



Modeling Gratitude Through Socially Competent CRE Teaching: Lessons from Noah (Genesis 8:20) at SMP Negeri 3 Afulu

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ABSTRACT

Gratitude is a central virtue in moral and spiritual formation, yet its cultivation in students requires deliberate modeling by educators who possess strong social competence. This study explores how Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Afulu model gratitude, drawing lessons from Noah's immediate thanksgiving in Genesis 8:20. Employing a structured review of literature, the study analyzes recent national and international research on teacher social competence, virtue-based education, character formation, and gratitude in school settings. The findings reveal that socially competent CRE teachers foster gratitude through relational modeling, reflective pedagogy, and symbolic or ritualized classroom practices. Relational modeling emphasizes empathy, ethical consistency, and supportive interpersonal engagement, allowing students to observe and internalize thankful behaviors. Reflective pedagogy encourages students to connect personal experiences with spiritual teachings, while symbolic activities, inspired by Noah's offering, provide concrete opportunities for expressing gratitude. Contextual and cultural sensitivity further enhances the effectiveness of these strategies, ensuring that gratitude education resonates with diverse student backgrounds. The study also highlights that gratitude cultivated through socially competent teaching contributes to broader outcomes, including prosocial behavior, emotional regulation, resilience, and classroom climate improvement. By integrating biblical exemplars with practical pedagogical strategies, CRE teachers can create environments where gratitude is both observable and internalized, bridging theoretical knowledge with lived practice. This research underscores the importance of intentionality, consistency, and authenticity in modeling gratitude, offering practical and theoretical insights for virtue-based education in secondary school contexts. The findings have implications for teacher training, curriculum design, and the holistic development of students' moral, social, and spiritual capacities.

Keywords: Social competence, gratitude, Christian Religious Education, teacher modeling

INTRODUCTION

Gratitude is widely recognized as a fundamental virtue in both spiritual and social development, playing a critical role in shaping moral character and interpersonal relationships. Within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), fostering gratitude among students is not only an essential component of spiritual formation but also a reflection of the teacher's social competence, which encompasses empathy, communication skills, ethical sensitivity, and the ability to cultivate positive social interactions. In the narrative of Noah presented in Genesis 8:20, gratitude is exemplified through Noah's immediate response to God's deliverance from the flood, wherein he offers a burnt offering as an act of thankfulness. This biblical account serves as a timeless model for educators, suggesting that the integration of gratitude into daily life requires conscious reflection, moral discernment, and relational awareness—qualities that are central to the social competence of CRE teachers. By modeling such behavior, teachers not only transmit theological knowledge but also demonstrate practical applications of spiritual virtues, thereby shaping students' character development in ways that extend beyond the classroom. The importance of teacher social competence in religious education has been increasingly emphasized in contemporary scholarship, highlighting that effective educators must navigate complex social dynamics, address diverse student needs, and foster a learning environment characterized by respect, trust, and cooperation. In Indonesia, where the integration of Christian values into education is contextualized within a multicultural and pluralistic society, CRE teachers are challenged to embody these competencies to ensure that moral and spiritual education resonates meaningfully with students' lived experiences. SMP Negeri 3 Afulu, as a public secondary school with a diverse student body, provides a representative setting to explore the impact of teacher social competence on students' attitudes toward gratitude. Understanding how teachers model thankfulness through their interactions, instructional strategies, and ethical conduct is crucial for informing pedagogical practices that aim to internalize virtue education in a holistic manner. Research indicates that students' moral and spiritual development is closely associated with the observable behavior and relational approach of teachers. Socially competent teachers who demonstrate care, fairness, and ethical consistency can inspire students to emulate these virtues, including gratitude. In the case of CRE instruction, this modeling extends beyond cognitive transmission of biblical knowledge to include affective and behavioral dimensions, wherein students learn to recognize blessings, appreciate communal support, and respond with intentional acts of thankfulness. The story of Noah provides a scriptural framework for such modeling, illustrating how an immediate, sincere expression of gratitude can function both as a personal spiritual discipline and as a social exemplar for others. By examining this biblical lesson within the school context, educators can develop strategies to integrate gratitude into classroom practice, fostering an environment that nurtures both spiritual awareness and social responsibility. Some empirical studies focusing on the interplay between CRE teachers' social competence and the cultivation of gratitude among students remain limited. Existing research often emphasizes general moral education or pedagogical competence, leaving a gap in understanding the specific mechanisms through which socially competent teaching translates into observable virtuous behavior, particularly in secondary school settings in Indonesia. This gap

