



The Influence of Christian Religious Education and Character Education Teachers' Exemplary Behavior on the Character of 11th Grade Students at SMA Negeri 1 Paranginan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of the example of Christian Religious Education teachers on the character of grade XI students of SMA Negeri 1 Paranginan for the 2024/2025 Academic Year. The method used in this study is an inferential descriptive quantitative method. The population is all grade XI students of SMA Negeri 1 Paranginan for the 2024/2025 Academic Year totaling 190 students and a research sample of 20% of the population is set to be 36 students using random sampling techniques. Data was collected with a closed questionnaire of 32 items. The results of the data analysis show that there is a positive and significant influence of the example of Christian Religious Education teachers on the character of grade XI students of SMA Negeri 1 Paranginan for the 2024/2025 Academic Year, as evidenced by the analysis of the following data: 1) The analysis requirements test: a) a positive relationship test obtained a value $r_{xy} = 0.678 > r_{table} (\alpha=0.05, n=36) = 0.329$. b) A significant relationship test obtained a value of $t_{count} = 5.375 > t_{table} (\alpha=0.05, dk=n-2=34) = 2.042$. 2) Effect test: a) Regression equation test, regression equation is obtained. b) The regression determination coefficient ($r^2 \hat{Y} = 26,27 + 0,53X^2$) = 45.9% test. 3) The hypothesis test using the F_{test} was obtained $F_{count} > F_{table} = (\alpha=0.05, dk \text{ numerator } k=17, dk \text{ denominator } =n-2=36-2=34)$ which is $28.84 > 1.62$. Thus, there is a positive and significant influence of the example of Christian Religious Education teachers on the character of grade XI students of SMA Negeri 1 Paranginan for the 2024/2025 Academic Year accepted and H_0 rejected.

Keywords: Exemplary Behavior, Teacher, Christian Religious Education, Student Character

INTRODUCTION

Education is the key to shaping a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also possesses good attitudes and behaviors. Through education, individuals can develop their potential to the fullest and contribute positively to their surrounding environment. According to the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education

System, national education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the life of the nation. Its purpose is to foster the development of students' potential so that they become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. Thus, the cultivation of Pancasila-based character becomes the primary goal of national education, given the crucial role of character in national and civic life. Throughout the reform of the education system, it is important to remember that the aim of reform is to transform every citizen into a person of character and to build a more constructive society. Character is a fundamental foundation for building a resilient nation. Character development aims to produce a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also possesses integrity, discipline, honesty, work ethic, and commitment to national development. Therefore, for Indonesia to become more advanced and dignified, character formation must be a top priority in families, schools, and the wider social environment. One of the major challenges facing today's education is the decline in students' character. Rapid advances in science and technology have contributed to this problem. The government strives to enhance public thinking through education, as education plays a vital role in developing individuals who are independent, responsible, creative, knowledgeable, healthy, and morally upright. Character formation requires a long and continuous process. Character education aims to equip individuals with good attitudes and moral values. Simply put, character can be understood as the morals or personality that distinguish a person from others. Furthermore, according to Thomas Lickona, as cited in Masnur, individuals of character are those who respond to situations morally and demonstrate concrete actions through good behavior, honesty, responsibility, and respect for others. Therefore, character education seeks to shape individuals who are faithful, responsible, confident, honest, knowledgeable, healthy, and virtuous. Students are expected to independently enhance and apply their knowledge while internalizing character values in their daily behavior. According to Pianda, "Teachers are professional educators responsible for educating, guiding, and evaluating students." In this context, teachers play a critical role in shaping students' character. Teachers are not only instructors but also role models influencing the moral and character development of their students. A teacher's exemplary behavior is a key factor in the success of character education because teachers not only convey values but also embody them in daily life. Christian Religious Education plays a vital role in guiding students toward better lives, based on the teachings of the Bible as the highest authority. According to John Nainggolan, "The exemplary behavior of Christian Religious Education teachers is characterized by sensitivity toward others, effective communication through words, attitudes, and correct actions, as well as demonstrating discipline, patience, firmness, love, and consistency in truth." Teachers bear great responsibility, as their profession is both a calling and a trust from God. Therefore, teachers must serve as role models for their students through their actions and behavior. Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers must not neglect their responsibility in shaping students' character. They are not merely instructors but also character builders. A CRE teacher should exemplify Christian faith and embody Christian values in daily life, thus bringing blessings to those around them.

