



The Influence of Teachers' Teaching Style Variation on Learning Interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of teachers' teaching style variation on students' learning interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Recognizing that learning interest is a crucial factor in supporting students' cognitive, affective, and spiritual growth, this research synthesizes empirical findings from 32 studies published between 2013 and 2024. The review reveals that teaching style variation significantly enhances students' learning interest by fostering engagement, strengthening motivation, and creating learning environments that are dynamic, inclusive, and spiritually meaningful. Teachers who employ diverse instructional approaches, such as interactive discussions, storytelling, multimedia integration, collaborative projects, and reflective activities, are shown to effectively accommodate different learning preferences, stimulate deeper involvement, and support the internalization of Christian values. The findings also demonstrate that teaching style variation contributes to positive teacher-student relationships, improves classroom climate, and aligns well with the holistic goals of Christian Religious Education, which emphasize not only cognitive understanding but also moral and spiritual formation. While challenges such as limited resources and insufficient teacher training persist, the SLR underscores the importance of pedagogical diversity as an essential component of effective Christian education. The study concludes that varied teaching styles are instrumental in enhancing learning interest and promoting transformative character development among students. These results highlight the need for ongoing professional development to support teachers in implementing diverse and impactful instructional strategies.

Keywords: *Teaching Style, Teacher, Learning Interest, Christian Education*

INTRODUCTION

Learning interest is one of the most essential psychological factors that determine the success of students in the educational process, particularly within the context of Christian Religious Education and Character Development. Interest serves as an internal drive that motivates students to engage actively, respond positively, and demonstrate perseverance

in learning activities. In Christian Religious Education, which aims not only to transmit biblical knowledge but also to shape spiritual maturity, moral integrity, and Christ-like character, a high level of learning interest becomes an indispensable element. Without sufficient interest, students tend to disengage, exhibit minimal participation, and fail to internalize the values being taught. Consequently, educators must pay attention not only to the cognitive dimension of teaching but also to the pedagogical approaches that influence students' affective and motivational responses. One of the significant determinants of students' learning interest is the teacher's ability to employ varied teaching styles that accommodate different learning needs, preferences, and classroom dynamics.

Teaching style variation refers to a teacher's ability to modify instructional behaviors, communication strategies, methods, and classroom interactions to ensure learning remains dynamic, meaningful, and student-centered. Scholars argue that monotonous teaching styles often lead to student boredom, disengagement, and decreased motivation, especially in subjects perceived as abstract or theoretical, such as religious education. Conversely, teachers who demonstrate flexibility by integrating multiple teaching styles—ranging from authoritative, demonstrative, facilitative, delegative, to interactive approaches—tend to stimulate students' curiosity, participation, and emotional involvement in learning. This variation not only enhances students' attention and enthusiasm but also creates a conducive learning environment where learners feel valued, challenged, and supported. In the context of Christian Religious Education and Character Development, teaching style variation is particularly crucial because spiritual and moral formation requires experiential, reflective, and relational learning activities that cannot be facilitated effectively through a single pedagogical approach. Teaching style variation is closely linked to students' psychological readiness to learn. A diverse set of teaching strategies allows students with different learning modalities—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reflective—to experience meaningful engagement. For example, students who learn best through discussion will be more motivated when teachers apply interactive dialogue, while visual learners will be more attentive when lessons involve media, illustrations, and storytelling. The dynamic use of teaching styles also helps to contextualize biblical principles and moral values so that they become relevant to students' real-life experiences. This is aligned with the goals of Christian Religious Education, which emphasize not merely the transmission of doctrinal knowledge but the formation of Christ-centered character expressed in love, integrity, responsibility, and service.

Research in educational psychology indicates that teacher behavior strongly influences students' emotional and motivational conditions. Teachers who consistently vary their teaching styles cultivate a sense of novelty, reduce monotony, and encourage active participation, all of which are essential for maintaining high levels of learning interest. When students perceive their teachers as creative, enthusiastic, and adaptive, they develop positive attitudes toward learning and are more inclined to invest effort in understanding the material. This relational dimension is also fundamental in Christian Religious Education, where the teacher functions not only as an instructor but also as a role model who embodies Christian values. Thus, teaching style variation becomes a medium through which teachers can convey respect, care, and encouragement—values that significantly influence students' willingness to learn. Despite the acknowledged

importance of teaching style variation, empirical studies specifically examining its influence on learning interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development remain limited. Most existing studies focus on general subjects or analyze teaching styles independently without highlighting their impact on religious and character formation. Therefore, there is a substantial need for research that explores how variations in teaching styles contribute to students' learning motivation, engagement, and interest in Christian Religious Education. This study aims to address that gap by investigating the influence of teachers' teaching style variation on students' learning interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development. Through this research, it is expected that empirical evidence will strengthen the understanding that diverse teaching styles are not merely pedagogical techniques but essential strategies for fostering meaningful learning experiences, spiritual growth, and holistic character development among students.

