



Independence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Classroom Management and Conflict Resolution: Implementation of Personality Competence at SD Negeri 071054 Biouti

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ABSTRACT

The independence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers represents a key indicator in the implementation of personality competence, playing a vital role in classroom management and conflict resolution within the school environment. This study aims to identify and analyze the various forms of independence demonstrated by CRE teachers at SD Negeri 071054 Biouti, particularly in managing classrooms and addressing conflicts, while also evaluating the contribution of personality competence to the effectiveness of teachers in fostering a conducive learning atmosphere. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, the research gathered data through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving CRE teachers and other school stakeholders. The findings reveal that CRE teachers at SD Negeri 071054 Biouti exhibit a high level of independence in making pedagogical decisions, cultivating harmonious interpersonal relationships with students, and responding to conflicts with wisdom and constructive solutions. Such independence is shaped not only by teaching experience but also by a deep understanding of spiritual and moral values that undergird personality competence. The study concludes that the application of personality competence is crucial in shaping independent CRE teachers who can act as agents of reconciliation when faced with classroom challenges. These insights contribute significantly to the professional development of CRE teachers and serve as a valuable reference for formulating policies aimed at improving teacher quality grounded in Christian personality values.

Keywords: *teacher independence, personality competence, Christian religious education, classroom management, conflict resolution, elementary school*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of modern education, the role of teachers extends far beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. Teachers are increasingly recognized as character builders

and facilitators of healthy learning environments. For Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in particular, this responsibility is twofold: they must not only teach subject matter but also embody and transmit spiritual values. This dual responsibility necessitates the cultivation of personality competence, a dimension of teacher professionalism that includes moral integrity, exemplary behavior, responsibility, and the ability to respond wisely to social dynamics within the classroom and school environment (Uno, 2016). One tangible manifestation of personality competence is the independence of teachers in managing classrooms and resolving conflicts. Independence here does not suggest isolation from institutional frameworks but rather refers to the teacher's ability to exercise professional judgment, make ethical decisions, and create conditions that foster order, engagement, and justice without over-reliance on external authority (Sudjana, 2010). This independence becomes particularly significant for CRE teachers, whose daily practice often involves mediating not only academic but also moral and relational concerns among students.

Classroom management constitutes one of the most visible areas where teacher independence is enacted. A teacher who demonstrates independence is able to establish an orderly, enjoyable, and interactive classroom atmosphere while simultaneously nurturing students' holistic development. Such teachers display initiative in designing learning activities, applying pedagogical strategies, and maintaining discipline without excessive dependence on administrative directives (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). For CRE teachers, independence in classroom management has a unique dimension. It requires aligning classroom practices with Christian ethical values such as love, justice, and mutual respect. In practice, this might involve establishing democratic classroom rules, modeling respectful communication, and fostering an atmosphere where students feel safe to express themselves while respecting differences (Noddings, 2012). By demonstrating independence, the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 071054 Biouti exemplifies how personality competence is translated into pedagogical praxis, thereby enhancing the moral and social dimensions of education.

Another crucial domain in which teacher independence is tested is conflict resolution. Conflict is an inevitable part of school life, emerging from differences in opinion, competition, or interpersonal misunderstandings among students. Left unmanaged, conflict can disrupt the learning process and damage the school climate. Teachers, therefore, play a critical role as mediators and peacemakers (Deutsch, 2011). For CRE teachers, conflict resolution requires balancing objectivity with compassion. Independence in this area means that teachers are able to assess situations without favoritism, make decisions based on principles of fairness, and foster reconciliation among students. This often involves listening empathetically to all parties, encouraging dialogue, and guiding students to reflect on their actions from a moral and spiritual perspective (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). By doing so, CRE teachers serve not only as conflict managers but also as moral exemplars who demonstrate how Christian values of forgiveness and reconciliation can be applied in real-life situations.

SD Negeri 071054 Biouti provides a unique context for exploring the implementation of teacher independence and personality competence. Situated in a socially diverse