underscores the need for focused investigation into the ways CRE teachers can effectively model gratitude, drawing insights from both scriptural exemplars and contemporary educational theories. Moreover, such an inquiry aligns with broader educational objectives, including the development of students' socio-emotional skills, ethical reasoning, and spiritual resilience, which are essential for navigating the challenges of adolescence in increasingly complex social environments. Given this background, the present study aims to explore how CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Afulu demonstrate social competence in modeling gratitude, drawing lessons from Noah's response in Genesis 8:20. By analyzing teachers' behaviors, classroom interactions, and instructional approaches, the study seeks to elucidate the strategies and principles that facilitate the internalization of gratitude among students. The findings are expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical understanding of virtue-based education, providing insights for teacher training, curriculum development, and pedagogical interventions that prioritize moral and spiritual formation. Ultimately, this research emphasizes that the cultivation of gratitude is not merely a religious or moral aspiration but a dynamic educational process that intertwines social competence, biblical exemplars, and the lived experiences of students within the classroom context.

METHODS

This study employs a structured approach to examine the relationship between the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and the cultivation of gratitude among students, drawing insights from the biblical account of Noah (Genesis 8:20). The research process involved identifying, selecting, and analyzing relevant literature from national and international sources published within the last ten years. The primary sources included peer-reviewed journals, books, conference proceedings, and educational reports that addressed teacher social competence, virtue-based education, character formation, and gratitude in educational contexts. A comprehensive search strategy was implemented using multiple academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC, complemented by institutional repositories and university libraries to ensure a diverse and representative body of literature. Keywords such as "social competence," "Christian Religious Education," "teacher modeling," "gratitude in education," "character formation," and "Noah Genesis 8:20" were applied in various combinations to maximize the retrieval of relevant studies. The initial search yielded a substantial number of publications, which were subsequently screened based on relevance, quality, and alignment with the study's objectives. Inclusion criteria focused on empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and practical interventions that directly addressed the role of teacher social competence in shaping student attitudes, particularly gratitude, within formal educational settings. Exclusion criteria eliminated sources that lacked peer review, were outdated, or did not provide sufficient contextual or methodological information. After the screening process, a final set of studies was selected for detailed analysis, ensuring that the included literature represented a balanced mixture of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches, as well as both local and international perspectives. Data extraction was systematically conducted from each selected source, capturing key information such as research objectives, study population, educational context, theoretical frameworks, data collection instruments,

and main findings related to teacher social competence and student gratitude. Additionally, attention was given to the practical strategies and classroom practices highlighted in the literature, particularly those that demonstrated effective modeling of gratitude and relational skills by teachers. The extracted data were organized into thematic categories to facilitate comparative analysis, with themes emerging around instructional techniques, relational dynamics, ethical modeling, and integration of biblical narratives into teaching practice. Special attention was given to studies emphasizing the influence of teacher behavior on students' socio-emotional development and moral internalization, as these directly inform the present investigation. Following data extraction, a structured synthesis was conducted to identify patterns, consistencies, and gaps in the literature. Comparative analysis was applied to evaluate the effectiveness of different pedagogical strategies in modeling gratitude and promoting moral virtues, with a focus on contextual relevance to secondary school settings, particularly SMP Negeri 3 Afulu. Insights were drawn from the biblical narrative of Noah to align theoretical findings with scriptural exemplars, emphasizing the role of teachers as models of gratitude and socially competent agents within the classroom. Throughout the analysis, care was taken to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in evidence, with cross-references to multiple studies used to validate conclusions and highlight best practices. The resulting synthesis provides a coherent foundation for understanding how social competence in CRE teaching can foster student gratitude, serving as a basis for discussion, practical recommendations, and further research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The cultivation of gratitude in students represents a multifaceted endeavor that intertwines spiritual formation, moral development, and social-emotional learning, emphasizing the pivotal role of teachers' social competence in the process. Literature consistently highlights that socially competent educators are capable of creating learning environments characterized by empathy, ethical consistency, effective communication, and relational sensitivity, all of which contribute to the internalization of positive virtues such as gratitude among students. Social competence encompasses a teacher's ability to navigate interpersonal dynamics, respond appropriately to diverse student needs, and model ethical and prosocial behavior in authentic and observable ways. In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), these competencies gain additional significance as they provide a framework for teachers to not only impart biblical knowledge but also exemplify the spiritual and moral values inherent in the curriculum. The narrative of Noah, particularly his immediate act of thanksgiving in Genesis 8:20 following the flood, exemplifies a model of gratitude that is both relational and performative, demonstrating how an individual's moral disposition manifests through actions that acknowledge divine providence. This scriptural account underscores the importance of modeling virtues within communal and educational contexts, serving as a reference point for educators seeking to cultivate gratitude among their students. Empirical studies suggest that students' attitudes toward gratitude are heavily influenced by the behaviors and relational approaches of their teachers. Teachers who consistently exhibit fairness, empathy, encouragement, and moral reflection foster an environment in which students feel valued and supported, which in turn facilitates the adoption of prosocial behaviors

