



The Pedagogical Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Realizing Transformational Learning: A Biblical Reflection on Philippians 3 in the Context of SD Negeri 071188 Hilizoliga

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in realizing transformational learning through a biblical reflection on Epistle to the Philippians chapter 3, contextualized at SD Negeri 071188 Hilizoliga. The research was conducted within a school community consisting of 60 Christian students and 10 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, the study integrates historical-grammatical exegesis of Philippians 3 with classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The findings reveal that pedagogical competence is manifested through four interrelated dimensions: Christ-centered epistemological reorientation, goal-directed formative pedagogy, dialogical-reflective instructional strategies, and holistic character-based assessment. By emphasizing Paul's reevaluation of identity in Christ and his metaphor of pressing toward the goal, the CRE teacher translates theological concepts into age-appropriate learning activities such as reflective dialogue, spiritual goal-setting, and experiential application. Students demonstrate increased engagement, moral awareness, and perseverance, indicating that learning extends beyond cognitive acquisition toward personal transformation. The study concludes that pedagogical competence grounded in Pauline theology enables CRE teachers to cultivate transformational learning in elementary education. In this context, professionalism is expressed not only through technical instructional skill but also through theological intentionality and formative leadership. Philippians 3 thus functions as a normative and practical framework for integrating faith and pedagogy in shaping students' spiritual and intellectual growth.

Keywords: *Pedagogical Competence, Christian Religious Education, Transformational Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Pedagogical competence constitutes a central pillar of teacher professionalism in Indonesia, encompassing the capacity to design, implement, and evaluate learning processes that foster students' holistic development (Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers). Within Christian Religious Education (CRE), pedagogical competence extends beyond methodological skill; it is intrinsically theological, oriented toward transformation of mind, character, and life in Christ. This study examines the pedagogical competence of CRE teachers in realizing transformational learning through a biblical reflection on Epistle to the Philippians chapter 3, contextualized at SD Negeri 071188 Hilizoliga. The school community comprises 60 Christian students and 10 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, forming a context where faith-based formation intersects with public educational standards. Philippians 3 presents one of Paul's most profound autobiographical and theological reflections. The apostle recounts his former religious credentials, reinterprets them in light of Christ, and articulates a dynamic vision of knowing Christ, pressing forward toward the goal, and being transformed by resurrection hope. Gordon D. Fee (1995) notes that Philippians 3 centers on a radical reorientation of values, wherein prior gains are considered loss "because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ." Similarly, Peter T. O'Brien (1991) emphasizes that Paul's language of pressing on (*diōkō*) conveys an active, ongoing pursuit of conformity to Christ. These exegetical insights reveal that Christian transformation is neither static nor merely cognitive; it involves a continual reconfiguration of identity and purpose. Such theological dynamics provide a rich foundation for conceptualizing transformational learning within CRE. Transformational learning theory, as articulated by Mezirow (1991), describes a process through which individuals critically reassess prior assumptions and adopt new frames of reference. Although Mezirow's framework emerges from adult education theory, its emphasis on perspective transformation resonates with Pauline theology in Philippians 3. Paul himself undergoes a profound paradigm shift, from confidence in the flesh to confidence in Christ. For Christian educators, this shift offers a pedagogical paradigm: teaching is not limited to information transfer but seeks to cultivate renewed understanding and reoriented life commitments. Thomas H. Groome (2011) further argues that faith education must integrate lived experience and Christian narrative in a dialogical process that fosters authentic transformation. Thus, pedagogical competence in CRE involves facilitating encounters between biblical truth and students' concrete realities. In the context of SD Negeri 071188 Hilizoliga, where 60 Christian students interact daily with 10 Christian teachers, pedagogical practice significantly shapes the spiritual and intellectual climate of the school. Elementary education represents a formative developmental stage; cognitive structures, moral reasoning, and spiritual imagination are actively emerging. The CRE teacher's ability to design age-appropriate yet theologically substantive instruction therefore carries long-term implications. If Philippians 3 is interpreted pedagogically, its motifs of re-evaluating identity, pursuing Christ-centered goals, and persevering in faith can inspire learning models that nurture resilience, humility, and purpose among young learners. Pedagogical competence encompasses several integrated dimensions: understanding student characteristics, mastering subject matter, designing contextualized instruction, employing interactive strategies, and conducting authentic

