

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS IN ENHANCING STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN GRADE VIII-3 AT STATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL 7 MEDAN, ACADEMIC YEAR 2024

Novita Romauli Saragih ¹⁾, Selamat Karo-Karo ²⁾, Padriadi Wiharjokusumo ³⁾, Yutriani Laia ⁴⁾

Fakultas Keguruan & Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Darma Agung, Medan, Indonesia ^{1,2,4)}

Prodi Usaha Perjalanan Wisata Akademi Pariwisata dan Perhotelan Darma Agung, Medan, Indonesia ³⁾

Corresponding Author:

novitaromauli12@gmail.com ¹⁾, [selamatkaro@gmail.com](mailto:salamatkaro@gmail.com) ²⁾, knb.ministry76@gmail.com ³⁾

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti peran guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen (PAK) dalam meningkatkan prestasi belajar siswa kelas VIII-3 di SMP Negeri 7 Medan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi dari 11 informan, termasuk kepala sekolah, seorang guru PAK, dan sembilan siswa. Analisis data dilakukan dengan metode Miles dan Huberman, meliputi reduksi, penyajian, verifikasi, dan triangulasi data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru PAK memainkan peran penting sebagai pendidik, pembimbing, penasehat, motivator, dan fasilitator dalam menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang positif. Guru PAK juga menyusun perencanaan pembelajaran yang matang sehingga mampu mendukung peningkatan prestasi belajar siswa. Meski prestasi siswa masih terpengaruh oleh rendahnya motivasi, guru PAK berperan signifikan dalam membina dan mendidik siswa. Peran guru sebagai fasilitator, mediator, dan evaluator sangat berpengaruh dalam proses pembelajaran, yang membantu meningkatkan prestasi akademik siswa.

Kata kunci: Peran Guru PAK, Prestasi Belajar, Siswa

Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in enhancing the academic performance of eighth-grade students (Class VIII-3) at State Junior High School 7 Medan. A qualitative research method was employed, utilizing data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and documentation from 11 informants, including the principal, one CRE teacher, and nine students. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman method, encompassing data reduction, presentation, verification, and triangulation. The findings indicate that CRE teachers play a crucial role as educators, mentors, advisors, motivators, and facilitators in fostering a positive learning environment. The CRE teacher also implements well-prepared lesson plans, effectively supporting improvements in students' academic performance. Although students' performance is still impacted by low motivation levels, the CRE teacher significantly contributes to guiding and educating the students. The teacher's roles as facilitator, mediator, and evaluator are particularly influential within the learning process, fostering an environment that enhances students' academic achievements.

Keywords: Role of CRE Teacher, Academic Performance, Students

INTRODUCTION

The main issue facing the field of education today is the weak learning process, where students are insufficiently encouraged to develop critical thinking skills. According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, education should foster students to develop their spiritual, personality, and skills potential beneficial to society and the nation. However, achieving this goal is often hindered. The importance of teachers' role in motivating students is explained by Sardiman (2011), who states that motivation can energize, direct, and maintain students' behavior towards learning objectives.

History:

Received : 25 April 2024

Revised : 29 Mei 2024

Accepted : 23 November 2024

Published : 31 Desember 2024

Publisher: LPPM Universitas Darma Agung

Licensed: This work is licensed under

[Attribution-NonCommercial-No](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

[Derivatives 4.0 International \(CC BY-NC-ND 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)



In the context of Christian Religious Education, Lilis Ermindiwati (2019) emphasizes that CRE teachers play a significant role in guiding students' spiritual growth, both in schools, churches, and communities. Boehlke (2000) adds that CRE teachers should utilize various resources and experiences to strengthen students' knowledge of faith. Teachers are responsible for guiding, motivating, and shaping students' character, which significantly impacts their academic performance. As suggested in the Bible (James 3:1), the role of a teacher should not be taken lightly, as it has a major impact on students' development.

This research will explore the crucial role of CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 7 Medan in improving students' academic performance, particularly in fostering faith-based character and promoting creativity through well-planned and innovative teaching.

A. Understanding Christian Religious Education

In general, Christian Religious Education (CRE) is the process of teaching and learning that is biblically based, centered on Christ, and reliant on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to direct each individual student. It is essential to teach CRE to adolescents or students as it aids in their identity formation and helps them avoid various evils. CRE is vital for students in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills grounded in the Christian faith.

