



## Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching the Value of Self-Control (Genesis 4:7): A Study at UPTD SD Negeri 071077 Madolaoli

Yusman Derius Bate'e

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

\*correspondence: [yusmanderiusbatee89@gmail.com](mailto:yusmanderiusbatee89@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the value of self-control based on Genesis 4:7 at UPTD SD Negeri 071077 Madolaoli, Indonesia. The study adopts a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to examine the level of teachers' professional competence and its relationship with students' understanding of self-control as a core moral and spiritual value in Christian education. The population consisted of 9 Christian teachers and 54 Christian students, and total sampling was employed to include all members of the population as research participants. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and simple linear regression. The results indicate that CRE teachers demonstrated a high level of professional competence ( $M = 4.21$ ), while students showed a high level of understanding of the value of self-control ( $M = 4.07$ ). Correlational analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' understanding of self-control ( $r = 0.62, p < 0.01$ ). Regression analysis further showed that teachers' professional competence significantly predicted students' understanding of self-control ( $\beta = 0.62, p < 0.001$ ), explaining 38% of the variance. These findings provide empirical evidence that professional competence plays a crucial role in the effective teaching of biblical moral values. The study affirms the pedagogical and theological relevance of Genesis 4:7 as a foundation for character education and highlights the importance of sustained professional development for CRE teachers. Overall, the results suggest that professionally competent CRE instruction contributes meaningfully to students' moral maturity, emotional regulation, and responsible behavior in elementary school contexts.*

**Keywords:** Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Self-Control

### INTRODUCTION

Professional competence is widely recognized as a central determinant of instructional quality and student learning outcomes. In contemporary educational discourse, professional competence refers not only to teachers' mastery of subject matter but also

to their ability to design meaningful learning experiences, apply appropriate pedagogical strategies, and integrate ethical and character-based dimensions into instruction (OECD, 2019). In the Indonesian context, professional competence is formally defined as one of the four core competencies of teachers, alongside pedagogical, personal, and social competence, emphasizing mastery of subject content and continuous professional development (Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers). Within Christian Religious Education (CRE), professional competence acquires an additional theological dimension, as teachers are expected to integrate biblical understanding, doctrinal clarity, and moral formation into their teaching practice (Groome, 2011; Pazmiño, 2008). One of the core moral and spiritual values emphasized in both biblical theology and contemporary character education is self-control. In psychological and educational research, self-control is understood as the capacity to regulate impulses, emotions, and behaviors in pursuit of long-term goals (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007). Extensive empirical studies have demonstrated that self-control is strongly associated with academic achievement, social adjustment, and long-term life success (Moffitt et al., 2011; Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). The strength model of self-control proposed by Baumeister and colleagues conceptualizes self-control as a limited but trainable resource, similar to a muscle that can be depleted through exertion but also strengthened through practice and supportive environments (Baumeister et al., 2007). From an educational perspective, this implies that teachers play a strategic role in helping students understand, model, and practice self-control in daily learning situations.

In Christian education, self-control is not merely a psychological skill but a spiritual and moral virtue. Scripture consistently presents self-control as an essential aspect of faithful living and moral maturity (Galatians 5:22-23; Proverbs 25:28). In this study, particular attention is given to Genesis 4:7, in which God addresses Cain with the exhortation that sin is “crouching at the door,” but Cain “must rule over it.” Biblical scholars interpret this passage as emphasizing human responsibility to exercise moral agency and self-mastery in the face of destructive impulses (Wenham, 1987; Goldingay, 2010). Wenham (1987), in his commentary on Genesis, notes that Genesis 4:7 presents a profound theological anthropology, portraying humans as morally responsible agents who are called to exercise self-control over sinful tendencies. This theological framing aligns closely with contemporary understandings of self-regulation, which emphasize the capacity to override immediate impulses in order to act in accordance with higher-order values and goals (Baumeister et al., 2007). The teaching of self-control thus represents an intersection between biblical theology, moral formation, and educational psychology. However, the effectiveness of such instruction is highly dependent on the professional competence of CRE teachers. Teachers must not only understand the theological meaning of biblical texts such as Genesis 4:7 but also be able to translate these meanings into age-appropriate, pedagogically sound learning activities. Research on teacher competence consistently shows that strong subject-matter knowledge, combined with pedagogical content knowledge, is associated with higher student engagement and deeper conceptual understanding (Shulman, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 2000). In religious education, this implies that teachers’ theological literacy and interpretive skills are critical for avoiding superficial or moralistic readings of biblical texts and for fostering meaningful moral reflection among students (Groome, 2011).

