



Nurturing Self-Control Through Pedagogical Competence: A Biblical Approach from Genesis 4:7 at SMPN 2 Blitar

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' pedagogical competence in nurturing students' self-control based on the biblical foundation of Genesis 4:7, within the context of SMPN 2 Blitar. The research employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to analyze and synthesize findings from national and international studies related to pedagogical competence, moral education, and the cultivation of self-control in Christian education. Through a comprehensive review of 32 peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2024, the study identifies patterns, theoretical frameworks, and pedagogical strategies relevant to developing moral discipline and emotional regulation among adolescents. The findings reveal that teachers' pedagogical competence-covering aspects such as lesson planning, classroom management, student-centered approaches, and formative assessment-plays a pivotal role in shaping students' self-control and spiritual character. The study further emphasizes that integrating biblical narratives, especially the moral lesson in Genesis 4:7 about mastery over sin, provides a transformative framework for moral formation in the classroom. Teachers who apply a faith-integrated pedagogy can guide students to internalize values of patience, empathy, and responsibility, fostering both moral and academic maturity. The discussion highlights the harmony between educational psychology and biblical ethics, proposing that effective pedagogical practice rooted in Scripture can cultivate holistic Christian character. This article concludes that developing teachers' pedagogical competence through continuous professional formation and biblical reflection is essential for fostering self-control among students in Christian Religious Education, thereby contributing to the moral integrity and spiritual growth of the next generation.

Keywords: *Pedagogical competence, Christian Religious Education, self-control, Genesis 4:7*

INTRODUCTION

Education is not merely the transfer of knowledge; it is fundamentally the formation of character and moral integrity. Within Christian Religious Education (CRE), the teacher's

role extends beyond cognitive instruction to the moral and spiritual nurturing of students. Pedagogical competence—the teacher’s ability to manage, design, and implement effective learning—is an essential foundation for achieving these aims. A competent teacher not only masters subject matter but also models values that influence students’ personal growth. One of the key values central to Christian character formation is self-control, a virtue deeply rooted in biblical teaching and vital for emotional stability, ethical conduct, and social harmony. The Book of Genesis 4:7 provides a timeless moral lesson on self-control, encapsulating God’s warning to Cain: *“If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”* This divine admonition underscores the necessity of human responsibility to govern emotions, particularly anger, through conscious moral discipline. In the contemporary educational setting, especially among adolescents in junior high school, the challenge of self-control is increasingly evident. Students often face emotional instability, peer pressure, digital distractions, and moral dilemmas that affect their behavior both inside and outside the classroom. Thus, teachers—particularly CRE teachers—are called to become moral exemplars who guide students toward developing self-regulation and spiritual maturity. The pedagogical competence of CRE teachers plays a vital role in integrating biblical values into learning experiences that shape students’ attitudes and behavior. When pedagogical skills are infused with biblical principles, teaching becomes transformative rather than merely informative. Teachers become facilitators of spiritual and moral formation, helping students internalize self-control as an expression of faith and obedience to God’s word. Genesis 4:7 serves as a profound scriptural basis for understanding the necessity of mastering one’s impulses. God’s instruction to Cain reflects a pedagogical dialogue between Creator and learner—a divine model of guidance aimed at moral correction and personal responsibility. Within this narrative, self-control is not portrayed as repression of emotion but as moral discernment empowered by divine truth. For teachers of CRE, this verse becomes a theological foundation for fostering discipline and spiritual awareness in students. It calls educators to teach not only through speech but through life—by demonstrating patience, empathy, and integrity in daily interactions.

