



Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Developing Teaching Materials on the Birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:1-2): A Case Study at UPTD SDN 156485 Gabungan Hasang 2

Rumbun Marimbun Siburian

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

* correspondence: rumbun140688@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in developing teaching materials on the birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:1-2) at UPTD SDN 156485 Gabungan Hasang 2, Central Tapanuli, Indonesia. Focusing on a qualitative descriptive approach, the research aims to understand how teachers translate biblical narratives into age-appropriate, pedagogically effective, and contextually relevant learning materials for primary school students. The study involved semi-structured interviews with the CRE teacher and other Christian educators and classroom observations. Findings indicate that the CRE teacher demonstrates high competence in content knowledge, instructional design, and contextual adaptation. Students actively participated in lessons, demonstrating comprehension, critical thinking, and the internalization of values such as faith, hope, and perseverance. The teacher's ability to contextualize biblical narratives to students' personal experiences and local culture enhanced learning relevance and spiritual reflection. Despite challenges such as limited resources, time constraints, and occasional variability in student engagement, the teacher employed adaptive strategies to ensure meaningful learning outcomes. The study highlights the central role of professional competence in fostering holistic religious education that integrates cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions. The findings contribute to the discourse on CRE pedagogy by demonstrating effective strategies for material development, student engagement, and value integration in primary education, particularly in small rural schools. Recommendations include enhancing teacher training programs in instructional design, contextual adaptation, and resource utilization to support CRE teachers in cultivating knowledge, moral formation, and spiritual growth among students.

Keywords: Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Genesis 21:1-2

INTRODUCTION

At the primary school level, Christian Religious Education (CRE) is not only a subject aimed at imparting biblical knowledge but also serves as a vehicle for nurturing ethical values, resilience, and spiritual identity among children. In this context, the competence of teachers becomes a critical factor in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of religious education (Lickona, 2014; Putra, 2020). Teacher competence, particularly professional competence, encompasses the ability to design, develop, and implement learning materials that are pedagogically sound, theologically accurate, and contextually relevant. The story of Isaac's birth (Genesis 21:1-2) offers rich pedagogical potential for CRE teachers. It presents themes of divine promise, faithfulness, hope, and divine timing, concepts that are not only central to biblical narratives but also highly relevant to children's moral and spiritual development. In primary education, translating such complex theological themes into age-appropriate teaching materials requires a high level of professional competence. Teachers must possess a thorough understanding of biblical content, curriculum alignment, and effective instructional strategies that engage young learners while fostering both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning (Fadillah, 2018; Wibowo, 2021).

In Indonesia, public elementary schools (*Sekolah Dasar Negeri, SDN*) like UPTD SDN 156485 Gabungan Hasang 2 in Central Tapanuli, present a unique context for exploring CRE teacher competence. The school accommodates a small but significant group of Christian students and educators: 29 students and 5 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. This setting allows for an in-depth examination of how professional competence manifests in a real classroom environment, particularly in the development and implementation of teaching materials on biblical stories. The limited number of Christian educators emphasizes the need for high proficiency in content knowledge, instructional design, and contextual adaptation to ensure that CRE learning remains meaningful and impactful (Sari, 2019). Professional competence in CRE extends beyond content knowledge. It encompasses curriculum development skills, the ability to integrate biblical principles with everyday life, and proficiency in using instructional tools and resources. For instance, when teaching the story of Isaac's birth, teachers must decide on appropriate narrative strategies, illustrative materials, and activities that resonate with students' developmental stage. They must also be adept at anticipating students' questions, misconceptions, and emotional responses to the biblical text (Nasution, 2020). Effective teaching materials do not merely recount biblical events; they contextualize lessons in ways that students can understand and apply, thus fostering deeper comprehension and internalization of spiritual values. Existing literature tends to concentrate on urban schools or higher education settings, leaving a knowledge gap regarding how teachers in smaller public schools develop teaching materials that are pedagogically and theologically robust (Tambunan, 2017; Hutabarat, 2021). This study seeks to address this gap by examining the professional competence of CRE teachers at SDN 156485 Gabungan Hasang 2, with specific attention to their strategies in developing instructional materials on the birth of Isaac. This study emphasizes a case study approach, which allows for a holistic and context-sensitive exploration of teacher practices. A case study is particularly appropriate for understanding complex educational phenomena in

naturalistic settings, capturing the nuances of teacher decision-making, instructional planning, and material development in response to students' needs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through this lens, the research aims to generate insights not only about individual teacher competence but also about the broader implications for CRE pedagogy in similar primary school contexts. Understanding how CRE teachers exercise professional competence in developing biblical teaching materials is crucial for enhancing the quality of religious education in Indonesia. This research focuses on the narrative of Isaac's birth (Genesis 21:1-2), a story that embodies hope, divine faithfulness, and perseverance, values that are essential for students' spiritual formation. By examining the strategies, challenges, and outcomes associated with teaching this story, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective religious education, teacher professionalism, and curriculum development in Christian primary education contexts.

