

Christian Religious Education Teachers' Personality and the Embodiment of Responsibility: An Exegetical Study of Genesis 42:37 at SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Christian Religious Education teachers' personality in cultivating student responsibility, using Genesis 42:37 as the exegetical foundation and the learning context of SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan as the practical locus. Responsibility is a core virtue in Christian character formation, it demands the presence of teachers whose personality embodies integrity, accountability, emotional maturity, and moral consistency. Genesis 42:37, Reuben's bold declaration of personal accountability before Jacob, provides a theological model of responsibility grounded in relational commitment and moral seriousness. The study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), synthesizing empirical, theoretical, and biblical scholarship related to teacher personality, character education, and responsibility formation. The findings indicate that the personality of PAK teachers significantly influences students' internalization of responsibility through processes of modeling, relational trust, emotional guidance, and structured opportunities for responsible action. Teachers who demonstrate reliability, self-discipline, and consistency create an ethical climate in which responsibility becomes a lived, observable value rather than an abstract moral concept. Moreover, integrating Genesis 42:37 into instructional activities strengthens students' understanding of responsibility by connecting biblical narratives with their everyday experiences of accountability in school, family, and peer interactions. The study concludes that the convergence of teacher personality competence, relational pedagogy, and exegetical insight provides a holistic and effective framework for cultivating responsibility in Christian education. Strengthening the personal formation of PAK teachers is therefore essential to shaping students who develop responsibility as a central dimension of their Christian identity and daily practice.

Keywords: *Personality, Christian Religious Education, Responsibility*

INTRODUCTION

The personality of a Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teacher plays a decisive role in shaping students' moral consciousness, particularly their understanding and practice of

responsibility within daily life. As educational institutions across Indonesia navigate complex socio-cultural realities, teachers are increasingly expected not only to master pedagogical techniques but also to embody the ethical and spiritual virtues they teach. At SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan, a school characterized by religious plurality and diverse socio-economic backgrounds, the presence of CRE teachers who demonstrate integrity, empathy, and responsibility is critical. Students observe, internalize, and eventually emulate the attitudes and behaviors modeled by their teachers. For this reason, personality is not a peripheral trait but a pedagogical force, shaping the relational climate of the classroom and influencing moral formation more effectively than verbal instruction alone. The concept of responsibility has long been central to Judeo-Christian moral theology. Within Christian education, responsibility is understood as a willingness to be accountable, to act with integrity, and to carry out duties faithfully even under pressure. Genesis 42:37—where Reuben declares to his father Jacob, “*You may put both of my sons to death if I do not bring him back to you. Entrust him to my care, and I will bring him back*”—provides a compelling exegetical foundation for exploring this virtue. In this narrative, Reuben’s bold assurance reflects an extraordinary sense of commitment and moral duty. Though scholars diverge on whether Reuben’s statement should be interpreted as courageous or desperate, the text undeniably illustrates an individual assuming profound accountability for the wellbeing of another. The verse reveals how responsibility, in the biblical sense, involves willingness to bear consequences, safeguard others, and uphold relational trust within the community. This theological insight becomes highly relevant for CRE teachers tasked with guiding adolescents toward maturity and moral stability. The Hebrew structure of Genesis 42:37 strengthens this understanding. The expression “*taḥat yādī*” (under my hand/authority) underscores Reuben’s readiness to take full personal charge, while his proposition of severe consequences highlights the seriousness of his pledge. Commentators such as Wenham and Hamilton note that Reuben’s declaration reflects an attempt to restore broken trust between himself and Jacob, suggesting that responsibility also includes the effort to rebuild relational integrity. When applied to the sphere of Christian education, this framework implies that teachers who model responsibility are those who cultivate trust, take ownership of their instructional and pastoral roles, and demonstrate reliability in their interactions with students. Thus, Genesis 42:37 serves not only as an ancient narrative but also as a pedagogical principle that can inform contemporary teaching practice.

