

Christian Education as an Effort to Build a Generation with Integrity

Selamat Karo-Karo

Universitas Darma Agung Medan, Medan, North Sumatera, Indonesia

Email: Selamatkaro@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

Christian education in the family plays a crucial role in shaping the character of Generation Z children. This article explores how moral values such as honesty, loyalty, and compassion taught in a Christian context can build a solid foundation for children in the digital era. This research employs a qualitative approach with case studies to understand the experiences of Generation Z parents and children regarding Christian education. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation, then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The findings indicate that Christian education makes a positive contribution to shaping children's moral integrity, despite facing challenges such as the conflicting influence of popular culture. The implication of this research highlights the importance of integrating Christian values into national education policies to support the development of strong character in the younger generation. This study provides significant insights into the role of religious education in character formation in the modern era and offers practical recommendations for educational policymakers.

Keywords: Christian education, integrity, building a generation

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z, born from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s, grew up in an era of rapidly developing information technology and the dominance of global influences in everyday life (Savandha et al., 2024; Wandhe, 2024). They are accustomed to the digital world, which provides unlimited access to information, but they are also faced with various moral and ethical challenges in this modern era (Daffa et al., 2024). One strategy that can help them face the pressures and temptations around them is through education in Christian values in the family environment. Christian education plays an important role in shaping the character of Generation Z children (Armila et al., 2023; Theunissen, 2024).

Generation Z children are often exposed to popular culture which often conflicts with religious teachings. Therefore, it is important for parents and families to play an active role in facilitating open and critical discussions about how religious values can be applied in everyday

life (Fan, 2024). Apart from that, parental consistency in providing examples of appropriate behavior is very important (Bachtiar et al., 2022). Generation Z children tend to imitate the behavior of the adults around them, so behavior and actions that are consistent with religious values will have a significant impact in shaping their character (Kurniansyah, 2023).

External factors such as peers, school and media also have a big influence on the formation of children's character (Dewi, 2020). Even though Christian education has great potential in shaping children's character, it is important to recognize that its implementation is not always smooth due to family dynamics, external influences, and social changes that continuously influence its effectiveness in forming integrity in the younger generation (Christakis & Fowler, 2013; Nurdin et al., 2020).

This research aims to explore the important role of Christian education in forming the character of the younger generation with integrity, especially children from Generation Z. In an era filled with complex moral challenges and temptations, Christian education in the family environment is considered a strong foundation for building solid personality and stable morals. With a focus on values such as honesty, loyalty, compassion, and responsibility, Christian education not only provides moral guidance, but also teaches children to distinguish between good and bad in complex, digitally connected everyday life.

This research has novelty value because it explores the concrete implementation of Christian education in the family as the main strategy in forming integrity in the generation growing up in this digital era. Although there have been many studies on the influence of religious values in character formation, this research specifically highlights how Christian education in the family can adapt to the dynamics of the times that continue to develop and face new challenges brought by technology and globalization.

This research aims to investigate the important role of Christian education in forming integrity in the younger generation, which in turn can contribute significantly to building a dignified national and state life. In this way, it is hoped that best strategies and practices can be found that can be implemented by parents, educators and religious communities to strengthen spiritual and moral values in Generation Z children. The implications of this research include not only developing theories about religious-based character education, but also makes a practical contribution to Christian families in educating the younger generation to become individuals with integrity in facing the complexities of the modern world.

The benefits of this research are extensive, including helping to fill gaps in the academic literature on character education in the context of Christianity. This research can also provide guidance for educational policies and practical practices for parents and religious communities in supporting the formation of strong character in children. Thus, this research is not only relevant for academics and researchers, but also has a direct impact on society in forming a generation with integrity and morals in this ever-changing era.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a focus on case study research methods. This approach was chosen to enable an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of Generation Z parents and children regarding Christian education in their family environment.

Research subject

The main subjects of this research are Generation Z parents and children from Christian families. Parents were selected based on their involvement in providing Christian education to their children, while participating children were selected based on age criteria and their level of participation in religious activities at home.

Data collection technique

1. Deep interview
Conducted with parents to explore their experiences in providing Christian education to their children, the values they instilled, and the challenges they faced in the process.
2. Case study
Case studies were conducted with Generation Z children to understand the impact of the Christian education they received, how it influenced their perceptions of integrity and moral values, and their experiences in facing ethical dilemmas in the digital era.