METHODS

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to comprehensively examine and synthesize empirical findings related to the influence of teachers' teaching style variation on students' learning interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development. The SLR method was chosen because it provides a structured, transparent, and replicable approach to identifying, evaluating, and integrating relevant research evidence across various scholarly sources. By systematically reviewing existing studies, this research aims to build a solid theoretical and empirical foundation that supports the analysis of how teaching style variation contributes to learning interest, particularly within the context of Christian Religious Education. The SLR approach is also appropriate for addressing the current gap in literature, as previous research tends to focus on general teaching contexts, and there remains limited empirical investigation specifically addressing Christian Religious Education and character development. The review process followed several key stages, beginning with defining the research questions, formulating inclusion and exclusion criteria, and determining relevant academic databases. The primary research question guiding the review was: "How does variation in teachers' teaching styles influence students' learning interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development?" To ensure coherence and relevance, the review included studies published between 2013 and 2024, written in English or Indonesian, and conducted within educational settings at primary, secondary, or higher education levels. Only peer-reviewed journal articles, empirical studies, theses, and conference papers that examined teaching style variation, learning interest, or Christian Religious Education were selected. Studies focusing solely on unrelated subjects, opinion essays, or materials without empirical data were excluded. The search process was conducted using reputable academic databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, Dimensions, Scopus-indexed journals, and national academic portals such as GARUDA and SINTA. Keywords and Boolean operators used in the search included "teaching style variation," "learning interest," "Christian Religious Education," "character development," "teacher pedagogy," and "student motivation." After compiling the search results, duplicate articles were removed, and the remaining studies underwent a two-step screening: first, screening titles and abstracts for relevance, and second, conducting full-text evaluations to assess methodological rigor, clarity of findings, and alignment with the

review objectives. A total of 32 studies met all criteria and were selected for in-depth analysis. Data extraction was carried out using a structured coding sheet that documented the authors, year of publication, research design, sample characteristics, key findings, and relevance to the research questions. A thematic analysis technique was applied to identify recurring patterns and synthesize insights across studies. Through this systematic process, the SLR method enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive, credible, and integrated evidence on the significant role of teaching style variation in fostering students' learning interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this Systematic Literature Review reveal a strong and consistent relationship between teachers' teaching style variation and students' learning interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development. Across the 32 studies analyzed, the majority of evidence demonstrates that teaching style variation enhances students' engagement, attentiveness, and motivation to participate actively in learning activities. This is particularly significant in religious and character education, where emotional involvement, personal reflection, and internalization of values form a central part of the learning objectives. The review indicates that when teachers adapt their teaching styles according to students' learning needs, classroom environment, and lesson content, students respond with higher enthusiasm and interest, which subsequently strengthens their understanding of Christian values and character-building principles. Such findings affirm that teaching style variation is not merely an instructional technique, but an essential dimension of holistic, value-based, and student-centered pedagogy.

The analysis shows that teachers employing diverse teaching styles—authoritative, facilitative, demonstrative, interactive, and delegative—tend to create a more dynamic learning environment that prevents monotony and promotes active involvement. For instance, studies indicate that authoritative teaching styles, when balanced with warmth and encouragement, help establish structure while maintaining a supportive atmosphere that motivates students. Meanwhile, facilitative styles encourage student autonomy, discussion, and reflection, which are crucial for developing critical thinking and spiritual maturity. Demonstrative approaches, involving storytelling, visual aids, media-based instruction, and real-life examples, make Christian Religious Education content more relatable and concrete. Interactive teaching styles, such as group discussions, Bible study circles, collaborative projects, and role-playing activities, foster deeper participation and emotional engagement. Delegative styles, where students are entrusted with responsibilities such as leading prayers, sharing reflections, or presenting projects, enhance confidence and intrinsic motivation. Together, these variations help accommodate diverse learning modalities and sustain students' interest throughout the learning process. The reviewed studies also reveal that monotonous teaching styles significantly reduce students' learning interest. When teachers rely heavily on lectures or one-way communication, students tend to lose concentration, disengage from the material, and perceive the learning as irrelevant to their lives. This is especially concerning in Christian Religious Education, where the abstract nature of theological content and the moral expectations placed on students require deeper involvement and meaning-making. Several studies demonstrate that students are more likely to participate and internalize spiritual values when teachers integrate varied teaching approaches that address their

social, emotional, and cognitive needs. Therefore, the lack of teaching style variation not only affects learning interest but also hinders character development and spiritual formation.

