



Integration of Pedagogical Competence and Spirituality of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Contextual Learning Based on Philippians: A Study at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau Malan

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ABSTRACT

The integration of pedagogical competence and spirituality among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers plays a pivotal role in enhancing contextual learning experiences rooted in biblical principles. This study explores how CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau Malan, Katingan, integrate their pedagogical skills with spiritual guidance to foster meaningful learning based on Philippians. The research context involved 69 Christian students and 13 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, providing a culturally and religiously cohesive setting for examining instructional dynamics. Employing a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the study measured teacher competencies across pedagogical planning, instructional delivery, student engagement, and spiritual modeling, while assessing student perceptions of learning relevance, moral reflection, and motivation. Findings reveal a strong positive relationship between the integration of pedagogical competence and spiritual guidance and students' engagement in contextualized learning, with approximately 48% of variance in learning effectiveness explained by teachers' integrated competencies. Students reported that teachers' ability to model Christian values, provide ethical reflection, and connect biblical teachings to real-life scenarios enhanced both academic understanding and character formation. The study underscores the importance of harmonizing professional teaching skills with spiritual mentorship in faith-based education. Implications suggest that CRE teachers should continuously develop both pedagogical strategies and spiritual awareness to nurture holistic student growth. By demonstrating the synergy between skillful instruction and moral guidance, teachers become instruments of both cognitive and spiritual formation, aligning educational practice with the mission of Christian education in Indonesia.

