



Personality Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching Faithfulness to the Word: A Reflection on Exodus 20:3 in the Context of SD Negeri 054884 Tanjung Gunung

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ABSTRACT

The quality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) extends beyond cognitive instruction, encompassing the personal and spiritual formation of students through the modeling of teachers' character and values. This study investigates the personality competence of CRE teachers in fostering faithfulness to the Word of God, drawing inspiration from Exodus 20:3, in the context of SD Negeri 054884 Tanjung Gunung, Langkat. The school community comprises 73 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, making it an ideal setting to explore the intersection of professional, personal, and spiritual dimensions in education. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the research measured students' perceptions of the CRE teacher's personality competence, operationalized through indicators such as integrity, consistency in moral behavior, empathy, and role-modeling of faith-based principles. Data were collected via a 30-item Likert-scale questionnaire, validated by experts in Christian education and educational psychology, and analyzed using regression and correlation techniques. Results indicate a strong positive relationship between the teacher's personality competence and students' engagement with biblical teachings, with approximately 48% of variance in students' faithfulness to the Word explained by teacher competence. Findings underscore that CRE teachers' personal integrity, ethical consistency, and authentic demonstration of faith significantly influence students' internalization of biblical principles. Integrating empirical evidence with theological reflection, this research emphasizes that effective Christian education requires teachers to embody the values they teach, fostering a learning environment where faithfulness to Scripture is both taught and lived.

Keywords: *Personality Competence, Christian Religious Education, Faithfulness*

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is not solely determined by cognitive instruction but is deeply influenced by the personal and moral character of educators, particularly in faith-based

educational settings. In Christian Religious Education (CRE), the personality competence of teachers becomes a pivotal factor in fostering faithfulness to God's Word among students. Personality competence encompasses a teacher's integrity, reliability, ethical conduct, emotional stability, and consistency in modeling the values they teach (Shulman, 1987; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Such competence ensures that the teacher is not only a source of knowledge but also a living example of spiritual and moral principles, which is critical for character formation in primary education contexts. At SD Negeri 054884 Tanjung Gunung, Langkat, 73 students and 8 teachers identify as Christian, including the CRE teacher. This context presents a unique opportunity to observe the intersection between personality competence and spiritual education in a predominantly Christian environment. Langkat, located in North Sumatra, is a region characterized by cultural diversity and strong local traditions that emphasize respect, honesty, and community cohesion. In such an environment, teachers' personality competence plays a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes toward faith, ethical behavior, and relational harmony. According to Lickona (1991), character education is most effective when students encounter consistent moral exemplars, making teachers' personality integrity a key instrument in the internalization of values. The biblical foundation for this study is Exodus 20:3, which emphasizes exclusive devotion to God as a central commandment. Faithfulness to the Word requires that students not only understand God's commands cognitively but also embody them relationally and behaviorally. CRE teachers serve as mediators of this divine instruction, bridging scripture and daily life through modeling honesty, commitment, and ethical discernment (Anthony, 2001). The teacher's personality competence thus becomes a critical variable that influences students' spiritual formation and practical application of biblical teachings. Studies indicate that educators who demonstrate empathy, emotional regulation, and ethical consistency significantly enhance students' moral reasoning, spiritual resilience, and social behavior (Goleman, 2006; Colley, 2003). In the primary school context, the personality of the teacher functions as both a pedagogical and spiritual tool. Students often emulate adult behavior, making the CRE teacher's integrity and ethical consistency a determinant of value internalization (Bandura, 1977). The teacher's emotional stability and relational skills foster an environment of trust, openness, and accountability, which is essential for reinforcing students' commitment to biblical principles. For example, a teacher who consistently integrates lessons on obedience and faithfulness with personal example of patience and honesty provides students with concrete models for living out the teachings of Exodus 20:3. Research on the role of personality competence in fostering faithfulness to the Word in Indonesian primary schools remains limited. While studies on teacher professionalism often focus on pedagogical and cognitive competencies, personal and ethical dimensions are less frequently examined in empirical settings (Mulyasa, 2013). In faith-based schools, where spiritual formation is intertwined with academic learning, the teacher's personality is not ancillary but foundational. The ability to consistently model ethical and spiritual integrity is likely to affect students' moral development, their engagement with scripture, and their practical application of biblical values in social interactions. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the extent to which the personality competence of CRE teachers contributes to students' faithfulness to God's Word at SD Negeri 054884 Tanjung Gunung. By integrating psychological frameworks of personality competence with biblical reflection, the research seeks to provide empirical evidence and

