



Contemporary Curriculum in Christian Religious Education

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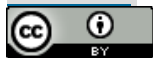
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ABSTRACT

The curriculum in Christian Religious Education (PAK) continues to develop along with the dynamics of the times, technological advancements, and changes in the characteristics of students. This article aims to examine in depth the concept of contemporary curriculum in PAK, including its main characteristics, theological foundations, and relevance in shaping the faith and character of students in the modern era. This research uses a qualitative approach through literature study by analyzing various theological, pedagogical, and educational policy sources of the latest education. The results of the study show that the contemporary curriculum of PAK has the main characteristics of a student-centered approach, contextual, integrative between faith and life, and utilizing technology as a learning medium. In addition, this curriculum emphasizes transformational aspects, namely changes in attitudes, values, and behaviors that reflect Christian teachings in daily life.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the times marked by the advancement of digital technology, globalization, and the complexity of modern life has brought significant changes in the world of education. Education no longer functions just as a means of knowledge transfer, but also as a process of character formation, 21st century competency development, and the cultivation of spiritual values that are relevant to the lives of students. In this context, the curriculum as the core of education must be dynamic and adaptive to the changing times (Pinar, 2019; Oliva & Gordon, 2019). Contemporary curriculum comes as an approach that emphasizes flexibility, contextuality, and integration between science, technology, and life values. In Christian Religious Education (PAK), curriculum reform is becoming increasingly important because PAK is not only oriented to the cognitive aspect, but also to the formation of students' faith and character holistically. Christian education aims to integrate faith with daily life, so that students are able to live Christian values in a real way (Groome, 2019; Estep et al., 2020). This is in line with the learning outcomes in the PAK curriculum which emphasizes the ability to reflect-critically on contemporary issues in religious life. However, the implementation of the PAK curriculum still faces various challenges. Learning that is still teacher-centered causes low active participation of students in the learning process. In addition, the integration of technology in PAK learning has not been optimal, even though the development of the digital era requires innovation in learning approaches (Clark & Mayer, 2016; Siemens & Long, 2018). It also emphasized the importance of developing a digital technology-based curriculum that is relevant to the characteristics of the Z and Alpha generations.

On the other hand, the PAK curriculum needs to be designed contextually and transformationally to be able to respond to the needs of students in various social and cultural contexts. A good curriculum is not only theoretical, but also able to shape the spiritual life and character of students in a real way (Van Brummelen, 2021; Pazmino, 2018). This is in line with the course description which emphasizes the importance of a holistic, biblical, and contextual curriculum. In addition, the reality of a pluralistic society demands that the PAK curriculum be inclusive and multicultural. Religious education must be able to build tolerance and dialogue between faiths without losing its theological identity (Banks, 2019; Nwosu, 2020). It was also emphasized that the PAK curriculum needs to consider the multicultural context and religious pluralism as part of the development of relevant education. Furthermore, the contemporary curriculum in PAK must also be able to respond to increasingly complex technological and digital cultural developments. The integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence, gamification, and digital learning can be a means to increase student engagement and learning effectiveness (Lee, 2022; Anderson, 2021). Therefore, the development of the PAK curriculum cannot be separated from the need to innovate pedagogically and technologically.

Based on this description, it can be concluded that the development of a contemporary curriculum in Christian Religious Education is an urgent need. A relevant curriculum must be able to integrate the values of the Christian faith with the development of science, technology, and social realities. Therefore, this study aims to examine the characteristics, implementation, and challenges of contemporary curriculum in PAK, so that it can contribute to the development of contextual, innovative, and transformative Christian education. Problems in PAK are closely related to various broader educational issues, such as the low relevance of religious learning to real life, lack of student involvement, and lack of integration of technology in the learning process. The PAK curriculum must be able to answer the challenges of the church, school,

and community context in a holistic and contextual manner. In addition, other challenges arise from the context of multiculturalism and religious pluralism that demand an inclusive and adaptive approach to education. A curriculum that is not responsive to this context has the potential to fail in forming faith that is relevant to the social life of students.

