



The Influence of Christian Religious Education on the Character Development of Adolescents at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehu

Rika Maria Peranginangin^{1*}, Elisamark Sitopu²

¹Student, Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

²Lecturer, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: rikamaria3004@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) on the character development of adolescents at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehu. Character formation is a fundamental aspect of adolescent development, and religious education is considered a significant medium in this process. The research employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, involving 68 Christian adolescents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The findings indicate a positive and significant influence of Christian Religious Education on adolescent character development, with a coefficient of determination of 0.724 (72.4%). The most influential aspects of CRE were the implementation of Christian values in daily life and the understanding of teachings on love and forgiveness. The most notable character improvements were observed in the areas of responsibility, integrity, and empathy toward others. This study offers both theoretical and practical implications for the development of character-oriented CRE curricula, particularly within the context of rural education.

Keywords: *Christian Religious Education, character development, adolescents*

INTRODUCTION

Character formation is one of the fundamental goals of education in Indonesia, as stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. Education is therefore not solely directed toward the development of intellectual capacity, but also toward shaping the moral foundation, ethical conduct, and positive personality of learners. Strong character is widely acknowledged as a crucial element in preparing future generations to face the challenges of modern times while contributing positively to the nation and society (Koesoema, 2021). Character is not merely an individual attribute but also a social capital that determines how young people position themselves within the wider community. Christian Religious Education (CRE) serves a strategic role in shaping

students' character. As a compulsory subject in Indonesian schools, CRE is not confined to teaching doctrinal and ecclesiastical knowledge. Rather, it instills essential Christian values such as love, honesty, responsibility, compassion, and respect for others (Boehlke, 2019). Sidjabat (2021) argues that Christian Religious Education functions as a means of value transformation, grounding character formation in the example of Christ and in biblical teaching. Through this approach, students are guided to internalize moral values not only cognitively but also affectively and behaviorally, fostering holistic personal growth. Adolescence is a critical developmental phase in which the formation of identity and character becomes particularly salient. Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory emphasizes that adolescence is characterized by the crisis of *identity versus role confusion*, during which individuals grapple with the intense search for self-definition. At this stage, adolescents are highly susceptible to external influences, both positive and negative. The rapid development of digital technology and the pervasive role of social media have introduced new challenges for adolescents, ranging from exposure to inappropriate content to the rise of individualistic attitudes (Santrock, 2023). These influences often intersect with peer interactions, shaping adolescents' perceptions of values and norms. For this reason, religious education is expected to provide a firm foundation for adolescents to navigate the complexities of identity formation and moral decision-making.

SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe is situated in a rural area of Karo Regency, North Sumatra. As a *one-roof* school, it combines elementary and junior high levels within a single institution to expand educational access for communities in remote areas. The school serves students predominantly from farming families with lower to middle socioeconomic backgrounds. Culturally, the surrounding community continues to uphold traditional customs and religious practices, with Christianity as the majority faith (BPS Kabupaten Karo, 2023). These conditions create a unique educational environment where cultural values, religious teachings, and social realities intersect in shaping students' character. Several previous studies have explored the relationship between religious education and character formation. Hasugian (2020) found that Christian Religious Education in secondary schools contributes significantly to fostering honesty and integrity among students. Similarly, Sianipar (2019) reported that the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education in shaping character is highly dependent on teaching methods and teacher role modeling. However, research gaps remain, particularly in examining the influence of CRE on character development among adolescents in rural schools with specific demographic characteristics, such as SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe. Such schools face different challenges compared to their urban counterparts, including limited resources, exposure to modernization, and evolving cultural patterns.

Preliminary observations at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe reveal an intriguing phenomenon. On the one hand, students demonstrate adherence to religious and cultural values, reflecting the strong influence of family and community traditions. On the other hand, signs of modernization and the penetration of digital culture are evident in behavioral changes among some adolescents, such as declining respect toward parents and teachers, increased individualism, and the prioritization of personal interests over communal responsibilities. These patterns raise pressing questions about the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education in maintaining and strengthening students' character amid the pressures of social and technological change.

