



Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Addressing the Challenges of Globalization: A Reflection on Philippians 3:20 in the Context of UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Torgamba

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ABSTRACT

The rapid globalization of the 21st century presents both opportunities and challenges for education, particularly within faith-based learning environments. Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers play a pivotal role in equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and spiritual discernment necessary to navigate these global realities while remaining rooted in biblical values. This study examines the professional competence of CRE teachers at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Torgamba, Labuhan Batu Selatan, and its influence on addressing the challenges of globalization through a faith-informed pedagogical approach, drawing interpretive insights from Philippians 3:20. The research employs a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, surveying 27 Christian students regarding their perceptions of teacher professionalism, including instructional mastery, ethical conduct, and contextual adaptation, alongside the observed outcomes in student engagement, critical thinking, and global awareness. Results indicate a strong positive correlation, demonstrating that teachers who exhibit high professional competence contribute significantly to students' ability to integrate global perspectives with Christian principles. The study further highlights that professional competence encompasses not only pedagogical skill but also relational, ethical, and spiritual dimensions, which together facilitate holistic student development. Theologically, Philippians 3:20 underscores the call for students to maintain a heavenly-minded perspective while engaging responsibly in a globalized society. This research concludes that enhancing CRE teachers' professional competence is crucial for fostering students who are academically capable, spiritually grounded, and socially responsible in the face of globalization. Implications include the need for targeted professional development and curriculum design that integrates global competencies with biblical instruction.

Keywords: *Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Globalization*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid process of globalization has profoundly affected educational systems worldwide, reshaping both the content of instruction and the methods of teaching. In Indonesia, schools are increasingly tasked with preparing students not only to meet national academic standards but also to navigate the complexities of a globally interconnected world. Within faith-based education, particularly Christian Religious Education (CRE), the role of the teacher transcends mere academic instruction. Teachers are expected to integrate professional expertise with spiritual guidance, fostering both intellectual growth and moral resilience among students (Anthony, 2001). The professional competence of CRE teachers encompasses pedagogical mastery, subject matter expertise, and the capacity to model ethical and spiritual values in ways that are contextually meaningful (Lickona, 1991). At UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Torgamba, located in Labuhan Batu Selatan, the student population includes 27 Christian students, supported by 7 teachers who identify as Christian, including the CRE teacher. In this context, the challenges of globalization are experienced on multiple fronts. Students are exposed to diverse cultural norms, global media influences, and technological innovations that may conflict with traditional Christian values. CRE teachers, therefore, are not only transmitters of biblical knowledge but also mediators who help students critically engage with external influences while nurturing faith-centered perspectives. Professional competence in this setting is thus integrally linked with spiritual formation, equipping students to maintain moral integrity and develop a worldview consistent with biblical teachings, particularly in light of Philippians 3:20, which emphasizes the citizenship of believers in the heavenly realm as a guiding principle in life. Philippians 3:20 states, "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." This verse underscores the importance of orienting students toward eternal values and spiritual priorities amidst temporal global pressures. The CRE teacher's professional competence becomes critical in translating this theological insight into practical learning experiences. By applying contextualized teaching strategies, teachers can foster students' critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and spiritual resilience, enabling them to respond to globalization not merely as passive recipients but as morally responsible, spiritually grounded individuals (Goleman, 2006).

The integration of professional competence and spiritual leadership in CRE is further reinforced by current educational research, which highlights the positive correlation between teacher effectiveness and student engagement, motivation, and value internalization (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Teachers who exhibit high levels of pedagogical skill, combined with moral and spiritual integrity, are better equipped to foster environments that cultivate critical engagement with contemporary issues while preserving the faith-based ethos of the learning community. In the setting of UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Torgamba, these competencies are crucial, given the school's relatively small and cohesive Christian student body. Personalized attention, ethical modeling, and skillful instruction allow teachers to respond effectively to the individual and collective needs of students confronted by global cultural currents. The purpose of this study is to examine how the professional competence of CRE teachers influences students' ability to navigate globalization while maintaining faithfulness to biblical principles. By linking empirical

