



Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Developing Instructional Materials on the Integrity of Eliezer (Genesis 24:34-36): A Study at UPT Negeri 188 Sionom Hudon Toruan

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in developing instructional materials on the integrity of Eliezer based on Genesis 24:34-36 at UPT Negeri 188 Sionom Hudon Toruan, Humbang Hasundutan. Integrity, understood as consistency between belief, speech, and action, is a central virtue in Christian character formation and is clearly exemplified in Eliezer's loyalty, honesty, and accountability in carrying out Abraham's mission. The effectiveness of teaching this biblical virtue depends significantly on the teacher's professional competence, particularly in mastering subject matter, interpreting Scripture accurately, and designing structured and contextualized instructional materials. This research employed a quantitative descriptive method with a correlational approach. The population consisted of 52 Christian students, all of whom were involved as respondents through total sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire measuring two variables: teachers' professional competence in developing instructional materials and students' understanding and internalization of integrity. The findings reveal that teachers' professional competence is categorized as high, and students' internalization of integrity is also at a high level. Statistical analysis demonstrates a positive and significant relationship between professional competence and the development of students' integrity. Regression results indicate that professional competence significantly predicts students' understanding and application of biblical integrity. The study concludes that professional competence in Christian Religious Education is a crucial factor in shaping character formation, particularly in rural public-school contexts. By developing biblically faithful and pedagogically structured instructional materials, CRE teachers effectively foster integrity as a lived virtue among elementary students.

Keywords: Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Integrity

INTRODUCTION

Professional competence is a central dimension of teacher quality and directly influences the depth, accuracy, and transformative potential of classroom instruction. In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), professional competence extends beyond general pedagogical skill to include mastery of biblical content, theological interpretation, curriculum development, and the ability to design instructional materials that shape students' character. According to Indonesian Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, professional competence requires teachers to master subject matter broadly and deeply, enabling them to guide students toward achieving established competency standards. For CRE teachers, this mandate includes responsible handling of Scripture and intentional integration of biblical narratives into character formation. The teaching of biblical integrity is especially relevant in contemporary educational settings where moral fragmentation, academic dishonesty, and identity confusion increasingly affect young learners. Integrity, understood as consistency between belief, speech, and action, is a foundational virtue in Christian ethics. Within the Old Testament narrative, Genesis 24 presents a compelling model of integrity through the character of Eliezer, Abraham's servant. In Genesis 24:34-36, Eliezer faithfully recounts his mission, testifies truthfully about his master's wealth and God's guidance, and demonstrates transparency in fulfilling his entrusted task. Scholars note that the narrative emphasizes loyalty, accountability, and trustworthiness within covenantal relationships (Wenham, 1994). Gordon J. Wenham, in Genesis 16–50, argues that Genesis 24 highlights divine providence working through human faithfulness, presenting Eliezer as an exemplary servant whose actions align with God's covenantal purposes. John H. Walton in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* explains that ancient Near Eastern servant roles required absolute reliability and representational integrity, as servants often acted with delegated authority. Eliezer's speech in Genesis 24:34-36 is not merely narrative repetition but a demonstration of ethical transparency and covenant loyalty. Within Christian interpretation, this integrity reflects a theological anthropology in which obedience and truthfulness become expressions of faith in God's promises.

Professional competence in CRE therefore involves more than accurate exegesis; it demands the development of instructional materials that translate biblical integrity into formative learning experiences. George R. Knight in *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective* emphasizes that Christian teachers must intentionally integrate biblical worldview with curriculum design so that faith shapes both content and method. Instructional materials, whether lesson plans, worksheets, or contextual illustrations, should not merely inform students about biblical characters but guide them toward personal appropriation of virtues such as honesty, responsibility, and covenant faithfulness. In Humbang Hasundutan Regency, the integration of biblical character education within public schooling presents both opportunities and challenges. UPT Negeri 188 Sionom Hudon Toruan is a public elementary school where 52 students identify as Christian and are served by two Christian Religious Education teachers. With limited personnel and resources, professional competence becomes crucial for ensuring that biblical narratives are presented accurately, meaningfully, and contextually. The ability of teachers to develop structured instructional materials on Eliezer's integrity may significantly influence how students understand and embody Christian ethical values. Teacher professional competence is widely recognized as a predictor of instructional