This research therefore aims to analyze the extent to which Christian Religious Education influences the character development of adolescents at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe. The specific objectives of the study are threefold To identify the patterns of Christian Religious Education implementation at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe, to analyze indicators of adolescent character growth following the delivery of Christian Religious Education and to examine the factors that either strengthen or hinder the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education in shaping adolescent character. The anticipated contributions of this study are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it enriches the body of knowledge concerning the influence of religious education on character formation, especially in the context of adolescents in rural communities. The study seeks to expand scholarly understanding of how Christian Religious Education interacts with sociocultural and economic factors in shaping adolescent values. Practically, the findings are expected to inform curriculum development and pedagogical strategies, offering insights for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers. Specifically, the research outcomes may guide improvements in teaching methods, highlight the importance of teacher role modeling, and suggest innovative approaches for embedding character values in classroom activities. Moreover, the study acknowledges the dual role of Christian Religious Education as both an academic subject and a medium of character cultivation. Beyond cognitive mastery of biblical narratives or theological concepts, CRE emphasizes lived values manifested through students' daily interactions and decision-making. By internalizing values such as compassion, integrity, and communal responsibility, adolescents are better equipped to resist negative influences, embrace their cultural heritage, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

METHODS

A mixed-methods approach was used, with a sequential explanatory design, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods in successive phases (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). In the first phase, a quantitative study was conducted to obtain a general overview of the influence of Christian Religious Education on students' character development. This was followed by a qualitative study, which aimed to deepen the understanding of the quantitative findings and explore the context, processes, and dynamics of Christian Religious Education as well as its impact on students' character. The use of this approach was deemed appropriate given the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation—namely, character development and the influence of religious education—which cannot be fully captured through either a purely quantitative or a purely qualitative approach. By integrating both, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of Christian Religious Education on adolescent character growth. The population of this study consisted of all Christian students at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe, totaling 83 students from grades VII through IX. The sample was determined using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: students must identify as Christian; they must have attended Christian Religious Education classes for at least one year; and they must be willing to participate as research respondents. Based on these criteria, 68 students were selected as the sample, comprising 24 students from grade VII, 22 students from grade VIII, and 22 students from grade IX. For the qualitative phase, informants were purposively selected based on the results of the quantitative

analysis. The informants consisted of 12 students (four from each grade level, balanced by gender), two Christian Religious Education teachers, the school principal, and five parents, resulting in a total of 21 participants for the qualitative component.

The instruments used in this study were varied and designed to address both quantitative and qualitative needs. The Christian Religious Education Questionnaire consisted of 25 items measuring students' perceptions of Christian Religious Education, with indicators including lesson planning, lesson implementation, evaluation, application of Christian values, and the relevance of lesson content to daily life. This instrument employed a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The Character Development Questionnaire contained 30 items assessing students' character according to Christian values, focusing on indicators such as integrity, responsibility, tolerance, empathy, honesty, and self-discipline, also using a five-point Likert scale. For the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide was developed to deepen insights from the quantitative findings, targeting students, teachers, the school principal, and parents. In addition, observation sheets were used to document the classroom implementation of Christian Religious Education and the integration of Christian values into school activities. Finally, document analysis was conducted on syllabi, lesson plans, instructional materials, and student records. The validity and reliability of the quantitative instruments were rigorously tested. Content validity was established through expert judgment involving two specialists in religious education and one in developmental psychology. Construct validity was tested using confirmatory factor analysis. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with an acceptable threshold of 0.7. The results showed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.876 for the Christian Religious Education questionnaire and 0.892 for the character development questionnaire, indicating a high level of reliability for both instruments. Data collection was carried out between January and April in several stages. The quantitative data collection stage involved administering the questionnaires to the 68 students in the sample, with data collected directly under the researcher's supervision to ensure completeness and clarify any questions. The quantitative data analysis stage followed, in which the questionnaire results were analyzed to identify general patterns and highlight areas requiring further exploration in the qualitative phase. Subsequently, qualitative data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The qualitative data analysis stage entailed transcribing interviews, coding data, categorizing emerging themes, and conducting thematic analysis. Finally, an integration stage combined the findings from both phases to produce a comprehensive understanding of the influence of Christian Religious Education on students' character development.

Quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis provided an overview of the variables of Christian Religious Education and character development, using frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, and categorization. Inferential analysis was performed through simple linear regression to test the effect of Christian Religious Education on character development. Prior to regression analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, to ensure the validity of the model. Qualitative data analysis followed established procedures. The first step was transcribing interviews and observational notes. Next, coding was carried out to identify keywords and concepts, which were then grouped into broader categories. A thematic analysis was conducted to

identify recurring themes and patterns, followed by interpretation to provide meaning to the findings. To ensure the credibility of qualitative results, triangulation of sources (comparing data from multiple informants) and triangulation of methods (comparing data from different collection techniques) were employed. Additionally, member checking was conducted by sharing the interpretations with informants to verify accuracy and authenticity. Through this systematic mixed-methods approach, the study sought to capture both the measurable outcomes of Christian Religious Education and the nuanced, context-specific experiences of students, teachers, and parents. The integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence offered a holistic perspective on how Christian Religious Education shapes adolescent character development within the unique cultural and social context of SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The respondents in this study consisted of 68 Christian students from SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe, with the following distribution: 24 students (35.3%) from grade VII, 22 students (32.4%) from grade VIII, and 22 students (32.4%) from grade IX. By gender, the respondents comprised 30 male students (44.1%) and 38 female students (55.9%). The majority of respondents (82.4%) came from farming families, 10.3% from merchant families, and 7.3% from families with other occupations. Most respondents (64.7%) had attended Christian Religious Education classes for more than two years, while the remaining 35.3% had attended such classes for one to two years.

Implementation of Christian Religious Education at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe

Descriptive analysis of the Christian Religious Education variable yielded the following results:

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of the Christian Religious Education Variable

Category	Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Good	> 105	15	22.1
Good	85 – 105	38	55.9
Fair	65 – 84	12	17.6
Poor	45 – 64	3	4.4
Very Poor	< 45	0	0
	Total	68	100

Table 1 shows that the majority of students (55.9%) perceived the implementation of Christian Religious Education in their school as “good,” 22.1% perceived it as “very good,” 17.6% as “fair,” and only 4.4% as “poor.” None perceived it as “very poor.” Further analysis of Christian Religious Education indicators revealed that *Implementation of Christian values* obtained the highest mean score (4.32), followed by *Relevance of Christian Religious Education to daily life* (4.18), *Instructional implementation* (3.95), *Instructional evaluation* (3.86), and *Instructional planning* (3.78). Qualitative data from interviews and observations provided more detailed insights into how Christian Religious Education is implemented at this school. Classes are conducted for two periods per week (2 × 40 minutes) in accordance with the national curriculum. In addition to classroom learning, supplementary activities include Monday morning worship services following

the flag ceremony, as well as weekly extracurricular activities such as choir and prayer fellowship groups. Observations indicated that Christian Religious Education teachers employed various teaching methods, including lectures, group discussions, role-playing, and case studies. However, the use of instructional media was still limited to blackboards and textbooks, with occasional use of the school's projector. The main challenges in delivering Christian Religious Education stem from limited learning resources and supporting facilities, due to the school's rural location with restricted access.