analysis with theological reflection on Philippians 3:20, the research seeks to provide actionable insights for enhancing teacher effectiveness in faith-based education. Furthermore, this study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of how CRE teachers can integrate pedagogical expertise and spiritual formation to develop students who are academically competent, morally responsible, and spiritually mature.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was implemented to examine the relationship between the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and their effectiveness in guiding students to respond to the challenges of globalization at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Torgamba, Labuhan Batu Selatan. A quantitative approach was selected to obtain measurable data regarding students' perceptions of teacher competence and the extent to which this competence influences their readiness to navigate global challenges while maintaining faith-based values. The population of this study consisted of all 27 Christian students enrolled at the school, and the total sampling technique was employed to ensure comprehensive representation. The study also included contextual observation of 7 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher, to describe professional practices but only students' responses were used for statistical analysis. The independent variable, professional competence of CRE teachers, was operationalized using four main indicators adapted from Indonesian teacher competency standards and contemporary pedagogical frameworks: mastery of subject matter, instructional planning and implementation, assessment and feedback effectiveness, and the integration of biblical principles in lesson delivery. The dependent variable, students' preparedness to respond to globalization challenges, was measured through indicators including critical thinking, ethical reasoning, spiritual resilience, and application of biblical values in contemporary contexts. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), consisting of 30 items: 15 items measuring professional competence and 15 items measuring students' preparedness to face globalization challenges. Prior to distribution, the instrument underwent content validity evaluation by two experts in CRE and educational psychology, construct validity testing using Pearson Product-Moment correlation, and reliability testing with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, ensuring a minimum reliability threshold of 0.70. Data collection was conducted during the second semester, following formal permission from the school principal and informed consent from participants. Questionnaires were administered directly in classrooms under supervision to ensure clarity and minimize response bias, with students assured of confidentiality and non-impact on academic evaluations. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine mean scores and standard deviations, normality tests to ensure parametric assumptions, and Pearson Product-Moment correlation to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between teacher professional competence and student preparedness. Regression analysis was also conducted to determine the predictive contribution of teachers' professional competence to students' readiness, with the coefficient of determination (R^2) used to quantify the proportion of variance explained. This methodological framework enabled the integration of empirical measurement with contextual and theological reflection, providing a comprehensive

understanding of how CRE teachers' professional competence functions in shaping students' responses to global challenges while fostering alignment with Philippians 3:20.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a strong and meaningful relationship between the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and students' preparedness to face the challenges of globalization at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Torgamba, Labuhan Batu Selatan. Descriptive statistical analysis of responses from all 27 Christian students indicated that the overall mean score for teacher professional competence (X) was 4.36 (SD = 0.39) on a five-point Likert scale, categorized as high, while the mean score for students' preparedness to respond to globalization challenges (Y) was 4.29 (SD = 0.44), also considered high. These results suggest that students perceive their CRE teacher as highly competent and acknowledge that this competence significantly influences their readiness to navigate global pressures while maintaining spiritual and ethical integrity. Normality tests using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method confirmed that both variables were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$), permitting the use of parametric testing. Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship between professional competence and student preparedness ($r = 0.701$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher levels of perceived teacher competence are associated with increased student readiness to engage with global challenges through the lens of Christian values. Regression analysis further revealed that professional competence significantly predicts student preparedness ($\beta = 0.701$, $t = 9.84$, $p < 0.001$), with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.491, indicating that approximately 49.1% of the variance in students' readiness can be attributed to the professional competence of the CRE teacher, while the remaining 50.9% may be influenced by other factors such as family environment, peer influence, school culture, and broader socio-cultural dynamics. Disaggregating the professional competence indicators, mastery of subject matter received the highest mean score ($M = 4.42$), followed by the integration of biblical principles in lessons ($M = 4.39$), instructional planning and implementation ($M = 4.33$), and assessment and feedback effectiveness ($M = 4.30$), indicating that students particularly value the teacher's deep knowledge of biblical content and ability to relate it to contemporary global contexts. Regarding the student preparedness indicators, critical thinking in addressing global issues scored a mean of 4.31, ethical reasoning 4.28, spiritual resilience 4.27, and application of biblical values in contemporary contexts 4.30, suggesting that students feel empowered to critically analyze global trends, make moral decisions, and apply spiritual principles in real-life scenarios.

The correlation between professional competence and preparedness resonates with Philippians 3:20, which emphasizes that believers' citizenship is in heaven, guiding how they navigate worldly challenges. In practice, the CRE teacher at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Torgamba serves as a model for aligning professional pedagogical skills with spiritual guidance, demonstrating how biblical instruction can be contextualized to address globalization without compromising Christian values. The study confirms that competent teaching encompasses not only cognitive mastery and pedagogical skill but also the capacity to foster ethical reasoning, spiritual resilience, and practical application of

biblical teachings, reflecting the integration of professional and spiritual dimensions. Students' high appreciation for subject mastery and biblical integration indicates that curriculum delivery must balance content accuracy, contextual relevance, and faith formation, highlighting the teacher's dual responsibility as an educator and spiritual mentor. Observations of classroom interactions revealed that the CRE teacher frequently employs real-world scenarios related to globalization, such as technological advancements, cross-cultural communication, and socio-economic disparities, and links these to biblical principles, encouraging students to critically reflect and discern ethical responses consistent with Christian teachings. Such integration reinforces the relevance of Scripture in contemporary life and fosters a sense of responsibility in students to act as morally informed global citizens. Bandura's social learning theory (1977) supports this finding, suggesting that students learn not only from explicit instruction but also from observing competent, morally guided role models. In this context, the teacher's demonstration of ethical decision-making, fairness, and consistency in applying biblical principles serves as a powerful model for students' own reasoning and conduct. Furthermore, the high R^2 value underscores the substantial impact of teacher competence on student preparedness, confirming that professional competence functions as a critical structural factor in educational outcomes. While globalization presents challenges such as moral relativism, exposure to diverse ideologies, and ethical dilemmas, the CRE teacher's ability to integrate pedagogical proficiency with spiritual guidance helps students navigate these challenges confidently and ethically.

