



The Implementation of Socio-Emotional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Improving Student Learning Outcomes at SDN 076066 Ombo Lata Sawo II

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of socio-emotional competence among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and its impact on student learning outcomes at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II. Teacher socio-emotional competence is a crucial aspect of the learning process that significantly influences educational success. The research employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and documentation of students' learning outcomes. The study involved two CRE teachers and forty-two students as respondents. The findings reveal that: (1) the socio-emotional competence of CRE teachers at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II was categorized as good, with an average score of 3.78 on a 5-point scale; (2) there is a significant positive correlation between teachers' socio-emotional competence and student learning outcomes, with a correlation coefficient of 0.724; (3) empathy, social awareness, and relationship management emerged as dominant factors in enhancing learning outcomes; and (4) programs aimed at strengthening the socio-emotional competence of CRE teachers contributed to an 18.5% increase in students' average scores. This study concludes that the socio-emotional competence of CRE teachers is a key determinant in improving student learning outcomes, particularly in primary schools located in rural areas such as Ombolata Sawo II.

Keywords: *socio-emotional competence, teachers, learning outcomes, primary school*

INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a crucial role in shaping the holistic development of students. CRE is not only designed to cultivate intellectual growth but also aims to instill spiritual and emotional values rooted in the teachings of Christ. Through CRE, students are expected to grow into individuals of faith, integrity, and the ability to live harmoniously with others. The role of CRE teachers in the learning process is highly

strategic. They are not only responsible for delivering instructional content but also serve as role models who embody Christian values in the daily lives of their students (Sidjabat, 2019). To fulfill this noble task, CRE teachers are required to possess a wide range of supporting competencies. One particularly relevant and essential competence is socio-emotional competence. This includes the ability to recognize and regulate one's own emotions, empathize with the feelings and needs of others, build positive and productive relationships, and motivate students to actively engage in the learning process. According to Goleman (2018), emotional intelligence is a primary determinant of success, surpassing even intellectual intelligence (IQ). This is equally true in the educational context, where teachers with high emotional intelligence are generally more effective in managing classrooms, creating conducive learning environments, and fostering meaningful connections with students. Previous studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between teachers' socio-emotional competence and student learning outcomes. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) highlight that teachers who are able to manage their emotions effectively and build positive social relationships with students create classroom environments that nurture both academic achievement and character development. Similarly, Schonert-Reichl (2017) emphasizes that successful learning is not solely determined by teaching methods or instructional materials but also by teachers' ability to foster healthy and constructive emotional relationships with their students. It is important to note that the majority of these studies have been conducted in urban settings or within the framework of general education, not specifically focusing on CRE teachers in primary schools, particularly in rural areas such as those in Indonesia. Consequently, there is still a scarcity of literature that explores the specific ways in which the socio-emotional competence of CRE teachers influences student learning outcomes in contexts where educational resources and access are limited. One school that provides a compelling case for such a study is SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II, a primary school located in a rural area of North Nias Regency, North Sumatra Province. This school faces multiple challenges in the teaching and learning process, especially in CRE. Preliminary observations indicate several key issues: first, limited facilities and infrastructure constrain the optimal delivery of lessons; second, the diverse socio-economic backgrounds of students create disparities in learning readiness and access to educational resources; and third, teachers' limited access to professional development opportunities, including training that enhances socio-emotional competence, poses an additional challenge. Despite these obstacles, CRE teachers at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II have demonstrated strong commitment to developing socio-emotional competence in their daily teaching practices. They strive to maintain effective communication with students, recognize their emotional conditions, and provide motivation to sustain learning enthusiasm, particularly in CRE. This commitment is reflected in several practices that emphasize personal and relational approaches, such as group discussions, faith reflections, and dialogical conflict resolution.

