



Post-Modernism, Deconstruction of Christian Religious Education, and Cultural Projection in Central Kalimantan

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine cultural participation in Central Kalimantan in the context of Christian education, whether as a curriculum, subject, or livelihood of Christian learning, in the midst of the postmodern wave. The aim of this research is to explore postmodernist ideas in Christian education that are non-totalitarian, acknowledge the non-homogeneity of truth, and allow for diversity and freedom of thought. This research method prioritizes postmodernist thinking and culture in Christian religious education through a literature study. Secondary sources are taken from journal references (Scopus and Sinta) and several dissertations related to Christian education. The main sources for analysis are books by Karl Henri Nouwen, Franz-Magnis Suseno, Polanyi, and Jean-François Lyotard. The language used is clear, objective, and value-neutral, with a formal register and precise word choice. The logical structure ensures a clear and concise flow of information with causal connections between statements. The text is free from grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, and punctuation errors. The text adheres to conventional structure and formatting features, with consistent citation and footnote style. No changes in content have been made. The results indicate that postmodernism, which rejects grand narratives and totalitarianism, as well as the omission of imperialism in Christian education, plays a role in the form of a living culture in Central Kalimantan. This culture emphasizes the balance of life, respect for creation, and the ritualistic and spiritual sacredness of religion, which are reflected in education, including Christian education.

Keywords: deconstruction, post-modernism, Christian Religious Education, spirituality

INTRODUCTION

Post-Modernism has become a popular term lately, not only on the level of philosophy, but also in the world of education and humanities (Paramita, 2023; Radu, 2015; Schussler, 2016; Wardani, 2021). It originated in the critique of thinkers who saw inadequacies in modernist thought. The term 'postmodernism' originated from the critique of thinkers who saw modernist thought as inadequate due to its uncritical absolutization, finality of thought or ideas, and homogenization. It is characterized by a rejection of grand narratives and an emphasis on subjective experience and cultural diversity (Cooper and Burrell, 1988; Moslemani, 2019; Pazmiño, 2008; Zarkasyi et al., 2023). Thinkers who use postmodernism instruments often desire relativist and pluralist ideas.

In educational contexts, for example, the impact of what happens to teachers, students, curriculum, user communities, legal instruments involved in education, stakeholders, subjects involved in the school space, learning strategies, learning methods and media, and political processes in decision-making. Postmodernism can be implemented in policies, particularly in the education cycle. (Cardone, 2021; Ghasemi, 2019; Rorty, 2022). Christian religious education is no exception. It is also closely connected to local culture, providing contextualization. Additionally, there is a multidimensional relationship between philosophy and Christian religious education. It holds a primary position in the educational process, being taught in schools, churches, and families (Pramana, Yappo, and Munthe, 2023; Rusmiyati, 2023; Saputra and Wibisono, 2020; Suluh et al., 2024).

Postmodernism is used in education across religions worldwide, and it also intersects with Christian education. Examples of this intersection include educational culture, infrastructure, learning governance, poverty, theory of mind, and learning media (Mariani, 2020; Prasetiawati, 2022; Rahmelia and Prasetiawati, 2021; Saputri et al., 2023). In addition, postmodernist thought is also present in the curriculum of Christian religious education and in formal and informal-non formal education patterns of life. However, many criticize postmodernist thought, particularly in its characterization of a dislike for modernist thought. For instance, when discussing ethics, rationality, religion, and even the ideas of female philosophers (Magnis-Suseno, 2005; Sobon and Ehaq, 2021). However, the researcher is currently not discussing criticism of modernism or schools of thought outside of postmodernism. Instead, the focus is on examining the phenomenon of postmodernism in the context of Christian religious education.

In a previous study, researcher analyzed Ayesha Fiaz's ideas, which explored subaltern communities in Pakistan as disadvantaged subjects through the framework of Foucault (Fiaz, 2023). Postmodernism aims to explore the roots of imbalance through the subject's identity and the politicization of religious representatives as instruments of power (Fiaz, 2023). Foucault's concept of fragmentation is viewed as a historiographical tools for understanding the imperial past of India. Fiaz identifies the presence of a resistant community of voices, expressed orally, as a means of challenging imperial hegemony and empowering marginalized individuals in Pakistan (Fiaz, 2023). Fiaz's perspective aligns with that of the researcher as they both explore and utilize postmodernist ideas. However, Fiaz's focus is on the marginalized communities in Pakistan, which he refers to as subaltern,

while the researcher is more interested in the hegemonic tendencies that emerge in Christian religious education. However, Fiaz's focus is on the marginalized communities in Pakistan, which he refers to as subaltern, while the researcher is more interested in the hegemonic tendencies that emerge in Christian religious education.