Based on observations conducted by the author at SMA Negeri 1 Paranginan, particularly in the 11th grade for Christian Religious Education and Character courses, several issues regarding students' character were identified. Some students exhibited negative behaviors, such as frequent fighting, mocking peers, violating dress codes, and showing a lack of discipline in religious classes. In terms of discipline, many students arrived late, failed to bring their Bibles to worship, and occasionally skipped class. Poor study ethics were evident in behaviors such as talking during lessons, using mobile phones in class, and demonstrating low motivation to learn. Additionally, students displayed insufficient awareness of environmental cleanliness, often littering without a sense of responsibility. These character issues indicate that some students still lack good moral conduct. To cultivate students' character in line with expectations, the exemplary behavior of CRE teachers is crucial. From these observations, it is clear that some students demonstrate less-than-ideal behavior or morals. All stakeholders hope to cultivate good character in students, and one significant factor influencing this is the teacher's example. A Christian Religious Education teacher must serve as a role model. As Apostle Paul stated in 1 Timothy 4:12b: "Be an example to the believers in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity." Paul encouraged the young Timothy to serve as a model for the Christian community. Similarly, CRE teachers must act as exemplars for students, helping to shape quality human resources. Therefore, teachers should not merely talk about values but also demonstrate them in real life. Teachers, as role models, shape students' character by demonstrating appropriate speech and behavior, cultivating respect and care for others and the environment, and providing examples of discipline, such as time management and adherence to school rules. Consequently, CRE teachers must teach with clear objectives and build close relationships with their students to understand their character. Teachers are expected to carry out positive actions in their professional duties, not just through words, but through behavior and tangible examples. This approach enhances their credibility and authority, particularly in the eyes of their students.

METHODS

Research methodology is essential in conducting a study because it enables the researcher to observe, analyze, and examine an object to obtain new insights and discover the truth. Furthermore, this study aims to acquire new knowledge through systematic techniques. The basic principle of data presentation is that it should be both communicative and comprehensive. According to Sugiyono, inferential statistics is a statistical technique used to analyze sample data, the results of which are generalized to the population. Based on this explanation, the method employed in this study is quantitative inferential statistics, as the research involves analyzing sample data to make conclusions applicable to the entire population.

Data Collection Procedure

Before distributing the questionnaire to respondents, the researcher first explained the purpose and objectives of the study and provided instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. This approach ensures that respondents answer sincerely and accurately. The procedure included the following steps: 1) Providing instructions to each class. 2) Randomly assigning numbers to students within each class. 3) Selecting respondents based on the assigned numbers; those who receive the predetermined numbers become

the sample. 4) Distributing the questionnaire to the selected respondents. 5) Allowing respondents sufficient time to answer the questions. 6) Collecting the completed questionnaires immediately after completion. Random sampling was employed as the sampling technique. In this method, every individual in the population, whether individually or collectively, has an equal opportunity to be selected as a sample member. The data collection for the main study followed the same procedures as the pilot study, with careful attention to avoid duplicating respondents receiving the same questionnaire. To analyze the research data, the following steps were undertaken: 1) Categorizing responses based on the available options (a, b, c, d). 2) Tabulating respondents' answers according to weighted scores, following the distribution table provided in the appendix. 3) Creating a frequency distribution of responses, analyzing how respondents' answers correspond to the predetermined weights for each alternative. 4) Conducting significance tests to determine the relationship between variable X (the influence of CRE teachers' exemplary behavior) and variable Y (student character). 5) Performing hypothesis testing to evaluate the effect and significance of the relationship between the variables.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to Sri Zulfida, character is the attitude exhibited by an individual, observable through their speech, behavior, clothing, emotional expression, ability to give and receive, and respect for others. By observing these aspects, one can determine whether an individual has good or poor character. Saptono defines character as the traits, mental attributes, disposition, morals, or ethical conduct that distinguish one person from another. Wynne, as cited in Mulyasa, explains that character represents the values of goodness manifested in daily actions and behavior. Consequently, individuals who are dishonest, deceitful, cruel, or greedy are considered to have poor character, while those who are honest, kind, and helpful are regarded as having good or noble character. Thomas Lickona further elaborates that "character consists of values reflected in actions, rooted in a person's inner awareness. Character is not only formed from knowledge of what is right but also involves a commitment and habit of acting morally. In other words, character reflects a person's ability to consistently respond to various life situations correctly and ethically according to moral standards, thereby becoming reliable in behavior and action." Based on these perspectives, it can be understood that character is a set of values and traits reflected in an individual's attitudes, behaviors, and daily actions. It encompasses how a person speaks, dresses, expresses emotions, and interacts with others, setting them apart from others. Character is formed from inner awareness, influenced by moral values, and manifested through a commitment and habitual practice of acting rightly. Thus, character is not merely knowledge of goodness but the consistent application of these values in real life.