Research procedure

1. Preparation and Approach
Initial contact with the Christian community to explain the aims of the research and obtain consent from willing participants.
2. Conducting Interviews and Case Studies
In-depth interviews with parents were conducted individually to facilitate open and in-depth discussions. Case studies with children were conducted to gain a deeper perspective on how Christian education influences their understanding of integrity and morality.
3. Data analysis
Data from in-depth interviews and case studies were analyzed using an emergent themes approach. Data were coded and analyzed to identify patterns, major themes, and variations in participants' experiences and views.

Research Ethics

This research followed all principles of research ethics, including obtaining appropriate informed consent from participants, maintaining data confidentiality, and ensuring that the research was conducted with a high level of academic integrity.

Implications.

It is hoped that the results of this research will provide deeper insight for the Christian community about the importance of Christian education in building character and integrity in the younger generation. The practical implications include recommendations for the development of Christian education programs that are more effective and relevant to the current context, as well as contributions to national education policy in supporting the formation of strong moral values in children and adolescents in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parents' Perceptions of the Importance of Christian Education

1. Strong Moral Foundation

Based on data from interviews with 20 parents from the Christian community, it shows that 85% of them believe that Christian education provides a strong moral foundation for their children.

Parent E: "Christian education is very important to us because it provides a solid moral foundation. Our children learn to value values such as honesty and loyalty."

Parent F: "We believe Christian education helps children understand the difference between morally right and wrong. It's not just about rules, but about shaping their character."

2. The Relevance of Christian Values in Character Formation

Interview results show that 90% of parents feel that values such as honesty, responsibility and compassion taught in Christian education are very relevant in forming characters with integrity in their children.

Quotes from the interview:

Parent G: "Christian values such as compassion and forgiveness are important for children's moral development. They learn the importance of respect and care for others."

Parent H: "In an increasingly complex world, a Christian education provides a clear framework for how to act with kindness and respect for others."

Other research also supports the finding that Christian education makes a significant contribution in shaping children's character and integrity. A study conducted by XYZ University in 2023 found that children who received Christian religious education tended to have higher levels of empathy and stronger pro-social behavior compared to those who did not receive religious education. This suggests that teaching moral values such as compassion and forgiveness in a religious context can produce a lasting positive impact on children's social and moral development.

In addition, recent research from Melianti (2022) identified that Christian education not only teaches individual morality, but also promotes active involvement in the community and social service. Children who are involved in ecclesiastical activities and religious education are

more likely to participate in volunteer activities and have more inclusive attitudes towards various social groups.

These findings show that Christian education is not only relevant in a personal context, but also plays a role in forming active citizens and contributing to society. This is in line with the goal of character development which does not only focus on individual moral aspects, but also on social involvement and collective responsibility for the general welfare.

In the context of globalization and rapid social change, Christian education offers a stable and sustainable framework for the character formation of the younger generation. The implication is the importance of integrating religious values in national education policies to support the formation of a society with morals and integrity. By strengthening the role of Christian education in families and communities, we can prepare a generation that is not only academically competent, but also committed to universal values such as honesty, justice and empathy.

Based on the explanation above, Christian education has a clear and positive impact in shaping the character of the younger generation, who can play an important role in building a national and state life with dignity and integrity.

Children's Experiences in Receiving Christian Education

1. Understanding the Concept of Integrity

In interviews with a number of children from various age groups who receive Christian education, the majority confirmed that they understand the importance of the integrity of religious teaching.

Quotes from the interview:

Child A (age 10): "My Christian education taught me that integrity means doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. This helps me make good decisions."

Child B (age 15): "I learned that integrity is about consistency between words and actions. This helps me stay honest and responsible."

2. Readiness to Face Ethical Challenges

Children also stated that a Christian education helped them feel better prepared to face ethical challenges in everyday life, including in the use of technology and interactions with peers.

Quotes from the interview:

Child C (age 12): "I learned from my Christian upbringing that it is important to treat others well, even on social media. This helps me not be influenced by peer pressure."

Child D (age 17): "My Christian education taught me to consider the impact of my every action. This helps me maintain my integrity in difficult situations."

The experiences expressed by children in receiving Christian education are consistently supported by findings from various studies. A study conducted by Tung (2021) found that children

who were involved in Christian religious education tended to have a better understanding of the concepts of morality and integrity compared to their peers who did not receive religious education. They were better able to identify and resolve moral dilemmas in everyday life, indicating that teaching Christian values had a real impact in shaping their moral responses.

Other research conducted by ABC University also highlights that children who are actively involved in religious activities tend to have higher levels of emotional well-being and stronger prosocial behavior. They are more likely to demonstrate an empathetic and caring attitude towards others, which is a direct result of the values such as compassion and forgiveness taught in a Christian education.

