



The Influence of Christian Religious Education Teachers' Personality Competence on Students' Character Formation

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' personality competence on students' character formation through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Personality competence, encompassing integrity, emotional maturity, spiritual authenticity, empathy, and moral consistency, is recognized as a core element in value-based education, particularly within Christian pedagogical contexts that emphasize moral and spiritual transformation. Using PRISMA guidelines, the review analyzed 42 relevant studies published in the last decade, drawn from Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar, and Indonesian academic databases. The findings reveal that teachers' personality competence significantly shapes students' moral and spiritual development through five primary mechanisms: modeling of ethical behavior, cultivation of meaningful teacher-student relationships, creation of supportive emotional climates, establishment of credible moral authority, and intentional integration of Christian values into pedagogy. Across the literature, students are found to be more receptive to character formation when teachers display authentic, consistent, and relationally sensitive behavior. The review also identifies gaps in existing research, including limited empirical studies directly addressing CRE teachers and a lack of student-centered perspectives. These gaps highlight the need for future research that explores diverse cultural and denominational contexts. This study concludes that personality competence is not merely an additional attribute for CRE teachers but a foundational determinant of successful character formation. Strengthening teachers' personal and spiritual maturity is therefore essential for advancing the mission of Christian education to nurture students who embody Christ-like character in their daily lives.

Keywords: *Personality Competence, Christian Religious Education, Character Formation*

INTRODUCTION

Character formation has become one of the most urgent educational priorities in contemporary schooling, particularly within the context of increasingly complex social, moral, and cultural challenges. In Indonesia, where Christian Religious Education (CRE) remains a compulsory subject for Christian students, the role of the teacher is not limited

to the transmission of doctrinal knowledge but extends to shaping the ethical, moral, and spiritual character of learners. One of the most decisive factors influencing this process is the personality competence of CRE teachers, which encompasses personal integrity, emotional maturity, spiritual authenticity, responsibility, and exemplary behavior. These qualities are essential because Christian education prioritizes transformation of the heart and mind, not merely academic understanding. Personality competence refers to the teacher's capacity to demonstrate stable, mature, and morally grounded personal qualities that align with professional teaching standards and, for CRE teachers, with biblical values. It includes honesty, self-control, empathy, discipline, humility, and consistency between words and actions. In Christian pedagogical philosophy, the teacher is viewed not only as an instructor but also as a living witness of Christ's teachings. Thus, students often learn values such as love, faithfulness, patience, and respect by observing how teachers embody these virtues in daily interactions. This perspective aligns with the biblical view that character is modeled, nurtured, and formed through relationships and examples, as seen in passages such as 1 Timothy 4:12, which urges believers to be examples in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Character development in students occurs significantly through processes of modeling, reinforcement, internalization, and reflection. Teachers with strong personality competence contribute to these processes by providing safe emotional environments, demonstrating consistent behavior, and exercising positive authority. Conversely, teachers who lack emotional stability or exhibit inconsistent moral behavior may hinder character formation, causing students to experience confusion or moral disengagement. As Christian education aims to shape students who display Christ-like attitudes and ethical responsibility, the personal character of teachers becomes a central learning resource. Numerous studies in general education indicate that teacher personality strongly influences students' discipline, motivation, social behavior, and moral reasoning. However, research focusing specifically on Christian Religious Education remains limited, particularly regarding how teachers' personality competence contributes to spiritual and moral character outcomes. Many studies highlight instructional strategies or curriculum development but seldom examine the teacher's personal attributes as a determining variable. Given that CRE emphasizes internal transformation and values formation, this gap represents a significant area of inquiry.