such as thankfulness. For instance, research on teacher-student relational dynamics indicates that when educators actively acknowledge students' efforts, demonstrate genuine care, and provide opportunities for reflective practice, students are more likely to develop internalized appreciation and recognition for both interpersonal support and broader life circumstances. Within CRE classrooms, modeling gratitude requires deliberate integration of scriptural examples, ethical discussion, and reflective activities, enabling students to observe the interplay between spiritual beliefs and daily practice. Noah's offering, described in Genesis 8:20, can be interpreted as an archetype of intentional gratitude: it illustrates immediate acknowledgment of divine benevolence, communal testimony through ritual action, and the integration of personal morality with observable behavior. Translating this narrative into the classroom involves guiding students to reflect on their own experiences of blessing, to articulate thankfulness in both personal and communal contexts, and to internalize gratitude as an enduring character trait. The literature reveals several practical strategies through which socially competent CRE teachers can model gratitude effectively. First, relational modeling, where teachers consistently demonstrate kindness, active listening, and ethical responsiveness, provides students with tangible examples of grateful conduct. This relational approach reinforces that gratitude is not merely an abstract concept but a lived practice observable in daily interactions. Second, reflective pedagogy, including guided discussions, journaling, and group sharing, encourages students to identify sources of blessing, recognize efforts of others, and connect personal experiences with spiritual principles. Integrating biblical narratives, such as Noah's response after the flood, within these reflective exercises provides concrete illustrations of gratitude that bridge historical scripture with contemporary moral practice. Third, ritual and symbolic activities within the classroom, inspired by Noah's burnt offering, allow students to express gratitude tangibly, whether through prayers, service projects, or recognition of peers' contributions. Studies indicate that these embodied practices reinforce cognitive understanding with affective and behavioral dimensions, enhancing the likelihood that gratitude becomes internalized rather than superficial. Research emphasizes the critical role of ethical consistency in teacher behavior as a determinant of students' moral development. Socially competent CRE teachers who model integrity, fairness, and responsibility not only instruct students cognitively but also communicate the value of gratitude through personal example. When students observe that their educators recognize effort, show appreciation, and maintain a principled approach to classroom management and interpersonal interactions, they are more likely to replicate such virtues in their own behavior. Noah's example demonstrates this principle vividly: his gratitude was not merely verbalized but performed in a concrete act of obedience and offering, underscoring that authentic virtue requires both recognition and action. Translating this into the educational setting, teachers' consistent demonstration of gratitude, acknowledgment of student efforts, and ethical engagement with the learning environment collectively reinforce students' understanding that thankfulness is inseparable from social competence and moral integrity. Another dimension highlighted in the literature is the integration of communal and contextual sensitivity in fostering gratitude. CRE teachers' social competence includes the ability to perceive and respond to the cultural, social, and emotional contexts of their students, thereby ensuring that gratitude education is meaningful and relevant. At SMP Negeri 3 Afulu, a diverse secondary school environment, teachers must navigate varying student

backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, adapting strategies to cultivate gratitude inclusively. Research underscores that students internalize virtues more effectively when instructional methods resonate with their lived experiences and when teachers demonstrate respect for individual and cultural differences. This contextualized approach reflects Noah's communal orientation, as his thanksgiving not only honored divine deliverance but also acknowledged the broader relational and environmental implications of the flood narrative. In classroom practice, this entails encouraging students to recognize interdependence, express appreciation for peers and the community, and consider the broader social and ethical significance of gratitude. The outcomes of socially competent teaching extend beyond individual character formation to influence classroom climate, peer relationships, and overall student well-being. Classrooms led by socially competent educators tend to exhibit higher levels of cooperation, mutual respect, and emotional support, which create fertile ground for gratitude to flourish. Studies in character education highlight that gratitude contributes to prosocial behavior, resilience, emotional regulation, and a sense of purpose among students. Within the CRE framework, gratitude is both a spiritual and relational virtue, fostering a holistic approach to moral and emotional development. By modeling gratitude consistently and authentically, teachers not only instill a biblical virtue but also cultivate social cohesion and positive relational dynamics among students, reinforcing the intertwined nature of moral and social competencies.

