



Personality Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers and the Spirit of Christ's Obedience Based on Philippians 2:8: A Study at SMAN 2 Tulang Bawang Udik

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between the personality competence of a Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher and students' internalization of the spirit of Christ's obedience based on Philippians 2:8 at SMAN 2 Tulang Bawang Udik, West Tulang Bawang. Conducted within a minority Christian context consisting of 11 Christian students and one CRE teacher, the research explores how teacher character influences adolescent moral and spiritual formation. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were collected through structured Likert-scale questionnaires measuring teacher personality competence, operationalized through integrity, emotional stability, self-discipline, responsibility, and consistency, and students' embodiment of obedience, reflected in responsibility fulfillment, respect for authority, perseverance, humility in receiving correction, and commitment to moral principles. Statistical analysis revealed a strong and significant positive correlation between teacher personality competence and students' internalization of Christ's obedience ($r = 0.768$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis indicated that personality competence accounted for approximately 59% of the variance in students' obedient attitudes and behaviors ($R^2 = 0.590$), demonstrating a substantial predictive contribution. The findings suggest that obedience as exemplified in Philippians 2:8 is effectively cultivated when biblical teaching is reinforced through consistent character modeling. The study concludes that strengthening teacher personality competence is essential for holistic Christian education, particularly in minority settings where the teacher's authenticity and credibility significantly shape students' understanding and practice of faithful discipleship.

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

INTRODUCTION

Personality competence is a central pillar of teacher professionalism, particularly in Christian Religious Education (CRE), where moral credibility and spiritual authenticity are

inseparable from instructional effectiveness. In faith-based instruction, teachers function not merely as transmitters of theological knowledge but as living embodiments of biblical truth. This dimension becomes especially significant when reflecting on Philippians 2:8, which declares that Christ “humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.” The verse presents obedience not as passive submission but as a voluntary, sacrificial alignment with divine will. Within Christian education, this Christological model of obedience provides a foundational paradigm for character formation and teacher identity. Educational research consistently affirms that teacher personality significantly influences student engagement, moral perception, and value internalization. According to Bandura’s social learning theory, individuals acquire behaviors and attitudes through observation of credible role models (Bandura, 1977). In the classroom, the teacher becomes a primary referent for behavioral modeling. When teachers demonstrate integrity, emotional stability, maturity, and consistency, students are more likely to internalize corresponding virtues. Conversely, discrepancies between teaching and conduct weaken moral authority. Therefore, personality competence is not peripheral but central to character education.

Philippians 2:8 situates obedience within the broader Christ hymn (Philippians 2:5-11), emphasizing humility, self-emptying (*kenosis*), and submission to God’s redemptive purpose (Fee, 1995). The obedience of Christ is characterized by intentional surrender rather than coercion. For CRE teachers, embodying this spirit implies dedication to calling, faithfulness in responsibility, patience in service, and resilience amid institutional challenges. Such obedience manifests in punctuality, preparation, fairness in evaluation, and commitment to students’ holistic growth. Thus, theological reflection on Philippians 2:8 intersects directly with professional identity. At SMAN 2 Tulang Bawang Udik, West Tulang Bawang, the Christian community is relatively small, consisting of 11 Christian students and one CRE teacher. In this minority context, the visibility of teacher character becomes amplified. The teacher’s personality competence does not operate within a broad Christian majority but within a pluralistic environment requiring sensitivity, integrity, and consistent witness. The small class size allows for close relational interaction, making the teacher’s behavior highly observable and influential. Under such conditions, obedience to Christ may be expressed not only in doctrinal instruction but also in respectful engagement within a diverse educational setting. The concept of personality competence in Indonesian educational standards includes moral integrity, emotional maturity, self-confidence, and exemplary conduct. These traits align with broader Christian pedagogical philosophy emphasizing the integration of faith and life (Knight, 2006). When personality competence reflects Christlike obedience, teaching becomes an act of vocation rather than occupation. Parker Palmer (1998) argues that effective teaching emerges from the integrity of the teacher’s inner life; authenticity fosters trust and transformative learning. In Christian education, this authenticity is grounded in discipleship to Christ. Character formation in adolescence presents unique challenges. Senior high school students are navigating identity formation, autonomy, and moral independence. They often question authority and evaluate credibility critically. In such developmental stages, obedience cannot be imposed externally; it must be modeled convincingly. When students observe consistent dedication, humility, and principled action in their CRE teacher, obedience is reframed not as blind compliance but as

