



Teaching Discipline and Perseverance through Teacher Personality Competence in Christian Religious Education: A Reflection of Exodus 16:19-20 at SMP Negeri 3 Mazo

Suriati Hia

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: hiasuriati@1gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of teacher personality competence in fostering discipline and perseverance among students through Christian Religious Education grounded in a reflection on Exodus 16:19-20 at SMP Negeri 3 Mazo. The research employed a quasi-experimental design involving 132 students who were divided into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received instruction that intentionally integrated teacher personality competence such as consistency, emotional stability, responsibility, and perseverance into the teaching process, while the control group followed conventional instructional practices. Data were collected through pretest and posttest questionnaires measuring students' levels of discipline and perseverance. The findings revealed a significant improvement in both character traits among students in the experimental group compared to those in the control group. Students exposed to personality-based modeling demonstrated increased punctuality, stronger commitment to completing tasks, and greater persistence when facing academic challenges. The integration of Exodus 16:19-20 provided a meaningful theological framework that helped students interpret discipline as daily responsibility and perseverance as faithful consistency. As teachers modeled these values in practice, students internalized them through observation and relational trust. The study concludes that teacher personality competence is a crucial factor in character formation within Christian Religious Education. When supported by reflective engagement with biblical narratives, such competence becomes a transformative pedagogical tool that nurtures disciplined and persevering learners. These findings highlight the importance of aligning teacher identity with instructional goals to achieve holistic student development.

Keywords: *Teacher personality competence, discipline, perseverance, Christian Religious Education, Exodus 16:19–20*

INTRODUCTION

Education is not merely a process of transferring knowledge but fundamentally a transformative endeavor aimed at shaping the character, values, and moral orientation of learners. In contemporary educational discourse, character formation has become an essential priority, particularly in contexts where moral resilience and personal responsibility are urgently needed among young people. One of the most influential elements in shaping student character is the teacher, not only through instructional strategies but through the personal qualities embodied in daily interactions. Research consistently emphasizes that teacher personality competence, reflected in integrity, emotional maturity, consistency, and exemplary conduct serves as a foundational determinant of student character development (Lukman et al., 2021). This perspective aligns with the understanding that personality functions as a “hidden curriculum,” subtly yet powerfully shaping student attitudes and behaviors beyond formal instruction (Nurjan, 2015, as cited in Agustin & Nafiah, 2019). Personality competence is recognized as one of the four core teacher competencies alongside pedagogical, professional, and social competencies. Among these, personality competence holds a uniquely formative role because it directly influences the moral climate of the classroom and the credibility of the teacher as a role model (Pradesa et al., 2021). Teachers who demonstrate discipline, responsibility, emotional stability, and integrity tend to foster similar values in students through processes of imitation and habituation. Empirical studies have shown that when teachers consistently model discipline and ethical behavior, students are more likely to internalize these values as part of their own character (Nasution & Sagita, 2024). This phenomenon is supported by social learning theory, which posits that individuals acquire behaviors through observing credible role models in their environment. Within Christian Religious Education (CRE), the significance of teacher personality competence becomes even more profound. CRE does not solely aim to develop cognitive understanding of religious doctrines but seeks to cultivate Christ-like character and spiritual maturity among students. In this context, teachers are called not only to teach but to embody the values they seek to instill. Personality competence encompassing authenticity, empathy, and moral consistency has been identified as a central mechanism through which Christian teachers influence students’ spiritual and ethical formation (Pasaribu, 2025). Students tend to respond more positively to character-based learning when teachers demonstrate genuine alignment between their teachings and personal conduct. Thus, the effectiveness of CRE is inseparable from the lived example of the teacher.

Discipline and perseverance represent two critical character traits that are essential for both academic success and spiritual growth. Discipline fosters self-regulation and responsibility, while perseverance sustains effort in the face of challenges. These virtues are not merely behavioral habits but deeply rooted dispositions that enable students to navigate life’s complexities with resilience. Studies have indicated that disciplined character can be cultivated through consistent modeling and structured habituation within educational settings (Nasution & Sagita, 2024). Similarly, perseverance emerges when learners observe persistence and consistency in authority figures, particularly teachers whose daily conduct reflects commitment and reliability. The influence of teacher personality competence on student discipline has been empirically validated in Christian educational settings. For instance, qualitative research conducted in Indonesian