environment, the school is characterized by students with varied cultural, familial, and personal backgrounds. Such diversity often produces both opportunities for intercultural learning and challenges in terms of maintaining classroom harmony. The independence of the CRE teacher becomes indispensable. Without relying solely on administrative intervention, the teacher must design strategies that address both academic goals and relational harmony. This includes anticipating potential conflicts, embedding values of tolerance in daily instruction, and nurturing mutual respect among students. However, there has been little empirical research that specifically examines how CRE teachers in such environments embody personality competence through independent classroom management and conflict resolution. This research therefore aims to fill that gap. The primary purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the independence of CRE teachers in classroom management and conflict resolution at SD Negeri 071054 Biouti, with a focus on its connection to the implementation of personality competence. By examining these practices, the study seeks to highlight the ways in which independence is not merely a functional skill but also a moral orientation grounded in Christian educational philosophy. They are expected to contribute to educational theory and practice in several ways. First, it enriches the body of literature on teacher competence, particularly the underexplored area of personality competence in religious education. Second, it offers practical insights for policymakers and education stakeholders in designing teacher training programs that prioritize the integration of interpersonal, moral, and spiritual values alongside pedagogical skills (Lickona, 1991). Finally, it underscores the urgency of strengthening teacher independence as a means of equipping educators to handle the complex demands of diverse and dynamic school environments. The independence of CRE teachers in classroom management and conflict resolution is a vital expression of personality competence. At SD Negeri 071054 Biouti, this independence enables teachers to foster orderly, interactive, and value-driven learning environments while addressing conflicts with fairness and compassion. Such practices affirm the teacher's dual role as educator and moral leader, highlighting the inseparability of pedagogy and character in Christian Religious Education. This study also underscores that strengthening teacher independence is not only relevant but urgent in today's educational landscape. It provides a pathway for embedding Christian values into daily practice, thereby ensuring that religious education serves as a vehicle for both cognitive growth and moral transformation.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study method, chosen for its ability to provide an in-depth exploration of social phenomena and individual behaviors related to the independence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in classroom management and conflict resolution. A case study was deemed appropriate because it allows for a holistic and contextualized understanding of professional practices in a specific setting, in this case, SD Negeri 071054 Biouti (Creswell, 2018). The research subjects consisted of the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 071054 Biouti, with supporting informants that included the school principal, classroom teachers, and several students. Such a purposive sampling strategy was designed to capture multiple perspectives and to enhance the richness of the data (Patton, 2015). Data collection was conducted through

participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation enabled the researcher to directly observe teacher–student interactions, including strategies of classroom management and responses to emerging conflicts. In-depth interviews, conducted using semi-structured guides, provided deeper insights into teachers’ perceptions, experiences, and reflections regarding the challenges of teaching. Meanwhile, documentation—such as lesson plans (RPP), evaluation records, and school activity reports—was analyzed to complement and validate the findings. The data analysis followed a thematic approach, consisting of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques, comparing the consistency of findings obtained from interviews, observations, and document reviews. This process strengthened the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. The analysis was conducted in an integrative and descriptive-analytical manner, enabling exploration of the relationship between teacher independence and the dimensions of personality competence. The research was conducted over a period of three months, covering preparation, fieldwork, data analysis, and reporting. Ethical considerations were observed by informing all participants about the purpose of the research, obtaining informed consent prior to interviews, and maintaining the confidentiality of participants’ identities in the final report (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). By employing this methodological framework, the study aims to generate a valid and trustworthy portrayal of the independence of CRE teachers at SD Negeri 071054 Biouti, specifically in relation to classroom management and conflict resolution. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on teacher personality competence and its role in fostering effective and value-based education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research indicate that the independence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SD Negeri 071054 Biouti in managing classrooms and resolving conflicts represents a tangible manifestation of personality competence internalized in their attitudes, actions, and professional mindsets. Personality competence, understood as the embodiment of moral integrity, responsibility, consistency, and self-regulation, becomes central in ensuring that teaching does not merely transmit cognitive knowledge but also builds character and values among students (Tilaar, 2015; Arends, 2017). In this context, teacher independence emerges as a crucial dimension that reflects not only pedagogical capacity but also the maturity of personal and spiritual identity (Lickona, 2009). The independence of teachers was observed in several key aspects, namely: (1) pedagogical decision-making, (2) conflict resolution among students, (3) interpersonal relations, and (4) classroom climate management that supports effective learning. These aspects, when seen holistically, demonstrate that the independence of CRE teachers is inseparable from the implementation of personality competence as mandated by educational standards in Indonesia (Permendiknas No. 16/2007).

One of the clearest indicators of teacher independence is the capacity to make pedagogical decisions without overreliance on external directives. The CRE teacher at SD Negeri 071054 Biouti consistently demonstrated such independence in both lesson planning and instructional delivery. During interviews, the teacher stated that while curriculum guidelines serve as the foundation, lesson plans (RPP) are not followed mechanically. Instead, they are adapted to the social context of the students, the classroom dynamics, and Christian values relevant to learners' needs. This illustrates that the teacher has the courage to exercise creative improvisation, making contextually sensitive adjustments rather than depending solely on top-down instructions (Fullan, 2014). For example, when dealing with students from problematic family backgrounds, the teacher employed an empathetic and pastoral approach, rather than a purely academic or disciplinary one. This decision was not based on formal directives from the school principal but emerged from the teacher's personal conviction that the classroom should serve as a safe and nurturing space. Such decisions underscore that personality competence—particularly responsibility, empathy, and moral integrity—formed the guiding principles for professional independence (Noddings, 2013). The independence of pedagogical decision-making was evident in the teacher's readiness to experiment with contextual and adaptive strategies, such as reflective storytelling, value-based group discussions, and project-based activities that integrate biblical principles with everyday student experiences. This demonstrates a form of independence that goes beyond technical competence, highlighting a holistic orientation toward the students' well-being and moral growth.

