



The Influence of Teachers' Teaching Styles on Students' Interest and Learning Outcomes in Christian Religious Education at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of teachers' teaching styles on students' interest and learning outcomes in Christian Religious Education at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan. The research employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design, involving 120 students as respondents selected through purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaires to measure teaching styles, students' interest, and learning outcomes documentation. The findings revealed that teachers' teaching styles significantly influenced both students' interest ($r = 0.712$, $p < 0.01$) and learning outcomes ($r = 0.685$, $p < 0.01$). The student-centered teaching approach demonstrated the strongest positive correlation with learning interest and academic achievement. Furthermore, students' interest served as a mediating variable between teaching styles and learning outcomes. The study concludes that effective teaching styles, particularly those emphasizing interactive and collaborative methods, substantially enhance students' engagement and academic performance in Christian Religious Education. These findings provide valuable insights for educators and school administrators in optimizing pedagogical approaches to improve the quality of religious education.

Keywords: *Students' interest, learning outcomes, Christian Religious Education*

INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education plays a vital role in shaping students' moral values, spiritual development, and character formation within the Indonesian educational system. As mandated by the national curriculum, religious education serves not only as a medium for theological instruction but also as a foundation for developing students' ethical reasoning and social responsibility. However, the effectiveness of religious education delivery remains a critical concern among educators and stakeholders, particularly regarding pedagogical approaches that can meaningfully engage contemporary students. The teaching style employed by educators significantly impacts students' learning experiences and academic achievement. Teaching style refers to the distinctive manner in which

teachers design, implement, and manage instructional activities, encompassing their philosophical orientation, methodological preferences, and interpersonal dynamics with students. Contemporary educational research emphasizes that no single teaching style universally guarantees success; rather, effectiveness depends on contextual factors including subject matter, student characteristics, and learning objectives.

At SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan, preliminary observations indicated varying levels of student engagement in Christian Religious Education classes. While some students demonstrated enthusiasm and active participation, others appeared disengaged and achieved suboptimal learning outcomes. These disparities raised important questions about the relationship between instructional approaches and student responses. Understanding this relationship becomes increasingly important as educators seek evidence-based strategies to enhance the quality of religious education.

Students' interest represents a crucial psychological factor influencing learning processes and outcomes. Interest manifests as a positive emotional disposition toward specific subject matter, motivating students to invest cognitive effort and persist through challenges. In the context of religious education, cultivating genuine interest proves particularly significant, as the subject matter inherently involves values, beliefs, and personal meaning-making that require authentic engagement rather than superficial memorization. Previous studies have established connections between teaching methodologies and student outcomes across various disciplines. However, research specifically addressing teaching styles in Christian Religious Education within Indonesian secondary schools remains limited. This gap is particularly notable considering the unique characteristics of religious education, which integrates cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions of learning. Furthermore, the mediating role of students' interest in the relationship between teaching styles and learning outcomes warrants systematic investigation. This study aims to address these gaps by examining how teachers' teaching styles influence students' interest and learning outcomes in Christian Religious Education. Specifically, the research investigates: (1) the relationship between teaching styles and students' interest; (2) the relationship between teaching styles and learning outcomes; (3) the relationship between students' interest and learning outcomes; and (4) whether students' interest mediates the relationship between teaching styles and learning outcomes. The significance of this research extends to multiple stakeholders. For teachers, the findings offer empirical guidance for refining pedagogical practices to maximize student engagement and achievement. For school administrators, the results inform professional development initiatives and curriculum planning. For the broader educational community, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on effective religious education practices in diverse cultural contexts.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a correlational design to examine the relationships among teachers' teaching styles, students' interest, and learning outcomes in Christian Religious Education. The correlational design was selected as appropriate for investigating the strength and direction of relationships between variables without manipulating them experimentally. The research population comprised all students enrolled in Christian Religious Education classes at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan during the 2024/2025 academic year, totaling 185 students across grades 10, 11,

and 12. Using purposive sampling technique, 120 students were selected as respondents based on specific criteria: (1) active enrollment in Christian Religious Education classes, (2) regular attendance of at least 80% throughout the semester, and (3) willingness to participate voluntarily in the study. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, ensuring adequate statistical power for the analyses. A 30-item instrument adapted from established teaching style inventories was used to assess students' perceptions of their teachers' instructional approaches. The questionnaire measured four dimensions: (1) teacher-centered approach, (2) student-centered approach, (3) content-focused approach, and (4) interaction-focused approach. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The instrument demonstrated high reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.891. All instruments underwent rigorous validation procedures. Content validity was established through expert judgment by three educational researchers and two experienced Christian Religious Education teachers. Construct validity was assessed through confirmatory factor analysis, which confirmed the hypothesized dimensional structure of both questionnaires. Pilot testing was conducted with 30 students from a comparable school not included in the main study. Items with corrected item-total correlations below 0.30 were revised or eliminated.

