

Research Article

The Role of Christian Religious Education and Family Interaction in Shaping a Culture of Quality in Leadership Character Development

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Abstract: In today's world, the crisis of moral integrity and low quality of leadership have become one of the most serious challenges in education and social life. This study aims to examine how Christian Religious Education and family interactions contribute to the formation of a culture of quality that supports the growth of leadership character based on faith, responsibility, and a spirit of service. The approach used is a reflective literature study with a review of eleven journals, sixteen books or other sources from theological and educational philosophy perspectives, and leadership studies. The results of the study show that Christian Religious Education not only fosters spiritual awareness and ethical thinking skills, but also strengthens students' commitment to excellence as a manifestation of living faith, hence the emphasis is on the active role of parents. The integration of faith education and family interaction creates a culture of quality that encourages continuous growth, self-reflection, and integrity in leadership. The novelty in this study is the formation of an integrated culture of quality.

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1. Introduction

The moral and leadership crises occurring in various areas of life, ranging from education and politics to religious institutions, show that character building and a culture of quality are no longer just a necessity but a social and spiritual urgency. Amidst rapid technological advances and globalization, many individuals excel intellectually but are poor in moral and spiritual dimensions. In this context, Christian Religious Education and family interaction play an important role in instilling the values of faith, ethics, and social responsibility that form the basis of true leadership character.

Character Education Theory explains that character building includes three main components: First, Moral Knowing (moral knowledge) understanding of values and truth;

Second, Moral Feeling (moral feelings) sensitivity of conscience, empathy, and love; Third, Moral Action (moral actions) application of values in real behavior. This theory emphasizes that effective moral education is not enough with knowledge, but must be accompanied by habit and example. In the context of your topic, Christian Religious Education serves as a means of fostering these three aspects in family life. When values of faith and love are taught at home, the family plays a direct role in shaping character and leadership with integrity. (Lickona, 2022) Servant leadership is described in his theory of Servant Leadership, true leaders are those who first serve, not be served. Effective leadership is born from moral and spiritual character, not from power. In relation to this study, families and Christian Religious Education foster the values of service, empathy, and humility, which are characteristics of Christian leadership oriented towards love and the common good. (Greenleaf, 2002)

Research on the role of Christian Religious Education and family interaction in shaping a culture of quality in developing leadership character is important because it touches on the core of holistic human development, both spiritually, morally, and socially. In the context of modern education, which is increasingly competitive and pragmatic, spiritual and ethical

values are often marginalized. Christian Religious Education has a strategic role in instilling the foundations of faith and morality that guide individuals to not only be intellectually intelligent, but also to have integrity, responsibility, and sensitivity towards others. (Pazmiño, 2018). Based on the results of a survey of 120 Christian education teachers and students at three theological colleges in Indonesia (Jakarta, Manado, and Yogyakarta), 82% of respondents stated that Christian Religious Education has a significant influence in shaping the values of integrity and responsibility in future leaders, while seventy-four percent of respondents assessed that harmonious and communicative family interactions also strengthen leadership character based on love and service. This data shows a close relationship between the application of faith values at home and in the educational environment with the formation of a culture of quality, which is reflected in attitudes of discipline, cooperation, and commitment to excellence. These findings emphasize that the process of character building for leaders does not only depend on the formal education system, but also on the quality of family interactions that instill spiritual and moral values from an early age (, 2021). Thus, collaboration between Christian Religious Education and families is a strategic key in building a sustainable culture of quality and producing Christian leaders with integrity who are capable of bringing positive change to society.

In a study by Paulus Istandar Tan entitled examining the influence of character education, Christian religious education, and family involvement in preparing for leadership based on morals and faith. The results of the study show that character education and Christian religious education have a significant impact on the formation of future leaders, and that family involvement as active partners is key in this process. The success of the development of a culture of quality in children will never be separated from the active interaction of parents with their children. Parents, through the care and attention they always give to their children, will have a major influence on parenting patterns. Starting from openness, self-confidence, and feelings of being loved to enthusiasm in living life or in a struggle.

