

The Role Of Christian Religious Education In Developing 21st Century Skills In Church Youth

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Abstract

This article examines the role of Christian Religious Education (PAK) in developing 21st century skills among church youth. In an era of constant change, where technology and globalization affect all aspects of life, PAK not only focuses on teaching spiritual and moral values, but also supports the development of skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, effective communication and creativity. This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach, with a focus on literature study. By using this method, research emphasizes the importance of using literature to understand best practices and theories that support the integration of 21st century skills in the context of religious education, thereby enabling church youth to be more adaptive and innovative in dealing with social and technological problems. . dynamics. The results of this research through an integrated approach between theology and practical skills, PAK seeks to equip the younger generation with the tools necessary to succeed and contribute positively in modern society. This article discusses how PAK's curriculum and teaching methods can be adapted to be more relevant to the needs of church youth, preparing them to become leaders and bringers of change in the future. The conclusion from conducting this research is that in facing the challenges of the 21st century, Christian Religious Education (PAK) plays an important role in equipping the young generation of the church with skills that not only support their spiritual growth but also prepare them to become competent and empathetic world citizens.

Keywords : *Christian Religious Education, Skills 21st Century, Teenagers Church*

INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, Christian Religious Education (PAK) plays an important role not only in forming spiritual and moral foundations, but also in developing skills that are relevant to the challenges of the times. 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, effective communication, and creativity, are increasingly recognized as keys to future success. In the context of the church, this means equipping youth with the tools they need to not only survive, but also to thrive in a rapidly changing environment (Wright & Bird, 2019).

The importance of integration between PAK and 21st century skills lies in the ability of religious education to offer more than just theological knowledge; it should also provide a framework that allows youth to apply religious values in the broader context of social and professional interactions. These 21st century skills are crucial for helping church youth not only understand and apply Christian teachings, but also face the challenges of an increasingly complex world (Susanta, 2021).

Education is one of the important things in human life. Education will bring individuals to change for the better and there is hope from education. This understanding is built on education which is an important foundation for the development of human resources that education, whether informal, formal or non-formal, cannot be separated from the process of human development. Education can help individuals from not understanding to being understood. One of them is knowing and understanding the types of knowledge to be used in the future, apart from that, you can also discover abilities, develop yourself and understand yourself (Ushama, 2022).

In the current context, Christian Religious Education faces growing challenges due to rapid social and technological evolution. Education that previously may have focused more on doctrinal teaching now requires adaptation to include more dynamic and applicable aspects that are relevant to the lives of modern teenagers. Traditional approaches that focus only on teaching religious doctrine and values are now required to include 21st century skills such as information technology skills, critical thinking, and communicating effectively on various digital platforms (Ding & Devine, 2020).

This problem is increasingly complex with the challenges of identity and spirituality faced by teenagers in a pluralistic and fast-paced world. Therefore, effective PAK needs to equip young people to understand and articulate their beliefs in a wider context and dialogue with people from different backgrounds. In addition, there is often a gap between the values taught in religious contexts and everyday social practices. This requires religious education that is not only theoretical but also practical, helping teenagers connect religious teachings with concrete actions in real life, especially in dealing with modern social and ethical problems (Khan & Dixon, 2020).

In the modern era of the 21st century, life has changed with technology. It can affect every individual, including teenagers, who are the quickest to experience these changes. Adolescence is an important phase in human development that involves significant physical, emotional and social changes. In addition, teenagers begin to form their own identity and look for a place in the world where they are accepted, understood, encouraged and so on. Teenagers face many new challenges and opportunities in the era of globalization and technological advances. Technological developments in the 21st century have changed the way teenagers interact, think and view things. Apart from that, globalization brings various new cultures and values to the world, which can influence the behavior, responses, views and thoughts of teenagers. Technological developments that occur in the era of very rapid globalization, bring about paradigm changes and social developments in society (Mwanyumba Tweni, Wamocha, & Buhere, 2022).

Developments in the 21st century make it very easy to access everything with one finger, which is immediately visible. There is opposition being faced, one of which is the response of teenagers and children in responding to what happens on cellphones, therefore a correct response is needed in dealing with what is happening. The church is also facing this and there are challenges faced by teenagers in the church. Church is a place where many people, including teenagers, gather with each other by sharing experiences, sharing, but there are also times when they gather that they don't care about each other and are busy with their own worlds even though they are in the same place. Behind this, teenagers are not only influenced by the development of technological advances, the increasingly rapid flow of globalization, but there are also pressures from the internal and external environment which can influence teenagers' self-development (Paat, 2022).