primary schools revealed that CRE teachers who consistently exhibited punctuality, empathy, and moral integrity significantly enhanced students' adherence to school rules and participation in faith-based activities (Hondo & Gultom, 2025). These findings demonstrate that discipline is not primarily imposed through external enforcement but cultivated through relational modeling. When students perceive teachers as authentic and trustworthy, they are more inclined to emulate their attitudes and behaviors. From a theological perspective, the integration of discipline and perseverance in Christian pedagogy finds a compelling foundation in biblical narratives. The account of manna in Exodus 16:19-20 presents a powerful illustration of obedience, daily dependence, and faithful discipline. The Israelites were instructed to gather manna according to divine guidance and refrain from storing it overnight. Those who ignored this instruction encountered decay and loss, symbolizing the consequences of disobedience and lack of trust. This narrative highlights the importance of disciplined obedience and persistent reliance on God's provision. In educational terms, it provides a symbolic framework for understanding how discipline and perseverance are cultivated through consistent practice and faithful adherence to guiding principles. Biblical narratives such as Exodus 16:19-20 serve not only as theological content but as pedagogical resources that shape moral imagination. When teachers interpret and embody these narratives in their own lives, they create a learning environment where spiritual truths become lived realities. Teacher personality competence thus becomes the bridge between scriptural values and student character formation. As demonstrated in recent studies, personality competence enables teachers to translate moral teachings into observable practices that students can internalize (Butar-Butar & Ariawan, 2024). Character education research underscores that personality competence is not a static trait but a dynamic disposition developed through reflective practice and relational engagement (Manik & Gultom, 2024). Teachers who cultivate patience, consistency, and emotional maturity create supportive environments where discipline and perseverance can flourish. Conversely, the absence of such qualities may weaken the credibility of moral instruction, resulting in superficial compliance rather than genuine character transformation. Given the strategic importance of teacher personality competence in shaping discipline and perseverance, this study seeks to explore how CRE teachers embody these virtues in their pedagogical practices. By reflecting on the theological insights of Exodus 16:19-20 and examining their practical implementation at SMP Negeri 3 Mazo, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how character formation occurs through the intersection of spiritual values and teacher identity. Ultimately, the study positions teacher personality competence not merely as a professional requirement but as a transformative force that nurtures disciplined and persevering learners prepared to face both academic and spiritual challenges.

METHODS

A quantitative experimental research design was used to examine the effectiveness of teacher personality competence in fostering discipline and perseverance among students in Christian Religious Education through the reflective teaching of Exodus 16:19-20. Experimental research is widely recognized as an appropriate method for determining causal relationships between educational interventions and student outcomes because it

allows for controlled comparison between treatment and non-treatment conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The design used in this study was a quasi-experimental pretest posttest control group model, which enables researchers to observe changes in student character before and after exposure to the intervention (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The participants consisted of 132 students from SMP Negeri 3 Mazo who were enrolled in Christian Religious Education classes during the academic year. The sample was divided into two groups: an experimental group comprising 66 students and a control group comprising 66 students. The selection of participants was conducted through cluster sampling to ensure representation of intact classroom settings while maintaining natural learning conditions (Sugiyono, 2019). The experimental group received instruction integrating teacher personality competence demonstrated through consistency, discipline, emotional stability, and perseverance while explicitly reflecting on the biblical principles found in Exodus 16:19-20. Meanwhile, the control group received conventional Christian Religious Education instruction without structured emphasis on teacher personality modeling related to discipline and perseverance. The intervention was implemented over a period of six weeks. During this time, teachers in the experimental group intentionally modeled disciplined behavior, such as punctuality, consistency in classroom routines, and perseverance in guiding students through learning challenges. They also incorporated reflective discussions connecting classroom practices to the narrative of obedience and daily dependence illustrated in Exodus 16:19-20. This approach aligns with character education frameworks that emphasize modeling and habituation as key strategies for developing moral virtues in students (Lickona, 2012). The control group followed standard instructional procedures without structured character modeling. Data were collected using validated questionnaires measuring students' discipline and perseverance levels before and after the intervention. The instrument was developed based on established character education indicators and adapted for the Christian Religious Education context (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha indicated acceptable internal consistency, ensuring the trustworthiness of the measurements (Field, 2018). Statistical analysis was conducted using paired sample t-tests and independent sample t-tests to determine differences within and between groups. These analytical techniques are commonly used in experimental educational research to assess the impact of instructional interventions on student behavior and character outcomes (Ary et al., 2014). Through this design, the study aimed to determine whether teaching that integrates teacher personality competence and biblical reflection significantly influences students' discipline and perseverance compared to conventional instructional approaches.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of this study was grounded in the assumption that character formation particularly discipline and perseverance cannot be effectively cultivated through cognitive instruction alone. Rather, such virtues emerge through consistent modeling, relational influence, and meaningful integration of moral narratives into lived experience. The experimental findings from SMP Negeri 3 Mazo strongly support this perspective. The results demonstrated that students exposed to instructional practices rooted in teacher personality competence showed a measurable improvement in both disciplined behavior and perseverance compared to those in the control group who

