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The Fruit of the Spirit and Falulu Fohalowo: Synergy of Christian Values and Nias Culture in Character Education for Teenagers

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Abstract

This article aims to examine the synergy between the values of the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) and the cultural values of Falulu Fohalowo from the people of Nias as a basis in the formation of the character of today's Christian youth. This research uses a literature study method by examining various sources such as the Bible, theological literature, books, and relevant scientific articles. The results of the study show that the Fruit of the Spirit emphasizes inner transformation through the development of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, loyalty, gentleness, and self-mastery, while Falulu Fohalowo emphasizes social responsibility, mutual cooperation, and respect for others in the context of community. The synergy between the two results in a holistic approach to adolescent character education that integrates spirituality, value understanding, and tangible action. Thus, the contextual application of the values of the Spirit Fruit and Falulu Fohalowo in Christian Religious Education can be an effective strategy in forming adolescents who are faithful, have social character, and are able to live Christian values in the midst of modern cultural challenges.

Keywords: character education; christian teen; falulu fohalowo; spirit fruit

Introduction

Character education is very important to be applied in the world of education with the aim of equipping adolescents with the formation of good character and character through good coaching, training, and self-formation. Character is the main basis that must be formed in students through education to form an integrated personality and be able to live every change experienced. Proper character formation is part of the benchmark for achieving educational goals lived by students. To produce students with character, the application of Christian Religious Education can start from the family as the main forum for education for children (Stevanus & Macarau, 2021). The application of character education is not only carried out in the educational environment but can start from the family, where parents are the first people who will recognize the world of education to children. The family is the main forum in the process of growth and education for children, adolescents and even adults.

One of the cultural values that is relevant to character formation is *Falulu fohalowo*. This value has the meaning of gotong-royong as one of the pillars of the value of the Nias community to teach community members to work together for the common good (Laia, 2019). This value not only appears in traditional ceremonies and physical developments such as traditional houses, but is also internalized in the pattern of leadership, deliberation, and the customary law system (fondrakö). Therefore, falulu fohalowo has great potential as a character learning material: it forms habits of mutual help, discipline in collective tasks, and fosters a sustainable sense of social responsibility.

In the current era, there are many factors that result in character damage in teenagers, one of which is the phenomenon of social media that does not educate and build morals. Adolescence is a time when children will experience changes as a transition period from childhood to adolescence. Nowadays, teenagers are more likely to make their own decisions easily, act faster and be more curious and try things. Based on news sourced from republika.co.id, a junior high school student was found to be a victim of the demolition of several high school students (*AY Case, Reflection of the Moral Dilapidated Generation*, 2019). This happens because the character has not been formed in students, so that they triumphantly carry out demolition which is an attitude that does not describe a student. Other evidence of the decline in the character of adolescents can be seen by the existence of crimes, anarchism, vigilance, radicalism, hatred, intolerance, disrespect, terrorism, injustice that unwittingly become a culture in various generations until today's adolescents in various relationships (Stevanus, 2018).

Selfish and easily influenced by access to social media so that media abuse occurs which is one of the things that damages the character of adolescents by being too dependent on the media (Purba, 2021). It was also found that there were several cases that teenagers did not have a bad character. This can be seen from the rampant drug cases, *married by accident*, pornography, plagiarism in exams and many other things, even cases of media abuse which do not only occur in schools but also in universities. According to Imawati, (2018) pornography caused by the abuse of technological sophistication causes adolescents to experience cognitive impairment (Imawati & Sari, 2019).

The decline in the character of today's teenagers, according to (*Christmas Febe Wulandari*, 2023) can be overcome by the way teachers must teach Christian ethical values in a biblical perspective as the foundation of life that is taught and applied in daily life. There are also several ways to overcome the deterioration of the character of today's adolescents, namely by strengthening character education in the family, instilling character values by building a positive moral culture in schools, and strengthening character education in the church and in the community (Yuri, 2019). Determining relevant strategies in character education is also a way to overcome the deterioration of adolescent character by involving parents, the church, and society in guiding adolescents about a life of character based on Christian values (*Darianti*, 2023). According to (*Rifai* 2023), the formation of adolescent character can also be done based on the Bible (Psalm 78:1-8), where a teacher must reflect the example of Christ to his students as Christians whose moral life is based on the word of God. Based on the importance of character education in various ways in overcoming character decline sourced from some of the findings of previous researchers, in this paper, the researcher discusses how to implement

Christian Religious Education based on Galatians 5:22-23 as an effort to build the character of today's adolescents.

Christian Education is an educational process that functions to instill the faith of many people with the preaching of God's Word carried out with the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Baganu, 2023). As is known, character formation cannot be separated from the formation of spirituality in a person. For this reason, Christian Religious Education is very important to be applied in forming the personality of adolescents with character and good integrity. This education can be carried out in various places including churches and community environments with various experiences that can be shared to grow everyone's spirituality and be able to make people slowly experience God and form the moral, caring and responsible personalities of today's Christian youth, which can be carried out with discipline training and forming a quality personality.

