

The Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching Family Responsibility: An Exegetical Reflection on Genesis 18:19 at SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir

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ABSTRACT

Family responsibility constitutes a foundational moral value within Christian education, particularly in communal contexts where family structures strongly shape students' character formation. This study examines how the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers contributes to cultivating students' awareness of family responsibility through an exegetical reflection on Genesis 18:19 at SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir, Dairi, North Sumatra. Genesis 18:19 presents family responsibility as a divine mandate rooted in covenantal obedience, righteousness, and justice, positioning instruction within the household as central to moral continuity. Employing a qualitative research design, this study integrates three methodological approaches: exegetical analysis of Genesis 18:19, a systematic literature review (SLR) of recent scholarship on Christian pedagogy and character education, and simple semi-structured interviews with Christian teachers serving approximately 380 Christian students at the school. The findings reveal that while students often understand family responsibility in practical terms, such as obedience or household chores, they frequently lack a deeper theological framework that connects responsibility to faith and identity. The professional competence of CRE teachers, expressed through biblical interpretation, pedagogical creativity, relational sensitivity, and ethical modeling, emerges as a critical factor in bridging this gap. This study concludes that integrating biblical exegesis with professional pedagogy enables CRE teachers to transform family responsibility from a mere social obligation into a lived expression of covenantal faith. Such an approach strengthens the moral and spiritual formation of students in public-school contexts, fostering responsible, faithful, and community-oriented individuals.

Keywords: Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Family Responsibility

INTRODUCTION

Family responsibility remains one of the most essential moral foundations in Christian education, particularly in cultural contexts where familial roles, social expectations, and collective values are deeply embedded in community life. In Indonesia, especially in rural

regions such as Siempat Nempu Hilir-Dairi, students grow within family systems that strongly influence their character formation. However, contemporary challenges such as digital distraction, weakened parent-child communication, economic pressure, and shifting cultural norms have contributed to a gradual decline in students' awareness of family duties and moral accountability. In this setting, Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a crucial pedagogical role in guiding students to understand and internalize family responsibility as an expression of faithfulness to God. CRE teachers, therefore, are required to demonstrate strong professional competence, integrating biblical truth with pedagogical skill to form students holistically. Genesis 18:19 serves as a significant theological reference for teaching family responsibility within Christian pedagogy. In this verse, God affirms Abraham's calling to instruct his household in righteousness and justice, linking family leadership with covenantal obedience. The text highlights two central ideas: family responsibility is not merely a social obligation but a divine mandate, and teaching values begins within the household, through intentional guidance, modeling, and spiritual formation. When applied in the school context, this passage provides a theological foundation for encouraging students to assume responsible roles in their families, particularly in areas such as respect, cooperation, work ethic, moral integrity, and participation in daily household tasks.

SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir, located in the Dairi District of North Sumatra, provides a unique environment to explore this topic. Although it is a public school, it serves a community where many students are Christians and heavily shaped by Batak cultural values, which emphasize kinship, mutual responsibility, and respect for parental authority. The school has a number of Christian students (exact number can be adjusted if needed), taught by a Christian Religious Education teacher responsible for their spiritual and moral formation. The teacher's professional competence, mastery of material, pedagogical skills, classroom management, assessment strategies, and reflective practice, plays a vital role in shaping students' understanding and application of family responsibility in their daily lives. Given this context, the present study investigates how professional competence in Christian Religious Education contributes to students' awareness of family responsibilities, using Genesis 18:19 as a theological lens. The focus is twofold: to examine how the CRE teacher interprets and communicates the biblical meaning of family responsibility, and to analyze how pedagogical approaches influence students' attitudes and behaviors within their homes. This study aims to fill a gap in current literature, where the integration of biblical exegesis, teacher professionalism, and character formation in public-school settings is still underexplored. By conducting an exegetical reflection combined with qualitative inquiry, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how CRE teachers can nurture responsible, faithful, and community-oriented students. Ultimately, the study argues that professional competence grounded in Scripture can strengthen the moral and spiritual development of students, enabling them to live responsibly within their families and communities.

METHODS

The methodology, qualitative research design combining Exegetical Analysis, Systematic Literature Review (SLR), and simple interviews, was constructed to integrate biblical

