



Serving through Education: The Formation of Teachers' Service Ethos in Christian Religious Education from the Perspective of the Epistle to the Philippians at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara

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ABSTRACT

The ethos of service is a fundamental value in Christian education because it reflects the teachings of the gospel and the example of Christ's humility and dedication to serving others. In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), teachers are expected to embody these values in their professional responsibilities so that students not only understand Christian teachings intellectually but also experience them through practical examples. This study examines the formation of teachers' service ethos through Christian Religious Education from the perspective of the Epistle to the Philippians at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara in Kepulauan Mentawai. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach involving fifty-two Christian students and seven Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and documentation analysis to explore how biblical teachings influence teachers' attitudes and practices in educational service. The findings reveal that the ethos of service among teachers is expressed through several key dimensions, including spiritual commitment, relational care for students, collaborative engagement among teachers, and the integration of biblical values into classroom instruction. Teachers demonstrate humility, patience, and dedication in guiding students, creating a learning environment that encourages respect, cooperation, and moral responsibility. The example of Paul the Apostle and the teachings in Philippians provide a theological foundation that inspires teachers to approach their profession as a form of ministry and service. The study concludes that the integration of biblical values with professional teaching practice contributes significantly to the development of a service-oriented ethos among educators and supports the holistic formation of students' character and faith within the school community.

Keywords: Education, Christian Religious Education, Service Ethos

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a transformative role in shaping the intellectual, moral, and spiritual character of learners. Within the framework of Christian Religious Education (CRE), this transformative function is closely related to the formation of values that reflect the teachings of the gospel. Teachers in Christian education are therefore expected not only to deliver academic content but also to demonstrate a lifestyle of service that reflects Christian faith in practice. The ethos of service becomes a central dimension of Christian teaching because it embodies the values of humility, dedication, and commitment to the well-being of others. In this context, the teachings contained in the Epistle to the Philippians provide a significant theological foundation for understanding how service and humility can shape the attitudes and practices of educators. The letter to the Philippians was written by Paul the Apostle to encourage the early Christian community to live in unity, humility, and joyful perseverance despite difficult circumstances. The epistle emphasizes that followers of Christ are called to adopt the mindset of Christ Himself, who demonstrated humility and selfless service for the sake of others. These teachings have profound implications for Christian education because they highlight that faith should be expressed through practical service and commitment to community life. Teachers who internalize these values can play a significant role in shaping the spiritual development of students by demonstrating that service is an integral expression of Christian faith. In the field of Christian education, scholars emphasize that the role of teachers extends beyond instructional duties into the sphere of spiritual mentorship and moral guidance. Pazmiño (2008) explains that Christian education aims to nurture holistic discipleship by integrating biblical teaching with everyday life experiences. Teachers serve as facilitators who guide students in understanding the relationship between faith and action. Similarly, Groome (2011) argues that Christian educators must embody the values they teach because authentic witness is one of the most powerful forms of learning in faith formation. Through their attitudes, behaviors, and interactions with students, teachers communicate important lessons about commitment, compassion, and responsibility.

Discussions of teacher professionalism typically focus on competencies such as pedagogical skill, subject knowledge, and classroom management. However, Christian Religious Education introduces an additional dimension of professionalism that involves spiritual commitment and ethical responsibility. Teachers who serve in CRE are expected to model Christian virtues such as humility, perseverance, and service. These qualities contribute to the development of a positive learning environment where students can grow not only academically but also spiritually and morally. The formation of a service-oriented ethos among teachers is therefore essential in ensuring that Christian education fulfills its mission of shaping character and strengthening faith. The importance of cultivating a service ethos among teachers becomes particularly significant in schools located in geographically remote or socially diverse regions. Educational institutions in such contexts often rely heavily on the dedication and commitment of teachers to maintain a supportive learning environment. SMPN 2 Siberut Utara, located in Kepulauan Mentawai, represents an educational setting where Christian Religious Education plays a vital role in guiding students' moral and spiritual formation. In this school community, there are fifty-two Christian students and seven teachers who are also Christians,

