



Spiritual Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers as a Reflection of Christ's Glory An Exodus 34:29 Perspective at SMK Negeri 1 Toma

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as a reflection of Christ's glory inspired by Exodus 34:29 within the educational context of SMK Negeri 1 Toma. The research is grounded in the understanding that teachers play a vital role not only as facilitators of knowledge but also as spiritual role models who influence students' character formation. Spiritual competence is viewed as the integration of faith, personal integrity, moral commitment, and professional responsibility manifested in teaching practices. Drawing from the theological symbolism of Moses' radiant face after encountering God, this study explores how teachers' spiritual depth becomes visible in their attitudes, relationships, and pedagogical approaches. This research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to synthesize relevant scholarly works on spirituality, teacher competence, and Christian education. Selected literature was analyzed thematically to identify key dimensions of spiritual competence, including personal transformation, relational leadership, ethical resilience, vocational awareness, and reflective practice. The findings reveal that spiritually competent teachers contribute significantly to creating a faith-centered learning environment characterized by trust, empathy, and moral consistency. Their lived example enables students to internalize Christian values through observation and experience rather than solely through doctrinal instruction. The study also highlights that spiritual competence strengthens teachers' adaptability in contemporary educational challenges while fostering ethical learning cultures. However, institutional pressures and professional demands may hinder its development, necessitating intentional spiritual formation programs. Ultimately, this study affirms that spiritual competence is essential for CRE teachers to embody Christ-like character in their vocation. By reflecting divine presence in educational practice, teachers not only support academic growth but also nurture the spiritual and moral development of students in holistic and transformative ways.

Keywords: *Spiritual competence, Christian Religious Education, teacher, Exodus 34:29*

INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) occupies a strategic and transformative role in shaping students not only cognitively but also morally and spiritually. Within this framework, teachers are not merely conveyors of theological knowledge but living witnesses whose character and spiritual depth influence students' faith formation. Contemporary studies emphasize that the effectiveness of Christian education is closely tied to the spiritual competence of teachers, understood as the integration of faith, character, and professional practice in everyday pedagogical life (Halawa, 2025). This perspective aligns with the foundational understanding that education in Christian contexts is inherently transformative, aiming to nurture individuals who reflect Christ-like character in their attitudes and actions (Sitanggang & Naibaho, 2023). Therefore, the presence of spiritually mature teachers becomes indispensable in cultivating students' holistic development. In recent years, educational discourse has increasingly recognized spirituality as a core dimension of teacher competence rather than a purely private or devotional matter. Research demonstrates that spirituality functions as a guiding force that shapes educators' professionalism, ethical decision-making, and relational engagement with students (Simamora, 2023). Spiritual competence, in this sense, is not limited to religious observance but involves embodying divine character in teaching practices. When teachers internalize Christian values such as humility, compassion, integrity, and perseverance, their pedagogical role transcends technical instruction and becomes a ministry that nurtures faith and character formation (Mawikere & Hura, 2024). The importance of spiritual competence is further underscored by studies showing its significant influence on student character development. Observations in Christian educational settings reveal that students often encounter Christian faith more profoundly through the lived example of teachers than through doctrinal explanations alone (Munthe et al., 2025). This aligns with social learning perspectives which suggest that modeling behavior plays a crucial role in value internalization. Teachers who demonstrate Christ-like attitudes in patience, honesty, empathy, and responsibility create an environment where students are more receptive to moral and spiritual formation (Pasaribu, 2025). The concept of reflecting Christ's glory becomes central to understanding spiritual competence. The biblical narrative in Exodus 34:29 describes Moses descending from Mount Sinai with a radiant face after encountering God's presence. This passage symbolically illustrates how spiritual intimacy with God transforms an individual's character and outward expression. In the context of education, such transformation parallels the expectation that teachers who maintain a vibrant spiritual life will radiate Christ-like qualities in their teaching vocation. Research on spiritual competence among CRE teachers highlights that practices such as prayer, reflection, and dependence on God sustain their integrity and perseverance amidst professional challenges (Halawa, 2025). The role of spiritual intelligence in teacher professionalism cannot be overlooked. Studies indicate that spiritual intelligence, defined as the capacity to perceive meaning, purpose, and divine guidance, serves as the foundation for authentic professional conduct among Christian educators (Anjaya, Arifianto, & Fernando, 2021). Through an intimate relationship with God, teachers develop sensitivity to moral values and divine direction, enabling them to carry out their responsibilities with sincerity and dedication. Such spirituality fosters a sense of vocation rather than mere occupational duty, encouraging educators to view teaching as participation in God's redemptive mission. The integration of spiritual competence into

