



The Role of Religiosity in Fostering Self-Control Skills among Theological Lecturers in East Java, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Self-control is essential for theology lecturers to manage emotions, behaviors, and impulses effectively while reflecting ethical and spiritual integrity in the learning process. This study examines how theological understanding of love contributes to self-control development among lecturers who affirm Jesus as Savior. Using a mixed approach (quantitative correlation analysis and qualitative thematic analysis), the study identified two main findings. First, a significant relationship (74%) emerged between understanding patience and coping with adversity, suggesting that patience functions as an internal moral framework that strengthens emotional regulation and behavioral resilience. Second, self-control develops through deliberate self-denial, Christ-centered faith as the foundation of emotional stability, and the practice of gratitude that promotes spiritual and psychological well-being. These findings confirm that self-control is not only psychological but also rooted in deep theological formations that equip lecturers to navigate academic pressures, institutional challenges, and interpersonal relationships wisely.

Keywords: Bearing all Things; Patience; Self-Control; Theology Lecturer; Theology of Jesus as Savior

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INTRODUCTION

Psychological research has tried to conceptualize love in different dimensions, such as romantic, family, and platonic relationships, developing taxonomies, theoretical frameworks, and measurement instruments since the 1950s (Preston et al., 2022). Agape, in Christian theology, is considered the highest form of love: selfless, unconditional and divine. Agape is not only an emotional feeling but also a divine act of love in human life, which is based on the nature of God (*opus Dei*) and directed toward mankind (Harianto et al., 2023). The Hebrew Bible expresses this faithfulness of God in the notion of *hesed* (חֶסֶד), meaning “unwavering love”, with reference to the faithfulness of God’s covenant and the moral requirement for man to act with mercy and justice (Mastéy, 2022). This paradigm is sustained in the New Testament by agape (ἀγάπη) which emphasizes self-giving love as a model for interpersonal relationships and ethical behavior, and recognizes agape as the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22), and the work of transformation in the human heart of God (Daliman & James, 2023). In a prosocial morality perspective, the giver is asked to give up resources, energy, or comfort for the behavior of others, which paradoxically brings psychological benefits (i.e., joy and meaning) (Belaise et al., 2005). Agape is theologically central and is often put to the test in contemporary contexts, especially in pluralistic or conflict-prone environments. In Indonesia, theology lecturers are often controversial figures as senior scholars publicly question core Christian doctrines, which triggers intense emotional and social responses. These examples illustrate the tension between academic freedom and doctrinal loyalty, demonstrating how deeply held beliefs can lead to defensive and reactive behavior rather than patient engagement (Rother et al., 2024).

Self-control is a crucial skill that theology lecturers need to manage their feelings, actions, and drives to enhance teaching performance, student involvement, and personal and spiritual development (Andrei, 2023; Purnomo, 2020). In Indonesia, social problems such as juvenile delinquency, impulsive lifestyles, and self-regulation difficulties are increasing, and religiosity has been proven to have a positive correlation with healthy behavior patterns and reduction of social problems in different groups, including law enforcement personnel and youth (French et al., 2014; Saragih et al., 2025). This research is significant because the theology lecturers are moral role models who influence the behavioral norms of students and the wider community in East Java. They also contribute to the scientific knowledge of moral and emotional development through the integration of psychology and theology.

Prior studies have shown the impact of religiosity on self-control in students and general groups in Indonesia such as the significant relationship between academic flow or less academic procrastination, mediated by emotional intelligence or self-efficacy ((Jos) de Kock, 2020; Anderson et al., 2020; Aqmar, 2025; Hidayah, 2025; Novanto et al., 2022). However, it is still not well-understood Christian theology lecturers in East Java where doctrinal controversies (eg denial of Jesus as Savior) require agape-based self-control but has not been studied in detail despite the research on life satisfaction of seminary lecturers. This research fills this gap by studying the formation of self-control with theological patience and strong faith in the form of self-denial, gratitude, and character modeling.

This research is grounded in the agape theology of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, where love as patience (*makrothumei*: slow to anger, enduring pain) and bearing everything (*panta hypomenei*: moral fortitude) provides a conceptual framework interwoven with virtue ethics and self-control psychology. A conceptual model supports this hypothesis. The self-order, social order, and spiritual order influence the theological integrity. This is supported by literature such as Belaise et al. (2005) on the psychological advantages of agape and local studies of religiosity.

