



The Influence of Christian Religious Education Teachers' Creativity on Learning Motivation in Christian Religious Education

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of Christian Religious Education teachers' creativity on students' learning motivation through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of research published between 2015 and 2024. The review synthesizes findings from 23 national and international empirical studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of how creative teaching practices shape student engagement in Christian Religious Education. The analysis reveals that teacher creativity significantly enhances students' cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual motivation. Creative pedagogical strategies, such as digital storytelling, project-based learning, dramatization of biblical narratives, and contextualized reflection, make learning more meaningful, relatable, and enjoyable for students. These methods stimulate curiosity, promote active participation, and foster deeper comprehension of Christian values. The results also show that creativity contributes to a positive emotional climate by reducing student anxiety, increasing confidence, and encouraging open expression in spiritual discussions. The review highlights that creative teachers are better able to address learner diversity through differentiated instruction, thereby strengthening students' sense of inclusion and intrinsic motivation. However, challenges such as limited resources, inadequate training, and restrictive curriculum structures may hinder the implementation of creative teaching in CRE classrooms. Overall, the study concludes that teacher creativity is a crucial determinant of learning motivation in Christian Religious Education and should be prioritized in teacher training programs, school policies, and curriculum development. Strengthening creative competencies among CRE teachers will help foster transformative learning experiences that support academic growth, character formation, and spiritual development.

Keywords: *Teachers' Creativity, Learning Motivation, Christian Education*

INTRODUCTION

Learning motivation is one of the most central determinants of successful learning in Christian Religious Education. In the classroom, students' willingness, enthusiasm, and persistence in engaging with learning activities are shaped not only by internal factors but

also by the external stimuli provided by the teacher. Among these external factors, the creativity of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a crucial role in ensuring that the learning process becomes meaningful, attractive, and transformative. Creativity in teaching refers to the ability of teachers to design, implement, and adapt various learning strategies, methods, and media in ways that stimulate students' curiosity, encourage active participation, and promote deeper understanding of Christian values. In the context of Christian Religious Education, creative teaching is expected to go beyond transmitting doctrinal knowledge; it aims to cultivate spiritual formation, moral character, and reflective thinking, which require a dynamic and engaging learning climate. The rapid changes in educational paradigms, shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered learning, have increased expectations for teachers to adopt more innovative approaches. Christian Religious Education teachers are required not only to master theological content but also to transform that content into learning experiences that resonate with the diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and spiritual needs of students. Creativity becomes essential in bridging abstract Christian teachings with real-life situations faced by students in contemporary society. When teachers creatively integrate storytelling, project-based learning, multimedia presentations, role-play, games, or contextualized biblical reflections, students tend to perceive the lessons as more relevant and enjoyable. This relevance is a key trigger for learning motivation, as students are more inclined to engage with learning materials that they find meaningful and connected to their identity and daily lives. Creativity in teaching helps Christian Religious Education teachers respond to the challenges of modern youth culture. Today's learners are digital natives who are accustomed to interactive and visually rich content. Traditional methods alone may not be sufficient to maintain their attention or encourage deeper exploration of Christian faith. A creative teacher is able to incorporate digital platforms, collaborative activities, and experiential learning that align with students' interests and cognitive tendencies. Such innovative approaches can transform Christian Religious Education learning from passive listening to active exploration. When students feel that learning activities stimulate their imagination, challenge their thinking, and provide opportunities for self-expression, their intrinsic motivation naturally increases. Motivated learners demonstrate higher persistence, improved comprehension, and greater willingness to apply biblical values in personal and social contexts.

Teacher creativity also fosters a positive emotional climate in the classroom, which significantly influences learning motivation. A creative teacher typically demonstrates enthusiasm, flexibility, and humor, which create a warm and supportive learning environment. In Christian Religious Education, where spiritual and moral development are central, emotional engagement is a vital component. Creative learning activities often promote collaboration, empathy, and reflection, allowing students to feel valued and heard. When students experience positive emotions during learning, such as joy, interest, and inspiration, they develop stronger motivation to participate actively and internalize Christian values. Furthermore, creativity enables teachers to differentiate learning according to students' abilities and needs, ensuring that all learners feel capable and involved. This inclusivity strengthens students' self-efficacy, a psychological factor closely linked to learning motivation. Several empirical studies highlight the strong connection between teacher creativity and student motivation, particularly in religious and moral education contexts. Students who are taught by creative teachers tend to show higher

engagement, improved attitudes toward learning, and better academic outcomes. In Christian Religious Education, creativity is even more crucial because it helps translate spiritual truths into practical and relatable forms. Therefore, examining the influence of teachers' creativity on students' learning motivation becomes essential for improving Christian Religious Education teaching practices and enhancing students' holistic development. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective Christian Religious Education pedagogy, emphasizing the need for teachers to integrate creativity as a core competency in order to inspire and empower students in their faith journey and academic achievement.

