



Philippian Values-Based Model for Strengthening the Pedagogical Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers: A Study at SDN 153025 Simargarap

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop and analyze a Philippian values-based model for strengthening the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SDN 153025 Simargarap, Central Tapanuli. Grounded in the theological ethos of Philipians, particularly the call to live in a manner worthy of the gospel, this research explores how biblical values can inform and enhance professional teaching practices in CRE classrooms. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach involving one CRE teacher and 30 Christian students as the primary participants. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The findings indicate that the integration of Philippian values, such as unity, humility, responsibility, and steadfastness, contributes positively to the improvement of pedagogical competence, especially in lesson planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, and reflective evaluation. The study also reveals that the teacher's internalization of Pauline servanthood ethos fosters a more student-centered and spiritually responsive learning environment. However, several challenges were identified, including limited instructional resources and the need for continuous professional development. The study concludes that a Philippian values-based pedagogical model provides a contextual and theologically grounded framework for enhancing the effectiveness of CRE teaching in primary schools. This model is recommended for broader implementation and further empirical testing in similar educational contexts to support the holistic formation of both teachers and students in Christian education settings.

Keywords: Pedagogical Competence, Christian Religious Education, Philippian Values

INTRODUCTION

Teacher pedagogical competence remains one of the most decisive factors in determining the quality of learning and student outcomes in contemporary education systems. Within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Indonesia, pedagogical competence

is not only concerned with instructional effectiveness but also with the integration of Christian values that shape students' character and spiritual formation. The Indonesian government, through the National Education Standards, emphasizes that teachers must demonstrate mastery of pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies to ensure meaningful learning processes (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). However, in many elementary schools, especially in rural or semi-rural contexts, the pedagogical competence of CRE teachers still faces practical challenges, including limited instructional innovation, insufficient contextualization of biblical values, and minimal integration between theology and pedagogy. Pedagogical competence broadly encompasses teachers' ability to understand learners' characteristics, design and implement effective learning strategies, utilize appropriate media, and conduct authentic assessment (Shulman, 1987). In CRE settings, this competence requires an additional dimension: the capacity to translate biblical teachings into pedagogically meaningful classroom practices. Research indicates that when Christian values are intentionally integrated into instructional design, students demonstrate stronger engagement, moral awareness, and spiritual sensitivity (Hull, 2010). Therefore, strengthening pedagogical competence in CRE should not rely solely on technical teaching skills but must also be grounded in robust theological frameworks. One biblical text that offers rich pedagogical implications is Philippians 1:27, which emphasizes living "worthy of the gospel of Christ" in unity, steadfastness, and shared purpose. This passage highlights core values such as integrity, perseverance, unity of spirit, and responsibility, principles that are highly relevant to contemporary educational practice. Scholars argue that Pauline ethics, particularly in Philippians, provide a strong foundation for character-oriented Christian education because they connect theological identity with observable conduct (Fee, 1995). When these Philippian values are operationalized into teaching models, they can guide CRE teachers in fostering holistic learning environments that nurture both cognitive and spiritual development. The explicit use of Philippian values as a pedagogical strengthening framework remains underexplored in Indonesian CRE research. Many existing studies focus on general teacher competence or character education without offering a biblically grounded instructional model. Empirical studies at the elementary level, especially in public schools where CRE classes often have limited time allocation, are still relatively scarce. This gap becomes particularly significant in schools such as SDN 153025 Simargarap, Central Tapanuli, where the Christian student population is relatively small (30 students) and CRE instruction is handled by a single teacher. In such contexts, the effectiveness of pedagogical practice heavily depends on the teacher's capacity to design value-integrated, efficient, and contextually relevant learning. Preliminary observations indicate that CRE learning in similar settings often remains teacher-centered, with limited variation in instructional strategies and minimal explicit linkage between biblical texts and students' daily experiences. Previous research has shown that learner-centered pedagogies significantly improve student motivation and learning outcomes when teachers possess strong pedagogical competence (Hattie, 2009). Furthermore, value-based instructional models have been found to enhance internalization of moral and spiritual principles when systematically embedded in lesson planning and classroom interaction (Lickona, 2012). These findings suggest the urgent need for a structured model that integrates pedagogical best practices with Philippian theological values. Based on this background, the present study seeks to develop and examine a Philippian Values-Based