effectiveness. Darling-Hammond (2000) argues that teacher quality is one of the most significant school-related factors affecting student outcomes. In religious education, this competence includes hermeneutical responsibility and contextual adaptation. Without adequate mastery of content and curriculum development skills, biblical narratives risk being reduced to moralistic simplifications rather than covenantal theology grounded in divine faithfulness.

Integrity as a character trait is strongly linked to holistic education. Character education scholars emphasize that moral virtues must be taught intentionally and modeled consistently (Lickona, 1991). For CRE teachers, professional competence includes the ability to design learning objectives, select appropriate learning strategies, construct evaluation instruments, and connect biblical integrity with students' daily experiences, such as honesty in academic work, responsibility in family life, and trustworthiness in peer relationships. This study seeks to analyze the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in developing instructional materials on the integrity of Eliezer (Genesis 24:34-36) at UPT Negeri 188 Sionom Hudon Toruan, Humbang Hasundutan. By investigating how teachers design, implement, and evaluate learning materials, this research aims to contribute to the development of biblically faithful, pedagogically sound, and contextually relevant Christian Religious Education.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive design with a correlational approach to examine the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in developing instructional materials on the integrity of Eliezer (Genesis 24:34-36) at UPT Negeri 188 Sionom Hudon Toruan, Humbang Hasundutan. A quantitative approach was selected because it enables systematic measurement of teacher competence as perceived by students and allows statistical analysis of the relationship between instructional material development and students' understanding of biblical integrity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research was conducted using a cross-sectional design, meaning that data were collected at one point in time after students had completed a learning unit on Genesis 24:34-36. The study was carried out at UPT Negeri 188 Sionom Hudon Toruan, a public elementary school with 52 Christian students who receive Christian Religious Education instruction from two CRE teachers. Because the total number of Christian students was relatively small, this study used a total sampling technique in which all 52 students were included as research respondents. Total sampling ensures comprehensive representation of the population and minimizes sampling bias when the population size is limited (Sugiyono, 2017). Although two CRE teachers serve at the school, the unit of analysis focused on students' perceptions of professional competence as reflected in the instructional materials and teaching practices they experienced. The research involved two principal variables. The independent variable was the professional competence of CRE teachers, operationally defined as mastery of biblical content (particularly Genesis 24:34-36), ability to interpret Scripture accurately, capacity to design structured lesson plans, development of contextual and relevant instructional materials, and use of appropriate assessment strategies. This definition aligns with national teacher competency standards and scholarly perspectives on subject-matter mastery and curriculum development (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The dependent variable was

students' understanding and internalization of the integrity of Eliezer, reflected in their comprehension of the biblical narrative, recognition of integrity as a Christian virtue, and application of honesty and responsibility in daily life. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher based on theoretical frameworks of professional competence and biblical character education. The instrument consisted of Likert-scale statements ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items measuring professional competence addressed clarity of material presentation, coherence of instructional design, contextual relevance of learning activities, and adequacy of evaluation methods. Items measuring integrity development assessed students' understanding of Eliezer's loyalty, honesty, accountability, and trustworthiness as portrayed in Genesis 24:34-36. Prior to administration, the instrument underwent content validation through expert judgment by two lecturers in Christian Religious Education to ensure theological accuracy and pedagogical appropriateness. Construct validity was tested using Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis, and reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a threshold of 0.70 indicating acceptable internal consistency (Field, 2018). The data collection process began with formal permission from the school principal and coordination with the CRE teachers. Students were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that participation was voluntary and anonymous. The questionnaire was administered in the classroom setting under the researcher's supervision to ensure clarity of instructions and completeness of responses. Students were given approximately thirty minutes to complete the instrument. Ethical considerations were upheld by maintaining confidentiality and ensuring that responses would not influence academic evaluation. Data analysis was conducted using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were calculated to determine the level of professional competence and the level of integrity internalization among students. Scores were categorized into qualitative levels (very high, high, moderate, low, and very low) using predetermined interval criteria. A normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method was performed to confirm that data distribution met parametric assumptions. To examine the relationship between professional competence and students' understanding of integrity, Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was applied. Furthermore, simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which professional competence significantly predicted the development of students' integrity. The level of statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in developing instructional materials on the integrity of Eliezer (Genesis 24:34-36) at UPT Negeri 188 Sionom Hudon Toruan is generally categorized as high based on students' perceptions. Descriptive statistical analysis shows that the mean score for professional competence falls within the "high" interval classification, suggesting that students perceive their teachers as having strong mastery of biblical content, clarity in material presentation, structured lesson planning, and contextual relevance in instructional design. The standard deviation reflects relatively consistent responses among the 52 students, indicating that perceptions of competence are broadly

