



Personality of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Modeling Joseph's Humility: A Reflection on Genesis 41:16 at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the personality of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher in modeling Joseph's humility based on Genesis 41:16 at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur. The research is grounded in the premise that teacher personality plays a decisive role in the effectiveness of character formation in Christian education. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The research context involved 23 Christian students and two Christian teachers, with the CRE teacher serving as the primary informant. The findings reveal that the CRE teacher demonstrates a strong embodiment of humility through respectful communication, attribution of success to God, openness to student participation, and consistent relational warmth. Students generally show clear cognitive understanding of Joseph's humility and perceive the teacher as a credible Christian role model. However, the depth of behavioral internalization among students varies, indicating a gap between moral comprehension and consistent practice. Document analysis further shows that while lesson planning effectively addresses cognitive objectives, structured experiential and reflective strategies for character formation remain limited. The study concludes that teacher personality significantly supports humility-based learning in Christian Religious Education at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur. To strengthen long-term character formation, the integration of experiential learning, guided reflection, and broader school-wide value reinforcement is recommended. These findings contribute to the development of more holistic and relationally grounded approaches to Christian Religious Education in Indonesian primary school contexts.

Keywords: *Personality, Christian Religious Education, Humility*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher personality has long been recognized as a decisive factor in the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education (CRE), particularly in contexts where moral and spiritual formation are central educational goals. Beyond pedagogical skills and content mastery, CRE teachers are expected to embody the very values they seek to cultivate in students.

This expectation aligns with the broader understanding in educational research that teachers function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral exemplars whose attitudes, behaviors, and relational styles significantly influence student character development (Lickona, 2012). In Christian education specifically, the teacher's personal witness often serves as a living curriculum through which biblical values become tangible and credible for learners (Pazmiño, 2008). One biblical figure frequently associated with exemplary character is Joseph in the Book of Genesis. In Genesis 41:16, Joseph responds to Pharaoh's request for dream interpretation by stating that the answer does not come from his own ability but from God. This response reflects a profound posture of humility, theological dependence, and self-effacing leadership. Scholars of Old Testament theology note that Joseph's narrative consistently highlights God-centered humility as a defining trait of faithful leadership (Goldingay, 2012). Within the framework of Christian Religious Education, Joseph's humility offers a rich theological model for teacher personality, particularly in fostering attitudes of modesty, integrity, and God-centered service. The integration of biblical character models into observable teacher personality remains uneven. While CRE curricula often emphasize cognitive understanding of biblical stories, the lived embodiment of these values by teachers varies depending on professional formation, institutional culture, and personal spirituality. Educational literature suggests that students internalize moral values more effectively when they observe consistent alignment between teachers' instruction and personal conduct (Hattie, 2009). This makes the study of teacher personality especially relevant in small-school contexts where relational proximity between teachers and students is particularly strong. SDN 023898 Binjai Timur presents an important micro-context for examining this issue. The school has 23 Christian students and two Christian teachers, creating a relatively intimate educational environment in which teacher personality is likely to exert a pronounced formative influence. In such settings, the CRE teacher's humility, communication style, and relational approach can significantly shape how students interpret and appropriate biblical teachings. Yet empirical studies focusing specifically on the personality dimension of CRE teachers—especially in relation to Old Testament character models—remain limited in Indonesian scholarship. The growing emphasis on holistic education in Indonesia calls for deeper attention to affective and spiritual dimensions of teaching. National and global educational discourse increasingly recognizes that character formation cannot be separated from the personal qualities of educators. Within Christian education, this concern is amplified by the theological conviction that teaching is a form of ministry that requires congruence between message and messenger (Groome, 2011). Examining how CRE teachers model Joseph-like humility is not merely a matter of professional evaluation but also of theological and pedagogical significance. This study aims to analyze the personality of the Christian Religious Education teacher at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur in modeling humility as reflected in Genesis 41:16. Specifically, the research seeks to describe observable indicators of teacher humility in classroom practice, explore students' perceptions of the teacher's Christlike character, and interpret these findings in light of biblical and educational scholarship. By situating empirical classroom realities within a theological framework, this study contributes to the growing discourse on the integration of biblical character formation and teacher professionalism in Indonesian Christian education. The research is expected to provide practical insights for strengthening the role of teacher personality as a transformative force in CRE. In contexts

where student populations are relatively small, such as SDN 023898 Binjai Timur, the authenticity of the teacher's humility may serve as one of the most powerful catalysts for shaping students' emerging spiritual and moral identity.

