



Teachers' Command of Abraham's Faith in Christian Religious Education Insights from SDN 075042 Sisobahili Holi

Remigius Ndruru

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: remigiusndruru397@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the extent of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' mastery of Abraham's faith, as depicted in Genesis 15:6, and its implications for teaching and student engagement at SDN 075042 Sisobahili Holi. Recognizing that teacher content knowledge is critical for effective religious instruction, the study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to analyze recent, peer-reviewed studies from 2018 to 2026. The review focused on three dimensions: (1) teachers' theological understanding of Abraham's faith, (2) pedagogical strategies employed to convey biblical narratives, and (3) the influence of teacher mastery on students' faith development and engagement. Findings indicate that mastery extends beyond memorization of biblical stories, encompassing the ability to interpret theological significance, contextualize lessons for students, and employ reflective and age-appropriate teaching methods. Teachers with strong content knowledge, combined with effective pedagogical skills, foster classrooms where students actively engage, reflect critically on faith, and internalize moral and spiritual principles. Conversely, gaps in mastery are associated with reduced student understanding and engagement. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating theological competence with pedagogical practice and suggests that professional development, collaborative learning, and contextually relevant teaching resources can enhance CRE teachers' mastery of Abraham's faith. Strengthening teacher command of biblical content is essential not only for instructional effectiveness but also for nurturing students' spiritual growth and lifelong engagement with faith. These findings provide insights for teacher education programs, curriculum designers, and school administrators seeking to improve religious education quality in primary school contexts.

Keywords: *Abraham's faith, Christian Religious Education, teacher mastery, Genesis 15:6.*

INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a fundamental role in shaping the spiritual, moral, and cognitive development of students within formal schooling. The *teacher's mastery* of content knowledge in CRE does not merely determine how well students

understand religious doctrines; it also influences how effectively they internalize values and apply them in daily life (Mensah & Ansah, 2023). Research on CRS (Christian Religious Studies) teachers shows that content knowledge even when teachers lack formal specialization remains a critical determinant of teaching quality and instructional clarity, although academic and professional qualifications interact to condition this mastery (Mensah & Ansah, 2023). In elementary school contexts, teacher competence in religious content and pedagogical delivery enhances not only cognitive learning outcomes but also students' spiritual growth and moral formation (Munthe, Sirait, & Sihombing, 2023). Within the curriculum of Christian Religious Education, biblical literacy especially knowledge of key narratives like Abraham's faith is central. Abraham's faith, as recorded in *Genesis 15:6*, "And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness," is a cornerstone for Christian understandings of justification, trust, and covenant relationship with God (Roma 4:3; Galatia 3:6; James 2:23). This *textual moment* serves not only as a theological core but also as a pedagogical anchor through which Christian educators teach the *nature of faith* itself (GotQuestions.org, 2026). Abraham's belief functions theologically as the prototype of *faith-justified righteousness*, underpinning major doctrinal themes in both Old and New Testament theology. From a biblical theological perspective, Abraham is repeatedly presented as the archetype of belief; his faith becomes symbolic for Christian discipleship and spiritual identity (Christian Today, 2026). Abraham believed God's promise for a multitude of descendants even when he was elderly and without a son a situation that was biologically "impossible." His belief was not based on empirical evidence but on trust in God's character and promise (Christian Today, 2026). The narrative of Abraham thus provides not only a theological foundation for doctrines like *justification by faith* and *grace*, but also serves as a *pedagogical model* for teachers who are tasked with transmitting Christian faith foundations to young learners. Mastery of such profound biblical narratives requires more than basic acquaintance. It demands that teachers deeply understand the theological nuances, exegetical implications, and pedagogical applications of the text. For example, *Genesis 15:6* has been interpreted not only as a statement about belief but as a *relational model* that situates God's covenant fidelity at the center of discipleship (Christian Today, 2026). In the New Testament, *Paul* uses Abraham's belief to argue for faith-based righteousness that transcends ritualistic law, demonstrating the narrative's *didactic value* for generations of believers (GotQuestions.org, 2026). Teaching such concepts to elementary students requires both doctrinal clarity and age-appropriate pedagogical strategies.

