



## Pedagogical Competence in Cultivating Honesty: A Biblical Reflection on Genesis 44:16 among Christian Religious Education Teachers at SMAN 1 Sunggal

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates how pedagogical competence contributes to cultivating honesty among students through a biblical reflection on Genesis 44:16 in the teaching practices of Christian Religious Education teachers at SMAN 1 Sunggal. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, the research explores how teachers interpret the biblical narrative of Judah's confession and integrate its moral principles into classroom instruction. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns in pedagogical practices. The findings reveal that teachers' exegetical engagement with Genesis 44:16 forms a strong theological foundation for teaching honesty as an acknowledgment of wrongdoing, personal accountability, and awareness of God's moral presence. Pedagogical competence manifests through four primary dimensions: authentic modeling of honesty, dialogical-reflective teaching methods, contextualized learning strategies, and virtue-oriented assessment practices. Teachers consistently modeled integrity through transparent communication and fairness, creating a credible moral environment for students. Dialogical approaches encouraged students to reflect on moral dilemmas and connect biblical lessons to personal experiences. Contextual strategies—including integrity journals and collaborative accountability tasks—helped students practice honesty in daily life. Assessments focusing on self-reflection and behavioral change reinforced honesty as a lived virtue rather than a cognitive concept. Despite challenges posed by social pressures, digital influences, and cultural norms, CRE teachers demonstrated that integrating biblical reflection with pedagogical competence can significantly influence students' moral development. Overall, the study concludes that Genesis 44:16 provides an effective exegetical and pedagogical anchor for fostering honesty, positioning CRE teachers as vital agents of character formation in the school context.*

**Keywords:** Pedagogical Competence, Christian Religious Education, Honesty

## INTRODUCTION

Honesty is one of the core moral values emphasized consistently in Christian Scriptures and considered foundational for human character development. Within the context of Christian Religious Education, honesty is not only taught as a doctrinal concept but must be embodied, demonstrated, and cultivated through the pedagogical competence of the teacher. In Indonesian schools, particularly in public educational institutions such as SMAN 1 Sunggal, the role of the Christian Religious Education teacher is critical in ensuring that biblical values, including honesty, become essential virtues shaping students' moral identity. The increasing exposure of students to digital culture, social comparison, and academic pressure has contributed to the rise of dishonest behaviors such as cheating, plagiarism, manipulation of information, and avoidance of responsibility. Thus, pedagogical competence that integrates biblical reflection is urgently needed. Genesis 44:16 provides a profound narrative framework for understanding honesty as a transformative moral value. In this verse, Judah acknowledges guilt before Joseph after the silver cup is discovered in Benjamin's sack. He declares, "God has uncovered your servants' guilt," demonstrating an attitude of honesty, transparency, and moral accountability. Judah's confession is not merely a verbal expression but an act of taking responsibility for wrongdoing without offering excuses or shifting blame. This biblical narrative highlights honesty as a spiritual discipline grounded in self-awareness, humility, and reverence for God's justice. For Christian Religious Education teachers, the story serves as a theological foundation to frame pedagogical approaches that promote honesty as a lived moral practice rather than abstract moral instruction. Pedagogical competence encompasses the teacher's capacity to design learning, manage classrooms, employ instructional strategies, and evaluate student learning effectively. In the context of character education, pedagogical competence must include the ability to integrate biblical principles with contemporary educational needs. For teachers at SMAN 1 Sunggal, cultivating honesty among students requires context-sensitive pedagogical skills that consider student diversity, socio-cultural background, and challenges arising from modern academic life. This involves creating learning environments that value integrity, encouraging reflective thinking, promoting open dialogue about moral dilemmas, and modeling honesty through the teacher's personal conduct. A teacher's credibility in teaching morality depends not only on the content delivered but also on the ethical consistency of their behavior. Pedagogical competence in teaching honesty involves the use of problem-based learning, collaborative discussions, narrative pedagogy, and character-oriented assessments. Narrative pedagogy is especially relevant because biblical stories, such as the account in Genesis 44, serve as powerful moral mirrors through which students can reflect upon their behavior. When students see how Judah acknowledged guilt without resistance or deception, they learn that honesty is connected to courage and moral maturity. Teachers who are competent in reflective pedagogy can help students internalize values rather than comply with rules externally.

