

CHRISTIAN RELIGION-BASED CHARACTER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the management of Christian-based character education in improving the quality of high school education. The study was conducted at a Christian high school in Tangerang. The basis for this research is the increasing need for character strengthening amidst the moral crisis of the younger generation due to the negative impact of globalization, technological developments, and the lack of integration of religious values in the lives of students. This study used a qualitative descriptive method where data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The research subjects were the principal, vice principal for curriculum and student affairs, PAK, BK, and PKn teachers, homeroom teachers, students, parents, and alumni. The results showed that the management of Christian-based character education in this school was well designed through systematic, collaborative, and evaluative management. The planning stage was designed systematically, structured, and integrated from the center (foundation) which was then integrated into the vision and mission, learning objectives, and the appropriate curriculum. Organizational was carried out using a *whole-school approach*, involving all school members, namely the principal, vice principal, teachers, students, parents, and alumni. The implementation phase takes place through curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular learning, where every activity must integrate Christian values. Other measures taken include a role model approach and constructive interpersonal communication. Character education is carried out continuously to produce an effective habituation process. Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation are carried out holistically and continuously. Character rubrics are included in report cards, student reflective journals, and evaluations from teachers and the foundation, along with follow-up improvements and program strengthening. This demonstrates that Christian-based character education contributes significantly to improving the quality of education.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Education plays a crucial role in the sustainability of human life, developing intelligent individuals with character. However, today's education system has lost its focus on developing a generation of noble morals, with mental decline and a moral crisis occurring among students. Rapid technological developments and the rapid flow of

information make adolescents vulnerable to values that are inconsistent with the nation's culture and morals. If this condition is allowed to continue, education will lose its identity and risk producing "fake" generations who are only academically intelligent but morally empty.

Character education is the primary foundation, with *soft skills* being a key determinant of success in both personal and professional life (Maisyahroh, 2023). Individuals with strong character tend to exhibit a positive and purposeful mindset and live their daily lives focused on meaningful pursuits that have a real impact. They are not only able to formulate life goals but also to pursue them with commitment and consistency.

The process of strengthening character requires the active participation of schools, families, and communities, where these three pillars are interconnected and inseparable. Prasetyo & Hidayat (2019) stated that the involvement of all parties is key to creating sustainable and adaptive educational institutions amidst the era of disruption. Schools are the primary space for formal education, but in terms of character formation, they require support from families and communities. Qin Cheng et al. (2022) emphasized that adolescence is the most crucial period in character formation, where good values need to be consistently instilled. Adolescents who grow up in an atmosphere that supports virtue and morality will develop strong character resilience and resilience, responsibility, and wisdom in facing life's challenges.

The world of education needs to internationalize so that Indonesia can compete with the progress of other nations around the world. This effort does not mean abandoning national identity, but rather provides an opportunity to further strengthen it through global standards of excellence. Schools, as micro-entities, play a strategic role as places for moral and character development, enabling students to exercise self-control and engage in good deeds. Deviant behavior among students is a serious warning that should not be ignored, considering that current criminals can come from young people who are considered not yet vulnerable to crime.

This is where the role of religion needs to be revived, as humans fundamentally use religion as a guide and moral compass in their lives. Religion serves as a foundation for demonstrating good character, thus becoming a moral identity that distinguishes each individual. Character education needs to be designed and built on religious values.

Currently, the Independent Curriculum promotes a balance between *soft* and *hard skills*, focusing on strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile through project-based learning. Students are encouraged to live out the noble values of Pancasila, which include faith and devotion to the One and Only God, noble character, global diversity, critical thinking, mutual cooperation, independence, and creativity (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). Faith and devotion to God are emphasized, as these religious values reflect the depth of students' spirituality and morals. This is related to the development of emotional intelligence and self-awareness (*mindfulness*), which will equip students for success, especially amidst the increasingly challenging times, particularly in the era of *Society 5.0*, where human capabilities must keep pace with technology.

High school is a crucial phase in human life in character formation. This period is the starting point where personal values begin to grow and take root into a strong identity. Students need guidance and mentoring from competent and experienced individuals. The success of schools in designing and implementing character education effectively is expected to provide answers to the various polemics currently facing, as well as a concrete response to the moral crisis currently gripping this nation. Good character education will also improve the quality of school education. The quality of an educational institution is not only responsible for students' cognitive aspects, but also plays a role as an environment for the socialization of religious and moral values (Samsudin, 2016). Good character will reflect the true quality of education.