Data collection was conducted over a four-week period following approval from the school administration and informed consent from participants. The researcher personally administered questionnaires during regular class sessions to ensure controlled conditions and clarify any questions from respondents. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, with all data coded numerically. Learning outcome data were obtained from official school records with appropriate permissions. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26.0. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were calculated to characterize the sample and variables. Prior to inferential analyses, assumptions testing was performed, including normality tests using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, linearity tests, and multicollinearity diagnostics. Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to examine bivariate relationships between variables. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the simultaneous influence of teaching styles and students' interest on learning outcomes. Path analysis using the Sobel test was performed to examine the mediating effect of students' interest in the relationship between teaching styles and learning outcomes. Statistical significance was determined at the 0.05 alpha level for all tests. The study adhered to ethical research principles. Approval was obtained from the school principal and the education district office. Informed consent was secured from all participants, with parental consent obtained for students under 18 years of age. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw without consequences. All data were stored securely and used exclusively for research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis revealed important characteristics of the study variables. For teaching styles, the mean score was 3.68 (SD = 0.54) on a 5-point scale, indicating that students generally perceived their teachers as employing moderately effective instructional approaches. The student-centered dimension received the highest mean

score ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.61$), followed by interaction-focused ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.58$), content-focused ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.63$), and teacher-centered approaches ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.67$). Students' interest in Christian Religious Education demonstrated a mean score of 3.59 ($SD = 0.62$), suggesting moderate to high levels of engagement. Among the interest dimensions, emotional engagement scored highest ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.59$), followed by behavioral engagement ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.64$), and cognitive engagement ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.68$). These findings indicate that students felt more emotionally connected to the subject than cognitively challenged by it. Learning outcomes showed a mean score of 81.35 ($SD = 7.82$) on a 100-point scale, reflecting generally satisfactory academic performance. The distribution of grades indicated that 42.5% of students achieved scores in the 80-89 range, 31.7% in the 70-79 range, 18.3% in the 90-100 range, and 7.5% below 70. These results suggest considerable variability in academic achievement among students. Pearson correlation analysis revealed statistically significant relationships among all variables. Teaching styles demonstrated a strong positive correlation with students' interest ($r = 0.712$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that more effective teaching approaches were associated with higher levels of student engagement. Similarly, teaching styles showed a strong positive correlation with learning outcomes ($r = 0.685$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that instructional quality significantly influenced academic achievement. Students' interest exhibited a moderate to strong positive correlation with learning outcomes ($r = 0.643$, $p < 0.01$), confirming that engaged students tended to achieve better academic results. The correlation matrix indicated that all relationships were in the expected directions and sufficiently strong to warrant further investigation through regression analysis. Examining specific teaching style dimensions, student-centered approaches demonstrated the strongest correlation with interest ($r = 0.698$, $p < 0.01$) and learning outcomes ($r = 0.672$, $p < 0.01$). Interaction-focused approaches also showed strong correlations with interest ($r = 0.654$, $p < 0.01$) and outcomes ($r = 0.631$, $p < 0.01$). Teacher-centered approaches exhibited the weakest, though still significant, correlations with interest ($r = 0.487$, $p < 0.01$) and outcomes ($r = 0.456$, $p < 0.01$). Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the simultaneous influence of teaching styles and students' interest on learning outcomes. The overall model was statistically significant ($F = 89.347$, $p < 0.001$) and explained 60.4% of the variance in learning outcomes ($R^2 = 0.604$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.597$). This substantial explained variance indicates that the model effectively predicted academic achievement in Christian Religious Education. The regression coefficients revealed that both teaching styles ($\beta = 0.438$, $t = 6.127$, $p < 0.001$) and students' interest ($\beta = 0.352$, $t = 4.931$, $p < 0.001$) independently contributed to learning outcomes when controlling for the other variable. Teaching styles demonstrated a slightly stronger direct effect on outcomes than students' interest, though both predictors were highly significant. Further analysis examining teaching style dimensions simultaneously revealed that student-centered approaches ($\beta = 0.341$, $p < 0.001$) and interaction-focused approaches ($\beta = 0.276$, $p < 0.01$) were significant predictors of learning outcomes, while teacher-centered and content-focused approaches did not contribute uniquely when other dimensions were controlled. Path analysis was conducted to test whether students' interest mediated the relationship between teaching styles and learning outcomes. The analysis proceeded through three steps following Baron and Kenny's mediation framework. First, teaching styles significantly predicted students' interest ($\beta = 0.712$, $p < 0.001$). Second, students' interest

