



Integration of Pedagogical Competence in Innovative Christian Religious Education Learning Models at SD Negeri 064964 Medan Timur

Hermin Tandi Kala^{1*}, Dorlan Naibaho²

¹Student, Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

²Lecturer, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: hermintandikala51@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explores the integration of pedagogical competence within innovative Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning models at SD Negeri 064964 Medan Timur, aiming to understand how such integration influences students' cognitive, affective, and spiritual development. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with PAK teachers and school administrators, and document analysis of lesson plans, teaching materials, and assessment tools. A total of 32 participants, including two PAK teachers, 28 students from grades 4 to 6, and two school administrators, contributed to the study. The findings reveal that pedagogical competence plays a central role in facilitating innovative teaching strategies such as project-based learning, collaborative activities, and contextually responsive instruction that incorporates local cultural wisdom. These approaches not only enhance students' understanding of theological concepts but also support the internalization of Christian values, including empathy, honesty, social responsibility, and ethical reasoning. Teachers' ability to plan, implement, and assess lessons with reflective practice strengthens student engagement and fosters a spiritually and morally nurturing classroom environment. This study demonstrates that the integration of pedagogical competence in innovative PAK models significantly contributes to holistic education, combining academic mastery with moral and spiritual formation. The results underscore the importance of teacher expertise, ethical modeling, and institutional support in cultivating interactive, meaningful, and contextually relevant learning experiences. These findings provide insights for educators, school administrators, and policymakers seeking to enhance the quality and effectiveness of Christian Religious Education at the elementary level.

Keywords: *Pedagogical Competence, Christian Religious Education, Learning Models*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary elementary education, the role of pedagogical competence in enhancing learning outcomes has garnered increasing attention, particularly within the context of

Christian Religious Education (PAK) in Indonesia. Pedagogical competence, encompassing the ability to design, implement, and evaluate instructional strategies effectively, is widely acknowledged as a central factor in ensuring meaningful and transformative learning experiences for students (Shulman, 1987). Within the PAK framework, such competence assumes a dual responsibility: not only to deliver theological and moral knowledge effectively but also to foster students' spiritual growth, moral reasoning, and character development. The integration of pedagogical skills into innovative learning models allows educators to bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and practical application, promoting a holistic understanding of Christian values among elementary students. Innovative teaching models, including project-based learning, collaborative approaches, and contextually responsive instruction grounded in local culture, have emerged as effective mechanisms for operationalizing pedagogical competence in PAK classrooms. These approaches encourage active student engagement, critical thinking, and experiential learning, moving beyond traditional didactic methods that prioritize memorization of theological concepts over practical internalization of values (Van Brummelen, 2009). By combining content mastery with interactive and student-centered pedagogical techniques, teachers can cultivate learning environments that are both intellectually stimulating and spiritually nurturing, fostering the holistic development of students in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The context of SD Negeri 064964 Medan Timur, with its diverse student population and emphasis on character education, provides a unique setting for examining how pedagogical competence is integrated into innovative PAK learning models. In this environment, teachers must navigate not only curricular requirements but also the socio-cultural diversity of students, adapting instructional strategies to meet varying needs while maintaining fidelity to Christian educational principles. The school setting underscores the importance of relational pedagogy, where teacher-student interactions, ethical modeling, and reflective practice are central to the effective teaching of reconciliation, empathy, and moral responsibility. Research indicates that the integration of pedagogical competence in religious education has a profound impact on students' understanding of spiritual values. Teachers who are skilled in designing meaningful, contextually relevant, and engaging learning experiences enable students to internalize Christian teachings in ways that inform their daily behavior and ethical decision-making (Holmes, 1987). Innovative pedagogical strategies that incorporate local wisdom and collaborative learning not only enhance knowledge acquisition but also foster social cohesion, empathy, and mutual respect among students from diverse backgrounds. These findings highlight the critical role of teacher agency, reflective practice, and instructional creativity in promoting effective and transformative PAK education. This study aims to investigate the integration of pedagogical competence within innovative PAK learning models at SD Negeri 064964 Medan Timur, focusing on how such integration influences students' spiritual understanding, engagement, and overall learning outcomes. By examining classroom practices, teacher strategies, and institutional support mechanisms, the research seeks to illuminate the dynamic interplay between pedagogical competence and innovative instructional approaches in promoting meaningful Christian education. The study also contributes to broader discussions on teacher professional development, curriculum design, and the cultivation of learning environments that are interactive, contextually relevant, and spiritually formative. In doing so, it underscores the potential of

