



## The Influence of Christian Religious Education Teachers' Role Modeling on the Christian Character of Ninth-Grade Students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to determine the influence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' role modeling on the Christian character of ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, Academic Year 2025/2026. The research employed a quantitative method with inferential statistics and an ex post facto design. The population consisted of all ninth-grade Protestant Christian students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, Academic Year 2025/2026, totaling 93 students. From this population, 74 students were selected as the research sample using a probability sampling technique with a simple random sampling type. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire comprising 35 items. The results of data analysis show that there is a positive and significant influence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' role modeling on the Christian character of ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, Academic Year 2025/2026, as evidenced by the following data analysis: 1) Analysis prerequisite tests: a) The positive correlation test obtained  $r_{xy} = 0.610 > r_{table} (\alpha = 0.05, n = 74) = 0.227$ . b) The significant correlation test obtained  $t_{count} = 6.530 > t_{table} (\alpha = 0.05, df = n - 2 = 72) = 2.000$ . 2) Effect test: a) Regression equation test yielded the regression equation  $\hat{Y} = 6.76 + 0.89X$ . b) Regression determination coefficient test ( $r^2$ ) = 37.2%. 3) Hypothesis test using the  $F_{test}$  obtained  $F_{count} > F_{table} (\alpha = 0.05, \text{numerator } df = k = 24, \text{denominator } df = n - 2 = 74 - 2 = 72)$ , namely  $42.63 > 1.39$ . Thus, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ), namely that there is a positive and significant influence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' role modeling on the Christian character of ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, Academic Year 2025/2026, is accepted, while the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected.*

**Keyword:** Teacher Example, Christian Religious Education, Christian Character, Students

## INTRODUCTION

Character is of paramount importance for the future development of the Indonesian nation and state. Young people with good character will be able to live their lives with greater clarity and purpose. Character itself can be shaped by several factors, including parents as the primary educators within the family, the exemplary role of teachers, peers or social groups, the school environment, society, reading materials, gadgets, and, ultimately, religion. All these factors, whether directly or indirectly, play a significant role in shaping students' mindset, attitudes, and behaviors in daily life. In the educational context, character formation is not solely the responsibility of the family but also of educational institutions, particularly teachers, who interact closely with students on a daily basis.

At the junior high school level, especially Grade IX where students are typically 14–15 years old, they are in a developmental phase of adolescence characterized by significant emotional, social, and intellectual changes. Without proper guidance, they may be influenced by values contrary to Christian teachings, such as individualism, hedonism, and deviant behaviors. Therefore, the mentoring role of exemplary figures within the school environment becomes essential in ensuring that students do not lose direction in shaping their life paths.

Based on the author's initial observations through direct monitoring and interviews with a Christian Religious Education (PAK) teacher at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, it was found that there remains a gap between the ideal character expected according to Christian values and the reality observed in schools. Some students still lack concern for others and are reluctant to help peers in need. In cases of conflict, they are often unwilling to forgive those who have wronged them, allowing problems to persist unresolved. Students also tend to avoid making sacrifices to assist others and have not fully realized the importance of upholding dignity through politeness, honesty, and honorable behavior. Furthermore, some students struggle to foster peace. They are unable to reconcile after conflicts and find it difficult to build healthy, constructive friendships. When confronted with situations requiring patience, several students cannot exercise self-control. They often become impatient, demanding others to fulfill expectations without allowing sufficient time for commitments to be honored.

The attitude of generosity is also not yet strongly evident among students, as some remain indifferent to peers in need, refusing to get involved because they believe it is not their responsibility. Similarly, the virtue of kindness is not fully reflected in their behavior. Some students harbor negative thoughts toward others, hold grudges, and even resort to physical or verbal harm. Loyalty, too, is not consistently demonstrated, as seen in their inability to trust others and their tendency to make unwise decisions hastily without adequate consideration.

Gentleness, including fairness and compassion, continues to pose challenges. Certain students exhibit unjust behaviors and show little empathy toward peers experiencing difficulties. Their level of self-control also remains low, particularly among male students, who often struggle to regulate emotions and fail to make appropriate decisions due to neglecting the consequences of their actions.

