



Constructing Spiritual Foundations: Pedagogical Implications of Matthew 7:24-27 for Christian Education at SDN 021 Tambusai

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between pedagogical competence and the development of spiritual foundations among Christian students at SDN 021 Tambusai through instruction based on Matthew 7:24-27. The research is grounded in the theological emphasis of the parable of the wise and foolish builders, which highlights obedience to Christ's teachings as the foundation of spiritual resilience. Employing a quantitative descriptive design with a correlational approach, the study involved 171 Christian students as the total population sample. Data were collected using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire measuring two primary variables: teachers' pedagogical competence and students' spiritual foundation development, encompassing cognitive understanding, affective commitment, and behavioral intention. The instrument underwent content validation and reliability testing prior to distribution. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment correlation, and simple linear regression at a 0.05 significance level. The findings indicate that students perceive pedagogical competence at a high level, particularly in clarity of explanation, interactive engagement, structured lesson planning, and formative assessment. Statistical analysis reveals a positive and significant correlation between pedagogical competence and spiritual foundation development. Regression results further demonstrate that pedagogical competence significantly predicts students' internalization of obedient faith as expressed in Matthew 7:24-27. These results suggest that effective and application-oriented teaching strategies contribute meaningfully to shaping resilient and faithful learners. The study concludes that constructing spiritual foundations in Christian education requires intentional pedagogical practice that integrates theological meaning with age-appropriate instructional design.

Keywords: *Spiritual Foundations, Christian Religious Education, Pedagogical Implications*

INTRODUCTION

Christian education at the elementary level plays a formative role in shaping students' spiritual identity, moral character, and worldview. In this stage of development, children

begin to internalize foundational beliefs that influence their long-term faith formation. Within the Indonesian educational framework, teachers are expected to demonstrate pedagogical competence, defined as the ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning processes effectively and meaningfully. In Christian Religious Education (CRE), pedagogical competence involves not only mastery of instructional strategies but also the capacity to guide students toward spiritual maturity through biblically grounded teaching. One of the most pedagogically rich passages for Christian formation is Matthew 7:24-27, the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders. In this passage, Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount by contrasting two individuals: one who hears His words and puts them into practice, building on rock; and another who hears but does not act, building on sand. The imagery of foundations, storms, and structural endurance communicates a vivid lesson about obedience and resilience. According to D. A. Carson in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew*, the parable emphasizes that true discipleship is demonstrated not by mere hearing but by obedient action rooted in Christ's teaching. The stability of the house symbolizes a life grounded in faithful response to divine instruction.

R. T. France in *The Gospel of Matthew* interprets the metaphor of the rock foundation as representing practical obedience rather than abstract belief. The storms signify inevitable trials, and the difference between survival and collapse lies in whether Jesus' teachings are embodied. From a pedagogical perspective, this passage underscores the importance of transformative learning, education that moves students from passive reception to active application. At SDN 021 Tambusai, where there are 171 Christian students supported by six accomplished teachers, including Christian educators, the challenge of constructing spiritual foundations becomes both urgent and promising. A student population of this size requires structured, intentional pedagogical planning to ensure that biblical teachings are communicated effectively across grade levels. Moreover, the presence of high-achieving teachers provides a strong institutional basis for implementing innovative and reflective instructional strategies. However, effective spiritual formation depends not solely on institutional excellence but also on pedagogical intentionality grounded in Scripture. Educational research consistently highlights the influence of teacher effectiveness on student outcomes. John Hattie in *Visible Learning* identifies teacher clarity, feedback, and instructional design as among the highest-impact factors affecting learning achievement. When applied to Christian education, these findings suggest that spiritual understanding likewise benefits from clear explanation, interactive engagement, and structured reinforcement. Teaching Matthew 7:24-27 effectively requires pedagogical strategies that help students grasp the metaphor of foundation-building in age-appropriate ways, connecting it to daily practices such as honesty, perseverance, prayer, and obedience. Christian educational philosophy affirms that learning is holistic. George R. Knight in *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective* argues that Christian education aims to restore learners into harmonious relationship with God, self, others, and creation. In this light, the parable of the wise builder becomes more than a moral illustration; it provides a framework for integrating faith and action. Pedagogical competence therefore involves designing learning experiences that encourage reflection, practice, and character application. SDN 021 Tambusai offers a meaningful locus for such investigation due to its substantial Christian student population and its cadre of accomplished teachers. Understanding how

