



## The Influence of Christian Religious Education Teachers' Personality Competence on Students' Respect toward Teachers: A Biblical Perspective Based on Ephesians 6 at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the relationship between teacher personality competence and students' respect toward teachers in Christian Religious Education (CRE) at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua. Grounded in both pedagogical and biblical perspectives, particularly Ephesians 6:1-3, the research explores how Christlike personality traits-integrity, empathy, patience, and humility-shape students' moral attitudes of respect and obedience. A quantitative correlational design was employed, involving 30 elementary students (grades IV–VI) who completed two validated Likert-scale instruments: the Teacher Personality Competence Scale (TPCS) and the Student Respect toward Teacher Scale (SRTS). Data were analyzed using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation. The results revealed a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.782$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that approximately 61% of the variance in student respect is explained by the teacher's personality competence. Students who perceived their CRE teacher as emotionally stable, fair, and compassionate demonstrated higher levels of admiration, obedience, and moral imitation. The findings affirm that respect within Christian education arises not from authoritarian control but from relational virtue inspired by the teacher's authenticity and spiritual integrity. Theologically, the study situates respect as a divine command and spiritual act of obedience to God's established authority. The CRE teacher's personality thus functions as an incarnational medium through which Christian values are embodied and transmitted. The study concludes that personality competence is both a pedagogical necessity and a theological vocation, affirming that when teachers reflect Christ's character, they cultivate not only respectful students but faithful disciples who honor God through their reverence for those who teach them.*

**Keywords:** *Respect, Christian Religious Education, Personality Competence*

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher personality competence holds a central position in the holistic development of students within Christian Religious Education (CRE). A teacher's personality not only

reflects their professional integrity but also serves as a living testimony of faith that influences students' attitudes, values, and behaviors. In the context of primary education, where moral foundations and social character begin to take shape, the teacher's personal example becomes a formative force that shapes students' respect, discipline, and moral awareness. Particularly in Christian schools, the personality of the CRE teacher represents an embodiment of Christ's character, serving as both moral authority and spiritual guide. As such, the relationship between a teacher's personality competence and students' respect toward teachers constitutes a crucial dimension of Christian educational praxis that deserves systematic investigation. In recent years, there has been growing concern that students' respect toward teachers has declined, reflecting a broader erosion of traditional moral values in school culture. Factors such as excessive exposure to digital media, diminished parental modeling, and shifting cultural norms have weakened the moral framework that previously upheld respect for authority. Within this social context, Christian Religious Education faces the dual responsibility of nurturing students' faith while also restoring moral virtues—among them, respect, obedience, and humility. A teacher's personality competence, characterized by integrity, emotional stability, self-control, empathy, and a consistent moral example, plays a decisive role in this process. Teachers who demonstrate kindness, patience, and authenticity in their behavior are more likely to earn students' admiration and respect. Conversely, teachers who fail to embody Christian virtues may unintentionally weaken students' moral formation. According to the Indonesian Law on Teachers and Lecturers (Law No. 14 of 2005), personality competence is defined as the teacher's ability to present themselves as a stable, mature, wise, authoritative figure and to serve as a moral role model for students. In the context of CRE, this competence is not merely psychological but theological in nature. It encompasses the imitation of Christ's humility, love, and righteousness as the foundation for relational authority in education. The Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 6:1-3, exhorts: *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."* While the passage refers primarily to family relationships, Christian educational philosophy extends its moral principle to the teacher-student relationship. Teachers, as parental figures in the educational context, are entrusted with guiding students toward obedience and reverence through moral instruction and spiritual modeling. Respect for teachers, therefore, is not merely cultural but theological—an act of obedience to God's order of authority and a reflection of gratitude toward those who nurture and instruct in the faith. Empirical studies in educational psychology consistently show that teacher personality significantly affects students' attitudes, motivation, and interpersonal respect. A positive teacher personality fosters a warm and trusting classroom climate, enhancing students' willingness to engage and cooperate. In Christian pedagogy, this relational dynamic gains deeper meaning: respect is cultivated not through coercion but through the teacher's embodiment of grace and truth. Thus, the teacher's credibility and consistency in living out Christian values directly shape students' moral responses and attitudes of respect.

