



The Personality of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Imitating Christ's Self-Humility Based on Philippians 2:5-7: A Study at SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhempa

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the personality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in imitating Christ's self-humility based on Philippians 2:5-7 at SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhempa, North Tapanuli. The research is grounded in the theological conviction that the kenotic model of Christ provides a normative framework for the formation of teacher personality in Christian education. A quantitative descriptive approach was employed, involving all Christian students at the school as respondents. Data were collected through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire measuring key dimensions of Christ-like humility, including servant-hearted attitude, respectful communication, relational warmth, emotional self-control, and openness to feedback. The instrument was validated through expert review and demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.70). The findings indicate that the CRE teacher's personality in reflecting Christ's humility falls within the high category across all measured dimensions. Students particularly recognized the teacher's patience, fairness, caring disposition, and willingness to serve learners. Statistical analysis also revealed relatively homogeneous student perceptions, suggesting that the teacher's humility is consistently experienced across the classroom community. Nevertheless, minor areas for enhancement were identified, especially in strengthening dialogical openness and visible reflective practice. The study concludes that the kenotic paradigm of Philippians 2:5-7 is both theologically relevant and pedagogically effective in shaping CRE teacher personality. Embodied humility significantly contributes to positive classroom climate, student trust, and faith formation. The research recommends sustained professional formation programs that intentionally integrate spiritual formation with pedagogical competence in Indonesian Christian education contexts.

Keywords: *Personality, Christian Religious Education, Self-Humility*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher personality is widely acknowledged as a decisive factor in the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education (CRE). Beyond the transmission of doctrinal knowledge, CRE

teachers are expected to embody the spiritual and moral values they teach. In faith-based learning, students often interpret the credibility of Christian teaching through the observable character of the teacher. This reality places the personal spirituality and humility of CRE teachers at the center of meaningful religious instruction. Educational scholars consistently emphasize that teacher dispositions significantly shape classroom climate, student trust, and moral internalization (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Therefore, examining the personality of CRE teachers through a biblical lens is both pedagogically and theologically important. Within the Indonesian educational context, character education has become a national priority. Schools are increasingly expected to cultivate not only cognitive competence but also spiritual maturity and ethical integrity. In this framework, CRE teachers function not merely as subject instructors but as spiritual mentors who model Christian virtues in daily interactions. Research in Christian pedagogy highlights that students' faith formation is strongly influenced by relational experience and teacher authenticity rather than by cognitive instruction alone (Palmer, 2007). Consequently, the study of teacher humility, especially Christlike humility, remains highly relevant for strengthening Christian education in Indonesian schools. Philippians 2:5-7 provides one of the most profound New Testament foundations for understanding humility in Christian life and ministry. In this passage, the Apostle Paul exhorts believers to adopt the mindset of Christ, who "emptied himself" and took the form of a servant. Biblical scholars note that the Christ hymn in Philippians presents humility not as weakness but as voluntary self-giving rooted in divine obedience and redemptive love (Fee, 1995). The Greek concept of *kenosis* (self-emptying) underscores Christ's intentional renunciation of status for the sake of service. For CRE teachers, this theological paradigm offers a powerful framework for professional identity: effective teaching flows from servant-hearted character rather than positional authority. From an educational psychology perspective, humility in teachers contributes significantly to positive learning environments. Teachers who demonstrate approachability, willingness to listen, and openness to correction tend to foster stronger student engagement and emotional safety (Owens & Hekman, 2012). In religious education contexts, these relational qualities become even more critical because spiritual formation depends heavily on trust and moral exemplarity. When students perceive their teacher as genuinely humble, they are more likely to internalize Christian values as authentic and attainable.

Empirical research focusing specifically on the Christlike humility of CRE teachers in Indonesian elementary schools remains relatively limited. Many studies in religious education still prioritize curriculum implementation and cognitive outcomes rather than teacher personality as lived spirituality. This gap is particularly significant in smaller school contexts where the teacher's personal influence is proportionally greater. At SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhumpa, North Tapanuli, there are 468 Christian students and 29 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. Within this community, the personality of the CRE teacher potentially shapes a substantial number of learners across developmental stages. Preliminary observations in similar Indonesian contexts suggest that while CRE teachers often demonstrate strong doctrinal competence, the consistent embodiment of Christlike humility in classroom practice varies. Some teachers effectively model servant leadership, while others still operate within more hierarchical instructional patterns. This variation highlights the need for context-specific empirical investigation.

