



## Personality Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Responding to God's Call: Insights from Exodus 3:4 - A Study at SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in responding to God's call, drawing theological insight from Book of Exodus 3:4, within the context of SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup, Murung Raya. The school includes 38 Christian students and three Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, forming a small yet significant faith community within a public senior high school environment. Exodus 3:4, which records Moses' response "Here I am" to God's call from the burning bush, provides a biblical framework for understanding vocational responsiveness as attentiveness, humility, and availability to divine purpose. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that personality competence is expressed through spiritual attentiveness, moral integrity, emotional maturity, humility in leadership, and relational presence. The CRE teacher's consistent character and authentic faith practice significantly influenced students' understanding of vocation and responsibility. Students reported increased awareness of life purpose and a deeper willingness to interpret their academic and personal aspirations as responses to God's invitation. The study concludes that personality competence in Christian education functions as embodied theology, where character becomes a formative pedagogical instrument. By modeling a lived "Here I am" posture, the teacher cultivates an environment that encourages students to discern and respond to God's call with confidence and integrity.*

**Keywords:** *Personality Competence, Christian Religious Education, God's Call*

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher personality competence occupies a central place in Christian Religious Education (CRE), particularly when the educational task involves nurturing spiritual responsiveness and vocational awareness. In Christian pedagogy, the teacher is not merely a transmitter

of doctrinal knowledge but a moral and spiritual exemplar whose character shapes the interpretive horizon of learners. Personality competence refers to the integrity, maturity, stability, and ethical consistency demonstrated by educators in both personal and professional life (Knight, 2006). Within Christian education, such competence is inseparable from spiritual sensitivity and obedience to God's calling. Thus, examining teacher personality through a biblical lens offers valuable insight into how educators model responsiveness to divine initiative in the classroom. A profound biblical foundation for understanding responsiveness to God's call is found in Book of Exodus 3:4, where God calls Moses from the burning bush, and Moses responds, "Here I am." This moment marks a transformative encounter in which personal availability precedes mission. Scholars note that Moses' response reflects attentiveness, humility, and readiness to engage with divine purpose (Childs, 1974; Fretheim, 1991). Theologically, this encounter illustrates that calling begins not with competence but with presence, an openness to hear and respond. For Christian educators, this narrative provides a paradigm of vocational identity rooted in listening and obedience rather than self-promotion or institutional obligation.

Christian education theorists emphasize that faith formation is deeply influenced by the authenticity of the teacher. Groome (2011) argues that educators mediate the Christian story not only through curriculum but also through personal witness. Similarly, Pazmiño (2008) underscores that teachers in Christian contexts are called to embody the values they teach, as their character becomes a living curriculum. When teachers demonstrate attentiveness to God's call in their own lives, students are more likely to perceive faith as relational and dynamic rather than abstract and distant. Personality competence, therefore, is not peripheral but foundational to effective CRE instruction. The formation of vocational awareness and moral identity is particularly critical. Adolescents are navigating questions of purpose, belonging, and future direction. Educational psychology suggests that during this developmental stage, role models significantly influence identity exploration and commitment (Erikson, 1968). A teacher who exemplifies integrity, humility, and responsiveness to spiritual calling can create a formative environment where students learn to discern meaning and responsibility in their own lives. Consequently, studying personality competence within a real educational setting provides practical insight into how biblical narratives inform character formation. At SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup, Murung Raya, there are 38 Christian students and three Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. This relatively small Christian community within a public high school setting presents both opportunity and challenge. On one hand, the limited number of Christian students allows for close relational interaction; on the other, it requires intentional effort to sustain spiritual vitality and communal identity. In such a context, the personality competence of the CRE teacher becomes especially significant. The teacher's responsiveness to God's call, modeled through commitment, ethical consistency, and spiritual attentiveness, can profoundly shape students' understanding of vocation and discipleship. This study seeks to explore how the personality competence of Christian Religious Education teachers at SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup reflects the theological insights of Exodus 3:4. By examining how teachers embody attentiveness to God's call and how this embodiment influences students' spiritual awareness, the research contributes to broader discussions on character-based pedagogy in Christian education. Ultimately, the study argues that personality competence grounded in biblical vocation fosters an

educational environment where students learn not only to hear about God's call but to respond to it with their own "Here I am."

