

Idealism in Christian Religious Education: Concept, Implementation, and Challenges

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Abstract

Christian Religious Education (PAK) plays an important role in shaping students' character and moral awareness. One philosophical stream that can serve as a foundation for Christian Religious Education (PAK) is idealism. Idealism emphasizes that true reality is ideas, mind, or spirit, not material objects. This article discusses the concept of idealism in Christian Religious Education (PAK), the implementation of idealism in Christian Religious Education (PAK), and the challenges faced in implementing idealism in Christian Religious Education (PAK). Research results show that idealism can serve as a strong foundation for PAK to shape students' character and moral awareness, as well as improve the quality of Christian religious education. However, the implementation of idealism in PAK must be carried out carefully and consider existing challenges, such as limited resources, teachers' skills, inappropriate curriculum, and diverse student needs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (PAK), as one of the strategic tasks of the church, can make an important contribution if in all PAK programs for all age categories and various contexts (family, church, and in shaping the character and moral awareness of students (Nuhamara, 2018). In the era of globalization and modernization, PAK is expected to be a foundation for students to develop strong moral and spiritual values, as well as become agents of positive change in society. The increasingly complex and dynamic context of globalization demands. Christian Religious Education to adapt to existing challenges. Plurality and multiculturalism, global ethical challenges, technology and social change, conflict and tolerance, and the influence of popular culture and consumerism, all of these issues underline the importance of integrating Christian religious values into the development of a missionary character that is relevant to the context of globalization (Pendidikan et al., 2023). One of the philosophical schools that can be a foundation for PAK is idealism. Idealism emphasizes that true reality is ideas, thoughts, or spirits, not material objects. In the context of PAK, idealism can help shape students who have high moral and spiritual awareness, as well as improve the quality of Christian religious education.

Idealism is a philosophical school that upholds ideas or concepts. Christian religious education based on idealism encourages students to seek the truth and develop their ability to understand the spiritual and moral world. This can help them live meaningful lives and make a positive contribution to society. Christian religious education based on idealism places teachers as important objects to guide students in the learning process. Teachers must have a good understanding of Christian values and can help students develop a deeper relationship with God. In addition, teachers must also pay attention to students' needs and abilities to help them reach

their highest potential (Juli et al., 2023). However, the implementation of idealism in Christian Religious Education also faces several challenges, such as limited resources, teacher skills, and an inappropriate curriculum. Furthermore, Christian Religious Education must also face external challenges, such as the influence of popular culture and technology that can affect students' moral and spiritual values. Therefore, this article will discuss the concept of idealism in PAK, the implementation of idealism in PAK, and the challenges faced in implementing idealism in PAK, to provide a deeper understanding of the role of idealism in PAK and how to implement it effectively.

This article will also discuss several strategies to address challenges faced in implementing idealism in Christian Religious Education, such as developing a more flexible curriculum, improving teacher skills, and utilizing technology in education. Furthermore, this article will discuss several examples of successful implementations of idealism in Christian Religious Education and provide recommendations for improving the quality of Christian Religious Education in the future. Therefore, this article is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of Christian Religious Education and improve the quality of Christian religious education in Indonesia.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

In this writing, the author will discuss the role of idealist philosophy and its implementation in education, so the method used is the descriptive method, which is also the method chosen to describe the role of idealist philosophy and its implementation in Christian Religious Education (PAK). The strategy for obtaining data is carried out through library studies, such as books or articles.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Idealism in Christian Religious Education (PAK)

Idealism is a philosophical school that glorifies the soul. Idealism is a school of educational philosophy that emphasizes that ultimate reality is rooted in spiritual values, ideas, and truths (Fathoni, 1985). In the context of Christian Religious Education (PAK), idealism places God as the source of absolute truth and God's Word as the primary foundation for the entire educational process. Education is not understood merely as a process of transferring knowledge, but rather as an effort to shape whole people who live according to God's will.

Ideally based Christian Religious Education (PAK) focuses on developing students' spiritual awareness. Education is aimed at helping students build a deep relationship with God, so that faith is not only understood conceptually but also experienced in everyday life. Therefore, Christian values such as love, truth, justice, loyalty, and responsibility are at the core of the learning process. These values are seen as fundamental, eternal, and universal in Christianity, and must be instilled from an early age through continuous faith education (Juli et al., 2023).

From an idealistic perspective, truth is not seen as merely a product of human thought but as an essential truth originating from God. Religious Education (PAK) encourages students to recognize this truth and understand the essence of human existence as God's creation, made in His image and likeness. This understanding helps students develop positive mindsets, develop a sensitive conscience, and make wise decisions based on Christian teachings. Thus, education fosters not only intellectual intelligence but also moral integrity and ethical responsibility in both personal and social life.

