



Social Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Reflecting on Women's Role in Salvation: A Case Study of Genesis 29:31 at SD Negeri 2 Patas 1

Ruhiini

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: ruhuiniruhui@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in reflecting on women's role in salvation (Genesis 29:31) at SD Negeri 2 Patas 1, South Barito, Indonesia. Using a quantitative research design, the study focused on students' perceptions of teacher social competence, examining its influence on engagement, comprehension, and moral-spiritual reflection. The study involved 32 Christian students as respondents, representing all students in the school, who completed a structured questionnaire measuring four dimensions of social competence: communication skills, empathy, interpersonal sensitivity, and supportive learning environment. Findings indicate that the CRE teacher demonstrates high social competence, as perceived by students, across all four dimensions. Students reported that the teacher communicates clearly, responds empathetically to their emotional and spiritual needs, adapts instruction to diverse learning abilities, and fosters a safe, inclusive, and cooperative classroom climate. Statistical analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between teacher social competence and student engagement ($r = 0.78, p < 0.01$), highlighting the significant impact of relational skills on learning outcomes. Classroom observations further confirmed that integrating social competence with biblical reflection enhances students' understanding of theological content, particularly regarding women's contributions to salvation, and promotes moral and ethical reasoning. The study underscores the importance of developing teachers' social competence alongside pedagogical expertise in religious education. CRE teachers who exhibit strong communication, empathy, sensitivity, and supportive classroom practices can effectively guide students in understanding complex biblical narratives while fostering ethical, spiritual, and socio-emotional growth. These findings have implications for teacher training programs, curriculum development, and professional development initiatives in faith-based educational settings.

Keywords: Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, Salvation

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping not only the cognitive development of students but also their socio-emotional and moral growth. Modern educational theory emphasizes that teaching competence extends beyond content knowledge and instructional skills to include social competence, which enables teachers to manage interpersonal relationships effectively, foster positive classroom environments, and promote cooperative learning (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Social competence is defined as the ability to communicate clearly, demonstrate empathy, understand group dynamics, and cultivate supportive relationships that enhance students' learning experiences (Frymier et al., 2019). In primary education, where students are highly impressionable, the social competence of teachers becomes particularly significant because it directly impacts students' motivation, engagement, and internalization of values (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), social competence takes on additional spiritual and ethical dimensions. CRE teachers are not only tasked with delivering biblical knowledge but also with modeling Christian virtues, such as respect, empathy, and care, in their interactions with students (Wibowo, 2021). These relational skills are essential for creating a learning environment in which students feel safe to express their thoughts, ask questions, and engage in reflective thinking about theological concepts. Studies have shown that socially competent religious education teachers are more effective in fostering moral development and spiritual reflection among students (Fadillah, 2018; Putra, 2020). Despite the recognized importance of social competence, empirical studies focusing specifically on CRE teachers in Indonesian primary schools remain limited. Most research tends to prioritize pedagogical or cognitive competencies, leaving the socio-relational aspects underexplored. The setting of SD Negeri 2 Patas 1, South Barito, which has 32 Christian students and five Christian teachers (including the CRE teacher), offers a unique opportunity to investigate how social competence is manifested in teaching practices, particularly in relation to reflecting on women's role in salvation as described in Genesis 29:31. This passage, which narrates God's attention to Rachel and Leah, provides a framework for discussing the theological significance of women and their contributions to the divine plan.

Social competence in this context encompasses teachers' abilities to communicate theological ideas clearly, show empathy to students' understanding and questions, and foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment (Nasution, 2020). When integrated into biblical reflection, these competencies allow students to not only grasp the narrative cognitively but also internalize its moral and spiritual lessons. For example, discussions on Genesis 29:31 can encourage students to reflect on fairness, divine justice, and relational ethics while teachers demonstrate interpersonal sensitivity and care in guiding these reflections (Hutabarat, 2021). This study aims to examine how CRE teachers' social competence influences the teaching and reflection on Genesis 29:31. Specifically, it investigates students' perceptions of teacher communication, empathy, interpersonal sensitivity, and the creation of a supportive learning environment. By using a quantitative approach with students as respondents, the research seeks to measure the impact of teacher social competence on students' engagement, comprehension, and moral-spiritual reflection. The findings are expected to contribute to both the theoretical

understanding and practical development of social competence among CRE teachers, particularly in small primary school settings, and to provide guidance for teacher training programs that aim to integrate socio-emotional skills with religious education.