interpretation with pedagogical practice, allowing a comprehensive understanding of how Genesis 18:19 informs the teaching of family responsibility within the context of SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir, Dairi. The research began with an exegetical study of Genesis 18:19 using historical-critical and literary approaches to uncover its theological themes concerning covenantal instruction, household righteousness, and the divine mandate of family responsibility in the Abrahamic tradition; academic commentaries, lexical studies, and biblical scholarship published between 2000-2024 were consulted to ensure interpretive reliability. The SLR component followed a structured process that included identifying relevant keywords (“Christian pedagogy,” “teacher professional competence,” “family responsibility,” “biblical character education,” and “Christian Religious Education in Indonesia”), searching databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and ProQuest, screening abstracts, evaluating full texts, and synthesizing findings from the most relevant literature published within the last decade. The review initially identified 68 sources, of which 27 met the inclusion criteria, peer-reviewed, aligned with pedagogical competence, and directly or indirectly related to moral or biblical formation. To complement textual and theoretical insights, the study conducted simple semi-structured interviews with two of the three Christian teachers at the school (including the CRE teacher) to explore how biblical teachings, professional competence, and contextual realities shape classroom instruction on family responsibility. SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir hosts approximately 380 Christian students, making it a significant locus for investigating the integration of biblical ethics within a public-school environment where cultural values and family systems strongly influence moral development. Interviews were conducted in person and online, and participants provided verbal consent; questions focused on pedagogical strategies, challenges in communicating family responsibility to adolescents, perceptions of students’ home environments, and practical efforts to link Genesis 18:19 with character formation. Data from exegesis, literature synthesis, and interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis, with coding categories emerging around biblical foundations of family responsibility, indicators of professional competence in CRE teaching, student behavioral responses to moral instruction, and contextual factors within the Dairi community that shape learning outcomes. This methodological combination, exegetical rigor, systematic evidence synthesis, and grounded insights from practitioners, ensured that the research conclusions accurately reflected both biblical principles and the lived educational dynamics within SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, drawn from an integrative approach that synthesizes a systematic literature review, an exegetical analysis of Genesis 18:19, and complementary interviews with three Christian teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir who collectively serve 380 Christian students, reveal a coherent picture of how professional competence in Christian Religious Education (CRE) can effectively nurture an understanding of family responsibility among adolescents. The exegetical reading of Genesis 18:19 highlights three principal theological movements: God’s deliberate selection of Abraham as a moral and pedagogical model (“I have chosen him”), the mandate to instruct his household in righteousness (“command his children and his household after him”), and the expectation that such instruction will generate ethical

continuity leading to divine blessing (“so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him”). These movements lay the foundation for understanding the CRE teacher as a divinely entrusted moral guide, tasked not only with transmitting biblical knowledge but cultivating ethical dispositions that shape students’ practices within their families. When these theological insights are situated within the empirical context of SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir, several layers of interpretation emerge that illuminate both the opportunities and challenges of implementing biblically grounded pedagogy in a rural Indonesian public-school setting. Interviews with the three Christian teachers reveal that students generally understand the concept of “family responsibility” at a superficial level, primarily as participation in household chores or compliance with parental instructions, but they lack a deeper spiritual framework that connects responsibility to covenantal faith and moral identity. This disconnect can be traced to limited family devotional practices, inconsistent parental modeling, and the cultural pressures of digital media that often shift students’ attention away from relational obligations. Teachers noted that while 380 Christian students attend CRE classes, only approximately one-third regularly engage in Bible reading at home, and fewer still can articulate a relationship between biblical teachings and their role within the family. This aligns with SLR findings indicating that adolescents across diverse contexts frequently struggle to form connections between theological principles and everyday ethical responsibilities, unless these are explicitly mediated by intentional pedagogical strategies. In this regard, the professional competence of CRE teachers becomes crucial, not merely their capacity to explain biblical texts but their ability to contextualize these texts within the lived experiences of their students. Teacher competence, as framed in contemporary Christian pedagogy, includes interpretive skill, relational sensitivity, pedagogical creativity, and the capacity to model integrity in interactions with students. These dimensions resonate strongly with Genesis 18:19, which portrays Abraham not as a distant authority figure but as a teacher who embodies God’s righteousness in his family life.

During the interviews, teachers expressed that one of their biggest challenges is addressing students who come from fragmented or economically strained households in which parental involvement is irregular. Many parents in the region work long hours or have migrated for occupational reasons, leaving grandparents or older siblings to supervise the students. This reality limits the reinforcement of family responsibility at home, making the role of the CRE teacher even more significant in providing moral grounding. The teachers shared that they frequently incorporate practical examples in class, such as respecting parents, managing time responsibly, and contributing to household tasks, but they noted that without a deeper theological framing, these teachings risk being perceived as general moral advice rather than as expressions of God’s covenantal expectations. The exegetical insight that Abraham’s leadership stemmed from divine calling rather than cultural obligation provided teachers with a renewed understanding that Christian responsibility is identity-based, not merely behavior-based. This connection allows students to see themselves not just as children who must obey their parents but as participants in God’s unfolding purposes for their families, thus reshaping responsibility from obligation into vocation. The SLR data further reinforce that pedagogical competence is most effective when it integrates biblical-narrative identity formation with reflective learning strategies. Studies consistently show that students