Factors Influencing Student Character

Heri Gunawan identifies two primary factors that influence student character: internal and external factors. Internal factors include: (a) instinct or innate drive, which facilitates goal-directed actions and originates from innate traits; (b) habits, which strongly influence behavior and shape moral conduct; (c) willpower, defined as the determination to achieve goals despite obstacles; and (d) conscience, which warns against wrongdoing and

encourages good behavior, serving as the core determinant of character. External factors include: (a) formal education, which significantly shapes personality and behavior through structured learning experiences; and (b) environment, encompassing both the material and social-spiritual contexts in which individuals interact with others and nature. Similarly, Ratnawati, as cited in Sofyan, emphasizes that character formation is influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors involve elements inherent in the individual, such as interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, which affect self-management and social interaction. External factors are derived from the surrounding environment, including family, school, and community, which play a vital role in shaping student character. Andi further highlights specific influences: family plays a critical role in providing foundational values, norms, and behaviors, serving as the primary source of early education. Factors such as parental involvement, consistency in values, and alignment between home and school teachings enhance children's confidence and learning outcomes. Early social experiences, including peer interactions at school, contribute to character development by instilling values such as cooperation, empathy, and fairness. In conclusion, student character is shaped by a combination of internal factors—including instinct, habits, willpower, conscience, and inheritance—and external factors, including education, family, school, and community. Effective character development requires supportive education, a conducive environment, and moral guidance in daily life.

The Concept of Christian Religious Education (CRE) Teachers

According to Dorlan Naibaho, a Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher can be defined in three ways: (1) a teacher from a Christian perspective, encompassing the general role and responsibilities of educators in light of Christian faith; (2) a Christian teacher, highlighting the teacher's identity and role as a follower of Christ; and (3) a CRE teacher who delivers instruction related to Christian faith in formal and non-formal settings, such as schools, churches, and orphanages. CRE teachers are collaborators with God, providing both instruction and exemplary conduct, and play a crucial role in developing high-quality human resources with potential for national development. Robert R. Boehlke states that a CRE teacher is an educator who facilitates learning experiences and utilizes various resources—including books, tools, objects, and experiences—to help others grow in knowledge of the Christian faith and personal experience of belief. Homrighausen and Enklaar, as cited in Hasudungan Simatupang, define CRE teaching as an effort directed toward individual students, even when instruction is delivered to groups, with the intention that each student personally engages with the material. Lasmaria L. Tobing emphasizes that a CRE teacher is someone who believes in Jesus Christ, knows Him personally, and models Him as the ultimate Teacher, striving to educate students' character and responsibility before God while instilling biblical Christian morals. Based on these perspectives, it can be concluded that a CRE teacher is an educator who not only imparts knowledge of the Christian faith based on the Bible and centered on Jesus Christ but also serves as a role model and God's collaborator in guiding students personally to know God and internalize Christian moral values. CRE teachers are responsible for educating students' character through an integrated approach encompassing teaching, spiritual guidance, and moral and spiritual development in both formal and non-formal contexts, thereby shaping high-quality, responsible individuals before God.

The Influence of Christian Religious Education Teachers' Exemplary Behavior on Student Character

The influence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' exemplary behavior on student character is evident in how teachers are called to grow toward a deeper understanding of the person of Jesus Christ. CRE teachers comprehend God's will in their responsibilities and guide students toward a genuine knowledge of God and His works as the path to truth and life. According to Belandina, a CRE teacher is "an educator who carries out teaching and mentoring tasks in the field of Christian Religious Education by relying on high competence and character, modeling the example of Jesus as the ultimate teacher." Sherill, as cited in Harianto G.P., explains that CRE aims to introduce the Bible to students so that they are prepared to encounter and respond to God. It facilitates deep interpersonal communication concerning human concerns and sharpens students' ability to accept that they are governed by the power and love of God, which redeems, restores, and recreates. John M. Nainggolan emphasizes that CRE teachers must demonstrate sincerity in their teaching, serving as role models in knowledge, life conduct, and various other aspects for their students. The exemplary behavior of CRE teachers significantly influences student character, as teachers must encourage students through concrete examples and personal modeling. Stephen Tong further asserts that "educating in Christian character is of utmost importance; CRE teachers must embody love, purity, virtue, and justice." Several principles are essential in shaping student character:

1. Love: Teachers must demonstrate the highest care for others. CRE teachers' exemplary behavior is evident through their actions, showing love by giving their best to students to foster positive character development.
2. Justice: Teachers must act in accordance with the rights and responsibilities of others, treating students impartially and without favoritism.
3. Wisdom: CRE teachers must make decisions that are accurate, beneficial, and morally sound for both themselves and others.
4. Virtue: Virtue encompasses behaviors and qualities grounded in moral goodness, serving as the foundation of ethical principles.
5. Courage: CRE teachers must demonstrate courage in carrying out their duties and facing challenges.

