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## The Implementation of Character Education in the High School of Catholic Seminary of St. Fransiskus Xaverius Kakaskasen Tomohon

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### Abstract

This study aims to describe and analyse the implementation of character education in Catholic Seminary High School Kakaskasen Tomohon. This educational institution is a school for prospective priests that not only emphasises academic aspects, but also the formation of students' personality and spirituality through character education that is integrated in all school activities and boarding life. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results showed that character education in Kakaskasen Catholic Seminary High School is implemented consistently through various indicators, including discipline, responsibility, simplicity and togetherness, integration of character values in learning, liturgical activities and spirituality, dormitory system, social activities, and personal example from educators and coaches. These values are formed through structured daily routines, community activities, value-based learning, and regular religious reinforcement. Evaluation of character education is carried out continuously through daily observations, monthly evaluation meetings between coaches, students' personal reflections, and personality reports every semester. The main strategies applied in character education in this school include exemplary behaviour, daily reflection and religious reinforcement. This finding strengthens the social learning and value clarification theories that place exemplary and internalisation of values in daily activities as the key to character building. This research is expected to be a reference for both religious and public schools in designing effective character education.

## INTRODUCTION

Character education is an educational process that aims to shape the personality of students through learning moral values, ethics, and social norms that apply in society (Hakim, 2023) . According to Lickona (1992), character education has an important role in shaping individuals who are moral, responsible, and able to make ethical decisions in everyday life (Lickona, 1992) . In the school context, character education is integrated into learning activities, social interactions in the school environment, and extracurricular activities, so as to create an educational atmosphere that is not only oriented towards academic achievement, but also the moral, emotional, and spiritual development of students (Koesoema, 2015) .

The importance of character education in schools is reinforced by government policies through various regulations, including Presidential Regulation No. 87/2017 on Strengthening Character Education (PPK). This policy affirms that character education must be a major part of the national education system to instil religious values, nationalism, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation in students (Indonesia, 2017) . Schools as formal institutions have a strategic responsibility in shaping young generations who are not only intellectually intelligent (Lestari, 2020) , but also mature in moral and spiritual aspects in order to be able to face the challenges of globalisation and the crisis of values in the modern era (Pangalila et al., 2022) .

St Francis Xavierius Seminary Catholic High School Kakaskasen Tomohon as a religious-based educational institution has a strategic role in shaping the whole person. This school not only functions as a place to gain knowledge, but also as a place for character building for future leaders of the church and society. Through interviews and direct observation in this school environment, it is seen that character values such as discipline, responsibility, simplicity, and social care are consistently integrated in the daily lives of the seminarians.

The implementation of character education at St Francis Xavierius Seminary Catholic High School Kakaskasen Tomohon is done through various habituation activities, school regulations, religious teaching, and spiritual guidance that are routinely implemented. This confirms that as an educational institution for prospective priests, Seminary Kakaskasen does not only emphasise academic achievement, but more deeply instils the values of honesty, service, responsibility, and a strong Catholic faith in

seminarians. Activities such as daily mass, spiritual retreats, social services, and service assignments become important media in internalising these character values.

An environment full of religious values provides a strong foundation for the successful implementation of character education in this school. The supervision, exemplary behaviour of the priests, and humanistic communication patterns between teachers and students also strengthen the character building of the seminarians. In addition, the rules of living together in the dormitory that require discipline, openness, and cooperation between students further instil mutual care, responsibility, and empathy for others.

From an academic perspective, research on the implementation of character education in religious schools such as St Francis Xavierius Seminary Catholic High School Kakaskasen Tomohon is still relatively limited. Most studies on character education focus more on public schools or formal education based on the national curriculum. Therefore, it is important to explore more deeply how the concept and practice of character education is implemented in the seminary environment, as well as the extent of its effectiveness in shaping student character holistically.

