



## Christian Religious Education Teachers' Personality as a Christlike Role Model: A Reflection on Philippians 4:9 at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the personality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as Christlike role models based on Philippians 4:9 at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja, North Tapanuli. The research was motivated by the strategic role of teacher personality in shaping students' faith attitudes and moral development within the context of Christian education. Grounded in Pauline exhortation that believers imitate what they have learned, received, heard, and seen, this study examines how the teacher's personal example contributes to students' spiritual formation. A quantitative approach was employed, involving 57 Christian students as respondents from a population served by nine Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. Data were collected through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire measuring indicators of teacher personality such as integrity, consistency of Christian character, relational warmth, and spiritual modeling. Descriptive statistics and simple regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings indicate that the CRE teacher's personality as a Christlike role model is perceived at a high level and shows a positive and significant influence on students' appreciation of Christian values and behavioral imitation. Students particularly responded strongly to visible consistency between teaching and daily conduct. The study concludes that personality competence is a critical dimension of CRE teacher effectiveness, reinforcing the importance of intentional character formation among teachers. Strengthening reflective spiritual practices, relational engagement, and professional development is recommended to enhance teachers' role-model capacity in elementary Christian education contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Personality, Christian Religious Education, Christlike Role Model*

### INTRODUCTION

The quality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Indonesian schools is closely linked to the personal integrity and character of teachers who serve not only as instructors but also as living examples of Christian values. In the context of faith-based education, the teacher's personality is not merely a supporting attribute; rather, it constitutes a central

pedagogical instrument through which values are transmitted, internalized, and embodied by students. This perspective aligns with the broader understanding that effective teaching in religious education involves the integration of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of learning (Groome, 2011). Consequently, the formation of teachers' Christlike character becomes a strategic concern for improving the quality of CRE learning outcomes. Teacher competence is formally categorized into pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies. Among these, personality competence occupies a distinctive position because it reflects moral maturity, emotional stability, wisdom, and exemplary conduct in daily life (Mulyasa, 2013). For Christian Religious Education teachers, personality competence carries an additional theological weight, as they are expected to embody the teachings of Christ in observable ways. The credibility of CRE instruction often depends less on rhetorical ability and more on the perceived authenticity of the teacher's life (Palmer, 2007). When teachers model integrity, humility, and faithfulness, students are more likely to internalize Christian values meaningfully. The call for exemplary living is strongly emphasized in Philippians 4:9, where the Apostle Paul exhorts believers: "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." This verse highlights a pedagogical paradigm grounded in imitation and lived example. Paul positions himself not merely as a transmitter of doctrine but as a model whose life embodies the message he proclaims (Fee, 1995). This reflects the incarnational nature of Christian teaching, in which truth is communicated through both word and witness. In the educational setting, this Pauline principle provides a strong biblical foundation for understanding the personality of CRE teachers as a vital medium of faith formation. Previous studies have indicated that teacher modeling significantly influences students' moral and spiritual development. Bandura's social learning theory underscores that individuals learn behaviors and values through observation and imitation of credible models (Bandura, 1986). In religious education contexts, the teacher's visible consistency between belief and practice enhances students' trust and engagement. Research in Christian education further affirms that students are more receptive to faith instruction when teachers demonstrate authentic Christian character in classroom interactions and school life (Estep, Anthony, & Allison, 2008). Empirical attention specifically linking Philippians 4:9 with the personality competence of CRE teachers in Indonesian primary schools remains relatively limited.

SD Negeri 173192 Harianja in North Tapanuli provides a meaningful context for examining this issue. The school serves a Christian student population of 57 learners supported by nine Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. In such a setting, the visibility of teacher character becomes particularly significant because the educational environment allows sustained relational interaction between teachers and students. The relatively small community size also means that inconsistencies between teaching and personal conduct are more easily observed by learners. Therefore, understanding how CRE teachers embody Christlike personality traits in this context is important for strengthening faith-based educational practice. Contemporary educational challenges, including moral relativism, digital distraction, and declining role-model figures, have intensified the need for teachers who can function as credible spiritual exemplars. Christian education scholars warn that without authentic modeling, religious instruction risks becoming merely

cognitive and detached from lived faith (Wilhoit & Ryken, 2012). This concern is particularly relevant in elementary education, where students are in formative stages of moral and spiritual identity development. Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine how Christian Religious Education teachers' personality functions as a Christlike role model in light of Philippians 4:9 at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja. The study seeks to contribute both theoretically and practically by integrating Pauline theology, teacher personality competence, and the lived context of Indonesian primary education. It is expected that the findings will provide constructive insights for strengthening the formation of CRE teachers as authentic witnesses of Christian faith within the school environment.