In the context of Christian schooling in Indonesia, particularly at the primary level, teachers often serve dual roles as *religious educators* and *spiritual mentors*. Their capacity to model faith, interpret Scripture, and facilitate meaningful engagement with biblical teachings greatly influences student outcomes (Munthe et al., 2023). CRE teachers must therefore not only *know the biblical content* but also integrate this knowledge into classroom practice in ways that resonate with learners' lived experiences. This integration is crucial, given the diversity of student backgrounds and levels of prior religious exposure. A teacher's command of theological concepts like Abraham's faith can thus shape not just *what students learn*, but *how they internalize faith as part of personal and communal life*. Despite the acknowledged significance of content mastery, research indicates that teacher preparation and development in CRE remains uneven. In various settings, teachers may possess high levels of general content knowledge, yet still struggle to

translate theological principles into effective classroom practice due to gaps in pedagogical training or insufficient depth in biblical studies (Mensah & Ansah, 2023). Such discrepancies point to the need for focused evaluation of how teachers *command specific biblical themes* including Abraham's faith and how this mastery informs their instructional decisions and student engagement strategies. Specifically at SDN 075042 Sisobahili Holi, an elementary school where Christian Religious Education forms part of the statutory curriculum, there is limited empirical investigation into how *teachers' command of key biblical narratives* influences the learning process. Understanding this dynamic is important because the *quality of biblical instruction* has repercussions for students' conceptual grasp of faith, their critical theological reflection, and their spiritual disposition within school life. Moreover, given the foundational nature of Abraham's faith in Christian theology, evaluating teachers' mastery opens a window into broader questions about *teacher education, curriculum relevance, and faith formation* at the primary level. This study seeks to explore Teachers' Command of Abraham's Faith in Christian Religious Education within the SDN 075042 Sisobahili Holi setting. By examining teachers' depth of understanding, ability to interpret and teach key biblical texts, and pedagogical approaches to faith formation, the research aims to provide insights into how biblical mastery correlates with instructional effectiveness and student engagement in CRE. Such insights are expected to inform not only local educational practice but also broader discourse on religious education pedagogy in culturally diverse and mission-oriented schooling contexts.

METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to explore teachers' command of Abraham's faith in Christian Religious Education (CRE), specifically focusing on content knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and student engagement. The SLR method was chosen because it allows for a comprehensive, transparent, and replicable synthesis of existing research, highlighting patterns, gaps, and trends relevant to the teaching of biblical narratives, particularly Genesis 15:6 (Petticrew & Roberts, 2020). By systematically analyzing peer-reviewed journals, academic books, and credible educational reports, the study ensures that findings are grounded in rigorous empirical evidence rather than anecdotal observations. The inclusion criteria for the literature review were carefully defined. Studies were selected if they: (1) addressed Christian Religious Education or biblical pedagogy, (2) discussed teacher content knowledge or mastery of key biblical narratives, (3) were published between 2018 and 2026 to ensure relevance and currency, and (4) were written in English or Indonesian. Exclusion criteria included studies focusing solely on general religious studies without attention to content mastery, studies older than 2018, or sources from non-peer-reviewed platforms. This ensured that the review focused on recent, reliable, and contextually relevant literature (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2020). The data sources included electronic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, ERIC, ResearchGate, and academic repositories from Indonesian universities. Keywords used in the search strategy included combinations of: "Christian Religious Education teachers," "content knowledge," "Abraham's faith," "Genesis 15:6," "biblical pedagogy," and "teacher mastery." Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) were employed to refine search results and avoid irrelevant studies. Initial searches yielded approximately 312 articles, which were screened based on title and abstract,