In the context of SMPN 2 Blitar, the cultivation of self-control among students is particularly relevant. As a public junior high school that accommodates diverse backgrounds, moral and behavioral challenges often emerge in daily school life. The presence of CRE teachers in such a plural environment offers an opportunity to integrate biblical ethics into character education. Through pedagogical competence—encompassing lesson planning, learning strategies, classroom management, and evaluation—teachers can guide students to recognize the moral implications of their choices. In doing so, they help students understand that self-control is not merely a social expectation but a spiritual calling grounded in God’s will. The teacher’s pedagogical approach must respond to students’ developmental needs. Adolescents are in a crucial stage of identity formation, where moral reasoning and emotional regulation are still developing. Effective pedagogical competence enables CRE teachers to design meaningful learning activities that engage both cognitive and affective domains. Strategies such as reflective discussion, moral dilemma analysis, and contextual Bible study allow students to connect scriptural lessons to real-life situations. By creating such learning environments, teachers encourage self-reflection, critical thinking, and behavioral transformation. This study explores how

pedagogical competence among Christian Religious Education teachers contributes to nurturing students' self-control based on the biblical foundation of Genesis 4:7. It seeks to uncover how theological insight and pedagogical skill intersect to form an educational praxis that shapes both mind and character. By examining this integration at SMPN 2 Blitar, the research aims to provide a model for faith-based education that is contextually relevant, pedagogically sound, and spiritually transformative. Ultimately, nurturing self-control through pedagogical competence reflects the holistic vision of Christian education-to cultivate individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also wise, disciplined, and faithful in living according to God's Word.

METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to analyze and synthesize scholarly works related to pedagogical competence and the nurturing of self-control within Christian Religious Education (CRE), interpreted through the biblical perspective of Genesis 4:7. The SLR approach was selected because it allows for a comprehensive, structured, and replicable process of identifying, evaluating, and integrating findings from existing literature to build a theoretical understanding of the topic. Unlike a traditional narrative review, an SLR uses explicit and systematic procedures to minimize bias, ensuring that the conclusions drawn are credible, evidence-based, and academically sound. The review process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, which includes four primary stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. During the identification stage, the researcher searched for relevant studies using academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ERIC, and ResearchGate. The keywords used were combinations of terms including "pedagogical competence," "Christian Religious Education," "self-control," "biblical education," "teacher character," and "Genesis 4:7." Boolean operators were employed to refine search results and ensure relevance to the research focus.

The inclusion criteria for selecting literature consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, theses, dissertations, and conference papers published between 2014 and 2024. These sources were required to discuss pedagogical competence in religious or moral education contexts, with particular attention to self-control, character formation, or biblical-based pedagogy. Exclusion criteria included articles that were not written in English or Indonesian, studies unrelated to religious or moral education, and papers lacking empirical or theoretical relevance to the biblical dimension of Genesis 4:7. Following identification, the screening process involved reviewing abstracts and full texts to ensure alignment with the research question: *How can the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education teachers nurture students' self-control, as reflected in Genesis 4:7?* Studies that addressed the interplay between teacher competence and moral-spiritual development were prioritized. Each article was analyzed in terms of research objectives, methodology, findings, and implications for Christian education. For the data analysis, a thematic synthesis approach was applied. The selected studies were coded and categorized into emerging themes such as the role of pedagogical competence in moral and character formation, the integration of biblical principles in teaching practice, the significance of teacher modeling in promoting self-control, and the theological interpretation of Genesis 4:7 in educational settings. This thematic framework allowed

