



Personality Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Embodying the Value of Humility Based on Philippians 2:3: A Study at SMP Negeri 2 Toma

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and the embodiment of humility among students based on Philippians 2:3 at SMP Negeri 2 Toma, South Nias. In a school context consisting of 80 Christian students and two Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, the visibility of teacher character plays a significant role in shaping students' moral and spiritual development. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were collected through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire measuring teacher personality competence, operationalized through integrity, emotional stability, relational maturity, moral consistency, and exemplary conduct, and students' embodiment of humility, reflected in respect for others, openness to correction, cooperation, empathy, and avoidance of selfish ambition. The findings reveal a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between teacher personality competence and student humility ($r = 0.728$, $p < 0.001$). Regression analysis indicates that teacher personality competence accounts for approximately 53% of the variance in students' humility ($R^2 = 0.530$), demonstrating a substantial predictive contribution. The results suggest that humility, as articulated in Philippians 2:3, is effectively cultivated not only through doctrinal instruction but through consistent character modeling in daily classroom interactions. The study concludes that strengthening teacher personality competence is essential for holistic Christian education, as authentic embodiment of biblical values by teachers significantly influences students' relational ethics and spiritual formation.

Keywords: Personality Competence, Christian Religious Education, Value of Humility

INTRODUCTION

Personality competence is a foundational dimension of teacher professionalism, particularly in faith-based education where moral modeling and spiritual authenticity are inseparable from instructional practice. In the context of Christian Religious Education

(CRE), teachers are not merely transmitters of doctrinal knowledge but living examples of biblical values. Among these values, humility, as articulated in Philippians 2:3, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves” occupies a central place in shaping relational ethics and spiritual maturity. In educational settings where character formation is as important as academic development, the embodiment of humility by teachers significantly influences students’ moral perception, relational behavior, and spiritual growth. At SMP Negeri 2 Toma, South Nias, the Christian community within the school comprises 80 Christian students and 2 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. In such a relatively intimate educational environment, teacher personality competence becomes highly visible and influential. Students observe not only what teachers teach but also how they behave, respond to challenges, manage conflicts, and treat others. Personality competence includes integrity, emotional stability, maturity, consistency, and exemplary moral conduct. When these attributes are aligned with biblical humility, they create a classroom climate that fosters respect, empathy, and servant leadership. Humility in Philippians 2:3 is not passive self-deprecation but an active, relational virtue characterized by prioritizing others’ welfare, practicing self-control, and demonstrating servant-hearted leadership. For CRE teachers, embodying humility means facilitating learning without authoritarian dominance, correcting students with patience, acknowledging personal limitations, and fostering collaborative dialogue. In a global context increasingly marked by individualism and self-promotion, cultivating humility in students requires educators who consistently model it in daily interactions. Previous educational research emphasizes that teacher personality significantly affects student engagement, motivation, and moral development. Students are more receptive to moral instruction when teachers demonstrate authenticity and congruence between words and actions. Social learning perspectives suggest that students internalize behaviors they repeatedly observe in respected authority figures. Thus, humility demonstrated through consistent teacher conduct can become internalized as a normative relational value among students. In the cultural context of South Nias, communal relationships, mutual respect, and social harmony are deeply embedded societal values. Integrating Philippians 2:3 with local cultural ethics enhances the relevance of humility in both spiritual and social dimensions. CRE teachers who demonstrate personality competence rooted in humility not only strengthen classroom relationships but also reinforce cultural continuity while grounding it in biblical theology. This study aims to examine the relationship between the personality competence of CRE teachers and the embodiment of humility among students at SMP Negeri 2 Toma. Specifically, it investigates how teacher integrity, emotional stability, relational maturity, and moral consistency influence students’ understanding and practice of humility in academic and social interactions. By integrating empirical analysis with theological reflection, this research seeks to contribute to a holistic understanding of how personality competence functions as a transformative force in Christian education.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and students’ embodiment of humility based on Philippians 2:3 at SMP Negeri 2