Keywords: Pedagogical Competence, Christian Religious Education, Spirituality

INTRODUCTION

The role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in Indonesia extends beyond mere transmission of biblical knowledge; it encompasses the formation of students' character, spiritual maturity, and critical engagement with both faith and daily life. In contemporary educational settings, especially within public schools with significant Christian populations, teachers are expected to integrate professional pedagogical competence with spiritual insight to foster holistic learning experiences (Anthony, 2001). At SMP Negeri 1 Pulau Malan, Katingan, where 69 students and 13 teachers identify as Christian, including the CRE teacher, the challenge of delivering contextualized, meaningful instruction is particularly relevant. Contextual learning, rooted in students' lived experiences, social environment, and cultural background, enhances comprehension and application of biblical principles (Lickona, 1991). Pedagogical competence, as defined by Indonesian national standards, encompasses instructional planning, implementation of learning strategies, classroom management, and assessment of student learning outcomes (Kemendikbud, 2020). When merged with spirituality, pedagogical competence transforms the classroom into a setting not only for academic achievement but also for moral and spiritual formation. Teachers who model Christian virtues such as humility, service, and discernment create a learning atmosphere conducive to internalizing faith-based values (Goleman, 2006). In the context of Philippians, the Apostle Paul emphasizes virtues such as humility, perseverance, and unity, which can serve as foundational principles for guiding both teaching approaches and student interactions (Philippians 2:1-8). Previous studies have highlighted the positive correlation between teachers' pedagogical competence and students' academic achievement, engagement, and moral development (Hattie, 2009). However, less attention has been given to how the integration of pedagogical skills with spiritual reflection enhances students' internalization of biblical values. In settings such as SMP Negeri 1 Pulau Malan, where the community exhibits strong relational ties and shared faith identity, CRE teachers are uniquely positioned to contextualize learning through culturally sensitive examples, discussions, and reflective practices rooted in Philippians. This study aims to explore the integration of pedagogical competence and spirituality in CRE instruction and its impact on contextual learning outcomes. By examining both instructional methods and spiritual modeling, the research seeks to identify strategies through which CRE teachers can foster student engagement, ethical decision-making, and faith application. The investigation also considers students' perceptions of teaching effectiveness, their ability to relate biblical principles to personal experience, and the role of teacher spirituality in shaping classroom dynamics. Through quantitative and qualitative data, this study addresses critical questions: How do CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau Malan integrate pedagogical competence with spiritual guidance? To what extent does this integration enhance contextual learning grounded in Philippians? What observable impacts does this integration have on students' academic and moral development? The findings aim to contribute to both educational theory and practice, offering a framework for teacher professional development, curriculum design, and the cultivation of spiritually enriched learning environments in faith-based education.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods design with an emphasis on a quantitative descriptive-correlational approach complemented by qualitative observations to examine the integration of pedagogical competence and spirituality among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau Malan, Katingan. The research aimed to assess how teachers combine professional instructional strategies with spiritual modeling to facilitate contextual learning based on Philipppians. The school comprises 69 Christian students and 13 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, providing a sufficiently homogeneous context for exploring faith-informed pedagogical practices. The quantitative component targeted the student population, utilizing a total sampling technique to ensure comprehensive representation. All 69 students were invited to complete a structured questionnaire designed to measure their perceptions of the CRE teacher's pedagogical competence, spiritual integration, and the effectiveness of contextualized instruction. The questionnaire was composed of 30 Likert-scale items ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), divided evenly between pedagogical competence indicators and spirituality-based instructional practices. Pedagogical competence was operationalized using indicators such as lesson planning, clarity of explanation, classroom management, use of varied instructional strategies, and assessment feedback, in accordance with Indonesian teacher competency standards (Kemendikbud, 2020). Spirituality integration was assessed through indicators including modeling of Christian virtues, incorporation of biblical reflection into lessons, promotion of moral and ethical reasoning, and encouragement of student application of faith principles in daily life. Prior to data collection, the instrument underwent content validity review by two experts in Christian Religious Education and educational psychology and construct validity testing using Pearson Product-Moment correlation. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded coefficients above the acceptable threshold of 0.70 for all constructs, indicating internal consistency. Data collection was conducted during classroom sessions in the second semester, with informed consent obtained from students and the school principal. Questionnaires were administered under supervision to clarify instructions and minimize response bias, with assurances of anonymity and confidentiality. Complementary qualitative data were gathered through non-participant classroom observations and structured interviews with the CRE teacher to provide contextual insights into pedagogical practices and spiritual engagement. Observations focused on instructional strategies, student-teacher interactions, integration of Philipppians-based reflection, and teacher modeling of virtues such as humility, perseverance, and unity. Interview questions explored the teacher's philosophy of integrating pedagogy and spirituality, challenges encountered, and perceived outcomes on student learning. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis to determine the strength and predictive value of the relationship between pedagogical-spiritual integration and perceived student learning outcomes. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed to enrich interpretation, triangulate findings, and illustrate practical examples of classroom implementation. This combined approach allowed for both empirical measurement and in-depth understanding of how CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau Malan operationalize

pedagogical competence alongside spiritual modeling to foster contextualized learning rooted in Philippians principles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate a substantial and meaningful relationship between the pedagogical competence and spirituality of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and the effectiveness of contextual learning at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau Malan, Katingan. Data collected from 69 Christian students revealed that the integration of professional teaching skills with spiritually informed instructional practices was consistently perceived as high across multiple dimensions. Descriptive statistics show that the overall mean score for pedagogical competence was 4.28 (SD = 0.39), while the integration of spirituality in teaching achieved a mean of 4.33 (SD = 0.42) on a five-point Likert scale. These findings suggest that students recognize both the CRE teacher's mastery of educational principles and the deliberate incorporation of biblical values drawn from Philippians into the learning process. In terms of specific pedagogical indicators, students rated lesson clarity and structured explanation the highest (M = 4.41), followed by the teacher's ability to manage classroom dynamics effectively (M = 4.35), use varied instructional strategies (M = 4.29), provide timely and constructive feedback (M = 4.27), and facilitate student engagement through active learning (M = 4.25). These results align with the framework proposed by Kemendikbud (2020), which emphasizes the necessity of coherent planning, clear delivery, and adaptive strategies as pillars of teacher professional competence. Observations and qualitative feedback reinforced these quantitative findings, demonstrating that the CRE teacher consistently employed diverse instructional approaches, including group discussions, problem-based learning, and scenario analysis, each contextualized through biblical narratives and principles drawn from Philippians, such as humility, perseverance, and communal unity. The integration of spirituality in teaching, operationalized through modeling Christian virtues and embedding biblical reflections within lessons, was similarly highly rated by students. Indicators such as teacher demonstration of humility and servant leadership received a mean score of 4.36, while encouragement of students to apply Philippians-based values in daily decision-making achieved a mean of 4.34. Other indicators, including fostering moral reasoning (M = 4.30) and reinforcing relational ethics through cooperative classroom activities (M = 4.28), also ranked highly. Qualitative observation confirmed that the CRE teacher purposefully linked lesson content to real-life scenarios, guiding students to reflect on how scriptural principles inform their conduct, choices, and interactions. For example, in a lesson on peer collaboration, the teacher referenced Philippians 2:3–4 to encourage students to "consider others better than yourselves," demonstrating humility in leadership and relational sensitivity. Such modeling not only reinforced content comprehension but also created a moral and spiritual framework that students could internalize and emulate. This dual emphasis on pedagogy and spirituality reflects Anthony's (2001) assertion that Christian education is most effective when learning is embedded within relational and faith-based networks, enabling students to perceive knowledge acquisition as inseparable from ethical and spiritual formation.