Jessie Hill's research results prompted an interest in the historical relations of symbolization in Christianity, specifically in the context of the United States' history. No subjective evaluations were included. Jessie Hill's research results prompted an interest in the historical relations of symbolization in Christianity, specifically in the context of the United States' history. The author examines the overlap of racism, social hierarchy, and superiority during that time period (Hill, 2022). Therefore, Hill's identification of symbolism in Christian interactions with other religions is evident in expressions, oral and written messages, and the framing of social and political events that perpetuate the symbolic hegemony of non-white Christians (Hill, 2022). Hill's research is relevant to the researcher because it addresses issues that are often overlooked in the context of postmodernism, even though Hill does not explicitly use this term. The researcher shares an affinity with Hill's discussion of Christianity in the US, as Christians often face marginalization of their identity or even as a whole globally. However, Hill's focus is primarily on the construction of symbology. The researcher focuses on the perpetuation of Christian religious education.

Abdessamad Belhaj's research compares Buddhism and Christianity through mystical philosophical thinking, using Patrick Laude's term to emphasize that the history of Islam, which emphasizes spirituality, cannot be disconnected from the history and existence of Buddhism and Christianity (Belhaj, 2023). Belhaj's research at the time aimed to explore the existence of Spiritual Islam in France, in contrast to traditionalist and political Islam. This was done through the work of Muslim intellectuals Abdennour Bidar and Éric Geoffroy (Belhaj, 2023). Belhaj argues that the knowledge and practices of spiritual Islam can be spread through postmodernism, secularization, and freedom of religion (Belhaj, 2023). Belhaj refers to postmodernism as fluid and non-legalistic (Belhaj, 2023). Although there was still elitism that emphasized individualism and a lack of formal religious institutions in the context of the time, the text suggests that there were some formal religious institutions present (Belhaj, 2023). Belhaj's research discusses the participation of postmodernism in the context of spiritualist Islam and political turmoil in France (West), while the researcher focuses on exploring postmodernism within the framework of Christian religious education. Belhaj's research discusses the participation of postmodernism in the context of spiritualist Islam and political turmoil in France (West), while the researcher focuses on exploring postmodernism within the framework of Christian religious education. Both works offer unique perspectives on the role of postmodernism in different religious contexts.

Ayesha Fiaz's examination of Foucault's postmodernism thinking on the fragmentation of the dominative hegemony of religion as an instrument in the context of Pakistan, along with B's thoughts, serve as the basis for this analysis. Jessie Hill analyzed the concepts of superiority and social hierarchy through a postmodern lens, while Abdessamad Belhaj's research explored postmodernism in three religions: Islam (spiritualist), Christianity (mystical and philosophical), and Buddhism (mystical and philosophical). Although previous research has discussed

postmodernism, the context of Christian religious education sets this study apart from previous ones. So, the purpose of this research is to examine phenomena in the world of Christian religious education through actual and historical issues that allude to modernism and postmodernism.

METHODS

This research utilizes qualitative research methods with data retrieval techniques through literature sources. Literature was initiated and traced through secondary sources (recent journals, which are relevant to postmodernism and education, and allude to a bit of post mo school thinking) and primary sources or through the study and reading of books connected to Christian religious education, postmodernism and education that intersect with philosophy in general. The research employs literature studies through secondary sources from Pro quest publishers indexed by Scopus and reputable journals from Sinta. Additionally, secondary studies from other sources were found through data searches, including Google Scholar. The primary sources used in this research are books that examine the presence of postmodernist thought, Christian religious education, and cultural participation in Central Kalimantan. These sources contribute to the values of diversity, communality, brotherly love, and interfaith and cultural participation. The research also identifies hindrances to these values, particularly in the field of education and Christian religious education.