In the context of SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan, students face pressures typical of urban youth-academic competition, digital distractions, and fluctuating motivation—which demand the presence of mature role models capable of reinforcing character development. CRE teachers who embody responsibility through their personality characteristics—discipline, emotional stability, consistency, and moral conviction—create a learning environment in which students feel safe, respected, and guided. Research in educational psychology consistently affirms that a teacher’s personality influences student engagement, moral growth, and behavioral outcomes more strongly than purely cognitive instruction. Therefore, integrating biblical exegesis with educational theory opens a valuable analytical lens for understanding how responsibility can be taught not merely as a concept but as a lived reality. This study aims to synthesize theological, pedagogical, and psychological perspectives to examine how

the personality of CRE teachers contributes to the embodiment of responsibility among students, using Genesis 42:37 as the exegetical foundation. By situating the discussion within the local context of SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan, the research provides a culturally grounded and biblically informed framework for strengthening character education in Christian schooling environments.

METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design to explore how the personality of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers contributes to students' embodiment of responsibility, with particular theological grounding in the exegetical interpretation of Genesis 42:37 and contextual application at SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan. The SLR method was chosen because it provides a transparent, rigorous, and replicable approach for synthesizing diverse scholarly insights across educational psychology, Christian pedagogy, teacher personality studies, and biblical interpretation. The research process consisted of four integrated stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. Academic databases were systematically searched using Boolean combinations of key terms. The search covered peer-reviewed articles, books, dissertations, and biblical commentaries published between 2000 and 2024, ensuring that the findings were relevant to contemporary educational and theological contexts. Inclusion criteria required that studies discuss teacher personality traits, explore the cultivation of responsibility or related moral values in school settings, address Christian or biblical pedagogy, examine character development among adolescents, or offer exegetical insights into Genesis 42:37 or similar Old Testament narratives. Exclusion criteria included articles lacking academic rigor, publications unrelated to pedagogy or biblical interpretation, studies outside the school context, and sources unavailable in full text. All eligible literature was subjected to systematic coding and thematic analysis, allowing patterns, categories, and theoretical relationships to emerge across the data. Three major thematic strands were identified: the role of teacher personality as a determinant of student character formation, responsibility as a multidimensional construct shaped by cognitive, emotional, and spiritual processes, and the theological significance of Genesis 42:37 as a framework for understanding accountability, moral courage, and relational trust. To ensure methodological credibility, the study used triangulation across educational, theological, and psychological disciplines, maintained an audit trail documenting search decisions, engaged two external scholars to review the coding system, and adhered to ethical standards by ensuring accurate representation of sources and appropriate citation. Because this research relied solely on published literature, no human participants were involved, eliminating the need for institutional ethical clearance; however, the review was conducted with commitment to scholarly integrity, avoiding bias and ensuring fidelity to the exegetical and educational goals of the study. Through this SLR approach, the study provides a robust conceptual foundation for understanding how CRE teachers' personality traits can effectively nurture a culture of responsibility within learning environments such as SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this Systematic Literature Review reveal that the personality of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a decisive role in shaping students' sense of responsibility, and when examined through the exegetical lens of Genesis 42:37, a deeper theological-pedagogical framework emerges that illuminates how responsibility is embodied, modeled, and internalized within the school environment, particularly in the context of SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan. Across the reviewed literature, three convergent insights consistently surfaced. First, teacher personality is identified as a central determinant of student moral formation, especially traits such as dependability, moral consistency, integrity, self-control, compassion, and accountability, all of which align with core Christian virtues. Psychological studies on teacher influence show that students are more likely to internalize moral values when they observe those values embodied authentically by their teachers, confirming Bandura's social learning theory that emphasizes modeling as the strongest mode of character transmission. Within the context of PAK, this modeling becomes even more potent because Christian teachers do not merely convey cognitive religious knowledge but represent faith in practice, making their personality an instrument of pedagogical and spiritual influence. Second, the literature reveals that responsibility is a multidimensional construct involving cognitive understanding of duties, emotional maturity in responding to consequences, and spiritual motivation rooted in a sense of calling or covenant-based obligation. The development of responsibility among adolescents, such as those at SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan, depends not only on explicit instruction but also on relational trust, consistent expectations, and meaningful engagement in real-life tasks that allow students to demonstrate dependability and commitment. Third, exegetical studies on Genesis 42:37—where Reuben declares to his father Jacob, *"You may put both of my sons to death if I do not bring him back to you; entrust him to my care, and I will bring him back"*—provide a compelling theological model of responsibility shaped by urgency, loyalty, courage, and moral weight. Scholars emphasize that Reuben's statement is not merely a vow but a declaration of accountability that reflects a deep personal commitment to restore what has been entrusted to him. This narrative opens a rich pedagogical framework for understanding responsibility not only as an individual choice but as a relational and covenantal act embedded in trust, sacrifice, and moral seriousness. When connected to the context of CRE instruction, this exegetical insight reveals that responsibility taught in Christian education must be relational, concrete, and tied to accountability before God and others.

