



## The Influence of Christian Religious Education Teachers' Professional Competence on the Learning Motivation of Seventh-Grade Students at UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela

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### ABSTRACT

*The objective of this study is to examine the positive and significant influence of Christian Religious Education teachers' professional competence on the learning motivation of seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela in the 2024/2025 academic year. The research employed an inferential quantitative method, with a population of 156 students. A sample consisting of 30% of the population, or 46 students, was selected using a simple random sampling technique. The research instrument was a closed-ended questionnaire consisting of 40 items, with 22 items measuring variable X and 18 items measuring variable Y. The instrument was tested on 32 students outside the research sample to ensure validity and reliability. The findings of the study demonstrate a positive and significant influence of Christian Religious Education teachers' professional competence on students' learning motivation. The results are as follows: (1) Correlation test results showed  $r_{count} > r_{table}$  ( $0.599 > 0.291$ ); (2) Significance test results indicated  $t_{count} > t_{table}$  ( $4.962 > 2.021$ ); (3) The coefficient of determination was 35.88%; (4) The regression equation was obtained as part of the analysis; and (5) Hypothesis testing using the F-test revealed  $F_{count} > F_{table}$  at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ , with numerator  $df = 24$  and denominator  $df = n-2 = 46-2 = 44$ , resulting in  $24.52 > 1.51$ . Based on these results, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ), stating that there is a positive and significant influence of Christian Religious Education teachers' professional competence on the learning motivation of seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela in the 2024/2025 academic year, is accepted, while the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected.*

**Keywords:** Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Learning Motivation

### INTRODUCTION

Learning plays a vital role in the life of a nation and state in education. In its simplest and most general sense, education is understood as a human effort to cultivate and develop

both physical and spiritual potential in accordance with the values existing within society. According to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 14 of 2005, Article 1, a teacher is a professional educator whose main responsibilities are to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, assess, and evaluate learners in early childhood education within formal pathways, basic education, and secondary education. The teaching and learning process is the core component of the entire educational system. The objective of this process is to develop the quality of students. While the responsibility for learning ultimately lies with the students, teachers play a crucial role in creating an atmosphere that encourages initiative, motivation, and a sense of responsibility in learners. This is aimed at shaping students into individuals of quality. In the teaching and learning process, motivation is of great importance as the driving force that initiates, sustains, and directs students' learning activities toward the achievement of intended goals. The success of an educational institution in achieving its goals is closely tied to the role of teachers. Teachers' roles are one of the primary factors in the success of the teaching and learning process, particularly in fostering students' learning motivation. In this context, student motivation plays a pivotal role: motivated learners tend to demonstrate enthusiasm in engaging with learning activities, show positive responses, direct themselves toward achieving goals, and reduce inner tension that may otherwise hinder their efforts. A Christian Religious Education teacher, therefore, must possess a set of competencies, namely: 1) Pedagogical competence, which is the ability to manage student learning, including understanding learners, designing and implementing instruction, and evaluating learning outcomes. 2) Personal competence, which relates to the attitudes, values, morals, and character of the teacher as a role model for students. 3) Social competence, which is the ability of teachers to interact effectively with students, fellow educators, education personnel, parents, and the broader community. This competence emphasizes the skill of building communication and harmonious social relations to ensure the educational process runs effectively. In efforts to enhance student learning motivation, Christian Religious Education teachers are expected to possess a range of competencies. Among these, professional competence is particularly significant, as it encompasses the teacher's mastery of subject matter, teaching methods, and instructional strategies. A professional teacher is able to deliver lessons effectively, clearly, and engagingly, enabling students to understand the material more easily. This, in turn, cultivates interest, enthusiasm, and motivation to learn, as students perceive the lessons as meaningful, enjoyable, and relevant to their lives. Teachers must therefore recognize that their professional competence can significantly enhance students' motivation in the classroom. The ability of Christian Religious Education teachers to apply professional competence has a substantial impact on students' learning enthusiasm. Consequently, teachers' professional competence is a key aspect in the field of education. It involves the ability to design, implement, and evaluate the teaching and learning process effectively. Teachers with strong professional competence can create conducive learning environments, communicate lessons clearly, and provide effective guidance to students. As a result, students become more motivated to learn and achieve optimal understanding of the material. Learners succeed academically when they possess a strong drive or desire to learn, commonly referred to as motivation. Motivated students understand learning objectives, experience safe and comfortable learning environments, and feel encouraged when their achievements are recognized—all of which strengthen their motivation. With this motivation, continuous

efforts to improve the quality of learning can be made, as motivation remains a key factor in educational success: when students are highly motivated, they tend to engage in learning more earnestly.

