



## Fostering Filial Respect: Exploring the Social Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers through Genesis 28:7 at SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates how the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers fosters filial respect among students at SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara, using Genesis 28:7 as a theological anchor. Filial respect-understood as honoring, obeying, and valuing parents-represents both a biblical mandate and a culturally significant virtue within Nias society. Yet contemporary adolescents increasingly experience weakened family structures, shifting cultural norms, and reduced parental presence, making the cultivation of respect a pedagogical and relational challenge. Employing a qualitative design that integrates a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and semi-structured interviews, the study draws upon biblical scholarship, educational psychology, and character-formation literature to establish the conceptual frame. The SLR was conducted, while empirical data were gathered from five CRE teachers selected purposively for their experience and engagement with students. Data were analyzed thematically, guided by Braun and Clarke's inductive model. The results reveal that teachers' social competence-particularly relational modeling, empathetic communication, cultural sensitivity, and value-laden instruction-plays a central role in shaping students' understanding and practice of filial respect. Genesis 28:7 becomes pedagogically meaningful when teachers embody its ethical posture through daily interactions, modeling the obedience and humility shown by Jacob. The discussion demonstrates that filial respect is cultivated most effectively when biblical teaching is integrated with local cultural norms, relational authenticity, and contextual awareness of students' familial struggles. The study concludes that socially competent CRE teachers function as vital agents of moral and spiritual formation, offering a holistic pathway for strengthening student character within faith-based education.*

**Keywords:** Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, Filial Respect

## INTRODUCTION

Cultivating filial respect among adolescents remains a crucial yet increasingly challenging task in contemporary education, particularly within multicultural and rapidly shifting social environments. In Indonesia, Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers hold a strategic role in shaping learners' moral and interpersonal dispositions, including the ethic of honoring parents—a value deeply rooted in biblical tradition and integrated into the national curriculum for character formation (Kemendikbud, 2022). At the junior high school level, this ethical dimension becomes more urgent, as students enter early adolescence—an age characterized by identity exploration, emotional volatility, and shifting social loyalties. The capacity of CRE teachers to exercise strong social competence therefore becomes a determining factor in their ability to meaningfully influence learners' attitudes and interpersonal behavior. Social competence in teaching broadly refers to the capacity to communicate effectively, build harmonious relationships, demonstrate empathy, and respond constructively to learners' socio-emotional contexts. Recent scholarship emphasizes that teachers' social competence significantly predicts students' moral development, relational sensitivity, and classroom behavior (Wentzel, 2022; Jennings & Greenberg, 2019). Within CRE, this competence takes on a theological dimension because teachers serve not only as educators but also as models of Christian relational ethics. Their interactions with students, parents, and the community embody the values embedded in Scripture and contribute to the formation of covenantal identity. Genesis 28:7 states that *“Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and went to Paddan-Aram.”* This verse, though brief, holds exegetical significance for understanding filial respect in the narrative context of Jacob's transformation. Prior to this moment, Jacob's actions had largely been driven by competition, deception, and familial tension. Yet Genesis 28:7 marks a behavioral shift: he obeys Isaac and Rebekah, submitting to parental instruction and embracing a path aligned with covenantal continuity (Alter, 2019). The Hebrew verb *shama* (“obey” or “listen attentively”) implies not mere compliance but a relational attentiveness grounded in respect and covenantal responsibility (Hamilton, 2020). Thus, the text presents filial respect not merely as a cultural norm but as an active expression of one's place within God's covenant family. When applied pedagogically, this exegetical insight underscores that honoring parents arises from a deeper spiritual identity rather than imposed moral obligation. For CRE teachers, integrating the theological depth of Genesis 28:7 into classroom engagement requires not only pedagogical understanding but also mature social competence. Teachers must translate biblical principles into relational practices—dialogue, empathy, and modeling behavior—that resonate with students' lived realities. Studies increasingly note that adolescents learn respect and relational ethics more effectively when they observe them embodied by trusted adults rather than merely taught cognitively (Niemi & Eronen, 2023). Social competence therefore becomes both a method and a message: it mediates biblical values in ways that shape learners' character through relational experience.