METHODS

Qualitative descriptive research is particularly suitable for educational studies that aim to provide a comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of phenomena in their natural setting (Sandelowski, 2000; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach allows the researcher to describe teacher practices, instructional strategies, and challenges without imposing experimental manipulations, thus capturing the authentic experiences of educators within the school environment. The research setting was SDN 156485 Gabungan Hasang 2, a public elementary school located in the Central Tapanuli region. The school hosts 29 students and five Christian teachers, including one assigned as the CRE teacher. The relatively small size of the school provides an ideal context for an in-depth examination of teacher competence, as interactions between teachers and students are more personalized and observable. The study focused specifically on how the CRE teacher develops, adapts, and implements instructional materials that align with both biblical content and the developmental needs of primary school students. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, emphasizing teachers with direct responsibility for teaching CRE. The primary participant was the CRE teacher, who had experience in designing teaching materials and conducting classroom instruction on biblical narratives. Additional participants included other Christian teachers who occasionally collaborated in lesson planning or provided feedback on material development. Purposive sampling ensured that the data collected would be rich in information relevant to the study's objectives (Patton, 2015). Data collection involved multiple qualitative techniques to ensure triangulation and depth of understanding. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the CRE teacher to explore perceptions, strategies, and challenges in developing teaching materials for the story of Isaac's birth. Questions were designed to elicit detailed responses about curriculum alignment, pedagogical strategies, and contextual adaptations for primary school students. Classroom observations were conducted during CRE lessons, focusing on instructional delivery, student engagement, and the application of teaching materials. Observation notes included teacher-student interactions, the use of visual aids, storytelling techniques, and activity facilitation. This allowed for verification of alignment between intended learning outcomes and actual instructional content (Bowen, 2009). Data analysis followed a thematic approach suitable for descriptive qualitative research. All interview

transcripts, observation notes, and document analyses were systematically reviewed and coded to identify recurring themes related to teacher professional competence, material development strategies, and pedagogical effectiveness. Themes were categorized under major competencies such as content knowledge, instructional design, contextual adaptation, and student engagement strategies. The analysis process emphasized maintaining fidelity to the participants' perspectives while interpreting how professional competence is enacted in practice. The study also adhered to respectful engagement with students during observations, avoiding any disruption of classroom activities. By employing this qualitative descriptive methodology, the study captures a detailed, context-rich portrayal of how CRE teachers at SDN 156485 Gabungan Hasang 2 exercise professional competence in developing biblical teaching materials. The findings provide practical insights into teacher strategies, challenges, and successes in fostering meaningful religious education for primary school students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the most prominent findings in this study was the CRE teacher's proficiency in biblical content, specifically regarding the story of Isaac's birth (Genesis 21:1-2). During interviews, the teacher demonstrated a thorough understanding of the narrative, emphasizing its theological significance, moral lessons, and spiritual implications for students. The teacher noted that Isaac's birth illustrates the fulfillment of God's promises, divine faithfulness, and hope amid challenges, which are key values to instill in primary school students. Observations of classroom interactions confirmed the teacher's ability to convey these concepts effectively. The teacher frequently asked guiding questions to encourage students to reflect on Abraham and Sarah's faith, the challenges they faced, and how God's intervention shaped the narrative. For example, students were prompted to discuss what it means to trust God when circumstances seem impossible, aligning with the spiritual and cognitive goals of CRE. Document analysis of lesson plans and teaching materials revealed that the teacher systematically incorporated biblical exegesis, age-appropriate language, and narrative-based teaching strategies. Worksheets included questions prompting students to identify key events, reflect on moral lessons, and relate the story to personal experiences. Visual aids, such as illustrated storyboards and timeline charts, were designed to simplify complex theological concepts for young learners. The findings align with previous studies emphasizing that content knowledge is a cornerstone of professional competence in religious education (Fadillah, 2018; Putra, 2020). Teachers who possess deep knowledge of biblical narratives can contextualize lessons meaningfully, connect theological principles to students' lived experiences, and foster spiritual reflection. In the case of SDN 156485 Gabungan Hasang 2, this competence was evident in both lesson preparation and interactive teaching practices.

