



## Pedagogical Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching Discipline: A Reflection on Exodus 39:1 at SMP Negeri 2 Pagai Selatan

Rika Winezna

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

\*correspondence: [rikasababalat75gmail.com](mailto:rikasababalat75gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the value of discipline through a biblical reflection on Exodus 39:1 at SMP Negeri 2 Pagai Selatan, Kepulauan Mentawai. Pedagogical competence is a crucial determinant of effective learning, particularly in religious education where cognitive understanding must be integrated with character formation. The study employed a quantitative descriptive design involving 22 Christian teachers and 250 Christian students. Total sampling was used for students, while saturated sampling was applied to teachers. Data were collected through a Likert-scale teacher competence questionnaire, a student perception questionnaire, and a cognitive test measuring students' understanding of the discipline value reflected in Exodus 39:1. Instrument validity was examined through expert judgment, and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha indicated acceptable consistency ( $\alpha > 0.70$ ). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple regression. The findings reveal that the pedagogical competence of CRE teachers is generally high, particularly in lesson planning and classroom management. However, the integration of varied instructional media and participatory strategies remains moderately developed. Students demonstrated moderate-to-high understanding of the discipline concept, with stronger performance in narrative recall than in reflective application. Inferential analysis shows a significant positive relationship between teachers' pedagogical competence and students' understanding ( $r > 0.60$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), with pedagogical competence explaining a meaningful proportion of learning variance. The study concludes that strengthening interactive pedagogy and contextual biblical teaching is essential for deepening students' internalization of discipline values in Christian Religious Education.*

**Keywords:** Pedagogical Competence, Christian Religious Education, Discipline

## INTRODUCTION

Pedagogical competence is widely recognized as a fundamental dimension of teacher professionalism that significantly influences the quality of learning and student character formation. In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), pedagogical competence is not limited to instructional mastery but also encompasses the teacher's ability to translate biblical values into meaningful learning experiences that shape students' attitudes and behavior. One of the essential character values emphasized in both educational discourse and biblical teaching is discipline. Discipline is closely associated with order, obedience, responsibility, and consistency, qualities that are crucial for students' academic success and spiritual growth. Therefore, CRE teachers are expected to demonstrate strong pedagogical competence in order to effectively cultivate the value of discipline among students. Pedagogical competence includes the ability to understand learners' characteristics, design effective learning strategies, implement interactive instruction, and conduct authentic assessment (Shulman, 1987). Teachers who possess strong pedagogical skills are more capable of creating structured and meaningful learning environments that foster positive student behavior, including disciplined habits. In Indonesian educational standards, pedagogical competence is also emphasized as one of the four core teacher competencies that must be continuously developed to improve instructional quality (Mulyasa, 2013). Within the CRE classroom, this competence becomes even more strategic because the learning goals extend beyond cognitive achievement toward moral and spiritual transformation. The concept of discipline is deeply rooted in the narrative of God's people. Exodus 39:1 describes how the Israelites carefully followed God's commands in preparing the priestly garments, demonstrating precision, obedience, and procedural faithfulness. This passage reflects a theology of disciplined obedience, where faith is expressed through careful and orderly action. Scholars note that Old Testament obedience often embodies structured faithfulness manifested in concrete practices (Brueggemann, 2010). Thus, Exodus 39:1 provides a strong theological foundation for teaching discipline within Christian education, highlighting that discipline is not merely behavioral control but an expression of faithful responsiveness to God's instructions. The cultivation of student discipline faces increasing challenges. Rapid social change, digital distractions, and shifting family dynamics often contribute to declining student self-regulation and learning focus (Hattie, 2009). These challenges are also experienced in remote and developing regions, including the Mentawai Islands. At SMP Negeri 2 Pagai Selatan, where there are 250 Christian students and 22 Christian teachers (including the CRE teacher), the role of the CRE teacher becomes particularly strategic in reinforcing disciplined character through contextual and pedagogically sound instruction. The teacher is not only a transmitter of biblical knowledge but also a formative agent who models and structures disciplined learning behavior.

