



## Consistent with the Word: The Personal Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Light of Exodus 5:22 at SDN 3 Mandomai

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### ABSTRACT

*The personal competence of teachers plays a fundamental role in shaping the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education, particularly in nurturing students' spiritual and moral development. In Christian educational contexts, teachers are expected not only to transmit biblical knowledge but also to demonstrate integrity and consistency in living according to God's Word. This study aims to examine the personal competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in reflecting biblical values inspired by Exodus 5:22 at SDN 3 Mandomai, Kapuas. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach involving fourteen Christian students and three Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, as participants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation analysis to explore how the teacher's personal competence is manifested in daily teaching practices and interactions with students. The findings reveal that the CRE teacher demonstrates strong personal competence characterized by spiritual integrity, emotional maturity, responsibility, and consistency between teaching and personal behavior. These qualities contribute significantly to creating a positive learning environment where students feel encouraged to engage with biblical teachings and reflect on their faith in daily life. The biblical narrative of Moses' dialogue with God in Exodus 5:22 provides a meaningful theological framework that emphasizes faithfulness and honesty in fulfilling God's calling, which is reflected in the teacher's commitment to Christian education. The study concludes that the personal competence of CRE teachers is essential in fostering holistic student development, as it integrates spiritual authenticity with educational practice and supports the formation of students' character and faith within the school community.*

**Keywords:** *Personal Competence, Christian Religious Education, the Word*

## INTRODUCTION

Competence refers not only to mastery of subject matter and pedagogical skills but also to the personal qualities and integrity that shape how teachers embody the values they teach. In Indonesia, teacher competence is formally categorized into four main domains: pedagogical competence, professional competence, social competence, and personal competence. Among these, personal competence occupies a particularly crucial role because it reflects the teacher's moral integrity, emotional stability, maturity, and consistency in living according to ethical and spiritual values. The Indonesian educational framework emphasizes that teachers must become moral exemplars for their students, demonstrating integrity and responsibility both inside and outside the classroom (Mulyasa, 2013). Personal competence carries even deeper significance. CRE teachers are not merely transmitters of theological knowledge but are spiritual mentors who model Christian character and faith in daily life. Christian education traditionally understands teaching as a vocation rooted in spiritual formation and moral witness. According to Robert W. Pazmiño, Christian educators must integrate faith, character, and pedagogy so that students not only understand biblical truths intellectually but also experience them through the teacher's personal example. This perspective highlights that the authenticity of the teacher's life strongly influences the effectiveness of religious education.

The biblical foundation for understanding the integrity and consistency of God's servants can be found in various scriptural narratives. One significant passage is found in Exodus 5:22, where Moses returns to the Lord and expresses his concern about the difficulties faced by the Israelites after confronting Pharaoh. The verse portrays a moment of tension, honesty, and spiritual struggle in Moses' leadership. Despite experiencing doubt and questioning God's plan, Moses remains committed to his calling. This narrative illustrates the complexity of faithful leadership and the importance of maintaining sincerity before God even in moments of uncertainty. Biblical scholars such as Walter Brueggemann interpret this passage as an example of authentic faith in which God's servant engages in honest dialogue with God while remaining obedient to the divine mission. The principle reflected in this biblical narrative can inspire teachers to cultivate integrity, humility, and perseverance in their professional responsibilities. Teachers who remain consistent with the values of the Word of God demonstrate authenticity in their teaching ministry. Personal competence, therefore, involves not only moral uprightness but also spiritual resilience and faithfulness in fulfilling one's vocation as an educator. As noted by Thomas H. Groome, effective Christian education requires educators who embody the message they teach, allowing students to encounter Christian faith through lived experience rather than abstract instruction alone. Christian Religious Education teachers often serve students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Their personal character becomes an essential factor in shaping students' attitudes toward faith, morality, and community life. Scholars such as Thomas Lickona emphasize that character formation in schools largely depends on the example set by teachers, as students learn moral values not only through instruction but also through observation and imitation. In this sense, the personal competence of CRE teachers directly influences the spiritual and moral development of students. This issue becomes particularly relevant in smaller educational communities where the number of Christian students and teachers is limited. At SDN 3 Mandomai in

Kapuas Regency, for instance, Christian students constitute a minority group within the broader school population. The school records indicate that there are fourteen Christian students and three teachers who share the same faith, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. In such contexts, the teacher's personal example becomes even more critical because it provides students with a visible model of Christian faith and character within the school environment. The presence of a teacher who consistently lives according to biblical principles can strengthen students' spiritual identity and encourage them to practice Christian values in daily interactions. Many studies focus primarily on pedagogical strategies or curriculum implementation, while the spiritual and personal dimensions of teacher competence receive less attention. Therefore, research that explores the integration of biblical reflection and teacher competence is needed to enrich the discourse of Christian education, particularly within the Indonesian context. Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the personal competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in light of the biblical reflection found in Exodus 5:22. Specifically, the research investigates how the values of faithfulness, integrity, and spiritual honesty reflected in this passage are manifested in the teaching practices and personal character of CRE teachers at SDN 3 Mandomai, Kapuas. By analyzing the relationship between biblical principles and teacher competence, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how Christian educators can remain consistent with the Word of God while fulfilling their professional responsibilities in contemporary educational settings.