In the context of implementing character education, Christian schools are among the institutions that significantly implement religious-based character education. The Christian faith provides eternal and timeless values, thus fostering a resilient and virtuous personality (Situmorang, 2019). In this regard, educational quality recognizes

the need for character and spiritual maturity in students. Christian-based character education considers character formation as part of the calling of faith, transforming each individual into an image and partner of the living God. A school culture built on love and truth will provide fertile ground for the growth of positive character in students.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. A qualitative approach is used to explore descriptive data regarding a particular situation, event, individual, or context that is observed comprehensively and in depth (Hamzah, 2019). The research subjects consisted of the principal, vice principal for curriculum and student affairs, Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers, Civics teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, students, parents, and alumni. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, direct field observations, and documentation studies. Data analysis was carried out using an interactive model, namely through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To maintain the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and methods was carried out. This research was conducted at a Christian high school in Tangerang City, which is known to have a structured character education system based on Christian values.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To address the increasingly complexities of modern education coupled with moral decadence, this school strives to implement various methods of character building for students. Modern education emphasizes more than just the transfer of knowledge; it must also foster strong, adaptive character (Sahlberg, 2015). This is crucial, considering that schools, besides being a place to acquire knowledge, also serve as a place for moral and character development among students. Character education is based on Christianity and is known as PKBN2K (Character Education Based on Christian Values), where every activity is required to incorporate Christian values. The values contained in PKBN2K are: humility, kindness, loyalty, honesty, perseverance, obedience, courage, caring, sacrifice, self-control, patience, and generosity. In practice, these values are anchored by the value of love.

Through the implementation of the PKBN2K program, it is hoped that the best graduate profile will be created, known as *BEST*, which is an acronym for *be tough, excel worldwide, share with society, and trust in God*. The *BEST* graduate profile must be understood as the outlet for the embodiment of Christian values that are wrestled with and explored together. Otherwise, people can fall into the trap of understanding *BEST* as a form of arrogance and pride. Within the PKBN2K framework, the *BEST graduate profile* cannot be separated from the Christian values that underlie it.

A. Christian-Based Character Education Planning

Planning is carried out systematically and structured, adhering to the foundation's *top-down policies* and integrated through the BIKER (Bureau of Spirituality and Character), which is responsible for designing and developing character education programs. These character values are then mapped and collaboratively implemented into the school's vision, mission, and goals. The steps taken during this stage include:

1. Goal Setting

This is done by formulating the direction of character development based on the national vision and mission of schools and foundations, then outlining the objectives of character education in the PKBN2K indicators and *BEST* profiles, and then aligning the objectives of character education with national policies (P5). Effective educational planning must take into account local needs, student potential, and the direction of national and global policies in the world of education (Gunawan, 2017).

2. Situation Analysis

Identifying the needs and challenges of student character can be done through observation and evaluation of activities that have been carried out, then analyzing the context of the diversity of student backgrounds to avoid rejection and assessing the suitability of character values with social dynamics and needs.

3. Resource Identification

The resources used and involved include: human resources, program and document resources, and material resources.

4. Strategy Development

Establish annual routine and additional programs based on the implementation of Christian character education designed by the school structure. Then, appoint a PIC and a person in charge for each activity and form a small team to ensure implementation and oversight of the activities. As well as establishing regular teacher coaching and training sessions to increase capacity and vision alignment.

5. Akis Plan Development

This plan is designed to plot the activities outlined in the academic calendar. This ensures that theme determination, work meetings, outreach, activity implementation, and evaluation can be carried out effectively and sustainably.

This planning is implemented in various systematic and structured programs and activities such as:

1. Focused Material

This is material that discusses the values of PKBN2K which was specially designed by the BIKER team.

a. Insert Material

Conducted by all subject teachers, character values are embedded in teaching modules. Learning modules are designed in the MGMP forum, and teachers can then adapt them to their respective school's circumstances.

b. Joint Growth Group/KTB

This is a spiritual and character development activity conducted in small groups within the classroom. The goal is to instill Christian values in a more personal and profound way, so that students experience spiritual and social character growth.

c. 5S Program (Smile, Greet, Say Hello, Be Polite and Courteous) and TOMATO (Please, Sorry and Thank You)

Both programs are behavioral practices designed to instill habits and are strongly emphasized throughout the school community. The hope is that the value of politeness will be effectively implemented and become part of the school culture. These programs may seem simple, but they play a significant role in shaping students' character.

