



Transfiguration as Pedagogical Metamorphosis: The Transforming Personality of Christian Teachers in Light of Matthew 17:2 - A Case Study at SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the theological motif of transfiguration in Matthew 17:2 as a framework for understanding the transforming personality of Christian teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi. Situated within a public junior high school context comprising 480 Christian students and 50 Christian teachers, including Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers, the research investigates whether theological internalization of the transfiguration narrative correlates with measurable dimensions of professional personality. Using a quantitative correlational design, data were collected from 48 Christian teachers through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire measuring two primary variables: theological internalization of Matthew 17:2 and transforming personality, operationalized through five dimensions, integrity, empathy, emotional regulation, servant leadership orientation, and reflective self-awareness. Statistical analysis included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression. The results indicate a strong positive correlation between theological internalization and transforming personality ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$). Regression analysis revealed that theological internalization significantly predicts transforming personality ($R^2 = 0.50$), accounting for 50% of the variance. Among the personality dimensions, servant leadership and integrity demonstrated the strongest associations with theological reflection. The findings suggest that the concept of transfiguration functions not only as a Christological doctrine but also as a formative paradigm shaping professional identity. Teachers who internalize the transformative meaning of Matthew 17:2 exhibit higher levels of ethical consistency, relational empathy, and service-oriented leadership. This study contributes to faith-integrated educational research by demonstrating that theological constructs can be operationalized and empirically analyzed within quantitative frameworks.

Keywords: *Pedagogical Metamorphosis, Christian Religious Education, Personality*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher personality constitutes a decisive dimension of educational effectiveness because it shapes classroom climate, relational trust, moral influence, and students' holistic development. Beyond cognitive competence and pedagogical skill, educators function as moral agents whose character significantly influences learners' motivation and identity formation. In Christian educational discourse, personality transformation is not merely psychological maturation but a spiritual-ethical process grounded in Christological paradigms. Within this theological horizon, Matthew 17:2, depicting the transfiguration of Jesus, offers a compelling metaphor for transformative personality. The verse narrates that Jesus "was transfigured" (Greek: *metemorphōthē*) before His disciples, indicating a visible manifestation of inner glory. The concept of metamorphosis embedded in this text suggests radical transformation rather than superficial modification (France, 2007; Luz, 2001). The Transfiguration event reveals continuity between inner identity and outward radiance. As Ulrich Luz argues, the Matthean account emphasizes revelatory transformation as confirmation of divine sonship and authority (Luz, 2001). R. T. France similarly underscores that the narrative demonstrates eschatological glory breaking into historical reality (France, 2007). When interpreted pedagogically, this passage can be understood as a framework for personality integration, where interior conviction, spiritual maturity, and ethical consistency converge in observable practice. For Christian teachers, such integration forms the foundation of authentic educational leadership. Teacher personality has been associated with classroom management efficacy, student engagement, and socio-emotional learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Research in teacher effectiveness consistently shows that relational authenticity, empathy, and moral integrity positively correlate with students' academic achievement and well-being (Hattie, 2009). These findings align with theological insights suggesting that transformation of the inner self precedes sustainable external influence. Therefore, integrating Matthean theology with educational psychology offers a robust interdisciplinary framework for examining teacher personality. This study situates its inquiry at SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi, a public junior high school context comprising approximately 480 Christian students and 50 Christian teachers, including Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers. The relatively significant Christian demographic within the school creates a meaningful environment for exploring faith-informed professional identity within a public educational framework. While the institution operates under national educational standards, teachers' spiritual convictions remain influential in shaping their interpersonal and professional conduct. Most theological reflections remain normative or qualitative. Conversely, quantitative educational research often neglects theological constructs as explanatory variables. This gap invites systematic investigation: Can the theological motif of transfiguration serve as an analytical framework for understanding measurable personality transformation among Christian teachers? To address this question, the present study employs a quantitative research design. Personality transformation is operationalized through measurable constructs such as integrity, empathy, emotional regulation, servant leadership orientation, and reflective self-awareness. These constructs are assessed using standardized Likert-scale instruments adapted to align with Matthean theological themes. The study examines statistical relationships between teachers' theological

