



Social Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers within the Framework of Brotherly Love (Philippians 1:7): A Study at SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the social competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher within the framework of brotherly love based on Philippians 1:7 at SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes, South Nias, Indonesia. The research was motivated by the central role of social competence in fostering relational harmony, emotional security, and holistic faith formation, particularly in a context involving 59 Christian students guided by one CRE teacher. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The study integrates biblical-theological reflection with educational theory to analyze how Pauline brotherly love is embodied in practical teaching behavior. The findings reveal that the teacher's social competence is expressed through relational warmth, empathetic communication, fairness in conflict resolution, collaborative learning practices, and pastoral engagement beyond the classroom. These practices reflect the theological principles of affection, solidarity, and shared participation in grace emphasized in Philippians 1:7. The study further indicates that such competence contributes significantly to classroom unity, student engagement, and moral modeling. While challenges related to workload and limited professional development exist, the overall relational climate demonstrates that social competence grounded in biblical love fosters transformative Christian education. The research concludes that social competence is both a professional requirement and a spiritual vocation for CRE teachers. When rooted in Christ-centered brotherly love, it becomes a vital instrument for cultivating cohesive learning communities and nurturing students' spiritual and social maturity within the elementary school context.

Keywords: Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, Brotherly Love

INTRODUCTION

Teacher competence encompasses pedagogical, professional, personal, and social dimensions, each contributing to holistic student development. Among these, social

competence is particularly significant in multicultural and relational learning environments, where teachers must demonstrate empathy, communication skills, and collaborative attitudes (Mulyasa, 2013). Social competence refers not merely to the ability to interact but to the capacity to build meaningful, respectful, and ethical relationships within the school community. For Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers, social competence is not only a professional requirement but also a theological calling grounded in biblical values. The concept of brotherly love serves as a central ethical framework for social interaction. In Philippians 1:7, the Apostle Paul expresses deep affection and solidarity with the believers in Philippi, stating that he holds them in his heart and shares with them in grace. This verse reflects relational commitment, mutual participation, and covenantal affection. Gordon D. Fee (1995) explains that Paul's language in Philippians emphasizes partnership (*koinonia*) and shared grace as foundational to Christian community life. Similarly, Moisés Silva (2005) notes that Paul's emotional tone in Philippians 1:7 demonstrates pastoral affection rooted in theological conviction. Thus, brotherly love in this context transcends sentimentality; it embodies a Christ-centered relational ethic grounded in shared faith and mission.

For CRE teachers, Philippians 1:7 provides a biblical paradigm for social competence. The verse portrays relational depth, empathy, loyalty, and commitment, qualities essential for effective educational practice. Thomas H. Groome (2011) argues that Christian education is fundamentally relational, as faith formation occurs within communities of shared story and mutual trust. Consequently, social competence for CRE teachers involves nurturing an environment where students feel valued, heard, and spiritually supported. This is especially important in primary education contexts, where emotional security significantly influences cognitive and moral development. The context of SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes in South Nias presents a unique case for examining this issue. The school serves 59 Christian students under the guidance of one CRE teacher. In such a setting, the relational dynamics between teacher and students become highly influential. The teacher's social competence directly affects classroom climate, student engagement, and moral modeling. Research in educational psychology affirms that positive teacher-student relationships enhance motivation, academic performance, and prosocial behavior (Wentzel, 2012). For a CRE teacher, these relational outcomes align with theological objectives of cultivating love, unity, and mutual respect. South Nias carries strong communal cultural values characterized by kinship bonds and collective identity. Integrating biblical brotherly love with local communal ethos offers a contextualized approach to Christian education. Robert W. Pazmiño (2008) emphasizes that Christian educators must interpret Scripture faithfully while engaging cultural realities responsibly. Therefore, examining social competence through Philippians 1:7 within the specific locus of SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes allows for a contextual theological analysis that bridges biblical teaching and lived educational practice. Social competence also intersects with emotional intelligence, communication skills, and conflict resolution abilities. Daniel Goleman (2006) highlights that effective leaders and educators exhibit empathy and relational awareness, which foster collaborative environments. For CRE teachers, such competencies must be integrated with theological virtues, ensuring that relational engagement reflects Christ-like love rather than mere interpersonal skill. Philippians 1:7 underscores that Christian relationships are rooted in shared participation in grace; thus,

