



Teachers as Vessels of Divine Wisdom: Integrating Biblical Insight and Pedagogical Competence Based on Matthew 13:52 at SD Negeri 21 Simbolon Purba

Rinawati Lumbantungkup

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: rinawatispdk45@guru.sd.belajar.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between pedagogical competence and the integration of biblical wisdom among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers, drawing on the theological framework of Matthew 13:52. The passage portrays teachers as stewards who bring forth both “new and old treasures,” offering a meaningful paradigm for understanding the integration of biblical insight and pedagogical practice. This research was conducted at SD Negeri 21 Simbolon Purba, involving 36 Christian students and three CRE teachers. A quantitative correlational research design was employed to investigate the extent to which teachers’ pedagogical competence influences their ability to integrate biblical wisdom into instructional practices. Data were collected using structured questionnaires designed to measure students’ perceptions of teachers’ pedagogical competence and the integration of biblical values in classroom learning. The instruments were tested for validity and reliability prior to analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to examine data distribution, while Pearson correlation analysis was applied to determine the relationship between the two variables. The findings indicate a strong and positive correlation between pedagogical competence and the integration of biblical wisdom, suggesting that higher levels of pedagogical competence significantly enhance teachers’ effectiveness in conveying biblical values in meaningful and contextually appropriate ways. This study contributes to the discourse on Christian pedagogy by highlighting the relevance of biblical theology in shaping professional teaching competence. The findings underscore the importance of integrating theological insight and pedagogical excellence to foster holistic education that nurtures students’ intellectual, moral, and spiritual development.

Keywords: *Divine Wisdom, Christian Religious Education, Pedagogical Competence*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a central role in shaping not only students’ cognitive development but also their moral, spiritual, and character formation. In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), teachers are expected to function beyond the role of knowledge

transmitters; they are called to become living examples of wisdom, integrity, and faith-based pedagogy. This dual responsibility places CRE teachers at the intersection of pedagogical competence and biblical insight, requiring them to integrate professional teaching skills with theological depth and spiritual discernment. Contemporary educational research increasingly affirms that effective teaching is inseparable from the teacher's personal values, moral identity, and reflective wisdom (Day et al., 2006; Campbell, 2017). Biblical foundations offer a rich framework for understanding the vocation of teachers as bearers of wisdom. Matthew 13:52 presents a distinctive metaphor: "Every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old." This verse highlights a dynamic integration between inherited tradition ("old treasures") and contextual innovation ("new treasures"). In educational terms, it suggests that teachers are called to mediate between established knowledge and contemporary pedagogical practices, transforming learning into a meaningful and life-giving process. Scholars of biblical pedagogy emphasize that this passage reflects a model of wisdom that is adaptive, reflective, and ethically grounded (Wright, 2010; Hays, 2014).

Pedagogical competence itself is widely recognized as a core dimension of teacher professionalism. It encompasses mastery of instructional strategies, classroom management, assessment literacy, and the ability to respond to students' diverse needs (Shulman, 1987; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). However, in Christian education, pedagogical competence cannot be detached from spiritual and moral dimensions. Research in moral and character education shows that students learn values not only through explicit instruction but also through the modeled behavior and decision-making patterns of teachers (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014; Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013). Thus, CRE teachers who embody wisdom grounded in faith are more likely to foster holistic learning environments that nurture both academic growth and character formation. The metaphor of "vessels of divine wisdom" underscores the relational and transformative nature of teaching. Teachers are not the source of wisdom themselves but are entrusted with it, responsible for interpreting, contextualizing, and transmitting it responsibly. This perspective aligns with social cognitive theory, which emphasizes modeling as a powerful mechanism of learning; students observe, internalize, and reproduce behaviors demonstrated by significant adults, including teachers (Bandura, 1986). In CRE classrooms, the teacher's integration of biblical insight with pedagogical skill becomes a lived curriculum, shaping students' understanding of faith in practical and observable ways. This gap is particularly evident at the elementary level, where foundational character and faith development take place. SD Negeri 21 Simbolon Purba, with its context of Christian students and dedicated CRE teachers, provides a meaningful setting to explore how biblical wisdom from Matthew 13:52 is interpreted and embodied in daily teaching practice. With 36 Christian students and three CRE teachers, the school represents a microcosm of broader challenges and opportunities faced by Christian educators in pluralistic educational environments. This study aims to examine how CRE teachers at SD Negeri 21 Simbolon Purba integrate biblical insight from Matthew 13:52 with pedagogical competence in their instructional practices. By framing teachers as vessels of divine wisdom, this research seeks to contribute to the discourse on faith-integrated pedagogy, offering insights for teacher development, curriculum design, and

the strengthening of Christian education within public school contexts. Such integration is essential for ensuring that Christian Religious Education remains relevant, transformative, and faithful to its theological foundations while meeting contemporary educational standards (Arthur et al., 2015; Nucci et al., 2018).

