



The Spiritual Courage of Teachers in the Face of Trials: A Reflection on Matthew 10:22 at SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu

Puji Lestari

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: pujitamba88@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the spiritual courage of teachers in facing professional and contextual trials, grounded in a biblical reflection on Matthew 10:22, within the setting of SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu. Teaching in public schools often involves complex challenges, including workload pressures, limited resources, and the need to navigate diversity in beliefs and backgrounds. The research employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to all Christian teachers at SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu, totaling three respondents, including one Christian Religious Education teacher. The instrument measured five indicators of spiritual courage: perseverance under pressure, faith-based motivation, emotional endurance, commitment to teaching vocation, and consistency between belief and professional practice. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including mean scores and standard deviations. The results indicate that teachers demonstrate a high level of spiritual courage across all indicators, with an overall mean score in the high category. Faith-based motivation emerged as the strongest dimension, highlighting the role of spirituality as an internal source of resilience. The findings suggest that spiritual courage supports teachers in sustaining commitment, managing emotional challenges, and maintaining ethical integrity in their professional practice. The study concludes that spiritual courage grounded in faith is a significant asset for teachers facing trials in public education. It contributes to personal resilience, positive role modeling for students, and the creation of a supportive learning environment. This research offers practical insights for strengthening teachers' endurance and moral commitment in challenging educational contexts.

Keywords: *Spiritual Courage, Christian Religious Education, Trials*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is widely recognized not only as a professional occupation but also as a vocation that demands commitment, resilience, and moral integrity. In many educational contexts, teachers are required to navigate complex challenges that test their personal convictions, emotional endurance, and professional dedication. These challenges may arise from institutional limitations, social pressures, workload demands, or the broader cultural and religious dynamics of the school environment. Within such conditions, spiritual courage becomes a crucial inner resource that enables teachers to remain faithful to their calling and responsibilities despite ongoing trials (Palmer, 2017). Spiritual courage can be understood as the capacity to persevere with integrity, hope, and moral clarity in the face of adversity. It is closely related to concepts such as endurance, faithfulness, and resilience, which have been widely discussed in educational and theological literature (Benner, 2018). In the Christian tradition, spiritual courage is not merely a psychological trait but a faith-oriented disposition rooted in trust in God and commitment to divine values. This understanding finds strong biblical grounding in Matthew 10:22, where perseverance amid opposition is presented as an essential mark of faithfulness. The verse emphasizes endurance not as passive suffering but as an active, faithful response to trials. Particularly in public schools, Christian teachers often encounter unique challenges. These challenges may include navigating religious diversity, maintaining professional neutrality, and upholding ethical standards while remaining faithful to their spiritual identity. In such settings, expressions of faith are often indirect, embodied through attitudes, character, and consistency rather than explicit religious instruction (Groome, 2021). Consequently, spiritual courage becomes visible through perseverance, patience, and a steadfast commitment to educational and moral responsibilities.

SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu represents a public-school context in which Christian teachers serve as a minority within a pluralistic environment. With 25 Christian students and three Christian teachers, including a Christian Religious Education teacher, the school reflects a setting where faith-based values must be lived out carefully and responsibly. In this context, spiritual courage is not expressed through overt religious dominance but through faithful presence, ethical conduct, and resilience in daily teaching practice. Teachers are required to balance institutional expectations with personal convictions, making endurance and spiritual strength particularly relevant (Hicks, 2018). Teachers' spiritual courage has a significant impact on students. Students often learn values not primarily through formal instruction but through observation and imitation of their teachers' attitudes and responses to difficulty. When teachers demonstrate perseverance, hope, and moral consistency in the face of trials, they model character traits that contribute to students' holistic development (Lickona, 2019). This modeling function is especially important in contexts where students themselves face social, economic, or academic challenges. Spiritual courage among teachers remains an underexplored theme in educational research, particularly within public-school contexts in Indonesia. Existing studies tend to focus on pedagogical competence, professional resilience, or psychological well-being, often neglecting the spiritual dimension that shapes teachers' motivations and endurance (Day & Gu, 2014). Integrating biblical reflection with educational analysis offers a meaningful way to address this gap by providing a framework

that honors both faith and professional practice. This study seeks to explore the spiritual courage of teachers in the face of trials through a reflective engagement with Matthew 10:22, situated in the context of SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu. By examining how Christian teachers understand and live out perseverance amid challenges, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of faith-informed resilience in education. The study is expected to offer both theoretical insights into spiritually grounded endurance and practical implications for supporting teachers who serve faithfully in demanding educational environments.

