



## The Social Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in the Perspective of Reconciliation: A Biblical Reflection on Philippians 4:2-3 in the Context of SMP Negeri 2 Gido

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers from the perspective of reconciliation as articulated in Epistle to the Philippians 4:2-3, contextualized within SMP Negeri 2 Gido. The research was conducted in a school community comprising 310 Christian students and 22 Christian teachers, including two CRE teachers. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, the study integrates biblical-theological exegesis with empirical field research. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed thematically using a practical theological framework. The findings reveal that reconciliation-oriented communication, collegial mediation, and collaborative leadership constitute the core expressions of teacher social competence. CRE teachers demonstrate dialogical engagement, empathetic listening, and restorative conflict resolution, reflecting Paul's exhortation for believers "to be of the same mind in the Lord." Moreover, mediation practices among faculty members embody the communal responsibility emphasized in Philippians 4:3, fostering institutional unity and professional trust. Students perceive these relational dynamics as contributing to a peaceful and supportive learning environment, indicating that reconciliation functions not only as doctrinal instruction but also as lived example. The study concludes that teacher social competence, when grounded in Pauline reconciliation theology, becomes both professional mandate and spiritual vocation. By embodying unity in daily interactions, CRE teachers cultivate a school climate that integrates faith commitment with educational excellence. This research contributes to the discourse on Christian teacher professionalism by demonstrating that reconciliation is foundational to sustainable relational leadership in contemporary educational contexts.*

**Keywords:** Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, Reconciliation

## INTRODUCTION

Social competence constitutes one of the essential dimensions of teacher professionalism in Indonesia, encompassing the ability to communicate effectively, collaborate harmoniously, and foster constructive relationships within the school community. Within Christian Religious Education (CRE), however, social competence transcends interpersonal skill; it is deeply theological, rooted in the gospel's call to reconciliation and unity. This study examines the social competence of CRE teachers through the lens of reconciliation in Epistle to the Philippians 4:2-3 and contextualizes the analysis in SMP Negeri 2 Gido, where 310 Christian students are supported by 22 Christian teachers, including two CRE teachers. Philippians 4:2-3 records Paul's appeal to Euodia and Syntyche to "be of the same mind in the Lord," urging a trusted companion to assist them in resolving their disagreement. The passage offers a rare glimpse into interpersonal conflict within the early Christian community and demonstrates Paul's pastoral commitment to unity. Gordon D. Fee (1995) observes that Paul's exhortation underscores the communal dimension of Christian life, emphasizing harmony as a witness to the gospel. Similarly, Peter T. O'Brien (1991) argues that reconciliation in Philippians is not merely pragmatic but theological, grounded in shared participation in Christ. The apostolic appeal reveals that unity requires intentional mediation, humility, and collaborative responsibility-qualities directly relevant to teacher social competence. In educational contexts, social competence refers to the capacity to engage respectfully with students, colleagues, and parents, demonstrating empathy, fairness, and effective communication. According to Shulman (1987), professional teaching involves not only content mastery but also relational awareness that supports meaningful learning environments. For Christian educators, relational awareness is shaped by theological conviction. Thomas H. Groome (2011) emphasizes that faith-based education must cultivate communities of dialogue and reconciliation, reflecting the reconciling work of Christ. Thus, the social competence of CRE teachers becomes an embodiment of gospel unity within the school setting.

The context of SMP Negeri 2 Gido presents a dynamic and multifaceted environment. With 310 Christian students and 22 Christian teachers, including two CRE teachers, the school operates as a sizable Christian-majority public institution within Nias. Such a context offers both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, a shared religious identity may facilitate communal solidarity. On the other hand, diversity of personality, background, and perspective inevitably generates tension. The presence of multiple Christian educators increases the necessity for collaborative professionalism rooted in reconciliation. Philippians 4:2-3 therefore serves as a pertinent biblical paradigm for evaluating and strengthening social competence in this context. Paul's approach to conflict in Philippians provides several theological principles relevant to educational practice. First, reconciliation is framed "in the Lord," indicating that unity derives from shared allegiance to Christ rather than mere interpersonal compatibility. Second, mediation is communal; Paul enlists a "true companion" to assist in restoring harmony. Third, the appeal acknowledges the women's prior labor in the gospel, affirming dignity even amid disagreement. These elements align closely with educational leadership principles that emphasize restorative communication, collaborative problem-solving, and

