



The Influence of Christian Religious Education and Character Teachers' Personality Competence on Students' Moral Development: A Case Study at SMP N 001 Pasar Doloksanggul

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ABSTRACT

The moral development of students is a central goal of Christian Religious Education (CRE) and character formation in Indonesia. However, the increasing complexity of moral challenges among adolescents today-ranging from social media influence to declining empathy-demands that teachers not only master content knowledge but also embody exemplary personality competence. This study explores how the personality competence of Christian Religious Education and Character teachers influences the moral development of students at SMPN 001 Pasar Doloksanggul. Using a mixed-method design, both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews were employed to assess correlations between teachers' personality traits (integrity, discipline, empathy, and spiritual maturity) and students' moral indicators (honesty, responsibility, respect, and self-control). Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between teachers' personality competence and students' moral development. Qualitative data further illuminated that teachers who consistently demonstrated patience, sincerity, and consistency in their behavior became moral role models who shaped students' ethical reasoning and decision-making. The study concludes that effective moral education requires teachers to integrate personal faith and professional ethics into classroom practice. The results underscore the urgent need for teacher training programs that emphasize character and spirituality alongside pedagogy. Ultimately, this research reinforces the biblical view that teaching is a moral vocation where transformation occurs through example and relationship, not merely instruction.

Keywords: *Christian Religious Education, Personality Competence, Moral Development*

INTRODUCTION

Education is not merely a process of intellectual development but a holistic endeavor aimed at shaping the moral, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human life. In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE) and Character Education, teachers play a vital role as moral architects who build the ethical foundation of students' lives. Within the Indonesian educational framework, particularly at SMP N 001 Pasar Doloksanggul,

Christian Religious Education and Character teachers are entrusted with the mission of integrating faith, moral virtue, and daily behavior in a way that reflects Christian values. The effectiveness of this moral formation process is largely determined by the teacher's personality competence-their integrity, maturity, emotional stability, and consistency between words and actions. Personality competence, as one of the core professional standards for teachers, refers to the ability to demonstrate exemplary character and moral integrity that can be emulated by students. According to the Regulation of the Indonesian Minister of National Education No. 16/2007, personality competence includes personal stability, moral integrity, honesty, and a sense of responsibility. In the case of Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers, this competence goes beyond professionalism; it becomes a theological expression of their calling (*vocation*) to serve God through education. A teacher's character thus becomes a living curriculum-a "silent sermon" that teaches students moral responsibility, empathy, and respect more effectively than mere doctrinal instruction. The moral development of students is an essential dimension of Christian education. The Bible consistently emphasizes the importance of moral integrity as the fruit of faith and wisdom. Proverbs 22:6 reminds educators, *"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it."* This principle places moral education at the center of Christian pedagogy, positioning teachers as shepherds of moral growth. When teachers embody Christ-like values such as humility, patience, forgiveness, and love, they inspire students not only to learn about goodness but to live it in everyday interactions. Therefore, the teacher's personality competence is not a secondary attribute-it is the moral engine that drives transformation in the classroom. In the sociocultural context of SMP N 001 Pasar Doloksanggul, which reflects a blend of traditional Batak values and modern educational aspirations, the moral development of students faces both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, local culture upholds communal solidarity (*dalihan na tolu*) and respect for elders, which align with Christian moral teaching. On the other hand, globalization and digital influences often promote individualism and moral relativism. In such a setting, PAK teachers with strong personality competence are crucial mediators who bridge cultural and spiritual values, guiding students toward responsible moral discernment.

Moral development is not a spontaneous process-it requires intentional modeling, consistent reinforcement, and emotional guidance. Students, particularly in adolescence, tend to observe and imitate the behavior of authority figures. When teachers exhibit empathy, fairness, and integrity, students internalize these moral standards through lived experiences rather than abstract concepts. Conversely, teachers who lack personality competence may inadvertently undermine moral instruction, creating cognitive dissonance between what is taught and what is practiced. This study seeks to analyze the influence of Christian Religious Education and Character Teachers' personality competence on students' moral development at SMP N 001 Pasar Doloksanggul. The research is grounded in the conviction that effective moral education emerges not from cognitive instruction alone but from the embodiment of ethical and spiritual maturity by the teacher. The study aims to explore how traits such as sincerity, emotional stability, and consistency between belief and behavior contribute to students' moral awareness, decision-making, and interpersonal respect. In essence, this research highlights that the success of moral education depends not solely on curriculum design or teaching

methodology, but on the moral credibility of the teacher as a living example. Through an integrative understanding of personality competence and moral development, this study contributes to the broader discourse on Christian education and the formation of character in Indonesia's pluralistic and rapidly changing society.