2. Materials and Method

A descriptive qualitative approach with a literature analysis method is one of the scientific approaches used to understand a phenomenon in depth through a review of relevant literature. This approach does not focus on numbers or statistics, but rather on understanding the meanings, values, and key concepts contained in scientific sources such as books, journals, and previous research results. (Creswell, 2018)

According to John W. Creswell (2018), the descriptive qualitative approach is used when researchers want to understand the meaning given by individuals or groups to a social or humanitarian phenomenon. This approach is not oriented towards numbers, but towards efforts to describe reality as it is through in-depth interpretation of narrative and contextual data. In the context of literature research, this method requires researchers to critically examine written sources such as books, journals, documents, and previous research reports to find themes, patterns, and relationships that are relevant to the topic of study.

Scientifically, the descriptive qualitative approach aims to systematically and factually describe a social reality or concept based on textual data and interpretative. (Haryono, 2021) Researchers act as the "main instrument" that interprets the meaning behind the text, not merely collecting data mechanically. Meanwhile, library research is conducted by examining and comparing theories from various literature to find patterns, themes, or principles relevant to the research topic. (Mestika, 2004)

When this approach combines theology, educational philosophy, and leadership studies, the research becomes interdisciplinary. From a theological perspective, researchers examine the moral, spiritual, and ethical values that form the basis of human actions. From an educational philosophy perspective, researchers highlight the meaning, purpose, and principles of forming a whole person through the educational process. Meanwhile, from the perspective of leadership studies, researchers examine how these values and principles are manifested in the concrete actions of exemplary leaders. By combining these three perspectives, the research not only describes the phenomenon descriptively but also offers a reflective and normative understanding of how the values of faith, reason, and leadership can play a role in shaping human character and behavior. Thus, the qualitative descriptive approach through literature analysis serves as a bridge between theory and practice, helping researchers find conceptual relationships between theological beliefs, educational principles, and leadership behaviors that are meaningful to the context of today's life.

3. Research Results And Discussion

Family interactions in Indonesian culture

In the context of Indonesian culture, the family holds a very important position as the smallest social unit and the center for the formation of individual values, morals, and identity. The family is not just a place to live together, but also a place for character education, cultural value inheritance, and the formation of social responsibility. (Koentjaraningrat, 2000) In the view of Indonesian society, which is rooted in communal values, the family is seen as part of a broader social system, where relationships between family members are based not only on blood ties, but also on values of togetherness, mutual respect, and solidarity. And from the culture in Indonesia, it is then narrowed down to the cultural context in Yogyakarta, Central Java. A culture that is strongly rooted in Javanese values that emphasize harmony, manners, and respect for social hierarchy. In family life, the principle of unggah-ungguh (politeness) is the main guideline for interacting with family members. Children are taught to respect their parents, speak politely (basa krama), and maintain harmony through humility (andhap asor). The social structure of Yogyakarta society, which still highly values tradition, gives families an important role as guardians of cultural continuity, especially in the face of modernization and globalization, which tend to encourage individualism. Thus, families in Javanese culture in Yogyakarta serve as the main bastion for the preservation of the cultural and moral identity of Javanese society. (Suwarno, 2021)

Cultural values such as deliberation, respect for elders, cooperation, and concern for others are characteristic of interactions within the family. The traditional kinship system in Indonesia is often collectivist in nature, meaning that group interests take precedence over personal interests. In this context, the family not only functions to fulfill economic and biological needs, but also becomes a moral and social institution that instills ethical values, spirituality, and cultural identity from an early age. In addition, various studies show that families in Indonesia still play an important role in shaping social behavior, children's education, and moral resilience. In many regions, families also serve as intermediaries between traditional and modern values, helping the younger generation navigate social changes resulting from globalization. Thus, families in Indonesian culture function not only as places of birth and growth, but also as centers for the internalization of Pancasila values and local wisdom that strengthen the character of the nation. Furthermore, family life is an achievement in a person's life within society. In the Indonesian context, life stages or career achievements are always correlated with society's views on life partners, marriage, having children, and the success of children. This sequence is an important assessment that a person must go through in society.

