



The Discipling Teacher: Professional Responsibility in Christian Religious Education - A Biblical Reflection on Gospel of Matthew 28:20 in the Context of UPT SPF SDN No. 104220 Durian Simbelang

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of teachers as disciplers in fulfilling their professional responsibility within Christian Religious Education through a biblical reflection on Gospel of Matthew 28:20. In this passage, Jesus instructs His followers to teach others to observe all His commandments, emphasizing the importance of teaching as a continuous process of discipleship and spiritual formation. The purpose of this research is to analyze how the professional responsibility of Christian Religious Education teachers contributes to the development of students' understanding of biblical teachings and their application in daily life within the educational setting of UPT SPF SDN No. 104220 Durian Simbelang. This study employed a quantitative descriptive research approach. The participants consisted of 34 Christian students who actively participated in Christian Religious Education classes. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale designed to measure students' perceptions of the teacher's professional responsibility and the implementation of discipleship-oriented teaching practices. The instrument included indicators such as the teacher's commitment to guiding students in understanding biblical teachings, the consistency between teaching and personal example, the encouragement of spiritual growth among students, and the teacher's efforts to help students apply the message of Gospel of Matthew 28:20 in their daily lives. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to determine the overall level of implementation of these practices in the classroom. The findings indicate that students generally perceive the Christian Religious Education teacher as demonstrating strong professional responsibility and a consistent commitment to discipleship-based teaching. By integrating professional competence with spiritual responsibility, teachers not only convey biblical knowledge but also foster students' character formation and spiritual growth. The study highlights the importance of viewing teaching as an act of discipleship that contributes to the holistic development of students within the educational community.

Keywords: Professional Responsibility, Christian Religious Education, Discipline

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping not only students' intellectual capacities but also their moral character and spiritual awareness. In contemporary educational discourse, the responsibility of teachers extends beyond the transmission of academic knowledge to include the cultivation of values that guide students in their personal and social lives. Teachers function as mentors, facilitators, and role models who influence the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of their students. Within the framework of Christian Religious Education (CRE), this responsibility becomes even more significant because the teacher is expected to guide students toward a deeper understanding of Christian faith and to encourage them to live according to biblical values. Scholars in the field of character education emphasize that the formation of moral character requires intentional guidance from educators who demonstrate integrity, commitment, and responsibility in their professional roles (Lickona, 1991). In Christian educational contexts, the concept of teaching is closely connected to the idea of discipleship. Discipleship refers to the process of guiding individuals to grow in faith, knowledge, and obedience to God's teachings. This concept is strongly rooted in the mission of Jesus Christ as expressed in the Great Commission recorded in Gospel of Matthew 28:20, where Jesus instructs His followers to teach others to observe everything He has commanded. This passage highlights the importance of teaching as an ongoing process of spiritual formation rather than merely the transfer of information. Biblical scholars interpret this instruction as a call for believers to participate actively in nurturing faith through instruction, example, and guidance (France, 2007). In the context of Christian education, teachers therefore serve not only as educators but also as disciplers who help students internalize Christian values and apply them in their daily lives.

The role of the teacher as a discipler emphasizes the integration of professional competence with spiritual responsibility. Professional responsibility in education includes commitment to effective teaching practices, ethical conduct, and dedication to students' holistic development. In Christian Religious Education, this responsibility also involves modeling Christian virtues such as humility, compassion, patience, and integrity. Educational theorists suggest that students often learn moral and spiritual values by observing the attitudes and behaviors demonstrated by their teachers. Palmer (1998) argues that teaching is an expression of the teacher's identity and inner values, meaning that the authenticity of the teacher significantly shapes the learning environment. Consequently, teachers who demonstrate genuine commitment to their vocation can influence students not only academically but also spiritually. The integration of discipleship principles into educational practice is particularly important in elementary schools, where students are in the early stages of character and faith development. During this formative period, students begin to develop attitudes toward authority, responsibility, and moral decision-making. Teachers who intentionally guide students in understanding and practicing Christian values help establish a strong foundation for lifelong character development. Research in educational psychology indicates that supportive teacher-student relationships contribute significantly to students' motivation, engagement, and moral growth (Wentzel & Miele, 2016). When students experience guidance that combines knowledge with personal example, they are more likely to internalize the values presented in the learning process. The context of this study is UPT SPF SDN No. 104220 Durian Simbelang, where Christian Religious Education is