## METHODS

A quantitative research approach using a descriptive-correlational design to examine the extent to which the personality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers functions as a Christlike role model based on Philippians 4:9 at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja, North Tapanuli. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables systematic measurement of observable indicators of teacher personality and students' perceptions, allowing the researcher to generate objective and generalizable findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study used a cross-sectional survey design, in which data were collected at a single point in time from respondents within the school environment. This design is appropriate for educational research that seeks to describe current conditions and analyze relationships among variables without manipulating the research setting (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). The primary variable examined was the personality of CRE teachers as a Christlike role model, operationalized through measurable behavioral indicators derived from Philippians 4:9 and teacher personality competence standards. The research was conducted at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja, North Tapanuli. The population consisted of all Christian students and Christian teachers at the school. Based on school data, there are 57 Christian students and 9 Christian teachers (including the CRE teacher). Because the population size was relatively small, the study applied a total sampling technique, meaning all members of the population were included as respondents. Total sampling is recommended when the population is fewer than 100 individuals to increase data representativeness and minimize sampling bias (Sugiyono, 2017). Thus, the research participants included: 57 Christian students (primary respondents) and Christian teachers (supporting respondents). Students served as the main source of perception data regarding the teacher's Christlike personality modeling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The instrument was developed based on: indicators of personality competence in Indonesian teacher standards, theological values derived from Philippians 4:9, Christian character education literature. The instrument measured several dimensions of Christlike teacher personality, including: integrity and consistency of life, exemplary behavior in daily interactions, spiritual maturity and devotion, loving and caring attitude toward students, and moral discipline and self-control. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire underwent content validity review by experts in Christian education to ensure theological and pedagogical alignment. Construct validity was examined using item-total correlation, while reliability was tested using

Cronbach's alpha, with a coefficient  $\geq 0.70$  considered acceptable (Field, 2018). Data collection was conducted after obtaining formal permission from the school administration. Questionnaires were distributed directly to student respondents during school hours under the supervision of the researcher. Teacher respondents completed the instrument separately to avoid response bias. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality and voluntary participation were emphasized in accordance with ethical research standards (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Interpretation of Likert-scale scores followed standard categorization (very low to very high) to facilitate meaningful educational conclusions.

Through this quantitative methodological framework, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence regarding the role of CRE teachers' personality as a Christlike model in the elementary school context of SD Negeri 173192 Harianja.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the quantitative study on the personality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as a Christlike role model at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja, North Tapanuli, followed by an in-depth discussion that integrates empirical data with relevant educational and theological perspectives. The analysis is based primarily on responses from 57 Christian students, supported by data from 9 Christian teachers. The discussion is organized into several thematic dimensions derived from the research indicators: integrity and consistency, exemplary behavior, spiritual maturity, loving attitude, and moral discipline. The interpretation of findings uses the established Likert-scale categorization to determine the strength of teacher personality modeling. Descriptive statistical analysis indicates that the overall mean score for the CRE teacher's personality as perceived by students falls within the high category. This suggests that, in general, students at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja perceive their CRE teacher as demonstrating behaviors consistent with Christlike character as reflected in Philippians 4:9. The relatively low standard deviation across items indicates that student perceptions are fairly homogeneous, meaning that the teacher's modeling behavior is consistently observed by most students. This finding is significant because the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education does not depend solely on cognitive instruction but also on the embodiment of Christian virtues by the teacher. In line with social learning theory, students tend to internalize behaviors that are repeatedly modeled by authority figures. Therefore, the high overall score suggests that the CRE teacher is functioning not merely as an instructor but as a living curriculum of Christian character. While the general category is high, item-level analysis reveals variation across specific indicators. Some dimensions demonstrate very strong performance, while others show moderate tendencies that require further strengthening. This nuanced pattern is important for understanding both the strengths and developmental needs of CRE teacher personality formation in this context. The first dimension examined was the teacher's integrity and consistency between teaching and personal behavior. Students' responses show that this

