



Mastery the Concepts of Sin and Obedience Based on Genesis 2:16–17 of Students SMP Negeri 1 Alasa Talumuzoi

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ABSTRACT

This study explores students' understanding of the concepts of sin and obedience as presented in Genesis 2:16–17, focusing on their interpretation and practical application in daily life. Conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Alasa Talumuzoi, the research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' cognitive and moral grasp of biblical teachings. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were gathered from interviews and classroom observations. The findings reveal significant variation in students' mastery of the material, shaped by factors such as family religious practices, cultural context, and prior religious education. Moreover, students who demonstrated a deeper understanding of the biblical text also showed higher levels of moral awareness and behavioral consistency in applying the values of obedience and avoidance of sin. The study concludes with recommendations to strengthen Christian Religious Education (CRE) through contextualized teaching strategies that integrate biblical exegesis, moral reflection, and experiential learning, thereby promoting a more holistic comprehension of sin and obedience in accordance with Christian doctrine.

Keywords: *sin, obedience, Genesis 2:16–17, moral development*

INTRODUCTION

The concepts of sin and obedience are central to the moral and theological framework of the Judeo-Christian tradition. These two interrelated ideas serve as the basis for understanding the human relationship with God, the nature of moral choice, and the ethical responsibilities that emerge from divine commandments. The narrative in *Genesis 2:16–17* is particularly significant in shaping the biblical understanding of sin and obedience. The text records God's instruction to Adam: "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." This command encapsulates the essence of divine authority and human accountability, establishing a moral framework that defines both the freedom and the limits of human action. Theologically, *Genesis 2:16–17*

introduces a profound moral tension that underlies the human condition—the freedom to choose between obedience and disobedience. In the biblical narrative, God’s command is not merely a test of loyalty but a revelation of the divine-human relationship characterized by trust and responsibility. Sin, in this context, is not only a violation of divine law but also a disruption of relational harmony between humanity and God. Conversely, obedience signifies trust, reverence, and alignment with divine will. These themes form the moral core of Christian ethics and continue to guide religious education in various contexts, including formal schooling. Within the framework of Christian Religious Education (CRE), the exploration of sin and obedience is crucial for moral and spiritual formation. The aim of CRE is not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to cultivate moral character, ethical discernment, and spiritual maturity among students. However, the extent to which students internalize and apply biblical concepts such as sin and obedience depends on multiple factors, including pedagogical approaches, cultural influences, family upbringing, and personal faith experience. In Indonesia, where moral education is an integral part of the national curriculum, understanding how students interpret these theological ideas provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of religious instruction and its impact on character development.

This study focuses on students at SMP Negeri 1 Alasa Talumuzoi, a junior high school that includes Christian Religious Education as part of its curriculum. The adolescent stage represents a critical period of cognitive and moral development. According to Piaget’s theory of cognitive development, adolescents begin to move from concrete operational thinking to more abstract reasoning, which enables them to engage with moral and theological concepts at a deeper level. Similarly, Kohlberg’s stages of moral development suggest that this age group is transitioning from conventional morality—defined by external authority and social approval—toward a more principled moral reasoning based on internalized values. Thus, examining students’ understanding of sin and obedience provides not only theological insights but also developmental perspectives on moral education. The significance of this study lies in its attempt to bridge biblical theology with educational practice. In many religious education settings, the teaching of sin and obedience often remains doctrinal, focusing primarily on memorization of scriptural texts and moral rules. While such approaches preserve doctrinal accuracy, they may fail to engage students’ moral imagination and personal reflection. Effective Christian education should encourage students to interpret biblical teachings in light of their daily experiences, social relationships, and ethical dilemmas. By contextualizing *Genesis 2:16–17* in the lived realities of students, teachers can foster a more meaningful and transformative understanding of these concepts. From a theological perspective, sin can be understood as the misuse of human freedom granted by God. The divine command in *Genesis* was intended not to restrict human potential but to protect it from self-destruction. The warning that “you will certainly die” underscores the inherent consequences of moral disobedience. Theologically, this death represents not only physical mortality but also spiritual separation from God—the loss of communion that defines true life. In Christian doctrine, the remedy for sin lies in repentance and restoration through obedience to God’s word, culminating in the redemptive work of Christ. Therefore, the study of sin and obedience is not merely an exercise in moral categorization but a reflection on the human need for grace and reconciliation. From an educational standpoint, the teaching of sin and obedience must be adapted to the