## **METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine how the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers reflects responsiveness to God's call as portrayed in Book of Exodus 3:4 within the context of SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup, Murung Raya. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research aimed to explore lived experiences, personal dispositions, and relational dynamics that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement. The case study design enabled an in-depth investigation of one specific educational setting consisting of 38 Christian students and three Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, thereby allowing the researcher to analyze personality competence as it is embodied and experienced in daily school life. Participants were selected purposively, with the CRE teacher serving as the primary informant due to direct responsibility for Christian instruction. The two other Christian teachers were included to provide additional perspectives regarding the consistency of character, professional conduct, and spiritual example demonstrated within the broader school environment. Several Christian students from different grade levels were also invited to participate in interviews to capture their perceptions of the teacher's personality, spiritual influence, and vocational modeling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom observations, and document analysis. Interviews focused on teachers' understanding of divine calling, personal spiritual practices, ethical decision-making, and experiences of guiding students toward vocational awareness. Classroom observations examined teacher-student interaction, verbal and non-verbal expressions of attentiveness, modeling of humility, and responsiveness to students' questions about faith and life purpose. Document analysis included lesson plans, reflective notes, and school records to identify the integration of calling themes within instructional planning. Data collection occurred over multiple instructional sessions to ensure depth and credibility. Triangulation was applied by comparing insights from interviews, observations, and documentation to identify convergent themes. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with participants for validation and clarification. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, beginning with open coding to identify patterns related to attentiveness, humility, integrity, vocational modeling, and spiritual responsiveness. These themes were then interpreted in dialogue with biblical theology and Christian educational theory. Ethical considerations were upheld by obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality, and using pseudonyms where appropriate. Through this methodological framework, the study sought to provide a reliable and contextually grounded understanding of how teacher personality competence embodies and communicates responsiveness to God's call within Christian secondary education.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study reveal that the personality competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup, Murung Raya, significantly shapes

students' understanding of spiritual calling, responsibility, and vocational awareness. Through classroom observation, interviews, and document analysis, several interrelated themes emerged: spiritual attentiveness, authenticity and integrity, humility in leadership, relational presence, vocational modeling, moral consistency, and transformative influence within a minority faith context. Together, these findings demonstrate that personality competence is not an abstract professional standard but a lived embodiment of theological conviction, particularly as illuminated by the narrative of Book of Exodus 3:4. In that text, Moses responds to God's call from the burning bush with the words, "Here I am," an expression of availability and readiness that provides a paradigm for vocational responsiveness. Spiritual attentiveness emerged as a defining feature of the teacher's personality competence. Interviews revealed that the CRE teacher interprets personal vocation as an ongoing response to God's initiative rather than merely a professional appointment. The teacher described teaching not simply as employment but as participation in God's redemptive work within the school. This perspective was evident in classroom interactions, where moments of discussion were often framed in reflective terms such as, "What might God be inviting you to notice in this situation?" Observational data showed that the teacher frequently paused during lessons to create space for contemplation, encouraging students to consider how biblical narratives speak into their personal decisions. This attentiveness mirrors Moses' act of turning aside to observe the burning bush before responding to God's call. In educational terms, the teacher's personality communicates that responsiveness begins with listening. Students reported that such reflective pauses made lessons feel personal and meaningful rather than merely academic.