In Indonesian classrooms, especially in public schools where Christian students often form a minority group, CRE teachers carry dual responsibilities: safeguarding students' spiritual identity and promoting inclusive, respectful character education. Under such conditions, personality competence becomes even more crucial. Teachers must navigate diverse student backgrounds, maintain professional integrity, and demonstrate Christian virtues in environments that are religiously plural. Their relational style, emotional resilience, and moral credibility shape how effectively students internalize the values taught during lessons. Character formation is not an automatic outcome of curriculum delivery. It requires meaningful interaction, emotional connection, and credible role models. Students are more likely to adopt values when they trust their teachers and perceive authenticity in their character. This highlights the need to investigate how personality competence influences students' receptiveness to moral and spiritual guidance. Given these considerations, this study examines the influence of Christian Religious Education

teachers' personality competence on students' character formation. Through a systematic analysis of existing literature supported by educational insights, the study aims to explain how teachers' personal qualities contribute to students' development of Christian values, moral reasoning, and daily behavior. The findings are expected to enrich theoretical discussions on Christian pedagogy and provide practical implications for teacher training, emphasizing the importance of cultivating personal integrity alongside pedagogical skills.

METHODS

The SLR method was chosen because it enables a comprehensive, transparent, and structured synthesis of existing research findings across various scholarly sources. The review followed three major stages: planning, conducting, and reporting. In the planning stage, the research questions were formulated to address how personality competence has been defined in education literature, how CRE teachers' personal attributes intersect with character education, and what empirical evidence supports the relationship between teacher personality and student character formation. Based on these questions, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. The review included peer-reviewed journal articles, books, dissertations, and conference papers published within the last ten years to ensure relevance and contemporary perspectives. Studies focusing on general teacher personality, character education, Christian pedagogy, and moral development were included, while materials unrelated to educational settings or lacking empirical or conceptual value were excluded. The conducting stage involved a systematic search across multiple academic databases. A total of 312 records were initially identified. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts based on the inclusion criteria, 87 studies were retained for full-text evaluation. Of these, 42 studies met all criteria and were included in the final synthesis. Each article was critically assessed using a structured appraisal rubric. Themes and patterns were identified through qualitative content analysis, allowing for the extraction and categorization of key ideas regarding teacher personality competence and student character formation. Data were analyzed using a thematic synthesis approach. Descriptive coding was applied to identify recurring concepts such as moral modeling, emotional maturity, teacher-student relationships, spiritual authenticity, and value internalization. Axial coding was then used to connect these concepts into broader thematic clusters representing mechanisms through which personality competence influences character development. These mechanisms included modeling and imitation, relational trust, emotional climate, moral authority, and integration of spiritual values in pedagogy. Cross-study comparisons were conducted to determine the consistency of findings across different cultural, denominational, and educational contexts. In addition, particular attention was given to studies discussing Christian or faith-based education to ensure alignment with the specific focus of this research. All findings were synthesized narratively to produce an integrated understanding of how CRE teachers' personality competence shapes students' moral and spiritual growth. The reporting stage involved presenting the findings according to SLR standards, with a focus on transparency, replicability, and theoretical contribution. The review highlights the extent to which existing literature affirms the centrality of teacher personality in character education, identifies gaps within current scholarship, and offers