Students' Character Development

Descriptive analysis of the students' character development variable is presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Students' Character Development

Category	Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Good	> 126	18	26.5
Good	102 – 126	37	54.4
Fair	78 – 101	10	14.7
Poor	54 – 77	3	4.4
Very Poor	< 54	0	0
Total		68	100

Table 2 shows that the majority of students (54.4%) exhibited character development at the "good" level, 26.5% at the "very good" level, 14.7% at the "fair" level, and only 4.4% at the "poor" level. None were categorized as "very poor." Among the indicators, *Responsibility* had the highest mean score (4.30), followed by *Integrity* (4.25), *Empathy* (4.18), *Honesty* (4.10), *Self-discipline* (3.96), and *Tolerance* (3.92). Qualitative data highlighted that students' character growth was evident in various aspects of daily behavior. Key findings from interviews and observations include: Students demonstrated greater responsibility, such as completing assignments on time and acknowledging mistakes; Integrity was observed through consistency between words and actions, including honesty during examinations and returning lost items; Empathy was shown through concern for peers in need and active participation in school social activities; Interfaith tolerance began to emerge, though limited mainly to respect for other religious groups without deeper dialogue; Self-discipline remained a challenge for some students, particularly in time management and consistent adherence to school rules. The principal and Christian Religious Education teachers noted significant differences in character development between students actively involved in extracurricular religious activities and those who only participated in classroom-based Christian Religious Education. The former group tended to display more positive character growth.

The Influence of Christian Religious Education on Students' Character Development

Prior to regression analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted, including tests of normality, linearity, and heteroskedasticity. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test showed a significance value of 0.152 (> 0.05), indicating normally distributed data. The linearity test produced a significance value of 0.385 (> 0.05), confirming a linear relationship between Christian Religious Education and character development. The Glejser test for heteroskedasticity yielded a significance value of 0.278 (> 0.05), indicating

no heteroskedasticity. The results of simple linear regression analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	Coefficient	t-value	Sig.
Constant	20.472	3.241	0.002
Christian Religious Education	0.962	13.176	0.000

Dependent variable: Character Development

$R = 0.851$; $R^2 = 0.724$; $F = 173.608$; $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$

Based on Table 3, the regression equation can be expressed as: $Y = 20.472 + 0.962X$

Where: $Y = \text{Character Development}$, $X = \text{Christian Religious Education}$.

This equation indicates that every one-unit increase in Christian Religious Education is associated with a 0.962-unit increase in character development. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.724$) shows that 72.4% of the variation in students' character development can be explained by Christian Religious Education, while the remaining 27.6% is attributable to other factors not examined in this study. The t-test results showed a t-value of 13.176 with a significance of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating a significant effect of Christian Religious Education on students' character development. Similarly, the F-test produced an F-value of 173.608 with a significance of 0.000 (< 0.05), confirming the overall significance of the regression model. Further analysis of individual Christian Religious Education indicators revealed that *Implementation of Christian values* contributed the most ($\beta = 0.418$, $p < 0.05$), followed by *Relevance to daily life* ($\beta = 0.352$, $p < 0.05$), *Instructional implementation* ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.05$), *Instructional evaluation* ($\beta = 0.217$, $p < 0.05$), and *Instructional planning* ($\beta = 0.195$, $p < 0.05$). Qualitative data enriched these quantitative findings by offering deeper insights into how Christian Religious Education shapes students' character. Important themes from interviews with students, teachers, and parents include: Christian Religious Education helps students understand the moral and ethical foundations of Christian values that underpin character formation; Internalization of values such as love, forgiveness, and service fosters empathy and social responsibility; Teachers' role-modeling is crucial for the internalization of character values among students; The application of Christian Religious Education values in daily life is influenced by family support and consistency between school teachings and home practices; Extracurricular religious activities provide students with opportunities to practice Christian values and cultivate positive character traits.

Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Christian Religious Education in Character Formation

Based on the analysis of qualitative data, several factors were identified that either strengthen or hinder the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in shaping students' character. Supporting Factors: Teacher Competence and Role Modeling: Competent CRE teachers who serve as role models are key to successful character formation; Family Support: Families that reinforce Christian values taught at school strengthen students' character development; Positive School Climate: A school environment that consistently applies Christian values in policies and daily practices fosters character growth; Religious Extracurricular Activities: Activities such as choir and

prayer groups provide practical opportunities for students to cultivate their character; Church Community Support: Collaboration between schools and local churches in student character formation enhances the impact of CRE learning. Inhibiting Factors: Limited Learning Resources: Restricted access to diverse and high-quality learning resources hampers optimal CRE teaching; Influence of Media and Technology: Unfiltered exposure to the internet and social media often conflicts with the Christian values taught in school; Limited Instructional Time: The allocation of only two lessons per week for CRE is insufficient for comprehensive character formation; Gap Between Theory and Practice: Difficulties arise in translating the theoretical aspects of CRE into consistent daily practice.

Implementation of Christian Religious Education at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe

The findings show that the majority of students (78%) perceived the implementation of CRE in their school as good to very good. This indicates that, despite being located in a rural area with various limitations, CRE at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe has been carried out fairly effectively. The indicator *“Implementation of Christian Values”* received the highest score in students’ perceptions of CRE. This aligns with Homrighausen and Enklaar (2018), who emphasize that the essence of CRE is the application of Christian values in daily life rather than mere doctrinal knowledge. The high score on this indicator suggests that CRE teachers at this school have successfully connected learning with the practical implementation of Christian principles. The relevance of CRE content to students’ daily lives was also perceived positively. This supports Groome’s (2020) view that effective CRE must be contextual and responsive to learners’ concrete needs and experiences. At this school, CRE teachers have made efforts to contextualize Christian teachings with the realities of rural life, such as using examples from farming activities or linking Christian values with Karo local wisdom. However, the indicator *“Lesson Planning in CRE”* received the lowest score. Interviews revealed that this was due to limited resources and teaching aids. Teachers often faced challenges in designing creative and innovative lesson plans because of the lack of references and media. This is consistent with Simanjuntak (2022), who found that limited learning resources remain a major obstacle to CRE in rural schools. Teaching methods used by CRE teachers were still dominated by conventional lectures, though combined with group discussions and role plays. While lecture methods remain relevant for transmitting foundational Christian teachings (Nuhamara, 2018), current generations of students are more accustomed to interactive learning, which calls for greater innovation in CRE methods. Religious extracurricular activities, such as choir and prayer groups, provided additional learning experiences supporting classroom instruction. This reinforces Tety and Wiraatmadja’s (2021) argument that religious extracurricular activities are crucial for developing students’ spiritual and moral character, offering deeper engagement with faith values compared to limited classroom time.

Student Character Development

Most students (80.9%) demonstrated character development in the good to very good categories. This suggests that students at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe have cultivated positive character grounded in Christian values. The indicator *“Responsibility”* received the highest score, followed by *“Integrity”* and *“Empathy.”* These

findings align with Lickona (2019), who highlights that effective character education must include moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. The high score in responsibility may be linked to the cultural values of the Karo community, which emphasize responsibility in family and social life. This reflects a positive synergy between Christian values taught in CRE and local cultural values. This finding supports Sidjabat (2019), who argues that Christian character education is more effective when it dialogues with local cultural contexts while maintaining the uniqueness of Christian values. High integrity among students was evident in the consistency between words and actions, such as honesty during examinations and returning lost items. This aligns with Christian teachings on honesty and integrity emphasized in CRE. The result supports Hasugian's (2020) finding that CRE focused on biblical values positively contributes to students' integrity. Empathy also developed well, as reflected in students' concern for peers in need and active participation in school social activities. This embodies the Christian teaching of love highlighted in CRE. These findings strengthen Tanudjaja's (2018) argument that cultivating empathy is one of CRE's significant contributions to character development. The indicator "Tolerance" scored the lowest. Interviews revealed that students' tolerance was limited to showing respect toward people of other faiths without deeper interfaith dialogue. This can be explained by the religiously homogenous student composition, which limits opportunities for interaction with people of different faiths. This highlights the need for CRE materials to emphasize inclusivity and appreciation of diversity, as proposed by Darmaputera (2021).