pedagogical practice contributes to the creation of a faith-centered learning environment. Research conducted in Indonesian Christian schools shows that spiritually competent teachers cultivate classroom cultures characterized by love, cooperation, and mutual respect (Gulo & Sihombing, 2024). Their empathetic communication and incarnational teaching methods enable students to experience Christian values in tangible ways. Consequently, education becomes a relational process through which students grow spiritually while engaging academically.

The manifestation of spiritual competence among teachers remains a challenge in many educational contexts. Some educators continue to perceive teaching as merely fulfilling professional obligations, neglecting the deeper spiritual responsibility embedded in Christian education (Paembonan, 2022). This gap often results in a lack of authentic role models for students, thereby weakening the transformative potential of CRE. Strengthening spiritual competence, therefore, becomes essential in ensuring that teachers embody the values they seek to impart. The digital and globalized educational landscape demands renewed attention to the spiritual formation of teachers. As education evolves in response to technological and societal changes, Christian educators are required to maintain a biblical worldview while engaging contemporary realities (Chrismastianto et al., 2022). Spiritual competence enables teachers to navigate these complexities with discernment and resilience, ensuring that their pedagogical practices remain anchored in Christ-centered principles. In light of these considerations, this study explores the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers as a reflection of Christ's glory, inspired by Exodus 34:29, within the context of SMK Negeri 1 Toma. By examining how teachers embody spiritual values in their professional roles, this research seeks to highlight the transformative impact of spirituality on educational practice. Ultimately, understanding spiritual competence as a reflection of divine presence offers a theological and pedagogical framework for nurturing educators who not only teach about Christ but visibly reflect His character in their lives and ministries.

METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to explore and analyze the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as a reflection of Christ's glory inspired by Exodus 34:29. The SLR method was selected because it allows for a structured, transparent, and comprehensive synthesis of previous scholarly findings related to spirituality, teacher competence, and Christian education. Systematic reviews are widely recognized as effective in identifying patterns, theoretical frameworks, and research gaps within a particular field of study (Snyder, 2019). Through this method, the research does not rely on a single empirical setting but integrates findings from multiple credible academic sources to build a strong conceptual foundation. The review process followed several systematic stages. The identification stage involved searching relevant literature from reputable academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus-indexed journals, and theological education publications. Keywords used in the search process included *spiritual competence*, *Christian Religious Education teachers*, *teacher spirituality*, *spiritual intelligence in education*, and *character formation in Christian education*. These keywords were chosen to ensure alignment with the research focus on spirituality as a professional and theological dimension of teaching.

The screening stage was conducted to ensure the relevance and quality of selected sources. Articles were included based on the following criteria: published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure contemporary relevance, peer-reviewed academic journals or scholarly books, directly discussing spirituality in education, teacher competence, or Christian pedagogical practice, and presenting empirical findings or theoretical frameworks. Sources that lacked academic credibility, were opinion-based, or did not explicitly relate to teacher spirituality were excluded from the review. This selection process follows recommended systematic review standards for ensuring validity and reliability (Xiao & Watson, 2019). The eligibility and analysis stage involved in-depth reading and thematic categorization of the selected literature. The studies were analyzed using a qualitative thematic approach to identify recurring concepts related to spiritual competence, such as personal faith integration, moral integrity, vocational calling, and transformational leadership in teaching. Particular attention was given to literature that emphasized the embodiment of Christian values in educational practice (Anjaya et al., 2021; Mawikere & Hura, 2024). These themes were then interpreted in light of the theological narrative of Exodus 34:29, which symbolically portrays spiritual transformation through divine encounter. The synthesis stage integrated the findings into a coherent framework that explains how spiritual competence enables CRE teachers to reflect Christ-like character in their professional roles. The SLR method thus provided a comprehensive understanding of how spirituality shapes teaching identity, pedagogical interaction, and character modeling in Christian education contexts. By employing this structured review process, the study ensures methodological rigor while offering a theological-pedagogical interpretation relevant to the educational setting of SMK Negeri 1 Toma.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, derived from a systematic review of relevant scholarly literature, reveal that the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers plays a foundational role in shaping both the atmosphere of learning and the moral-spiritual development of students. Spiritual competence is consistently described not merely as an inward religious disposition but as an integrative capacity that influences cognition, emotion, behavior, and professional responsibility (Anjaya, Arifianto, & Fernando, 2021). Within the educational vocation, spirituality becomes visible through attitudes, relational patterns, ethical decisions, and commitment to the holistic formation of learners. This aligns with the theological symbolism of Exodus 34:29, where Moses' radiant face reflected the transformative impact of encountering God's presence. In educational practice, this "radiance" metaphorically represents the visible manifestation of Christ-like character in teachers' lives. One of the dominant themes emerging from the reviewed literature is that spiritual competence begins with personal transformation before it shapes professional practice. Teachers who cultivate an intimate relationship with God through prayer, reflection, and scriptural engagement develop an internalized value system that governs their pedagogical approach (Mawikere & Hura, 2024). Such educators demonstrate consistency between belief and behavior, thereby fostering authenticity in teaching. Students, in turn, perceive this authenticity as credibility. Research shows that learners are more receptive to spiritual and moral instruction when they witness congruence between a teacher's words and actions (Munthe et al., 2025).