theological insight into how teachers' personal integrity and moral modeling enhance spiritual education. The findings are expected to offer practical guidance for teacher training, professional development, and the cultivation of spiritually grounded educational communities in Indonesia. In essence, this study situates the teacher not only as a conveyor of knowledge but as a living instrument of spiritual formation, exemplifying the values enshrined in Exodus 20:3.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used to investigate the relationship between the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and students' faithfulness to God's Word at SD Negeri 054884 Tanjung Gunung, Langkat, Indonesia. A quantitative approach was selected to obtain measurable data reflecting student perceptions of teacher personality competence and its influence on their internalization and practice of biblical principles. The correlational design enabled the determination of both the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variable, personality competence of CRE teachers, and the dependent variable, students' faithfulness to God's Word. The research was conducted at SD Negeri 054884 Tanjung Gunung, which consists of 73 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. The population of the study included all 73 Christian students, and total sampling (census sampling) was applied to ensure that every student's perspective was captured, thereby providing comprehensive insight into classroom and school-wide relational dynamics. Teachers were observed and described contextually, but they were not respondents in the statistical analysis. The independent variable, personality competence, was operationalized through indicators adapted from educational standards and social-emotional learning frameworks, including integrity and ethical conduct, emotional stability, consistency in modeling values, and relational professionalism. The dependent variable, students' faithfulness to God's Word, was measured through indicators such as obedience to biblical teachings, internalization of scriptural values, application of ethical behavior in daily school activities, and active participation in faith-based learning. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), consisting of 30 items: 15 items measured teacher personality competence, and 15 items assessed students' faithfulness to the Word. The instrument underwent rigorous validation procedures, including content validity review by two experts in Christian Religious Education and educational psychology, construct validity assessment using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation, and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha, with a threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$. Data collection was carried out during the second semester of the academic year, with permission obtained from the school principal and informed consent from all participants. Questionnaires were distributed directly to students in the classroom under supervision, ensuring that respondents clearly understood the items while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity to reduce response bias. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to examine mean scores and standard deviations, and inferential statistics, specifically Pearson Product-Moment correlation, to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between personality competence and student faithfulness to the Word. Additionally, regression analysis was

conducted to measure the predictive contribution of teacher personality competence to students' spiritual outcomes, with the coefficient of determination (R^2) indicating the proportion of variance in faithfulness explained by the teacher's personal competencies. This methodological approach allowed for an empirical evaluation of how teacher personality, as a combination of ethical conduct, emotional stability, and moral modeling, influences the cultivation of faithfulness to the Word in a primary school setting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative analysis of this study revealed a significant and meaningful relationship between the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and students' faithfulness to God's Word at SD Negeri 054884 Tanjung Gunung, Langkat. Descriptive statistical analysis of 73 student responses indicated that the overall mean score for the personality competence variable was 4.36 (SD = 0.39) on a five-point Likert scale, suggesting that students perceived their CRE teacher as highly competent in personal and relational qualities, including integrity, emotional stability, ethical modeling, and relational professionalism. Meanwhile, the dependent variable, students' faithfulness to God's Word, yielded a mean of 4.29 (SD = 0.42), indicating a strong internalization and application of biblical teachings within the school context. Normality testing using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method confirmed that both variables were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$), validating the use of parametric correlation and regression analyses. Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis showed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between teacher personality competence and student faithfulness to the Word ($r = 0.701$, $p < 0.001$). This correlation coefficient demonstrates that higher levels of perceived personality competence among CRE teachers are closely associated with greater levels of student adherence, obedience, and internalization of biblical principles. Regression analysis further supported this finding, revealing that personality competence significantly predicts students' faithfulness to the Word ($\beta = 0.701$, $t = 9.62$, $p < 0.001$), with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.491. In other words, approximately 49.1% of the variance in students' faithfulness to God's Word can be explained by the personality competence of their CRE teacher, while the remaining 50.9% may be influenced by other factors, including family environment, peer influence, church involvement, and broader socio-cultural dynamics.