The literature shows that the development of the PAK curriculum should be based on a strong philosophical, theological, and pedagogical foundation. Studies such as those presented by Pazmino, Groome, and Van Brummelen emphasize the importance of integration between faith, learning, and real life. In addition, contemporary curriculum theory emphasizes an adaptive approach to the development of the times, including the integration of digital technologies and experiential learning. It also emphasized that the PAK curriculum must be able to accommodate the digital generation (Generation Z and Alpha) through a creative and innovative approach.

Based on the study of the curriculum, PAK has developed to cover various aspects, such as theological approaches, global curriculum analysis, and the integration of technology and spirituality. However, existing research still tends to be partial and has not fully integrated these various dimensions into one complete curriculum framework. This research takes a position by integrating these various approaches, including theological, pedagogical, technological, and social contexts, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the contemporary curriculum in PAK.

Despite emphasizing the importance of developing a curriculum that is contextual, transformational, and technology-based, real implementation on the ground still faces various obstacles. Many PAK curricula are still oriented towards cognitive aspects and have not integrated spiritual, social, and digital dimensions optimally. In addition, the study of the integration of technology in PAK learning is still limited, especially in relation to character formation and spirituality. Therefore, research is needed that is able to bridge the gap

between theory and practice in the development of the PAK curriculum.

The Grand Theory, Middle Theory, and Applied Theory used are as follows. First, the Grand Theory is the Big Theory. The grand theory in this study is rooted in Christian educational theology, which emphasizes that education is not just a process of knowledge transfer, but a process of forming the faith, character, and spirituality of students based on biblical values. Christian education has the main goal of bringing students to the knowledge of God, growth of faith, and life transformation that reflects Christian values (Groome, 2019; Estep et al., 2020). Theologically, the foundation of Christian education can be found in biblical principles, such as Deuteronomy 6:6-7 and Matthew 28:19-20, which emphasize the importance of continuous faith teaching and discipleship. In the context of the curriculum, this means that the entire educational process must be Christ-centered and integrate faith with all aspects of life. The Christian Religious Education Curriculum also emphasizes that curriculum development must be based on strong philosophical-theological studies and be able to form reflective and contextual Christian thinkers and leaders. Thus, the grand theory in this study places theology as the main foundation in the development of the PAK curriculum. Second, the Middle Theory, namely the Middle Theory.

Middle theory in this study uses the approach of contemporary curriculum theory and constructivism. Contemporary curriculum theory emphasizes that the curriculum must be dynamic, contextual, and student-oriented, as well as able to respond to the needs of the times (Pinar, 2019; Oliva & Gordon, 2019). Meanwhile, constructivism views that knowledge is actively built by learners through learning experiences, social interaction, and reflection. Therefore, learning should be designed to encourage active engagement, problem-solving, and critical thinking (Wiggins & McTighe, 2018). In the context of PAK, this theory is integrated with the values of the Christian faith so that learning is not only academic, but also reflective and spiritual. It also emphasizes the importance of learning

approaches such as contextual learning, discovery learning, and group discussions as part of active and contextual learning. Thus, middle theory serves as a bridge between theological foundations and learning practices that are relevant to the development of the times. Third, Applied Theory, namely Applied Theory. The applied theory in this study is manifested in the form of practical implementation of the contemporary curriculum in PAK learning. The approaches used include contextual teaching and learning (CTL), project-based learning, reflective discussions, and the integration of digital technology in the learning process. The contextual approach allows learners to relate learning materials to real life, while project-based learning provides hands-on experience in applying faith values in concrete actions. In addition, the use of digital technologies such as e-learning, multimedia, and digital Bibles is an important part of increasing learning effectiveness (Clark & Mayer, 2016; Siemens & Long, 2018). This emphasizes that the PAK curriculum must be based on digital technology, adaptive to generations Z and Alpha, and able to integrate various innovative learning approaches. In addition, curriculum development is also directed at an inclusive, data-based, and social- and spiritual impact approach. Thus, applied theory is a concrete application of previous theories in innovative, contextual, and transformative learning practices.

