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Integration of Christian Values with Local Wisdom in Digital Learning Media: Literature Review

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the integration of Christian values with local wisdom through digital learning media within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE). The problem addressed is the lack of learning media that contextually and relevantly accommodates Christian values and local culture in line with the development of digital technology. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a library research approach through a systematic review of relevant academic literature. The novelty of this research lies in the design of a conceptual model for digital media that combines Christian faith values such as love, justice, and service with local cultural elements like folklore, regional songs, and traditional symbols. The research findings indicate that this integration can enhance the relevance, participation, and understanding of Christian teachings among students, while simultaneously strengthening their cultural identity. These findings offer a theoretical contribution to the development of inculturation-based CRE literature and a practical contribution for Christian educators in the digital age.

Keywords: christian; digital; learning; local; values

Introduction

Christian Religious Education (CRE) inherently aims not only to transfer doctrines of faith but also to integrate Christian values with the local cultural context where learning takes place (Giban & Rangka, 2025). In the digital age, the utilization of technology in the learning process has become a necessity. Digital learning media can serve as a bridge to connect Christian teachings with the socio-cultural realities of students. Contextual learning is expected to foster a creative dialogue between Christian faith and local culture without losing the essence of Christ's authentic teachings. Therefore, Christian educators need to develop digitally-based teaching materials that are relevant to the real lives of students, while remaining grounded in biblical principles.

In practice, digital learning media can be implemented through several concrete forms. For example, the creation of interactive videos that narrate Christian values through local folklore relevant to biblical teachings, such as honesty, love, and cooperation. Furthermore, educational game-based learning applications can be designed to teach Christian principles through symbols and characters from local culture. Podcasts or audio devotions that combine

traditional stories with reflections on the Word of God can also be an effective medium to reach students in areas with limited visual digital access (Hall & Jones, 2023). Other forms, such as contextual digital modules and locality-based e-learning platforms—which integrate biblical texts with cultural values like deliberation, mutual assistance (*gotong royong*), or respect for elders—represent tangible efforts in inculturating Christian values within the digital realm.

Despite the possibility of various such innovations, the reality in the field indicates that CRE learning is still largely textual, monotonous, and insufficiently adaptive to local culture and technological advancements (Astuti et al., 2023). Many educators still employ traditional approaches and have not creatively optimized digital media to bring faith values to life within the cultural context of students. Furthermore, the available content is often universal and does not adequately accommodate the richness of local cultures, making learning feel less meaningful for students.

On the other hand, the digital divide remains a serious challenge in the implementation of technology-based learning media (Wahyudi & Jatun, 2024). Unequal access to devices and internet networks exacerbates disparities in learning quality. Furthermore, previous studies on inculturation in CRE are generally still conceptual and have not extensively developed practical implementation forms through digital media. This results in a lack of applicable guidance for educators in integrating Christian values and local culture in technology-based learning.

Previous research emphasizes the importance of integrating local culture into learning media to shape student character. Bawan, Leonardo, Salamba, & Melianus (2024) integrated the values of loyalty, kinship, and tolerance in education through the Longko' Torayan culture. Aryani, Fajrie, & Kironoratri (2023) developed a local wisdom-based e-story book of Grobogan to instill leadership values and cultural pride. Safitri & Jupriyanto (2025) demonstrated that culture-based learning media strengthens student character and learning motivation in Pancasila Education. These three studies affirm that local wisdom is effectively integrated into digital media to enhance the relevance of learning.

The innovation of this research is also reflected in the development of a digital learning platform specifically designed to accommodate the process of inculturation in Christian Religious Education (Noor, Younas, Aldayel, Menhas, & Xu, 2022). This platform will consider various aspects of local culture while maintaining the integrity of Christian teachings. This research has significant implications for efforts to improve the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education in the digital age. The research results are expected to provide concrete contributions to the development of contextualized and meaningful learning media. Practically, this research will help Christian educators develop more effective teaching strategies by utilizing digital technology while still paying attention to local wisdom. From a theoretical perspective, this research will enrich studies on inculturation in the context of religious education, especially in relation to the use of digital technology as a learning medium.

Responding to this gap, this research offers novelty by developing digital learning media that specifically integrates Christian values such as love, forgiveness, service, justice, and respect for creation with forms of local wisdom like folklore, regional songs, and

traditional rituals. Different from previous studies that focused more on general cultural or character aspects, this research designs contextual digital media prototypes in the form of interactive platforms, culturally-based video devotions, and educational applications that maintain the purity of Christian teachings in their presentation (Noor et al., 2022). Thus, this innovation not only enriches technology-based CRE learning approaches but also strengthens the internalization of faith that is relevant to the cultural context of students.