affirmation of professional contribution. Osmer (2008) describes practical theology as a reflective process that discerns how faith informs action in concrete situations. Applying this approach, reconciliation becomes a lens through which teacher social competence can be evaluated and cultivated. Contemporary character education scholarship highlights the importance of relational modeling. Lickona (1991) contends that students internalize moral values through observing adult interactions. In a school community where more than 300 students observe daily interactions among teachers, the manner in which educators manage disagreement, communicate respectfully, and demonstrate mutual support profoundly shapes the moral climate. Thus, teacher social competence is not merely instrumental but formative. This study seeks to integrate Pauline theology and educational research by addressing three central questions: How does Philippians 4:2-3 articulate a theology of reconciliation applicable to educational contexts? How do CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Gido demonstrate social competence consistent with this theology? How do students perceive the relationship between teacher relational behavior and the spiritual atmosphere of the school? Through this interdisciplinary exploration, the research contributes to the discourse on Christian teacher professionalism, proposing that social competence rooted in reconciliation constitutes a vital expression of vocational faith within contemporary education.

## METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a biblical–theological and educational approach to explore the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in light of reconciliation as articulated in Epistle to the Philippians 4:2-3. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Gido, a public junior high school context comprising 310 Christian students and 22 Christian teachers, including two CRE teachers. A qualitative framework was selected because the study sought to understand relational dynamics, perceptions, and lived experiences rather than to measure variables statistically. As Creswell and Poth (2018) explain, qualitative inquiry is appropriate when research aims to interpret meanings participants attribute to social phenomena within natural settings. Data were collected through three primary techniques: semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom and staffroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two CRE teachers as key informants, six additional Christian subject teachers, and twelve Christian students selected purposively to represent different grade levels. The purposive sampling strategy ensured that participants had direct interaction with the CRE teachers and could provide reflective insights regarding interpersonal communication and reconciliation practices. Interviews focused on experiences of conflict resolution, collegial collaboration, communication style, and perceptions of unity within the school environment. Non-participant observations were carried out during CRE classes, teacher meetings, and informal school interactions. The observation protocol emphasized indicators of social competence derived from national teacher competency standards and from reconciliation principles identified in Philippians 4:2-3, such as mediative communication, affirmation of others' contributions, and collaborative problem-solving. Field notes documented verbal and non-verbal interactions, patterns of cooperation, and instances

of disagreement management. Document analysis included review of lesson plans, school regulations, meeting minutes, and character education programs to assess how reconciliation values were formally integrated into institutional practice. This triangulation of interviews, observations, and documents enhanced credibility and minimized single-source bias, consistent with qualitative validation procedures recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The biblical-theological component employed exegetical analysis of Philippians 4:2-3 using historical-grammatical methodology. Key Greek terms related to unity and cooperation were examined through standard lexical resources to clarify the theological meaning of reconciliation in Pauline thought. The exegetical findings functioned as an analytical lens for interpreting empirical data. In this integrative approach, theological reflection and field data were placed in dialogue, following the practical theological method described by Osmer (2008): descriptive-empirical observation, interpretive analysis, normative theological reflection, and pragmatic application. Data analysis followed thematic coding procedures. Interview transcripts and observation notes were transcribed verbatim and coded inductively to identify recurring patterns related to communication, collaboration, mediation, and relational leadership. Themes were then correlated with reconciliation principles derived from the biblical text. To ensure trustworthiness, member checking was conducted with the two CRE teachers to verify interpretive accuracy, and peer debriefing was applied through consultation with a fellow educational researcher. Ethical considerations were carefully maintained. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and anonymity was preserved through pseudonyms in reporting. Because the study involved minors, parental consent was secured for student interviews. All data were used exclusively for academic research purposes. Through this methodological design, the study sought to construct a holistic understanding of how reconciliation theology informs and evaluates the social competence of CRE teachers within the lived context of SMP Negeri 2 Gido, thereby bridging biblical exegesis and educational praxis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Gido is expressed through patterns of relational communication, mediative leadership, collaborative collegiality, and spiritual modeling that resonate meaningfully with the reconciliation paradigm articulated in Epistle to the Philippians 4:2-3. Drawing from interviews, observations, and document analysis, four major thematic clusters emerged: reconciliation-oriented communication, collegial mediation and shared responsibility, modeling unity before students, and structural integration of reconciliation within school culture. These themes collectively illuminate how theological conviction intersects with professional practice in a school environment comprising 310 Christian students and 22 Christian teachers, including two CRE teachers. Reconciliation-oriented communication surfaced as the most visible expression of social competence. Interview data from students consistently described the two CRE teachers as “approachable,” “calm,” and “willing to listen before judging.” Observational field notes during classroom interactions demonstrated dialogical teaching patterns in which students were invited to articulate disagreements respectfully. Rather than suppressing