The Role of PAK as the Foundation of Spirituality and Morality for Leaders

Christian Religious Education Christian Religious Education has a fundamental role in building the spiritual and moral foundation that is at the core of true leadership character. Theologically, Christian Religious Education is rooted in the principle that humans are created in the image and likeness of God (*imago Dei*), so that every individual has the divine potential to lead with integrity and love (Genesis 1:26–27). In the context of education, CAR not only functions as a means of transferring knowledge of faith, but also as a process of shaping the heart, mind, and behavior based on Christian values. Through teaching, reflection, and exemplary behavior, Christian Religious Education fosters moral awareness that guides students to live in truth, honesty, and responsibility towards others and towards God.

The value of integrity in Christian leadership grows when individuals learn to align their faith and actions, making honesty a form of loyalty to God and others. The value of responsibility stems from the understanding that every leader is a steward or manager entrusted to serve, not to rule (Sanders, 2007). Meanwhile, the value of love is at the core of Christian leadership ethics, which guides a person to lead with empathy, sacrifice, and humility as exemplified by Christ (Maxwell, 2018). Thus, Christian Religious Education becomes an educational space that not only teaches doctrine but also instills spiritual and moral habits that produce leaders of character, integrity, and oriented toward loving service.

Christian families are often referred to as "mini churches" because it is within them that Christian values of faith, love, and responsibility are first instilled and lived out. Theologically speaking, the family is a divine institution created by God to be the primary vessel for the formation of faith and character (2 Timothy 1:2-5). In the home, children learn to know God not only through verbal teaching, but especially through the example of parents who practice love, forgiveness, hard work, and faithfulness. Thus, the family becomes the first place where

Christian leadership principles are put into practice—not in the form of oppressive authority, but in the form of loving service. As a "mini church," the family plays a role in fostering character-based leadership values, because daily interactions provide opportunities to practice empathy, communication, responsibility, and discipline. Parents become leaders who not only give orders but also set an example of how to lead with a servant's heart. Children who grow up in a loving and forgiving family environment tend to develop self-confidence, the ability to work together, and high social sensitivity—the hallmarks of a spiritually and emotionally mature leader (Balswick, 2014).

In 2 Timothy 1:2–5, the role of the family in passing on faith and shaping spiritual character is beautifully described. In his letter, Paul writes to Timothy with love, calling him his "true son in the faith" (v. 2), and reminding him that the sincere faith within Timothy first lived in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (v. 5). This verse affirms that the family is the first and primary vessel for the formation of Christian faith and character.

Theologically, this text shows that faith is not merely the result of verbal teaching, but the fruit of consistent example in the family. Lois and Eunice not only taught Timothy the values of faith through words, but also through their daily practices. In the context of family theology, this emphasizes that faith transmission does not occur instantly or institutionally, but through intimate relationships and the practice of faith in the household. From a New Testament theological perspective, the role of the family in this text is rooted in the concept of the household *oikos*, which in the early church was understood as the basic unit of the life of faith. Paul saw the family not merely as a social structure, but as a small community of faith (*ecclesiola domestica*) where Christian values of love, faithfulness, and hope were cultivated. Thus, the household became the context in which children learned to know God through the love they experienced from their parents and other family members.

The faith that Lois and Eunice passed on to Timothy shows that women in the family have a strategic role in the faith education and spiritual formation of children. The maternal faith in this text is not only emotional but also theological: it is a channel of God's grace that nurtures the faith of the next generation. In this context, the Christian family becomes a "domestic church" that functions not only to meet physical needs, but also spiritual and moral ones.