Integrating these three major findings with the educational context at SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan demonstrates that teacher personality significantly shapes how students perceive, understand, and practice responsibility. Teachers who embody responsibility through punctuality, truthfulness, consistency between speech and action, emotional regulation, and faithful stewardship of their duties create an environment in which students experience responsibility not as an imposed rule but as a relational expectation worthy of imitation. The literature consistently affirms that adolescents respond more deeply to relational and experiential models of ethics rather than purely doctrinal or instructional approaches. In a school environment influenced by diverse cultural backgrounds, socio-economic challenges, and adolescent developmental

complexities, the character of the teacher becomes a stabilizing force that shapes the moral climate of the classroom. PAK teachers, therefore, are uniquely positioned to nurture responsibility because their teaching inherently integrates ethical formation with spiritual reflection. The findings also show that a responsible teacher personality catalyzes students' sense of accountability by offering consistent expectations, firm but empathetic guidance, and opportunities for students to exercise responsibility through daily routines, group projects, peer support, and service-oriented activities. Students become more responsible when teachers create structured opportunities where responsibility can be practiced and evaluated through reflection, feedback, and encouragement. The integration of Genesis 42:37 into pedagogical practice adds theological richness to the development of responsibility, providing a biblical narrative that resonates with adolescents' experiences of trust, family expectations, and moral dilemmas. Reuben's willingness to stake his own family as a guarantee reflects the weight of responsibility in biblical ethics. Exegetically, the Hebrew narrative illustrates that responsibility is not merely about completing tasks but about honoring trust and fulfilling relational obligations even when the stakes are high. Applying this framework to the school context means helping students understand responsibility as a sacred trust, entrusted by God, teachers, parents, and peers. When taught through storytelling, dialogical reflection, role-play, and situational analysis, the narrative of Genesis 42:37 becomes an effective pedagogical tool for helping students internalize the seriousness and beauty of responsibility. Literature on biblical pedagogy affirms that narratives shape moral imagination more effectively than abstract rules because they create emotional identification and moral vision. Students who reflect on Reuben's decision are not only learning a biblical story; they are invited to examine their own commitments, the consequences of their choices, and the moral weight of promises made to others. Teachers who integrate such narratives effectively into classroom discussions demonstrate advanced pedagogical personality competence, characterized by relational presence, clarity of moral communication, and spiritual wisdom.

The literature highlights that teacher personality has a positive impact on the broader school culture, demonstrating that responsible teachers contribute to a climate characterized by trust, mutual respect, discipline, and accountability. Students at SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan, who are in a critical stage of identity formation, benefit significantly when surrounded by adults who embody the virtues they aspire to develop. Research on adolescent moral development affirms that consistent exposure to responsible adult figures enhances students' self-regulation, sense of purpose, and motivation to fulfill tasks conscientiously. The findings also indicate that responsibility is strengthened through collaborative learning environments in which teachers model and facilitate moral dialogue, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Teachers who display responsible leadership skills, such as fairness, reflective thinking, and moral courage, tend to foster classrooms where students feel safe to express concerns, admit mistakes, and take ownership of their learning. These dynamics mirror Reuben's role as mediator and protector in Genesis 42, where his personality becomes a conduit of moral persuasion and relational stability for his family. Similarly, the PAK teacher's personality serves as a mediating presence that helps students navigate moral uncertainty and strengthens their ability to make responsible decisions. The SLR also

