



## Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Developing Instructional Materials on Jacob's Prayer (Genesis 32:9-12): A Study at SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in developing instructional materials on Jacob's prayer (Genesis 32:9-12) at SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara, Rokan Hulu. The research employed a quantitative descriptive design, involving 140 students as respondents, complemented by documentation analysis of lesson plans, teaching modules, and classroom observations. The study operationalized professional competence into eight indicators: mastery of biblical content, contextualization for elementary students, curriculum alignment, systematic organization, use of relevant examples, integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions, development of learning media, and evaluation strategies. Data analysis using descriptive statistics revealed that the CRE teacher demonstrated high competence across all indicators, effectively translating complex theological concepts into age-appropriate and engaging learning experiences. Observational and documentation data further confirmed the teacher's ability to integrate content knowledge, pedagogical skill, and spiritual guidance. Despite challenges such as large class sizes and limited teacher resources, the study indicates that professional competence significantly enhances students' comprehension, moral development, and spiritual formation. These findings underscore the importance of continuous professional development, pedagogical creativity, and curriculum alignment for CRE teachers in public elementary schools, providing a model for holistic and effective religious education.*

**Keywords:** Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Instructional Materials

### INTRODUCTION

Professional competence is widely recognized as a decisive factor in determining the quality of educational processes and outcomes. In the Indonesian context, teacher competence is formally framed in four integrated domains: pedagogical, professional,

social, and personal competence (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen). Among these, professional competence refers to the teacher's mastery of subject matter broadly and deeply, including the ability to develop creative and contextualized learning materials that align with students' developmental stages and curriculum demands. For Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers, professional competence does not merely involve cognitive mastery of biblical texts but also the capacity to interpret, contextualize, and pedagogically transform Scripture into meaningful learning experiences. The significance of teacher professional competence has been consistently affirmed in international research. Teachers who demonstrate strong content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are more effective in facilitating student understanding and engagement (Shulman, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Shulman (1986) introduced the concept of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), emphasizing that effective teaching requires not only mastery of subject matter but also the ability to represent and adapt that content in ways comprehensible to learners. In religious education, this becomes particularly crucial because biblical texts contain theological, historical, and literary dimensions that require careful interpretation before being translated into age-appropriate instruction.

Prayer occupies a central theological and spiritual position. The narrative of Jacob's prayer in Book of Genesis 32:9-12 presents a profound example of covenantal remembrance, dependence on God's promise, and existential struggle. In this passage, Jacob invokes the God of his fathers, recalls divine promises, expresses humility, and petitions for deliverance. Theologically, this text reflects themes of covenant faithfulness, divine grace, and transformative encounter (Brueggemann, 1982; Wenham, 1994). For elementary-level students, however, such rich theological dimensions must be carefully simplified without losing doctrinal integrity. This task demands high professional competence from CRE teachers. Religious education in public schools in Indonesia carries a unique mandate. According to national education policy, religious instruction must nurture students' faith, piety, and noble character while promoting harmony within diversity. In schools with a significant number of Christian students, CRE teachers are entrusted with shaping students' spiritual formation through structured learning activities. At SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara, there are 220 Christian students and three Christian teachers, including one CRE teacher. This demographic context indicates both opportunity and responsibility: opportunity, because a relatively large number of Christian students allows for dynamic faith-based instruction; responsibility, because the limited number of teachers may intensify instructional demands and require creative material development. Developing instructional materials on Jacob's prayer for elementary students involves multiple professional tasks. Teachers must conduct biblical exegesis to understand the historical-literary context of Genesis 32:9-12. They must align the content with the national curriculum and students' cognitive development, considering that elementary learners are typically in Piaget's concrete operational stage (Piaget, 1972). Teachers must design learning strategies that integrate cognitive understanding with affective and spiritual dimensions, as religious education aims not only at knowledge acquisition but also character formation (Groome, 1999).

Scholars in Christian education emphasize that Scripture teaching should move beyond rote memorization toward transformative engagement (Wright, 2006). When students learn about Jacob's prayer, they should not only retell the narrative but also internalize values such as humility, trust in God's promises, and perseverance in crisis. Thus, professional competence in this context entails theological accuracy, pedagogical creativity, curriculum alignment, and spiritual sensitivity. Empirical studies focusing specifically on CRE teachers' competence in developing biblical instructional materials in Indonesian public elementary schools remain limited. Much research tends to concentrate on general teacher competence or on moral education broadly, without examining the specific challenges of translating complex Old Testament narratives into age-appropriate Christian Religious Education content. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in developing instructional materials on Jacob's prayer (Genesis 32:9-12) at SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara. By exploring how teachers interpret, design, and implement such materials, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the intersection between theological literacy and pedagogical practice in Indonesian public education.