Classroom Management Grounded in Ethics and Spirituality

Another significant finding concerns the ability of the CRE teacher to manage the classroom independently and effectively. Independence in this context does not imply isolation from institutional structures but rather the ability to create a positive learning environment without constant intervention from external authorities. Observations showed that the teacher consistently created a classroom climate marked by order, joy, and inclusivity. Instead of relying on rigid discipline or coercion, the teacher practiced dialogical communication and ethical role modeling, reflecting the essence of Christian pedagogy that emphasizes love, equality, and respect for human dignity (Palmer, 1998). Discipline in the classroom was maintained not through punishment but through consistency, fairness, and modeling of virtuous behavior. The teacher frequently reminded students of their shared responsibility to maintain harmony and respect. Moreover, the integration of Christian values into routine learning activities—such as reflective prayer, storytelling, and group discussions—helped students internalize the principles of respect and compassion. Such practices reveal that classroom management was not merely about maintaining order but about nurturing students' capacity for self-discipline and social responsibility. Independence, therefore, was expressed in the teacher's ability to align pedagogical strategies with spiritual and ethical commitments, strengthening the classroom as a space for holistic education (Lovat, Toomey, & Clement, 2010).

Conflict among students is an unavoidable reality in education. However, the manner in which teachers respond determines whether conflict becomes destructive or transformative. At SD Negeri 071054 Biuti, the CRE teacher exhibited an independent and transformative approach to conflict resolution. In one observed case, a disagreement between two students during group work escalated into open conflict. Rather than imposing punishment, the teacher facilitated a restorative dialogue, allowing each student to articulate their perspective. The teacher then guided the students toward finding a common solution, embedding the process with biblical values of reconciliation, forgiveness, and accountability. This approach reflects independence in conflict management, as the teacher did not rely on the principal or other staff for intervention. Instead, the teacher drew upon personal competence, spiritual values, and relational skills to handle the situation. Such independence is aligned with the concept of teachers as agents of peacebuilding and reconciliation within educational communities (Galtung, 2000; Lederach, 2003). By transforming conflict into a learning opportunity, the teacher also strengthened students' socio-emotional development. Students not only resolved their immediate problem but also learned broader lessons about empathy, mutual respect, and moral responsibility—key components of Christian education aimed at character formation (Hutchison, 2018).

Integration of Personality Competence in Professional Practice

The findings show that personality competence was not confined to abstract principles but was consistently translated into practical action. The CRE teacher demonstrated honesty, consistency, discipline, and responsibility in daily interactions. In addition, a high level of commitment to self-development was evident, as shown through active participation in teacher training, collegial discussions, and self-reflective practices. During interviews, the teacher emphasized that Christian spirituality served as a moral and spiritual anchor in professional life. Spirituality, in this sense, nurtured inner strength and resilience, enabling the teacher to act independently even under external pressure. This confirms the argument that teacher competence is not static but evolves as the product of spiritual growth, life experience, and ongoing professional reflection (Day & Gu, 2010). The independence of CRE teachers was also facilitated by a supportive school environment. The principal encouraged teachers to experiment with creative methods, provided space for pedagogical innovation, and applied a participatory supervision model. This environment enhanced teachers' confidence to take initiative without fear of failure or reprimand (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Collegial relationships among teachers created a cooperative culture, where ideas and experiences were openly shared. This peer support reinforced the teacher's sense of autonomy, enabling independence without isolation. The school environment, therefore, played a crucial role in creating conditions where personality competence could flourish in daily practice.

