRE can be developed through indicators of faith-based practice, including engagement in service activities, the application of values such as love and justice, participation in experiential learning activities, and reflective evaluation of concrete actions as expressions of lived faith. The proposed psychomotor assessment model emphasizes the integration of faith and action (orthopraxy) by utilizing assessment techniques such as observation, performance assessment, portfolios, and praxis-based reflection. In conclusion, the development of a psychomotor assessment model in Christian Religious Education constitutes a strategic step toward shifting the learning paradigm from mere knowledge transmission to holistic, contextual, and transformative faith formation.

Keywords: assessment, psychomotor, faith in action, Christian religious education

Introduction

Holistic education requires the integrated development of learners across the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. These domains are inseparable, as together they shape individuals' capacities to think, to form attitudes, and to act responsibly in real-life contexts. Nevertheless, in educational practice, the psychomotor domain has often received less serious attention than the cognitive and affective domains. This challenge has become more pronounced in the twenty-first century, as technological advancements increasingly replace routine and static psychomotor skills with machines, while the world of work demands motor skills that are adaptive, flexible, and context-sensitive. Unfortunately, education has not yet established a robust universal framework for developing cross-disciplinary psychomotor skills that are relevant to technological change and dynamic labor market demands (Hill et al., 2018).

The absence of such a framework has resulted in psychomotor assessment practices that remain largely focused on procedural compliance and static end products, detached from learning processes, contextual variation, and learners' adaptive capacities. In contrast, twenty-first-century psychomotor assessment calls for authentic and dynamic approaches that emphasize coordination, flexibility, and learners' responsiveness to changing tasks, tools, and work situations. These challenges are further compounded by the lack of clear guidelines for best practices, limited teacher understanding of appropriate psychomotor assessment methods, and insufficient professional training in designing instruction and assessment for complex

psychomotor tasks (Nasrudin, Anwa, Rahman, 2025). Consequently, the implementation of psychomotor assessment in schools remains low and is frequently neglected due to constraints related to time, infrastructure, and the persistent tendency to prioritize cognitive assessment, which is perceived as easier to measure (Sajidan et al., 2022).

Similar conditions are evident in Christian Religious Education (CRE). Assessment in CRE continues to emphasize cognitive understanding and affective dispositions, while the psychomotor dimension, closely related to the embodiment of faith through concrete action, has not been systematically developed. Yet, CRE aims to educate learners holistically so that they not only comprehend Christian teachings conceptually but also internalize and enact them in daily life. CRE emphasizes character formation, the internalization of values, and learners' ability to connect theological concepts with lived practice through concrete actions, social relationships, and direct learning experiences (hands-on experiences) (Toron, 2025).

Therefore, the evaluation and development of psychomotor assessment in Christian Religious Education constitute an urgent need. Assessment should be designed not merely to measure theological knowledge and religious attitudes but also to evaluate learners' capacity to embody faith in concrete actions as part of identity formation, moral development, and meaningful religious learning experiences (Toron, 2025). Within this framework, psychomotor assessment plays a strategic role in affirming the paradigm of faith in action, a faith that does not remain at the level of understanding and disposition, but is concretely manifested in the practices of everyday life.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research design using a literature review approach. Data and information are drawn from peer-reviewed research articles published in reputable academic journals within the last ten years. The author systematically collects and analyzes scholarly works related to Christian theology, educational theory, Christian Religious Education, and assessment models, all of which are examined through the lens of the psychomotor domain. The analysis aims to synthesize theoretical and empirical insights that can contribute to the development of a psychomotor assessment model applicable to Christian Religious Education.

Result and Discussion

Faith in Action: A Christian Theological Perspective on Psychomotor Assessment

Christian theology affirms that genuine faith cannot be separated from concrete action. The Epistle of James explicitly rejects a form of faith that remains merely confessional or internal, asserting that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:14–26). Faith and works are not functionally equivalent, yet they are intrinsically related: faith is the foundation of justification graciously bestowed by God, while good works are the necessary fruit of a living faith. In Pauline theology, works are not a prerequisite for justification but the inevitable consequence of God's renewing work; justifying faith always gives rise to a transformed life. James emphasizes the concrete dimension of this relationship by insisting that faith which is not expressed in action cannot save. Thus, works do not replace faith but function as an essential indicator of its authenticity (Nicol, 1975; Van Der Merwe, 2024).

Furthermore, James maintains that living faith is active and is brought to maturity through works (James 2:22). The authenticity of faith is tested through observable practices such as perseverance, patience, and endurance in the face of trials and injustice (James 1:2–4; 5:7–11). By pointing to Job as an exemplar, James demonstrates that true faith is sustained through embodied faithfulness to God, expressed not merely through verbal confession but through concrete attitudes and actions. Faith, therefore, is inherently performative: what is confessed must be congruent with one's way of life.

