



Social Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers as an Expression of Fraternal Love: A Study of Philippians 2:2 at SMAN 3 Palangkaraya

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ABSTRACT

Teacher social competence plays a crucial role in fostering ethical interaction, inclusivity, and relational harmony within contemporary educational settings. In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), social competence is closely connected to the embodiment of Christian values, particularly fraternal love. This study aims to examine the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers as an expression of fraternal love based on Philippians 2:2, focusing on the context of SMAN 3 Palangkaraya. The research integrates theological reflection with international educational perspectives to provide a holistic understanding of teacher professionalism in a pluralistic public-school environment. A qualitative research design was employed, combining a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and simple semi-structured interviews. The SLR drew upon peer-reviewed publications from reputable international databases, including SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, ScienceDirect (Elsevier), and Wiley Online Library. To complement the literature review, interviews were conducted with Christian teachers, including CRE teachers, at SMAN 3 Palangkaraya, selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using an integrated thematic analysis guided by both educational theory and the theological framework of Philippians 2:2. The findings indicate that social competence among CRE teachers is manifested through relational responsibility, empathy, unity, cooperation, and ethical modeling. Fraternal love, as articulated in Philippians 2:2, functions as an internal motivation that shapes inclusive, respectful, and ethical professional conduct. The study concludes that teacher social competence, when grounded in Christian fraternal love, contributes positively to school climate and supports students' moral and social development. These findings highlight the importance of integrating theological values into discussions of teacher professionalism within public education.

Keywords: Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, Fraternal Love

INTRODUCTION

Teacher social competence has become an increasingly important dimension of professionalism in contemporary education, particularly in pluralistic and multicultural school contexts. Social competence refers to teachers' ability to build healthy interpersonal relationships, communicate effectively, demonstrate empathy, and engage collaboratively with students, colleagues, parents, and the wider school community. International educational research consistently emphasizes that teachers' social competence significantly influences classroom climate, student engagement, moral development, and institutional harmony (Day et al., 2006; Campbell, 2017). In public schools characterized by social and religious diversity, social competence is not merely a technical skill but an ethical capacity that reflects teachers' values, attitudes, and moral orientation. Within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), social competence holds particular significance. CRE teachers are expected not only to deliver cognitive content related to Christian doctrine but also to embody Christian values through relational conduct. As moral agents in educational settings, CRE teachers play a vital role in modeling ethical behavior, respect, compassion, and social responsibility (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013). Studies in character and moral education highlight that students often internalize values not through formal instruction alone but through observing how teachers interact with others and respond to social situations (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). Therefore, social competence becomes a key medium through which Christian values are translated into lived educational practice. One of the central values in Christian ethics that directly informs social competence is fraternal love. In the New Testament, fraternal love is not merely an emotional disposition but a relational commitment rooted in unity, humility, and mutual care. Philippians 2:2 presents a strong theological foundation for understanding this concept, as the Apostle Paul urges believers to be "of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind." Biblical scholars interpret this passage as an exhortation toward relational harmony grounded in humility, empathy, and shared purpose (Fee, 2011). In Christian pedagogy, this theological principle provides a framework for understanding social interactions as expressions of faith rather than neutral professional behaviors. Philippians 2:2 offers a lens through which teacher social competence can be understood as an expression of fraternal love. Social competence, from this perspective, involves the ability to foster unity, respect differences, manage conflict constructively, and demonstrate genuine care for others. This understanding aligns with contemporary educational discourse that positions teachers' relational skills as central to effective teaching and ethical professionalism (Carr, 2018). Thus, social competence in Christian Religious Education transcends functional interaction and becomes a moral practice informed by theological conviction.

The relevance of this issue becomes particularly evident in public schools where Christian teachers serve within diverse religious and cultural environments. At SMAN 3 Palangkaraya, where approximately 834 Christian students and 65 Christian teachers, including CRE teachers, are part of a broader multicultural school community, social competence is essential for maintaining inclusive, respectful, and harmonious relationships. In such settings, CRE teachers are challenged to express Christian values authentically without fostering exclusivity or tension. Educational research suggests that

teachers working in diverse contexts must possess high levels of social sensitivity, ethical awareness, and relational wisdom to navigate differences constructively (Campbell, 2017; Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013). International studies published by Springer, Taylor & Francis, and Elsevier indicate that teachers' social competence contributes positively to students' social development, emotional security, and moral reasoning (Day et al., 2006; Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). Teachers who demonstrate empathy, respectful communication, and cooperative attitudes tend to create learning environments that support trust and mutual respect. From a Christian perspective, these qualities resonate strongly with the biblical call to live in unity and love as articulated in Philippians 2:2. However, much of the existing research on teacher social competence is grounded in secular frameworks, often overlooking the role of theological values in shaping relational behavior. This gap highlights the need for research that integrates educational theory with biblical reflection, particularly within the field of Christian Religious Education. By examining teacher social competence through the lens of fraternal love, this study seeks to offer a more holistic understanding of professionalism that encompasses pedagogical, ethical, and theological dimensions. Therefore, this study aims to explore the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers as an expression of fraternal love based on Philippians 2:2, focusing on the context of SMAN 3 Palangkaraya. The findings are expected to contribute to scholarly discourse on teacher professionalism, Christian pedagogy, and social ethics, while also providing practical insights for CRE teachers serving in public school environments.