Based on the author's observations at SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela during the 2024/2025 academic year in Christian Religious Education classes, it was noted that students exhibited low motivation to participate in learning. This was evident in their lack of attentiveness, discomfort, poor concentration, boredom, and tendency to give up easily when facing assignments given by the teacher. Such behaviors indicate a deficiency in learning motivation and concentration. Interviews with the Christian Religious Education teacher confirmed this issue, as the teacher observed that students' lack of motivation to learn stemmed from boredom and limited interest, thereby highlighting the critical role of teachers. Christian Religious Education teachers are thus expected to possess strong professional competence in order to manage learning creatively, engagingly, and in ways relevant to students' lives. Through professional competence, teachers can employ diverse teaching methods, utilize instructional media, and adopt approaches that encourage active student participation. These strategies can help reduce boredom, foster interest, and ultimately enhance learning motivation.

## **METHODS**

This study employed an inferential quantitative statistical method, as the research was conducted on a sample and its results were generalized to the population. According to Sugiyono, inferential statistics are statistical techniques used to analyze sample data, and the results are then applied to the population. Based on this perspective, the researcher adopted the inferential quantitative approach to ensure that the findings could represent the broader population. The research was carried out with seventh-grade students of UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela, Baktiraja District. The location was chosen due to observable problems related to students' low motivation in Christian Religious Education (CRE) classes. Practical considerations, including efficiency in terms of time, cost, and accessibility, also influenced the decision to select this school. The study was scheduled between April and June 2025. Sugiyono defines population as a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects with specific qualities and characteristics established by the researcher for study and conclusion. In this study, the population comprised all seventh-grade Protestant Christian students of UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela in the 2024/2025 academic year. The total population consisted of 156 students across five classes (VII-1 = 31, VII-2 = 32, VII-3 = 31, VII-4 = 31, and VII-5 = 31). A sample is a subset of the population, selected to represent its characteristics (Sugiyono, Arikunto). When the population is large, researchers may use a percentage of the population due to limitations of time, cost, and resources. Arikunto suggests that when subjects exceed 100, a sample of 10-25% is adequate. Based on this guideline, the researcher applied simple random sampling and selected 30% of the population, resulting in 46 students as the research sample. Prior to distributing the final questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with 32 students outside the sample to validate the instrument. The main instrument was a closed-ended questionnaire consisting of 40 items: 22 items for the independent variable (X) - teachers' professional competence - and 18 items for the dependent variable (Y) - students' learning motivation. The questionnaire was tested for validity using the Pearson

Product Moment formula to ensure accuracy and reliability. The data collection procedure followed these steps: (1) Respondents were given instructions on how to complete the questionnaire; (2) Questionnaires were distributed, and students were asked to respond honestly by checking the appropriate options; (3) The researcher provided clarification when questions were unclear; and (4) Responses were recorded systematically in a data table for analysis. To test the research hypothesis, the collected data were processed and analyzed using several steps: 1) Creating distribution tables of respondents' answers based on available alternatives. 2) Constructing frequency distributions weighted according to response options. 3) Conducting associative hypothesis testing to examine the relationship between variables X and Y by calculating the correlation coefficient using Pearson's Product Moment formula, as outlined by Arikunto. This approach enabled the researcher to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers and students' learning motivation.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To determine whether there is a relationship between variable X (Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers) and variable Y (Students' Learning Motivation) of Grade VII students at UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela in the 2024/2025 academic year, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula was applied. Based on the calculation of  $r_{xy}$  using the Pearson Product Moment formula, the obtained value of ( $r_{xy}$ ) was 0,599. When compared with  $r_{table}$  ( $\alpha=0,05$ ;  $n=46$ ) = 0,291, it was found that  $r_{count} > r_{table}$ , namely  $0,599 > 0,291$ . Thus, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between the Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers and Students' Learning Motivation in Grade VII at UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela in the 2024/2025 academic year.

### ***Significance Test of the Relationship (t-test)***

According to Sugiyono, "To test the significance of the relationship, namely whether the relationship found applies to the entire population, it must be tested for significance." The obtained value of  $t_{hitung}$  was 4,962. This value was then compared with  $t_{table}$  at a 5% significance level, two-tailed test, with  $dk = n-2 = 46-2 = 44$ , resulting in  $t_{table} = 2,021$ . Since  $t_{count} > t_{table}$ , or  $4,962 > 2,021$ , it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of the Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers on Students' Learning Motivation in Grade VII at UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela in the 2024/2025 academic year.

