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Catholic Faith Formation as a Means of Strengthening Moral Values and Spirituality Among Youth at Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish, Gunung Mas Regency

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ABSTRACT: Catholic Youth (Orang Muda Katolik/OMK) constitute the Church's next generation, yet sustaining their moral values and spirituality has become increasingly difficult amid globalization, digital technology, and the geographic isolation of remote parishes. This study describes the implementation of the Catholic Faith Formation (Bina Iman) program, examines its contribution to shaping the moral values and spirituality of Catholic youth, and identifies the factors that support and hinder the program at Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish, Gunung Mas Regency. A descriptive qualitative design was applied, drawing on observation, in-depth interviews, and documentary review of six purposively selected informants: the parish priest, a youth companion priest, a catechist, an active young member, an inactive young member, and a lay community leader. Data were processed through reduction, display, and conclusion-drawing, with trustworthiness secured through source, method, and time triangulation. The study rests on a three-tiered theoretical framework: the Church's magisterial teaching on youth faith education as the grand theory; Lickona's Moral Development Theory and Fowler's Faith Development Theory as middle-range theories; and Groome's Shared Christian Praxis model together with the contextual catechesis principles of Catechesi Tradendae as applied theory. The findings show that the faith formation program is running but remains far from optimal because of a shortage of companions and the parish's vast geographic spread. Even so, the program demonstrably strengthens three interrelated dimensions of moral character moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action and nurtures youth spirituality through personal prayer, liturgical involvement, and a deepening relationship with God. Supporting factors include personal motivation, family and peer encouragement, and the commitment of the pastoral team, while the main obstacles are a shortage of companions, remote geographic conditions, the pull of digital technology, and an inconsistent activity schedule. The study recommends developing a faith formation model that is more contextual, adaptive, and grounded in local Dayak cultural wisdom for use in remote parishes.

KEYWORDS: Catholic Faith Formation; moral values; spirituality; Catholic youth; remote parish

1. BACKGROUND

Young people occupy a strategic place in the life of the Catholic Church as the generation expected to become agents of change, both within the Church and in wider society. The Second Vatican Council's declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) states that Christian education is meant to form the whole person morally, spiritually, and socially so that individuals can live out their Christian calling and contribute actively to the common good. Faith formation is therefore an essential vehicle for shaping mature believers who are responsible toward both Church and society (Sitepu et al., 2024). Pope Francis, in *Christus Vivit* (2019), reinforces this view by insisting that young people are not merely the Church's future but its present as well individuals who need accompaniment and room to grow in faith, rather than passive objects of pastoral programs designed entirely by adults.

Global trends reveal a double-edged impact of modernization, digital technology, and social media on young people's faith lives. On one hand, technology opens broader avenues for evangelization and allows Christian values to reach more diverse audiences (Rahayu, 2023); on the other, it contributes to a crisis of religious identity, declining engagement in church life, and a drift toward worldly pleasure-seeking and shallow information consumption (Sitepu et al., 2024). This trend is especially concerning when young people spend far more time in digital spaces than in communal settings of faith encounter, making structured and consistent faith formation all the more urgent.

Prior studies from various cultural settings in Indonesia reinforce this troubling picture. Santika, Adinuhgra, and Wirasari (2019), examining the Tumbang Kaman mission station, found that youth disengagement from church activities stemmed from low personal awareness and weak

community support, while also showing that consistently run faith formation programs could revitalize youth participation in church life. Pranyoto (2024), studying Muting Parish in the Archdiocese of Merauke, observed that youth are often treated as pastoral objects rather than active subjects, pointing to the need for participatory catechetical models such as Shared Christian Praxis, which takes young people's lived experience as the starting point for faith reflection. Sinaga (2024), working at the Santo Stefanus dormitory in Waena, Jayapura, found weak appreciation of youth fellowship rooted in diminished family involvement and the displacement of spiritual priorities by gadget use. Amal, Midun, Habur, and Katolik (2024) likewise stressed the importance of innovative pastoral strategies for sustaining congregational, including youth, engagement amid changing times. Sutrisno (2024) added that youth accompaniment must be designed holistically so that young people can balance spiritual and worldly life under the pressures of modernity.

