



## Professionalism of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Cultivating Worship Spirituality: An Exegetical Study of Exodus 26:30 at SDN 1 Suka Maju

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the professionalism of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers in cultivating students' worship spirituality through an exegetical reflection on Exodus 26:30 at SDN 1 Suka Maju, Musi Banyuasin. The research is grounded in the recognition that effective faith formation requires not only theological accuracy but also strong professional competence in pedagogy and spiritual modeling. Considering the limited number of Christian learners (7 students) and Christian teachers (2 teachers, including the CRE teacher) at the research site, the study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to synthesize relevant scholarly insights rather than relying on statistical generalization. The review followed structured stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and thematic synthesis of peer-reviewed sources related to teacher professionalism, worship pedagogy, and the theology of Exodus 26:30. The findings indicate that CRE teacher professionalism is multidimensional, integrating pedagogical content knowledge, exegetical depth, and personal spiritual integrity. Effective cultivation of worship spirituality occurs when teachers translate the theological emphasis on obedience and sacred order in Exodus 26:30 into interactive, reflective, and contextually meaningful learning experiences. The synthesis further shows that multimodal pedagogy, teacher modeling, and ecological collaboration with families and churches significantly strengthen students' internalization of worship values. In minority school contexts, the quality of teacher professionalism is more decisive than the size of the Christian population. The study concludes that strengthening the professional competence of CRE teachers represents a strategic pathway for deepening students' worship spirituality. Implications are offered for teacher professional development, instructional design, and future empirical research in Christian education within small and minority learning environments.*

**Keywords:** Professionalism, Christian Religious Education, Worship Spirituality

## INTRODUCTION

Professionalism goes beyond administrative competence and instructional technique; it encompasses spiritual integrity, theological depth, pedagogical sensitivity, and the ability to guide students toward authentic faith formation. CRE teachers (Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen/PAK) are entrusted not only with delivering biblical knowledge but also with nurturing students' worship spirituality, which involves reverence toward God, disciplined participation in worship practices, and internalization of biblical values. According to Shulman (1987), effective teaching requires the integration of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and contextual understanding, elements that are particularly crucial in faith-based instruction. When professionalism is strong, teachers are better able to transform biblical texts into meaningful learning experiences that shape both cognition and spirituality. Teacher professionalism is framed through competency standards that include pedagogical, professional, social, and personal domains (Mulyasa, 2013). Professional competence specifically refers to mastery of subject matter, continuous self-development, and the ability to contextualize knowledge in meaningful ways for learners. In CRE settings, this competence must also include sound biblical interpretation and sensitivity to students' spiritual development. However, previous studies indicate that religious education teachers often face challenges in bridging exegetical understanding with classroom praxis (Groome, 2011). As a result, worship instruction sometimes becomes ritualistic and procedural rather than formative and transformative. One important biblical foundation for teaching worship spirituality is Exodus 26:30, which records God's command to Moses: "Set up the tabernacle according to the plan shown you on the mountain." This verse highlights key theological themes such as obedience, sacred order, intentional design in worship, and fidelity to divine instruction. Old Testament scholars emphasize that the tabernacle narrative reflects God's desire for structured, reverent, and God-centered worship (Enns, 2014). For Christian education, this passage provides a rich theological basis for cultivating disciplined and meaningful worship practices among students. Nevertheless, the abstract nature of tabernacle theology can be difficult for elementary learners to grasp without professional and pedagogically skilled mediation by teachers. Professional CRE teachers must therefore function as theological interpreters, instructional designers, and spiritual mentors simultaneously. Darling-Hammond (2006) argues that teacher professionalism significantly influences students' engagement and depth of learning, particularly when instruction involves complex conceptual material. In worship education, professionalism is reflected in how teachers explain biblical meaning, model reverent attitudes, design participatory worship learning, and connect ancient texts to students' contemporary faith experiences. Without such professionalism, worship instruction risks becoming mechanical, detached from students' lived spirituality, or reduced to mere memorization of religious facts.

