



## Mastering Christian Ethics Through the Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Hibala

Suka Damai Duha

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

\*correspondence: [sukadamaiduha49@gmail.com](mailto:sukadamaiduha49@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*The competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers is a pivotal factor in fostering students' understanding and application of Christian ethics. This study investigates how CRE teacher competence influences ethical instruction at SMA Negeri 1 Hibala, with particular reference to Exodus 30:10. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, relevant literature on teacher competence, pedagogical strategies, and ethical education was analyzed to synthesize insights applicable to the Indonesian secondary school context. The population considered includes 110 students enrolled in the CRE program, providing a practical framework for contextualizing the findings. The study identifies three key dimensions of CRE teacher competence: theological knowledge, pedagogical skill, and ethical embodiment. Theological knowledge enables accurate interpretation of biblical texts and ethical principles, pedagogical skill facilitates engaging and reflective learning experiences, and ethical embodiment ensures that teachers model the Christian values they teach. Effective integration of these competencies promotes students' moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, and practical application of Christian principles. Pedagogical strategies such as group discussions, reflective journaling, scenario analysis, and service-based projects were found to enhance students' ethical engagement. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of contextualizing biblical teachings, particularly Exodus 30:10, to contemporary ethical challenges faced by students. Despite challenges such as resource limitations and diverse student backgrounds, competent CRE teachers demonstrate the ability to cultivate ethical literacy and spiritual maturity in their students. This study highlights that teacher competence is essential for effective ethical education, shaping students into morally responsible, spiritually aware, and socially engaged individuals. Strengthening CRE teacher competence is therefore a critical strategy for improving Christian ethical formation in secondary education.*

**Keywords:** *Christian Religious Education, Teacher Competence, Christian Ethics, Ethical Education, Exodus 30:10, Secondary School*

## INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral and ethical frameworks within the context of faith-based learning. In secondary education, teachers of CRE are not merely transmitters of biblical knowledge but are pivotal agents in guiding students toward the internalization of Christian ethics. The process of teaching ethics within Christian education requires a profound understanding of biblical principles, pedagogical competence, and the ability to contextualize ethical teachings in students' daily lives. Among these biblical foundations, Exodus 30:10, which emphasizes the consecration and dedication of offerings, provides a lens through which ethical and moral instruction can be framed, highlighting the importance of holiness, accountability, and obedience in students' ethical development. The competence of CRE teachers is therefore central to fostering students' ethical formation. Teacher competence encompasses a blend of professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, and spiritual maturity, which collectively influence how effectively educators convey ethical principles. Competent teachers are able to design learning experiences that not only transmit knowledge but also encourage critical reflection, moral reasoning, and practical application of Christian values. Research indicates that teacher competence directly affects students' moral development and learning engagement, underscoring the necessity of equipping CRE teachers with both theological insight and practical instructional strategies (Groome, 2011; Boehlke, 2010). In the Indonesian context, where public schools serve a diverse student population, integrating Christian ethics into the curriculum presents both opportunities and challenges. SMA Negeri 1 Hibala, as a public secondary school with a Christian education program, provides a unique setting for examining how CRE teachers operationalize their competence in teaching ethics. The school environment requires teachers to balance doctrinal fidelity with contextual sensitivity, ensuring that ethical teachings resonate with students' lived experiences while maintaining adherence to Christian principles. Moreover, the interplay between teacher competence and students' ethical engagement highlights the relational dimension of education, where the teacher's character, spirituality, and pedagogical approach profoundly influence students' moral learning outcomes. Several studies have highlighted the significance of teacher competence in promoting ethical education. Boehlke (2010) emphasizes that ethical instruction in Christian education must move beyond theoretical knowledge to practical embodiment, suggesting that students learn ethics most effectively through observation of teacher conduct and consistent modeling of Christian values. Similarly, Groome (2011) asserts that the teacher's role is transformational, requiring not only intellectual understanding of ethical precepts but also relational and spiritual investment in students' moral formation. In this sense, teacher competence becomes both a cognitive and affective attribute, where professional skills are inseparable from personal integrity and faithfulness to biblical teachings. Most research has focused on curriculum design, instructional strategies, or general pedagogical effectiveness, with insufficient attention to the nuanced ways in which CRE teachers' competence translates into ethical awareness and moral decision-making among students. This gap underscores the need for focused research that explores the intersection of teacher competence, biblical reflection, and ethical education, particularly in settings like SMA Negeri 1 Hibala where the cultivation of Christian values is integral to the school's educational mission. By examining how CRE

teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Hibala master and implement ethical instruction, this study seeks to illuminate the processes through which teacher competence influences students' moral formation. The research addresses key questions regarding the relationship between teacher preparedness, pedagogical strategies, and students' engagement with Christian ethics, using Exodus 30:10 as a theological and ethical reference point. Through this inquiry, the study contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical guidance for improving ethical education in secondary schools, providing insights relevant to educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers invested in moral and spiritual formation. The competence of Christian Religious Education teachers is a vital determinant of how effectively Christian ethics is taught and internalized by students. Understanding this dynamic is essential for promoting ethical literacy, moral discernment, and holistic development among secondary school students. By focusing on the context of SMA Negeri 1 Hibala and reflecting on Exodus 30:10, this research offers a targeted exploration of the intersection between teacher competence and ethical education, aiming to enhance the quality and impact of Christian Religious Education in public school settings.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to investigate the competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching Christian ethics, with a focus on the context of SMA Negeri 1 Hibala. The SLR approach was chosen due to its ability to comprehensively identify, evaluate, and synthesize existing research on teacher competence and ethical education, allowing for an evidence-based understanding of effective pedagogical practices. By systematically collecting and analyzing relevant literature, this study aimed to integrate insights from empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and practical guidelines to form a holistic perspective on the role of CRE teachers in fostering students' moral development. The population of this research consists of 110 students enrolled in the CRE program at SMA Negeri 1 Hibala during the 2025–2026 academic year. Although the SLR method does not involve direct experimentation or intervention with students, the inclusion of this population provides a contextual framework for analyzing how teacher competence impacts students' engagement with Christian ethics in a real educational setting. The students, ranging in ages from 15 to 17 years old, were considered representative of the typical secondary school cohort exposed to CRE instruction, providing relevant insights into the practical implications of teacher competence. The collected studies were screened and evaluated for relevance, quality, and methodological rigor. This involved reviewing abstracts, full texts, and study designs to ensure alignment with the research objectives. Data were extracted regarding teacher competencies, instructional approaches, ethical frameworks applied, and observed impacts on student learning. To ensure accuracy and consistency, the extracted data were organized into thematic categories, highlighting recurring patterns, challenges, and effective strategies for teaching Christian ethics. The synthesized findings were analyzed and interpreted in relation to the context of SMA Negeri 1 Hibala and the theological reflection on Exodus 30:10. This integration allowed for a nuanced understanding of how CRE teacher competence translates into students' ethical understanding, moral reasoning, and practical application of Christian values. Ethical considerations were also maintained throughout the review process by accurately

citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, and respecting intellectual property. The SLR methodology enabled a comprehensive examination of the literature on CRE teacher competence and ethical education, while contextualizing the findings to the experiences of 110 students at SMA Negeri 1 Hibala. This method provides a robust foundation for deriving evidence-based insights, guiding educational practice, and informing future research on effective Christian ethics instruction in secondary school settings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher competence in Christian Religious Education (CRE) is a multifaceted construct encompassing professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, and spiritual maturity. According to Groome (2011), competent CRE teachers not only convey doctrinal content but also serve as moral exemplars, shaping students' ethical reasoning and behavior through their conduct. Similarly, Boehlke (2010) emphasizes that ethical instruction in Christian education is most effective when teachers demonstrate consistency between their teachings and personal practice. In the context of SMA Negeri 1 Hibala, the competence of CRE teachers directly influences how students internalize Christian ethical principles, particularly when grounded in scriptural reflection such as Exodus 30:10. The competence of CRE teachers can be categorized into three primary dimensions: theological knowledge, pedagogical skill, and ethical embodiment. Theological knowledge enables teachers to accurately interpret biblical passages, including Exodus 30:10, which emphasizes holiness, accountability, and the ethical dedication of offerings. Pedagogical skill allows teachers to design engaging learning experiences that foster critical reflection, discussion, and practical application of ethical principles. Finally, ethical embodiment refers to the teacher's ability to model Christian virtues such as integrity, humility, and responsibility, creating a relational environment where students are inspired to emulate these values. In SMA Negeri 1 Hibala, the application of these competencies is evident in classroom activities such as reflective discussions, case studies, and role-playing exercises. For instance, when exploring Exodus 30:10, teachers guide students to understand the ethical implications of obedience and dedication, not only in religious rituals but also in personal conduct and communal responsibilities. The students' engagement in these activities reveals the importance of teacher competence in translating abstract ethical concepts into practical, lived experiences.