pedagogical strategies influence students' spiritual comprehension can contribute to the broader development of Christian education models that are both academically rigorous and spiritually formative. This study seeks to analyze the pedagogical implications of Matthew 7:24-27 for Christian education at SDN 021 Tambusai. Specifically, it aims to examine how pedagogical competence contributes to constructing spiritual foundations among 171 Christian students through structured instruction, interactive engagement, and application-oriented learning. By integrating biblical exegesis with educational theory and empirical analysis, this research endeavors to offer insights into how faithful learners can be nurtured within the elementary school context.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive design with a correlational approach was used to examine the pedagogical implications of Matthew 7:24–27 for Christian education at SDN 021 Tambusai. The research was conducted during the 2025 academic year and focused specifically on the population of 171 Christian students enrolled at the school. Given the manageable size of the population, total sampling was applied, meaning that all 171 Christian students participated as respondents in order to ensure comprehensive representation and strengthen the internal validity of the findings. Although the school has six accomplished teachers, including Christian educators, the primary focus of measurement was students' perceptions of pedagogical practices in Christian Religious Education (CRE) related to teaching the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders. The study consisted of two primary variables: pedagogical competence as the independent variable and students' spiritual foundation development as the dependent variable. Pedagogical competence was operationally defined as the teacher's ability to design structured lesson plans, present biblical material clearly, employ interactive teaching strategies, provide constructive feedback, and evaluate learning outcomes effectively. Indicators included clarity of explanation, use of relevant examples, encouragement of active participation, formative assessment practices, and reinforcement of practical application. The dependent variable, spiritual foundation development, referred to students' cognitive understanding of Matthew 7:24-27, affective commitment to obedience, and behavioral intention to apply Jesus' teachings in daily life. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher based on established pedagogical theory and biblical character education principles. The instrument utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire underwent content validation through expert judgment by two Christian education lecturers to ensure theological accuracy and pedagogical relevance. Construct validity was tested using Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis to confirm item consistency, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with results indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

The data collection process was conducted in coordination with school leadership to ensure ethical compliance and informed participation. Students completed the questionnaire anonymously to promote honest responses. Data analysis began with descriptive statistics to calculate mean scores, standard deviations, and percentage distributions for each variable. Assumption testing included normality testing using the

Kolmogorov–Smirnov method to determine the suitability of parametric analysis. Hypothesis testing was conducted using Pearson Product-Moment correlation to examine the relationship between pedagogical competence and spiritual foundation development. A simple linear regression analysis was subsequently performed to determine the predictive contribution of pedagogical competence to students' spiritual formation. All statistical analyses were conducted at a significance level of 0.05. Through this methodological framework, the study aimed to generate empirical evidence regarding how structured and application-oriented pedagogical practices contribute to constructing spiritual foundations among elementary students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide comprehensive empirical insight into how pedagogical competence contributes to constructing spiritual foundations among 171 Christian students at SDN 021 Tambusai through instruction based on Matthew 7:24-27. The results are organized through descriptive statistical analysis, correlation testing, and regression modeling, followed by an interpretative discussion integrating biblical exegesis and educational theory. Overall, the data demonstrate that pedagogical competence is perceived at a high level and significantly influences students' spiritual formation, particularly their understanding and application of the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders. Descriptive statistical analysis shows that students perceive the pedagogical competence of their Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as strong and consistent. The overall mean score for the pedagogical competence variable falls within the high category on the Likert scale. Indicators such as clarity of explanation, structured lesson planning, interactive engagement, use of relevant illustrations, and reinforcement of practical application all received strong agreement responses. Students reported that teachers explained the parable in ways that were understandable for their age level, often using visual aids, storytelling techniques, and contextual examples related to daily life, such as building sturdy houses or preparing for storms. This contextualization appears to make the biblical metaphor accessible and memorable for elementary learners. The clarity of instruction received particularly high responses. Students indicated that teachers clearly differentiated between the "wise builder" who hears and obeys Jesus' words and the "foolish builder" who hears but does not act. The explanation of the rock as obedience and the sand as disobedience was consistently reinforced through repetition, questioning, and class discussions. Such instructional clarity aligns with research on effective teaching, which emphasizes that structured explanation and cognitive scaffolding significantly enhance comprehension. In the context of Matthew 7:24-27, clarity ensures that the theological distinction between hearing and doing is not misunderstood as merely intellectual belief but is recognized as active discipleship.

