



## Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching Voluntary Offering Values: An Exegetical Study of Genesis 35:14 at SD Negeri 067262 Medan

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study explores the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers in teaching the values of voluntary offering, based on the exegetical perspective of Genesis 35:14, at SD Negeri 067262 Medan. The research addresses how teachers integrate content knowledge, pedagogical skills, ethical modeling, and reflective practice to facilitate students' understanding and internalization of voluntary giving as an expression of obedience, gratitude, and spiritual responsibility. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and school administrators, and analysis of teaching documents, including lesson plans, teaching materials, and student portfolios. Findings indicate that professional competence significantly shapes students' engagement, comprehension, and moral development. Teachers applied innovative learning models, such as project-based activities, collaborative discussions, and experiential exercises, which allowed students to connect biblical principles with everyday practices of generosity. Reflective teaching and ethical modeling by teachers further enhanced the authenticity of learning, enabling students to internalize values rather than merely following procedures. Institutional support, including administrative guidance and access to teaching resources, also played a crucial role in sustaining effective teaching practices. The study concludes that professional competence is pivotal for translating theological knowledge into meaningful learning experiences, fostering holistic development encompassing cognitive, affective, and spiritual domains. By demonstrating how professional expertise and pedagogical innovation can nurture morally and spiritually mature learners, this research provides practical implications for PAK teachers, school administrators, and policymakers in enhancing the quality of Christian Religious Education in elementary school settings.*

**Keywords:** *Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Voluntary Offering*

## INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education in elementary schools plays a pivotal role in shaping students' spiritual, moral, and ethical development, bridging theological concepts with everyday practice. One aspect of this education involves cultivating values related to generosity, stewardship, and voluntary offerings, which are essential for nurturing both personal faith and social responsibility. The biblical narrative in Genesis 35:14 provides a rich exegetical framework for understanding these values. The verse states, *"And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where God had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering upon it, and he poured oil on it"* (Genesis 35:14, ESV). This narrative highlights the deliberate, intentional, and heartfelt nature of voluntary offerings, emphasizing both obedience to God and the internal disposition of the giver. Jacob's act reflects an integration of reverence, gratitude, and personal commitment, establishing a model for spiritual practice that extends into educational contexts, particularly in teaching children the meaning and value of giving freely from the heart. Genesis 35:14 demonstrates that voluntary offerings are not mere ritualistic acts but are embedded within relational and covenantal contexts. Jacob's offering is a response to divine encounter and guidance, illustrating that teaching such values in school requires more than instructing procedural knowledge; it necessitates fostering internalized understanding and spiritual awareness. Scholars of biblical pedagogy, such as Childs (2004), argue that narratives like these function as formative texts, providing ethical paradigms that can be translated into everyday behaviors and decision-making processes. In the context of PAK, teachers act as mediators of these values, interpreting biblical principles in ways that are developmentally appropriate for children while remaining faithful to the theological intent of the scripture.

Professional competence of PAK teachers encompasses content mastery, pedagogical skills, classroom management, and ethical integrity, all of which are crucial for effectively conveying spiritual values such as voluntary giving. According to Shulman (1987), teachers' pedagogical content knowledge is central to their ability to transform abstract theological concepts into engaging and meaningful learning experiences. In practice, this means that a teacher must not only understand the theological significance of Genesis 35:14 but also design learning activities, discussions, and reflective exercises that allow students to connect scriptural teaching with their own experiences of generosity, stewardship, and empathy. Furthermore, the professional competence of teachers includes reflective and relational skills, enabling them to model ethical behavior and inspire voluntary action in students. The context of SD Negeri 067262 Medan provides a unique opportunity to explore how professional competence in PAK can be operationalized. As a public elementary school situated within a diverse sociocultural and religious environment, teachers must navigate challenges such as varying student readiness, differences in family background, and institutional expectations while maintaining fidelity to Christian teachings. Observations in similar educational settings suggest that students are highly influenced by teacher modeling, classroom climate, and the authenticity of instructional delivery (Palmer, 1998; Situmorang, 2019). Therefore, teachers' professional competence is not solely an academic requirement but a moral and spiritual responsibility that shapes students' understanding of voluntary offering as both

a personal and communal practice. This study aims to examine how PAK teachers at SD Negeri 067262 Medan integrate professional competence in teaching the values of voluntary offering, drawing from the theological and ethical implications of Genesis 35:14. By focusing on the intersection of professional expertise, pedagogical strategy, and biblical fidelity, this research seeks to illuminate effective practices for nurturing generosity and spiritual awareness in elementary students. Understanding how teachers embody these competencies in real classroom settings provides valuable insights into the formation of morally grounded, spiritually reflective, and socially responsible learners, contributing both to the field of Christian Religious Education and to broader discussions on values-based pedagogy in pluralistic educational contexts.

## METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach to examine how professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers is applied in teaching voluntary offering values at SD Negeri 067262 Medan. A qualitative approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and instructional practices within their natural classroom context (Creswell, 2013). The descriptive-analytical orientation ensures that findings reflect the actual practices and contextual realities of teachers while allowing for critical interpretation of pedagogical strategies, spiritual modeling, and the integration of biblical principles in classroom learning. The research was conducted over a four-month period, from November 2024 to February 2025, at SD Negeri 067262 Medan, a public elementary school characterized by diverse cultural, social, and religious backgrounds. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following inclusion criteria: PAK teachers with a minimum of three years of teaching experience, students from grades 4 to 6 actively participating in PAK lessons, and school administrators, including the principal and vice-principal responsible for curriculum implementation. A total of 30 participants were included: two PAK teachers, 25 students (eight students from grade 4, nine from grade 5, and eight from grade 6), and three school administrators. Data collection combined classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted across twelve PAK sessions (four sessions per grade level) to examine teachers' instructional practices, integration of pedagogical competence, and facilitation of voluntary offering activities. Observational focus included lesson planning, teaching strategies, classroom interactions, use of instructional media, and student engagement. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with PAK teachers to explore their understanding of professional competence, approaches to teaching voluntary offering, and challenges faced in fostering spiritual values. Interviews with school administrators focused on institutional policies, support mechanisms, and expectations regarding teachers' professional development and instructional quality. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), involving steps of familiarization, coding, theme development, reviewing, and reporting. Coding was performed manually to ensure close engagement with participants' narratives and instructional practices. Emergent themes were identified to represent the ways in which professional competence is operationalized in teaching voluntary offering values, reflecting both pedagogical effectiveness and fidelity to biblical principles. Participants provided informed consent and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Reflexive

notes were maintained throughout the research process to minimize researcher bias and ensure respectful representation of participants' faith-based perspectives. This methodological framework allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how professional competence is integrated into PAK instruction, providing insights into effective strategies for nurturing students' spiritual awareness, moral reasoning, and appreciation of voluntary offering within an elementary school setting.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of data collected from classroom observations, interviews, and document review at SD Negeri 067262 Medan reveals that professional competence significantly shapes the teaching and internalization of voluntary offering values among elementary students. Professional competence, as articulated by Shulman (1987), encompasses not only content knowledge but also pedagogical skills, ethical modeling, and reflective practice, all of which emerged as critical dimensions in the study. The PAK teachers demonstrated a strong understanding of Genesis 35:14, interpreting Jacob's act of offering as a paradigm for intentional, heartfelt generosity, which goes beyond mere ritualistic behavior. Teachers consistently highlighted in interviews that voluntary offering is a manifestation of obedience and gratitude to God, and this theological understanding guided the design and implementation of their learning activities. Observations of twelve classroom sessions showed that teachers employed various innovative strategies to make the teaching of voluntary offering meaningful and relatable. Project-based learning activities, such as creating mini offering jars and tracking their contributions over time, were particularly effective in linking biblical principles to practical student experiences. Through these exercises, students learned to associate their actions with spiritual responsibility, seeing voluntary giving not as an obligation but as a personal, joyful practice rooted in faith. Additionally, collaborative activities, such as group discussions and role-playing scenarios, enabled students to articulate their understanding of generosity and to empathize with peers who may have different levels of resources. This approach aligns with the pedagogical principle that moral and spiritual values are best internalized through active engagement and experiential learning, rather than through didactic instruction alone (Palmer, 1998). Interviews with teachers revealed that reflective practice is a central component of their professional competence. Teachers consistently reflected on lesson outcomes, student engagement, and personal modeling of voluntary giving, recognizing that their own behavior serves as a template for students. One teacher noted, *"Students are more attentive to how I act than what I say. If I show genuine commitment to giving and helping others, they begin to mirror that behavior."* This observation supports prior research indicating that teacher modeling is a powerful influence on the ethical and spiritual development of students (Situmorang, 2019). Teachers' ability to connect the theological meaning of Genesis 35:14 with age-appropriate classroom activities underscores the intersection of content mastery and pedagogical creativity, which is essential for fostering both comprehension and internalization of values.