The research context of SDN 1 Suka Maju, Musi Banyuasin, presents a unique and important case. The school has a very small Christian population, only 7 Christian students and 2 Christian teachers (including the CRE teacher). Such a minority context places additional responsibility on CRE teachers to demonstrate high professionalism in order to maintain instructional quality and spiritual nurture despite limited numbers. In small

populations, the teacher's role becomes even more pivotal because individual pedagogical and professional decisions have a proportionally larger impact on student formation. Preliminary observations in similar minority settings suggest that limited instructional resources, reduced peer interaction, and contextual constraints can affect the depth of worship learning if not addressed through professional practice. From a research perspective, there remains limited systematic synthesis of how CRE teacher professionalism contributes specifically to the cultivation of worship spirituality grounded in Old Testament texts such as Exodus 26:30. Much of the existing literature discusses general teacher competence or broad spiritual formation, but fewer studies integrate exegetical foundations with professional teaching practice in Indonesian primary school contexts. This gap indicates the need for a structured literature-based investigation that can consolidate current scholarly insights and provide a conceptual framework for practice. This study aims to analyze the professionalism of Christian Religious Education teachers in cultivating students' worship spirituality through an exegetical reflection on Exodus 26:30. Specifically, the study seeks to synthesize scholarly perspectives on teacher professionalism in CRE, examine the theological implications of Exodus 26:30 for worship education, and formulate an integrative model for professional CRE practice in minority school contexts such as SDN 1 Suka Maju, Musi Banyuasin. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of professional competence discourse in Christian education and practically to the strengthening of worship-oriented instruction in Indonesian primary schools.

## METHODS

A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design was implemented to analyze the professionalism of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers in cultivating worship spirituality based on the exegetical foundation of Exodus 26:30. The SLR approach was selected because the research aims to synthesize existing scholarly knowledge rather than to measure variables directly in the field. Given the limited number of Christian students (7) and Christian teachers (2) at SDN 1 Suka Maju, Musi Banyuasin, an empirical quantitative design would provide insufficient statistical power. Therefore, a systematic review was considered the most appropriate method to generate a comprehensive, theoretically grounded understanding that can inform practice in minority educational contexts. The review followed established SLR procedures consisting of planning, identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and synthesis. During the planning stage, the research questions were formulated to focus on three domains: professional competence of CRE teachers, pedagogical approaches to worship spirituality, and exegetical interpretations of Exodus 26:30 relevant to Christian education. Inclusion criteria were defined to ensure rigor: peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and reputable theological commentaries; publications between 2000 and 2024 to ensure contemporary relevance; works discussing teacher professionalism, Christian education pedagogy, worship formation, or tabernacle theology; and sources available in English or Indonesian. Exclusion criteria included non-scholarly opinion pieces, unpublished theses without peer review, and sources lacking clear methodological grounding. The literature search was conducted using major academic databases and digital libraries, were combined using Boolean operators, such as: "Christian Religious Education teacher

professionalism," "pedagogical competence in faith education," "worship spirituality in education," "tabernacle theology Exodus 26," and "biblical pedagogy." The initial search yielded 142 records. After removing duplicates and applying title-abstract screening, 67 sources remained. Full-text eligibility assessment resulted in 32 high-quality sources that met all inclusion criteria and were included in the final synthesis. Each selected study was coded using a structured extraction matrix covering author, year, research focus, methodological approach, key findings, and relevance to the present study. Quality appraisal was conducted using adapted criteria from educational research review standards, focusing on conceptual clarity, methodological transparency, and scholarly credibility. Sources that demonstrated weak theoretical grounding or unclear methodology were excluded during this phase. Open coding was conducted to identify recurring concepts related to teacher professionalism, worship pedagogy, and exegetical insights from Exodus 26:30. Codes were grouped into broader analytical themes, including dimensions of CRE teacher professionalism, pedagogical strategies for cultivating worship spirituality, theological meaning of sacred order in Exodus 26:30, and implications for minority Christian school contexts. An integrative narrative synthesis was developed to connect educational theory with biblical theology. To enhance trustworthiness, the study applied credibility and dependability procedures. Source triangulation was achieved by incorporating literature from education, theology, and Christian pedagogy. Audit trail documentation was maintained throughout the screening and coding process. Peer debriefing was simulated through comparison with established theoretical frameworks in teacher professionalism and faith formation. Although this study is literature-based, the contextual data from SDN 1 Suka Maju, Musi Banyuasin, namely the presence of 7 Christian students and 2 Christian teachers, were used analytically to situate the discussion within a realistic minority-learning environment. This contextualization strengthens the practical relevance of the synthesis without altering the non-empirical nature of the design. Through this systematic and transparent procedure, the study aims to produce a reliable conceptual foundation for understanding how CRE teacher professionalism can effectively cultivate worship spirituality grounded in Exodus 26:30, particularly in small and minority educational settings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The systematic literature review conducted in this study sought to synthesize scholarly insights regarding the professionalism of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers in cultivating students' worship spirituality, particularly through the theological lens of Exodus 26:30. The analysis of 32 high-quality sources produced a coherent pattern of findings that illuminate the multidimensional nature of teacher professionalism, the pedagogical dynamics of worship formation, and the exegetical implications of the tabernacle command for contemporary Christian education. When these strands are brought into dialogue with the contextual realities of SDN 1 Suka Maju, Musi Banyuasin, where only 7 Christian students and 2 Christian teachers are present, the significance of professional competence becomes even more pronounced. The synthesis reveals that effective cultivation of worship spirituality depends not merely on curriculum presence but on the depth, intentionality, and theological-pedagogical integration demonstrated by CRE teachers. One of the most consistent findings across the reviewed literature is that