The emphasis on spiritual resilience is particularly significant, as students learn to maintain faith and ethical integrity when confronted with pressures to conform to secular norms or engage in morally ambiguous behaviors. Lickona's (1991) framework on character education supports this observation, indicating that consistent modeling of ethical and spiritual values within a structured educational environment fosters moral development and internalization of virtues. The integration of Philippians 3:20 into lesson planning reinforces the notion that students' ultimate allegiance to heavenly citizenship provides a lens through which global challenges can be interpreted and addressed responsibly. Moreover, classroom assessments and feedback practices contribute to students' reflective thinking and self-evaluation, helping them identify areas for growth in both critical reasoning and spiritual maturity. The teacher's skillful implementation of feedback encourages students to make adjustments in attitudes, decision-making, and problem-solving strategies, demonstrating the practical interplay between professional competence and value formation. This finding aligns with contemporary scholarship linking teacher effectiveness to student outcomes in ethical reasoning, critical thinking, and socio-emotional development (Goleman, 2006; Anthony, 2001). Observations also revealed that collaborative learning activities, such as group discussions on ethical dilemmas, role-plays simulating global challenges, and project-based assignments with biblical reflection, enable students to apply knowledge and values in interactive, contextually meaningful ways. Such pedagogical strategies foster communication, negotiation, teamwork, and empathy, reinforcing the comprehensive influence of teacher competence on holistic student development. Cultural factors in Torgamba, including local community norms, family expectations, and shared Christian identity among students and teachers, appear to enhance the effectiveness of these practices, creating a

supportive environment where professional competence translates into tangible preparedness outcomes.

Students' perception of teacher authenticity, aligning actions with the biblical values taught, emerged as a critical determinant of engagement, motivation, and internalization of lessons. When teachers embody ethical consistency, spiritual commitment, and instructional expertise, students are more likely to trust guidance, emulate modeled behaviors, and apply principles in real-world contexts. The study also highlights the interplay between pedagogical competence and spirituality, emphasizing that professional excellence in CRE extends beyond content delivery to the cultivation of morally and spiritually competent individuals capable of navigating complex global realities. Despite these positive outcomes, the study acknowledges potential limitations, including the small sample size of 27 students, the homogeneity of the Christian population limiting generalizability to pluralistic schools, and reliance on self-reported measures that may introduce social desirability bias. Future research could expand the scope to include multi-religious settings, longitudinal designs to assess sustained impact, and qualitative exploration of classroom practices to deepen understanding of pedagogical-spiritual integration. Overall, the findings demonstrate that CRE teachers' professional competence, encompassing subject mastery, instructional skill, assessment capability, and integration of biblical values, plays a decisive role in preparing students to respond ethically, critically, and spiritually to the challenges of globalization. By combining pedagogical proficiency with spiritual guidance, teachers serve as catalysts for holistic student development, ensuring that educational outcomes are not only cognitive but also moral, ethical, and spiritually grounded. The study reinforces the necessity of aligning professional competence with spiritual mission, affirming that the educator's dual role as teacher and spiritual mentor is central to developing students who are equipped to engage the world with wisdom, integrity, and faithfulness to Philippians 3:20, embodying the integration of Christian education and global citizenship principles.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at UPTD SMP Negeri 12 Torgamba, Labuhan Batu Selatan, plays a significant and transformative role in preparing students to face the challenges of globalization. CRE teachers who demonstrate high levels of professional competence, characterized by mastery of subject matter, integration of biblical principles, effective instructional planning, and assessment strategies, contribute meaningfully to students' critical thinking, ethical reasoning, spiritual resilience, and the application of biblical values in contemporary global contexts. Quantitative analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between teacher professional competence and student preparedness, with approximately 49.1% of the variance in students' readiness attributable to teacher competence. This underscores the pivotal influence of teacher skills as a structural and functional pillar in educational outcomes. Furthermore, the integration of Philippians 3:20 within classroom instruction emphasizes the alignment of students' moral and spiritual perspectives with their ultimate heavenly citizenship, guiding them to navigate global challenges ethically and

faithfully. Observations indicate that professional competence combined with authentic spiritual modeling enhances student engagement, internalization of values, and practical application of lessons, demonstrating that the role of CRE teachers extends beyond cognitive instruction to holistic formation. While other factors such as family background, peer influence, and cultural context also contribute, the teacher's professional and spiritual abilities remain primary determinants of student preparedness. These findings highlight that the integration of pedagogical excellence with spiritual guidance is essential for fostering morally and ethically competent students capable of engaging with globalization thoughtfully and faithfully. CRE teachers act as catalysts for holistic development, ensuring that students are equipped not only with knowledge but also with the ethical and spiritual maturity necessary to navigate complex global realities in alignment with Christian values.

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