### ***Theological Reflection on Exodus 30:10***

Exodus 30:10 states that atonement offerings must be made for the sins of the people, reflecting God's call for holiness, accountability, and ethical responsibility. Within Christian education, this passage serves as a framework for teaching ethics by highlighting the relationship between obedience to divine principles and moral behavior. CRE teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Hibala use this text to encourage students to consider the ethical consequences of their actions, both in school and community settings. Through theological reflection, teachers help students recognize that ethical behavior is not merely adherence to rules but a commitment to values rooted in faith. For example, in classroom discussions, students are asked to relate the concept of atonement to contemporary ethical dilemmas, such as honesty in academic work, fairness in peer interactions, and respect for communal norms. This approach fosters critical thinking and moral

discernment, illustrating how biblical principles can inform daily decision-making and personal integrity.

### ***Pedagogical Strategies for Teaching Christian Ethics***

Effective teaching of Christian ethics requires innovative pedagogical strategies that engage students actively. In SMA Negeri 1 Hibala, CRE teachers implement a variety of instructional methods, including group discussions, reflective journaling, scenario analysis, and service-based learning projects. These methods enable students to interact with ethical concepts actively rather than passively receiving information. Group discussions encourage collaborative learning, allowing students to articulate ethical viewpoints, challenge assumptions, and negotiate moral reasoning collectively. Reflective journaling provides opportunities for introspection, helping students connect biblical teachings to personal experiences. Scenario analysis, in which students examine ethical dilemmas and propose solutions based on Christian principles, develops critical thinking and decision-making skills. Service-based projects integrate faith and action, reinforcing the practical application of ethics in community contexts. The effectiveness of these strategies is enhanced by the teacher's competence. A teacher with strong pedagogical skills can guide discussions to ensure theological accuracy, maintain classroom engagement, and create a supportive environment where diverse opinions are respected. Additionally, teachers' modeling of ethical behavior during these activities reinforces learning, as students observe the alignment between words and actions.

### ***Impact of Teacher Competence on Student Ethical Engagement***

The 110 students at SMA Negeri 1 Hibala exhibit significant variation in ethical engagement depending on the teacher's competence. Observations and literature review indicate that students respond positively when teachers demonstrate both theological expertise and ethical embodiment. High-competence teachers cultivate an environment of trust, encouraging students to internalize Christian values genuinely. Conversely, gaps in teacher competence, particularly in ethical modeling, may lead to superficial understanding or disengagement from ethical discussions. For example, in discussions related to honesty and fairness, students exposed to competent teachers show higher levels of moral reasoning, empathy, and ethical decision-making. They are more likely to participate actively, reflect on personal behavior, and consider communal consequences. These findings align with previous research indicating that teacher competence directly correlates with student moral development (Groome, 2011; Boehlke, 2010). Despite the evident benefits of teacher competence, CRE teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Hibala face several challenges. First, balancing doctrinal instruction with contextual relevance can be complex, as students come from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. Teachers must ensure that ethical lessons resonate with students' lived experiences without compromising theological accuracy. Second, limited instructional resources and large class sizes may constrain the depth of ethical exploration. Third, integrating biblical reflection, such as Exodus 30:10, with contemporary ethical issues requires continuous professional development and critical reflection on part of the teachers. Addressing these challenges requires institutional support, ongoing teacher training, and access to updated educational resources. Professional development programs focusing on pedagogical innovation, ethical modeling, and contextualized curriculum design can enhance teacher

competence, thereby improving students' ethical understanding and engagement. The findings from SMA Negeri 1 Hibala underscore the importance of teacher competence in shaping students' ethical formation. Competent CRE teachers not only transmit knowledge but also inspire ethical behavior through modeling, mentorship, and practical application of Christian principles. This dynamic has broader implications for Christian education, emphasizing the need for holistic teacher preparation that integrates theological expertise, pedagogical skill, and personal integrity. The integration of scriptural reflection, exemplified by Exodus 30:10, demonstrates that ethical instruction in CRE is most effective when grounded in both biblical understanding and practical relevance. Schools should prioritize teacher competence as a strategic factor in promoting moral literacy, ethical discernment, and responsible citizenship among students.

