



## Spiritual Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Building Students' Faith Resilience: A Study of Philippians 1:6 at SDN 1 Babual Baboti

Serius Gulo

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

\*correspondence: [guloserius7@gmail.com](mailto:guloserius7@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*This study explores the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in fostering students' faith resilience, grounded in the theological framework of Philippians 1:6, at SDN 1 Babual Baboti, West Kotawaringin. In contemporary educational contexts marked by rapid social change and moral challenges, faith resilience has become an essential dimension of holistic student development. Within Christian pedagogy, teachers are not only transmitters of religious knowledge but also spiritual mentors whose faith, consistency, and ethical integrity significantly influence students' spiritual endurance. Philippians 1:6 affirms God's ongoing work in believers, offering a theological foundation for understanding the teacher's role as a cooperative agent in nurturing resilient faith. This study employed a qualitative approach combining a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and simple semi-structured interviews. The SLR examined peer-reviewed international literature on spiritual competence, faith formation, and Christian education, while interviews were conducted with Christian Religious Education teachers to capture lived experiences and pedagogical practices in a public-school context. The findings indicate that teachers' spiritual competence, expressed through personal spirituality, consistency between faith and practice, prayerful dependence on God, and relational authenticity, plays a crucial role in strengthening students' faith resilience. Teachers who model trust in God's ongoing work foster a learning environment that supports perseverance, hope, and spiritual confidence among students. The study concludes that spiritual competence is a vital dimension of professional identity for CRE teachers and contributes meaningfully to students' long-term faith development. These findings offer important implications for teacher formation programs and the integration of biblical theology into Christian Religious Education practice.*

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

### INTRODUCTION

In contemporary educational discourse, the role of teachers is increasingly understood not only in terms of instructional competence but also in relation to their spiritual and

moral influence on students. This perspective is particularly significant in the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), where teachers are expected to integrate faith, character formation, and academic instruction in a holistic manner. International studies in education emphasize that teachers' inner dispositions, values, and spiritual orientations significantly shape students' resilience, motivation, and capacity to navigate challenges (Day et al., 2006; Campbell, 2017). In this regard, the concept of spiritual competence emerges as a crucial dimension of teacher professionalism, especially in faith-based education. Spiritual competence refers to a teacher's ability to live out and transmit faith values authentically through attitudes, relationships, and educational practices. In Christian education, this competence is not limited to doctrinal knowledge but encompasses spiritual maturity, consistency of faith and action, and the capacity to nurture students' spiritual resilience. Research in moral and character education highlights that students learn enduring values primarily through modeling rather than verbal instruction alone (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). Teachers who demonstrate spiritual integrity, perseverance, and trust in God become living examples that shape students' understanding of faith as a sustaining force in life. The notion of faith resilience is increasingly relevant in modern educational contexts. Faith resilience refers to the capacity of students to remain steadfast in their beliefs, maintain spiritual hope, and continue growing in faith despite challenges, doubts, or adverse circumstances. Educational psychology and character education literature affirm that resilience is strengthened through supportive relationships, meaningful guidance, and consistent modeling by significant adults, particularly teachers (Carr, 2018; Noddings, 2013). In Christian pedagogy, faith resilience is closely connected to theological convictions about God's faithfulness and ongoing work in believers' lives.

A strong biblical foundation for understanding faith resilience is found in Philippians 1:6, where the Apostle Paul expresses confidence that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Biblical scholars interpret this verse as an affirmation of God's sustaining grace and faithfulness in the process of spiritual growth (Fee, 1995; Wright, 2013). The verse emphasizes that faith development is not merely the result of human effort but is grounded in God's continual work. When applied to education, Philippians 1:6 offers a theological framework for understanding resilience as trust in God's ongoing presence and guidance, even amid challenges. Teachers play a vital role as mediators of this theological truth. Through their spiritual competence, teachers help students internalize the belief that faith is a journey sustained by God's faithfulness rather than a fragile possession easily lost. Teachers who embody trust in God, perseverance, and spiritual hope model a resilient faith that students can observe and emulate. Studies in Christian education affirm that teachers' spiritual lives significantly influence students' spiritual formation and long-term faith commitment (Pazmiño, 2008; Groome, 2011). The relevance of spiritual competence becomes particularly pronounced in public school contexts where Christian students and teachers function within pluralistic environments. At SDN 1 Babual Baboti, West Kotawaringin, where there are 29 Christian students and seven Christian teachers, including CRE teachers, the nurturing of faith resilience must be carried out through ethical conduct, relational sensitivity, and consistent spiritual modeling rather than explicit confessional dominance. Research on religious education in public schools indicates that faith values