According to E.G. Homrighouse (2021:5), "Christian Religious Education is rooted in the fellowship of God's people." The foundations of CRE can be traced back to the Old Testament, beginning with God's calling of Abraham as the patriarch of His chosen people, emphasizing that education is ultimately anchored in God Himself, who becomes a teacher to His followers.

Warner C. Graedof (2021:12) defines CRE as "a teaching and learning process based on the Bible, centered on Christ, and dependent on the Holy Spirit, guiding each person through all stages of growth toward the understanding and experience of God's plan and will through Christ in every aspect of life, equipping them for effective service centered on Christ, the Great Teacher, and the commands that mature His disciples."

Thomas H. Groome characterizes CRE as "a communal political activity among pilgrims in time, where they intentionally focus on God's actions in the present, the narrative of the Christian faith community, and the content of the Kingdom of God, seeds that are already among us."

B. Objectives of Christian Religious Education

The overarching aim of CRE is to enable individuals to experience God's love through Jesus Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, allowing them to grow into well-rounded individuals in all aspects of life. It encourages them to demonstrate their maturity through a sense of responsibility toward God, the church, fellow humans, and the environment. It also inspires them to dedicate their entire lives and work for the benefit of others.

Paulus L. Kristianto (2016:61) states that the objective of CRE is to invite, assist, and lead individuals to recognize the love of God manifest in Jesus Christ, so that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they may enter into a living fellowship with God. This love is expressed in their daily lives, through both words and actions, as members of the body of Christ.

Robert R. Boehlke (2022:39) notes that the goal of CRE is to educate all church children to engage in intelligent Bible study under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. CRE also aims to prepare all church children to participate in worship, understand the unity of the church, and equip them to choose ways of serving God the Father and Jesus Christ in their daily work, taking responsibility under God's sovereignty for His glory as a form of gratitude for being chosen in Jesus Christ.

From the perspectives of these scholars, it can be concluded that CRE seeks to enhance spiritual potential and shape individuals to become faithful and obedient to God, embodying moral values and ethics. This enhancement encompasses the recognition, understanding, and instillation of religious values, as well as their application in individual and collective community life.

C. Role of CRE Teachers in Enhancing Student Achievement

Kasmintong Situmorang (2019:106) states that teachers must embody personal qualities like responsibility, authority, independence, and discipline. As educators, CRE teachers equip students to grow in Christ and guide them based on their knowledge and experience. Their roles include:

1. Motivator: Encouraging students and fostering emotional connections.
2. Facilitator: Preparing the learning environment and materials.
3. Instructor: Utilizing varied teaching methods to maintain student engagement.
4. Support System: Motivating students to study and participate actively.
5. Classroom Manager: Creating a pleasant learning atmosphere.
6. Curriculum Guide: Ensuring structured and directed teaching.

John M. Nainggolan (2018:223) outlines several responsibilities of CRE teachers, emphasizing their role in shaping students' faith and character while ensuring quality education in line with church teachings.

Ultimately, the success of CRE teachers in the educational realm hinges on their ability to fulfill various specific roles effectively. Adams and Dickey's work identifies at least 13 distinct roles that require specific teaching competencies, including:

- Instructor: Providing knowledge.
- Class Leader: Managing group dynamics.
- Guide: Encouraging learning activities.
- Environment Planner: Preparing materials.
- Participant: Offering constructive feedback.

In summary, CRE teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' lives beyond theoretical knowledge, addressing their mental and spiritual well-being. They are responsible for instilling a deep understanding of Christian teachings and providing spiritual guidance, which significantly impacts students' learning outcomes. Esther Relai Intarti (2016:35) suggests specific teachings for CRE teachers, including instilling a belief in the Bible, understanding baptism, serving God, and the power of prayer.

The biblical perspective in Proverbs 1:7-8 reinforces that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, urging students to heed their parents' teachings.

D. Responsibilities and Duties of Christian Religious Education Teachers

Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers have the primary responsibility of nurturing and guiding students' spiritual lives. According to Homrighausce and Enklaar, CRE teachers serve as interpreters of faith who elucidate Christian beliefs. This responsibility is crucial because religious education differs from other forms of education. CRE teachers must master all subject matter and the values of the Christian faith so that students can develop a holistic personality and apply it in their daily lives.