A CRE teacher's exemplary behavior profoundly affects students, as students directly observe their teachers' conduct, including role modeling in faith, love, Bible reading, speech, and general behavior. To cultivate good character, teachers must educate according to biblical teachings, following Jesus' example as the ultimate teacher whose teachings are grounded in Scripture. Teachers must first embody the truth they teach; exemplary behavior is a fundamental aspect of effective teaching. If a teacher fails to practice or apply it constructively, the effectiveness of learning diminishes. As leaders in the classroom, CRE teachers guide and direct students with authority while exercising patience in addressing students' needs. Teachers' conduct as role models greatly shapes student character; therefore, they must lead wisely to yield fruitful results and honor God. CRE teachers must possess dignity, authority, and credibility, as students will emulate those whom they perceive as exemplary figures. Based on the research conducted on eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Paranginan during the 2024/2025 academic year, the results indicate that the exemplary behavior of Christian Religious Education

(CRE) teachers has a positive impact on student character. The study identified five key indicators of teacher exemplary behavior: exemplary speech, behavior, love, faithfulness, and holiness. Teachers demonstrated exemplary speech by speaking politely, responding constructively, maintaining positive communication, building close relationships with students, and motivating students to actively engage in learning. Exemplary behavior was shown through enforcing school rules appropriately, dressing neatly, and politely requesting permission when leaving the classroom. Teachers modeled love by visiting sick students, patiently teaching those struggling with lessons, and advising students who forgot their Bibles. Faithfulness was reflected in punctuality and attentiveness to all students during instruction, while holiness was demonstrated by guiding students in short prayers before and after lessons and instructing them to avoid sinful actions. These exemplary behaviors were reflected in the positive development of student character. Students displayed wisdom by considering the consequences of actions before making decisions and asking questions when they did not understand lessons. Courage was shown when students advised peers who were late or neglected homework. Justice was observed in their willingness to discuss in groups and return borrowed items. Self-control was manifested through avoiding offensive language and preventing conflicts. Humility was shown by accepting criticism and sharing resources with peers. Honesty was reflected in accurately reporting absences and completing assessments truthfully. Discipline was evident in punctuality and adherence to school uniform regulations, and responsibility was shown in carrying out class duties and bringing Bibles to CRE lessons. Statistical analysis confirmed the positive relationship between CRE teachers' exemplary behavior (X) and student character (Y). The correlation coefficient was $r = 0.678$, exceeding the critical value $r_t = 0.329$ for a 5% significance level with a 95% confidence interval ($n = 36$), indicating a positive correlation. The t-test result, $t_h = 5.375$, was greater than $t_t = 2.042$ ($df = 34$), demonstrating a significant effect. Regression analysis yielded the equation $\hat{Y} = 26.27 + 0.53X$, indicating that each unit increase in CRE teachers' exemplary behavior increased student character by 0.53 units. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was 0.459, meaning 45.9% of the variation in student character could be explained by teacher exemplary behavior. Additionally, the F-test result, $F_h = 28.84$, exceeded $F_t = 1.62$ (df numerator = 17, df denominator = 34), confirming that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. The research demonstrates that CRE teachers' exemplary behavior has a positive and significant influence on the character development of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Paranginan during the 2024/2025 academic year. This underscores the importance of teacher role modeling in shaping students' moral and ethical development in accordance with Christian values.

CONCLUSION

The exemplary behavior of Christian Religious Education (CRE) and Character teachers refers to the attitudes, actions, and speech of teachers that are worthy of being emulated by students. In this study, the indicators of teacher exemplary behavior include: exemplary speech, which involves speaking politely to students, responding positively, fostering constructive communication that allows teachers and students to develop close relationships, and motivating students to engage actively in learning; exemplary behavior,

including administering appropriate discipline for rule violations, dressing neatly, and politely requesting permission when leaving the classroom; exemplary love, demonstrated by visiting sick students, patiently teaching those who struggle to understand lessons, and advising students who forget to bring their Bibles; exemplary faithfulness, reflected in punctuality in attending school and classes, while paying attention to all students during lessons; and exemplary holiness, manifested through guiding students in short prayers before and after lessons and instructing them to refrain from sinful actions. Character formation is a relatively stable personal trait that serves as a foundation for behavior according to high moral and normative standards. A student with good character is capable of making decisions and is prepared to take responsibility for the consequences of those decisions. Christian adolescent students are expected to develop character in several areas, including: wisdom, where students consider the consequences of their actions before making decisions and ask questions about lessons they do not understand; courage, demonstrated when advising peers who arrive late or neglect homework; justice, reflected in their willingness to participate in group discussions and return borrowed items; self-control, shown by avoiding offensive language and conflicts; humility, demonstrated by accepting peer criticism and sharing resources with classmates in need; honesty, reflected in reporting true reasons for absences and completing assessments truthfully; discipline, shown through punctuality and adherence to school uniform regulations; and responsibility, including carrying out classroom duties and bringing Bibles to CRE lessons. Based on theoretical perspectives and research findings, it can be concluded that optimal exemplary behavior from CRE and Character teachers significantly contributes to enhancing the character of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Paranginan during the 2024/2025 academic year.

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