This research focuses on Christian Religious Education in the context of formal education, especially at the secondary school level. This focus is relevant to the need for curriculum development that is able to answer the challenges of the digital generation and complex social contexts, regarding the importance of an adaptive and contextual curriculum.

This research is important because the contemporary curriculum in PAK has a strategic role in shaping students who not only have theological knowledge, but also character, spirituality, and critical thinking skills. This confirms that the main goal of PAK curriculum development is to produce educators and learners who are able to design, implement, and evaluate learning in a transformative and relevant manner. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of a PAK curriculum that is contextual, innovative, and able to respond to the challenges of the times holistically.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach. Data were obtained from educational theology books, scientific journals, and the latest curriculum documents. The analysis was carried out descriptively to find the main patterns and concepts in the contemporary curriculum of PAK. This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of literature study (library research). The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand in depth the concepts, characteristics, and implementation of the contemporary curriculum in Christian Religious Education (PAK) through the analysis of various theoretical and conceptual sources. Qualitative research allows researchers to comprehensively explore the meaning, value, and relevance of a concept in a given context (Mertler, 2020; Stringer, 2021). This type of literature study research is used by examining various scientific sources such as books, journals, and curriculum documents that are relevant to the research topic. The main sources in this study include literature on curriculum theory, Christian education, as well as the Christian Religious Education Curriculum document which is a reference in understanding the development of the contemporary PAK curriculum. This literature study is important to obtain a strong theoretical foundation as well as identify gaps between concepts and practices in curriculum implementation.

The approach used in this study is descriptive analytical, namely by describing contemporary curriculum concepts in PAK, then analyzing their relationship with educational needs in the digital era. The analysis was carried out systematically by studying curriculum theories (Pinar, 2019; Oliva & Gordon, 2019), Christian education (Groome, 2019), and the integration of technology in learning (Clark & Mayer, 2016). In addition, the analysis also considers the multicultural context and the development of the digital generation as emphasized in the development of the PAK curriculum.

The data collection technique in this study is carried out through documentation, namely by collecting and reviewing various written documents such as books, journal articles, and curriculum documents. The data obtained was then analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify the main themes related to the contemporary curriculum in PAK. Content analysis allows researchers to interpret the meaning of texts systematically and objectively (Posner, 2015). The data analysis process is carried out through several stages, namely the first, data reduction, by selecting and simplifying information that is relevant to the focus of the research. Second, data presentation, by organizing information in the form of a systematic narrative. Third, drawing conclusions, by interpreting the results of the analysis to answer the formulation of the research problem. This stage is in line with the principles of action research and curriculum development that emphasizes critical analysis, reflection, and data-driven decision-making (Mertler, 2020; Oliva & Gordon, 2019).

In addition, this study also pays attention to the validity of data through source triangulation, namely by comparing various references used to ensure the consistency and accuracy of information. This is important considering that the development of the PAK curriculum demands an approach that is not only theoretical, but also contextual and relevant to the reality of education (Pazmiño, 2018; Van Brummelen, 2021). Thus, this research method is expected to be able to provide a comprehensive picture of the contemporary curriculum in Christian

Religious Education, as well as produce an in-depth and relevant analysis for the development of Christian education in the modern era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of the Contemporary Curriculum in Christian Religious Education (PAK)

a. Student-Centered Learning

The contemporary curriculum in Christian Religious Education places learners as the main subjects in the learning process. Students are no longer positioned as passive recipients, but rather as active individuals engaged in the process of exploration, reflection, and knowledge construction. In this approach, teachers play the role of facilitators who guide, direct, and create a conducive learning environment (Wiggins & McTighe, 2018). This is in line with learning approaches that emphasize methods such as student-centered learning, small group discussion, and contextual learning to increase learners' active engagement. Thus, PAK learning becomes more participatory and encourages the development of students' critical and reflective thinking skills.

b. Contextual and Relevant to Real Life

The contemporary curriculum emphasizes the importance of the relationship between learning materials and the reality of students' lives. In PAK, the material is not only presented theoretically, but is associated with actual issues such as technological developments, social challenges, religious pluralism, and cultural dynamics. This contextual approach aims to enable students to understand and apply faith values in daily life (Banks, 2019; Parker & Raihani, 2021). It also emphasized that the PAK curriculum must be responsive to the multicultural context and religious pluralism and be able to respond to the challenges of the times. Thus, learning becomes more meaningful and relevant to the needs of students.