Interactive engagement also scored highly in descriptive results. Students reported opportunities to participate in discussions, answer questions, role-play scenarios, and reflect on practical examples of obedience in school and family contexts. For instance, teachers reportedly asked students how they might "build on rock" through honesty, prayer, respect for parents, and perseverance in studies. These interactive strategies

appear to facilitate deeper internalization of the biblical message. Rather than passively memorizing verses, students are invited to analyze their behavior in light of Jesus' teaching. This participatory approach strengthens both cognitive understanding and affective commitment. The dependent variable, spiritual foundation development, likewise demonstrates high descriptive scores. Cognitive indicators show that most students correctly understand the narrative structure of Matthew 7:24-27, including the contrasting outcomes of the two builders and the symbolism of the storm. Affective indicators reflect positive attitudes toward obedience and trust in Jesus' teachings. Students express agreement that obeying Jesus provides strength during difficulties and that faith must be practiced, not merely professed. Behavioral intention items reveal that students intend to apply biblical teachings in daily decisions, such as telling the truth, helping classmates, and remaining faithful in prayer. These findings suggest that pedagogical strategies have successfully moved students beyond surface-level comprehension toward practical application.

The Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis reveals a positive and statistically significant relationship between pedagogical competence and spiritual foundation development. The correlation coefficient indicates a moderate-to-strong association, meaning that higher levels of perceived pedagogical competence correspond with stronger levels of spiritual formation among students. The significance value is below 0.05, confirming that the relationship is statistically meaningful. This result supports the hypothesis that structured, clear, and application-oriented teaching practices enhance the internalization of biblical principles in elementary education. Regression analysis further demonstrates that pedagogical competence significantly predicts spiritual foundation development. The regression coefficient indicates that improvements in pedagogical competence are associated with measurable increases in students' spiritual understanding and behavioral intention. Although pedagogical competence does not account for all variance, since family background, church involvement, and personal spiritual experiences also influence faith formation, it nonetheless explains a substantial proportion of the outcome within the school context. The coefficient of determination suggests that pedagogical strategies play a decisive role in shaping how students interpret and apply the teachings of Matthew 7:24-27. The findings confirm the pedagogical power embedded within the structure of the parable itself. Matthew 7:24-27 concludes the Sermon on the Mount by presenting obedience as the true foundation of spiritual stability. The imagery of storms symbolizes inevitable life challenges, and the endurance of the house represents resilience rooted in faithful practice. When teachers emphasize this cause-and-effect relationship through structured instruction, students grasp the practical implications of discipleship. The statistical correlation suggests that when pedagogical methods are clear and engaging, the theological message becomes more deeply embedded in students' worldview. The presence of six accomplished teachers at SDN 021 Tambusai may also contribute to a culture of instructional excellence. Although the study focuses on CRE instruction, a broader environment of pedagogical professionalism likely reinforces high expectations and consistent teaching standards. Students who experience effective instruction across subjects may be more receptive to structured learning in religious education as well. However, regression analysis confirms

that within the specific context of Matthew 7:24-27 instruction, pedagogical competence itself remains a distinct and influential factor.

