

Research Article

Factors Influencing Low Participation of Catholic Youth in Spiritual Activities at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the factors influencing the low participation of Catholic Youth in spiritual activities at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish. The research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Research subjects consisted of one Catholic Youth coordinator and six members selected purposively to represent diverse perspectives. Data collection techniques included unstructured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The data were then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the low participation of Catholic Youth is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include low motivation, shyness, lack of self-confidence, unstable physical conditions, and the excessive use of social media, which often distracts youth from engaging in church life. Meanwhile, external factors consist of economic limitations, heavy school and work commitments, insufficient mentoring from religious leaders, negative peer influence, and minimal family support. These challenges collectively contribute to the declining interest and active involvement of Catholic Youth in spiritual activities. This research highlights the urgency of creating innovative spiritual activity programs that are more attractive and relevant to the needs of young people in the current era. In addition, optimizing mentoring and guidance from parish leaders, parents, and peers is crucial to strengthen motivation and a sense of belonging among Catholic Youth. By addressing both internal and external factors simultaneously, the church community can foster a more participative and dynamic youth movement. Therefore, strategic collaboration among religious leaders, families, and the youth themselves is essential in revitalizing Catholic Youth participation in church life.

Keywords: Catholic Youth, External Factors, Internal Factors, Participation, Spiritual Activities

1. INTRODUCTION

Catholic Youth (CY) represent the next generation who are the hope and future of the Catholic Church. Ideally, CY should play active roles as the spearhead of church development, particularly through full participation in all spiritual activities. The intended spiritual activities include the Eucharist, communal prayer, catechesis, retreats, choir, and pilgrimages that aim to awaken CY's enthusiasm in knowing and deepening Christian faith (Santesa, Adinuhgra, & Maria, 2022). Active participation of CY in spiritual activities becomes fundamental in realizing the Church's hope and future, as their involvement will determine the quality of church life and the Church's development in the future.

The Catholic Church considers that CY can provide significant influence on today's world. As emphasized in Church documents, Pope Francis through the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* explains the importance of the Church listening to and empowering CY. The Church will grow and develop optimally if CY play active roles and participate in every spiritual activity. In this context, the Church is a community where CY's faith grows and develops, so the Church needs to provide special attention so that CY can live their faith deeply through various meaningful spiritual activities (Tawa, Meja, & Yogalianti, 2022).

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However, the reality occurring in the field shows a concerning phenomenon. Today, one of the significant problems faced by CY is uncertainty in life caused by various inhibiting factors that prevent them from being actively involved in spiritual activities. The increasingly modern era development and rapid technological advancement, such as computers, laptops, smartphones, television, and various social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, have caused CY to lose interest in spiritual activities (Raong et al., 2022). The current lifestyle of CY is greatly influenced by digital technology development, which impacts their orientation shift from spiritual activities toward more instant and attractive worldly pleasures.

The phenomenon of low CY participation in spiritual activities can be seen from declining attendance levels in various spiritual activities organized by the Church. Although the models and forms of spiritual activities in the Catholic Church are very diverse and designed to attract young people's interest, they still fail to optimally increase CY involvement. Spiritual activities that should serve as means for CY faith formation actually experience decreased enthusiasm, causing many CY to be reluctant to take active roles in church life.

Several previous studies have examined the problem of CY participation in church life. Daniel and Firmanto (2023) studied CY participation in altar server ministry at St. Montfort Serawai Parish, finding that rapid technological development makes CY involvement obscured and tends toward worldly lifestyles. Santesa, Adinuhgra, and Maria (2022) examined CY participation in church life at Santo Yosef Kudangan Parish, identifying that CY lack appreciation for church life and tend to follow worldly rather than spiritual lifestyles. Meanwhile, Firmanto (2023) studied CY involvement in Church ministry in rural areas, emphasizing the importance of CY taking part in Church ministry as noble and sacred duties.

