



Spirit Empowered Professionalism by Building Students' Spirituality through Christian Religious Education in the Light of Exodus 31:3 at SD S Yayasan Tiga Putra Persada PT Hutahaean

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of spirit-empowered professionalism in Christian Religious Education (CRE) and its role in nurturing students' spirituality in light of Book of Exodus 31:3. Grounded in a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR), this research synthesizes recent scholarly works (2019-2025) addressing teacher professionalism, spiritual formation, and theological foundations of educational practice. The review follows systematic stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and thematic synthesis to ensure methodological rigor and credibility. The findings indicate that professionalism in CRE extends beyond pedagogical competence and administrative responsibility. It encompasses spiritual maturity, ethical integrity, theological awareness, and vocational consciousness. Drawing from the biblical depiction of Bezalel in Exodus 31:3 who was filled with the Spirit of God with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge this study conceptualizes teacher professionalism as divinely empowered service. Such empowerment shapes instructional practices, classroom climate, and relational engagement, thereby fostering environments conducive to students' spiritual growth. The synthesis further reveals that students' spirituality is significantly influenced by teachers who embody authentic faith and integrate biblical values into pedagogical processes. Spirit-empowered professionalism encourages reflective learning, moral discernment, and holistic formation within the primary school context, particularly at SD S Yayasan Tiga Putra Persada PT Hutahaean. This study contributes to bridging biblical vocational theology and contemporary educational discourse by articulating a model of professionalism rooted in spiritual empowerment. Future research is recommended to empirically examine measurable indicators of student spiritual development associated with teacher professionalism in Christian educational settings.

Keywords: Spirit empowered, Christian Religious Education, teacher competence, student spirituality, Exodus 31:3.

INTRODUCTION

The professional role of teachers in Christian Religious Education (CRE) transcends mere instructional delivery; it embodies a sacred vocation aimed at nurturing the holistic development of students, especially their spiritual formation. In the context of primary education, where foundational beliefs and character are cultivated, the professional identity of a Christian Religious Education teacher becomes critically significant. Professionalism in CRE is not an abstract ideal; rather, it represents a deliberate and intentional integration of theological conviction, pedagogical competence, and spiritual maturity (Simangunsong & Naibaho, 2023). Contemporary educational research underscores that teacher professionalism is intricately connected to the quality of learning outcomes in both cognitive and affective domains (Gulo, Lawolo & Tatubeket, 2024). Within Christian settings, professionalism further incorporates a spiritual dimension that considers the teacher's own faith commitment as foundational to their pedagogical practices. This spiritual dimension aligns closely with the biblical paradigm presented in *Exodus 31:3*, where God endows individuals with divine wisdom and skill through the Holy Spirit. In Christian education, such divine empowerment provides a theological basis for viewing teacher professionalism not merely as technical competence but as spiritually infused vocational service. The concept of spirituality in education pertains to the holistic growth of learners, whereby spiritual formation complements intellectual development and ethical behavior (Manurung, Bangun & Sinurat, 2025). Christian Religious Education teachers, therefore, play a dual role: they are both educators and spiritual mentors. As educators, they are expected to master curricular content, implement effective instructional strategies, and assess learning outcomes. As spiritual mentors, they model Christ-like character, facilitate encounters with God's Word, and guide students toward a lived expression of Christian faith. This dual role elevates professionalism from a set of competencies to a spiritually empowered practice that impacts students' lives beyond the classroom. Teacher professionalism in the Christian context has been the focus of scholarly attention in recent years, particularly in how such professionalism influences student outcomes in character, behavior, and spirituality. Research from Indonesian Christian education contexts reveals a positive correlation between the spiritual commitment of teachers and the spiritual or moral outcomes among students. For instance, qualitative studies indicate that when Christian Religious Education teachers intentionally integrate spiritual values such as prayer, biblical reflection, and Christ-centered virtues into instruction, students exhibit improved discipline, cooperation, and ethical attitudes (Manurung, Bangun & Sinurat, 2025). Contemporary scholarship highlights that teacher professionalism is not limited to academic expertise or classroom management skills; it also encompasses the teacher's capacity for spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence. These internal capacities enable teachers to connect with students on relational and spiritual levels, fostering learning environments where faith is not only taught but experienced (Meilani & Fernando, 2023). When teachers exemplify spiritual maturity and emotional sensitivity, they contribute to an educational ethos that supports students in discerning purpose, meaning, and spiritual identity.