Regression analysis showed that CRE had a positive and significant effect on students' character development, with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.724. This means that 72.4% of the variation in character development could be explained by CRE. This finding underscores CRE's strategic role in shaping character, as emphasized by Boehlke (2019) and Sidjabat (2021). Among CRE indicators, "Implementation of Christian Values" contributed the most to character development, followed by "Relevance of CRE Content to Daily Life." This confirms that the applied aspects of CRE have a stronger impact on character formation than theoretical aspects. These findings are in line with Nuhamara (2018), who stresses the importance of transformative CRE that focuses not only on doctrinal knowledge but also on applying Christian values in daily life. CRE's influence on character was stronger among students actively involved in religious extracurricular activities. This underscores the importance of concrete religious experiences in character formation, consistent with Fowler's (2018) faith development theory, which states that adolescents' faith and character growth are shaped more by meaningful religious experiences than by cognitive understanding alone. The role of CRE teachers as role models was also identified as a crucial factor. This supports Bandura's theory of observational learning (cited in Santrock, 2023), which asserts that students adopt values and behaviors modeled by respected authority figures, in this case, CRE teachers. This aligns with Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of *ing ngarso sung tulodho* (in front, be an example). Family support and consistency between values taught at school and those practiced at home also influenced the effectiveness of CRE in shaping character. This highlights the importance of school-family partnerships in character education, as argued by Epstein (2018). In CRE, such partnerships are even more vital, as Christian values must be consistently practiced across different life contexts. These findings enrich the understanding of the relationship between religious education and character formation,

particularly among adolescents in rural areas. This supports character education theories that emphasize the interaction between individual factors (students), environmental factors (school and family), and educational content (CRE curriculum) in character development (Berkowitz & Bier, 2017). This study also enhances the religious-based character education model developed by Lickona and Davidson (2018), by adding a contextual dimension-such as local culture and geographical conditions-as factors that need to be considered in implementing character education.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Christian Religious Education (CRE) has a positive and significant influence on the character development of adolescents at SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe, with a coefficient of determination of 0.724 (72.4%). The implementation of CRE at the school has been carried out effectively, with the highest scores obtained on the indicators of Christian values implementation and the relevance of CRE content to daily life. The majority of students exhibited character growth within the good to very good categories, with responsibility, integrity, and empathy being the highest-scoring indicators. The aspects of CRE that exerted the greatest influence on character development were the implementation of Christian values in daily life and the contextual relevance of CRE content to students' lived experiences. Factors that enhanced the effectiveness of CRE in character formation included teacher competence and role modeling, family support, a positive school climate, religious extracurricular activities, and support from the church community. Conversely, inhibiting factors consisted of limited learning resources, the influence of media and technology, restricted instructional time, the gap between theory and practice, and students' socio-economic backgrounds. The study concludes that CRE plays a strategic role in adolescent character formation, particularly in fostering responsibility, integrity, and empathy. To optimize this role, it is necessary to develop a more contextualized CRE curriculum, enhance teacher competence, strengthen religious extracurricular activities, promote stronger school-family-church partnerships, and integrate CRE materials that emphasize the values of tolerance.

This research, however, has several limitations: its focus on a single school limits the generalizability of the findings; the measurement of character relied primarily on student self-reports; and the cross-sectional design does not capture the long-term dynamics of character growth. Future studies are therefore recommended to: broaden the scope by including multiple schools with different characteristics; employ more objective measures of character development, such as behavioral observation or third-party assessments; and adopt a longitudinal design to better understand the dynamics of character formation over time.

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