received conventional Christian Religious Education instruction. The pretest results indicated that both the experimental and control groups had relatively similar levels of discipline and perseverance. Students generally displayed moderate tendencies in maintaining classroom order, completing assignments, and sustaining effort in challenging learning situations. This initial similarity was important because it confirmed that both groups began the study from comparable character dispositions, thereby strengthening the validity of the experimental outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Following the six-week intervention, notable differences emerged. Students in the experimental group demonstrated increased punctuality, improved adherence to classroom routines, and greater persistence in completing tasks even when facing difficulties. Teachers reported that students became more willing to revise unfinished work, participate actively in discussions, and demonstrate patience during complex learning processes. These behavioral changes were not merely procedural but reflected a deeper shift in student attitudes toward responsibility and commitment. In contrast, while the control group also showed minor improvements, these changes were less consistent and appeared to be influenced primarily by external reinforcement rather than internalized character transformation. Students in this group tended to respond positively when reminded of rules or consequences but were less likely to sustain disciplined behavior independently. This difference suggests that discipline rooted in external regulation lacks the durability of discipline nurtured through relational modeling and value-based reflection (Lickona, 2012). The statistical analysis confirmed these observational findings. The paired sample t-test revealed a significant increase in posttest scores within the experimental group, indicating meaningful development in both discipline and perseverance. Meanwhile, the independent sample t-test comparing posttest results between the experimental and control groups showed that the experimental group achieved higher mean scores in both variables. These results suggest that the integration of teacher personality competence into CRE instruction has a tangible impact on student character development. One of the most significant insights from this study lies in understanding how teacher personality competence functions as an active pedagogical force. Teachers in the experimental group intentionally embodied disciplined habits such as consistency in time management, clarity in expectations, emotional stability in handling student mistakes, and perseverance in guiding students through academic challenges. These behaviors created an environment where discipline was not imposed as an external demand but experienced as a shared value within the learning community. Students responded positively to this consistency. Interviews conducted during the intervention revealed that many students began to perceive discipline not as punishment but as a form of self-respect and responsibility. This shift reflects the influence of modeling as described in social learning theory, where individuals internalize behaviors observed in trusted authority figures. The presence of teachers who consistently demonstrated patience and commitment encouraged students to adopt similar attitudes toward their own learning processes. The theological integration of Exodus 16:19-20 further enriched this character formation process. The narrative of manna provided a symbolic framework through which students could understand the meaning of discipline and perseverance in daily life. Teachers used this passage not merely as doctrinal content but as a reflective lens through which classroom practices

were interpreted. The instruction given to the Israelites-to gather manna according to divine command without hoarding became an analogy for daily responsibility and trust. Students began to relate this narrative to their own routines. Just as the Israelites were required to gather manna each day with discipline and obedience, students were encouraged to approach learning tasks with consistent effort rather than postponement or neglect. Those who attempted to “store” effort by delaying assignments or relying on last-minute preparation were guided to reflect on the consequences illustrated in the biblical account. This connection between narrative and practice strengthened students’ moral imagination and provided a meaningful context for behavioral change. The emphasis on perseverance emerged naturally from discussions about reliance and faithfulness. The Israelites’ daily dependence on provision mirrored the student’s need for steady effort in academic growth. Teachers highlighted that perseverance is not merely about endurance but about faithful consistency in fulfilling responsibilities over time. Students began to interpret challenges not as obstacles to avoid but as opportunities to practice persistence.