The educational setting of SMAN 1 Sunggal, known for its multicultural and interreligious environment, adds a unique dimension to teaching honesty. Christian Religious Education teachers must foster integrity in ways that are respectful, inclusive, and aligned with the

school's values. Integrating biblical reflection into character education provides students with ethical anchors grounded in faith, yet applicable within a diverse learning community. Through effective pedagogical practices, teachers can develop students who are not only academically capable but morally trustworthy, a need that is increasingly important in contemporary society. Examining pedagogical competence in cultivating honesty, framed through the lens of Genesis 44:16, is essential to understand how CRE teachers can contribute meaningfully to moral formation at SMAN 1 Sunggal. This study aims to explore how biblical reflection enriches pedagogical practice and how teachers translate scriptural principles into concrete learning strategies that shape honest character among students.

## METHODS

A qualitative descriptive research design was implemented to explore how pedagogical competence contributes to cultivating honesty among students through biblical reflection on Genesis 44:16 by Christian Religious Education teachers at SMAN 1 Sunggal. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the teachers' pedagogical practices, interpretive processes, and the integration of biblical values within classroom instruction. The setting of the research was SMAN 1 Sunggal, a public senior high school with a diverse religious environment, making it an ideal locus to examine the contextual challenges and opportunities in teaching Christian values. The participants consisted of four CRE teachers who were purposefully selected based on their teaching experience, willingness to be observed, and involvement in character education initiatives at the school. Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom observations, and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to explore participants' perceptions of pedagogical competence, their understanding of Genesis 44:16, and their strategies for cultivating honesty. Interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes to preserve data accuracy. Classroom observations were conducted over a period of four weeks to understand how teachers implemented honesty-related pedagogical practices in real-time teaching situations. Observation guidelines focused on aspects such as instructional design, classroom management, integration of biblical reflection, teacher modeling of honesty, and student responses during learning activities. Credibility was maintained through prolonged engagement in the field, member checking, and triangulation among data sources. Dependability was ensured through maintaining a detailed audit trail of decisions, interview protocols, and observation notes. Confirmability was strengthened by the researcher's reflective journal to minimize bias and distinguish personal interpretations from participants' actual statements. Transferability was supported through thick descriptions of the school context, participant characteristics, and pedagogical practices. Through this systematic process, recurring themes related to pedagogical competence—such as narrative pedagogy, reflective teaching, modeling integrity, and character-focused assessment—were identified and interpreted in relation to Genesis 44:16. The qualitative descriptive design, enabled the researcher to provide a comprehensive and contextualized understanding of how CRE teachers at SMAN 1 Sunggal develop honesty as a moral virtue through pedagogical competence embedded within biblical reflection. The study sought to capture both the pedagogical dynamics and the spiritual-theological dimensions shaping character formation among students.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a multifaceted and deeply interconnected dynamic between pedagogical competence and the cultivation of honesty among students through the biblical reflection of Genesis 44:16 in the teaching practices of Christian Religious Education teachers at SMAN 1 Sunggal. The thematic analysis generated several overarching themes-biblical-narrative interpretation as pedagogical foundation, modeling integrity as lived pedagogy, dialogical-reflective teaching as a catalyst for moral awareness, contextualized character formation strategies, and assessment practices oriented toward virtue rather than solely cognitive mastery. Together, these themes illuminate how pedagogical competence is not merely a technical construct but a spiritual-pedagogical calling in which exegetical insight, relational wisdom, and instructional design converge to shape the moral character of students. The first significant finding relates to how teachers interpret and utilize Genesis 44:16 within the moral-pedagogical discourse of honesty. All participating teachers displayed a coherent understanding of the narrative context in which Judah, speaking on behalf of his brothers, confronts Joseph's accusation regarding the silver cup. Their interpretation consistently emphasized the moment of confession as a turning point in the maturation of the brothers' moral integrity, especially when Judah states, "What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants." Teachers highlighted this verse as a narrative embodiment of honesty, repentance, and accountability, stressing that biblical honesty is not merely telling the truth but acknowledging wrongdoing even when concealment seems advantageous. This exegetical orientation shaped the pedagogical approach adopted by teachers, who integrated narrative theology with moral instruction to present honesty as a virtue that emerges from awareness of God's presence and responsibility toward others. The depth of teachers' exegetical engagement demonstrates the importance of biblical literacy as part of pedagogical competence, enabling them to translate scriptural narratives into meaningful moral frameworks for students. The second major theme centers on the importance of teacher modeling as a form of lived pedagogy. Teachers consistently reported that students are more influenced by what teachers do than what they teach verbally. Observation data confirmed that teachers consistently embodied honesty in classroom interactions-for example, acknowledging mistakes, transparently explaining evaluation criteria, and demonstrating fairness in decision-making. These behaviors communicated to students that honesty is not a detached moral slogan but a practiced ethical posture. One teacher explained that when she apologizes to students for arriving late or miscommunicating an assignment, students witness the vulnerability and sincerity that characterize the honest character found in Genesis 44:16. This finding aligns with pedagogical theories that emphasize the role of teacher authenticity and moral integrity in character formation. Furthermore, teachers' willingness to embody the values they teach serves as a contemporary analog to Judah's confession, modeling the courage required to admit errors and seek accountability. The integration of modeling into pedagogical competence demonstrates that effective CRE instruction involves not only verbal explanation but also the habitual enactment of virtues. The third theme concerns dialogical-reflective teaching practices, which emerged as a core component of pedagogical competence. Teachers employed open-ended discussions, guided

