



Empowering Biblical Understanding: The Professional Competence of CRE Teachers in Teaching Sin and Triumph Over It (Genesis 4:7) at SD Negeri 071144 To'iwu

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of professional competence among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the biblical concept of sin and victory over it, as reflected in Genesis 4:7, with a focus on the educational context of SD Negeri 071144 To'iwu. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, the research synthesizes findings from 25 peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2025. The review aims to identify how theological understanding, pedagogical skill, moral integrity, and spiritual maturity collectively shape the professional competence required for effective biblical instruction. The results indicate that CRE teachers' professional competence is a multidimensional construct integrating theological literacy, pedagogical innovation, and personal spirituality. Teachers who possess deep biblical understanding are able to interpret Scripture accurately and present theological concepts in ways that are accessible and transformative for students. Pedagogical competence enables them to employ creative methods-such as storytelling, reflection, and contextual learning-to make biblical lessons relevant to children's daily experiences. Moreover, moral and spiritual modeling reinforces learning, as students are more likely to internalize values demonstrated by their teachers. In the To'iwu context, professional competence empowers teachers to communicate the moral and spiritual implications of Genesis 4:7-that sin seeks to control humanity, but victory is possible through obedience and faith. The study concludes that professional competence in CRE teaching represents both an educational standard and a spiritual vocation, essential for forming students who understand biblical truth, exercise moral discernment, and live victoriously according to Christian principles.

Keywords: Professional competence, Christian Religious Education, Genesis 4:7, sin, teacher spirituality

INTRODUCTION

Education is not merely a process of transferring knowledge but also a moral and spiritual endeavor aimed at shaping the character and worldview of students. In Christian Religious Education (CRE), the teacher plays a central role in leading learners toward understanding

the biblical view of human nature, sin, and redemption. The book of Genesis, particularly Genesis 4:7-*"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"*-offers profound theological insight into the nature of sin and the call to self-mastery through obedience to God. This passage underscores the human struggle between moral failure and spiritual victory, a theme that is foundational to Christian moral education. The professional competence of CRE teachers in explaining this concept is therefore essential for cultivating biblical understanding and moral awareness among students, especially in the context of elementary education. In the modern educational setting, teachers are not only expected to possess pedagogical and interpersonal skills but also to demonstrate professional competence rooted in both subject mastery and ethical responsibility. For Christian Religious Education teachers, professional competence extends beyond cognitive or methodological ability; it involves the integration of biblical truth, theological reflection, and spiritual maturity into the learning process. The teacher must be able to interpret Scripture accurately, contextualize its meaning for children, and inspire them to apply biblical principles in daily life. This responsibility becomes even more critical when addressing abstract theological themes such as sin, temptation, and moral victory, which require sensitivity, wisdom, and spiritual insight. At SD Negeri 071144 To'iwo, as in many other elementary schools in Indonesia, Christian Religious Education serves as a foundational platform for moral and spiritual development. The understanding of sin and victory over it is not merely doctrinal but deeply formative in shaping the conscience and behavior of students. However, many students today face challenges in distinguishing right from wrong due to exposure to conflicting moral messages from media and social environments. Therefore, the role of the teacher becomes pivotal in presenting biblical truths in ways that are comprehensible, relevant, and transformative. A teacher's professional competence thus determines the effectiveness of religious instruction and the extent to which students internalize and practice biblical values. Genesis 4:7 provides a pedagogical entry point for teaching about the dynamics of moral choice and divine accountability. It shows that sin is an ever-present threat but also that human beings are called to exercise self-control and obedience to God. A professionally competent CRE teacher must help students grasp this message by employing creative pedagogical strategies-such as storytelling, role-play, and reflective discussion-while maintaining theological accuracy. Furthermore, the teacher must exemplify moral integrity and spiritual discipline, serving as a living testimony of the biblical principles being taught. This study seeks to explore how professional competence enables Christian Religious Education teachers to effectively teach the biblical concept of sin and victory over it as presented in Genesis 4:7. By focusing on the experience of teachers at SD Negeri 071144 To'iwo, the research aims to identify the dimensions of professional competence that contribute to effective biblical teaching and character formation. The study assumes that professional competence in CRE involves not only academic qualifications and pedagogical skills but also spiritual wisdom, hermeneutical ability, and a commitment to living out the gospel message. This inquiry contributes to the broader discourse on the integration of faith and education. It highlights the need for teacher formation programs that emphasize not only pedagogical excellence but also spiritual depth and biblical literacy. By empowering teachers to communicate theological truths effectively, Christian education can fulfill its mission to nurture students who not only understand the concept

of sin but also experience victory through obedience to God and the transformative power of faith. In this way, professional competence becomes both an educational and spiritual calling, aligning the teacher's vocation with the biblical mandate to guide others toward righteousness and godly living.

