

Pedagogical Analysis of Faith in Catechetical Activities: Between Theory and Practice in Mok Parish, Flores

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the application of the principles of faith pedagogy in catechesis activities among the people of Mok Parish, Flores, as well as to identify the gap between theory and practice occurring in the field. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, using interview, observation, and documentation techniques involving parish priests, station administrators, KBG chairpersons, and congregations at Waekekik Station. The study results show that catechesis activities for the people remain instructive and formal, with physical presence but limited reflective and participatory involvement. Factors contributing to the low implementation of faith pedagogy include limited faith understanding, weak spiritual motivation, economic busyness, challenging geographical terrain, and a lack of facilitator capacity in applying participatory methods. Analysis grounded in the theories of shared Christian praxis, experiential learning, and andragogy confirms that effective faith learning requires contextual experience, reflection, and dialogue of faith. This study recommends updating catechesis methods based on faith pedagogy that is more participatory and contextual, training facilitators, and developing catechesis materials relevant to the lives of rural people. This approach is expected to make catechesis a means of transforming faith that is alive and grounded in the social reality of the people.

Keywords: catechesis of the people, participation, faith pedagogy, faith education, Mok Parish, Flores.

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INTRODUCTION

Faith education in the Catholic Church faces serious challenges in the modern era, especially due to social, technological, and increasingly complex changes in the lives of the faithful. Catechesis, as the main means of faith building, is no longer sufficient when carried out solely as a process of transmitting teachings; it needs to be understood as a space for faith transformation that involves real experiences, reflections, and actions in daily life (Sweetman, 2021; Meddi, 2022). Many studies show that traditional catechesis models, which are instructive and one-way, tend to fail in fostering contextual and participatory faith because people are often passive recipients rather than reflective actors in the faith learning process (Rosales & Bantogon, 2024; Tarihoran et al., 2024).

In this context, the faith pedagogy approach presents a new paradigm that places the life experience and reflection of the people's faith at the center of the learning process. This approach aligns with the Shared Christian Praxis developed by Groome (1980), which emphasizes the importance of participants' active involvement in connecting personal experiences with gospel values through reflection and transformative action. The faith pedagogy model also resonates with Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984), which states that effective learning occurs through cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application (Rahmi, 2024). Various contemporary religious education studies demonstrate that applying an experiential approach can strengthen the affective and social dimensions of faith learning (Halek, 2025; Tibo, 2025).

In the practice of catechesis for the people in Indonesia, applying faith pedagogy still faces significant challenges. Research shows that catechesis facilitators often lack adequate pedagogical understanding to create a participatory learning atmosphere (Setiyaningtiyas & Soares, 2024). Many catechesis activities remain top-down, characterized by one-way communication that leads the faithful to attend more due to socio-religious obligation than conscious faith encouragement. Studies in rural parishes reveal that limited education, agricultural workloads, and difficult geographical terrain are external factors hindering active participation (Goma, 2025).

Other studies highlight that the effectiveness of catechesis depends not only on the content of teachings but also on facilitators' ability to relate faith messages to people's lived realities (Habur, 2018; Rosales & Bantogon, 2024). Participatory faith pedagogy demands a paradigm shift from "teaching faith" to "accompanying the experience of faith" (Groome, 2011; Sudarto, 2022; Meddi, 2022). This means that the success of catechesis is measured not by the amount of material delivered but by the extent to which the faithful reinterpret their life experiences considering the Gospel and live them through concrete actions.

However, although the discourse on pedagogy of faith has been widely discussed theoretically, there is still little empirical research directly linking faith pedagogy theory to the practice of people's catechesis at the base community (stasi) level, especially in rural areas like Flores. Most research focuses on the context of Catholic schools or formal education (Andrienko et al., 2021), while the informal faith formation through people's catechesis remains underexplored. This gap between faith pedagogy ideals and actual practice indicates a clear research need.