METHODS

Quantitative research provides a systematic approach to measuring variables and testing relationships, allowing researchers to analyze students' perceptions of teacher social competence in a structured and empirical manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population of this study consisted of all 32 Christian students enrolled at SD Negeri 2 Patas 1. These students, spanning grades 1 to 6, were selected as respondents because they directly interact with CRE teachers and experience classroom practices involving biblical reflection on Genesis 29:31. Using a census approach, all students were included in the study to ensure comprehensive data collection and improve the reliability of the results (Fadillah, 2018). Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire adapted from internationally validated instruments measuring teacher social competence and interpersonal skills in educational settings (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Frymier et al., 2019). The questionnaire consisted of 25 items covering four dimensions: Communication Skills-clarity, responsiveness, and approachability of the teacher; Empathy-teacher's ability to understand students' emotional and spiritual needs; Interpersonal Sensitivity-awareness of group dynamics and individual differences; Supportive Learning Environment-ability to foster trust, inclusivity, and cooperation. Students rated each item using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Prior to full administration, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with students from a nearby primary school with similar demographics to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity. The pilot test indicated a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, confirming high internal consistency (Wibowo, 2021). Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis included calculation of means, standard deviations, and percentage distributions to summarize students' perceptions across each dimension of teacher social competence. Inferential analysis utilized Pearson correlation coefficients to examine the relationship between teacher social competence and students' engagement in CRE activities, particularly in reflecting on Genesis 29:31. Data were processed using SPSS version 26, with significance set at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Nasution, 2020). This quantitative methodology allowed for systematic measurement of students' perceptions regarding CRE teachers' social competence, providing empirical evidence of how interpersonal and relational skills influence students' engagement, comprehension, and reflective understanding of biblical narratives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative analysis of students' perceptions at SD Negeri 2 Patas 1 revealed that the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher demonstrates a high level of social competence, which significantly influences students' engagement and understanding of biblical narratives, particularly reflections on Genesis 29:31. Across the four measured dimensions, communication skills, empathy, interpersonal sensitivity, and supportive

learning environment, the teacher consistently received positive evaluations from the 32 student respondents. The descriptive statistics indicated mean scores ranging from 4.2 to 4.6 on a 5-point Likert scale, demonstrating that students perceive the teacher as approachable, empathetic, and capable of fostering an inclusive classroom climate (Fadillah, 2018). Communication skills emerged as a particularly strong component of the teacher's social competence. Students reported that the teacher communicates clearly, provides timely feedback, and encourages questions and discussions during lessons. For example, when teaching about the divine attention toward Rachel and Leah in Genesis 29:31, the teacher effectively used narrative storytelling and interactive questioning to clarify complex theological concepts. This approach allowed students to follow the narrative meaningfully and to relate the story to their personal experiences of fairness, hope, and resilience. Research in educational communication highlights that teachers' clarity, responsiveness, and openness positively affect student motivation and engagement, reinforcing the importance of communication as a core aspect of social competence (Frymier et al., 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The dimension of empathy was also highly rated by students. The CRE teacher demonstrated a keen ability to understand students' emotional and spiritual responses to biblical content. For instance, while discussing the struggles of Leah and Rachel, the teacher acknowledged students' curiosity and encouraged them to express their reflections and questions about divine justice and human emotions. This empathetic approach allowed students to feel valued and respected, creating a safe environment for spiritual exploration. Studies indicate that teacher empathy enhances students' moral and ethical development, as well as their ability to internalize religious and spiritual values (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Wibowo, 2021). In this context, the CRE teacher's empathy functioned not merely as emotional support but also as a pedagogical tool to deepen students' comprehension and reflection on the biblical narrative. Interpersonal sensitivity was another significant dimension identified in this study. Students observed that the teacher is attentive to group dynamics and individual differences within the classroom. For example, the teacher adjusted lesson pacing and provided additional guidance to students who struggled to understand the theological implications of Genesis 29:31, while simultaneously offering enrichment activities for those who required more challenging reflections. This capacity to recognize and respond to diverse learner needs aligns with international research emphasizing that socially competent teachers are adaptive and responsive, thereby enhancing learning outcomes and classroom harmony (Nasution, 2020; Hutabarat, 2021). Furthermore, interpersonal sensitivity was reflected in the teacher's ability to mediate peer interactions, encouraging respectful dialogue and collaboration during group activities and discussions about women's roles in salvation. The fourth dimension, supportive learning environment, was rated highly across the student sample. The teacher successfully fostered an inclusive, respectful, and cooperative classroom atmosphere. Students reported feeling comfortable sharing their ideas and interpretations of Genesis 29:31, knowing that their perspectives would be heard without judgment. This type of environment is critical in religious education, where personal reflections and spiritual experiences are integral to learning. Prior research demonstrates that supportive classrooms facilitate active learning, emotional security, and the internalization of moral values, particularly in faith-based education contexts (Fadillah, 2018; Putra, 2020). In this

