



Pedagogical Leadership Grounded in Humility: A Biblical Reflection on Matthew 20:26-28 in the Context of UPTD SD Negeri 158494 Makarti Nauli

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ABSTRACT

This study examines pedagogical leadership grounded in humility as reflected in Gospel of Matthew 20:26-28 and its relevance to the practice of Christian Religious Education in the learning context of UPTD SD Negeri 158494 Makarti Nauli. In this biblical passage, Jesus redefines the concept of leadership by emphasizing service and humility rather than authority and power. The purpose of this research is to analyze how humility-based pedagogical leadership is implemented in the teaching practices of Christian Religious Education teachers and how it influences students' learning experiences. This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach. The participants consisted of 29 Christian students who actively participated in Christian Religious Education classes. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale designed to measure students' perceptions of the teacher's pedagogical leadership and humility-oriented teaching practices. The research instrument included indicators such as instructional guidance, clarity of explanation, classroom interaction, respect toward students, willingness to listen, and the teacher's commitment to serving students' learning needs. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to identify the general level of pedagogical leadership and humility demonstrated in the learning process. The findings reveal that students generally perceive the teacher's pedagogical leadership as positive and supportive. The teacher demonstrates humility through respectful communication, patient guidance, and a willingness to prioritize students' understanding during the learning process. By integrating professional teaching competence with the biblical principle of servant leadership, teachers are able to create learning environments that support both academic learning and students' moral and spiritual development.

Keywords: Pedagogical Leadership, Christian Religious Education, Humility

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an essential dimension of the educational process because it shapes how learning environments are organized, how values are communicated, and how students are guided toward intellectual and moral development. In the context of education, leadership is not limited to administrative authority but also includes pedagogical influence exercised by teachers in the classroom. Teachers who demonstrate strong pedagogical leadership are able to guide students effectively, foster meaningful learning experiences, and cultivate attitudes that support both academic growth and character formation. Educational research consistently emphasizes that teacher leadership significantly influences classroom climate, student motivation, and the overall effectiveness of instruction (Hattie, 2009). Pedagogical leadership refers to a teacher's ability to organize learning processes, guide students intellectually and morally, and create a classroom environment that encourages participation, collaboration, and critical thinking. It involves various competencies, including instructional planning, communication skills, classroom management, and the capacity to inspire students through personal example. Scholars argue that effective pedagogical leadership requires not only technical teaching skills but also ethical and relational qualities that shape how teachers interact with students (Darling-Hammond, 2017). These qualities are especially important in religious education, where teachers are expected to embody the values they teach.

The concept of leadership is deeply connected with biblical teachings about humility and service. One of the most significant passages addressing leadership from a Christian perspective is Matthew 20:26-28. In this passage, Jesus redefines leadership by contrasting worldly authority with servant leadership, teaching His disciples that greatness is measured not by power but by service. Jesus states that "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant," emphasizing humility as the foundation of true leadership. Biblical scholars note that this teaching challenges hierarchical models of authority and introduces a paradigm in which leadership is expressed through self-giving service and concern for others (Green, 2007). In educational contexts, this principle suggests that teachers lead most effectively when they demonstrate humility, care, and a willingness to serve their students' learning needs. The integration of biblical principles with educational leadership is particularly relevant in Christian Religious Education because teachers function not only as transmitters of theological knowledge but also as mentors who model Christian character. According to scholars of Christian education, teaching in a Christian context involves the formation of both intellect and character, requiring educators to demonstrate authenticity and moral integrity in their daily interactions with students (Pazmiño, 2008). When teachers embody the values of humility and service described in Matthew 20:26-28, they create a learning environment that reflects the transformative nature of Christian teaching. Humility as a leadership virtue has also received attention in contemporary educational research. Humble leadership involves recognizing the value of others, listening to diverse perspectives, and prioritizing the growth and well-being of those being guided. Educational theorists suggest that humility in leadership promotes collaborative learning environments and encourages students to participate more actively in the learning process (Owens & Hekman, 2012). In the classroom setting, teachers who practice humility tend to foster stronger