In some settings, teachers may lack thorough theological training or ongoing professional development that emphasizes spiritual formation as integral to pedagogy. Additionally, the increasing complexity of contemporary classrooms with diverse learning needs,

cultural pluralism, and varying degrees of spiritual receptivity among student places added demands on teacher competencies (Gulo, Lawolo & Tatubeket, 2024). These challenges necessitate deeper reflection on how professionalism in Christian Religious Education can be conceptualized as spiritually empowered practice. A theology of teaching grounded in Scripture affirms that educators are co-laborers with God in shaping young lives. *Exodus 31:3* provides a theological anchor for this perspective, emphasizing that true professional capability is not self-generated but bestowed by the Spirit who equips individuals for divine purposes. This spirit-empowered approach affirms that teachers draw on divine wisdom, creativity, and discernment attributes essential for fostering spiritual growth in students. In the Indonesian context specifically, research has progressively engaged with the intersections between teacher professionalism, spirituality, and student formation. Studies focusing on Christian primary and secondary schools emphasize that professionalism when anchored in deep spiritual commitment enables teachers to impact student character positively and support holistic growth (Simangunsong & Naibaho, 2023; Gulo, Lawolo & Tatubeket, 2024). However, there remains limited empirical research that examines professionalism explicitly through the lens of *Exodus 31:3* as a theological foundation for teacher practice in primary schools. Investigating how biblical spirituality informs and energizes professional practices contributes to both theological reflection and educational praxis. Considering this background, this study explores how professionalism, understood as spirit-empowered practice, influences the development of students' spirituality within Christian Religious Education at SD S Yayasan Tiga Putra Persada PT Hutahaean. By situating teacher professionalism within the theological framework of *Exodus 31:3*, this research seeks to articulate how divine empowerment contributes to professional identity and shapes pedagogical practices that nurture student spiritual formation. Such an inquiry not only enriches academic discourses in Christian education but also provides practical insights for educational stakeholders committed to fostering spiritually formative school environments.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design to examine the concept of spirit-empowered professionalism in Christian Religious Education (CRE) and its contribution to students' spiritual formation in light of *Exodus 31:3*. A qualitative SLR was selected because it enables a comprehensive, transparent, and replicable synthesis of existing scholarly findings while allowing deep interpretive analysis of theological and educational concepts (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019). Unlike traditional narrative reviews, the SLR approach follows structured procedures for identifying, screening, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant studies to minimize bias and enhance methodological rigor. The review process followed four primary stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and synthesis. Academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus-indexed journals, and national accredited journals (SINTA) were systematically searched using combinations of keywords including "Christian Religious Education," "teacher professionalism," "spiritual formation," "spiritual competence," "biblical foundation of teaching," and "Exodus 31:3." The search was limited to publications between 2019 and 2025 to ensure currency and relevance.

Peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and conference proceedings written in English or Indonesian were included. Studies were excluded if they lacked clear methodological grounding, were opinion-based without empirical support, or did not substantially address professionalism or spirituality in educational contexts. Following the identification stage, duplicate records were removed. Titles and abstracts were screened to determine alignment with the research focus. Full-text analysis was then conducted to evaluate methodological quality, theoretical relevance, and contribution to the themes of teacher professionalism and student spirituality. The selection criteria emphasized credibility, clarity of research design, relevance to Christian education contexts, and conceptual depth regarding spirituality and professional competence. This evaluative process reflects recommended SLR standards for transparency and rigor in qualitative research synthesis (Snyder, 2019). Data analysis employed thematic synthesis. Key findings, theoretical frameworks, research contexts, and conclusions from selected sources were coded inductively. Codes were then categorized into broader analytical themes, including spiritual foundations of professionalism, pedagogical competence as vocation, teacher spirituality as formative influence, and biblical-theological grounding of educational practice. The interpretive process sought patterns, convergences, and conceptual gaps across the literature. Particular attention was given to how *Exodus 31:3* which highlights divine empowerment through wisdom, understanding, and knowledge has been implicitly or explicitly connected to professional identity in Christian education. To enhance trustworthiness, this review applied credibility and confirmability measures by cross-checking findings across multiple sources and maintaining a transparent documentation trail of selection and coding decisions. Through this qualitative SLR approach, the study provides a synthesized and theologically informed understanding of spirit-empowered professionalism as a foundation for nurturing students' spirituality in Christian Religious Education contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this qualitative systematic literature review reveal that spirit-empowered professionalism in Christian Religious Education (CRE) cannot be reduced to institutional compliance, pedagogical certification, or instructional efficiency. Rather, professionalism in this context emerges as an integrative construct that unites theological conviction, spiritual formation, pedagogical competence, and vocational consciousness. Across the literature examined between 2019 and 2025, a consistent pattern appears: teacher professionalism in Christian education becomes transformative when it is rooted in spiritual identity and animated by theological awareness (Snyder, 2019; Simangunsong & Naibaho, 2023). This integrative pattern aligns closely with the theological vision presented in Book of Exodus 31:3, where Bezalel is described as being filled with the Spirit of God, endowed with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge for skilled work. The biblical narrative frames competence not as self-generated expertise but as divine empowerment directed toward purposeful service. The thematic synthesis shows that contemporary discussions of teacher professionalism increasingly recognize the importance of internal dispositions alongside observable competencies. In secular educational discourse, professionalism often centers on mastery of content, instructional strategies, assessment literacy, and classroom management (Xiao & Watson, 2019). However, studies within Christian education contexts expand this framework by