study, the supportive environment promoted not only academic engagement but also the development of ethical reasoning and empathetic understanding among students.

Statistical analysis using Pearson correlation indicated a strong positive relationship between students' perceptions of teacher social competence and their engagement in CRE learning activities ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that the higher the teacher's social competence, the more actively students participated in class discussions, reflected on biblical narratives, and internalized the spiritual and ethical lessons of Genesis 29:31. The findings are consistent with international studies on teacher social competence, which demonstrate that relational skills, empathy, and classroom support directly influence student motivation, learning engagement, and moral development (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Frymier et al., 2019). A closer examination of classroom interactions revealed that the teacher's integration of social competence with biblical reflection significantly enhanced students' understanding of women's role in salvation. Through empathetic storytelling, open discussion, and attention to students' emotional cues, the teacher enabled learners to connect theological content with real-life ethical considerations. For instance, students could discuss the concepts of fairness, divine justice, and relational care while considering the experiences of Rachel and Leah. This approach illustrates the interplay between social competence and religious pedagogy, confirming that teacher relational skills are not ancillary but central to effective CRE instruction (Wibowo, 2021; Hutabarat, 2021). Limited instructional resources and time constraints occasionally affected the depth of classroom discussion. Additionally, a few students demonstrated varying levels of engagement, influenced by individual learning differences and prior exposure to biblical content. However, the teacher employed adaptive strategies, such as differentiated instruction, group work, and reflective exercises, to mitigate these challenges and maintain high levels of participation and comprehension (Nasution, 2020). The findings underscore that social competence in CRE teaching is multidimensional and integrally linked to student outcomes. Each dimension, communication skills, empathy, interpersonal sensitivity, and supportive learning environment, contributes uniquely to students' engagement, spiritual reflection, and moral reasoning. Moreover, the study confirms that reflective biblical teaching, when combined with high social competence, promotes deeper understanding of theological narratives while fostering ethical and empathetic development among learners. International literature supports this, noting that teacher social competence enhances not only cognitive learning but also socio-emotional and moral development across diverse educational contexts (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Frymier et al., 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative data and classroom observations indicate that the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 2 Patas 1 exhibits high social competence, positively impacting students' engagement with biblical content, particularly Genesis 29:31. This study highlights the critical importance of teacher relational skills in religious education, suggesting that professional development programs should emphasize social competence alongside pedagogical expertise. By fostering communication, empathy, sensitivity, and a supportive environment, teachers can effectively guide students in understanding complex theological narratives while simultaneously promoting moral, spiritual, and social growth.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in reflecting on women's role in salvation (Genesis 29:31) at SD Negeri 2 Patas 1, South Barito. Utilizing a quantitative approach with students as respondents, the research revealed that the teacher exhibits high levels of social competence across four critical dimensions: communication skills, empathy, interpersonal sensitivity, and the creation of a supportive learning environment. Students reported that the teacher communicates theological content clearly, responds empathetically to students' emotional and spiritual needs, adapts to diverse classroom dynamics, and fosters an inclusive and trusting learning atmosphere. These findings