If such conditions are allowed to persist, they will not only disrupt the learning environment but also hinder the development of students' Christian character in their future social lives. Therefore, the presence of a PAK teacher who can serve as a role model

is crucial in guiding them to remain on the right path. The exemplary role of teachers is not merely a complement to the learning process but serves as a fundamental element in shaping students' Christian character holistically and sustainably.

The importance of the teacher's role in character formation is also aligned with the mandate of Law No. 20 of 2003, Chapter II, Article 3 on the National Education System, which emphasizes that: "*National education functions to develop capabilities and form the character ... of students to become faithful and devoted to God Almighty, of noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and responsible democratic citizens.*" Consequently, it is the responsibility of every teacher, especially PAK teachers, to be a role model in realizing these educational goals. Proverbs 22:6 affirms this principle: "*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*" Thus, in the learning process, teachers should not only act as instructors but also as role models who exemplify Christian values in daily life. Students learn more effectively from what they see than from what they merely hear. *Verba movent exempla trahunt*—words may move people, but examples truly capture hearts.

Several studies have also demonstrated that role model-based learning is more effective in shaping students' Christian character compared to lecture methods or mere verbal instruction. For instance, research conducted by Padang and Weismann entitled *The Influence of Christian Religious Education Teachers' Exemplary Role on the Character Formation of Students in Class II at SMP PGRI Marinding* revealed that a teacher's exemplary conduct greatly influences students, as they directly observe the teacher's actions. This observation ultimately encourages them to change for the better. This suggests that students are more inclined to imitate what they see rather than merely remember what they hear.

This finding is consistent with Bandura's social learning theory, which posits that individuals learn not only through direct experience but also through observing the behaviors of others, especially influential figures in their lives. In this case, the PAK teacher, as a model, has a profound impact on the formation of students' Christian character. Bandura emphasized that behavior can be shaped through modeling, that is, by imitating the behaviors of those considered role models. Therefore, if PAK teachers consistently embody Christian values in their lives, students will be more motivated to follow in their footsteps. Such consistent role modeling fosters an internal awareness in students to embrace these values—not out of compulsion, but as a natural response shaped by observation and lived experience.

Based on this background, the author is motivated and interested in conducting research on this matter under the title: "*The Influence of Christian Religious Education (PAK) Teachers' Exemplary Role on the Christian Character of Grade IX Students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, Academic Year 2025/2026.*"

## **METHODS**

Research methodology is essentially a scientific approach to obtaining data for specific purposes and uses. In this study, the researcher employed a quantitative method. According to Sugiyono, "Quantitative research is a method based on the philosophy of positivism, applied to study specific populations or samples, with data collection using research instruments, data analysis conducted quantitatively or statistically, and aimed at testing predetermined hypotheses." The analytical technique used in this study was

inferential or probability statistics, which is a statistical technique employed to analyze data from a sample and generalize the results to the population. The type of research applied in this study was *ex post facto*.

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency. The selection of this location was based on several important considerations. First, the school has students from diverse backgrounds in terms of character and behavior, providing the researcher with an opportunity to examine how the exemplary role of Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers influences the formation of students' Christian character in a real-life context. Second, the researcher had good access to the school and received official permission and support, which facilitated effective data collection through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Third, no prior research has specifically examined the influence of PAK teachers' exemplary role on students' Christian character at this school, making this study a potential scientific contribution to the development of Christian character education within the institution. To obtain the required data, this research was conducted between February and July 2025.

The research instrument was designed, constructed, weighted, and tested in detail for each variable. The primary instrument used was a questionnaire. According to Sugiyono, "A questionnaire is a data collection technique carried out by giving a set of written questions or statements to respondents to be answered." Based on the questionnaire blueprint, the researcher developed 40 multiple-choice items, each with four answer options. A pilot test of the instrument was conducted with 30 students outside the study sample, specifically Grade IX students at SMP Negeri 6 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, in the 2025/2026 academic year. The purpose of the pilot test was to determine whether the questionnaire was appropriate and feasible to be used as a research instrument. The pilot test involved both validity and reliability testing.

