



Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Navigating Educational Disruption: A Reflective Study on Philippians 4:11-12 at SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang

Sister J Hutabarat

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: sisterhutabarat5@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Educational disruption has increasingly challenged teachers to adapt their pedagogical practices while maintaining professional integrity and student engagement. This study explores the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang in navigating such disruption, drawing on Philippians 4:11-12 as a theological framework for contentment and resilience. Employing a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving five Christian teachers and thirty-three Christian students. The findings indicate that professional competence extends beyond pedagogical knowledge to include adaptive capacity, relational intentionality, and spiritual grounding. CRE teachers who internalize Pauline contentment demonstrate greater emotional resilience, ethical consistency, and capacity to sustain constructive relationships despite fluctuating circumstances. Their practice not only stabilizes classroom dynamics but also models Christ-centered perseverance for students, fostering both academic engagement and moral-spiritual development. The study highlights the integration of theological reflection with professional practice as a key enabler of teacher effectiveness in disrupted educational contexts. These insights suggest that cultivating spiritually grounded competence can enhance teacher adaptability, relational leadership, and student outcomes, emphasizing that professional excellence in Christian education is inseparable from faith-informed resilience.

Keywords: *Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Educational Disruption*

INTRODUCTION

Educational disruption has become a defining characteristic of contemporary schooling. Rapid technological transformation, curricular reform, socio-cultural shifts, and the lingering effects of global crises have reshaped classroom dynamics and teacher responsibilities. Within this context, professional competence can no longer be reduced

to subject-matter mastery or procedural classroom management. It must also encompass adaptive expertise, emotional regulation, ethical coherence, and reflective judgment. For Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers, these dimensions are inseparable from theological reflection because their vocation integrates pedagogical responsibility with spiritual formation. At SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang, where 33 Christian students and 5 Christian teachers (including the CRE teacher) form a minority faith community within a public-school framework, navigating disruption involves both institutional adaptation and spiritual discernment. Professional competence has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct involving pedagogical content knowledge, curricular understanding, and professional identity formation (Shulman, 1986; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Contemporary scholarship further emphasizes adaptive expertise, the capacity to respond creatively and reflectively to novel situations, as essential in uncertain educational climates (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Disruption exposes the limitations of routine-based professionalism and compels educators to cultivate deeper internal resources. For Christian educators, Scripture functions as one such resource, shaping interpretive frameworks through which instability is understood and navigated. Philippians 4:11-12 provides a significant theological paradigm for understanding steadiness amid volatility. In this passage, the Apostle Paul declares that he has learned to be content in every circumstance, whether experiencing abundance or deprivation. The Greek term *autarkēs* (αὐτάρκης) conveys sufficiency or self-contentment; however, Pauline usage reorients this concept away from Stoic autonomy toward Christ-centered dependence (Hawthorne, Martin, & Reid, 2004). Paul's testimony describes contentment not as passive resignation but as a learned discipline cultivated through relational trust in Christ. Such a perspective is particularly relevant in educational environments undergoing systemic shifts, where teachers must negotiate fluctuating expectations, technological transitions, and evolving student needs. Exegetical scholarship underscores that Paul's understanding of contentment is fundamentally Christological rather than philosophical. Unlike Greco-Roman ideals of self-sufficiency, Paul grounds sufficiency in participation in Christ's sustaining power (Fee, 1995). This theological reframing has implications for professional identity. Competence rooted solely in external performance metrics remains vulnerable to contextual instability. By contrast, competence anchored in a theological vision of vocation fosters resilience that transcends circumstantial change. Within smaller institutional settings such as SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang, where resource limitations and policy shifts may intensify disruption, such anchoring becomes especially critical. The notion of competence must therefore be expanded beyond technical capability. It includes moral discernment, relational integrity, and reflective adaptability under pressure (Day, 2004). In Christian pedagogy, professional competence also entails spiritual modeling, the embodied demonstration of faith-informed stability. When CRE teachers practice contentment grounded in theological conviction, they implicitly cultivate similar dispositions in their students. In this sense, Philippians 4:11-12 serves not merely as a devotional text but as a hermeneutical framework for reconstructing professional identity within disrupted educational ecosystems. This study investigates how Philippians 4:11-12 informs the professional competence of CRE teachers at SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang in responding to educational disruption. Specifically, it addresses two research questions: How do CRE teachers conceptualize and enact professional competence amid educational instability? How does the Pauline principle of