The relatively large number of Christian students, 171 individuals, introduces both opportunity and challenge. On one hand, a substantial population allows for collaborative activities, peer discussion, and communal reinforcement of values. On the other hand, large classes require careful planning to ensure individual engagement. The high descriptive scores for interactive engagement suggest that teachers successfully implement strategies that maintain participation despite class size. Group discussions, storytelling, and practical demonstrations appear to sustain attention and facilitate reflection. This adaptability demonstrates the functional importance of pedagogical competence in diverse classroom settings. An important dimension revealed in the findings is the integration of formative assessment. Students reported that teachers frequently asked reflective questions, provided feedback on answers, and encouraged self-evaluation. Formative assessment reinforces learning by clarifying expectations and correcting misunderstandings in real time. In the context of Matthew 7:24-27, formative questions such as “What does it mean to build on rock today?” prompt students to connect biblical narrative with lived experience. This alignment between assessment and application strengthens spiritual foundation development. The behavioral intention findings are particularly noteworthy. Many students expressed willingness to practice obedience and integrity in daily life as an expression of building on rock. While self-reported intention does not guarantee long-term behavior change, it indicates internal motivation and moral awareness. The positive regression relationship suggests that structured teaching strategies contribute to this motivation. When students clearly understand the consequences illustrated in the parable, standing firm versus collapse, they are more likely to value obedience as protective and life-giving rather than restrictive. The discussion also highlights the significance of developmental appropriateness. Elementary students learn effectively through concrete imagery and storytelling. The parable’s vivid depiction of houses and storms aligns well with cognitive development at this stage. Teachers who leverage visual metaphors, simple language, and relatable examples enhance comprehension. The strong correlation between pedagogical competence and spiritual development suggests that age-appropriate explanation is essential for effective Christian education. Another dimension worth noting is the communal reinforcement of spiritual values. In a school with 171 Christian students, peer influence can either strengthen or weaken faith practice. When pedagogical strategies emphasize shared reflection and group application, students collectively reinforce obedience norms. For example, class discussions about honesty during exams or kindness toward classmates transform individual decisions into communal commitments. Pedagogical competence thus shapes not only individual understanding but also collective moral culture. The findings also align with educational research emphasizing teacher clarity and feedback as high-impact factors in learning. Although this study does not replicate experimental conditions, the statistical significance observed supports the principle that effective instructional design enhances outcome variables. In Christian education, outcome variables include not only academic knowledge but also character formation and spiritual resilience. The parable of the wise builder serves as a conceptual bridge between cognitive learning and ethical practice, and pedagogical competence

ensures that this bridge is navigable. It is important to acknowledge that the study relies on self-reported data, which may reflect social desirability bias. Students in religious settings may feel inclined to respond positively. However, the consistency of responses across multiple indicators and the statistical significance of correlations suggest genuine patterns rather than random affirmation. Future research incorporating observational methods or longitudinal tracking could provide additional depth and confirm behavioral outcomes over time. The results and discussion confirm that pedagogical competence significantly contributes to constructing spiritual foundations among elementary students at SDN 021 Tambusai. Through clear explanation, interactive engagement, formative assessment, and application-oriented instruction, teachers effectively communicate the transformative message of Matthew 7:24-27. The statistical evidence demonstrates a positive and meaningful relationship between teaching quality and students' internalization of obedient faith. By integrating biblical exegesis with structured pedagogical practice, Christian educators foster resilience, moral clarity, and active discipleship in young learners. The findings affirm that building faithful learners requires intentional instructional design that moves students from hearing to doing, ensuring that their spiritual houses are firmly grounded on the rock of practiced obedience.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that pedagogical competence plays a significant and measurable role in constructing spiritual foundations among Christian students at SDN 021 Tambusai through instruction based on Matthew 7:24-27. The findings confirm that clear explanation, structured lesson planning, interactive engagement, and formative assessment are not merely technical teaching skills but essential instruments in shaping students' understanding of obedient discipleship. The positive and statistically significant correlation between pedagogical competence and spiritual foundation development indicates that when teachers intentionally design learning experiences that emphasize both comprehension and application, students are more likely to internalize biblical teachings in cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. The regression analysis further strengthens this conclusion by demonstrating that pedagogical competence meaningfully predicts the development of students' spiritual resilience. Although spiritual formation is influenced by multiple factors such as family, church, and personal experience, the classroom remains a critical environment for cultivating biblical literacy and moral commitment. Within the context of SDN 021 Tambusai, where 171 Christian students participate in structured Christian Religious Education, the teacher's ability to translate the theological message of Matthew 7:24-27 into age-appropriate, engaging, and practical instruction proves to be decisive. By guiding students to understand the contrast between building on rock and building on sand, teachers help them recognize obedience as the true foundation of spiritual stability. The study also highlights the importance of contextual and developmental sensitivity. Elementary learners benefit from concrete imagery, relatable examples, and participatory learning methods. When pedagogical competence aligns with these developmental needs, biblical narratives become transformative rather than abstract. The parable of the wise and foolish builders is not merely memorized but interpreted as a call to consistent faith practice in daily life, through honesty, perseverance, prayer, and responsibility. This integration of theological

meaning and pedagogical clarity enables students to connect Scripture with lived experience. Constructing spiritual foundations in Christian education requires more than doctrinal transmission; it demands intentional, reflective, and professional pedagogical practice. Teachers who demonstrate high pedagogical competence create learning environments where faith is not only taught but embodied and practiced. The evidence from this study affirms that effective teaching strategies significantly contribute to forming resilient, obedient, and faithful learners whose lives are grounded on the enduring foundation of Christ's teachings.

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