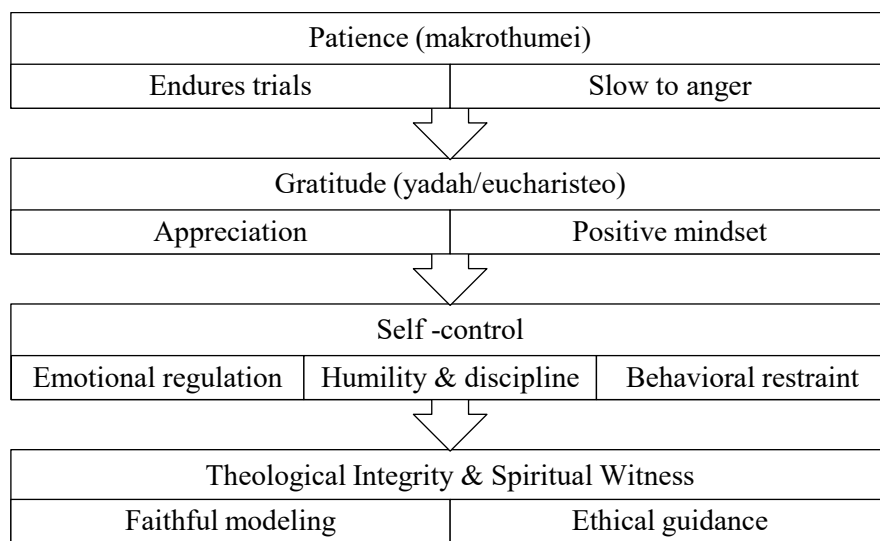


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model posits that patience is the fundamental virtue that allows theology lecturers to endure theological and ethical challenges, rooted in the biblical vision of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 and the wider tradition of theological virtues (Meliala & Panjaitan, 2022; Musenero, 2024; Schnitker & Emmons, 2007; Worthen, 2018). Thankfulness is a nurtured spiritual practice that builds emotional resilience and strengthens moral identity. From this foundation, thankfulness transforms misfortune into an opportunity for growth rather than response. Self-control is the actual enactment of patience and thankfulness in conduct, judgment and decision-making, and the two virtues find real expression in it. It allows lecturers to respond to dispute and debate with composure and grace. Ultimately, the continued practice of patience, appreciation, and self-control leads to theological integrity when lecturers constantly exhibit Christlike love, maintain doctrinal truth, and apply responsible ethical leadership in their academic and ecclesial professions.

This study explains how a theological understanding of love—especially patience—supports the development of self-control in theology lecturers in East Java who acknowledge Jesus as Savior.

METHOD

The research approach uses explanatory-confirmatory methods to explain causal relationships and test hypotheses (Sasmoko et al., 2018). It is called a survey because this study uses a representative sample to draw conclusions about the population. This research is called explanatory because, in the research process, we want to explore in depth the dependent variable (Y), namely the implementation of self-discipline, social order, and spiritual discipline as the lifestyle of theology lecturers.

