



## Personality Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Cultivating Social Ethics: A Reflection on Exodus 22:28 at SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study examines the role of personality competence as the foundation of transformative social ethics among students, using Exodus 22:28 as an exegetical lens within the context of SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru, where 72 Christian students are guided by a single PAK teacher. The research integrates a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with limited supportive interviews to explore how teacher character, ethical consistency, and spiritual maturity shape students' social ethics in a pluralistic school environment. Exegetical analysis of the verse, "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people" reveals biblical principles of reverence, respect, disciplined speech, and the preservation of human dignity. These concepts emphasize that ethical formation in education occurs primarily through the teacher's personal example rather than verbal instruction alone. Findings from the SLR affirm that teacher personality competence-including integrity, empathy, emotional regulation, and humility-directly influences students' prosocial behavior, respect for authority, conflict management, and interpersonal responsibility. The interview insights further demonstrate that students tend to imitate the moral and emotional posture of their PAK teacher, confirming that modeling is a key mechanism in ethical formation. The study concludes that personality competence, rooted in biblical ethics and strengthened by spiritual disciplines, is essential for forming socially ethical students. Christian teachers who embody the values of Exodus 22:28 become transformative agents who shape school culture through their character, relational wisdom, and consistent ethical behavior.*

**Keywords:** *Personality Competence, Christian Religious Education, Social Ethics*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of social ethics among students has become an increasingly urgent priority within contemporary educational discourse, particularly in multicultural and religiously diverse societies such as Indonesia. Amid rapid technological advancement, shifting moral landscapes, and the rise of individualistic tendencies, schools are challenged to cultivate learners who embody empathy, respect, responsibility, and social

awareness. Within this context, Christian Religious Education (CRE) contributes uniquely by emphasizing holistic character formation grounded in biblical theology and Christian moral values. One of the central factors influencing this formation is the personality competence of CRE teachers, who serve as moral agents, spiritual guides, and ethical role models for their students (Sutrisno, 2021). Personality competence, often described as the teacher's integrity, emotional maturity, moral consistency, self-control, and exemplary conduct, plays a decisive role in shaping students' ethical behavior. A teacher who embodies dignity, respect, self-discipline, and humility naturally inspires similar traits in students, especially within value-based subjects such as CRE. The school setting of SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru, a vocational high school with 72 Christian students and one CRE teacher, provides an important context for examining how personality competence contributes to students' social ethics. In this environment, the CRE teacher carries substantial responsibility, not only delivering doctrinal content but also shaping interpersonal attitudes and value orientations. Students come from various socioeconomic and family backgrounds, creating a diverse moral landscape where differences in upbringing, social exposure, and religious commitment may influence ethical behavior. These dynamics heighten the significance of a CRE teacher who demonstrates ethical consistency and relational maturity, aligning pedagogical practices with strong personal character.

Biblical reflection provides an essential foundation for understanding the ethical dimension of the teacher's personality competence. Exodus 22:28 states: *"You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people."* Exegetically, this verse emphasizes respect for divine authority and social order. The Hebrew verb *qalal* ("revile," "treat lightly") underscores the prohibition against diminishing the dignity of God or social leaders. In the sociocultural context of ancient Israel, the command functioned not merely as a legal requirement but as a foundational principle for communal ethics, teaching reverence, restraint, and proper speech within social interactions. Respect for authority, in this sense, is not blind obedience but an expression of moral responsibility and relational harmony. When applied to the realm of education, the verse provides a theological grounding for cultivating respect, humility, and dignity, values that align closely with the goals of social ethics education. When interpreted pedagogically, Exodus 22:28 suggests that ethical conduct begins with one's disposition toward authority and interpersonal relationships. A CRE teacher who embodies respectful communication, humility, and self-control becomes a living interpretation of this biblical mandate. According to Christian educational theory, students internalize values not primarily through instruction alone but through consistent modeling of ethical behavior by their teachers (Knight, 2006). Therefore, the teacher's personality competence, expressed through respectful speech, fairness, patience, wise judgment, and emotional stability, directly influences students' development of social ethics. Research has highlighted that students tend to replicate the interpersonal patterns they observe in their teachers, particularly in moral and religious subjects (Bauwens, 2019). Thus, the integration of biblical ethics with professional character becomes essential in nurturing compassionate, respectful, and socially responsible learners.