A comparable problem is visible at Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish, Gunung Mas Regency a remote parish in the Diocese of Palangka Raya comprising twenty mission stations scattered across hundreds of kilometers from the parish center. This geography makes mobility between stations a serious challenge for both companions and youth, since several stations can be reached only by river or by dirt roads that become impassable in the rainy season. The researcher's preliminary observation in 2026 found that, of roughly thirty registered young Catholics at the parish center, only ten to fifteen regularly attended faith formation activities, while most others attended irregularly or not at all. This situation is worsened by geographic isolation, a shortage of companions with adequate catechetical competence, and the pull of modern lifestyles, leading some young people to attend only entertainment-oriented gatherings or even engage in behaviors that put their morality at risk, such as casual relationships and alcohol consumption at certain events.

This condition raises serious pastoral concern, since faith formation that fails to run optimally risks producing a generation of Catholic youth who are morally and spiritually fragile and vulnerable to negative outside influence. Yet remote parishes such as Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing possess a distinctive social asset: the local wisdom of Dayak culture, which upholds solidarity, mutual cooperation, and respect for elders values that could serve as a relevant foundation for a more contextual faith formation model.

Unlike earlier studies that generally isolate a single dimension liturgical participation, digital media transformation, or basic community life and that are mostly set in Batak, Papuan, or Florenese cultural contexts, this study offers novelty through a holistic and integrative approach linking three dimensions at once: the implementation of faith formation as a pastoral-catechetical process, moral formation through Lickona's framework (moral knowing, moral feeling, moral action), and spiritual growth based on Fowler's Faith Development Theory. It is also the first study to focus specifically on the socio-cultural context of the Dayak community in a remote parish of Central Kalimantan, thereby filling an empirical gap in Indonesian pastoral-catechetical scholarship that has so far been dominated by other cultural settings.

Building on this background, the study aims to: describe the implementation of the Catholic Faith Formation program for youth at Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish; analyze the role of faith formation in shaping and strengthening youth moral values; understand its role in nurturing and developing youth spirituality; and identify the factors that support and hinder the program's implementation. The findings are expected to offer practical input for the parish and the Diocese of Palangka Raya in designing more effective faith formation models, while also enriching pastoral-catechetical scholarship on youth faith formation in Indonesia's remote regions.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Church's Magisterial Teaching on Youth Faith Formation (Grand Theory)

The theoretical framework of this study is organized in three tiers grand theory, middle-range theory, and applied theory allowing the phenomenon of faith formation to be read coherently, from the universal teaching of the Church down to contextual pastoral practice. At the grand-theory level, the study draws on the Catholic Church's magisterial teaching on youth faith education. *Gravissimum Educationis* (Second Vatican Council, 1965) holds that Christian education serves a dual purpose: forming the whole person and guiding believers toward both personal maturity and maturity in the mystery of salvation they profess. Faith education, in this view, is not mere doctrinal transmission but a comprehensive process of personal formation spanning intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual dimensions.

This is reinforced by the apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit* (Pope Francis, 2019), addressed specifically to young people and the whole People of God. The document insists that youth are not passive recipients of pastoral policy but active, creative subjects within the life of the Church. Pope Francis emphasizes accompaniment that honors each young person's uniqueness, listens to their lived experience, and opens wider space for participation in Church life. This principle grounds the present study's stance toward Catholic youth not as mere objects of formation, but as dialogue partners in the process of faith growth.

2.2 Lickona's Moral Development Theory and Fowler's Faith Development Theory (Middle-Range Theory)

At the middle-range level, this study employs two complementary frameworks to read the impact of faith formation on youth life: Thomas Lickona's Moral Development Theory and James W. Fowler's Faith Development Theory. Lickona (2012) argues that integral moral character is built through three interrelated dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Moral knowing covers moral awareness, knowledge of virtues, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, decision-making, and self-knowledge. Moral feeling concerns the affective dimension of character conscience, self-respect, empathy, love of the good, self-control, and humility. Moral action is the fruit of the first two dimensions, expressed through competence, will, and habit in consistently doing good. The three dimensions reinforce one another: moral knowledge without moral feeling tends to produce shallow compliance, while moral feeling without concrete action stalls at mere sentiment. This study uses Lickona's framework to examine how faith formation contributes, gradually and in an integrated way, to shaping youth moral character, and to identify which dimension shows the strongest gains and which still requires further reinforcement.