### ***Regression Analysis***

According to Sugiyono, "The analysis can be continued by calculating the regression equation. A regression equation can be used to predict how high the dependent variable will be if the independent variable is varied." The regression equation indicates that, with a constant = 8,17, every one-unit increase in variable X (Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers) results in an increase of 0,58 in variable Y (Students' Learning Motivation).

### **Coefficient of Determination ( $r^2$ )**

According to Sugiyono, "Correlation analysis can be continued by calculating the coefficient of determination, by squaring the correlation coefficient obtained." Furthermore, "From the coefficient of determination, the percentage of the effectiveness of X on Y can be calculated by multiplying  $r^2$  by 100% ( $r^2 \times 100\%$ )." Based on the calculation,  $r^2 = 0,3588$ . Thus, the percentage of the effect of the Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers on Students' Learning Motivation is:  $(r^2) \times 100\% = 0,3588 \times 100\% = 35,88\%$ .

### **F-Test Hypothesis Formulation:**

$H_a$  : If  $F_{count} > F_{table}$ , it indicates that there is a positive and significant effect of variable X on variable Y.

$H_0$  : If  $F_{count} < F_{table}$ , it indicates that there is no positive and significant effect of variable X on variable Y.

From the hypothesis test, the ANOVA table shows  $F_{count} = 24,52$ , which is greater than  $F_{table}$  with dk numerator  $k = 24$  and dk denominator  $= n-2 = 46-2 = 44$ , namely 1,51. Therefore,  $F_{count} > F_{table}$  or  $24,52 > 1,51$ . Thus,  $H_0$  stating no effect is rejected, and  $H_a$  stating a positive and significant effect is accepted.

From the table above,  $F_{count} = 24,52$ . When compared with  $F_{table} = ( \alpha = 0,05, dk k=24, dk = n-2=46-2=44) = 1,51$  then  $F_{calculated} > F_{table}$  yaitu  $24,52 > 1,51$ , it shows that  $F_{count} > F_{table}$ , namely  $24,52 > 1,51$ . Therefore, the research hypothesis can be determined as follows:  $H_0 : \beta = 0$  is rejected, and  $H_a : \beta \neq 0$  is accepted if  $F_{count} \geq F_{table} (\alpha, k, n-2)$ . Hence,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, meaning that there is a positive and significant effect of the Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers on Students' Learning Motivation in Grade VII at UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela in the 2024/2025 academic year.

From the ANOVA table, the value of  $F = \frac{S_{TC}^2}{S_e^2}$ , with  $F_{calculated} = 1,23$ , was used to test the linearity of the regression. Since this value is smaller than  $F_{table}(\alpha, k-2, n-k) = F_{(0,05,22,22)} = 1,78$ , it can be concluded that the regression model of X (Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers) on Y (Students' Learning Motivation) in Grade VII at UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela in the 2024/2025 academic year is linear.

## **CONCLUSION**

The professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers is an ability and expertise possessed by teachers to master the subject matter of Christian Religious Education in depth, as well as to apply appropriate teaching methods to shape students' faith, character, and spirituality. This competence includes mastery of the curriculum, understanding of students' developmental stages, the ability to design contextual and meaningful learning, and skills in evaluating learning outcomes objectively and responsibly. Based on previous research discussed in earlier chapters, professional competence of CRE teachers significantly influences students' learning motivation. Based on the results of the analysis prerequisite tests, it was found that  $r_{count} = 0,599 > r_{table} = 0,291$ , indicating a positive influence between variable X and variable Y. Furthermore,

$t_{\text{count}} = 4,962 > t_{\text{table}} = 2,021$  shows a positive and significant influence between variable X and variable Y. The regression equation obtained is  $\hat{Y} = 8,17 + 0,58X$ . From the F-test, the result is  $F_{\text{count}} = 24,52 > F_{\text{table}} = 1,51$ , which means the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant influence of Christian Religious Education teachers' professional competence on the learning motivation of Grade VII students at UPT SMP Negeri 007 Sinambela in the Academic Year 2024/2025. The findings of this research demonstrate that the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers positively affects students' learning motivation. Teachers with strong professional competence are able to deliver subject matter clearly, employ appropriate teaching methods, and create a conducive classroom atmosphere, thereby encouraging students to become more motivated, active, and able to comprehend the lessons effectively. Consequently, the improvement of teachers' professional competence directly contributes to the enhancement of students' learning outcomes and overall learning quality.

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