relationships with students, which in turn enhances trust, engagement, and motivation to learn. The context of elementary education provides a particularly important setting for exploring the relationship between pedagogical leadership and humility. At this stage of development, students are highly influenced by the attitudes and behaviors of their teachers. Teachers who demonstrate humility, patience, and respect can shape students' perceptions of authority and leadership in positive ways. Furthermore, the values modeled by teachers during these formative years often contribute to the development of students' moral and social character. This study is conducted in the context of Christian Religious Education at UPTD SD Negeri 158494 Makarti Nauli, where a number of students and teachers share the Christian faith tradition. In this setting, the integration of biblical teachings with educational practice becomes particularly meaningful. Understanding how pedagogical leadership grounded in humility is practiced within this environment can provide valuable insights into the role of Christian values in shaping effective teaching practices. The purpose of this study is to explore how pedagogical leadership grounded in humility, as reflected in Matthew 20:26-28, is implemented in the context of Christian Religious Education. By examining the interaction between biblical principles and classroom practice, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how servant leadership can influence teaching effectiveness, student engagement, and character formation in educational settings. The findings are expected to provide insights for educators seeking to integrate biblical values into pedagogical leadership within Christian educational contexts.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive research design was used to examine the implementation of pedagogical leadership grounded in humility, as reflected in Gospel of Matthew 20:26-28, within the context of Christian Religious Education at UPTD SD Negeri 158494 Makarti Nauli. A quantitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to measure students' perceptions of teachers' pedagogical leadership and humility in a systematic and objective manner through statistical analysis. The population of the study consisted of 29 Christian students who actively participated in Christian Religious Education classes, as well as five Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher. Due to the relatively small population size, the research applied a total sampling technique, meaning that all Christian students were included as research respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was designed to measure two main indicators: pedagogical leadership practices demonstrated by the teacher, such as instructional guidance, communication clarity, classroom interaction, and the ability to motivate students, and humility-based leadership values inspired by the teaching of Jesus in Gospel of Matthew 20:26-28, including service-oriented attitudes, respect toward students, willingness to listen, and the prioritization of students' learning needs. Prior to distribution, the instrument was reviewed to ensure content validity and clarity of statements. Data collection was conducted during the academic semester through direct distribution of questionnaires to students in the classroom setting. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including percentage distribution, mean scores, and interpretation categories to determine the level of pedagogical leadership and humility-based teaching practices perceived by

students. Through this method, the study aimed to provide an empirical description of how pedagogical leadership grounded in humility is experienced by students in Christian Religious Education learning activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate that pedagogical leadership grounded in humility plays a significant role in shaping the learning atmosphere and the overall educational experience of students in Christian Religious Education at UPTD SD Negeri 158494 Makarti Nauli. Based on the descriptive statistical analysis of questionnaire responses collected from 29 Christian students, the majority of respondents perceived the Christian Religious Education teacher's pedagogical leadership as positive and effective. The data indicate that students generally experience the teacher's leadership style as supportive, respectful, and service-oriented. This perception aligns closely with the biblical teaching found in Gospel of Matthew 20:26-28, where Jesus redefines leadership as an act of humble service rather than authority-centered domination. The teacher's ability to embody humility while guiding students academically and spiritually contributes to the creation of a learning environment that encourages participation, trust, and mutual respect. In the context of Christian Religious Education, such leadership practices are particularly important because the teacher is expected not only to transmit theological knowledge but also to model the ethical and spiritual values taught in Scripture. Educational researchers have long emphasized that teacher leadership significantly influences student motivation and engagement, as teachers who demonstrate relational and ethical leadership qualities tend to create more positive learning environments (Hattie, 2009). In the present study, students consistently reported that the teacher demonstrated attentiveness, patience, and openness in classroom interactions, characteristics that reflect humility-based leadership. The descriptive results also reveal that the pedagogical dimension of the teacher's leadership is evident in the organization and delivery of classroom instruction. Students indicated that the teacher explains biblical concepts clearly, organizes learning activities effectively, and encourages active participation during lessons. These practices reflect the core elements of pedagogical leadership, which include guiding the learning process, facilitating understanding, and fostering an environment where students feel motivated to engage with the subject matter. The teacher's instructional strategies were perceived by students as structured yet flexible, enabling them to follow the lesson while also contributing their ideas during discussions. This finding supports the view that effective teaching requires both subject mastery and the ability to communicate knowledge in ways that are meaningful and accessible to learners (Darling-Hammond, 2017). In the classroom context observed during the study, the Christian Religious Education teacher integrated biblical narratives, reflective discussions, and practical examples from students' daily experiences. By connecting biblical teachings to real-life situations, the teacher helped students understand the relevance of Christian values in their everyday interactions with peers, family members, and the broader community. Such contextualization is essential in religious education because it allows students to move beyond abstract theological ideas and recognize the practical implications of faith in daily life.