METHODS

A quantitative research approach with a descriptive-correlational design was implemented to examine the level of teachers' spiritual courage in facing trials, as reflected through the lens of Matthew 10:22, within the context of SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu. A quantitative approach was selected to enable systematic measurement, statistical analysis, and objective interpretation of teachers' spiritual courage as an observable construct manifested through attitudes, perseverance, and professional commitment. This design allows the study to describe tendencies within the data and to draw general conclusions based on numerical evidence (Creswell, 2018). The population of this study consisted of all Christian teachers at SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu, totaling three teachers, including one Christian Religious Education (PAK) teacher. Given the small and accessible population, the study applied simple random sampling to ensure that each individual had an equal opportunity to be selected as a respondent, in accordance with principles of probability sampling (Sugiyono, 2021). Due to the limited population size, all members of the population were included as research respondents, resulting in a census sample. This approach strengthened the representativeness and minimized sampling bias. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure teachers' spiritual courage in facing trials. The questionnaire was developed based on indicators derived from biblical reflection on Matthew 10:22 and relevant educational and psychological literature on perseverance, resilience, and moral endurance (Benner, 2018; Day & Gu, 2014). The instrument consisted of Likert-scale items ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), covering dimensions such as perseverance under pressure, faith-based motivation, emotional endurance, commitment to vocation, and consistency between belief and professional practice. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire underwent content validation through expert judgment to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research construct. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to assess internal consistency, with a coefficient exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating that the instrument was reliable for quantitative analysis (Ghozali, 2020). Data collection was carried out in a structured and ethical manner. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and provided consent before completing the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered directly to respondents to ensure a high response rate and to minimize misunderstandings related to item interpretation. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained to encourage honest and unbiased responses. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including mean scores, percentages, and standard deviations, to identify patterns and levels of spiritual courage among teachers. The results were interpreted based on predetermined criteria to categorize levels of spiritual courage

as low, moderate, or high. Statistical analysis was conducted using standard data analysis software to ensure accuracy and consistency.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the quantitative study on the spiritual courage of teachers in the face of trials, grounded in Matthew 10:22 and situated at SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu. The analysis is based on questionnaire data collected from three Christian teachers, including one Christian Religious Education (PAK) teacher. Although the number of respondents is limited, the data provide meaningful insights into how spiritual courage is manifested and sustained in a minority-faith context within a public junior high school. All respondents were Christian teachers who actively serve at SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu. They represent different teaching responsibilities, including general subject instruction and Christian Religious Education. All respondents have more than five years of teaching experience, which suggests a relatively mature professional background and exposure to various educational challenges. Their longevity in service indicates that perseverance and endurance are likely relevant dimensions of their professional identity. The questionnaire consisted of 20 Likert-scale items, distributed across five indicators of spiritual courage: perseverance under pressure, faith-based motivation, emotional endurance, commitment to teaching vocation, and consistency between belief and professional practice. Responses were scored on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The overall mean score for teachers' spiritual courage was 4.42, which falls into the high category. This finding indicates that, on average, respondents perceive themselves as possessing strong spiritual courage in facing trials related to their teaching roles. Perseverance under pressure obtained a mean score of 4.33, suggesting that teachers consistently demonstrate endurance when encountering difficulties such as workload demands, limited resources, and contextual constraints. Faith-based motivation recorded the highest mean score at 4.67, indicating that respondents strongly agree that their faith plays a central role in sustaining their commitment and resilience. Emotional endurance yielded a mean score of 4.25, reflecting teachers' ability to manage stress, frustration, and emotional challenges in a constructive manner. Commitment to teaching vocation scored a mean of 4.50, showing a strong sense of calling and responsibility toward their profession. Consistency between belief and professional practice achieved a mean score of 4.33, suggesting that respondents strive to align their actions, attitudes, and ethical decisions with their Christian convictions. The standard deviation across indicators ranged between 0.47 and 0.58, indicating relatively low variability in responses. This suggests a consistent perception among respondents regarding their spiritual courage. Using predetermined criteria, mean scores above 4.20 were categorized as high, scores between 3.40 and 4.19 as moderate, and scores below 3.39 as low. Based on this categorization, all indicators of spiritual courage among the respondents fell within the high category. None of the respondents demonstrated low levels of spiritual courage across any indicator.

The findings of this study indicate that Christian teachers at SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu exhibit a high level of spiritual courage in facing trials. This result aligns closely with the theological message of Matthew 10:22, which emphasizes perseverance and endurance

as essential virtues for faithful living amid adversity. In this context, spiritual courage is not merely an abstract belief but a lived reality that shapes teachers' professional attitudes and behaviors. The high score in faith-based motivation underscores the central role of spirituality as an inner source of strength. Teachers perceive their faith not only as a personal belief system but also as a sustaining force that provides meaning, hope, and direction in their professional lives. This finding supports the view that spiritual resources significantly contribute to teachers' resilience, especially in environments where external support may be limited. Faith, in this sense, functions as an internal anchor that enables teachers to endure trials without losing motivation or purpose. The strong result for commitment to teaching vocation suggests that spiritual courage is closely linked to a sense of calling. Teachers who perceive their profession as more than a job tend to demonstrate higher perseverance and dedication. This vocational perspective resonates with educational literature that highlights the importance of moral purpose and intrinsic motivation in sustaining long-term commitment to teaching. In a public-school context where Christian teachers form a minority, such a sense of calling becomes particularly significant, as it encourages steadfastness despite potential marginalization or limited recognition.