METHODS

This study employed the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to comprehensively identify, analyze, and synthesize research findings related to the influence of teachers' creativity on learning motivation within the context of Christian Religious Education. The SLR approach was chosen because it provides a structured and transparent process for mapping existing knowledge, evaluating the quality of evidence, and generating synthesized conclusions rooted in empirical studies. Unlike traditional literature reviews, SLR follows a rigorous protocol that minimizes bias, ensures replicability, and allows researchers to gather a holistic understanding of the research topic. Through this method, the study aimed to compile relevant findings that can strengthen theoretical and practical insights on how creative teaching practices impact students' motivation in Christian Religious Education settings. The SLR process consisted of three major stages: planning, conducting, and reporting. During the planning stage, the research questions were formulated to align with the study's objective, focusing on how teachers' creativity influences students' learning motivation in Christian Religious Education. Subsequently, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. The inclusion criteria required that the articles: were published between 2015 and 2024, focused on teacher creativity, learning motivation, or Christian Religious Education, were empirical studies, and were written in English or Indonesian. Articles unrelated to educational settings, lacking empirical data, or focused solely on theological constructs without pedagogical relevance were excluded. Databases chosen for the search included Google Scholar, ERIC, DOAJ, and SINTA, as these platforms provide extensive access to national and international academic publications in the field of education and Christian studies. During the conducting stage, keywords such as "teacher creativity," "learning motivation," "Christian Religious Education," "creative teaching," and "Christian Religious Education pedagogy" were combined using Boolean operators to optimize the search results. The initial search yielded 312 articles, which were then screened through title and abstract review. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 57 articles remained for full-text analysis. Quality appraisal was conducted using a modified checklist, focusing on research design, data validity, methodological rigor, and relevance to the research topic. Ultimately, 23 high-quality studies were selected for synthesis. In the reporting stage, the findings were categorized into thematic areas, including creative teaching strategies, motivational outcomes, student engagement, and the role of teacher competence in Christian Religious Education. Data were synthesized narratively to explain patterns, similarities, and differences across studies. This SLR method enabled a comprehensive and evidence-

based understanding of how teachers' creativity significantly contributes to enhancing learning motivation in Christian Religious Education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the systematic literature review conducted in this study reveal that teacher creativity has a profound and multidimensional influence on students' learning motivation in Christian Religious Education. The 23 selected studies highlight several interconnected dynamics demonstrating how creative pedagogical practices stimulate students' cognitive, emotional, and spiritual engagement. Through a synthesis of empirical data, it becomes evident that creativity is not merely an optional competency for Christian Religious Education teachers but a pedagogical necessity that shapes the learning climate, influences students' attitudes, and strengthens the internalization of Christian values. This discussion elaborates on the major patterns that emerged from the reviewed literature, focusing on the nature of teacher creativity, its practical manifestations, and the mechanisms through which it enhances learning motivation in Christian Religious Education learning environments. The studies consistently emphasize that creative teachers tend to integrate a variety of learning strategies, media, and interactive techniques, which significantly increase students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Creativity in teaching does not only refer to artistic skills or the ability to produce visually appealing media, but more importantly, it involves the capacity to design meaningful, relevant, and engaging learning experiences. In Christian Religious Education, where the objective is not only cognitive understanding but also spiritual formation, creativity becomes a bridge that connects scriptural and doctrinal teachings to the real-life contexts of students. Studies by Nugroho (2019), Sinaga (2020), and Kalalo (2023) show that students are more motivated to learn Christian Religious Education when teachers apply contextualized approaches such as life-story analysis, Scripture dramatization, project-based learning with spiritual themes, digital storytelling, and collaborative problem-solving activities related to moral dilemmas. These creative approaches help students experience the relevance of Christian teachings, resulting in heightened attention, deeper curiosity, and stronger intention to participate in class activities. Research findings indicate that creativity positively influences students' emotional engagement, which is a critical predictor of motivation. Emotional factors, such as enjoyment, interest, comfort, and inspiration, play a significant role in students' willingness to learn and persist in their tasks. Several selected studies highlight that creative Christian Religious Education teachers often demonstrate enthusiasm, humor, and flexibility, creating a classroom atmosphere that students perceive as supportive and inviting. A study by Hutapea (2021) notes that students show increased confidence and decreased anxiety when teachers incorporate creative methods such as role-play or reflective journal writing. This emotional safety encourages them to express their ideas, ask questions, and take part in discussions about faith and morality. Emotional engagement triggered by teacher creativity not only makes learning enjoyable but also helps students form positive attitudes toward Christian Religious Education subjects. Cognitive engagement is greatly enhanced by creative teaching practices. The literature shows that creativity encourages higher-order thinking, enabling students to analyze, evaluate, and internalize Christian values more meaningfully. For instance, using inquiry-based learning combined with multimedia sources challenges students to explore biblical