assessment (Shulman, 1987). In a Christian framework, these competencies are animated by theological intentionality. When Paul declares, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:14), he articulates a teleological orientation, learning directed toward a transcendent goal. Applied educationally, this suggests that curriculum and pedagogy should cultivate goal-oriented growth grounded in Christ-centered values. Philippians 3:20-21 introduces an eschatological dimension: believers' citizenship is in heaven, and transformation culminates in conformity to Christ's glorious body. While elementary students may not fully grasp eschatological complexity, pedagogical competence involves translating such theological hope into accessible language that nurtures perseverance and moral aspiration. As Osmer (2008) argues, practical theology bridges normative biblical reflection and concrete action within specific contexts. Accordingly, examining pedagogical competence at SD Negeri 071188 Hilizoliga requires attention to both exegetical integrity and classroom praxis. This research therefore addresses three guiding questions: How does Philippians 3 articulate a theology of transformation relevant to education? How do CRE teachers demonstrate pedagogical competence in facilitating transformational learning within the school context? How do students perceive the impact of such pedagogical practices on their understanding of faith and personal growth? By integrating biblical exegesis and qualitative educational analysis, the study seeks to contribute to ongoing discourse on Christian teacher professionalism. It proposes that pedagogical competence, when rooted in Pauline transformation theology, becomes not merely technical proficiency but participation in God's redemptive work within the formative space of elementary education.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design integrating biblical-theological exegesis and educational field research to examine the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in realizing transformational learning at SD Negeri 071188 Hilizoliga. The research focused on a school community consisting of 60 Christian students and 10 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to explore lived pedagogical practices, interpret participants' experiences, and understand how theological reflection on Epistle to the Philippians chapter 3 informs instructional processes. Data collection was conducted through three primary techniques: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the CRE teacher as the principal informant, four additional Christian classroom teachers, and eight Christian students representing upper and lower grade levels. The purposive sampling strategy ensured that participants had direct involvement in or exposure to CRE instruction. Interview questions focused on lesson planning, instructional strategies, student engagement, assessment practices, and perceptions of spiritual and cognitive transformation in learning. Classroom observations were conducted during multiple CRE sessions to document pedagogical practices in real time. An observation protocol was developed based on indicators of pedagogical competence derived from Indonesian national teacher standards and from transformational learning characteristics such as reflective dialogue, contextual application, and goal-oriented instruction. Particular

attention was given to how Philippians 3 was presented, interpreted, and connected to students' daily experiences. Field notes recorded teacher explanations, questioning techniques, student participation, use of learning media, and evaluative feedback. This triangulation of interviews, observations, and documents enhanced credibility and minimized single-source bias. To strengthen trustworthiness, member checking was conducted with the CRE teacher to confirm interpretive accuracy, and peer debriefing was undertaken with a fellow educational researcher to evaluate thematic consistency. The biblical-theological component utilized a historical-grammatical approach to interpret Philippians 3, examining key concepts such as "knowing Christ," "pressing on," and "citizenship in heaven." These exegetical insights functioned as a normative lens for analyzing empirical findings. Data analysis followed thematic coding procedures, moving from initial coding to focused categorization in order to identify recurring patterns related to pedagogical strategy, transformative engagement, and spiritual formation. Ethical considerations were observed through informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of participant identity. Through this integrated methodological framework, the study sought to construct a comprehensive understanding of how pedagogical competence grounded in Pauline theology contributes to transformational learning within the elementary school context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the pedagogical competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SD Negeri 071188 Hilizoliga demonstrates a substantive alignment with the transformational theology articulated in Epistle to the Philippians chapter 3. Within a school context comprising 60 Christian students and 10 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, pedagogical practice reveals a deliberate orientation toward cognitive renewal, affective engagement, and behavioral transformation. Analysis of interviews, classroom observations, and instructional documents generated four major thematic patterns: Christ-centered epistemological reorientation, goal-directed formative pedagogy, reflective and dialogical instructional strategies, and assessment practices oriented toward character and growth. These themes collectively illustrate how Pauline transformation theology informs and animates pedagogical competence in a concrete elementary education setting. Christ-centered epistemological reorientation emerged as a foundational pedagogical pattern. Philippians 3 recounts Paul's radical reassessment of his former religious credentials, which he now regards as loss compared to "the surpassing worth of knowing Christ." Exegetically, this passage signals a decisive reconfiguration of epistemic priorities: knowledge is no longer defined by status or achievement but by relational participation in Christ. In the classroom context, this theological reorientation was translated into instructional emphases that prioritized relational understanding of faith over mere memorization of doctrinal content. Observations revealed that lessons on Philippians 3 did not focus primarily on historical data about Paul but on the meaning of "knowing Christ" in daily life. The CRE teacher repeatedly asked students reflective questions such as, "Apa arti mengenai Yesus bagi hidupmu sehari-hari?" ("What does knowing Jesus mean for your daily life?"). This questioning technique shifted cognitive focus from abstract recall to personal

appropriation. Students were encouraged to articulate experiences of trust, forgiveness, and perseverance, thus internalizing theological concepts within lived experience. Such practice reflects pedagogical competence in understanding student developmental stages; elementary learners benefit from narrative and experiential integration rather than abstract theological abstraction. The epistemological shift modeled by Paul, valuing relational knowledge over external credentials, was thereby pedagogically embodied.