1) Morning Reflection

A routine activity carried out by students, teachers, and staff before beginning school activities. It aims to reflect on Christian values in the hope of inspiring, motivating, and encouraging, as well as strengthening the character and personality of the school community.

2) Morning Service

The daily routine program for students and teachers on duty is to welcome school residents by greeting them when entering *the lobby*.

3) Monthly worship for teachers and students.

This is a mandatory activity for the school community. The student month service is performed by all 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students, accompanied by fellow students. The teacher month service is performed together with teachers from kindergarten, elementary, and junior high schools.

The special programs carried out include:

1. *Three Big Events (Character Camp, Faith Building, and Field Trip)*
Character Camp is specifically for 10th graders, *Bina Iman* is for 11th graders, and *Field Trip* is for 12th graders. Each activity takes place over three days outside of school and will focus on character development for students.
 2. *Teacher development activities*
It is a series of efforts designed systematically and sustainably to improve the competence, *professionalism*, and personal and pedagogical qualities of educators.
 3. *Social Action*
It is a form of implementation of Christian values such as love, caring, humility, and sacrifice . Social action aims to raise awareness of the importance of serving and being present to others , especially those in need.
 4. *Future Friends (SMD).*
Funds are collected from students voluntarily setting aside their pocket money to help children in need. The funds are managed by the class treasurer, who then submits them to the SMD PIC teacher each month. This activity supports the Social Action program.
 5. *Best Mentor.*
This is a training program offered to teachers representing each PENABUR high school school. The program provides teachers with insights into how to handle problem students. Each meeting also includes *sharing* from each school.
 6. *Leadership camp*
This activity aims to provide leadership training for students. Representatives from the Student Council (OSIS) and Student Representative Council (MPK) are required to participate.
 7. *Peer Educator .*
It is one of PENABUR's strategic programs which aims to empower students as peer educators in *supporting* character building, learning, and social skills development.
 8. *Spirit of Challenge (SoC)*
This activity takes the form of educational tourism and character development through adventure, social interaction, and exposure to local culture outside the school environment. The goal is to shape students' character through real-life experiences and spiritual reflection within a context of togetherness and diversity.
 9. *Community Social Project /CSP*
This activity is a signature school activity held annually, targeting social communities in need, the environment, and MSMEs. All students in grades 10, 11, and 12 participate in the activity.
 10. *DofE IA (The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award)*
This is an international awards program for young people aged 14-24. The program aims to empower young people to develop their potential and skills through positive activities.
 11. *POA (Project of Awareness)*
PENABUR is a high school program that emphasizes cleanliness in the school and outside environment through the 3Rs (*reuse, reduce, and recycle*) and *save the earth activities* . The goal is to raise awareness of the environment and a sustainable lifestyle. This program is packaged as an inter-school competition at the high school level.
- B. Organizing Christian-Based Character Education
- Organization is carried out by involving all school members through a '*whole-school' approach* . (1). The principal as the general director and highest person responsible for the character education program, (2). The vice

principal for student affairs is tasked with compiling, coordinating, and integrating the character program with student activities such as OSIS, MPK, extracurricular activities, and other student programs. Such as CSP, TOMATO, 5S , *Spirit of Changalle*, DOFe IA, *Leadership Camp* , and others, (3). The vice principal for curriculum is tasked with ensuring and monitoring the implementation of learning in the classroom, where all subjects are required to include character education in every meeting and all of this is stated in the learning module/RPP, (4). The PAK teacher as the spearhead in implementing Christian values, implementing the PKBN2K program, KTB, worship, reflection, and focused material as well as fostering students spiritually and emotionally, (5). BK teachers as implementers of classical guidance, individual counseling, and monitoring of psychosocial character development, (6). Homeroom teachers act as implementers of PKBN2K material during homeroom hours, character mentors, personal companions for students, taking a personal approach to problem students, and liaisons with parents, (7). Subject teachers insert character values in learning modules/RPP and daily learning, (8). Students (OSIS/MPK) as direct implementers of character activities in the student environment, and (9). Alumni as *role models* or real witnesses to the long-term impact of character education.