Church youth have great potential to become leaders and bringers of change in the future because of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creative, communicative, collaborative, and problem solving. Therefore, it is very important for church youth to be able to learn modern skills so that they can properly face the challenges of this century. Being able to be successful in oneself, competitively, and contributing positively to society, is very important to equip with various 21st century skills. Christian religious education really helps church teenagers develop 21st century skills. To help teenagers develop positive personalities and characters, Christian values such as love, justice, mutual sharing, and responsibility can serve as a strong moral foundation. In the midst of all these changes, Christian Religious Education is needed which plays an important role in guiding youth in the church in the 21st century so that they remain adherent to the values of behaving in accordance with Christian values while also being based on the ideology of the Indonesian state (Díaz, 2021). Christian religious education can also help

teenagers learn various cognitive and non-cognitive skills, such as critical thinking, creative, communicative, collaborative and problem solving. This can be achieved through a variety of creative and engaging approaches to learning, such as projects, group discussions and educational games.

Based on the problems above, this research aims to describe the role of Christian religious education in developing 21st century skills in church youth.

Education in English comes from the Latin "ducere", which means to guide (to lead) and begins with the word "e", which means out. Education means a process or action to guide someone out of a certain condition into a better condition. Religion refers to its togetherness with all educational efforts, namely a bond that is important to maintain and Christianity means religious education provided by the Christian faith community and from the perspective of Christian. So it can be interpreted that Christian Religious Education is a process that educates, guides from past problems to the future and develops the Christian faith of both educators and students. Christian religious education is one of the processes of forming youth development in facing developments from time to time and is based on the Bible. The role of Christian religious education is very important in terms of development for teenagers (Widjaja, Boiliu, Tafonao, Simanjuntak, & Lahagu, 2022).

Christian religious education is an education that is based on God's sovereignty. In this learning there is a main source, namely the Bible, which teenagers can understand about how to deal with developments in the times and train them to develop their own skills. Because in fact every individual's life has a future full of hope and every individual born into the world has their own goals and basically from the womb they have been formed to achieve goals (Psalm 139:13) all of which can be achieved with a response from each individual and youth to gain knowledge, skills, truth and Christian values (Sianipar, Hasugian, Sairwona, Zega, & Ritonga, 2022).

Loyola states that "Christian education involves young people, especially in spiritual and intellectual exercises that foster inner and cognitive life. This education is carried out through a guidance process carried out by adults to guide young people to have a good spiritual life, intelligent intellectual and understand, clearly and completely the existence of Allah and obey His every command."

Teenagers who are in church cannot necessarily be said to be in good condition. Teenagers are very good at hiding things to avoid problems and bullying. Hiding doesn't mean not wanting to tell anyone, but looking for someone who can understand your condition, personality, story, hopes and experiences. Adolescence is often called "adolescence", which comes from the Latin, " adolescence", which means "to grow" or "grow into adulthood". The broader meaning of this term includes the mental, emotional, social and physical maturity of a teenager (Okunoye, 2019).

Adolescence is a process for self-development, mental, from childhood to adolescence. Therefore, the Church is a place that is expected to be able to pour out the hearts of teenagers in these current times of development. The word "church" in English comes from the Kuriakon language, which means "Belonging to God", and is usually used to denote things such as places, people, Sociologically, the church is a place in which there is a social community that does not differentiate in the same sense. all regardless of the differences. If you look at it from here, it turns out to be the same as the Indonesian state symbol of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Even though they are different, they are still one. In the sense that the goal of Christian religious education is to maintain unity and help each other without insulting each other). one individual to another (Smith, Green, Kurkechian, & Cheng, 2021).

Constructivist Learning Theory emphasizes that the best learning occurs when students actively construct their own knowledge from experience, rather than just passively receiving information. In the context of PAK, the constructivist approach allows teenagers to explore and apply religious teachings in their real situations, encouraging reflection and application of

Christian values in everyday life. This helps them not only understand texts and doctrines, but also how to implement them in diverse contexts.

Social Skills Theory underscores the importance of social skills in developing healthy interpersonal relationships. In PAK, this teaching can be directed at helping teenagers develop the ability to empathize, communicate and collaborate effectively. Religious education that includes social skills helps teenagers become more adaptive and responsive in their social interactions, which is especially important in the church community and broader social environment (Kolibu, Peter, Naibaho, Paparang, & Hanock, 2021).

Emotional Intelligence Theory, According to Daniel Goleman, emotional intelligence includes self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills. In PAK, integrating the concept of emotional intelligence helps teenagers understand and manage their emotions and the emotions of others. This is crucial in developing young leaders who are not only spiritually resilient but also able to face emotional challenges in a healthy and productive way.

Psychological Resilience Theory, Resilience refers to the ability to recover from adversity. Teaching Christian values such as forgiveness and hope in the context of resilience theory helps teens understand and implement ways to survive difficult times with the help of their faith. This is important in forming individuals who are not only physically and emotionally strong, but also spiritual.