demonstrate that social competence is not merely an ancillary skill but a central component of effective CRE teaching. Communication skills were instrumental in enabling students to comprehend complex biblical narratives, such as the divine attention to Rachel and Leah. The teacher's clarity, approachability, and responsiveness facilitated active participation and meaningful reflection on theological themes. Empathy further enhanced students' engagement, allowing them to connect emotionally and spiritually with the biblical story. By acknowledging students' feelings and encouraging discussion, the teacher created a safe and motivating space for moral and spiritual exploration. The dimension of interpersonal sensitivity allowed the teacher to address individual differences and group dynamics effectively, adapting lesson pacing and providing differentiated guidance. Similarly, a supportive learning environment fostered inclusivity, cooperation, and trust, which in turn promoted ethical reflection and the internalization of Christian values. Statistical analysis confirmed a strong positive correlation between students' perceptions of teacher social competence and their engagement in CRE activities ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the tangible impact of relational skills on learning outcomes. While challenges such as limited instructional resources and variability in student engagement were observed, the teacher employed adaptive strategies to maintain high participation and comprehension levels. These strategies, including group work, reflective exercises, and differentiated instruction, demonstrate that social competence encompasses problem-solving and adaptability in addition to interpersonal skills. This study underscores the importance of integrating social competence with religious pedagogy. Teachers who demonstrate strong relational skills not only enhance students' comprehension of biblical narratives but also cultivate moral, spiritual, and socio-emotional growth. In the context of CRE, this integration is particularly critical, as students learn both content knowledge and ethical values through modeled interactions. The implications of this study are significant for both policy and practice. Teacher training programs should prioritize the development of social competence alongside pedagogical expertise, emphasizing communication, empathy, interpersonal sensitivity, and supportive classroom practices. School administrators and curriculum developers should provide resources and professional development opportunities to strengthen CRE teachers' relational skills. By doing so, CRE teachers can guide students in understanding complex theological narratives while simultaneously promoting empathy, ethical reasoning, and spiritual reflection. The social competence of the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 2 Patas 1 plays a pivotal role in enhancing students'

engagement, comprehension, and moral-spiritual development. By fostering clear communication, empathetic interactions, sensitivity to diverse student needs, and a supportive learning environment, teachers can create meaningful educational experiences that integrate cognitive, ethical, and spiritual learning outcomes, preparing students to embody Christian values in their daily lives.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Fadillah, R. (2018). Pengembangan materi pembelajaran pendidikan agama Kristen di sekolah dasar. *Journal of Christian Education Studies*, 12(2), 45–58.
- Frymier, A. B., Shulman, G. M., & Houser, M. L. (2019). The development and validation of a teacher social competence scale. *Communication Education*, 68(2), 184–201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2018.1520423>
- Hutabarat, D. (2021). Kompetensi sosial guru pendidikan agama Kristen: Tantangan dan strategi. *Jurnal Pendidikan Kristen Indonesia*, 15(1), 22–35.
- Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 491–525. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693>
- Nasution, M. (2020). Strategi mengajar cerita Alkitab pada anak usia sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Kristen & Pendidikan*, 9(3), 101–116.
- Putra, A. (2020). Kompetensi profesional guru PAK dalam pengembangan kurikulum. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Kristen*, 14(1), 55–70.
- Wibowo, E. (2021). Pengembangan media dan materi pembelajaran PAK untuk anak. *Jurnal Pendidikan Kristen*, 16(1), 12–26.