METHODS

This study employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to investigate how professional competence among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers supports their ability to teach the biblical concept of sin and victory over it, as reflected in Genesis 4:7, with specific reference to the context of SD Negeri 071144 To'iwo. The SLR method is chosen because it enables a comprehensive and structured synthesis of previous studies relevant to the topic, ensuring that the resulting analysis is based on credible, peer-reviewed, and up-to-date academic sources. Through this approach, the researcher systematically identifies, evaluates, and integrates findings from prior research to develop a holistic understanding of how professional competence contributes to effective biblical teaching in Christian education. The SLR process in this study follows the general framework proposed by Kitchenham and Charters (2007), which involves three key stages: planning the review, conducting the review, and reporting the results. In the planning stage, the research question was formulated as follows: *"How does the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers influence their effectiveness in explaining the concept of sin and victory over it according to Genesis 4:7?"* This question guided the search strategy, inclusion criteria, and data extraction process. The data sources for this review included reputable academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, ResearchGate, and DOAJ, focusing on publications between 2015 and 2025 to ensure the inclusion of the most recent studies. The search employed combinations of keywords such as *"professional competence," "Christian Religious Education," "biblical teaching," "Genesis 4:7," "moral education,"* and *"teacher effectiveness."* The inclusion criteria were: peer-reviewed journal articles, theses, or conference papers published within the last ten years, studies discussing teacher competence in Christian or religious education contexts, research that connects biblical interpretation or moral education with pedagogy, and studies written in English or Indonesian. Exclusion criteria included publications that lacked full-text access, non-academic articles, or those not directly relevant to professional competence and biblical education. In the conducting stage, a total of 75 studies were initially identified. After screening titles and abstracts for relevance, 45 studies were retained. Following full-text evaluation based on the inclusion criteria, 25 studies were selected for detailed analysis. Data were extracted systematically using a data extraction form, which included the author, year, research context, methodological approach, key findings, and relevance to the present study. These studies were then analyzed thematically to identify patterns, similarities, and divergences regarding professional competence, pedagogical strategies, and biblical instruction. The reporting stage involved synthesizing the extracted data to form a conceptual framework illustrating how professional competence enhances teachers' ability to interpret and communicate biblical truths effectively. The findings were categorized into thematic dimensions such as theological understanding, pedagogical skill, moral integrity, and spiritual leadership—all of which contribute to the professional identity of a CRE teacher.

To ensure reliability and transparency, the review followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, which include a flow diagram showing the process of study selection and exclusion. Through the SLR method, this study not only consolidates previous empirical and theoretical contributions but also bridges the gap between professional competence and biblical pedagogy. By synthesizing existing literature, the research offers a scholarly foundation for understanding how competent CRE teachers can effectively teach complex theological concepts—such as sin and victory over it—in ways that are biblically faithful, pedagogically sound, and contextually meaningful for students at SD Negeri 071144 To'iwu.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the heart of professional competence for CRE teachers lies theological and biblical literacy. According to Anderson (2020), teachers of faith-based subjects must be “interpreters of Scripture” who can convey its meaning with accuracy, relevance, and spiritual sensitivity. Genesis 4:7, which narrates the dialogue between God and Cain, embodies the moral tension between sin’s temptation and human responsibility. For teachers, interpreting this passage demands an understanding of both its theological essence and pedagogical significance. The verse’s imagery—“sin is crouching at your door”—invites moral reflection on temptation, discipline, and divine warning, themes that must be translated into language accessible to children. In the reviewed studies, teachers with strong biblical literacy were found to integrate exegesis and hermeneutics into their instructional preparation. Sagala and Hutapea (2022) emphasize that competent teachers use sound biblical interpretation to avoid misconceptions that could lead students toward moral confusion. They present Scripture not as abstract doctrine but as a living moral guide. In the case of Genesis 4:7, this involves explaining sin as a personal and relational issue—between human beings and God—and victory as obedience empowered by divine grace. Johnson (2021) highlights that theological competence equips teachers to navigate complex biblical themes, such as free will, moral accountability, and divine justice, which are implicit in the Genesis narrative. Without this competence, teachers risk reducing moral education to a set of behavioral rules detached from spiritual transformation. Thus, theological depth enables teachers not only to convey doctrinal truths but also to foster students’ personal encounters with biblical wisdom. In the To'iwu context, this competence is particularly vital, as many students grow up in environments where moral relativism and secular values increasingly challenge biblical authority.