## METHODS

A quantitative descriptive research design was implemented to examine the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in developing instructional materials on Jacob's Prayer (Genesis 32:9-12) at SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara. Quantitative descriptive research is appropriate when the objective is to systematically measure and describe existing phenomena using numerical data (Creswell, 2014). In this case, the research sought to measure the level of professional competence demonstrated by CRE teachers through structured instruments and statistical analysis. The population of this study consisted of 220 Christian students enrolled at SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara. Because the focus of this research is on the professional competence of CRE teachers as perceived in the instructional process, students were selected as respondents to evaluate the clarity, depth, and relevance of the instructional materials delivered. Using proportional random sampling, 140 students from grades IV-VI were selected as the research sample. These grade levels were chosen because students at this stage are developmentally capable of responding reliably to structured questionnaires, as they are generally in the concrete operational stage (Piaget, 1972), enabling them to evaluate observable aspects of teaching and learning. In addition, the three Christian teachers (including one CRE teacher) were involved as research subjects for documentation analysis and validation of instructional planning documents. The primary variable in this study was Professional Competence of CRE Teachers in Developing Instructional Materials on Jacob's Prayer (Genesis 32:9-12). This variable was operationalized into the following measurable indicators, adapted from the framework of teacher professional competence in Indonesian law (*Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen*) and the concept of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986): mastery of biblical content (theological and narrative understanding), ability to contextualize Jacob's prayer for elementary students, alignment of instructional materials with curriculum standards, clarity and systematic organization of teaching materials, use of relevant examples and illustrations, integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual

learning dimensions, development of learning media and supporting materials, and evaluation strategies aligned with lesson objectives. Each indicator was translated into Likert-scale questionnaire items with five response options (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Instrument validity was tested using product-moment correlation, while reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a minimum acceptable reliability value of 0.70 (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Instrument validation by two experts in Christian Religious Education and educational research methodology. Distribution of questionnaires to selected students after the completion of the learning unit on Jacob's Prayer (Genesis 32:9-12). Collection and analysis of teaching documents and classroom observations. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality was maintained in accordance with research ethics standards (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores, percentage distributions, and standard deviation. The level of professional competence was categorized as follows: 4.21-5.00 = Very High, 3.41-4.20 = High, 2.61-3.40 = Moderate, 1.81-2.60 = Low, 1.00-1.80 = Very Low. In addition, documentation and observation findings were analyzed descriptively to support and triangulate the quantitative results. This triangulation approach enhances the credibility and validity of the findings (Creswell, 2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive view of the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in developing instructional materials on Jacob's prayer (Genesis 32:9-12) at SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara. The study involved data collection from 140 students and documentation of lesson plans, teaching modules, and classroom observations conducted over a full instructional cycle. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, supplemented by qualitative insights from document and observation analysis, providing a holistic understanding of teacher professional competence in this context. The analysis revealed that the CRE teacher demonstrated a high level of mastery over biblical content related to Jacob's prayer. Students' questionnaire responses indicated a mean score of 4.3 on items evaluating the clarity and accuracy of the biblical narrative presented, suggesting that students perceived the teacher as knowledgeable and confident in conveying the content. This competence aligns with Shulman's (1986) concept of pedagogical content knowledge, wherein content mastery is foundational for effective teaching. The documentation review confirmed that the teacher had carefully studied Genesis 32:9-12, highlighting key theological themes such as covenant faithfulness, humility before God, and trust in divine promises. The lesson plan demonstrated deliberate efforts to translate these abstract theological concepts into accessible language appropriate for elementary learners. Observation notes reinforced these findings, showing that the teacher was able to narrate Jacob's prayer with appropriate intonation and emphasis, pausing at critical moments to allow students to reflect and respond. The teacher also linked the narrative to students' everyday experiences, asking them to recall moments when they had to ask for help or guidance, thus contextualizing the prayer in a manner suitable for their developmental stage. This approach is supported by Groome's (1999) assertion that religious education should