reveals that teacher personality competence intersects with emotional intelligence, particularly the teacher's ability to regulate emotions, respond empathetically to student struggles, and maintain self-control in challenging situations. Emotional intelligence significantly enhances students' development of responsibility because it provides a relational environment where responsibility is both expected and supported. For example, emotionally intelligent teachers are more likely to help students reflect on the emotional dimensions of responsibility, such as managing frustration, responding calmly to consequences, and empathizing with others affected by their actions. These findings connect deeply with the emotional undertones of Genesis 42:37, where Reuben's plea reflects a mixture of fear, determination, empathy for his father, and desire to restore what was lost. This emotional depth enriches the theological interpretation of responsibility as both rational and affective, reminding teachers that moral formation requires emotional engagement, not only cognitive instruction.

Across the reviewed studies, cultural context also emerges as a significant factor. In Indonesian settings, including Medan, responsibility is shaped by cultural values such as family honor, communal expectations, and respect for authority. These cultural elements align closely with the biblical worldview expressed through Reuben's narrative, creating a powerful synergy between Scripture, cultural ethics, and educational practice. However, the literature also warns that cultural norms alone cannot guarantee the development of responsibility; teacher personality remains a critical mediator that interprets, models, and reinforces these values in ways that are meaningful to adolescents living in a rapidly changing and globalized society. This insight reinforces the necessity for PAK teachers to integrate cultural wisdom, biblical exegesis, and psychological understanding into their personality development and pedagogical practice. The results and discussion demonstrate that responsibility is best cultivated when teacher personality, biblical narratives, educational psychology, and contextual realities work together to produce a coherent and relational model of character formation. The SLR confirms that the personality of PAK teachers, marked by reliability, moral consistency, humility, courage, and compassion, serves as the strongest determinant of students' embodiment of responsibility. When this personality is informed by rich exegetical insights from Genesis 42:37, the educational practice becomes both spiritually grounded and pedagogically transformative. In the specific context of SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan, where students face diverse social pressures and developmental challenges, such an integrated approach is essential for nurturing responsible, mature, and morally grounded young people.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study affirm that the personality of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a decisive and transformative role in cultivating responsibility among students, particularly within the context of SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan. Through the integration of insights from educational psychology, Christian pedagogy, and exegetical interpretation of Genesis 42:37, the study demonstrates that responsibility is most effectively nurtured not through abstract moral instruction but through the lived character and relational integrity of the teacher. Reuben's declaration in Genesis 42:37, marked by courage, accountability, and moral seriousness, provides a theological anchor

for understanding responsibility as a covenantal and relational commitment rather than a mere compliance with rules. This biblical model reinforces the idea that responsibility develops when teachers demonstrate consistency between words and actions, exercise emotional maturity, uphold integrity in decision making, and embody reliability in daily practice. The systematic review also reveals that adolescents internalize responsibility through processes of observation, imitation, relational trust, and structured opportunities to practice responsible behavior in real-life contexts. Thus, the personality of the PAK teacher becomes the primary medium through which responsibility is transmitted, interpreted, and reinforced. Teachers who exhibit responsible traits create a moral environment in which students feel encouraged and compelled to develop similar dispositions. In the setting of SMA Swasta Laksamana Martadinata Medan, where students encounter diverse social influences and developmental pressures, the teacher's personality serves as a stabilizing moral compass that guides students toward becoming accountable, disciplined, and trustworthy young adults. Biblical narratives, especially those involving relational trust and moral weight, emerge as powerful pedagogical tools when aligned with the teacher's personality and instructional approach. Genesis 42:37, when thoughtfully integrated into classroom discussions, allows students to connect Scripture with their own experiences of duty, trust, and responsibility. Ultimately, this study concludes that the convergence of teacher personality competence, biblical insight, and relational pedagogy forms a holistic framework for developing responsibility in Christian education. Strengthening the personality formation of PAK teachers is therefore essential not only for effective instruction but also for shaping students who embody responsibility as a core dimension of their Christian character and daily life.

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