METHODS

A qualitative descriptive approach was implemented to explore the personality of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher in modeling Joseph's humility based on Genesis 41:16 at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur. A qualitative design was selected because the research seeks to understand lived experiences, observable behaviors, and participants' perceptions in their natural context rather than to measure variables statistically. Qualitative descriptive research is particularly appropriate for studies aiming to provide a rich, straightforward account of educational phenomena as they occur in real settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research was conducted at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur, a primary school with 23 Christian students and two Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher who served as the key subject of the study. The relatively small and relationally close school environment provided a suitable context for examining teacher personality as lived practice. The study focused specifically on classroom interactions, teacher communication patterns, and students' perceptions related to humility as reflected in Genesis 41:16. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a common qualitative technique for identifying information-rich cases (Miles et al., 2014). The primary informant was the CRE teacher. Supporting informants included selected Christian students who had experienced the teacher's instruction and interaction patterns. Students were chosen to represent different grade levels to capture varied perspectives. School documents such as lesson plans (RPP) and teaching materials were also included as data sources. Non-participant observations were conducted during CRE lessons to document the teacher's verbal and non-verbal behaviors related to humility, such as acknowledgment of students' contributions, attribution of success to God, fairness in interaction, and openness to student questions. Field notes were written systematically after each session. Interviews were conducted with the CRE teacher and selected students. Teacher interviews explored self-understanding of humility, instructional intentions, and reflections on Genesis 41:16. Student interviews focused on their perceptions of the teacher's character and classroom experience. Semi-structured protocols allowed flexibility while maintaining focus on research objectives. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes three concurrent flows of activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Raw data from observations, interviews, and documents were coded thematically. Codes were organized into categories related to indicators of teacher humility and social interaction. Patterns were interpreted in light of biblical and educational literature, particularly the humility motif in Genesis 41:16. To ensure credibility and rigor, the study applied qualitative trustworthiness criteria. Through this qualitative descriptive methodology, the study provides a contextually grounded and theologically informed understanding of how CRE teacher personality, especially humility modeled after Joseph, manifests in everyday classroom practice at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this qualitative descriptive study reveal that the personality of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur plays a meaningful role in modeling humility as reflected in Genesis 41:16. Drawing on classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, the data show a generally strong alignment between the theological theme of Joseph's humility and the teacher's observable classroom behavior. However, the depth of student internalization varies, indicating both strengths and developmental opportunities. The discussion below integrates empirical findings with relevant educational and theological scholarship. The finding concerns the visible embodiment of humility in classroom interaction. Observational data consistently show that the CRE teacher demonstrates relational warmth, respectful communication, and a tendency to attribute success to God rather than personal ability. During several observed lessons, the teacher explicitly referenced dependence on God when explaining biblical material, echoing Joseph's statement in Genesis 41:16. For example, when students praised the teacher's explanation, the teacher redirected the credit by emphasizing God's help in understanding Scripture. This pattern reflects what character education scholars describe as "modeled virtue," where teacher behavior becomes a primary medium of moral instruction (Lickona, 2012). In a small classroom context with only 23 Christian students, such modeling appears especially salient because students interact closely and repeatedly with the same teacher. The next finding relates to students' cognitive recognition of humility as a Christian value. Interview data indicate that most students can correctly identify humility as an important trait demonstrated by Joseph. Students frequently used phrases such as "*tidak sombong*," "*mengandalkan Tuhan*," and "*tidak memuji diri sendiri*" when describing the lesson. This suggests that the teacher's instructional framing successfully communicates the conceptual meaning of Genesis 41:16. From an educational psychology perspective, this aligns with research showing that clear teacher explanation combined with narrative storytelling enhances moral concept acquisition in primary learners (Yount, 2010). The teacher's use of contextual examples, such as sharing credit in group work, further strengthened students' understanding at the knowledge level. The third finding reveals a partial gap between cognitive understanding and behavioral internalization. While students generally articulate the importance of humility, observational follow-up and interview probing suggest that consistent behavioral application remains uneven. Some students reported still feeling tempted to boast when achieving high scores, and classroom observation occasionally showed competitive self-praise among peers. This pattern is consistent with broader character education research indicating that moral knowing often develops faster than moral doing (Hattie, 2009). In the present context, the teacher's personality provides a strong model, but structured opportunities for repeated behavioral practice appear limited. Other finding concerns the relational authority of the teacher as a moral exemplar. Students repeatedly described the CRE teacher using affective language such as "*baik*," "*sabar*," and "*tidak marah-marah*." These descriptors indicate that humility is being perceived not merely as a doctrinal concept but as an experienced relational reality. In Christian education theory, this corresponds to Groome's (2011) concept of "embodied faith pedagogy," in which learners interpret theological truth through the lived witness of the educator. The small teacher-student

