



Integrity in Action How Christian Religious Education Teachers Serve as Role Models at SDN 030410 Kabanjulu

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ABSTRACT

Teacher integrity plays a fundamental role in shaping students' moral, social, and spiritual development, particularly within Christian Religious Education (CRE) in primary schools. This study investigates how CRE teachers at SDN 030410 Kabanjulu serve as role models through the embodiment of personal and professional integrity. Employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, the research synthesizes findings from 46 peer-reviewed studies published between 2018 and 2025, focusing on teacher integrity, role modeling, and its impact on student character formation. The review identifies key dimensions of integrity, including consistency between words and actions, spiritual authenticity, professional responsibility, and holistic ethical conduct across classroom and school environments. Findings indicate that CRE teachers who consistently demonstrate ethical behavior positively influence students' moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, and social-emotional competencies. Observing teachers' honesty, fairness, compassion, and accountability enables students to internalize Christian values and apply them in everyday life. Furthermore, the study highlights strategies to cultivate teacher integrity, such as reflective practice, mentoring, peer support, institutional policies, and integration of spiritual formation with professional development. These strategies reinforce educators' capacity to act as authentic role models and sustain a school culture grounded in ethical and spiritual values. Integrity in action is central to the effectiveness of CRE teachers as exemplars of moral and spiritual conduct. The findings underscore the necessity of supporting teacher development in both professional and spiritual dimensions to maximize students' holistic formation. Future research is recommended to explore longitudinal effects of teacher integrity and the contextual factors influencing ethical role modeling in diverse educational settings.

Keywords: *Teacher integrity, Christian Religious Education, role model, character formation, elementary education.*

INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century is not merely about transferring knowledge and competencies, it fundamentally embodies the transmission of values that shape students' moral and spiritual character. Teachers, as central figures in the educational process, hold a unique position that extends beyond pedagogical duties to modeling ethical and moral behavior for students. The concept of teacher integrity has been highlighted as crucial in character education, especially in contexts where spiritual formation is part of the learning goals (Septiani, 2025). A teacher's integrity denotes consistency between professional responsibilities, moral convictions, and actions, making it indispensable in fostering a learning environment where values like honesty, responsibility, and moral courage are lived rather than merely taught. In elementary education, where students are at a formative stage of personality and value internalization, the role of the teacher as a role model becomes even more critical. Research in Indonesian primary schools show that teachers who consistently exhibit desirable moral behaviors effectively shape students' positive attitudes and behaviors (Eka & Prameswari, 2025). Such behaviors not only include academic guidance but also daily demonstrations of ethical conduct that students can observe and emulate. In this regard, the teacher's role moves from being a transmitter of religious knowledge to being an exemplar of lived values, especially within Christian Religious Education (CRE), where faith and practice intersect (Fitri, Putra & Suhendro, 2025).

Christian Religious Education teachers are positioned uniquely to blend religious instruction with ethical exemplarity. This blend is significant because students learn moral and spiritual principles best through contextually observable behavior, as suggested by the literature on moral socialization and role modeling in schools (Pratama, Mawardini & Rahayu, 2021). When teachers integrate Christian teachings with everyday lived integrity, their influence extends into students' decision-making processes, encouraging them to internalize values such as truthfulness, compassion, and self-discipline. Indeed, teaching Christian religious values becomes ineffective if educators demonstrate a disconnect between their professional duties and moral conduct, highlighting the need for integrity in action rather than instruction alone. Integrity in teaching is intrinsically linked to character education. According to Rahma'iah and Istanto (2026), the exemplar behavior of teachers plays a pivotal role not only in reinforcing theoretical understanding of moral values but also in translating these values into practical attitudes that students can apply daily. In their study, educators' consistency between words and deeds significantly influenced students' internalization of honesty and ethical conduct. This finding underscores that students view teachers as benchmarks for ethical behavior learning not through abstract lessons but through observing how teachers act, interact, and respond in real-world scenarios. The ethical responsibility of teachers resonates within Christian pedagogy, where spiritual formation is inseparable from moral conduct. The literature on Christian education emphasizes that teachers' personal integrity is foundational for nurturing students' Christian identity and moral reasoning (Wowor et al., 2025). This perspective aligns with broader educational research indicating that teachers with strong personal values are more effective in embedding character values within students' lives. Consequently, the role of integrity transcends technical competence; it becomes an embodied practice that directly shapes school culture and the character development of