Teacher independence was found to be shaped by a combination of internal and external factors. Internal factors included intrinsic motivation rooted in a sense of vocational calling and regular spiritual reflection. For the CRE teacher, teaching was not merely a

profession but a spiritual mission to embody Christian values in the classroom. Life experiences, including personal struggles, also enhanced the teacher's capacity for empathy, resilience, and wise decision-making. External factors included institutional support, collegial relationships, and a relatively non-bureaucratic school culture. These external conditions encouraged teachers to exercise autonomy while still feeling connected to the school community. Together, these factors reveal that independence is not an isolated attribute but the outcome of continuous interaction between personal spirituality and institutional culture (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Another aspect of independence was the teacher's ability to respond adaptively to curricular reforms, such as the introduction of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. The CRE teacher demonstrated readiness to integrate project-based learning, cross-disciplinary approaches, and digital tools into instruction. Notably, this was achieved without waiting passively for formal training but by actively seeking alternative learning resources from online platforms, professional communities, and peer collaboration. This reflects a spirit of lifelong learning, where independence is not limited to decision-making but also encompasses proactive self-development. The teacher's adjustments further illustrate the ability to contextualize biblical values within students' everyday realities, making learning meaningful and transformative. Teacher independence significantly influenced both the cognitive and affective outcomes of students. In classrooms managed by independent teachers, students displayed higher levels of engagement, respect for rules, and emotional security. Observations showed that students were more open and trusting toward the CRE teacher than toward some other teachers, indicating that independence fostered trust-based relationships. Conflict resolution practices that emphasized restorative and reconciliatory approaches also contributed to students' character formation. Students learned not only how to resolve disputes but also how to practice forgiveness, accountability, and empathy—skills essential for living in pluralistic societies. Thus, teacher independence reinforced the role of CRE as both spiritual education and character formation (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008).

The Transformational Role of CRE Teachers as Peace Agents

A broader implication of independence is the transformation of the CRE teacher into an agent of peacebuilding within the school community. By mediating disputes, fostering dialogue, and embodying reconciliation, the teacher extended influence beyond the classroom into the wider school environment. This role aligns with the Christian vision of education, where teachers are called to become ambassadors of peace and justice (Knight, 2006). The independence of the CRE teacher thus contributed not only to classroom management but also to the broader cultivation of a peaceful and just educational culture. A key finding was the importance of spiritual reflection as the foundation for independence. The teacher regularly engaged in prayer, Bible reading, and reflective journaling, using these practices as a means of evaluating not only teaching performance but also spiritual integrity. Through reflection, challenges were reframed as opportunities for growth, while decisions were anchored in biblical wisdom rather than situational pressure. This practice strengthened resilience and consistency, ensuring that

independence was not merely pragmatic but deeply rooted in spiritual conviction. This highlights that true independence in Christian education cannot be divorced from spirituality. Without spiritual grounding, independence risks becoming arbitrary; with reflection, it becomes a coherent and meaningful expression of professional calling (Palmer, 1998). The findings demonstrate that the independence of CRE teachers at SD Negeri 071054 Biuti represents a concrete implementation of personality competence in daily practice. Independence was manifested in pedagogical decision-making, classroom management, conflict resolution, curriculum adaptation, and spiritual reflection. Both internal motivations and external supports shaped this independence, which in turn contributed significantly to student learning outcomes and the creation of a peaceful school culture. It thus underscores the urgent need to strengthen personality competence in teacher training and professional development programs, with a particular emphasis on spiritual reflection and autonomy. By doing so, CRE teachers can continue to act as educators, role models, and peace agents in increasingly diverse educational contexts.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the independence of Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers in managing classrooms and resolving conflicts at SD Negeri 071054 Biuti represents a concrete reflection of the implementation of deeply internalized personality competence. The PAK teacher demonstrated remarkable ability to make autonomous decisions, manage classroom dynamics through ethical approaches, and resolve conflicts in constructive ways grounded in Christian values. Such independence was not merely shaped by teaching experience but was also rooted in the internalization of spiritual and moral values that constitute the essence of personality competence. The findings reaffirm that personality competence is not merely an administrative attribute but rather a moral foundation that shapes integrity and steadfastness in the teaching profession. An independent teacher is one who stands firm in the principles of truth, takes initiative to create change, and demonstrates the courage to act upon moral convictions—even under pressure or within challenging circumstances. In the context of Christian Religious Education, teacher autonomy emerges as a tangible manifestation of a faith-based vocation, translated into professional actions that generate positive impact for both students and the wider school community. From an institutional perspective, it is imperative for schools to continually foster an environment that supports teacher autonomy through reflective supervision, ongoing professional development, and recognition of pedagogical creativity. Moreover, support from colleagues and school leadership serves to further strengthen the teacher's role as a key agent of character-based educational transformation. The results of this study make an important contribution to the field of education, particularly in reinforcing the paradigm that the success of education is not determined solely by the teacher's intellectual capacity, but even more profoundly by the quality of personality underpinning all professional actions. The implications of this research also highlight the necessity of integrating personality competence values into every stage of teacher professional development, ensuring that

independence becomes not only a goal to achieve but also an inherent characteristic embedded in every Christian educator.

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