Another important finding relates to the relational dimension of humility-based leadership demonstrated by the teacher. Students reported that the teacher treats them with respect and listens to their opinions during classroom discussions. This behavior reflects the servant leadership principle articulated in Gospel of Matthew 20:26-28, where Jesus emphasizes that true greatness is expressed through service to others. In an educational context, this principle translates into teaching practices that prioritize students' needs, encourage dialogue, and promote collaborative learning. When students feel respected and valued by their teacher, they are more likely to participate actively in the learning process and develop a positive attitude toward the subject being taught. Research in educational psychology suggests that supportive teacher-student relationships are strongly associated with higher levels of student engagement and academic motivation (Wentzel & Miele, 2016). In this study, the teacher's humble attitude appeared to foster an atmosphere of psychological safety in the classroom, where students felt comfortable expressing their thoughts and asking questions about biblical teachings. The influence of humility on pedagogical leadership was also reflected in the teacher's willingness to guide students patiently through the learning process. Students noted that the teacher did not respond with frustration when they encountered difficulties in understanding certain concepts but instead provided additional explanations and encouragement. This patient and supportive approach demonstrates humility in practice, as it prioritizes the growth and development of students rather than the assertion of authority. In Christian pedagogy, humility is often understood as a virtue that enables educators to recognize their role as servants in the educational process, guiding students toward truth while acknowledging the importance of empathy and compassion (Pazmiño, 2008). The teacher's willingness to invest time and effort in helping students understand the material contributed to a learning environment where mistakes were treated as opportunities for growth rather than failures. Such an approach encourages students to develop confidence in their ability to learn and explore biblical teachings more deeply. The results further indicate that humility-based pedagogical leadership contributes positively to students' moral and spiritual development. Christian Religious Education aims not only to provide knowledge about biblical texts but also to shape students' character according to Christian values. In this study, students reported that the teacher often emphasized practical applications of biblical teachings, encouraging them to practice kindness, forgiveness, and cooperation in their daily interactions. These moral lessons were integrated into classroom discussions and activities, enabling students to reflect on how biblical principles could guide their behavior both inside and outside the classroom. The teacher's role as a moral role model was therefore an important component of pedagogical leadership. Students observed the teacher's attitudes and behaviors, including humility, fairness, and willingness to serve others, and these qualities reinforced the moral messages conveyed in the lessons. Educational scholars have noted that students often learn values not only through explicit instruction but also through the implicit example set by teachers' behavior (Palmer, 1998). In this sense, the teacher's personal integrity and humility became a powerful teaching tool that complemented formal instruction.

The small educational context of UPTD SD Negeri 158494 Makarti Nauli also contributed to the effectiveness of humility-based pedagogical leadership. With a relatively limited

number of Christian students participating in Christian Religious Education classes, the teacher was able to establish closer relationships with each student and provide more individualized attention. Students indicated that the teacher frequently interacted with them individually during lessons, asking about their understanding of the material and offering guidance when necessary. This level of personal interaction strengthened the relational dimension of the learning process and enabled the teacher to adapt teaching strategies according to students' needs. Research on classroom dynamics suggests that smaller learning environments often facilitate stronger teacher–student relationships and more interactive learning experiences (Finn, Pannozzo, & Achilles, 2003). In the present study, the small class size allowed the teacher to implement servant leadership principles more effectively by maintaining direct engagement with each student. Another important aspect highlighted by the findings is the influence of humility on classroom communication. Effective communication is a fundamental element of pedagogical leadership because it determines how well students understand the material and how comfortable they feel participating in discussions. Students reported that the teacher used language that was simple, clear, and appropriate for their level of understanding. This communication style helped students grasp biblical concepts more easily and encouraged them to ask questions when they encountered difficulties. Humble leadership often involves the ability to listen actively and respond thoughtfully to others' perspectives. In the classroom setting observed in this study, the teacher demonstrated these qualities by inviting students to share their reflections on biblical stories and acknowledging their contributions during discussions. This interactive communication process created a collaborative learning environment where students felt that their voices were valued. The integration of humility with pedagogical leadership influenced students' perception of authority in the classroom. Instead of perceiving authority as a form of domination, students experienced the teacher's authority as guidance rooted in care and responsibility. This perception reflects the biblical model of leadership presented in Gospel of Matthew 20:26-28, where leadership is expressed through service rather than power. By demonstrating humility in daily teaching practices, the teacher redefined authority as a means of supporting students' growth rather than controlling their behavior. This approach not only strengthened the teacher's credibility but also encouraged students to respect the teacher's guidance. Educational theorists argue that authority grounded in trust and mutual respect is more effective in promoting student engagement than authority based solely on hierarchical control (Owens & Hekman, 2012).