Pedagogical Competence and Instructional Strategy in Teaching Biblical Concepts

The next major theme emerging from the literature concerns pedagogical competence—the ability to design, implement, and evaluate effective learning experiences that lead to meaningful understanding. Studies such as Wahyuni and Simanjuntak (2023) and Reynolds (2020) demonstrate that students’ comprehension of moral and theological ideas depends greatly on how teachers contextualize learning. Effective CRE teachers apply various methods such as storytelling, simulation, reflective dialogue, and project-based learning to help students grasp abstract spiritual truths. In the context of Genesis 4:7, storytelling is particularly powerful. By retelling the narrative of Cain and Abel in engaging ways, teachers invite students to identify the emotions and moral choices

involved in the story. Tamba (2021) notes that narrative pedagogy allows students to internalize biblical principles by emotionally connecting with characters. The story becomes not just an ancient tale but a mirror of the human struggle with jealousy, temptation, and moral decision-making. Another pedagogical dimension involves moral reflection and discussion. According to Boe (2022), teachers who integrate open-ended discussions encourage students to think critically about moral choices in light of Scripture. In classroom practice, teachers might ask, "What should Cain have done differently?" or "What can we learn about overcoming anger and jealousy?" Such reflective questioning promotes moral reasoning and aligns with the developmental needs of elementary students who are forming their ethical frameworks. Moreover, professional competence includes the ability to adapt teaching strategies to diverse learning styles. Students at SD Negeri 071144 To'iwu, like most elementary learners, possess varied cognitive and emotional abilities. Therefore, teachers who employ multimodal approaches-combining visual aids, dramatization, and interactive activities-enhance comprehension and retention. Simanjuntak (2019) stresses that pedagogical flexibility rooted in professional competence enables teachers to balance biblical depth with child-friendly instruction. Assessment is another key aspect of pedagogical competence. The reviewed studies highlight that teachers should not only evaluate students' factual recall of biblical stories but also their moral understanding and behavioral application. Andrews (2020) proposes the use of formative assessments such as reflective journals, role-playing evaluations, and group discussions to gauge spiritual growth. Through these methods, students demonstrate how they internalize the lesson of Genesis 4:7-recognizing sin's lure and choosing moral victory through faith.

Moral and Spiritual Modeling of the Teacher

A consistent finding across the reviewed literature is that professional competence in CRE teaching cannot be separated from the teacher's moral integrity and spiritual authenticity. Lumbantobing (2021) argues that teachers' credibility as moral educators stems not only from their knowledge but from their personal example. In teaching about sin and victory, the teacher becomes both messenger and model, showing through daily conduct what it means to resist temptation and live in obedience to God. The integration of teaching and modeling echoes biblical pedagogy itself. Jesus, the master teacher, embodied the truths He taught. In a similar way, the CRE teacher must demonstrate patience, humility, honesty, and self-control-qualities that reinforce the moral messages being conveyed. Genesis 4:7's warning about sin's desire and the call to "rule over it" gains practical meaning when students observe their teacher's self-discipline and integrity. Turner (2022) observes that when teachers exhibit emotional self-control and moral consistency, students are more likely to adopt similar behavior patterns, perceiving them as attainable and desirable. This dimension of professional competence thus transcends technical skill. It involves spiritual formation and ethical consistency. Teachers must cultivate a prayerful life, engage in continuous biblical study, and nurture a personal relationship with God. These practices sustain their credibility and authority in moral instruction. Hutagalung (2020) points out that students, especially at the elementary level, are highly impressionable; they learn moral lessons more effectively from modeled behavior than from abstract explanation. In the context of SD Negeri 071144 To'iwu, teachers who embody the biblical message of Genesis 4:7 play a transformative role in

their community. By demonstrating moral resilience and spiritual discipline, they not only teach students about victory over sin but also show them what living in victory looks like. This approach aligns with the holistic mission of Christian education-to form not only knowledgeable learners but also spiritually mature individuals who reflect Christlike character in their relationships.