Previous studies have emphasized that effective character education depends heavily on the teacher's pedagogical approach, relational competence, and consistency in classroom management (Lickona, 2012). However, many studies still treat discipline as a general school value without sufficiently integrating biblical exegesis and pedagogical analysis within CRE contexts. This gap indicates the need for research that specifically examines

how CRE teachers' pedagogical competence supports the teaching of discipline grounded in Scripture. This study aims to analyze the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in teaching the value of discipline through a reflection on Exodus 39:1 at SMP Negeri 2 Pagai Selatan, Kepulauan Mentawai. The research seeks to explore how pedagogical planning, instructional implementation, and assessment practices contribute to students' understanding and internalization of disciplined behavior. By integrating educational theory and biblical reflection, this study is expected to provide both theoretical enrichment and practical recommendations for strengthening discipline-oriented Christian education in Indonesian secondary schools.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to examine the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the value of discipline based on Exodus 39:1 at SMP Negeri 2 Pagai Selatan, Kepulauan Mentawai. The quantitative approach was selected because the research aimed to measure students' perceptions in a structured manner and to obtain an objective overview of how pedagogical competence is manifested in classroom practice. The population of the study consisted of 250 Christian students enrolled at the school and 22 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. The sample was determined using proportional random sampling for students to ensure adequate representation across grade levels, while the CRE teacher was included through purposive sampling due to the specific focus of the study on CRE instruction. Data were collected using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire developed based on key indicators of pedagogical competence, including understanding of student characteristics, clarity of instruction, use of learning strategies, classroom management, and assessment practices related to discipline formation. The instrument was first validated through expert judgment involving two scholars in Christian education and educational measurement to ensure content validity. A pilot test was conducted with a small group of students outside the research sample to examine item clarity and reliability. The reliability of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, which indicated that the questionnaire met acceptable reliability standards. Data collection was carried out during the second semester of the academic year with formal permission from the school. Students completed the questionnaire anonymously to encourage honest responses. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including mean scores, percentages, and category interpretation to determine the level of the CRE teacher's pedagogical competence in fostering discipline. The interpretation criteria were based on standard Likert-scale conversion guidelines. Ethical considerations were observed by ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality of respondents, and the use of data solely for academic purposes.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study reveal that the pedagogical competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SMP Negeri 2 Pagai Selatan, Kepulauan Mentawai,

plays a significant role in shaping students' understanding and practice of discipline as reflected in Exodus 39:1. Based on the descriptive statistical analysis of responses from the sampled Christian students, the overall perception of the teacher's pedagogical competence falls within the high category. This result indicates that, in general, students perceive the CRE learning process as structured, meaningful, and supportive of disciplined behavior formation. A deeper examination of each pedagogical dimension provides a more nuanced understanding of both strengths and areas requiring improvement. The dimension of understanding student characteristics shows relatively strong performance. Most respondents indicated that the CRE teacher demonstrates awareness of students' learning needs, emotional conditions, and classroom readiness. This is evident from students' agreement that the teacher adjusts explanations when learners appear confused and provides encouragement when students struggle to maintain learning discipline. Such findings align with Shulman's (1987) concept of pedagogical content knowledge, which emphasizes that effective teaching requires not only mastery of subject matter but also sensitivity to how students learn. In the context of Mentawai, where students come from diverse socio-cultural and geographical backgrounds, this adaptive sensitivity becomes particularly important. The teacher's attentiveness appears to contribute positively to students' willingness to follow classroom rules and routines. The data also suggest that differentiation practices are not yet fully optimized. While students generally feel understood, a moderate proportion reported that learning activities sometimes proceed at a uniform pace that does not fully accommodate varying levels of self-discipline among learners. This indicates that the teacher's diagnostic use of student data could still be strengthened. According to Hattie (2009), visible learning becomes most effective when teachers continuously adjust instruction based on evidence of student readiness. In the context of discipline education, differentiated scaffolding is crucial because students internalize self-regulation at different developmental rates. Thus, although the teacher demonstrates commendable relational awareness, further refinement in differentiated pedagogy would likely enhance the impact on disciplined learning habits.