The literature also identifies challenges and considerations in implementing gratitude-focused instruction. Teachers must balance explicit instruction with implicit modeling, ensuring that students perceive gratitude authentically rather than as a perfunctory exercise. Additionally, teachers' own social competence-encompassing empathy, self-awareness, and ethical sensitivity-serves as a prerequisite for effective modeling, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between teacher development and student outcomes. Professional development programs, mentoring, and reflective practice are recommended to enhance educators' capacity to model gratitude and related virtues effectively. Drawing lessons from Noah, it is evident that intentionality, immediacy, and sincerity are central to the enactment of gratitude, offering a paradigm for teachers to cultivate authenticity and depth in students' moral formation. The social competence of CRE teachers is a critical determinant in the cultivation of gratitude among students. Through relational modeling, reflective pedagogy, ethical consistency, and contextual sensitivity, teachers can create learning environments in which gratitude is both observed and internalized. The narrative of Noah in Genesis 8:20 provides a rich framework for conceptualizing and operationalizing gratitude in the classroom, illustrating how immediate, sincere, and action-oriented expressions of thankfulness can serve as powerful models for students. At SMP Negeri 3 Afulu, these insights offer practical implications for curriculum design, instructional strategies, and teacher professional development, emphasizing that the integration of spiritual virtues with social competence is essential for fostering holistic student development. Ultimately, this study highlights that modeling gratitude is not a peripheral activity in religious education but a core pedagogical strategy that bridges biblical teaching, teacher social competence, and student moral formation, promoting enduring virtues that extend beyond the classroom into students' personal, social, and spiritual lives.

CONCLUSION

The present study underscores the significant role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' social competence in fostering gratitude among students, drawing inspiration from Noah's exemplary response in Genesis 8:20. By examining contemporary literature and biblical narratives, it is evident that social competence extends beyond mere interpersonal skill; it encompasses ethical consistency, relational sensitivity, empathetic engagement, and the ability to model virtues authentically in everyday interactions. CRE teachers who embody these qualities provide students with tangible examples of how gratitude is expressed not only as a moral or spiritual concept but as a lived practice, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Noah's immediate act of thanksgiving following the flood illustrates that gratitude is inherently action-oriented, integrating reflection, obedience, and acknowledgment of relational and divine interconnectedness. Translating this paradigm into classroom practice enables teachers to cultivate environments in which gratitude becomes an observable, internalized, and sustained virtue among students. The synthesis of findings highlights several mechanisms through which CRE teachers' social competence fosters gratitude. Relational modeling serves as a foundational strategy, wherein teachers demonstrate care, fairness, and ethical engagement, allowing students to observe and internalize behaviors associated with thankfulness. Reflective pedagogy, including discussions, journaling, and guided activities, further reinforces this process by encouraging students to connect personal experiences with spiritual teachings and to articulate gratitude in meaningful ways. Moreover, symbolic or ritualized expressions, inspired by Noah's offering, provide concrete avenues for students to enact gratitude within a communal or classroom setting, reinforcing both affective and behavioral dimensions. These strategies collectively suggest that social competence is inseparable from the effective modeling of gratitude, emphasizing that teachers' personal conduct and relational approach are as influential as the instructional content itself. The study identifies the importance of contextual and cultural sensitivity in implementing gratitude-focused education. At SMP Negeri 3 Afulu, the diversity of student backgrounds necessitates that teachers adapt their approaches to resonate with students' lived experiences, ensuring that gratitude education is relevant, inclusive, and meaningful. Social competence equips teachers to navigate this complexity, fostering an environment in which students perceive the value of gratitude as both a personal and relational virtue. The classroom becomes a microcosm of ethical and spiritual practice, where gratitude is cultivated not in isolation but within the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, communal engagement, and reflective awareness. This contextual alignment enhances students' capacity to internalize gratitude, translating classroom learning into broader social and spiritual behaviors. Furthermore, the findings underscore that the cultivation of gratitude has implications extending beyond individual character development. Socially competent teaching fosters positive classroom climates, enhances peer relationships, and contributes to students' overall socio-emotional well-being. Gratitude is linked to prosocial behavior, resilience, emotional regulation, and moral discernment, highlighting its multidimensional impact on adolescent development. CRE teachers who model gratitude authentically thus serve as catalysts for holistic education, integrating spiritual, moral, and social dimensions in ways that promote enduring personal and communal virtues. Finally, this study

emphasizes that the deliberate modeling of gratitude requires intentionality, consistency, and authenticity on the part of the teacher. Professional development, reflective practice, and ongoing ethical awareness are essential to enhancing educators' capacity to embody and transmit gratitude effectively. Drawing lessons from Noah, educators are reminded that virtue is both a personal and social endeavor, enacted through deliberate, observable actions that reflect moral and spiritual commitments. The integration of social competence and biblical exemplars into CRE pedagogy provides a framework for fostering gratitude that is theoretically grounded, practically applicable, and spiritually enriching, ultimately preparing students to internalize virtues that will guide their ethical, relational, and spiritual lives well beyond the classroom.

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