Based on this, this study aims to analyse the implementation of character education at St Francis Xavierius Seminary Catholic High School Kakaskasen Tomohon. This research is expected to contribute to the development of the theory and practice of character education in Indonesia, especially in religious-based schools. In addition, the results of this study can serve as a reference for other schools in designing and developing effective and sustainable character education programmes.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is suitable to describe in depth the implementation process of character education in St Francis Xavierius Seminary Catholic High School Kakaskasen Tomohon. The case study was chosen because this research focuses on one specific location with distinctive characteristics, namely a Catholic religious-based school that has a special education system and character development for prospective priests. This approach allows the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the social, cultural and religious contexts that influence the character education process in the school (Hamid, 2013) .

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, dormitory coaches, and some seminarian students to obtain information about the concept, methods, and implementation of character education at the school. Participatory observation was conducted by following routine school activities such as daily mass, teaching-learning activities, spiritual retreats, and social activities to directly observe the process of internalising character values among students. In addition, documentation studies were conducted by reviewing school documents, the guidebook for living together, and the agenda of character building activities.

The data obtained were analysed using the interactive data analysis technique of the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Huberman & Miles, 2002). In the data reduction stage, researchers simplified and sorted out important data according to the research focus. Furthermore, the data that had been reduced was presented in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate the process of understanding and interpretation. In the final stage, the researcher drew conclusions by connecting the findings in the field with the theories of character education and the results of previous research, in order to obtain a complete picture of the implementation of character education at St Francis Xavierius Seminary Catholic High School Kakaskasen Tomohon.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **RESULTS**

#### **4.1. Results of Character Education Implementation at St. Francis Xavierius Seminary Catholic High School Kakaskasen Tomohon**

SMA Seminari St. Francis Xavierius Kakaskasen Tomohon is a special educational institution for prospective Catholic priests that is committed to shaping the personality of students as a whole. This school not only emphasises the mastery of science, but also moral, spiritual and character development according to the values of the teachings of the Catholic Church. This is reflected in the school motto of *Scientia* (Science), *Virtus* (Virtue), and *Disciplina* (Order). In addition, the school's vision targets the realisation of graduates who excel in science, skills and Catholic integrity. The curriculum at this school is

structured in such a way that character values are integrated into the entire learning process and boarding life activities.

The implementation of Character Education in this school is analysed using the indicators described below:

a. Discipline

Based on the observation, the discipline aspect in Kakaskasen Catholic Seminary High School is strictly and consistently implemented. The students' daily activity schedule is very structured, starting from 05.00 am for meditation or morning mass, followed by the learning process, independent study time, spiritual activities, to physical activities and recreation. In interviews with some of the students, they said that discipline is fundamental in building the personality of a seminarian. This order does not only apply in teaching and learning activities, but also in dormitory life, worship, and social activities.

b. Responsibility

The value of responsibility is instilled through the division of tasks and roles in community life. Each seminarian has daily responsibilities such as cleaning pickets, garden maintenance, and being a liturgical officer. A teacher stated that education in this Seminary does not only aim to produce smart students, but also individuals who are aware of their calling to serve. This responsibility is also applied in social activities and involvement in community service.

c. Simplicity and Togetherness

The researcher's observations show that the lifestyle of the students at the Seminary is very simple. Clothes, food, and facilities are shared with the principle of togetherness. There is no difference in treatment or facilities between students, thus creating an egalitarian and empathetic atmosphere. This simple attitude is also reflected in the way students address personal and collective needs, as well as in their caring attitude towards each other.

d. Integration in Learning

The implementation of character education at Kakaskasen Catholic Seminary High School is not only done through non-academic activities, but also integrated in subjects. For example, Church History lessons instil the value of

loyalty and sacrifice of Church figures, while in Indonesian lessons, students are encouraged to write honestly and be responsible for the content of the writing. This integration makes character education not verbalistic, but integrated into the entire learning process.

