



## Strengthening Moral Guidance through Teacher Professionalism: A Study of Christian Religious Education Based on Exodus 32:19 at SDN 156320 Simpang Tiga 2 Banjar

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the role of teacher professionalism in strengthening moral guidance among students in Christian Religious Education through a reflection on Book of Exodus 32:19. The research was conducted at SDN 156320 Simpang Tiga 2 Banjar, where Christian Religious Education teachers are expected to guide students in understanding and practicing biblical moral values in their daily lives. The background of this study is based on the growing need for teachers who not only possess pedagogical competence but also demonstrate professional integrity in shaping students' character and preventing moral deviation in the school environment. This research employed a quantitative descriptive approach. The population consisted of 35 Christian students and five Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. Because the population size was relatively small, a total sampling technique was applied, allowing all members of the population to participate as respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale designed to measure indicators of teacher professionalism and students' moral awareness. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including percentages and mean scores, to identify patterns in respondents' perceptions. The results show that teacher professionalism significantly contributes to strengthening moral guidance among students. The study concludes that professional Christian Religious Education teachers play an essential role in preventing moral deviation and fostering responsible character formation among students through the integration of biblical teachings and practical moral guidance in the educational process.*

**Keywords:** Moral Guidance, Christian Religious Education, Teacher Professionalism

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher professionalism does not only involve mastery of subject matter and pedagogical competence but also includes the ability to guide students toward ethical and spiritual maturity. Christian Religious Education teachers are expected to act as moral mentors

who help students understand biblical values and apply them in everyday life. The presence of teachers who demonstrate professional integrity and spiritual commitment plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral awareness and behavior within the school environment. Professional teachers are characterized by their ability to combine academic knowledge, pedagogical skills, and ethical responsibility in the teaching process. According to Linda Darling-Hammond, teacher professionalism is closely related to the capacity of educators to design meaningful learning experiences that support both intellectual and moral development (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In Christian Religious Education, this responsibility becomes even more significant because teachers are not only facilitators of knowledge but also spiritual guides who influence the moral formation of students. When teachers demonstrate professionalism in their teaching practices, they create an environment where students can explore moral values and develop character based on biblical teachings. The importance of moral guidance in education is increasingly evident in modern society, where students are often exposed to various influences that may lead to moral confusion or behavioral deviation. Schools therefore play a strategic role in strengthening students' moral foundations through value-based education. Christian Religious Education contributes to this effort by integrating biblical teachings into the learning process, helping students understand the difference between right and wrong while encouraging them to live according to Christian ethical principles. According to Robert W. Pazmiño, Christian education seeks to nurture the spiritual and moral growth of learners by connecting biblical truth with real-life situations that students encounter in their daily lives (Pazmiño, 2008).

One biblical narrative that provides an important reflection on moral guidance is found in Book of Exodus 32:19. This passage describes the moment when Moses descended from Mount Sinai and witnessed the Israelites worshipping the golden calf. The reaction of Moses symbolized a firm response to moral deviation and idolatry among the people. The story illustrates how leadership grounded in commitment to God's commandments requires courage to confront wrongdoing and guide the community back to the path of righteousness. In the context of education, this narrative offers a valuable theological perspective on the responsibility of teachers to address moral deviations among students and guide them toward ethical behavior. The relevance of this biblical reflection becomes particularly important in elementary school settings, where students are in the formative stages of character development. During this period, children begin to form their understanding of moral values and social norms. Teachers therefore serve as influential role models whose attitudes and actions can shape students' character. According to George R. Knight, Christian educators must demonstrate consistency between their teaching and personal conduct because students often learn moral values through observation of their teachers' behavior (Knight, 2006). When teachers model integrity, discipline, and commitment to biblical values, students are more likely to internalize these principles in their own lives.