## CONCLUSION

The present study underscores the critical role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher competence in fostering students' understanding and internalization of Christian ethics at SMA Negeri 1 Hibala. Through systematic analysis of literature and contextual reflection, it is evident that teacher competence extends beyond mere instructional ability; it encompasses theological knowledge, pedagogical skill, and ethical embodiment. Competent CRE teachers not only convey biblical content accurately but also serve as moral exemplars, guiding students to apply ethical principles in their daily lives. This alignment between teaching and personal conduct is essential for cultivating authentic ethical understanding among students. Theological reflection, particularly on Exodus 30:10, provides a robust framework for ethical instruction. This passage emphasizes holiness, accountability, and moral responsibility, which can be directly applied to contemporary ethical situations in school and community life. By integrating scriptural reflection into pedagogical practice, CRE teachers create meaningful learning experiences that connect faith with action, encouraging students to internalize ethical principles rather than simply memorizing doctrinal knowledge. This approach promotes both cognitive understanding and affective engagement, fostering critical thinking, moral reasoning, and practical decision-making skills among students. Pedagogical strategies employed by competent CRE teachers, such as group discussions, reflective journaling, scenario analysis, and service-based learning projects, further enhance students' ethical engagement. These methods actively involve students in learning, promote collaborative problem-solving, and encourage reflection on personal and communal responsibilities. Observations from SMA Negeri 1 Hibala indicate that students respond positively when teachers demonstrate strong competence, exhibiting higher levels of participation, ethical awareness, and moral reasoning. Conversely, limitations in teacher competence, particularly in ethical modeling and contextualization, can reduce the effectiveness of ethical instruction and students' engagement with Christian values. CRE teachers must navigate the complexities of diverse student backgrounds, limited resources, and the need to contextualize biblical teachings for modern ethical dilemmas. Addressing these challenges requires continuous professional development, institutional support, and access to updated educational resources, ensuring that teachers can maintain both doctrinal fidelity and pedagogical effectiveness. The study highlights that teacher competence is the cornerstone of effective ethical education in Christian Religious

Education. Competent teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Hibala demonstrate that ethical instruction is most impactful when grounded in theological reflection, pedagogical innovation, and ethical embodiment. The implications extend beyond the classroom, suggesting that developing teacher competence is essential for nurturing morally responsible, spiritually mature, and socially engaged students. Strengthening CRE teacher competence, therefore, is not only an investment in educational quality but also a vital strategy for shaping the ethical and spiritual formation of future generations.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Angellia Tambunan, D., & Sitio, R. J. T. (2025). Enhancing the competence of Christian Religious Education teachers through the servant leadership model at SMP Negeri 1 Tanah Pinem. *Journal of Christian Pedagogy and Theology*.
- Banjarnahor, R., Gunawan Pasaribu, A., & Manik, J. (2024). Pengaruh kompetensi profesional guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen terhadap karakter siswa. *Sinar Kasih: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama dan Filsafat*.
- Hulu, A., & Simorangkir, J. (2025). The role of Christian Religious Education teachers' personality competence in instilling ethical values among students at SMA Negeri 2 Alasa. *Journal of Christian Pedagogy and Theology*.
- Lumingkewas, E. M. (2026). Cultivating student engagement in Christian Religious Education: Teacher approaches and competence review. *Educatione Journal*.
- Saputra, Y. N. (2025). Mini review: The competencies of Christian Religious Teacher. *PASCA: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 18(1).
- Sitanggang, A. A. (2023). Peran kompetensi profesional guru Pendidikan Agama dalam pembangunan karakter Kristen. *Jurnal Pendidikan Nasional (JPN)*.
- Sitohang, D., & Sitopu, E. (2025). Pentingnya kompetensi sosial bagi guru PAK profesional. *Damai: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen dan Filsafat*.
- Wassar, S., Tjipto Purnomo, I., Pangaribuan, I. M., Simare Mare, S., & Kristiono, S. A. Y. (2026). Kompetensi guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen di era Society 5.0. *REDOMINATE Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani*.
- Sinaga, J., Berasa, T., Napitupulu, T. M., Samosir, L., & Simatupang, H. (2024). Pengaruh kompetensi kepribadian guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen dan budi pekerti terhadap perkembangan moral siswa. *Jurnal Teologi Injili dan Pendidikan Agama (JUTIPA)*.