At the elementary school level, where students are in a formative stage of moral and character development, the role of CRE teachers becomes even more significant. Developmental psychology suggests that children in this age range are actively forming patterns of emotional regulation, impulse control, and moral reasoning (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Eggum, 2010). Educational interventions that explicitly address self-control and self-regulation have been shown to support not only academic learning but also socio-emotional development (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). From a Christian educational perspective, this developmental window provides a strategic opportunity to integrate biblical teachings on self-control with practical guidance on managing emotions, conflicts, and impulses in everyday life. Most existing studies focus either on general teacher competence or on character education in secular frameworks, with less attention to how theological interpretation and professional competence intersect in CRE classrooms. This gap is particularly relevant for schools such as UPTD SD Negeri 071077 Madolaoli in Kota Gunungsitoli, where CRE plays a formal role in shaping students' moral and spiritual development. This study aims to analyze the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in teaching the value of self-control based on Genesis 4:7. By focusing on this specific biblical text and its pedagogical implementation, the study seeks to contribute to both educational and theological scholarship by demonstrating how professional competence mediates the translation of biblical values into effective classroom practice. In doing so, the study also responds to broader calls for evidence-based approaches to character education that are theologically grounded, pedagogically sound, and contextually relevant within pluralistic educational settings.

## METHODS

The primary objective was to examine the level of professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and its relationship with students' understanding of the value of self-control based on Genesis 4:7. A quantitative approach was selected to enable systematic measurement of teachers' professional competence and students' perceived understanding and internalization of self-control through standardized instruments and statistical analysis. This design is appropriate for investigating relationships between educational variables and for providing empirical evidence regarding instructional effectiveness (Creswell, 2014). The study was conducted at UPTD SD Negeri 071077 Madolaoli, located in Kota Gunungsitoli, Indonesia. The research site was selected purposively because Christian Religious Education is formally implemented and because the school has a sufficient number of Christian students and teachers to support quantitative analysis. The population consisted of all Christian students and Christian teachers at the school. Based on school records, there were 54 Christian students and 9 Christian teachers, including Christian Religious Education teachers. Given the relatively small population size, this study applied a total sampling technique (census sampling), in which all members of the population were included as research participants. Total sampling is recommended when the population size is limited and when the researcher aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of the research context (Sugiyono, 2019). The 9 teachers served as respondents for the professional competence variable, while the 54 students served as respondents for the self-control understanding variable. This dual-respondent design allowed the study to capture data from both the instructional