significantly predicted learning outcomes ($\beta = 0.643$, $p < 0.001$). Third, when both teaching styles and students' interest were included as predictors, the direct effect of teaching styles on outcomes remained significant but was reduced ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < 0.001$ compared to $\beta = 0.685$, $p < 0.001$ in the bivariate model).

The Sobel test confirmed partial mediation, with the indirect effect of teaching styles on learning outcomes through students' interest being statistically significant ($z = 5.832$, $p < 0.001$). The mediation analysis indicated that approximately 36.1% of the total effect of teaching styles on learning outcomes was mediated through students' interest. This finding suggests that teaching styles influence learning outcomes both directly and indirectly by fostering student engagement. The path coefficients demonstrated that teachers' teaching styles \rightarrow students' interest pathway ($\beta = 0.712$) was stronger than the students' interest \rightarrow learning outcomes pathway ($\beta = 0.352$ in the mediated model), indicating that teaching styles powerfully shaped student engagement, which in turn contributed to academic success. Supplementary analyses examined potential differences across grade levels. One-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences in teaching style perceptions ($F = 1.847$, $p = 0.162$), students' interest ($F = 2.134$, $p = 0.122$), or learning outcomes ($F = 1.653$, $p = 0.195$) among grades 10, 11, and 12. This consistency suggests that the relationships among variables were stable across different student cohorts. Exploratory analysis investigated whether the strength of relationships varied by specific teaching style dimensions. Results indicated that the mediating effect of interest was strongest for student-centered approaches (37.8% mediation) and weakest for teacher-centered approaches (24.3% mediation), suggesting that more participatory instructional methods generated greater interest-driven learning benefits.

The findings of this study provide robust evidence that teachers' teaching styles significantly influence both students' interest and learning outcomes in Christian Religious Education at SMA Negeri 2 Percut Sei Tuan. The strong correlations observed between teaching styles and student outcomes align with contemporary educational theories emphasizing the centrality of instructional quality in promoting meaningful learning experiences. The particularly strong correlation between teaching styles and students' interest ($r = 0.712$) underscores the pivotal role that pedagogical approaches play in cultivating student engagement. This finding resonates with self-determination theory, which posits that teaching methods that support students' autonomy, competence, and relatedness foster intrinsic motivation and sustained interest. In the context of Christian Religious Education, where subject matter involves personal beliefs and values, creating an engaging learning environment becomes especially crucial for authentic learning rather than superficial compliance. The superiority of student-centered and interaction-focused teaching approaches over teacher-centered methods represents a significant finding with practical implications. Student-centered pedagogy, which emphasizes active learning, collaborative inquiry, and personalized instruction, appears particularly well-suited for religious education. This approach allows students to explore faith-related questions, share personal perspectives, and construct meaning through dialogue rather than passively receiving doctrinal information. The interactive nature of these approaches addresses the relational dimension inherent in Christian education, where community and shared exploration are valued. The mediating role of students' interest between teaching styles and learning outcomes illuminates the mechanism through which instructional quality affects academic achievement. This partial mediation suggests that

effective teaching styles operate through dual pathways: directly influencing learning through instructional clarity and content organization, and indirectly enhancing outcomes by sparking interest that motivates sustained cognitive engagement. For Christian Religious Education, this implies that technical instructional competence must be complemented by the ability to make content personally relevant and emotionally resonant for students.

