



## Personality Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers as a Reflection of Christian Piety: A Study of Philippians 1:10 at SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as a reflection of Christian piety, grounded in Philippians 1:10, within the context of SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral, Asahan. Personality competence is understood as the integration of moral integrity, emotional maturity, and consistency between belief and behavior, which are essential qualities for teachers engaged in faith-based education. The study employs a qualitative research design that combines a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with simple semi-structured interviews to obtain both theoretical and contextual insights. The SLR synthesizes relevant scholarly literature published within the last decade, focusing on teacher personality competence, Christian education, and spiritual formation. To complement the literature findings, interviews were conducted with five Christian teachers, including CRE teachers, who are actively involved in students' moral and spiritual development. The findings indicate that personality competence is manifested through ethical discernment, patience, self-control, and authenticity in daily teaching practices. The study also reveals that personality competence is not a static trait but a dynamic process that requires ongoing reflection, spiritual discipline, and institutional support. In conclusion, the study affirms that the personality competence of CRE teachers serves as a vital expression of Christian piety and plays a decisive role in the effectiveness of Christian education. By integrating biblical reflection and educational theory, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of holistic teacher formation in Christian elementary schools.*

**Keywords:** *Personality Competence, Christian Religious Education, Christian Piety*

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher competence is widely acknowledged as a decisive factor in determining the quality of education, particularly in religious education contexts where moral formation and spiritual development are integral components of learning. In Christian Religious Education (CRE), teachers are not merely transmitters of doctrinal knowledge but are also expected to embody Christian values through their attitudes, behaviors, and personal

integrity (Stronge, 2018). Consequently, teacher competence in this context extends beyond pedagogical and professional dimensions to include personality competence as a reflection of lived faith. Personality competence refers to a teacher's capacity to demonstrate moral integrity, emotional maturity, self-discipline, and consistency between belief and conduct in both professional and personal life (Day, 2017). Within Christian education, this competence is inseparable from spirituality, as teachers are viewed as role models whose lives serve as tangible expressions of Christian teaching. For elementary school students in particular, values are more effectively internalized through example than through verbal instruction alone (Lickona, 2019). Therefore, the personality competence of CRE teachers plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and spiritual orientation. The concept of Christian piety finds strong biblical grounding in Philippians 1:10, which emphasizes discernment, moral clarity, and a blameless life rooted in love. This verse highlights the importance of ethical sensitivity and spiritual maturity as essential aspects of Christian life. From a theological perspective, Christian piety is not limited to personal devotion but is expressed through responsible moral action and discernment in everyday relationships (Fee, 2015). When applied to the educational vocation, Philippians 1:10 provides a normative framework for understanding teacher personality competence as an outward manifestation of inward spiritual maturity. Christian teachers face increasingly complex challenges now. Rapid social change, moral pluralism, and the pervasive influence of digital culture demand that teachers exercise sound judgment, emotional stability, and ethical consistency (Palmer, 2017). For CRE teachers, the challenge is not only to remain faithful to Christian values but also to cultivate inclusive and respectful relationships within diverse school communities. Personality competence enables teachers to navigate these challenges by fostering trust, credibility, and moral authority in their interactions with students and colleagues (Noddings, 2018).

The significance of personality competence is particularly evident in elementary education, where students are at a formative stage of moral and spiritual development. At SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral in Asahan, which serves 54 Christian students and is staffed by 5 Christian teachers including CRE teachers, daily interactions between teachers and students provide a powerful context for character formation. In such close-knit educational environments, students continuously observe and interpret their teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and responses to challenges. As a result, the personality competence of CRE teachers functions as a living curriculum that complements formal religious instruction (Knight, 2016). Personality competence is often discussed in general terms without sufficient integration of biblical theology. Many studies on teacher professionalism emphasize ethical behavior and emotional maturity but do not explicitly connect these qualities to scriptural foundations of Christian life. This gap highlights the need for research that integrates educational competence frameworks with theological reflection. By using Philippians 1:10 as a biblical lens, this study seeks to offer a contextual and theologically grounded understanding of personality competence in Christian Religious Education. This article aims to examine the personality competence of Christian Religious Education teachers as a reflection of Christian piety, based on Philippians 1:10, with a specific focus on SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral, Asahan. The study seeks to contribute both theoretically, by integrating educational and theological perspectives,

and practically, by providing insights for strengthening teacher formation in Christian elementary education. Through this approach, the study affirms that the credibility of Christian education is deeply rooted in the personal integrity and spiritual maturity of the teacher.

## METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design that integrated a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with simple semi-structured interviews. This combined approach was chosen to provide both a strong theoretical foundation and contextual empirical insight into the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as a reflection of Christian piety. The SLR enabled a comprehensive synthesis of relevant scholarly literature, while the interviews provided firsthand perspectives from practitioners within the research locus (Creswell, 2018). By integrating these two methods, the study sought to connect biblical-theological reflection with educational practice in a coherent and systematic manner. The SLR followed a structured and transparent procedure to ensure methodological rigor and replicability. The review process consisted of four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and synthesis (Xiao & Watson, 2019). Academic sources were collected from reputable databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ERIC. The search focused on peer-reviewed journal articles and academic books published within the last ten years to ensure the relevance and currency of the theoretical framework. Keywords used in the search process included "personality competence," "teacher character," "Christian Religious Education," "Christian piety," and "Philippians 1:10." The selected literature was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring concepts, theoretical models, and theological interpretations relevant to personality competence and Christian piety. Themes such as moral integrity, discernment, emotional maturity, and consistency between belief and practice emerged as central constructs in the literature. These themes were then synthesized to form the analytical framework used in interpreting the interview data. To complement the findings of the SLR, simple semi-structured interviews were conducted with Christian teachers at SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral, Asahan. The participants included CRE teachers and other Christian teachers who were directly involved in students' moral and spiritual formation. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants based on their relevance to the research objectives (Patton, 2015). In total, five Christian teachers participated in the interviews, reflecting the actual number of Christian teaching staff at the school. The interviews focused on participants' understanding of personality competence, their interpretation of Christian piety in light of Philippians 1:10, and the ways these values were embodied in their daily teaching practices. Interview questions were open-ended and designed to encourage reflective responses while remaining aligned with the themes identified in the SLR. The interviews were conducted in a conversational manner to create a comfortable environment that allowed participants to express their experiences and perspectives honestly. Interview transcripts were read repeatedly to identify meaningful patterns and themes related to personality competence and Christian piety (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The themes derived from the interviews were then compared and integrated with the theoretical themes identified in the SLR to ensure analytical coherence.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are derived from the integration of two main data sources: a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on teacher personality competence and Christian piety, and simple semi-structured interviews conducted with Christian teachers at SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral, Asahan. The results are presented in a narrative form that interweaves theoretical insights from the literature with empirical observations from the field, allowing for a holistic understanding of personality competence as a lived expression of Christian piety in educational practice. The SLR reveals a strong consensus among scholars that personality competence is a foundational dimension of teacher professionalism, particularly in value-based and religious education contexts. Studies consistently emphasize that personality competence encompasses moral integrity, emotional stability, self-discipline, and consistency between values and behavior (Stronge, 2018; Day, 2017). In Christian education, these attributes are not merely professional requirements but are deeply connected to spiritual maturity and faith commitment. The literature highlights that teachers who demonstrate authenticity and moral coherence are more effective in fostering character formation among students than those who rely solely on instructional strategies (Lickona, 2019). From a theological perspective, the literature affirms that Christian piety is fundamentally relational and ethical in nature. Rather than being confined to private devotion, piety is expressed through discernment, responsible moral action, and love-oriented behavior within social relationships (Fee, 2015). This understanding resonates strongly with educational discourse that views teaching as a moral practice. The convergence of educational theory and biblical theology suggests that personality competence functions as a bridge between faith and pedagogy, enabling teachers to translate Christian values into daily educational interactions.