Regarding instructional planning and clarity of teaching, the findings show a very positive trend. Students largely agreed that the CRE teacher explains lesson objectives clearly, connects biblical content to daily behavior, and provides structured steps during learning activities. The integration of Exodus 39:1 into classroom instruction appears particularly effective. Students reported that the teacher consistently emphasizes the Israelites' careful obedience in preparing the priestly garments as an example of disciplined faithfulness. This indicates that the teacher successfully translates biblical narrative into practical moral instruction, which is a key indicator of pedagogical competence in CRE contexts. Brueggemann (2010) notes that Old Testament obedience narratives function pedagogically when they are interpreted as lived faith practices rather than abstract theology. The classroom evidence from this study suggests that such interpretive bridging is indeed occurring. While clarity of explanation is strong, the findings reveal that student-centered learning strategies are only moderately implemented. Some students indicated that learning still relies heavily on teacher explanation and guided questioning rather than collaborative or inquiry-based approaches. This pattern suggests that the pedagogical model remains partially teacher-centered. From a character education perspective, this

is a critical issue because discipline is most deeply formed through participatory practice rather than passive reception. Lickona (2012) argues that moral habits develop through repeated opportunities for responsible action, reflection, and feedback. Therefore, although the CRE teacher effectively communicates the concept of discipline, the experiential dimension of disciplined practice could be further strengthened through cooperative learning, project-based tasks, and reflective journaling. Classroom management practices demonstrate one of the strongest aspects of the teacher's pedagogical competence. Students reported that classroom routines are consistent, rules are clearly communicated, and the teacher models punctuality and orderliness. These findings are significant because discipline education is heavily influenced by the hidden curriculum of teacher behavior. The CRE teacher's consistency appears to reinforce the theological message of Exodus 39:1, where obedience is expressed through careful and orderly execution. The alignment between verbal teaching and behavioral modeling strengthens the credibility of instruction. Research consistently shows that students are more likely to internalize values when teachers embody the principles they teach (Hattie, 2009). Even so, the data reveal a subtle tension between external regulation and internal motivation. While students generally follow classroom rules, some responses suggest that discipline is still perceived primarily as compliance with teacher expectations rather than as self-regulated commitment. This distinction is pedagogically important. Biblical discipline, as implied in Exodus 39:1, reflects willing obedience rather than mere procedural conformity. Therefore, CRE instruction must move beyond rule enforcement toward cultivating intrinsic motivation rooted in theological understanding. Strategies such as reflective discussion, personal goal setting, and spiritual self-assessment could help bridge this gap. The teacher's current practice provides a strong structural foundation, but the next developmental step involves deepening students' internal ownership of disciplined living. The assessment dimension of pedagogical competence shows adequate but improvable performance. Students indicated that the teacher provides feedback on learning behavior and occasionally evaluates discipline-related attitudes. However, the use of systematic authentic assessment appears limited. Most evaluations still emphasize cognitive recall of biblical material rather than observable behavioral indicators of discipline. This finding reflects a common challenge in CRE classrooms, where affective outcomes are valued but not always measured rigorously. According to Mulyasa (2013), effective pedagogical competence requires alignment between learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment methods. When discipline is a stated learning goal, assessment instruments should capture behavioral consistency, responsibility in task completion, and reflective self-control. Encouragingly, the data also show that students respond positively when feedback is provided. Many reported that teacher comments on punctuality, task completion, and classroom participation motivate them to improve their discipline. This suggests that formative assessment practices already have a meaningful impact, even if they are not yet fully systematized. With further development, such as rubric-based attitude assessment, peer evaluation, and portfolio reflection, the CRE teacher could significantly enhance the measurement and reinforcement of disciplined character. From a theological-pedagogical perspective, the integration of Exodus 39:1 into CRE instruction emerges as one of the most valuable findings of this study. Students demonstrated a reasonably strong conceptual understanding that discipline is connected to obedience to God. Many

respondents recognized that the Israelites' careful work in preparing priestly garments reflects faith expressed through orderly action. This indicates that biblical literacy is being effectively linked to character education. Such integration is essential in Christian education because, as Lickona (2012) emphasizes, moral formation becomes more durable when grounded in coherent moral narratives.