Although these studies have provided important contributions to understanding CY participation dynamics, significant research gaps remain. Previous research focused more on general aspects of CY participation in church life but had not deeply explored specific factors influencing low CY participation in spiritual activities, particularly from comprehensive internal and external factor perspectives. Additionally, specific geographical and socio-cultural contexts in remote areas like St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish have not received adequate attention in academic literature.

St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish, located in northern Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, has unique characteristics as a parish that experienced difficult times without pastoral service for five years (2011-2015) due to conflicts with traditional leaders. This condition certainly provides its own impact on church life dynamics, including CY participation in spiritual activities. This parish consists of nine communities with 1,055 households, where most parishioners work as farmers and fishermen with limited economic conditions.

The significance of this research lies in its multidimensional contribution to knowledge development and pastoral education practice. Theoretically, this research will enrich literature on factors influencing CY participation in spiritual activities and provide new perspectives on strategies for increasing young generation involvement in church life through comprehensive approaches. Practically, research results are expected to serve as references for pastors,

catechists, and CY coordinators in optimizing mentoring strategies and providing strategic input for church institutions in developing more effective and contextual pastoral programs.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive approach to analyzing internal and external factors influencing CY participation, with special focus on parish contexts in remote areas with unique challenges. This research also integrates pastoral and sociological perspectives in understanding CY participation dynamics, thus providing more holistic understanding of the studied phenomenon.

Based on the background and problem identification above, this research aims to identify and analyze factors influencing low participation of Catholic Youth in spiritual activities at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish. Specifically, this research will explore internal factors originating from within CY themselves and external factors from surrounding environments that contribute to their low participation levels in various spiritual activities. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to pastoral science development and practical contributions to improving CY mentoring quality at parish levels.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Participation in Religious Context

Participation is a fundamental concept in group life dynamics, including in religious contexts. According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the word participation comes from English "participation," which means taking part or involvement. In a broader context, participation is defined as individual or group involvement in activities to achieve certain goals (Pritiani et al., 2021). The concept of participation in religious life has more complex dimensions because it involves spiritual, emotional, and social aspects that interact with each other.

Amirin in Pritiani et al. (2021) argues that participation is a form of individual or group involvement emotionally, mentally, and physically in certain activities. This perspective emphasizes that participation is not merely physical presence but also involves deep engagement from various aspects of individual personality. In religious contexts, optimal participation occurs when someone is not only physically present in spiritual activities but also emotionally and spiritually involved in the experience.

Koten in Pritiani et al. (2021) adds that participation is individual involvement or participation in activities as part of a community, creating togetherness atmosphere that greatly influences activity implementation. This definition emphasizes the communal aspect of participation, which is highly relevant in church life contexts where togetherness and brotherhood become fundamental values. Individual involvement in spiritual activities depends on social aspects of society and their personal spirituality, influenced by individual beliefs and faith experiences.

Catholic Youth: Identity and Role in the Church

Catholic Youth (CY) have specific definitions and characteristics in Indonesian Catholic Church contexts. According to the Youth Pastoral Work Guidelines (PKPKM) issued by the Youth Commission of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (KWI), CY are those aged 13-35 years and unmarried, while considering regional customs (Utami & Tse, 2018). This age

range shows that CY consist of various developmental stages, from adolescents to young adults, each having different characteristics and needs.

The KWI Youth Commission categorizes CY into several groups based on age: adolescent group (13-15 years), youth group (16-19 years), middle group (20-24 years), and work group (25-35 years). This categorization is important for understanding that CY are not homogeneous groups but consist of various sub-groups with different psychological, social, and spiritual developmental characteristics. However, age limits are not absolute benchmarks, as what is more important is the youthful spirit possessed by someone in contributing to church life.