internalization of Matthew 17:2 and observable personality dimensions within professional practice. By framing transfiguration as pedagogical metamorphosis, this research argues that spiritual transformation can be empirically investigated as a factor influencing professional personality. Rather than reducing theology to abstract doctrine, the study conceptualizes it as a formative paradigm capable of shaping measurable dispositions. Through quantitative analysis, the research seeks to contribute to three scholarly domains: biblical theology of transformation, teacher personality research, and faith-integrated educational studies. Ultimately, this investigation proposes that Matthew 17:2 provides more than a christological revelation; it offers a transformative lens for understanding the personality of Christian educators. When interior conviction becomes visible in ethical radiance, analogous to the transfigured Christ, teachers embody a pedagogical metamorphosis that enhances relational trust, moral authority, and professional credibility within the educational community of SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi.

METHODS

A quantitative approach was selected to enable statistical measurement of personality constructs and to test empirically whether theological reflection on transfiguration correlates with measurable professional dispositions. The study followed a cross-sectional survey model, collecting data at one point in time to analyze patterns of association between variables. The independent variable was theological internalization of the transfiguration motif (Matthew 17:2), operationalized as the degree to which teachers affirm and reflect transformative Christological principles in their professional identity. The dependent variable was transforming personality, operationalized through measurable constructs derived from educational psychology and Christian ethics. The population consisted of 50 Christian teachers (including PAK teachers) at SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi. Given the relatively manageable population size, this study employed a total sampling technique, meaning all 50 teachers were invited to participate. Total sampling reduces sampling bias and enhances statistical representation of the institutional context. Participation was voluntary. Forty-eight completed questionnaires were returned and deemed valid for analysis, yielding a response rate of 96%. Theological Internalization of Matthew 17:2 (Independent Variable), measured the extent to which teachers: understand the concept of spiritual transformation (*metamorphosis*), integrate Christological identity into professional self-concept, reflect on spiritual growth as part of teaching vocation, demonstrate alignment between inner conviction and outward conduct. The scale consisted of 15 Likert-type items (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Transforming Personality (Dependent Variable), was measured through five sub-dimensions: integrity (ethical consistency, truthfulness), empathy (sensitivity to students' emotional needs), emotional regulation (self-control in classroom situations), servant leadership orientation (authority as service), reflective self-awareness (capacity for self-evaluation and growth). The transforming personality scale consisted of 30 Likert-type items distributed evenly across these five dimensions. The questionnaire was developed based on: theological exegesis of Matthew 17:2 (France, 2007; Luz, 2001), teacher personality and effectiveness literature (Hattie, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2017), and established personality measurement principles (DeVellis, 2017). Content validity was assessed by three experts: one biblical scholar, one educational psychologist, and one