This integration of theology and pedagogy aligns with contemporary perspectives in Christian education, which emphasize that biblical narratives serve as formative stories shaping ethical consciousness (Groome, 2011). When teachers embody the principles embedded in these narratives, learning transcends intellectual comprehension and enters the realm of lived transformation. Another important finding concerns the relational dimension of personality competence. Teachers who exhibited warmth, fairness, and emotional stability were more effective in fostering disciplined behavior than those who relied solely on authority. Students expressed greater trust in teachers who corrected mistakes with patience rather than harshness. This relational trust became a foundation upon which discipline could flourish. Perseverance was particularly influenced by teachers’ responses to student failure. In the experimental group, teachers consistently reframed mistakes as part of the learning journey rather than as indicators of inadequacy. This approach encouraged students to persist even when initial efforts were unsuccessful. Over time, students demonstrated increased willingness to engage in challenging tasks and reduced anxiety toward complex assignments. The findings also revealed that discipline and perseverance are mutually reinforcing traits. As students became more disciplined in managing time and responsibilities, they were better equipped to sustain effort during difficulties. Similarly, perseverance strengthened disciplined habits by encouraging consistent follow-through. This reciprocal relationship highlights the importance of addressing both traits simultaneously within character education initiatives. The influence of teacher personality competence extended beyond academic contexts. Teachers observed improvements in students’ social interactions, including greater respect for peers and increased willingness to collaborate. This suggests that discipline cultivated through relational modeling contributes to broader ethical development rather than remaining confined to classroom tasks. The control group, lacking structured personality-based modeling, relied more heavily on rule enforcement. While this approach maintained basic order, it did not foster the same depth of internal motivation. Students often complied when supervised but reverted to less disciplined behaviors in less structured settings. This contrast underscores the distinction between compliance and character. From an educational standpoint, these findings reinforce the argument that teacher personality competence should be considered a central element

of pedagogical effectiveness rather than a peripheral attribute. Professional training programs often prioritize instructional techniques while underestimating the formative power of personal example. This study demonstrates that character education requires intentional cultivation of teacher identity alongside methodological competence. The results highlight the importance of contextualizing biblical teaching within everyday experiences. When scriptural narratives are connected to practical behaviors, students are more likely to internalize their values. The story of manna functioned as a moral metaphor that guided student reflection on responsibility, consistency, and trust. The implications of this research extend to curriculum design and teacher development. Educational institutions seeking to promote discipline and perseverance should invest not only in behavioral management systems but also in initiatives that strengthen teacher self-awareness, emotional maturity, and ethical consistency. Such investments are likely to yield long-term benefits in student character formation. The experimental findings from SMP Negeri 3 Mazo provide compelling evidence that teaching discipline and perseverance through teacher personality competence grounded in reflective engagement with Exodus 16:19-20 significantly enhances student character development. The integration of consistent modeling, relational trust, and theological reflection created a learning environment where discipline and perseverance emerged as internalized values rather than externally imposed expectations. This study affirms that the personal integrity of the teacher remains one of the most powerful instruments in shaping the moral and spiritual trajectory of learners.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study affirm that teacher personality competence plays a decisive role in shaping students' discipline and perseverance within the context of Christian Religious Education. The experimental implementation conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Mazo demonstrated that when teachers intentionally embody disciplined behavior, emotional stability, consistency, and perseverance in their daily interactions, students respond with meaningful character growth. This growth is not limited to surface-level compliance but reflects deeper internalization of responsibility and sustained effort in learning. The integration of reflective teaching based on Exodus 16:19-20 proved to be particularly effective in connecting moral values with lived classroom practices. Through this narrative, students were able to understand discipline not merely as rule-following but as an expression of trust, obedience, and daily faithfulness. Similarly, perseverance was interpreted as steadfast commitment in fulfilling responsibilities despite challenges. The story of manna became a symbolic framework that helped students recognize the importance of consistent effort and accountability in both academic and personal contexts. The experimental results showed that students exposed to personality-based modeling displayed greater punctuality, improved task completion, and stronger persistence in facing learning difficulties. These changes indicate that discipline and perseverance can be cultivated effectively when teachers function as authentic role models rather than solely as authority figures enforcing regulations. In contrast, students who experienced conventional instruction without structured modeling demonstrated less stable behavioral development, suggesting that character formation requires relational influence in addition to cognitive instruction. This study also highlights that

teacher personality competence extends beyond classroom management into the realm of moral formation. The relational trust established through patience, fairness, and emotional maturity enabled students to internalize values rather than merely comply with expectations. As students observed consistent behavior in their teachers, they gradually adopted similar attitudes toward responsibility and perseverance. This supports the broader understanding that character is often transmitted through example rather than instruction alone. The results suggest that Christian Religious Education should integrate teacher self-reflection and identity formation as part of its instructional strategy. The effectiveness of biblical teaching depends not only on the content delivered but on the authenticity of the teacher who embodies it. When theological narratives such as Exodus 16:19-20 are connected to observable behaviors, they become transformative tools for shaping student character. Teaching discipline and perseverance through teacher personality competence represents a holistic approach to character education. The combination of consistent modeling, relational engagement, and scriptural reflection creates a learning environment where students develop both moral awareness and practical habits of responsibility. This study underscores the importance of nurturing teacher integrity as a foundational element in fostering disciplined and persevering learners prepared to navigate academic challenges and life responsibilities with resilience.

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