These findings underscore the critical role of teacher personality as a structural pillar in shaping spiritual attitudes, ethical behavior, and moral consistency among primary school students. In the context of SD Negeri 054884 Tanjung Gunung, where all 73 students and 8 teachers identify as Christian, the influence of a teacher's personality becomes particularly pronounced, as students are able to directly observe, internalize, and emulate the moral and spiritual behaviors modeled by their instructor. Disaggregating the indicators of personality competence revealed nuanced insights into which teacher qualities most strongly influenced student faithfulness. Integrity and ethical conduct received the highest mean score ($M = 4.42$), indicating that students highly value consistency between teacher words and actions, perceiving their CRE teacher as morally trustworthy and principled. Emotional stability and composure in classroom interactions scored $M = 4.35$, highlighting the importance of self-regulated, calm, and empathetic

behavior in establishing relational security and moral modeling. Consistency in modeling values, which includes demonstrating the practical application of biblical teachings, scored $M = 4.33$, suggesting that students are attentive to the congruence between doctrinal instruction and observable behavior. Finally, relational professionalism, characterized by respectful communication, attentiveness, and conflict mediation, scored $M = 4.30$, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal skills in fostering trust, engagement, and receptivity among students. These results indicate that students not only recognize the CRE teacher's technical knowledge but also critically evaluate the teacher's personal integrity, moral conduct, and relational approach in shaping their spiritual learning. The dependent variable of student faithfulness to God's Word was similarly dissected into its component indicators. Obedience to biblical teachings scored $M = 4.36$, reflecting students' willingness to follow ethical directives derived from Scripture. Internalization of scriptural values scored $M = 4.31$, suggesting that students cognitively and affectively absorb moral principles and integrate them into personal decision-making. The application of ethical behavior in daily school activities scored $M = 4.27$, demonstrating that students translate internalized values into practical actions, such as honesty, kindness, and accountability. Active participation in faith-based learning scored $M = 4.25$, indicating engagement in classroom activities and reflection exercises that reinforce scriptural understanding. These indicators collectively affirm that students' faithfulness to God's Word is a multidimensional construct influenced not only by knowledge acquisition but also by relational modeling, ethical demonstration, and the affective environment cultivated by the teacher. The findings align with Lickona's (1991) theory of character education, which posits that moral and spiritual development occurs most effectively in environments where adults consistently model virtue and relational integrity. In the context of SD Negeri 054884 Tanjung Gunung, the CRE teacher functions as both an ethical exemplar and a relational facilitator, providing students with observable behaviors that reinforce biblical principles in everyday life.

The connection between teacher personality competence and student faithfulness resonates with the reflection on Exodus 20:3, which emphasizes unwavering devotion to God as the foundation for moral life. Just as the first commandment establishes the primacy of faithfulness to God, the teacher's personal faithfulness, integrity, and ethical consistency serve as a living demonstration of this principle. The congruence between doctrinal teaching and personal modeling enhances credibility, fosters trust, and encourages imitation among students. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) provides an explanatory framework for these observations, suggesting that students acquire behaviors through observation of credible role models. In this study, the CRE teacher's consistent demonstration of integrity, emotional regulation, and ethical decision-making functions as the template through which students learn to enact faithfulness in their own lives. Effective communication, empathetic interaction, and relational professionalism further strengthen this process by creating an environment where students feel safe to internalize values, ask questions, and engage in reflective practice. The study also highlights the interplay between cultural context and religious instruction. Langkat, with its strong community norms and localized moral traditions, provides a socio-cultural backdrop that can either support or hinder the internalization of biblical values. In this case, the alignment of the CRE teacher's personality competence with communal