Correlation analysis further demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship between pedagogical competence and spirituality integration with students' perceived learning outcomes. Pearson correlation coefficients indicate a strong relationship between pedagogical competence and learning effectiveness ($r = 0.671$, $p < 0.001$), as well as between spirituality integration and learning effectiveness ($r = 0.689$, $p < 0.001$). Regression analysis revealed that approximately 47.2% of the variance in student learning outcomes can be predicted by the combined effect of pedagogical competence and spirituality integration ($R^2 = 0.472$), while the remaining 52.8% may be attributed to other contextual and individual factors, such as parental support, peer interaction, and broader socio-cultural influences. These results underscore the essential role of CRE teachers as both professional educators and spiritual guides, demonstrating that learning in a faith-based context transcends cognitive mastery to include relational, moral, and spiritual dimensions. The findings are consistent with Lickona's (1991) theory of character education, which emphasizes the importance of modeling ethical behavior within learning communities. In the classroom context of SMP Negeri 1 Pulau Malan, students are exposed to relational and spiritual exemplars, observing not only the teacher's instructional competence but also the consistent application of biblical principles in daily interactions. Observational data revealed that the CRE teacher often mediated conflicts using strategies grounded in Philippians 2, encouraging empathy, mutual respect, and reconciliation. Such modeling provided students with concrete examples of applying faith-based values in their interpersonal relationships, reinforcing both social-emotional and spiritual development. The high mean scores in collaborative engagement and cooperative classroom behaviors indicate that students internalize these relational patterns, demonstrating prosocial behaviors, accountability, and a commitment to communal objectives. This mirrors Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which posits that individuals acquire new behaviors through observation of credible role models, particularly when behaviors are consistently reinforced and culturally or spiritually resonant.

The integration of contextualized instruction was observed to enhance both engagement and comprehension. The CRE teacher frequently utilized locally relevant examples, case studies, and community scenarios to connect Philippians-based teachings to students' lived experiences. For instance, lessons on perseverance drew on both biblical narratives and challenges observed in local community projects, enabling students to relate spiritual principles to tangible outcomes. This contextualization aligns with constructivist educational theories, which highlight the importance of linking prior knowledge and lived experience to new learning to enhance retention, critical thinking, and moral reasoning. Students reported increased motivation and a deeper understanding of the relevance of biblical teachings, indicating that pedagogical competence and spirituality integration mutually reinforce each other to create a holistic educational experience. The qualitative component also highlighted the CRE teacher's intentional approach to spiritual mentoring. Interviews revealed that the teacher perceives pedagogy and spirituality as inseparable: effective teaching requires both structured instructional strategies and consistent embodiment of Christian virtues. For example, when facilitating group discussions, the teacher not only guides cognitive exploration but also models humility, encourages empathetic listening, and prompts reflection on ethical decision-making in

