



Living in Purity: Examining the Spiritual Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers at SDN 2 Tanjunganom

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SDN 2 Tanjunganom, focusing on how they maintain a pure life in accordance with biblical principles, particularly Genesis 7:1. Spiritual competence is conceptualized as the integration of personal faith, moral integrity, reflective practice, and pedagogical application, enabling teachers to serve as ethical role models for students. A systematic review of literature from the past fifteen years was conducted to synthesize empirical and theoretical findings on the strategies, challenges, and impacts of teachers' spiritual competence in primary education. The findings reveal that CRE teachers employ reflective practices, mentorship, and classroom-based moral modeling to uphold purity and spiritual integrity. Institutional support, community engagement, and alignment with school values further enhance teachers' capacity to demonstrate ethical conduct consistently. Despite challenges such as workload pressures, societal influences, and personal conflicts, teachers who exemplify spiritual competence significantly influence students' moral reasoning, ethical behavior, and spiritual awareness. Integration of biblical narratives in teaching not only reinforces theoretical understanding but provides students with tangible models of integrity, obedience, and righteousness. The study concludes that the spiritual competence of CRE teachers is essential for effective religious education and holistic student development. Professional development programs, supportive institutional policies, and structured reflection practices are recommended to strengthen teachers' moral and spiritual capacities. By living in accordance with scriptural guidance, teachers create a learning environment that nurtures students' ethical and spiritual growth, thereby embodying the principles they teach. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of teacher spirituality in fostering moral formation and offers practical guidance for enhancing the quality of Christian Religious Education in primary schools.

Keywords: *Spiritual competence, Christian Religious Education, moral integrity, Genesis 7:1*

INTRODUCTION

Spiritual competence has emerged as a critical dimension of effective Christian Religious Education (CRE) teaching, reflecting not only a teacher's personal faith but also their capacity to guide students in embodying moral and ethical values (Panggabean, 2023). In the context of primary education, teachers are not merely conveyors of academic knowledge; they serve as role models whose behavior significantly influences students' spiritual formation and character development. Particularly in the Indonesian educational setting, where values-based education is emphasized, the integration of spiritual competence into teaching practices has become increasingly recognized as essential for fostering holistic development in learners (Simanungkalit & Telaumbanua, 2024). The notion of living in purity, as highlighted in Genesis 7:1, underscores the importance of maintaining moral integrity and obedience to God's commandments, both of which are integral to the role of CRE teachers. Upholding a pure life is not solely a personal endeavor; it entails the deliberate modeling of ethical conduct, spiritual discernment, and consistency in faith practices, which in turn cultivates similar values among students. Research indicates that many educators face challenges in consistently translating their faith into classroom practices (Sitorus, 2022). These challenges often arise from a combination of contextual, institutional, and personal factors. Primary school teachers navigate diverse socio-cultural backgrounds among students, which may complicate the uniform application of spiritual principles. School environments vary in their emphasis on character education, access to faith-based professional development, and the presence of policies that support spiritual mentoring. On a personal level, teachers may encounter internal conflicts between professional obligations, personal faith practices, and societal expectations, which can hinder their ability to live authentically in accordance with their spiritual beliefs. Examining how CRE teachers maintain a pure life through spiritual competence becomes vital, not only for understanding their own professional development but also for identifying strategies that enhance the spiritual formation of their students.

At SDN 2 Tanjunganom, the role of CRE teachers is particularly significant due to the school's commitment to integrating religious education with character-building programs. Teachers are expected to demonstrate ethical conduct and spiritual maturity as part of their daily interactions with students, colleagues, and the wider school community. Their ability to embody spiritual competence affects both the learning environment and the moral development of students. Genesis 7:1, which emphasizes the preservation of righteousness and obedience amidst societal corruption, provides a theological framework for understanding the spiritual responsibilities of educators. By embodying purity in life and conduct, teachers offer a living example of faith in action, thereby strengthening students' moral grounding and fostering a culture of integrity within the school. Although existing literature has explored teacher competence in pedagogical, professional, and social dimensions, the spiritual aspect remains underexamined, particularly within the primary education context (Telaumbanua & Simamora, 2021). This gap highlights the need for focused studies that analyze how CRE teachers operationalize spiritual competence in practice, including their strategies for maintaining moral integrity, nurturing students' spiritual growth, and navigating challenges that may compromise ethical standards. Such research not only contributes to