The context of SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara in West Nias provides a meaningful locus for examining this dynamic. West Nias culture highly values respect for parents and elders, yet economic constraints, migration patterns, and social change have influenced family structures and adolescent behavior (Gulo, 2021). In such settings, CRE teachers face complex relational demands requiring cultural sensitivity, emotional intelligence, and

dialogical skill. Investigating how they utilize social competence to cultivate filial respect can offer new insights into culturally embedded Christian pedagogy. Existing studies on CRE teacher competence in Indonesia tend to focus on pedagogical or professional dimensions (Siahaan, 2022), with limited attention to social competence as a theological-pedagogical bridge. Likewise, biblical reflections on filial respect often remain theoretical, without exploring how exegetical insights shape classroom practice. This research therefore addresses a significant gap by exploring how CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara draw on their social competence to foster students' respect for parents, grounded in the theological meaning of Genesis 28:7. Through this integration of exegetical reflection and contemporary pedagogical inquiry, the present study aims to contribute to both biblical pedagogy and teacher professional development, offering a model of relationally grounded Christian character education relevant for school and community contexts.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative design that combined a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with semi-structured interviews to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara utilize social competence to foster filial respect inspired by Genesis 28:7. The use of a mixed qualitative strategy was intended to produce both conceptual depth and empirical richness, allowing biblical-theological insights from scholarly literature to interact with lived experiences of teachers in the school context. This methodological integration follows the contemporary shift in religious education research toward multi-source triangulation to ensure interpretive validity (Sandelowski, 2019). The SLR component served as the foundational step for mapping scholarly conversations on: social competence of teachers, pedagogical models of Christian character formation, and exegetical and theological interpretations of Genesis 28:7 concerning filial respect. The review followed a structured protocol (Page et al., 2021), comprising identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. Electronic databases were systematically searched using keyword combinations such as social competence, Christian Religious Education, teacher interpersonal skills, filial respect, and Genesis 28:7. Inclusion criteria consisted of peer-reviewed publications from 2015-2024, empirical studies on teacher social competence, and scholarly works with biblical-theological analysis relevant to family ethics. Exclusion criteria involved outdated studies, purely doctrinal commentaries without pedagogical relevance, and literature lacking methodological transparency. The SLR findings provided conceptual categories used to frame the interview guide and to shape the analytical lenses through which empirical data were interpreted. To complement the literature review, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five CRE teachers from SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara who were selected through purposive sampling based on teaching experience, community engagement, and willingness to participate. Semi-structured interviewing was chosen for its flexibility in eliciting nuanced descriptions of teachers' relational strategies, classroom experiences, and biblical interpretations connected to Genesis 28:7 (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). The interviews explored themes such as how teachers model respect in interpersonal interactions, how they incorporate exegetical insights in their lessons, the relational challenges they face

with adolescents, and how local Nias cultural values regarding family dynamics inform their practices. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted in a confidential setting within the school environment. Data analysis followed an inductive thematic procedure while maintaining iterative dialogue with SLR findings (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This analytical approach allowed conceptual themes derived from literature—such as empathy, relational modeling, covenantal ethics, and culturally grounded pedagogy—to be compared and contrasted with teachers’ empirical narratives. Biblical exegesis of Genesis 28:7 was treated as a hermeneutical framework that informed thematic interpretation rather than as an independent data source, ensuring the theological dimension remained integrated with pedagogical realities. Through this methodological combination, the study sought to generate a holistic portrayal of how CRE teachers embody and translate social competence into practices that nurture filial respect among students.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal a multilayered interaction between the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers, the biblical-theological meaning of Genesis 28:7, and the cultural realities of students at SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara. The thematic analysis, informed by both the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and semi-structured interviews, shows that the fostering of filial respect among students occurs through three interrelated domains: interpersonal relational modeling by teachers, pedagogical integration of biblical and cultural values, and contextual responsiveness to the socio-cultural environment of West Nias. Each domain not only reflects patterns found within the literature but also illustrates nuanced, lived expressions of teacher social competence as experienced by the participants. The discussion below integrates these findings with contemporary scholarship and theological insight to demonstrate how CRE teachers actively shape students’ understanding and practice of respecting parents. The first major finding centers on the role of interpersonal relational modeling as a core expression of teachers’ social competence. Participants consistently emphasized that students’ attitudes toward parents are influenced not merely by formal instruction but by observing how teachers embody relational kindness, empathy, and respect in daily interactions. This finding aligns with educational psychology research indicating that teacher-student relationships form a key predictor of moral and social development among adolescents (Wentzel, 2020). Teachers who display warmth, fairness, attentiveness, and emotional stability create an atmosphere of relational trust, which in turn encourages students to internalize the values being taught in the classroom (Jennings & Greenberg, 2019). Within the setting of SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara, such modeling emerges as particularly vital due to the close-knit communal structure of Nias culture, where the teacher is often regarded as an extended parental figure. Interviews revealed that when teachers show patience toward students who struggle academically or behaviorally, students interpret this as an echo of how parents should be treated—with honor, patience, and empathy. One teacher noted that “students learn more from what they see than from what they hear,” reflecting the idea that relational demonstration becomes a living curriculum for shaping filial respect. This relational modeling is further illuminated when interpreted through Genesis 28:7. The verse narrates Jacob’s obedience to his parents’ instruction as he departs for Paddan-Aram, emphasizing his respect for