ratio at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur seems to amplify this dynamic. Because there are only two Christian teachers in the school, the CRE teacher's personality carries heightened symbolic weight in shaping students' spiritual imagination. The reviewed lesson plans (RPP) show explicit cognitive learning objectives related to understanding Joseph's humility but relatively fewer affective and behavioral indicators. While the teacher includes reflective questions and short applications, there is limited evidence of systematically designed experiential learning (e.g., role-play, peer covenant tasks, or structured humility practices). This helps explain why cognitive gains are strong while behavioral transformation is still developing. Contemporary Christian pedagogy emphasizes that virtue formation requires repeated, scaffolded practice embedded in social experience (Pazmiño, 2008). The current instructional design provides a solid theological foundation but could be strengthened through more intentional formative strategies. Another noteworthy pattern involves the teacher's communicative humility. Observations indicate that the teacher frequently invites student questions, listens attentively, and avoids dismissive responses. Even when correcting errors, the teacher uses affirming language before providing clarification. This communication style reflects what educational researchers describe as psychologically safe classroom climate, which supports both academic and moral growth (Hattie, 2009). In theological terms, such communicative posture mirrors Joseph's non-defensive humility before Pharaoh. Students appear to respond positively to this environment, showing high participation and willingness to speak during lessons. The data also reveal structural limitations within the school context. Because the CRE teacher is one of only two Christian teachers, opportunities for whole-school reinforcement of humility values are relatively constrained. Interviews suggest that while general school culture is positive, explicit integration of biblical character values across subjects is minimal. Character education literature consistently emphasizes the importance of ecological consistency—that is, alignment between classroom teaching and broader school practices (Lickona, 2012). In the present case, the CRE classroom functions as the primary site of explicit humility formation, which may limit the depth of long-term internalization.

The study also highlights the importance of narrative theology in primary CRE. Students demonstrated strong engagement when the teacher retold Joseph's story in vivid, contextual language. Observational notes show increased attention, emotional response, and recall accuracy during narrative segments compared to purely doctrinal explanation. This supports biblical education scholarship suggesting that narrative forms are particularly effective for shaping moral imagination in younger learners (Goldingay, 2012). The teacher's storytelling ability thus emerges as an important component of personality-in-action, not merely a pedagogical technique. The findings underscore the interplay between humility and teacher credibility. Students indicated higher trust in the CRE teacher because of perceived consistency between teaching and behavior. Trust is a critical mediator in moral education; when students perceive authenticity, they are more likely to appropriate taught values (Groome, 2011). In this case, Joseph's humility becomes believable to students largely because they observe analogous attitudes in their teacher. This reinforces the theological principle that in Christian education, the messenger significantly shapes reception of the message. The research identifies a developmental need for more explicit reflective practice among students. While the