This study is conducted at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua, a public elementary school where Christian Religious Education is delivered as part of character and moral development. The school represents a relevant locus for examining the influence of teacher personality

competence on students' respect, given its culturally Christian environment and strong community ties. The study seeks to determine whether and how the personality competence of CRE teachers correlates with students' level of respect toward them. Through a quantitative correlational approach, this research aims to provide empirical evidence of the relationship between the two variables while interpreting the findings through a biblical-theological lens. The research is guided by the following questions: How strong is the relationship between the personality competence of CRE teachers and students' respect toward teachers at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua? How can this relationship be understood in light of the biblical principle of honor as stated in Ephesians 6:1-3? The significance of this study lies in its dual contribution. Empirically, it provides insights into the extent to which teacher personality shapes student attitudes within Christian education. Theologically, it offers a reflection on the biblical meaning of respect, positioning teacher-student relationships within the divine framework of mutual love and obedience. Ultimately, this research seeks to affirm that authentic personality competence in teachers-rooted in Christlike character-is not only a pedagogical requirement but a spiritual vocation that leads students toward honoring God through their respect for those who educate them.

## METHODS

A quantitative correlational research design was implemented, to investigate the relationship between the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and students' respect toward teachers at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua. The quantitative approach was selected to measure the strength and direction of the association between these two variables in an objective and statistically verifiable manner. The correlational design was appropriate since the study aimed not to manipulate variables but to examine the natural relationship between the teacher's personality and the students' moral response, understood within a biblical framework of respect and obedience (Ephesians 6:1-3). The research was conducted at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua, a public elementary school located in a culturally Christian area of North Tapanuli. The school was chosen purposively for its consistent integration of Christian moral education in classroom practices. The sample consisted of 30 students from grades IV to VI, representing both male and female students aged 10-12 years. The inclusion criteria required that students had participated in Christian Religious Education classes under the same teacher for at least one academic semester to ensure familiarity and consistent exposure to the teacher's personality and instructional style. Two standardized instruments were used in the study. The Teacher Personality Competence Scale (TPCS) was developed based on the Indonesian Teacher Competency Standards (Law No. 14/2005) and adapted to the Christian education context, covering indicators such as integrity, self-control, empathy, maturity, and consistency in moral example. The Student Respect Toward Teacher Scale (SRTS) measured students' attitudes of obedience, politeness, and moral admiration toward teachers. Both instruments employed a Likert-type scale (1-5), ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Content validity was ensured through expert judgment by two senior lecturers in Christian pedagogy, and reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha > 0.80$ ). Data collection took place over two weeks in a classroom setting after receiving formal approval from the school principal and consent from students' parents. Students completed the questionnaires anonymously under the supervision of the

