



The Scope of Christian Religious Education: The Intersection of Teachers' Social Competence and Students' Attitude of Respect at SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the intersection between Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' social competence and the cultivation of students' "sikap hormat" (attitude of respect) within the context of SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua, North Nias Regency. Respect, viewed through the lens of Christian theology, is understood as a manifestation of love (agapē) and humility (tapeinophrosynē) that reflects Christ's character and the biblical call to "value others above yourselves" (Philippians 2:3). Employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, this research synthesizes studies published between 2010 and 2024 concerning teacher competence, moral-spiritual formation, and contextual Christian pedagogy. The findings reveal three major themes: (1) the relational and communicative dimension of social competence, (2) moral-spiritual integration as the foundation of respect, and (3) cultural contextualization through local Nias wisdom such as si'ulu (honoring elders and promoting harmony). Results indicate that CRE teachers' empathy, communication, and moral integrity significantly influence students' development of respect as both an ethical and spiritual virtue. Socially competent teachers foster relational trust, mediate conflicts through forgiveness, and embody humility as living examples of faith. The study also underscores that respect formation thrives when Christian values are harmonized with cultural traditions and supported institutionally through reflective pedagogy, community collaboration, and faith-based learning environments. Ultimately, the study concludes that strengthening CRE teachers' social competence transforms classrooms into communities of grace where respect is both taught and lived-shaping spiritually grounded, respectful, and socially responsible graduates who embody Christlike character in their professional and personal lives.

Keywords: Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, Attitude of Respect

INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) stands at the heart of holistic education in Indonesia, serving as more than a medium for doctrinal instruction. It is a transformative process

that aims to shape the intellectual, moral, and relational dimensions of students' lives. CRE has a crucial mission: to form learners who are not only knowledgeable about faith but also spiritually mature and socially responsible. One essential expression of this formation is the cultivation of *sikap hormat*—an attitude of respect toward God, others, and oneself. In Christian theology, respect is not limited to external politeness or social convention; it represents the embodiment of love (*agapē*) and humility (*tapeinophrosynē*), virtues that reflect Christ's character. As stated in Philippians 2:3, "*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.*" This biblical exhortation provides the foundation for understanding respect as a moral attitude rooted in spiritual consciousness. The context of SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua in North Nias Regency offers a distinctive backdrop for examining how CRE contributes to the development of respectful character. As a vocational institution situated in a predominantly Christian community with deep cultural traditions, the school represents an intersection between faith, culture, and modern education. Vocational schools (SMK) in Indonesia emphasize technical and professional skills, often fostering competitive academic and social environments. In such contexts, adolescents face various challenges—peer pressure, digital distraction, and value pluralism—that can erode moral sensitivity. Therefore, nurturing *sikap hormat* becomes not only an educational necessity but a moral and spiritual calling. In this setting, the social competence of the CRE teacher emerges as a decisive factor in bridging the gap between faith-based instruction and relational transformation. The scope of Christian Religious Education in vocational contexts is multidimensional. It extends beyond theological content toward the moral and emotional formation of students as future professionals. CRE provides a moral compass that helps learners integrate their vocational identity with Christian ethics. According to *Permendiknas No. 16 of 2007*, teacher competence includes four interrelated dimensions: pedagogical, professional, personal, and social. Of these, social competence is particularly critical in shaping respectful behavior and cooperative relationships in the school environment. Astika (2017) emphasizes that teachers with strong social competence can build authentic relationships, communicate effectively, and embody empathy—all of which function as conduits for moral and spiritual development. In Christian education, social competence becomes an act of ministry—an expression of divine love and reconciliation, as affirmed in Colossians 3:12-14, which calls believers to "*clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.*" Through such virtues, teachers reflect Christ's relational nature and guide students to embody similar attitudes in daily life.

At SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua, the CRE teacher's social competence finds concrete expression in pedagogical and interpersonal practices. Dialogical teaching methods encourage students to express ideas respectfully, fostering open communication rooted in empathy and humility. Collaborative learning allows students to engage in moral case studies that highlight respect for authority, peers, and community. Conflict mediation activities help students resolve disagreements through forgiveness and understanding rather than confrontation. These approaches show that respect is not merely taught as a rule but experienced as a relational reality within the learning community. The CRE classroom becomes a microcosm of Christian fellowship—a space where knowledge, love, and faith converge in practice. Respect also functions as both a spiritual and cultural value

within the Nias community. Local wisdom, particularly the concept of *si'ulu* (honoring elders and promoting social harmony), aligns naturally with Christian virtues of humility and obedience. When integrated into Christian pedagogy, this cultural foundation reinforces spiritual education by contextualizing respect within communal and theological frameworks. Respect in Christian education includes three dimensions: reverence toward God through worship and obedience, respect toward others through empathy and cooperation, and respect toward oneself through self-discipline and integrity. The CRE teacher's role is to nurture all three dimensions through authentic relationships, daily modeling, and faith-based dialogue. The biblical and theological basis for this educational vision rests on the commandment of love articulated in Matthew 22:37-39-*"Love the Lord your God... and love your neighbor as yourself."* Genuine love inevitably manifests in respect, since honoring others is an acknowledgment of God's image in every human being. Similarly, 1 Peter 2:17 commands believers to *"show proper respect to everyone."* These passages remind both teachers and students that respect is not optional but central to Christian discipleship. Therefore, when teachers model humility, fairness, and compassionate communication, they guide students to see respect not as a social expectation but as an act of worship and moral devotion. The intersection between the social competence of PAK teachers and the cultivation of respect among students at SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua illustrates the transformative potential of Christian education. Through empathy, dialogue, and Christlike example, PAK teachers serve as moral and spiritual mentors who help students internalize respect as a reflection of divine love and human dignity. Within this holistic framework, education becomes an act of ministry-forming not only skilled professionals but spiritually grounded individuals who embody God's peace and humility in the world.

METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine the intersection between Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' social competence and students' attitude of respect within the context of SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua, North Nias Regency. The SLR method was chosen to provide a structured and comprehensive synthesis of current research on teacher competence, Christian pedagogy, and moral-spiritual formation in vocational education. Following the procedures outlined by Kitchenham and Charters (2007), the study included four stages: defining research questions, identifying and selecting relevant literature, appraising sources, and synthesizing findings. Data were gathered from academic databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, ERIC, and ProQuest, focusing on studies published between 2010 and 2024 using keywords like "social competence in Christian education," "respectful character formation," and "spiritual pedagogy." Only studies that addressed teacher competence, student respect, and Christian ethical foundations were included. Thematic analysis (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014) revealed three core themes: the relational and communicative role of social competence, the integration of biblical principles-especially humility and love-as the moral basis for respect, and the cultural contextualization of Christian education through local values such as *si'ulu* (honoring elders). Triangulation across theological, pedagogical, and cultural perspectives ensured credibility and depth of interpretation. Overall, the review demonstrates that the social competence of PAK teachers-expressed through empathy, communication, and moral integrity-is crucial for

cultivating respect as both a spiritual and ethical virtue, confirming that relational authenticity rooted in Christlike character lies at the heart of effective Christian education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The systematic review yielded a robust convergence of findings indicating that the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers plays a critical and multi-layered role in fostering a genuine attitude of respect (*sikap hormat*) among students in vocational Christian schools such as SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua. Across the relevant literature and contextual studies, three major domains emerged: (1) the relational and communicative dimension of teacher social competence, (2) the moral-spiritual integration in respect formation, and (3) the contextual mediation by culture and institutional constraints. Each domain resonates strongly with the vocational school context, where adolescents negotiate technical demands, peer influences, and moral pressures. One recurring insight across multiple studies is that teachers who actively embody empathy, listening, clear communication, and trustworthiness create a relational climate conducive to respect. Empathetic connection allows students to feel heard and valued, which opens the door for internalizing respectful dispositions rather than merely conforming to rules. Teachers' ability to dialogue with students-inviting questions, acknowledging students' life situations, and responding openly-reinforces that respect is a two-way relational reality rather than top-down deference (Lickona, 1991; Noddings, 2005). In such settings, students begin to view respect not as forced obedience but as mutual recognition of dignity under God. In the vocational Christian school context, this relational competence is especially crucial. Adolescents in SMK environments often feel pressure to perform or conform, and thus relational safety matters. Teachers who listen well to students' struggles, validate their voices, and model humility can dissipate resistance and foster respect. The review showed examples where CRE teachers used morning reflections, peer-sharing circles, and guided dialogues-techniques that prioritize relational connection over didactic monologue. In these spaces, teachers demonstrated not only verbal affirmation, but nonverbal cues of attention, eye contact, tone moderation, and emotional gentleness-elements often overlooked in pedagogical training but central to relational trust. Conflict and disagreement are inevitable in school life. The literature emphasizes that teacher social competence includes conflict mediation skills grounded in dialogue, forgiveness, and reconciliation rather than punitive control (Astika, 2017). When a teacher intervenes in peer disputes by modeling respectful listening, allowing each party to express feelings, and guiding toward mutual understanding, students witness respect in action. This modeling helps internalize respect as a lived virtue, not just a rule to obey.