In addition, the text of 2 Timothy 1:2–5 also shows the intergenerational dimension of faith inheritance. The faith that lived in Lois and Eunice was naturally passed on to Timothy, demonstrating spiritual continuity between generations. This reinforces the theological view that families have a mandate to continue God's work of salvation through faith education that is alive and relevant in every age. Christian families thus serve as God's pedagogical medium, where love, faith, and truth are instilled from an early age in order to produce individuals of character and steadfast faith in the midst of a constantly changing world. And then the spirit of service from the Apostle Paul was passed on to Timothy from the beginning of their meeting until Timothy was trusted and sent by the Apostle Paul to begin his ministry. Timothy's spirit of service, which had been instilled in him since childhood through his family, never faded even after the Apostle Paul's death. Timothy remained faithful in spreading the mission of Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, families who live in faith become miniatures of the church community, where prayer together, Bible reflection, and loving communication form the basis of communal life. This is where transformative leadership values, such as integrity, humility, and service, are learned naturally and contextually. Thus, the Christian family is not merely a social unit, but also a community of faith learning that nurtures a generation of leaders who serve with love and truth, as Christ exemplified. The family is viewed as an emotional system in which members influence each other. In this system, the quality of family interactions (communication, emotional support, and attachment) forms the basis for character development in children. The healthier the patterns of communication and emotional attachment within the family, the stronger the child's ability to internalize moral and social values. In this context, the family functions as the "first school" for character learning through modeling, empathetic communication, and positive reinforcement.

The text of 2 Timothy 1:2–5 provides a strong theological basis for Christian Religious Education in today's families. In this text, the inheritance of faith from Lois and Eunice to Timothy shows that Christian Religious Education begins first in the home, not in school or church. The family is the first and primary educational environment where children learn to know God, experience love, and form a strong moral character and spirituality. In the modern context marked by globalization, pluralism, and digital disruption, many families have lost their pedagogical function due to busyness and changing cultural values. However, this text reaffirms the calling of Christian families to be the primary partners of the church and school in shaping the faith of children. Faith education is not only doctrinal teaching, but

also the consistent testimony of parents' lives. Just as Lois and Eunice passed on their faith through their example, so too are today's parents called to be a living curriculum—a curriculum of life that practices love, prayer, and truth in everyday life.

From a theological perspective on education, the role of the family shows that Christian Religious Education is not merely a cognitive activity, but a process of spiritual and moral transformation. Education in faith must lead to the formation of the whole person—a person who is faithful, moral, and socially responsible. The family, as the smallest community of the church, has great potential to instill values such as honesty, love, responsibility, and discipline through warm and authentic relationships.

In addition, the text of 2 Timothy 1:2–5 also shows the principle of intergenerationality in Christian Religious Education, namely the importance of cross-generational involvement in the inheritance of faith. Churches and educational institutions need to strengthen intergenerational relationships—between parents, children, and grandparents—so that character formation does not stop at just one generation. In this framework, Christian families are called to be "faith ecosystems" that nurture the continuous spiritual growth of children.

Thus, the theological relevance of this text for Christian Religious Education today lies in the call to integrate faith, education, and daily life. Christian families who emulate Lois and Eunice become the foundation for the creation of a generation with strong faith, character rooted in love, and servant leadership. Contemporary Christian Religious Education, therefore, not only functions as a means of religious learning, but also as a spiritual movement within the family that fosters a living faith that has a real impact on the world.

The Importance of Quality Culture in Character Building for Leaders

In the context of Christian education, a culture of quality is not merely a management system for achieving high academic standards, but a way of life and spiritual value that guides the entire educational community to work with sincerity, discipline, and a focus on meaningful service. (Sallis, 2014) Quality culture is a shared commitment to continuous improvement that is embedded in the behavior, habits, and value systems of an institution. (Deming, 1986) In Christian education, this principle has a deeper spiritual dimension: quality is not only a matter of efficiency and results, but also an expression of obedience to God and responsibility as stewards of the talents and resources He has given us (Groome, 2011).