researcher and the CRE teacher. Data were analyzed using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation to test the strength and direction of the relationship between teacher personality competence and student respect. The significance level was set at  $p < 0.05$ . Beyond statistical interpretation, the results were also examined through a biblical-theological lens, linking empirical findings to the moral command in Ephesians 6:1-3, which frames respect for teachers as a manifestation of obedience to God's order of authority. Ethical considerations, including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent, were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive results indicated that the level of teacher personality competence, as perceived by students, was generally high, with a mean score of 4.32 on a 5-point Likert scale. This finding reflects that the CRE teacher at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua is viewed by students as a role model who consistently exhibits integrity, patience, empathy, and self-control. Indicators such as moral integrity and emotional stability received the highest mean ratings (4.45 and 4.38 respectively), suggesting that students perceive their teacher as an individual of trustworthy character who manages emotions wisely and models the Christian virtues taught in class. These findings align with the concept of personality competence as defined by Law No. 14 of 2005, which emphasizes the teacher's role as a stable, mature, wise, and authoritative figure. In Christian pedagogy, these qualities mirror the character of Christ-the Good Shepherd who leads not by domination but by compassionate example (John 10:11-14). Thus, the teacher's personality becomes an embodied testimony of faith, communicating Christian values not merely through words but through visible and consistent behavior. The results also revealed a high level of student respect toward the CRE teacher, with a mean score of 4.28. Respect indicators such as obedience, politeness, and gratitude were rated particularly high (mean 4.40, 4.35, and 4.31, respectively). Students expressed admiration for the teacher's fairness, compassion, and ability to listen. They reported feeling motivated to emulate their teacher's moral conduct, especially in showing kindness and humility toward peers. This pattern reflects that respect in Christian education extends beyond outward compliance. It represents a relational response grounded in mutual love and moral recognition. According to Ephesians 6:1-3, the biblical imperative to "honor your father and mother" extends to the educational context where teachers, as parental figures in loco parentis, nurture students' moral and spiritual growth. When students honor their teachers, they are simultaneously honoring God's established order of authority. The Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated a strong positive correlation between the personality competence of the CRE teacher and students' respect toward the teacher ( $r = 0.782$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that the more students perceive their teacher as possessing Christlike personality traits-integrity, empathy, and emotional balance-the greater their sense of respect, obedience, and admiration becomes. This finding confirms the hypothesis that teacher personality plays a decisive role in shaping students' moral and affective attitudes within Christian education. The correlation value ( $r = 0.782$ ) signifies a high level of association, implying that approximately 61% of the variance in student respect can be explained by the teacher's personality competence ( $r^2 = 0.61$ ). This substantial relationship demonstrates that respect is not merely the result of authoritarian control or

discipline, but rather an organic outcome of moral influence through personality modeling. This dynamic embodies the Pauline vision of Christian authority—an authority rooted in humility and love rather than coercion. The teacher’s moral authority flows from the imitation of Christ, who, as Philippians 2:7–8 describes, “*made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant.*” When teachers demonstrate humility, patience, and compassion, they command respect not through fear but through spiritual credibility.

The strong correlation found in this study can be interpreted through three interrelated dimensions: pedagogical, psychological, and theological. Pedagogically, personality competence represents a foundation for effective moral instruction. The Indonesian educational framework views personality competence as one of four pillars of teacher professionalism, together with pedagogical, social, and professional competencies. Within Christian Religious Education (PAK), the personality dimension holds a distinctive role because it connects doctrinal knowledge with lived moral practice. At UPT SDN 088 Lobutua, the teacher’s consistent demonstration of moral values—such as honesty, fairness, and self-control—helped students internalize similar attitudes. During classroom observations, it was noted that the teacher often integrated real-life moral reflections into lessons, such as encouraging students to show forgiveness when conflicts arose or to practice honesty in group work. These lived examples resonate with Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 5:16: “*Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*” The pedagogical strength of personality competence, therefore, lies not in cognitive transmission but in moral contagion—the transmission of virtue through character modeling. Psychologically, the relationship between teacher personality and student respect can be explained through social learning theory, which posits that children learn behaviors by observing and imitating significant role models. For primary school students (aged 10–12), teachers often occupy the same emotional space as parental figures. Students are sensitive to the teacher’s tone, fairness, and emotional responses. When teachers consistently display empathy and justice, students feel safe and valued, leading to affective trust—a precursor to respect. Conversely, inconsistency or harshness may provoke fear but not genuine reverence. The strong positive correlation found in this study suggests that students at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua recognize moral coherence between what their CRE teacher teaches and how they behave. This coherence reinforces internal respect, transforming external compliance into internalized value. This finding resonates deeply with the biblical command of honor found in Ephesians 6:1–3. Paul’s exhortation to children to honor their parents “in the Lord” establishes a moral principle that transcends biological family relationships and extends to all divinely instituted authorities, including teachers. In the context of Christian education, teachers serve as spiritual parents, nurturing faith and character in children. Respect for teachers thus becomes a form of worship, reflecting obedience to God’s moral order. The high correlation between teacher personality and student respect affirms that spiritual authority arises from moral authenticity. When teachers manifest the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23)—students naturally respond with honor and trust. This theological insight underscores that respect cannot be demanded; it must be inspired through the teacher’s Christlike example. As Jesus declared in Luke 6:40, “*A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.*” The students’ respect,