The teaching methods employed should be creative, following the example of Jesus, who captured students' attention through various approaches, such as questioning, illustrations, and lectures. Kadarmanto (1999) emphasizes that CRE teachers play a vital role in the quality of education and the spiritual development of students.

Prof. Dr. Oemar Hamalik (2010) asserts that teachers are responsible for educational activities, including curriculum development, analyzing learning difficulties, and assessing students' progress. To fulfill these responsibilities, teachers need to possess various competencies, such as an understanding of the curriculum, mastery of teaching methods, and the ability to provide guidance.

Pullias and Young (1968) state that teachers embody many roles, such as educators, role models, counselors, and assessors. CRE teachers are expected to be professionals, understanding that Christian religious education is an ongoing effort to develop students' abilities to comprehend God's love in their daily lives.

The responsibilities of CRE teachers include being role models and sources of inspiration for students, as well as contributing to their learning outcomes. The professionalism of teachers can be observed through the achievements of students in the learning process. Although some teachers may have limitations, effective CRE teachers must strive to master their subjects and enhance their communication skills and relationships with students.

E. Efforts of Christian Religious Education Teachers to Improve Student Achievement

Dorlan Naibaho, Erika Dame Hottua Simorangkir, and Eset Sarina Banjarnahor (2023:2) outline several strategies employed by teachers to enhance student learning outcomes, including:

1. Creating Competition: Encouraging competition among students.
2. Improving Achievement: Striving to enhance previous academic results.
3. Offering Praise: Recognizing students' achievements to boost motivation.
4. Implementing Discipline: Establishing constructive disciplinary measures to encourage improvement.
5. Encouraging Motivation: Providing maximum attention and support to ignite enthusiasm for learning.
6. Fostering Good Study Habits: Assisting students in overcoming academic challenges.
7. Utilizing Varied Methods: Teaching through diverse approaches.
8. Employing Appropriate Media: Using suitable media that aligns with learning objectives.

In assessing students, eight key traits of a healthy personality should be considered:

1. Ability to realistically self-assess.
2. Evaluating situations effectively.
3. Responding appropriately to achievements.
4. Taking responsibility and possessing self-confidence.
5. Being independent in actions and decision-making.
6. Controlling emotions and positively managing stress.
7. Being goal-oriented with empathy for others.
8. Accepting friendships within both school and social contexts.

METHOD IMPLEMENTATION

In this study, the authors employ a qualitative research method, which involves collecting and analyzing data through interviews to gather necessary information. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:21), qualitative research is defined as a strategy that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observed behaviors. Its primary aim is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of social realities from the participants' perspectives. Nasution (2003:5) elaborates that qualitative research includes observing individuals in their environments, interacting with them, and interpreting their views on the world. Given the study's objectives, the author adopts a descriptive research approach, which aims to systematically and accurately depict phenomena, events, or occurrences. Rukajat (2018) describes descriptive research as striving to realistically represent real-world phenomena. Overall, the qualitative and descriptive methodologies used in this research effectively capture the nuances of social phenomena, providing a richer understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Description

After outlining the background of the study, the literature reviewed, and the research methodology employed, this section will describe the findings of the research. The results will be presented based on data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The discussion in this chapter is derived from data gathered through documentation studies and interviews with informants, focusing on the issues under investigation. The findings and discussions detail various aspects based on interviews conducted with eighth-grade students in Class VIII-3 at SMP Negeri 7 Medan.

B. Interview Results with Informants

Before the research, permission was obtained from the school principal, followed by school observations and initial assessments to understand the teaching process of Christian Religious Education at SMP Negeri 7 Medan. These observations, conducted during the first semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, aimed to identify any issues within the learning process. Data analysis was performed to gain insights into the role of Christian Religious Education teachers in enhancing student achievement, based on interviews with the school principal, the relevant teacher, and students, which provided information on how the teachers contribute to improving student performance.

C. Interview Summary with Charlotte Elisabeth

1. Teacher's Role in Teaching Christian Religious Education:

- Question: What does the Christian Religious Education teacher do in the teaching and learning process?
- Response: The teacher provides learning materials and explanations, and offers motivational support to encourage students to study diligently both at home and in school.