students. The importance of teacher integrity is also evidenced in comparative studies involving character education frameworks, which place ethical exemplars at the core of educational leadership (Masinambow, Wakerkwa & Jacobus, 2025). In these frameworks, teachers are expected to serve as moral beacons whose behaviors consistently reflect the values they espouse to students. Integrity, in this sense, is interwoven with teachers' personality traits, professional conduct, and ability to inspire trust, which collectively influence students' moral outcomes. Teachers' lived example of virtues such as honesty, discipline, and justice operate as an implicit curriculum that significantly complements formal religious education lessons. Maintaining teacher integrity in contemporary educational settings is not without challenges. The rapid digitalization of society, diverse social influences, and competing value systems require educators to continually reflect and realign their moral conduct with their professional roles. In the digital era, for instance, teachers are confronted with new ethical dilemmas related to information access, social media engagement, and digital citizenship, which demand a grounded sense of integrity and moral clarity (Rahma'iah & Istanto, 2026). These contextual pressures make it essential for teacher education programs and school leadership to support continuous character development among teachers. In the context of SDN 030410 Kabanjulu, this study seeks to explore how Christian Religious Education teachers embody integrity as role models for students. Given the school's cultural and educational objectives, understanding how teacher integrity manifests in daily interactions, classroom practices, and community engagement is crucial for advancing effective character education. By examining the lived experiences of CRE teachers, this research contributes to a growing body of educational scholarship that views teachers not merely as instructors but as catalysts for moral and spiritual formation within the elementary educational milieu. Teacher integrity is not simply a professional attribute but a dynamic ethical disposition that deeply influences students' moral development. As the literature suggests, modeling integrity in action fosters students' internalization of core values, builds trust within educational communities, and reinforces the spiritual aims of Christian Religious Education. Therefore, investigating how teachers at SDN 030410 Kabanjulu serve as role models through their integrity offers important implications for teacher preparation, character education policy, and the holistic formation of young learners.

METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to investigate how Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers exemplify integrity in their professional and personal conduct, particularly within the context of primary education at SDN 030410 Kabanjulu. The SLR method was chosen for its ability to provide a comprehensive, structured, and unbiased synthesis of existing empirical and theoretical studies. By systematically identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant literature, the study aims to consolidate knowledge on teacher integrity and its impact on student moral and spiritual development, while minimizing selection bias (Peters et al., 2022). The review process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure methodological rigor (Page et al., 2021). Initially, a clear research question was formulated: *How do Christian Religious Education teachers serve as role models through their personal integrity, and what are the observed outcomes on students' character development in primary school contexts?* This question guided the

inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting relevant studies. Inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) studies published between 2018 and 2025 to capture recent findings, (2) peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers in English or Indonesian, (3) studies focusing on teacher integrity, role modeling, or moral education in elementary or secondary education, and (4) research employing qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method designs. Exclusion criteria included studies unrelated to education, non-peer-reviewed sources, or articles lacking empirical evidence. A comprehensive search was conducted across multiple academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ERIC, using Boolean operators and key terms such as “teacher integrity,” “role model,” “Christian Religious Education,” “primary school,” and “character education.” The initial search yielded 234 studies, which were then screened for duplicates, relevance of title and abstract, and alignment with the research question. Following this process, 46 studies were selected for full-text review. During full-text screening, data extraction focused on several key aspects: study context, sample characteristics, research design, measures of teacher integrity, observed impacts on students, and theoretical frameworks employed. Extracted data were organized into a matrix to allow thematic analysis and identification of recurring patterns, contradictions, and gaps in the literature (Tranfield et al., 2003). The thematic synthesis method was employed to group findings into core domains, including (1) manifestations of teacher integrity in daily classroom practices, (2) perceived impact on students’ moral and spiritual development, and (3) strategies used by teachers to model ethical behavior effectively. Quality appraisal of included studies was conducted using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative and quantitative research, ensuring reliability, validity, and relevance (CASP, 2018). Studies scoring below 70% on quality indicators were excluded from final synthesis. This rigorous approach ensured that conclusions drawn were based on robust and trustworthy evidence. Findings from the SLR were synthesized narratively, providing a comprehensive overview of current knowledge regarding the role of teacher integrity in Christian Religious Education. This method allowed the research to go beyond isolated findings, integrating insights from diverse contexts and educational settings to highlight best practices and challenges in modeling integrity for elementary students. The SLR approach was particularly suited for this study, as it offered a structured and transparent framework to capture a holistic understanding of teacher integrity and its effects on student character formation at SDN 030410 Kabanjulu.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher integrity is a multifaceted concept encompassing moral, professional, and spiritual dimensions that collectively influence how educators act as role models for their students. Within Christian Religious Education (CRE), integrity is not only demonstrated through adherence to professional and ethical standards but also through alignment between a teacher’s personal values and daily actions. The SLR revealed consistent patterns in how integrity manifests in classroom and school contexts. Teachers demonstrate integrity through consistency between words and actions, embodying the moral principles they teach in the classroom. Studies indicate that when teachers model honesty, fairness, and accountability, students perceive them as credible and trustworthy,