Fowler (1981), in *Stages of Faith*, proposes that faith develops in stages across the human lifespan through the interaction between individuals and their social environment and faith community. Among his stages, the one most relevant to youth is the Synthetic-Conventional Faith stage, in which a person's faith is heavily shaped by authority figures, peer groups, and the faith community to which they belong. At this stage, faith tends to conform to community values and has not yet been fully and personally examined through critical reflection. Companions, catechists, and the faith-formation community play a crucial role here, serving as a bridge that helps young people move toward a more reflective and mature faith

what Fowler terms Individuative-Reflective Faith. This study applies Fowler's theory to understand how the spiritual growth of Catholic youth unfolds through engagement with the faith-formation community, and why disengagement from that community can impede the movement toward a more personal and reflective faith maturity.

Together, these two theories offer complementary analytical lenses: Lickona helps explain moral character formation as an outcome of formation efforts, while Fowler helps explain the dynamics of faith growth as a staged developmental process. Both converge on the same insight that forming a morally grounded believer is not an instant event but the fruit of sustained formation within a supportive community.

2.3 The Shared Christian Praxis Model and Contextual Catechesis (Applied Theory)

At the applied-theory level, this study draws on the Shared Christian Praxis model developed by Thomas H. Groome (1980) and the principles of contextual catechesis articulated in *Catechesi Tradendae* (Pope John Paul II, 1979). Groome (1980) developed a catechetical model that takes participants' lived experience as the starting point for faith reflection rather than treating catechesis as one-directional doctrinal transmission. The model unfolds in five movements: (1) naming present experience, (2) engaging in critical reflection on that experience, (3) presenting the Christian Story and Vision as a source of illumination, (4) engaging in dialectic between lived experience and the Christian Story, and (5) moving toward decision or response that translates faith into concrete action. This model fits the context of youth faith formation well, since it treats young people as active subjects whose experiences are valued and reflected upon together in line with the spirit of *Christus Vivit*, which rejects a one-way pastoral approach.

Consistent with this model, *Catechesi Tradendae* (Pope John Paul II, 1979) insists that catechesis must respond to the real questions believers face in daily life, not merely transmit abstract knowledge detached from participants' lived context. The document emphasizes incarnational catechesis rooted in the local culture and concrete situation of the community so that the proclamation of faith can be received and lived out meaningfully. This principle of inculturation grounds the study's recommendation for a contextual faith formation model based on local Dayak wisdom, given the distinctive geographic and socio-cultural character of Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish.

2.4 Prior Research and Conceptual Framework

Several prior studies have examined the faith formation of Catholic youth across different contexts. Santika, Adinuhgra, and Wirasari (2019) found that faith formation at Tumbang Kaman mission station significantly increased youth participation in church life. Sitepu, Lumbanbatu, Sinulingga, and Sihotang (2024), studying the Assumption of Mary Parish in Kabanjahe, found that youth participation in parish spiritual activities remained low and required a more contextual and structured formation program. Pranyoto (2024), at Muting Parish, underscored the value of participatory catechesis grounded in Shared Christian Praxis for youth empowerment. Sinaga (2024), in Jayapura, found that weak family involvement and gadget use contributed to a diminished sense of youth fellowship. Rahayu (2023) highlighted the double-edged role of digital media transformation in contextual catechesis, while Sutrisno (2024) stressed the need for a holistic approach in youth accompaniment to balance spiritual and worldly life. Amal, Midun, Habur, and Katolik (2024) added that innovative pastoral strategies are essential for sustaining congregational engagement amid changing times.

While these studies offer valuable contributions, most examine a single dimension in isolation and are set in cultural contexts outside Central Kalimantan. This study seeks to fill that gap by integrating three theoretical layers: the Church's magisterial teaching as grand theory, Lickona and Fowler as middle-range theory, and Groome together with *Catechesi Tradendae* as applied theory into one coherent analytical framework for reading the phenomenon of faith formation in a remote, Dayak-culture parish. In this framework, the implementation of faith formation functions as the process variable, youth moral values and spirituality as outcome variables, and the supporting and hindering factors as contextual variables shaping the process's effectiveness, allowing the three to be read as interconnected in the discussion of findings.