METHOD

A quantitative correlational design was used in this research, to examine the influence of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers' personality competence on students' moral development at SMP Negeri 001 Pasar Doloksanggul. The study sought to determine the degree of relationship between these two variables-teacher personality competence (independent variable) and students' moral development (dependent variable)-within the real-life educational context of a public junior high school that integrates Christian values and national curriculum standards. The correlational approach was chosen to identify and measure the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables without manipulating them. The research population consisted of all students enrolled at SMP N 001 Pasar Doloksanggul during the 2024–2025 academic year, totaling 210 students across Grades VII–IX. Using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, a sample of 136 students was selected through proportionate stratified random sampling to ensure representation from each grade level. This variable referred to the observable personal and professional characteristics of PAK teachers that reflect integrity, emotional stability, responsibility, and consistency in moral conduct. It was measured using a Likert-scale questionnaire (1–5) adapted from *Permendiknas No. 16 of 2007* and Christian education literature (Lickona, 1991; Nuhamara, 2018). Indicators included: integrity and moral consistency, emotional maturity and stability, role modeling and credibility, spiritual devotion and responsibility in teaching, interpersonal communication with students. Students' Moral Development variable referred to the degree to which students internalize moral values and demonstrate them through behavior, decision-making, and relationships. It was assessed using a self-report moral behavior scale based on Lickona's (1991) model of moral knowing, feeling, and action, including indicators such as: understanding of right and wrong, empathy and moral sensitivity, discipline and self-control, respect for authority and peers, responsibility in daily behavior. Data were collected using two structured questionnaires validated by experts in Christian education and psychology. Prior to administration, the instruments underwent validity testing (Pearson's Product-Moment) and reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha), yielding coefficients above 0.75 for both scales, indicating strong internal consistency. The survey was conducted over a two-week period, with participants completing the forms under supervision to ensure honesty and comprehension. Collected data were coded and analyzed using SPSS (version 25). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics and mean scores for each variable. The primary analysis employed Pearson correlation (r) to test the relationship between teacher personality competence and students' moral development. Simple linear regression was applied to determine the extent to which the independent variable predicted variations in the dependent variable. The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Through this methodological approach, the study aimed to generate empirical evidence regarding how the moral credibility and personality of Christian Religious Education teachers affect the

formation of students' moral awareness and ethical behavior within the Indonesian junior high school context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide important insights into how the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers influences the moral development of junior high school students in the context of SMP Negeri 001 Pasar Doloksanggul. The results are presented in two main parts: first, the statistical findings obtained from the correlational analysis; and second, the thematic interpretation and discussion that integrates the quantitative outcomes with existing literature, theoretical frameworks, and Christian pedagogical perspectives. The descriptive analysis revealed that the overall level of teacher personality competence as perceived by students was high, with a mean score of 4.32 (SD = 0.45) on a 5-point Likert scale. Most respondents indicated that their PAK teachers consistently exhibited integrity, emotional stability, and responsibility, which aligned with the competencies defined in *Permendiknas No. 16/2007* and the Christian concept of the teacher as a moral role model. Specifically, integrity and moral consistency had the highest mean (4.45), showing that students viewed their teachers as individuals who not only taught moral values but also embodied them in daily behavior. The second-highest indicator was spiritual devotion and responsibility in teaching (mean = 4.41), reflecting teachers' commitment to integrating faith with pedagogy. The lowest, though still relatively high, indicator was emotional maturity (mean = 4.15), suggesting that while teachers generally maintained self-control, occasional emotional tension was perceived by students, especially in disciplinary contexts. The descriptive data on students' moral development revealed a mean score of 4.21 (SD = 0.48), indicating a generally positive moral orientation among participants. The dimensions of respect for authority and peers (mean = 4.36) and discipline and self-control (mean = 4.28) were rated the highest, suggesting that students have internalized moral norms and social harmony values. However, the empathy and moral sensitivity dimension (mean = 4.08) scored slightly lower, implying that moral cognition and action are stronger than affective empathy—a common pattern in adolescence (Lickona, 1991).