These theological insights resonate strongly within the field of education. Just as faith is incomplete without action, education is inadequate if it remains confined to the cognitive domain (knowing) and the affective domain (valuing and internalizing). Authentic learning must culminate in the psychomotor domain: acting, practicing, and demonstrating concrete performance. Without psychomotor expression, knowledge and attitudes remain latent and fail to signify holistic educational transformation. In this sense, psychomotor competence functions analogously to works in the faith–works relationship: not as an optional add-on, but as concrete evidence that the learning process genuinely shapes one’s way of living and acting.

The emphasis on “faith in action” is further developed through Jack Barentsen’s methodological shift from deductive theology toward an inductive approach grounded in embodied realism. Barentsen argues that theological knowledge emerges from lived participation and embodied engagement in the world rather than from abstract propositions alone. Through the lens of embodiment, the human body is understood as the primary locus where theory and practice converge within social and communal interaction. Theology, therefore, is construed as critical reflection on concrete human participation in relationships with God, others, and the world, in a manner consistent with the incarnational character of the Christian faith (Barentsen, 2021).

Within the framework of practical theology, Barentsen further explains that the relationship between theory and practice is concretely realized through processes of identity formation shaped by embodied participation in communities of practice. Missional leadership is not determined by mastery of abstract concepts but by practical discernment of God’s work through contextual engagement, a spirituality of listening, and adaptive action. Pedagogically, this implies that theological education should prioritize case-based learning, field practice, and reflective processes. Consequently, assessment must move beyond cognitive evaluation toward psychomotor assessment through authentic, performance-based tasks that evaluate students’ capacity to practice leadership, ministry, and theological discernment within real-life contexts (Barentsen, 2021).

In light of embodied realism, faith in action is not merely an ethical consequence of belief but the existential mode of faith itself. Faith is first lived before it is theoretically articulated; theological reflection arises from embodied praxis through critical engagement. Accordingly, the use of performance-based and authentic assessment in theological education constitutes a pedagogical translation of faith in action. What is assessed is not only what is believed or cognitively understood, but how faith is practiced, embodied, and transformed into consistent, reflective, and responsible action within concrete communal and contextual realities.

Psychomotor Skills

The psychomotor domain within learning taxonomies was developed as a complement to the cognitive and affective domains introduced by Bloom, with the aim of explaining the development of human motor skills and actions. Early development of this domain was undertaken by Simpson (1966), who classified psychomotor skills into seven categories: perception, set (readiness), guided response, mechanism, complex overt response, adaptation, and origination. However, in educational practice, the psychomotor taxonomy most widely used is that proposed by Dave (1967), which hierarchically organizes psychomotor skills into five levels: imitation, manipulation, precision, articulation, and naturalization. Dave’s taxonomy is regarded as more systematic and operational, making it particularly useful for instructional planning and assessment. Although the revision of Bloom’s taxonomy by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) primarily focused on the cognitive domain, the psychomotor domain continues to retain these five levels as the principal framework for measuring students’ achievement of practical skills (Sajidan et al., 2022). This taxonomic framework provides an

important conceptual foundation; nevertheless, a deeper understanding requires further elaboration of the nature and characteristics of psychomotor abilities in educational practice.

In line with this framework, Ega Nasrudin and colleagues describe psychomotor ability as an individual's capacity to perform coordinated bodily movements through intentional physical actions, such as touching, grasping, moving, or manipulating objects. Motor skills are mechanical, physical, and practical in nature, and they develop progressively from imitation toward increasingly complex movements that eventually become automatic through repeated practice. Mastery of these skills requires a high degree of precision and control and therefore must be cultivated through serious and sustained training, given that their application demands accuracy, procedural conformity, and responsibility. Moreover, psychomotor skills do not operate independently but are influenced by affective and perceptual dimensions. Consequently, educators need to understand and integrate various psychomotor taxonomies into instruction in order to produce learners who are not only theoretically proficient but also skilled, adaptive, and innovative in responding to real-world challenges (Nasrudin, Anwa, Rahman, 2025). Nevertheless, in educational practice, understandings of psychomotor skills are often simplified through certain classifications that warrant critical examination.