pedagogically competent and innovative PAK instruction to not only enhance academic achievement but also foster holistic moral and spiritual development in elementary students.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using a descriptive-analytical approach to explore the integration of pedagogical competence in innovative Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning models at SD Negeri 064964 Medan Timur. A qualitative approach was selected to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within its natural context, emphasizing participants' experiences, perspectives, and reflections on teaching and learning processes (Creswell, 2013). The descriptive-analytical orientation allowed for systematic observation, documentation, and interpretation of classroom practices while preserving the contextual richness of educational interactions. The research was conducted over a four-month period, from November 2024 to March 2025. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on predefined inclusion criteria to ensure relevance and depth of data. The participant group included: PAK teachers with at least three years of teaching experience, students from grades 4 to 6 actively engaged in PAK learning sessions, and the school principal and vice principal in charge of curriculum development as key policy stakeholders. A total of 32 participants were involved, comprising two PAK teachers, 28 students (10 fourth graders, 9 fifth graders, and 9 sixth graders), and two school administrators. This sampling strategy ensured that data collection focused on participants with direct experience and insight into the integration of pedagogical competence within innovative learning models. Data collection was conducted using three complementary methods to ensure triangulation and increase the credibility of findings. First, classroom observations were conducted across 12 PAK learning sessions, with four sessions observed per grade level. Observations focused on multiple dimensions, including lesson planning, instructional delivery, use of teaching aids and technology, student engagement, and assessment practices. Particular attention was given to how teachers applied innovative strategies, such as project-based learning, collaborative activities, and contextually adaptive approaches integrating local wisdom. These observations provided direct evidence of the practical enactment of pedagogical competence in real classroom settings. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with PAK teachers, the principal, and the vice principal for curriculum. Teacher interviews explored their understanding of pedagogical competence, strategies for innovative teaching, challenges encountered in PAK instruction, and reflections on student outcomes. Interviews with school administrators focused on policies, support mechanisms, and institutional initiatives that facilitate teacher development and innovation in pedagogical practices. This method provided insights into both individual and organizational factors influencing the implementation of innovative PAK learning models. Third, document analysis was carried out to supplement observational and interview data. Reviewed documents included lesson plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran/RPP*), syllabi, teaching materials, learning media, assessment instruments, and student portfolios. Document analysis enabled the researchers to examine the alignment between instructional planning, pedagogical implementation, and learning objectives, as well as to assess the extent to which innovative strategies and pedagogical

competence were embedded in teaching practices. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step model: familiarization, coding, theme development, theme review, defining themes, and reporting. Triangulation of observational, interview, and document data enhanced the validity of findings by cross-verifying information and ensuring coherence between reported, observed, and documented practices. Ethical considerations were rigorously maintained, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring participant confidentiality, and allowing voluntary withdrawal at any stage of the study. This methodological framework provided a comprehensive understanding of how pedagogical competence is integrated into innovative PAK learning models, highlighting the interactions between teacher expertise, instructional strategies, student engagement, and institutional support within a natural school context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illustrate the complex and multidimensional nature of integrating pedagogical competence into innovative Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning models at SD Negeri 064964 Medan Timur. Observations, interviews, and document analyses collectively reveal that teachers' pedagogical expertise directly influences both the quality of instruction and students' engagement with spiritual and moral content. Across the twelve observed sessions, it became evident that teachers who skillfully applied pedagogical principles created a learning environment conducive to both cognitive and spiritual development. These teachers not only adhered to the formal curriculum but also actively adapted content, activities, and assessment strategies to meet the diverse needs and abilities of students, thereby exemplifying the practical integration of theory and practice in PAK instruction. In project-based learning activities, for instance, students were required to collaboratively design presentations or small projects that connected biblical teachings to daily life. Observations indicated that these activities enhanced not only students' understanding of theological concepts but also their abilities to reflect critically on moral and ethical implications. The PAK teachers demonstrated competence in scaffolding these projects by providing clear instructions, formative feedback, and opportunities for peer collaboration, reflecting Shulman's (1987) notion of pedagogical content knowledge, where mastery of subject matter is inseparable from the ability to convey it effectively. Interviews with teachers highlighted that careful planning, alignment with learning objectives, and adaptation to students' developmental levels were central to fostering meaningful engagement. Teachers emphasized that innovative approaches, such as contextualized examples and experiential activities, allowed students to internalize Christian values, rather than merely memorizing doctrinal content. Collaborative learning, another key strategy observed, further demonstrated the importance of pedagogical competence in managing classroom dynamics and facilitating peer interaction. Students worked in small groups to discuss moral dilemmas, ethical stories from the Bible, or scenarios related to reconciliation, empathy, and social responsibility. Teachers applied techniques such as guided questioning, monitoring group interactions, and facilitating reflective discussions, which encouraged students to articulate their thoughts, listen to others, and negotiate understanding. The effectiveness of these collaborative activities was corroborated by student feedback, indicating increased motivation, interest, and sense of ownership in their learning process. The