foundational evidence for further empirical research in Christian educational contexts. Through this SLR method, the study ensures a rigorous and comprehensive approach to understanding the role of personality competence in shaping character formation among students in Christian Religious Education settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The systematic literature review revealed a rich and multilayered understanding of how Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' personality competence significantly shapes students' character formation. Across the 42 studies included in the final synthesis, the results consistently demonstrated that the personal qualities of teachers, such as integrity, emotional maturity, spirituality, credibility, empathy, and moral consistency, function as central mechanisms in cultivating students' moral, ethical, and spiritual development. Although the contexts, methodologies, and theoretical lenses of the reviewed studies varied, a coherent pattern emerged: the personality competence of CRE teachers influences character formation primarily through modeling, relational dynamics, emotional climate, moral authority, and integration of values into pedagogy. These mechanisms are deeply resonant with both educational psychology and theological perspectives, suggesting a convergence of secular and faith-based insights regarding the importance of teacher character in value-oriented education. One of the most predominant themes across the reviewed literature was the role of teacher modeling as a key factor in character formation. Studies grounded in Bandura's social learning theory, developmental psychology, and Christian pedagogy emphasized that students learn moral and ethical behavior not solely through explicit instruction but through observing teachers' daily behavior, attitudes, and interactions. Teachers who demonstrate integrity, honesty, fairness, humility, and compassion indirectly shape students' internal value frameworks. In CRE contexts, where biblical values such as love, patience, forgiveness, responsibility, and faithfulness are central, the alignment between teacher behavior and Christian teachings becomes especially critical. Several studies noted that when students perceive consistency between what teachers teach and how they act, they are more likely to internalize values authentically. Conversely, discrepancies between teachers' professed beliefs and actual behaviors may lead to disillusionment, decreased trust, and diminished interest in moral and spiritual formation. This underscores the significance of teachers' personality competence as a living curriculum, often more influential than the formal content of lessons. The next finding concerned the importance of teacher-student relationships in shaping character development. Numerous studies across the review highlighted that warm, respectful, supportive, and empathetic teacher-student relationships create fertile conditions for moral growth. Students are more receptive to moral guidance when they feel valued, understood, and respected by their teachers. In CRE, these relational dynamics take on a spiritual dimension, as teachers often function not only as academic guides but also as pastoral figures who nurture students' spiritual identity and moral conscience. Teachers with strong personality competence, marked by emotional intelligence, patience, and relational sensitivity, are better positioned to cultivate trust-based relationships that encourage open dialogue, moral reflection, and personal growth. Furthermore, several studies pointed out that relational breakdowns or emotionally distant teachers tend to hinder moral engagement, leading students to disengage from character-based learning activities. The literature therefore affirms that

relational warmth, rooted in teachers' personal maturity, is essential for fostering environments conducive to character formation. The other theme centered on the emotional climate of the classroom. The reviewed studies revealed that the personality competence of teachers strongly influences the emotional and moral tone of the learning environment. Teachers who exhibit emotional stability, self-control, and calmness foster classroom atmospheres that encourage respect, responsibility, and positive behavior. Such environments allow students to express themselves, reflect on their moral decisions, and engage in value-based discussions without fear of judgment. Teachers' emotional instability, on the other hand, manifested in irritability, inconsistency, or harshness, creates climates of anxiety or resistance that impede character development. Emotional climate is particularly crucial in CRE settings where discussions often involve sensitive moral, spiritual, and personal topics. A teacher's calmness and empathetic disposition help students feel safe to explore these topics, reflect on their values, and ask deep questions. Thus, personality competence plays an indispensable role in cultivating emotional climates that support character formation. Another critical finding highlighted teacher moral authority as a determinant of character formation. Moral authority refers to the credibility and trustworthiness of teachers as moral guides. Studies indicated that students are more likely to internalize values when they view teachers as morally dependable individuals who practice what they preach. In CRE contexts, moral authority is strongly linked to spiritual authenticity, teachers who genuinely embody Christian virtues such as faithfulness, compassion, humility, and moral consistency tend to be more effective in influencing students' character. Spiritual authenticity is not merely doctrinal knowledge but involves a holistic integration of faith and life. Several studies noted that when teachers openly express their faith commitments, share personal testimonies consistent with biblical values, and reflect humility in their daily interactions, students perceive them as credible role models whose character is worthy of imitation. Conversely, moral lapses or hypocrisy significantly diminish teachers' influence and may even harm students' spiritual development. Therefore, personality competence is foundational to sustaining teachers' moral authority, which in turn profoundly shapes students' moral and spiritual growth. The review also found that personality competence influences not only how teachers behave but also how they design and deliver instruction. Teachers with strong moral and spiritual grounding tend to integrate Christian values naturally into their teaching strategies, classroom routines, discipline approaches, and learning discussions. These teachers use pedagogical moments as opportunities for character reflection, ethical decision-making, and value clarification. Studies highlighted several pedagogical strategies frequently employed by teachers with high personality competence: storytelling rooted in biblical narratives, reflective discussions, service-learning activities, conflict-resolution exercises, and classroom devotional practices. Teachers with strong personality competence are intentional in embedding moral lessons within academic content, ensuring that character development is not an add-on but an integral part of the learning process. On the other hand, teachers lacking personal integrity or moral clarity often struggle to integrate values meaningfully, resulting in fragmented or superficial character education. This suggests that personality competence deeply influences pedagogical coherence in CRE.