Although the literature on *the fruit of the Spirit* (Galatians 5:22-23) has been widely used as a basis for values in Christian Religious Education, and ethnographic studies explain traditional Nias values such as *falulu fohalowo* and *fondrakö*, there is a lack of conceptual integration and empirical evidence that tests the synergy between the two sources of value in shaping adolescent character. This research aims to fill this gap by designing, implementing, and evaluating an integrated pedagogical model that combines *the fruits of the Spirit* and *the falulu fohalowo* in the context of schools to measure character changes and understand the cultural meaning behind these educational practices.

Methods

This study uses a library research method that aims to examine various written sources related to the implementation of Christian Religious Education in the formation of adolescent character through the integration of *the value of the Fruit of the Spirit* (Galatians 5:22-23) and the cultural value of *the falulu fohalowo* from Nias. Research data was obtained from relevant books, scientific journals, articles, and customary documents. The research process includes problem identification, collection and selection of literature sources, content analysis of theological and cultural concepts, and synthesis of study results to find the synergy of Christian values and local culture in the context of character education of today's adolescents.

Results and Discussion

Character Education

Christian Religious Education is an educational process to gain an understanding and application of Christian values carried out in daily life through the development of spirituality and character formation based on the faith and beliefs of Christians. Christian education not only creates adolescents who are successful in obtaining academic grades, but is able to create adolescents who are more faithful, obedient, and of good character. Christian education plays a role in shaping and maturing character (Laia, 2020). Christian education is able to form human beings as a whole in all aspects of life, namely spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, and also physical. The main purpose of Christian education is to help adolescents to reach their full potential as human beings made by God and to be able to understand every call to serve Him. Christian education is important to be applied to adolescents, because character formation cannot be separated from the spirituality instilled in adolescents. Where in Christian

education there is a process or effort in shaping the personality and maturing each individual through teaching and training.

Character is not a new thing that has been heard as an important subject in education that is formed in education and has even become a benchmark for higher educational achievements. Character is a set of personalities, dispositions, and traits that are identical to a person's prevalence and beliefs in daily life (Nandy, 2022). Character is a trait and psychology inherent in individuals that includes attitudes, behaviors and actions of a person in various situations and environments with values and morals that are acceptable in society. Good character is an important quality to develop in daily life, especially to achieve positive life goals and help others. Character formation is carried out by the process of learning daily life. This means that character is not something that is innate from birth, but is formed through the process of learning both from the family environment and the people around it. Some elements that can affect the formation of a person's character, namely: emotions, attitudes, beliefs, habits and willingness, self-concept and self-conception.

Analysis of Galatians 5:22-23 as an Effort to Build the Character of Today's Youth

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit in Greek: *Fruit* (karpos), "fruit" is *spirit* (pneumatos), "Spirit" is a biblical term that contains 9 tangible attributes of the true Christian life according to the Apostle Paul to the Galatians 5. The term "fruit" is a single word that affirms that there is only one kind of "Fruit" with 9 properties (Widiastuti, 2021). The Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 is a human act or effort as a good thing done by every Christian who has a relationship with the Spirit of God. The fruit of the Spirit is an indication of what Paul emphasizes as a spiritual life with a unity that is the goodness that exists in every person whose life is led by the Holy Spirit and practiced in relationship with Christians and fellow human beings. The nine fruits of the Spirit in Galatians help in forming the character of youth based on the principles of the Holy Spirit, namely love, joy, peace, patience, generosity, kindness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control.

The fruits of the Spirit are a must for every student who has studied Christian Religious Education, where this is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit by showing the change or transformation obtained through Bible study (Belo, 2020). The fruit of the Spirit will lead people to God's grace by maintaining a close relationship with Jesus Christ and being responsible in the kingdom of God. The Lord Jesus affirmed that every Christian should not fulfill the desires of the flesh, which are contrary to the desires of the Spirit, such as impurity, lust, debauchery, drunkenness, malice, and lasciviousness (*Meaning of Galatians 5*, 2021). By implementing Christian Religious Education based on Galatians 5:22-23, the researcher hopes that this can make it easier to form the character of teenagers with good morals. However, it is also important to pay attention to the needs in character development of each teenager. Some ways to apply the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 as an effort to shape the character of today's youth are as follows: first, Instilling the values of love and kindness. Youth must be taught to love and serve others selflessly, to love their enemies, and to show kindness in all situations. Second, Teaching the importance of joy and patience. Youth must be taught how to find joy in their lives, even in difficult circumstances, they are still taught to be patient in the face of trials and difficulties. Third, Encourage the creation of peace and

loyalty. Youth must be taught to live in peace with others, show loyalty to the Lord and their friends, and seek the good of others. Fourth, Getting used to meekness and self-control. Adolescents must be taught to treat others gently, control their emotions and make good and wise decisions. This can be done by providing guidance to youth to practice meekness and self-mastery at every opportunity. Fifth, Provide a good example of life. Youth should be set by example and guided by adults who follow the principles of the Holy Ghost, so that youth can learn to model good behavior and conform to the principles of the Christian religion.