Instrument validity refers to the extent to which a tool measures what it is intended to measure. A valid instrument has high validity, while a less valid instrument has low validity. The purpose of validity testing is to ensure that the instrument is accurate and reliable for measuring the intended variables. In this study, the data collection technique involved a closed-ended questionnaire, implemented through the following steps: (1) gathering respondents and providing instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, (2) distributing the questionnaire and instructing respondents to answer honestly by selecting one option, (3) guiding and assisting respondents in understanding questions that were unclear, and (4) recording all responses in a tabulated format for analysis.

To test whether the predetermined hypotheses would be accepted or rejected, the researcher processed and analyzed the responses using the following steps: (1) creating distribution tables for respondents' answers to variable X (Exemplary Role of Christian Religious Education Teachers) and variable Y (Students' Christian Character) based on alternative answers; (2) creating distribution tables for respondents' answers based on weighted options; (3) tabulating the overall responses, summing each answer according to its designated weight; (4) conducting an associative hypothesis test (examining relationships between variables) by calculating the correlation coefficient between variable X and variable Y; (5) conducting a significance test using the product-moment correlation; (6) performing regression analysis; and (7) testing the research hypothesis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research conducted with Grade IX students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, Academic Year 2025/2026, the discussion of the research findings is as follows. The results of data processing from students' responses regarding the Exemplary Role of Christian Religious Education (PAK) Teachers indicate that the Christian Character of Grade IX students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, Academic Year 2025/2026 has improved. The indicators of the Exemplary Role of PAK Teachers in this study consist of five aspects: (1) Exemplary love, including patience, generosity, not seeking self-interest, not being quick-tempered, and not keeping records of others' wrongdoings; (2) Exemplary speech, including carefulness, wisdom, being thoughtful, and good self-control; (3) Exemplary behavior, including doing what is good according to the teachings of faith and according to the values upheld in society; (4) Exemplary faith and loyalty, including believing that God helps, relying on God daily, depending on God in life struggles, faithfully upholding God's teachings, and being doers of God's Word rather than merely listeners; and (5) Exemplary purity and holiness, including living in a renewed relationship with God, maintaining newness of life, avoiding defilement through immoral acts, and demonstrating purity of heart and mind.

Accordingly, through the Exemplary Role of PAK Teachers in Grade IX at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, it was found that students' Christian Character increased positively and significantly, as reflected in the following indicators: (1) Love, expressed through caring, accepting others as they are, and forgiving those who have wronged them; (2) Joy, demonstrated by willingness to sacrifice for the good of others and acting with honor; (3) Peace, reflected in living harmoniously, building friendships, and not withdrawing from social interaction; (4) Patience, shown by refraining from demanding immediate results and giving others time to fulfill promises; (5) Generosity, seen in eagerness to help and provide assistance to those in need; (6) Kindness, demonstrated by not harboring evil thoughts and refraining from harmful actions; (7) Faithfulness, reflected in the ability to trust others and exercise wisdom; (8) Gentleness, demonstrated by fairness and compassion; and (9) Self-control, shown through the ability to regulate oneself and make appropriate decisions.

From the prerequisite analysis test to determine whether there is a positive relationship between variable X and variable Y, the result obtained was  $r_{\text{count}} = 0.610$  compared with  $r_{\text{table}}$  at a 5% significance level and a confidence interval (CI) =  $100\% - 5\% = 95\%$ , with  $n = 74$ , which equals 0.227. Since  $r_{\text{count}} > r_{\text{table}}$  ( $0.610 > 0.227$ ), it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between variable X and variable Y, namely, the positive influence of the Exemplary Role of PAK Teachers on the Christian Character of Grade IX students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, Academic Year 2025/2026.

From the significance test to determine whether there is a significant relationship between variable X and variable Y, the result obtained was  $t_{\text{count}} = 6.530$  compared with  $t_{\text{table}}$  at a 5% significance level and  $n - 2 = 74$ , which equals 2.000. Since  $t_{\text{count}} > t_{\text{table}}$  ( $6.530 > 2.000$ ), it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between variable X and variable Y, namely, the significant influence of the Exemplary Role of PAK Teachers on the Christian Character of Grade IX students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, Academic Year 2025/2026.