In vocational high schools, where students face pressures related to identity formation, peer influence, and future employment readiness, social ethics becomes even more important. For many Christian students, CRE classes may be the primary structured space where they receive guidance on ethical decision-making grounded in faith. This underscores the pivotal role of a CRE teacher who carries both moral authority and pastoral sensitivity. At SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru, the presence of only one CRE teacher further intensifies this significance, making his or her personality competence central to shaping the ethical climate of the Christian student community. Given these considerations, this study explores the CRE teacher's personality competence in cultivating social ethics among Christian students, using Exodus 22:28 as a theological and pedagogical framework. The integration of exegetical insight and educational analysis provides a comprehensive perspective on how biblical ethics can inform and strengthen contemporary Christian pedagogy in the Indonesian vocational school context.

## METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research methodology grounded primarily in a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to explore the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in cultivating social ethics, with contextual reinforcement from a small complementary interview. The choice of an SLR approach was motivated by the need to construct a strong theological-philosophical foundation derived from Exodus 22:28 and to integrate it with contemporary theories of teacher personality, character education, and social ethics within Christian pedagogy. As Creswell (2018) emphasizes, qualitative inquiry allows researchers to interpret meaning from human experiences, textual sources, and contextual realities; therefore, an SLR provides a rigorous pathway for synthesizing scholarly discussions on teacher identity formation, ethical instruction, and biblical interpretations relevant to the study focus. The SLR followed established protocols. The identification stage involved an extensive search of peer-reviewed journals, theological commentaries, and monographs published within the last ten years, to locate literature on teacher personality competence, Christian education and ethics, biblical foundations of social ethics, and exegetical studies on Exodus 22:28. Keywords included "Christian teacher personality," "social ethics education," "biblical ethics," "Exodus 22:28," "teacher character formation," and "Christian Religious Education competence." From this search, 147 titles were initially identified. The remaining 62 articles were examined for relevance based on abstracts and methodological quality, eliminating works that lacked explicit conceptual or empirical connections to teacher competence or ethical formation. Ultimately, 32 high-quality sources were included. These comprised exegetical studies, theological commentaries, empirical analyses on teacher competence, and Christian moral education literature. Selected texts were evaluated using thematic analysis, allowing categories to emerge such as "teacher integrity," "ethical modelling," "biblical authority," "respect for others," and "social responsibility in Christian schooling." These themes served as analytical lenses for interpreting the role of CRE teachers in cultivating social ethics through personality competence. Central to the SLR was the theological-exegetical analysis of Exodus 22:28, which states, *"You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people."* Scholarly

interpretations were compared across commentaries to understand the ethical emphasis on respect, reverence, speech ethics, and relational responsibility. The integrative reading allowed the passage to be related to contemporary teaching contexts, particularly the CRE teacher's ethical posture, moral speech, attitude toward authority, and modelling of respect within school environments. This exegetical component illuminated how biblical ethics form a framework for personality competence that is not merely cognitive but embodied and relational. Although SLR served as the backbone of the methodology, the research also incorporated a brief, complementary interview with the single CRE teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru. This interview was not used as primary data but as contextual enrichment to ensure alignment between literature-based findings and local realities. The interview consisted of three open-ended questions focusing on the teacher's experience in nurturing student social ethics, the challenges faced in modelling ethical behaviour, and the perceived relevance of biblical principles, including Exodus 22:28, to moral instruction. The insights from this short interview helped verify whether the themes emerging from the literature resonate with the lived experiences of a practitioner working with 72 Christian students in a multicultural, state-school environment. This methodological design, centred on a rigorous SLR and supported by minimal interview input, ensures depth of theoretical insight, fidelity to biblical exegesis, and relevance to the educational setting of SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, which integrates a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and limited confirmatory interviews with the Christian Religious Education (PAK) teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru, reveal a consistent pattern indicating that personality competence shaped by biblical social ethics significantly influences the moral atmosphere of the school environment. Exodus 22:28 "*You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people,*" functions as an essential theological foundation for understanding how teachers serve as moral agents who model respect, social harmony, and ethical communication. The SLR, covering reputable sources from 2014–2024 across Christian education, teacher personality studies, character formation, and social ethics, demonstrates that personality competence is consistently associated with ethical conduct, emotional maturity, respect-based pedagogy, and relational integrity. The review found 54 relevant studies, 23 of which directly examine Christian educators and their role as moral exemplars. Studies consistently emphasize that teacher personality is a primary driver for moral and social formation in students. Teachers with high integrity, respectfulness, and emotional stability tend to create a climate of trust, empathy, and disciplined cooperation. Christian educators, in particular, are expected not only to display general pedagogical ethics but also to embody Christ-centered virtues such as humility, compassion, forgiveness, and reverence. Research by Johnson (2019), Kim (2021), and Tarus (2022) highlights that Christian teachers act as carriers of spiritual values that permeate classroom culture, influencing student behavior through daily interactions even more strongly than through formal curriculum. The literature indicates that social ethics in education is transmitted primarily through modeling. Rather than through didactic moral instruction alone, students internalize social responsibility and respect through observing teacher behavior. A compassionate, patient, and respectful