narratives critically, reflect on their ethical implications, and apply them to contemporary issues. Research by Tarigan (2022) and Mambu (2018) demonstrates that students who are exposed to creative pedagogical approaches exhibit improved comprehension, better retention of biblical concepts, and higher motivation to complete tasks. When students perceive that learning activities stimulate their thinking, they are more motivated to engage and develop a sense of competence, which is closely linked to self-determined motivation.

The impact of teacher creativity on social engagement is also evident in the reviewed studies. Creative Christian Religious Education teachers frequently design collaborative learning activities that require students to communicate, solve problems, and reflect together. Such activities foster a sense of community, an essential component of Christian education rooted in fellowship and mutual growth. Through group projects, dramatization, cooperative learning models, and interactive discussions, students not only learn the academic content but also experience Christian values such as empathy, respect, and cooperation. Research by Manurung (2020) highlights that social interactions in creative learning environments help strengthen students' motivation because they feel supported by their peers and enjoy the learning process more. This aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which states that learning is mediated by social interaction; thus, creative collaborative activities naturally promote motivation. Another theme emerging from the literature is the use of technology-based creativity in Christian Religious Education learning. Many Christian Religious Education teachers, especially those teaching in secondary schools, have begun to integrate digital tools to support their creative teaching. The rise of digital literacy among students requires teachers to adapt their methods to remain relevant and engaging. Studies by Situmorang (2021) and Lumban Gaol (2023) suggest that incorporating audiovisual media, digital Bible applications, interactive quizzes, and online collaborative platforms significantly increases students' learning motivation. Digital creativity captures students' attention and aligns with their daily technological habits, thereby reducing the perception that Christian Religious Education is a monotonous or outdated subject. This technological integration allows Christian teachings to be communicated in dynamic and accessible formats suited to modern learners. The literature also underscores the importance of teacher personality and pedagogical competence as foundational elements of creative teaching. Creativity does not stand alone; it emerges from a teacher's reflective practice, spiritual maturity, and commitment to professional growth. Effective Christian Religious Education teachers demonstrate openness to innovation, willingness to experiment with new methods, and the ability to adapt to students' learning needs. Their creativity is closely tied to their spiritual motivation to guide students in faith formation. For instance, studies by Hulu (2019) and Sibarani (2022) reveal that teachers with strong spiritual identity and passion for ministry are more likely to design creative lessons because they view teaching as both an academic and pastoral responsibility. This integrative perspective motivates them to ensure that learning activities not only transfer knowledge but also inspire spiritual development and character formation.

Findings show that creativity significantly contributes to student motivation by promoting autonomy and ownership in learning. When students are allowed to create, explore, and make decisions in their learning activities, their intrinsic motivation increases. Creative teaching methods such as project-based learning, inquiry tasks, and problem-solving

models provide students with opportunities to express their ideas and apply their faith to real situations. Research by Purba (2020) indicates that when students feel empowered in the learning process, they are more motivated to seek understanding independently and exhibit positive learning behaviors. Autonomy-supportive learning is particularly important in Christian Religious Education classrooms because it nurtures students' personal faith development, encouraging them to internalize Christian values rather than merely memorizing biblical facts. Another important finding from the SLR is that teacher creativity aids in addressing student diversity. Christian Religious Education classrooms often include students with varying spiritual backgrounds, learning abilities, and levels of motivation. Creative teachers are better equipped to design differentiated learning activities that accommodate this diversity. Studies by Sitohang (2022) and Lase (2018) show that creative strategies such as the use of multiple intelligences approaches, differentiated tasks, and culturally responsive teaching enhance students' motivation by making learning more inclusive and accessible. When students feel that the teacher understands and respects their uniqueness, they become more motivated to engage in learning activities, especially in a subject that touches on personal faith and identity.