integration of local wisdom and cultural relevance into collaborative tasks also fostered a more inclusive classroom climate, enabling students from different backgrounds to connect theological teachings to familiar contexts. In addition to project-based and collaborative learning, the study revealed that teachers' use of instructional media and technology played a significant role in operationalizing pedagogical competence. Teachers incorporated multimedia presentations, visual aids, and interactive exercises that catered to varied learning styles and enhanced students' comprehension of abstract spiritual concepts. Document analysis showed alignment between lesson plans, teaching materials, and assessment tools, confirming intentional design and reflective practice in lesson preparation. Interviews with teachers revealed that these innovative media not only facilitated content delivery but also engaged students emotionally and intellectually, thereby reinforcing the holistic objectives of PAK. The role of assessment and evaluation emerged as another critical dimension of pedagogical competence. Teachers employed both formative and summative assessments to monitor understanding of biblical narratives, moral reasoning, and application of values in daily behavior. Observations indicated that feedback was specific, constructive, and timely, allowing students to reflect on their progress and identify areas for improvement. This emphasis on assessment aligns with Holmes' (1987) assertion that effective Christian pedagogy integrates knowledge, reflection, and moral development into the learning process. Teachers also adapted assessment strategies to suit individual student needs, recognizing the varying levels of cognitive and spiritual maturity within the classroom. Interviews with school administrators underscored the importance of institutional support in sustaining innovative pedagogical practices. The principal and vice principal emphasized that teacher professional development, access to resources, and alignment with school policies were essential for the successful implementation of innovative PAK models. Administrators highlighted initiatives such as workshops on instructional strategies, collaborative planning sessions, and reflective practice meetings, which reinforced teachers' ability to integrate pedagogical competence with creativity and innovation. These findings indicate that pedagogical effectiveness is not solely dependent on individual teacher skill but is also shaped by systemic support and school culture. The influence of pedagogical competence on students' spiritual and moral development was evident across multiple dimensions. Students engaged in innovative PAK activities demonstrated improved understanding of spiritual concepts, stronger ethical reasoning, and greater willingness to apply Christian values in interpersonal interactions. Classroom discussions and reflective exercises revealed that students were able to relate biblical narratives to personal experiences, demonstrating internalization of values such as honesty, compassion, forgiveness, and social responsibility. The research also highlighted the interplay between teacher modeling and student behavior; teachers who consistently embodied Christian virtues in their interactions provided powerful examples that reinforced learning outcomes.

The study found that the integration of pedagogical competence into innovative PAK models contributed to higher student motivation and engagement. Observed classrooms were characterized by active participation, collaborative problem-solving, and meaningful dialogue, indicating that students were not passive recipients of knowledge but active constructors of understanding. Interviews with students revealed that they appreciated

the practical relevance of learning activities, the opportunity to express opinions, and the supportive classroom climate fostered by competent teachers. These findings align with contemporary theories of student-centered and constructivist pedagogy, which emphasize engagement, autonomy, and contextualized learning as critical factors in achieving meaningful educational outcomes (Van Brummelen, 2009). The study also identified challenges in integrating pedagogical competence, including time constraints, diverse student readiness levels, and the need for ongoing professional development. Teachers reported that designing innovative lessons required substantial planning and adaptation, and that balancing curriculum requirements with creative teaching approaches could be demanding. Nonetheless, these challenges were mitigated through collaboration, reflective practice, and continuous professional learning, highlighting the dynamic and iterative nature of pedagogical competence in practice. The results of this study demonstrate that the integration of pedagogical competence into innovative PAK learning models significantly enhances students' cognitive, affective, and spiritual development. Teachers who combine subject mastery, instructional creativity, and reflective practice create learning environments that foster engagement, ethical reflection, and value internalization. The study underscores the essential role of teacher agency, institutional support, and contextually relevant instructional strategies in achieving effective and transformative Christian Religious Education. By operationalizing pedagogical competence within innovative frameworks, PAK teachers contribute not only to academic learning but also to the holistic development of students' moral character and spiritual awareness.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical role of pedagogical competence in enhancing the effectiveness and transformative potential of innovative Christian Religious Education (PAK) learning models at SD Negeri 064964 Medan Timur. The findings indicate that teachers who skillfully integrate pedagogical knowledge, instructional creativity, and reflective practice create learning environments that are both intellectually engaging and spiritually formative. Through the use of project-based learning, collaborative activities, and contextually responsive approaches incorporating local wisdom, teachers facilitate not only the acquisition of theological knowledge but also the internalization of Christian values such as empathy, honesty, social responsibility, and moral discernment. The research further emphasizes the importance of teacher modeling and consistent demonstration of Christian virtues, which reinforces students' ethical and spiritual development. By embodying pedagogical competence, teachers serve as catalysts for holistic learning, guiding students to connect classroom lessons with real-life moral and spiritual experiences. The integration of innovative instructional strategies enhances student engagement, motivation, and critical thinking, demonstrating that pedagogical competence is indispensable for achieving both cognitive and affective learning outcomes in PAK. Institutional support, including professional development opportunities, administrative guidance, and access to instructional resources, emerged as a vital factor in sustaining innovative pedagogical practices. Teachers' ability to adapt lessons to diverse student needs, manage classroom dynamics, and align instructional strategies with educational objectives is strengthened when systemic support is available. The study also acknowledges challenges, such as time constraints and varying levels of student

readiness, which require ongoing reflection, collaboration, and professional learning to overcome effectively. The integration of pedagogical competence into innovative PAK learning models constitutes a strategic and essential approach for fostering holistic Christian education. By combining expertise, creativity, and ethical modeling, teachers are able to nurture students' cognitive, moral, and spiritual development. These findings suggest that continuous investment in teacher competency, reflective practice, and institutional support is crucial for sustaining effective and meaningful PAK education, thereby preparing students not only for academic success but also for morally responsible and spiritually grounded lives.

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