including the CRE teacher who provides religious instruction and spiritual guidance. The presence of multiple Christian educators within the school creates opportunities for collaboration in fostering values of service, responsibility, and community engagement among students. Much of the existing literature focuses on instructional strategies or curriculum design, while the spiritual motivations that shape teachers' commitment to service receive less attention. The theological perspective offered by the Epistle to the Philippians provides a valuable framework for examining how educators can develop a mindset of humility, dedication, and unity in their professional roles. This study seeks to examine the formation of teachers' service ethos through Christian Religious Education at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara in Kepulauan Mentawai. By exploring the experiences and perspectives of both teachers and students, the research aims to understand how the teachings of Philippians influence the attitudes, motivations, and practices of educators in their service to the school community. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on Christian education by highlighting the importance of integrating biblical values with professional responsibility, particularly in educational contexts where teachers play a crucial role in shaping both the academic and spiritual development of students.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the formation of teachers' service ethos through Christian Religious Education (CRE) from the perspective of the Epistle to the Philippians at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara in Kepulauan Mentawai. A qualitative approach was selected because the purpose of the research was to understand deeply the experiences, perspectives, and practices of teachers and students regarding the integration of Christian values into educational service. Qualitative descriptive research allows the researcher to examine social and educational phenomena within their natural context and to interpret meanings based on participants' lived experiences (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the approach made it possible to analyze how biblical teachings shape the attitudes and professional behavior of teachers involved in Christian Religious Education. The research was conducted at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara, a public junior high school located in Kepulauan Mentawai. The school community includes fifty-two Christian students and seven teachers who identify as Christians, including the Christian Religious Education teacher who plays a central role in guiding students' spiritual learning. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which enables the researcher to choose individuals who possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the research topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The participants in this study consisted of the CRE teacher, several Christian teachers who support the implementation of Christian values in the school environment, and a number of Christian students who actively participate in CRE classes. Their perspectives were considered essential for understanding how the ethos of service is formed and expressed within the educational setting. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and documentation analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the CRE teacher and several Christian teachers to explore their understanding of service ethos, their interpretation of biblical teachings related to service, and their experiences in applying these values within their professional roles. Interviews were also conducted with selected students to understand how they perceive

the attitudes, guidance, and service demonstrated by their teachers in the context of Christian Religious Education. These interviews provided rich insights into how teacher behavior influences students' perspectives on faith and service. Classroom observations were conducted during CRE learning sessions to examine how teachers integrate biblical teachings with classroom activities and how they demonstrate attitudes of service in their interactions with students. Particular attention was given to teaching methods, communication styles, encouragement of student participation, and the ways in which teachers model values such as humility, cooperation, and responsibility. In addition, documentation analysis was carried out by reviewing relevant materials such as lesson plans, teaching notes, school policies related to religious education, and records of school activities that reflect the implementation of Christian values within the school community. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis process began with familiarization with the data by carefully reading interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation. The researcher then conducted initial coding to identify key ideas and recurring patterns related to service ethos and Christian educational practice. These codes were subsequently organized into broader themes that represent significant aspects of teachers' service-oriented attitudes and behaviors. Finally, the themes were interpreted in relation to the research objectives and the theological framework derived from the Epistle to the Philippians. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings, several validation strategies were implemented. Data triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was also used by confirming key findings with participants to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected their experiences. In addition, detailed documentation of the research process was maintained to enhance transparency and reliability. Through these methodological procedures, the study aims to provide a comprehensive and trustworthy understanding of how the ethos of service among teachers is formed and practiced through Christian Religious Education at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara in Kepulauan Mentawai.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the formation of teachers' service ethos in Christian Religious Education (CRE) at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara in Kepulauan Mentawai is strongly influenced by the integration of biblical values, professional commitment, and the relational dynamics between teachers and students. Within this educational context, the ethos of service is not merely understood as an abstract moral principle but as a practical expression of Christian faith that shapes teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and instructional practices. The teachings contained in the Epistle to the Philippians serve as an important theological framework that inspires teachers to demonstrate humility, dedication, and collaborative spirit in their service to students and the broader school community. Through interviews, observations, and documentation analysis, several key themes emerged that illustrate how the ethos of service is cultivated and expressed within the school environment. One of the most prominent findings concerns the understanding of teaching as a form of ministry rather than merely a professional obligation. Teachers involved in Christian Religious Education frequently described their work as a calling that