CY have strategic positions as hope and future of the Catholic Church and society. With their abilities and skills in looking far ahead, CY are acknowledged to have provided very significant influence on today's world (Utami & Tse, 2018). In the Synod of Bishops in Rome in 1987, there were two important things discussed regarding CY: first, about CY themselves as pastoral subjects; and second, about pastoral priorities for them. This shows that the Church provides special attention to CY as groups requiring appropriate and contextual pastoral accompaniment.

Church's View of Catholic Youth

The Catholic Church has very positive and hopeful views toward CY. Vatican Council II states that CY deserve unconditional love, and the Church sees CY as potential young generations who can be relied upon to help Church ministry and form faith ministry through spiritual activities (Utami & Tse, 2018). This view reflects the Church's commitment to providing special attention to CY as future investments in church life.

The Church also realizes that CY's life situations, inner attitudes, and relationships with families experience rapid changes and shift to new socio-economic conditions. Therefore, the Church through Vatican Council II states its advocacy for CY by requesting help and encouraging adults to participate in guiding CY to be involved in spiritual activities. This advocacy shows that the Church not only places CY as pastoral objects but also as active subjects in church life.

Additionally, the Church views CY as very important forces for current Church development. However, the Church also realizes various challenges faced by CY in contexts of rapid social and cultural changes. Therefore, CY accompaniment always stems from CY's own calling to become salt and light of the world (Matt 5:13-14), showing that CY's role is not only for internal Church interests but also for broader societal transformation.

Spiritual Activities in Catholic Youth Faith Formation

Spiritual activities are all forms of activities or actions performed for spirituality or religious purposes, which in Catholic Church contexts have central roles in CY faith and character formation. Various forms of spiritual activities that can be performed by CY include the Eucharist, retreats, recollections, spiritual camps, catechesis, choir practice, and pilgrimages (Noveyra, Zefanya, & Derung, 2023). Each type of spiritual activity has specific characteristics and purposes in supporting CY spiritual development.

The Eucharist as the center of Catholic life is the most important form of CY formation. Through Eucharistic celebrations, CY can increasingly understand the Eucharistic mystery and God's calling, because the Eucharist is free grace that reveals God's love to the world (Wardani, 2006). Eucharistic celebrations aim to awaken CY's awareness that they are guided and saved by Christ's love, so they are enabled to imitate Christ's faithfulness in daily life.

Retreats and recollections are spiritual activities focused on reflection and spiritual deepening. Retreats aim to achieve CY's spiritual "health," so they can live their lives and callings according to optimal spiritual potential, know themselves more completely, and courageously make conversions. Meanwhile, recollections are spiritual exercises aimed at training CY's abilities to increasingly know, realize love, work and calling, as well as personal attitudes and responses to faith (Noveyra et al., 2023).

Factors Influencing Participation in Spiritual Activities

CY participation in spiritual activities is influenced by various factors that can be categorized into internal and external factors. Internal factors are conditions, processes, and circumstances originating from within that influence individual behavior, attitudes, and actions. In CY contexts, internal factors include motivation, personality, self-confidence, skills, and physical and emotional conditions (Koten, 2020).

Motivation becomes a very important internal factor in encouraging CY to participate in spiritual activities. The intended motivation is positive encouragement that can drive someone's personality to continue developing toward better directions. In CY contexts, each individual must have motivation or personal motives to involve themselves in spiritual activities conducted at the Church. Personality also plays important roles, because according to Allport, personality is dynamic organization within individuals as psychophysical systems that determine their unique ways of adapting to their environment.

External factors are factors originating from outside individuals that include environments or objects that can change someone's worldview toward their surroundings. External factors include social environment, family environment, school environment, and peer influence. Social environment becomes the main factor that can influence CY, especially in contexts of increasingly modern and individualistic cultural and lifestyle changes, causing many CY to tend to focus more on personal achievements and fast-paced worldly activities so that spiritual activities are neglected.

3. METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach with descriptive design to analyze factors influencing low participation of Catholic Youth in spiritual activities. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to explore deep understanding of CY participation phenomena in spiritual activity contexts and to comprehensively understand research subjects' perspectives and experiences. As explained by Hasan and Ratnasari (2024), qualitative research is a type of research where researchers heavily depend on information from objects or

informants on a wide scale, by asking questions, collecting data mostly from texts or words from informants, and providing subjective analysis explanations of collected texts. Descriptive design enables researchers to provide detailed and accurate descriptions of actual CY participation conditions and their impacts on spiritual life at research locations.

This research was conducted at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish located in northern Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. Location selection was based on considerations that similar topic research had never been conducted at that parish, thus providing new contributions to CY pastoral life development in that region. St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish has unique characteristics as a parish that experienced difficult times without pastoral service for five years (2011-2015) due to conflicts with traditional leaders, thus providing interesting contexts to be studied in relation to CY participation dynamics. Research time was conducted from January to May 2024, with adequate duration for in-depth data collection through continuous observation and intensive interviews.

Research subjects consisted of seven individuals selected purposively, including one Catholic Youth coordinator and six CY members at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish. The selection of CY coordinator as research subject aimed to obtain data about CY participation success levels in spiritual activities and coordinator perspectives regarding pastoral program implementation for young generations. Meanwhile, six CY members were selected as subjects to obtain data related to participation motivation and their responses to various spiritual activities organized at the parish. Purposive sampling technique was chosen because it enables researchers to select informants who have knowledge and experience relevant to research focus (Huberman & Miles, 1992).

Research subject selection criteria were established based on several considerations. First, CY coordinators must have minimum two years of experience in accompanying CY activities at that parish. Second, selected CY members represent various age groups according to KWI categorization, namely adolescent group (13-15 years), youth group (16-19 years), middle group (20-24 years), and work group (25-35 years) as stipulated in Youth Pastoral Work Guidelines (Utami & Tse, 2018). Third, research subjects must be willing to provide information openly and have adequate knowledge about spiritual activity dynamics at that parish.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: unstructured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Unstructured interviews were chosen to provide freedom for informants to express their thoughts, experiences, and opinions without being bound by rigid guidelines. As explained by Hasan and Ratnasari (2024), interviews are interaction processes between researchers and informants through direct communication to obtain information about research objectives through direct question-and-answer sessions with individuals. This interview technique enables researchers to explore deeper and more authentic information about factors influencing CY participation in spiritual activities.

Participatory observation was used to directly observe CY spiritual activity processes and various pastoral program implementations at the parish. According to Hasan and Ratnasari (2024), observation is data collection involving social relationships between researchers and informants in conducting research objects in the field. Research can be conducted through

observation and recording every event occurring in the field with the aim that researchers can know truth or facts from the field. Through this observation technique, researchers can obtain data about CY participation levels reflected in their behavior and involvement during activities.

Documentation was conducted to strengthen data obtained through written field notes and other supporting documents. Hasan and Ratnasari (2024) explain that documentation is secondary data collection technique by recording, reading, quoting written information, as well as supporting photos and videos related to studied problems. Documentation technique includes collecting data about parish history, CY organizational structure, implemented spiritual activity programs, and statistical data about CY numbers and characteristics at that parish.

Research instruments in this study were the researchers themselves as key instruments (human instruments), equipped with supporting instruments in the form of interview guidelines and observation sheets. Research instruments were designed based on internal and external factor variable indicators influencing CY participation. Internal factor indicators include motivation, personality, self-confidence, skills, and physical-emotional conditions as proposed by Koten (2020). Meanwhile, external factor indicators include social environment, family environment, school environment, peer influence, and religious leader support.

Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. As explained by Anwar (2021), data reduction is the process of reducing data volume or size by eliminating unnecessary information to change data formats so they are more efficiently stored, processed, or needed. Data display is the process of presenting information or data through face-to-face meetings, which can be in the form of text or images with the aim of providing quick understanding of presented information (Anwar, 2021). Conclusion drawing is a new finding that has never existed before, which can be descriptions or depictions of objects that were previously still vague or dark so that after conducting research they become clear (Anwar, 2021).