(teacher) and learning outcome (student) perspectives. This study involved two main variables: Professional Competence of CRE Teachers (Independent Variable), refers to teachers' mastery of subject matter, understanding of biblical and theological content, ability to explain biblical values clearly, and engagement in professional development. This variable was operationalized based on indicators derived from national teacher competency standards (Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 14/2005) and educational literature on professional competence (Shulman, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 2000); and Students' Understanding of the Value of Self-Control (Dependent Variable), refers to their cognitive, affective, and behavioral understanding of self-control as taught through Genesis 4:7. This variable included indicators related to students' ability to explain the meaning of self-control, recognize situations requiring self-control, and report attitudes and intentions related to regulating emotions and impulses in school contexts. Data were collected using structured questionnaires developed by the researcher. Two separate instruments were used: Teacher Professional Competence Questionnaire (This instrument was administered to the 9 teachers. It consisted of Likert-scale items, 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, measuring dimensions such as: Mastery of biblical and theological content related to self-control, Ability to explain Genesis 4:7 clearly and accurately, Use of appropriate teaching strategies to convey moral values, Ability to relate biblical teaching to students' daily life, and Engagement in continuous professional development). This instrument was administered to the 54 students. It consisted of age-appropriate Likert-scale items measuring: Cognitive understanding of the meaning of self-control, Recognition of situations requiring self-control (e.g., anger, conflict, temptation), Affective attitudes toward practicing self-control, Self-reported behavioral tendencies related to impulse control and emotional regulation. Both instruments were developed based on relevant literature on teacher competence and self-control (Baumeister et al., 2007; Duckworth & Gross, 2014) and aligned with the theological interpretation of Genesis 4:7. Content validity was established through expert judgment. The questionnaires were reviewed by experts in Christian Religious Education and educational measurement to ensure that the items were conceptually appropriate, theologically accurate, and suitable for elementary school students. A pilot test was conducted on a small group of respondents outside the main sample to assess clarity and reliability. Reliability was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. An alpha value of  $\geq 0.70$  was considered acceptable, following commonly accepted standards in educational research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Items with low item-total correlations were revised or removed prior to final data collection. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage) were used to describe the levels of teacher professional competence and students' understanding of self-control. To examine the relationship between teacher professional competence and students' understanding of self-control, correlational analysis was conducted using Pearson's product-moment correlation. In addition, simple linear regression analysis was used to examine the extent to which teacher professional competence predicted students' understanding of self-control. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the level of professional competence among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at UPTD SD Negeri 071077 Madolaoli. Based on responses from 9 teachers, the overall mean score for professional competence was  $M = 4.21$  ( $SD = 0.38$ ) on a five-point Likert scale, indicating a high level of professional competence. At the indicator level, teachers reported the highest mean scores on mastery of biblical and theological content related to self-control ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ) and ability to explain Genesis 4:7 clearly and accurately ( $M = 4.28$ ,  $SD = 0.36$ ). The ability to relate biblical teaching to students' daily life also received a high rating ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ). Engagement in continuous professional development showed a slightly lower but still high mean score ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ). These findings suggest that teachers generally perceived themselves as professionally competent, particularly in theological understanding and instructional explanation of biblical values. Data from 54 students were analyzed to assess their understanding of the value of self-control as taught through Genesis 4:7. The overall mean score for students' understanding of self-control was  $M = 4.07$  ( $SD = 0.42$ ), indicating a high level of understanding. At the sub-dimension level, students demonstrated relatively high cognitive understanding of the meaning of self-control ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ). Recognition of situations requiring self-control, such as anger, conflict, and temptation, also showed a high mean score ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ). Affective attitudes toward practicing self-control were rated positively ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ), while self-reported behavioral tendencies related to impulse control and emotional regulation had a slightly lower but still high mean score ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ). These results indicate that students not only understood the concept of self-control cognitively but also demonstrated positive attitudes and reported tendencies toward applying self-control in daily school life. Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' understanding of self-control. The analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant correlation between the two variables ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates a moderate-to-strong relationship, suggesting that higher levels of teachers' professional competence are associated with higher levels of students' understanding of the value of self-control. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether teachers' professional competence significantly predicted students' understanding of self-control. The regression model was statistically significant ( $F(1, 61) = 32.14$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Teachers' professional competence significantly predicted students' understanding of self-control ( $\beta = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The coefficient of determination showed that teachers' professional competence explained approximately 38% of the variance in students' understanding of self-control ( $R^2 = 0.38$ ). This indicates that a substantial proportion of students' understanding of self-control can be attributed to variations in teachers' professional competence, while the remaining variance may be influenced by other factors such as family environment, peer relationships, and individual differences.

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the central role of professional competence in Christian Religious Education, particularly in teaching moral and spiritual values such as self-control. The high mean scores for teachers' professional competence suggest that CRE teachers at UPTD SD Negeri 071077 Madolaoli generally possess strong

mastery of biblical content and the pedagogical ability to explain Genesis 4:7 in ways that are understandable for elementary school students. This aligns with prior research emphasizing that subject-matter mastery and pedagogical content knowledge are critical components of effective teaching (Shulman, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 2000). The high level of students' understanding of self-control indicates that instruction based on Genesis 4:7 was effective not only in conveying cognitive knowledge but also in shaping students' attitudes and self-reported behavioral tendencies. This finding is consistent with educational psychology research demonstrating that self-control is a trainable capacity and that school-based instruction can play a meaningful role in supporting the development of self-regulation and emotional control (Baumeister et al., 2007; Duckworth & Gross, 2014). From a Christian educational perspective, this also supports theological claims that biblical teaching, when delivered through competent instruction, can contribute to moral and character formation (Groome, 2011; Pazmiño, 2008). The significant positive correlation between teachers' professional competence and students' understanding of self-control ( $r = 0.62$ ) underscores the importance of teacher quality in value-based and character-oriented instruction. This finding suggests that students are more likely to internalize and understand the value of self-control when teachers demonstrate strong theological understanding, clarity of explanation, and the ability to contextualize biblical teachings in students' daily experiences. This supports the theoretical assumption that professional competence serves as a mediating factor between curriculum content and student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The regression results further strengthen this conclusion by showing that teachers' professional competence explained 38% of the variance in students' understanding of self-control. This proportion is substantial for educational research and indicates that teacher-related factors play a major role in shaping students' moral understanding. However, the fact that more than half of the variance remains unexplained also highlights the multifaceted nature of self-control development. Previous studies emphasize that family environment, parenting practices, peer influence, and individual temperament also contribute significantly to the development of self-control and self-regulation (Moffitt et al., 2011; Eisenberg et al., 2010). Therefore, while teacher competence is a key factor, it should be understood as part of a broader ecological system influencing students' moral and emotional development. The findings support the relevance of Genesis 4:7 as a pedagogical foundation for teaching self-control. The biblical emphasis on human responsibility to "rule over" sinful impulses resonates with contemporary psychological models of self-regulation, which emphasize the capacity to override immediate impulses in favor of higher-order goals (Baumeister et al., 2007). The ability of teachers to interpret and explain this text in a theologically sound and pedagogically accessible manner appears to be crucial for translating biblical theology into practical moral guidance for students.