therefore, signifies not only admiration but discipleship—a desire to emulate the moral pattern they observe in their teacher. The results of this study are consistent with previous research in both Christian and general education contexts. Studies by Lickona (2012) and Tangen (2017) found that teacher personality strongly predicts students' moral attitudes and classroom discipline. Similarly, in Christian settings, Smith and Wilhoit (2019) argue that faith formation in students is primarily shaped through the teacher's character rather than cognitive instruction.

A study by Hutabarat (2021) in a similar North Sumatra context also demonstrated that personality competence of PAK teachers significantly correlates with students' spiritual attitudes ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The current research at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua extends this evidence by confirming that the same principle applies specifically to students' respect toward teachers—a moral dimension often underexplored in empirical Christian education studies. What distinguishes this study is its theological interpretation of the correlation, framing the data not merely in psychological terms but as a spiritual phenomenon grounded in divine order. The alignment between empirical data and Scripture reveals that personality competence is not a peripheral skill but a theological vocation—the calling to reflect Christ's moral image in the educational relationship. Some students indicated that their respect fluctuated when the teacher appeared stressed or less patient, suggesting that emotional consistency remains a crucial factor in sustaining respect. Additionally, the teacher acknowledged limited institutional support for reflective training or personality development programs. Another challenge lies in cultural shifts among children, who are increasingly exposed to digital media that glorify individualism and self-assertion. Such exposure often undermines traditional values of respect and humility. The teacher's personality, therefore, functions as a countercultural witness, modeling Christlike humility in a generation shaped by self-promotion. In light of these challenges, continuous professional formation is necessary—not only through pedagogical workshops but through spiritual retreats and mentoring that nurture the teacher's inner life. As Proverbs 4:23 reminds us, *"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."* The authenticity of teacher personality originates from spiritual maturity rather than technique alone.

The findings imply that enhancing teacher personality competence should be a strategic focus of Christian education reform. Teacher training programs must prioritize character formation alongside pedagogical skills. Institutions like IAKN Tarutung or similar theological colleges could design courses emphasizing spiritual discipline, emotional intelligence, and pastoral sensitivity for future PAK teachers. Classroom practice should incorporate reflective pedagogy, where teachers intentionally model virtues and encourage students to recognize and reflect upon them. The study suggests that respectful classrooms emerge where teachers embody integrity and consistency more than where strict rules are imposed. The correlation between teacher personality and student respect reaffirms the incarnational nature of Christian education—truth is transmitted through persons who live it. The teacher, as an image-bearer of Christ, becomes the medium through which divine authority and love are revealed to students. Respect, therefore, becomes a spiritual discipline—a form of reverence toward God reflected in how one relates to human authority. The Apostle Paul's linking of honor to