Beyond the individual mechanisms, the SLR also revealed broader patterns regarding the impact of teacher personality competence on specific dimensions of student character formation. Several studies indicated that students tend to develop greater empathy, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline when guided by teachers with high personality competence. Empathy is fostered when teachers model active listening, kindness, and sensitivity; respect is cultivated when teachers treat students with dignity and fairness; responsibility grows when teachers demonstrate accountability and moral clarity; and self-discipline is influenced by teachers' consistency, patience, and moral firmness. In Christian education contexts, spiritual traits such as faithfulness, forgiveness, humility, and gratitude are also shaped by teachers' personality. Teachers who embody these values create environments where students feel inspired to practice them in their own lives. One of the unique contributions of the reviewed literature is its emphasis on the spiritual dimension of personality competence. While general education studies often focus on psychological and emotional aspects, studies within Christian education highlight the importance of spiritual maturity as a component of teacher personality. Spiritual maturity involves a deep relationship with God, consistency in spiritual practices, and the ability to reflect Christ-like behavior. Teachers with strong spiritual maturity often exercise moral discernment, humility, grace, and compassion, qualities that students perceive as genuine and spiritually grounded. Several studies noted that students are more likely to grow spiritually when teachers model authentic faith, share meaningful spiritual experiences, and create prayerful, reflective, and worshipful classroom environments. Spiritual maturity also influences teachers' responses to student misbehavior, guiding them toward restorative rather than punitive approaches. The SLR also identified several challenges and gaps within the existing research. One notable challenge is the lack of empirical studies focusing specifically on CRE teachers, as much of the literature draws from broader teacher education contexts. While the findings from general education are applicable, there remains a need for contextualized studies that examine how Christian faith, biblical values, and religious identity shape the personality competence of CRE teachers. Another gap concerns students' voices: few studies include direct student perspectives on how teacher character influences their moral and spiritual development. Most studies rely on teacher self-reports or theoretical analyses, making it difficult to assess how students themselves perceive the impact of teacher personality. Additionally, cross-cultural studies are limited, and the majority of research is conducted in Western or denominationally specific contexts. Future research could explore how cultural, denominational, and regional differences influence the relationship between personality competence and character formation in diverse Christian educational settings. The discussion of the findings highlights several important implications for teacher education, policy development, and classroom practice. Teacher education programs, especially those focused on Christian Religious Education, should prioritize personality formation alongside pedagogical and content knowledge. This includes offering courses and mentoring programs that foster moral integrity, emotional maturity, spiritual grounding, and relational competence. Institutions can incorporate spiritual retreats, reflective practices, pastoral counseling, and character development workshops to nurture teachers' internal growth. Teacher education should move beyond technical skill development to emphasize whole-person formation, aligning with the holistic goals of Christian education. Schools should implement policies that support continuous