implemented as part of the formal curriculum for Christian students. The school community includes 34 Christian students and 9 Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. This educational setting provides an opportunity to examine how the concept of discipleship in teaching can be practiced within the classroom environment. In such contexts, teachers are expected to carry out their professional responsibilities while simultaneously guiding students in their spiritual formation. The interaction between teachers and students therefore becomes an important space where biblical teachings can be interpreted and applied in practical ways. Understanding the professional responsibility of teachers through the perspective of discipleship is important for strengthening the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education. When teachers view their vocation as part of a spiritual mission, their approach to teaching becomes more holistic and meaningful. Instead of focusing solely on cognitive achievement, teachers also prioritize students' moral and spiritual development. This perspective aligns with the biblical mandate found in Gospel of Matthew 28:20, which emphasizes the responsibility of teaching others to live according to the teachings of Christ. This study aims to examine how the concept of the "discipling teacher" is reflected in the professional responsibilities of Christian Religious Education teachers. Specifically, the research seeks to analyze how teachers implement the principles of discipleship in their teaching practices and how students perceive the influence of these practices on their learning experience. By exploring these aspects, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how biblical principles can inform educational practice and strengthen the role of teachers as agents of spiritual and character formation within the school environment.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive research design was implemented to examine the implementation of teachers' professional responsibility as disciplers in Christian Religious Education based on the teaching found in Gospel of Matthew 28:20 within the educational context of UPT SPF SDN No. 104220 Durian Simbelang. A quantitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to measure students' perceptions of the teacher's professional practices and the integration of discipleship values in classroom instruction in a systematic and objective manner. The population of this research consisted of 34 Christian students who actively participated in Christian Religious Education classes and nine Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher. Considering the relatively small population, the study applied a total sampling technique, meaning that all Christian students were included as research respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The instrument was designed to measure several indicators related to teacher professionalism and discipleship-oriented teaching, including the teacher's commitment to guiding students in understanding biblical teachings, consistency between teaching and personal example, encouragement of spiritual growth among students, clarity in explaining Christian values, and the teacher's responsibility in helping students apply the teachings of Gospel of Matthew 28:20 in their daily lives. Before the data collection process, the questionnaire items were reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and content validity. Data collection

was conducted during the academic semester through direct distribution of the questionnaire to student respondents during Christian Religious Education classes. The collected data were then analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency distribution, percentage calculation, and mean score interpretation to determine the level of implementation of teacher professional responsibility as perceived by students. Through this methodological approach, the study aimed to provide an empirical description of how the concept of the discipling teacher is reflected in the educational practices of Christian Religious Education within the school context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that the concept of the discipling teacher plays a significant role in shaping the learning environment and spiritual development of students in Christian Religious Education at UPT SPF SDN No. 104220 Durian Simbelang. Based on the analysis of questionnaire responses collected from the Christian students who participated in this research, the descriptive statistical findings indicate that the majority of respondents perceive their Christian Religious Education teacher as demonstrating a strong sense of professional responsibility. Students generally reported that the teacher not only explains biblical teachings clearly but also demonstrates attitudes and behaviors that reflect Christian values in daily interactions. This perception suggests that the integration of professional competence with spiritual guidance contributes to a positive learning experience in which students feel supported both academically and spiritually. In the context of Christian education, such integration is essential because teaching is understood not only as the transmission of knowledge but also as a process of guiding students toward spiritual maturity and moral responsibility. One of the most significant findings of this study is related to the teacher's role in helping students understand the meaning of discipleship as expressed in the Great Commission recorded in Gospel of Matthew 28:20. Students indicated that the teacher frequently emphasizes the importance of learning and practicing the teachings of Jesus in everyday life. Rather than presenting biblical texts merely as historical or religious information, the teacher encourages students to reflect on how the message of Christ can influence their attitudes, decisions, and relationships with others. This approach aligns with the theological interpretation of Matthew 28:20, which emphasizes the responsibility of believers to teach and guide others to observe the commands of Christ. In the educational context, this responsibility is reflected in the teacher's commitment to nurturing not only cognitive understanding but also spiritual transformation among students.

