



The Communication Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching Social Respect: A Reflection on Exodus 22:31 at SMP Negeri 3 SATAP Permata Kecubung

Lidiana

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: lidiana48@guru.smp.belajar.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines the communication competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in cultivating social respect among students through a biblical reflection on Book of Exodus 22:31. Effective communication is a crucial element in Christian education because it enables teachers to convey moral and spiritual values in ways that are meaningful and applicable to students' daily lives. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 SATAP Permata Kecubung, located in Sukamara, involving 34 Christian students and three Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach using a Likert-scale questionnaire to measure students' perceptions of teacher communication competence and their attitudes toward social respect. The findings reveal that clear explanations, respectful language, interactive dialogue, and contextual interpretation of biblical teachings significantly contribute to students' understanding of social respect. The teacher's ability to connect biblical messages with students' real-life experiences encourages reflection on ethical behavior and fosters positive relationships among students. Furthermore, the teacher's communication style serves as a model of respectful interaction that students tend to emulate in their daily social engagements. The study concludes that communication competence is a vital component of effective Christian Religious Education. Teachers who communicate biblical teachings clearly and empathetically can strengthen students' moral awareness and promote respectful social behavior. Therefore, improving teacher communication competence should be a strategic priority in Christian education to support holistic character formation among students.

Keywords: *Communication Competence, Christian Religious Education, Social Respect*

INTRODUCTION

Communication competence is one of the most essential elements in the teaching process, particularly in subjects that focus on character formation and moral development. In Christian Religious Education, the role of communication becomes even

more significant because teachers are responsible not only for explaining biblical knowledge but also for shaping students' attitudes and social values. Effective communication enables teachers to translate biblical teachings into practical moral guidance that students can apply in their daily lives. When teachers communicate clearly, respectfully, and persuasively, students are more likely to understand and internalize the ethical messages conveyed during the learning process. Communication is considered a central component of effective pedagogy. Teachers who demonstrate strong communication competence can create an interactive learning environment that encourages participation, dialogue, and reflection among students. According to John W. Creswell, communication in education functions as a bridge between knowledge and understanding, allowing complex ideas to be conveyed in ways that are accessible and meaningful to learners (Creswell, 2014). Within Christian Religious Education, communication competence allows teachers to interpret biblical teachings in a way that resonates with students' social realities, helping them see the relevance of faith in their relationships with others.

One of the most important social values that Christian education seeks to cultivate is respect for others. Social respect involves attitudes of appreciation, empathy, and responsibility toward fellow human beings. In a school environment, respect is expressed through behaviors such as listening attentively, treating peers kindly, honoring teachers, and maintaining harmonious relationships within the learning community. These behaviors contribute to a positive school climate where students feel safe, valued, and motivated to learn. However, fostering social respect among students requires intentional guidance from educators who consistently communicate and model respectful attitudes. Christian Religious Education provides a strong biblical foundation for teaching social respect because the Scriptures contain numerous teachings that emphasize ethical conduct and responsible relationships with others. One important reference can be found in Book of Exodus 22:31, which emphasizes the call for God's people to live as holy individuals whose conduct reflects obedience to divine standards. Although the verse appears within the context of Israel's covenantal laws, its ethical message highlights the importance of maintaining integrity and respect in daily life. For students, this biblical principle can be interpreted as an invitation to develop attitudes that reflect respect, responsibility, and moral awareness in their interactions with others. The successful transmission of such biblical values depends largely on the communication competence of teachers. Christian Religious Education teachers must be able to explain scriptural teachings clearly while connecting them with situations that students encounter in their everyday lives. According to Thomas H. Groome, effective Christian education involves a dialogical process in which teachers and students engage in conversations that connect biblical narratives with personal experiences and social realities (Groome, 2011). Through this dialogical communication, students are encouraged to reflect on how biblical principles can guide their behavior within the school community and broader society.

Teacher communication also influences the relational dynamics between teachers and students. When teachers communicate respectfully and empathetically, they establish a model of interaction that students can imitate. This modeling is particularly important in character education because students often learn moral values through observation as well as instruction. According to George R. Knight, Christian educators must demonstrate

consistency between what they teach and how they communicate with others, since students tend to internalize the attitudes displayed by their teachers (Knight, 2006). Therefore, communication competence in Christian Religious Education includes not only the clarity of instruction but also the demonstration of respectful and ethical behavior in daily interactions. The role of teacher communication becomes particularly significant in the context of SMP Negeri 3 SATAP Permata Kecubung located in Sukamara. In this school, there are 34 Christian students and three Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. Within this relatively small educational community, communication between teachers and students occurs frequently and often takes a personal form. Such conditions create opportunities for teachers to provide close guidance in matters related to moral behavior and social relationships. The way teachers communicate biblical teachings and respond to students' questions or conflicts can significantly influence how students perceive and practice social respect. Students may struggle to relate ancient biblical texts to contemporary social situations unless teachers provide clear explanations and meaningful examples. Consequently, teachers must develop communication strategies that encourage dialogue, reflection, and practical application of biblical teachings in students' daily lives. This study aims to examine the communication competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in teaching social respect among students. By reflecting on the ethical message contained in Exodus 22:31 and analyzing its implementation within the learning context of SMP Negeri 3 SATAP Permata Kecubung, this research seeks to explore how teacher communication contributes to the cultivation of respectful social behavior among students. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights into the importance of communication competence in strengthening character education and fostering harmonious relationships within the school environment.

METHODS

Quantitative research was chosen because it allows researchers to measure perceptions and behavioral tendencies using numerical data and systematic statistical analysis. According to John W. Creswell, quantitative research is suitable for identifying patterns of relationships between variables and describing phenomena through measurable indicators (Creswell, 2014). In this study, teacher communication competence served as the independent variable, while students' social respect behavior based on the ethical reflection of Book of Exodus 22:31 functioned as the dependent variable. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 SATAP Permata Kecubung located in Sukamara. The population consisted of 34 Christian students and three Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. Considering that the population size was relatively small, the study applied a total sampling technique, meaning that all members of the population were included as research participants. This approach ensured that the data collected represented the entire Christian school community's perception of teacher communication in Christian Religious Education learning. Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale designed to measure several indicators of teacher communication competence and students' attitudes of social respect. The indicators of teacher communication competence included clarity in explaining biblical teachings, the ability to relate scriptural messages to students' daily

experiences, the use of respectful language during instruction, openness to dialogue and questions from students, and the ability to guide students in reflecting on moral issues. Meanwhile, indicators of social respect among students included listening attentively to others, respecting differences among peers, showing politeness toward teachers, maintaining positive relationships with classmates, and demonstrating responsible behavior in school interactions. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including the calculation of frequencies, percentages, and mean scores to identify patterns in respondents' perceptions. The results of this statistical analysis were then interpreted within the framework of Christian education and biblical ethics in order to explain how communication competence among Christian Religious Education teachers contributes to the cultivation of social respect among students. Through this analytical approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of teacher communication in strengthening character formation within Christian Religious Education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate that the communication competence of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a significant role in cultivating social respect among students. The data obtained from respondents at SMP Negeri 3 SATAP Permata Kecubung located in Sukamara indicate that the majority of students perceive the teacher's communication style as clear, respectful, and supportive of moral learning. The respondents consisted of 34 Christian students and three Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. Their responses reveal that the way teachers communicate biblical teachings significantly influences students' understanding of social values and their willingness to practice respectful behavior in their daily interactions. These findings reinforce the view that communication competence is not merely a technical teaching skill but a relational and ethical practice that shapes students' character formation. One of the key findings of the study is that students perceive clarity of explanation as a crucial component of teacher communication competence. Many respondents indicated that the Christian Religious Education teacher explains biblical passages in ways that are understandable and relevant to students' everyday experiences. Rather than presenting Scripture as abstract theological concepts, the teacher translates biblical messages into practical lessons about social relationships, cooperation, and mutual respect. For example, when discussing moral teachings related to social conduct, the teacher often connects biblical narratives with situations that students encounter within the school environment, such as resolving conflicts with classmates, showing respect to teachers, and maintaining positive communication with peers. This approach enables students to recognize that biblical teachings are not distant historical texts but living principles that guide their social behavior. The reflection on Book of Exodus 22:31 provides an important theological framework for understanding the relationship between faith and ethical conduct. In its original context, the verse calls God's people to live as holy individuals who demonstrate obedience to divine standards in their daily lives. Although the verse addresses dietary and ethical regulations within ancient Israel, its broader message emphasizes the importance of maintaining moral integrity and respect for the values established by God. Within the classroom setting, the Christian Religious Education teacher interprets this passage as an encouragement for students to

cultivate respectful attitudes in their relationships with others. Students are guided to understand that living as people who honor God involves demonstrating kindness, responsibility, and respect toward fellow human beings. The research findings indicate that the teacher's ability to communicate these biblical principles effectively contributes to students' moral awareness. Many students reported that classroom discussions about biblical teachings encourage them to reflect on their own behavior and evaluate whether their actions align with Christian values. For instance, when discussing the concept of holiness mentioned in the biblical passage, the teacher invites students to think about how they can express holiness through respectful attitudes, such as speaking politely, avoiding insults, and maintaining honesty in their interactions. These reflective conversations help students internalize moral principles because they connect scriptural teachings with their personal experiences.

Another important aspect highlighted by the data is the role of respectful communication in shaping the classroom atmosphere. Students reported that the Christian Religious Education teacher consistently communicates with kindness, patience, and attentiveness. This communication style creates a positive learning environment where students feel comfortable expressing their opinions and asking questions. When teachers communicate respectfully, they provide a living example of the values they seek to teach. Students observe how the teacher listens carefully to others, responds thoughtfully to questions, and addresses disagreements with calmness and fairness. These observations reinforce the lesson that respect is not only a theoretical concept but also a practical behavior that should be demonstrated in everyday communication. The influence of teacher modeling is particularly evident in the way students interact with one another. The findings suggest that students who experience respectful communication from their teacher are more likely to replicate similar behaviors in their relationships with peers. For example, group discussions conducted during Christian Religious Education lessons often require students to listen to different perspectives and respond constructively to one another's ideas. Through these activities, students practice respectful dialogue and learn how to express disagreements without hostility. Such experiences help develop communication skills that are essential for maintaining harmonious relationships in both school and society.

The study also reveals that the teacher's communication competence encourages active student participation in the learning process. Many respondents reported that the Christian Religious Education teacher invites students to share their opinions, reflections, and personal experiences during classroom discussions. This participatory approach transforms the learning environment into a collaborative space where students feel that their voices are valued. According to educational theory, such interactive communication enhances student engagement because learners become active contributors to the learning process rather than passive recipients of information. In the context of Christian Religious Education, participatory dialogue also enables students to explore the ethical implications of biblical teachings more deeply. The teacher uses storytelling as a communication strategy to illustrate moral lessons from Scripture. Biblical narratives are presented in ways that highlight their relevance to students' daily lives. For instance, stories about the challenges faced by biblical figures are used to demonstrate how individuals can maintain integrity and respect even in difficult circumstances. Students

reported that these narratives help them understand the consequences of both positive and negative behaviors. Storytelling therefore becomes an effective pedagogical tool for communicating moral values because it allows students to visualize ethical dilemmas and reflect on appropriate responses. The results further indicate that communication competence contributes to the development of students' emotional and social sensitivity. Through open conversations about moral issues, students learn to consider the feelings and perspectives of others. For example, when discussing conflicts that occur among classmates, the teacher encourages students to reflect on how their words and actions might affect the emotions of their peers. This reflective process helps students develop empathy and encourages them to adopt more respectful forms of communication. Empathy is an essential component of social respect because it enables individuals to recognize the dignity and worth of others.

Another significant finding of the study is that the teacher's communication competence helps address misunderstandings or conflicts that arise within the classroom. When disagreements occur among students, the Christian Religious Education teacher uses dialogue to guide them toward constructive resolution. Instead of imposing immediate punishment, the teacher encourages students to explain their perspectives, listen to others, and reflect on the moral implications of their actions. This process not only resolves the immediate conflict but also teaches students valuable lessons about responsibility, accountability, and reconciliation. Such conflict-resolution practices reinforce the broader educational goal of fostering respectful relationships within the school community. The relatively small size of the Christian student community at SMP Negeri 3 SATAP Permata Kecubung allows for close interactions between teachers and students. With 34 Christian students and three Christian teachers, communication often occurs in a personal and supportive manner. Students have opportunities to interact directly with their teacher, ask questions, and receive individual guidance regarding moral or social concerns. This close communication enhances the effectiveness of moral instruction because the teacher can address specific challenges faced by students and provide tailored guidance based on their experiences. The findings also highlight that teacher communication competence contributes to students' motivation to practice respectful behavior beyond the classroom. Many respondents indicated that the lessons learned during Christian Religious Education classes influence how they interact with family members and friends outside school. Students reported becoming more aware of the importance of polite language, patience, and empathy in their daily communication. This transfer of learning from the classroom to real-life situations demonstrates that effective teacher communication can have a lasting impact on students' character development. The results of this study confirm that communication competence among Christian Religious Education teachers is a vital factor in cultivating social respect among students. Teachers who communicate biblical teachings clearly, respectfully, and interactively are able to create learning environments that encourage reflection, dialogue, and ethical growth. By connecting the moral message of Exodus 22:31 with practical social behavior, the teacher helps students understand that respect for others is an essential expression of their faith. Through consistent modeling, thoughtful dialogue, and engaging instructional strategies, Christian Religious Education teachers can guide students toward developing respectful attitudes that contribute to harmonious