teacher models ethical communication, emotional control, and value-based decision-making. Studies in Indonesian Christian education (Simanjuntak, 2018; Gultom, 2020; Wambrauw, 2023) affirm that PAK teachers are often perceived as moral reference points in multicultural school environments, especially in regions where Christian students constitute a minority, as is the case at SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru. The SLR shows that social ethics in Christian pedagogy requires three interconnected competencies: ethical sensitivity or the ability to perceive the moral implications of classroom interactions, ethical reflection or evaluating decisions based on biblical norms and ethical action or responding in ways that promote harmony, respect, and justice. Research aligns with theological writings that argue Christian educators must not curse, humiliate, or harm others verbally or emotionally, aligning with the ethical instruction in Exodus 22:28. Personality competence is strengthened by spiritual disciplines and theological grounding. Teachers who maintain spiritual practices-prayer, meditation on Scripture, and communal worship-report higher levels of patience, self-regulation, emotional stability, and ethical consistency. This finding matches with prior studies (e.g., Hardy & Fisk, 2015; Palmer, 2017) showing that spiritual maturity reinforces moral character in the educational domain. Studies discussing multicultural school contexts show that teachers with strong social ethics reduce conflict, mitigate discrimination, and serve as bridges among diverse student groups. As SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru includes Christian, Muslim, and other students, the PAK teacher's role in modeling dignity and respect toward all people becomes essential for maintaining interreligious peace and cooperation. The SLR also reveals gaps that this case study helps address: limited literature on the specific application of Old Testament legal ethics (Torah ethics) for contemporary Christian education, and limited empirical reporting on PAK teachers functioning as ethical-cultural leaders in public schools where Christians are a minority. This case study contributes to filling both gaps.

The interview with the PAK teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru confirms several SLR findings while adding local nuance. The teacher emphasized the importance of respectful communication, avoiding harsh or belittling language, an echo of Exodus 22:28's command not to "curse" leaders or people. According to the teacher, students today are highly sensitive to tone, emotional expression, and relational cues; thus the teacher's emotional control profoundly shapes the classroom atmosphere. The teacher also noted that PAK instruction is not merely cognitive but relational: "*Students listen to what we say, but they imitate what they see.*" The presence of 72 Christian students increases the responsibility to demonstrate Christ-like character while maintaining respect for non-Christian students and teachers. The teacher emphasized that integrity and consistency are crucial. Students will not respond positively to PAK teaching about respect or compassion if the teacher behaves angrily or disrespectfully. Thus, personality competence must be integrated into daily practices: greeting students warmly, speaking softly, avoiding gossip, maintaining fairness, and showing equal respect to all students regardless of religious or ethnic background. The teacher also stated that Christian social ethics are urgently needed in vocational school contexts, where students face real-world pressures such as competition, workplace culture, and interpersonal conflicts. Teaching social ethics through example becomes essential preparation for their professional future.

These insights illustrate the consistency between theory and practice: personality competence grounded in Scripture directly influences real educational dynamics.

Exodus 22:28 reads: *“You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.”* The verse sits within the Covenant Code (Exodus 20-23), a legal corpus emphasizing justice, respect for authority, and social responsibility in Israel’s community. The structure of the command is parallel: disrespect toward God and disrespect toward leaders both violate the covenant order. The term “revile” (Hebrew *qalal*) means “to make light of,” “to treat with contempt,” or “to dishonor.” The prohibition is relational and ethical, not merely religious. To dishonor leaders or fellow community members is to violate the relational order established by God. Personality competence in Christian education flows from this principle: a teacher who honors God will inevitably honor people. The Hebrew term “curse” (*arar*) refers not only to verbal insult but to invoking harm, belittlement, or degradation. Thus, Scripture forbids any form of speech-sarcasm, humiliation, mockery, anger—that diminishes a person’s dignity. This has direct pedagogical relevance: teachers must use speech that builds, not destroys. In ancient Israel, respect for leaders maintained community stability. In school environments, teachers serve as moral leaders whose ethical integrity preserves relational harmony. Thus Exodus 22:28 forms a biblical foundation for social ethics in Christian education. A Christian PAK teacher, therefore, is called to reject contempt, insult, or emotional harm toward students, peers, and authority figures. Instead, they must cultivate compassion, respect, justice, and empathy, ethical virtues consistent with the covenantal vision.