accordance with Philippians 4:8. This dual approach fosters an environment where students feel valued, understood, and spiritually guided, contributing to a sense of belonging and purpose within the school community. Observational field notes indicated that students often mirrored these behaviors in peer interactions, demonstrating cooperation, conflict resolution, and consideration for others' perspectives. These patterns suggest that teacher modeling of relational and spiritual competence is central to cultivating an educational culture that promotes both academic and moral development. The findings underscore the significance of integrating spirituality in addressing socio-emotional development. In rural and culturally cohesive areas such as Katingan, where local traditions emphasize communal solidarity, the CRE teacher's use of biblical teachings to frame relational norms strengthens both classroom cohesion and moral understanding. Students frequently cited lessons that emphasized Philippians 2:14-16, promoting integrity, obedience, and perseverance as critical to both spiritual and social life. Such integration resonates with Goleman's (2006) concept of social-emotional intelligence, illustrating how spiritual modeling contributes to students' capacity for empathy, self-regulation, and relational awareness. The study also highlights the teacher's role in reinforcing ethical decision-making, illustrating that pedagogical competence alone may be insufficient for fostering holistic development; spiritual integration ensures that learning outcomes are aligned with values, ethics, and faith. Observations noted occasional difficulties in maintaining uniform engagement across all students. While the majority responded positively to contextualized lessons, a few students required additional guidance to apply biblical principles effectively in practical scenarios. These findings suggest that while the CRE teacher's pedagogical-spiritual integration is highly effective, supplementary scaffolding, peer mentoring, or differentiated instruction may enhance outcomes further. The overall results demonstrate that the CRE teacher's personality, pedagogical skills, and spirituality collectively create an enriching educational environment. The combination of structured instruction, contextual relevance, and moral-spiritual modeling allows students to connect abstract principles from Philippians to everyday life, fostering both cognitive understanding and moral character development. The study reveals a robust, positive, and multifaceted relationship between CRE teachers' pedagogical competence, spiritual integration, and student learning outcomes. By embedding Philippians-based reflections into professional teaching practices, teachers not only facilitate academic comprehension but also cultivate moral and spiritual growth, relational awareness, and community engagement. This integration reinforces the concept that Christian education transcends content delivery, positioning teachers as holistic guides who nurture intellect, character, and faith simultaneously. The findings provide empirical support for educational frameworks that emphasize the inseparability of professional pedagogy and spiritual formation, highlighting practical strategies for teacher training, professional development, and curriculum design in faith-based educational settings.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the integration of pedagogical competence and spirituality in Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Pulau Malan, Katingan, plays a pivotal role in fostering effective,

meaningful, and morally grounded learning. CRE teachers who combine professional instructional skills with deliberate incorporation of biblical values derived from Philippians create a learning environment that enhances both cognitive understanding and spiritual-moral development among students. Quantitative analysis revealed strong positive correlations between pedagogical competence, spirituality integration, and students' learning outcomes, with approximately 47.2% of variance in perceived learning effectiveness attributable to these combined competencies. The study emphasizes that effective CRE teaching transcends mere content delivery; it involves modeling virtues such as humility, perseverance, and cooperative engagement, enabling students to internalize values and replicate positive behaviors in their daily lives. Contextualized instruction further strengthens the connection between biblical principles and students' lived experiences, fostering relevance, engagement, and ethical reasoning. Additionally, the teacher's spiritual modeling contributes to relational and social-emotional development, enhancing classroom cohesion and creating a supportive environment for holistic growth. The findings affirm that the integration of pedagogy and spirituality functions as a transformative approach in Christian education. Teachers who embody and operationalize Philippians-based teachings through professional strategies not only promote academic achievement but also nurture character, faith, and communal responsibility. These results highlight the importance of professional development programs that strengthen both pedagogical skills and spiritual formation, reinforcing the role of CRE teachers as holistic facilitators of intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth in faith-based educational contexts.

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