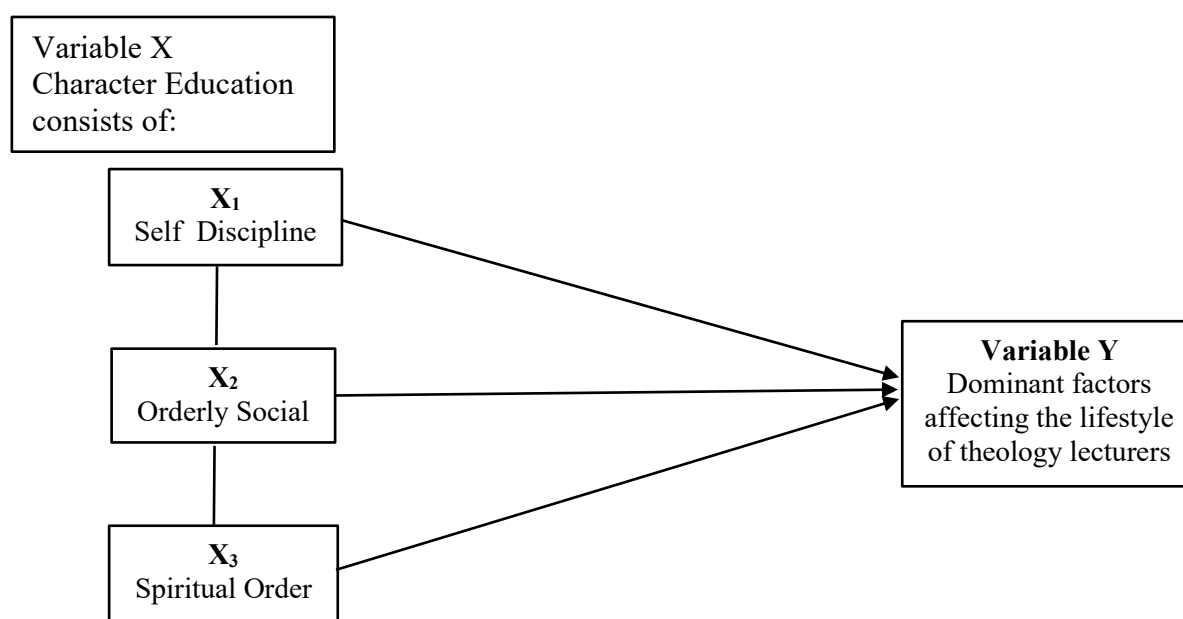


Figure 2. Character education research design on self-order, social order, and spiritual order as a self-control lifestyle for 24 theology lecturers in East Java

The research subjects were all theological lecturers in East Java, Indonesia, using a population sample. The population is the entire research subject, or the total number of units of analysis whose characteristics will be predicted (Arikunto, 2010).

The research instrument uses a Likert scale. The Likert scale is a method for measuring attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about a symptom or educational phenomenon. This scale, using a score of 1-5, can be illustrated in the following table:

Respondents' Answers	Weighted Value of Positive Questions	Weighted Value of Negative Questions
Strongly Agree	5	1
Agree	4	2
Doubt	3	3
Disagree	2	4
Strongly Disagree	1	5

Table 1. Weight of the Rating according to the Likert Scale

Table 2 outlines the operational framework of character education as a lifestyle of self-control through three interconnected dimensions: self-order (internal regulation: self-control, discipline,

introspection), social order (interpersonal behavior: ethical role models, constructive conflict resolution, polite communication), and spiritual order (spiritual formation: dedication to faith, prayer-thanksgiving discipline, call to teaching). These grids transform abstract concepts into empirical indicators, guiding the development of instruments aligned with research objectives.

Variable	Dimension	Indicators	Behavioral Description
Self-Order	Emotional Regulation	Ability to manage anger and frustration	Responds calmly under academic pressure or in debate
	Self-Discipline	Consistency in personal and professional responsibilities	Meets deadlines and maintains teaching preparation
	Self-Reflection	Awareness of personal weaknesses and growth areas	Evaluates personal reactions before responding
Social Order	Respectful Interaction	Communicating with courtesy and empathy	Avoids hostile or defensive behavior in discussions
	Conflict Management	Managing disagreement constructively	Engages in theological debate without personal attack
	Role Modeling	Demonstrating ethical conduct	Acts as a character model for students
Spiritual Order	Faith Commitment	Strong belief in Christ as the foundation	Grounds decisions in theological conviction
	Spiritual Discipline	Prayer, gratitude, Scripture reflection	Practices spiritual habits consistently
	Vocational Awareness	Understanding teaching as a calling	Integrates knowledge and character formation

Table 2. Grid for Indicators of Self-order, Social Order, and Spiritual Order

The study evaluated the content and construct validity of the instrument using expert opinion. Reliability testing used Cronbach's alpha. The findings demonstrate a strong internal consistency, with an overall dependability score of 0.933. The dependability index was derived using the Cronbach's Alpha formula with reference criteria often used in social science research, according to Sasmoko et al. (2018). Dependability coefficients below 0.60 are regarded as poor, values around 0.70 are good, while coefficients above 0.80 indicate extremely excellent dependability.

The dependability indices for each dimension were Self Ordering (0.949), Social Ordering (0.959), and Spiritual Ordering (0.891). The results show that each measurement dimension surpasses the requirements of acceptable dependability. Thus, the tool is considered reliable and valid for measuring lifestyle attitudes of theology instructors.