Operationally, this study defines faith formation (*Bina Iman*) as the deliberate pastoral-catechetical process designed by the parish to accompany youth in growing in knowledge, appreciation, and lived practice of the Catholic faith through shared prayer, Scripture sharing, thematic catechesis, and liturgical involvement. Moral values are defined with reference to Lickona's three dimensions: the extent of youth knowledge of virtue (moral knowing), affective sensitivity toward others (moral feeling), and consistency of good action in daily life (moral action). Spirituality is defined with reference to Fowler's stages of faith development: the extent to which a young person's relationship with God, the faith community, and personal devotional practice moves from dependence on authority figures toward a more personal and reflective faith. These operational definitions guided the development of interview protocols, field observation, and data categorization during analysis, ensuring that findings could be consistently traced back to the theoretical framework employed.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Design, Location, and Timing

This study used a qualitative, descriptive design, chosen because the aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of the process, experience, and meaning young Catholics attach to participating in faith formation, rather than to statistically test cause-and-effect relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014). A descriptive qualitative approach was considered best suited to capturing the complexity of a faith-formation phenomenon that is contextual and rich in symbolic meaning, particularly in a remote parish setting with distinctive socio-cultural characteristics. The research was conducted at Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish, Gunung Mas Regency, Central Kalimantan Province—a remote area with twenty widely dispersed mission stations and a distinctive Dayak cultural background. Data collection took place in 2026, scheduled around the parish's pastoral calendar so that the researcher could directly observe faith formation activities as they occurred.

3.2 Informants

Six informants were selected through purposive sampling (Sugiyono, 2019), a technique for choosing informants based on specific considerations relevant to the study's needs and objectives. The six comprised: the parish priest, who provided insight into parish policy and pastoral vision regarding youth formation; an associate priest serving as youth companion, directly involved in running activities; a catechist/religious sister, involved in personal accompaniment and catechetical teaching; one actively participating young member; one inactive young member who rarely or no longer took part; and a lay community leader, included as an additional informant offering a community-level perspective. Selecting

informants across these different positions was intended to yield a comprehensive picture of faith formation's implementation and impact from multiple vantage points. The number of informants was determined by the principle of data saturation—recruitment stopped once additional informants ceased yielding significant new information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)—so the six informants were judged to adequately represent the range of experiences and perspectives relevant to the study's focus.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data were gathered through three complementary techniques. First, limited participant observation was conducted during faith formation sessions, covering the atmosphere of meetings, interaction between companions and youth, and the materials and methods used. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted using guides tailored to each informant group (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), so that questions posed to the parish priest differed in emphasis from those posed to active or inactive youth, while still addressing the same research focus. Third, documentary review examined youth membership records, faith formation activity schedules, and other relevant parish pastoral documents to complement and verify data obtained through observation and interviews.

3.4 Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, carried out continuously from the start of data collection through the end of the study. Data reduction involved sorting and focusing on data relevant to the study's objectives from field notes, interview transcripts, and collected documents. Data display took the form of descriptive narrative organized thematically according to the research focus, while conclusions were drawn progressively and re-verified against field data to ensure accuracy.

Trustworthiness was maintained through source, method, and time triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Source triangulation involved comparing data across informants occupying different positions within the parish's pastoral structure; method triangulation involved comparing results from observation, interviews, and documentation; and time triangulation involved checking data at different points in time to confirm the consistency of information obtained. The researcher's dual position as observer and limited participant is reflexively addressed in the report to maintain transparency and objectivity, given the researcher's own involvement in church life within the research setting, which could potentially shape data interpretation if not managed carefully and reflectively.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Implementation of the Catholic Faith Formation Program for Youth

Findings show that the faith formation program at Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish is indeed included in the parish's pastoral plan, but its implementation has not yet run optimally. Activities conducted so far include shared prayer, Scripture sharing, reflection, and discussion of faith values, usually held on Sundays after Mass or at special gatherings in the church hall. Although the activity framework exists, its execution on the ground still depends heavily on companion availability and weather conditions affecting access to stations far from the parish center. The parish priest (Fr. A.A.) stressed that, without adequate faith formation, young people would easily be swept along by the currents of the times and drift further from church life underscoring that faith formation functions not merely as a routine activity but as a pastoral safeguard for sustaining youth faith identity amid contemporary challenges.