In the context of education, an educator is responsible for outlining their Christian perspective as an implementation of the educational system they implement. This perspective can be considered a collection of fundamental assumptions that shape a person's mindset and behavior. Therefore, the Christian perspective can be interpreted as a set of basic Christian beliefs that describe the relationship between God and His creation (Tunggal et al., 2024). Education is directed at character formation that reflects the example of Christ, so that students are able to live righteously before God and be responsible in their relationships with others. The development of social skills

and concern for the environment are also important, so that students are able to present themselves as individuals who have a positive impact in society.

Implications of Jesus' Wisdom for Teachers. Observing the wisdom of Jesus above, several important points below can be used as implications for teachers of Christian Religious Education: Asking for wisdom from God. Teachers are limited humans, even though they are figures who can be used as examples by students. That is why the teacher's task is not easy. Therefore, teachers need to ask God for wisdom in helping students with problems. This wisdom is obtained if teachers know God and humans (Purnama, 2020). The implications of idealism in Christian Religious Education demand the role of educators as role models of Christian faith and values. Christian Religious Education teachers do not only function as conveyors of material, but also as spiritual guides who present the values of faith through attitudes, words, and concrete actions. The learning process should be reflective and transformative, so that students not only understand Christian teachings theoretically, but are also encouraged to live them in the real context of life. Thus, idealism in Christian Religious Education contributes to the formation of a generation with strong faith, Christian character, and is able to present the values of the Kingdom of God in the world.

Implementation of Idealism in Christian Religious Education (PAK)

The Bible is a source of knowledge for believers. The Bible guides a person to love wisdom and to love the one who gives wisdom, namely God. Philosophy Christianity not only guides a believer to “love wisdom” but also to love the giver of true wisdom. Christian Religious Education must develop philosophy and theology as an effort to present biblical truths on various life issues (No et al., 2020). Idealism in education places universal and transcendent values as the main foundation, especially in PAK which is oriented towards the formation of spiritual humans according to the teachings of Christ (John 17:17). Its implementation includes an approach that integrates spirituality, character, and personal experience to form whole students.

In 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, love is explained, which includes an understanding and explanation of character values. If character is formed, it will greatly determine the character of the nation in the future. This research was conducted using qualitative methods or literature presented in the form of a biblical analysis of character education according to 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Based on the Bible, the values of character education are love, as reviewed from 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Love is a character that is patient, generous, not jealous, not arrogant, not self-satisfied, does not seek self-interest, is not angry, does not keep records of other people's wrongs, does not rejoice in injustice, rejoices with the truth, tests all things, and believes all things (Elkana, 2023). **Spiritual Values as Priorities** The curriculum and PAK learning methods are designed to instill core spiritual values such as love (1 Corinthians 13:4-7), forgiveness, honesty, justice, and service. Examples of implementation include thematic Bible studies (e.g., Acts of the Apostles for service), group discussions on Christian ethics in Indonesia's multicultural society, social activities such as community service in the NTT community, and reflective school worship. Teachers are the main facilitators in schools, whose function is to explore, develop, optimize their potential so that they become part of a civilized society. Teachers are educators, figures, role models and identification for the students they educate and their environment. Therefore, of course, being a teacher must have certain standards and qualities that must be met (Didik, 2023). This is realized through the example of teachers as role models, habituating positive behavior (such as being honest in exams or serving each other in class), and instilling moral values in every PAK subject.

Holistic and Inclusive Approach. Idealistic education develops all aspects of the student's personality—intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical—in a balanced manner, reflecting the creation of humans as the image of God (Genesis 1:27). The holistic approach views humans as a whole entity consisting of body, soul, and spirit. The Christian view affirms that God created humans in His image and likeness (Imago Dei). Humans are not merely rational beings, but also relational, spiritual, and moral beings. Therefore, true education must treat

humans as whole, unfragmented individuals. In Genesis 1:27, it is emphasized that humans are created in the image of God, which means they have the divine potential to reflect God's love, truth, and justice in life. Christian Religious Education, therefore, must not be reductive or pragmatic, but must aim at the restoration and development of the totality of humans (Tapilaha & Mauboy, 2025).

Using Reason to Understand Religious Teachings. Idealism encourages the use of reason to understand Christian teachings rationally and critically (1 Peter 3:15), avoiding blind dogmatism. Students are invited to analyze contemporary issues such as digital ethics or religious tolerance through biblical hermeneutics, so that religious teachings become relevant in the modern era of plural Indonesia.

The Challenge of Idealism in Christian Religious Education (PAK)

In-depth Analysis and Faith-Based Solutions Philosophical idealism, which places ideas, spiritual values, and transcendent truth as the primary reality, offers a transformational vision for Christian Religious Education (PAK). However, in Indonesia's postmodern era, its implementation faces serious challenges that threaten its spiritual-holistic essence. This section outlines five key challenges, followed by analysis, contextual examples, and practical solutions rooted in the Bible, so that PAK remains relevant in shaping a generation of believers amidst the secular current.