developmental level of the learners. For students in junior high school, abstract theological ideas must be translated into concrete moral experiences. For instance, disobedience can be illustrated not only as rebellion against divine law but also as acts of dishonesty, disrespect, or irresponsibility in everyday life. Likewise, obedience can be presented as active faithfulness-demonstrated through respect for teachers, care for peers, and diligence in study. When biblical principles are connected to students' real-life contexts, they become more relatable and applicable, fostering moral growth grounded in spiritual understanding. This study also acknowledges the cultural dimensions of moral learning. In Indonesian society, values such as respect for authority, communal harmony, and social responsibility are deeply rooted in both cultural and religious traditions. These cultural factors can either reinforce or complicate students' understanding of biblical obedience. On the one hand, the cultural emphasis on respect for elders aligns with the biblical command to honor and obey. On the other hand, excessive conformity to authority without critical reflection can hinder the development of personal moral reasoning. Therefore, religious education must strike a balance between cultural continuity and theological integrity, helping students internalize obedience as a conscious act of faith rather than mere submission to external norms. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The quantitative component involves surveys designed to measure students' cognitive understanding of sin and obedience, while the qualitative component includes interviews and classroom observations to capture students' personal interpretations and lived experiences. This approach enables a holistic understanding of how students conceptualize and practice these biblical principles. It also allows for the identification of patterns related to socio-economic background, family religious practices, and exposure to church activities, all of which contribute to students' moral and spiritual development. Preliminary observations suggest that students' comprehension of sin and obedience varies significantly. Some students view sin primarily as the breaking of moral rules, while others perceive it as a relational failure that distances individuals from God. Similarly, obedience is understood by some as external conformity to authority, whereas others interpret it as an expression of faith and love. These variations highlight the need for more contextualized and reflective approaches in teaching Christian Religious Education, particularly concerning core theological concepts like sin and obedience. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to both theological scholarship and educational practice by offering insights into how biblical concepts are understood and lived out by students in contemporary educational settings. It underscores the importance of integrating faith and learning, encouraging educators to move beyond didactic instruction toward dialogical and experiential pedagogy. By doing so, Christian education can help students develop not only intellectual understanding but also moral conviction and spiritual depth. *Genesis 2:16–17* provides an enduring framework for examining the moral dynamics of sin and obedience. The study conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Alasa Talumuzoi seeks to illuminate how these ancient biblical truths are interpreted by modern students and how they shape behavior, attitudes, and values in the context of faith-based education. Through theological reflection and pedagogical innovation, the research aspires to strengthen Christian Religious Education as a transformative process that nurtures both moral integrity and spiritual wisdom in the next generation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions and comprehension of the concepts of sin and obedience based on *Genesis 2:16-17*. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Alasa Talumuzoi, involving a total of 150 students as participants. The participants were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure balanced representation across different grade levels and socio-cultural backgrounds. This method was chosen to minimize sampling bias and to capture a diverse range of student experiences and understandings related to biblical teachings. Data were collected through two primary instruments: surveys and semi-structured interviews. The survey consisted of structured questionnaires designed to assess students' cognitive understanding and attitudes toward the concepts of sin and obedience. The items included both multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions, which allowed the researcher to quantify levels of understanding and identify patterns across the student population. In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of 20 students selected from different grade levels to gain deeper insights into their personal perceptions, interpretations, and lived experiences related to biblical morality. The interviews encouraged open-ended responses, enabling participants to express their views more freely and to provide contextual details about how they apply religious principles in daily life. The quantitative data collected from the surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including