Traditionally, psychomotor skills have been divided into two main types: gross motor skills and fine motor skills. Gross motor skills involve the use of large muscle groups, such as the arms and legs, whereas fine motor skills involve smaller muscles, particularly those of the fingers. Many work-related skills can indeed be categorized within these two types; however, in practice, most motor activities require a combination of both. Even activities commonly regarded as fine motor skills, such as writing, also involve coordination of larger muscle groups. Therefore, the dichotomy between gross and fine motor skills is considered overly simplistic for representing the full complexity of psychomotor skills. In this regard, the concept of motricity becomes essential, referring to an individual's ability to control and coordinate bodily movements effectively and adaptively in order to achieve specific goals. To understand motricity and to develop psychomotor learning more effectively, the traditional gross-fine motor approach needs to be transcended. Motor skills are more appropriately understood as multidimensional abilities that vary according to task demands. Psychomotor performance can be assessed through dimensions such as precision, accuracy, speed, and consistency, as well as physical capacities including strength, flexibility, balance, and stamina. These dimensions allow psychomotor skills to be assessed in a more contextualized manner across diverse fields of work (Hill et al., 2018). Understanding motor skills as multidimensional abilities has important implications for how the process of psychomotor development itself is conceptualized.

The development of psychomotor skills can be understood as a gradual process that moves from states of unconscious incompetence toward conscious competence and eventual automaticity. In the initial stage, individuals are unaware of the purpose of the skill being learned and therefore do not recognize their errors. As awareness increases, individuals begin to recognize their deficiencies and learn through practice until they are able to perform the skill automatically. However, when confronted with more complex task demands, skills that have become automatic may once again reveal previously unnoticed weaknesses, requiring the learning process to be repeated. Within this dynamic process, perception and proprioception function as continuous feedback mechanisms rather than as separate stages. Both help individuals become aware of what they are sensing and of their bodily position during movement, thereby enabling adjustment and refinement of actions. Through ongoing sensory feedback, psychomotor skills develop and become transferable to new situations (Hill et al., 2018). Perception refers to the ability to recognize and interpret information received through the senses, such as sight, hearing, touch, or the sensation of movement, which helps individuals understand what is occurring, for example, the position of the hands, movement rhythm, or

applied pressure. Proprioception, by contrast, refers to internal bodily awareness, namely the ability to sense body position, movement, and balance without relying on vision, such as knowing the position of one's feet while walking or maintaining balance without looking at the ground. This continuous developmental process ultimately forms the foundation for the emergence of higher-level psychomotor abilities.

At this advanced level, meta-motor abilities, particularly coordination and adaptation, function as cross-domain skills that enable individuals to integrate and transfer various motor skills in complex and dynamic situations. Coordination involves the regulation of movements performed simultaneously or sequentially, whereas adaptation emphasizes the ability to transfer skills across different contexts, tasks, or technologies. Both abilities develop progressively from awareness toward competence and are relatively difficult to replace with technology, especially in non-routine tasks. Amid rapid changes in the world of work and ongoing technological advancement, coordination and adaptation remain fundamental psychomotor skills that are highly relevant, while also being closely linked to cognitive development and experiential learning processes (Hill et al., 2018).

Psychomotor Assessment Model in Christian Religious Education

Within a holistic learning framework, psychomotor assessment should be understood as an advanced stage of learning development that is grounded in cognitive mastery and the formation of affective dispositions. Assessment in this domain aims to evaluate learners' ability to actualize the knowledge and attitudes they have acquired into concrete actions that are relevant to everyday life. After understanding key concepts and demonstrating appropriate attitudes, learners are expected to apply their learning through the demonstration of concrete and meaningful skills. Accordingly, psychomotor learning outcomes can only be identified when learners display behaviors or actions that are consistent with the cognitive understanding and affective dispositions that have been formed.

If psychomotor learning outcomes are positioned as the culmination of the internalization of knowledge and attitudes, the implication is the need for assessment practices that are continuous and systematic. Ongoing assessment enables teachers to monitor learners' developmental progress in a structured and sustained manner while simultaneously evaluating the achievement of learning objectives. Therefore, to obtain optimal results, teachers are required to possess the competence to design and implement psychomotor assessments consistently. Ideally, psychomotor assessment should be positioned on an equal footing with affective and cognitive assessment within the overall learning process (Sajidan et al., 2022).

These principles of psychomotor assessment become increasingly relevant when applied within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), which essentially emphasizes the integration of faith, values, and concrete action. In this context, existing studies indicate that psychomotor assessment in CRE can be developed through indicators of faith practice, including students' engagement in service activities, the application of Christian values such as love and justice, participation in experiential learning, and reflective evaluation of concrete actions as expressions of lived faith. On this basis, the development of psychomotor assessment indicators in CRE cannot be separated from concrete and measurable practices of faith in students' lives. The proposed psychomotor assessment model emphasizes the integration of faith and action (orthopraxis) by employing a variety of assessment techniques, such as observation, performance assessment, portfolios, and praxis-based reflection. Consequently, the development of a psychomotor assessment model in CRE is viewed as a strategic step toward shifting the learning paradigm from the mere transmission of knowledge to the formation of faith that is holistic, contextual, and transformative.

This approach finds broader articulation in the practice of Christian higher education, particularly through initiatives that integrate faith and learning through service-based pedagogy.