senior PAK educator. Revisions were made to ensure theological accuracy and psychometric clarity. A pilot test was conducted with 15 Christian teachers from a neighboring school (not included in the final sample). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha: theological Internalization Scale: $\alpha = 0.89$, transforming Personality Scale: $\alpha = 0.92$. Both coefficients exceed the 0.70 threshold recommended for internal consistency (Field, 2018), indicating strong reliability. After obtaining formal permission from the school administration of SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi, printed questionnaires were distributed during a scheduled teacher meeting. Participants were informed about: the academic purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality assurance, and anonymous data processing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative analysis involved 48 valid respondents out of 50 Christian teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi. Descriptive statistics revealed that the overall level of theological internalization of Matthew 17:2 was high ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.41$ on a 5-point Likert scale). This indicates that most teachers strongly affirmed the idea that spiritual transformation (*metamorphosis*) forms part of their vocational identity. Similarly, the overall score for transforming personality was also high ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.38$). Among its five dimensions, the mean scores were as follows: Integrity: $M = 4.40$, Empathy: $M = 4.35$, Emotional Regulation: $M = 4.18$, Servant Leadership Orientation: $M = 4.31$, and Reflective Self-Awareness: $M = 4.16$. Integrity recorded the highest mean, suggesting that ethical consistency and alignment between belief and conduct are strongly emphasized among teachers. Reflective self-awareness and emotional regulation, while still high, showed comparatively lower means, indicating potential areas for professional growth. Normality testing using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test confirmed that data were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$), allowing the use of parametric statistical analysis. Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis demonstrated a strong positive correlation between theological internalization of Matthew 17:2 and transforming personality ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$). This coefficient indicates a substantial relationship, suggesting that teachers who deeply internalize the theological meaning of transfiguration tend to exhibit stronger personality transformation in professional practice. According to conventional interpretation thresholds (Field, 2018), an r value above 0.70 represents a strong association. Further correlation analysis by sub-dimension revealed: Integrity: $r = 0.69$, Empathy: $r = 0.66$, Emotional Regulation: $r = 0.58$, Servant Leadership Orientation: $r = 0.73$, and Reflective Self-Awareness: $r = 0.61$. The strongest correlation emerged in servant leadership orientation ($r = 0.73$), suggesting that theological reflection on Christ's transfigured identity significantly shapes teachers' understanding of authority as service rather than dominance. Simple linear regression analysis indicated that theological internalization significantly predicts transforming personality ($\beta = 0.71$, $t = 7.84$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.50, meaning that 50% of the variance in transforming personality can be explained by theological internalization of Matthew 17:2. This is a substantial explanatory contribution in educational research contexts, where behavioral and personality variables are typically influenced by multiple interacting factors. These findings empirically support the hypothesis that spiritual-theological

constructs can function as measurable predictors of professional personality development.

The strong correlation between theological internalization and transforming personality suggests that the concept of transfiguration operates not merely as doctrinal knowledge but as a formative paradigm. In Matthew 17:2, the Greek verb *metemorphōthē* conveys radical transformation. Within theological scholarship, this transformation reflects the manifestation of divine identity in visible form (France, 2007; Luz, 2001). This narrative appears to function analogically: interior conviction becomes outwardly observable character. The statistical results indicate that teachers who consciously reflect on this Christological model demonstrate stronger integrity, empathy, and servant leadership. Thus, the data affirm that theological anthropology, specifically the imitation of Christ, can operate as a psychosocial developmental mechanism. This aligns with educational research suggesting that deeply internalized belief systems significantly shape professional dispositions (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Integrity recorded the highest descriptive mean and a strong correlation with theological internalization ($r = 0.69$). The transfiguration reveals coherence between Jesus' identity and manifestation. Integrity reflects coherence between belief and behavior. Teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi appear to exhibit high ethical consistency, suggesting that theological reflection reinforces professional credibility. Research on teacher effectiveness consistently identifies trust and authenticity as foundational for positive student outcomes (Hattie, 2009). The present findings provide quantitative support for the claim that theological reflection strengthens this dimension. The strongest correlation emerged in servant leadership orientation ($r = 0.73$). While Matthew 17:2 does not explicitly address leadership structures, the transfiguration narrative affirms Christ's authority in revelatory glory. Yet this glory is inseparable from the path to the cross described in the surrounding Matthean context. Teachers who internalize this paradox, glory through humility, appear to reconceptualize authority as stewardship. Statistical evidence indicates that theological reflection significantly predicts this leadership orientation. This finding contributes to leadership studies by demonstrating that spiritual paradigms can measurably shape leadership style within secular institutional contexts. Although still positively correlated, emotional regulation ($r = 0.58$) and reflective self-awareness ($r = 0.61$) showed comparatively lower associations. This suggests that while theological conviction influences external relational behavior, internal emotional management may require additional psychological training beyond theological reflection alone. This distinction is significant. Spiritual transformation does not automatically eliminate emotional reactivity; rather, it may provide motivational orientation that must be complemented by pedagogical skill development. Therefore, professional formation programs should integrate theological reflection with evidence-based emotional competence training. One of the most significant contributions of this study lies in its methodological implication. Theological constructs are often treated as qualitative or purely normative categories. This research demonstrates that theological internalization can be operationalized, measured, and statistically analyzed. An R^2 value of 0.50 indicates that theological reflection accounts for half of the variance in transforming personality among participants. While causality cannot be conclusively established in cross-sectional design, the predictive strength underscores the formative power of belief systems in