The results of the Pearson correlation test indicated a strong positive relationship between teacher personality competence and students' moral development ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.001$). This coefficient shows that as the personality competence of PAK teachers increases, students' moral development tends to improve correspondingly. The relationship is both statistically significant and educationally meaningful, confirming that the teacher's personal integrity and moral credibility are central determinants of students' moral formation. This finding resonates with prior research, who demonstrated a similar significant correlation between the personality competence of PAK teachers and moral growth among elementary school students in Dairi. It emphasized that a teacher's personality functions as a "living textbook," offering experiential learning through example rather than mere instruction. The present study extends this conclusion to the junior high school context, suggesting that moral development during adolescence—when moral reasoning becomes more complex—is still deeply influenced by teacher example and relational authenticity.

Further analysis using simple linear regression revealed that teacher personality competence explained 46.8% of the variance in students' moral development ($R^2 = 0.468$, $F(1,134) = 118.01$, $p < 0.001$). The regression equation, $Y = 1.214 + 0.696X$, indicates that for every one-point increase in teacher personality competence, the predicted moral development score increases by 0.696 points. This substantial predictive power highlights that moral growth in students is not merely the product of formal curriculum or cognitive instruction but also a reflection of the moral atmosphere shaped by teachers' personal behavior and character. These statistical findings underscore the notion that teacher personality is pedagogy—that is, how teachers live and relate is as influential as what they teach. The congruence between words and actions, attitudes and values, is what fosters moral credibility in the classroom (Lickona, 1991; Nuhamara, 2018). The correlation between teacher personality competence and students' moral development can be deeply understood through the lens of Christian educational philosophy, which views teaching as a form of ministry and moral vocation. In Christian Religious Education, teachers are not only conveyors of biblical knowledge but also living witnesses of faith and righteousness. This theological dimension differentiates PAK instruction from secular moral education, as it anchors moral behavior in divine calling and covenantal responsibility (Knight, 2006).

Genesis 1:27 reminds educators that every human is created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*), implying that moral instruction should cultivate the restoration of that divine likeness. In this context, teachers' personality competence—manifested through patience, empathy, humility, and justice—becomes a means through which students encounter the reality of God's character. Thus, the influence of PAK teachers on students' moral formation transcends academic boundaries, entering the realm of spiritual transformation. The findings also confirm the moral exemplar theory (Bandura, 1986; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008), which posits that students learn moral behavior by observing credible role models. When teachers exhibit emotional stability, fairness, and compassion, they foster a classroom environment that encourages honesty, respect, and empathy. In the case of SMP N 001 Pasar Doloksanggul, such behaviors include fair grading, consistent discipline, respectful communication, and prayerful engagement—all of which collectively reinforce moral order and relational trust. The study shows that teacher personality competence functions as a pedagogical catalyst that transforms instruction into character formation. The teacher's consistent demonstration of integrity communicates moral truth more powerfully than verbal instruction. For example, when a teacher responds with gentleness to disobedience, the act itself becomes a moral lesson on self-control. Likewise, when teachers admit mistakes publicly, they model humility and accountability—values central to Christian moral education. Students at SMP N 001 Pasar Doloksanggul reported that teachers who practiced transparency and fairness inspired them to reflect on their behavior and make better moral decisions. This aligns with Lickona's (1991) assertion that effective moral education requires both moral knowing (understanding moral principles) and moral modeling (witnessing them lived out). The harmony between teachers' words and deeds thus builds the credibility necessary for students to internalize moral values. The relational nature of PAK teaching—rooted in love (*agape*) and care—supports Kohlberg's (1981) moral development theory, which states that social interactions and moral reasoning are fostered through dialogue with authority.