divine blessing (*“that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the earth”*) suggests that respect produces life-giving order in communities. Within schools, this means that honoring teachers contributes to a culture of peace, cooperation, and moral growth. To strengthen the integration of personality competence and student respect, several recommendations emerge: regular retreats emphasizing spiritual renewal, emotional balance, and reflective character-building, experienced teachers can mentor younger colleagues in embodying Christian virtues in teaching practice, biblical principles of honor and humility should be explicitly linked to classroom management and moral education modules, schools should recognize and reward teachers who demonstrate exceptional personality competence, setting a precedent for others. Ephesians 6:1–3 provides a profound interpretive lens for the findings of this study. The command to “honor your father and mother” encompasses a broader divine structure of relational respect rooted in the concept of *kurios* (Lordship). When students honor their teachers, they participate in this order, acknowledging God’s authority mediated through legitimate human guides. The study at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua demonstrates that such honor is awakened not by authoritarian demand but by the teacher’s Christlike personality. The moral reciprocity between teacher and student mirrors the covenantal relationship between God and His people-rooted in love, obedience, and reverence. Respect becomes a spiritual response to grace rather than a social formality. In this light, teacher personality competence is not merely a professional attribute but a spiritual ministry. Through their patience, consistency, and moral integrity, teachers enact the Gospel in daily pedagogy. Their influence extends beyond academic outcomes into the moral and spiritual transformation of their students, echoing the promise of Ephesians 6:3-that it may go well with you.” The results clearly affirm that teacher personality competence has a strong and significant positive relationship with students’ respect toward teachers in Christian Religious Education at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua. This respect emerges not from hierarchical power but from relational virtue, where the teacher’s authenticity invites the student’s reverence. By uniting empirical evidence with theological reflection, this study demonstrates that personality competence is both a pedagogical necessity and a theological calling. When teachers embody the humility and love of Christ, they restore the sacred bond between knowledge, virtue, and respect-shaping not only well-behaved students but disciples who honor God through honoring their teachers.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study clearly affirm that teacher personality competence plays a decisive and transformative role in shaping students’ respect toward teachers within Christian Religious Education (CRE). The strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.782$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) observed at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua empirically confirms that the more students perceive their CRE teacher as possessing Christlike virtues-integrity, empathy, patience, humility, and moral consistency-the greater their level of respect, obedience, and admiration becomes. This relationship underscores that respect is not born from coercive authority but from relational virtue, where the teacher’s authenticity evokes the student’s reverence. From a pedagogical perspective, the results demonstrate that personality competence serves as the living foundation of moral education. It bridges the gap

between cognitive instruction and moral formation by translating ethical principles into observable behavior. Students at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua responded positively to the moral coherence between what their teacher taught and how they lived. The teacher's steady patience, fairness, and kindness created an atmosphere of trust and safety in which respect could flourish naturally. This finding aligns with educational theories such as Bandura's social learning theory and Lickona's concept of character education through modeling, both of which affirm that students internalize virtues through consistent observation of moral exemplars. Psychologically, the relationship between personality and respect is grounded in emotional connection and moral trust. Primary school students, aged 10–12, are in a developmental stage where they seek figures of stability and care. When teachers model empathy and emotional control, students perceive them as trustworthy guides, fostering a deep sense of admiration. Respect, therefore, evolves from emotional security and moral clarity rather than external discipline. The teacher's demeanor, tone, and spiritual integrity become the silent curriculum shaping students' conscience. This correlation carries profound significance. Drawing from Ephesians 6:1-3, the command to "honor your father and mother" reflects a divine moral order that extends to all legitimate authorities, including teachers. Within Christian education, the teacher assumes a parental and pastoral role, entrusted with nurturing both intellect and spirit. Hence, respecting teachers is not merely cultural courtesy but a form of obedience to God's order—a spiritual act of worship. When teachers embody the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), they reveal God's character in educational relationships, and students respond with reverence that honors both the teacher and the Creator. The study also highlights the incarnational nature of Christian education: truth is transmitted through the life of the teacher. The CRE teacher's personality becomes a vessel of grace—an embodied testimony of Christ's humility and love. This incarnational model transforms classrooms into moral communities where learning becomes discipleship. Respect, in this context, is not enforced but inspired; it is a spiritual discipline arising from the recognition of divine character reflected in human authority. These findings call for renewed emphasis on teacher formation that integrates spiritual and emotional development with pedagogical training. Teacher education institutions—such as theological colleges and Christian universities—should cultivate reflective practices, mentorship, and spiritual retreats that nurture the teacher's inner life. As Proverbs 4:23 teaches, "*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*" Only a teacher with a guarded, Spirit-filled heart can sustain authenticity that inspires genuine respect. The study at UPT SDN 088 Lobutua reaffirms that personality competence is both a pedagogical necessity and a theological vocation. When teachers live out the humility and love of Christ, they restore the sacred bond between knowledge, virtue, and respect—shaping not only obedient students but faithful disciples who learn to honor God by honoring those who teach them. This dynamic of mutual reverence represents the heart of Christian education: a living communion of truth, grace, and transformation.

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