incorporating spiritual maturity, moral integrity, and faith consistency as essential components of professional identity (Manurung, Bangun, & Sinurat, 2025). This expanded understanding suggests that professionalism in CRE involves being spiritually formed before forming others. Teachers who intentionally cultivate prayerful dependence, biblical reflection, and ethical coherence are more likely to demonstrate authenticity in the classroom, which in turn influences students' spiritual receptivity. The literature also highlights that students' spirituality in primary education is particularly sensitive to teacher modeling. At the elementary level, students tend to internalize values through relational observation rather than abstract theological reasoning. Empirical findings from Christian school settings indicate that consistent exposure to teachers who embody patience, compassion, discipline, and Christ-centered decision-making fosters greater spiritual curiosity and moral awareness among learners (Gulo, Lawolo, & Tatubeket, 2024). Spirituality, therefore, is not transmitted solely through doctrinal instruction but through lived interaction. The teacher becomes a visible hermeneutic of Scripture, translating biblical truths into observable practices.

In light of Book of Exodus 31:3, the concept of divine empowerment introduces a theological corrective to purely technical models of professionalism. The passage emphasizes three attributes wisdom, understanding, and knowledge which together form a holistic framework for professional practice. Wisdom refers to discernment in action, understanding implies depth of comprehension, and knowledge indicates mastery of content. When applied to CRE teachers, this triad suggests that professional excellence requires not only academic preparation but spiritual sensitivity and contextual awareness. Teachers must discern when to encourage, when to correct, when to listen, and when to challenge. Such discernment reflects spiritual wisdom rather than procedural routine. The review further reveals that professionalism shaped by spiritual empowerment contributes significantly to the cultivation of a spiritually formative classroom environment. Classroom climate studies consistently demonstrate that environments characterized by trust, respect, and relational warmth enhance student engagement and moral development (Meilani & Fernando, 2023). Within Christian education, these relational qualities are often rooted in theological convictions about human dignity and grace. Teachers who view students as *imago Dei* approach discipline, assessment, and feedback with restorative rather than punitive intentions. Consequently, students experience learning as participation in a community shaped by spiritual values rather than as mere academic obligation. Another recurring theme concerns the integration of pedagogical innovation with spiritual intentionality. Professional teachers in CRE contexts increasingly utilize varied instructional strategies project-based learning, reflective journaling, collaborative discussion, and contextual Bible interpretation to connect Scripture with lived experience. However, the literature cautions that methodological creativity without spiritual grounding risks reducing biblical education to moralism or information transfer. Spirit-empowered professionalism ensures that instructional methods remain oriented toward transformation rather than performance. In this sense, pedagogy becomes a channel for spiritual encounter rather than a neutral delivery mechanism.

The SLR also identified a tension between institutional expectations and spiritual authenticity. In some educational contexts, teachers face administrative pressures related to curriculum targets, assessment benchmarks, and documentation

requirements. While such standards are necessary for accountability, the literature suggests that excessive bureaucratic emphasis may inadvertently marginalize spiritual formation (Simangunsong & Naibaho, 2023). Spirit-empowered professionalism negotiates this tension by reframing administrative responsibilities as dimensions of faithful stewardship. Completing lesson plans, preparing assessments, and participating in professional development are not merely compliance tasks but expressions of disciplined vocation. Within the specific locus of SD S Yayasan Tiga Putra Persada PT Hutahaean, the application of these findings suggests that teacher professionalism must be contextualized within local cultural, institutional, and spiritual realities. Indonesian Christian schools often operate within pluralistic social environments where students encounter diverse worldviews beyond the classroom. In such settings, the CRE teacher's professionalism includes equipping students with spiritual resilience and critical faith reflection. The literature indicates that students who are guided to connect biblical narratives with contemporary challenges such as peer pressure, digital influence, and moral ambiguity demonstrate stronger spiritual identity formation (Manurung, Bangun, & Sinurat, 2025).