The interview data corroborate these theoretical insights. All participating teachers emphasized that their role as Christian educators extends beyond delivering subject matter to modeling Christian character in everyday school life. Teachers frequently described personality competence using terms such as “consistency,” “self-control,” “patience,” and “integrity,” indicating an intuitive understanding of the concept that aligns closely with scholarly definitions. One participant noted that students often learn more from how teachers respond to challenges than from formal lessons, underscoring the performative dimension of personality competence in elementary education. A key theme emerging from the interviews is moral discernment as a central aspect of personality competence. Teachers reported that they regularly face situations requiring careful judgment, such as managing student conflicts, responding to behavioral issues, and navigating differences among students’ family backgrounds. These situations demand not only pedagogical skill but also ethical sensitivity and emotional maturity. The ability to “discern what is best,” as emphasized in the biblical text underlying this study, was frequently mentioned implicitly by teachers who spoke about choosing responses that promote reconciliation, fairness, and compassion rather than punishment alone. This finding supports the theological claim that Christian piety involves practical wisdom expressed in concrete actions (Fee, 2015).

Another significant finding concerns the role of consistency between belief and behavior. Both the literature and interview data stress that students are highly sensitive to discrepancies between what teachers say and what they do. Teachers acknowledged that inconsistencies can undermine their moral authority and weaken the credibility of Christian instruction. This awareness reflects a mature understanding of personality competence as an integrative quality that unites faith, character, and professional conduct. Educational scholars similarly argue that teacher authenticity is essential for effective character education, as students are more likely to internalize values that are visibly embodied by trusted role models (Noddings, 2018). The findings also highlight emotional maturity as a crucial component of personality competence. Interview participants described the importance of managing emotions, particularly in stressful situations, as an expression of Christian character. Teachers emphasized patience, gentleness, and self-restraint as virtues they strive to practice daily. This emphasis aligns with educational research indicating that emotionally stable teachers create more supportive learning environments and foster stronger teacher-student relationships (Palmer, 2017). In Christian education, emotional maturity is further understood as a fruit of spiritual growth, reinforcing the connection between personal spirituality and professional competence.

In the context of SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral, the small school community amplifies the impact of teacher personality competence. With 54 Christian students and 5 Christian teachers, interactions are frequent and personal, allowing students to observe teachers closely over time. This environment intensifies the formative influence of teacher behavior, making personality competence particularly consequential. The literature supports this observation, noting that in close-knit educational settings, the teacher's character functions as a "hidden curriculum" that powerfully shapes student values (Knight, 2016). The interview data confirm that teachers are keenly aware of this influence and perceive their daily conduct as an integral part of their educational responsibility. An important point of discussion concerns the inclusive dimension of personality competence. Teachers emphasized that Christian piety does not lead to exclusivism or moral superiority but instead motivates respectful and compassionate engagement with all members of the school community. Although the school primarily serves Christian students, teachers expressed a commitment to values such as respect, fairness, and empathy that transcend religious boundaries. This inclusive orientation reflects contemporary understandings of Christian education that emphasize witness through love and service rather than coercion (Palmer, 2017). The literature similarly underscores that authentic Christian piety fosters openness and relational sensitivity, qualities that are essential in pluralistic educational contexts. The integration of SLR and interview findings also reveals challenges in developing and sustaining personality competence. Teachers acknowledged that maintaining moral consistency and emotional balance requires ongoing reflection and spiritual discipline. External pressures, such as administrative demands and personal stress, can strain teachers' capacity to embody Christian virtues consistently. These challenges highlight the need for institutional support in nurturing teacher personality competence. Educational researchers argue that professional development should address not only pedagogical skills but also personal and ethical

growth (Day, 2017). In Christian schools, this support may include spiritual formation programs, mentoring, and reflective practices that strengthen teachers' inner lives.

The findings affirm that personality competence can be conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that integrates moral, emotional, and spiritual elements. The literature review demonstrates that while secular educational frameworks emphasize ethical behavior and emotional intelligence, Christian education adds a theological dimension that grounds these qualities in faith commitments. The empirical data illustrate how this integration operates in practice, as teachers draw on biblical values to guide their professional behavior. This synthesis contributes to the broader discourse on teacher competence by offering a faith-informed perspective that complements existing educational models. The discussion also underscores the relevance of biblical reflection in educational research. By using a scriptural text as a conceptual lens, the study provides a normative framework for evaluating teacher personality competence that goes beyond descriptive analysis. This approach aligns with scholarship advocating for the integration of theology and education in Christian research, arguing that biblical reflection can enrich theoretical understanding and practical application (Knight, 2016). The findings suggest that such integration is not only feasible but also valuable in illuminating the ethical and spiritual dimensions of teaching.