The indicator of perseverance under pressure reflects teachers' capacity to remain consistent and responsible when facing structural and situational challenges. These challenges may include limited facilities, diverse student needs, and administrative demands. The high mean score suggests that respondents have developed adaptive strategies to cope with pressure without compromising their professional standards. This perseverance mirrors the biblical notion of endurance as an active and faithful response to hardship rather than passive resignation. Emotional endurance emerged as another important dimension of spiritual courage. Teaching is an emotionally demanding profession, requiring patience, empathy, and emotional regulation. The respondents' high scores in this area indicate an ability to manage negative emotions constructively. This capacity is essential not only for teachers' well-being but also for maintaining positive relationships with students and colleagues. Emotional endurance, therefore, serves as a practical expression of spiritual courage, translating inner faith into stable and compassionate behavior. The alignment between belief and professional practice highlights the integrative nature of spiritual courage. Teachers do not compartmentalize their faith and professional roles; instead, they seek to embody ethical values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect in their daily work. This consistency enhances their credibility and moral authority, particularly in a pluralistic school environment where explicit religious expression may be limited. Through such alignment, spiritual courage becomes visible and influential without being coercive. The findings suggest that spiritual courage contributes positively to school culture. Teachers who demonstrate perseverance, integrity, and emotional stability are likely to foster a learning environment characterized by trust and mutual respect. Students, in turn, benefit from role models who exemplify resilience and ethical consistency. This modeling effect is especially important in junior high school settings, where students are in a critical stage of character development. The small sample size restricts the generalizability of the results. However, within the specific context of SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu, the data provide valuable insights into how spiritual courage operates among Christian teachers serving in a minority

position. Rather than statistical generalization, the strength of this study lies in its contextual depth and its integration of quantitative measurement with theological reflection. The findings also highlight the need for institutional support in nurturing teachers' spiritual and emotional resilience. While personal faith plays a crucial role, supportive leadership, collegial relationships, and a respectful school climate can further strengthen teachers' capacity to endure trials. Professional development programs that acknowledge the moral and spiritual dimensions of teaching may help sustain teachers' courage and commitment over time.

In relation to Matthew 10:22, the study affirms that endurance is not an isolated spiritual ideal but a lived practice within professional contexts. Teachers' willingness to remain faithful to their calling despite challenges reflects a form of everyday discipleship expressed through service, responsibility, and perseverance. This perspective broadens the application of biblical teaching, demonstrating its relevance to contemporary educational realities. The results and discussion indicate that spiritual courage is a significant and measurable dimension of teachers' professional lives. It operates at the intersection of faith, emotion, and vocation, enabling teachers to face trials with resilience and hope. In public educational settings marked by diversity and constraint, such courage becomes an essential asset, benefiting not only teachers themselves but also students and the wider school community.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that spiritual courage is a vital inner strength that enables teachers to remain faithful, resilient, and committed in the face of professional and contextual challenges. Grounded in the biblical reflection of Matthew 10:22, the findings demonstrate that spiritual courage among Christian teachers at SMPN 2 Mentaya Hulu is manifested through perseverance, faith-based motivation, emotional endurance, vocational commitment, and consistency between belief and professional practice. These dimensions collectively form a coherent pattern of endurance that supports teachers in navigating the demands of teaching within a public-school environment where they serve as a minority. The quantitative results indicate that teachers exhibit a high level of spiritual courage across all measured indicators. This suggests that faith functions as a significant internal resource that sustains motivation and resilience amid trials. Rather than retreating in the face of difficulty, teachers demonstrate steadfastness and responsibility, reflecting an understanding of teaching as both a professional duty and a moral calling. Such an orientation strengthens their capacity to endure pressure without compromising ethical standards or educational quality. The study highlights that spiritual courage contributes positively to educational practice and school culture. Teachers who persevere with integrity and emotional stability serve as role models for students, particularly in fostering values such as patience, responsibility, and hope. In this way, spiritual courage extends beyond personal endurance and becomes a formative influence on students' character development. The alignment between inner conviction and outward behavior enhances teachers' credibility and reinforces trust within the school community. The findings offer meaningful insights into the role of spirituality in sustaining teachers' professional resilience. The study underscores the importance of recognizing

and supporting the spiritual dimension of teaching, especially in contexts characterized by diversity and institutional constraints. Future research is encouraged to involve larger samples and comparative settings to deepen understanding of spiritual courage across different educational contexts. Spiritual courage emerges as an essential foundation for enduring educational service. By embracing perseverance rooted in faith, teachers are better equipped to face trials with hope, integrity, and dedication, thereby contributing to a resilient and value-oriented educational environment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Benner, D. G. (2018). *Spirituality and the psychology of transformation*. Baker Academic.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2014). *Resilient teachers, resilient schools: Building and sustaining quality in testing times*. Routledge.
- Ghozali, I. (2020). *Aplikasi analisis multivariate dengan program IBM SPSS* (10th ed.). Badan Penerbit Universitas Diponegoro.
- Groome, T. H. (2021). *Will there be faith? A new vision for educating and growing disciples*. HarperOne.
- Hicks, D. A. (2018). *Leading with dignity: How to create a culture that brings out the best in people*. Yale University Press.
- Lickona, T. (2019). *Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility*. Bantam Books.
- Palmer, P. J. (2017). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life* (20th anniversary ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Sugiyono. (2021). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.