C. Implementation of Christian-Based Character Education

The implementation of character education based on Christian religious values is implemented in three main channels, namely intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. The implementation is carried out in the following ways: (1). Internalization of Christian values in school activities (morning reflection, monthly worship, integration in subjects and extracurricular activities, DofE IA, *Peer Educator* , *Leadership camp* , *Spirit of Challenge* , focused material, Growing Together Group, social service and community service activities such as *Community Social Project* , Sahabat Masa Depan, *Project of Awareness* , (2). Creation of a conducive learning environment, (3). Carrying out character building through 5S, TOMATO, and *morning service activities* , (4). Special approaches for students with problems, (5). Teacher role models and teacher and employee strengthening programs.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation of Christian-Based Character Education

The monitoring and evaluation process of character education is carried out through various mechanisms, both qualitative and quantitative. The objectives of monitoring and evaluating character education are to (1) Assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the character education program, (2) Determine changes in student attitudes, behavior, and personality, (3) Adjust character development strategies and programs according to students' real needs, (4) Ensure the achievement of PKBN2K values and synchronization with the Pancasila Student Profile. The assessment and evaluation instruments are as follows:

NO	INSTRUMENT	EXPLANATION	Evaluator
1	Attitude value rubric	Used in report assessment with categories A, B, C.	PAK and PKn Teacher
2	Homeroom teacher journal/personal agenda	Record any outstanding student behavior events.	Homeroom teacher
3	Google evaluation form	Sent by the foundation (BIKER) to teachers and students every semester.	BIKER Team
4	Teacher's daily observation	Used by all teachers as part of learning.	Subject teachers
5	Evaluation of program activities/reflection	PICs for social, spiritual and character extracurricular activities are arranged.	PIC and team

6	Student-parent communication sheet	Used by some homeroom teachers as a record of character development.	Homeroom teacher
7	Peer assessment link	Assessment conducted by peers	PAK and PKn Teacher

Attitude scores on report cards, processed by the PAK and PKn teachers, will be presented at a teacher council meeting. These scores will be presented and the homeroom teacher and subject teacher's opinions will be solicited. These scores may be changed if the subject teacher or homeroom teacher has specific notes regarding the student. These notes must align with the assessment indicators set by the PAK and PKn teachers.

The evaluation reporting process involves creating a descriptive report by the PIC, or person in charge of the activity, accompanied by activity documentation. This report is then submitted to the vice principal, the person responsible for the activity. The report is then forwarded to the principal for review. If it is satisfactory, the activity report is submitted to the foundation and signed by the principal. The evaluation results will then be used to revise and improve the program.

Every year, BIKER will conduct monitoring and evaluation through a questionnaire link that must be completed by the children and the PAK teachers, who serve as the character development team. Typically, students will be asked what changes they have experienced after participating in various school activities or programs. The results of the questionnaire will then be evaluated to determine whether character education is working effectively.

CONCLUSION

The research results show that the management of Christian-based character education at SMAK PENABUR Tangerang City is systematic, integrated, and involves all elements of the school. The planning stage is carried out systematically, structured, and integrated. The Foundation, through the Bureau of Spirituality and Character (BIKER), has provided guidance and direction for character policies based on Christian values. These values are then integrated into the school's vision and mission, learning objectives, and curriculum in accordance with the Independent Curriculum. This planning process involves the principal, vice principal, teachers, students, and parents collaboratively.

In the organizational phase, the school implements a collaborative and whole-school approach. Each stakeholder plays an integral role in program implementation, from the principal as the person ultimately responsible, teachers as role models and value facilitators, the character development team, parents as partners, to students as the primary subjects of character internalization and alumni as role models.

Implementation phase is carried out through curricular learning (inserting character values in every subject), co-curricular (spiritual mentoring, Character Camp, worship reflection), and extra-curricular (extracurricular activities, community service, OSIS activities). Teachers consistently instill values such as love, integrity, responsibility, and self-control through a life-modeling approach and constructive interpersonal communication. The program is implemented continuously, not incidentally, thus resulting in an effective habituation process.

The monitoring and evaluation stages are conducted holistically and continuously. Assessments are based not only on cognitive aspects, but also on affective and spiritual aspects. Character rubrics are included in report cards, student reflective journals, and teacher and parent evaluations. The monitoring process is also accompanied by follow-up program improvements and strengthening. This demonstrates that character evaluation is treated as part of school quality assurance, in line with modern educational management principles.

Overall, Christian-based character management contributes significantly to improving the quality of education. This is evident not only in improved student behavior, but also in academic achievement, a positive school culture, and student readiness to face the challenges of the times. Character education, integrated with the school's identity, creates a holistic personal transformation, making students not only intellectually intelligent but also morally and

spiritually strong. Overall, the Christian-based character education management approach has proven to make a real contribution to improving the quality of education and developing a young generation with morals, responsibility, and a spirit of service.

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