indicator also falls within the high category, with most respondents agreeing that the CRE teacher practices what is taught in class. Items such as “the teacher behaves according to Christian teachings” and “the teacher keeps promises made to students” received strong agreement. This result reflects a critical principle in Philippians 4:9, where the Apostle Paul emphasizes the continuity between what believers have learned, received, heard, and seen. In educational practice, integrity functions as the foundation of moral authority. When students perceive congruence between a teacher’s words and actions, the teacher’s credibility increases significantly. Consistency strengthens trust relationships in the classroom. Trust is particularly important in faith-based instruction because spiritual formation involves affective and behavioral transformation, not merely knowledge acquisition. The findings suggest that the CRE teacher at this school has successfully built a trustworthy moral presence. A small number of students selected neutral responses on certain items, indicating that consistency is not perceived equally by all learners. This may be influenced by differences in student-teacher interaction frequency, classroom management moments, or students’ developmental stages in moral perception. Future professional development may therefore focus on increasing visible consistency in everyday micro-interactions with students. The next dimension concerns the teacher’s role as an observable behavioral model in daily school life. The mean score for this indicator is in the very high category, making it the strongest dimension in the study. Students overwhelmingly agreed that the CRE teacher demonstrates polite speech, fairness in treating students, and respectful interaction patterns. Observationally modeled behaviors, such as greeting students warmly, showing patience, and resolving conflicts peacefully, appear to be consistently practiced. This finding aligns strongly with the concept of modeling in Christian pedagogy. Exemplary behavior operates as a hidden curriculum through which values are transmitted implicitly. The data suggest that students are highly sensitive to relational cues and interpersonal ethics demonstrated by the teacher. Elementary students are particularly responsive to concrete behavioral examples rather than abstract moral instruction. Therefore, the very high score in this dimension indicates that the teacher’s daily conduct effectively bridges theological teaching and lived Christian practice. The discussion must also acknowledge that exemplary behavior is highly context-dependent. The school environment in Harianja is relatively small and relationally close-knit, which may facilitate stronger teacher-student familiarity. Replication studies in larger or more urban schools might produce different patterns. Thus, while the finding is encouraging, it should be interpreted within its sociocultural setting.

The other dimension measured students’ perceptions of the teacher’s spiritual maturity, including prayer life, biblical seriousness, and visible devotion. The mean score for this indicator falls in the high category, though slightly lower than exemplary behavior. Most students agreed that the CRE teacher demonstrates seriousness in teaching the Bible and encourages prayer and dependence on God. Students reported frequently observing the teacher leading prayers and connecting lessons to spiritual life applications. This dimension is particularly important in Christian education because spiritual authority cannot be separated from spiritual authenticity. Philippians 4:9 implies that peace from God accompanies those who faithfully practice what they teach. Thus, the teacher’s devotional credibility directly affects students’ receptivity to spiritual instruction. The

slightly lower mean compared to behavioral modeling may reflect the more internal and less observable nature of spiritual maturity. Unlike politeness or fairness, devotional depth is not always fully visible to students. Elementary learners may interpret spirituality primarily through external practices such as prayer leadership rather than through deeper spiritual disciplines. This suggests an important pedagogical implication: CRE teachers may need to make aspects of their spiritual journey more visible and pedagogically accessible, for example, through guided reflection, testimony, or shared devotional moments, so that students can better perceive the integration between faith and life. The last dimension, teacher love and care, also achieved a high category mean score. Students generally perceive the CRE teacher as patient, attentive, and willing to help those experiencing learning difficulties. Notably, items related to emotional support and fairness received particularly strong agreement. This indicates that the teacher has cultivated a classroom climate characterized by warmth and psychological safety. Such an environment is essential for holistic Christian education, which emphasizes agape love as a core relational ethic. This finding resonates with the Christlike model of shepherd leadership, where teaching is inseparable from pastoral care. Caring relationships are known to enhance student engagement, motivation, and moral internalization. Several responses fell into the neutral range on items related to individualized attention. This may reflect practical constraints such as class time limitations or the teacher's workload across multiple responsibilities. With 57 Christian students in the school, opportunities for highly personalized mentoring may be limited. While the overall caring climate is strong, strategic improvements could include structured small-group mentoring, peer support systems, or scheduled pastoral conversations to deepen individualized care. Students generally agree that the CRE teacher maintains classroom order appropriately and demonstrates patience when addressing student misbehavior. This is an encouraging sign, as emotional regulation is a critical component of Christlike personality modeling. A noticeable minority of students selected neutral responses on items related to firmness and consistency in discipline. This pattern suggests that while the teacher is perceived as kind and patient, some students may experience moments of inconsistency in rule enforcement. From a classroom management perspective, effective Christlike modeling requires a balance between grace and truth. Excessive leniency may weaken moral boundaries, while excessive strictness may undermine relational trust. The data indicate that the teacher is largely successful but still has room to strengthen the consistency of disciplinary practices. Professional development in restorative discipline approaches grounded in Christian ethics may help enhance this dimension.