requires commitment, patience, and dedication to the well-being of students. This perspective reflects the influence of biblical teachings that emphasize humility and selfless service. In particular, the example presented by Paul the Apostle in his letter to the Philippians provides a powerful model of perseverance and commitment to serving others even in difficult circumstances. Teachers reported that this biblical narrative motivates them to approach their responsibilities with a spirit of service rather than viewing teaching solely as a routine professional task. By interpreting their role as a form of ministry, teachers develop a deeper sense of responsibility for guiding students not only academically but also spiritually and morally. Classroom observations further indicate that the ethos of service is reflected in the ways teachers interact with students during the learning process. Teachers consistently demonstrate patience, empathy, and attentiveness in responding to students' questions and concerns. Instead of emphasizing authority or control, they prioritize supportive communication and encouragement. This relational approach creates a classroom atmosphere characterized by mutual respect and trust. Students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences, which enhances their engagement in discussions related to Christian values. The ethos of service therefore becomes visible through everyday interactions that demonstrate care and respect for students as individuals.

Another significant finding involves the integration of biblical teachings into the instructional process. Teachers incorporate themes from the Epistle to the Philippians, such as humility, unity, perseverance, and joyful service, into lesson discussions and learning activities. For example, when discussing passages related to humility and service, teachers encourage students to reflect on how these values can be practiced in their relationships with friends, family members, and teachers. Students are often invited to share personal experiences that illustrate the application of Christian values in daily life. This participatory learning approach allows students to see the relevance of biblical teachings beyond the classroom, transforming abstract concepts into practical guidance for their everyday actions. The formation of service ethos is also supported by collaborative relationships among Christian teachers within the school. At SMPN 2 Siberut Utara, there are seven teachers who identify as Christians, including the CRE teacher. These educators often support one another in reinforcing values of service and responsibility in the broader school environment. For instance, teachers collaborate in organizing activities that promote character formation, such as group discussions about moral values, encouragement of respectful communication among students, and participation in community-oriented school programs. This collaborative approach reflects the emphasis on unity found in the Epistle to the Philippians, where believers are encouraged to work together with a shared purpose and spirit.

The presence of a supportive community of Christian teachers contributes significantly to the sustainability of service-oriented values within the school environment. Rather than placing the responsibility solely on the CRE teacher, multiple educators contribute to modeling attitudes of humility, compassion, and dedication. Students therefore encounter consistent messages about the importance of serving others through various aspects of their educational experience. This consistency strengthens the credibility of the values being taught and reinforces the idea that Christian service is a collective responsibility within the community. Another important aspect revealed in the findings is the role of personal example in shaping students' understanding of service. Students

consistently reported that they learn more effectively when teachers demonstrate the values they teach through their own actions. When teachers treat students fairly, show patience in addressing difficulties, and demonstrate willingness to help those in need, students perceive these behaviors as authentic expressions of Christian teaching. The modeling of service therefore becomes a powerful pedagogical tool that complements formal instruction. Through observing their teachers' behavior, students gain practical insights into how Christian values can be expressed in everyday situations. The educational context of Kepulauan Mentawai also plays a significant role in shaping the way service ethos is expressed within the school. As a region characterized by geographical challenges and limited educational resources, schools often rely heavily on the dedication and creativity of teachers. In such circumstances, the willingness of teachers to serve with commitment and perseverance becomes particularly important. Teachers at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara frequently demonstrate adaptability by using creative teaching strategies and contextual examples that resonate with students' local experiences. For instance, discussions about service often relate to community cooperation, mutual assistance among neighbors, and respect for local cultural values. This contextualization allows students to connect Christian teachings with their own social environment.