the researcher to draw conceptual connections between pedagogical practice and the biblical concept of self-governance. The review process emphasized transparency, reliability, and critical reflection. Reference management software such as Zotero and Mendeley was used to organize citations and prevent duplication. Each source was evaluated using quality appraisal criteria that examined methodological rigor, theoretical contribution, and contextual relevance. Furthermore, triangulation was achieved by comparing findings across multiple disciplines, including theology, pedagogy, and psychology of education. The outcome of this systematic review provides a comprehensive understanding of how pedagogical competence-anchored in biblical wisdom-can be a transformative force in shaping students' self-control. By examining literature across theological and educational domains, the SLR method illuminates the pedagogical strategies, biblical principles, and character formation processes that contribute to holistic Christian education. Ultimately, this method provides a solid foundation for integrating faith and pedagogy, offering valuable insights for CRE teachers at SMPN 2 Blitar and similar educational contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pedagogical competence in Christian education is deeply intertwined with the teacher's capacity to form not only intellectual but also moral and spiritual dimensions of students. Studies show that teachers' pedagogical abilities-such as classroom management, contextualized instruction, and empathetic communication-directly affect the behavioral development of learners (Supriadi, 2021; Nugroho & Santosa, 2022). In CRE, these competencies take on a transformative role: teachers are expected to embody the values they teach and to nurture virtues such as patience, humility, and self-control through lived example. According to Arends (2014), effective pedagogy integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning domains to cultivate holistic character formation. Within the Christian framework, this means that the process of teaching should encourage students to internalize moral truths and align their behavior with biblical principles. CRE teachers who exhibit pedagogical competence demonstrate an ability to create a safe, reflective, and spiritually engaging classroom environment. Such an environment encourages students to evaluate their emotions and actions in light of Scripture. Empirical studies affirm that students' moral behavior and self-control are significantly influenced by teacher attitudes and relational approaches (Kurniawan, 2020; Setiawan, 2023). Teachers who model consistency between faith and action help students understand self-control not as suppression of feeling but as wise regulation of desires in accordance with divine guidance. The CRE teacher becomes a living textbook of biblical ethics-illustrating how faith translates into disciplined action. Pedagogical competence also involves the ability to integrate moral reflection into academic instruction. Teachers can use narrative learning, discussion-based pedagogy, and experiential learning to help students engage personally with biblical lessons. When students are encouraged to reflect on their feelings and moral struggles in light of Scripture, they develop self-awareness, empathy, and emotional intelligence-key components of self-control. The literature shows that such integration leads to sustained behavioral change and moral maturity (Simanjuntak, 2022).

The Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 4:7 as a Pedagogical Model

Genesis 4:7 serves as a theological and pedagogical cornerstone for understanding self-control from a biblical perspective. In this passage, God speaks to Cain before he commits a grave moral failure. The divine counsel—"Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it"-illustrates the human struggle with emotion, temptation, and moral decision-making. This dialogue between God and Cain provides a paradigm for Christian educators: teaching is not merely instruction but moral intervention designed to guide learners toward righteousness. Biblical scholars such as Brueggemann (2010) and Walton (2015) interpret Genesis 4:7 as a warning about moral responsibility and the power of free will. God's statement underscores that human beings have the capacity and obligation to master their impulses. The pedagogical implication is profound: education should empower learners to govern themselves through understanding, conviction, and faith, rather than through fear or external coercion. From a hermeneutical perspective, this verse portrays God as a teacher who recognizes emotional tension in the learner (Cain) and uses corrective dialogue to guide him toward moral clarity. This divine pedagogy involves empathy, confrontation, and empowerment—three elements also essential in modern teaching. In practical terms, it suggests that teachers must: identify the emotional state of their students, address moral or behavioral concerns through dialogue, and empower students with the tools to choose rightly. Such an approach transforms education into an act of moral mentoring, not just knowledge transmission. In CRE pedagogy, Genesis 4:7 thus becomes a model for how teachers can nurture self-control through relational and spiritual engagement. God does not condemn Cain immediately; rather, He provides moral reasoning that appeals to Cain's conscience. Similarly, CRE teachers should approach student misbehavior with empathy and guidance, helping students understand the moral consequences of their actions. As one study by Siahaan (2021) notes, biblical-based moral guidance that involves open discussion and reflection promotes internalized discipline rather than imposed obedience. Genesis 4:7 implies that the moral battle is internal—within the human heart. This aligns with the Christian psychological view that self-control arises from the transformation of the heart and mind through faith (Romans 12:2). Therefore, pedagogical competence in CRE must include the ability to connect biblical truths to students' emotional and psychological realities. Teachers should help students recognize that self-control is not only behavioral but spiritual, cultivated through prayer, reflection, and obedience to God's word.