The interlude in this research method also involves the researcher's experience of encountering Christian religious education as a subject or course, as well as the integration of Christian values fostered in the context of school, church, and family. Experience can reinforce the validity of data in qualitative research, particularly when dealing with cultural subjects such as students, teachers, school initiators, and field practice students involved in religious moderation. This is also applicable to learn of life in Christian religious education subjects.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Deconstruction, Delegitimization and Christian Education

The researcher's reading of postmodernism is concerned with social justice, balance, and resistance to the absolutization of authoritative thought. This requires revision and revolutionist efforts to challenge the status quo, which may lead to epistemic relativity in epistemology, axiology, and ontology. Postmodernism emerged in response to the rise of modernism in the 17th to 19th centuries (Cooper and Burrell, 1988; Durand, Bennington, and Massumi, 1984; Hidayat, 2006; Lyotard, Bennington, and Massumi, 1984; Qiong, 2017). Therefore, the researcher's efforts to deconstruct Christian religious education, borrowing from Jacques Derrida's thought, aim to delegitimize certain topics. This includes modules, lesson plans, textbooks, students' assignment sheets, and simplification of narratives in the scriptures. The goal is not to present an over reach of modernization or to incite revolutionary violence against modernist ideas. The author argues that modernist thought is still important in Christian religious education, even if postmodernist thought is not utilized. The researcher does not engage in a specific discussion of these ideas, whether they

are characterized as a grand narrative or as positivism. In Ireland-Verwoerd's dissertation, Christian education is described as trans formative or aestheticism (Ireland-Verwoerd 2018). According to Verwoerd's context, aesthetics is akin to John Wesley's description of the process of viewing art as involving the nerves, including aspects such as slowing down, body parts, rewards, lines, emotions, and contrast. This encompasses metaphor, meaning, ambiguity, empathy, approach/attention, and imitation (Ireland-Verwoerd 2018).

Christian Religious Education is inseparable from the participation and historical traces of church denominations or inter denominations. Catholicism as the oldest church in the world uses the term Christian education with something close to the term Catechizes (*Katechesis*: create an echo [teaching or instruction]). The main textbook for learning Christian education comes from the Bible and Jesus is the main teacher and figurehead. Apart from the Catholic tradition, Christian education, according to François Lumbala Baseless through Gobbo, originated in colonial contexts (*contradictio in terminis* in pseudo-Christian education), including in Africa and Asia (Gobbo 2023). Before the advent of Christian religious education, according to Gobbo, Africa had known education in the context of age, work, family and camps (Gobbo, 2023). The style of education at that time was still in the space of symbols (non-books) (Gobbo, 2023). The nature of education prioritizes memory and has a communal aspect (Gobbo, 2023). Furthermore, education is integrated into daily activities (Gobbo, 2023). The researcher reflects that Christian education has the same target audience as the African context prior to the advent of formal Christian education. The angels introduced in education were more in the context of manpower (segregation of women and womanhood), economic development, human liberation/freedom and ethnic loyalties.

Where is Christian education going? The reflective question is not only a *Quo Vadis*, it is also similar to an endeavor that is overshadowed by a bright future (Gobbo, 2023). However, do the facts on the ground show the reality of beautiful expectations? All parties who live Christian religious education have the same goal. Nevertheless, speaking of deconstruction, there is something that must be reviewed, resisted, reconstructed, reinterpreted and evaluated continuously. Not as an achievement, but rather an endless process across time and places where Christian religious education is framed. For example, Wilbert Gobbo in the African context tried to translate the values of *Ubuntu* through the phrase "thinking globally but actualizing something local" (Gobbo, 2023). If we consider the etymology of the word, education is closely related to the term pedagogy, which comes from the Greek words *paidos* (meaning 'child') and *agogein* (meaning 'to lead'). Therefore, the question arises whether education, including Christian education, involves top-down leadership, shared leadership, or both?

The researcher's experience suggests that the process of education and learning in this subject is running at full capacity, despite some remaining challenges. It is important to acknowledge these challenges as part of the process. As far as the researcher's search goes, it appears that critical thinking patterns for students have been strengthened throughout the curriculum journey (2013 to the independent curriculum) by providing space for dialogue and through the mentoring process by teachers and related school parties. It is noted that these efforts continue to be reformed. Researcher have argued that construction in Central Kalimantan was underpinned by culture, which was inseparable from its successes. The involvement of Dayak and other tribal cultures in Central Kalimantan was significant in supporting the schools' ethics and achievements. This participation was felt throughout the learning process of Christian education

by students and teachers, and had logical consequences. However, it is important to note that this contribution was not always visible. This contribution actually takes the role of connecting the baton of the relevant government to the hope for peace and the work of caring for diversity.