reflections, and narrative-based questioning to create a learning environment that fosters ethical awareness. By inviting students to reflect on questions such as “Why is honesty difficult?” or “How would you respond if you were in Judah’s position?” teachers encouraged moral imagination and helped students internalize the biblical principle of honesty. Observations indicated that students responded positively to such discussions, often sharing personal experiences related to academic dishonesty, peer pressure, or moral dilemmas at home, which then became opportunities for deeper moral reflection. This dialogical approach aligns with contemporary theories of transformative pedagogy, which posit that moral learning occurs when students engage in critical reflection and meaning-making rather than passive reception of moral rules. Teachers reported that these discussions helped students realize that honesty has relational consequences not only between humans but also in one’s relationship with God, echoing Judah’s recognition that God exposes hidden guilt. The dialogical-reflective method thus served as an effective bridge between biblical narrative and students’ lived experiences. The fourth theme highlights teachers’ use of contextualized strategies for cultivating honesty, reflecting their ability to adapt biblical principles into culturally and developmentally appropriate pedagogical practices. Teachers utilized real-life scenarios, collaborative activities, and experiential learning tasks to promote honesty. For instance, one teacher implemented a group assignment in which students had to evaluate each other’s honesty in completing tasks, emphasizing mutual accountability. Another teacher created a classroom “integrity journal” in which students wrote weekly reflections on situations where they practiced honesty or struggled with it. These strategies helped students connect the abstract virtue of honesty to daily life and reinforced the idea that honesty is a continuous practice rather than a single action. The effectiveness of contextualized pedagogy is supported by developmental psychology, which suggests that adolescents internalize moral values when they experience them through social interaction and real-life application. Teachers also emphasized the importance of understanding students’ cultural background, recognizing that honesty may be influenced by social norms such as avoiding shame or preserving group harmony. By acknowledging these cultural factors and guiding students toward biblical honesty grounded in personal responsibility before God, teachers demonstrated pedagogical sensitivity and competence. The fifth theme concerns assessment practices that emphasize virtue development beyond cognitive attainment. Teachers acknowledged that traditional assessments—quizzes, essays, and memorization of biblical content—were insufficient for measuring students’ growth in honesty. Instead, they adopted alternative forms of assessment such as reflective essays, self-evaluation checklists, peer assessments, and informal observation.