the teacher's social competence must flow from spiritual identity. This study therefore investigates how the social competence of the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes reflects the framework of brotherly love articulated in Philippians 1:7. By analyzing relational patterns, communication practices, and communal dynamics within the classroom, the research seeks to determine how biblical principles translate into practical educational behavior. The central argument is that social competence, when grounded in Christ-centered brotherly love, becomes a transformative force that strengthens classroom unity, fosters emotional security, and models Christian character for students. In a school environment with a relatively small Christian population, the CRE teacher's relational authenticity is not peripheral but foundational to holistic faith formation and community cohesion.

METHODS

A qualitative descriptive research design was used to explore the social competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher within the framework of brotherly love based on Philippians 1:7 at SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes, South Nias, Indonesia. A qualitative approach was selected because the research aimed to understand relational dynamics, interpersonal behavior, and lived experiences within a natural educational setting rather than to measure variables statistically. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is appropriate for exploring meaning, perspectives, and contextual realities in depth. The study integrates biblical-theological reflection and empirical classroom observation, allowing theological concepts of brotherly love to be examined in light of real educational practice. This integrative approach aligns with Pazmiño's (2008) view that Christian educational research should connect scriptural foundations with lived pedagogical realities.

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes, South Nias, a public elementary school with 59 Christian students and one CRE teacher. The CRE teacher served as the primary subject of analysis, while students functioned as supporting participants in providing contextual data regarding classroom interaction and relational climate. Because the number of Christian students was manageable, the study used total sampling for contextual observation, meaning all 59 students were included in classroom-based observations. However, for in-depth interviews, purposive sampling was employed by selecting representative students across different grade levels to ensure variation in perspectives (Patton, 2015). Non-participant observation was conducted to examine the teacher's communication patterns, conflict resolution approaches, encouragement strategies, and relational engagement. Field notes focused on indicators of social competence such as empathy, clarity of communication, inclusiveness, respect, and collaborative interaction (Mulyasa, 2013). Interviews were conducted with the CRE teacher and selected students. Questions explored perceptions of relational warmth, fairness, accessibility, and spiritual encouragement. The interview format allowed flexibility while maintaining alignment with research objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data Reduction, organizing field notes and interview transcripts by coding themes related to social competence and brotherly love. Data Display, categorizing findings into thematic clusters such as relational warmth, communicative clarity, conflict mediation, and