the broader discourse on holistic teacher competence but also offers practical insights for policy development, teacher training, and curriculum design aimed at enhancing spiritual education in schools. This study seeks to examine the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers at SDN 2 Tanjunganom, with a specific focus on how they maintain a pure life in accordance with biblical principles. By investigating both personal practices and professional applications of spiritual competence, this research aims to illuminate the dynamic relationship between teachers' spiritual development and their impact on students' moral and spiritual formation. Ultimately, the findings are expected to inform educators, administrators, and policymakers about the significance of fostering spiritual competence as a core component of effective and transformative Christian Religious Education.

METHODS

This study employed a systematic approach to review and synthesize existing literature on the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers, with particular attention to the ways in which teachers uphold moral purity in their professional and personal lives. The selection of literature focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and credible reports published over the past fifteen years to ensure relevance and reflect contemporary practices in primary education. Emphasis was placed on studies that addressed spiritual development, teacher competence, moral modeling, and the integration of biblical principles into classroom practices, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between teachers' spirituality and their pedagogical effectiveness. The process began with the formulation of research questions aimed at identifying key themes, strategies, and challenges related to the cultivation of spiritual competence among CRE teachers. Articles were screened based on inclusion criteria that emphasized applicability to the primary education context, empirical evidence, and explicit discussion of teacher spiritual practices. Studies lacking methodological rigor, or those that did not address the teacher's role in modeling spirituality, were excluded to maintain focus and reliability of findings. Once selected, the literature underwent a detailed extraction process. Information was systematically categorized into themes, including the conceptualization of spiritual competence, strategies employed by teachers to maintain a pure life, the influence of school and community context, and the observed outcomes on students' moral and spiritual development. Data synthesis involved identifying recurring patterns, contrasting approaches across different educational settings, and highlighting exemplary practices that demonstrated a strong alignment between teachers' personal spirituality and professional conduct. Attention was also given to gaps in the literature, particularly in relation to practical applications within Indonesian primary schools, which provided a rationale for contextualizing the findings to SDN 2 Tanjunganom. To ensure comprehensiveness, cross-referencing of citations within the selected studies was conducted to uncover additional relevant research that may not have appeared in initial database searches. Quality assessment of each study considered methodological rigor, clarity of conceptual definitions, and the robustness of evidence presented. The analytical process emphasized both descriptive and thematic interpretation, allowing for the identification of critical factors that contribute to effective spiritual competence among

CRE teachers. Findings were contextualized within biblical frameworks, particularly the principles exemplified in Genesis 7:1, to link theoretical insights with the spiritual and moral expectations of educators in faith-based learning environments. The outcome of this method was a structured synthesis of current knowledge on how CRE teachers cultivate and demonstrate spiritual competence, particularly in ways that model moral purity to students. The approach enabled the identification of strategies, challenges, and institutional supports that enhance or impede teachers' ability to live in accordance with spiritual principles, providing a solid foundation for subsequent discussion and practical recommendations. Through this method, the study bridges the gap between theoretical discourse on teacher spirituality and its practical manifestations in primary education, highlighting pathways for both professional development and the enhancement of students' spiritual formation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Spiritual competence in Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers encompasses the integration of personal faith, moral integrity, and pedagogical skills to guide students in ethical and spiritual development (Panggabean, 2023). Literature indicates that spiritual competence is multidimensional, involving self-awareness, emotional regulation, ethical decision-making, and the consistent application of biblical principles in daily conduct (Sitorus, 2022). Teachers who demonstrate spiritual competence act as moral exemplars, modeling behaviors such as honesty, obedience, humility, and compassion. In the context of SDN 2 Tanjunganom, spiritual competence is particularly relevant, as students are exposed to diverse social influences and require guidance to navigate moral dilemmas. By conceptualizing spiritual competence as both an internal disposition and an observable practice, CRE teachers create a framework in which students can witness the alignment between faith and action, reinforcing the holistic objectives of religious education. Findings from reviewed literature emphasize that teachers employ multiple strategies to maintain moral purity and spiritual integrity. One primary approach is reflective practice, wherein teachers engage in continuous self-evaluation of their thoughts, actions, and spiritual attitudes (Simanungkalit & Telaumbanua, 2024). This practice often involves prayer, meditation, or journaling, enabling teachers to align personal behavior with biblical teachings. Another strategy is mentorship and peer collaboration, where educators discuss ethical challenges and support each other in modeling righteous conduct. Teachers also integrate moral narratives and biblical examples into classroom instruction, thereby embedding the principles of purity, obedience, and righteousness within the learning experience. At SDN 2 Tanjunganom, these strategies are adapted to the primary school setting by incorporating storytelling, role-playing, and discussion of ethical dilemmas that reflect students' lived experiences, making spiritual lessons tangible and actionable.