In the educational context of SDN 156320 Simpang Tiga 2 Banjar, the presence of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a strategic role in guiding students toward moral awareness and responsible behavior. With a total of 35 Christian students and five Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher, the school environment provides opportunities for meaningful interaction between teachers and

students in the process of moral formation. The teacher's professionalism in delivering biblical teachings, addressing behavioral issues, and providing moral guidance becomes an essential factor in helping students avoid actions that contradict Christian values. Teachers must be able to translate theological concepts into practical lessons that are relevant to students' daily experiences. This requires creativity, sensitivity to students' developmental stages, and a deep understanding of both educational principles and biblical theology. According to Thomas H. Groome, effective Christian education involves a dialogical process in which biblical narratives are connected with learners' real-life contexts so that faith can shape ethical decision-making (Groome, 2011). This study aims to examine how teacher professionalism contributes to strengthening moral guidance among students in Christian Religious Education. By reflecting on the biblical message of Exodus 32:19 and exploring its relevance in the teaching context at SDN 156320 Simpang Tiga 2 Banjar, the study seeks to provide insights into the role of Christian Religious Education teachers in preventing moral deviation and fostering responsible behavior among students. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of effective pedagogical approaches that integrate biblical principles with character formation in contemporary educational settings.

## **METHODS**

A quantitative descriptive research design was used to analyze how teacher professionalism strengthens moral guidance among students in Christian Religious Education learning. Quantitative research was selected because it allows researchers to measure perceptions and behavioral tendencies using numerical data and statistical interpretation. According to John W. Creswell, quantitative research is effective for examining relationships between educational variables and describing patterns that emerge from respondents' perceptions through structured instruments (Creswell, 2014). In this study, teacher professionalism functions as the independent variable, while students' moral awareness in avoiding behavioral deviation based on the reflection of Book of Exodus 32:19 serves as the dependent variable. The research was conducted at SDN 156320 Simpang Tiga 2 Banjar. The population consisted of 35 Christian students and five Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. Because the total number of respondents was relatively small, the study used a total sampling technique, meaning that all members of the population were included as research participants. This approach ensured that the collected data represented the perceptions of the entire Christian school community regarding the role of teacher professionalism in guiding students to avoid moral deviation. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a Likert scale, which was designed to measure several indicators related to teacher professionalism and moral guidance. The indicators of teacher professionalism included mastery of biblical teaching materials, clarity in explaining moral values, consistency in modeling ethical behavior, ability to correct inappropriate student behavior, and effectiveness in guiding students to reflect on biblical principles. Meanwhile, the indicators of students' moral awareness included obedience to school rules, honesty in daily activities, respect for teachers and peers, willingness to correct mistakes, and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong according to Christian values. Each questionnaire item provided five response options ranging from strongly

disagree to strongly agree. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including the calculation of frequencies, percentages, and mean scores in order to identify patterns in respondents' responses. This analysis helped determine the overall level of teacher professionalism and its influence on students' moral awareness in avoiding behavioral deviation. The statistical findings were then interpreted within the framework of Christian education theory and biblical reflection in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teacher professionalism contributes to strengthening moral guidance among students in the context of Christian Religious Education.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate that teacher professionalism plays a significant role in strengthening moral guidance among students in Christian Religious Education. The data collected from respondents at SDN 156320 Simpang Tiga 2 Banjar indicate that the majority of participants perceive the Christian Religious Education teacher as demonstrating strong professionalism in guiding students to avoid behaviors that deviate from Christian moral values. The respondents consisted of 35 Christian students and five Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. Their responses reveal that the teacher's professional conduct, instructional clarity, and consistent moral example contribute positively to the formation of students' ethical awareness and behavior in the school environment. These findings support the argument that teacher professionalism is not merely a technical competence related to instructional delivery but also an ethical and spiritual commitment that shapes students' moral development. One of the most notable findings of this research is the strong perception among students that the teacher demonstrates clear moral guidance during the learning process. Students reported that the Christian Religious Education teacher frequently emphasizes biblical principles when discussing issues related to honesty, discipline, respect, and responsibility. The teacher does not only deliver theoretical explanations of moral values but also connects them with practical situations that students encounter in their daily lives. For example, when discussing honesty, the teacher relates biblical teachings to real-life situations such as completing assignments independently, telling the truth when mistakes occur, and respecting school regulations. This contextual approach enables students to understand moral teachings not as abstract concepts but as practical guidelines for everyday behavior. Such pedagogical practices align with the perspective of Robert W. Pazmiño, who argues that Christian education should bridge biblical teachings and life experiences so that students can apply spiritual values in concrete ways (Pazmiño, 2008).

