



The Spiritual Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Fostering Students' Moral Resilience: A Biblical Reflection on Philippians 4:7 at SMA Negeri 1 Godean

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and its role in fostering students' moral resilience through a biblical reflection on the Epistle to the Philippians 4:7. The passage emphasizes the peace of God that guards the hearts and minds of believers, highlighting the importance of spiritual stability in facing life's challenges. Within the context of Christian education, this theological message provides a foundation for guiding students to develop inner strength, ethical awareness, and responsible behavior. The purpose of this research is to explore how the spiritual competence of CRE teachers contributes to the development of students' moral resilience in the school environment. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Godean. The participants consisted of 25 Christian students and one Christian Religious Education teacher who plays a central role in the instructional process. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and documentation analysis related to Christian Religious Education learning activities. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis involving data reduction, categorization, and interpretation to identify patterns related to teacher spirituality and students' moral resilience. The findings reveal that the spiritual competence of the CRE teacher significantly influences the formation of students' moral resilience. Students demonstrate a deeper understanding of how faith can guide their responses to moral challenges and personal struggles. In conclusion, the spiritual competence of CRE teachers plays a crucial role in strengthening students' moral resilience and supporting holistic character formation within Christian education.

Keywords: *Spiritual Competence, Christian Religious Education, Moral Resilience*

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping not only students' intellectual abilities but also their moral and spiritual character. In contemporary society, young people are

increasingly confronted with various moral challenges, including peer pressure, ethical dilemmas, and the influence of digital culture. These realities highlight the importance of moral resilience, which refers to the capacity of individuals to maintain ethical integrity and responsible behavior even in difficult or conflicting situations. Schools therefore carry a significant responsibility in fostering moral resilience among students by providing guidance that integrates knowledge, character formation, and spiritual values. Within this context, teachers serve as key agents in shaping students' moral development through both instruction and personal example. Scholars in education emphasize that teachers' character and spiritual integrity strongly influence the moral attitudes of students because learning often occurs through relational modeling as much as through formal instruction (Palmer, 1998). The formation of moral resilience is closely connected to the spiritual competence of teachers. Spiritual competence refers to the teacher's ability to integrate faith, values, and biblical teachings into the educational process in a way that nurtures students' spiritual awareness and ethical responsibility. Christian educators are expected not only to convey theological knowledge but also to guide students in applying biblical principles to real-life situations. Pazmiño (2008) argues that Christian education must intentionally combine theological reflection with practical discipleship so that learners develop a faith that influences their decisions, attitudes, and relationships. This perspective highlights the importance of teachers who possess a mature spiritual life, because their personal spirituality shapes how they interpret and communicate biblical teachings in the classroom.

One biblical text that provides a profound theological foundation for moral resilience is found in the Epistle to the Philippians 4:7. In this passage, the apostle Paul speaks about the "peace of God, which surpasses all understanding," that guards the hearts and minds of believers in Christ Jesus. Biblical scholars interpret this statement as emphasizing the transformative power of divine peace in sustaining believers amid challenges, anxieties, and moral struggles (Fee, 1995). The passage suggests that spiritual stability and moral strength are closely connected to an inner life shaped by faith and trust in God. For students navigating the complexities of adolescence, such a message is particularly relevant because it provides a spiritual foundation for developing emotional balance, self-control, and ethical decision-making. The message of Epistle to the Philippians 4:7 can serve as an important framework for guiding students toward moral resilience. When teachers help students understand that inner peace and moral clarity come from a relationship with God, they encourage learners to develop spiritual resources that support responsible behavior. This process requires teachers who are spiritually competent and capable of translating biblical teachings into meaningful educational experiences. According to Wright (2004), the message of Philippians consistently emphasizes joy, perseverance, and faithfulness in the midst of challenges, making it a rich source for exploring how Christian faith can shape ethical attitudes and resilient character. The role of teachers becomes even more significant in school contexts where Christian students represent a minority group. In such settings, Christian Religious Education often functions as a space where students can explore their faith identity and reflect on how biblical values guide their behavior within a diverse social environment. Teachers must therefore demonstrate sensitivity, wisdom, and spiritual maturity in guiding students to practice their faith while respecting the broader school community. Their spiritual competence enables them to create learning environments that encourage