integrate cognitive and affective dimensions, fostering both understanding and internalization of spiritual truths. A key dimension of professional competence observed in this study was the teacher's ability to contextualize Jacob's prayer for young learners. The questionnaire data indicated a mean score of 4.2 for items assessing students' comprehension and engagement with the material, reflecting effective adaptation of content to their cognitive and emotional level. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children in grades IV-VI operate predominantly in the concrete operational stage (Piaget, 1972), meaning they can reason logically about concrete events but may struggle with abstract theological concepts. The teacher demonstrated skill in bridging this gap by using relatable examples, such as comparing Jacob's plea for safety to situations students encounter in their daily lives, like seeking help when facing a problem or resolving a conflict with peers. Documentation revealed that the instructional materials included illustrations, storyboards, and simple question prompts that encouraged students to identify Jacob's actions, feelings, and dialogue with God. These resources facilitated students' active engagement with the narrative and enhanced comprehension. Classroom observation corroborated this, showing that students were able to retell the story of Jacob's prayer in their own words and identify the main themes, suggesting that the teacher successfully translated complex theological content into an age-appropriate format. This demonstrates the teacher's ability to perform contextualization, a crucial aspect of professional competence in religious education (Wright, 2006).

Another important indicator examined was the alignment of instructional materials with the national curriculum and the systematic organization of lesson content. Analysis of lesson plans and teaching modules showed that the teacher consistently integrated curriculum objectives with the biblical content of Genesis 32:9-12. The learning objectives were clearly stated, linking cognitive understanding of the narrative to affective outcomes, such as developing humility, trust in God, and prayerfulness. For example, one learning objective stated: "Students will be able to explain Jacob's prayer and relate it to their own experiences of asking God for guidance." This objective reflects an intentional connection between curriculum standards, spiritual formation, and the students' lived experiences. The observation data highlighted that the teacher organized the instructional sequence logically, beginning with an introduction that activated prior knowledge, followed by storytelling, discussion, reflection activities, and a closing prayer. Materials were prepared in advance and presented in a coherent sequence that facilitated progressive understanding. Students were able to follow the narrative easily and engage in meaningful discussion. Questionnaire responses regarding the clarity of material presentation yielded a mean score of 4.1, indicating that students perceived the materials as well-structured and comprehensible. The teacher's attention to systematic organization demonstrates a professional competence in instructional planning, consistent with Darling-Hammond's (2000) assertion that teacher effectiveness is strongly linked to the ability to organize content coherently and meaningfully. Professional competence in religious education extends beyond mastery of content and instructional organization to include the integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions in learning. In this study, the teacher's instructional approach reflected a balanced integration of these dimensions. Cognitive engagement was fostered through comprehension questions and story retelling exercises. Affective development was

encouraged through reflective questions about students' personal experiences and emotional responses to the narrative. Spiritual engagement was nurtured through guided prayer activities, inviting students to practice petition and thanksgiving in a manner modeled after Jacob's prayer. Questionnaire results indicated that students felt spiritually engaged during the lessons, with a mean score of 4.4 on items measuring spiritual understanding and reflection. Observational data supported this, showing students participating actively in prayer exercises and articulating personal connections to Jacob's experiences. This integration illustrates the teacher's ability to transform biblical knowledge into holistic learning experiences, aligning with Groome's (1999) model of faith formation in education. Furthermore, the teacher's use of reflective exercises promoted moral and spiritual development, which is essential in fostering the character formation objectives of CRE within public schools in Indonesia (Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 55 Tahun 2007).

The study also examined the teacher's competence in developing learning media and supporting materials to facilitate understanding of Jacob's prayer. Documentation analysis showed that the teacher prepared storyboards, illustrated handouts, and interactive worksheets that guided students through key elements of Genesis 32:9-12. The use of visual aids and tangible materials helped students visualize the narrative and engage more actively with the text. Observation notes indicated that the teacher used these media effectively, prompting students to discuss the images, identify the sequence of events, and express their interpretations. Students' questionnaire responses rated the effectiveness of these materials with a mean score of 4.2, demonstrating a positive reception. This finding highlights the teacher's creativity in designing resources that enhance comprehension and engagement. The development of learning media is a critical component of professional competence, particularly in elementary religious education, where abstract biblical concepts must be translated into concrete learning experiences (Wright, 2006). The teacher's ability to create and implement appropriate media illustrates a practical application of pedagogical content knowledge and reinforces the holistic integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual learning. Professional competence also encompasses the development of assessment strategies aligned with lesson objectives. In this study, the teacher employed multiple forms of evaluation, including oral questioning, written exercises, and reflective activities. For example, students were asked to write a short prayer modeled after Jacob's, demonstrating both comprehension and personal application of the narrative. Observation notes confirmed that the teacher provided timely feedback, guiding students to refine their understanding and express their thoughts more effectively. The questionnaire data indicated that students perceived the evaluation process as fair and meaningful, with a mean score of 4.1. These findings suggest that the teacher possesses competence in aligning assessment strategies with both cognitive and affective objectives, ensuring that evaluation contributes to overall learning and spiritual formation. This aligns with Darling-Hammond's (2000) assertion that effective teaching involves the alignment of content, instruction, and assessment to achieve intended learning outcomes. The limited number of Christian teachers at SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara, with only three teachers including one CRE teacher, poses a constraint on workload distribution and individualized attention. Documentation analysis suggested that preparation of instructional materials was intensive, requiring substantial