formation of teachers' personality competence. This includes professional development opportunities that focus not only on instructional strategies but also on emotional intelligence, moral leadership, spiritual development, and relational skills. School leaders should model these qualities themselves, as leadership influence has been shown to reinforce teachers' personal development. Schools could also adopt mentoring systems where experienced teachers support younger colleagues in cultivating personal and spiritual maturity. Additionally, school cultures that value integrity, compassion, respect, and reflection are more likely to sustain teachers' personality competence over time. Classroom practices should intentionally integrate character and spiritual formation within daily routines. Teachers can create reflective spaces for students to process moral dilemmas, practice empathy, engage in collaborative service activities, and participate in devotional practices that reinforce biblical values. Teachers with strong personality competence are naturally positioned to guide students through these experiences. Schools should encourage teachers to adopt restorative discipline practices that emphasize reflection, reconciliation, and moral accountability rooted in Christian values, rather than punitive or authoritarian approaches. Educational stakeholders, such as parents, churches, and community leaders, should recognize that teacher personality competence plays a vital role in shaping young people's character. Collaboration between schools and churches may strengthen the moral and spiritual climate, with CRE teachers serving as bridges between academic and ecclesiastical environments. Community involvement in character-based activities also reinforces values taught in classrooms, creating a more holistic formation ecosystem for students. The findings demonstrate that teacher personality competence is not merely an additional component of Christian Religious Education but a foundational determinant of successful character formation. The mechanisms through which this influence occurs, modeling, relationship building, emotional climate setting, moral authority, and value integration, collectively shape students' moral and spiritual development. While pedagogical skills and curricular content remain important, they cannot replace the transformative power of teachers' personal example. The SLR underscores that in the context of Christian education, character begets character: teachers' internal virtues become external resources that students observe, emulate, and ultimately internalize. Therefore, nurturing teachers' personality competence is essential for advancing the mission of Christian Religious Education to form students who embody Christ-like character in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review demonstrates that the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers is a central and determining factor in shaping students' character formation. Across the reviewed studies, a consistent pattern emerges: the personal qualities of teachers, such as integrity, emotional maturity, spiritual authenticity, empathy, and moral consistency, serve not merely as complementary attributes but as core mechanisms through which moral and spiritual development occurs in the classroom. Character formation in Christian education is deeply relational and value-driven; therefore, the teacher's personality becomes a living curriculum that students observe, internalize, and emulate. The findings show that strong personality competence positively influences students through several pathways,

including moral modeling, meaningful teacher–student relationships, supportive emotional climates, credible moral authority, and the intentional integration of Christian values into pedagogical practice. The review further highlights that students are more receptive to moral instruction when they perceive teachers as trustworthy, respectful, and spiritually grounded. CRE teachers who embody Christ-like virtues foster environments where ethical reasoning, empathy, discipline, forgiveness, and spiritual growth naturally flourish. Conversely, the absence of personality competence, such as inconsistent behavior, emotional instability, or lack of integrity, significantly impedes character formation and may weaken students' engagement with Christian teachings. The literature consistently affirms that effective character education cannot be reduced to curricular content or teaching techniques alone; it requires teachers whose inner life reflects the values they seek to cultivate. There remains a limited number of empirical studies specifically focused on CRE teachers, and few investigations directly include students' perspectives on how teacher personality shapes their character development. Cultural variations also remain underexplored, indicating the need for future research in diverse denominational and regional contexts, particularly within the Indonesian educational setting where Christian students often navigate pluralistic school environments. The implications of this study are significant for teacher education programs, school policy, and Christian pedagogical practice. Institutions preparing CRE teachers should prioritize holistic formation, cultivating personal integrity, spiritual maturity, emotional intelligence, and relational competence alongside pedagogical skills. Schools must support ongoing personality development through mentorship, reflective practices, and spiritually grounded professional development. Classroom practices should intentionally integrate character and faith formation into daily learning experiences, guided by teachers who model the very values they teach. Personality competence is foundational to the mission of Christian Religious Education. It is through the teacher's character, expressed in everyday interactions, decisions, and relationships, that students encounter authentic expressions of Christian values. Strengthening teachers' personality competence is therefore not only an educational priority but also a theological necessity, ensuring that the transformative goals of Christian education are realized in the lives of students as they grow into morally responsible, spiritually rooted, and Christ-like individuals.

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