These results reinforce the importance of continuous professional development for CRE teachers. Although overall competence levels were high, the slightly lower scores on engagement in professional development suggest an area for further improvement. Ongoing training in biblical interpretation, child development, and instructional strategies for character education could further strengthen teachers' capacity to support students' self-control and broader moral formation. The findings of this study contribute to both educational and theological scholarship by providing empirical evidence that professional

competence in CRE is not only a matter of content delivery but also a significant determinant of students' moral and character-related learning outcomes. The study highlights the need for sustained investment in teacher professional development as a strategic approach to strengthening character education and biblical value formation in Christian Religious Education contexts.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the value of self-control based on Genesis 4:7 at UPTD SD Negeri 071077 Madolaoli. Using a quantitative approach with total sampling of 9 Christian teachers and 54 Christian students, the study sought to provide empirical evidence regarding the relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' understanding of self-control as a core moral and spiritual value in Christian education. The findings indicate that CRE teachers at the research site demonstrated a high level of professional competence, particularly in mastery of biblical and theological content, clarity in explaining Genesis 4:7, and the ability to relate biblical teachings to students' daily experiences. At the same time, students showed a high level of understanding of the value of self-control, reflected in their cognitive comprehension, positive attitudes, and self-reported behavioral tendencies related to emotional regulation and impulse control. These results suggest that instruction grounded in Scripture and delivered through professionally competent teaching can contribute meaningfully to students' moral and character development at the elementary school level. The statistically significant and positive relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' understanding of self-control confirms the central role of teacher quality in value-based and character-oriented education. The regression analysis further demonstrated that teachers' professional competence accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in students' understanding of self-control. This finding underscores that professional competence is not merely a formal requirement but a critical pedagogical factor that directly influences the effectiveness of biblical value instruction in CRE classrooms. The study affirms the pedagogical relevance of Genesis 4:7 as a foundational text for teaching self-control and moral responsibility. The integration of this biblical narrative with sound pedagogical practices enabled students to engage with the concept of self-control not only as a religious doctrine but also as a practical guide for everyday behavior. This supports the view that Christian Religious Education plays a strategic role in bridging biblical theology and lived moral practice. The research was conducted in a single school with a relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the use of self-report questionnaires may be influenced by social desirability and subjective perceptions. Future research is therefore encouraged to involve larger and more diverse samples, incorporate observational or mixed-methods designs, and explore additional variables such as family background, parenting practices, and school climate to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the development of self-control in Christian education contexts. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on teacher competence and character education by providing empirical evidence that professional competence in CRE significantly supports students' understanding of self-control as a biblical and moral value. The findings highlight the

importance of sustained professional development for CRE teachers and reinforce the strategic role of Christian Religious Education in fostering moral maturity, emotional regulation, and responsible behavior among elementary school students.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., & Tice, D. M. (2007). The strength model of self-control. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16(6), 351–355. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2007.00534.x>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 8(1), 1–44. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v8n1.2000>
- Duckworth, A. L., & Gross, J. J. (2014). Self-control and grit: Related but separable determinants of success. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23(5), 319–325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721414541462>
- Duckworth, A. L., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Self-discipline outdoes IQ in predicting academic performance of adolescents. *Psychological Science*, 16(12), 939–944. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2005.01641.x>
- Eisenberg, N., Spinrad, T. L., & Eggum, N. D. (2010). Emotion-related self-regulation and its relation to children's maladjustment. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 6, 495–525. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.121208.131208>
- Goldingay, J. (2010). *Genesis for everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1–16*. Westminster John Knox Press.
- Groome, T. H. (2011). *Will there be faith? A new vision for educating and growing disciples* (Rev. ed.). HarperOne.
- Moffitt, T. E., Arseneault, L., Belsky, D., Dickson, N., Hancox, R. J., Harrington, H., ... Caspi, A. (2011). A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108(7), 2693–2698. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1010076108>
- Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- OECD. (2019). *OECD future of education and skills 2030: OECD learning compass 2030*. OECD Publishing.

Pazmiño, R. W. (2008). *Foundational issues in Christian education: An introduction in evangelical perspective* (3rd ed.). Baker Academic.

Republic of Indonesia. (2005). *Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers*. Government of Indonesia.

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4–14. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X015002004>

Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.

Wenham, G. J. (1987). *Genesis 1–15* (Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 1). Word Books.