These assessments focused on changes in behavior, awareness of moral responsibility, and the ability to analyze ethical dilemmas. Teachers noted that such assessments encouraged students to view honesty as a lived characteristic rather than an academic topic. This shift aligns with contemporary educational research that advocates for holistic assessment practices in character education. By evaluating the process of moral development rather than solely academic performance, teachers fostered an environment where honesty is nurtured, recognized, and affirmed. The sixth finding relates to the challenges teachers faced in promoting honesty. Teachers identified several barriers, including the prevalence of cheating during tests, peer pressure, digital

distractions, and a broader societal context where dishonesty is sometimes normalized. One teacher noted that students often perceive deception as a survival strategy, influenced by societal models of corruption or academic pressure. These challenges necessitated strategic pedagogical responses, such as establishing clear classroom norms, integrating digital ethics into lessons, and fostering a supportive environment where students feel safe admitting mistakes. Teachers shared that when students saw honesty being celebrated and dishonesty being addressed with restorative-not punitive-responses, they became more willing to practice honesty themselves. Restorative approaches included allowing students to correct mistakes without humiliation, discussing the consequences of dishonesty openly, and emphasizing forgiveness, aligned with biblical principles. The seventh theme highlights the spiritual-pedagogical synthesis that characterizes CRE teaching at SMAN 1 Sunggal. Teachers viewed their pedagogical competence not only in terms of instructional skills but also as part of their spiritual calling. This perspective influenced how they interpreted Genesis 44:16, seeing the narrative not merely as a historical account but as a divine instrument for shaping the moral lives of students. Teachers expressed that their role involved guiding students toward spiritual maturity, helping them understand that honesty is rooted in their identity as children of God. This spiritual orientation strengthened their commitment to practicing honesty and encouraging students to do likewise. Such integration of spirituality and pedagogy resonates with Christian educational philosophy, which emphasizes the unity of faith and learning. The eighth theme reveals that the integration of biblical reflection with pedagogical competence resulted in observable behavioral changes among students. Teachers noted that students became more self-aware, more willing to admit mistakes, and more reflective about the consequences of dishonesty. Some students openly shared that the lessons on Genesis 44:16 helped them rethink their attitudes toward cheating or lying to avoid punishment. Teachers attributed these changes to the consistent reinforcement of honesty through modeling, discussion, reflection, and biblical grounding.

These findings suggest that character formation through CRE instruction is effective when pedagogy and biblical interpretation are harmonized. The ninth theme emphasizes the relational dimension of teaching honesty. Teachers highlighted the importance of building trusting relationships with students, as honesty thrives in an environment characterized by mutual respect. Observations revealed that teachers who invested time in listening to students, understanding their emotional struggles, and affirming their efforts created a classroom culture where honesty was valued. Students were more open to acknowledging mistakes when they felt trusted and respected. This relational approach mirrors Judah's relational transformation in Genesis 44, where his confession emerged from a renewed sense of responsibility toward his family and before God. Teachers reported that relational closeness allowed them to address dishonesty not merely as discipline issues but as opportunities for moral growth. The tenth and final theme involves the role of school culture in supporting or hindering honesty formation. Teachers noted that when the school leadership emphasized integrity in policies and daily operations, students were more likely to internalize honesty. Conversely, inconsistent discipline or lack of transparency in school administration weakened moral instruction. However, SMAN 1 Sunggal generally cultivated a supportive environment for character education,