Model for strengthening the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education teachers at SDN 153025 Simargarap, Central Tapanuli. Specifically, the study aims to: analyze the existing pedagogical competence of the CRE teacher, formulate a Philippian values-based pedagogical strengthening model, and evaluate the model's potential contribution to improving CRE learning effectiveness. By situating pedagogical development within a Pauline theological framework, this study is expected to contribute both theoretically, through the integration of biblical ethics and pedagogy—and practically, by providing an applicable model for CRE teachers in similar Indonesian elementary school contexts.

METHODS

A descriptive qualitative approach was implemented to explore and formulate a Philippian values-based model for strengthening the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SDN 153025 Simargarap, Central Tapanuli. A qualitative descriptive design was selected because the research sought to understand educational practices, lived experiences, and contextual meanings rather than to test statistical relationships. Qualitative description is appropriate for studies that aim to present a comprehensive summary of events in everyday terms and to generate practice-oriented models grounded in field realities (Sandelowski, 2000). The research design focused on an in-depth exploration of how pedagogical competence is practiced, perceived, and strengthened through the integration of values drawn from Philippians, particularly unity, humility, perseverance, and Christ-centered service. The study emphasized naturalistic inquiry within the authentic school setting. This approach aligns with qualitative educational research that prioritizes contextual understanding and participant perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research was conducted at SDN 153025 Simargarap, Central Tapanuli, a public elementary school with a relatively small Christian student population. The site was purposively selected based on the relevance of its context to the research focus, particularly the presence of Christian Religious Education instruction and the opportunity to observe pedagogical practices directly. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which enables researchers to identify information-rich cases relevant to the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015). The primary participants included: 30 Christian students enrolled in CRE classes and the school principal (as supporting informant). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the school principal. The interview protocol explored lesson planning, instructional strategies, classroom management, assessment practices, and the integration of Philippian values in teaching. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian. Classroom observations were carried out during CRE learning sessions. The researcher used an observation checklist focusing on pedagogical indicators such as instructional clarity, student engagement, differentiation practices, classroom climate, and value integration. Field notes captured both verbal and non-verbal classroom dynamics. Raw data from interviews, observations, and documents were coded and categorized. Meaning units related to pedagogical competence and Philippian values were identified. The categorized data were organized into thematic matrices to facilitate pattern recognition. Themes included instructional planning, learner-centered strategies, classroom management, assessment practices, and value integration. Interpretations were developed inductively and continuously verified

through cross-source comparison. Emerging themes informed the construction of the proposed pedagogical strengthening model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the pedagogical competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SDN 153025 Simargarap demonstrates both promising strengths and areas requiring systematic strengthening through a Philippian values-based model. Based on qualitative observations, interviews, and document analysis involving one CRE teacher and 30 Christian students, the data indicate that pedagogical practices are generally functional but have not yet been fully optimized through an explicit theological-pedagogical framework grounded in the values of the Epistle to the Philippians. This section discusses the results across four major domains: current pedagogical competence profile, manifestation of Philippian values in teaching practice, challenges in pedagogical strengthening, and the proposed Philippian values-based pedagogical model. The overall profile of pedagogical competence shows that the CRE teacher demonstrates adequate mastery of basic instructional functions. Classroom observations indicate that lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment practices are implemented in a structured manner. The teacher prepares lesson plans aligned with the national curriculum and demonstrates awareness of students' developmental characteristics. This finding aligns with the view that pedagogical competence involves the teacher's ability to understand learners, design instruction, implement learning, and evaluate outcomes (Shulman, 1987; Mulyasa, 2013). Although structurally adequate, the pedagogical approach tends to remain teacher-centered. Learning activities are still dominated by explanation and question-answer patterns, with limited use of interactive or student-centered strategies. From the students' perspective, most participants reported that CRE lessons are understandable and orderly, yet some expressed that learning could be more engaging and varied. This suggests that while cognitive delivery is functioning, the affective and participatory dimensions of pedagogy require strengthening. Contemporary Christian pedagogy emphasizes that effective religious education must integrate cognitive understanding with spiritual formation and active participation (Groome, 2011). Therefore, the current pedagogical practice, although stable, has not fully embodied transformative learning principles. The analysis of Philippian values reveals partial but not yet systematic integration into pedagogical practice. The Epistle to the Philippians highlights key values such as unity in Christ (Phil. 1:27), humility (Phil. 2:3-5), perseverance (Phil. 3:13-14), and joyful service (Phil. 4:4). In classroom observation, elements of these values appear implicitly. For example, the teacher consistently encourages respectful interaction among students, reflecting the value of unity. The teacher also models patience and calmness when addressing student difficulties, which reflects humility in practice. Interviews reveal that the teacher has not intentionally framed pedagogical decisions through an explicit Philippian theological lens. The integration remains intuitive rather than systematic. This condition confirms previous findings that many CRE teachers practice Christian values implicitly but lack structured pedagogical models that translate biblical theology into instructional design (Estep, Anthony, & Allison, 2008). As a result, the transformative potential of biblical values in shaping pedagogical competence is not fully maximized. Several contextual challenges