Authenticity and integrity were consistently identified as core aspects of the teacher's character. Students described the teacher as "consistent," "honest," and "the same inside and outside the classroom." Such descriptions indicate that personality competence extends beyond instructional moments into everyday conduct. The two other Christian teachers confirmed that the CRE teacher maintains ethical reliability in administrative duties, collegial relationships, and conflict resolution. This moral consistency strengthens credibility; students perceive the teacher's spiritual exhortations as genuine rather than performative. In adolescent developmental psychology, authenticity in adult role models significantly influences identity formation. At SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup, where only 38 students identify as Christian within a larger public school environment, credibility is particularly important. The teacher's integrity provides stability and reassurance, demonstrating that faith can be integrated with professional excellence. Humility in leadership surfaced as a defining expression of personality competence. In classroom observation, the teacher often acknowledged personal limitations and shared testimonies of spiritual growth rather than presenting an image of flawless authority. For example, when discussing vocational uncertainty, the teacher recounted moments of doubt during early career stages, emphasizing dependence on prayer and discernment. This vulnerability fostered relational trust; students felt comfortable sharing their own uncertainties about future plans. The humility displayed echoes Moses' reluctance and eventual submission to divine commission in Exodus 3-4. Rather than asserting superiority, the teacher's demeanor communicates that calling involves reliance on God rather than self-confidence alone. Such humility counters hierarchical educational models

and reinforces relational pedagogy. Relational presence proved central to the teacher's influence. Observations indicated that the teacher consistently remained accessible before and after class, engaging students in informal conversation about academic pressures, family challenges, and spiritual questions. This availability reflects the "Here I am" posture of Exodus 3:4 not only toward God but toward students. Personality competence, therefore, manifests as presence, being emotionally and spiritually available. Students interviewed emphasized that they felt "seen" and "heard," experiences that contributed to their willingness to discuss personal aspirations and doubts. In a context where Christian students are a minority within the broader school population, such relational attentiveness strengthens communal bonds and nurtures spiritual resilience. Vocational modeling emerged as a transformative dimension of personality competence. Rather than presenting vocation as limited to church ministry, the teacher emphasized diverse callings in society, education, healthcare, public service, entrepreneurship, while maintaining a theological foundation. During lessons related to Exodus 3:4, the teacher invited students to reflect on moments in which they sensed responsibility toward others. Students described aspirations to become teachers, nurses, engineers, and community leaders. The teacher framed these ambitions as potential responses to God's invitation to serve society. Observational evidence showed that students engaged actively in these discussions, demonstrating that the concept of calling had become accessible and relevant. The teacher's own example, balancing professional commitment with visible spiritual practice, reinforced this integration. Moral consistency in challenging situations provided concrete evidence of personality competence. Interviews with the two Christian colleagues revealed instances in which the CRE teacher addressed ethical concerns within the school environment, such as academic dishonesty or interpersonal conflict, with fairness and compassion. Students confirmed that disciplinary interactions were characterized by explanation and restoration rather than humiliation. This approach reflects theological principles of justice and grace, reinforcing that responsiveness to God's call includes moral courage. In the narrative of Exodus 3:4, Moses' availability precedes a mission of liberation and justice. Similarly, the teacher's readiness to address ethical issues demonstrates that spiritual calling entails active responsibility. The minority faith context of SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup amplifies the significance of personality competence. With 38 Christian students and three Christian teachers, the Christian community functions as a small but visible presence within the school. Students reported that observing their CRE teacher's confident yet humble faith encouraged them to express their beliefs respectfully among peers of different religious backgrounds. The teacher's demeanor, firm in conviction yet open in dialogue, modeled constructive interfaith interaction. Thus, personality competence contributes not only to internal spiritual formation but also to social engagement. Students learned that responding to God's call involves embodying faith in pluralistic contexts without hostility or withdrawal. The integration of biblical narrative with lived example strengthened theological internalization. Rather than treating Exodus 3:4 as distant history, the teacher connected Moses' encounter with contemporary experiences of decision-making and responsibility. Students were encouraged to identify personal "burning bush moments," situations that capture attention and demand response. Reflections collected from students revealed that many began to interpret academic opportunities, family expectations, and community needs as potential sites of divine invitation. This