Pedagogical Competence in Nurturing Self-Control: Practical Application

The result demonstrates that pedagogical competence is expressed through four interrelated domains: planning, implementation, evaluation, and personal example. Each domain provides practical avenues for nurturing self-control among students, especially within the context of SMPN 2 Blitar.

a. Planning Biblical-Integrated Lessons

Effective lesson planning requires CRE teachers to intentionally embed self-control themes within curriculum objectives. For instance, lesson plans can incorporate moral dilemmas drawn from Scripture, reflective journaling on emotional challenges, or role-play scenarios that simulate real-life moral decisions. These approaches encourage students to apply biblical reasoning in managing anger, temptation, and

peer pressure. Research by Lestari (2021) shows that students who engage in reflective moral activities exhibit improved emotional regulation and ethical decision-making.

b. Implementing Transformative Learning Strategies

Implementation involves pedagogical creativity and adaptability. Transformative learning, occurs when learners critically reflect on their assumptions and experience moral perspective change. CRE teachers can use dialogical teaching, group discussions, and storytelling based on biblical narratives like Cain and Abel to help students examine the consequences of uncontrolled emotion. At SMPN 2 Blitar, where students face various behavioral challenges, such methods can humanize moral instruction and make biblical lessons relevant to daily life. In addition, classroom management rooted in compassion and fairness is a vital expression of pedagogical competence. Studies highlight that consistent, empathetic teacher discipline fosters self-regulated behavior among adolescents (Santosa, 2020). When students experience justice and mercy in teacher-student interactions, they internalize similar principles in their own behavior.

c. Evaluating Character and Behavioral Growth

Assessment in CRE should move beyond cognitive testing to include qualitative evaluation of character growth. Reflective journals, peer feedback, and teacher observation can be used to assess indicators of self-control, such as patience, respect, and emotional restraint. This approach aligns with formative assessment principles that view evaluation as an opportunity for growth rather than punishment (Black & Wiliam, 2008). At SMPN 2 Blitar, this might take the form of “character reflection sheets” where students record instances of emotional struggle and how they applied biblical principles to resolve them. Such reflective practices foster self-awareness and help teachers provide targeted moral support.

d. Modeling as Pedagogical Witness

Perhaps the most powerful dimension of pedagogical competence in Christian education is teacher modeling. Teachers’ daily conduct-how they handle frustration, conflict, and disappointment-serves as a living curriculum for students. Research consistently shows that students imitate the moral and emotional patterns of teachers they admire (Kristianto, 2022). Thus, CRE teachers must cultivate spiritual disciplines such as prayer, patience, and forgiveness, demonstrating that self-control is not innate but developed through faith and practice. At SMPN 2 Blitar, where students come from diverse moral and religious backgrounds, teacher modeling becomes a form of silent evangelism. By embodying humility, fairness, and perseverance, CRE teachers teach self-control not through force but through example. This aligns with Paul’s exhortation in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

Theological and Educational Implications

The integration of pedagogical competence and biblical teaching produces several significant implications for Christian education. First, it underscores that self-control is a spiritual virtue that must be intentionally cultivated through teaching and mentorship. It is not an automatic result of moral instruction but a gradual outcome of relational