Toma, South Nias. The research was conducted during the second semester of the 2025 academic year. The population consisted of all 80 Christian students enrolled at the school. Given the relatively small and accessible population, total sampling (census sampling) was applied, meaning all 80 students participated as respondents. Although the school has two Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, the primary data source was student responses to measure perceptions of teacher personality competence and their own humility-related behaviors. The independent variable (X) was teacher personality competence, operationalized through measurable indicators: integrity, emotional stability, maturity, self-control, consistency in moral behavior, and exemplary conduct. The dependent variable (Y) was students' embodiment of humility based on Philippians 2:3, operationalized through indicators such as respect for others, willingness to prioritize peers' interests, openness to correction, cooperative engagement, empathy, and avoidance of selfish ambition. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 30 Likert-scale items (15 items per variable) with five response options ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument underwent content validation by two experts in Christian education and educational psychology to ensure theological and pedagogical relevance. Construct validity was tested using Pearson Product-Moment correlation, and reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with coefficients exceeding 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Data collection procedures included obtaining formal permission from the school principal and informing students about the voluntary nature of participation. Questionnaires were administered directly in the classroom under researcher supervision to ensure clarity and completeness. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), normality testing using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, and simple linear regression to assess predictive contribution (R^2). All statistical analyses were conducted at a significance level of 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate a substantial and statistically significant relationship between the personality competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher and the embodiment of humility among students at SMP Negeri 2 Toma, South Nias. Based on descriptive statistical analysis of responses from 80 Christian students, the overall mean score for teacher personality competence was 4.41 (SD = 0.35) on a five-point Likert scale, placing it within the "very high" category. This indicates that students consistently perceive the CRE teacher as demonstrating integrity, emotional stability, maturity, self-control, and exemplary moral conduct in daily interactions. Meanwhile, the overall mean score for students' embodiment of humility based on Philippians 2:3 was 4.34 (SD = 0.39), also categorized as "high." These descriptive results alone already suggest a positive alignment between teacher character modeling and student moral development. However, further inferential statistical analysis provides a clearer understanding of the strength and significance of this relationship. The Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.728$ ($p < 0.001$), indicating a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between teacher personality competence and student humility. This means that as students

perceive higher levels of integrity, emotional maturity, and moral consistency in their CRE teacher, they also report stronger tendencies to practice humility in their own behavior. The coefficient of determination (R^2) obtained from simple linear regression analysis was 0.530, suggesting that approximately 53% of the variance in students' humility can be explained by the personality competence of the CRE teacher. This is a substantial proportion in social science research, highlighting the central role of teacher character in shaping student attitudes and relational ethics. The remaining 47% of variance may be influenced by other factors such as family upbringing, peer culture, church involvement, media exposure, and broader sociocultural dynamics in South Nias.

A closer examination of individual indicators provides deeper insight into how teacher personality competence manifests in observable educational practice. Among the indicators of personality competence, integrity received the highest mean score ($M = 4.47$). Students reported that the CRE teacher consistently keeps promises, applies rules fairly, and demonstrates honesty in grading and classroom decision-making. This perceived fairness strengthens trust and reduces hierarchical distance between teacher and students. In the context of Philippians 2:3, integrity reflects the rejection of selfish ambition and vain conceit, because fairness requires the teacher to prioritize justice over personal preference. Emotional stability followed closely ($M = 4.43$), with students noting that the teacher remains calm during classroom disruptions and handles conflicts without anger or humiliation. Emotional regulation is crucial in modeling humility because humility involves self-restraint and the ability to value others even in challenging situations. A teacher who reacts impulsively or defensively would contradict the message of Philippians 2:3, but in this case, students perceive congruence between teaching and behavior. Relational maturity ($M = 4.39$) and moral consistency ($M = 4.35$) also received high evaluations. Students reported that the teacher listens attentively to their opinions, encourages dialogue, and admits mistakes when necessary. This last aspect—admitting mistakes—is particularly significant in understanding humility. When a teacher acknowledges personal limitations, students observe that authority does not require infallibility. Instead, authority can coexist with vulnerability and accountability. This practice reduces fear-based compliance and fosters authentic respect. Such modeling reinforces the theological principle that humility is not weakness but strength expressed through self-awareness and relational sensitivity. Turning to the dependent variable, students' embodiment of humility was measured through several behavioral indicators. The highest mean score among these was willingness to cooperate ($M = 4.38$). Students reported increased readiness to work collaboratively in group assignments, share responsibilities, and support peers who struggle academically. Cooperation directly reflects the biblical call to "value others above yourselves," because it requires consideration of collective goals rather than individual recognition. Openness to correction ($M = 4.36$) also scored highly, indicating that students are more willing to accept feedback from teachers and peers without defensiveness. This is a critical dimension of humility, as it involves acknowledging one's limitations and being receptive to growth. Respectful communication ($M = 4.33$) and empathy toward peers ($M = 4.31$) further illustrate how humility translates into relational behavior. Students reported reduced tendencies to mock or belittle classmates and greater sensitivity to the feelings of others. Observational data during the research period supported these self-reports, as

classroom interactions generally reflected orderly discussion, mutual listening, and minimal interpersonal conflict. Although self-reported data may contain social desirability bias, the consistency between statistical findings and observed behavior strengthens the credibility of the results.

The regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.728$, $t = 11.02$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that teacher personality competence is a significant predictor of student humility. Practically, this means that improvements in teacher character modeling are likely to produce measurable improvements in student relational ethics. In small educational communities such as SMP Negeri 2 Toma, where there are only two Christian teachers including the CRE teacher, the visibility of teacher behavior is heightened. Students interact closely with their teachers, making personality traits more observable and influential. In larger schools, individual influence might be diluted, but in this context, modeling effects are intensified. These findings affirm the incarnational dimension of Christian education. Philippians 2:3 is situated within a broader Christological hymn (Philippians 2:5-11) that presents Jesus as the ultimate model of humility. Therefore, when CRE teachers embody humility, they participate in a pedagogical imitation of Christ. The strong statistical relationship found in this study suggests that theological instruction becomes transformative when embodied by credible role models. Without embodiment, biblical teaching risks becoming abstract moralism. With embodiment, it becomes relational formation. Culturally, South Nias is characterized by communal values emphasizing kinship solidarity, respect for elders, and collective responsibility. The high levels of student cooperation and empathy observed in this study may partly reflect these cultural foundations. However, the significant predictive contribution of teacher personality competence indicates that cultural values alone do not account for student humility. Rather, the CRE teacher's consistent modeling integrates biblical teaching with local cultural norms, reinforcing and deepening them. This integration prevents the dichotomy between religious instruction and everyday social practice. The findings also align with social learning theory, which posits that individuals learn behaviors through observation and imitation of credible models. Students are more likely to internalize humility when they repeatedly observe it enacted by authority figures. Over time, observed behavior becomes internalized disposition. In this study, the high R^2 value (53%) suggests that modeling effects are not marginal but central in shaping student character. While cognitive instruction about humility is important, affective and behavioral modeling appears to exert stronger influence. Another significant dimension emerging from the data is the relationship between emotional stability and openness to correction. Statistical cross-tabulation indicates that students who rated the teacher's emotional stability highly were also more likely to report personal willingness to accept correction. This suggests that safe emotional environments encourage humility. When students do not fear humiliation, they can admit mistakes more freely. Thus, humility is nurtured not only through exhortation but through psychologically secure relational climates. The research relies primarily on self-reported questionnaires, which may be influenced by respondent bias. The study focuses on a single institution with a relatively small population, limiting generalizability. The cross-sectional design does not allow for causal conclusions over time. A longitudinal study could better assess whether sustained teacher modeling produces long-term character transformation. The strong statistical association

found here provides compelling preliminary evidence. In practical terms, the results suggest that professional development programs for CRE teachers should emphasize personality formation alongside pedagogical skill. Training in emotional regulation, reflective practice, servant leadership, and ethical consistency can enhance the embodiment of humility in classroom practice. The data indicate that when teachers grow in these areas, students are likely to follow. The relatively high explanatory power of teacher personality competence (53%) underscores the moral responsibility borne by CRE teachers. Their influence extends beyond cognitive learning outcomes to character formation. In faith-based education, the integration of theological truth and personal authenticity is not optional but essential. The study at SMP Negeri 2 Toma demonstrates that even in a modest educational setting with 80 Christian students and two Christian teachers, transformative character education is achievable when humility is modeled consistently. The results and discussion affirm that the personality competence of the CRE teacher significantly shapes students' embodiment of humility in alignment with Philippians 2:3. Statistical evidence, observational support, and theological reflection converge to highlight the indispensable role of teacher character in Christian education. Humility becomes more than a biblical concept; it becomes a lived relational reality when teachers embody integrity, emotional stability, and servant-hearted leadership.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers plays a decisive and measurable role in shaping students' embodiment of humility based on Philippians 2:3 at SMP Negeri 2 Toma, South Nias. The statistical findings reveal a strong and significant positive relationship between teacher personality competence and student humility, with teacher integrity, emotional stability, relational maturity, and moral consistency contributing substantially to students' respectful, cooperative, and selfless behaviors. The coefficient of determination indicates that more than half of the variance in students' humility can be explained by the teacher's personality competence, underscoring the centrality of character modeling in Christian education. The findings affirm that humility is not effectively transmitted through doctrinal instruction alone but through lived example. When CRE teachers embody the principle of valuing others above themselves, as expressed in Philippians 2:3, students internalize humility as a relational ethic rather than merely an abstract concept. The integration of biblical teaching with consistent personal conduct fosters a classroom climate characterized by trust, openness to correction, empathy, and collaborative engagement. Within a school community consisting of 80 Christian students and two Christian teachers, the visibility of teacher behavior amplifies its influence. In such an environment, authenticity and consistency become critical factors in moral formation. The study highlights that personality competence is not secondary to pedagogical skill; rather, it is foundational to holistic education that seeks to nurture both intellectual and spiritual growth. Strengthening teacher personality competence through reflective practice, spiritual formation, and professional development should be prioritized in Christian educational contexts. Ultimately, humility becomes a lived reality within the school community when teachers model it faithfully, transforming biblical values into observable and sustainable character formation among students.

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