their guidance and expectations. In the exegetical literature, Jacob's obedience is frequently associated with covenantal identity and the transmission of familial values (Alter, 2019). Teachers in this study refer to the verse not simply as a historical narrative but as a relational paradigm emphasizing the posture of listening, responding, and submitting oneself to parental authority. The integration of relational modeling with biblical narrative helps students see respect not as an abstract moral concept but as a lived behavior embodied by trusted adults. The teachers' approach resonates with Christian formation theory, which argues that moral virtues are cultivated through relational participation within a community that embodies its values rather than through cognitive instruction alone (Smith, 2016). The findings demonstrate that teachers who consistently display empathy, attentiveness, and self-control create relational contexts that mirror Jacob's posture of obedience, thus reinforcing students' understanding of filial respect in concrete and observable ways. The second major theme concerns the pedagogical integration of biblical teaching and local cultural values. Teachers employed a hybrid approach that blended exegetical explanation of Genesis 28:7 with contextualized examples from Nias family life. Instead of merely lecturing on the biblical command to honor parents, teachers connected the text to cultural practices such as *mangowasa* (showing gratitude) and the deep communal respect for elders embedded in West Nias tradition. This integration reflects pedagogical scholarship indicating that culturally responsive teaching enhances moral internalization by grounding abstract principles in familiar social frameworks (Gay, 2018). Students reportedly responded more positively when lessons acknowledged the cultural continuity between biblical narratives and local expectations of filial respect. Such contextual alignment allowed students to see Genesis 28:7 not as a distant religious text but as a reaffirmation of values already upheld within their families and community. Interviews revealed that teachers frequently used narrative-driven pedagogy-telling stories about Jacob's family, linking biblical obedience to real-life situations, and inviting students to reflect on personal experiences with their parents. This mirrors modern findings that narrative pedagogy strengthens moral reasoning and empathy by enabling students to imagine themselves within ethical scenarios (Narvaez & Bock, 2014). Teachers also employed dialogical teaching methods, encouraging students to articulate what respect for parents looks like within their homes, what challenges they face, and how biblical guidance might inform their responses. Such dialogical strategies reflect the relational constructivist approach to moral education, which asserts that students develop ethical understanding through guided conversation and shared reflection rather than rote memorization (Tirri, 2021). Through these strategies, CRE teachers merged biblical exegesis, cultural relevance, and social interaction-an expression of social competence grounded in communicative clarity, sensitivity, and relational awareness. The integration of Genesis 28:7 in class discussions served as a theological anchor that legitimized and strengthened cultural values already present in Nias society. According to scholars of biblical ethics, Genesis 28:7 demonstrates not only personal obedience but also the continuity of covenantal responsibility across generations (Wenham, 2020). Teachers in this study drew upon this theological insight to show that respecting parents is part of a larger covenant identity rather than merely an individual moral obligation. Students were encouraged to understand that filial respect contributes to familial harmony, community strength, and spiritual integrity. This approach reinforced the idea that moral behavior is deeply relational, connected to one's