Roso et al. (2022) describe a multi-year collaborative initiative at Azusa Pacific University (APU) that explores the synergy among Academic Faith Integration, Service-Learning, and the framework of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). The primary focus of this initiative lies in the concept of Faith and Learning in Action (FLA), in which educators systematically study their own classrooms to understand how faith-based community engagement can enhance student learning outcomes while simultaneously deepening their spiritual commitments. Through a communal and reflective approach, the program seeks to empirically validate the effectiveness of Christian pedagogy and to share it as a form of public intellectual capital in order to advance a missional and transformative vision of Christian higher education (Roso et al., 2022).

Within this context, the concept of “faith in action” acquires concrete pedagogical significance as a bridge between theological reflection and lived practice. This concept is narrated as a dynamic synergy that transforms theological reflection into authentic life practices. The process moves from intellectual understanding toward empirical validation in real-world contexts, such that the integrity of Christian education is no longer measured solely by theoretical idealism but by the effectiveness of students in fulfilling their roles as servants and agents of cultural transformation. By adopting the ministry of Jesus as a pedagogical foundation, faith is understood not as passive knowledge but as “wisdom in action” that integrates academic excellence with sincere service to others.

When faith is understood as wisdom embodied in action, the psychomotor domain becomes the primary arena for the actualization of faith–learning integration. This relationship is systematically realized through the application of experiential learning that converts cognitive understanding into concrete action in real-life contexts. In this regard, psychomotor assessment does not merely evaluate the mastery of technical skills, but also students’ ability to synchronize faith-based values with applied competencies in producing tangible products or actions for the benefit of society. Learning evaluation is no longer adequate if it relies solely on cognitive measurement; rather, it must encompass observation of concrete actions that carry theological and social significance.

Therefore, the integration of faith and learning should not be confined to conceptual or pedagogical levels that are merely instructional and educator-centered, as such approaches often fail to produce sustained transformation in students’ lives. Faith–learning integration must be understood as an authentic process that guides students to actively discern how Christian faith is embodied in concrete actions, particularly through their life calling and professional responsibilities in serving others, especially vulnerable and marginalized communities. Through experiential learning, service, and critical reflection, faith is not only cognitively understood but also concretely lived within real social contexts. In this way, the integration of faith and learning functions as a transformative pedagogical praxis that shapes students’ ways of thinking, attitudes, and actions, enabling Christian faith to emerge as faith in action in relationship with God, others, and the world (Roso, 2026).

This assessment model integrates psychomotor learning theory with the theological principle of Faith in Action, positioning learning not merely as an intellectual exercise but as a formative process that culminates in concrete and transformative practice. Grounded in the concept of orthopraxis, the model deliberately moves beyond cognition toward systematic and embodied action in real-life contexts. Learning is understood as a dynamic continuum in which cognitive engagement enables students to grasp theological and academic concepts, affective formation facilitates the internalization of core Christian values such as love, justice, and empathy, and psychomotor enactment provides the space for faith to be demonstrated through applied skills in service to the community. Through this integrated structure, faith is not only known and affirmed but actively embodied, rendering learning both theologically meaningful and socially transformative.

To ensure optimal and holistic learning outcomes, the assessment model is structured around interrelated components that capture the embodiment of faith in concrete practice. In CRE, psychomotor assessment is operationalized through several key performance indicators, including faith practice, which refers to the extent of students' active engagement in service and ministry activities; values application, denoting the consistency with which core Christian values such as love and justice are enacted in real-world social interactions; product or project outcomes, which assess the quality and relevance of tangible outputs such as educational programs, social campaigns, or service-oriented initiatives; and praxis reflection, defined as students' capacity to critically evaluate their concrete actions as expressions of lived faith. Collectively, these indicators enable assessment to move beyond abstract belief toward observable, measurable, and reflective practices of faith, thereby aligning psychomotor learning outcomes with the integrative and transformative aims of Christian pedagogy.

The assessment techniques employed in this model are designed to capture students' psychomotor performance in authentic and contextualized settings. Direct observation is used to assess physical skills and observable behaviors demonstrated by students during service activities. Performance assessment measures the level of technical competence and ethical appropriateness with which students carry out assigned tasks. Peer assessment provides a collaborative perspective by capturing evaluations of each individual's tangible contributions within team-based activities. In addition, portfolio and reflective assessment serve to document the development of students' actions over time as well as shifts in their perspectives, enabling a longitudinal evaluation of learning that integrates practice with critical reflection.

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Conclusion

This assessment model ensures that Christian Religious Education moves beyond an instructional focus toward a transformative pedagogical practice. By implementing continuous psychomotor assessment, educational institutions can prepare graduates who demonstrate applied competencies and act as cultural transformers in real-world settings. Accordingly, the model shifts the learning paradigm from knowledge transmission to the integration of learning outcomes as lived and actionable practice.

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