The contribution of this research encompasses two important aspects. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a strategic reference for Christian educators in developing digital learning media relevant to the cultural context of their students (Knitter, 1995). Theoretically, this research enriches the literature on inculturation-based CRE, particularly in the application of digital technology as a contextual and transformative learning medium.

Based on this background, the main research question is: how can Christian values be integrated with local wisdom through digital learning media for CRE? The primary objective of this research is to develop a digital learning model that integrates Christian values and local culture within the context of CRE. Specifically, this research aims to: (1) identify effective forms of digital media for integrating Christian values and local wisdom, (2) develop a prototype of inculturation-based digital learning media. Thus, the aim of this study is to systematically review the literature related to the integration of Christian values and local wisdom through digital learning media, and to formulate a conceptual model that can serve as a foundation for the development of innovative digital learning media for CRE in the digital age.

Methods

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method, focusing on the review of academic literature as the primary source of data (Mason, 2002). This method was chosen because it aligns with the conceptual nature of the research objective, which is to formulate a model for integrating Christian values and local wisdom in CRE digital learning media. Data were collected through a review of various sources such as scholarly books, national and international journals, scientific articles, and educational policy documents relevant to the topic, digital learning media, and Christian values within the local cultural context. The data collection process was conducted systematically by selecting literature sources with strong relevance and high academic validity. During this stage, the researcher sought to extract the essence from various sources related to the theme. Thus, this library research approach not only strengthens the theoretical foundation of the research but also yields an applicable scientific construct for the development of contextual and transformative learning models in CRE.

Findings and Discussion

Increasing the Relevance of Christian Religious Learning

Enhancing the relevance of Christian Religious Education in the modern context requires a holistic and contextual approach. According to Collet & Matemba (2022), religious learning must integrate faith values with daily life, making it not only doctrinal but also applicable. Boiliu (2024) emphasizes the importance of using interactive learning methods,

such as discussions and case studies, so that students can connect Christian teachings with contemporary issues like social and environmental justice. Meanwhile, Ziebertz (2024) argues that educators need to consider the cultural diversity and backgrounds of students to make learning more inclusive and meaningful. By combining theological, pedagogical, and contextual approaches, Christian Religious Education can become more relevant for the younger generation in addressing the challenges of the times.

Therefore, one strategic approach is the use of digital learning media based on local wisdom to bridge the gap between Bible teachings and the cultural context lived by students (Tarumingi, 2024). Through this approach, the subject matter is not only presented universally, but is contextualized to suit the local culture. The integration of local wisdom in Christian learning helps students understand that Christian values can live in the traditions and cultural practices they know.

In this study, the main Christian values chosen to be integrated include: love, forgiveness, service, justice, and respect for creation. The value of love emphasizes the importance of loving one another in the community; forgiveness builds awareness of improving relationships between individuals; service encourages a spirit of humility in helping others; justice instills an attitude of defending the truth; and respect for creation strengthens the responsibility to protect nature as God's mandate (Xu et al., 2021). To connect these values with the local cultural context, several forms of local wisdom have been identified and integrated into digital learning media, namely: first, Folk tales: For example, legends about inter-tribal cooperation in Papua, which illustrate the values of love and justice. This story is used to teach the importance of unity and mutual respect in the community. Second, Folk songs: Traditional songs that contain moral messages and respect for others and nature are used to instill the values of love and respect for creation. These songs are re-recorded in digital format and inserted into the learning module. Third, traditional rituals: Several traditional rituals depicting reconciliation and peace between groups, such as traditional conflict resolution ceremonies, are used to introduce the values of forgiveness and service to students. Fourth, traditional carvings and dances: Carvings that tell cultural stories about creation and human relationships are used to illustrate the value of fellowship in the body of Christ. Traditional dances involving community cooperation are also used to emphasize the values of service and togetherness.

As a concrete example, in the context of Papua, the legend about the origin of friendship between tribes in the Central Highlands is used in the form of animated videos to teach the values of love and justice (Fatubun, 2021). Regional songs with the theme of brotherhood are re-sung in digital versions to support reflection on the universal love of Christ.