The findings further demonstrate that students perceive the teacher as consistently modeling Christian virtues such as patience, kindness, and humility in classroom interactions. This modeling plays an important role in reinforcing the values taught during lessons. Educational research suggests that students often learn moral values more effectively through observation and example than through verbal instruction alone. When teachers demonstrate attitudes consistent with their teaching, students are more likely to internalize these values and apply them in their own lives. In the context of this study, the teacher's behavior serves as a living example of the principles of discipleship, illustrating how Christian teachings can be translated into everyday actions. Such

modeling contributes to the credibility of the teacher's instruction and strengthens the impact of the learning process. Another important aspect highlighted by the results is the teacher's commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere. Students reported that the Christian Religious Education classroom is characterized by open communication and respectful dialogue. The teacher encourages students to ask questions, share their thoughts, and participate actively in discussions related to biblical teachings and moral values. This interactive approach helps students feel valued and respected as participants in the learning process. It also reflects the relational dimension of discipleship, which involves guiding individuals through personal engagement and meaningful dialogue rather than through authoritative instruction alone. By creating opportunities for students to express their ideas and reflect on their experiences, the teacher helps students connect biblical teachings with real-life situations. The data also indicate that the teacher's professional responsibility extends to providing guidance for students' personal and spiritual development. Many respondents stated that the teacher often encourages them to practice values such as honesty, responsibility, and compassion in their daily interactions with classmates and family members. These practices illustrate how the teaching of Christian Religious Education goes beyond academic instruction to include character formation and ethical guidance. In this sense, the teacher fulfills the role of a mentor who supports students in their journey of faith and personal growth. Such mentorship reflects the broader meaning of discipleship described in Gospel of Matthew 28:20, where teaching involves guiding individuals to live according to the teachings of Christ.

The results also reveal that the integration of discipleship-oriented teaching contributes positively to students' motivation and engagement in learning activities. Students who perceive their teacher as dedicated and supportive tend to participate more actively in classroom discussions and assignments. The teacher's encouragement helps students feel confident in expressing their opinions and asking questions about the material being studied. This sense of engagement is important for effective learning because it allows students to explore ideas more deeply and to develop a clearer understanding of biblical principles. When students are actively involved in the learning process, they are more likely to retain information and to apply it in meaningful ways. One challenge involves ensuring that students fully understand the deeper meaning of discipleship rather than perceiving it simply as religious obligation. Some students initially interpret the concept of discipleship as merely following rules or memorizing biblical teachings. To address this challenge, teachers must emphasize the relational and transformative aspects of discipleship, helping students recognize that following Christ involves a personal commitment to living according to His teachings. This requires teaching strategies that encourage reflection, discussion, and practical application of biblical values in everyday life. Another challenge concerns the diversity of students' backgrounds and levels of spiritual understanding. Even within a group of Christian students, there may be differences in familiarity with biblical teachings and levels of engagement with religious practices. These differences can influence how students interpret and respond to lessons in Christian Religious Education. Teachers must therefore adapt their instructional approaches to accommodate varying levels of understanding and to ensure that all students can benefit from the learning process. By using diverse teaching strategies such

as storytelling, group discussion, and practical examples, teachers can make biblical teachings more accessible and meaningful for students with different experiences.