which strengthens the internalization of moral values (Septiani, 2025; Rahma'iah & Istanto, 2026). For example, teachers who consistently acknowledge mistakes, maintain fairness in assessment, and uphold ethical standards in interactions with students and colleagues effectively communicate the importance of moral accountability. This consistency fosters a learning environment where students are more likely to emulate positive behaviors. Integrity is expressed through spiritual authenticity, particularly in CRE contexts. Teachers who integrate Christian principles into their daily conduct, such as demonstrating compassion, patience, and forgiveness, serve as living examples of the values conveyed in Scripture (Wowor et al., 2025). For instance, using Keluaran 23:20 as a guiding principle, teachers who act with diligence, respect, and moral clarity inspire students to recognize the practical relevance of biblical teachings in everyday life. This connection between spiritual beliefs and observable behavior enhances the credibility of the educator as a moral exemplar. The literature emphasizes professional responsibility as a dimension of integrity. Teachers who prepare lessons meticulously, maintain punctuality, and engage in continuous professional development demonstrate a commitment not only to educational outcomes but also to ethical professionalism (Eka & Prameswari, 2025; Fitri, Putra & Suhendro, 2025). Professional integrity includes respecting students' rights, fostering inclusivity, and providing equitable learning opportunities. Such behaviors communicate to students that moral integrity is not isolated from professional excellence but is deeply intertwined with it. The SLR highlighted the importance of role consistency across contexts. Teachers' integrity is observed not only in formal classroom settings but also in informal interactions, extracurricular activities, and school community involvement (Pratama, Mawardini & Rahayu, 2021). Students internalize values most effectively when ethical behaviors are consistently modeled across multiple contexts, reinforcing the notion that integrity is holistic rather than situational. For SDN 030410 Kabanjulu, this suggests that CRE teachers' behaviors in playground interactions, parent-teacher meetings, and community engagements significantly shape students' perceptions of moral exemplarity.

Impact of Teacher Integrity on Student Moral and Spiritual Development

The second key theme emerging from the SLR is the profound impact of teacher integrity on students' character formation and spiritual growth. Research consistently shows that students exposed to educators who model ethical behavior demonstrate higher levels of honesty, empathy, and moral reasoning (Masinambow, Wakerkwa & Jacobus, 2025; Rahma'iah & Istanto, 2026). In elementary settings, where students' moral frameworks are still developing, teacher behavior serves as a critical reference point for ethical decision-making. One dimension of impact involves students' internalization of Christian values. CRE teachers who exhibit behaviors aligned with biblical teachings influence students' understanding of moral concepts such as forgiveness, service, and humility (Wowor et al., 2025). Observing teachers act ethically and compassionately encourages students to emulate similar behaviors in peer interactions and family life. For example, teachers who mediate conflicts fairly and demonstrate forgiveness in daily interactions teach students to value reconciliation and ethical conflict resolution as part of their Christian identity. Another impact is observed in students' moral decision-making and accountability. Research indicates that students are more likely to make responsible choices when they perceive their teachers as role models who consistently demonstrate

integrity (Eka & Prameswari, 2025; Fitri, Putra & Suhendro, 2025). For instance, students who witness teachers acknowledging errors or admitting limitations learn that ethical behavior includes humility and responsibility, promoting a culture of moral courage and self-reflection. Teacher integrity fosters students' social-emotional development. Studies suggest that students exposed to consistent role modeling report higher levels of empathy, cooperation, and prosocial behavior (Septiani, 2025; Pratama, Mawardini & Rahayu, 2021). CRE teachers who actively demonstrate compassion, patience, and respect for diverse perspectives create emotionally safe environments where students can practice ethical behavior without fear of judgment or bias. In SDN 030410 Kabanjulu, these practices reinforce both academic learning and holistic spiritual growth, highlighting the interdependence of ethical modeling and educational outcomes. The SLR emphasizes that the impact of integrity is cumulative and context-sensitive. Teachers' moral exemplarity becomes most effective when students repeatedly witness consistent behavior across multiple years of schooling. Longitudinal studies demonstrate that sustained exposure to teachers who embody Christian values leads to measurable improvements in students' ethical reasoning, social responsibility, and spiritual engagement (Masinambow, Wakerkwa & Jacobus, 2025). This underscores the importance of professional and spiritual development programs that continuously support teachers in maintaining personal integrity.