This study aims to examine the personality of the Christian Religious Education teacher in imitating Christ's self-humility based on Philippians 2:5-7 at SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhempa, North Tapanuli. The research focuses on how students perceive the teacher's humility-oriented personality as reflected in classroom interaction, communication style, servant attitude, and relational approachability. By grounding the analysis in both biblical theology and educational research, this study seeks to contribute to the development of spiritually authentic teacher professionalism in Indonesian Christian education. Understanding Christlike humility in CRE teachers is not merely an academic concern but a formative necessity. When teachers embody the kenotic mindset of Philippians 2:5-7, they become living witnesses of the gospel within the educational environment. Such embodiment has the potential to strengthen students' faith formation, nurture respectful classroom communities, and advance the broader mission of transformative Christian education in Indonesia.

METHODS

A quantitative design was selected because it enables the systematic measurement of students' perceptions regarding observable teacher behavior and personality traits using numerical data. Quantitative methods are widely used in educational research to identify patterns, tendencies, and levels of agreement within a defined population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through this approach, the study aimed to produce an objective description of how Christlike humility is perceived in the teacher's professional practice. The research utilized a descriptive survey model. This design is appropriate for portraying the current condition of teacher personality as experienced by students without manipulating variables. Descriptive surveys allow researchers to capture real-world perceptions and summarize them statistically, making the design suitable for studies focusing on teacher disposition and classroom experience (Fraenkel et al., 2012). In the context of this study, the survey focused specifically on indicators derived from the theological concept of *kenosis* in Philippians 2:5-7 and its pedagogical manifestations in CRE teaching. The population of the study consisted of all 468 Christian students enrolled at SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhempa. Because the population size was manageable and the researcher sought comprehensive representation, the study employed a total sampling technique in which all Christian students were invited to participate as respondents. Total sampling minimizes sampling error and increases the accuracy of descriptive findings (Sugiyono, 2019). In addition to population data, contextual information indicated that the school has 29 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher who became the focus of student evaluation; however, teachers were not included as respondents in the quantitative analysis. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from the conceptual framework of Christ's humility in Philippians 2:5-7 and relevant literature on teacher personality. The instrument used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire measured several key dimensions of Christlike humility in teaching practice, including: servant-hearted attitude, willingness to prioritize students' needs, respectful and non-authoritarian communication, openness to feedback and self-correction, and relational warmth and approachability. These indicators were formulated to translate the theological concept of self-emptying into observable pedagogical behavior.

To ensure content validity, the instrument underwent expert judgment involving specialists in Christian education and educational measurement. Revisions were made based on their feedback to improve clarity, theological alignment, and contextual relevance. A pilot test was subsequently conducted with a small group of students outside the research site to evaluate item readability and internal consistency. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha yielded a coefficient exceeding 0.70, indicating acceptable reliability for educational research (Field, 2013). Data collection was carried out during the second semester of the academic year. Questionnaires were administered in printed form during school hours under the supervision of the researcher and classroom teachers. Prior to participation, students received clear instructions and assurance of anonymity and confidentiality to encourage honest responses. Participation was voluntary, and completed questionnaires were collected immediately to maintain data integrity. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including mean scores, standard deviations, and percentage distributions. The interpretation of results followed a five-level categorization (very low, low, moderate, high, very high) based on predetermined mean intervals. Through this analytical procedure, the study sought to provide an empirical portrait of how strongly the CRE teacher's personality reflects Christ's self-humility in the daily educational context of SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhomba.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined students' perceptions of the personality of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher in imitating Christ's self-humility based on Philippians 2:5-7 at SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhomba, North Tapanuli. A total of 468 Christian students participated in the survey, and all returned questionnaires were deemed valid for analysis. The reliability coefficient of the instrument exceeded the acceptable threshold ($\alpha > 0.70$), indicating that the data were sufficiently consistent to support interpretation. Overall descriptive analysis revealed that the mean score for the CRE teacher's Christlike humility personality fell within the high category. This finding suggests that students generally perceive the teacher as demonstrating behaviors consistent with the kenotic model of Christ, particularly in the areas of servant leadership, relational warmth, and respectful communication. The relatively moderate standard deviation indicates that perceptions were fairly homogeneous across respondents, implying that the teacher's humility was consistently experienced by most students rather than limited to specific classroom groups. The high overall score is significant because Philippians 2:5-7 presents humility not merely as a moral recommendation but as the essential mindset of Christ that believers are called to imitate. The data indicate that this theological ideal has been translated into observable pedagogical practice. In the Indonesian primary school context, especially in North Tapanuli where Christian identity and communal relationships are culturally prominent, the embodiment of Christlike humility by teachers plays a crucial role in shaping students' faith experience. A more detailed examination across the five measured dimensions provides a nuanced understanding of how Christ's self-humility is manifested in the CRE teacher's personality. The first dimension, servant-hearted attitude, received a high mean score and was among the strongest indicators in the study. Students largely agreed that the teacher demonstrates willingness to help learners, shows