METHODS

A quantitative research design with a correlational approach was used to examine the relationship between teachers' pedagogical competence and the integration of biblical wisdom based on Matthew 13:52 in Christian Religious Education (CRE). Quantitative design was chosen to enable systematic measurement, statistical analysis, and objective interpretation of empirical data related to teacher competence and students' perceptions of wisdom-based pedagogy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The correlational approach allowed the study to identify the strength and direction of relationships between variables without manipulating the research setting. The research was conducted at SD Negeri 21 Simbolon Purba, an Indonesian public elementary school with an active implementation of Christian Religious Education. The participants consisted of 36 Christian students and 3 Christian Religious Education teachers (including certified CRE teachers). Given the relatively small population, the study applied a total sampling technique, in which all members of the population were included as research participants. This approach ensured comprehensive representation and minimized sampling bias, which is particularly recommended for small-scale educational research (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

Pedagogical Competence of CRE Teachers (Independent Variable). This variable refers to teachers' ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning effectively. Indicators included instructional planning, classroom management, teaching strategies, assessment practices, and responsiveness to students' learning needs (Shulman, 1987; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Integration of Biblical Wisdom Based on Matthew 13:52 (Dependent Variable). This variable measured the extent to which teachers integrate biblical insight, understood as the ability to connect "old treasures" (biblical truths) with "new treasures" (contextual learning experiences), into classroom instruction. Indicators included contextual biblical explanation, moral application, reflective learning, and the modeling of wisdom-oriented behavior in teaching practice (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014; Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013).

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on established theoretical frameworks of pedagogical competence and moral-biblical integration. The instrument employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was divided into two sections corresponding to the research variables. Prior to data collection, the instrument underwent content validity review by experts in Christian education and educational research to ensure clarity, relevance, and theological appropriateness. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, with coefficients exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Data collection was carried out during regular school hours with formal permission from school authorities. Questionnaires were administered directly to student participants under the supervision of the researcher and teachers to ensure comprehension and completeness. Teachers completed a parallel self-assessment instrument focusing on pedagogical competence and biblical integration. Ethical

considerations were upheld by ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the use of data solely for academic purposes. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentage) were used to describe the overall level of pedagogical competence and biblical wisdom integration. Inferential analysis employed the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to examine the relationship between the two variables. Statistical significance was determined at a 0.05 alpha level. Data analysis was performed using standard statistical software to ensure accuracy and replicability (Field, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative analysis revealed that the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SD Negeri 21 Simbolon Purba was generally perceived at a high level by students. Descriptive statistical results showed a mean score of 4.21 (SD = 0.46) on a five-point Likert scale, indicating that teachers demonstrated strong instructional planning, classroom management, clarity of explanation, and responsiveness to students' learning needs. These findings suggest that CRE teachers possess adequate professional skills to facilitate effective learning in elementary education contexts. The variable of integration of biblical wisdom based on Matthew 13:52 also obtained a high mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.49). Students reported that teachers consistently connected biblical teachings with real-life examples, explained scriptural values contextually, and modeled reflective and wise behavior during classroom interactions. This finding indicates that biblical insight was not treated merely as doctrinal content but was actively integrated into pedagogical practice. Inferential analysis using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation demonstrated a strong and positive correlation between pedagogical competence and the integration of biblical wisdom ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$). This statistically significant result confirms that higher levels of pedagogical competence are associated with stronger integration of biblical wisdom in CRE instruction. In other words, teachers who demonstrated effective teaching strategies were more capable of translating the theological meaning of Matthew 13:52 into meaningful learning experiences for students. The findings of this study reinforce the theoretical assumption that pedagogical competence plays a critical role in enabling teachers to function as "vessels of divine wisdom," as articulated in Matthew 13:52. The strong correlation observed supports the view that effective teaching is not solely a matter of theological knowledge but also depends on the teacher's professional ability to contextualize and communicate that knowledge in ways that are accessible and transformative for learners (Shulman, 1987; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Matthew 13:52 emphasizes the teacher's role in bringing forth "new and old treasures," a concept that resonates strongly with contemporary pedagogical theory. The "old treasures" represent biblical truths and inherited faith traditions, while the "new treasures" symbolize contextual learning strategies, student-centered instruction, and adaptive teaching practices. The high mean scores in both variables indicate that CRE teachers at SD Negeri 21 Simbolon Purba were able to embody this biblical ideal by integrating faith content with modern pedagogical approaches. This finding aligns with research suggesting that teachers who effectively integrate moral or spiritual values into instruction tend to exhibit strong pedagogical awareness and reflective practice