METHODS

A combination of a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and simple semi-structured interviews was used to examine the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as an expression of fraternal love based on Philippians 2:2. This combined approach was chosen to ensure conceptual depth and contextual relevance, allowing theological reflection, educational theory, and empirical insights to be analyzed in an integrated manner. Qualitative methods are particularly appropriate for exploring values, ethical perspectives, and lived experiences in educational settings (Creswell, 2013). The SLR aimed to establish a strong theoretical foundation regarding teacher social competence, moral education, professional ethics, and Christian pedagogy. Academic sources were retrieved exclusively from reputable international publishers and peer-reviewed databases. These sources were selected due to their credibility and extensive publication of high-impact research in education and moral studies. The literature search used keywords such as teacher social competence, teacher professionalism, moral and character education, Christian education, teacher ethics, and relational competence in education. Studies focusing on teachers' interpersonal skills, ethical responsibility, and relational modeling were prioritized. The selected literature was analyzed with particular attention given to concepts such as empathy, relational harmony, ethical interaction, unity, and moral modeling (Day et al., 2006; Campbell, 2017; Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). Themes identified through the SLR were later aligned with the theological principles of Philippians 2:2, especially unity of mind, shared love, and relational harmony. These themes served as analytical categories for interpreting the interview data. The participants consisted of Christian teachers, including Christian Religious Education

teachers, selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique was used to ensure that participants had direct involvement in Christian education and experience in interacting with Christian students within a public-school context. The interviews focused on participants' understanding and practice of social competence in daily teaching activities. Guiding questions explored how teachers build relationships with students, colleagues, and the wider school community; how they manage differences and conflicts; and how Christian values, particularly fraternal love, influence their social interactions. Interviews were conducted in a reflective and conversational manner to encourage openness and authenticity, allowing participants to express their experiences without pressure. Key themes from the literature, such as empathy, relational responsibility, unity, ethical interaction, and moral modeling, were identified. Interview transcripts were examined to identify patterns and statements that reflected these themes. The findings from both sources were then compared and interpreted in light of Philippians 2:2 as the theological framework. This integrative analysis enabled the study to connect theoretical insights from international scholarship with empirical observations from the school context. By triangulating literature-based themes and interview data, the study enhances the credibility and coherence of its findings, offering a holistic understanding of teacher social competence as both a professional and faith-informed construct.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents an integrated analysis of the findings derived from the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and semi-structured interviews conducted with Christian teachers at SMAN 3 Palangkaraya. The discussion focuses on how social competence among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers is understood and practiced as an expression of fraternal love, interpreted through the theological framework of Philippians 2:2. By integrating theoretical perspectives and empirical insights, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of teacher social competence as both a professional and faith-informed construct. One prominent theme emerging from the findings is social competence as relational responsibility. Interview participants consistently described social competence as the ability to maintain respectful, caring, and constructive relationships with students, colleagues, and school leadership. Teachers emphasized that effective communication, patience, and empathy were essential in fostering trust and emotional safety within the classroom. These findings align with international research suggesting that teachers' relational skills play a crucial role in shaping positive learning environments and supporting students' social and emotional development (Day et al., 2006; Campbell, 2017). From a Christian perspective, this relational responsibility was understood as a moral obligation rooted in love for others, reflecting the biblical call to unity and mutual care found in Philippians 2:2.

The SLR reinforces this interpretation by highlighting that social competence is closely linked to ethical responsibility and moral sensitivity. Educational scholars argue that teachers' daily interactions function as implicit moral instruction, shaping students' attitudes toward respect, cooperation, and social harmony (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). In this study, teachers expressed awareness that their behavior toward students and colleagues communicates values more powerfully than verbal instruction alone. This