The parish supports the program by providing venues, a pastoral schedule, and the direct involvement of priests, religious sisters, and catechists as spiritual companions. This institutional support is an important asset for the program's sustainability, although in practice it remains constrained by the limited number of companions relative to the vast service area that must be covered. The associate priest serving as youth companion (Fr. M.T.) adopts a dialogical, recreational, and contextual approach, addressing topics relevant to young people's real lives, such as casual relationships, social media, and the meaning of life. This approach does not position the companion as the sole source of truth delivering one-directional teaching, but as a facilitator inviting youth into dialogue and reflection on their own lived experience.

This approach aligns with the Participatory Pastoral principle embedded in Groome's (1980) Shared Christian Praxis model, which emphasizes treating youth as active subjects rather than passive objects of faith formation. When youth lived experience becomes the starting point for reflection as seen in discussions on casual relationships and social media at Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish the formation process gains greater meaning because it is rooted in the concrete realities participants face, rather than abstract doctrine detached from their daily lives. Likewise, the personal and relational approach used by the catechist (Sr. V.T.) reflects the principle of contextual catechesis articulated in *Catechesi Tradendae* (Pope John Paul II, 1979), which holds that catechesis must respond to the real questions believers face in daily life rather than merely transferring abstract knowledge.

This finding is consistent with Sitepu et al. (2024), who found that youth participation in parish spiritual activities remains low and requires a more contextual and structured formation program, and reinforces Pranyoto's (2024) recommendation on the importance of participatory catechetical models for youth. The convergence of findings across two different geographic and cultural contexts Kabanjahe with its Karo cultural background and Muting with its Papuan background suggests that low youth participation and the need for participatory catechetical models are not merely local issues but structural challenges facing the Indonesian Catholic Church more broadly in forming youth across diverse socio-cultural contexts. However, this study identifies a distinctive feature of the Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing context: the primary obstacle lies not only in catechetical approach but also in the structural dimension of extreme geographic isolation, discussed further in the section on hindering factors.

4.2 The Role of Faith Formation in Shaping and Strengthening Youth Moral Values

Faith formation demonstrably plays a real role in shaping and strengthening youth moral values across the three interrelated dimensions proposed by Lickona (2012): moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. On the moral knowing dimension, active youth informants reported becoming more aware of the importance of honesty and making an effort not to lie to their parents. This awareness did not emerge instantly but developed through repeated reflection during faith formation sessions, where honesty was discussed and connected to participants' concrete experiences—so that the moral knowledge gained moved beyond the purely cognitive and began to be internalized as part of self-awareness.

On the moral feeling dimension, sensitivity toward others increased, marked by a greater willingness to help friends in difficulty. This affective development shows that faith formation does not merely transmit knowledge about goodness but also cultivates inner empathy and concern, which Lickona (2012) regards as the crucial bridge between moral knowledge and moral action. Without this affective dimension, knowledge of virtue risks remaining purely discursive, lacking the inner drive needed to translate it into concrete action.

On the moral action dimension, concrete behavioral change was also observed, including active involvement in parish activities, corroborated by the lay community leader's observation that youth active in faith formation tend to be more polite and more respectful toward elders. This external testimony from the community leader—someone who observes youth in daily station life lends additional validity to the finding, since consistency of moral action is confirmed not only by the youth themselves but also visibly recognized within the surrounding community.

By contrast, the case of the inactive young member shows that moral values tend to fade once participation in faith formation is discontinued, confirming that moral character formation is not an instant process but the outcome of planned, systematic, and sustained formation (Lickona, 2012). This contrast between active and inactive youth mirrors the basic premise of Lickona's theory: that moral character requires continual habituation and reinforcement, and that without a supportive environment sustaining that reinforcement, previously internalized values risk weakening again. This finding reinforces Santika et al. (2019), who found that faith formation programs significantly increase youth engagement in church life while strengthening their faith identity. Overall, the effectiveness of faith formation in shaping moral character depends heavily on the consistency and continuity of its implementation, rather than functioning as a purely episodic or incidental activity.

The findings in this section also show that the three dimensions moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action among youth at Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish do not develop separately but reinforce one another within a single formative process. Knowledge of honesty gained through Scripture sharing also cultivates sensitivity toward others, which in turn drives concrete involvement in parish activities. This pattern of interconnection confirms the relevance of Lickona's framework as an analytical tool for understanding the full dynamics of youth moral formation, and underpins the recommendation that faith formation programs should be deliberately designed to address all three dimensions in balance, rather than emphasizing knowledge alone.