c. Integrative (Faith and Life)

One of the main characteristics of the contemporary curriculum in PAK is its integrative nature, which is the connection between the Christian faith and everyday life. Christian education focuses not only on the aspect of theological knowledge, but also on the application of the values of faith in concrete action. This reflects the concept of integration of faith and science that characterizes Christian education (Heie & Wolfe, 2016). In terms of affirming that the PAK curriculum must be holistic and biblical, as well as being able to integrate spiritual, social, and intellectual aspects in the lives of students. With this approach, learners not only understand faith conceptually, but also live it in daily practice.

d. Digital Technology-Based

The development of digital technology has become an integral part of the contemporary curriculum. In the context of PAK, the use of technologies such as e-learning, multimedia, gamification, and artificial intelligence can increase the effectiveness of learning and student engagement (Clark & Mayer, 2016; Anderson, 2021; Lee, 2022). It also emphasizes the importance of developing a digital technology-based PAK curriculum that is adaptive to the characteristics of generation Z and Alpha. This shows that technology integration is no longer an option, but a necessity in creating relevant and innovative learning in the digital era.

e. Transformational (Life Change-Oriented)

The contemporary curriculum in PAK not only aims to improve knowledge, but also to transform the lives of students. Christian education has the main goal of forming character, spirituality, and personality that reflects Christian values (Pazmiño, 2018). In this case, it is emphasized that the goal of PAK learning is to produce students and educators who are able to think critically, reflectively, and have a social and spiritual impact in real life. Thus, the PAK curriculum is transformative,

which is changing the way of thinking, attitudes, and actions of students to be in harmony with the teachings of Christ.

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the contemporary curriculum in Christian Religious Education has characteristics that are interintegrated, namely student-centered, contextual, integrative, technology-based, and transformational. These five characteristics show that the PAK curriculum not only functions as a tool for knowledge transfer, but also as a means of building faith and character that is relevant to the development of the times. The contemporary curriculum in PAK demands a paradigm shift in learning, from traditional to innovative, contextual, and experiential-based learning. This is in line with the demands in the RPS which emphasizes the development of an adaptive, inclusive, and technology-based curriculum that is able to respond to global challenges and the needs of today's generation. Thus, the implementation of a contemporary curriculum in PAK is very important to produce students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually mature and able to face the challenges of modern life with strong faith.

Implementation of Contemporary Curriculum in PAK Learning

The implementation of the contemporary curriculum in Christian Religious Education (PAK) requires a change in the learning approach from traditional to active, contextual, and experiential learning. The curriculum is not only a planning document, but is manifested in learning practices that are able to integrate faith with the real lives of students. In the RPS of the Christian Religious Education Curriculum, it is emphasized that learning must use approaches such as *contextual learning, discovery learning, project-based learning, and group discussions* to encourage active student involvement.

a. Contextual Teaching and Learning Model

The contextual approach emphasizes the relationship between the learning material and the real life of the learner. In PAK, this approach allows learners to understand the values of the Christian faith in social, cultural, and everyday life contexts. Learning is not only oriented to theory, but also to practical application in real life (Parker & Raihani, 2021). It also emphasizes the use of *contextual learning* methods as an important part of PAK learning to answer the challenges of the times and the needs of students. With this approach, students can relate the Bible's teachings to the concrete situation they are facing.

b. Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is a learning model that provides opportunities for students to learn through direct experience by working on a project. In PAK, this model is very effective for developing students' critical thinking, collaboration, and social and spiritual responsibility skills (Wiggins & McTighe, 2018). In this case, project-based learning is one of the approaches recommended in the development of the PAK curriculum, especially in designing innovative and experiential learning. Through this approach, learners not only understand concepts, but also apply them in real actions.