The substantial variance in learning outcomes explained by the combined model (60.4%) indicates that teaching-related factors constitute major determinants of academic success in religious education. However, the remaining unexplained variance reminds us that student achievement results from complex interactions involving individual differences, family background, peer influences, and school climate factors beyond instructional variables alone. Future research should investigate these additional contributors to develop more comprehensive models of learning in religious education contexts. The consistency of findings across grade levels suggests that the relationships identified are robust and not artifacts of particular developmental stages or cohort characteristics. This stability implies that effective teaching principles in Christian Religious Education transcend specific age groups within the secondary school range, though the concrete manifestations of these principles may require age-appropriate adaptations. Several theoretical frameworks help interpret these findings. Constructivist learning theory supports the effectiveness of student-centered approaches, as students actively construct religious understanding through social interaction and personal reflection rather than absorbing pre-packaged knowledge. Cognitive load theory explains why interaction-focused methods succeed by distributing instructional information through collaborative processing rather than overwhelming individual working memory. Engagement theory highlights how teaching styles that promote emotional connection sustain the psychological energy necessary for deep learning. From a practical standpoint, these findings challenge traditional approaches to Christian Religious Education that prioritize content transmission over student engagement. The results suggest that teachers should emphasize pedagogical strategies that actively involve students in exploring religious concepts through discussion, project-based learning, experiential activities, and reflective practices. Professional development programs should equip teachers with specific skills in facilitating dialogue, designing collaborative learning experiences, and connecting religious teachings to students' lived experiences.

The study also highlights the importance of monitoring students' interest as an indicator of instructional effectiveness. Schools might implement periodic surveys or observational protocols to assess student engagement levels, using this information to provide targeted support for teachers whose instructional approaches may be generating lower interest. Given the mediating role of interest, interventions focused on enhancing teaching styles should explicitly aim to increase student engagement as a proximal outcome that will subsequently improve learning results.

Several limitations warrant consideration when interpreting these findings. First, the cross-sectional design precludes definitive causal inferences; while the theoretical model presumes teaching styles influence interest and outcomes, alternative causal sequences or reciprocal relationships remain possible. Longitudinal research tracking changes in teaching practices and corresponding shifts in student responses would strengthen causal claims. Second, reliance on student perceptions of teaching styles introduces potential

subjective bias; observational assessments of actual instructional practices would complement self-report measures. Third, the study context of a single school limits generalizability; replication across diverse settings is necessary to establish the broader applicability of findings.

Despite these limitations, the study makes valuable contributions to understanding effective pedagogy in Christian Religious Education. The empirical demonstration that teaching styles matter significantly for student outcomes provides evidence-based justification for prioritizing instructional quality in religious education. The identification of student-centered and interaction-focused approaches as particularly effective offers concrete direction for pedagogical improvement efforts. The elucidation of students' interest as a mediating mechanism highlights an actionable target for intervention that can amplify the impact of teaching style improvements. Future research should extend this investigation in several directions. Qualitative studies exploring students' lived experiences of different teaching styles would enrich understanding of the psychological processes underlying the quantitative relationships observed. Experimental or quasi-experimental designs comparing specific instructional interventions would enable stronger causal inferences about pedagogical effectiveness. Investigation of teacher characteristics, beliefs, and training experiences that shape teaching style adoption would inform professional development design. Finally, examining whether these findings generalize across different religious education contexts (Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist) would reveal universal principles versus tradition-specific pedagogical considerations.

CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence that teachers' teaching styles significantly influence students' interest and learning outcomes in Christian Religious Education. The research demonstrates strong positive relationships between instructional quality and student engagement ($r = 0.712$) and between teaching approaches and academic achievement ($r = 0.685$). Student-centered and interaction-focused pedagogical methods emerge as particularly effective in promoting both interest and learning success. Furthermore, students' interest partially mediates the relationship between teaching styles and outcomes, accounting for approximately 36% of the total effect, indicating that effective teaching operates through both direct instructional impact and indirect motivation-enhancing pathways.

These findings carry important implications for educational practice. Teachers should prioritize pedagogical approaches that actively engage students through dialogue, collaboration, and personal relevance rather than relying predominantly on lecture-based content delivery. School administrators should invest in professional development that equips teachers with skills in student-centered instruction and should establish systems for monitoring student engagement as an indicator of teaching effectiveness. Curriculum designers should structure Christian Religious Education programs to support interactive and experiential learning rather than exclusively text-based study. Ultimately, the goal of Christian Religious Education extends beyond knowledge acquisition to encompass spiritual growth, moral development, and character formation. Achieving these ambitious objectives requires teaching approaches that engage students' hearts and minds, not

merely their capacity for memorization. This study demonstrates that such engagement is achievable through thoughtful pedagogical choices and that these choices significantly impact learning success. As educators continue refining their practice, attention to teaching styles that promote interest and interaction will remain essential for fulfilling the transformative potential of religious education.

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