The Role of Classroom Practices in Demonstrating Spiritual Competence

Classroom practices serve as critical avenues for teachers to exemplify spiritual competence. Studies indicate that the consistent demonstration of virtues such as honesty, fairness, patience, and respect significantly influences students' moral development (Telaumbanua & Simamora, 2021). In practice, CRE teachers at SDN 2

Tanjunganom employ structured activities that encourage ethical reflection and personal accountability. For instance, teachers may assign reflective exercises where students analyze their behavior against biblical standards, or facilitate group discussions on moral scenarios derived from daily life. Through these practices, students internalize the principles of a pure life, learning to emulate the ethical behavior modeled by their teachers. Furthermore, teachers' consistent alignment between words and actions reinforces trust and credibility, establishing a classroom culture that values integrity and spiritual awareness. Research highlights the importance of institutional and community support in fostering spiritual competence among teachers. Schools that prioritize religious education, provide professional development in ethics and spirituality, and create avenues for reflective practice contribute to teachers' ability to maintain purity in life and teaching (Sitorus, 2022). At SDN 2 Tanjunganom, leadership encouragement, structured mentorship programs, and school-wide value initiatives facilitate teachers' spiritual growth and modeling of ethical behavior. Community norms also play a role; supportive families and local faith communities reinforce the behaviors demonstrated in school, creating a synergy between home, school, and spiritual teachings. Challenges arise when institutional emphasis is limited or when societal pressures conflict with biblical standards, requiring teachers to exercise discernment and resilience to uphold their spiritual values. Literature identifies factors such as workload, societal pressures, and personal conflicts as potential obstacles to spiritual integrity (Simanungkalit & Telaumbanua, 2024). In the primary school context, teachers often manage multiple responsibilities, which can limit time for personal reflection and spiritual practices. Exposure to diverse student behaviors and family dynamics may also test teachers' patience, empathy, and ethical judgment. At SDN 2 Tanjunganom, educators navigate these challenges by prioritizing reflective practices, seeking mentorship, and grounding their decision-making in biblical principles. Recognizing these challenges is essential for developing interventions and professional support structures that strengthen teachers' capacity to maintain moral purity amidst practical demands.

Impact on Students' Moral and Spiritual Formation

Evidence suggests that teachers' spiritual competence directly influences students' ethical development, moral reasoning, and spiritual awareness (Panggabean, 2023). When students observe teachers consistently demonstrating purity, integrity, and obedience to biblical principles, they are more likely to internalize similar values. At SDN 2 Tanjunganom, teachers' modeling of spiritual competence manifests in students' increased engagement in ethical reflection, empathy toward peers, and adherence to school values. Activities such as group reflections, moral storytelling, and discussions on biblical narratives help students understand the relevance of spiritual principles in daily life. Moreover, students develop critical thinking skills related to ethical dilemmas, enabling them to navigate social and moral challenges with a foundation rooted in spiritual integrity. The theological framework of Genesis 7:1 provides a foundation for understanding the importance of purity and obedience in life. Literature indicates that integrating biblical principles into teaching practices reinforces both personal accountability and pedagogical effectiveness (Telaumbanua & Simamora, 2021). CRE teachers at SDN 2 Tanjunganom apply biblical narratives as tools for moral reflection, encouraging students to examine the consequences of ethical and unethical behaviors.