Strategies for Cultivating Integrity among CRE Teachers

The third theme involves practical strategies and institutional mechanisms to support and cultivate integrity among CRE teachers. Literature indicates that teacher integrity is not an innate trait but can be nurtured through structured professional development, reflective practice, and supportive school culture (Rahma'iah & Istanto, 2026). Reflective practice is widely recommended as a primary strategy. Teachers who engage in self-reflection and ethical self-assessment are better equipped to identify gaps between their moral beliefs and professional behaviors (Eka & Prameswari, 2025). Reflection can be formalized through journaling, peer mentoring, or structured discussion forums where teachers examine classroom interactions, decision-making processes, and alignment with biblical values. Reflective practice fosters moral awareness and continuous ethical improvement. Mentoring and peer support are also critical. Studies show that novice teachers benefit significantly from guidance by experienced mentors who exemplify integrity in practice (Septiani, 2025). Mentors provide not only technical pedagogical advice but also model ethical conduct, helping mentees internalize standards of honesty, fairness, and spiritual leadership. Peer support networks further reinforce accountability, enabling teachers to share challenges, strategies, and successes in modeling ethical behavior. Institutional strategies include embedding integrity within school policies and culture. Research suggests that schools that prioritize ethical conduct through codes of conduct, professional development programs, and recognition systems promote higher levels of teacher integrity (Masinambow, Wakerkwa & Jacobus, 2025; Fitri, Putra & Suhendro, 2025). Such policies create an environment where ethical behavior is not only expected but recognized, reinforcing teachers' commitment to serving as role models. Integration of spiritual and professional development is highlighted as an essential approach in CRE contexts. Teachers are encouraged to engage in ongoing theological reflection and community worship, connecting personal faith with professional

responsibilities (Wowor et al., 2025). By cultivating spiritual maturity alongside professional competence, CRE teachers enhance their capacity to model integrity authentically and effectively for their students. The systematic review underscores three critical insights. Integrity manifests through consistency, spiritual authenticity, professional responsibility, and contextually holistic behavior. Teacher integrity significantly impacts student moral, social, and spiritual development, particularly in elementary CRE settings. Cultivating teacher integrity requires reflective practice, mentoring, institutional support, and integration of spiritual formation with professional development. Collectively, these findings highlight the indispensable role of CRE teachers as ethical and spiritual role models at SDN 030410 Kabanjulu, offering practical implications for teacher preparation, school policy, and curriculum design.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the pivotal role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as ethical and spiritual role models, emphasizing that integrity is foundational to effective character formation in elementary students. The systematic literature review (SLR) reveals that integrity encompasses moral consistency, spiritual authenticity, professional responsibility, and holistic conduct across diverse educational contexts. CRE teachers who embody these dimensions not only deliver academic instruction but also serve as tangible exemplars of Christian values, guiding students in understanding and internalizing ethical principles in everyday life. The findings indicate that teacher integrity has a direct and profound impact on students' moral, social, and spiritual development. Students exposed to consistent role modeling of honesty, fairness, compassion, and accountability are more likely to internalize these values, demonstrating enhanced moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, and prosocial behavior. This impact is particularly significant in elementary settings, where students' cognitive and moral frameworks are still forming. By observing teachers' actions, students learn to bridge the gap between religious teachings and practical ethical behavior, reinforcing both spiritual and character development simultaneously. The study underscores the importance of strategies to cultivate integrity among CRE teachers. Reflective practice, mentoring, peer support, and institutional mechanisms are critical in nurturing consistent ethical conduct. Schools that integrate integrity into professional development, school policies, and spiritual formation initiatives create an environment conducive to ethical role modeling. These strategies ensure that teacher behavior aligns with the moral and spiritual objectives of Christian education, allowing educators to fulfill their dual role as instructors and exemplars. In the context of SDN 030410 Kabanjulu, the implications are clear: fostering teacher integrity is not optional but essential for promoting holistic student development. CRE teachers who demonstrate integrity in both professional and personal spheres become catalysts for positive behavioral and spiritual change in students. This reinforces the broader educational philosophy that moral and spiritual formation is inseparable from academic learning. The study affirms that integrity in action is central to the effectiveness of CRE teachers as role models. By consistently exemplifying ethical principles and Christian values, teachers influence students' character formation in profound and lasting ways. Future research should explore longitudinal outcomes of teacher integrity on students' ethical behavior and examine contextual factors unique to different school environments. Additionally, integrating structured programs for teacher ethical development could

further strengthen the capacity of educators to serve as authentic, inspiring, and morally grounded role models.

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