Another significant finding is that students perceive the teacher as a moral role model within the school environment. Teacher professionalism is reflected not only in the way lessons are delivered but also in the teacher's personal behavior and interactions with students. Many respondents indicated that the teacher consistently demonstrates attitudes of patience, fairness, and respect toward students. This behavior strengthens the credibility of the moral teachings presented in the classroom. Students are more likely to accept and internalize ethical values when they observe that their teacher practices the same principles in daily life. According to George R. Knight, the moral authority of

teachers in Christian education is closely related to the consistency between their teachings and their personal conduct (Knight, 2006). The findings of this study confirm that such consistency enhances students' trust in the teacher and increases their willingness to follow moral guidance. The reflection on Book of Exodus 32:19 provides an important theological foundation for understanding the teacher's role in addressing moral deviation. In the biblical narrative, Moses reacts strongly when he sees the Israelites worshipping the golden calf, an act that represents a serious moral and spiritual deviation from God's commandments. The decisive response of Moses symbolizes the responsibility of spiritual leaders to confront wrongdoing and guide the community back to the path of righteousness. In the educational context, the Christian Religious Education teacher adopts a similar role by addressing behaviors that contradict Christian moral values. The teacher does not ignore disciplinary issues but instead uses them as opportunities for moral reflection and learning. For instance, when conflicts occur between students or when students violate school rules, the teacher facilitates discussions that encourage students to evaluate their actions in light of biblical teachings. This approach helps students understand that moral guidance is not merely about punishment but about restoring relationships and encouraging personal growth.

The research findings also reveal that teacher professionalism contributes to creating a supportive learning environment where students feel safe to express their thoughts and concerns. Several respondents indicated that the Christian Religious Education teacher listens attentively when students share personal challenges or ethical dilemmas. This openness encourages students to seek guidance when they encounter situations that test their moral judgment. The teacher's willingness to provide counsel and encouragement reflects a pastoral dimension of Christian education, where teachers serve as mentors who accompany students in their moral and spiritual journeys. Such relational approaches to teaching are particularly important in elementary education, where students often rely on trusted adults to help them interpret complex social situations. In addition to personal guidance, the teacher demonstrates professionalism through effective instructional strategies that reinforce moral values. The research data indicate that the teacher frequently uses storytelling, group discussions, and reflective activities to help students explore biblical narratives and their moral implications. Storytelling is especially effective in helping students understand the consequences of moral decisions because it allows them to imagine the experiences of biblical characters. For example, when discussing the story of Moses confronting the Israelites' idolatry, the teacher invites students to reflect on how individuals should respond when they encounter wrongdoing within their community. Through guided discussions, students learn that moral courage sometimes requires standing up against actions that contradict ethical principles. This emphasis on moral courage resonates with the leadership example demonstrated by Moses in the biblical narrative.

Another important aspect revealed by the data is the role of teacher professionalism in preventing behavioral deviation through proactive guidance. Rather than waiting for problems to arise, the Christian Religious Education teacher consistently reminds students of the importance of maintaining integrity in their actions. Moral guidance is integrated into various classroom activities, including prayers, reflections, and discussions