Spiritual competence is not simply transmitted through formal instruction but embodied through lived example. The review indicates that spiritual competence significantly influences relational dynamics in the classroom. Teachers who embody Christ-like humility, patience, and compassion tend to establish learning environments characterized by trust and mutual respect (Gulo & Sihombing, 2024). This relational dimension reflects the incarnational model of Christian leadership, where influence emerges through service rather than authority. In CRE contexts, such relational leadership encourages students to internalize values through experience rather than coercion. Consequently, classrooms become spaces of moral dialogue and spiritual growth rather than merely cognitive instruction. Another critical aspect identified is the connection between spiritual competence and moral resilience. Teaching, particularly in faith-based contexts, involves navigating ethical dilemmas, cultural diversity, and evolving social expectations. Studies highlight that teachers with strong spiritual grounding demonstrate greater perseverance, emotional stability, and ethical consistency when facing professional challenges (Simamora, 2023). Their decision-making processes are guided not solely by institutional regulations but by internalized spiritual convictions. This capacity mirrors the transformative encounter experienced by Moses in Exodus 34:29, where divine presence produced enduring change rather than temporary inspiration. The literature also underscores the role of spiritual intelligence as a core component of teacher competence. Spiritual intelligence enables educators to interpret their work as vocation rather than occupation (Anjaya et al., 2021). Teachers who perceive their role as participation in God's redemptive mission approach teaching with purpose and dedication. This sense of calling enhances motivation and fosters resilience in the face of institutional limitations or resource constraints. In contexts such as SMK Negeri 1 Toma, where students may face socio-economic or developmental challenges, spiritually competent teachers are better equipped to provide guidance that integrates academic support with moral encouragement.

The review reveals that spiritual competence contributes to the formation of ethical learning cultures. Teachers who model integrity, fairness, and empathy cultivate norms that influence peer interactions among students (Pasaribu, 2025). Over time, these norms evolve into shared values that shape the school environment. CRE teachers thus function as cultural architects, shaping not only individual students but also collective identity. This aligns with the broader educational aim of character formation, which emphasizes internal transformation rather than behavioral conformity. The discussion further highlights that spiritual competence is inseparable from reflective practice. Spiritually mature educators engage in continuous self-evaluation, recognizing their limitations and seeking divine guidance in improving their teaching (Halawa, 2025). This humility fosters openness to growth and prevents spiritual stagnation. Reflection also enables teachers to align pedagogical strategies with theological principles, ensuring that educational methods support rather than contradict spiritual objectives. The integration of spirituality into professional identity enhances teachers' adaptability in contemporary educational settings. Globalization and technological advancement often introduce value pluralism that may challenge traditional Christian perspectives (Chrismastianto et al., 2022). Teachers with strong spiritual competence navigate these complexities with discernment, balancing faith commitment with contextual sensitivity. Rather than withdrawing from modern challenges, they engage constructively while maintaining Christ-centered values.