This digital learning media based on local wisdom not only makes learning more contextual but also increases student engagement. The younger generation, growing up in the technology era, is more interested in visual, dynamic, and interactive learning (Ariani et al., 2023). By packaging Christian values through folklore, regional songs, traditional rituals, and traditional arts in the form of videos, educational applications, or interactive animations, learning becomes more meaningful and profound. Furthermore, this approach promotes inclusivity in Christian Religious Education. By acknowledging the existence of local culture

in learning, students from various backgrounds feel valued and motivated to develop their faith within the context of their daily lives. The recognition of local culture as part of God's creation fosters appreciation for diversity within the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

The integration of Christian values through local wisdom has an impact on students' character development. When the value of love is manifested in caring, forgiveness in reconciliation, service in helping others, justice in upholding truth, and appreciation for creation in preserving the environment, students will be better prepared to live out their faith in a tangible way (Sauda, 2023). Learning becomes a transformative life experience, not just the mastery of cognitive material. Intergenerational dialogue is also strengthened through this approach. For example, students can explore Christian values through cultural stories told directly by parents or traditional elders, which are then repackaged in digital form. This strengthens intergenerational relationships and simultaneously preserves cultural traditions that are in danger of extinction.

In the long term, digital learning media based on local wisdom with the integration of Christian values has the potential to form a more harmonious, tolerant society that respects cultural and faith diversity (Hendarwoto & Sutrisno, 2024). Thus, digital learning media is not only a pedagogical tool, but also a means of spiritual and social transformation. Christian religious learning that is integrated with the values of love, forgiveness, service, justice, and respect for creation becomes more relevant, down to earth, and has a real impact on the lives of students amidst the challenges of the times.

Empowering Cultural Identity in Christian Faith

In the context of Christian Religious Education, the empowerment of cultural identity becomes an important step to ensure that students do not lose their cultural roots while deepening their Christian faith (Triposa & Kolibu, 2024). The integration of Christian values with local cultural elements such as art, language, and traditions is a strategic approach to achieve this goal. Local arts, such as traditional music and dance, can be utilized to convey biblical messages. Praise songs in regional languages, for example, not only help students understand the Word of God better but also strengthen their sense of pride in their cultural heritage. This creates a close relationship between their faith and cultural identity.

Local languages also play a significant role in deepening students' understanding of Christian values. Bibles translated into local languages allow students to understand God's word in expressions that are familiar to them (W. R. F. Browning, 2007). The use of the mother tongue in teaching provides a profound impression that is difficult to achieve when using only national or international languages. Local traditions, such as folktales or customary rituals, can be used to illustrate Christian theological concepts. For example, folktales that highlight the values of justice or love can be linked to the teachings of Jesus. In this way, students not only learn about faith but also gain a broader understanding of the relationship between culture and spirituality.

The empowerment of cultural identity within the Christian faith also helps students face the challenges of modernization, which often erodes traditional values (Gole & Duha, 2024). When their faith is linked to local culture, students have a strong foundation to maintain the positive values of their cultural heritage amidst the changes of time. This approach also

contributes to students' character development. By knowing and appreciating local culture, students are taught to be humble individuals, respect diversity, and value ancestral heritage. These values are in line with the principles of the Christian faith, such as love and respect for others.

Furthermore, the integration of local culture within the Christian faith creates space for intergenerational dialogue. When students learn their faith through art, language, or traditions, they often involve parents or traditional elders. This strengthens family and community relationships while maintaining the continuity of cultural values from one generation to the next. In the context of education, the use of local cultural elements also increases the relevance and attractiveness of learning. Students feel that learning Christian Religious Education is not foreign or detached from their lives but rather relevant and connected to their daily experiences (Hura, Laoli, & Gea, 2024). This increases their motivation to learn and live out their faith.

Empowering cultural identity in Christian faith also has broad social impacts. Students who have a strong cultural identity tend to be more confident individuals and are able to contribute to society (Sampe & Petrus, 2021). By upholding Christian principles in their culture, they can become agents of change that bring positive impacts in their communities. Thus, the integration of Christian values with local cultural elements not only strengthens students' faith but also enriches their cultural identity. This approach creates harmony between faith and culture, providing students with a solid foundation to face global challenges without losing their spiritual and cultural roots.

Effectiveness of Locally Based Digital Learning Media

Digital learning media based on local culture has become a significant innovation in education, especially for Christian religious education. By incorporating local symbols, stories, and traditions, this media can make biblical material more relevant and engaging for students (Talakua, 2023). This has proven to increase student engagement in the teaching-learning process. The use of local cultural symbols in digital media provides a more meaningful learning experience. For example, traditional symbols often used in carvings, fabrics, or local art can be adapted to explain biblical concepts such as love, faith, or forgiveness. These symbols make biblical messages easier to understand because they are rooted in things that are already familiar to students.