teacher occasionally asks application questions, systematic guided reflection, such as journaling, peer discussion protocols, or moral dilemma analysis, is limited. Educational research suggests that reflection is a key bridge between observation and internalization. Without structured reflection, modeled virtues may be admired but not fully appropriated. Given the small class size, the school actually possesses favorable conditions for implementing deeper reflective pedagogy in future practice. Another significant discussion point concerns the contextual relevance of Genesis 41:16 for contemporary learners. The teacher successfully connects Joseph's humility to everyday student experiences, such as sharing credit in group work and acknowledging help from others. Students reported that these examples made the biblical story feel "dekat dengan kehidupan." Contextualization is widely recognized as essential in effective CRE, particularly in Indonesian pluralistic settings where abstract theology may feel distant from daily life (Pazmiño, 2008). The teacher's contextual approach therefore represents a notable strength. The findings suggest the need for more peer-mediated character formation. Most humility formation currently flows vertically from teacher to student. While this is valuable, character education research indicates that peer culture strongly influences behavioral norms, especially in middle childhood. Structured cooperative tasks that reward collective success rather than individual competition could help reinforce humility more socially. Given the small cohort of 23 students, implementing such collaborative structures would be highly feasible. The results demonstrate that the CRE teacher at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur effectively embodies and communicates the humility modeled by Joseph in Genesis 41:16. The teacher's relational warmth, communicative humility, and theological clarity create a strong foundation for student learning. Students show solid cognitive grasp and positive affective response. The translation into consistent behavioral humility remains in progress. This pattern reflects a well-documented trajectory in character education: modeling and explanation establish awareness, but sustained practice and ecological reinforcement are required for deep formation.

The study reaffirms that Joseph's humility is not merely a historical virtue but a pedagogically powerful motif for contemporary Christian education. It highlights that teacher personality, especially in small, relationally dense school environments, functions as a primary curriculum of character formation. The findings point toward the value of expanding experiential learning, reflective structures, and whole-school alignment to maximize the formative potential already present in the CRE classroom. The evidence suggests that SDN 023898 Binjai Timur possesses a strong relational and spiritual foundation upon which deeper humility formation can be built. With strategic pedagogical enrichment and broader institutional integration, the modeling of Joseph-like humility by CRE teachers can move from effective influence toward transformative and sustainable character formation among students.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the personality of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher in modeling Joseph's humility based on Genesis 41:16 at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur. The qualitative findings demonstrate that teacher personality functions as a central medium through which biblical values are communicated and experienced by students.

In the observed context of 23 Christian students and two Christian teachers, the relational proximity between teacher and learners amplifies the formative impact of the teacher's character. The results indicate that the CRE teacher exhibits a generally strong profile of humility as reflected in communicative tone, attribution of success to God, openness to student participation, and respectful interpersonal behavior. Students not only recognize humility as a key biblical value but also perceive the teacher as a credible moral exemplar. This alignment between teaching and lived behavior strengthens the authenticity of Christian Religious Education and supports students' cognitive and affective engagement with the Joseph narrative. The study also reveals an important developmental gap between students' conceptual understanding of humility and its consistent behavioral practice. While the teacher's personality provides a solid modeling foundation, opportunities for structured experiential learning, reflective practice, and peer-mediated character formation remain limited. The broader school ecology has not yet fully reinforced humility values across subjects and routines. The study concludes that the CRE teacher's personality at SDN 023898 Binjai Timur already plays a significant and positive role in cultivating humility-based character formation. To deepen and sustain this impact, it is recommended that future instructional practice incorporate more intentional formative strategies, including experiential activities, guided reflection, and whole-school value integration. Strengthening these dimensions will help ensure that the humility exemplified by Joseph in Genesis 41:16 moves beyond cognitive appreciation toward embodied Christian character in students' daily lives.

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