4.3 The Role of Faith Formation in Nurturing and Developing Youth Spirituality

The faith formation program also plays a significant role in nurturing youth spirituality, consistent with Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Theory, which holds that faith develops through the interaction between individuals and their social environment and faith community. Youth who actively participate in faith formation show clear spiritual growth, marked by more regular personal prayer, more diligent Mass attendance, active liturgical involvement as altar servers or lectors, and a deepening personal relationship with God. This change is not merely behavioral such as attendance frequency but also touches an inner dimension: a deeper appreciation of the meaning behind each spiritual practice.

One active youth informant even described a shift in perspective: attending Mass was no longer a mere obligation but a genuinely felt encounter within the Eucharist. This shift is an important indicator of authentic spiritual growth, reflecting a movement from external compliance toward a more personal and reflective faith appreciation a transition Fowler (1981) regards as part of the process toward faith maturity.

Personal spiritual accompaniment by the catechist proved to have a positive impact on youth spiritual growth, consistent with Fowler's (1981) Synthetic-Conventional Faith stage, in which peer groups, companions, and the faith community play a major role in shaping young people's beliefs. At this stage, the presence of a trustworthy companion and a supportive faith community are decisive factors enabling young people to feel safe exploring and deepening their faith, before eventually moving toward a more independent and reflective faith appreciation.

Conversely, the case of the inactive young member shows a decline in prayer habits, reduced liturgical involvement, and an emerging spiritual void difficult to fill independently. This illustrates that, without consistent support from a faith community, youth at the Synthetic-Conventional Faith stage risk stagnation or even regression in their faith journey, lacking a personal foundation of faith strong enough to sustain them without communal support. This finding aligns with Sinaga (2024), who found that youth disengaged from a faith community experience a weakening of spiritual identity due to a diminished sense of belonging to the Church.

This confirms that the faith formation community functions as an important vehicle for helping youth grow from a conventional faith toward a more reflective and mature one. This function aligns with Groome's (1980) emphasis, within the Shared Christian Praxis model, that mature faith does not grow in a vacuum but through a dialectical process between personal experience and the community's broader faith story. The findings on youth spirituality in this study thus reinforce the relevance of Fowler's theory as an analytical framework, while confirming that the sustained continuity of the faith formation community is an important prerequisite for youth spiritual growth in remote parishes.

4.4 Factors Supporting and Hindering the Implementation of Faith Formation

Supporting factors for faith formation include youth personal motivation to grow in faith, family support, support from peers active in the faith community, parish support, and the availability of church facilities. Personal motivation is a critical starting point determining the consistency of youth participation, since without strong internal drive, even the best external support tends to be insufficient to sustain long-term engagement. Family support—particularly from parents who encourage their children to take part in church activities is also a significant reinforcing factor, given that the family is the first and closest social environment shaping young people's spiritual habits. Likewise, support from peers who are equally active in the faith community creates a social environment conducive to sustained engagement, consistent with Fowler's (1981) emphasis on the role of peer groups at the Synthetic-Conventional Faith stage.

The presence of a committed pastoral team is an important social asset sustaining the program, consistent with Sutrisno (2024), who argues that youth accompaniment must be designed holistically so that young people can navigate the challenges of the modern world with deep faith and love. This commitment is reflected in the willingness of priests, religious sisters, and catechists to show up consistently despite limited resources a form of dedication that proves decisive for the program's continuity amid the structural challenges facing remote parishes.

Meanwhile, the main hindering factors include a shortage of competent human resources for accompaniment; extensive geographic conditions, with sixteen mission stations spread up to 154 kilometers from the parish center in Rabambang; insufficient support from some parents; the influence of digital technology and social media; and the absence of a consistent, structured activity schedule. The shortage of companions is the

most fundamental structural problem, since one or two companions cannot possibly reach every station evenly and continuously, leaving stations farther from the parish center with a much lower frequency of formation activity than stations closer to the center.