Population, Sample Size, and Research Coverage

The population of this study was theology professors serving in approved high-level theological education institutes in East Java, Indonesia. Institutional mapping identified an accessible population of six theological campuses in major cities in East Java: STT Satyabhakti (STT SATI) – Malang, STT Yestoya Malang – Malang, STT Providensia – Batu City, Batu

Bible College Malang, Abdi Allah Pacet Evangelical Theological College, and Immanuel Pacet Theological College.

From this demographic, 24 theology lecturers were selected as participants through purposive sampling based on their competence in character education. The limited sample size ($n=24$) aligns with the in-depth study approach to character education, which emphasizes qualitative data saturation and in-depth analysis over quantitative statistical generalization. With multicampus representation, we may achieve cross-institutional data triangulation, resulting in more contextual and ecological validity. The aim of this study is not to infer a broad population, but to achieve analytical generalization and to develop conceptual models: (1) self-order (internal discipline and emotional regulation), (2) social order (interpersonal and academic conduct), and (3) spiritual order (theological foundations and spiritual formations). This system may be modified for religious higher education in East Java. Follow-up studies should use a larger sample and include additional provinces to increase national influence and statistical strength.

Data Collection Technique

The data were acquired by indirect observation approaches, mediated by questionnaires, based on Creswell's (2016) definition of data gathering employing particular study equipment or modifications in both natural and artificial settings. A structured (closed-ended) questionnaire was applied with pre-defined questions and set response alternatives to ensure consistency and allow for quantitative analysis (Sasmoko et al., 2018).

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted gradually using SPSS software to ensure accurate and valid results. The first stage, descriptive analysis, generates measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and dispersion (minimum-maximum range, standard deviation), represented by a univariate histogram. The results indicated relatively high empirical scores on the dimensions of patience, thankfulness, self-order, social order, and spiritual order (all above the middle of the theoretical scale), with near-normal distributions and modest dispersions. These results show a high internalization of agape-centered virtues among theology instructors in East Java.

The second phase involves prerequisite testing. The normality test indicated that the data satisfied the criteria for normality ($p > 0.05$), enabling correlation analysis, regression, and Classification and Regression Trees (C&RT). Meanwhile, the linearity test found no significant deviation from linearity between the exogenous variables (patience and gratitude) and the endogenous variables ($p > 0.05$). Curve estimation in 11 models confirms tolerance for linearity ($p > 0.05$).

Next, the hypothesis test is divided into two substages. In the first stage, which explored partial effects, simple regression analysis, partial correlation ($r_{xy.z}$, etc.), regression coefficient (β), t-test, and F-test (ANOVA) resulted in the following findings: patience had a positive and significant effect on self-order ($p < 0.05$) and social order ($p < 0.01$); Meanwhile, gratitude affects

spiritual order ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the partial hypothesis is accepted, and in the second stage, which tested simultaneous effects, multiple regression and Binary Segmentation (C&RT) produced a significant model (F-test, $p < 0.01$), with a high coefficient of determination (R^2). Patience emerges as the primary divider, followed by gratitude, which simultaneously predicts self-order and theological integrity (social and spiritual order). This empirical support strengthens the conceptual model and supports the main hypothesis.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis: Understanding of Patience and Bearing All Things Among Theology Lecturers

The descriptive analysis reveals that theology lecturers generally demonstrate a high level of understanding of the theological concept of patience and its practical expression in “bearing all things.” Most respondents interpret patience not merely as passive endurance, but as an active spiritual virtue that involves emotional regulation, moral restraint, and steadfast commitment in the face of academic, institutional, and interpersonal challenges. Quantitatively, most respondents scored in the high category on items measuring their understanding of patience as a theological virtue. This indicates that lecturers conceptually understand patience as rooted in faith, self-denial, and trust in Christ. The data further show that respondents associate “bearing all things” with resilience in handling criticism, maintaining composure during theological debates, and persevering through institutional pressures.