Contextual and Cultural Application in the To'iwu Setting

Another essential finding from the review is the need for contextualization. Professional competence involves the capacity to translate biblical truths into culturally meaningful frameworks. As Sitompul (2023) explains, CRE teachers in rural or multicultural schools must be sensitive to students' socio-cultural realities while maintaining theological fidelity. In SD Negeri 071144 To'iwu, where students come from diverse Christian backgrounds and family environments, contextual teaching ensures that biblical concepts resonate with their lived experiences. For example, explaining sin as "a wrong choice that hurts God and others" may be more relatable to children than using abstract theological terms like "transgression" or "depravity." Teachers can illustrate victory over sin by connecting the message to familiar experiences-such as resisting anger, sharing with friends, or obeying parents. Such contextualization is not a simplification of theology but an act of incarnational teaching, making the Word of God accessible and transformative in daily life. Tambunan (2021) emphasizes that professional competence also includes cultural intelligence-the ability to adapt teaching methods and moral lessons to local customs without compromising biblical truth. In the To'iwu context, storytelling that integrates local values of mutual respect and community harmony can reinforce the biblical message of overcoming jealousy and maintaining right relationships. By doing so, CRE teachers make Scripture relevant to students' social environment while promoting a biblical worldview grounded in love and accountability. The reviewed literature underscores the importance of parental and community involvement. Nainggolan (2020) suggests that competent CRE teachers foster partnerships with parents to extend moral education beyond the classroom. When parents reinforce the same moral messages at home-about self-control, honesty, and forgiveness-the impact of classroom instruction multiplies. This collaboration aligns with the biblical principle in Deuteronomy 6:7, which calls believers to teach God's commands diligently to their children in all settings.

Integration of Spiritual and Pedagogical Competence

Professional competence in CRE teaching cannot be fragmented into separate skills; rather, it is an integrated whole where spiritual depth fuels pedagogical creativity. The reviewed studies reveal that teachers who combine theological insight with innovative pedagogy achieve higher learning engagement and deeper moral understanding among students. Marbun (2022) found that spiritually mature teachers are more effective in designing transformative lessons because they view teaching as ministry rather than routine. This integration is vividly applicable in teaching Genesis 4:7. A teacher might begin the lesson with prayer and reflection, lead students in exploring the story of Cain and Abel, and facilitate group activities that help them identify modern forms of temptation-such as dishonesty, envy, or disobedience. The lesson concludes with personal reflection and prayer for strength to "rule over sin." Such a lesson not only conveys biblical knowledge but also cultivates spiritual awareness and moral

commitment. Furthermore, professional competence requires continuous self-improvement. According to Purba (2023), teachers must engage in lifelong learning-attending seminars, reading theological works, and collaborating with other educators. This ongoing formation keeps their teaching fresh, relevant, and spiritually vibrant. It also prevents stagnation in faith and practice, ensuring that their instruction continues to inspire students toward righteousness.

The Role of Professional Development and Institutional Support

The systematic review also highlights the importance of institutional and professional support in nurturing teachers' competence. Schools and educational authorities play a significant role in providing training opportunities, mentoring, and resources for spiritual and pedagogical growth. Batubara (2021) reports that teachers who participate in professional learning communities exhibit higher confidence and competence in integrating biblical values into classroom instruction. In SD Negeri 071144 To'iwo, such institutional support might take the form of regular workshops on biblical pedagogy, mentorship by senior teachers, or collaboration with local churches. The synergy between educational institutions and faith communities enhances teachers' theological grounding and moral encouragement. Professional competence thus grows not in isolation but within a supportive network that values continuous formation. The literature also identifies challenges-such as limited access to theological resources, lack of formal training in hermeneutics, and the tension between secular educational demands and faith-based instruction. Saragih (2022) warns that when teachers feel pressured to meet administrative targets, the spiritual essence of Christian education can be overshadowed. Therefore, schools must reaffirm their commitment to holistic education, ensuring that professional competence encompasses spiritual as well as academic excellence.