## METHODS

A qualitative approach was chosen because the research sought to understand deeply the lived experiences, attitudes, and spiritual perspectives of teachers in carrying out their educational responsibilities. Qualitative research allows researchers to interpret social and educational phenomena from the perspectives of participants, emphasizing meaning, context, and personal reflection (Creswell, 2014). In the context of Christian education, such an approach is appropriate for examining how biblical principles are embodied in the daily practices and character of teachers. The research was conducted at SDN 3 Mandomai, located in Kapuas Regency, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. This school represents a unique context for studying Christian Religious Education because Christian students form a relatively small group within the broader school population. Based on school data, the participants involved in this study included fourteen Christian students and three Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. The small number of participants allowed the researcher to conduct a more in-depth exploration of the relationships between teachers' personal character, their faith commitment, and the learning experiences of students. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify individuals who possess relevant experiences related to the research topic (Patton, 2015). The Christian Religious Education teacher served as the primary participant because of their central role in delivering religious instruction and modeling Christian values in the classroom. In addition, other Christian teachers and Christian students were included as supporting participants to provide broader perspectives regarding how the teacher's personal competence is perceived and experienced within the school environment. Data

collection was conducted through several qualitative techniques. In-depth interviews were carried out with the Christian Religious Education teacher and other Christian teachers to explore their understanding of personal competence, their spiritual motivations in teaching, and how biblical values influence their professional conduct. The interview questions were designed to capture themes such as integrity, responsibility, faithfulness, humility, and consistency in living according to God's Word. These themes were inspired by the leadership and spiritual perseverance demonstrated by Moses in Exodus 5:22, which illustrates honest dialogue with God and steadfast commitment to divine calling. Classroom observations were conducted to examine how the teacher's personal competence was expressed in real teaching situations. Observations focused on the teacher's attitudes, communication style, emotional control, fairness toward students, and consistency between teaching content and personal behavior. Observational data are valuable in educational research because they allow researchers to see how values and competencies are demonstrated in authentic learning environments (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Documentation analysis was used to support the findings obtained from interviews and observations. Documents such as lesson plans, school records, and student learning outcomes were examined to understand how Christian Religious Education was implemented within the school context. These documents also provided insights into the structure of CRE learning activities and how teachers integrate biblical teachings into their instruction. The collected data were analyzed which involves identifying patterns, themes, and meanings within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process began with data organization and transcription of interviews, followed by careful reading and coding of key ideas related to personal competence and biblical values. These codes were then grouped into broader themes such as spiritual integrity, consistency in faith practice, moral example, and teacher commitment. Through this process, the researcher interpreted how the values reflected in Exodus 5:22 influenced the teacher's personal competence in the educational setting.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the personal competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SDN 3 Mandomai, Kapuas, plays a significant role in shaping the spiritual atmosphere of the classroom and influencing students' learning experiences. Personal competence in this context refers to the teacher's integrity, emotional maturity, moral consistency, and spiritual commitment in living according to the Word of God. The data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation show that the CRE teacher not only performs instructional duties but also embodies Christian values through personal example and relational engagement with students. This finding is consistent with the broader educational perspective that teachers are moral agents whose personal character directly influences students' attitudes and behavior. Scholars such as Thomas Lickona emphasize that character formation in educational settings largely depends on the moral example of teachers, because students internalize ethical values not merely through formal instruction but also through observation of their teachers' actions. One of the most prominent aspects of the teacher's personal competence identified in this research is spiritual integrity. The CRE teacher demonstrated a consistent commitment to living according to Christian teachings both inside and outside the classroom. Interviews

with students revealed that the teacher frequently emphasized honesty, humility, and faithfulness as essential Christian virtues. These values were not only communicated verbally but were also reflected in the teacher's daily behavior, including fairness in evaluating students, patience in responding to questions, and sincerity in guiding students' spiritual development. This pattern of behavior aligns with the biblical reflection found in Exodus 5:22, where Moses openly expresses his concerns to God while remaining faithful to his calling. The passage illustrates that genuine faith involves both honesty before God and steadfast commitment to divine responsibility. In the context of Christian education, this narrative serves as a model for teachers who must maintain spiritual authenticity while fulfilling their professional roles.