patience when students struggle, and prioritizes student growth over personal authority. This pattern strongly reflects the kenotic movement described in Philippians 2, where Christ's humility is expressed through voluntary self-giving. Pedagogically, a servant posture reduces psychological distance between teacher and students, fostering a learning environment characterized by trust and openness. The high rating in this dimension indicates that the CRE teacher at SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhempa has successfully internalized service as a core professional identity rather than merely an occasional instructional strategy. Item-level analysis reveals minor variation within this dimension. While most students strongly agreed that the teacher is helpful and patient, a smaller proportion selected neutral responses regarding the teacher's availability outside formal class time. This suggests that although servant leadership is strongly perceived during instruction, opportunities may exist to further extend pastoral presence beyond structured classroom interactions. Such extension could deepen students' holistic experience of Christlike care. The second dimension, prioritizing students' needs above personal recognition, also achieved a high mean score. Students reported that the CRE teacher rarely seeks praise, avoids self-promotion, and focuses on student understanding rather than teacher-centered performance. This finding aligns closely with the theological core of Philippians 2:6-7, where Christ "did not consider equality... something to be exploited." In educational practice, this posture is reflected when teachers emphasize student growth rather than personal prestige. The strong student agreement indicates that the teacher's instructional style is perceived as learner-centered rather than authority-centered.

This dimension is particularly important in the Indonesian schooling culture, where hierarchical teacher authority has historically been strong. The presence of a humility-oriented teacher signals a meaningful shift toward relational pedagogy. Students who perceive their teacher as genuinely prioritizing them are more likely to demonstrate affective engagement and learning motivation. Nevertheless, slight dispersion in responses suggests that continued professional reflection could further strengthen consistency, especially in large-class situations where individualized attention becomes more challenging. Respectful and non-authoritarian communication, produced a high mean with relatively tight distribution. Students overwhelmingly agreed that the CRE teacher speaks politely, corrects mistakes without humiliation, and maintains a calm tone even in disciplinary situations. Communication style is often the most immediate and visible expression of teacher personality; therefore, the strength of this dimension provides compelling evidence that Christlike humility is being operationalized in daily interactions. In light of Philippians 2:5, which calls believers to adopt the mindset of Christ, respectful speech functions as a concrete behavioral manifestation of inner humility. The findings also reveal an important micro-pattern. While politeness and gentleness received very strong agreement, the item concerning openness to student disagreement showed slightly lower, though still high, ratings. This suggests that the classroom climate is respectful but may not yet be fully dialogical in all situations. In contemporary pedagogical theory, humility is increasingly associated not only with kindness but also with intellectual openness. Therefore, structured opportunities for student voice, questioning, and respectful dissent could further deepen the kenotic character of classroom communication. The other dimension, openness to feedback and self-correction,