Cultural Projections in Central Kalimantan Based on Postmodernist Frameworks

Rather than being replaced by postmodernism, Junker's dissertation research (2003) shows that Christian education is engaging with multidisciplinary fields such as philosophy and gender studies (Junker 2003). For example, negotiating space to address existing challenges such as togetherness and communality, allowing for creative decision-making, and taking responsibility for choices while maintaining freedom. Additionally, avoiding being subjected to oppression, marginalization, and imbalance (Junker, 2003). The theological foundation is based on the praxis activity of God as a relational being. Therefore, Junker's research is relevant in the context of culture and education in Central Kalimantan. For instance, Junker refers to philosopher Lev Vygotsky's idea that learning (not specifically related to Christian education) involves transforming culture, history, and building knowledge in a community of faith. In Christian religious education, the concept of community is crucial as it allows for diversity and provides a space for creation. Karl Polanyi refers to it as the realization of subjective self-knowledge. It is important to maintain objectivity and avoid subjective evaluations (Martin 1995; Polanyi 2002).

Christian religious education is culturally important, particularly in schools in Central Kalimantan, where the researcher and writer live, to promote harmony and balance. For instance, the values of respecting the diversity of interfaith rituals, expressing gratitude, honouring the sacredness (referred to as sacramental spaces in Christianity), and valuing all living beings, including humans and the universe, are important. Central Kalimantan is a province with both private and public schools that have educational units which often fail to incorporate cultural attributes into the learning process (Adellia et al., 2023; Manuputty et al., 2023; Silipta et al., 2023; Tumbol and Wainarisi, 2023). There is a need for integration of culture into everyday life, rather than just celebrating culture at special occasions (Graves, 2021; Nouwen, 2013; Veronica, 2022). For instance, the researcher visited a Vocational School in Barito Timur during the research (Desti 2023; Loheni et al. 2023; Siburian, Amiani, and Munthe 2023; Tim Developer Diskominfo 2023). Furthermore, the researcher has discovered the cross-cultural context in Central Kalimantan that enriches Christian religious education at the SMK level in South Barito, Pulang Pisau, Katingan, and Palangka Raya. This indicates that Christian education is not solely a Western heritage, but has also been embraced by Indonesia, particularly Central Kalimantan.

The researcher found that the existing culture in Central Kalimantan, which has been present throughout its history, is not simply a repetitive action to fill a void, even when in contact with Christian religious education. Instead, there is room for continuous meaning based on the processes of cultural engagement. Whether keeping up with the developments in technology or building upon long-standing cultural values, it is important to emphasize exploration freedom, provide space for love and opportunity, and value togetherness. The researcher reflected that these values are not only essential for existence in Central Kalimantan, but also contribute to the foundations of cultural values. These values are crucial in constructing a Pancasila Indonesia and affirming the values upheld by the global community. This means that both in the context of

learning, curriculum travel (at least researchers had time to find a cursory journey from the 2013 curriculum to the independent curriculum), meetings with religions with joyful synergy, giving each other space and expression, reading books, relationships with peers, teachers, principals, school officials and even the surrounding community are manifestations of Christian religious education that not only stops in school benches.

The researcher elaborated on the actualization of postmodernism in the context of Christian religious education. This action is positioned as extensive, consistent, and cultured. The researcher seldom considers the position of postmodernism in resisting modernism, even though learning about life in subject matter or Christian religious education courses may seem repetitive. However, these courses always incorporate the values of postmodernism that are relevant to Christian religious education. In the context of Christian campuses in Central Kalimantan, the researcher found that the embodiment or actualization of gender participation (which prioritizes women's leadership) was realized not only in quantitative terms, but also in the projection of women's subjective capacity as reformers (borrowing the term from Christianity, especially Pentecostal-Charismatic). Policies and spaces for light conversation in formal or informal settings have been established.

CONCLUSION

According to the researcher's analysis, Christian religious education is not isolated but rather interacts with and is influenced by culture. This is particularly evident in Central Kalimantan where Christian education and culture emphasize balance, gratitude, ritual appreciation, diversity, and spiritual sacredness, while also promoting the harmonization of culture and religious existence. Similarly, Christian religious education contributes to the field of Christian education by providing a platform for negotiation that fosters creativity, responsibility, and the development of religion within the community life of Central Kalimantan. This is considered an important value and practice. Based on cultural participation, individuals internalize local and national values. This can serve as a means of resistance to challenges faced by Christian religious education, particularly issues of marginalization. It is important to avoid grand narratives, staging the status quo, and universalizing reason, which are all aspects of postmodernism that are disliked.

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