are most effectively communicated through lived examples that respect diversity and promote integrity (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2013). Many studies address teacher professionalism from secular or policy-driven perspectives, leaving a gap in understanding how scriptural convictions inform teachers' spiritual influence in educational settings. This gap underscores the need for research that integrates theological reflection with educational theory. This study aims to examine the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in building students' faith resilience based on Philippians 1:6 at SDN 1 Babual Baboti, West Kotawaringin. By integrating insights from international educational research and biblical theology, this study seeks to contribute to the discourse on Christian pedagogy, teacher spirituality, and faith-based resilience. The findings are expected to provide meaningful implications for the development of CRE teachers and the strengthening of students' resilient faith in contemporary educational contexts.

## METHODS

The combination of qualitative research design with a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach complemented by simple semi-structured interviews was intended to provide both theoretical depth and contextual validation regarding the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in fostering students' faith resilience, as illuminated by Philippians 1:6. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on meaning, spiritual values, pedagogical practices, and theological interpretation rather than numerical measurement. The review was guided by the central research question: How does the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers contribute to building students' faith resilience in light of Philippians 1:6? Keywords were formulated to ensure conceptual clarity and relevance, including spiritual competence, Christian Religious Education teachers, faith resilience, spiritual formation, and Philippians 1:6. Scholarly articles, books, and peer-reviewed journals were retrieved from credible academic databases, and only sources published in English or Indonesian and relevant to Christian education, spiritual competence, teacher professionalism, and biblical theology were considered. Selected literature was analyzed, the synthesis process emphasized recurring concepts such as teacher spirituality, perseverance in faith, divine faithfulness, and the role of educators as instruments in God's ongoing work, in alignment with the theological message of Philippians 1:6. To complement the literature review, simple semi-structured interviews were conducted with Christian Religious Education teachers at SDN 1 Babual Baboti, West Kotawaringin. The school context included 29 Christian students and 7 Christian teachers, including CRE teachers. The interviews aimed to explore practical insights into how teachers understand and implement spiritual competence in daily teaching practices. The interview questions focused on: teachers' understanding of spiritual competence, strategies used to strengthen students' faith resilience, challenges encountered in nurturing students' spiritual perseverance, and reflections on Philippians 1:6 as a foundation for educational practice. The process involved data reduction, categorization, and interpretation to identify meaningful patterns. Biblical-theological reflection on Philippians 1:6 was integrated into the analysis to ensure coherence between empirical findings and theological insights.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are derived from two primary data sources: a systematic literature review of scholarly works addressing spiritual competence, Christian Religious Education (CRE), and faith resilience; and semi-structured interviews with Christian Religious Education teachers at SDN 1 Babual Baboti, West Kotawaringin. The integration of these sources provides a comprehensive understanding of how teachers' spiritual competence contributes to the development of students' faith resilience, particularly in light of the theological assurance found in Philippians 1:6, which emphasizes God's faithfulness in completing the good work He has begun in believers. The literature review consistently underscores spiritual competence as a core dimension of professional competence for Christian educators. Spiritual competence is not limited to doctrinal knowledge but encompasses personal faith maturity, spiritual discipline, moral integrity, and the ability to embody Christian values in everyday educational practice. This aligns with the conceptualization of spiritual competence as an integration of belief, attitude, and action within the educator's personal and professional life. Findings from the reviewed literature indicate that teachers who possess strong spiritual competence demonstrate a deeper awareness of their vocation as a divine calling rather than merely a professional occupation. Such teachers understand education as participation in God's redemptive work, particularly in shaping students' character and faith. This understanding resonates strongly with Philippians 1:6, which affirms that spiritual growth is initiated and sustained by God Himself, while human agents are called to cooperate faithfully in this process. Interview data from CRE teachers at SDN 1 Babual Baboti further support this perspective. Teachers emphasized that faith resilience among students begins with consistent spiritual modeling by educators. One participant noted that students often imitate attitudes and behaviors more readily than they absorb verbal instruction. Therefore, teachers' patience, prayerful demeanor, and perseverance in difficult situations serve as living testimonies that strengthen students' trust in God's ongoing work in their lives. The discussion of these findings suggests that spiritual competence functions as the foundational infrastructure upon which faith resilience is built. Without spiritual authenticity and consistency on the part of teachers, efforts to cultivate resilient faith among students risk becoming superficial or disconnected from lived experience.