Goal-directed formative pedagogy constituted a prominent theme. Philippians 3:12-14 emphasizes pressing on toward the goal, employing athletic imagery to describe spiritual perseverance. The Greek verb *diōkō* conveys active pursuit, while the metaphor of a prize underscores teleological intentionality. In classroom practice, this motif inspired goal-oriented learning structures. Lesson plans examined during document analysis included clearly articulated spiritual and behavioral objectives, such as cultivating perseverance in prayer, developing humility, and setting Christ-centered personal goals. Rather than presenting faith as static inheritance, the teacher framed Christian life as ongoing journey. Observational data showed that students were guided to write short-term “faith goals,” for example, committing to daily gratitude or reconciliation with peers. These activities reflect high-level pedagogical competence in translating biblical metaphors into age-appropriate formative exercises. Interviews with students indicated that such goal-setting fostered motivation and self-awareness; several reported feeling “lebih semangat” (“more motivated”) to improve attitudes at home and school. Theologically, the pressing-on motif was thus operationalized as disciplined growth rather than passive belief. From an educational perspective, this aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes active student engagement in meaning-making and goal formation. Reflective and dialogical instructional strategies were consistently observed as mechanisms of transformation. Philippians 3 involves autobiographical reflection: Paul recounts his past to reinterpret it through Christ’s redemptive work. This narrative reflexivity served as pedagogical template. During observed lessons, the CRE teacher invited students to recount personal experiences of change, asking them to compare “*dulu dan sekarang*” (“before and now”). Such comparative reflection enabled students to recognize incremental growth in character. Rather than imposing moral conclusions, the teacher facilitated guided dialogue in which students articulated insights collaboratively. This dialogical approach fostered communal learning, consistent with the Pauline emphasis on shared citizenship and collective identity (Phil 3:20). In interviews, students expressed appreciation for opportunities to speak and be heard, noting that the classroom atmosphere felt “aman” (“safe”) for sharing. The creation of psychological safety is a critical indicator of pedagogical competence, particularly in elementary contexts where self-expression can be fragile. The teacher’s ability to moderate discussion, affirm contributions, and gently correct misconceptions demonstrated mastery of classroom management integrated with spiritual sensitivity. Transformational learning occurred not through didactic monologue but through participatory reflection, enabling students to internalize biblical narratives within their own developmental trajectories. Assessment practices revealed orientation toward character formation rather than purely cognitive evaluation. While national curriculum standards require measurable learning outcomes, the CRE teacher supplemented written tests with reflective journals and observational rubrics assessing attitudes such as cooperation, perseverance, and honesty. Document

analysis showed that evaluation criteria included indicators like “menunjukkan semangat berusaha” (“demonstrates perseverance”) and “bersikap rendah hati” (“acts humbly”), directly derived from Philippians 3 themes. Interviews with fellow teachers indicated that this holistic assessment approach influenced broader school culture; several classroom teachers reported integrating reflective components into their own subjects after observing CRE practices. In this way, pedagogical competence extended beyond subject boundaries, contributing to institutional ethos. Theologically, such assessment mirrors Paul’s concern not merely for doctrinal correctness but for lived conformity to Christ. Educationally, it reflects authentic assessment theory, which values demonstration of applied understanding over rote memorization. The findings also reveal contextual tensions and developmental limitations. Elementary students exhibit varied cognitive capacities; abstract theological concepts such as eschatological citizenship (Phil 3:20–21) require simplification without distortion. The CRE teacher addressed this by employing metaphors of “*rumah surgawi*” (“heavenly home”) and “*menjadi seperti Yesus*” (“becoming like Jesus”), emphasizing hope and moral aspiration. However, interviews suggest that some younger students interpret these ideas concretely, occasionally conflating moral behavior with earning salvation. This indicates the pedagogical challenge of balancing ethical exhortation with grace-centered theology. Competence therefore involves ongoing refinement of explanatory clarity to avoid unintended legalism. The teacher acknowledged this tension, noting the need to reiterate that transformation flows from relationship with Christ rather than performance anxiety. Such self-reflection evidences professional maturity. Another contextual dimension concerns the relatively small size of the Christian student population (60 students). While intimacy facilitates individualized attention, it also amplifies relational visibility. Students are acutely aware of teacher consistency; discrepancies between instruction and behavior quickly undermine credibility. Interviews revealed that students observe whether teachers themselves “press on” in perseverance during difficulties. For example, during a period of infrastructure limitation, the CRE teacher maintained enthusiastic instruction despite resource scarcity. Students later referenced this example when discussing Philippians 3:14, suggesting that modeling perseverance reinforces cognitive content. Thus, pedagogical competence includes embodied congruence between message and demeanor.