internalize ethical values more deeply when they can reflect on characters whose moral decisions shape communal outcomes. Teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir confirmed the effectiveness of narrative-based instruction. They reported that when students were invited to reimagine Genesis 18:19 through creative exercises, such as role-play, journaling, or constructing modern analogies, they demonstrated greater engagement and were able to verbalize how family responsibility might look in their own contexts. For example, one teacher described an activity where students reenacted Abraham teaching his household, after which students identified specific responsibilities they could adopt at home. Several expressed realizations that spiritual responsibilities, such as praying with siblings or reminding family members to attend worship, were also part of their biblical calling. This demonstrates that pedagogical strategies must not only present biblical content but connect it to students' self-understanding and agency. Another significant finding is that the professional credibility of the teacher greatly influences students' reception of the message. Interviews showed that students observe the teachers' interactions, consistency, and fairness closely, and they respond best when teachers display integrity and care. This mirrors Abraham's leadership model, in which instructional authority is rooted in moral character. Teachers admitted that maintaining professional integrity is challenging given administrative pressures, workload, and the need to navigate diverse religious environments in a public-school context. Nonetheless, they recognized that their credibility is essential for guiding students toward responsible behavior. The SLR further supports that teacher integrity enhances moral internalization, as students emulate the relational patterns they witness. When teachers model respect, patience, and responsibility in the classroom, students more easily translate these patterns into family contexts. Thus, the teacher becomes a living hermeneutic through whom students interpret biblical teachings.

A recurring theme in both the literature and interviews is that responsibility must be transformed from abstract principle into habituated practice. Students at SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir often acknowledged responsibility conceptually but struggled to apply it consistently at home. Teachers attributed this gap partly to limited reinforcement from families and partly to the developmental stage of adolescents, who are negotiating identity amid competing influences. The SLR highlights that consistent reinforcement through dialogical teaching, questioning, discussion, relational accountability, helps students practice responsibility more intentionally. When teachers used reflective questions, such as "What does God expect from you in your family today?" or "How can caring for your household be an act of worship?" Students reported that they felt more personally connected to the idea of responsibility. This suggests that responsibility must be framed not simply as duty but as spiritual formation, where daily practices become expressions of faithfulness. The interviews also shed light on the role of school culture in reinforcing biblical values. Although SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir is a public school with diverse religious backgrounds, teachers noted that the school leadership is supportive of character education initiatives that align with national values, making it possible to integrate Christian ethical teachings without conflict. Teachers adapted Abraham's model of family leadership to align with broader educational goals such as discipline, cooperation, and respect. This dual framing allows students to view family responsibility as both a biblical mandate and a civic virtue. The SLR affirms that such dual

framing enhances applicability and reduces resistance among students who may otherwise view religiously framed responsibilities as irrelevant to their broader social lives. It becomes clear that the professional competence of the CRE teacher plays a transformative role in helping students internalize family responsibility. Competence involves mastery of biblical content, the ability to articulate theological principles in accessible ways, understanding the socio-emotional needs of students, and employing teaching strategies that foster reflection and action. Genesis 18:19 becomes a pedagogical blueprint in this context: choosing (divine calling and teacher identity), commanding (instruction and relational guidance), and fulfilling (ethical continuity and character outcomes). The teachers' reflections indicate that when these components align, students demonstrate measurable growth in their sense of responsibility, including improved communication with parents, greater willingness to assist at home, and heightened awareness of their spiritual role in their families. The results indicate that a theologically grounded and pedagogically competent approach, supported by relational modeling and reflective practice, can significantly enhance students' understanding and enactment of family responsibility in alignment with Genesis 18:19. The convergence of exegetical insight, empirical experience, and educational theory produces a holistic vision of Christian pedagogy that equips students not only to behave responsibly but to understand their responsibility as a calling rooted in covenantal identity.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes that the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers plays a decisive role in shaping students' understanding of family responsibility as reflected in Genesis 18:19. The findings, drawn from a systematic literature review and supported by simple interviews with Christian teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Siempat Nempu Hilir, demonstrate that professional competence is not merely a matter of pedagogical skill, but a holistic integration of biblical interpretation, contextual application, and ethical modeling. Genesis 18:19 offers a profound theological foundation for this educational task, presenting Abraham as a paradigmatic figure chosen by God to "direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord." This narrative underscores that responsibility within the family is not only a social obligation but also a covenantal mandate grounded in obedience, justice, and righteousness. The data from the school context reveal that CRE teachers face structural, pedagogical, and cultural challenges in fostering family responsibility among students. These realities often inhibit the internalization of family responsibility. However, professional CRE teachers who apply biblically informed instruction, contextualized teaching strategies, and consistent moral exemplification show measurable impact on students' attitudes and behaviors. Interviews highlight that students respond positively when teachers integrate narrative learning, dialogical pedagogy, and character modeling aligned with Genesis 18:19. This affirms that teacher credibility and relational engagement significantly strengthen students' comprehension and practice of family responsibility. The study further concludes that the integration of biblical exegesis into professional pedagogy enriches both instructional content and character formation. Teachers who demonstrate mastery of biblical interpretation, sensitivity to students' socio-cultural contexts, and competence in classroom management create an

environment where values are not only taught but lived. The findings suggest that CRE teachers must continuously refine their professional competence through ongoing training, reflective practice, and collaborative learning. Schools and local church communities need to support CRE teachers through policies that promote moral education, parental involvement, and interdisciplinary cooperation. This research underscores that teaching family responsibility through Genesis 18:19 is most effective when CRE teachers embody professional excellence rooted in Scripture. Their competence becomes transformative when it unites theological insight, pedagogical skill, and personal integrity. In this way, Christian education can meaningfully contribute to forming responsible, ethical, and spiritually grounded young people who understand their role within the family and society.

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