reflection, dialogue, and moral discernment. This research is conducted in the context of SMA Negeri 1 Godean, where Christian Religious Education is implemented for Christian students as part of the national education curriculum. In this school context, there are 25 Christian students and one Christian Religious Education teacher, which creates a unique educational environment where the teacher plays a central role in guiding students' spiritual and moral development. The limited number of Christian students also highlights the importance of effective teaching practices that strengthen students' faith identity and moral resilience within a broader multicultural setting. Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the role of the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in fostering students' moral resilience. By reflecting on the theological message found in Epistle to the Philippians 4:7 and analyzing its application within the educational context, this research seeks to provide insights into how teachers can guide students to develop inner stability, ethical responsibility, and spiritual strength. Ultimately, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how Christian Religious Education can support the holistic formation of students, equipping them to navigate moral challenges with faith, wisdom, and integrity.

METHODS

A qualitative descriptive research design to explore how the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers contributes to fostering students' moral resilience based on the theological message of the Epistle to the Philippians 4:7. A qualitative descriptive approach was selected because it enables researchers to understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections in depth, particularly regarding how spiritual values are integrated into the teaching and learning process. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Godean, where Christian Religious Education is provided as part of the formal curriculum for Christian students. The participants in this study consisted of 25 Christian students and one Christian Religious Education teacher, who served as the primary informants due to their direct involvement in CRE learning activities. Participants were selected purposively in order to obtain rich and relevant information related to the implementation of spiritual values in the classroom. Data were collected through several qualitative techniques, including semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and documentation analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the CRE teacher and selected students to explore their understanding of moral resilience, their experiences in learning biblical teachings, and the ways in which the teacher's spirituality influences classroom interaction. Classroom observations were carried out during Christian Religious Education lessons to examine teaching methods, teacher-student interactions, and the overall learning atmosphere, particularly how the teacher integrates spiritual reflection and biblical principles into the learning process. In addition, documentation such as lesson plans, instructional materials, and school records related to Christian Religious Education activities were analyzed to support and contextualize the information obtained from interviews and observations. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis procedures, which involved several stages: data reduction, data categorization, and interpretation. The researcher carefully reviewed and organized all collected data to identify meaningful information related to teacher spirituality and students' moral resilience. The data were grouped into thematic

categories such as teacher spiritual example, integration of biblical teaching from the Epistle to the Philippians 4:7, student reflections on moral challenges, and the development of inner peace and ethical responsibility. The themes were interpreted within the broader framework of Christian education and character formation. Through this analytical process, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive description of how the spiritual competence of CRE teachers contributes to strengthening students' moral resilience within the educational environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the spiritual competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher plays a significant role in fostering students' moral resilience within the learning environment at SMA Negeri 1 Godean. Through interviews, classroom observations, and documentation analysis, the research identified several interconnected themes that illustrate how teacher spirituality influences students' moral development. These themes include the teacher as a spiritual role model, the integration of biblical teachings into moral reflection, the cultivation of inner peace and emotional stability, the development of ethical awareness in everyday situations, and the influence of relational learning on students' character formation. Together, these findings demonstrate that the spiritual competence of the teacher serves as a key foundation for helping students develop resilience in facing moral and emotional challenges. One of the most prominent findings relates to the role of the teacher as a spiritual role model. In Christian Religious Education, teachers are not merely transmitters of biblical knowledge but also living witnesses of the values they teach. Observational data indicated that the CRE teacher consistently demonstrates attitudes of humility, patience, and attentiveness toward students. These qualities are reflected in the teacher's manner of communication, which emphasizes encouragement, understanding, and spiritual reflection rather than rigid authority. Students described the teacher as someone who embodies the values of faith and calmness even when addressing difficult classroom situations. Such attitudes create a strong impression on students, who often interpret the teacher's behavior as an example of how Christian faith should be lived in daily life. The teacher's consistent demonstration of spiritual maturity becomes a powerful educational tool that helps students understand that faith is not only a theoretical concept but a lived experience that shapes attitudes and decisions.