Collaboration among the 10 Christian teachers further supported transformational learning. Observations during teacher meetings indicated that CRE themes occasionally informed cross-curricular integration. For instance, a language teacher incorporated reflective journaling aligned with spiritual goal-setting, while a social studies teacher referenced perseverance in discussing national heroes. Such interdisciplinary reinforcement strengthens learning retention. The Pauline metaphor of shared citizenship fosters collective identity not only among believers but among educators pursuing common mission. Although the study focuses primarily on the CRE teacher, the broader faculty environment amplifies pedagogical impact. The integration of exegetical analysis with empirical data underscores a bidirectional dynamic. Philippians 3 provides theological grammar for transformation, reevaluation of identity, disciplined pursuit, communal belonging, and eschatological hope. Classroom practice translates this grammar into pedagogical syntax, reflective dialogue, goal-setting exercises, holistic

assessment, and modeling perseverance. Where these elements converge, transformational learning becomes tangible rather than theoretical. Students reported changes such as increased willingness to apologize, renewed motivation to complete homework diligently, and heightened awareness of spiritual habits. While such outcomes remain qualitative, their consistency across interviews suggests authentic internalization. Sustainability requires institutional reinforcement. Transformational learning is gradual and cumulative; sporadic emphasis yields limited effect. Continuous professional development in pedagogical innovation and theological literacy would strengthen competence further. Systematic evaluation tools measuring long-term character growth could provide clearer evidence of transformation. The CRE teacher expressed openness to peer observation and feedback, indicating adaptive professionalism. It becomes evident that pedagogical competence at SD Negeri 071188 Hilizoliga is not confined to technical instructional skill but encompasses theological intentionality, developmental sensitivity, dialogical engagement, and formative assessment. Philippians 3 functions as normative lens shaping educational vision: knowledge reoriented around Christ, growth pursued intentionally, identity anchored in heavenly citizenship, and perseverance cultivated through disciplined practice. Within the modest yet vibrant community of 60 Christian students, such pedagogical integration fosters a learning environment where faith and intellect converge. Transformational learning, therefore, emerges not as abstract theory but as lived educational process grounded in Pauline spirituality and enacted through competent, reflective teaching practice.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the pedagogical competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SD Negeri 071188 Hilizoliga demonstrates a coherent and contextually grounded integration of biblical theology and instructional practice. Through a reflective engagement with Epistle to the Philippians chapter 3, the research confirms that transformational learning can be meaningfully realized when pedagogical competence is oriented toward Christ-centered reevaluation of identity, disciplined pursuit of growth, dialogical reflection, and holistic character formation. The findings show that transformational learning begins with epistemological reorientation. By emphasizing “knowing Christ” as relational and life-shaping rather than merely informational, the CRE teacher cultivates learning experiences that engage both cognition and spirituality. This approach reflects Paul’s reinterpretation of former gains as loss for the sake of Christ, translated pedagogically into reflective and experiential instruction appropriate to elementary learners. Goal-directed pedagogy rooted in Philippians 3:12-14 fosters perseverance and intentional growth among students. The integration of spiritual goal-setting, reflective exercises, and formative feedback demonstrates that pedagogical competence includes guiding learners toward purposeful development rather than passive reception of content. Within a community of 60 Christian students and 10 Christian teachers, such intentionality contributes to a coherent educational ethos. Dialogical and reflective strategies enable students to internalize biblical truths within their lived experiences. Transformational learning is facilitated not through didactic transmission alone but through guided conversation, narrative reflection, and modeling

of perseverance. The alignment between teacher conduct and theological instruction strengthens credibility and enhances formative impact. The study acknowledges ongoing challenges, particularly in translating complex theological themes, such as eschatological hope, into developmentally accessible language without oversimplification. Sustained professional reflection and collaborative reinforcement among faculty members remain essential for maintaining transformative momentum. Pedagogical competence grounded in Philippians 3 transforms CRE instruction into a dynamic process of spiritual and intellectual renewal. At SD Negeri 071188 Hilizoliga, transformational learning is realized when biblical reflection informs instructional design, classroom interaction, and character assessment. Thus, teacher professionalism is not merely technical expertise but vocational participation in God's transformative work within the formative context of elementary education.

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