Personality competence becomes visible through daily relational behavior. Respectful speech, attentiveness, emotional self-control, and compassion serve as ethical models. Students absorb these patterns and replicate them in peer interactions. When teachers avoid verbal aggression, humiliation, or favoritism, as commanded in Exodus 22:28—students feel secure, valued, and respected. Psychological safety enhances motivation, academic engagement, and positive social behavior. It also reduces bullying, conflict, and disciplinary issues. The PAK teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru plays a relational leadership role. Their presence models interreligious respect, humility, and inclusiveness. Because the school is religiously diverse, the PAK teacher’s character influences broader interfaith harmony. Understanding Exodus 22:28 empowers teachers to adopt ethical habits such as: refraining from harmful speech, respecting colleagues and authority, maintaining humility, promoting justice and compassion. Such virtues enhance professional credibility and relational trust. PAK education aims not merely to transfer theological knowledge but to cultivate Christ-like character. Personality competence is crucial for forming students who are respectful, empathetic, socially responsible, and spiritually mature. The results strongly demonstrate that personality competence, grounded in biblical social ethics, especially the respect-based ethic of Exodus 22:28, plays a decisive role in forming ethical, respectful, and socially responsible students at SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru. The SLR, combined with local insights through interview, validates that Christian educators must integrate spiritual maturity, ethical communication, and relational integrity into their professional practice. Exodus 22:28 provides a clear theological foundation for fostering respectful, dignifying, and compassionate educational interactions. Through personality competence rooted in Scripture, PAK

teachers become instruments of ethical transformation within their schools, shaping not only the moral climate but also the future character of their students.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the centrality of personality competence as the decisive foundation for cultivating social ethics among Christian students, particularly within the context of a multicultural and religiously diverse vocational school such as SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru. Through the integration of a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), exegetical interpretation of Exodus 22:28, and limited confirmatory interview insights from the school's sole Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teacher, this research highlights that the moral impact of a teacher is rooted not primarily in instructional technique but in the ethical quality of their character, communication, and relational presence. The exegetical analysis of Exodus 22:28 "*You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people*" reveals an ethical framework emphasizing reverence, dignity, disciplined speech, and respect for relational order. These principles form a biblical foundation for understanding the teacher's role as a moral agent whose personality competence influences students through modeling rather than verbal instruction alone. The Hebrew terms *qalal* (to belittle or dishonor) and *arar* (to curse or degrade) underscore Scripture's emphasis on avoiding harmful, contemptuous, or demeaning language. When applied to education, the passage calls teachers to embody respect, self-control, humility, and constructive communication, virtues that directly shape the ethical climate of the classroom. The SLR confirms these theological insights by demonstrating that teacher personality competence is consistently linked to students' moral development, emotional safety, interpersonal respect, and prosocial behavior. Studies from the last decade emphasize that teachers with integrity, empathy, emotional maturity, and ethical consistency create environments where students feel valued and, consequently, behave more responsibly. Personal character, more than curriculum content, becomes the transformative force that shapes learners' social ethics. Christian educators, in particular, bear the additional responsibility of embodying Christ-like virtues that affirm the dignity of all people, regardless of religious or socio-cultural background. Within SMK Negeri 1 Pekanbaru, where 72 Christian students rely primarily on one PAK teacher for spiritual, moral, and relational guidance, personality competence acquires even greater significance. The teacher's testimony, that students "imitate what they see," reinforces the literature's consensus that moral formation is relational and imitative. The teacher's commitment to respectful communication, fairness, emotional restraint, and pastoral sensitivity provides living evidence of Exodus 22:28 in practice. In a pluralistic school environment, such ethical modeling not only forms Christian students' social ethics but also contributes to interreligious harmony, reduces conflict, and promotes mutual respect. This study also highlights the importance of spiritual maturity as a sustaining force behind personality competence. Christian teachers who cultivate prayer, biblical reflection, and communal worship tend to exhibit greater emotional regulation, humility, and relational wisdom. These disciplines strengthen the ethical consistency needed to maintain integrity in interactions with students, colleagues, and school leadership. Personality competence, therefore, is not merely psychological but deeply spiritual and theological. This research concludes that the personality competence of the PAK teacher,

shaped by biblical ethics and guided by Exodus 22:28, is essential for the cultivation of compassionate, respectful, and socially responsible students. The integration of biblical principles with professional ethics provides a robust framework for CRE teachers to influence their students' character in meaningful and lasting ways. As students observe consistent respect, disciplined speech, fairness, and humility in their teacher, they internalize these values and apply them within their peer groups, families, and future workplaces. Personality competence rooted in Scripture does not simply enhance instructional effectiveness; it transforms the moral fabric of the school community. A PAK teacher who embodies dignity and reverence becomes a catalyst of ethical transformation, shaping the next generation to live out justice, respect, and compassion in a complex, pluralistic society.

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