were identified. One major constraint is the limited professional development opportunities available to the CRE teacher, who serves as the sole specialist for Christian students at the school. Being the only CRE teacher for 30 Christian students creates both workload concentration and professional isolation. Research shows that teacher collaboration and continuous professional learning communities significantly influence pedagogical growth (Hattie, 2009). In this context, the absence of regular peer dialogue may contribute to the relatively conventional instructional patterns observed. Another challenge relates to learning resources. Although basic teaching materials are available, the integration of creative media and contextual learning tools remains minimal. The teacher reported constraints in time, training, and access to specialized CRE pedagogical workshops. This condition is common in rural or semi-rural Indonesian schools, where subject-specific professional enrichment is unevenly distributed. Consequently, pedagogical innovation tends to rely heavily on individual teacher initiative rather than systemic support.

Student diversity in learning readiness also emerged as an important factor. Even within the relatively small group of 30 Christian students, variations in prior biblical knowledge, motivation, and learning pace were evident. Differentiated instruction, a key element of strong pedagogical competence, was observed only in limited form. While the teacher provides general clarification for struggling students, structured differentiation strategies (such as tiered tasks or flexible grouping) are not yet consistently implemented. This finding supports Tomlinson's (2014) argument that effective pedagogy must deliberately respond to learner variability through planned differentiation rather than spontaneous adjustment. Based on the findings, this study formulates a Philippian values-based pedagogical strengthening model consisting of four integrative components: theological grounding, pedagogical transformation, relational cultivation, and reflective evaluation. The first component, theological grounding, emphasizes that pedagogical competence in CRE should be explicitly rooted in the theological values of Philippians. Rather than treating biblical content only as subject matter, the model positions Philippian virtues, unity, humility, perseverance, and joy, as pedagogical orientations that shape how teaching is designed and delivered. For example, lesson planning can intentionally incorporate collaborative learning structures that embody unity (Phil. 1:27), while formative feedback can be framed through the lens of Christlike humility (Phil. 2:5). This approach reflects the principle that Christian teaching is not merely informational but formational (Groome, 2011). Pedagogical transformation, focuses on shifting from predominantly teacher-centered instruction toward more student-centered and participatory learning. Based on classroom evidence, the CRE teacher already possesses foundational classroom control and content mastery; therefore, the next developmental step is methodological enrichment. Strategies such as cooperative learning, reflective journaling, biblical role-play, and contextual problem-based learning are recommended. These approaches align with constructivist pedagogy, which emphasizes active meaning-making by learners (Vygotsky, 1978). Importantly, when framed through Philippian values, these strategies also nurture spiritual attitudes alongside cognitive understanding. Relational cultivation, highlights the importance of teacher-student relationships as a core dimension of pedagogical competence. Observational data show that the CRE teacher maintains a warm and respectful classroom climate, which is a significant