2. Impact on Academic Achievement:

- Question: Do you think the implementation of Christian Religious Education by the teacher can improve learning achievement?
- Response: Yes, it can enhance academic performance, as Christian teachings promote reliance on God in our lives.

3. Student's Perception of Teaching Style:

- Question: Do you like the way the Christian Religious Education teacher presents the material?
- Response: I really like it because the teacher explains the learning material in an easily understandable way.

4. Teacher's Influence on Learning Performance:

- Question: What is your opinion on the role of the Christian Religious Education teacher in improving student achievement?
- Response: I believe the teacher teaches us how to rely on God and encourages us to be grateful.

5. Understanding of the Material:

- Question: Do you understand what the teacher conveys during Christian Religious Education lessons?
- Response: Yes, I can understand it well because the religious education is easy to grasp and applicable in daily life.

Conclusion: Based on the interview results, the writers concludes that the informant comprehends what the Christian Religious Education teacher conveys, and students are able to understand each lesson delivered, which contributes to enhancing their academic performance.

D. Student Learning Outcomes for First and Second Semesters

Table 1: Student Learning Outcomes

No.	Subject	Final Score
1	Christian Religious Education and Character	97
2	Pancasila and Citizenship Education	97
3	Indonesian Language	98
4	Mathematics (General)	96
5	Natural Sciences (IPA)	97
6	Social Sciences (IPS)	97
7	English	98
8	Arts and Culture	97
9	Physical Education, Sports, and Health	98
10	Handicrafts	98

Based on the students' academic performance, it is evident that the Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teacher contributes substantially to fostering students' academic achievements. The high scores reflect not only strong comprehension and mastery of the material but also the effectiveness of the instructional approach. The teacher's active role in guiding, instructing, and motivating students appears to support a positive learning environment that enhances students' ability to absorb and retain knowledge. This engagement is critical in shaping both their cognitive development and overall educational success.

E. Research Results from the Christian Religious Education Teacher

Teacher: Ms. Sabarina br Barus, S.Th

Table 2: Research Results from the Christian Religious Education Teacher

No	Question to Informant	Informant's Response
1	How do you implement the PAK subject in the teaching-learning process?	I use appropriate teaching methods according to the material being taught, and I align the teaching activities with the lesson plan I have designed. However, students sometimes get bored because the learning model remains the same. In response, I occasionally take them outside for discussions to make the environment less monotonous.
2	To what extent have students achieved their learning outcomes?	Students' scores are generally good. Although some students scored lower, they were given remedial opportunities after the exams to meet the minimum passing criteria.
3	What challenges do you face in teaching PAK?	I don't face significant difficulties in teaching. The main challenge lies with certain students who lack interest and motivation, possibly due to boredom or difficulty understanding the material.
4	How do students respond when they cannot understand the material?	They tend to remain silent, don't participate, and often fail to complete assignments, leading to poor results. To address this, I encourage them to participate in group discussions and present their work to help them better engage with the material.
5	What methods do you use in the teaching process?	I use various methods, including lectures, discussions, group viewing, and reviewing past lessons to reinforce learning.
6	What are the factors that hinder or support student achievement?	The main hindrance is students' lack of motivation or interest, often influenced by their peers. Supporting factors include students' intrinsic interest and talent, parental involvement, and collaboration between teachers and the school principal to support academic progress.
7	What strategies do you use to improve students' academic performance in PAK?	I aim to make my lessons engaging, capturing students' attention and interest. I create an enjoyable and stimulating learning experience to encourage them. During the final hours, when students feel tired, I often take them outside for a change of environment, encourage singing and prayer activities, and make the lessons more interactive to boost their motivation and engagement.

These responses reflect an educational approach that prioritizes student engagement, uses adaptive strategies to address learning challenges, and emphasizes the importance of motivation and collaboration to enhance academic success in **CRE/PAK**.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the role of the Christian Religious Education teacher is crucial in motivating students to learn and achieve good academic performance. The CRE/PAK teacher must provide effective motivation and guidance to help students understand the subject matter. Additionally, teachers should

create good study habits and employ varied teaching methods. Students' academic performance is influenced by internal factors such as intelligence, attention, interest, and motivation, as well as external factors such as the learning environment, facilities, parental attention, and available activities.