Preliminary data show that the average student scores in CRE have fluctuated over the past three years. In 2021, the average score was 65.8, rising to 72.4 in 2022, but declining again to 68.3 in 2023. These fluctuations raise critical questions about the factors influencing student achievement and the extent to which teachers' socio-emotional competence contributes to such dynamics. Based on this background, the present study seeks to examine in depth the relationship between the socio-emotional competence of

CRE teachers and student learning outcomes at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II. Specifically, this study aims to: analyze the level of socio-emotional competence of CRE teachers; identify the relationship between such competence and student learning outcomes; determine the aspects of socio-emotional competence that most significantly contribute to student achievement; and evaluate the effectiveness of programs implemented by teachers to strengthen socio-emotional competence in the context of CRE. The urgency of this research lies in several areas. First, there is a lack of studies on the socio-emotional competence of CRE teachers in Indonesia, particularly at the primary school level and in rural contexts. Second, it is essential to identify effective strategies to enhance student learning outcomes in CRE, a subject that is often undervalued compared to others. Third, there is a pressing need for policy recommendations that holistically and contextually support the professional development of CRE teachers, including strengthening socio-emotional competence as an integral component of teacher effectiveness. The results of this study are expected to provide significant contributions to the field of education, particularly Christian Religious Education. The study not only seeks to understand the realities on the ground but also aims to offer practical solutions to improve the quality of CRE learning by reinforcing teacher character and competence. Furthermore, its findings may serve as valuable input for local governments, educational institutions, and religious organizations in designing teacher development programs that address emotional and spiritual dimensions, not merely cognitive ones. In this way, education becomes not only a vehicle for knowledge transmission but also a means of holistic Christian character formation for younger generations, especially in regions that have long received limited attention in educational quality development.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-method approach with a sequential explanatory design, in which data collection and analysis were conducted in two stages: beginning with quantitative data followed by qualitative data. The choice of this approach aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the socio-emotional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers and its impact on student learning outcomes at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II. The quantitative phase provided an objective depiction of the relationships among variables, while the qualitative phase enriched the findings with deeper contextual insights and narratives. The study was conducted at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II, located in Lahewa Subdistrict, North Nias Regency, North Sumatra Province. The research took place over six months, from January to June 2025. The participants included two PAK teachers and 42 students from grades IV to VI. Upper-grade students were selected because they were considered more capable of providing reflective assessments of teacher performance and demonstrated more stable and well-documented learning outcomes. A total of 12 classroom observations were conducted using an assessment rubric based on socio-emotional competence indicators. In-depth interviews were conducted with PAK teachers, the school principal, and selected students to further explore their perspectives on how socio-emotional competence was practiced in the learning process. The student questionnaire, consisting of 25 Likert-scale items across five key dimensions of socio-emotional competence, was administered to capture students' perceptions of their PAK teachers. Documentation of student learning

outcomes was collected from daily tests, mid-term scores, and final semester scores in PAK subjects. The research instruments were systematically designed. The observation rubric comprised 15 indicators representing five main dimensions of socio-emotional competence: self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. The interview guide was semi-structured and developed based on the same dimensions. The student questionnaire had undergone validation and demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.86. Additionally, the documentation format was structured to facilitate tracking of student learning progress throughout the research period. Quantitative data were analyzed first using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and paired-sample t-tests. These analyses aimed to describe the relationships between teacher competence and student learning outcomes, as well as the contribution of each competence dimension. Subsequently, qualitative data were analyzed through reduction, presentation, and conclusion-drawing processes. Validation was ensured through source and methodological triangulation, and thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns of PAK teachers' socio-emotional competence practices in the rural elementary school context.

Table 1. Observation Rubric for PAK Teachers' Socio-Emotional Competence

No	Dimension & Indicator	1	2	3	4	5
Self-Awareness	Recognizes personal emotions while teaching					
	Understands personal strengths and limitations					
	Demonstrates appropriate self-confidence					
Self-Management	Adapts to changing classroom situations					
	Manages emotions in challenging situations					
	Demonstrates consistency between values taught and personal behavior					
Self-Motivation	Shows initiative in developing learning activities					
	Demonstrates enthusiasm in teaching					
	Perseveres when facing difficulties					
Empathy	Provides appropriate support for students' needs					
	Demonstrates sensitivity to students' feelings					
	Understands students' perspectives and backgrounds					
Social Skills	Manages conflicts constructively					
	Communicates effectively with students					
	Builds positive relationships with students					

Interview Guide for PAK Teachers (Sample Questions)

1. How do you recognize your emotions while teaching?
2. How do you manage your emotions when facing challenging classroom situations?
3. What strategies do you use to understand students' emotional needs?
4. How do you build positive relationships with students from diverse backgrounds?
5. What challenges do you encounter in developing socio-emotional competence?