c. Reflective Discussion and Case Studies

Reflective discussions and case studies are methods that encourage students to think critically and deeply about a problem. In PAK, this method is very important to help students reflect on their faith in dealing with various life issues such as ethics, morals, and social. This approach also helps students develop analytical and decision-making skills based on Christian values (Groome, 2019). It emphasizes the importance of *small group discussion* and analysis of contemporary issues as part of reflective and critical PAK learning. Thus, learners are trained to not only understand the teachings, but also internalize them in life.

d. Use of Digital Media and Digital Bibles

The integration of technology in learning is a key feature of the contemporary curriculum. In PAK, the use of digital media such as learning videos, digital Bible applications, e-learning platforms, and interactive multimedia can increase students' interest in learning and understanding (Clark & Mayer, 2016; Siemens & Long, 2018). It also emphasized the importance of developing a digital technology-based curriculum that is adaptive to generations Z and Alpha. This shows that the use of technology is not only a tool, but an integral part of the PAH learning process. Examples of Implementation in PAK Learning. First, the project "The Role of Christians in Protecting the Environment". Students are given the task of creating projects related to their responsibilities as Christians in protecting the environment. This project can be an environmental care campaign, the creation of an educational video, or a real action such as planting a tree. This activity reflects the integration between faith and concrete actions and is in line with the concept of value-based education and social responsibility (UNESCO, 2021). It also emphasizes the importance of integrating global values such as *the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* in the PAK curriculum as a form of faith responsibility in a global context. Second, the discussion is Christian Ethics in the Use of social media. Students are invited to discuss how Christian values are applied in the use of social media, such as honesty, love, and responsibility. This discussion can be conducted through case studies that are relevant to students' lives, so that they can understand the impact of their actions in the digital world. This approach emphasizes learning based on contemporary issues and the development of students' reflective-critical skills in facing the challenges of the times.

Challenges and Opportunities of Contemporary Curriculum in PAK

The implementation of the contemporary curriculum in Christian Religious Education (PAK) is inseparable from various challenges that arise along with the change in the educational paradigm. However, behind these challenges, there are great opportunities that can be used to improve the quality of PAK learning to be more relevant, innovative, and transformative. The RPS Christian Education Curriculum emphasizes that curriculum development must be adaptive, innovative, and technology-based and able to answer the challenges of the times.

Challenges of Implementing a Contemporary Curriculum

1. Lack of Teacher Competence in Technology

One of the main challenges in the implementation of contemporary curriculum is the limited competence of teachers in utilizing digital technology in learning. Many educators still do not have adequate skills in the use of digital media, e-learning, and data-based learning technology. In fact, technology integration is the main demand in the modern curriculum (Clark & Mayer, 2016). In this case, it is emphasized that the development of the PAK curriculum must be based on digital technology and adaptive to generations Z and Alpha. This shows that improving teachers' digital competence is an urgent need so that learning can run effectively and relevantly.

2. Resistance to Curriculum Change

Curriculum changes often face resistance from educators and educational institutions. This is due to the habit of using traditional methods, lack of understanding of the new curriculum, and discomfort in dealing with changes. In fact, contemporary curriculum demands innovation and flexibility in the learning process (Pinar, 2019). It also emphasizes the importance of transformational leadership in the development of the PAK curriculum, which aims to drive systemic change and innovation in education. Without strong leadership, the implementation of

contemporary curriculum will be difficult to run optimally.

3. Limited Facilities and Infrastructure

Limited facilities such as internet access, technological devices, and digital learning resources are also obstacles in the implementation of contemporary curriculum. Not all educational institutions have adequate facilities to support technology-based learning.

In this case, it is stated that curriculum development must consider the real context of education, including the condition of available facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, an adaptive strategy is needed so that the curriculum can still be implemented even with limited facilities.

Opportunities for Implementing Contemporary Curriculum

1. Technology Makes Learning Easier

The development of digital technology provides a great opportunity to improve access and quality of learning. With e-learning platforms, digital Bible applications, and interactive learning media, students can learn flexibly and independently (Siemens & Long, 2018). It also emphasizes the importance of integrating technology in the PAK curriculum to create adaptive and innovative learning. This shows that technology can be a solution in overcoming space and time limitations in learning.