Moral-Spiritual Integration: Respect as Christian Virtue

Another central theme emerging from the literature is that respect as a moral attitude cannot be divorced from spiritual formation. In Christian pedagogy, respect is not a secular social skill but a virtue that flows from love (*agapē*) and humility (*tapeinophrosynē*). As Colossians 3:12-14 exhorts believers to clothe themselves with

compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience-and to let love bind them together-teachers' social competence becomes a channel for incarnating these virtues in educational relationships. Thus, respect is not merely external politeness but the outworking of inner spiritual disposition. Effective CRE teachers intentionally embed biblical reflection and prayer into relational interactions. For example, before resolving disagreements or addressing class behavior, a teacher might lead a short Scripture reading on humility or kindness, then invite students to reflect on how the text calls them to respect one another. This integration ensures that respect is not an isolated cognitive exercise, but is rooted in the worldview of discipleship. Students thereby learn that respect is not just social etiquette but an expression of Christlike character. The literature reveals that teachers who live out consistency between their words and actions amplify respect formation. When teachers show respect to students-speaking politely, acknowledging mistakes, apologizing when needed-they become powerful moral exemplars. This integrity reduces hypocrisy and fosters trust, making students more receptive to internalizing respect rather than merely complying. The principle "*they see what you live more than what you say*" recurs in pedagogical theology (Knight, 2006). Respect toward God, others, and self must be balanced. The formation of respect includes cultivating reverence toward God (in worship, obedience), interpersonal respect (in speech, listening, service), and self-respect (in integrity, responsibility). Teachers who treat students as image-bearers of God help students see that respect toward others flows from respect toward God's creation. In the reviewed studies, respect formation activities often included devotions, worship, and scriptural reflections that remind students of their identity in Christ, thereby anchoring interpersonal respect in spiritual awareness.

A third prominent theme is that cultural and institutional contexts mediate how teacher social competence and respect formation unfold. In particular, the cultural norm of *si'ulu* (honor toward elders and community harmony) in Nias provides a pre-existing value framework that can support or hinder Christian respect formation depending on how it is engaged. Teachers skilled in contextual sensitivity can draw on *si'ulu* to affirm respect toward elders while reinterpreting it through Christian humility. In such cases, students see respect not as merely cultural tradition but transformed through the gospel. Several case studies demonstrated that teachers who integrated local cultural stories, proverbs, or metaphors about honoring elders with biblical humility resonated more deeply with students' moral imagination. Institutionally, time constraints, curriculum pressures, and prioritization of technical skills pose challenges. Many vocational schools marginalize spiritual formation, relegating PAK to minimal hours or extracurricular status. The literature shows that teacher social competence includes creative adaptation-embedding respect formation into technical or general subject lessons, using informal moments (break times, assembly) for short reflections, or fostering peer-led respect initiatives. Teachers navigate institutional constraints by aligning respect formation with school goals, e.g. linking respectful interpersonal behavior with professional conduct in vocational tasks.

Another institutional factor is parental and community influence. Students' family backgrounds and prior exposure to respect values vary widely. Some students come from households where respectful speech is normative; others may have limited family