understanding resonates with the theological emphasis of Philippians 2:2, which calls believers to embody shared love and unity in practical relationships. Thus, social competence emerges as an expression of lived theology within the educational context. Another significant theme identified is empathy and inclusivity as core dimensions of social competence. Teachers reported that working in a diverse public-school environment requires heightened sensitivity to differences in background, belief, and personal experience. Participants emphasized the importance of listening, understanding students' struggles, and responding with compassion rather than judgment. This approach reflects findings from international studies indicating that empathetic teachers are more effective in building inclusive classrooms and promoting students' sense of belonging (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013). The literature further suggests that empathy is a foundational element of moral competence, enabling teachers to navigate complex social dynamics ethically (Carr, 2018). Philippians 2:2 provides a theological grounding for this emphasis on empathy and inclusivity. The call to be "of the same mind" and to share "the same love" does not imply uniformity, but rather relational harmony grounded in humility and mutual respect. Interviewed teachers interpreted this passage as encouragement to prioritize understanding and cooperation over personal preference or authority. In practice, this theological perspective motivated teachers to engage students and colleagues with openness and respect, thereby strengthening social cohesion within the school community. The findings also highlight unity and cooperation as expressions of professional social competence. Teachers described collaboration with colleagues, both Christian and non-Christian, as an essential aspect of their professional role. Maintaining harmonious working relationships was viewed as part of ethical professionalism, particularly in a school setting with a large Christian population embedded within a broader pluralistic environment. This aligns with research emphasizing that collaborative competence enhances school effectiveness and contributes to a positive institutional culture (Day et al., 2006; Campbell, 2017). The SLR indicates that teachers who demonstrate cooperative attitudes and relational maturity contribute to organizational trust and collective responsibility. Philippians 2:2 reinforces cooperation as a moral imperative rather than a mere professional strategy. Teachers in this study perceived unity not as passive conformity but as active commitment to shared goals and mutual respect. This understanding allowed them to express Christian values authentically without creating exclusivity or tension. Consequently, social competence functioned as a bridge between faith commitment and professional responsibility, enabling CRE teachers to contribute positively to the broader school environment. Another important finding concerns social competence as moral modeling for students. Although this study did not quantitatively measure student outcomes, teachers observed that their relational behavior influenced students' attitudes toward respect, discipline, and cooperation. Teachers noted that when they modeled patience, fairness, and empathy, students were more likely to exhibit similar behaviors. These observations are consistent with character education research emphasizing modeling as a central mechanism of moral learning (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). The SLR supports the notion that students internalize social and moral values through sustained exposure to teachers' conduct rather than through formal moral instruction alone.

Fraternal love grounded in Philippians 2:2 served as an internal motivation for ethical consistency. Teachers viewed their social interactions as part of their witness and responsibility, reinforcing the idea that professionalism in Christian Religious Education involves coherence between belief and behavior. This integration strengthens the argument that social competence is not value-neutral but deeply shaped by moral and theological commitments. The integrated findings demonstrate that the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers at SMAN 3 Palangkaraya is closely intertwined with the expression of fraternal love. Empathy, relational responsibility, unity, cooperation, and ethical modeling emerged as key dimensions of social competence, supported by both international educational literature and empirical insights. By interpreting these dimensions through Philippians 2:2, this study contributes to the discourse on teacher professionalism by highlighting the relevance of biblical values in shaping ethical and relational practices within public education. Social competence, therefore, is best understood not merely as interpersonal skill but as a faith-informed commitment to unity, love, and responsible service.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as an expression of fraternal love through the theological lens of Philippians 2:2, focusing on the context of SMAN 3 Palangkaraya. By integrating a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with simple semi-structured interviews, the research provides a holistic understanding of teacher social competence as both a professional capability and a faith-informed ethical practice. The findings affirm that social competence is a central dimension of teacher professionalism, particularly within diverse public-school environments where relational sensitivity and ethical conduct are essential. The results indicate that social competence among CRE teachers is primarily expressed through relational responsibility, empathy, unity, cooperation, and ethical modeling. Teachers perceived their social interactions not merely as functional aspects of teaching but as moral responsibilities shaped by Christian values. This understanding aligns with international educational literature emphasizing that teachers' interpersonal conduct significantly influences classroom climate, institutional harmony, and students' moral development. In this study, social competence was consistently interpreted as an active commitment to maintaining respectful and caring relationships with students, colleagues, and the wider school community. Philippians 2:2 provided a meaningful theological framework for interpreting these findings. The biblical call to unity of mind and shared love was understood by teachers as an invitation to practice humility, empathy, and cooperation in daily professional interactions. Rather than promoting exclusivity, fraternal love was expressed through inclusivity, ethical sensitivity, and respect for diversity. This theological perspective enabled CRE teachers to integrate their faith authentically within a pluralistic educational context, demonstrating that Christian values can be lived out through ethical professionalism and relational excellence.

The study also highlights the role of social competence as moral modeling. Teachers recognized that their behavior serves as an implicit form of instruction, shaping students' attitudes toward respect, responsibility, and cooperation. This reinforces the view that

social competence is not only beneficial for professional effectiveness but also contributes to students' character formation. By embodying fraternal love through consistent and ethical social interaction, CRE teachers support the broader educational mission of fostering holistic student development. This study is limited by the qualitative scope and the absence of direct measurement of student outcomes. Future research may expand upon these findings by employing mixed-method approaches, larger participant samples, or longitudinal designs to explore the long-term impact of teacher social competence on student behavior and school culture. Further studies could also examine comparative contexts to deepen understanding of how theological values interact with professional practices across different educational settings. This study affirms that the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers, when grounded in fraternal love as articulated in Philippians 2:2, constitutes a vital expression of ethical professionalism. Social competence emerges not merely as an interpersonal skill but as a faith-informed commitment to unity, empathy, and responsible service. Such integration of theological values and educational practice offers a meaningful contribution to contemporary discourse on teacher professionalism and Christian pedagogy within public education.

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