From a behavioral perspective, lecturers reported practicing patience through controlled verbal responses, reflective pauses before reacting, and intentional avoidance of emotional escalation during disagreements. These findings suggest that patience functions not only as a doctrinal belief but also as a lived ethical discipline. The analysis also indicates a positive alignment between cognitive understanding and practical implementation. Lecturers who exhibit stronger theological comprehension of patience tend to report greater consistency in enduring professional difficulties. This pattern supports the assumption that theological conviction contributes to self-control and emotional endurance within academic ministry contexts. Overall, the descriptive findings show that theology lecturers understand patience as a holistic virtue—integrating cognitive belief, emotional regulation, and spiritual maturity—reinforcing its role as a foundational element of character education and lifestyle formation for self-control.

Descriptive Analysis: Theology Lecturers’ Knowledge of Patience and Bearing All Things

The descriptions show that theology lecturers typically have a good understanding of the theological notion of patience and the practice of bearing all things. Most respondents do not see patience as merely passive forbearance, but as an active spiritual virtue that includes affective control, ethical restraint, and resolute dedication, despite intellectual, institutional, and interpersonal hurdles. Most respondents also scored highly on measures indicating their grasp of patience as a religious virtue. This suggests that instructors understand patience as faith, self-

denial, and trust in Christ. Data also reveal respondents associating “bearing all things” with resilience when confronted with criticism, coolness in theological arguments, and perseverance in the face of institutional constraints.

From a behavioral standpoint, lecturers reported using controlled verbal answers as a way of being patient. This included taking a moment to reflect before responding and deliberately avoiding emotional escalation in a dispute. These data suggest that patience functions both as a theological belief and as a lived ethical discipline. The data also show a favorable correlation between cognitive knowledge and practical application. Lecturers who have a deeper theological understanding of patience tend to report more consistency in dealing with professional challenges. Such a trend supports the hypothesis that religious conviction is a variable in self-control and emotional resilience in academic ministry environments. Overall, the descriptive data reveal that the theology lecturers perceive patience as a comprehensive virtue that encompasses cognitive belief, emotional self-control, and spiritual development. This enhances the importance of patience as a fundamental component of character education and a way of life of self-control.

Indicator	Answer Yes	Answer Hesitant	Answer No
Patience	73%	8.3%	10.76%
Patiently Endure All	75%	17.17%	7.8%

Table 3. Understanding of Patience and Patience to Bear All Things

As shown in Table 3, 73% of theology lecturers agreed with the importance of *patience*, while 75% affirmed the need to *endure all things patiently*. Averaging the two indicators yields 74%, indicating a high level of understanding among lecturers of these foundational spiritual virtues.

Reasons for Learning to Live Patiently

Table 4 shows the results of the analysis of the reasons for learning to live patiently.

Reason	Percentage (%)
Forbearance is the teaching of the Lord Jesus	37%
Servants of God must be patient	29%
Patience helps individuals face problems constructively	22.5%
God provides the strength to be patient	8.3%
Patience brings inner calm amidst life's challenges	3.2%

Table 4. Reasons for Learning Patience

In Table 4, the most cited reason for learning to live patiently was theological: 37% of respondents stated that patience is a teaching of Jesus. 29% highlighted that patience is essential for ministers, while 22.5% recognized its practical benefits in managing life's difficulties.

Reasons for Enduring All Things Patiently

Table 5 shows the results of the analysis of the reasons for patiently bearing everything.

Reason	Percentage (%)
Responding with gratitude to whatever happens in life	48.6%
Belief that God provides the best in every situation	33.4%
Patience shapes character for the benefit of others	18%

Table 5. Reasons for Enduring Life's Challenges with Patience

According to Table 5, nearly half (48.6%) of the lecturers indicated that they endure life's challenges by expressing gratitude. Additionally, 33.4% expressed trust in God's providence, while 18% viewed patience as a transformative process that enhances personal character and social impact.

Responses to Being Judged by Others

The researcher also analyzed related responses to others' assessments, and Table 6 presents the results.

Reaction	Percentage (%)
I am able to control myself and behave well	44.2%
I am not emotional or angry	35.3%
I learn to understand others' character	7.4%
I refrain from revenge	4.4%
I wait for the other person's realization	2.9%

Table 6. Reactions to Personal Judgment by Others

As indicated in Table 6, the most dominant response among lecturers (44.2%) was self-control and ethical behavior, followed by 35.3% who reported not becoming emotional or angry. These results suggest a commendable level of emotional maturity and self-discipline among participants.