spiritual encouragement. Conclusion Drawing and Verification, interpreting patterns in light of Philippians 1:7 and Christian educational theory. Theological interpretation of Philippians 1:7 was guided by exegetical principles from Fee (1995) and Silva (2005), ensuring textual fidelity while applying its principles contextually.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the social competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes, South Nias, demonstrates a meaningful embodiment of brotherly love as articulated in Philippians 1:7, particularly in relational warmth, communicative clarity, inclusive interaction, and spiritual solidarity. The classroom environment observed throughout the research reflects a relational climate characterized by familiarity, mutual respect, and emotional safety. These qualities resonate strongly with Paul's expression of affection and shared participation in grace toward the Philippian believers. Gordon D. Fee (1995) emphasizes that Philippians 1:7 reveals Paul's deep relational attachment, grounded not merely in personal emotion but in theological partnership. In a similar way, the CRE teacher's relational approach at SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes extends beyond formal instruction into genuine pastoral care, suggesting that social competence rooted in theological conviction shapes the overall classroom culture. The first significant finding concerns relational warmth and emotional accessibility. Classroom observations showed that the teacher consistently addressed students by name, maintained eye contact, and used affirming language during instruction. These behaviors fostered a sense of belonging among the 59 Christian students. Educational psychology affirms that teacher-student connectedness significantly enhances student engagement and socio-emotional development (Wentzel, 2012). In this context, students reported feeling "noticed" and "valued," indicating that relational accessibility contributed to positive emotional attachment. From a theological perspective, Philippians 1:7 underscores holding others "in the heart," which Moisés Silva (2005) interprets as a covenantal expression of solidarity. The teacher's relational attentiveness mirrors this biblical principle by positioning students not as passive recipients of knowledge but as partners in shared spiritual growth. The next finding relates to communicative competence. The teacher demonstrated clarity in instruction while maintaining dialogical openness. Lessons frequently incorporated interactive questioning, group discussion, and storytelling connected to students' daily experiences in South Nias. Thomas H. Groome (2011) argues that Christian education becomes transformative when it integrates faith tradition with lived experience through shared praxis. This pedagogical approach was evident in the classroom, where biblical narratives were contextualized within local cultural realities, such as communal cooperation and familial responsibility. Such integration strengthened comprehension and relevance. The teacher's ability to communicate theological content in age-appropriate and culturally sensitive language reflects strong social and pedagogical competence. It also aligns with Mulyasa's (2013) assertion that social competence involves effective communication and adaptive interaction within educational settings. Another prominent finding involves conflict resolution and fairness. Observations revealed that minor disputes among students were handled calmly and impartially. The teacher encouraged dialogue between conflicting parties and emphasized forgiveness and reconciliation grounded in Christian

teaching. This approach directly reflects the ethical dimension of brotherly love, which prioritizes unity and restoration. Philippians as a whole repeatedly stresses humility and mutual regard (Phil. 2:1-4), reinforcing that Christian community thrives on selfless relational conduct. By modeling patience and fairness, the teacher embodied the moral virtues inherent in Paul's relational theology. Students expressed that conflicts were resolved "without anger" and that the teacher "listened to both sides," demonstrating relational justice and empathy. Such practices contribute to what Goleman (2006) identifies as emotionally intelligent leadership, where empathy and relational awareness cultivate trust.

The study also found that spiritual solidarity significantly shapes the teacher's social competence. Beyond academic instruction, the teacher regularly prayed with students, visited families during times of difficulty, and maintained communication with parents regarding both academic and personal concerns. This pastoral dimension illustrates that social competence in CRE extends beyond classroom boundaries. Robert W. Pazmiño (2008) emphasizes that Christian educators serve as spiritual mentors whose influence encompasses moral and relational guidance. In SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes, the teacher's engagement with families strengthened community cohesion, reinforcing the biblical theme of shared grace articulated in Philippians 1:7. Students perceived the teacher not only as an instructor but as a caring guardian figure, reflecting the integration of professional responsibility and Christian compassion. Cultural context further enriches the interpretation of these findings. South Nias society is deeply communal, valuing kinship, respect for elders, and collective harmony. The teacher's relational style resonates with these cultural norms while grounding them in biblical theology. Contextualization is essential in Christian education, as faith must be communicated in culturally meaningful ways without compromising doctrinal integrity (Pazmiño, 2008). The study indicates that the teacher's social competence effectively bridges biblical brotherly love with local communal ethos, creating a harmonious synthesis between Scripture and culture. This contextual alignment enhances the credibility and authenticity of Christian instruction. With only one CRE teacher responsible for 59 Christian students across different grade levels, workload demands are significant. Limited time sometimes restricts opportunities for individualized mentoring. While relational warmth remains evident, sustained professional development opportunities appear limited due to geographic and infrastructural constraints in South Nias. Creswell and Poth (2018) note that contextual limitations can shape qualitative realities, and this setting is no exception. Strengthening institutional support and access to teacher training could further enhance social competence in measurable ways.