e. Liturgical Activities and Spirituality

Religious activities are an important part of character education in this school. Students regularly attend daily mass, breviary prayer, recollection and spiritual retreats. These activities aim to foster spiritual diligence, inner discipline, and strengthen the religious personality of the seminarians. In interviews, students said that these spiritual activities help them reflect on their attitudes and behaviour, and improve themselves continuously.

f. Dormitory Activities and Daily Discipline

The dormitory life system at the Seminary is organised in a structured manner from waking up in the morning, studying, eating together, to recreation. This community life automatically forms discipline, togetherness, and mutual care among students. The daily activities also build a conducive atmosphere for students to learn to be responsible for themselves and their community.

g. Social Activities

Community service programmes such as social service in orphanages, service in parishes, and social work in the community are an important part of shaping student character. These activities instil the values of service, solidarity, and empathy towards others, especially those in need. Through direct experience in the community, students learn to live human values in real practice.

h. Personal Example

Formators, mentor priests, and teachers become real examples for students. Through their daily attitudes, actions, and interactions, the formators display exemplary behaviour in discipline, service, humility, and responsibility. Based on interviews, students admitted that they learnt a lot from the way of life of the coaches who are humble, simple, and dedicated.

## 4.2. Analysis of the Implementation of Character Education at St. Francis Xavierius Seminary Catholic High School Kakaskasen Tomohon

### a. Implementation of Character Education at Seminary Catholic High School Kakaskasen Tomohon

The implementation of character education at Kakaskasen Seminary Catholic High School Tomohon shows a thorough and integrated application of the principles of character education in various aspects of student life. Based on the theory of character education according to Thomas Lickona (1992), character education ideally includes three main components, namely moral knowledge (*moral knowing*), moral feelings (*moral feeling*), and moral behaviour (*moral behaviour*) (Lickona, 1992). The application of discipline in this Seminary is a concrete manifestation of moral behaviour that is formed through a regular structure of daily activities. Starting from meditation or morning mass, study schedules, to physical and social activities, all are carried out strictly and consistently. Observations and interviews conducted prove that discipline is not just a rule that must be obeyed, but has become a culture of life that shapes the personalities of the seminarians.

In addition, the value of responsibility in this school is instilled through the division of roles and tasks in the school and dormitory environment. In line with John Dewey's (1934) theory in (Wasitohadi, 2014) about education as a social process, social responsibility in the community is very important in shaping character. Dewey emphasised that education should prepare individuals to live in society through active participation and real experiences (Erikson et al., 2023). This is reflected in the lives of Seminary students who are daily given concrete responsibilities such as cleaning pickets, environmental care, and liturgical services. Moreover, involvement in social activities outside of school builds collective awareness and human values, which are important in shaping the person of a public servant.

The simple lifestyle and togetherness implemented at the Seminary are also important aspects of character education. Referring to the concept of local values-based character education according to Tilaar (2002), the habituation of simple life, egalitarian, and mutual care are effective values in shaping the character of the younger generation (HAR, 2004). Observations show that simplicity in clothing, food, and facilities creates an atmosphere of togetherness and high empathy between students. There is no difference

in treatment or facilities, thus creating an inclusive community climate and educating students to prioritise common interests over personal interests.

The integration of character education in the academic learning process is also a hallmark of Kakaskasen Catholic Seminary High School. In line with the opinion of Hosnan (2014) in the Scientific Approach to Learning, character education should ideally not only be carried out through extracurricular activities, but integrated in every subject (Hosnan, 2014). At this Seminary, character values such as loyalty, honesty, and responsibility are internalised through subject matter such as Church History and Bahasa Indonesia. This approach ensures that students' characters are formed not only through theory, but also through direct experience in learning and discussion.