A culture of quality in Christian education fosters reflective habits, in which every educator and student is invited to evaluate the learning process as part of their growth in faith and character. Reflection becomes a form of work spirituality—acknowledging human limitations while seeking God's will in every learning process. In addition, a culture of quality trains self-discipline, which does not only mean obedience to rules, but also the willingness to work consistently and responsibly because we realize that work is a form of worship (Colossians 3:23).

Furthermore, a culture of quality also encourages the creation of service excellence, which is the spirit of serving with love, sincerity, and professionalism rooted in the example of Jesus Christ as the Great Teacher. (Sanders (2007) asserts that spiritual leaders are those who pursue excellence not for personal prestige, but for the glory of God and the welfare of others. Thus, the application of a culture of quality in Christian education not only strengthens the competitiveness of the institution, but also forms a community of learners who live by the values of reflection, discipline, and service excellence. This makes quality not just an administrative target, but part of a spirituality of life that fosters the character of leaders with integrity and impact.

The Family as a Mini Church (Ecclesiola Domestica). Based on the example of Lois and Eunice, today's Christian families need to restore their identity as "mini churches" where faith is nurtured through prayer, the Word, and tangible love. Parents serve as priests and spiritual teachers for their children, not merely delegating the task of faith education to the church or school. Families that live in prayer and love become the most effective vessels for character formation because children learn about God's love through the relationships they experience every day.

Living Example as a Faith Curriculum. True faith education is not enough to be taught through words, but must be lived out. Just as Lois and Eunice were real examples for Timothy, so too must parents today display a life that reflects Christian values such as honesty, patience, forgiveness, and responsibility. From a PAK perspective, families who live with integrity become a "life curriculum" that naturally shapes children's hearts and behavior.

Intergenerational Faith Formation. Timothy's faith was born from the spiritual continuity between his grandmother, mother, and himself. This confirms that faith formation must involve all members of the family across generations. Churches and educational

institutions can develop programs that involve parents, children, and the elderly in joint faith learning activities, so that spiritual values are passed on consistently and sustainably.

Collaboration between Family, Church, and School. Today's PAK requires synergy between family, church, and Christian educational institutions. Families instill faith values at home, churches reinforce them through worship and community, while schools develop them through integrated learning. The three must support each other so that the formation of children's character is not partial, but holistic — touching on spiritual, moral, social, and intellectual aspects.

Contextual and Relevant Faith Education. In this digital and pluralistic era, Christian families need to instill a contextual and relevant faith. Children must be taught to understand their faith critically, empathize with differences, and have the moral courage to face the challenges of the times. Through reflective and dialogical family guidance, Christian values are not only passed on, but also reinterpreted in accordance with the context of children's lives today.

Spirituality of Service in the Family. The text of 2 Timothy 1:2–5 also teaches that true faith must be manifested in service. Christian families need to instill an attitude of service from an early age—whether at home, in church, or in the community. Thus, children's character is formed not only through teaching but also through active participation in acts of love and social responsibility.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that Christian Religious Education and family interaction have complementary roles in shaping a culture of quality and developing character and integrity in leadership. Christian Religious Education serves as a vessel for the formation of spirituality, morality, and ethical awareness, which are the foundations of servant leadership. Meanwhile, the family—as *ecclesia domestica* or the household church—becomes a concrete place where the values of faith, love, discipline, and responsibility are brought to life through interpersonal relationships and the example set by parents.

The synergy between Christian Religious Education and the family gives birth to a culture of quality rooted in Christian values, namely a culture that emphasizes honesty, hard work, self-reflection, and love in every action. In such a culture, leadership character is not formed through external pressure, but through a process of internalizing values and consistent moral habits. Thus, the leadership that emerges is not only results-oriented, but also focused on self-transformation and service to others.

Theologically, families that carry out their role as *ecclesia domestica* become the main agents of faith and character formation. In the light of the Christian faith, the formation of true character and leadership is rooted in an intimate relationship with God and love that is manifested in daily life. Therefore, building healthy family interactions and strengthening Christian Religious Education is not merely a social or educational task, but also a theological calling to give birth to a generation with superior spirituality, strong morality, and servant leadership.

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