expectations likely reinforces both the salience and acceptability of the taught principles. The observed high mean scores suggest that the teacher's modeling resonates with both the spiritual and social frameworks in which students are embedded, amplifying the teacher's influence on faithfulness to the Word. Furthermore, the strong correlation ($r = 0.701$) and predictive power ($R^2 = 0.491$) indicate that teacher personality competence functions as a primary structural determinant of moral and spiritual behavior in this context. While family background, peer interactions, and church participation contribute to student development, the teacher's consistent demonstration of faith-aligned behavior serves as the immediate and daily reference point for students' moral decisions. Notably, the study found that relational professionalism, though slightly lower than integrity and emotional stability, plays a critical role in mediating conflicts, resolving ethical dilemmas, and encouraging collaborative learning. Students reported that witnessing the CRE teacher handle disputes with fairness, patience, and reconciliation skills encouraged them to emulate similar behaviors in peer interactions. This finding reinforces the notion that personality competence is not merely an internal trait but is actively expressed through social engagement and ethical modeling, which in turn shapes students' moral cognition and behavior. The data also suggest that emotional stability is integral to effective personality modeling. CRE teachers who demonstrate composure and resilience in the face of challenges provide students with strategies for navigating personal difficulties while maintaining faithfulness to biblical principles. This aligns with contemporary scholarship on emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2006), which links self-regulation and relational awareness to effective leadership and educational influence. In sum, the results of this study demonstrate a strong and significant association between the personality competence of CRE teachers and students' faithfulness to God's Word, with nearly half of the variance in spiritual adherence explained by teacher behavior. These findings underscore the dual role of the CRE teacher as both educator and moral exemplar. By embodying integrity, emotional stability, value consistency, and relational professionalism, teachers provide a tangible model for students to internalize and enact biblical principles.

The reflection on Exodus 20:3 further contextualizes these findings within a theological framework, illustrating that devotion to God is both a doctrinal imperative and a relationally mediated practice. Students' perceptions of the teacher's authenticity, ethical conduct, and relational engagement directly influence their willingness and ability to integrate scriptural teachings into their daily lives. Consequently, teacher personality competence emerges as a cornerstone for fostering both spiritual and moral development in primary education. These results carry implications for teacher training and professional development. Programs aimed at enhancing CRE effectiveness should not only focus on pedagogical skills and biblical knowledge but also emphasize personal integrity, emotional regulation, and relational competence. Equipping teachers with strategies for modeling ethical behavior, managing classroom dynamics, and nurturing empathetic relationships can significantly strengthen students' internalization of faith-based values. Additionally, the findings highlight the importance of congruence between cultural context and religious instruction. Teachers who align their personality and relational approach with community norms and values can amplify the effectiveness of moral and spiritual formation. While approximately 50.9% of the variance in student

faithfulness remains unexplained, the substantial predictive contribution of teacher personality underscores the centrality of relational and ethical modeling in the educational process. Limitations include the reliance on self-reported student data, which may be influenced by social desirability bias, and the homogeneous Christian composition of the sample, which limits generalizability to multi-faith or secular contexts. Future research could examine longitudinal impacts of teacher personality on student faithfulness, cross-cultural comparisons, and the interplay between family, church, and school influences. Overall, the evidence strongly supports the conclusion that personality competence is not peripheral but foundational for cultivating students' faithfulness to God's Word, demonstrating that teachers serve as living conduits of ethical and spiritual formation in Christian primary education. By integrating empirical analysis with biblical reflection, this study illustrates that personality competence encompasses more than individual traits; it is an active, relational, and pedagogical force that directly shapes the spiritual and moral life of students, thereby bridging doctrinal teaching with lived experience and modeling the covenantal principle expressed in Exodus 20:3.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the personality competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SD Negeri 054884 Tanjung Gunung, Langkat, plays a pivotal role in fostering students' faithfulness to God's Word. Teachers who demonstrate high levels of integrity, emotional stability, consistency in modeling values, and relational professionalism significantly influence students' ability to internalize and apply biblical principles in their daily lives. Quantitative analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between teacher personality competence and student faithfulness, with approximately 49.1% of the variance in students' adherence to Scripture explained by the teacher's personal and relational qualities. Theologically, this finding aligns with Exodus 20:3, which emphasizes unwavering devotion to God; teachers serve as living exemplars of this faithfulness, bridging doctrinal instruction with practical, observable behavior. Furthermore, the study highlights that personality competence functions as both a moral and relational foundation, shaping classroom climate, peer interactions, and students' ethical decision-making. While cultural and familial influences also contribute to spiritual development, the CRE teacher remains a central agent in guiding students toward consistent faith practice. The study underscores the necessity of integrating personality competence into teacher training and professional development, emphasizing ethical modeling, emotional regulation, and relational skills as core components of effective Christian education. Ultimately, the research confirms that cultivating strong personality competence in CRE teachers not only enhances instructional effectiveness but also ensures the formation of spiritually grounded, morally conscious, and faithful students, exemplifying unity between belief, behavior, and community life.

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