### *Teachers as Instruments of God's Sustaining Grace*

A significant theme emerging from both literature and interviews is the understanding of teachers as instruments rather than ultimate agents of spiritual transformation. The theological framework of Philippians 1:6 played a central role in shaping this understanding. The verse emphasizes divine initiative and divine completion, underscoring that God remains the primary actor in the process of spiritual formation. Literature reviewed in this study highlights that Christian educators who internalize this theological perspective tend to exhibit humility, perseverance, and hope in their teaching practice. Rather than being discouraged by slow or invisible spiritual growth in students, these teachers trust in God's faithfulness to continue His work beyond what is immediately observable. This trust fosters resilience not only in students but also in teachers themselves. Interview findings revealed that CRE teachers at SDN 1 Babual

Baboti frequently rely on prayer and spiritual reflection when facing challenges such as limited instructional time, diverse student backgrounds, and varying levels of spiritual maturity. Teachers expressed a shared conviction that their role is to plant and nurture seeds of faith, while trusting God to bring about growth in His time. This conviction significantly reduces frustration and burnout, enabling teachers to remain spiritually resilient and emotionally committed. This theme reinforces the importance of a theology-centered approach to spiritual competence. When teachers perceive themselves as vessels through which God works, rather than as sole drivers of outcomes, they model a faith posture that emphasizes dependence on God. This modeling becomes a powerful pedagogical tool that encourages students to develop resilient faith grounded in God's promises rather than in human performance.

### ***Pedagogical Practices Rooted in Spiritual Consistency***

Another prominent finding concerns the role of spiritually grounded pedagogical practices in fostering faith resilience. The literature indicates that effective Christian education integrates spiritual values seamlessly into teaching strategies, classroom management, and interpersonal relationships. Such integration ensures that faith formation is not confined to isolated religious instruction but becomes embedded within the broader educational experience. Interview data demonstrate that CRE teachers at SDN 1 Babual Baboti intentionally incorporate spiritual practices such as prayer, biblical reflection, and moral discussion into their teaching routines. These practices are not treated as ritualistic obligations but as meaningful engagements that connect students' daily experiences with biblical truth. Teachers reported that consistent exposure to such practices helps students develop a stable spiritual rhythm, which is essential for faith resilience. The discussion of these findings highlights the significance of consistency. Faith resilience is cultivated not through sporadic spiritual activities but through sustained exposure to faith-informed pedagogy. This aligns with Philippians 1:6, which emphasizes the ongoing nature of God's work. Teachers who mirror this continuity through consistent spiritual practices reinforce the message that faith development is a lifelong journey rather than a one-time event. The findings suggest that pedagogical consistency rooted in spiritual competence enhances students' ability to navigate challenges such as academic pressure, family difficulties, and social influences. By regularly engaging students in reflective and spiritually meaningful learning experiences, teachers equip them with internal resources that support perseverance and trust in God.

The concept of faith resilience emerged in this study as a dynamic process rather than a static outcome. Literature reviewed emphasizes that faith resilience involves the capacity to remain steadfast in belief, hope, and moral conviction amid adversity. This capacity develops gradually through spiritual formation processes that integrate cognitive understanding, emotional stability, and relational support. Interview findings indicate that CRE teachers perceive faith resilience as something that must be nurtured patiently. Teachers described observing gradual changes in students' attitudes toward prayer, ethical decision-making, and reliance on God during difficult situations. These changes were often subtle but became more evident over time, particularly among students who experienced consistent spiritual mentoring. In discussing these findings, it becomes clear

that Philippians 1:6 offers a powerful theological lens for understanding faith resilience. The assurance that God will complete His work provides a framework for interpreting gradual spiritual growth as meaningful progress rather than inadequacy. Teachers who embrace this perspective are better equipped to encourage students without imposing unrealistic expectations. This understanding also challenges performance-oriented educational paradigms that prioritize immediate results. Instead, faith resilience is framed as the fruit of long-term spiritual investment, supported by faithful teaching and divine grace. Such a framework aligns well with the qualitative nature of spiritual formation and reinforces the importance of patience and trust in educational ministry.