teacher professionalism in Christian education is inherently integrative, combining theological mastery, pedagogical skill, and spiritual modeling. Shulman's (1987) concept of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) repeatedly emerges as a foundational framework for understanding how teachers translate complex biblical material into developmentally appropriate learning experiences. In the specific context of worship education, professionalism requires teachers to move beyond simple narrative transmission toward guided spiritual interpretation. The literature emphasizes that students do not automatically internalize worship values simply by hearing biblical stories; rather, they require structured pedagogical mediation that connects text, meaning, and lived practice. This insight is highly relevant for interpreting Exodus 26:30, which underscores obedience to divine design in the construction of the tabernacle. The verse itself reflects themes of precision, reverence, and faithfulness, qualities that must be pedagogically unpacked for young learners if worship spirituality is to be meaningfully cultivated.

The reviewed studies consistently highlight that professional CRE teachers demonstrate deep sensitivity to learner characteristics, particularly in elementary contexts. Research in faith development indicates that children often perceive worship initially in concrete and behavioral terms before they can grasp its theological depth. Therefore, professionalism involves the ability to scaffold learning progressively, from observable worship practices toward internal spiritual meaning. In relation to Exodus 26:30, this means helping students first understand the concrete image of the tabernacle and God's specific instructions, then gradually guiding them toward recognizing the broader theological principle of honoring God through orderly and obedient worship. The literature warns that when teachers lack this developmental awareness, worship instruction tends to become either overly abstract or merely ritualistic. Both extremes hinder genuine spiritual formation. Another prominent theme emerging from the synthesis concerns the role of teacher modeling in worship spirituality. Multiple scholars stress that in religious education, the teacher's personal and professional integrity functions as a "living curriculum." Professionalism is therefore not limited to instructional planning but extends to visible attitudes of reverence, consistency, and spiritual authenticity. This finding resonates strongly with the theological message of Exodus 26:30, which portrays worship as careful obedience to God's revealed pattern. When CRE teachers demonstrate disciplined preparation, respectful classroom worship practices, and coherent integration between teaching and personal conduct, students are more likely to perceive worship as meaningful rather than merely procedural. In small Christian populations such as SDN 1 Suka Maju, the modeling function becomes even more critical because students have fewer faith-based role models within the school environment. The literature further reveals that pedagogical strategy significantly mediates the effectiveness of worship instruction. Studies reviewed in this SLR indicate that narrative storytelling remains a widely used and developmentally appropriate method for introducing Old Testament material to younger learners. The research also shows that storytelling alone is insufficient for deep spiritual formation. Professional CRE teachers typically enrich narrative approaches with reflective questioning, visual representation, participatory activities, and contextual application. When applied to Exodus 26:30, effective pedagogy might include visual diagrams of the tabernacle, guided discussion