Implications for Character Formation and Student Outcomes

One of the most significant findings of the literature synthesis is the correlation between teacher competence and student moral development. Students taught by professionally competent and spiritually mature CRE teachers show stronger moral reasoning, empathy, and self-discipline. Anderson and Meyer (2020) observed that consistent biblical instruction combined with authentic teacher modeling produces long-term behavioral change in students. In the case of Genesis 4:7, when students understand that sin represents disobedience to God's will and that victory comes through choosing righteousness, they begin to internalize moral responsibility. Teachers' explanations, reinforced by their own conduct, enable students to see moral integrity as both possible and desirable. This transformative learning fosters self-regulation and ethical awareness, aligning with the national educational goals of developing students with faith, character, and knowledge. Professional competence contributes to students' sense of purpose and identity. Through effective biblical teaching, children learn that moral choices are not merely social expectations but expressions of their relationship with God. Such understanding nurtures a resilient faith capable of withstanding societal pressures. In this way, the teacher's competence not only enhances cognitive learning but also shapes the spiritual identity of students, preparing them to live as responsible and faithful individuals. The result of the reviewed studies suggests that professional competence in CRE teaching is best understood as a dynamic interplay between knowledge, skill, and

character. Genesis 4:7 becomes more than a moral warning; it becomes a pedagogical paradigm. Teachers, like their students, face the constant challenge of mastering sin through obedience and faith. Their professional competence reflects their spiritual journey of aligning intellect, emotion, and will with divine truth. This theological reflection reinforces that victory over sin in education is not achieved merely through rules or instruction but through transformation—beginning with the teacher and extending to the student. Competent teachers act as mediators of grace, guiding students toward awareness of their moral nature and dependence on God. In this way, professional competence acquires a sacred dimension: it becomes a vocation rather than a profession. The reviewed literature, therefore, affirms that the integration of faith and learning is both possible and necessary. Teachers who approach their work with theological depth, pedagogical excellence, and spiritual authenticity embody the biblical principle of Genesis 4:7—they help students “rule over sin” by empowering them with understanding, faith, and moral strength.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore that the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers is both a pedagogical and spiritual vocation—one that integrates biblical understanding, moral integrity, and instructional skill into a unified practice of faith-based education. Through the systematic literature review, it becomes evident that teaching the concept of sin and victory over it, as derived from *Genesis 4:7*, requires far more than cognitive knowledge or methodological proficiency. It demands a teacher who lives out the message being taught—a teacher whose life becomes a testimony of the victory over sin through obedience to God and dependence on His grace. Professional competence in CRE is thus revealed to be multidimensional. It involves a sound understanding of Scripture and the ability to interpret it accurately for the developmental level of students. Pedagogically, it requires creativity and adaptability in transforming abstract biblical truths into learning experiences that are meaningful, engaging, and contextually relevant. It necessitates that teachers embody Christlike character, modeling what it means to resist temptation and live righteously. It calls for a deep personal relationship with God, expressed through prayer, reflection, and faithfulness in daily life. Each of these dimensions contributes to the teacher’s effectiveness in guiding students toward biblical understanding and moral transformation. In the context of SD Negeri 071144 To’iwo, the implications are profound. CRE teachers, when equipped with professional competence, can effectively translate the theological essence of *Genesis 4:7* into lessons that shape both the mind and heart of their students. Children learn not only the story of Cain and Abel but also the enduring truth that sin seeks to dominate human life, yet God empowers believers to “rule over it.” This message, when taught by a competent and spiritually grounded teacher, becomes a foundation for students’ moral reasoning and ethical behavior. The classroom thus becomes a transformative space where faith and learning intersect—where knowledge leads to conviction, and conviction to righteous action. This study highlights the importance of continuous professional development and institutional support. The competence of CRE teachers cannot remain static; it must evolve through lifelong learning, theological reflection, and collaboration within faith-based communities.

Schools and churches share the responsibility to provide training and resources that nurture teachers' biblical literacy, pedagogical innovation, and spiritual resilience. When teachers are continually renewed in their calling, they can inspire renewal in the lives of their students. The integration of professional competence with biblical teaching reflects the holistic vision of Christian education: to develop learners who not only understand God's Word but live it out daily. The warning and promise in *Genesis 4:7*-that sin crouches at the door, but one must master it-serves as both a moral challenge and a spiritual invitation. Through competent, faithful teaching, students are led to recognize the reality of sin, embrace God's grace, and experience victory in Christ. Therefore, professional competence in Christian Religious Education is not simply an academic standard but a sacred trust. It is a means by which teachers participate in God's redemptive work, shaping young hearts to discern good from evil and to choose righteousness. In fulfilling this calling, teachers of CRE become living instruments of God's truth, empowering students to walk in victory and reflect His image in the world.

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