2. The Younger Generation is More Open to Creative Methods

Generation Z and Alpha are known as the digital generation who are used to technology and interactive learning methods. They tend to be more responsive to creative approaches such as project-based learning, gamification, and digital media (Twenge, 2017). It also emphasizes that the PAK curriculum must be designed according to the characteristics of the digital generation to make learning more effective and engaging. This is an opportunity for educators to develop innovative learning methods that are in accordance with the needs of today's students.

3. PAK Becomes More Relevant to Real Life

Contemporary curriculum provides opportunities for PAK to become more contextual and relevant to students' lives. By linking learning to real issues such as the environment, digital ethics, and social life, PAK can act as a means of building real character and spirituality (Groome, 2019). It was also emphasized that the PAK curriculum must be contextual, holistic, and able to respond to the challenges of modern life. This shows that PAK has great potential to become a transformative education and have a direct impact on the lives of students.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary curriculum in Christian Religious Education is an approach that is relevant to the needs of the times. This curriculum emphasizes learner-centered, contextual, integrative, and transformational learning. Its implementation requires teacher readiness, technological support, and creativity in developing learning methods.

Based on the results of the study and discussion, it can be concluded that the contemporary curriculum in Christian Religious Education (PAK) is a relevant and necessary approach in answering educational challenges in the modern era. This curriculum is not only oriented to the delivery of material, but also emphasizes competency development, character building, and spiritual transformation of students holistically. The main characteristics of the contemporary curriculum in PAK include a student-centered, contextual, integrative approach between faith and life, technology-based, and transformational.

The implementation of contemporary curriculum in PAK learning is carried out through various innovative learning models such as contextual teaching and learning, project-based learning, reflective discussions, and the use of digital media. This approach allows learners to not only understand the teachings of faith cognitively, but also to internalize them in everyday life in real and contextual terms. This is in line with the objectives of the PAK curriculum which emphasizes the

development of reflective skills, criticism, and the relevance of faith in dealing with contemporary issues. However, the implementation of the contemporary curriculum in PAK still faces various challenges, such as the limitation of teachers' competence in technology, resistance to change, and limited educational facilities. Nevertheless, there are great opportunities that can be taken advantage of, especially through the development of digital technology, the adaptive characteristics of the young generation, and the increasing need for education that is relevant to real life. Therefore, the development of the PAK curriculum must be carried out in an adaptive, innovative, and contextual manner in order to be able to respond to the needs of the times.

Thus, the contemporary curriculum in Christian Religious Education not only serves as a learning framework, but also as a means of transforming students' faith and lives. This curriculum is expected to be able to produce individuals who not only have theological knowledge, but are also able to live Christian values in real life in personal, social, and global life. This is in line with PAK's educational goals which emphasize the development of a curriculum that is relevant, transformative, and impactful for the life of the church and society

For Christian Religious Education Teachers, PAK teachers need to improve their professional competence, especially in the use of digital technology and the development of innovative learning methods. Continuous training related to e-learning, digital media, as well as contextual and project-based learning models need to be actively followed so that learning is more relevant to the characteristics of Generation Z and Alpha. This is in line with the demands of RPS which emphasizes the development of technology-based curriculum and innovative learning. In addition, teachers are expected to be able to play the role of spiritual facilitators and guides who encourage students to integrate faith in daily life.

For schools and educational institutions, namely educational institutions, it is necessary to provide adequate support for facilities and infrastructure, especially in terms of learning technology such as internet access, digital devices, and online learning platforms. In addition, schools need to encourage a culture of innovation in learning and provide space for teachers to develop contextual and creative curriculum. It also emphasizes the importance of developing an adaptive, inclusive, and contextual curriculum in accordance with the needs of students and the challenges of the times. Therefore, educational institutions must be agents of change in the implementation of contemporary curriculum.

For the Church and the Christian Community, the Church as an educational partner has an important role in supporting the implementation of the PAK curriculum. The church can provide a faith-building program that is in harmony with the school curriculum, so that there is continuity between formal education and congregational life. This approach is important to ensure that learners' faith formation occurs not only in the classroom, but also in community life.

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