One challenge involves balancing administrative responsibilities and instructional duties with the broader mission of spiritual and moral formation. Teachers in public schools are required to fulfill numerous administrative tasks related to curriculum implementation, student assessment, and institutional reporting. These responsibilities sometimes limit the time available for deeper reflection on spiritual values during classroom instruction. Nevertheless, teachers attempt to address this challenge by integrating discussions about service and character development into regular learning activities. Another challenge relates to the diversity of students' backgrounds and levels of understanding regarding Christian teachings. Although there are fifty-two Christian students in the school, their levels of familiarity with biblical teachings vary depending on their family and church environments. Teachers therefore need to adapt their instructional approaches to ensure that all students can engage meaningfully with the material. The ethos of service becomes particularly important in this context because it encourages teachers to exercise patience and empathy when addressing students' diverse learning needs. Students' responses during interviews indicate that the presence of teachers who demonstrate a strong service ethos positively influences their attitudes toward learning and community life. Many students expressed that they feel motivated to participate actively in classroom discussions because their teachers create a supportive and respectful environment. Students also reported that lessons related to service and humility encourage them to practice kindness and cooperation in their relationships with peers. Some students shared examples of helping classmates with schoolwork, resolving conflicts peacefully, and showing respect toward teachers and parents as practical applications of the values discussed in CRE classes.

These responses suggest that the formation of service ethos among teachers contributes to broader character development among students. When teachers consistently demonstrate attitudes of service, students are more likely to internalize similar values and apply them in their daily interactions. This outcome aligns with the broader goals of Christian education, which seek to nurture individuals who not only understand biblical

teachings but also embody those teachings through their actions. The findings of this study support the view that Christian education involves the integration of faith, knowledge, and practice. The ethos of service functions as a bridge connecting these elements by translating theological principles into practical behaviors within the educational environment. The teachings of the Epistle to the Philippians provide a particularly relevant framework for this integration because they emphasize humility, unity, and dedication to serving others. The study highlights the importance of relational and communal dimensions in the formation of service-oriented values. Rather than being developed solely through formal instruction, the ethos of service emerges through interactions among teachers, students, and the broader school community. The collaborative relationships among Christian teachers at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara demonstrate how shared commitment to biblical values can strengthen the moral and spiritual climate of a school. The results and discussion of this study illustrate that the formation of teachers' service ethos in Christian Religious Education at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara is shaped by a combination of biblical inspiration, professional dedication, collaborative relationships, and contextual awareness. Through their attitudes, instructional practices, and personal example, teachers embody the values of humility and service emphasized in the Epistle to the Philippians. These practices create a learning environment that encourages students to understand and practice Christian values in their daily lives. Even within the unique geographical and social context of Kepulauan Mentawai, the commitment of teachers to serving others through education demonstrates the enduring relevance of biblical teachings in shaping both educational practice and character formation.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the formation of teachers' service ethos through Christian Religious Education (CRE) at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara in Kepulauan Mentawai from the theological perspective of the Epistle to the Philippians. The findings indicate that the ethos of service among teachers is not merely a professional attitude but a deeply rooted spiritual commitment that reflects the values of humility, dedication, and communal responsibility emphasized in the biblical message. Teachers who internalize these values are able to approach their educational responsibilities as a form of service that contributes to both the academic and spiritual development of students. The study reveals that the service ethos of teachers is expressed through several interconnected dimensions, including personal commitment to Christian values, relational care for students, collaborative support among fellow teachers, and the integration of biblical teachings into classroom instruction. These practices create a learning environment characterized by mutual respect, encouragement, and moral guidance. Through their attitudes and actions, teachers demonstrate the importance of humility, perseverance, and responsibility, which in turn influence students' understanding of Christian faith and its practical implications for everyday life. The research highlights the significance of contextual factors in shaping the expression of service ethos within the educational setting. The geographical and social context of Kepulauan Mentawai requires teachers to demonstrate adaptability, creativity, and strong dedication in carrying out their responsibilities. Despite challenges related to limited resources and diverse student backgrounds, teachers at SMPN 2 Siberut Utara show a strong commitment to serving their students and the school

community with integrity and compassion. The findings suggest that Christian Religious Education plays a vital role in cultivating a service-oriented mindset among teachers and students alike. By drawing inspiration from the teachings of Paul the Apostle in the Epistle to the Philippians, educators can integrate faith and professional responsibility in ways that promote holistic character formation. The ethos of service demonstrated by teachers becomes a powerful example that encourages students to practice values of humility, cooperation, and care for others within their daily lives. Future studies may further explore similar contexts to deepen understanding of how biblical principles can shape teacher professionalism and strengthen the mission of Christian education in diverse educational environments.

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