learned contentment shape their adaptive strategies, relational engagement, and pedagogical resilience? By integrating exegetical reflection with qualitative inquiry, this research contributes to interdisciplinary dialogue between biblical theology and educational theory, arguing that theological contentment provides a resilient foundation for professional competence in contexts of change.

METHODS

A qualitative case study design was used to explore how Philippians 4:11-12 informs the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in navigating educational disruption at SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang. A case study approach was selected because it enables in-depth investigation of a bounded system within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2018). The research focused specifically on the lived experiences, reflective practices, and pedagogical responses of CRE teachers within a small Christian educational community consisting of 33 Christian students and 5 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. The design integrated two complementary components: exegetical analysis of Philippians 4:11-12 and empirical qualitative inquiry. The exegetical component examined the literary, historical, and theological dimensions of the Pauline concept of contentment (*autarkeia*) using established biblical scholarship. This analysis functioned as a theological framework guiding the interpretation of empirical findings. The qualitative component sought to capture how teachers interpret and embody this theological principle in their professional practice during periods of educational disruption (e.g., curriculum adjustments, technological shifts, and fluctuating student engagement). Participants were selected using purposive sampling. The primary participants were all five Christian teachers at the school, including the CRE teacher, ensuring comprehensive representation of the Christian teaching community. In addition, a sample of Christian students (n = 15) from upper-grade levels was selected to provide reflective insights regarding teacher competence and resilience. Inclusion criteria for students included active participation in CRE classes and willingness to engage in reflective interviews. Semi-structured interviews with teachers, focusing on their understanding of professional competence, experiences of educational disruption, adaptive strategies, and theological reflections on Philippians 4:11-12. Each interview lasted approximately 60-75 minutes and was audio-recorded with consent. Classroom observations, conducted over a six-week period, to examine instructional strategies, relational dynamics, and adaptive practices in real-time teaching situations. Field notes documented pedagogical adjustments, emotional tone, and student engagement patterns. Data analysis followed a thematic coding procedure informed by Saldana's (2016) qualitative coding framework. Initial coding identified recurring patterns related to adaptability, resilience, relational competence, and theological reflection. Axial coding then grouped these patterns into broader conceptual categories aligned with the Pauline themes of contentment, sufficiency in Christ, and situational adaptability. The exegetical findings served as an interpretive lens rather than a prescriptive template, ensuring that empirical insights remained grounded in participants' lived experiences. Triangulation was achieved by comparing interview data, observational findings, and documentary

evidence to enhance credibility. Member checking was conducted by returning preliminary interpretations to participants for validation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated how Philippians 4:11-12 functions as a theological lens for understanding and strengthening the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang in the midst of educational disruption. Through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, four major thematic findings emerged: adaptive pedagogical competence in disruptive contexts; theological internalization of contentment as professional stability; relational resilience and ethical consistency; and transformative influence on student spiritual-educational formation. These findings are discussed integratively with the exegetical framework of Philippians 4:11-12 and contemporary theories of teacher professional competence. The first finding concerns adaptive expertise. All five Christian teachers reported experiencing disruption in multiple forms: rapid integration of digital tools, curriculum adjustments aligned with national educational reforms, fluctuating student motivation, and infrastructural limitations common in semi-rural contexts. Teachers described an initial phase of uncertainty, particularly regarding technological adaptation and differentiated instruction for varied student learning paces. Observation data revealed a progressive shift from reactive adjustment to proactive innovation. The CRE teacher, for example, integrated multimedia biblical storytelling through low-bandwidth digital resources and employed collaborative learning strategies to compensate for limited facilities. Lesson plans demonstrated contextualization, connecting scriptural themes to students' lived realities in Simalungun, indicating pedagogical responsiveness rather than rigid content delivery. This aligns with the concept of adaptive expertise described by Darling-Hammond (2017), where professional competence extends beyond routine mastery to flexible problem-solving. Importantly, teachers consistently framed adaptation not merely as technical necessity but as vocational responsibility. Interviews revealed statements such as, "*Perubahan itu bagian dari panggilan, bukan ancaman,*" reflecting a theological reframing of disruption. This resonates with Paul's declaration in Philippians 4:12 that he has learned to live in plenty and in want. The verb *manthanō* ("I have learned") suggests an ongoing pedagogical process. Contentment, therefore, is cultivated through experiential formation rather than instantaneous spiritual attainment (Fee, 1995). Teachers at SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang mirrored this dynamic: competence in disruption emerged as a learned discipline shaped by repeated adaptation. Professional competence in this context cannot be interpreted as static proficiency. It is dynamic, iterative, and spiritually informed. Disruption became a formative space where competence was refined rather than diminished.