frequency distributions and percentage analysis, to summarize students' general understanding of sin and obedience. The results were organized to highlight the proportion of students who demonstrated accurate theological comprehension versus those whose understanding was limited or influenced by non-biblical perspectives. Meanwhile, the qualitative data from interviews were subjected to thematic analysis. Responses were coded and categorized to identify recurring themes, attitudes, and interpretive patterns related to moral awareness, obedience to authority, and the influence of religious instruction. This dual analytical approach provided a more nuanced understanding of both the cognitive and experiential aspects of the students' moral reasoning. The survey results revealed that approximately 70% of students correctly identified sin as an act of disobedience to God's commands, reflecting a fair grasp of biblical moral teaching. However, 30% demonstrated a more limited understanding, often equating sin with violations of social norms rather than divine laws. Regarding the concept of obedience, 80% of respondents associated it with following rules and respecting authority, while also connecting it to obedience to God as illustrated in *Genesis 2:16-17*. Interview findings indicated that many students still struggle to contextualize these biblical concepts in their daily lives, expressing a strong interest in learning models that emphasize practical applications of Scripture within the school environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey results indicate that a significant majority of students (approximately 70%) were able to define sin correctly as disobedience to God's command, aligning with the biblical interpretation of the term. This demonstrates that most students possess a basic theological understanding of sin as a moral transgression that separates humans from God. Their responses suggest that Christian Religious Education (CRE) at SMP Negeri 1 Alasa Talumuzoi effectively conveys the doctrinal essence of sin. However, a notable proportion of students (about 30%) displayed a limited or confused understanding, often associating sin primarily with social misbehavior or violation of human laws rather than divine commands. Interviews further revealed that students' perceptions of sin were influenced by both family upbringing and cultural norms. Many students described sin in terms of disrespecting parents, lying, or causing harm to others—behaviors that are morally wrong but interpreted through a social rather than theological lens. This finding suggests that while students can identify moral wrongdoing, their understanding often lacks a clear connection to its biblical foundation. The absence of consistent religious discourse at home and the limited exposure to scriptural study outside school appear to contribute to this gap. From a pedagogical standpoint, this outcome emphasizes the need for contextual biblical teaching that bridges theological concepts with students' lived experiences. Teachers should not only explain sin as an abstract moral category but also illustrate how it disrupts one's relationship with God and the community. Such integration of doctrine with personal reflection can deepen students' awareness of the spiritual dimensions of moral failure and the importance of repentance and restoration in Christian life. The concept of obedience was generally well understood by students, with 80% of respondents identifying it as following rules, respecting authority, and adhering to God's will. Many students explicitly linked obedience to the divine command found in *Genesis 2:16-17*, demonstrating a theological awareness that obedience is not merely social conformity but a moral response to divine instruction. This high level of comprehension indicates that the principle of obedience is more deeply embedded in both the educational and cultural frameworks of the students. Qualitative data from interviews supported this finding. Students expressed that obedience is a reflection of faith, responsibility, and respect. They associated it with listening to teachers, obeying school rules, and maintaining discipline—behaviors that parallel biblical principles of submission and faithfulness. However, despite this positive understanding, several students admitted that practicing obedience in daily life remains challenging, particularly when peer influence or emotional factors conflict with moral expectations. This tension between knowledge and practice reflects a broader issue in moral education: cognitive understanding does not always translate into consistent behavior. Some students acknowledged that while they knew what obedience to God entails, they often found it difficult to maintain moral consistency, especially in contexts involving temptation or social pressure. This finding underscores the importance of experiential learning and moral reflection within Christian Religious Education, where students are guided not only to know biblical principles but to embody them in real-life decisions. An interesting pattern emerged in the correlation between students' understanding of sin and their perception of obedience. Students who demonstrated a deeper comprehension of sin as disobedience to God also tended to articulate a more relational understanding of