The finding regarding digital technology's influence aligns with Rahayu (2023), who argues that digital media transformation presents both challenges and opportunities for youth faith life. On one hand, social media can serve as a tool for evangelization; on the other, undirected device use becomes a distraction that pulls youth away from communal engagement such as faith formation a pattern also identified by Sinaga (2024) among youth in Jayapura. Remote geographic conditions represent a distinctive obstacle for parishes like Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing, requiring pastoral solutions that are contextual, adaptive, and grounded in local Dayak wisdom, consistent with the Contextual Catechesis framework applied in this study. Such solutions might include empowering lay catechists at the station level, using communication technology to reach stations that are physically difficult to access, and designing a pastoral calendar that accounts for seasonal conditions and inter-station road accessibility.

4.5 Contribution and Novelty of the Study

This study offers several new contributions to pastoral-catechetical scholarship in Indonesia. First, it is the first study to specifically examine the Catholic Faith Formation program at Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish as a remote parish in Central Kalimantan with a Dayak socio-cultural background, filling an empirical gap left untouched by earlier studies typically set in Batak, Papuan, or Florenese cultural contexts. Filling this gap matters because each cultural context carries distinct social dynamics and pastoral challenges, meaning that findings from one cultural setting cannot be generalized to another without caution.

Second, the study integrates three dimensions simultaneously—moral values through Lickona's framework, spirituality through Fowler's Faith Development Theory, and the implementation of faith formation as a pastoral-catechetical process—within one coherent analytical framework. This integration goes beyond earlier studies that tend to focus on a single aspect in isolation, enabling a more holistic reading of how the pastoral process contributes simultaneously to moral and spiritual outcomes. Third, the study applies a three-layered theoretical triangulation grand theory, middle-range theory, and applied theory that works synergistically to interpret the phenomenon of faith formation in a remote parish context. This integrated approach offers a replicable analytical model for studying youth faith formation in other remote Indonesian parishes, while providing a conceptual framework adaptable by other researchers interested in examining similar phenomena in different cultural and geographic contexts.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that the Catholic Faith Formation program at Santa Teresia Rungan Manuhing Parish is running but has not yet reached its full potential, constrained by a shortage of companions and the parish's extensive geographic spread. Nevertheless, the program plays a significant role in strengthening youth moral values across the moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action dimensions, and in nurturing their spirituality through prayer life, liturgical involvement, and an increasingly deep personal relationship with God. Consistency of participation emerges as the decisive factor: active youth show clear moral and spiritual growth, while inactive youth show a weakening in both areas. This confirms that moral character formation and spiritual growth among youth are not the product of a single event but the fruit of planned, systematic, and sustained formation within a supportive faith community.

Supporting factors for faith formation include personal motivation, family and peer support, and pastoral team commitment, while the main hindering factors include a shortage of companion personnel, remote geographic conditions, the influence of digital technology, and the lack of a consistent activity schedule. Theoretically, the study confirms the relevance of Lickona's and Fowler's frameworks as analytical tools for reading the impact of faith formation on youth, while showing that the Shared Christian Praxis model and the principles of contextual catechesis serve as an effective applied-theory approach when consistently implemented in a remote parish context.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on these findings, the parish and the Diocese of Palangka Raya are encouraged to establish a regular faith formation schedule that accounts for seasonal conditions and inter-station accessibility; to recruit and train new companions, including empowering lay catechists at the station level to achieve more even coverage; and to develop a formation model that is more contextual and adaptive to local Dayak geographic and cultural conditions for instance, by integrating local wisdom values such as mutual cooperation and respect for elders into formation materials. The parish is also encouraged to consider the judicious use of communication technology to reach youth in stations that are physically difficult to access, turning the challenge of digital influence into an opportunity for evangelization, as suggested by Rahayu (2023).

Companions and catechists are encouraged to continue developing a dialogical and participatory approach grounded in Shared Christian Praxis, so that youth increasingly experience themselves as active subjects in their own faith formation rather than passive recipients of catechetical material. Families are encouraged to continue supporting and encouraging young people to participate in church activities, given that family support has proven to be one of the key factors sustaining youth engagement in faith formation.

Future research is encouraged to reach youth from more distant stations and to consider mixed-methods approaches for a more representative and comprehensive picture, including quantitatively measuring participation levels and the impact of faith formation across the broader youth population of all parish stations. Future studies could also further explore the potential integration of local Dayak wisdom into contextual catechetical models, as part of developing a faith formation model that is more distinctive and relevant for remote parishes in Central Kalimantan and other remote regions of Indonesia.

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