Research stages consisted of three main phases: preparation stage, implementation stage, and writing stage. The preparation stage included research theme determination, problem identification, research question formulation, method selection, data collection technique determination, and research plan design. The implementation stage encompassed data collection through interviews, observation, and documentation, as well as data analysis conducted simultaneously with data collection processes. The writing stage included conclusion formulation based on collected data, research process evaluation and reflection, and academically accountable written research reporting.

To ensure research quality and credibility, data triangulation was conducted through multiple sources and multiple methods usage. Source triangulation was conducted by collecting data from various informants having different perspectives, namely CY coordinators and CY members from various age groups. Method triangulation was conducted by using three different data collection techniques to verify research finding consistency. Additionally, member checking was conducted by confirming data analysis results to informants to ensure researcher interpretation accuracy regarding provided data.

4. RESULTS

Condition of Catholic Youth Participation at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish

Research results indicate that Catholic Youth participation in spiritual activities at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish is very low. Based on observation and interviews with CY coordinators, it was found that CY attendance in Eucharistic activities, rosary prayer, catechesis, and other spiritual activities is dominated by elderly groups. The CY coordinator stated that "every time there are Eucharistic celebration activities, choir, rosary prayer, catechesis, only elderly people are involved, while Catholic Youth are busier confining themselves at their respective homes." This condition shows significant gaps between Church expectations regarding CY roles and their participation reality in the field.

Internal Factors Influencing Low Participation

Analysis of internal factors identified several main aspects influencing low CY participation. First, low motivation and emerging laziness from within CY themselves become dominant factors. Informant A stated that "many Catholic youth are not involved in spiritual activities for various reasons, namely the emergence of laziness from within Catholic Youth themselves." Second, feelings of shame and lack of self-confidence become significant psychological barriers. Informant C explained that CY experience "feelings of shame and lack of self-confidence, besides childhood upbringing where they are not accustomed to following spiritual activities."

Third, unstable physical conditions and stress due to various life problems also influence participation. Informant D revealed that influencing factors are "feeling lazy, stressed with various life problems that cause loss of enthusiasm to be actively involved in spiritual activities." Fourth, the influence of technological development and social media causes CY to prefer spending time on digital activities. Informant B explained that "the increasingly advanced/modern era changes make them prefer spending time at home playing with phones, internet and other social media rather than following spiritual activities."

Fifth, assumptions that spiritual activities are unimportant and boring decrease CY interest in participating. Several informants stated that CY "feel that spiritual activities are unimportant and boring so they do not attract their interest." Sixth, feelings of discomfort and not being accepted in spiritual communities become psychological barriers. Informant G explained that "some Catholic Youth might feel uncomfortable, awkward and feel not accepted by that community."

External Factors Influencing Low Participation

External factors show problem complexity originating from CY surrounding environments. First, economic limitations become significant practical barriers. Informant B identified that "economic factors such as spending registration money to join Catholic Youth organizations and several spiritual activities like pilgrimages that also require costs." Second, busyness with work and school activities limits CY time to participate. Informant C explained that "several Catholic Youth are busier with their respective jobs because some Catholic youth at this parish already have jobs as village staff, midwives, nurses and some are busy helping parents work in gardens."

Third, lack of accompaniment and socialization from religious leaders becomes structural factors influencing participation. Informant D stated that what causes CY not to be involved is "lack of accompaniment and socialization from pastors and catechists so they feel less attended to." Fourth, busy schedules with academic and social demands make CY difficult to divide time. Informant E revealed that "several Catholic youth feel insufficient time because they have busy schedules with school demands, work, and several other social activities."