A significant thematic insight emerging from the literature is the alignment between diverse teaching styles and the holistic aims of Christian Religious Education. The purpose of Christian Religious Education extends beyond cognitive knowledge to include the formation of Christian attitudes, behaviors, and identity. Teaching style variation supports this multidimensional goal by allowing students to engage cognitively, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. For example, when teachers use interactive and reflective methods, such as spiritual journaling or small group discussions, students are encouraged to articulate their faith, explore moral dilemmas, and relate biblical principles to real-life situations. In contrast, when teachers incorporate demonstrative or experiential methods, such as community service projects, visual storytelling, or multimedia sermons, students are guided to observe and experience Christian values in action. This integration of styles helps students connect the content with daily living, deepening their commitment to character development. The findings indicate that teaching style variation also enhances students' sense of belonging, respect, and value in the classroom. Several studies highlight that when teachers demonstrate adaptability, responsiveness, and creativity in their teaching styles, students feel that their needs, preferences, and learning challenges are understood and respected. This contributes to positive teacher–student relationships, which are crucial in Christian Religious Education settings, where teachers serve not only as instructors but also as role models of faith and moral conduct. Positive relational interactions foster emotional security, openness, and willingness to learn, factors that significantly heighten learning interest and motivation. Teaching style variation thus acts as a relational bridge that connects pedagogy with pastoral care, especially when teachers consciously engage students with empathy and encouragement. The systematic review also shows that teaching style variation positively influences classroom climate, which in turn enhances learning interest. Classrooms characterized by interactive and varied teaching styles tend to be more energetic, respectful, and participatory. Students feel more comfortable expressing their opinions, asking questions, and sharing experiences related to their faith journey. In such environments, Christian Religious Education becomes more than a compulsory subject; it transforms into a meaningful space for spiritual exploration and moral growth. Conversely, rigid and monotonous teaching styles often lead to a passive and disengaged classroom climate, where students hesitate to participate and fail to connect emotionally with the learning content. Thus, teaching style variation contributes to a climate that nurtures curiosity, openness, and transformative learning. Another important insight from the reviewed studies is that teaching style variation aligns with the principles of differentiated instruction, which acknowledges that students possess different readiness levels, learning profiles, and interests. In Christian Religious Education, students may come from diverse denominational backgrounds, spiritual maturity levels, and cultural contexts. Teaching style variation enables teachers to address these differences by offering multiple pathways for understanding and expressing faith-based concepts. For instance, reflective learners may benefit from journal writing or meditation, while kinesthetic learners may engage better with role-play or dramatization of biblical narratives. Visual learners may connect more deeply through images, videos, or infographics related to moral teachings.

Thus, teaching style variation ensures equity, inclusion, and accessibility in Christian Religious Education.

The SLR also indicates that technology-supported variations in teaching style significantly increase students' learning interest, especially among Generation Z learners who are accustomed to digital interaction. Studies in the past decade show that integrating multimedia presentations, animated biblical stories, virtual learning environments, and interactive platforms enhances student motivation and attention. In Christian Religious Education, the use of audio-visual media, such as film clips, digital storytelling, Bible apps, or online devotionals, helps contextualize scriptural messages and moral principles in ways that resonate with students' contemporary experiences. Such media not only support cognitive understanding but also stimulate emotional engagement, making learning more immersive and compelling. Teachers who vary their teaching styles through digital integration tend to create more modern, relevant, and appealing learning experiences for students. Another recurring theme concerns the relationship between teaching style variation and student participation. The reviewed studies consistently show that varied teaching styles encourage students to become active participants rather than passive recipients of information. Participation is a key indicator of learning interest, as students who are motivated tend to contribute ideas, ask questions, collaborate with peers, and engage in learning activities with enthusiasm. In Christian Religious Education, active participation also promotes critical reflection on faith, ethical decision-making, and spiritual dialogue. When teaching styles encourage students to reflect, discuss, and act, learning becomes more transformative and personally meaningful. This demonstrates that teaching style variation supports both pedagogical and spiritual objectives of religious education. The SLR findings further highlight that teaching style variation positively influences long-term learning outcomes. Students who experience varied teaching approaches develop stronger conceptual understanding, improved retention of biblical knowledge, and deeper internalization of moral values. They are also more likely to demonstrate positive character behaviors, such as respect, empathy, responsibility, and integrity. This is because varied teaching styles cater to multiple dimensions of learning-cognitive, affective, social, and spiritual-thereby promoting holistic development. Thus, teaching style variation not only enhances short-term learning interest but also contributes to long-term behavioral and spiritual formation.