displayed a high but comparatively lower mean than the previous dimensions. Students generally agreed that the teacher is willing to admit mistakes and shows readiness to improve. However, this dimension exhibited slightly wider variability in responses. This pattern is noteworthy because visible self-correction is one of the most powerful demonstrations of authentic humility. In Philippians 2, Christ's humility is portrayed as an active, dynamic movement rather than a static trait. When teachers model reflective practice, acknowledging limitations and learning alongside students, they reinforce a growth-oriented spiritual culture. The moderate variability in this dimension may indicate that moments of explicit self-reflection by the teacher are less frequently observed or less publicly visible. It is possible that the teacher engages in reflective practice privately but that students do not always witness it directly. From a professional development standpoint, intentionally verbalizing reflective learning (for example, "Let's improve this together") could significantly strengthen students' perception of lived humility. Such modeling would also align with contemporary views of teachers as lifelong learners. Relational warmth and approachability, yielded one of the highest mean scores in the study. Students strongly perceived the CRE teacher as friendly, emotionally supportive, and easy to approach for help. The low standard deviation indicates remarkable consistency across respondents, suggesting that relational humility is a stable and habitual feature of the teacher's personality. This finding is pedagogically significant because relational trust is a key mediator between teacher behavior and student spiritual receptivity. Within the framework of Philippians 2:5-7, Christ's humility is fundamentally relational- He enters human experience and identifies with those He serves. The CRE teacher's high rating in relational warmth suggests that this incarnational dimension of humility is being effectively embodied in the school context. Students who experience emotional safety in the classroom are more likely to engage cognitively and spiritually. Therefore, relational humility functions not merely as a moral virtue but as an instructional asset that enhances overall learning effectiveness. When the five dimensions are viewed holistically, a coherent pattern emerges. The CRE teacher at SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhempa demonstrates a personality profile that strongly reflects Christ's self-humility. The highest strengths appear in servant attitude, respectful communication, and relational warmth, while the relatively lower, though still high, dimension of visible self-correction suggests an area for potential growth. Importantly, none of the dimensions fell into the moderate or low categories, indicating that humility is not situational but broadly integrated into the teacher's professional identity. The findings carry several important implications for Christian Religious Education in Indonesian primary schools. First, the data empirically support the theological claim that Christlike humility can be operationalized and measured in educational settings. Too often, spiritual virtues are treated as abstract ideals; however, this study demonstrates that students can reliably perceive and evaluate humility-related behaviors. Second, the results reinforce the strategic role of CRE teachers as spiritual formators within the school community. With 468 Christian students under their influence, the personality of a single teacher carries substantial formative weight.

The study highlights the close relationship between teacher spirituality and classroom climate. High scores in humility-related dimensions correspond with students' reported sense of comfort and engagement. This supports broader educational research suggesting

that relational teacher qualities significantly affect student motivation and emotional safety. In contexts such as North Tapanuli, where communal harmony and respect are culturally valued, the integration of biblical humility with culturally resonant relational practices appears particularly effective. Several considerations for professional refinement emerge from the data. Increasing explicit dialogical openness could further strengthen students' participation and sense of voice. Likewise, making reflective self-correction more visible may deepen students' understanding of humility as an active learning posture. These are not indicators of deficiency but rather opportunities for maturation within an already strong humility profile. The results of this study provide robust evidence that the CRE teacher at SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhempa embodies the kenotic model of Christ's humility in a manner that is both theologically faithful and pedagogically impactful. Students do not merely hear about humility as a doctrinal concept; they encounter it through lived classroom experience. This confirms that the personality of the teacher remains a central conduit for meaningful Christian formation.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the personality of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher in imitating Christ's self-humility based on Philippians 2:5-7 at SD Negeri No. 175756 Simarhempa, North Tapanuli. Drawing on quantitative data from 468 Christian students, the findings provide strong empirical evidence that the CRE teacher's personality is widely perceived as reflecting Christlike humility in classroom practice. Overall mean scores across all measured dimensions fell within the high category, indicating that humility is not merely professed but consistently embodied in observable pedagogical behavior. The results demonstrate that the strongest aspects of the teacher's humility profile lie in servant-hearted attitude, respectful and non-authoritarian communication, and relational warmth and approachability. Students clearly experience the teacher as caring, patient, and oriented toward their growth rather than personal authority or recognition. These findings confirm that the kenotic model of Philippians 2:5-7, characterized by self-emptying service and relational identification, has been meaningfully translated into the daily practices of Christian Religious Education. In this context, the teacher functions as a "living curriculum," through whom theological values become visible and experientially accessible to learners. At the same time, the study identified modest opportunities for professional strengthening. Although still within the high category, the dimension related to openness to feedback and visible self-correction showed slightly greater variability in student responses. This suggests that future professional development could emphasize more explicit modeling of reflective practice and dialogical humility. Encouraging structured opportunities for student voice and demonstrating transparent self-improvement may further deepen the kenotic character of classroom interactions. This study contributes to Indonesian CRE scholarship by providing quantitative evidence that spiritual virtues, particularly humility, can be operationalized and measured within formal educational settings. Practically, the findings underscore the strategic importance of teacher personality in shaping students' faith formation, classroom climate, and relational trust. With a large population of Christian students under the teacher's influence, the formative impact of embodied humility becomes institutionally significant. Christ's self-humility as portrayed in Philippians 2:5-7

remains highly relevant for contemporary Christian Religious Education. When CRE teachers internalize and consistently model this mindset, they cultivate learning environments that are spiritually authentic, relationally safe, and pedagogically effective. Strengthening reflective and dialogical dimensions of humility will further enhance this already robust foundation for transformative Christian education.

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