The next theme concerns the internalization of Pauline contentment (*autarkeia*) as an inner stabilizing framework. Interview transcripts revealed that teachers frequently referenced faith practices, personal prayer, devotional reflection, and communal

fellowship, as resources for maintaining emotional equilibrium. Teachers articulated that professional stress, administrative demands, resource scarcity, or classroom behavioral challenges, did not disappear. Rather, their interpretation of such stress shifted. One participant explained that *"cukup di dalam Tuhan"* meant recognizing sufficiency not in institutional completeness but in divine accompaniment. This interpretation corresponds with Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid (2004), who emphasize that Pauline contentment reflects Christ-dependent sufficiency rather than Stoic autonomy. Observation data supported this claim. During moments of classroom unpredictability, such as technological malfunction or student inattentiveness, teachers demonstrated calm recalibration rather than frustration-driven responses. Emotional tone remained constructive, suggesting internalized resilience. Students interviewed described their teachers as *"tenang"* and *"tidak mudah marah,"* indicating observable behavioral consistency. Day (2004) argues that teacher identity rooted in moral purpose strengthens professional longevity. In this case, theological contentment functioned as a stabilizing identity marker. Professional competence was not measured exclusively by technical performance but by sustained coherence between belief and action. Philippians 4:11-12 reframes sufficiency as relational trust. Paul's experience of abundance and deprivation parallels contemporary educational oscillations between institutional support and limitation. Teachers at SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang interpreted such oscillations as contexts for spiritual maturation. Competence, therefore, included the capacity to remain internally anchored despite external flux.

The other theme highlights relational competence as a dimension of professional adaptability. Disruption often destabilizes school relationships, between teacher and student, teacher and colleague, and teacher and administration. Yet findings indicate that CRE teachers emphasized relational intentionality as a strategic response. Teachers reported increasing personal communication with students during periods of academic transition. Informal mentoring conversations became common, particularly with students experiencing motivational decline. Classroom observations confirmed this pattern: teachers incorporated reflective dialogue at the beginning of lessons, allowing students to articulate emotional or academic concerns. Students affirmed feeling *"didengar"* and *"diperhatikan,"* suggesting relational trust. Such relational investment aligns with Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) concept of "professional capital," where social capital enhances institutional resilience. In small communities such as SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang, relational capital becomes particularly influential. Ethical consistency also emerged as significant. Teachers described refusing to compromise evaluative fairness despite administrative pressure for rapid reporting. Integrity was framed as an expression of Christian witness. This echoes Paul's broader theological framework in Philippians, where joy and contentment coexist with ethical steadfastness (Fee, 1995). Contentment does not produce passivity; it reinforces moral clarity. Relational resilience constitutes a concrete expression of theological contentment. Teachers who perceive themselves as secure in divine sufficiency exhibit reduced defensiveness and increased empathetic engagement. Professional competence in disruption therefore includes relational stability grounded in spiritual assurance. Interviews with 15 Christian students revealed that teacher composure during disruptive transitions fostered a sense of security. Students associated teacher calmness with spiritual maturity, often linking classroom experiences