strength. However, the model proposes more intentional relational mentoring inspired by Paul's pastoral tone in Philippians. This includes regular spiritual check-ins, encouragement practices, and peer-support structures among students. Research consistently shows that positive teacher-student relationships significantly influence engagement and learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009). Within CRE, such relationships also support spiritual formation. Reflective evaluation, emphasizes continuous improvement through structured reflection. The current evaluation practice primarily focuses on cognitive assessment. The proposed model expands evaluation to include spiritual attitudes, collaborative behavior, and perseverance in learning. Reflective teaching journals, student self-assessment, and formative spiritual reflection tools are recommended. Schön's (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner supports this approach, emphasizing that professional growth emerges through disciplined reflection on practice. When synthesized, the findings indicate that the CRE teacher at SDN 153025 Simargarap demonstrates a solid foundational level of pedagogical competence but operates largely within conventional instructional patterns. The implicit presence of Philippian values provides a strong theological starting point; however, without systematic integration, the transformative potential remains underutilized. The proposed Philippian values-based model offers a contextual and theologically grounded pathway for strengthening pedagogical competence in small-school settings with limited human resources. The small number of Christian students (30 learners) should not be viewed as a limitation but rather as an opportunity for more personalized and relationally intensive Christian pedagogy. With intentional application of Philippian values, the CRE classroom can function as a formative micro-community characterized by unity, humility, perseverance, and joy in learning. Such an approach aligns with the broader mission of Christian education to form not only knowledgeable students but also Christlike character. The study demonstrates that strengthening pedagogical competence in CRE requires more than technical training; it requires theological-pedagogical integration. The Epistle to the Philippians provides a rich biblical framework that, when operationalized into concrete teaching practices, can significantly enrich the quality of Christian Religious Education at the elementary school level, particularly in contexts similar to SDN 153025 Simargarap in Central Tapanuli.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore and formulate a Philippian values-based model for strengthening the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SDN 153025 Simargarap, Central Tapanuli. Based on qualitative descriptive analysis involving one CRE teacher and 30 Christian students, the findings affirm that the teacher demonstrates a generally adequate level of pedagogical competence, particularly in lesson organization, classroom management, and basic instructional delivery. However, the study also reveals that pedagogical practices remain largely conventional and have not yet been intentionally framed through a systematic biblical-pedagogical integration rooted in the values of the Epistle to the Philippians. The research shows that key Philippian values, unity, humility, perseverance, and joy, are already present implicitly in classroom interactions, especially in the teacher's respectful communication style and supportive learning climate. These values have not been consciously operationalized into

structured pedagogical design, learning strategies, and assessment practices. As a result, the transformative potential of Christian theological values in shaping pedagogical excellence is not yet fully realized. This finding confirms the need for a more intentional and model-based approach in CRE pedagogy, particularly in elementary school contexts where character formation is foundational. The proposed Philippian values-based pedagogical model offers an integrative framework consisting of four interrelated components: theological grounding, pedagogical transformation, relational cultivation, and reflective evaluation. The model emphasizes that pedagogical competence in CRE must move beyond technical teaching skills toward spiritually informed instructional praxis. By embedding Philippian virtues into lesson planning, student engagement strategies, relational mentoring, and reflective assessment, CRE teachers can foster learning environments that are cognitively meaningful, spiritually formative, and relationally nurturing. The study highlights that the small number of Christian students at SDN 153025 Simargarap should be viewed as a strategic opportunity rather than a constraint. The relatively intimate classroom setting enables more personalized guidance, closer relational mentoring, and deeper value internalization. With appropriate pedagogical enrichment and continuous professional reflection, the CRE teacher can transform the classroom into a micro-community of faith learning that reflects the spirit of Philippians 1:27, living and learning in a manner worthy of the gospel. This study contributes theoretically by bridging biblical theology and pedagogical competence within the CRE context, and practically by offering an applicable model for teachers working in similar small-school environments across Indonesia. However, the study is limited by its single-site focus and the involvement of only one CRE teacher. Future research is recommended to test the proposed model in broader educational settings, employ mixed-method validation, and examine its impact on measurable student spiritual and academic outcomes. Strengthening the pedagogical competence of CRE teachers requires intentional theological integration, reflective professionalism, and context-sensitive innovation. The Philippian values-based model provides a promising pathway for advancing holistic and Christ-centered pedagogical practice in Indonesian elementary education.

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