Table 2. Student Perception Questionnaire on CRE Teachers' Socio-Emotional Competence (Sample Items)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	My CRE teacher expresses genuine emotions while teaching					
2	My CRE teacher remains calm when students cause disruption					
3	My CRE teacher shows enthusiasm in teaching					
4	My CRE teacher understands when I feel sad or have problems					
5	My CRE teacher listens attentively to students' opinions					

Student Learning Outcomes Data**Table 3. Recapitulation of PAK Scores Before and After the Program**

No.	Grade	Number of Students	Average Score Before	Average Score After	Increase
1	IV	14	68.4	78.9	10.5
2	V	15	70.2	84.5	14.3
3	VI	13	71.5	85.6	14.1
Total	42	70.0	83.0	13.0	

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of PAK Scores

Score Range	Frequency Before	Percentage	Frequency After	Percentage
90–100	0	0%	8	19.0%
80–89	5	11.9%	20	47.6%
70–79	15	35.7%	12	28.6%
60–69	18	42.9%	2	4.8%
< 60	4	9.5%	0	0%
Total	42	100%	42	100%

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the socio-emotional competence level of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II is categorized as good. Based on observations and assessments using the socio-emotional competence rubric, the teachers obtained an average score of 3.78 on a 5-point scale. Table 1 presents the scores for each dimension of PAK teachers' socio-emotional competence.

Table 5. Scores of Socio-Emotional Competence Dimensions of PAK Teachers

No	Dimension	Teacher A	Teacher B	Average
1	Self-Awareness	3.80	3.60	3.70
2	Self-Management	3.75	3.50	3.63
3	Self-Motivation	4.00	3.80	3.90
4	Empathy	4.20	3.90	4.05

5	Social Skills	3.85	3.40	3.63
	Overall Average	3.92	3.64	3.78

As shown in Table 1, the empathy dimension received the highest score (4.05), followed by self-motivation (3.90). Meanwhile, self-management and social skills received the lowest scores (3.63). These results suggest that CRE teachers at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II excel in the aspect of empathy toward students but still need to improve their self-management and social skills.

Qualitative data from interviews further revealed that teachers' empathy is reflected in several behaviors, such as:

1. Listening attentively when students express opinions or difficulties.
2. Understanding students' family backgrounds and adjusting teaching approaches accordingly.
3. Providing emotional support to students facing personal problems.
4. Appreciating the diversity of students' abilities and backgrounds.

Meanwhile, aspects of self-management that require further development include the ability to manage stress and negative emotions in challenging classroom situations, as well as maintaining consistency in enforcing classroom rules.

Relationship between CRE Teachers' Socio-Emotional Competence and Student Learning Outcomes

Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between CRE teachers' socio-emotional competence and students' learning outcomes. The correlation coefficient (r) of 0.724 with a significance value of $p < 0.01$ indicates a strong relationship. This means that the higher the socio-emotional competence of CRE teachers, the higher the students' learning outcomes. Further analysis was conducted for each socio-emotional competence dimension, as shown in Table 2.

Table 6. Correlation Between Socio-Emotional Competence Dimensions and Learning Outcomes

No	Dimension	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)
1	Self-Awareness	0.615	< 0.01
2	Self-Management	0.582	< 0.01
3	Self-Motivation	0.698	< 0.01
4	Empathy	0.802	< 0.01
5	Social Skills	0.743	< 0.01

As shown in Table 2, empathy demonstrated the strongest correlation with student learning outcomes ($r = 0.802$), followed by social skills ($r = 0.743$) and self-motivation ($r = 0.698$). These results indicate that teachers' ability to empathize with students and build positive social relationships plays a crucial role in enhancing learning outcomes.