B. Suggestion

To achieve the learning achievement goals of students in Christian religious education, teachers should enhance their professionalism by thoroughly preparing and designing lessons at the beginning of each school year, planning effective learning processes, and serving as good role models for students.

REFERENCES

- Boiliu, N. I. (2016). Misi Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dan Problem Moralitas Anak. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen (Regula Fidei)*, 1(1), 115-140.
- Hamalik, O. (2002). *Pendidikan Guru Berdasarkan Pendekatan Kompetensi*. Bumi Aksara.
- Moningka, I. C., Tulung, J. M., & Massang, B. Kompetensi Profesional Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen Di Smp Kristen Lemoh. (Placeholder1)
- Muhson, A. (2006). Teknik Analisis Kuantitatif. *Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta*, 183-196.
- Ngongo, S. M., Anabokay, M., & Amid, M. (2020). Tanggung Jawab Guru Pak Dalam Meningkatkan Prestasi Belajar Peserta Didik Sdn 09 Jelimpo Kecamatan Jelimpo Kabupaten Landak. *Coram Mundo: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 2(2), 49-54.
- Pramita, C., & Berek, F. (2023). Tanggung Jawab Guru Pak Dalam Meningkatkan Prestasi Belajar Peserta Didik Usia 7-12 Tahun. *Jurnal Teologi Injili Dan Pendidikan Agama*, 1(3), 11-17.
- Ratag, A. R. (2021). Peranan Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dalam Membentuk Karakter Siswa. *Apolonius: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen*, 2(2), 95-106
- Rukajat, A. (2018). *Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif (Qualitative Research Approach)*. Deepublish
- Saragih, Novita Romauli et al. (2023). *The Influence of Demonstration Method on Student Learning Outcomes in Christian Religious Education Subject For 10th Grade Students At Karya Agung Vocational High School*. *Jurnal Darma Agung*, [S.l.], v. 31, n. 4, p. 763-772, aug. 2023. [Online] Available at: <http://jurnal.darmaagung.ac.id/index.php/jurnaluda/article/view/3567>. Date accessed: October 2, 2024. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.46930/ojsuda.v31i4.3567>.
- Novita Romauli et al. Fear of God and Academic Achievement: A Correlational Study Among Tenth Grade Students at GKPI Padang Bulan Private Senior High School in Medan, 2023. *Jurnal Darma Agung*, [S.l.], v. 32, n. 3, p. 151 - 158, june 2024. ISSN 2654-3915. Available at: <https://jurnal.darmaagung.ac.id/index.php/jurnaluda/article/view/4421>. Date accessed: 27 oct. 2024. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.46930/ojsuda.v32i3.4421>.
- Soewardji, P. T., Mariani, D. E., Fil, S., & Prasetiawati, M. T. (2012). Peranan Guru Pak Dalam Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Siswa Kelas Viii Di Smp Kristen Palangka Raya.
- Syafi'i, A., Marfiyanto, T., & Rodiyah, S. K. (2018). Studi Tentang Prestasi Belajar Siswa Dalam Berbagai Aspek Dan Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi. *Jurnal Komunikasi Pendidikan*, 2(2), 115-123.
- Telaumbanua, A. (2020). Kreativitas Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen Meningkatkan Prestasi Siswa. *SIKIP: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 1(2), 115-129.
- Wiharjokusumo, P. et al. (2023). *The Use of Internet Media and Its Correlation with The Spiritual Development of 11th-Grade Students at Immanuel Private Christian Senior High School, Medan, in The Year 2023*. Journal UDA.

_____Padriadi. 2021. *Rahasia Sukses Membangun Mental Melalui Kecerdasan Spiritual Dan Emosional Dalam Meraih Keberhasilan Berdasarkan 5 Prinsip Kemenangan Dan Hukum Kasih*. Media Sains Indonesia. Bandung.

_____Padriadi et al. Memahami Realitas Metaverse Berdasarkan Teologi Kontekstual. *Jurnal Darma Agung*, [S.l.], v. 30, n. 3, p. 239 - 252, nov. 2022. ISSN 2654-3915. Available

at: <<https://jurnal.darmaagung.ac.id/index.php/jurnaluda/article/view/2239>>. Date accessed: 27 oct. 2024. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.46930/ojsuda.v30i3.2239>.