shared rather than concentrated in a small subgroup. Likewise, the mean score for students' understanding and internalization of integrity, as exemplified by Eliezer, is also categorized as high. This finding suggests that most students demonstrate comprehension of Eliezer's loyalty, honesty, and accountability, and report attempts to apply these values in their daily academic and social life. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test confirms that both variables are normally distributed ($p > 0.05$), thereby meeting parametric assumptions for inferential analysis. Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis reveals a positive and statistically significant relationship between professional competence and students' internalization of integrity (r in the moderate-to-strong range, $p < 0.05$). This result indicates that higher levels of perceived professional competence correspond with stronger understanding and application of biblical integrity among students. Furthermore, simple linear regression analysis demonstrates that professional competence significantly predicts the development of students' integrity, contributing a meaningful percentage of variance to the dependent variable. In practical terms, this means that the way teachers design and develop instructional materials substantially influences how students comprehend and embody the virtue of integrity.

These findings affirm theoretical perspectives on teacher quality and instructional effectiveness. Darling-Hammond (2000) argues that teacher competence, particularly subject-matter mastery and curriculum design skills, significantly affects student learning outcomes. In this study, professional competence is not limited to classroom management or general pedagogy but specifically relates to the ability to develop biblically accurate and pedagogically structured instructional materials. Students reported that their teachers clearly explained the historical background of Genesis 24, the role of Eliezer as Abraham's trusted servant, and the covenantal context of his mission. This clarity likely contributed to students' high levels of comprehension. When biblical narratives are presented with theological depth and contextual explanation, learners are better able to grasp moral implications rather than perceiving the story as mere historical information. Genesis 24:34-36 presents Eliezer as a servant who speaks truthfully, represents his master faithfully, and attributes success to God's providence. Gordon J. Wenham in Genesis 16-50 highlights that Eliezer's speech emphasizes divine guidance and covenant continuity, demonstrating a harmony between obedience and trust in God's promise. Similarly, John H. Walton in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* explains that in the ancient Near Eastern context, a servant's reliability was essential because he functioned as the authorized representative of his master. These scholarly insights are significant because they underscore that Eliezer's integrity is not incidental but central to the narrative's theological message. The high level of student agreement with statements such as "Eliezer shows honesty in carrying out his duty" and "Integrity means being faithful even when no one is watching" suggests that teachers successfully translated these theological nuances into accessible instructional material. The development of instructional materials appears to be a critical mediating factor. Students reported that teachers used structured lesson plans, guided worksheets, and contextual examples related to school life, such as honesty during examinations and responsibility in completing assignments. This approach aligns with the perspective of George R. Knight in *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, who emphasizes that Christian education must intentionally connect biblical worldview

with everyday practice. By designing materials that bridge Scripture and daily experience, teachers enable students to internalize virtues rather than merely memorize them. The regression findings, which show that professional competence significantly predicts integrity development, support Knight's assertion that worldview integration requires deliberate instructional design.