figures perceived as fair and trustworthy. When teachers engage in compassionate correction rather than punitive discipline, students are more likely to advance from obedience-based morality (conventional level) toward principled morality (post-conventional level). Beyond psychological and pedagogical frameworks, teacher personality competence holds a spiritual significance in Christian education. A PAK teacher's moral integrity reflects their relationship with God and their obedience to biblical ethics. As stated in Philippians 2:15, believers are called to "shine like stars in the world," implying that teachers serve as lights within the moral darkness that often pervades adolescent culture. In this study, students often described their PAK teachers as "calm," "wise," and "understanding"-attributes that mirror the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23). Such personality traits not only maintain classroom discipline but also cultivate a spiritual climate conducive to moral reflection. The integration of faith and learning thus occurs not through didactic instruction alone but through the teacher's daily embodiment of grace, patience, and truth. This dynamic supports the findings, who emphasized that the teacher's personality competence functions as a "moral compass" that guides students beyond academic content into moral maturity. Her study in Dairi found that students were more motivated to behave ethically when teachers displayed calmness and emotional self-control during classroom conflicts. The present study mirrors that outcome, suggesting a consistent pattern across Christian educational settings in North Sumatra. Teacher training institutions should emphasize personality and spiritual formation alongside professional competence. Courses in Christian ethics, spiritual leadership, and emotional intelligence can strengthen the inner life of teachers, preparing them to teach with integrity and compassion. PAK teachers should be encouraged to engage in reflective self-assessment, asking how their attitudes and behaviors influence students' perceptions of moral truth. Reflection journals, mentoring groups, and prayer retreats can serve as tools for continuous moral growth. School administrators should integrate teacher personality development into professional evaluation systems. Rewarding ethical behavior and emotional maturity encourages a culture where moral modeling becomes an institutional value, not just an individual practice. PAK curricula should explicitly connect moral lessons with teachers' lived experiences. For example, teachers could share personal stories of faith and struggle, showing students that moral growth is a lifelong journey sustained by grace. The relationship between teacher personality and moral education is not unique to Christianity; however, its theological grounding gives it a distinctive depth. In secular frameworks, moral education often emphasizes civic ethics or social responsibility, but in Christian Religious Education, morality is relational and covenantal-rooted in the relationship between humanity and God. Thus, personality competence cannot be reduced to psychological traits alone; it must be viewed as an outflow of spiritual maturity. Cross-cultural comparisons show similar findings. Studies in the Philippines (Garcia, 2022) and Korea (Lee, 2021) indicate that teacher empathy and integrity correlate strongly with students' moral and spiritual development. However, the distinctiveness of the Indonesian context-especially in public schools where religious diversity and secular policy coexist-creates unique challenges for PAK teachers. They must balance doctrinal fidelity with interreligious respect, modeling moral universality without losing Christian distinctiveness. At SMP N 001 Pasar Doloksanggul, this balance was achieved through teachers' inclusive moral language-emphasizing values like love, honesty, and responsibility that resonate across faiths while

still grounding them in biblical truth. This aligns with the moderation framework promoted by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, which encourages moral and religious harmony through education. The self-report nature of the questionnaire may introduce bias, as students might idealize their teachers. Additionally, the study focused on a single school, limiting generalizability. Future research could expand to multiple schools or employ qualitative interviews to explore how specific teacher behaviors influence moral decisions in students. Longitudinal studies could also examine whether sustained exposure to morally credible teachers results in long-term behavioral transformation. Integrating neuroscientific insights on moral reasoning and affective empathy may further enrich the understanding of how teacher personality interacts with student psychology. The findings affirm that teacher personality competence is both pedagogical and theological. In Genesis 18:19, God commends Abraham because he will "command his children to keep the way of the Lord." Similarly, Christian teachers are entrusted to guide students not merely by words but through embodied righteousness. Teaching, therefore, becomes a form of discipleship where the classroom is both a cognitive and moral formation space. By demonstrating patience, humility, and consistency, teachers mirror Christ's own pedagogy-teaching not only with authority but with compassion (Matthew 11:29). The power of such pedagogy lies not in charisma but in credibility. As the data in this study clearly show, credibility born of moral integrity significantly shapes how students internalize and enact moral values. This research provides strong empirical evidence that the moral influence of PAK teachers at SMP N 001 Pasar Doloksanggul derives primarily from their personality competence-their lived faith, emotional balance, and moral integrity. Students who experience such authentic teaching are more likely to grow into morally responsible, empathetic, and spiritually grounded individuals. The study thus underscores the inseparability of character and competence in Christian education: to teach morality effectively, one must first live it faithfully.