Literature highlights factors such as limited instructional resources, diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and external cultural influences as common obstacles in Christian education contexts. Interviews with CRE teachers at SDN 1 Babual Baboti revealed similar challenges. Teachers reported constraints related to limited time allocation for religious education, varying levels of parental support, and students' exposure to secular media and values. These factors sometimes hinder sustained spiritual engagement and make faith resilience more difficult to cultivate. The discussion of these challenges underscores the importance of spiritual competence as a resource for navigating contextual limitations. Teachers with strong spiritual grounding demonstrated greater adaptability and creativity in addressing constraints. Rather than perceiving challenges as barriers, they viewed them as opportunities to model perseverance and reliance on God. Philippians 1:6 again serves as a theological anchor in this context. The assurance of God's ongoing work provides hope amid limitations, enabling teachers to maintain confidence in the long-term impact of their efforts. This theological assurance also shapes students' understanding of faith as resilient precisely because it is sustained by God rather than dependent on ideal conditions. A key strength of this study lies in the integration of literature-based insights with field data. Both sources converge on the conclusion that spiritual competence is indispensable for fostering faith resilience. Literature provides theoretical validation, while interview findings offer contextual affirmation. The discussion reveals that spiritual competence operates at multiple levels: personal spirituality, pedagogical practice, and relational engagement. At each level, the influence of Philippians 1:6 is evident, reinforcing a theology of perseverance, hope, and divine faithfulness. This integration also highlights the relevance of theological reflection in educational research. By grounding empirical observations in biblical theology, the study offers a holistic understanding of faith resilience that transcends purely psychological or sociological interpretations. The findings of this study carry important implications for Christian Religious Education. Teacher development programs should prioritize spiritual formation alongside pedagogical training. Spiritual competence cannot be assumed; it must be intentionally nurtured through reflective practice, mentoring, and theological engagement. Curriculum design should emphasize consistency and continuity in spiritual practices. Faith resilience is strengthened when students encounter coherent and sustained spiritual messages across learning experiences. The theological framework of Philippians 1:6 should be integrated into educational philosophy. Emphasizing God's faithfulness in completing His work fosters hope, reduces performance anxiety, and encourages long-term commitment among teachers and students alike. The results and discussion demonstrate that the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education

teachers plays a vital role in building students' faith resilience. Through spiritually grounded pedagogy, theological awareness, and reliance on divine grace, teachers serve as effective instruments in God's ongoing work of spiritual formation. Philippians 1:6 provides a unifying theological foundation that frames faith resilience as a process sustained by God and nurtured through faithful educational practice.

## CONCLUSION

This study has examined the role of the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in building students' faith resilience, drawing on a systematic literature review and semi-structured interviews conducted at SDN 1 Babual Baboti, West Kotawaringin. Grounded in the theological framework of Philippians 1:6, which emphasizes God's faithfulness in completing the good work He has begun, the findings affirm that spiritual competence is a central factor in nurturing resilient faith among students within formal educational settings. The results demonstrate that spiritual competence extends beyond theological knowledge or instructional proficiency. It encompasses the integration of personal faith maturity, moral integrity, spiritual discipline, and consistent embodiment of Christian values in daily teaching practice. Teachers who exhibit strong spiritual competence are more likely to approach their educational role as a divine calling, thereby fostering learning environments that support students' spiritual growth and perseverance. Such environments enable students to develop faith resilience characterized by trust in God, endurance amid challenges, and moral steadfastness. A significant conclusion of this study is the recognition of teachers as instruments of God's sustaining grace rather than as the primary agents of spiritual transformation. The theological insight of Philippians 1:6 shapes teachers' understanding of their role, encouraging humility, patience, and hope in the educational process. This perspective reduces performance-oriented pressure and allows teachers to remain committed even when spiritual growth among students is gradual or not immediately visible. Consequently, students are exposed to a faith model that emphasizes dependence on God's faithfulness rather than human achievement. The study concludes that pedagogical practices rooted in spiritual consistency play a crucial role in strengthening students' faith resilience. Regular integration of prayer, biblical reflection, and value-based discussion into classroom routines fosters a stable spiritual rhythm that supports long-term spiritual formation. Consistency in these practices reinforces the biblical message that faith development is a continuous journey, aligning with the theological assurance that God's work in believers is ongoing and purposeful. The findings also highlight the importance of contextual awareness in Christian Religious Education. Despite challenges such as limited instructional time, diverse student backgrounds, and external cultural influences, spiritually competent teachers demonstrate resilience and adaptability. By responding to contextual constraints with faith-informed creativity and perseverance, teachers model resilience in practice, thereby reinforcing the very qualities they seek to cultivate in students. This dynamic illustrates that faith resilience is not formed in the absence of challenges but is strengthened through faithful engagement with them. This study affirms that the spiritual competence of CRE teachers is indispensable in fostering students' faith resilience. The integration of theological insight, particularly from Philippians 1:6, with educational practice provides a robust framework

for understanding spiritual formation in schools. The findings suggest that efforts to enhance Christian education should prioritize spiritual formation in teacher development, promote consistent spiritually grounded pedagogy, and embrace a theology of hope and perseverance. By doing so, Christian Religious Education can effectively contribute to the holistic development of students whose faith remains resilient amid the complexities of contemporary life.

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