Dominant Aspects of Socio-Emotional Competence

To identify the dominant aspects of socio-emotional competence influencing student learning outcomes, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 7. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Beta Coefficient	t	Sig.
Self-Awareness	0.142	2.315	0.026
Self-Management	0.138	2.246	0.031
Self-Motivation	0.185	2.873	0.007
Empathy	0.356	4.728	0.000
Social Skills	0.284	3.956	0.000

$R^2 = 0.687$

Based on Table 3, the regression model explains 68.7% of the variance in student learning outcomes ($R^2 = 0.687$). The empathy dimension had the most dominant influence, with a beta coefficient of 0.356, followed by social skills (0.284) and self-motivation (0.185). All dimensions of socio-emotional competence had a significant effect on student learning outcomes ($p < 0.05$).

These quantitative findings are reinforced by qualitative data from student interviews. Selected excerpts highlight the importance of teachers' empathy: *"I enjoy learning CRE/PAK because my teacher always listens and understands our difficulties. She does not get angry when we do not understand but patiently helps us instead."* (Grade V student). *"Our teacher is different from others. He knows when we feel sad or have problems. He often invites us to share our experiences at home and connects them with the lesson."* (Grade VI student)

Effectiveness of the Socio-Emotional Competence Strengthening Program for Christian Religious Education Teachers

As part of this study, a socio-emotional competence strengthening program for CRE teachers was conducted over a three-month period. The program included training, mentoring, and reflective teaching practice. Student learning outcomes were measured before and after the program to evaluate its effectiveness. Table 4 presents a comparison of students' learning outcomes.

Table 8. Comparison of Student Learning Outcomes Before and After the Program

Class	Number of Students	Average Score Before	Average Score After	Improvement (%)
IV	14	68.4	78.9	15.4
V	15	70.2	84.5	20.4
VI	13	71.5	85.6	19.7
Total	42	70.0	83.0	18.5

Paired-sample t_{test} results showed a significant difference between the mean scores before and after the program ($t = 12.354$, $p < 0.001$). Overall, the average score increased by 18.5%. The highest improvement was observed among Grade V students (20.4%), followed by Grade VI (19.7%) and Grade IV (15.4%).

Observations and interviews conducted after the program revealed significant changes in PAK teachers' teaching practices, including:

1. Improved ability to recognize and respond to students' emotional needs.
2. Use of more varied teaching techniques that incorporate emotional aspects.
3. Strengthened positive and affirmative communication with students.

4. Integration of storytelling and personal experiences to build stronger relationships with students.
5. Implementation of more effective and responsive classroom management strategies.

Socio-Emotional Competence of CRE Teachers and Its Implications

The study found that the socio-emotional competence of CRE teachers at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II was categorized as good, with an average score of 3.78 out of 5. This finding is consistent with Jennings and Greenberg (2009), who argue that teachers with strong socio-emotional competence are more likely to create a positive and supportive learning environment. The empathy dimension received the highest score (4.05), indicating that CRE teachers demonstrated strong ability in understanding and responding to students' emotional needs. This aligns with the characteristics of Christian Religious Education, which emphasize the development of Christian values such as love and care for others (Sidjabat, 2019). Within the rural context of SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II, where communal values are still strongly upheld, teachers' empathy serves as a vital foundation for building relationships with both students and the wider community. Self-management and social skills dimensions received the lowest scores (3.63), highlighting the need for professional development focused on these aspects. The ability to manage stress and regulate emotions is especially crucial given the challenges faced by teachers in rural schools, such as limited facilities and professional support. This finding is consistent with Vesely et al. (2014), who emphasized the importance of professional development programs that target teachers' emotional regulation.