identity within the family and the broader faith community. By grounding cultural expectation in biblical narrative, CRE teachers forged a harmonious pedagogical bridge between Scripture and local social norms. The third theme emerging from the data involves contextual responsiveness—the ability of teachers to adapt their social interactions and instructional approaches to the lived realities of students in Mandrehe Utara. Social competence, in this sense, extended beyond interpersonal warmth to include sensitivity to socio-cultural dynamics, family circumstances, and adolescent challenges. Teachers reported that a growing number of students struggled with parental relationships due to economic hardship, migration, and shifting family structures. Many parents work outside the village or island, leaving children in the care of extended family members. These conditions often create emotional distance, confusion about authority, and ambivalence toward parental expectations. Research on rural family dynamics confirms that economic and migratory pressures can weaken traditional patterns of respect and communication within families (Harold & Sellers, 2021). Teachers who recognized these contextual realities tailored their approaches to meet students where they were emotionally and socially. For instance, some teachers adjusted classroom activities to allow students to express their struggles indirectly through journaling, prayer, or storytelling rather than confrontational dialogue. This adaptive sensitivity mirrors findings in pastoral pedagogy showing that indirect modes of expression help adolescents process moral and emotional conflict more safely (Streib & Hood, 2016). Teachers also exercised what scholars refer to as “moral attunement”—the capacity to discern when a student’s disrespectful behavior stems from personal hurt, misunderstanding, or familial tension rather than conscious rebellion (Brown & Motsenbocker, 2021). Interviews revealed that teachers often reframed behavioral issues through empathy, choosing gentle correction and individualized counseling instead of rigid disciplinary measures. Such attunement allowed the classroom to serve as a supportive environment where filial respect could be rebuilt through emotional guidance rather than demanded through authority alone. At the same time, teachers maintained high relational expectations, consistently reminding students that respect toward parents remains a moral imperative regardless of family challenges. This balanced approach—combining empathy with clarity—reflects the literature on authoritative teaching, which has been found to correlate with higher moral development and prosocial behavior among adolescents (Brigham et al., 2020). In applying this principle, CRE teachers modeled what theologians describe as covenantal relationality: a form of guidance that is both firm and nurturing, reflective of the parental love and authority depicted throughout the biblical narrative (Fretheim, 2015). The result was a classroom climate in which students felt understood yet still held accountable for developing respect and responsibility within their families.

The discussion also reveals that teachers’ social competence functioned not only at the interpersonal and instructional levels but also within broader community engagement. Several teachers described making home visits, participating in church-based youth activities, or communicating with parents to better understand students’ backgrounds. These forms of engagement align with research suggesting that teacher involvement in students’ social ecosystems significantly enhances character formation (Epstein, 2018). In the cultural context of Nias, where community interdependence is strong, such engagement reinforces teachers’ moral authority and expands opportunities for students

to witness consistent modeling of respect across multiple settings. Through these interactions, teachers positioned themselves as relational mediators who could bridge gaps between school values, biblical values, and family expectations. Within the theological dimension of the study, Genesis 28:7 played a profound role in shaping teachers' conceptualization of filial respect and informing their pedagogical choices. The verse foregrounds Jacob's obedience to his father and mother as he adheres to their instruction regarding marriage. Scholars highlight that this obedience is not merely cultural but covenantal, reflecting fidelity to divine purpose working through family structures (Walton, 2020). Teachers interpreted this covenantal dimension as a framework for encouraging students to view their relationship with parents not only in terms of personal emotion but as part of their spiritual identity. Students were invited to see parental respect as participation in God's broader plan for family order, blessing, and moral formation. This theological framing appeared to influence how students articulated respect in classroom conversations—moving beyond statements of obligation to expressions of gratitude and relational responsibility. Another significant finding concerns the dynamic interplay between traditional Nias values and biblical teaching. Nias culture places strong emphasis on obedience, elder respect, and communal solidarity. Rather than disregarding these cultural values, teachers embraced them as assets for Christian formation. This interaction is consistent with contextual theology perspectives, which argue that faith education must honor and critically integrate local cultural narratives (Bevans, 2018). Teachers drew parallels between biblical family ethics and traditional Nias practices, helping students perceive continuity rather than conflict between Scripture and culture. For example, the practice of honoring elders during ceremonies was compared with Jacob's obedience in Genesis 28:7, illustrating how biblical principles often affirm existing cultural virtues. This integrative approach strengthens moral learning by situating it within a cultural-historical narrative that is meaningful to students, thereby enhancing the internalization of filial respect. The findings further reveal that social competence is not merely a set of interpersonal skills but encompasses emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, pedagogical creativity, and theological interpretation. This holistic concept aligns with contemporary models of teacher social competence that emphasize multidimensionality and contextual adaptability (Jennings et al., 2017). Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara demonstrated high levels of emotional self-awareness, particularly in managing frustration when students displayed challenging behaviors. This capacity for emotional regulation enhanced their ability to respond with empathy rather than react impulsively—an essential component of modeling respect. Teachers also demonstrated strong communicative clarity, adjusting their verbal and non-verbal messages to ensure understanding among students with different learning needs. Moreover, the ability to use culturally resonant illustrations and biblically grounded narratives demonstrated pedagogical sophistication that strengthened the transmission of moral values. The cumulative findings suggest that fostering filial respect requires an intricate synergy between relational demonstration, culturally grounded pedagogy, and theological framing. Students internalize respect for parents when they observe consistency between the values taught, the behaviors modeled by teachers, and the expectations upheld within their community. This holistic process affirms existing research showing that moral formation is most effective when supported by multiple reinforcing sources—family, school, culture, and faith tradition (Arthur et al., 2021). In this