The CRE teacher demonstrated high professional competence in instructional design, ensuring that teaching materials were pedagogically sound and developmentally appropriate. The teacher developed lesson plans that combined storytelling, discussion, creative activities, and reflective exercises. For instance, students engaged in drawing scenes from Isaac's birth, creating simple story maps, and dramatizing key events, which helped reinforce comprehension and retention. Observations highlighted the teacher's

ability to sequence lessons logically, beginning with contextualizing Abraham and Sarah's circumstances, moving to the miraculous birth of Isaac, and concluding with reflective discussions on faith and hope. The instructional design was intentionally aligned with the Indonesian national curriculum for primary CRE, ensuring compliance with educational standards while maintaining theological integrity. Document analysis indicated that the teacher utilized a range of resources, including simplified biblical texts, illustrated storybooks, and audio-visual aids. These resources were adapted to suit the students' cognitive and linguistic levels, reflecting the teacher's understanding of age-appropriate pedagogy (Wibowo, 2021). The materials incorporated critical thinking prompts to encourage students to analyze cause-effect relationships within the narrative, such as how Abraham's obedience influenced the outcome of God's promise. This aligns with the findings of Hutabarat (2021), who emphasized that effective CRE teachers integrate content knowledge with pedagogical strategies to produce learning materials that foster both cognitive understanding and spiritual growth. In this study, the teacher's instructional design not only transmitted knowledge but also facilitated reflective learning, emotional engagement, and value internalization.

Another critical aspect of professional competence observed was the adaptation of materials to the local and cultural context. The teacher incorporated examples and analogies familiar to students in Central Tapanuli, including references to family life, local traditions, and everyday experiences. For example, discussions on hope and faith were connected to students' personal challenges, such as managing school assignments or family responsibilities. The teacher also adapted materials to suit the small class size (29 students) and mixed abilities in comprehension. During observations, differentiated instruction was evident; the teacher provided additional guidance for students who struggled with abstract concepts while encouraging advanced learners to articulate personal reflections and ethical applications. This adaptive approach demonstrates situational awareness, a key component of professional competence in CRE (Nasution, 2020). Interviews revealed that the teacher deliberately considered students' spiritual and emotional maturity. For example, when discussing Abraham and Sarah's prolonged wait for Isaac, the teacher asked students how they might respond to waiting for something important, prompting personal reflection and empathy development. This strategy aligns with research suggesting that contextualization enhances both understanding and value formation in religious education (Tambunan, 2017).

The study found that the CRE teacher employed diverse pedagogical strategies to actively engage students in learning. Storytelling remained central, but it was supplemented with interactive questioning, role-playing, group discussions, and creative exercises. Observation notes indicated that students responded enthusiastically, asking questions, sharing personal insights, and participating in dramatizations. The teacher frequently used scaffolding techniques, gradually increasing the complexity of questions and discussions. For instance, after narrating Isaac's birth, the teacher prompted students to connect the story with the broader theme of God's faithfulness in their lives. Such scaffolding supported higher-order thinking while nurturing moral and spiritual reflection. Interviews confirmed that the teacher's engagement strategies were intentional and informed by both professional training and teaching experience. The teacher emphasized