Fifth, school environment factors that lack support for spiritual activities also contribute. Informant F explained that "teachers who do not pay attention to students regarding spiritual activities, give too many assignments so Catholic Youth focus more on given assignments rather than following spiritual activities." Sixth, negative influence from peers becomes social factors that distance CY from spiritual activities. Informant G stated that "many friends lack support and provide negative direction influence such as drinking, partying and having fun so they do not have enough time to be actively involved in spiritual activities."

Impact of Low Participation on Spiritual Life

Low CY participation impacts spiritual life quality at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish. Observation shows that spiritual activities such as catechesis, rosary prayer, and liturgical services experience regeneration shortages. CY coordinators express concern about this condition because CY should become the backbone of church life sustainability. Additionally, special programs for CY often do not run optimally due to minimal participation, so the goals of young generation faith and character formation are not achieved maximally.

5. DISCUSSION

Research findings confirm the complexity of factors influencing low Catholic Youth participation in spiritual activities at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish. In-depth data analysis shows that this phenomenon is not merely an individual problem but a manifestation of broader socio-cultural changes affecting young generations in church life contexts. This condition reflects tensions between normative Church expectations regarding CY roles as next generations and empirical reality showing their low involvement in spiritual activities.

Internal Factor Dynamics in Pastoral Psychology Perspective

Internal factors found in this research show CY psychological complexity in facing spiritual demands in the modern era. Low motivation and emerging laziness identified as dominant factors align with motivation theory in religious contexts emphasizing the importance of intrinsic encouragement to achieve spiritual satisfaction (Pritiani et al., 2021). This phenomenon indicates that CY at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish have not found deep personal meaning in spiritual activities, so their participation tends to be extrinsic and unsustainable.

Feelings of shame and lack of self-confidence experienced by CY reflect spiritual identity crises characteristic of transition periods from adolescence to young adulthood. In religious development contexts as explained by Rachman (2018), this period is critical where individuals experience deep struggles about relationships with God and life meaning. CY's inability to overcome this crisis without adequate accompaniment results in their withdrawal from spiritual activities that should serve as means for their spiritual identity formation.

Findings about technology and social media influence on CY orientation show digital native phenomena experiencing paradigm shifts in ways of interacting with spirituality. Generations growing up in digital eras have expectations toward instant, visual, and interactive experiences, contrasting with traditional spiritual activity characteristics that tend to be contemplative and reflective. This creates generational gaps in spirituality approaches requiring more adaptive and contextual pastoral strategies.

Unstable physical conditions and stress experienced by CY also reflect modern life pressures affecting young generation holistic well-being. In St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish contexts located in areas with economic limitations, CY face multiple stressors including academic, economic, and social pressures simultaneously. This condition creates life priorities placing material needs and academic achievements above spiritual needs, so spiritual activities are perceived as additional burdens rather than sources of strength.

External Factor Analysis in Pastoral Ecosystem Context

External factors identified in this research reveal systemic failures in creating pastoral ecosystems conducive to CY development. Economic limitations affecting CY participation not only reflect individual financial problems but also show structural injustice in access to spiritual experiences. When spiritual activities require significant costs in limited family economic contexts, this creates spiritual stratification contradicting universality principles of Christian calling.

Lack of accompaniment from religious leaders as revealed in research findings shows gaps in implementing Church pastoral vision toward CY. Although Vatican Council II has emphasized the importance of Church advocacy for CY and encouraged adults to guide them (Utami & Tse, 2018), field reality shows suboptimal implementation of this pastoral mandate. This condition is worsened by the traumatic history of St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish that experienced pastor service vacancy for five years, which likely impacted CY formation program continuity.

Negative peer influence and unsupportive social environments reflect contextual challenges faced by CY in environments not conducive to spiritual growth. This aligns with ecological development theory emphasizing the importance of multiple systems in shaping individual behavior. When microsystem (family), mesosystem (school), and exosystem (community) do not provide consistent support for spiritual values, CY tend to adopt alternative norms more dominant in their social environments.