hermeneutical move, from text to life, was facilitated not solely by instructional strategy but by the teacher's personal credibility. When students see their teacher living attentively, they are more inclined to interpret their own experiences theologically. Emotional maturity emerged as a supporting element of personality competence. Observational data indicated that the teacher maintained calm composure during classroom disruptions and responded to critical questions with patience rather than defensiveness. Adolescents often test authority figures, and the teacher's measured responses communicated stability. Emotional regulation enhances students' perception of safety, enabling open dialogue about existential questions. In vocational exploration, such psychological safety is essential. The teacher's emotional steadiness mirrors the calm assurance required to respond faithfully to divine calling amid uncertainty. Transformative influence became evident in students' self-descriptions. Interviews revealed that several students began to articulate their life goals in explicitly theological language, describing aspirations as "serving God through..." rather than merely pursuing success. While not all students adopted overtly religious vocabulary, many expressed heightened awareness of responsibility toward family and community. These shifts suggest that personality competence operates cumulatively over time. Through repeated exposure to an educator who models attentiveness and integrity, students internalize patterns of interpretation and action.

The discussion of these findings highlights that personality competence in Christian education functions as embodied theology. While professional competence encompasses subject mastery and pedagogical skill, personality competence reflects the integration of belief, character, and relational practice. In the case of SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup, the CRE teacher's attentiveness to God's call is not confined to personal devotion but permeates instructional method, ethical decision-making, and relational engagement. The narrative of Exodus 3:4 thus serves not only as curricular content but as interpretive lens for professional identity. The findings underscore the relational nature of vocational formation. Adolescents discern calling not merely through doctrinal instruction but through observation of adults who live purposefully. The teacher's "Here I am" posture becomes contagious; students learn that availability to God entails availability to others. This relational dynamic suggests that personality competence is central to sustainable Christian pedagogy, particularly in minority faith contexts where authenticity is essential for credibility. The study affirms that spiritual responsiveness can coexist with professional excellence in public education. The CRE teacher at SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup demonstrates that attentiveness to divine calling enhances rather than diminishes educational quality. Integrity, humility, and relational presence contribute to a classroom climate conducive to intellectual and spiritual growth. Through embodied example, students encounter a model of integrated life, faith informing vocation, character shaping leadership, and attentiveness guiding action. In this way, the results indicate that personality competence grounded in Exodus 3:4 fosters an educational environment where students are not only taught about God's call but are invited to respond with their own readiness: "Here I am."

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMAN 4 Laung Tuhup, Murung Raya, plays a decisive role in shaping students' understanding of spiritual calling and vocational identity. Grounded in theological reflection on Book of Exodus 3:4, the teacher's embodiment of attentiveness, humility, integrity, and relational presence demonstrates that responsiveness to God's call is not merely a biblical theme but a lived educational reality. The phrase "Here I am" becomes more than a scriptural quotation; it becomes a model of professional and spiritual identity. The findings indicate that personality competence is expressed through spiritual sensitivity, moral consistency, emotional maturity, and authentic relational engagement. In a school context consisting of 38 Christian students and three Christian teachers, the influence of one teacher's character becomes particularly significant. Students not only receive doctrinal instruction about divine calling but also observe its practical outworking in everyday interactions, ethical decisions, and vocational guidance. This integration of belief and behavior strengthens credibility and fosters deeper internalization of faith-based values. The study highlights that personality competence is foundational for vocational formation in adolescence. By modeling availability to God and responsibility toward others, the teacher creates a learning environment where students are encouraged to discern meaning and purpose within their own lives. In a pluralistic public school setting, such embodied faith also equips students to express their beliefs respectfully and confidently. Personality competence in Christian education functions as embodied theology, where character becomes curriculum and presence becomes pedagogy. When teachers live out the posture of "Here I am," they cultivate classrooms in which students are invited to hear, discern, and respond to God's call with integrity and courage.

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