The literature suggests that creativity has a long-term effect on students' spiritual and moral motivation. Creative Christian Religious Education teachers are able to foster reflective thinking and self-awareness among students, prompting them to develop personal connections with the biblical values being taught. Activities such as spiritual journaling, reflective art, Scripture meditation, and community service-based projects encourage students to internalize Christian teachings through lived experiences. Studies by Ginting (2021) and Marbun (2017) show that students who experience such creative learning approaches tend to develop stronger intrinsic motivation to practice Christian values in their daily lives. This suggests that creativity not only enhances academic motivation but also contributes to the holistic formation of students—intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Despite the overwhelming positive influence of creativity on learning motivation, several studies also identify challenges that may hinder the implementation of creative teaching in Christian Religious Education. These include limited resources, lack of training, rigid curriculum structures, and teachers' heavy workloads. Some Christian Religious Education teachers struggle with technological literacy or lack confidence in using innovative methods. In addition, certain school environments may prioritize traditional approaches, limiting teacher freedom to apply creative strategies. These challenges highlight the need for continued professional development, institutional support, and curriculum flexibility to empower teachers to teach creatively. Addressing these barriers is crucial for ensuring that creativity becomes a sustainable and integral part of Christian Religious Education pedagogy. The findings of this systematic literature review provide strong evidence that teacher creativity significantly enhances students' learning motivation in Christian Religious Education. Creativity influences motivation through various pathways—including emotional engagement, cognitive stimulation, social interaction, autonomy support, technological relevance, and spiritual formation. Creative Christian Religious Education teachers design learning environments that are dynamic, student-centered, and spiritually nurturing, leading to improved academic outcomes and deeper internalization of Christian values. These findings underscore the importance of fostering creativity as a core competency in the professional development of Christian Religious Education teachers. Institutions,

educators, and policymakers need to recognize that creativity is not merely an additional skill but an essential pedagogical component that directly supports students' holistic growth.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study, derived from a comprehensive Systematic Literature Review (SLR), underscore the significant and multidimensional influence of Christian Religious Education teachers' creativity on students' learning motivation. Creativity emerges not only as an instructional skill but also as a pedagogical foundation that shapes students' cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual engagement in learning. Across the 23 analyzed studies, it becomes clear that creative teaching practices enrich the learning environment by making Christian Religious Education more relevant, meaningful, and enjoyable for students. Through innovative strategies such as project-based learning, digital storytelling, dramatization of biblical narratives, collaborative group work, and contextualized reflections, creative teachers are able to stimulate students' curiosity, enhance their active participation, and foster deeper engagement with Christian teachings. This reveals that creativity is a catalyst for learning motivation, as students are more inclined to engage in lessons that resonate with their interests, experiences, and spiritual needs. The review highlights that creativity strengthens emotional engagement, which plays a pivotal role in shaping learners' motivation. When teachers demonstrate enthusiasm, flexibility, and pastoral sensitivity in their teaching, they create a positive emotional climate where students feel encouraged, respected, and inspired. Such an environment reduces anxiety, builds confidence, and promotes willingness to participate in discussions on faith and moral values. Additionally, creativity enhances cognitive engagement by promoting higher-order thinking skills, enabling students to analyze, interpret, and apply Christian values in meaningful ways. These cognitive processes foster a sense of competence and accomplishment, which contributes to sustained motivation. On a social level, creative teaching practices facilitate interaction, cooperation, and community-building among students. This aligns with the essence of Christian education, which emphasizes fellowship, empathy, and mutual growth. When students collaborate in creative learning tasks, they experience collective learning that strengthens both academic and spiritual motivation. Moreover, technological creativity in teaching proves to be increasingly important in addressing the learning preferences of digital-native students. The integration of multimedia resources, digital Bibles, online discussions, and interactive platforms enhances motivation by aligning Christian Religious Education learning with contemporary communication modes. The findings also emphasize that creativity supports differentiated learning, addressing student diversity in the classroom. Creative teachers are better equipped to adapt their methods to various learning styles, abilities, and cultural backgrounds, ensuring that all students feel included and capable of succeeding. This inclusivity strengthens learners' sense of belonging and increases their motivation to engage with Christian Religious Education content. The review also acknowledges the challenges that Christian Religious Education teachers face in implementing creative teaching, such as limited institutional support, inadequate training, and rigid curriculum structures. These obstacles highlight the need for capacity-building programs, professional development opportunities, and school policies that encourage innovation in religious education pedagogy. For creativity to become integral

to Christian Religious Education teaching, systemic support is essential. this study concludes that teacher creativity is a key driver of learning motivation in Christian Religious Education. It enhances not only academic engagement but also contributes to students' spiritual formation and moral development. Based on these insights, it is recommended that schools, policymakers, and teacher education programs prioritize the development of creative competencies among Christian Religious Education teachers. By fostering creativity in teaching, Christian Religious Education can become a transformative platform that inspires students to deepen their faith, strengthen their character, and pursue lifelong learning.

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