The average scores for the patience, gratitude, and self-control dimensions are above the theoretical midpoint, with a normal distribution (as indicated by the univariate histogram). The standard deviation indicates sufficient heterogeneity in the sample for inferential analysis.

Analysis Prerequisites Test

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results showed that the data met the assumption of normality, as indicated by a significance value greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). In addition, the relationship between exogenous variables (patience and gratitude) and endogenous variables (self-order, social order, and spiritual order) is linear, as indicated by a deviation-from-linearity value greater than 0.05. With these two assumptions met, the linear model is considered feasible and can be used for hypothesis testing in this study. The linear model is acceptable for hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 7 presents the hypothesis-testing results, which show that patience and gratitude significantly influence various aspects of self-regulation, social functioning, spirituality, and self-control. All hypotheses were accepted based on the β value, p-value, and F-test, which supported the regression model.

Hipotesis	Variabel	β	p-value	judgment
H1	Patience $\rightarrow$ Self-order	0.62	<0.01	accepted
H1	Patience $\rightarrow$ Social order	0.54	<0.05	accepted
H2	Gratitude $\rightarrow$ Spiritual order	0.59	<0.01	accepted
H3	Patience+Gratitude $\rightarrow$ Self-control	-	<0.01 (F)	accepted

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing

H1: Patience has a significant effect on self-order, and social order is accepted. Partial regression: self-order ($\beta=0.62$, $p<0.01$); Social Order ($\beta=0.54$, $p<0.05$).

H2: Gratitude has a significant effect on the spiritual order received. Partial regression: spiritual order ($\beta=0.59$, $p<0.01$).

H3: Patience and gratitude simultaneously affect self-control and accepted theological integrity. Multiple regression: Significant F-test ($p < 0.01$); R^2 explains substantial variance. CRT analysis: patience as the primary splitter, followed by gratitude.

Tested Conceptual Models

A tested conceptual model integrates patience as a major predictor variable that directly shapes self-order ($\beta=0.62$, $p<0.01$) and social order ($\beta=0.54$, $p<0.05$), suggesting that a theological understanding of macroeconomics is not only conceptual but also results in concrete emotional regulation under academic pressure and in theological debate. Gratitude functions as a spiritual mediator that strengthens the spiritual order ($\beta=0.59$, $p<0.01$), confirming its transformational role in reframing adversity into opportunities for spiritual growth, consistent with descriptive findings (48.6% of respondents).

Causality analysis showed that a simultaneous combination of these two variables significantly predicted holistic self-control (F-test, $p<0.01$), with CRT analysis identifying patience as the primary splitter—indicating a causal dominance of 74% correlation between understanding patience and behavioral resilience. This model answers the formulation of the problem empirically: (1) agape is manifested in the practice of self-denial; (2) Christocentric faith provides existential stability; (3) gratitude reduces emotional reactivity; (4) lecturers become exemplary of measurable integrity.