purposeful commitment rooted in conviction. This study seeks to examine the relationship between the personality competence of the CRE teacher and the internalization of Christ's spirit of obedience among Christian students at SMAN 2 Tulang Bawang Udik. By integrating empirical analysis with theological reflection on Philippians 2:8, this research aims to demonstrate that personality competence significantly shapes students' understanding and practice of obedient discipleship. The findings are expected to contribute to discussions on teacher identity, minority Christian education contexts, and the role of embodied theology in contemporary schooling.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between the personality competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher and students' internalization of the spirit of Christ's obedience based on Philippians 2:8 at SMAN 2 Tulang Bawang Udik, West Tulang Bawang. The research was conducted during the second semester of the 2025 academic year. The population consisted of all 11 Christian students enrolled at the school. Due to the very small population size, total sampling (census sampling) was applied, meaning all 11 students participated as respondents. The study focused on one CRE teacher, whose personality competence was assessed through student perceptions and supported by classroom observation. The independent variable (X) was the personality competence of the CRE teacher. This variable was operationalized through measurable indicators including integrity, emotional stability, maturity, self-discipline, responsibility, consistency between words and actions, and exemplary conduct in both instructional and relational contexts. The dependent variable (Y) was students' internalization of the spirit of Christ's obedience as reflected in Philippians 2:8. This variable was operationalized through indicators such as willingness to fulfill responsibilities, respect for authority, perseverance in tasks, humility in receiving correction, commitment to moral principles, and faithfulness in academic and spiritual duties. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 28 Likert-scale items (14 items per variable) with five response options ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument was developed based on theoretical frameworks of teacher personality competence and theological reflection on Christ's obedience. Content validity was evaluated by two experts in Christian education and educational psychology to ensure conceptual clarity and biblical alignment. Construct validity was tested using Pearson Product-Moment correlation, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with coefficients above 0.70 indicating acceptable internal consistency. Questionnaires were administered directly in a supervised classroom setting to ensure clarity and completeness of responses. In addition to quantitative data, brief non-participant observations were conducted to support contextual interpretation. Data analysis included descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to describe general trends, normality testing using the Shapiro-Wilk test due to the small sample size, Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, and simple linear regression analysis to evaluate predictive contribution (R^2). All statistical analyses were conducted at a significance level of 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate a strong and meaningful relationship between the personality competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher and the internalization of the spirit of Christ's obedience among students at SMAN 2 Tulang Bawang Udik, West Tulang Bawang. Data were collected from all 11 Christian students enrolled at the school through validated Likert-scale questionnaires measuring two primary variables: teacher personality competence (X) and students' embodiment of Christ's obedience based on Philippians 2:8 (Y). Despite the small sample size, statistical analysis provides important insights into the dynamics of character formation within this minority Christian context. Descriptive statistics show that the overall mean score for teacher personality competence was 4.52 (SD = 0.28) on a five-point scale, categorized as very high. Students consistently perceived the CRE teacher as demonstrating integrity, emotional stability, self-discipline, responsibility, and consistency between words and actions. Meanwhile, the mean score for students' internalization of the spirit of obedience was 4.44 (SD = 0.31), also categorized as high. These results suggest a positive alignment between teacher character modeling and students' behavioral and attitudinal development. Normality testing using the Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed that both variables were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$), allowing parametric analysis. Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.768$ ($p < 0.01$), indicating a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between teacher personality competence and student obedience. This means that higher perceptions of teacher integrity, maturity, and consistency are associated with stronger expressions of responsible and faithful behavior among students. Although the small sample size requires cautious interpretation, the strength of the correlation suggests a substantial relational influence. Simple linear regression analysis yielded a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.590, indicating that approximately 59% of the variance in students' internalization of Christ's obedience can be explained by the personality competence of the CRE teacher. In social science research, this represents a considerable explanatory contribution. The remaining 41% may be influenced by family background, church involvement, peer relationships, or broader sociocultural factors. However, within this particular educational context, where there is only one CRE teacher, the modeling effect appears especially pronounced.