1. **Lack of Understanding of the Concept of Idealism.** Many PAK educators and policymakers—including those at the Sunday school level and theological colleges—lack a deep understanding of the philosophical concept of idealism. Plato's idealism views the world of ideas as essential, while its Christian counterpart (such as Augustine's) emphasizes God's Word as the source of eternal truth. As a result, PAK often falls into a pragmatic-reductive approach, merely memorizing doctrine without developing the soul. In Indonesia, a survey of religious education shows that 60% of PAK teachers are more familiar with the national curriculum than with educational philosophy (data from the Ministry of Education and Culture 2024). The potential of idealism to improve quality—such as forming holistic character—is neglected, replaced by formal exam targets.

Strategic Solution: Implement mandatory training in Christian philosophy with a study of Colossians 2:8: Be careful that no one takes you captive through empty and deceitful philosophy, which is according to human tradition and the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

2. **The Influence of Materialism and Secularism** Urban Indonesian society is increasingly filled with the values of materialism (wealth as the main success) and secularism (privatized religion), challenging the idealism of PAK, which prioritizes spiritual values. Students, especially Gen Z in Kupang, are more interested in expensive gadgets or TikTok trends than prayer or service, as seen in the Barna Group 2025 survey on the decline in spiritual interest among Asian teenagers. This contradicts the essence of Christian idealism: humans are not merely consumers, but the image of God (Genesis 1:27) destined for eternal glory. In multi-ethnic NTT, post-pandemic economic pressures have worsened, making students prioritize "worldly success" over grace.

Strategic Solution: Design a curriculum with a Matthew 6:33 theme through Christian entrepreneurship projects (e.g., church social enterprises). Teachers exemplify a simple life, combined with career counseling based on the talents of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12).

3. **The Phenomenon of Hoaxes and Disinformation.** Currently, social media is an effective, transparent, and efficient communication medium and has an important role as an agent of change and renewal (Social, 2012). However, the spread of hoaxes via WhatsApp and Instagram undermines "media idealism"—the Christian principle of truth as a foundation (Psalm 119:160). In Indonesia, 80% of teenagers are exposed to daily disinformation, including anti-Christian or false narratives about the Bible, leading students to doubt their faith. This challenges Christian Education (PAK) because idealism emphasizes rational reason to understand revelation, not blind fanaticism.

Strategic Solution: Provide critical media literacy via weekly classes, teach source verification using John 8:32—"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Practice: Analyze news stories together, create a student podcast about Bible facts vs. myths.

4. Pluralism and Tolerance. Indonesia, as a pluralistic country (Pancasila, 6 official religions) demands that PAK teach Christian idealism—the values of eternal love and justice—without neglecting tolerance. The challenge: students from mixed backgrounds (such as in Kupang public schools) may perceive Christian teaching as "exclusive," triggering conflicts such as the intolerance case in NTT in 2024. Idealism is not relativism; Christian truth is unique (John 14:6), but the command to love one's neighbor (Mark 12:31) encourages respect for differences.

Strategic Solution: An inclusive approach to Romans 12:18—"If possible, as much as you can, live peaceably with all people"—through interfaith dialogue in schools, joint service projects (e.g., interfaith disaster relief). Integrate Pancasila ethics with Christian doctrine for local contexts.

5. Technological Development Rapid technology (AI, VR, metaverse) is a double-edged sword: an opportunity to convey interactive teachings (apps like the Bible Project), but challenges with internet addiction (average 7 hours/day for Indonesian teenagers, 2025) and negative content (pornography, extremism). This erodes the spiritual discipline of idealism, where reason and will must be subject to the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). In Kupang, internet access is high, but supervision is low, leaving students trapped in a secular echo chamber.

Strategic Solution: Leverage technology for good—VR Bible tour classes, prayer gamification—while teaching self-control, the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). School policy: A weekly "Digital Sabbath," plus a Christian parental control app.

Conclusion and Recommendations This challenge is not the end, but rather a call to idealistic Christian Education reform: a return to Christ as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6).

4. CONCLUSION

Idealism in PAK is an educational approach that emphasizes the development of spirituality and moral values as its primary foundation. This approach focuses not only on the transfer of knowledge but also on holistically shaping students through an understanding of essential truth, developing character with integrity, and strengthening their relationship with God.

The implementation of idealism in PAK is carried out through several strategies, namely integrating spiritual values such as love, forgiveness, and honesty into the curriculum; forming character through role models and habits; developing all aspects of personality in a balanced manner; actively involving students in learning through reflection, prayer, and service; and encouraging the use of reason to understand religious teachings rationally and critically.

However, the implementation of idealism in PAK faces various significant challenges, including the lack of understanding of the concept of idealism among educators, the influence of materialism and secularism that shifts the priority of spiritual values, the spread of hoaxes and disinformation that damage media ethics, the need to maintain tolerance amidst religious pluralism, and the two-sided impact of technological developments.

To optimize the role of idealism in PAK, a deep understanding of this concept is needed, strengthening students' critical literacy, and the wise use of technology to strengthen spiritual values amidst the dynamics of modern society.

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