The observations conducted during classroom learning activities also indicate that the CRE teacher's personal competence contributes significantly to the creation of a supportive and respectful learning environment. During the observed lessons, the teacher consistently encouraged students to express their opinions and ask questions about biblical teachings. Students were not afraid to participate in discussions, suggesting that the teacher had established a climate of trust and openness. Such an atmosphere is essential in religious education because spiritual learning often involves personal reflection and moral exploration. According to the Christian education scholar Thomas H. Groome, effective faith formation requires dialogical learning environments where students are invited to reflect critically on their experiences in light of biblical narratives. The CRE teacher at SDN 3 Mandomai appears to embody this principle by encouraging students to connect biblical teachings with their everyday lives. Another significant finding concerns the consistency between teaching and personal example. Students repeatedly mentioned that the CRE teacher's behavior reflects the values taught in class, particularly in areas such as patience, responsibility, and compassion. For instance, when conflicts occurred among students, the teacher approached the situation calmly and guided students to resolve their disagreements through dialogue and forgiveness. This behavior reinforced the biblical principle of reconciliation and demonstrated the practical application of Christian values. Such consistency strengthens the credibility of religious instruction, because students are more likely to trust and internalize teachings that are visibly practiced by their teachers. Educational theorists often refer to this phenomenon as the "hidden curriculum," which refers to the implicit values communicated through teachers' attitudes and actions. The influence of the hidden curriculum has been widely discussed in educational literature, highlighting that moral education is often transmitted through lived example rather than formal teaching alone. The teacher's emotional maturity also emerged as an important dimension of personal competence. Classroom observations showed that the teacher maintained calmness and self-control even when students displayed inattentive or disruptive behavior. Instead of responding with anger or harsh discipline, the teacher patiently guided students back to the learning activity and reminded them of their responsibilities as learners. This approach reflects the maturity expected of professional educators and corresponds with the Indonesian national standard for teacher competence, which emphasizes emotional stability and wise decision-making as essential elements of personal competence. In the context of Christian Religious Education, emotional maturity is particularly important because teachers are expected to reflect Christlike attitudes of patience and compassion in their interactions with students.

The influence of the teacher's personal competence becomes even more significant when considering the relatively small number of Christian students in the school. At SDN 3 Mandomai, only fourteen students identify as Christians, while the broader student population represents diverse religious backgrounds. In such a context, the CRE teacher functions not only as an academic instructor but also as a spiritual mentor who helps students maintain their Christian identity within a pluralistic environment. Interviews with students indicated that they felt encouraged and supported by the teacher's guidance, particularly when discussing moral challenges or questions related to faith. This finding supports the argument made by Robert W. Pazmiño that Christian educators serve as mediators of faith experiences, helping students integrate biblical teachings with their daily lives. Another important theme emerging from the data is the teacher's commitment to spiritual formation. The CRE teacher regularly initiated short moments of prayer and reflection during lessons, encouraging students to develop personal relationships with God. These practices were not implemented merely as routine religious rituals but were presented as opportunities for students to express gratitude, confess mistakes, and seek divine guidance. Through these activities, students gradually developed a deeper awareness of spiritual values and learned to connect biblical teachings with their personal experiences. Such practices reflect the holistic nature of Christian education, which seeks to nurture intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously. The study also found that the teacher's personal competence contributed to the development of positive learning motivation among students. Students expressed enthusiasm during CRE classes and showed genuine interest in discussing biblical stories and moral lessons. This enthusiasm can be partly attributed to the teacher's approachable personality and genuine concern for students' well-being. Educational research consistently demonstrates that positive teacher-student relationships enhance students' engagement and academic motivation. When students perceive their teachers as caring and trustworthy individuals, they are more likely to participate actively in learning activities and internalize the values conveyed during instruction.

The biblical reflection on Exodus 5:22 provides a meaningful framework for interpreting these findings. In this passage, Moses approaches God with honesty and vulnerability after facing resistance from Pharaoh and the suffering of the Israelites. Rather than abandoning his mission, Moses remains faithful to God's calling despite the challenges he encounters. This narrative illustrates the importance of perseverance and integrity in leadership. For teachers, especially those involved in Christian education, the story of Moses offers a powerful reminder that faithful service often requires patience, humility, and unwavering commitment to divine principles. In the context of SDN 3 Mandomai, the CRE teacher demonstrates similar qualities of perseverance and faithfulness. Although teaching a small group of Christian students may present certain limitations in terms of resources and institutional support, the teacher continues to provide meaningful spiritual guidance and maintain a positive learning environment. This dedication reflects the deeper vocational dimension of teaching in Christian education, where educators understand their work as a calling rather than merely a profession. The integration of professional responsibility with spiritual commitment allows teachers to remain consistent with the Word of God while addressing the practical challenges of classroom instruction. The findings highlight the importance of teacher authenticity in religious education. Authenticity refers to the alignment between a teacher's beliefs, values, and