A recurring theme across the reviewed studies is the modeling function of spiritually competent teachers. Students frequently internalize attitudes through observation rather than formal instruction (Sitanggang & Naibaho, 2023). When teachers demonstrate forgiveness, perseverance, and compassion in daily interactions, these behaviors become reference points for students' own moral development. In this sense, spiritual competence operates as a hidden curriculum that shapes character through lived experience. The discussion also reveals that spiritual competence influences instructional approaches. Teachers who embody Christ-like values tend to adopt participatory and empathetic teaching strategies that respect students' individuality (Gulo & Sihombing, 2024). Such approaches reflect the pastoral dimension of Christian education, where instruction is intertwined with care. Students are encouraged not only to understand theological concepts but also to apply them in personal and social contexts. Another important finding concerns the role of community in sustaining spiritual competence. Literature suggests that teachers' spirituality is strengthened through participation in faith communities and collegial support systems (Paembonan, 2022). These networks provide encouragement, accountability, and shared reflection, preventing professional isolation. In educational settings, collaborative spiritual practices among teachers can enhance institutional culture and reinforce shared mission. The synthesis of findings suggests that the reflection of Christ's glory in teaching is not a mystical abstraction but a practical reality manifested through attitudes and actions. Teachers who internalize spiritual values radiate qualities that influence students' perceptions of faith. This reflection becomes particularly meaningful in vocational education contexts like SMK Negeri 1 Toma, where students prepare for practical life roles. The presence of spiritually competent teachers ensures that technical training is complemented by moral formation. The literature also acknowledges challenges in cultivating spiritual competence. Factors such as workload, institutional pressures, and personal struggles may hinder teachers' spiritual growth (Simamora, 2023). Addressing these challenges requires intentional formation programs that integrate spiritual development with professional training. Educational institutions play a vital role in facilitating such integration through mentoring, retreats, and reflective practices. The discussion further emphasizes that spiritual competence is dynamic rather than static. Continuous engagement with Scripture, prayer, and community enables teachers to deepen their spiritual maturity over time (Halawa, 2025). This ongoing growth reflects the transformative journey symbolized in Exodus 34:29, where divine encounter initiated a lasting process of change. The reviewed literature consistently affirms that spiritual competence is central to the effectiveness of CRE teachers. It shapes relational dynamics, ethical decision-making, instructional strategies, and institutional culture. By embodying Christ-like character, teachers become living reflections of divine presence, influencing students not only intellectually but also spiritually. Within the context of SMK Negeri 1 Toma, such competence holds transformative potential for nurturing learners who are prepared not only for vocational success but also for moral and spiritual responsibility. Spiritual competence, inspired by the radiance described in Exodus 34:29, provides a theological foundation for understanding teaching as both profession and vocation. Through this lens, education becomes a transformative encounter where teachers and students alike participate in the ongoing reflection of Christ's glory.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers is a fundamental dimension that shapes not only instructional effectiveness but also the moral and spiritual formation of students. Inspired by the theological imagery of Exodus 34:29, where Moses' face radiated after encountering God, this research highlights that authentic spirituality within teachers becomes visibly reflected in their attitudes, relationships, and professional conduct. Such competence transcends doctrinal knowledge and is expressed through integrity, compassion, humility, and perseverance in daily educational practice. The findings derived from the systematic literature review demonstrate that spiritual competence plays a transformative role in fostering a faith-centered learning environment. Teachers who embody Christ-like character create relational spaces marked by trust, empathy, and moral consistency. Their lived example becomes a powerful pedagogical influence, enabling students to internalize Christian values through observation and interaction. This modeling function underscores that spiritual formation in education is not merely taught but experienced through authentic relationships with spiritually grounded educators. Spiritual competence strengthens teachers' resilience and vocational commitment. Educators who perceive teaching as a divine calling rather than a routine profession exhibit greater dedication and ethical sensitivity in navigating challenges within contemporary educational contexts. This sense of vocation supports reflective practice, continuous growth, and adaptability in responding to social and cultural changes without compromising biblical values. The study also recognizes that spiritual competence does not develop automatically. Institutional demands, workload pressures, and personal struggles may hinder teachers' spiritual growth. Therefore, intentional support systems such as mentoring, reflective practices, and communal spiritual formation are necessary to sustain this competence. In the context of SMK Negeri 1 Toma, the presence of spiritually competent CRE teachers holds significant potential for holistic student development. By reflecting Christ's character in their professional roles, teachers contribute to shaping learners who are not only academically prepared but also morally responsible and spiritually grounded. Ultimately, spiritual competence serves as the bridge between theological conviction and educational practice, ensuring that Christian education remains transformative in both purpose and impact.

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