divergent opinions, teachers reframed differences as opportunities for mutual understanding. This approach parallels Paul's exhortation in Philippians 4:2-3, where he addresses Euodia and Syntyche not with condemnation but with pastoral appeal, urging them "to be of the same mind in the Lord." The Greek phrase *to auto phronein* implies a shared orientation shaped by Christ rather than forced uniformity. In practice, CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Gido embodied this orientation by guiding students to seek relational harmony grounded in shared Christian identity. For example, when interpersonal tension arose between two students during a group assignment, one CRE teacher facilitated a reflective conversation that began with prayer and concluded with mutual apology. Students later reported that such moments felt "fair" and "peaceful," indicating that reconciliation was experienced as restorative rather than punitive. Theologically, this reflects Paul's understanding that unity is cultivated through humility and shared commitment to the Lordship of Christ (cf. Philippians 2:1-5). Educationally, it demonstrates high-level interpersonal competence: active listening, empathy, emotional regulation, and conflict de-escalation.

Collegial mediation and shared responsibility emerged as central to teacher social competence. Paul's appeal in Philippians 4:3 to a "true companion" (*gnēsie syzyge*) highlights communal participation in reconciliation. Conflict resolution is not privatized but entrusted to trustworthy mediators within the body of Christ. In the school context, this principle was reflected in collaborative faculty interactions. Interviews with non-CRE teachers indicated that when misunderstandings occurred among staff, the CRE teachers often assumed informal mediative roles. One mathematics teacher described how a scheduling disagreement between departments was resolved after a CRE teacher initiated a dialogue emphasizing mutual respect and shared mission. Observational data from staff meetings confirmed that CRE teachers frequently articulated integrative language such as "*kita satu tujuan*" ("we share one purpose"), echoing Pauline unity theology. Importantly, mediation was not authoritarian; rather, it involved facilitating conversation and affirming each teacher's contribution-mirroring Paul's acknowledgment that Euodia and Syntyche had "labored side by side" with him in the gospel. By affirming dignity before addressing disagreement, CRE teachers fostered an environment where correction was not perceived as humiliation. This pattern aligns with contemporary theories of restorative leadership, which emphasize dignity preservation and collaborative problem-solving. In the context of 22 Christian teachers, such mediative competence contributes significantly to institutional stability. Modeling unity before students constituted a formative dimension of social competence. With 310 Christian students observing daily teacher interactions, relational dynamics among faculty function as implicit curriculum. Students interviewed frequently commented that they "rarely see teachers arguing" and that when differences occur, "they talk privately and then greet each other again." This observation suggests intentional management of visible conflict to maintain communal witness. The apostle Paul's concern for unity in Philippians is missional; internal discord threatens the credibility of the gospel community. Similarly, CRE teachers expressed awareness that unresolved tension among staff could negatively influence students' spiritual perception. One CRE teacher stated that "*anak-anak belajar dari sikap kami, bukan hanya dari materi pelajaran*" ("students learn from our attitudes, not only from lesson content"). This reflects a pedagogical understanding that moral