Document analysis further corroborated these findings. Lesson plans consistently included objectives that integrated spiritual, moral, and cognitive outcomes, while

assessment instruments reflected both knowledge acquisition and value internalization. For example, rubrics measured students' participation in offering-related activities, reflections on the spiritual significance of giving, and engagement in collaborative learning tasks. This integration demonstrates that professional competence involves not only instructional delivery but also systematic planning, monitoring, and evaluation of spiritual formation outcomes. Teachers' documentation of their strategies and reflections highlighted their awareness of the importance of alignment between biblical fidelity, pedagogical innovation, and student-centered learning. Another significant finding concerns the role of school leadership in supporting professional competence. Interviews with the principal and vice-principal revealed that institutional encouragement, professional development opportunities, and access to teaching resources enhanced teachers' ability to implement innovative strategies. Administrators emphasized that fostering a culture of excellence and ethical modeling among teachers was essential for sustaining effective PAK instruction. This support network enables teachers to confidently navigate challenges, such as differing levels of student readiness, time constraints, and limited parental involvement, without compromising the depth or authenticity of spiritual instruction. The findings align with Holmes' (1987) assertion that professional competence is reinforced through a supportive institutional environment, which in turn enhances educational quality and student outcomes. The study also highlighted the nuanced understanding students developed regarding voluntary offering. Observed classroom interactions and student reflections indicated that children were not only able to recount the biblical narrative of Jacob but also articulate the underlying values of intentionality, gratitude, and obedience. Students expressed excitement in participating in voluntary offering activities, demonstrating that when teachers combine pedagogical competence with creative instructional design, spiritual values become tangible and personally meaningful. In essence, professional competence enables teachers to bridge the abstract theological meaning of Genesis 35:14 with practical, age-appropriate experiences, fostering the holistic development of students' moral, cognitive, and affective domains.

Some students initially struggled with understanding the personal significance of voluntary offerings, viewing them as tasks to be completed rather than as spiritual exercises. Teachers addressed this by incorporating repeated modeling, reflective discussions, and contextualization of biblical principles into daily routines. Additionally, time constraints posed challenges in balancing content coverage with in-depth spiritual engagement. Teachers reported that prioritizing quality over quantity, and focusing on experiential learning, helped mitigate these challenges. These findings illustrate that professional competence is not static but requires ongoing adaptation, reflection, and contextual sensitivity, particularly when teaching spiritual values in diverse educational settings. The study demonstrates that professional competence, encompassing content mastery, pedagogical skill, reflective practice, and ethical modeling, is pivotal in teaching voluntary offering values effectively. Teachers who skillfully integrate these dimensions can facilitate meaningful engagement, internalization of spiritual principles, and holistic moral development. Furthermore, institutional support, thoughtful planning, and reflective practice are necessary to sustain these efforts. By aligning innovative teaching strategies with biblical fidelity, PAK teachers at SD Negeri 067262 Medan successfully

cultivate an environment where voluntary offering is understood not merely as a ritual act but as a lived expression of faith, gratitude, and obedience to God, ultimately fostering spiritually mature and ethically responsible learners.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers plays a decisive role in effectively teaching voluntary offering values at SD Negeri 067262 Medan. By integrating content mastery, pedagogical skill, reflective practice, and ethical modeling, teachers are able to translate the theological significance of Genesis 35:14 into meaningful classroom experiences that foster students' cognitive, affective, and spiritual development. Observations and interviews demonstrated that innovative teaching strategies, such as project-based learning, collaborative discussions, and experiential activities, successfully engage students in understanding voluntary offering as an expression of obedience, gratitude, and personal commitment to God. Professional competence enables teachers to bridge the gap between abstract biblical principles and tangible student experiences. Teachers' reflective practices and role modeling enhance the authenticity of instruction, allowing students to internalize moral and spiritual values in a holistic manner. Moreover, institutional support from school administrators, including professional development and resource provision, reinforces teachers' capacity to implement innovative and contextually appropriate strategies. The study demonstrates that when teachers skillfully integrate theological understanding with pedagogical innovation, students not only comprehend the biblical narrative but also develop an intrinsic appreciation for voluntary giving, ethical behavior, and spiritual responsibility. Fostering professional competence among PAK teachers is essential for cultivating morally and spiritually mature learners. This study contributes to the discourse on values-based education by illustrating how theological fidelity, pedagogical expertise, and reflective practice can be combined to nurture students' ethical and spiritual growth, offering valuable insights for educators, school administrators, and policymakers in designing effective Christian Religious Education programs in elementary schools.

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