From the regression analysis, the following results were obtained: (a) The regression equation is  $\hat{Y} = 6.76 + 0.89X$ . This equation indicates that with a constant value of 6.76,

every additional unit in the Exemplary Role of PAK Teachers will increase the Christian Character of students by 0.89. (b) From the coefficient of determination test, the value obtained was  $r^2 = 0.372$ . This indicates that 37.2% of the variation in students' Christian Character can be explained by the influence of the Exemplary Role of PAK Teachers, while the remaining percentage is influenced by other factors.

From the F-test, the variance analysis yielded  $F_{\text{count}} = 42.63$ , which is greater than  $F_{\text{table}}$ , with numerator degrees of freedom  $k = 24$  and denominator degrees of freedom  $n - 2 = 74 - 2 = 72$ , yielding a value of 1.39. Since  $F_{\text{count}} \geq F_{\text{table}}$  ( $42.63 > 1.39$ ),  $H_0$  (stating no influence) is rejected, and  $H_a$  (stating there is an influence) is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis proposed by the author is accepted, namely, that there is a positive and significant influence of the Exemplary Role of Christian Religious Education (PAK) Teachers on the Christian Character of Grade IX students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, Academic Year 2025/2026.

## CONCLUSION

The exemplary character of Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers refers to the qualities, attitudes, words, and actions that reflect moral values, ethics, and character worthy of being emulated by students. A Christian Religious Education teacher is not only responsible for imparting biblical knowledge but must also serve as a role model who lives according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The indicators of exemplary behavior in PAK teachers include: (1) the example of love, such as patience, kindness, selflessness, being slow to anger, and not keeping records of wrongs; (2) the example of speech, including caution, wisdom, thoughtfulness, and good self-control; (3) the example of conduct, such as doing what is good in accordance with the faith and practicing values upheld in society; (4) the example of faith and loyalty, including trusting in God's help, relying on Him daily, depending on Him amid life's struggles, remaining faithful to His teachings, and being doers of the Word rather than merely listeners; and (5) the example of holiness and purity, including entering into a renewed relationship with God, maintaining a transformed life, avoiding defilement through negative actions, and living with a pure heart and mind.

The Christian character of students is defined as attitudes and behaviors that reflect the example of Jesus Christ and are grounded in God's Word as revealed in the Bible. Such character is formed through the growth of faith, obedience to Scripture, and the embodiment of Christian values. It also represents a conscious effort to live in accordance with God's will, displaying a good way of life. In this sense, Christian character becomes the identity of believers, visible to others as a testimony to the world. The indicators of students' Christian character include: (1) love, expressed in care, acceptance of others as they are, and forgiveness; (2) joy, seen in the willingness to sacrifice for others' well-being and to act honorably; (3) peace, shown through harmonious living, building friendships, and avoiding social withdrawal; (4) patience, demonstrated by refraining from immediate demands and allowing time for others to fulfill commitments; (5) kindness, expressed in generosity and readiness to help those in need; (6) goodness, seen in refraining from evil thoughts and actions; (7) faithfulness, expressed in trustworthiness and wise decision-making; (8) gentleness, reflected in fairness and compassion; and (9) self-control, shown in the ability to regulate one's behavior and make sound decisions. The research findings indicate that hypothesis testing resulted in  $F_{\text{count}} > F_{\text{table}}$ , namely

42.63 > 1.39, leading to the acceptance of the research hypothesis. This result demonstrates that there is a positive and significant influence of Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers' exemplary conduct on the Christian character of Grade IX students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, in the 2025/2026 academic year, amounting to 37.2%. Based on theoretical review and empirical findings, it can be concluded that the exemplary conduct of Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers significantly enhances the Christian character of Grade IX students at SMP Negeri 3 Pangaribuan, North Tapanuli Regency, in the 2025/2026 academic year. Thus, the better the exemplary character demonstrated by PAK teachers, the more positively students' Christian character develops in accordance with the expected values.

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