Practical Theology examines religious practices and teachings in the context of everyday life. In PAK, this means that teachings must be relevant and applicable, not just theoretical. Applying practical theology in religious education helps youth connect religious teachings to real action in their lives, such as in social justice, volunteer work, and other community activities.

This theoretical foundation suggests that effective Christian Religious Education for church youth must go beyond the boundaries of traditional doctrine and adopt a holistic approach that promotes integral personal, social, and spiritual development (Martin, 2018).

In the context of Christian Religious Education, integrating 21st century skills is important to prepare teenagers to face the challenges of the modern world. The following are several key skills that can be developed, namely First, Critical Thinking, namely teaching critical thinking in PAK involves more than just understanding the text; it encourages youth to analyze and reflect on the teachings and their application in complex social situations. This can be done through group discussions, case studies, and simulations that challenge students to question and evaluate multiple perspectives before forming their own conclusions. In this way, youth learn to appreciate the depth of their teachings while developing the ability to think independently and be responsive to real-world problems.

Second, collaboration is an important skill that is needed not only in the work environment but also in the communal life of the church. Christian Religious Education can promote collaboration through group projects, community service activities, and youth leadership initiatives. Teaching youth to work together in this context not only strengthens social cohesion within the church but also instills effective conflict management and teamwork skills that will be useful throughout their lives.

Third, Communication, namely Effectiveness in communication is a vital skill that cuts across many aspects of life. In PAK, teenagers can learn how to effectively communicate through various media, from public speaking to writing and digital media. Activities such as debates, presentations, and publication of church newsletters can help teens hone their communication skills while conveying their religious messages more effectively and empathetically. Fourth, Creativity by Promoting creativity in religious delivery and practice opens the door for teenagers to express their faith in innovative and personal ways. This can include arts such as music, visual arts, and drama, which not only enrich church services and activities but also give youth the tools to express themselves and their thoughts creatively. Religious education that embraces creativity

helps maintain youth engagement and inspires them to think about new and dynamic ways in their religious practice (Ward, 2021).

Through developing these skills, Christian Religious Education not only deepens youth's theological understanding but also equips them with the tools necessary to succeed and make an impact in a fast-paced, ever-changing modern society.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method with a literature study approach, which means through studies from various literature. The main instrument is that the researcher himself carries out observations and searches for literature by viewing and using literature in the form of books and journals (Al Qurtuby, 2015). This literature study activity is carried out by collecting, processing and summarizing the data that has been collected using certain techniques to find answers to the problems in this article (Lo, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In developing 21st century skills in church youth, one of the goals of a church, not only the church, but also the family, is also to hope that children can grow in terms of skills, both in terms of thinking, responding, outlook, social, and skills in producing work that supports the success of teenagers in life. Christian religious education plays an important role in preparing church youth to face the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century (Tran & Nguyen, 2021). Christian religious education not only instills Christian values, but also equips teenagers with important skills for living in this digital era. Therefore, the role of Christian religious education in the church is expected to be able to develop success in the 21st century in teenagers who are consistent and willing to learn. The following are several roles of Christian religious education that can be used by educators/teachers and church workers in developing adolescent skills:

Integration of the PAK Curriculum with Practical Skills

The integration of the Christian Religious Education (PAK) curriculum with practical skills brings a new dimension to religious education, enabling teenagers to learn and apply religious teachings in the context of their real lives. This could include sessions on financial management from a Christian perspective, leadership courses that combine religious teachings with modern leadership theories, and communications classes that focus on how to convey religious messages effectively in the digital age. Additionally, curriculum integration could be expanded to include ethics and decision-making courses, where youth are taught how to apply Christian values in making ethical and complex decisions. Entrepreneurship workshops with a Christian approach can also provide insight into how to start and manage a business that is not only commercially successful but also ethical. Career preparedness classes can introduce essential skills such as resume writing and interview techniques, seen from a Christian perspective, guiding teens in choosing and keeping a job. Finally, mental and spiritual health modules can help teens manage stress and maintain their mental health through spiritual practices (Gaberel, Magheru, & Emery, 2012). In this way, the education provided is not only theoretical but also practical and directly relevant to teenagers' daily lives, making PAK a dynamic and relevant education that prepares them for a meaningful future (Gosbell, 2021). Christian religious education must be able to adapt to current developments, not move away, but must continue to

follow and do well with existing technology in the 21st century (Grouchy, D'Eleuterio, Christiansen, & Lipson, 2016).