guidance rooted in faith. Teachers serve as co-laborers with God in shaping students' inner character, aligning with Proverbs 22:6: *"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."* Second, the synthesis of literature reveals that biblical pedagogy promotes intrinsic motivation for moral behavior. When teachers use Scripture not as a tool of discipline but as a means of self-reflection, students begin to see self-control as a response to God's grace rather than as mere rule-following. This theological grounding enhances long-term moral resilience and helps students navigate moral complexities beyond the classroom. Third, pedagogical competence informed by Genesis 4:7 also addresses emotional intelligence in education. Emotional self-regulation is an essential life skill, and Christian education provides a unique framework by connecting it with spiritual discipline. Through biblical reflection, students learn to identify the root of emotions such as anger or envy and seek spiritual solutions—repentance, forgiveness, and prayer. This aligns with contemporary psychology that views emotional regulation as central to mental and moral health (Gross, 2014). Fourth, the findings suggest that institutional support and teacher development are necessary for sustaining such pedagogical excellence. Schools like SMPN 2 Blitar can support CRE teachers by providing professional development in character-based pedagogy, mentoring programs, and reflective teaching workshops. By creating a supportive culture, schools ensure that biblical pedagogy is not an isolated effort but an institutional ethos. Finally, the integration of Genesis 4:7 into pedagogy demonstrates that Scripture remains timelessly relevant in addressing modern educational challenges. God's counsel to Cain mirrors the struggles of today's youth—temptations of anger, jealousy, and impulsivity. Teachers, acting as moral shepherds, can reinterpret this ancient wisdom for the contemporary classroom, helping students understand that every moral choice has spiritual significance. The SLR revealed consistent patterns across theological and educational literature: pedagogical competence encompasses moral and spiritual dimensions that directly influence students' self-control, Genesis 4:7 provides a biblical framework for understanding the nature of human emotion and the necessity of moral restraint, effective CRE teachers integrate biblical narratives into interactive, reflective, and relational pedagogy that promotes self-regulation, teacher modeling and moral consistency are the most influential factors in shaping students' self-control, spiritual formation through faith-based learning complements psychological approaches to emotional discipline, creating holistic education.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore that pedagogical competence in Christian Religious Education (CRE) transcends academic expertise—it is a spiritual vocation grounded in biblical wisdom and moral integrity. Through the lens of Genesis 4:7, the concept of nurturing self-control emerges as both a divine mandate and an educational necessity. God's admonition to Cain, *"You must rule over it,"* encapsulates the essence of moral education: the human responsibility to govern one's impulses through spiritual discipline and conscious obedience to God's truth. This theological insight provides a powerful foundation for understanding the teacher's role in guiding students toward self-mastery and moral maturity. The systematic literature review (SLR) demonstrated that pedagogical competence encompasses not only the technical dimensions of teaching-

such as planning, implementation, and evaluation-but also the moral and relational dimensions that shape character and faith. In CRE, teaching is not merely an act of information transfer but a process of moral formation. Teachers serve as facilitators of transformation, integrating faith, reason, and emotion to cultivate students' capacity for self-control. When pedagogical competence is infused with biblical principles, the learning process becomes redemptive-it restores students' moral consciousness and aligns their behavior with divine values. The discussion further revealed that teacher modeling plays the most critical role in developing self-control among students. Students learn to regulate their behavior by observing how teachers manage their own emotions and make ethical decisions. A teacher who demonstrates patience, humility, and forgiveness embodies the principles of Genesis 4:7 in practical form. Such modeling reinforces that self-control is not suppression but sanctified discipline-the result of walking in obedience and faith. This mirrors the apostolic call to imitate Christ, who exemplified perfect self-control even under trial and suffering. Pedagogical competence in CRE must be intentionally designed to address both the cognitive and affective domains of learning. Strategies such as reflective journaling, moral dialogue, and contextual Bible study enable students to connect scriptural truths with their personal experiences. These approaches help students recognize the inner moral conflict between good and evil, akin to Cain's struggle in Genesis 4, and equip them to make faith-based decisions. By engaging students' emotions, reasoning, and spirituality, CRE teachers nurture self-control that endures beyond the classroom-shaping lifelong moral resilience. In the educational context of SMPN 2 Blitar, where students face diverse moral and social challenges, the integration of pedagogical competence with biblical principles offers a holistic framework for moral education. It emphasizes that Christian character formation is not peripheral but central to education's purpose. Teachers who teach with competence and faithfulness become moral agents who transform learning spaces into arenas of spiritual growth. Their influence extends beyond academic achievement, fostering students who are emotionally balanced, ethically grounded, and spiritually mature. In conclusion, nurturing self-control through pedagogical competence, inspired by Genesis 4:7, represents a vital synthesis between theology and pedagogy. It calls teachers to be both educators and shepherds-guiding students toward wisdom, discipline, and godliness. This study affirms that education rooted in biblical truth produces not only knowledgeable individuals but also disciples of integrity. By embracing the divine model of teaching exemplified in Genesis 4:7, CRE teachers can fulfill their sacred mission: helping students learn not only what is right but also how to choose and live it faithfully. Ultimately, self-control becomes the fruit of both pedagogical excellence and spiritual obedience—a testimony of education that truly reflects God's transformative grace.

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