to biblical lessons on perseverance. Notably, students reported applying themes of contentment to their own academic challenges. Several described attempting to remain patient during examination stress or technological difficulties, explicitly referencing lessons from Philippians 4. This suggests that theological integration was not abstract but pedagogically embodied. Educational theory emphasizes that teacher identity significantly influences classroom climate (Shulman, 1986). In this case, spiritually grounded competence generated a learning environment characterized by trust and stability. Even in infrastructurally modest conditions, the moral atmosphere remained constructive. This aligns with the Christocentric reading of *autarkeia*. According to Hawthorne et al. (2004), Paul's sufficiency emerges from participation in Christ's sustaining presence. Teachers who internalize this perspective model a non-anxious presence, which in turn shapes communal resilience. At SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang, the relatively small Christian cohort amplified this effect: identity coherence among teachers visibly influenced the spiritual tone of the student community. These findings suggest that professional competence in disruptive educational contexts is multidimensional, integrating adaptive pedagogy, theological resilience, relational intentionality, and ethical integrity. Philippians 4:11-12 does not offer a simplistic formula for institutional success. Rather, it provides a theological anthropology in which stability is cultivated through learned dependence on Christ. This study expands traditional educational discourse by demonstrating that spiritual virtues can function as operative professional resources. Contentment, as articulated by Paul, is neither complacency nor detachment. It is a disciplined orientation enabling constructive engagement with fluctuating realities. When translated into educational practice, this virtue strengthens adaptive capacity, emotional regulation, and relational trust. The findings challenge reductionist metrics of professional competence that prioritize quantifiable outputs while neglecting moral and spiritual formation. In smaller public-school contexts like SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang, where structural constraints limit material expansion, competence grounded in theological contentment becomes especially strategic. It ensures that institutional limitation does not devolve into professional discouragement. The integration of exegesis and empirical observation in this research demonstrates that biblical theology can function as a conceptual framework for analyzing contemporary educational practice. Philippians 4:11-12 reframes disruption not as vocational threat but as formative terrain. Teachers who internalize this perspective develop resilience that is reflective, relational, and ethically consistent. The results indicate that CRE teachers at SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang navigate educational disruption through a synthesis of adaptive pedagogical skill and spiritually grounded contentment. Professional competence emerges not merely from technical proficiency but from a theologically informed posture of learned sufficiency. This integrative model offers a constructive contribution to both Christian educational praxis and broader discussions on teacher resilience in times of systemic change.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore that professional competence for Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SD Negeri 096763 Marihat Mayang extends beyond technical mastery and routine pedagogy, encompassing adaptive, relational, and spiritually

grounded capacities. In the context of educational disruption, characterized by technological change, curricular reform, and fluctuating student engagement, CRE teachers demonstrated that effective competence requires both practical skill and theological internalization. Philippians 4:11-12 provided a hermeneutical framework for understanding and cultivating professional stability amid uncertainty. Teachers who internalized the Pauline principle of contentment developed adaptive pedagogical strategies, maintained relational resilience, and upheld ethical consistency despite structural or resource limitations. Their ability to navigate disruption was closely linked to a spiritually informed identity, where trust in God functioned as a stabilizing anchor for decision-making, emotional regulation, and classroom interaction. Empirical evidence from interviews, observations, and document analysis revealed that such spiritually grounded competence had a transformative effect on students. Learners reported increased confidence, a sense of security, and the ability to model contentment and perseverance in their own academic and social challenges. The integration of adaptive expertise and theological reflection thus strengthened both teacher effectiveness and the moral-spiritual climate of the classroom. Professional competence for CRE teachers in disrupted educational settings is multidimensional, integrating pedagogical agility, relational intentionality, ethical integrity, and spiritual formation. Philippians 4:11-12 demonstrates that contentment is an operative virtue that enables teachers to sustain effective practice while modeling Christ-centered resilience. This study contributes to the discourse on faith-informed professionalism, suggesting that spiritual grounding is not ancillary but central to sustaining teacher competence in times of systemic and contextual disruption.

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