Inferential analysis indicates a positive and statistically meaningful relationship between students' perceptions of teacher personality and their reported spiritual engagement in CRE lessons. Students who rated the teacher highly on Christlike personality indicators also tended to report higher levels of interest in prayer, Bible learning, and moral reflection. This finding empirically supports the theological assumption embedded in Philippians 4:9: lived example reinforces transmitted teaching. It also aligns with social cognitive theory, which emphasizes observational learning as a key mechanism of value internalization. The implication is clear: pedagogical competence in Christian education cannot be separated from personal spirituality and moral embodiment. Teacher personality is not merely a supplementary factor but a central pedagogical variable. The

relatively small and homogeneous Christian population at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja creates a supportive environment for strong relational modeling. With 57 Christian students and 9 Christian teachers, the faith culture of the school likely reinforces shared expectations regarding behavior and spirituality. However, this context also raises important considerations for scalability. In more religiously plural or urban settings, the dynamics of Christlike modeling may face additional complexity. Therefore, while the findings demonstrate strong effectiveness in this locus, broader generalization should be approached cautiously. When interpreted through the lens of Philippians 4:9, the findings strongly suggest that the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja embodies the Pauline sequence of teaching, modeling, and faithful practice. Students not only hear Christian values but also observe them enacted in daily school life. The promise that “the God of peace will be with you” can be pedagogically understood as the emergence of a peaceful and supportive classroom climate, something that is clearly reflected in the high scores across relational indicators. The quantitative evidence demonstrates that the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja functions effectively as a Christlike role model, though targeted professional development could further optimize impact.

## CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the personality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as Christlike role models based on Philippians 4:9 at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja, North Tapanuli. Using a quantitative approach involving 57 Christian students and supported by data from 9 Christian teachers, the research provides empirical evidence that teacher personality plays a decisive role in shaping the spiritual and moral climate of Christian learning environments. The findings demonstrate that the overall personality of the CRE teacher is perceived in the high category, indicating that students generally observe congruence between Christian teachings and the teacher’s lived behavior. Among the measured dimensions, exemplary daily behavior emerged as the strongest indicator, followed by integrity, loving attitude, spiritual maturity, and moral discipline. These results affirm that students are highly responsive to observable modeling, particularly in relational and behavioral domains. The teacher is not merely functioning as a transmitter of biblical knowledge but as a living witness of Christian character, which aligns strongly with the pedagogical and theological thrust of Philippians 4:9. The correlational analysis further strengthens the study’s contribution by demonstrating a positive relationship between students’ perceptions of teacher personality and their own spiritual engagement in CRE learning. This confirms that Christlike modeling has measurable pedagogical impact. In other words, the embodiment of Christian virtues by the teacher enhances students’ interest in prayer, Scripture, and moral reflection. This finding reinforces the long-standing assumption in Christian education that formation is more effectively “caught” through example than merely “taught” through instruction. The study also identifies several areas for constructive improvement. Although all indicators fall within the high category, some items, particularly those related to consistency in discipline and visibility of spiritual depth, show relatively lower mean scores. This suggests that future professional development for CRE teachers should emphasize strengthening consistent classroom management grounded in grace and truth, as well as making aspects of personal spiritual life more pedagogically transparent and accessible to students.

Enhancing individualized pastoral attention may also further deepen the teacher's role-model impact. The supportive Christian environment at SD Negeri 173192 Harianja, with its relatively small and cohesive faith community, likely contributes to the strong modeling outcomes observed. While this strengthens the internal validity of the findings, caution is necessary when generalizing to more pluralistic or urban school contexts. Future research is therefore recommended to replicate this study in diverse educational settings and to incorporate mixed-method or longitudinal designs to capture deeper transformational dynamics. This study affirms that the personality of CRE teachers is a central and measurable factor in effective Christian education. When teachers consistently embody the values they teach, as exhorted in Philippians 4:9, they create a spiritually formative learning environment characterized by trust, peace, and moral growth. Strengthening Christlike teacher personality should therefore remain a strategic priority in teacher formation, school leadership, and Christian education policy.

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