The results have important implications for teacher formation and professional development in Christian education. The study indicates that personality competence should be intentionally cultivated through both formal training and informal mentoring. Teacher education programs may benefit from incorporating reflective practices that encourage candidates to examine the alignment between their beliefs and behaviors. Additionally, schools can foster supportive cultures that model and reinforce the values they seek to instill in students. The literature supports this emphasis on holistic teacher development, noting that sustained character formation requires communal reinforcement as well as individual commitment (Lickona, 2019). The findings affirm that personality competence is not a static trait but a dynamic process of growth. Teachers described their understanding of Christian piety as evolving through experience, reflection, and spiritual practice. This dynamic perspective aligns with contemporary views of professional identity as continuously shaped by context and practice (Day, 2017). By recognizing personality competence as a journey rather than a fixed attribute, the study highlights the importance of lifelong learning and spiritual formation in the vocation of Christian teaching. The integration of SLR and interview findings demonstrates that the personality competence of Christian Religious Education teachers functions as a concrete reflection of Christian piety. Grounded in moral discernment, consistency, emotional maturity, and inclusivity, this competence enables teachers to embody the values they teach and to foster holistic character formation among students. In the context of SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral, the close-knit educational environment amplifies the significance of teacher personality competence, making it a central factor in the credibility and effectiveness of Christian education. These findings contribute to both educational theory and practice by affirming that authentic Christian education is deeply rooted in the personal integrity and spiritual maturity of the teacher.

## CONCLUSION

This study has examined the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as a reflection of Christian piety, using Philippians 1:10 as a theological lens and focusing on the context of SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral, Asahan. By integrating a Systematic Literature Review with simple semi-structured interviews, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of how personality competence is formed, expressed, and practiced within Christian elementary education. The findings affirm that personality competence is not merely a professional requirement but a holistic quality that unites moral integrity, emotional maturity, and spiritual discernment. The results demonstrate that personality competence plays a central role in shaping the credibility and effectiveness of Christian education. Teachers who consistently align their beliefs with their actions are perceived as authentic role models by students. This consistency reinforces the internalization of Christian values, particularly among elementary school students who learn primarily through observation and imitation. In this sense, the teacher's personality becomes a living curriculum that complements formal instruction and significantly influences students' moral and spiritual development. The study also confirms that Christian piety, as reflected in Philippians 1:10, is not limited to personal devotion but is expressed through discernment, ethical judgment, and responsible behavior in everyday relationships. CRE teachers at SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral demonstrated an understanding of piety as practical wisdom that guides their responses to classroom challenges, interpersonal conflicts, and emotional pressures. This finding underscores that Christian piety is inherently relational and action-oriented, making it highly relevant to the teaching vocation. Another important conclusion concerns the role of emotional maturity in personality competence. Teachers highlighted patience, self-control, and gentleness as essential virtues in their professional lives. These qualities contribute to the creation of supportive and safe learning environments where students feel respected and valued. Emotional maturity, therefore, functions as both an educational asset and a spiritual expression, reinforcing the close relationship between inner spiritual formation and outward professional conduct. The study further reveals that personality competence must be understood as a dynamic and ongoing process rather than a fixed trait. Teachers acknowledged that maintaining moral consistency and spiritual integrity requires continuous reflection, self-discipline, and institutional support. This insight suggests that the development of personality competence should be intentionally supported through teacher formation programs, mentoring, and reflective practices that nurture both professional and spiritual growth. The findings highlight the need for Christian schools and teacher education programs to place greater emphasis on personality competence as an integral dimension of teacher professionalism. Efforts to improve educational quality in Christian contexts should not focus solely on pedagogical skills or curriculum design, but also on the formation of teachers' character and spiritual maturity. By fostering environments that encourage ethical reflection and spiritual growth, institutions can strengthen the overall quality and credibility of Christian education. In conclusion, this study affirms that the personality competence of CRE teachers is a vital expression of Christian piety and a key factor in effective Christian education. In the context of SD Swasta Bina Dharma Sentral, the close-knit school environment amplifies the influence of teacher personality, making it a decisive element

in students' character formation. Ultimately, the study reinforces the conviction that authentic Christian education begins with teachers whose lives reflect the values they seek to impart.

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