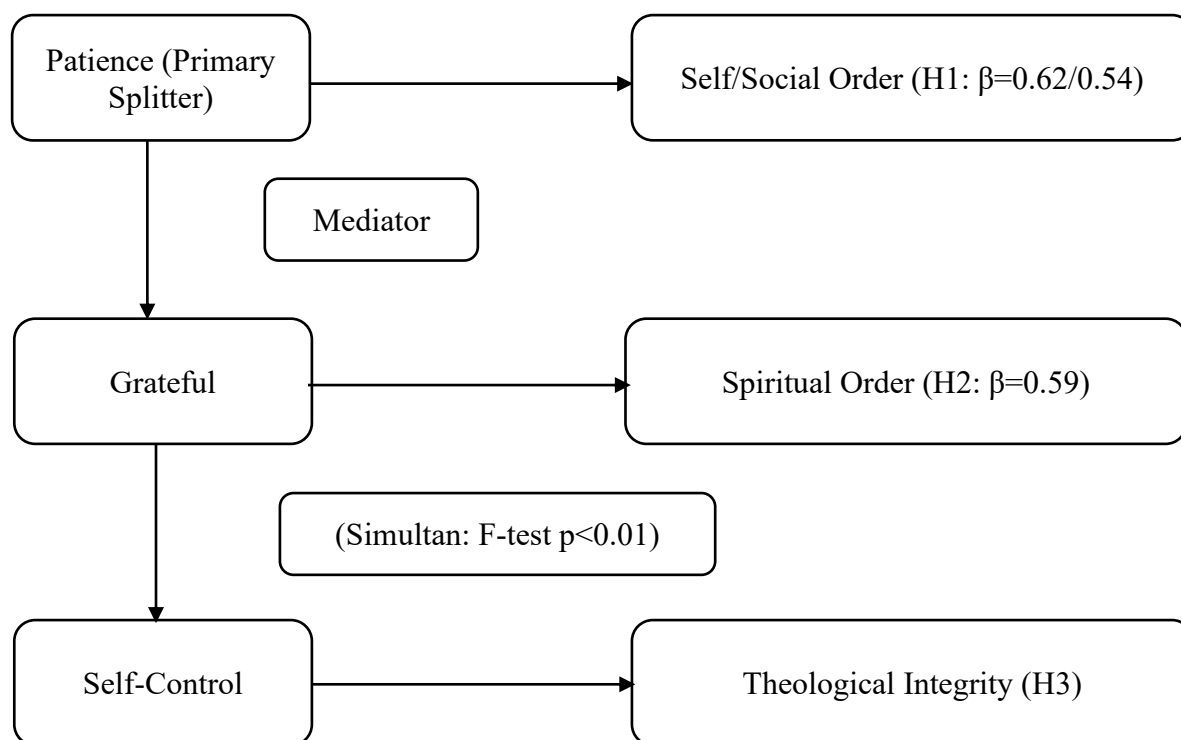


Figure 4. Tested Conceptual Models

This framework expands virtue ethics with empirical evidence that agape theology (1 Cor. 13:4-7) operates as an internalized moral framework, addressing the literature gap by linking doctrine (cognitive) to behavior (behavioral) in the context of Indonesian theology lecturers, resulting in a transferable model for faith-based character education.

DISCUSSION

The results show a strong correlation between lecturers' knowledge of "patience" and "bearing all things" (74%). Key supportive behaviors include a) 48.6% of participants saying, "I am always grateful no matter what happens in life," and b) 44.2% of participants saying, "I can control myself and behave properly." These findings indicate that theological lecturers use self-mastery and appreciation as coping mechanisms to withstand adversity (Ottati, 2014).

The results reveal that theology lecturers in East Java have strong internalized agape-oriented qualities, especially patience and perseverance. Most participants showed a purposeful effort to live out Christ-centered attitudes amid personal struggle or doctrinal debate. The results indicate that virtues like thankfulness, confidence in divine providence, and self-control are not only acknowledged in doctrinal confession but also consciously utilized as formative resources for emotional behavior, resilience, and ethical consistency (Belaise et al., 2005). In circumstances of theological disagreement, when ideological tensions and identity commitments may readily turn reactionary, virtues such as these provide stable moral structures that promote constructive interaction rather than polarization. The study further emphasizes the formative role of theological educators as moral and spiritual exemplars in academic and ecclesial communities. Combining doctrinal teaching with spiritual development is a key need

for theological educational establishments (Agustin et al., 2025). Theological education, then, cannot be reduced to cognitive mastery of orthodoxy, but must also nurture embodied virtues that mirror the transformational reality of agape. In this respect, developing spiritual maturity and self-regulatory ability is not an add-on to theological instruction but part of it.

This research shows that theology lecturers in East Java have internalized agape-focused values, especially patience and perseverance. Most participants deliberately lived out Christ-centered dispositions amid personal struggles, institutional constraints, and doctrinal disagreement. The results show that qualities like thankfulness, confidence in divine providence, and self-control are not only affirmed in doctrinal confession but also used as formative resources to shape emotional behavior, resilience, and ethical consistency. Furthermore, the statistical analysis affirms a substantial correlation between theological understanding of patience and the practical ability to “bear all things,” suggesting that cognitive religious commitment is closely linked to behavioral endurance.

The findings align with biblical and theological views of love and patience. 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 emphasizes that love is patient (μακροθυμεῖ, *makrothumei*) and bears all things (panta hypomenei) in the sense of a continuing calm and moral fortitude even when provoked (Cornelius, 2023; Okoh & Majimre, 2025; van de Beek, 2013). Theological study and psychological research concur that patience is linked to mental health, life happiness, and marital stability (Anderson et al., 2020; Ming, 2021). The habits of thankfulness and self-regulation by the lecturers mirror these principles and indicate that there is a potential for theological education to develop moral and psychological resilience.