Theoretical and Practical Implications in Contemporary Pastoral Context

Research findings provide significant contributions to understanding CY participation dynamics in contemporary pastoral contexts. Theoretically, this research confirms participation theory relevance emphasizing the importance of emotional, mental, and physical involvement in group activities (Pritiani et al., 2021). However, findings also reveal that in spiritual contexts, participation requires additional dimensions namely existential involvement involving meaning searches and life purposes.

Analysis of factors influencing CY participation also provides insights about the need for more holistic and integrative pastoral approaches. Traditional approaches focusing on

doctrinal knowledge transfer need to be developed into approaches encompassing psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of CY experiences. This aligns with understanding that Catholic Religious Education is not only cognitive transfer but faith maturation processes requiring special approaches to convey spiritual and moral values (Noveyra et al., 2023).

Practically, research findings show the need for pastoral strategy reformulation more responsive to contemporary CY characteristics and needs. Spiritual activity programs need to be designed considering digital generation preferences, economic limitations, and modern life complexity faced by CY. Additionally, systematic investment in CY coordinator capacity development is needed to provide effective and relevant mentoring.

Critical Reflection on Traditional Pastoral Paradigm

The phenomenon of low CY participation in spiritual activities at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish invites critical reflection on traditional pastoral paradigms that might not be fully adaptive to contemporary socio-cultural changes. Church expectations that CY will naturally be attracted and involved in traditional spiritual activities need evaluation in digital generation reality contexts having different characteristics and preferences from previous generations.

This condition also indicates the need for shifts from top-down pastoral models toward more participatory and dialogical approaches. CY can no longer be treated as passive recipients of programs designed by church authorities but need to be involved as co-creators in designing meaningful spiritual experiences for them. This requires mindset changes from pastors and catechists to be more open to innovation in pastoral methodology.

More fundamentally, research findings challenge the Church to reflect whether current spiritual activity formats and substances remain relevant to answer contemporary young generation spiritual quests. Questions about how to make spiritual activities more engaging, meaningful, and transformative become crucial for church life sustainability in the future. Without significant adaptation, young generation alienation risks from church life will increase, ultimately threatening Catholic community continuity and vitality in the future.

6. CONCLUSION

This research produces comprehensive findings that low Catholic Youth participation in spiritual activities at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish is a multifactorial phenomenon requiring systemic and holistic intervention. Dominant internal factors include spiritual motivation crises, psychological barriers in the form of shame and lack of self-confidence, and digital disruption that shifts CY orientation from contemplative activities toward instant gratification. Meanwhile, external factors show pastoral ecosystem failures in providing conducive environments, including structural limitations in the form of economic constraints, minimal professional accompaniment, and peer group influence counterproductive to spiritual values.

This research's main contribution lies in identifying gaps between normative Church expectations regarding CY roles as next generations and empirical reality showing their alienation from spiritual life. These findings indicate that traditional pastoral paradigms require fundamental transformation to answer digital native generation characteristics and needs. Effective CY accompaniment models must integrate understanding of developmental

psychology, contemporary socio-cultural dynamics, and contextual spirituality relevant to their life experiences.

Practical implications of this research lead to the need for more adaptive and responsive pastoral strategy reformulation. First, development of innovative and engaging spiritual activity programs by utilizing digital technology as spiritual medium rather than competitor. Second, investment in CY coordinator capacity building through systematic training about mentoring skills, intergenerational communication, and contemporary pastoral methodology. Third, implementation of inclusivity policies that overcome economic barriers in spiritual activity participation. Fourth, creation of safe spaces that enable CY to express spiritual doubts and explore their faith without judgment.

Theoretically, this research strengthens arguments that participation in spiritual contexts requires existential engagement dimensions beyond mere physical presence. Participation concepts need to be expanded to include emotional resonance, intellectual stimulation, and transformational experience capable of answering young generation spiritual quests. This implies the need for more dialogical and experiential pastoral approaches rather than merely informative and ritual.