Another important theme emerging from the data concerns the integration of biblical teachings into moral reflection. The CRE teacher frequently uses scriptural passages to guide students in reflecting on real-life situations, particularly those involving ethical choices and emotional challenges. The message found in Epistle to the Philippians 4:7 becomes a central framework in these discussions, emphasizing the idea that the peace of God can guard the hearts and minds of believers. During classroom lessons, the teacher encourages students to explore the meaning of this passage by connecting it with experiences such as academic stress, peer pressure, and personal uncertainty about the future. Students are invited to discuss how faith and prayer can help them remain calm and morally grounded in situations that might otherwise lead to anxiety or poor decision-making. This approach helps students recognize that biblical teachings provide practical

guidance for navigating complex emotional and moral experiences. The development of inner peace and emotional stability also emerged as a significant aspect of students' moral resilience. Interviews with students revealed that many of them experience various forms of pressure related to academic expectations, social relationships, and personal identity. These pressures can sometimes lead to emotional tension or uncertainty in making ethical choices. The CRE teacher addresses these challenges by encouraging students to cultivate spiritual practices such as prayer, reflection on Scripture, and trust in God's guidance. Through these practices, students learn that faith can provide a sense of stability and reassurance during difficult moments. Observations showed that classroom sessions often include moments of reflective prayer or discussion that invite students to express their concerns and seek spiritual encouragement. These practices contribute to the formation of a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable sharing their experiences and seeking guidance.

The findings also highlight how the teacher's spiritual competence influences students' ethical awareness in everyday situations. Students reported that CRE lessons help them reflect more carefully on the moral implications of their actions, particularly in their interactions with peers. For instance, discussions about the peace of God described in Epistle to the Philippians 4:7 often lead to conversations about conflict resolution, honesty, and respect for others. The teacher encourages students to consider how maintaining inner peace can help them respond wisely to disagreements or misunderstandings with classmates. Students explained that when they remember the biblical message about guarding the heart and mind, they become more intentional about controlling their emotions and avoiding impulsive reactions. Such reflections indicate that biblical teachings can serve as an ethical framework that guides students' behavior beyond the classroom. Another important finding concerns the relational dimension of learning. The data indicate that strong teacher–student relationships play a crucial role in facilitating the development of moral resilience. Students described the CRE teacher as approachable and supportive, which encourages them to discuss personal challenges and moral questions openly. This relational openness creates opportunities for deeper dialogue about faith and ethical decision-making. When students encounter moral dilemmas, they often seek the teacher's perspective or advice, indicating that the teacher is perceived not only as an instructor but also as a mentor. Through these conversations, the teacher helps students analyze situations from a Christian ethical perspective and consider the long-term consequences of their choices. Such guidance supports students in developing critical thinking and moral discernment. The influence of the teacher's spiritual competence is also evident in the overall classroom atmosphere. Observations revealed that CRE lessons are characterized by a calm and reflective environment in which students are encouraged to listen respectfully to one another and share their perspectives. The teacher intentionally fosters this atmosphere by modeling respectful dialogue and emphasizing the importance of empathy and understanding. When students express differing opinions or experiences, the teacher responds with affirmation and thoughtful questions that encourage deeper reflection. This approach helps students feel valued and respected, which in turn strengthens their willingness to engage in meaningful discussions about faith and morality. A supportive classroom climate therefore becomes an essential element in cultivating moral resilience. The findings show that students'

understanding of moral resilience evolves as they connect biblical teachings with their own life experiences. For example, some students reported that reflecting on the message of Epistle to the Philippians 4:7 helped them cope with anxiety during examinations or personal conflicts. Instead of reacting with frustration or fear, they learned to approach these situations with prayer and trust in God. Such experiences illustrate how spiritual teachings can shape students' emotional responses and encourage them to maintain ethical integrity even when facing challenges. Over time, these practices contribute to the development of a resilient moral identity grounded in faith.