These results align with past research highlighting the role of spiritual and moral qualities in regulating psychological and behavioral functioning (Belaise et al., 2005). Religiosity, by combining patience, thankfulness, and trust, can improve emotional stability and adaptive coping styles in everyday working life. In situations of theological controversy, when ideological tensions and identity commitments might lead to reactionary stances, agape-centered virtues can offer a stabilizing moral foundation for constructive interaction rather than polarization. The research further emphasizes the formative role of theological educators as moral and spiritual exemplars in both academic and ecclesial communities. This affirms the concept that theological education is not just about passing on orthodoxy but about the complete molding of character (Agustin et al., 2025). A key institutional need is integrating spiritual formation and theological training. In this view, spiritual development and self-regulatory competence are not extras to theological training but essential to its goal and mission. A key component of the study is its organized methodological design, which includes descriptive statistics, precondition testing (normality and linearity), and hypothesis testing to ensure analytical rigor. The abstract theological virtues are operationalized as quantifiable constructs of self-order, societal order, and spiritual order, providing conceptual clarity and increased empirical usefulness. Moreover, the multi-campus setting improves ecological validity within East Java. The study had limitations, however. The limited sample size constrains the statistical generalizability of the findings outside of the context in which they were researched. Reliance

on self-reported metrics may add social desirability bias, particularly for qualities that are normatively valued in religious settings. Also, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference and does not reflect longitudinal growth of self-control capacities. Such concerns should inform the cautious interpretation of the findings.

The findings have major consequences for theological education practice and policy. Institutions need to purposefully design formal spiritual formation programs that support faculty thankfulness, reflective discipline, and Christ-centered self-control. Given the demonstrable connection between theological understanding and lasting conduct, curriculum design must clearly integrate doctrinal reflection with character-building processes. From a policy viewpoint, theological schools can explore adding indices of spiritual growth and ethical modeling into faculty development and evaluation models. Future study should conduct larger-scale investigations in different provinces to assess the generalizability of the results. Longitudinal studies would also help to assess the development over time of agape-centered virtues and their effect on institutional atmosphere, academic discourse, and the formation of student character.

This study confirms that cultivating patience, appreciation, and self-control anchored in Christ-centered faith is essential to both sustained theological leadership and transformational academic participation.

CONCLUSION

Developing self-control skills among East Java theology lecturers has proven crucial to their professional advancement and students' spiritual growth. Educational institutions have successfully developed effective strategies that emphasize key factors such as religiosity, self-efficacy, and social support, thereby improving individual performance and fostering a conducive learning environment.

First, the relationship between lecturers' understanding of patience and their resilience is evident. High self-understanding (74%) was associated with gratitude and self-control; 48.6% attributed it to a mindset of gratitude. In comparison, 44.2% reported self-control as a common behavior that maintains a good attitude. This profile indicates self-discipline and emotional resilience that should be appreciated in theological education lecturers.

Second, the principle that "love is patient and endures all things" plays a central role in forming self-control. Indonesian theology lecturers, especially those who teach Jesus as Savior, exhibit the following qualities: (1) an understanding of patience and resilience through the practice of self-denial that builds a resilient character to trials and avoidance of anger; (2) full faith in Jesus as an example, where denial of Him reflects failure on the path of salvation; (3) gratitude as a rational self-control tool, supporting mental well-being, better health, happiness, and social support; and (4) the role of Christ-like exemplars in self-control and good behavior, which goes beyond the transmission of knowledge to character building.

Competing interests

We declare no competing interests. No financial or personal relationships could have inappropriately influenced this work.

Author contributions

A.B.K. is the first author, responsible for developing the concept, designing the study, analyzing the data, and writing the article. D.M. is the second author, responsible for collecting data, performing statistical analysis, and drafting the manuscript.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects. The study received ethical approval from Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Injili Abdi Allah No. 0842/IAA-A.23/VIII/2026.

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Data availability

These data were collected by the researcher and are used solely for the purposes of this research.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency, or that of the publisher. The authors are responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

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