Finally, the example of formators, supervising priests and teachers is an important element in character education in this school. According to Albert Bandura in *his Social Learning Theory* (1977), humans learn through observation and imitation of figures they regard as role models (Tarsono, 2010). The example of the coaches in terms of discipline, humility, and daily service has a direct influence on students' attitudes and behaviour. This is reinforced by daily reflection and liturgical activities that strengthen the spiritual dimension of students, so that character education at this Seminary is comprehensive, covering the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of students.

#### b. Assessment and Evaluation

Evaluation of character education at Kakaskasen Catholic Seminary High School is carried out systematically and continuously through several methods, including daily observations, monthly evaluation meetings between coaches, and students' personal reflections. According to Mulyasa (2022), evaluation in character education must be holistic and contextual, because character is not only measured through cognitive aspects, but also real behaviour in everyday life (Mulyasa, 2022). Daily observations by coaches on student behaviour in class, dormitories, and social activities are important instruments to identify seminarians' character development directly. This pattern allows for quick guidance when attitudes or behaviours that are not in accordance with the instilled character values are found.

In addition to observation, character education evaluation is also carried out through monthly evaluation meetings between formators and coaches. This forum serves as a forum for discussion and exchange of information regarding the development of



individuals and communities of students. In line with the concept of *collaborative evaluation*, according to Shinkfield (2007), the involvement of all parties in the evaluation process will produce objective and comprehensive feedback (Shinkfield, 2007) . In this Seminary, the results of the meeting are then followed up with personal and group coaching, according to student needs. In addition, students' personal reflection, which is conducted regularly, is an effective means of introspection in fostering moral awareness and self-development. Supported by personality reports every semester, this evaluation system not only monitors academic aspects, but further ensures the formation of superior character according to the educational objectives of the Seminary.

### c. Strategies and Methods

The main strategy in implementing character education at Kakaskasen Catholic Seminary High School relies on the exemplary approach. Educators, formators, and priests actively live with students in the dormitory environment, providing real examples in daily life. Bandura's *social learning* theory (1977) asserts that individuals tend to imitate the behaviour of people who are considered authoritative figures or role models (Tarsono, 2010) . This role model has proven to be effective in forming positive habits in terms of discipline, responsibility, simplicity, and service. Interviews with students show that they learn a lot of character values not only from classroom teaching, but also from the way the coaches act, speak, and address daily issues.

In addition to exemplary behaviour, the daily reflection method is an important part of the character education strategy at the Seminary. Every evening, students are invited to reflect on their actions, attitudes, and decisions made throughout the day. This reflection is in line with the *value clarification* approach according to Rath et al. (1978), where individuals are invited to realise, assess, and determine the values to be held in life (Rath et al., 1978) . This activity helps students to consciously evaluate themselves, correct mistakes, and strengthen their commitment to the character values taught. In addition, religious reinforcement through daily prayer, mass, and regular spiritual recollections strengthens the spiritual dimension of students, forming individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also morally and faithfully mature. This integrated approach makes character education at Seminary Kakaskasen Catholic High School run thoroughly, balanced between aspects of theory, practice, and spiritual reflection.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted at Kakaskasen Seminary Catholic High School in Tomohon, it can be concluded that the implementation of character education in this school environment runs systematically, planned, and integrated in all aspects of students' lives. Character education is not only taught through subject matter, but is manifested in boarding life, spiritual, social activities, and students' daily habits. Values such as discipline, responsibility, simplicity, togetherness, and service are instilled through structured routine activities and a supportive community environment.

The strategies used include exemplary behaviour of educators and formators, daily reflection methods, and religious reinforcement through prayer, mass, and spiritual recollection. Evaluation of character education is carried out on an ongoing basis through daily observations, monthly evaluation meetings, students' personal reflections, and personality reports each semester. This is in line with social learning theory, which emphasises the importance of role models, and value clarification theory, which encourages awareness and strengthening of character values in individuals. With this approach, Seminari Kakaskasen Catholic High School has succeeded in building an educational environment that not only produces students with academic achievements, but also forms personalities with integrity, religion, and care for others.

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