The analysis also reveals challenges teachers face in implementing teaching style variation. Several studies point out that teachers may lack training, confidence, or resources to apply diverse teaching methods effectively. Some teachers remain accustomed to traditional lecture-based styles and may feel overwhelmed by the demands of interactive or technology-based approaches. Time constraints, large class sizes, limited media, and curriculum rigidity are additional barriers identified in the literature. These challenges highlight the need for ongoing professional development that equips teachers with pedagogical flexibility, creativity, and technological literacy. In Christian Religious Education, teachers also require training in integrating spiritual formation principles into varied teaching styles. Thus, capacity building is essential to ensure the effective application of teaching style variation. The reviewed studies emphasize that even simple efforts to vary teaching styles can significantly increase learning interest. Teachers who make intentional choices, such as alternating between mini-lectures, discussions, storytelling, group work, media use, and reflective activities,

create a more engaging learning experience. The key is not the complexity of the methods used, but the teacher's willingness to adapt and respond to students' needs. This underscores the importance of teacher mindset and commitment to student-centered learning, especially in faith-based education. The findings collectively affirm that teaching style variation is a significant predictor of learning interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development. The consistency of evidence across multiple studies, contexts, and education levels strengthens the argument that varied teaching styles play a crucial role in enhancing student motivation. Moreover, the alignment between teaching style variation and the holistic goals of Christian Religious Education, spiritual formation, character development, and value internalization, suggests that pedagogical diversity is not optional but necessary for effective religious education. The systematic review demonstrates that teachers who vary their teaching styles contribute to more meaningful, engaging, and transformative learning experiences. Such teaching not only increases students' learning interest but also deepens their understanding of Christian values and promotes the development of Christ-like character. In conclusion, teaching style variation embodies the essence of effective Christian Religious Education: a dynamic, responsive, and holistic learning journey that nurtures the mind, heart, and spirit of each student.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study, derived from a comprehensive Systematic Literature Review, clearly demonstrate that variations in teachers' teaching styles play a crucial and transformative role in shaping students' learning interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development. The evidence gathered across multiple empirical studies consistently affirms that students are more engaged, motivated, and receptive when teachers intentionally and creatively vary their instructional approaches. This heightened interest fosters not only cognitive understanding but also emotional involvement and spiritual reflection, elements essential to the holistic goals of Christian Religious Education. The review reinforces the understanding that Christian Religious Education is not merely an academic subject that transfers knowledge about biblical narratives, doctrines, and moral values; it is fundamentally a process of shaping faith identities, moral consciousness, and Christ-like character. Therefore, the pedagogical strategies used by teachers must reflect this multidimensional purpose, and teaching style variation emerges as one of the most effective ways to achieve it. This review reveals that teaching style variation enables teachers to address the diverse learning needs, preferences, and backgrounds of students, which is crucial in today's heterogeneous classrooms. By integrating multiple instructional styles, ranging from interactive discussions, demonstrative storytelling, reflective activities, experiential learning, digital media, collaborative projects, to student-led practices, teachers can create learning environments that are dynamic, inclusive, and spiritually meaningful. Such environments stimulate curiosity, invite active participation, and encourage deeper engagement with the content. As a result, students develop stronger connections between biblical teachings and real-life situations, enhancing their ability to internalize Christian values and apply them in daily life. Teaching style variation also strengthens students' sense of belonging and respect, as they feel seen and valued in learning experiences that align with their unique learning characteristics. The review highlights the relational dimension of

teaching style variation. Teachers who demonstrate flexibility, responsiveness, and creativity tend to build stronger emotional connections with students. These relationships cultivate trust, openness, and willingness to learn, which significantly contribute to sustained learning interest. In Christian Religious Education, where teachers often serve as role models of faith and integrity, this relational factor becomes even more vital. Through varied teaching styles, teachers embody empathy, encouragement, and commitment, reinforcing the moral and spiritual lessons conveyed in the curriculum. Thus, teaching style variation becomes an extension of the teacher's pastoral and spiritual influence. The SLR also identifies challenges that educators may encounter in implementing varied teaching styles, including limited resources, insufficient training, curriculum constraints, and technological barriers. These challenges suggest the need for ongoing professional development that equips teachers with innovative pedagogical skills and spiritual pedagogical understanding. Investing in teacher capacity building will not only enhance instructional quality but also strengthen the overall effectiveness of Christian Religious Education. Teaching style variation has a profound and positive influence on students' learning interest in Christian Religious Education and Character Development. It enriches the learning process, strengthens student engagement, and contributes to the holistic formation of students' faith and character. The findings of this review emphasize that educators, schools, and policymakers must prioritize pedagogical diversity as a core component of effective Christian education. By adopting varied teaching styles, teachers can create transformative learning experiences that inspire students intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, empowering them to grow as individuals who reflect Christian values in their thoughts, actions, and daily lives.

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