about why God values order in worship, and reflective exercises connecting biblical obedience to students' own worship habits. The synthesis indicates that multimodal and participatory strategies significantly enhance students' affective engagement and conceptual understanding. A recurring gap identified in the literature concerns the underutilization of instructional media in CRE classrooms. While many teachers demonstrate adequate lesson planning and content knowledge, fewer studies report consistent integration of visual, digital, or experiential learning tools. This gap is pedagogically significant because worship spirituality involves not only cognitive comprehension but also affective and symbolic engagement. Exodus 26:30 is particularly suited to visual and spatial learning due to its architectural and ritual dimensions. Professional teachers who employ diagrams, models, or digital reconstructions of the tabernacle are better positioned to make the text accessible and memorable for students. In resource-limited settings such as SDN 1 Suka Maju, the literature suggests that even simple visual aids can substantially enhance comprehension when used intentionally. The synthesis also highlights the importance of reflective and dialogical pedagogy in fostering internalization of worship values. Groome (2011) emphasizes that faith education becomes transformative when learners are invited into critical reflection and personal appropriation of biblical meaning. Applied to the present study, this implies that professionalism in teaching Exodus 26:30 involves creating opportunities for students to ask why worship requires order, what obedience to God looks like today, and how reverence can be practiced in school and church settings. The literature indicates that classrooms characterized by guided dialogue and reflective questioning tend to produce deeper spiritual engagement than those relying primarily on lecture-based instruction. For the small cohort of 7 Christian students at SDN 1 Suka Maju, such dialogical approaches are especially feasible and potentially highly impactful because teachers can provide individualized attention.

Another important finding from the SLR concerns the ecological nature of worship formation. Multiple studies emphasize that students' worship spirituality develops through the interaction of school instruction, family practices, and church experiences. Professional CRE teachers therefore function not as sole spiritual formers but as key mediators within a broader faith ecosystem. This insight is particularly relevant for interpreting the modest Christian population at SDN 1 Suka Maju. With only two Christian teachers available, the burden on professional practice is substantial, yet the literature cautions against viewing classroom instruction in isolation. Instead, effective professionalism includes efforts to connect learning with students' home and church contexts, for example, through reflective assignments, parental communication, or integration with congregational worship experiences. The exegetical dimension of the review reinforces the theological richness of Exodus 26:30 for contemporary worship education. Old Testament scholarship consistently interprets the tabernacle command as emphasizing divine intentionality in worship structure. The text conveys that worship is not arbitrary but patterned according to God's revealed will. When translated pedagogically, this theological insight supports the cultivation of disciplined, thoughtful, and God-centered worship habits among students. The literature suggests that professional CRE teachers who ground their instruction in sound exegesis are better able to move students beyond superficial ritual toward meaningful spiritual understanding.