modeling. In such diversity, teachers must exercise differentiated relational approaches, empathizing with students' starting points and gradually scaffolding respect formation rather than assuming uniform receptivity. The literature suggests that collaborative efforts among teachers, school leadership, and community churches strengthen respect formation. When the CRE teacher's efforts are supported by school policies, faculty modeling, chaplaincy programs, and community values, the climate becomes reinforcing. Conversely, when the CRE teacher acts alone, efforts may falter under cultural or peer pressure. Translating these results to SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua, one can infer that for respect formation to flourish, the CRE teacher's social competence must be exercised intentionally and relationally. The teacher needs to plan not only lessons but relational spaces-morning devotions, small group sharing, conflict resolution circles-that allow respect to be practiced and modeled. The teacher should adapt pedagogical strategies-dialogue, moral case studies, service projects-that require students to grapple with respect in real contexts. Aligning respect formation with cultural values like *si'ulu* enhances acceptance and resonance. The teacher might weave local proverbs about honor into biblical discussions, helping students see that Christian respect fulfills and transforms cultural respect. Institutional support is also crucial: timetables should allocate occasional slots for relational formation; leadership must model respectful culture; collaboration with church or community elders may reinforce respect narrative among students. The study suggests that faculty development programs should intentionally cultivate social competence in CRE teachers-not just content knowledge. Training should include relational skills, conflict mediation, emotional intelligence, and contextual theology. Reflective practice (journaling, peer coaching) enables teachers to refine how they embody respect in daily interactions. In sum, the systematic review affirms that social competence and respect formation are intimately intertwined within Christian education, particularly in vocational contexts. The CRE teacher's relational empathy, humility, communication, and moral integrity provide the relational substrate on which students' respectful attitudes can grow. Respect is not imposed but nurtured through relational authenticity, moral modeling, and spiritual integration. Cultural and institutional constraints mediate, but with creativity and theological intentionality, CRE teachers can overcome such constraints. In SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua, these insights can guide the cultivation of *sikap hormat* as a lived virtue rather than a taught norm-transforming the school environment into a community of grace where respect is both taught and caught.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the intersection between Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' social competence and the cultivation of students' *sikap hormat* (attitude of respect) represents a vital foundation for holistic character formation in vocational Christian schools such as SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua. The findings reaffirm that Christian education must move beyond cognitive instruction toward relational and spiritual transformation, where learning becomes an act of grace and discipleship. Within this framework, the teacher's social competence-expressed through empathy, communication, moral integrity, and humility-functions as both the medium and the message of formation. Respect, therefore, is not simply a behavioral outcome but a

reflection of spiritual awareness grounded in love (*agapē*) and humility (*tapeinophrosynē*), as modeled by Christ Himself. The systematic literature review confirms that students internalize respect most effectively when teachers embody relational authenticity and Christlike character. A socially competent CRE teacher listens with empathy, speaks truth in love, and builds a classroom culture that mirrors Christian fellowship. Through dialogical teaching, moral reflection, and shared prayer, respect is cultivated as a lived experience rather than a taught concept. This finding aligns with theological perspectives that view education as a ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18), wherein teachers act as co-workers with God in restoring His image within students. When teachers model respect toward students-by acknowledging their dignity, treating them fairly, and forgiving mistakes-they make the invisible values of faith visible through daily relationships. Students, in turn, learn that to respect others is to honor the presence of God in every human being (Genesis 1:27; 1 Peter 2:17). The research underscores that respect formation in vocational contexts must be contextualized within local culture. In Nias, the indigenous value of *si'ulu*-honoring elders and maintaining social harmony-provides fertile ground for integrating Christian virtues of humility, service, and obedience. By weaving local wisdom with biblical truth, CRE teachers bridge cultural heritage and theological meaning, enabling students to see respect as both a social responsibility and a sacred calling. This cultural-theological synthesis strengthens moral education by affirming that Christian respect does not negate tradition but redeems and deepens it. The study highlights that the development of *sikap hormat* requires systemic support. The CRE teacher cannot work in isolation; respect must become a shared ethos among school leaders, parents, and church communities. Curriculum design, school culture, and extracurricular programs should intentionally incorporate spaces for reflection, prayer, and service learning. Such environments allow students to practice respect through real actions-cooperation, forgiveness, and empathy-thus bridging belief and behavior. The study affirms that social competence is both a professional requirement and a spiritual vocation. When CRE teachers integrate faith, communication, and compassion, they transform classrooms into communities of grace where respect is both “taught” and “caught”. Theologically grounded in Philippians 2:3 and Colossians 3:12-14, this transformation redefines education as a ministry of love that shapes minds, nurtures hearts, and molds Christlike character. For SMK Negeri 2 Tuhemberua, strengthening teachers’ social competence offers a strategic pathway to sustain respectful, spiritually mature, and socially responsible graduates-individuals who will serve their communities not only with skill but with humility, integrity, and reverence before God.

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