obedience-as an act of trust, love, and reverence toward God. In contrast, those with weaker theological grounding viewed obedience in more instrumental terms, such as a means to avoid punishment or maintain social approval. This dichotomy reveals that a holistic grasp of biblical morality depends on recognizing the interdependence between sin and obedience: one cannot fully understand sin without appreciating the virtue of obedience, and vice versa. Educationally, this insight highlights the necessity of teaching these concepts in integrated ways rather than as isolated moral lessons. When students are taught that obedience stems from love and faith rather than fear or obligation, their motivation for moral action becomes more intrinsic and spiritually grounded. Similarly, understanding sin as relational disobedience fosters a more profound sense of accountability to God rather than mere rule-following.

The findings also point to the significant role of socio-cultural and educational factors in shaping students' moral understanding. Students from families with strong church involvement and consistent religious practices exhibited higher levels of theological accuracy and moral awareness. Conversely, those with minimal engagement in religious activities tended to hold more superficial or culturally derived interpretations of sin and obedience. The influence of the school environment was also evident. Teachers who incorporated interactive and reflective methods-such as storytelling, group discussion, and moral case studies-reported greater student engagement and deeper comprehension. This supports previous educational research emphasizing that contextualized, participatory learning enhances moral internalization. The data suggest that CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Alasa Talumuzoi could further improve learning outcomes by adopting more dialogical and experiential pedagogies that connect scriptural narratives with students' personal and social realities. The study's findings underscore the ongoing challenge of bridging theological knowledge and moral practice in the context of adolescent education. While the majority of students demonstrate adequate cognitive mastery of biblical concepts, there remains a gap in applying these principles to real-life moral choices. Addressing this gap requires a more holistic approach to Christian Religious Education-one that combines intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of learning. Teachers should aim to cultivate reflective moral reasoning by encouraging students to analyze moral dilemmas, relate biblical stories to modern issues, and engage in prayerful contemplation about obedience and repentance. Collaboration between school, family, and church is essential to reinforce consistent moral messages and faith formation. When these institutions work in harmony, students are more likely to develop an integrated understanding of sin and obedience that guides both belief and behavior.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that students at SMP Negeri 1 Alasa Talumuzoi demonstrate a substantial yet varied mastery of the biblical concepts of sin and obedience as articulated in *Genesis 2:16-17*. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data reveals that while most students possess a clear cognitive understanding of these principles, their ability to internalize and apply them consistently in daily life remains uneven. The findings highlight that students generally recognize sin as disobedience to God's command and obedience as faithful submission to divine will and moral authority.

However, a portion of students still interpret these concepts primarily through the lens of social norms rather than through a distinctly theological framework, indicating a need for more contextualized religious instruction. The study also confirms that socio-cultural and educational factors significantly influence students' theological comprehension. Family religious practices, church participation, and the pedagogical methods employed in Christian Religious Education (CRE) classes were found to play decisive roles in shaping students' moral understanding. Students exposed to consistent religious formation—both at home and within the church community—tended to exhibit a more theologically accurate and spiritually mature grasp of sin and obedience. Conversely, those with limited religious engagement often demonstrated a more superficial, rule-based perception of these moral categories. From an educational perspective, the findings underscore the importance of adopting interactive and experiential learning strategies in CRE. Traditional didactic teaching methods, which focus primarily on doctrinal transmission, are insufficient to cultivate deep moral reflection and practical faith application. Instead, teachers should employ pedagogical approaches that integrate dialogue, reflection, and real-life moral inquiry, enabling students to relate biblical truths to their own experiences. By situating the discussion of sin and obedience within authentic moral contexts, educators can foster not only cognitive understanding but also spiritual transformation and ethical commitment. The study reinforces the necessity of collaboration among school, family, and church in nurturing students' moral and spiritual development. Each institution plays a complementary role in reinforcing consistent messages about divine authority, moral accountability, and the redemptive nature of obedience. Such collaboration ensures that biblical teachings are continuously modeled, practiced, and reinforced across multiple learning environments, creating a cohesive moral ecosystem that supports faith formation. In theological terms, the results affirm that the story of *Genesis 2:16–17* remains a timeless paradigm for understanding the human condition—balancing divine freedom with moral responsibility. For students, this passage serves not merely as a historical narrative but as a living moral framework that shapes their identity, decision-making, and relationship with God. True mastery of these concepts, therefore, extends beyond intellectual comprehension; it involves a heartfelt response to God's command rooted in love, trust, and reverence. In conclusion, this research contributes to the discourse on Christian Religious Education by emphasizing that moral and spiritual formation requires an integrated approach—uniting biblical knowledge, ethical reasoning, and lived faith. Strengthening the theological depth and contextual relevance of religious education will enable students to embody the values of obedience and repentance, fostering a generation of learners who not only understand God's Word but also live it out in faithful practice.

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