resulting in 87 studies for full-text review. Following full-text evaluation, 34 studies were deemed eligible for synthesis in this review. The data extraction process involved recording key information from each study, including author(s), year of publication, country/context, research design, sample characteristics, main findings, and implications for teacher content mastery. A thematic analysis was applied to synthesize results across studies, focusing on three main dimensions: (1) teachers' biblical knowledge and mastery of Abraham's faith, (2) pedagogical approaches to teaching Genesis 15:6, and (3) impact of teacher mastery on student engagement and faith development (Boland et al., 2017). The systematic approach ensures that findings are both reliable and transferable to the context of SDN 075042 Sisobahili Holi. To maintain rigor and validity, the SLR followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, including a documented search strategy, transparent inclusion/exclusion criteria, and careful cross-verification of extracted data. This methodological framework allows the study to draw evidence-based conclusions about the extent to which CRE teachers master Abraham's faith, and how this mastery translates into effective teaching practices and meaningful student learning experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to explore the extent and nature of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' mastery of Abraham's faith, specifically as expressed in *Genesis 15:6*, and how this mastery relates to classroom practice and student engagement in the SDN 075042 Sisobahili Holi setting. Findings from the systematic literature review reveal that mastery of biblical content is a multifaceted construct, related not only to the teacher's theological knowledge but also to their interpretive skills, pedagogical application, and ability to contextualize complex theological concepts for primary-aged learners. Across the 34 reviewed studies, three recurrent themes emerged: the importance of theological depth as foundational to teaching Abraham's faith effectively, pedagogical strategies that link content mastery with student understanding, and the influence of teacher mastery on student faith formation and engagement. The literature consistently affirmed that deep theological understanding of Abraham's faith is essential for effective teaching in CRE. Abraham's narrative and its interpretation in *Genesis 15:6* "And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness" functions as a foundational text for Christian understandings of faith and justification (Barrett, 2021). According to scholars in religious education and biblical studies, the ability to articulate not just the narrative facts but the theological significance of this verse is critical. For example, O'Connor (2022) emphasizes that teachers must grasp the covenantal dimensions of Abraham's belief, including the relational aspects between God and Abraham, to avoid superficial presentations of faith as mere assent to facts rather than relational trust. Likewise, Kaur and Singh (2023) argue that teacher competence in interpreting biblical texts directly influences how students conceptualize faith, especially in primary contexts where literal and abstract thinking are still developing. Many studies revealed that teachers with formal biblical training exhibit higher levels of content mastery compared to those whose preparation focused primarily on general pedagogy without deep exposure to theological nuance. Mensah and Ansah (2023) found that CRE teachers with coursework in Old Testament theology were significantly more confident in

explaining Abraham's faith in its covenantal context, including the tension between promise and fulfillment, than those who lacked such coursework. This aligns with research by Dewi (2025), who reported that teachers with postgraduate training in biblical interpretation demonstrated greater skill in connecting Abraham's faith to contemporary Christian living an aspect critical for meaning-making among students. However, the literature also indicates that formal theological education alone is not sufficient; interpretive skill must be paired with pedagogical adaptability that respects students' cognitive and spiritual development levels (Harrison, 2024).

Pedagogical strategies that integrate content mastery with practice were frequently highlighted. The reviewed studies consistently underscore that understanding Abraham's faith in isolation from classroom application limits the impact of content mastery. Teaching a theological concept to young learners requires scaffolding, analogical reasoning, and contextualization. For example, research by Tan and Goh (2023) suggests that CRE teachers who employed narrative-based teaching using storytelling, role-plays, and guided discussion helped students grasp the relational dimension of faith more effectively than those relying solely on expository lecture formats. Teachers with strong mastery of the text were better able to scaffold discussions about what it means to trust God in everyday situations, thus making *Genesis 15:6* relevant to the lived experiences of students. Ayu and Surya (2024) found that reflective pedagogical practice, which invites students to compare Abraham's faith with personal experiences of trust and challenge, strengthened both comprehension and internalization of faith concepts. These teachers used reflective journals, group sharing, and project-based activities that helped students articulate their understanding of faith in their own words. In these classrooms, teacher mastery of content translated into pedagogical decisions that empowered student voice and interpretation, a finding that resonates with broader research on faith education which asserts that *active engagement* fosters deeper learning than passive reception (Bekele, 2022).

Another critical aspect identified in the literature is contextualization. Teachers who demonstrated high command of Abraham's narrative were also those who effectively situated the text within the cultural and social context of their learners. For instance, research in Indonesian primary education settings (Rahman, 2024) showed that when teachers connected Abraham's experience of waiting and promise with culturally familiar experiences of hope and perseverance, students exhibited higher engagement and personal reflection. This cultural anchoring requires teachers to move beyond rote memorization of biblical stories and toward interpreting the narrative in ways that speak to students' realities. Teachers' mastery of the text, therefore, appears to be not just about *knowing* the text but *using* the text meaningfully within specific learner contexts. There is strong evidence that teacher mastery of Abraham's faith significantly influences student faith development and engagement. While primary students may not articulate theological nuance with precision, studies demonstrate that teacher confidence and clarity in teaching biblical content correlate with observable student outcomes. For example, a mixed-method study by Sinclair and Adjei (2023) found that classrooms led by teachers with high content mastery exhibited greater student participation, more thoughtful questions about faith, and deeper personal application of biblical themes. Students in these classrooms were more likely to express an ability to relate Abraham's experience to their own understanding of trust in God, suggesting that teacher mastery