Strategic recommendations for optimizing CY participation include: first, development of digital ministry platforms integrating online and offline spiritual activities; second, establishment of peer mentoring programs utilizing natural influence networks among CY; third, creation of social entrepreneurship initiatives enabling CY to integrate Christian values in relevant social action; and fourth, implementation of participatory evaluation systems involving CY in assessment and improvement of pastoral programs.

This research also reveals urgency for addressing pastoral trauma caused by conflict history at St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish. Recovery from five-year service vacancy experiences requires systematic healing processes and sustained commitment for rebuilding trust between communities and church leadership. This is fundamental for creating conducive conditions for flourishing spiritual life among young generations.

Ultimately, this research affirms that future viability of the Catholic Church greatly depends on its ability to successfully engage young generations in meaningful and transformative spiritual life. Failure in adaptation to contemporary socio-cultural changes will result in increasingly widespread alienation and threaten Catholic community sustainability in the future. Therefore, investment in innovative pastoral approaches for CY is not only a strategic choice but an existential imperative for the Church in maintaining its relevance in the modern era.

LIMITATION

This research has several methodological and contextual limitations that need to be transparently acknowledged to provide balanced perspective toward finding interpretation. First, significant geographical and demographic limitations because research was only conducted at one parish with specific socio-economic and cultural characteristics. St. Mikhael Kotabaru Parish located in rural areas with majority parishioners working as farmers and fishermen has dynamics that might differ from urban or semi-urban parishes with more heterogeneous

demographic characteristics. Finding generalization toward CY contexts at other parishes requires caution and additional empirical validation.

Second, relatively limited research duration (January-May 2024) constrains ability to observe CY participation patterns in complete annual liturgical cycles. Participation in spiritual activities can vary seasonally, with peak participation at certain moments such as Advent, Lent, or parish patron saint celebrations. Short-term observation might not capture temporal variability in CY engagement that can provide additional insights about factors influencing participation fluctuations.

Third, limited number of research subjects (seven informants) and relatively high perspective homogeneity limit diversity of viewpoints that can be explored. Although representation from various CY age groups has been attempted, absence of perspectives from other stakeholders such as parents, community leaders, or actively participating CY can result in bias in interpreting factors influencing participation. Additionally, possibilities of social desirability bias in informant responses cannot be completely eliminated, especially considering sensitive nature of topics related to spirituality and criticism toward church institutions.

Fourth, limitations in cross-denominational or cross-religious comparative analysis limit understanding about whether young generation low participation phenomena in religious activities are specific Catholic issues or more universal trends in religious engagement contexts in modern eras. Comparative analysis with other religious communities can provide more comprehensive perspectives about nature of challenges faced in engaging digital native generations in spiritual activities.

Fifth, this research did not deeply explore gender aspects in CY participation, which can provide nuanced understanding about whether there are different participation patterns between male and female Catholic youth. Gender dynamics in religious participation are rich areas to be explored considering potential differences in spiritual expression, social expectations, and accessibility toward leadership roles in church structures.

For future research, several recommendations can be proposed to overcome identified limitations. First, longitudinal studies observing CY participation changes in more extended periods can provide more robust understanding about young generation spiritual engagement trajectories. Second, comparative research involving multiple parishes with diverse geographical and demographic characteristics can improve finding external validity. Third, mixed-methods approaches integrating quantitative measurement toward participation levels with qualitative exploration toward underlying motivations can provide more comprehensive data triangulation.

Fourth, expansion of stakeholder perspectives to include parents, community leaders, and active CY members can provide more holistic views toward ecosystem factors influencing youth religious engagement. Fifth, incorporation of digital ethnography methods to explore how CY engage with spirituality through online platforms can provide insights about alternative forms of religious participation that might not be visible in traditional observational approaches. Future research with more comprehensive design can provide more substantial contribution toward development of evidence-based pastoral strategies for CY in contemporary eras.

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