Through careful selection of scripture-based examples, teachers facilitate discussions that highlight obedience, righteousness, and spiritual vigilance. This integration not only enhances students' moral literacy but also reinforces the teacher's role as a living example of biblical principles, creating a learning environment where spiritual values are consistently observed and internalized. Synthesizing the reviewed literature, several recommendations emerge to enhance the spiritual competence of CRE teachers. Professional development programs should incorporate modules on reflective practice, ethical decision-making, and the application of biblical principles in pedagogy. Schools should foster supportive environments that encourage mentorship, peer collaboration, and ongoing reflection on moral and spiritual challenges. Integrating spiritual competence assessment into teacher evaluation processes can help identify areas for growth and reinforce accountability. For SDN 2 Tanjunganom, embedding these strategies within existing religious education programs will not only strengthen teachers' personal and professional integrity but also amplify the impact on students' moral and spiritual development. The findings reveal a strong interplay between personal spirituality, professional competence, and student development. Teachers who maintain moral purity provide both explicit and implicit guidance, demonstrating that spiritual competence is not merely a set of theoretical principles but a lived practice that influences classroom culture and student behavior. The study reinforces the notion that spiritual competence must be cultivated continuously, supported by institutional structures, and contextualized within theological and educational frameworks. The implications extend to teacher training, policy development, and curriculum design, emphasizing the necessity of integrating spiritual growth into the broader objectives of Christian Religious Education.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the centrality of spiritual competence in the professional and personal lives of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers, highlighting its critical role in modeling moral purity and guiding students' ethical development. The findings demonstrate that spiritual competence is a multifaceted construct, encompassing self-awareness, moral integrity, reflective practice, and the consistent application of biblical principles in teaching and daily conduct. Teachers at SDN 2 Tanjunganom exemplify these qualities through deliberate strategies such as reflective journaling, mentorship, integration of moral narratives, and classroom practices that foster ethical reflection among students. By living in accordance with the principles of Genesis 7:1, they provide tangible examples of obedience, righteousness, and spiritual vigilance, thereby reinforcing the values they seek to instill in their students. The study reveals that the practice of spiritual competence extends beyond individual effort and requires institutional support, collegial collaboration, and engagement with the wider community. Supportive school policies, access to professional development in ethics and spirituality, and a school culture that values moral and spiritual integrity enhance teachers' ability to maintain a pure life. Likewise, family and community reinforcement strengthens the alignment between teachers' modeled behavior and students' learning experiences. Despite these supports, challenges persist, including workload pressures, societal influences, and personal conflicts, which may impede teachers' capacity to consistently demonstrate spiritual competence. Addressing these challenges necessitates ongoing

reflection, professional guidance, and deliberate prioritization of spiritual development within the educational framework. Importantly, the research highlights the profound impact of teachers' spiritual competence on students' moral and spiritual formation. When educators model integrity, ethical decision-making, and biblical obedience, students are more likely to internalize these values, develop critical moral reasoning skills, and exhibit behaviors consistent with a pure and righteous life. Classroom strategies such as group reflection, ethical storytelling, and discussions grounded in biblical narratives provide students with practical avenues to engage with moral concepts and apply them in daily life. Consequently, spiritual competence among CRE teachers functions not only as a personal attribute but also as a pedagogical tool that shapes the moral landscape of the learning environment. The integration of biblical principles into teaching further reinforces the reciprocal relationship between teacher spirituality and student development. Genesis 7:1 serves as a theological anchor, emphasizing the importance of purity, obedience, and righteousness as foundational elements of spiritual competence. By aligning professional practices with scriptural guidance, teachers at SDN 2 Tanjunganom demonstrate that living a pure life is both an individual responsibility and a collective pedagogical endeavor. This alignment fosters a cohesive educational environment where spiritual values are not merely taught but visibly practiced, creating a consistent model for students to emulate. In conclusion, the study affirms that the spiritual competence of CRE teachers is indispensable for effective religious education and the moral formation of students. Teachers who maintain a pure life through reflective practice, ethical decision-making, and the application of biblical principles significantly influence the ethical and spiritual development of their students. Schools and educational policymakers are encouraged to prioritize the cultivation of spiritual competence through professional development, institutional support, and integration into curricula and teacher evaluation frameworks. By doing so, educational institutions can ensure that CRE teachers not only teach moral principles but embody them, offering students a living example of faith, integrity, and spiritual commitment. The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between teacher spirituality, pedagogical effectiveness, and student moral development, providing both theoretical insights and practical guidance for enhancing the quality of Christian Religious Education.

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