This study aims to analyze the application of faith pedagogy principles in the catechesis activities of the people in Mok Parish, Flores, using empirical data from the Waekekik Station. The focus is to identify the gap between the participatory theory of faith pedagogy and ongoing catechesis practice, while offering a more contextual and transformative model of catechesis. The novelty of this research lies in linking the pedagogical approach of modern faith with the rural pastoral context and providing operational recommendations for capacity building among catechesis facilitators. Thus, this research is expected to make a dual contribution: enriching the academic resources of pastoral theology and offering practical solutions for developing people's catechesis in the local Church environment.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to understand in depth the application of faith pedagogy principles in catechesis activities of the people in Mok Parish, Flores. This approach was chosen to examine the phenomenon of faith and community participation within their natural social and religious contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher aimed to describe the relationship between the pedagogical theory of faith and its practical implementation at the base community level.

The research was conducted at Waekekik Station, St. Augustine Mok Parish, Ruteng Diocese, Flores. This location was purposively selected due to observed low levels of participation in catechesis activities during initial observations. The sample consisted of 20 informants, including parish priests, station administrators, heads of the Church Base Group

(KBG), and active members of the community. Informants were chosen using purposive sampling based on their involvement and experience in catechesis.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Interviews explored informants' perceptions, experiences, and understanding of faith pedagogy in catechesis. Observation focused on the catechesis process, participant involvement, and facilitators' methods. Documentation included records of pastoral activities, parish catechesis guidelines, and teaching materials used in congregational gatherings.

Data analysis followed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2018) model, consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. Interview and observation data were transcribed, categorized around key themes (participation, facilitation methods, faith reflection, contextualization), and interpreted based on faith pedagogy theory (Groome, 1980; Kolb, 1984).

Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, member checking, and audit trails to confirm reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation compared data from interviews, observations, and pastoral documents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Congregational Participation in Catechesis

The results of the research at the Waekekik Stasi show that the level of participation of the people in catechesis activities is relatively low, both in terms of attendance and the quality of involvement. Most of the people attend because of a sense of social-religious obligation, not a reflective awareness of faith. The people tend to be passive during meetings; They listen to the material delivered by the facilitator, but rarely ask questions or respond to the content of the catechesis. This pattern shows that catechesis activities are still running top-down, with facilitators playing a dominant role as material givers, while the faithful playing the role of passive recipients.

The findings confirm the results of a similar study in the context of rural Indonesian parishes, which stated that catechesis activities are often interpreted as liturgical obligations, not as a means of fostering sustainable faith (Goma, 2025). This phenomenon shows that there is a fundamental gap between the ideal of participatory faith pedagogy and the reality of the field that is still formalistic.

Analysis of Faith Pedagogy in Catechesis Praxisis

When compared to the principles of faith pedagogy as developed by Groome (1980) and Kolb (1984), the catechesis process in Waekekik shows significant gaps. Based on field observations and interview results, there are four main aspects of faith pedagogy that have not been running optimally: participation, faith reflection, faith dialogue, and contextualization.

Table 1. Analysis of Faith Pedagogy in Catechesis Praxisis

Aspects of Faith Pedagogy (Theory)	Practice at Waekekik Station (Research Results)	Implicasi's theorem
Active participation of the people	The people are physically present but do not engage in discussion or reflection.	The need for an andragogic approach that encourages participation through life experience (Knowles, 1984).
Reflection on the experience of faith	Reflection is rarely performed; The meeting focused on the delivery of material by the facilitator.	There has not been a <i>shared praxis</i> (Groome, 1980) that connects experience with the word of Allah (Lalu, 2007).
Dialogue of faith and horizontal interaction	The process goes one way; The people do not feel that they have room to speak.	A dialogical and empathetic pedagogical approach is needed so that the people become subjects, not objects (Sweetman, 2021; Guidelines for Catechesis, 2022).
Contextualization of teachings	The material of catechesis is less associated with the reality of the people's lives (agriculture, family economy, social relations).	Contextual catechesis is needed that raises local issues and symbols (Habur, 2018; Sudarto, 2022).

The table above shows that the practice of catechesis of the people in Mok Parish is still at the stage of reproduction of teachings, not yet reaching the stage of reflection and transformation of faith as idealized in participatory faith pedagogy. In this context, learning by doing as emphasized by Kolb (1984) has not been fully realized, because activities still focus on lectures rather than experiences.

Factors Affecting the Low Application of Faith Pedagogy

From the results of interviews and observations, a number of internal and external factors were found that affected the limitations of the application of faith pedagogy in the catechesis activities of the people.