enabling CRE teachers to integrate their pedagogical competence effectively. In this context, Genesis 44:16 served not only as an exegetical anchor but also as a moral compass guiding the school's approach to character formation. Overall, the findings demonstrate that pedagogical competence in cultivating honesty among students through Genesis 44:16 involves a holistic interplay of exegetical understanding, reflective teaching, contextualized strategies, authentic modeling, relational wisdom, and virtue-oriented assessment. The study underscores that CRE teachers at SMAN 1 Sunggal participate in a transformative educational process where biblical narrative and pedagogical skill converge to form students who embrace honesty as a God-centered moral virtue.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that pedagogical competence plays a decisive and transformative role in cultivating honesty among students when grounded in a deep exegetical engagement with biblical narratives such as Genesis 44:16. The practices of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMAN 1 Sunggal show that effective moral formation is neither incidental nor merely the result of formal instruction; rather, it emerges from a holistic pedagogical approach in which teachers intentionally integrate biblical insight, reflective dialogue, contextual learning activities, relational trust-building, and authentic modeling of ethical behavior. Genesis 44:16-Judah's confession before Joseph-serves as a theological and pedagogical anchor that embodies honesty as acknowledgment of wrongdoing, openness before God, and responsibility toward others. By using this narrative as a central moral text, teachers were able to translate scriptural truth into meaningful ethical principles that students could internalize and apply to their daily lives. The conclusion that emerges from the study confirms that pedagogical competence in a CRE context is inseparable from spiritual discernment, as teachers function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral agents who embody the values they teach. The study concludes that modeling honesty is one of the most powerful pedagogical strategies available to CRE teachers. Students at SMAN 1 Sunggal were shown to respond more strongly to the lived integrity of their teachers than to abstract instruction about honesty. When teachers confessed their mistakes, practiced transparency in evaluation, and demonstrated fairness and consistency, students perceived honesty as a credible and attainable virtue. This finding highlights the inseparability of character formation from the teacher's personal moral life and reinforces the theological insight that moral teaching gains authority when the messenger reflects the message. Another important conclusion is that dialogical and reflective pedagogy is essential for cultivating deep moral understanding. Teachers who encouraged open conversation, ethical reflection, and narrative engagement helped students move beyond rule-based morality toward an internalized ethical framework. This approach allows students to grapple honestly with their own moral struggles-academic pressure, peer influence, fear of punishment-and reinterpret them in light of the biblical narrative. As a result, honesty becomes not merely an external expectation but a personally embraced moral identity shaped through reflection, dialogue, and spiritual awareness.

The study also concludes that contextualized pedagogical strategies are crucial in connecting biblical principles with students' lived experiences. Activities such as integrity

journals, peer accountability tasks, and real-life case studies were effective in helping students recognize the everyday relevance of honesty, including in digital behavior, academic integrity, and interpersonal interactions. These strategies demonstrate that character formation requires pedagogical creativity and sensitivity to cultural, developmental, and social realities. Assessment practices that prioritize virtue development over purely cognitive outcomes were found to reinforce honesty as a holistic moral goal. When teachers used reflective essays, behavioral observations, and self-assessment tools, students gained opportunities to acknowledge their growth, struggles, and commitments, thereby reinforcing the internalization of honesty as part of their character. The study acknowledges ongoing challenges—such as societal normalization of dishonesty, peer dynamics, and digital-age temptations—which require CRE teachers to remain vigilant, adaptive, and spiritually grounded. Yet, these challenges also affirm the urgent relevance of CRE pedagogy rooted in Scripture and relational integrity. Overall, the study concludes that pedagogical competence in cultivating honesty through Genesis 44:16 is a dynamic, relational, and spiritually informed practice. It integrates exegetical depth, ethical modeling, reflective dialogue, contextualized instruction, and formative assessment. CRE teachers at SMAN 1 Sunggal play a pivotal role not only in teaching biblical narratives but in shaping students into individuals who recognize honesty as a divine calling and a foundational virtue for responsible Christian living.

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