Another important aspect emerging from the data is the contextual dimension of learning in Humbang Hasundutan. As a rural area, students often experience strong communal relationships and cultural emphasis on trustworthiness within family and village life. Teachers reportedly incorporated local illustrations when discussing Eliezer's role as a trustworthy envoy. This contextualization likely enhanced relevance and engagement. Constructivist learning theory suggests that students construct meaning more effectively when new information is connected to prior knowledge and lived experience. The positive correlation found in this study implies that professional competence includes not only textual mastery but also contextual sensitivity. The analysis also reveals moderate scores in certain indicators, particularly related to instructional media variation and collaborative learning activities. Some students indicated that lessons could be enriched through more interactive projects, dramatizations, or visual media. Although overall competence is categorized as high, these moderate responses suggest room for further professional development. Given that only two CRE teachers serve 52 Christian students, workload distribution may affect the time available for material innovation. However, the significant predictive power of professional competence indicates that even incremental enhancement in instructional design could further strengthen students' character formation. Integrity must be cultivated intentionally and consistently (Lickona, 1991). The findings suggest that when teachers design instructional materials that clearly articulate learning objectives, provide structured activities, and incorporate reflective evaluation, students are more likely to internalize integrity as a personal virtue. Students reported that class discussions encouraged self-examination regarding honesty and responsibility, indicating that instruction extended beyond cognitive understanding to affective reflection. This holistic approach reflects professional competence in its fullest sense, combining content mastery, curriculum design, and formative assessment. The rural public-school context demonstrates that professional competence can flourish even without extensive technological resources. The effectiveness observed in this study is primarily rooted in clarity of explanation, coherence of lesson structure, and contextual application rather than sophisticated infrastructure. This finding carries practical implications: strengthening teachers' theological literacy and curriculum development skills may yield significant educational impact even in resource-limited environments. The results and discussion affirm a statistically significant and educationally meaningful relationship between professional competence and students' internalization of biblical integrity at UPT Negeri 188 Sionom Hudon Toruan. Teachers' ability to develop structured, theologically accurate, and contextually relevant instructional materials on Genesis 24:34–36 substantially influences how students understand and practice integrity. The integration of biblical exegesis, character education principles, and professional curriculum design emerges as a key factor in shaping students' moral formation. This study therefore reinforces the view that professional competence in Christian Religious Education is not merely administrative compliance but a

transformative instrument for cultivating Christ-centered character within elementary school contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at UPT Negeri 188 Sionom Hudon Toruan, Humbang Hasundutan, plays a significant role in developing instructional materials that effectively cultivate students' understanding of integrity as exemplified by Eliezer in Genesis 24:34-36. The quantitative findings demonstrate that professional competence is perceived at a high level and shows a positive and statistically significant relationship with students' internalization of integrity. Regression analysis further confirms that professional competence meaningfully predicts the development of students' understanding and application of biblical integrity. The findings indicate that professional competence in CRE is not limited to subject-matter knowledge but includes accurate biblical interpretation, structured lesson planning, contextual material development, and reflective assessment. When teachers demonstrate mastery of Scripture and translate theological insights into relevant instructional materials, students are better able to grasp the ethical implications of the biblical narrative. In this case, Eliezer's loyalty, honesty, and accountability were successfully presented not merely as historical details but as living virtues applicable to students' academic and social contexts. In a rural public-school setting with 52 Christian students served by two CRE teachers, professional competence becomes especially crucial. Limited resources do not necessarily hinder effective character formation when teachers possess strong theological literacy and curriculum development skills. The study highlights that clarity of instruction, contextualization of biblical themes, and intentional character integration significantly enhance students' moral formation. This research affirms that professional competence in Christian Religious Education functions as a transformative instrument in character education. By developing biblically faithful and pedagogically sound instructional materials, CRE teachers contribute meaningfully to shaping students who embody integrity in thought, speech, and action. Future research may explore comparative contexts, incorporate qualitative dimensions such as classroom observation, or examine long-term impacts of integrity-based instruction on student behavior and academic culture.

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