(Campbell, 2017; Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013). The results corroborate social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the importance of modeling in learning processes. Students do not only learn from what teachers say but also from how teachers act, make decisions, and respond to classroom situations (Bandura, 1986). In this study, students' positive perceptions of biblical wisdom integration suggest that teachers' behavior served as a living curriculum, reinforcing the moral and spiritual dimensions of Christian education. This supports previous findings that moral and character education is most effective when values are consistently modeled by teachers rather than merely explained theoretically (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). The strong correlation between pedagogical competence and biblical integration also highlights the risk of separating faith content from professional teaching standards. Teachers with limited pedagogical skills may struggle to translate theological insights into age-appropriate learning experiences, resulting in abstract or ineffective instruction. Conversely, teachers who are pedagogically competent but lack theological reflection may reduce Christian education to generic moral instruction devoid of biblical depth. Therefore, this study underscores the necessity of holistic teacher development that integrates professional competence with biblical wisdom. The findings suggest that teacher training programs for CRE should intentionally integrate biblical hermeneutics with pedagogical skill development. Professional development initiatives that focus solely on curriculum compliance or instructional techniques may be insufficient if they neglect the spiritual and ethical dimensions of teaching. The results support calls from character education scholars who argue that teacher professionalism must include moral purpose and reflective wisdom as central components (Arthur et al., 2015; Nucci et al., 2018). The results demonstrate that CRE teachers at SD Negeri 21 Simbolon Purba effectively embody the role of teachers as vessels of divine wisdom when pedagogical competence and biblical insight are integrated harmoniously. This integration not only enhances instructional quality but also contributes to the holistic formation of students, affirming the enduring relevance of Matthew 13:52 in contemporary Christian education.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between pedagogical competence and the integration of biblical wisdom based on Matthew 13:52 among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SD Negeri 21 Simbolon Purba. Using a quantitative correlational design, the findings demonstrate that pedagogical competence is a significant factor in enabling teachers to function effectively as vessels of divine wisdom within the educational context. The results confirm that teachers who exhibit strong pedagogical skills are better able to translate biblical insight into meaningful, contextual, and age-appropriate learning experiences for students. The strong and positive correlation identified in this study indicates that pedagogical competence and biblical wisdom integration are not separate dimensions of teaching but mutually reinforcing elements. Pedagogical competence provides the methodological foundation through which biblical values can be communicated effectively, while biblical wisdom enriches pedagogical practice with moral purpose and spiritual depth. In this sense, Matthew 13:52 offers a relevant theological framework for understanding the role of CRE teachers as educators who responsibly bring together inherited biblical truths and contemporary pedagogical approaches. The findings also highlight the importance of modeling as a core

element of Christian education. Students' positive perceptions suggest that teachers' instructional practices, attitudes, and classroom interactions functioned as living examples of biblical wisdom. This reinforces the understanding that Christian education is not merely content-driven but formation-oriented, where faith-based values are internalized through consistent professional and ethical conduct. Future research is encouraged to involve larger samples, include classroom observations, and apply mixed-method approaches to deepen the understanding of how pedagogical competence and biblical wisdom interact in diverse educational settings. Longitudinal studies may also provide insights into the long-term impact of faith-integrated pedagogy on students' character and learning outcomes. This study affirms that pedagogical competence grounded in biblical wisdom is essential for effective Christian Religious Education. When teachers integrate professional teaching skills with theological insight, they fulfill their vocation as educators who bring forth both "new and old treasures," contributing to holistic education that nurtures intellectual growth, moral character, and spiritual maturity in students.

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