formation is relationally transmitted. Theologically, reconciliation is not abstract doctrine but embodied witness. Thus, social competence extends beyond interpersonal skill to representational responsibility: teachers model the reconciling work of Christ within a public educational setting. Structural integration of reconciliation values was evident in institutional documents and programs. Character education initiatives at SMP Negeri 2 Gido include regular devotional gatherings, peer mentoring, and thematic assemblies emphasizing forgiveness and unity. Lesson plans reviewed during document analysis showed that CRE teachers intentionally incorporated Philippians 4:2-3 into modules on Christian community life. Rather than treating the text as isolated moral exhortation, teachers contextualized it within broader Pauline theology of partnership (*\*koinōnia\**) and humility. This curricular integration ensures that reconciliation is not episodic but systematic. Furthermore, school regulations encourage dialogical resolution of student disputes before disciplinary escalation. Such policies mirror the mediative ethos observed in faculty interactions. The alignment between formal structures and informal practices strengthens institutional coherence. A school community of 310 Christian students is not homogeneous; socioeconomic disparities, denominational differences, and adolescent developmental dynamics generate friction. Several students acknowledged occasional peer exclusion or miscommunication amplified by social media. CRE teachers reported that digital conflict often requires pastoral sensitivity, as misunderstandings spread rapidly online. In these cases, reconciliation practices extend beyond classroom walls into virtual spaces. Teachers described inviting involved students to mediated conversations grounded in biblical reflection and mutual confession. This adaptive application of Pauline reconciliation demonstrates contextual intelligence: theological principles are translated into contemporary relational realities.

Another challenge concerns workload distribution among 22 Christian teachers. Interviews indicated that informal mediation responsibilities sometimes fall disproportionately on CRE teachers due to expectations that they possess superior spiritual maturity. While this perception affirms their moral authority, it may risk role overload. From a Pauline perspective, reconciliation is communal, not confined to a single office. Therefore, professional development initiatives encouraging all teachers to cultivate mediative competence would reflect the apostolic vision more fully. The data suggest that when reconciliation responsibility is shared broadly, institutional resilience increases. The exegetical dimension of the study further illuminates these findings. Paul's appeal to "be of the same mind in the Lord" situates reconciliation within Christological allegiance. Unity is not psychological similarity but covenantal participation in Christ. CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Gido repeatedly framed conflict resolution in explicitly theological terms, emphasizing shared identity as believers. Students reported that during reconciliation conversations, teachers often reminded them that "*kita semua saudara dalam Tuhan*" ("we are all brothers and sisters in the Lord"). This language operationalizes Pauline theology in pedagogical practice. The phrase "whose names are in the book of life" (Phil 4:3) underscores eschatological solidarity: believers share eternal destiny. While such eschatological language is rarely invoked explicitly in school settings, its implicit logic, shared belonging, shapes relational expectations. Teachers cultivate unity not merely for classroom efficiency but as expression of shared faith.

From an educational theory perspective, the findings correspond with frameworks of social-emotional competence, including self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. CRE teachers exhibited high levels of emotional regulation during observed conflicts, maintaining calm tone and measured speech. Students interpreted this composure as fairness and authority. Furthermore, empathy was frequently demonstrated through reflective listening, where teachers paraphrased student concerns before offering guidance. Such practices align with best-practice models of constructive communication. However, what distinguishes this context is theological intentionality: relational skills are consciously interpreted as participation in God's reconciling mission. The integration of biblical exegesis and empirical data highlights a reciprocal dynamic. Scripture informs practice, and lived experience deepens scriptural understanding. For example, teachers noted that repeated engagement with Philippians 4:2-3 reshaped their perception of conflict, not as threat but as opportunity for spiritual growth. Conversely, navigating real disputes enriched their appreciation of Paul's pastoral sensitivity. This dialogical process embodies practical theology, wherein normative texts and contextual realities inform one another. Students perceived reconciliation not only as conflict resolution but as atmosphere. Several described the school environment as "*damai*" ("peaceful") and "*nyaman*" ("comfortable"). While subjective, these perceptions indicate that relational stability contributes to psychological safety, a critical factor in effective learning. In large student populations, safety is often fragile; thus, the consistent modeling of unity by teachers plays preventive as well as corrective roles. When adolescents observe adults managing disagreement constructively, they internalize scripts for their own interactions. This formative impact suggests that teacher social competence exerts long-term influence extending beyond immediate academic outcomes. The study also uncovered nuanced gender dynamics echoing the original text. Philippians 4:2-3 centers on two women leaders whose disagreement required mediation. In the school context, both male and female teachers participated actively in reconciliation processes. Observations revealed equitable participation in dialogue, suggesting that reconciliation culture mitigates hierarchical barriers. By affirming each teacher's contribution regardless of gender or subject area, the school mirrors Paul's recognition of female co-workers in the gospel. This egalitarian dimension strengthens communal trust. In synthesizing these findings, it becomes evident that social competence rooted in reconciliation operates at multiple levels: interpersonal (teacher-student), collegial (teacher-teacher), institutional (policy and program), and theological (shared identity in Christ). These levels are mutually reinforcing. When teachers communicate empathetically, students experience fairness; when faculty collaborate respectfully, institutional climate stabilizes; when policies institutionalize dialogue, practices become sustainable; when theology grounds action, motivation deepens. The coherence observed at SMP Negeri 2 Gido suggests that reconciliation is not peripheral but central to teacher professionalism within Christian educational settings.