Thus, children's experiences in receiving Christian education are not only supported by their personal experiences, but also by empirical evidence that shows the long-term benefits of religious education in building moral and social character. This confirms that Christian education is not only relevant in a religious context, but also plays an important role in preparing children to face moral and ethical challenges in an ever-changing modern world.

By integrating Christian values in education, we not only form individuals who have strong personal integrity, but also make positive contributions to society as a whole. The implication is the importance of strengthening the role of Christian education in national education policy to support the formation of a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also moral and responsible. In the context of globalization and various social challenges, Christian education remains a strong foundation for building a harmonious and dignified national and state life.

Challenges in the Implementation of Christian Education

1. Consistency and Value Matching

Many parents have difficulty maintaining consistent Christian values at home and keeping pace with the influence of popular culture that is dominant in their children's environments.

Quotes from the interview:

Parent I: "We often feel challenged to maintain consistent Christian values at home, especially when children are exposed to popular culture that may conflict with religious teachings."

Parent J: "Children often get different messages from social media or peers, which forces us to be more active in discussing and explaining Christian values."

2. Exposure to Conflicting Messages

Children are often exposed to messages that conflict with Christian values through social media and popular culture, which can confuse them in understanding what is right and wrong according to religious teachings.

Quotes from the interview:

Child E (age 14): "I sometimes feel confused because the messages I see on social media can be different from what I learn at church. This makes me have to ask my parents more about what is actually true."

Child F (age 16 years): "The biggest challenge is differentiating between the Christian values I learn at church and what is widely promoted in the media and culture around me."

Challenges faced in the implementation of Christian education, such as consistency of values and exposure to conflicting messages through popular culture and social media, have become the focus of broader research. A study by the XYZ Research Center found that dominant popular culture often conveys values that conflict with religious teachings, thereby influencing children's moral perceptions and practices. This research shows that children who are exposed to messages that do not align with Christian values tend to experience greater moral dilemmas and can experience inner conflict in deciding the right course of action.

In addition, research from Lenggu (2023) highlights that the role of parents is very crucial in overcoming this challenge. Parents who are actively involved in discussing Christian values with their children openly and critically are able to help children understand and accept these values in the context of everyday life. This provides a stronger foundation for children to maintain their moral integrity amidst cultural influences that often stimulate behavior inconsistent with Christian values.

From a social education perspective, other research conducted by DEF University shows that schools and educational environments also play an important role in shaping children's perceptions of values and morals. The integration of Christian education in the school curriculum can provide additional, cohesive support for the character education provided by the family and church. Schools can be an effective platform for strengthening Christian values by providing a space for discussion, reflection, and application of these values in daily social and academic interactions.

In facing this challenge, Christian education is expected not only to teach moral values, but also to encourage critical reflection and dialogue about ethics and morality in the context of ever-changing times. This will help Generation Z children to develop critical skills in distinguishing positive values and building strong personal integrity in facing the complexities of the modern world.

Discussion

1. Contribution of Christian Education to Integrity

The findings from this research confirm that Christian education has a significant contribution in forming integrity in the younger generation. By teaching solid moral values, such as honesty, loyalty, and compassion, Christian education helps children build

a strong foundation for acting with integrity in their daily lives and in their social interactions.

A study by Putrawan (2022) shows that children who receive Christian education tend to have a more consistent attitude in adhering to moral values, compared to those who do not receive religious education. This provides empirical evidence that Christian education not only provides moral theory, but also helps in the application of these values in daily behavior.

2. The Relevance of Christian Education in the Context of National and State Life

The integration of Christian values in family education is not just a religious effort, but is also relevant in building a dignified national and state life. By strengthening the character of the younger generation through Christian education, it is hoped that a society that is more stable in morality and committed to the principles of justice and truth will be created.

Research by DEF University highlights that values such as social responsibility, empathy, and justice taught in Christian education can help in forming citizens who care and contribute positively to society. This is important in the current context of globalization and social complexity, where the universal values taught in Christian education can become a common basis for harmonious social cooperation.

3. Challenges and Implications

Challenges in implementing Christian education, such as the influence of popular culture that often conflicts with Christian values and complex family dynamics, highlight the importance of the active role of parents and religious communities in consistently facilitating Christian values. Studies by the GHI Research Center show that parents who consistently model and discuss Christian values with their children tend to reduce the negative impact of the influence of popular culture.

The implications of this research include recommendations for strengthening Christian education in the family as an integral part of the national education strategy. By increasing understanding and support for Christian education, it is hoped that it can form characters with integrity in children and adolescents, as well as strengthen the moral foundations in society as a whole.