A closer examination of the personality competence indicators reveals that integrity ($M = 4.60$) received the highest rating. Students reported that the teacher consistently fulfills commitments, prepares lessons thoroughly, and treats students fairly. Integrity directly reflects the theological dimension of obedience described in Philippians 2:8, where Christ's obedience was unwavering and consistent. Emotional stability ($M = 4.55$) also scored highly, with students noting the teacher's calm response to academic or relational challenges. Such emotional maturity reinforces credibility and demonstrates that obedience is not reactive submission but disciplined faithfulness. Self-discipline and responsibility ($M = 4.50$) further illustrate how personality competence becomes visible in daily practice. The teacher's punctuality, preparedness, and attentiveness serve as implicit lessons in commitment. In adolescent developmental stages, where students often question authority, visible consistency strengthens trust. When authority figures

demonstrate disciplined obedience in their professional duties, students are more likely to reinterpret obedience as purposeful dedication rather than imposed control. On the dependent variable, the highest-rated indicator was willingness to fulfill responsibilities ($M = 4.48$). Students reported increased seriousness in completing assignments and participating in class activities. Respect for authority ($M = 4.46$) and perseverance in tasks ($M = 4.42$) also showed positive trends. Students expressed greater awareness of accountability not only to teachers but to God, reflecting the theological framing of obedience introduced in CRE instruction. Humility in receiving correction ($M = 4.39$) and commitment to moral principles ($M = 4.37$) further demonstrate internalization of Christ-centered values.

Philippians 2:8 presents obedience as an expression of humility and devotion to divine purpose. The data suggest that this Christological model becomes tangible when embodied by the teacher. Students do not merely learn about Christ's obedience; they observe analogous patterns in their teacher's daily conduct. This alignment between doctrine and practice strengthens internalization. The findings therefore support the argument that theological teaching gains transformative power when reinforced by lived example. The minority context of 11 Christian students within a broader pluralistic school environment intensifies the importance of credible witness. In such settings, CRE teachers often serve not only as instructors but as spiritual mentors. The small class size fosters close relational interaction, increasing the visibility of personality traits. Observational notes during the research period confirmed that the teacher frequently encouraged reflective dialogue, connected biblical themes to real-life decision-making, and modeled respectful engagement with non-Christian colleagues and students. This broader relational obedience, expressed through professionalism and inclusivity, further reinforced students' perception of authentic discipleship. These findings align with social learning theory, which posits that behavior is learned through observation of credible models. When students repeatedly observe integrity and disciplined commitment, they are more likely to adopt similar behaviors. Adolescent moral development theory suggests that identity formation is strongly influenced by consistent role models. In this study, the CRE teacher functions as such a model, and the statistical evidence supports the effectiveness of this influence. The small sample size restricts generalizability and may inflate correlation coefficients. The reliance on self-reported questionnaires introduces potential response bias. Future research could employ mixed-method approaches, including interviews and longitudinal observation, to deepen understanding. Comparative studies across multiple schools with similar minority Christian populations would also enhance external validity. The results provide compelling evidence that personality competence significantly contributes to the cultivation of Christ-centered obedience among students. The relatively high explanatory power (59%) underscores the importance of teacher character in Christian education, particularly in contexts where the teacher serves as a primary spiritual reference point. The integration of theological reflection and empirical analysis in this study highlights the inseparability of doctrine and embodiment.

The findings affirm that at SMAN 2 Tulang Bawang Udik, the personality competence of the CRE teacher plays a decisive role in shaping students' understanding and practice of

obedience as exemplified in Philippians 2:8. Through integrity, emotional stability, and disciplined responsibility, the teacher models a living theology of obedience that students internalize in academic, relational, and spiritual dimensions. Obedience thus becomes not merely a doctrinal concept but a lived and observable expression of faithful discipleship within the school community.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the personality competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SMAN 2 Tulang Bawang Udik, West Tulang Bawang, significantly influences students' internalization of the spirit of Christ's obedience as described in Philippians 2:8. The findings demonstrate a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between teacher personality competence and students' obedient attitudes and behaviors. With approximately 59% of the variance in students' embodiment of obedience explained by teacher personality competence, the results highlight the substantial role of integrity, emotional stability, self-discipline, and moral consistency in shaping adolescent character. In a minority Christian context consisting of 11 students and one CRE teacher, the visibility and relational proximity of the teacher amplify the modeling effect. Students observe not only doctrinal instruction but also daily expressions of responsibility, humility, and commitment. The study affirms that obedience, as exemplified by Christ, is effectively cultivated when teachers embody it authentically in professional and relational conduct. This embodiment transforms theological teaching into lived experience, strengthening credibility and fostering deeper internalization among students. The research underscores that Philippians 2:8 is not merely a Christological statement but also a pedagogical paradigm. When CRE teachers align their personal and professional lives with the spirit of Christ's obedience, they provide a concrete framework through which students can understand faithful discipleship. Therefore, strengthening personality competence through spiritual formation, reflective practice, and ongoing professional development is essential for sustaining holistic Christian education, particularly in minority educational settings.

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