Local stories incorporated into digital media also serve as an effective means of connecting biblical values with students' lives (Kisno, Wibawa, & Khaerudin, 2022). For instance, folktales that emphasize the importance of justice or truth can be linked to Jesus' teachings on divine justice. In this way, students not only understand the Bible but also see its relevance in their culture. Local traditions, such as dance or traditional music, can be integrated into digital learning videos to enhance students' learning interest. Local music combined with spiritual songs or traditional dances that illustrate biblical stories become effective tools to attract students' attention and make them more enthusiastic about learning.

Local-based digital learning media also enables students to apply biblical values in the context of everyday life (Gulo & Tapilaha, 2024). For example, students who learn about love through their local folktales are more likely to practice love in their interactions with family

and community. Thus, learning becomes more applicable. One of the advantages of local-based digital media is its ability to reach various learning styles of students. Visual learners can be helped by local cultural animations, while kinesthetic learners can learn through interactive simulations inspired by local traditions. This approach ensures that every student can be maximally involved.

In addition to increasing students' interest and engagement, local-based digital media also supports the strengthening of cultural identity. When students see their cultural elements integrated into learning, they feel more valued and proud of their cultural heritage. This helps them understand that the Christian faith does not contradict but can actually enrich their culture. The effectiveness of local-based digital media also lies in its ability to overcome geographical challenges (Monika, 2023). In remote or hard-to-reach areas, this media can be accessed through digital devices such as mobile phones or tablets, providing opportunities for students to learn independently anytime and anywhere.

In the long term, the use of local-based digital media for Christian religious education also helps build bridges between local traditions and global values (Poroe, Tompo, & Idayanti, 2022). Students who learn through this approach not only understand their culture but also have a broad perspective on how the Christian faith is relevant in a global context. Thus, local-based digital learning media is not only an educational tool but also a means of transformation. This approach increases engagement, strengthens cultural identity, and enables students to apply biblical values in everyday life. The effectiveness of this media demonstrates that the integration of local culture into religious education is a strategic step to create a generation rooted in faith and culture, while also being prepared to face global challenges.

Character Building Through Harmony of Faith and Culture

Character formation is an important goal in education, including religious education (Nuhamara, 2018). Through the process of inculturation, learning that integrates faith and culture can create a generation with strong character. The harmony between Christian faith and local culture becomes a foundation for students to live according to biblical values without leaving their cultural identity. In this process of inculturation, learning allows students to understand that Christian teachings do not contradict their ancestral culture. On the contrary, culture can be a means to express faith. For example, the tradition of gotong royong found in many local cultures reflects the values of love and togetherness taught by Jesus.

Through learning that harmonizes faith and culture, students are taught to respect their ancestral heritage. By understanding local culture as part of God's greater plan, students learn to appreciate the cultural diversity in society while preserving their own cultural richness (Pasaribu, 2023). Inculturation also forms a more inclusive character in students. They learn that the Christian faith is not only for a particular group, but is relevant to all cultures and traditions. This understanding makes students more open to differences and able to build harmonious relationships with others, regardless of their cultural or religious background.

One of the important values formed through the harmony of faith and culture is respect for human dignity. When students are taught to appreciate their own culture, they are also taught to respect other creatures of God, including people from different cultures (Tarrapa, 2021). This creates students who are humble, tolerant, and respectful of others. The process of

character formation through the harmony of faith and culture also involves the strengthening of spiritual values. By understanding how local culture supports biblical teachings, students can more deeply appreciate values such as love, forgiveness, justice, and humility. These values become the foundation for their daily actions.

Through the integration of faith and culture, students also learn to be witnesses of Christ in a diverse society. They not only understand God's word but are also able to convey the love of Christ through concrete actions relevant to their cultural context (Choi, 2020). This makes them agents of change who have a positive influence on their communities. The harmony of faith and culture also helps students overcome the challenges of globalization that often erode traditional values. When students have a strong character foundation from faith and culture, they are able to face negative influences from outside without losing their identity. They become wise and resilient individuals in the midst of changing times.

In the long term, character formation through inculturation builds a more harmonious society. Young generations with strong characters, respect for ancestral culture, and living according to the Christian faith tend to become wise and visionary leaders (Tarumingi, 2024). They are able to create a peaceful and just environment, reflecting God's kingdom on earth. Thus, the harmony of faith and culture is not only a learning strategy but also a foundation for the formation of a complete character. The process of inculturation in Christian religious education not only educates students intellectually but also shapes them into individuals who reflect the love of Christ, respect their culture, and make a positive impact in the midst of a diverse society.