The findings of this study also highlight the broader impact of discipling teachers on the development of school culture. When teachers consistently model Christian values and encourage students to practice these values in their interactions, the influence extends beyond the classroom to the wider school environment. Students who learn to practice compassion, respect, and responsibility in Christian Religious Education classes often carry these attitudes into other areas of their school life. As a result, the presence of teachers who embrace their professional responsibility as disciplers contributes to the development of a school culture characterized by cooperation, mutual respect, and ethical behavior. The results suggest that the integration of discipleship principles can enhance the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education. Teaching that emphasizes both knowledge and spiritual formation encourages students to view their learning as relevant to their personal lives. Rather than seeing religious education as an isolated subject within the curriculum, students begin to recognize its significance for shaping their attitudes and decisions. This holistic approach to education reflects the broader goals of Christian teaching, which aim to guide individuals toward intellectual understanding, moral integrity, and spiritual maturity. The study also underscores the importance of professional responsibility in sustaining effective discipleship-based teaching. Teachers who view their vocation as a calling rather than merely a profession are more likely to demonstrate dedication, patience, and commitment to their students' development. Such attitudes influence not only the quality of instruction but also the relationships formed between teachers and students. Positive teacher–student relationships create a supportive learning environment in which students feel encouraged to grow academically and spiritually. In this context, professional responsibility becomes an expression of faith and service, aligning the teacher's educational role with the mission of Christian discipleship. It can be concluded that the concept of the discipling teacher provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of Christian Religious Education teachers in contemporary educational contexts. The example observed at UPT SPF SDN No. 104220 Durian Simbelang illustrates how the integration of biblical teachings with professional responsibility can contribute to students' holistic development. By guiding students to understand and practice the teachings of Christ, teachers help them develop a sense of purpose, responsibility, and moral awareness that extends beyond the classroom. The teaching found in Gospel of Matthew 28:20 serves as a powerful reminder that education within the Christian tradition is not limited to the transfer of knowledge but involves the formation of individuals who are committed to living according to the teachings of Christ. When teachers embrace their role as disciplers, they participate in a transformative process that shapes both the intellectual and spiritual lives of their students. Through consistent example, meaningful dialogue, and thoughtful instruction, discipling teachers help students grow in understanding, character, and faith, thereby fulfilling the deeper purpose of Christian education.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the concept of the discipling teacher plays an important role in strengthening the professional responsibility of Christian Religious Education teachers in guiding students toward both academic understanding and spiritual growth. The findings show that the implementation of discipleship-oriented teaching contributes positively to the learning experience of students at UPT SPF SDN No. 104220 Durian Simbelang. Through consistent teaching practices, respectful interaction, and personal example, the Christian Religious Education teacher is able to create a classroom environment that supports not only knowledge acquisition but also character formation and spiritual awareness. The results also highlight that students perceive their teacher as actively integrating biblical teachings into classroom instruction and daily interaction. The message found in Gospel of Matthew 28:20 serves as a theological foundation that encourages teachers to view their vocation as a form of discipleship. In this perspective, teaching becomes more than an instructional task; it becomes a process of guiding students to understand, internalize, and practice Christian values in their everyday lives. By modeling virtues such as patience, humility, responsibility, and compassion, teachers provide students with practical examples of how biblical teachings can shape personal behavior and social relationships. The study indicates that the presence of a discipling teacher contributes to a positive learning climate characterized by open communication, mutual respect, and active student participation. When students feel supported and valued, they are more motivated to engage in learning activities and to reflect on the moral and spiritual lessons presented in Christian Religious Education. This supportive environment strengthens the effectiveness of the educational process and encourages students to develop attitudes that align with Christian ethical principles. The professional responsibility of Christian Religious Education teachers is closely connected to the mission of discipleship described in Gospel of Matthew 28:20. Teachers who embrace this responsibility contribute not only to students' academic development but also to their spiritual formation and character growth. By integrating biblical teaching with professional practice, educators can cultivate students who demonstrate faith, responsibility, and ethical awareness in their relationships with others. Such an approach highlights the essential role of teachers as mentors and spiritual guides within the broader mission of Christian education.

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