time investment by the teacher. Additionally, classroom observation noted occasional difficulties in engaging all 220 students simultaneously, indicating that large class sizes may limit the depth of individual student engagement. Another challenge lies in the diversity of students' prior knowledge and spiritual background. Some students exhibited limited familiarity with biblical narratives, requiring the teacher to employ differentiated instruction strategies. This underscores the importance of continuous professional development in both biblical scholarship and pedagogical strategies to maintain high-quality instructional delivery.

The findings of this study have several implications for professional development of CRE teachers. Mastery of biblical content remains foundational; teachers should engage in ongoing theological study to deepen their understanding of Scripture. Pedagogical training should emphasize contextualization skills, enabling teachers to translate complex theological concepts into age-appropriate instruction. Curriculum planning and material development should integrate cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions, ensuring holistic student development. Training in the creation and use of instructional media can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Support structures at the school level are critical. Given the small number of CRE teachers, collaborative planning, mentoring, and resource sharing can help distribute workload and enhance instructional quality. School administrators should facilitate access to professional development opportunities, including workshops on biblical exegesis, curriculum alignment, and creative instructional design.

This study highlights the interplay between pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum alignment, and spiritual formation in the professional competence of CRE teachers. By focusing on Jacob's prayer, it demonstrates how a single biblical narrative can serve as a vehicle for both cognitive and spiritual development when handled competently. The findings support the theoretical perspective of Shulman (1986), emphasizing that professional competence is multidimensional, integrating subject mastery, instructional design, and student-centered contextualization. Additionally, the study aligns with Groome's (1999) framework of faith formation in education, confirming that effective religious instruction fosters holistic development encompassing knowledge, character, and spirituality. The teacher's professional competence becomes pivotal in ensuring that students receive meaningful and transformative learning experiences. The study demonstrates that even in settings with limited teacher resources, high levels of professional competence can be achieved through careful planning, contextualized content delivery, and creative instructional design. The professional competence of CRE teachers at SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara in developing instructional materials on Jacob's prayer can be classified as high across multiple indicators. The teacher demonstrates mastery of biblical content, skillful contextualization, curriculum alignment, integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions, effective development of instructional media, and appropriately aligned assessment strategies. These competencies contribute significantly to students' understanding of Scripture, moral formation, and spiritual growth, supporting the broader goals of Christian Religious Education in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara in developing instructional materials on Jacob's prayer (Genesis 32:9-12) is consistently high across multiple dimensions. The teacher exhibits a strong mastery of biblical content, accurately interpreting and conveying the theological and narrative aspects of Jacob's prayer. This mastery is complemented by an ability to contextualize the material for elementary students, using relatable examples, visual aids, and interactive exercises that align with students' developmental stages. The study also highlights the teacher's competence in curriculum alignment and systematic organization, ensuring that lesson objectives are coherent, measurable, and directly linked to both cognitive and spiritual learning outcomes. The integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions allows students not only to understand the narrative but also to internalize values such as humility, trust, and reliance on God. Additionally, the teacher demonstrates proficiency in developing learning media and supporting materials, enhancing student engagement and comprehension. Assessment strategies are aligned with lesson objectives, providing meaningful evaluation and feedback that foster both understanding and moral-spiritual growth. The findings indicate that high professional competence can be maintained through careful planning, creativity, and pedagogical expertise. The study emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development, including theological study, instructional design, and media creation, to further enhance teaching quality. School support structures, collaboration among teachers, and access to training are essential to sustain and improve the professional competence of CRE teachers in public elementary schools. The professional competence demonstrated by the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 004 Tambusai Utara effectively facilitates students' understanding of Jacob's prayer while promoting spiritual and moral formation. This study provides a model for integrating content mastery, pedagogical skill, and spiritual sensitivity in religious education, highlighting the critical role of professional competence in achieving holistic educational outcomes in Christian Religious Education.

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