The Meaning of Galatians 5:22-23 and Falulu Fohalowo as an Effort to Build the Character of Today's Youth

Theological Meaning of Galatians 5:22-23: The Fruit of the Spirit as the Basis for Character Formation

Galatians 5:22-23 mentions nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, mercy, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This verse shows that true Christian character is not the result of human efforts alone, but the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers (Fee, 2007; Barclay, 2019). In the context of today's youth, the fruit of the Spirit becomes a moral guide that leads to the formation of a whole personality – teaching love in social relationships, patience in the face of pressure, and self-control in the midst of the temptations of the digital and hedonistic world. Christian education plays an important role in instilling these values not only as doctrine, but as a lifestyle embodied in daily actions.

The Value of Falulu Fohalowo in Nias Culture: Gotong Royong as a Mirror of Social Welfare

Falulu fohalowo is the main value in Nias culture which means cooperation or mutual cooperation (Laia, 2019). This value emphasizes the importance of solidarity, togetherness, and mutual help in social life – both in traditional activities, house construction, and community celebrations. In the view of the Nias people, a person is not considered socially mature if he is not involved in joint work. This value not only fosters social responsibility, but also forms an attitude of humility, discipline, and empathy towards others (Harefa, 2020). Thus, *falulu fohalowo* is a tangible reflection of the values of love and service that are in line with the principle of the fruit of the Spirit in the Bible.

The Meeting Point of the Value of the Spirit Fruit and Falulu Fohalowo in the Formation of Adolescent Character

Both *the fruit of the Spirit* and *the falulu fohalowo* have in common the basic principles that lead humans to live in love, humility, and responsibility towards others. *The fruit of the Spirit* as described in Galatians 5:22-23 emphasizes the inner change that results in ethical and moral behavior according to God's will. Values such as love, patience, kindness, and self-control are tangible manifestations of the character formed by the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. Meanwhile, *falulu fohalowo* in Nias culture teaches the importance of cooperation, solidarity, and mutual cooperation as social responsibilities inherent in community life. This value requires every individual to prioritize togetherness and concern for others as a form of moral and social maturity.

The synergy between *the fruit of the Spirit* and *the falulu fohalowo* gave birth to a holistic approach in the character education of Christian adolescents. *The Spirit fruit* forms the spiritual and moral dimension in adolescents, while *the falulu fohalowo fohalowo* fosters a social dimension that emphasizes real action in life together. The integration of the two results in an educational model that balances aspects of the heart (spirituality), mind (understanding of values), and action (social practice). In the context of Christian Religious Education, this synergy can be

realized through contextual learning that links the teachings of the Bible with local cultural values, so that faith does not stop at religious knowledge alone, but is manifested in concrete social behaviors that are relevant to the lives of today's adolescents.

Implementation of the Value of the Spirit Fruit and Falulu Fohalowo in Adolescent Character Education

The implementation of these values can be realized through various strategies in Christian Religious Education in schools and churches. Teachers and spiritual advisors can develop service learning projects, where students learn to work together to help the surrounding community, while reflecting on their experiences based on the fruit of the Spirit. For example, environmental mutual cooperation activities, child assistance, or loving services to elderly parents. This process not only forms empathy and social concern, but also strengthens the faith and spirituality of the youth. Thus, character education based on *the fruit of the Spirit* and *falulu fohalowo* acts as a means of forming adolescents who are morally resilient, socially caring, and spiritually mature.

Conclusion

Based on the results of literature review and conceptual analysis, it can be concluded that the integration of the values of *the Fruit of the Spirit* (Galatians 5:22-23) and the cultural values of *Falulu Fohalowo* from Nias forms an effective synergy in the character development of today's Christian youth. Both share the same basic principles, which are to cultivate love, humility, and responsibility towards others, but through complementary dimensions: *The Fruit of the Spirit* focuses on the inner transformation that results in ethical behavior, while *Falulu Fohalowo* emphasizes the social-communal aspect through the practice of mutual cooperation and community solidarity. The findings of this study show that adolescent character education will be more meaningful if local spiritual and cultural values are contextually integrated in the learning process. The synergy between *Buah Roh* and *Falulu Fohalowo* gives birth to a holistic approach that fosters a balance between spirituality (heart), understanding values (mind), and real actions (deeds). The implementation of these values in Christian Religious Education can form adolescents who are faithful, have social character, and are able to live Christian values in their own cultural context. Thus, the results of this study affirm the importance of faith-based education and local wisdom as a relevant character formation strategy in the midst of the moral and social challenges of today's young generation.

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