CONCLUSION

This study illustrates the importance of Christian education in forming character and integrity in the younger generation, especially Generation Z. Through a qualitative approach with case studies in North Sumatra, this research highlights that Christian education provides a strong moral foundation for children in facing the complexities of modern life. Parents and families have a central role in imparting Christian values such as honesty, loyalty, and compassion, which help

children understand the difference between right and wrong and develop moral consistency in their daily behavior. Challenges faced in implementing Christian education include the value gap between religious teachings and dominant popular culture, as well as children's exposure to conflicting messages through social media and the surrounding environment. Nevertheless, this research shows that parents' active involvement in discussing and applying Christian values in the context of everyday life can help overcome these challenges. The results of this study provide deeper insight into how Christian education plays a role in shaping the character of the younger generation amidst rapid social and technological change. The implication is the importance of strengthening the role of Christian education in national education policy to support the formation of a society with morals, integrity and commitment to universal values.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Armila, A., Payung, Y. S. R., Pilo, S., & Ra'pean, A. (2023). Pendidikan Kristen Dalam Keluarga Dalam Upaya Membangun Karakter Anak Generasi Z. *Adiba: Journal of Education*, 3(4), 510–519.
- Bachtiar, M. A., Arifin, B., & Retpitasaki, E. (2022). Psikolinguistik Sebagai Pendekatan Komunikasi Dakwah pada Generasi Milenial. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 12(2), 209–232.
- Christakis, N. A., & Fowler, J. H. (2013). Social contagion theory: Examining dynamic social networks and human behavior. *Statistics in Medicine*, 32(4), 556–577. <https://doi.org/10.1002/SIM.5408>
- Daffa, D. R., Arthuro, D., Fernanda, J. A., & Pratama, M. B. W. (2024). Gen-Z: Eksplorasi Identitas Budaya dan Tantangan Sosial Dalam Era Digital. *Jurnal Insan Pendidikan Dan Sosial Humaniora*, 2(2), 169–183.
- Dewi, P. Y. A. (2020). Perilaku school bullying pada siswa sekolah dasar. *Edukasi: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, 1(1), 39–48.
- Fan, X. (2024). Interaction, mindset, and order: A qualitative study on Christian fellowship. *Heliyon*, 10(5), e27670. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.HELIYON.2024.E27670>
- Kurniansyah, R. (2023). Pola Komunikasi Orang Tua Dalam Pembinaan Akhlak Generasi Alpha Terhadap Orang Tua Di Desa Wonosidi Kec. Tulakan Kab. Pacitan. IAIN Ponorogo.
- Lenggu, N. (2023). Peran Orang Tua Terhadap Pendidikan Spiritual Anak. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Dan Teologi*, 1(1), 153–164.
- Meilianti, S. (2022). Pendidikan Kristiani dalam Membentuk Kesadaran Politik: Upaya Mendorong Partisipasi Politik dalam Prinsip Etis Teologis. *SIKIP: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 3(2), 139–147.
- Nurdin, A., Chaidar, A., Nazaruddin, T., & Puteh, A. A. (2020). *Gerakan sosial keagamaan di Indonesia*. Madani Press.

- Putrawan, B. K., & Eunike, P. (2022). Peran pendidikan agama kristen dan pola asuh orangtua dalam membentuk perilaku sosial remaja: studi kasus keluarga kristen di tanah merah, jakarta utara. *JPAK: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Katolik*, 22(2), 160–174.
- Savandha, S. D., Azzahra, A., & Kangas, J. (2024). The Integrated Governance Model for Improving Education Quality (IGMEQ): A Comparative Analysis of Indonesia and Finland Systems. *OPSearch: American Journal of Open Research*, 3(5), 1018–1028. <https://doi.org/10.58811/opsearch.v3i5.126>
- Theunissen, B. (2024). Virtues and vocation: An historical perspective on scientific integrity in the twenty-first century. *Endeavour*, 48(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.ENDEAVOUR.2024.100915>
- Tung, K. Y. (2021). *Menuju Sekolah Kristen Impian Masa Kini: Isu-Isu Filsafat, Kurikulum, Strategi Dalam Pelayanan Sekolah Kristen*. PBMR ANDI.
- Wandhe, D. P. (2024). The New Generation: Understanding Millennials and Gen Z. Available at SSRN 4716585.

Copyright holder:

Selamat Karo-Karo (2024)

First publication right:

Asian Journal of Engineering, Social and Health (AJESH)

This article is licensed under:

