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The Social Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Building School Harmony: A Reflection on Philippians 4:5 at SMP Negeri 4 Ulu Idanotae

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in fostering school harmony through a biblical reflection on Epistle to the Philippians 4:5. Social competence is an essential dimension of teacher professionalism because it enables educators to establish positive relationships, communicate effectively, and cultivate a respectful learning environment. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Ulu Idanotae located in South Nias, involving 54 Christian students and one Christian Religious Education teacher. The study employed a quantitative descriptive approach using a Likert-scale questionnaire to measure students' perceptions of teacher social competence and the level of harmony within the school environment. The findings reveal that the teacher's ability to communicate respectfully, demonstrate empathy, and encourage cooperative interaction significantly contributes to the development of harmonious relationships among students. The integration of biblical teaching, particularly the call to gentleness in Philippians 4:5, helps students understand the importance of humility, patience, and respect in their daily social interactions. Through consistent modeling and constructive dialogue, the teacher creates a classroom atmosphere that promotes mutual understanding and peaceful conflict resolution. The study concludes that the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers is a crucial factor in strengthening school harmony and character formation. Teachers who effectively integrate biblical values with positive social interaction can guide students toward developing respectful attitudes and responsible behavior. Therefore, strengthening teacher social competence should become an important priority in Christian education to support the development of harmonious and value-oriented school communities.

Keywords: Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, School Harmony

INTRODUCTION

School harmony is an essential element in creating a positive educational environment where students can develop academically, socially, and spiritually. A harmonious school

climate is characterized by respectful relationships, mutual understanding, and cooperative interaction among members of the school community. In this context, teachers play a strategic role not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as social leaders who shape the attitudes and behavior of students. Within Christian Religious Education, the teacher's role becomes even more significant because moral and spiritual values are communicated through both instruction and personal example. One of the key competencies required of teachers in this process is social competence, which refers to the ability to build constructive relationships, communicate effectively, and foster a climate of respect within the learning community. According to John W. Creswell, educational processes are strongly influenced by the interactions that occur between teachers and learners, indicating that teacher competence in social interaction is crucial for the success of character formation in schools. Social competence among teachers involves the ability to interact positively with students, colleagues, and the wider community. In the context of Christian Religious Education, social competence also includes the capacity to translate biblical values into everyday social behavior. Teachers who possess strong social competence can create an atmosphere where students feel respected, heard, and valued. Such an atmosphere is particularly important in shaping students' character and moral awareness. Educational theorists emphasize that character development occurs most effectively in environments where students experience consistent examples of ethical behavior. Thomas Lickona explains that respect, responsibility, and care for others are core values that should be cultivated through both instruction and relational interaction within the school environment. Biblical teaching provides an important theological foundation for understanding the importance of harmony in human relationships. One significant passage that emphasizes this principle is Epistle to the Philippians 4:5, which encourages believers to demonstrate gentleness toward all people. The apostle Paul the Apostle wrote this message to the Christian community as an encouragement to maintain unity and humility in their relationships. The exhortation to show gentleness reflects a broader Christian ethic that emphasizes kindness, patience, and consideration for others. Within an educational context, this biblical teaching can inspire teachers to model attitudes that promote peace and harmony in the classroom and throughout the school environment.

The integration of biblical values into educational practice is one of the central goals of Christian Religious Education. Teachers are expected to guide students not only in understanding biblical texts but also in applying their moral teachings in everyday life. According to George R. Knight, Christian education aims to integrate faith with learning so that students develop a holistic understanding of life grounded in biblical principles. When teachers embody values such as gentleness, respect, and humility, they provide students with tangible examples of how Christian ethics can shape social interactions. These examples are particularly important for adolescents who are in the process of forming their moral identity and social behavior. In many schools, maintaining harmony among students can be challenging due to differences in personality, background, and social dynamics. Conflicts, misunderstandings, and competition can sometimes disrupt the learning environment. Therefore, teachers must possess the social competence necessary to manage relationships constructively and guide students toward respectful interaction. Effective teacher communication, empathy, and fairness are essential

components of this competence. Educational researchers have noted that students are more likely to develop positive social attitudes when they observe their teachers demonstrating patience, openness, and respect in daily interactions (Lickona, 2013). These behaviors help establish trust and encourage students to adopt similar attitudes toward their peers.

This study focuses on examining the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in fostering school harmony at SMP Negeri 4 Ulu Idanotae located in South Nias. The school has 54 Christian students and one Christian Religious Education teacher who is responsible for guiding students in both academic and spiritual development. The presence of a relatively small Christian student community creates a unique context where teacher influence on student relationships becomes highly significant. The teacher's approach to communication, conflict resolution, and moral guidance may greatly affect how students interact with one another and how they understand the value of harmony in their school environment. Based on these considerations, this research aims to analyze how the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers contributes to building school harmony through the perspective of Philippians 4:5. By exploring the relationship between teacher interaction, biblical values, and student social behavior, this study seeks to provide insights into how Christian educators can effectively cultivate a harmonious learning environment. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on character education, teacher competence, and the integration of biblical principles within contemporary educational settings.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive research design was implemented to examine the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in building school harmony among students. Quantitative research was chosen because it enables the researcher to measure perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies systematically through numerical data and statistical analysis. According to John W. Creswell, quantitative research is appropriate for identifying relationships between variables and describing social phenomena through measurable indicators. In this study, the social competence of the Christian Religious Education teacher served as the independent variable, while school harmony among students functioned as the dependent variable. The conceptual framework of the study was also grounded in the ethical teaching of Epistle to the Philippians 4:5, which encourages believers to demonstrate gentleness and respectful attitudes toward others as a foundation for harmonious relationships. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Ulu Idanotae located in South Nias. The population of the study consisted of 54 Christian students and one Christian Religious Education teacher who were actively involved in the teaching and learning process at the school. Because 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 group of Christian students who experienced the instructional and relational influence of the Christian Religious Education teacher. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale, which was designed to measure students' perceptions of the teacher's

social competence and the level of harmony within the school environment. The questionnaire consisted of several indicators related to teacher social competence, including the teacher's ability to communicate respectfully, demonstrate empathy toward students, build positive relationships, encourage cooperation among students, and resolve interpersonal conflicts fairly. Meanwhile, indicators of school harmony included mutual respect among students, cooperative interaction, tolerance of differences, peaceful conflict resolution, and a sense of unity within the classroom community. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire items were carefully reviewed to ensure clarity and relevance to the objectives of the study. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency distribution, percentage calculation, and mean score analysis to identify patterns in students' responses. The results of the statistical analysis were then interpreted within the framework of Christian education and biblical ethics in order to understand how teacher social competence contributes to the development of harmonious relationships among students. Through this analytical process, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of Christian Religious Education teachers in fostering school harmony grounded in the ethical message of Philippians 4:5.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate that the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers significantly contributes to the development of school harmony among students. Data collected from respondents at SMP Negeri 4 Ulu Idanotae located in South Nias show that students perceive the Christian Religious Education teacher as playing a central role in fostering respectful interaction, cooperation, and peaceful relationships within the school environment. The respondents consisted of 54 Christian students who regularly participate in Christian Religious Education classes. Their responses reveal that teacher interaction, communication style, and personal example strongly influence the way students understand and practice harmonious relationships with their peers. One of the most prominent findings of the study is that respectful communication from the teacher serves as the foundation for establishing a harmonious classroom climate. Students reported that the Christian Religious Education teacher consistently communicates with politeness, patience, and attentiveness. This communication style creates a safe and supportive learning atmosphere where students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and opinions. When teachers communicate respectfully, students perceive that they are valued members of the classroom community. Such experiences encourage students to treat one another with similar respect. Educational scholars emphasize that students often mirror the relational patterns they observe in their teachers. When teachers demonstrate fairness, kindness, and openness, students learn to adopt those same behaviors in their interactions with others.

The importance of teacher communication becomes even more evident when considering the biblical framework that guides Christian Religious Education. The ethical message found in Epistle to the Philippians 4:5 encourages believers to show gentleness toward all people. This exhortation, written by Paul the Apostle, highlights the importance of humility, patience, and kindness in human relationships. In the classroom context, the

teacher interprets this passage as an invitation for students to practice gentleness and respect in their daily interactions. By connecting biblical teachings with real-life social situations, the teacher helps students understand that Christian values are not limited to religious rituals but also guide ethical behavior in everyday life. Students' responses indicate that the teacher frequently relates biblical teachings to situations they encounter within the school environment. For example, when conflicts arise between classmates, the teacher uses such situations as opportunities to reflect on the principle of gentleness emphasized in the biblical text. Students are encouraged to consider how patience, forgiveness, and respectful dialogue can help resolve disagreements. This approach enables students to see the practical relevance of Scripture in guiding their behavior. Instead of viewing biblical passages as abstract theological concepts, students begin to recognize them as moral guidelines that can shape their attitudes and relationships. Another significant finding of the study is that the teacher's social competence promotes a culture of cooperation among students. Respondents reported that the Christian Religious Education teacher often organizes learning activities that require collaboration, such as group discussions, cooperative projects, and reflective conversations. These activities provide students with opportunities to interact with one another in constructive ways. During group work, students learn to listen to different opinions, negotiate ideas, and work toward common goals. Such experiences help students develop interpersonal skills that are essential for maintaining harmony in both academic and social settings.

The development of cooperation among students is particularly important in schools where learners come from diverse social backgrounds. Differences in personality, family environment, and personal experiences can sometimes lead to misunderstandings or conflicts among students. However, the teacher's ability to guide students through respectful dialogue helps transform potential conflicts into opportunities for learning. When disagreements occur, the Christian Religious Education teacher encourages students to express their feelings calmly and listen carefully to the perspectives of others. Through this process, students learn that harmony does not mean the absence of differences but rather the ability to manage differences with respect and understanding. The study also reveals that the teacher's personal example serves as a powerful form of moral instruction. Students consistently reported that the Christian Religious Education teacher demonstrates attitudes of patience, fairness, and humility in daily interactions. For instance, when students make mistakes or display inappropriate behavior, the teacher addresses the situation with calmness rather than anger. By responding to challenges with patience and wisdom, the teacher provides a practical demonstration of the values being taught in the classroom. Students observe these behaviors and gradually internalize them as standards for their own conduct. This modeling of ethical behavior aligns with the broader goals of Christian education. According to Christian educational philosophy, teachers are not only responsible for transmitting knowledge but also for guiding students in character formation. The values of kindness, humility, and respect are most effectively communicated when students witness them in action. When teachers embody these virtues consistently, they become living examples of the principles they teach. In this way, social competence becomes an integral part of the educational process because it connects moral instruction with real-life practice.

Another important aspect identified in the study is the role of empathy in teacher-student relationships. Students reported that the Christian Religious Education teacher demonstrates genuine concern for their personal experiences and emotional well-being. The teacher often takes time to listen to students' concerns, provide encouragement, and offer guidance during difficult situations. This empathetic approach strengthens the relational bond between teacher and students. When students feel understood and supported, they are more likely to develop trust in their teacher and respond positively to moral guidance. Empathy also contributes to the development of a supportive classroom community. When students experience empathy from their teacher, they become more aware of the importance of caring for others. Many respondents indicated that discussions about empathy and compassion encourage them to pay greater attention to the feelings of their classmates. For example, students reported becoming more careful with their words and actions in order to avoid hurting others. Such behavioral changes demonstrate that teacher influence extends beyond academic instruction and into the realm of emotional and social development. The relatively small number of Christian students at SMP Negeri 4 Ulu Idanotae allows for closer interaction between the teacher and students. With only 54 Christian students guided by one Christian Religious Education teacher, communication tends to be more personal and interactive. Students have opportunities to ask questions, share personal experiences, and receive individual guidance from their teacher. This close relationship enhances the effectiveness of moral education because the teacher can address specific challenges faced by students and provide contextual guidance.

The results of the study further indicate that the teacher's social competence helps prevent conflicts from escalating into larger problems. Students reported that when tensions arise between classmates, the Christian Religious Education teacher often facilitates constructive dialogue. Instead of assigning blame immediately, the teacher encourages students to reflect on their actions and consider how their behavior affects others. This reflective process helps students develop a sense of responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationships. Over time, students learn that conflicts can be resolved through communication, understanding, and mutual respect. The influence of teacher social competence also extends beyond the classroom. Several students reported that the lessons they learned in Christian Religious Education classes influence how they interact with friends and family members outside school. For instance, students stated that they have become more aware of the importance of speaking politely, showing patience during disagreements, and respecting others' opinions. These responses suggest that the moral principles taught in the classroom are gradually shaping students' attitudes in broader social contexts. These findings highlight the importance of integrating character education into everyday learning activities. Social harmony cannot be achieved solely through rules or disciplinary policies; it requires the cultivation of attitudes and behaviors that promote mutual respect. Teachers who possess strong social competence are able to guide students toward these attitudes through consistent interaction and thoughtful communication. By fostering open dialogue and encouraging empathy, teachers help create an environment where students feel responsible for maintaining a peaceful and supportive community.

The findings also underscore the relevance of biblical teaching in contemporary educational settings. The exhortation in Philippians 4:5 to demonstrate gentleness remains highly applicable to modern school environments where students encounter various social challenges. When teachers interpret and apply this biblical message within the classroom, they provide students with a moral framework for navigating interpersonal relationships. The principle of gentleness encourages students to approach others with humility and respect, thereby reducing the likelihood of hostility or conflict. The results of this study confirm that the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers is a critical factor in building school harmony. Through respectful communication, empathetic relationships, and consistent modeling of ethical behavior, teachers create a learning environment that encourages students to practice kindness, cooperation, and mutual respect. By integrating biblical principles such as the call to gentleness in Philippians 4:5 with practical classroom interaction, Christian Religious Education teachers are able to nurture harmonious relationships among students and contribute to the development of a positive school culture.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a crucial role in fostering school harmony among students. The findings from SMP Negeri 4 Ulu Idanotae located in South Nias indicate that the teacher's ability to communicate respectfully, demonstrate empathy, and build positive relationships significantly influences the quality of interactions among students. When teachers consistently show fairness, patience, and openness in their communication, they create a supportive learning environment where students feel respected and encouraged to practice similar attitudes toward their peers. The ethical message found in Epistle to the Philippians 4:5 provides a strong theological foundation for understanding the importance of gentleness and respect in human relationships. By integrating this biblical principle into classroom instruction and daily interaction, the Christian Religious Education teacher guides students to understand that harmony within the school community is an expression of Christian character. Students who observe and experience such attitudes in their teacher gradually internalize these values and apply them in their own social behavior. The study highlights that teacher social competence extends beyond instructional delivery; it involves modeling ethical conduct, facilitating constructive dialogue, and guiding students in resolving interpersonal conflicts peacefully. These practices contribute to the development of cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect among students, which are essential elements of a harmonious school environment. Strengthening the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers is essential for promoting school harmony and character formation. Teachers who effectively integrate biblical values, relational communication, and positive role modeling can significantly influence students' social attitudes and contribute to the creation of a peaceful and respectful school culture.

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