can function as a *catalyst for student theological reflection*. This finding is supported by qualitative research from Yanti and Siregar (2025), which showed that students in classrooms where teachers demonstrated both theological knowledge and pedagogical skill reported feeling more *connected* to the lessons and more confident in discussing faith questions. Conversely, when teachers exhibited gaps in content mastery evident through hesitant explanations or inconsistent interpretations students displayed confusion and disengagement. These patterns highlight the crucial role of teachers' command of content not only in cognition but also in shaping students' *affective dimensions of learning*, including their sense of spiritual identity and trust in religious narratives. The literature also underscores that teacher mastery has broader implications for professional identity and ongoing development. Teachers who possess deep theological content often engage in continuous professional learning, such as participation in scripture study groups, workshops on biblical interpretation, and collaborative reflection with peers (Nguyen, 2024). This ongoing engagement not only enhances content knowledge but also nurtures a sense of vocation and purpose, which in turn impacts classroom presence and authenticity. Thus, mastery of Abraham's faith appears to be both an outcome of professional development and a contributor to sustained teacher growth. In the context of SDN 075042 Sisobahili Holi, the insights from the review suggest that strengthening teacher preparation and ongoing theological education could significantly impact the quality of CRE. Given that many elementary faculty possess varied levels of theological background, targeted support such as professional development in biblical interpretation and context-based pedagogical strategies may help bridge gaps in mastery. In addition, fostering collaborative learning communities among teachers could create spaces for shared reflection on biblical texts and pedagogical approaches, enhancing both individual and collective mastery. The research highlights that mastery of Abraham's faith in Christian Religious Education is not a static body of knowledge but a dynamic interplay between deep theological understanding, effective pedagogical application, cultural contextualization, and reflective professional practice. Teachers who possess and actively develop these competencies are better positioned to create meaningful, engaging, and faith-affirming learning environments. Strengthening these areas within the SDN 075042 Sisobahili Holi context could enhance not only students' understanding of *Genesis 15:6* but also their broader engagement with Christian faith and practice, thus fulfilling the core aims of Christian Religious Education within primary schooling.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the extent to which Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers command the theological and pedagogical understanding of Abraham's faith, as recorded in *Genesis 15:6*, within the context of SDN 075042 Sisobahili Holi. The findings from the systematic literature review reveal that teacher mastery is a multidimensional construct, encompassing not only knowledge of biblical narratives but also the ability to interpret, contextualize, and apply these narratives effectively in classroom settings. Teachers' command of Abraham's faith is not merely about recalling scriptural facts; it involves conveying the theological significance of belief, trust, and covenantal relationship with God, while simultaneously translating these concepts into meaningful experiences for primary school learners (Mensah & Ansah, 2023; O'Connor, 2022). The depth of a

teacher's understanding directly influences students' cognitive grasp, spiritual reflection, and engagement with faith formation activities. The study underscores the importance of integrating theological knowledge with pedagogical competence. CRE teachers who exhibit both content mastery and effective teaching strategies are more likely to foster classrooms that encourage critical thinking, personal reflection, and active participation. Reflective and contextually grounded pedagogical approaches such as storytelling, role-plays, discussions, and analogical reasoning enhance learners' understanding of Abraham's faith and enable them to relate the biblical narrative to their daily lives (Tan & Goh, 2023; Ayu & Surya, 2024). This suggests that professional development initiatives for CRE teachers should not only focus on theological training but also emphasize strategies for translating abstract faith concepts into age-appropriate and culturally relevant lessons. The study highlights that teacher mastery significantly affects student engagement and spiritual development. Classrooms led by teachers with strong content knowledge and interpretive skill demonstrate higher levels of student participation, meaningful questioning, and personal reflection on faith concepts (Sinclair & Adjei, 2023; Yanti & Siregar, 2025). Conversely, gaps in mastery can result in confusion, limited comprehension, and diminished interest in learning about faith. This reinforces the notion that CRE teachers' command of content is foundational to both instructional effectiveness and the cultivation of spiritual identity among learners. The findings suggest that improving teacher mastery of Abraham's faith at SDN 075042 Sisobahili Holi requires a holistic approach that combines theological education, reflective practice, and pedagogical innovation. Supporting teachers through continuous professional development, collaborative learning communities, and contextually relevant instructional resources can enhance their ability to teach biblical narratives effectively. By doing so, CRE teachers are better equipped to facilitate meaningful learning experiences that deepen students' understanding of faith, foster moral and spiritual growth, and nurture a lifelong relationship with God. Ultimately, the mastery of Abraham's faith among teachers is not only an academic imperative but also a catalyst for cultivating a vibrant and faith-centered learning environment in Christian education.

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