Internal factors include the low level of formal education of the people and the lack of a reflective understanding of the faith. Many people consider catechesis only relevant for children or prospective recipients of the sacrament, not for the continuous deepening of faith (Na'u et al., 2025). Low spiritual motivation is also an obstacle; Believers participate in activities because of "Church rules" not because of personal faith needs (Rosales & Bantogon, 2024).

Meanwhile, external factors include busyness as a farmer, difficult geographical terrain, limited time, and facilitator methods that tend to be monotonous (Goma, 2025). As shown by the research of Setiyaningtiyas and Soares (2024), the pedagogical competence of catechists greatly determines the quality of interaction in faith learning. In Waekekik, the facilitators did not have adequate faith pedagogy training, so the methods used were still traditional.

These findings are in line with Yuliani's (2024) view that facilitators need to understand the principle of andragogy — where adults learn most effectively when they feel their life

experiences are valued and used as a source of reflection on faith. Without this, catechesis is easily trapped into a routine without transformative power.

Contextual and Participatory Pedagogy of Faith

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the application of faith pedagogy in Stasi Waekekik, Mok Parish, Flores requires a reconstruction that emphasizes three main principles: active participation, reflection of faith, and contextualization of life.

First, active participation can be built by providing space for the faithful to share their experiences of faith, as recommended in shared praxis (Groome, 1980). Facilitators should act as spiritual companions (faith companions), not just teachers. A faith-dialogue-based approach will help people find the meaning of the gospel in their daily experiences (Sweetman, 2021). With dialogue, catechesis truly becomes a laboratory of dialogue as idealized by the document *Instructions for Catechesis* (2022).

Second, faith reflection needs to be an integral part of every catechesis session (Lalu, 2007). The facilitator can guide the reflection process with open-ended questions such as: "What life experiences have made you feel close to God this week?" or "How do today's gospel words speak about our family life?". This approach has proven to be effective in increasing the depth of faith (Tibo, 2025; Halek, 2025).

Third, contextualization is the key so that catechesis is relevant to the lives of the people. For example, gospel values can be linked to the experiences of farmers facing crop failure, or to social solidarity between villagers. This is in accordance with the idea of contextual catechesis that places local experience as a locus theologicus (Habur, 2018; Sudarto, 2022).

Thus, the application of participatory and contextual faith pedagogy not only fosters intellectual understanding, but also builds a real spiritual transformation in the lives of the people. This approach will help the local Church live out its mission to proclaim the Gospel in a more grounded way and relevant to the life of the people of Flores.

This study shows that there is a real gap between the theory of faith pedagogy and the practice of catechesis of the people in Mok Parish, Flores. Catechesis activities still focus on the transfer of teachings, not dialogue of faith; on physical presence, not reflective engagement. In fact, as emphasized by Groome (2011), true faith education must integrate knowing, believing, and doing in one unit of life praxis.

The implications of this finding are twofold. Theoretically, the results of the study enriched the discourse of faith pedagogy by emphasizing the importance of contextual and participatory dimensions in adult faith development. Practically, this research provides a basis for the local Church to design a catechesis facilitator training program based on shared praxis and andragogical approaches, as well as to develop contextual catechesis modules that are relevant to the socio-economic life of the people in the rural areas of Flores.

CONCLUSION

This research revealed that catechesis at Stasi Waekekik, Mok Parish, Flores, faces significant challenges in applying faith pedagogy principles, as the process remains largely one-way and informative, resulting in limited reflective and emotional engagement among the faithful. Faith formation often functions as routine ecclesiastical obligation rather than a dynamic space for encounter and growth. Factors contributing to this include limited

understanding and spiritual motivation, economic demands, difficult geography, and insufficient facilitator competence. A paradigm shift toward a dialogical, reflective, and contextual catechesis model is needed, emphasizing the active role of the people as learners who engage through life experiences and shared reflection in light of God's word. Future research should explore the development and impact of tailored training programs for catechesis facilitators and the creation of context-sensitive materials that integrate local culture and socio-economic realities to promote faith transformation that nurtures awareness, solidarity, and responsibility within the community.

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