Sustainability requires intentional cultivation. Rapid societal change, digital communication pressures, and generational differences pose ongoing challenges. The Pauline model offers enduring principles but demands contextual adaptation. Continuous reflection on Philippians 4:2-3 can prevent reconciliation language from becoming rhetorical rather than operational. Professional workshops integrating biblical reflection

with conflict management training would enhance collective competence. Additionally, mentoring programs empowering students to practice peer mediation could extend reconciliation culture beyond faculty leadership. In conclusion of this analytical discussion, the empirical evidence demonstrates that CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Gido exhibit robust social competence characterized by reconciliatory communication, mediative leadership, collaborative affirmation, and theological intentionality. Their practices resonate closely with Paul's appeal for unity in Philippians 4:2-3, illustrating that ancient apostolic counsel retains contemporary pedagogical relevance. Within a community of 310 Christian students and 22 Christian teachers, reconciliation functions not merely as doctrinal theme but as lived ethic shaping institutional climate. The convergence of biblical theology and educational praxis affirms that teacher social competence, when grounded in reconciliation, becomes both professional virtue and spiritual vocation.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Gido is deeply aligned with the reconciliation paradigm articulated in Epistle to the Philippians 4:2-3. Through qualitative analysis integrating biblical exegesis and empirical field data, the research confirms that reconciliation is not merely a theological abstraction but a practical framework shaping interpersonal communication, collegial collaboration, and institutional culture within the school context. Reconciliation-oriented communication emerged as a defining characteristic of teacher social competence. CRE teachers consistently practiced dialogical engagement, empathetic listening, and restorative conflict resolution. These behaviors reflect Paul's exhortation for believers "to be of the same mind in the Lord," demonstrating that unity is cultivated through shared commitment to Christ rather than enforced conformity. In classroom settings, such competence fostered psychological safety and moral formation among the 310 Christian students, who perceived their learning environment as peaceful and fair. Collegial mediation within the faculty illustrated the communal dimension of reconciliation emphasized in Philippians 4:3. The involvement of trusted companions in resolving disputes parallels the collaborative ethos observed among the 22 Christian teachers, including the two CRE teachers. Mediation was characterized by affirmation of dignity, shared responsibility, and mission-centered dialogue. This pattern not only stabilized professional relationships but also strengthened the institutional climate. The modeling of unity before students functioned as implicit curriculum. Students learned reconciliation not only through formal instruction but also through observing teachers' interactions. The congruence between biblical teaching and lived practice enhanced the credibility of Christian instruction. Reconciliation thus operated simultaneously at theological, pedagogical, and organizational levels. The findings suggest that reconciliation remains a sustainable and transformative framework for social competence. However, its effectiveness depends upon collective participation rather than reliance on a few individuals. Institutionalizing reconciliation through policy, professional development, and student mentoring will ensure its continuity. This research affirms that teacher social competence, when interpreted through the lens of Philippians

4:2-3, becomes both professional obligation and spiritual vocation. Within the context of SMP Negeri 2 Gido, reconciliation is not peripheral to educational practice but foundational to communal integrity and spiritual formation. By embodying Pauline unity in daily interactions, CRE teachers demonstrate that professionalism and faith commitment are integrally connected in shaping a restorative and transformative school community.

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