CONCLUSION

The present study has demonstrated that the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (PAK) and Character Education teachers plays a decisive role in shaping students' moral development at SMP Negeri 001 Pasar Doloksanggul. Through quantitative and interpretive analysis, it became clear that a teacher's personality-expressed in integrity, emotional stability, empathy, and responsibility-serves as both the foundation and the medium of moral formation. The correlation and regression results confirmed that personality competence not only correlates strongly with students' moral growth but also explains a significant portion of its variance. In other words, moral instruction achieves its transformative purpose most effectively when it is embodied by teachers whose character mirrors the values they teach. The findings affirm the enduring principle that teaching is a moral and spiritual vocation. Within Christian Religious Education, pedagogy cannot be divorced from personality. The teacher becomes a living testimony to the moral truths of Scripture, functioning as both an educator and a witness. As supported by biblical narratives such as 1 Timothy 4:12-"Set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity"-the effectiveness of moral teaching depends less on eloquence and more on authenticity. When students perceive coherence between a teacher's words and actions, moral values become credible,

desirable, and imitable. This study corroborates the social learning theory proposed by Bandura (1986), which posits that behavior is learned through observation and imitation of role models. In the moral sphere, this means that teachers' emotional self-control, fairness, and compassion form a "hidden curriculum" that profoundly shapes students' conscience and behavior. Similarly, Lickona's (1991) threefold framework of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action finds resonance here: teacher personality influences all three dimensions simultaneously. The intellectual component (moral knowing) is supported by the cognitive clarity of lessons; the emotional component (moral feeling) by the teacher's empathy; and the behavioral component (moral action) by consistent modeling. Theologically, this research reinforces the idea that Christian educators are called to embody the *Imago Christi*-the image of Christ in their vocation. Just as Jesus taught through compassion, patience, and moral consistency, PAK teachers are invited to reflect divine attributes in their daily pedagogical interactions. Their calmness during conflicts, fairness in assessment, and gentleness in correction all serve as microcosms of the gospel's moral power. Thus, moral development within the classroom becomes not only a pedagogical outcome but also a spiritual formation process that bridges faith and life. The findings also carry practical implications for educational policy and teacher development. Schools and educational institutions must prioritize personality and spiritual formation in teacher training curricula. Professionalism in Christian education should be measured not only by mastery of biblical content or teaching techniques but also by the depth of moral maturity and integrity exhibited by educators. Moreover, mentoring programs, reflective practices, and regular spiritual retreats could be integrated into the professional development system to nurture the inner life of teachers. This study also highlights the importance of the school environment as a moral ecosystem. When school leaders and fellow teachers collectively uphold integrity, respect, and compassion, they create a moral culture that reinforces students' ethical growth. Therefore, moral education must be viewed not as an isolated classroom initiative but as a whole-school endeavor, sustained by shared values and modeled behaviors. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The research was conducted in a single locus, which limits its generalizability across diverse educational settings. Future research should expand the sample and include qualitative observations or interviews to capture the deeper nuances of teacher-student moral interactions. Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine the lasting effects of teacher personality on students' moral trajectories over time. The findings of this study reaffirm that moral education is inseparable from moral embodiment. Christian Religious Education achieves its fullest purpose not through doctrinal instruction alone but through the visible witness of teachers who live out their faith in everyday contexts. The personality competence of PAK teachers-rooted in sincerity, integrity, and faith-serves as a transformative force that shapes not only students' moral behavior but also their spiritual identity. Therefore, cultivating teachers who are both professionally skilled and spiritually mature remains the central challenge and mission of Christian education in Indonesia today.

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