professional contexts. With 480 Christian students and 50 Christian teachers, SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi provides a unique environment where faith identity remains salient within a public educational structure. The findings suggest that theological reflection does not diminish professional standards but enhances them. Teachers' high personality scores correspond with a school culture characterized by relational stability and ethical coherence. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to examine personality transformation over time, incorporate student-rated personality measures for triangulation, and compare multiple institutional contexts. The quantitative findings strongly support the thesis that transfiguration functions as a metaphor of pedagogical metamorphosis. Teachers who internalize the theological meaning of Matthew 17:2 demonstrate significantly higher levels of transforming personality. The relationship is statistically robust, theoretically coherent, and contextually meaningful. Thus, at SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi, transfiguration is not confined to biblical narrative; it becomes a lived paradigm shaping professional character, relational authority, and ethical radiance within the educational community.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the theological motif of transfiguration in Matthew 17:2 as a framework for understanding the transforming personality of Christian teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi. Using a quantitative correlational design, the research demonstrated that theological internalization of the transfiguration narrative significantly relates to measurable dimensions of professional personality. The findings reveal three central conclusions. Theological reflection on Matthew 17:2 is not merely doctrinal cognition but functions as a formative paradigm shaping teachers' professional identity. The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.71$) indicates that teachers who deeply internalize the concept of *metamorphosis*, the visible manifestation of inner transformation, exhibit higher levels of integrity, empathy, servant leadership orientation, emotional regulation, and reflective self-awareness. Spiritual conviction and professional disposition appear empirically interconnected. Servant leadership and integrity emerged as the most strongly associated dimensions. This suggests that transfiguration, understood as coherence between inner identity and outward manifestation, reinforces ethical consistency and authority-as-service. In practical terms, teachers who frame their vocation within Christological transformation demonstrate relational credibility and moral stability in their educational practice. The data affirm that theological anthropology can significantly inform leadership style and ethical professionalism within a public-school setting. The regression analysis ($R^2 = 0.50$) indicates that theological internalization accounts for 50% of the variance in transforming personality among participants. While personality development is influenced by multiple factors, including institutional culture, training, and individual temperament, the statistical contribution of theological reflection is substantial. This finding challenges the assumption that spiritual constructs are merely subjective and unmeasurable. On the contrary, the study shows that faith-based paradigms can be operationalized and quantitatively examined in educational research. The presence of 480 Christian students and 50 Christian teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Berastagi creates a meaningful environment in which theological reflection remains socially significant. Within this setting, transfiguration becomes more than a biblical event; it becomes a

pedagogical metaphor for visible ethical radiance. Teachers who embody inner spiritual renewal demonstrate outward relational transformation that strengthens classroom climate and professional trust. The study acknowledges limitations. The cross-sectional design does not establish causality, and reliance on self-report instruments may introduce bias. Future research should employ longitudinal methods, mixed-method approaches, and comparative institutional samples to deepen empirical understanding of faith-informed personality development. Matthew 17:2 provides a compelling theological architecture for conceptualizing teacher personality as transformative rather than static. When internal spiritual conviction becomes externally observable character, analogous to Christ's transfigured radiance, Christian teachers embody a pedagogical metamorphosis that integrates faith, professionalism, and ethical leadership. The results affirm that theological reflection, when deeply internalized, significantly contributes to the formation of transformative educational practitioners.

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