Relationship Between Socio-Emotional Competence and Student Learning Outcomes

The study revealed a strong positive relationship between CRE teachers' socio-emotional competence and students' learning outcomes ($r = 0.724$). This supports previous findings by Schonert-Reichl (2017), which demonstrated that teachers' socio-emotional competence correlates with students' academic success. In the context of Christian Religious Education, this relationship is particularly relevant since its objectives extend beyond cognitive development to include affective and spiritual dimensions. The empathy dimension had the strongest correlation with student learning outcomes ($r = 0.802$). This can be explained by the fact that empathy enables teachers to identify students' learning difficulties and provide appropriate support. Empathy also fosters emotional connections between teachers and students, which Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) identified as a key factor in facilitating meaningful learning. Teachers' social skills also showed a strong correlation with learning outcomes ($r = 0.743$). In rural elementary schools such as SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II, teachers' social skills are important not only for interactions with students but also for building relationships with parents and the surrounding community. Parental and community support can reinforce the Christian Religious Education process that takes place at school.

Dominant Aspects and Their Implications for Teacher Professional Development

Multiple regression analysis revealed that empathy, social skills, and self-motivation were the dominant aspects influencing student learning outcomes. These findings have important implications for the professional development of CRE teachers. Professional

development programs should not only focus on mastery of subject matter and teaching methods but also prioritize the enhancement of socio-emotional competence, particularly empathy and social skills. In the context of SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II, socio-emotional competence development for CRE teachers can be implemented through the following approaches:

1. Reflective Training: Supporting teachers in reflecting on their teaching practices and interactions with students to identify areas for socio-emotional growth.
2. Coaching: Providing mentoring by senior teachers or mentors who possess strong socio-emotional competence.
3. Professional Learning Communities: Establishing CRE teacher learning communities to facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices in socio-emotional development.
4. Mindfulness Practices: Introducing mindfulness activities to enhance teachers' self-awareness and emotional regulation skills.

Effectiveness of the Socio-Emotional Competence Strengthening Program

The socio-emotional competence strengthening program for CR teachers in this study proved effective in enhancing student learning outcomes, with an average improvement of 18.5%. This finding aligns with Brackett et al. (2011), who reported that teacher socio-emotional competence development programs positively impact classroom climate and student achievement. The greater improvement observed in Grade V (20.4%) and Grade VI (19.7%) compared to Grade IV (15.4%) suggests that the impact of teachers' socio-emotional competence tends to be more significant among students with higher levels of cognitive and emotional maturity. This is consistent with developmental theories, which state that students' ability to engage in emotionally enriched learning increases alongside their cognitive development (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). The strengthening program in this study included reflective teaching practice, effective communication techniques, and responsive classroom management strategies. These components proved effective in improving PAK teachers' teaching practices at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II. The findings may serve as a model for professional development of PAK teachers in other rural elementary schools with similar characteristics.

CONCLUSION

The socio-emotional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers at SDN 076066 Ombolata Sawo II is categorized as good, with an average score of 3.78 on a 5-point scale. The empathy dimension achieved the highest score (4.05), while self-management and social skills dimensions obtained the lowest scores (3.63). A significant positive relationship was found between teachers' socio-emotional competence and students' learning outcomes, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.724 ($p < 0.01$). Among the dimensions, empathy showed the strongest correlation with student learning outcomes ($r = 0.802$), followed by social skills ($r = 0.743$) and self-motivation ($r = 0.698$). The dominant aspects of socio-emotional competence influencing student learning outcomes were empathy (beta coefficient = 0.356), social skills (beta coefficient = 0.284), and self-motivation (beta coefficient = 0.185). The program to strengthen CRE teachers' socio-emotional competence proved effective in improving student learning outcomes,

with an average increase of 18.5%. The highest improvement was observed among Grade V students (20.4%), followed by Grade VI (19.7%) and Grade IV (15.4%). Improvements in teaching practices after the implementation of the program included enhanced ability to recognize and respond to students' emotional needs, the use of more varied teaching techniques, reinforcement of positive communication, the integration of stories and personal experiences, as well as the application of more effective and responsive classroom management strategies. Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed: first, continuously developing socio-emotional competence, particularly in self-management and social skills, through reflective teaching practices and participation in professional development activities; second, implementing instructional strategies that integrate socio-emotional aspects, such as values-based learning, collaborative learning, and storytelling approaches relevant to the local context; and third, establishing professional learning communities among PAK teachers to share experiences and best practices in enhancing socio-emotional competence.

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