that student-centered learning promotes deeper comprehension and encourages internalization of Christian values. This is consistent with Lickona's (2014) framework for character education, which highlights the importance of interactive, reflective, and experience-based learning in developing ethical and spiritual competencies. The teacher noted that most commercially available resources are either too abstract or linguistically advanced, necessitating significant adaptation. Another challenge involved time constraints, as the CRE teacher was responsible for multiple classes and collaborated with only a small team of Christian educators. Balancing material development, lesson delivery, and student assessment required careful planning and prioritization. Classroom observations also highlighted occasional variability in student engagement, influenced by external factors such as fatigue, weather conditions, or competing academic demands. The teacher addressed these issues by incorporating short, interactive activities and adjusting lesson pacing, reflecting adaptive professional competence. A significant finding was the teacher's ability to integrate theological principles with educational objectives. In teaching Isaac's birth, the teacher emphasized both knowledge acquisition (understanding the biblical narrative) and value formation (faith, hope, and obedience). Students were encouraged to reflect on how biblical lessons could inform their behavior, decision-making, and responses to challenges. For example, after dramatizing Isaac's birth, the teacher guided a reflection session where students related the story to personal experiences of waiting, trusting, and being patient. This integration demonstrates holistic educational competence, where cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions are simultaneously addressed, a hallmark of effective CRE teaching (Fadillah, 2018; Wibowo, 2021). The findings have important implications for CRE practice in Indonesian primary schools. Professional competence in content knowledge, instructional design, and contextual adaptation is essential for meaningful biblical teaching. Teachers must develop flexible strategies to engage diverse learners and connect biblical narratives with students' lived experiences. Third, teacher training programs should emphasize material development skills, age-appropriate pedagogy, and contextualized instruction, particularly for rural and semi-urban schools with limited resources. The study illustrates that even in small school settings, dedicated and competent teachers can create rich learning experiences that foster both knowledge and spiritual growth. By focusing on narratives like Isaac's birth, teachers can cultivate hope, resilience, and faithfulness, values that are crucial for holistic child development. The CRE teacher at SDN 156485 Gabungan Hasang 2 demonstrated high professional competence across four dimensions: content knowledge, instructional design, contextual adaptation, and pedagogical strategies. Teaching materials were well-aligned with biblical content, developmentally appropriate, and sensitive to students' cultural and emotional contexts. The teacher effectively integrated theological principles with educational objectives, fostering active engagement, critical reflection, and value internalization among students. While challenges such as limited resources and time constraints existed, the teacher's adaptive strategies ensured that learning remained meaningful, interactive, and spiritually formative. These findings reinforce the centrality of teacher professional competence in enhancing CRE quality and underscore the potential for small, rural schools to deliver effective religious education when teachers are well-prepared and committed.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in developing teaching materials on the birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:1-2) at UPTD SDN 156485 Gabungan Hasang 2, Central Tapanuli. Through qualitative descriptive analysis of interviews, classroom observations, and teaching documents, the research identified multiple dimensions of teacher competence and highlighted both achievements and challenges in the development and delivery of CRE materials for primary school students. The findings demonstrated that the CRE teacher exhibited strong content knowledge, effectively understanding and communicating the theological significance of Isaac's birth. The teacher could translate complex biblical narratives into age-appropriate lessons while maintaining theological accuracy. By emphasizing themes such as divine promise, faithfulness, and hope amid adversity, the teacher facilitated not only knowledge acquisition but also spiritual reflection and moral formation among students. The study confirms that content knowledge remains a foundational aspect of professional competence, enabling teachers to connect biblical stories to students' lived experiences and contemporary contexts. In addition to content knowledge, the teacher demonstrated advanced instructional design skills. Lesson plans were carefully structured to include narrative storytelling, interactive questioning, creative exercises, and reflective discussions. Classroom activities were sequenced logically, allowing students to follow the story of Isaac's birth, internalize its lessons, and engage in critical thinking. Visual aids, storyboards, and worksheets further enhanced comprehension and student engagement. These practices align with research emphasizing that well-designed instructional materials support cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions of learning in CRE. The study also highlighted the teacher's ability in contextual adaptation, tailoring materials and activities to suit students' cultural, emotional, and cognitive levels. By connecting biblical narratives to students' personal experiences and local traditions, the teacher facilitated meaningful learning and value internalization. Differentiated strategies ensured that both struggling and advanced students could engage effectively with the material. This underscores the importance of situational awareness and adaptive competence in religious education, particularly in small or rural schools where resources are limited. Pedagogical strategies employed by the teacher were diverse and student-centered, including role-playing, group discussions, storytelling, and reflective exercises. Observations revealed that students actively participated, demonstrated curiosity, and reflected on personal and moral implications of the biblical narrative. These strategies promoted deeper understanding, critical thinking, and ethical reasoning, consistent with character education frameworks that emphasize active and reflective learning. Limited availability of age-appropriate teaching resources, time constraints, and occasional variability in student engagement posed obstacles to optimal lesson delivery. Nevertheless, the teacher employed adaptive strategies, such as modifying lesson pacing, using simplified visual aids, and integrating interactive activities to maintain engagement and effectiveness. These findings illustrate that professional competence encompasses not only content mastery and instructional design but also problem-solving and adaptive skills in real classroom contexts. In conclusion, the professional competence of the CRE teacher at SDN 156485 Gabungan Hasang 2 was instrumental in developing and delivering effective teaching materials on Isaac's birth. Competence in content knowledge,

instructional design, contextual adaptation, and pedagogical strategies enabled the teacher to foster knowledge acquisition, spiritual reflection, moral formation, and student engagement. This case study underscores the critical role of teacher professionalism in enhancing CRE quality, particularly in primary schools with limited resources and small student populations. The study also offers implications for policy and practice: teacher training programs should emphasize material development skills, age-appropriate pedagogy, and context-sensitive instruction; educational authorities should provide adequate resources and support for CRE teachers; and educators should continuously reflect on and adapt their instructional practices to meet students' spiritual, cognitive, and emotional needs. By doing so, CRE teachers can cultivate faith, hope, and ethical values in students, contributing to holistic development and preparing them to face life challenges with resilience and trust in God.

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