One challenge relates to maintaining students' focus and discipline during classroom activities, particularly when discussions become highly interactive. While open dialogue encourages participation, it also requires careful facilitation to ensure that conversations remain focused on the learning objectives. The teacher addressed this challenge by guiding discussions carefully and reminding students of the lesson's main themes. Another challenge involves balancing humility with instructional authority. Teachers must demonstrate humility without losing the ability to manage the classroom effectively and maintain clear academic expectations. In this study, the teacher appeared to achieve this balance by combining gentle guidance with firm but respectful classroom management. The findings of this study highlight the importance of integrating biblical principles with pedagogical leadership in Christian Religious Education. The example of servant

leadership presented in Gospel of Matthew 20:26-28 provides a valuable framework for understanding how humility can shape effective teaching practices. By prioritizing service, respect, and relational engagement, teachers can create learning environments that support both academic learning and spiritual formation. The experience of students at UPTD SD Negeri 158494 Makarti Nauli demonstrates that humility-based leadership contributes not only to improved classroom interaction but also to the development of moral values consistent with Christian teachings. These findings reinforce the idea that pedagogical leadership in Christian education should extend beyond technical teaching skills to include character formation and spiritual authenticity. When teachers embody the humility taught by Jesus, they become living examples of the values they seek to impart, inspiring students to pursue both knowledge and character development within the framework of Christian faith.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that pedagogical leadership grounded in humility plays an important role in shaping effective learning experiences in Christian Religious Education at UPTD SD Negeri 158494 Makarti Nauli. The findings indicate that when teachers demonstrate leadership characterized by humility, service, and respect toward students, the classroom environment becomes more supportive, participatory, and conducive to learning. Such leadership reflects the biblical principle found in Gospel of Matthew 20:26-28, where true greatness is defined through service rather than authority. In the educational context, this principle is manifested through teaching practices that prioritize students' growth, encourage open communication, and foster meaningful relationships between teachers and learners. The results show that the teacher's pedagogical leadership is expressed through effective instructional organization, clear communication of biblical teachings, and the ability to connect Christian values with students' daily experiences. These practices help students understand the relevance of Christian teachings while also encouraging active participation in the learning process. In addition, humility-based leadership contributes to the development of positive teacher-student relationships, where students feel respected, supported, and motivated to engage with the subject matter. The teacher's willingness to listen, provide guidance patiently, and model Christian character strengthens students' trust and enhances the overall quality of the learning environment. Another important finding of this study is that humility-based pedagogical leadership supports not only students' cognitive understanding but also their moral and spiritual development. In Christian Religious Education, teachers function as both educators and role models who demonstrate the values they teach. By embodying humility, service, and integrity, teachers provide a practical example of the biblical teachings discussed in the classroom. This integration of character and pedagogy enables students to internalize Christian values more effectively and apply them in their daily lives. Pedagogical leadership grounded in humility represents an essential dimension of effective Christian Religious Education. Teachers who integrate professional teaching competence with servant leadership principles can create learning environments that support intellectual growth, moral formation, and spiritual development. Therefore, efforts to strengthen Christian education should emphasize not only pedagogical skills but also the cultivation of humility and service-oriented leadership among teachers. Such

integration will help ensure that Christian Religious Education fulfills its broader mission of shaping students who are both knowledgeable and guided by Christian values in their interactions with others.

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