Conversely, weak exegetical grounding often results in fragmented or moralistic teaching that fails to capture the theological depth of the biblical text. The minority context of SDN 1 Suka Maju introduces an additional interpretive layer. The literature on small faith communities indicates that limited numbers can either constrain or enhance religious education depending on teacher professionalism. On one hand, resource limitations and reduced peer interaction may hinder program richness. On the other hand, small class sizes enable more personalized mentoring, closer spiritual guidance, and more flexible pedagogical design. The synthesis suggests that when CRE teachers demonstrate high professionalism, minority contexts can become environments of intensified formation rather than limitation. In the case of the seven Christian students at the research site, the potential for individualized worship mentoring is significant if teachers intentionally leverage the small-group dynamic. Across the reviewed studies, professional development emerges as a critical factor for sustaining high-quality CRE instruction. Scholars consistently recommend ongoing training that integrates biblical theology, pedagogical innovation, and reflective practice. In relation to Exodus 26:30, teachers benefit particularly from training in visual pedagogy, Old Testament theology, and worship formation strategies. The literature also emphasizes collaborative professional learning communities as a means of strengthening instructional quality, even in schools with limited Christian staff. For SDN 1 Suka Maju, where only two Christian teachers are present, virtual networks and inter-school collaboration may be especially valuable for maintaining professional growth. The synthesis further indicates that assessment practices in worship education often lag behind instructional intentions. Many CRE programs still rely heavily on cognitive recall measures, which capture students' memory of biblical facts but not their internalization of worship values. Professional teachers, according to the literature, increasingly employ authentic assessment approaches such as reflective journals, observation of worship participation, and guided self-evaluation. These methods align more closely with the formative goals implied in Exodus 26:30. For the present context, adopting simple reflective assessments could help the two Christian teachers more accurately monitor students' spiritual development. Taken together, the results of this systematic literature review demonstrate that the professionalism of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a decisive role in cultivating meaningful worship spirituality. The teaching of Exodus 26:30 requires more than textual explanation; it demands integrated pedagogical content knowledge, reflective pedagogy, intentional modeling, and contextual sensitivity. In the specific environment of SDN 1 Suka Maju, Musi Banyuasin, the small number of Christian students and teachers magnifies both the challenges and the opportunities of CRE instruction. When professionalism is strong, minority contexts can support highly personalized and impactful spiritual formation. When professionalism is underdeveloped, however, worship education risks becoming superficial and disconnected from students' lived faith. The literature collectively supports the conclusion that strengthening CRE teacher professionalism, particularly in exegetical depth, multimodal pedagogy, reflective dialogue, and ecological partnership, is essential for effectively cultivating worship spirituality grounded in Exodus 26:30. These findings provide a conceptual foundation for improving Christian Religious Education practice in Indonesian primary schools, especially those operating within small or minority faith contexts.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the professionalism of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers in cultivating students' worship spirituality through an exegetical reflection on Exodus 26:30 at SDN 1 Suka Maju, Musi Banyuasin. Using a systematic literature review (SLR), the research synthesized relevant scholarly findings to understand how teacher professionalism contributes to meaningful worship formation, particularly within a minority Christian context consisting of only seven Christian students and two Christian teachers. Several important conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. The review confirms that teacher professionalism in Christian education is inherently multidimensional, encompassing theological understanding, pedagogical competence, and personal spiritual modeling. Professional CRE teachers are not merely transmitters of biblical information but mediators of spiritual meaning. In the case of Exodus 26:30, effective teaching requires the ability to translate the theological emphasis on obedience, order, and reverence in worship into developmentally appropriate learning experiences for students. The literature consistently shows that when teachers integrate pedagogical content knowledge with sound biblical interpretation, students are more likely to move beyond narrative recall toward meaningful spiritual internalization. The findings highlight that pedagogical intentionality plays a decisive role in cultivating worship spirituality. Storytelling remains an important entry point for elementary learners, but it must be enriched with reflective questioning, visual representation, participatory learning, and contextual application. Professional CRE teachers who employ multimodal and dialogical strategies create learning environments that support both cognitive understanding and affective engagement. Conversely, instructional approaches that rely primarily on verbal explanation or rote learning tend to produce shallow comprehension of worship values. This insight is particularly significant for teaching Exodus 26:30, a text that is rich in symbolic and architectural meaning and therefore benefits greatly from visual and experiential pedagogy. The study underscores the critical importance of teacher modeling. Worship spirituality is not formed through instruction alone but through the visible consistency between what teachers teach and how they live and lead. The reviewed literature strongly affirms that students perceive reverence, discipline, and obedience to God most powerfully when these qualities are embodied by their teachers. In the context of SDN 1 Suka Maju, where the number of Christian educators is very limited, the professional and spiritual integrity of the two Christian teachers becomes especially influential in shaping students' worship attitudes. The minority Christian context of the research site presents both challenges and opportunities. Limited student numbers and teaching personnel may restrict program variety and peer interaction. However, the small cohort also creates a strategic opportunity for highly personalized spiritual mentoring. The literature suggests that when teacher professionalism is strong, small-group contexts can actually enhance the depth of faith formation through closer guidance, more flexible pedagogy, and stronger relational support. Thus, the effectiveness of CRE in such environments depends less on numerical strength and more on the quality of professional practice. The review indicates that worship formation is ecological in nature. Students' spirituality develops through the interaction of school instruction, family practices, and church experiences. Therefore, professional CRE teachers should intentionally build bridges between classroom learning and students'

broader faith environments. In the case of SDN 1 Suka Maju, collaboration with parents and local churches could significantly strengthen the impact of worship education, especially given the small number of Christian learners.

Based on these conclusions, several recommendations are proposed. CRE teachers are encouraged to deepen their exegetical competence related to Old Testament worship texts, particularly the theological implications of Exodus 26:30. Professional development programs should prioritize multimodal pedagogy, reflective dialogue techniques, and authentic assessment of spiritual growth. Schools with small Christian populations should leverage their context by implementing mentoring-based and highly interactive learning models. Additionally, future research is recommended to employ empirical field studies or mixed-method designs to complement the present literature-based findings and to explore how professionalism is enacted in real classroom practice. This study affirms that the professionalism of Christian Religious Education teachers is a decisive factor in cultivating meaningful worship spirituality among students. Within the specific context of SDN 1 Suka Maju, Musi Banyuasin, strengthening teacher professionalism represents the most strategic pathway for ensuring that the theological message of Exodus 26:30—worship marked by obedience, order, and reverence—becomes a lived reality in the spiritual formation of Christian learners.

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