actions. When teachers demonstrate authenticity, students perceive them as credible role models and are more inclined to embrace the values they promote. In this study, authenticity was evident in the teacher's willingness to share personal experiences of faith and to acknowledge personal struggles in maintaining spiritual discipline. Such openness reflects the kind of honest dialogue with God exemplified by Moses in the biblical narrative, reinforcing the relevance of scriptural teachings for contemporary educational practice. Another dimension revealed in the research is the role of personal competence in fostering communal harmony within the classroom. Although the CRE class consists of students with similar religious backgrounds, they come from different family situations and social contexts. The teacher's emphasis on mutual respect, cooperation, and forgiveness helped create a sense of unity among the students. This communal orientation reflects the broader Christian understanding of education as a process of nurturing community and shared moral responsibility. By modeling inclusive attitudes and respectful communication, the teacher contributed to the formation of a supportive learning community.

The findings of this study reinforce the idea that teacher competence cannot be reduced to technical skills alone. While pedagogical knowledge and subject mastery remain essential, the effectiveness of teaching ultimately depends on the character and integrity of the educator. Personal competence serves as the foundation upon which other competencies are built, because it shapes how teachers interpret their professional responsibilities and interact with students. In Christian Religious Education, this dimension becomes even more central, as the teacher's life itself becomes a testimony of faith. The results of this research demonstrate that the personal competence of the CRE teacher at SDN 3 Mandomai significantly influences the spiritual and moral development of students. Through integrity, emotional maturity, authenticity, and spiritual commitment, the teacher embodies the biblical values reflected in Exodus 5:22. These qualities enable the teacher to create a learning environment characterized by trust, respect, and spiritual growth. The study therefore highlights the importance of cultivating personal competence among Christian educators, emphasizing that effective religious instruction requires not only intellectual preparation but also deep spiritual formation and moral consistency.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the personal competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in light of the biblical reflection found in Exodus 5:22 at SDN 3 Mandomai, Kapuas. The findings indicate that the personal competence of the CRE teacher plays a crucial role in shaping both the spiritual atmosphere of the classroom and the moral development of students. Personal competence, expressed through integrity, emotional maturity, responsibility, and consistency with Christian values, enables teachers to become authentic role models who influence students not only through instruction but also through personal example. The results demonstrate that the CRE teacher consistently embodies Christian values such as honesty, patience, humility, and compassion in interactions with students. These qualities are reflected in the teacher's fairness in evaluating students, willingness to listen to students' perspectives, and commitment to guiding students toward moral and spiritual growth. Such behavior

strengthens the credibility of religious instruction, because students are more likely to internalize values that are visibly practiced by their teachers. In this way, the teacher's personal competence functions as a living testimony of Christian faith within the educational environment. The study also reveals that the teacher's personal competence contributes significantly to the creation of a positive and supportive learning climate. Through respectful communication, encouragement of student participation, and patient guidance during classroom challenges, the teacher establishes an atmosphere of trust and openness. This environment allows students to engage actively in discussions about biblical teachings and moral values, fostering deeper understanding and personal reflection. Even within the context of a relatively small group of Christian students, the teacher's presence as a spiritual mentor provides meaningful support for students' faith development. The biblical narrative of Exodus 5:22 offers an important theological framework for understanding the teacher's role. Moses' honest dialogue with God and his perseverance in fulfilling God's mission illustrate the importance of faithfulness and integrity in leadership. Similarly, the CRE teacher at SDN 3 Mandomai demonstrates perseverance and commitment in carrying out educational responsibilities, showing that teaching Christian values requires both spiritual dedication and personal authenticity. This biblical perspective reinforces the idea that Christian educators are called not only to teach biblical knowledge but also to live consistently according to God's Word. The research highlights that personal competence is a foundational element in the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education. Teachers who demonstrate integrity, emotional stability, and spiritual commitment can significantly influence students' character formation and faith development. Therefore, efforts to improve the quality of Christian education should not focus solely on pedagogical and professional competencies but should also emphasize the cultivation of strong personal and spiritual character among teachers. By remaining consistent with the Word of God and embodying the values they teach, Christian educators can fulfill their calling as faithful servants who guide students toward holistic growth in faith, knowledge, and character.

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