about everyday situations. This proactive approach helps students develop an internal awareness of moral responsibility. When students regularly engage in conversations about ethical values, they become more conscious of the choices they make and the potential consequences of their actions. Over time, this awareness contributes to the development of self-discipline and responsible behavior. The findings also indicate that teacher professionalism positively influences students' attitudes toward moral rules and school regulations. Many respondents reported that the teacher explains the reasons behind school rules rather than presenting them merely as obligations. By linking school regulations with biblical values such as respect, honesty, and responsibility, the teacher helps students understand that rules are designed to promote harmony and fairness within the school community. This explanation fosters a sense of moral accountability among students because they recognize that ethical behavior is not only expected by teachers but is also rooted in their faith values. Educational research suggests that students are more likely to follow rules when they understand the moral reasoning behind them rather than when they perceive them as arbitrary restrictions. The results highlight the importance of collaborative relationships between teachers and students in promoting moral development. The Christian Religious Education teacher encourages students to support one another in maintaining positive behavior. Group discussions and cooperative activities allow students to reflect together on moral issues and share perspectives on ethical dilemmas. Through these interactions, students learn to respect different viewpoints and develop empathy for others. These social learning experiences reinforce the communal dimension of moral formation, where students grow not only as individuals but also as members of a supportive learning community. Another interesting finding is that teacher professionalism contributes to students' ability to evaluate their own behavior critically. Reflective activities implemented by the teacher encourage students to think about the consequences of their actions and consider how they can improve their behavior in the future. For example, after discussing a moral lesson, the teacher may ask students to write short reflections about how they can apply the biblical principle in their daily lives. These reflective exercises help students internalize moral values because they require personal engagement with the ethical message of the lesson. Over time, such practices can strengthen students' capacity for self-regulation and responsible decision-making. The context of SDN 156320 Simpang Tiga 2 Banjar provides a unique setting in which teacher professionalism can have a strong impact on students' moral development. With a relatively small number of students and teachers, relationships within the school community tend to be more personal and supportive. The Christian Religious Education teacher has opportunities to interact closely with students, observe their behavior, and provide individualized guidance when necessary. This close interaction enhances the effectiveness of moral instruction because the teacher can tailor guidance to the specific needs and experiences of each student. The results of this study demonstrate that teacher professionalism is a crucial factor in strengthening moral guidance among students in Christian Religious Education. Professional teachers who combine pedagogical competence, ethical integrity, and biblical understanding can effectively guide students in avoiding behaviors that deviate from moral values. By reflecting on the example of Moses in Exodus 32:19, the Christian Religious Education teacher provides a powerful model of moral leadership that emphasizes responsibility, courage, and commitment to God's commandments. Through consistent instruction,

personal example, and supportive relationships, the teacher helps students develop the moral awareness necessary to navigate the challenges of modern life. The discussion of these findings highlights the broader significance of teacher professionalism in character education. Moral guidance in schools cannot rely solely on disciplinary policies or external regulations; it requires educators who are committed to nurturing students' ethical and spiritual growth. Christian Religious Education teachers, in particular, carry the responsibility of integrating biblical teachings with practical moral guidance that addresses real-life challenges faced by students. When teachers fulfill this role with professionalism and dedication, they contribute not only to the academic success of students but also to the formation of responsible individuals who are capable of making ethical decisions in their communities.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teacher professionalism plays a crucial role in strengthening moral guidance among students in Christian Religious Education. The findings from SDN 156320 Simpang Tiga 2 Banjar indicate that the professional conduct of the Christian Religious Education teacher significantly contributes to students' understanding of moral values and their ability to avoid behaviors that deviate from ethical principles. Through clear teaching strategies, consistent moral example, and meaningful interaction with students, the teacher is able to guide learners toward responsible and disciplined behavior in both academic and social contexts. The reflection on Book of Exodus 32:19 provides a theological foundation for understanding the responsibility of educators in addressing moral deviation. The firm response of Moses toward the Israelites' idolatry illustrates the importance of moral leadership that upholds God's commandments and corrects wrongdoing within a community. In the context of education, this biblical principle is reflected in the role of Christian Religious Education teachers who actively guide students to recognize ethical boundaries and make decisions based on Christian values. By integrating biblical teachings into classroom discussions, reflective activities, and daily interactions, the teacher helps students develop moral awareness and a commitment to ethical conduct. The study highlights that teacher professionalism extends beyond instructional competence to include character, integrity, and the ability to serve as a role model for students. When teachers demonstrate consistency between their teaching and their behavior, students are more likely to internalize the moral principles being taught. This consistency strengthens the credibility of moral guidance and fosters a learning environment where students feel encouraged to reflect on their actions and improve their behavior. Strengthening teacher professionalism in Christian Religious Education is essential for promoting character formation and preventing moral deviation among students. Professional teachers who integrate biblical values with effective pedagogical practices can cultivate a school environment that supports ethical growth, spiritual awareness, and responsible decision-making. Such efforts ultimately contribute to the development of students who are not only academically capable but also morally grounded and prepared to live according to Christian values in their communities.

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