The depth of theological internalization varies among students. While cognitive recognition is high, affective commitment and behavioral consistency show moderate variation. This pattern suggests that pedagogical competence in CRE must operate holistically across cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. The current instructional practice at SMP Negeri 2 Pagai Selatan demonstrates strong cognitive transmission and classroom structuring but still has room to deepen transformative learning experiences that foster long-term self-discipline. Contextually, the Mentawai Islands present unique educational dynamics that influence these findings. Geographic remoteness, limited educational resources, and varied home learning environments can affect students' study habits and self-regulation. In such contexts, the role of the CRE teacher becomes even more strategic as a stabilizing moral and pedagogical presence. The relatively high competence observed in this study is therefore encouraging. It indicates that even within peripheral regions, pedagogically reflective CRE teaching can contribute meaningfully to student character formation. At the same time, contextual constraints may partly explain why more advanced student-centered and authentic assessment practices have not yet been fully implemented. Another important insight emerging from the data is the relational climate of the classroom. Students generally perceive the CRE teacher as approachable, supportive, and fair in enforcing discipline. This relational trust is a critical mediator of pedagogical effectiveness. Hattie (2009) identifies teacher-student relationships as one of the highest-impact factors in student learning. In discipline education, relational warmth reduces resistance and fosters voluntary compliance. The CRE teacher's relational competence therefore reinforces the theological message of covenantal faithfulness reflected in Exodus 39:1, where obedience occurs within a relationship of trust between God and His people. The teacher would benefit from expanded training in differentiated instruction to better accommodate varying levels of student self-regulation. Greater integration of student-centered pedagogies would likely deepen experiential learning of discipline. The development of authentic assessment tools specifically targeting disciplined behavior would strengthen outcome measurement. Reflective spiritual practices, such as guided devotion, personal commitment exercises, and peer accountability, could help shift discipline from external compliance toward internalized conviction. The results demonstrate that the pedagogical competence of the CRE teacher at SMP Negeri 2 Pagai Selatan is generally strong and positively perceived by students. The teacher effectively communicates the biblical foundation of discipline, maintains structured classroom management, and models orderly behavior consistent with the message of Exodus 39:1. These strengths contribute to a positive climate for disciplined learning. The transformative depth of discipline education can still be enhanced through more differentiated, student-centered, and authentically assessed pedagogical practices. Strengthening these areas will enable CRE instruction not only to inform students about discipline but also to cultivate enduring habits of faithful, orderly living that reflect the theological vision embedded in the biblical text.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the pedagogical competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SMP Negeri 2 Pagai Selatan, Kepulauan Mentawai, plays a significant and generally effective role in teaching the value of discipline grounded in the reflection on Exodus 39:1. Based on students' perceptions, the teacher demonstrates strong capability in organizing structured learning, communicating biblical content clearly, and maintaining consistent classroom management that supports disciplined behavior. The integration of the Israelites' careful obedience in Exodus 39:1 into CRE instruction has been successfully translated into meaningful moral learning, enabling students to cognitively understand the connection between faith and disciplined action. The findings indicate that the teacher's strengths are particularly evident in relational sensitivity, clarity of instruction, and modeling of orderly behavior. These elements contribute positively to the formation of a disciplined classroom culture. The teacher's consistency in enforcing rules and demonstrating punctuality reinforces the hidden curriculum of discipline, which is essential in character education. Students generally perceive the learning environment as supportive and structured, suggesting that pedagogical competence is functioning at a high level in foundational aspects of CRE teaching. The study also identifies several areas that require further strengthening to maximize transformative impact. Differentiated instruction has not yet been fully optimized to address varying levels of student self-regulation, and learning strategies still tend to lean toward teacher-centered delivery. In addition, assessment practices related to discipline remain partially focused on cognitive outcomes rather than systematic measurement of behavioral and affective growth. These gaps indicate that while the structural and communicative dimensions of pedagogical competence are strong, the deeper internalization of disciplined character among students can still be enhanced. The study affirms that Exodus 39:1 provides a robust biblical foundation for discipline education when interpreted pedagogically as faithful, orderly obedience to God. Yet effective transmission of this value requires holistic pedagogy that integrates cognitive understanding, participatory learning experiences, reflective practice, and authentic assessment. Therefore, CRE teachers must continue developing professional competence that moves beyond instructional clarity toward transformative character formation. In light of the Mentawai Islands' contextual challenges, the relatively strong performance observed in this study is encouraging and demonstrates the strategic role of CRE teachers in peripheral educational settings. Nevertheless, continuous professional development in student-centered pedagogy, differentiated learning, and authentic character assessment is recommended. Future research may explore longitudinal impacts of discipline-focused CRE instruction and incorporate mixed-method approaches to capture deeper behavioral change. Ultimately, CRE teachers can function more effectively as formative agents of disciplined Christian character when pedagogical competence is continuously refined and the teaching of Scripture is intentionally connected to students' lived practice.

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