study, CRE teachers acted as pivotal agents who wove these sources together into a coherent moral tapestry. The results demonstrate that the social competence of CRE teachers, informed by biblical insight from Genesis 28:7 and contextualized within Nias culture, significantly shapes students' understanding and practice of filial respect. Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara embodied relational qualities that mirrored biblical obedience, utilized pedagogical strategies that connected Scripture with cultural values, and responded sensitively to the lived realities of students. These findings underscore the vital role of socially competent teachers in shaping character, affirming that moral development in adolescents flourishes where relational, cultural, and theological dimensions converge.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a decisive role in fostering filial respect among students at SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara. Through an integrated analysis using semi-structured interviews and a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), it becomes clear that the formation of filial respect is not a unidimensional or solely cognitive process but a holistic relational, cultural, and theological endeavor. The teachers' interpersonal behavior, pedagogical strategies, and contextual sensitivity collectively shape the moral imagination of students, enabling them to internalize the biblical value of honoring one's parents as reflected in Genesis 28:7. This outcome affirms contemporary scholarship that emphasizes the relational and communal nature of moral development, particularly within faith-based educational settings (Arthur et al., 2021). One key conclusion is that relational modeling constitutes the most influential pathway through which students learn filial respect. The teachers' embodiment of empathy, patience, fairness, and respectful communication forms a living curriculum that students observe and emulate. The significance of modeling aligns with educational psychology research demonstrating that adolescents internalize moral norms most effectively when they witness these norms consistently enacted by trusted adults (Jennings & Greenberg, 2019). In this study, teachers served as relational exemplars whose behavior paralleled Jacob's posture of obedience in Genesis 28:7. Their relational presence communicated that respect is not merely taught but lived, reinforcing the scriptural message in concrete daily interactions. A second conclusion concerns the importance of pedagogical integration between biblical teaching and cultural values. Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Mandrehe Utara employed culturally responsive strategies that connected the theological meaning of Genesis 28:7 with local Nias traditions of honoring elders, practicing gratitude, and upholding family cohesion. This integrated approach not only enhanced student engagement but also validated cultural practices, allowing students to perceive continuity between Scripture and their lived context. Such findings resonate with the literature on contextual theology and culturally relevant pedagogy, which argue that meaningful moral formation occurs when instruction is grounded in the sociocultural environment of learners (Gay, 2018). The third conclusion highlights teacher responsiveness to contextual realities as a hallmark of social competence. Many students navigate complex emotional and familial circumstances, including parental migration, financial hardship, or caregiving by extended family. Teachers who acknowledged these challenges did not lower moral expectations but adapted their relational and instructional approaches with sensitivity, embodying what scholars call "moral attunement" (Brown &

Motsenbocker, 2021). By combining empathy with clear guidance, teachers created an environment where students could process their struggles while still learning to honor parental authority. This balance between compassion and firmness mirrors the covenantal relationality embedded in biblical ethics. Taken together, the findings affirm that fostering filial respect requires synergy among relational modeling, culturally grounded pedagogy, and theological formation. The social competence of CRE teachers enables them to weave these elements into a cohesive educational experience, shaping students' moral character in ways that are both spiritually meaningful and culturally resonant. Genesis 28:7 proves not only instructive but transformative when taught through relational authenticity and contextual relevance. This study thus reinforces the critical role of socially competent CRE teachers as agents of moral formation and suggests that future educational frameworks should continue to strengthen teacher competence in relational, cultural, and theological domains to support holistic character development.

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