The results also suggest that moral resilience is not formed solely through theoretical instruction but through continuous practice and reinforcement. The CRE teacher regularly invites students to reflect on how biblical principles can guide their daily decisions, whether in relationships with friends, attitudes toward academic responsibilities, or responses to difficult situations. By repeatedly connecting faith with practical life experiences, the teacher helps students internalize moral values that become part of their personal identity. This process reflects a holistic approach to Christian education in which spiritual formation and moral development are integrated into the learning process. The research findings highlight the importance of contextual sensitivity in teaching Christian values within a diverse school environment. As a public school where students come from different religious backgrounds, SMA Negeri 1 Godean provides a multicultural setting that requires respectful dialogue and mutual understanding. The CRE teacher demonstrates awareness of this context by emphasizing that Christian values such as peace, honesty, and compassion are not only theological principles but also universal ethical virtues that contribute to harmonious social relationships. By presenting biblical teachings in a way that encourages respect for diversity, the teacher helps students understand how their faith can guide them in interacting positively with others in a pluralistic society. The study also identified certain challenges in fostering moral resilience among students. Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by exploration, questioning, and sometimes uncertainty about personal beliefs. Some students initially struggle to see the relevance of biblical teachings in addressing contemporary issues such as social media pressure or academic competition. To address this challenge, the teacher adopts an interactive teaching approach that encourages students to share their perspectives and ask questions about faith and ethics. Through open dialogue, the teacher gradually helps students recognize the practical significance of biblical teachings for their everyday lives. This strategy not only strengthens students' engagement with the subject but also promotes deeper understanding of Christian moral principles. Another challenge relates to the limited number of Christian students in the school, which may sometimes lead to feelings of isolation or uncertainty about expressing their faith. The CRE teacher responds to this situation by creating a supportive community within the classroom where students can share their experiences and encourage one another. Group discussions, reflective activities, and collaborative learning tasks help students build a sense of belonging and mutual support. In this way, the classroom becomes a space where students can strengthen their faith identity while also developing the confidence to practice their values within the broader school environment. The results and discussion of this study demonstrate that the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a vital role in fostering students' moral resilience. By modeling spiritual

integrity, integrating biblical teachings into real-life reflection, and nurturing supportive relationships with students, the teacher creates an educational environment that encourages ethical awareness and emotional stability. The message of Epistle to the Philippians 4:7 provides a powerful theological framework for this process, emphasizing that the peace of God can guard the hearts and minds of believers amid life's challenges. When this message is communicated through authentic teaching and relational engagement, students are empowered to develop resilience that enables them to navigate moral dilemmas with faith, wisdom, and integrity. Consequently, the role of teacher spirituality emerges as a central factor in the success of Christian Religious Education, highlighting the importance of nurturing teachers' spiritual competence as part of professional development in faith-based education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers plays a crucial role in fostering students' moral resilience within the educational environment. The findings demonstrate that the teacher's spiritual maturity, integrity, and ability to integrate biblical teachings into the learning process significantly influence how students understand and respond to moral challenges. Through consistent modeling of faith, reflective teaching practices, and supportive interpersonal relationships, the CRE teacher creates a learning atmosphere that encourages students to develop inner stability, ethical awareness, and responsible decision-making. In the context of SMA Negeri 1 Godean, where the number of Christian students is relatively small, the role of the teacher becomes even more important in guiding students to strengthen their faith identity and moral character. The theological message found in the Epistle to the Philippians 4:7 provides a meaningful framework for understanding moral resilience in Christian education. The concept of the peace of God guarding the hearts and minds of believers emphasizes that spiritual stability and moral strength originate from a deep relationship with God. When teachers communicate this message through reflective dialogue, prayer, and contextual application, students begin to understand that faith can provide guidance and emotional balance when facing academic pressure, interpersonal conflict, or ethical dilemmas. This process helps students internalize Christian values that influence their attitudes and behavior both inside and outside the classroom. The research highlights that moral resilience is nurtured through relational learning. The teacher's approachability, empathy, and willingness to listen to students' experiences foster a supportive learning environment where students feel safe to discuss personal challenges and moral questions. Such interactions enable the teacher to guide students toward thoughtful reflection and responsible choices grounded in biblical principles. Over time, these experiences contribute to the development of students who are not only academically engaged but also morally and spiritually resilient. The spiritual competence of CRE teachers is an essential component of effective Christian Religious Education. Teachers who integrate spiritual authenticity with pedagogical practice can help students develop a resilient moral character capable of navigating the complexities of modern life. Therefore, strengthening teachers' spiritual competence should be considered an

important priority in Christian education, as it supports the holistic formation of students and prepares them to live responsibly and faithfully within diverse social contexts.

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