Innovative and Interactive Learning Methods

Adopting innovative and interactive learning methods in Christian Religious Education (PAK) can be significant in increasing youth involvement and understanding. These innovative methods include the use of advanced technologies in education, such as special mobile applications for Bible studies, which facilitate access to learning materials and enrich interactions with religious content. Social media can also be utilized to hold group discussions, allowing teenagers to share insights and exchange ideas on a platform that is familiar to them. Additionally, e-learning platforms can be integrated to provide more structured and formal courses, providing rich learning material that is easily accessible from anywhere.

Furthermore, interactive learning techniques such as project-based learning facilitate the practical application of religious concepts in real projects that enhance collaborative and problem-solving skills. The flipped learning method, or flipped classroom, in which teenagers study material at home and apply it in class discussions, helps deepen understanding and engagement in learning material. Reality simulations can be used to create scenarios that allow teens to explore ethical dilemmas and real-life situations in a controlled and educational environment (Patte, 2019).

The use of this learning method not only makes the learning process more interesting and dynamic but is also important in honing teenagers' critical and analytical skills. Through more innovative and interactive methods, religious education becomes more relevant and effective, encouraging more holistic intellectual and spiritual growth among church youth (Pangaribuan, Wijaya, Djamil, Hidayat, & Putra, 2020).

Extracurricular Activities and Community Projects as a Tool for Practice

Extracurricular activities and community projects play an important role in educating youth about the practical application of Christian religious teachings (Vinas Rios et al., 2018). In addition to community service projects and service missions, these activities may include participation in sustainable development programs, environmental conservation initiatives, and local community development projects all of which incorporate the teachings of love and service to others. For example, youth can get involved in tree planting programs or recycling activities to promote care for creation, which is an important part of Christian values (Kit, 2020).

Additionally, extracurricular activities such as religious debate clubs can help teens hone their communication skills while exploring and defending theological views in a forum that is polite and respectful of the opinions of others. This stimulates intellectual growth while sharpening the ability to argue and listen effectively (Prasetiawati, 2020).

Involvement in these projects not only enhances youth's interpersonal and collaborative skills but also instills a deeper understanding of devotion and sacrifice as an expression of their faith. Through active participation in community and social projects, teens learn to put their faith into action, deepen their commitment to Christian values, and develop a strong understanding of how faith can foster positive change in society. It also helps them identify and respond to needs in their communities, strengthen social networks and build solidarity across a diversity of actions and beliefs (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

Curriculum Development

The meaning of curriculum can be defined from three aspects, namely etymological, terminological and dogmatic (theological) aspects. Etymologically, curriculum is defined as a word, for example "curriculum" comes from Latin, namely *curi*, which means runner, and *curere*, which means place to race. and developments over time, and dogmatically or theologically the curriculum is based on the Bible in the Bible (Christianto, Tafonao, Yahuda, Nelson, & Tjasmadi, 2022).

Curriculum is one of the most important guidelines in a church. With the curriculum, it is easier for the church to evaluate the performance and success of the services and activities held. Christian religious education plays a very important role in this matter in developing a curriculum that suits the needs of each teaching. This will help to develop the skills of teenagers in the 21st century by implementing the activities in the curriculum. For example, if the curriculum from the church center has been published, educators can change and add it according to their needs and will convey it to church leaders. From this, the role of PAK is also involved in developing teenagers' skills to be even more creative (Cherry, 2017).

Collaborate

Christian religious education plays a role in collaboration. Collaborating is a relationship between participating organizations agreeing to work together to achieve common goals, share information, resources, benefits, and take responsibility for joint decision making to resolve problems. Emily R. Lai explained, "Collaboration is the mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve a problem together. This collaboration is one of the most important forms of the role of Christian religious education in developing skills in church youth. Christian religious education can collaborate with curriculum creation for church youth so that it can convey the needs of existing youth and can become better spiritually and physically, in event activities (Christmas, Easter, worship) and so on. In this case, educators can see which ones can help in their respective fields and collaborate with each other. So skills in teenagers that are still not visible can be seen to be better, thinking patterns become more critical because of changes in the environment due to this collaboration. One of them is the combination of adults and teenagers, the management of different members, the formation of identity and community and training of personal skills. Collaborate in activities, one of which is social activities, sharing, within the community.

CONCLUSION

In facing the challenges of the 21st century, Christian Religious Education (PAK) plays a crucial role in equipping church youth with skills that not only support their spiritual growth but also prepare them to become competent and empathetic world citizens. By integrating 21st century skills into the curriculum, adopting innovative learning methods, and involving teenagers in extracurricular activities and community projects, PAK not only forms teenagers who are strong in their faith but also active and responsive to the needs of society. Through this holistic approach, Christian Religious Education can demonstrate its relevance in the modern era and contribute to the development of a young generation who is ready to lead with love and wisdom, embodying Christian values in every aspect of their lives.

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