Innovative Models for CRE in the Digital Age

In the digital era, religious education requires a learning model that is relevant to the needs of the current generation. The digital generation tends to have a learning style that is more visual, interactive, and multimodal (Huang & Xia, 2024). Therefore, the development of learning media based on local wisdom is one innovative approach that can meet these needs. Learning media based on local wisdom combines elements of culture, technology, and biblical values to create a holistic learning experience. This approach not only provides a deeper understanding of God's word but also strengthens students' cultural identity. In this way, religious education becomes more relevant and meaningful.

This innovative model integrates various media formats such as videos, animations, infographics, and interactive applications that highlight local symbols, stories, and traditions. For example, biblical stories can be presented through animations with a specific regional art style, or learning applications can include interactive quizzes in local languages (Baz, Avşar, Özbek, & Söğüt, 2024). The advantage of this approach is its ability to increase student engagement in learning. Visual and interactive media make biblical material more engaging, so students are more motivated to learn. They not only read or listen but also interact with the material, which helps strengthen their understanding.

In addition to increasing learning interest, this learning model also supports the development of 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy (Lubis, Siagian, Zega, Nuhdin, & Nasution, 2023). For example, students can be invited to create digital projects based on biblical values and local culture, such as short

videos or digital posters. This model also allows for personalized and adaptive learning. By using technology, media can be tailored to students' needs, interests, and ability levels. For instance, learning applications can offer modules specifically designed to help students understand biblical concepts according to their cultural context.

In its implementation, this innovative model also supports inclusivity in learning. Students from various cultural backgrounds feel more valued when their cultural elements are integrated into learning media (Messitidis, 2018). This creates a sense of belonging and appreciation for diversity within the body of Christ. Media based on local wisdom also has great potential to reach students in remote areas. With access to technology such as mobile phones or tablets, students can learn independently through digital media, even if they are in places difficult for teachers to reach. This provides wider opportunities to receive quality Christian Religious Education.

One of the main challenges in implementing this model is the need for training for teachers and media developers. Teachers need to understand how to use technology and integrate it with local wisdom effectively. Collaboration with local communities and cultural experts is also important to ensure that the media developed truly reflects authentic local values (Rifdah & Giriwat, 2024). Thus, the development of media based on local wisdom offers a new, innovative approach to CRE learning in the digital era. This model not only makes learning more interesting and relevant for the digital generation but also strengthens the cultural identity and spiritual values of students. This initiative is a strategic step to form a young generation that is faithful, has character, and is ready to face global challenges without losing their cultural roots.

Implications

The findings of this research provide a significant theoretical contribution to the development of Christian Religious Education (CRE), particularly within the framework of inculturation and contextual pedagogy. The integration of Christian values with local cultural elements through digital media reinforces the idea that faith and culture are not conflicting entities but can engage in constructive dialogue. This approach broadens the horizons of Christian education theory, which has predominantly focused on textual and dogmatic approaches, towards a more interactive, visual, and contextually experiential direction. Specifically, the results of this research support the paradigm of transformative education, where faith is not only taught but also lived out within a concrete cultural context relevant to learners.

Practically, the implications of these findings encourage CRE teachers to develop digital teaching materials that incorporate Christian values and local cultural richness through interactive videos, animations, songs, and stories. Developers of learning media are advised to build locally-based educational applications that are easily accessible and responsive to digital conditions in remote areas. Christian educational institutions need to develop a curriculum based on culture and faith and facilitate training for teachers to be able to use digital media contextually and creatively. For future development, it is recommended to conduct further field-based research to test the effectiveness of the media prototypes that have

been designed and to explore the role of digitalization in the formation of students' spirituality in various different local cultural contexts.

Conclusion

This research concludes that the integration of Christian values with local wisdom through digital learning media is an effective and transformative approach in Christian Religious Education (CRE). Values such as love, forgiveness, justice, service, and appreciation for creation can be creatively contextualized through folklore, regional songs, traditional rituals, and local cultural symbols. Through this approach, digital media not only becomes a learning tool but also a means to deepen the appreciation of faith and build the holistic cultural identity of learners. This innovation allows learning to be more relevant, meaningful, and inclusive, especially for the younger generation in the digital age who have visual and interactive learning styles. In addition to increasing student engagement and understanding, the development of locally-based digital media also contributes to the formation of contextual Christian character. The process of inculturation helps students realize that the Christian faith does not conflict with local culture but can actually enrich and strengthen it. By combining technology, faith values, and culture, the resulting learning model is able to bridge the gap between local traditions and global demands. Therefore, this research provides a theoretical contribution to the development of contextual CRE literature and a practical contribution in the form of strategic guidance for educators to create relevant, adaptive, and grounded learning media.

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