relationships within the school community and beyond. The discussion of these findings underscores the broader significance of communication competence in character education. Social respect cannot be cultivated solely through rules or disciplinary measures; it must be nurtured through meaningful communication that encourages understanding, empathy, and moral reflection. Christian Religious Education teachers who demonstrate effective communication competence serve as both educators and moral mentors, guiding students to live out the values of respect, responsibility, and compassion in their everyday interactions. Such contributions are essential for preparing students to become individuals who not only possess academic knowledge but also demonstrate integrity and respect in their relationships with others.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the communication competence of Christian Religious Education teachers plays an essential role in cultivating social respect among students. The findings from SMP Negeri 3 SATAP Permata Kecubung show that effective communication in the classroom contributes significantly to students' understanding and practice of respectful social behavior. Through clear explanations, interactive dialogue, and respectful language, the Christian Religious Education teacher is able to translate biblical teachings into meaningful moral guidance for students. As a result, students not only gain cognitive knowledge about Christian values but also develop attitudes and behaviors that reflect those values in their daily interactions. The reflection on Book of Exodus 22:31 provides an important theological foundation for understanding social respect within Christian education. The biblical call to live as holy people encourages believers to maintain integrity and demonstrate ethical conduct in their relationships with others. In the educational context, this teaching becomes a guiding principle for shaping students' character. When teachers communicate biblical messages effectively, students are more likely to internalize these values and apply them in practical situations, such as showing politeness, respecting differences, and maintaining harmonious relationships with peers and teachers. The study highlights that teacher communication competence extends beyond the delivery of instructional content. It also involves modeling respectful attitudes, encouraging open discussion, and guiding students through reflective conversations about moral issues. By creating a supportive learning environment, teachers enable students to express their thoughts and learn how to communicate respectfully with others. This relational approach to teaching strengthens students' social awareness and helps them develop empathy, responsibility, and moral sensitivity. The communication competence of Christian Religious Education teachers is a crucial element in fostering social respect among students. Teachers who integrate biblical reflection, effective communication strategies, and ethical modeling can significantly influence students' character formation. Therefore, strengthening teacher communication competence should be considered an important priority in Christian education, as it contributes not only to academic learning but also to the development of students who embody Christian values in their social lives.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, R. S., & Gangel, K. O. (2007). *Christian education: Foundations for the future*. Moody Publishers.
- Banks, R., & Ledbetter, B. M. (2004). *Reviewing leadership: A Christian evaluation of current approaches*. Baker Academic.
- Beebe, S. A., Beebe, S. J., & Redmond, M. V. (2019). *Interpersonal communication: Relating to others* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Estep, J. R., Anthony, M. J., & Allison, G. R. (2008). *A theology for Christian education*. B&H Academic.
- Fee, G. D., & Stuart, D. (2014). *How to read the Bible for all its worth* (4th ed.). Zondervan.
- Harris, M. (2012). *Fashion me a people: Curriculum in the church* (Revised ed.). Westminster John Knox Press.
- Hill, B., & Walton, J. H. (2009). *A survey of the Old Testament* (3rd ed.). Zondervan.
- Knight, G. R. (2006). *Philosophy and education: An introduction in Christian perspective* (4th ed.). Andrews University Press.
- Köstenberger, A. J., & Patterson, R. D. (2011). *Invitation to biblical interpretation: Exploring the hermeneutical triad of history, literature, and theology*. Kregel Academic.
- Lickona, T. (2013). *Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility*. Bantam Books.
- Miller, D. L. (2011). *The Oxford handbook of evangelical theology*. Oxford University Press.
- Richards, L. O. (2002). *Creative Bible teaching*. Moody Publishers.
- Van Brummelen, H. (2009). *Walking with God in the classroom: Christian approaches to teaching and learning* (3rd ed.). Purposeful Design Publications.
- Wilhoit, J. C., & Dettoni, J. M. (1995). *Nurture that is Christian: Developmental perspectives on Christian education*. Baker Academic.