The analysis underscores the relational dimension of spirit-empowered professionalism. Spiritual formation research consistently affirms that mentorship and dialogical engagement enhance students' capacity for reflective faith (Meilani & Fernando, 2023). Teachers who intentionally create spaces for questions, doubts, and testimony encourage students to articulate personal beliefs rather than merely recite doctrinal content. This dialogical approach resonates with the empowerment motif in Book of Exodus 31:3, where divine filling enables creative and meaningful contribution. Students, likewise, are invited to become active participants in their spiritual growth rather than passive recipients of instruction. The review also highlights the importance of ongoing professional development that integrates theology and pedagogy. Workshops, theological seminars, peer collaboration, and reflective practice communities strengthen teachers' capacity to align spiritual conviction with instructional competence. Without continuous formation, professionalism may stagnate or become mechanical. Spirit-empowered professionalism is dynamic, requiring renewal through Scripture, prayer, and scholarly engagement. Teachers who invest in lifelong learning model intellectual humility and spiritual dependence, reinforcing the message that growth is continuous. In terms of measurable impact, the literature suggests that spirit-empowered professionalism correlates with observable indicators such as increased student participation in devotional activities, improved moral decision-making, and enhanced classroom cooperation (Gulo, Lawolo, & Tatubeket, 2024). While spirituality cannot be quantified exhaustively, qualitative indicators student reflections, behavioral consistency, and relational harmony provide meaningful evidence of spiritual development. Such findings affirm that professional integrity and spiritual vitality mutually reinforce one another. The synthesis reveals a conceptual gap in explicitly connecting Old Testament vocational theology with contemporary teacher professionalism. While numerous studies discuss competence and spirituality, fewer articulate how biblical texts like Book of Exodus 31:3 provide a theological paradigm for professional identity. By situating teacher competence within the narrative of divine empowerment, this study contributes to bridging biblical theology and educational praxis. The Bezalel narrative illustrates that artistry and craftsmanship are sacred callings empowered by God's Spirit; analogously, teaching in

CRE becomes sacred craftsmanship shaping human souls. The discussion affirms that spirit-empowered professionalism transforms both teacher and student. Teachers who perceive their vocation as Spirit-filled service cultivate humility rather than self-exaltation. Students who encounter such educators witness a coherent integration of belief and practice. The classroom becomes a formative space where academic excellence and spiritual vitality converge. Within SD S Yayasan Tiga Putra Persada PT Hutahaeen, embracing this paradigm may strengthen institutional identity as a learning community committed not only to intellectual achievement but to spiritual flourishing. Spirit-empowered professionalism emerges as a multidimensional construct encompassing theological grounding, relational authenticity, pedagogical competence, ethical consistency, and vocational consciousness. Anchored in Book of Exodus 31:3, this model affirms that authentic professionalism in Christian Religious Education derives from divine empowerment expressed through disciplined practice. Such professionalism nurtures students' spirituality by modeling faith in action, fostering reflective engagement with Scripture, and cultivating environments where spiritual growth is intentionally pursued.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined spirit-empowered professionalism in Christian Religious Education (CRE) through a qualitative Systematic Literature Review, interpreting teacher professionalism in light of Book of Exodus 31:3. The synthesis of recent scholarly literature demonstrates that professionalism in Christian education cannot be confined to technical competence, administrative compliance, or pedagogical efficiency. Rather, it must be understood as a holistic integration of spiritual identity, theological conviction, ethical integrity, and instructional expertise. The biblical portrait of Bezalel filled with the Spirit of God, endowed with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge provides a theological paradigm for conceptualizing professional identity as divinely empowered vocation rather than self-derived achievement. The findings affirm that students' spirituality is profoundly influenced by the character, relational approach, and spiritual maturity of their teachers. In primary education contexts, such as SD S Yayasan Tiga Putra Persada PT Hutahaeen, students internalize values primarily through observation and interaction. Therefore, professionalism expressed through authentic faith, consistent moral conduct, and compassionate engagement becomes a living curriculum. When teachers embody Christ-centered virtues while maintaining pedagogical excellence, they create spiritually formative environments where learning transcends information transfer and becomes transformative formation. This study highlights that spirit-empowered professionalism requires intentional cultivation. Continuous theological reflection, participation in professional development, collaborative learning communities, and disciplined spiritual practices are essential for sustaining both competence and calling. Professional growth in CRE must therefore integrate academic advancement with spiritual renewal. Without this integration, professionalism risks becoming mechanical; with it, professionalism becomes missional and transformative. Grounding teacher professionalism in Book of Exodus 31:3 bridges biblical vocational theology and contemporary educational practice. The Spirit's empowerment in the Old Testament narrative underscores that skill, creativity, and wisdom are sacred gifts intended for the building of God's dwelling. Analogously, teachers in Christian education participate in constructing a spiritual dwelling within the hearts and

minds of students. Their classrooms become sacred spaces where divine wisdom intersects with human development. Spirit-empowered professionalism represents a dynamic and integrative model for Christian Religious Education. It affirms that authentic professional excellence emerges from spiritual depth, theological clarity, and disciplined practice. Within the context of SD S Yayasan Tiga Putra Persada PT Hutahaean, embracing this paradigm may strengthen both institutional mission and student spiritual formation. Future empirical research is encouraged to explore measurable indicators of spiritual growth linked to teacher professionalism, thereby further enriching the dialogue between theology and educational praxis.

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