The integration of Philippians 1:7 into educational practice demonstrates that biblical affection is not abstract but actionable. Paul's declaration of shared grace suggests mutual participation in God's redemptive work. In the classroom, this translates into collaborative spiritual growth. Students are invited into participatory learning rather than passive reception. This approach aligns with Groome's (2011) vision of communal faith formation, where teacher and learners journey together in understanding and living the Christian story. The teacher's relational humility, demonstrated in willingness to admit mistakes and seek feedback, further embodies the Christ-centered humility central to

Pauline theology. Another dimension of discussion involves modeling behavior. Social competence is not only relational skill but moral example. Students consistently described the teacher as “patient,” “kind,” and “consistent.” Modeling aligns with social learning theory, which posits that behavior is learned through observation and imitation. In Christian education, modeling acquires theological depth because teachers reflect Christ’s character to students. The embodiment of brotherly love therefore functions as both relational practice and moral witness. This reinforces the assertion that social competence in CRE must be rooted in spiritual formation, not merely interpersonal technique. Classroom observations indicated high levels of student participation and mutual encouragement during group activities. Collaborative learning tasks often included prayer circles and peer support exercises. Such practices reflect communal *koinonia*, reinforcing shared identity in Christ. Fee (1995) underscores that partnership in the gospel is central to Paul’s relational theology. When students support one another academically and spiritually, they enact this theological principle within an educational micro-community. The teacher’s facilitation of such interaction highlights the strategic importance of social competence in cultivating unity. The findings affirm that social competence enhances learning effectiveness. Positive relational climates increase intrinsic motivation and academic engagement (Wentzel, 2012). In SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes, students displayed attentiveness and willingness to participate, suggesting that emotional security facilitated cognitive openness. Thus, brotherly love, as a theological virtue, intersects with educational outcomes. This intersection demonstrates that Christian ethics and pedagogical effectiveness are not separate domains but mutually reinforcing realities.

The results indicate that the CRE teacher’s social competence substantially reflects the framework of brotherly love in Philippians 1:7 through relational warmth, communicative clarity, fairness, spiritual solidarity, and contextual sensitivity. While challenges related to workload and resource limitations exist, the overall relational climate embodies Pauline affection and partnership. The integration of biblical theology, educational theory, and cultural context reveals that social competence is both a professional standard and a spiritual vocation. In SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes, the lived expression of brotherly love strengthens classroom unity, fosters emotional security, and contributes to holistic faith formation among the 59 Christian students. These findings affirm that when social competence is grounded in Scripture and embodied authentically, it becomes a transformative force within Christian education, shaping not only knowledge acquisition but communal identity and spiritual maturity.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the social competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes, South Nias, meaningfully reflects the biblical framework of brotherly love articulated in Philippians 1:7. The findings demonstrate that social competence in this context is not limited to interpersonal skill but is deeply rooted in theological conviction and spiritual identity. Through relational warmth, communicative clarity, fairness in conflict resolution, pastoral attentiveness, and cultural sensitivity, the teacher embodies a Christ-centered relational ethic that strengthens

classroom unity and supports holistic student development. Philippians 1:7 presents brotherly love as affectionate solidarity grounded in shared participation in grace. This theological vision is practically expressed in the CRE classroom through intentional care, dialogical teaching methods, inclusive interaction, and moral modeling. The study shows that when social competence flows from biblical principles, it fosters emotional security, enhances student engagement, and promotes communal harmony. In a school environment with 59 Christian students guided by one CRE teacher, relational authenticity becomes foundational rather than peripheral to faith formation. The research confirms that social competence intersects with pedagogical effectiveness. A positive relational climate encourages active participation, strengthens motivation, and nurtures character formation. The teacher's ability to integrate biblical teaching with the communal culture of South Nias illustrates that contextualized Christian education enhances credibility and impact. However, the study also recognizes challenges related to workload and limited institutional support, indicating the need for sustained professional development opportunities to maintain and strengthen social competence. Social competence grounded in brotherly love is both a professional obligation and a spiritual calling for CRE teachers. At SD Negeri 078480 Orsedes, the lived expression of Philippians 1:7 contributes significantly to classroom cohesion, moral modeling, and spiritual growth. Strengthening teacher formation in theological depth, emotional intelligence, and relational leadership will further ensure that Christian education remains transformative, fostering communities of grace, unity, and Christ-centered character among students.

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