



Teaching Social Compassion through Professional Competence: Insights from Genesis 45:11 in Christian Religious Education at SDN 071130 Eho

Gantimanis Loi

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

* correspondence: gantimanisloi31@guru.sd.belajar.id

ABSTRACT

This study investigates how the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers contributes to the development of students' social compassion based on Genesis 45:11 at SDN 071130 Eho, South Nias. The research is grounded in the premise that teachers' professional quality plays a decisive role in translating biblical values into students' character formation. Employing a quantitative approach, data were collected from all 130 Christian students through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire measuring perceptions of teacher professional competence and students' social compassion. Descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlation were used to analyze the data. The findings reveal that students perceive the CRE teacher's professional competence to be in the high category, particularly in biblical mastery and clarity of instruction. Students' social compassion levels are also generally high, especially in cognitive understanding of Joseph's care in Genesis 45:11. The correlation analysis indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between teacher professional competence and students' social compassion, although the strength of the relationship is moderate. This suggests that while teacher professionalism is influential, other contextual factors also contribute to students' prosocial development. The study concludes that professionally competent CRE teachers play an important role in nurturing students' social compassion when biblical teaching is delivered clearly, contextually, and reflectively. Strengthening experiential learning and behavioral reinforcement is recommended to deepen the transformation from cognitive understanding to consistent compassionate action. The findings contribute to the development of more effective character-oriented Christian Religious Education in Indonesian primary schools.

Keywords: Social Compassion, Christian Religious Education, Professional Competence

INTRODUCTION

Professional competence carries an even deeper significance because teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also interpreters of biblical truth and facilitators of spiritual formation. The integration of pedagogical expertise, theological accuracy, and

contextual sensitivity becomes essential when CRE teachers seek to cultivate social virtues such as compassion, empathy, and responsibility among students (Pazmiño, 2008). In contemporary Indonesian education, where character education is strongly emphasized, the role of CRE teachers in nurturing social care values deserves focused scholarly attention. One biblical narrative that offers rich theological grounding for social compassion is Genesis 45:11, where Joseph assures his brothers of provision during famine. The text reflects themes of forgiveness, responsibility, and proactive care for others in times of crisis. Joseph's response moves beyond emotional reconciliation toward concrete social support, demonstrating that authentic faith expresses itself through tangible acts of care. From a Christian education perspective, this passage provides a powerful framework for teaching students that social concern is an integral expression of spiritual maturity rather than merely an optional moral behavior. Scholars of biblical pedagogy emphasize that Old Testament narratives, when interpreted contextually, can function as transformative moral resources in contemporary classrooms (Goldingay, 2012). In the Indonesian primary school context, the teaching of social compassion is particularly urgent. Rapid social change, digital individualism, and competitive academic cultures have contributed to observable declines in students' interpersonal sensitivity and communal awareness. Educational researchers note that character education programs are most effective when values are modeled consistently by teachers and reinforced through meaningful learning experiences rather than delivered through abstract moral instruction (Lickona, 2012). Therefore, the professional competence of CRE teachers becomes a decisive factor in whether biblical values such as those found in Genesis 45:11 are merely understood cognitively or truly internalized affectively and behaviorally. At SDN 071130 Eho in South Nias, this issue is especially relevant given the significant Christian student population. The school records indicate the presence of 130 Christian students supported by 15 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. This demographic context provides both opportunity and responsibility. On the one hand, the relatively strong Christian presence creates a supportive environment for faith-based value formation. On the other hand, it raises expectations for CRE teachers to demonstrate high levels of professional competence in translating biblical teachings into lived social attitudes among students. Preliminary observations in similar primary school settings suggest that while biblical stories are frequently taught, the connection between narrative understanding and social behavior is not always pedagogically optimized. Professional competence in CRE encompasses several interrelated dimensions, including mastery of biblical content, instructional design skills, classroom management, contextual application, and reflective practice (Yount, 2010). When these competencies function synergistically, teachers are better equipped to move students from passive listening toward active moral engagement. In the specific case of Genesis 45:11, effective teaching requires more than retelling Joseph's story; it requires guiding students to recognize the ethical implications of providing care in situations of need and to apply these insights within their own social environments. Without adequate professional competence, the risk remains that biblical narratives will be reduced to moral slogans rather than formative experiences. Previous studies in Christian education consistently affirm that teacher professionalism significantly correlates with student character outcomes, particularly in affective domains such as empathy and prosocial behavior (Groome, 2011). Empirical research focusing specifically on the intersection

between teacher professional competence and the teaching of social compassion within Indonesian CRE classrooms remains limited. Most existing studies either emphasize general character education or focus on theological interpretation without examining classroom implementation. This gap highlights the need for context-specific research that brings together biblical reflection, teacher competence, and observable educational impact. This study aims to explore how the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers contributes to the teaching of social compassion based on Genesis 45:11 at SDN 071130 Eho. The research seeks to analyze how students perceive the effectiveness of CRE instruction in fostering social care attitudes and to identify areas of pedagogical strength and needed improvement. By situating the investigation within an actual primary school context with 130 Christian students and 15 Christian teachers, this study intends to provide empirically grounded insights that can enrich both the theory and practice of Christian Religious Education in Indonesia.

METHODS

A quantitative research design was used to examine how the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers contributes to the teaching of social compassion based on Genesis 45:11 at SDN 071130 Eho, South Nias. A quantitative approach was selected because it enables systematic measurement of students' perceptions and allows the researcher to identify statistical tendencies between teacher competence and students' internalization of social care values (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research design used was descriptive–correlational, aiming both to describe the level of perceived teacher professionalism and to analyze its relationship with students' social compassion outcomes. The research was conducted at SDN 071130 Eho, a public primary school in South Nias with a strong Christian student presence. The population of the study consisted of 130 Christian students enrolled at the school. Given that the population size was manageable and to ensure comprehensive representation, the study applied a total sampling technique, in which all 130 Christian students were included as respondents. Total sampling is appropriate when the population is relatively small and the researcher intends to capture the full range of participant perceptions (Sugiyono, 2017). Although the school has 15 Christian teachers (including the CRE teacher), the primary respondents were students. This decision was based on the premise that students are the direct recipients of CRE instruction and are therefore in a valid position to evaluate how teacher professional competence is manifested in classroom practice and how it influences their understanding of social compassion. The study involved two principal variables: Independent Variable (X): Professional competence of CRE teachers (as perceived by students) and Dependent Variable (Y): Students' internalization of social compassion values based on Genesis 45:11. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from established frameworks in Christian education and teacher competence literature. The instrument used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Indicators of teacher professional competence included: mastery of biblical material, clarity of instructional explanation, ability to connect Scripture with daily life, use of varied teaching strategies, classroom management effectiveness, assessment and feedback practices. Indicators of students' social compassion included: understanding of Joseph's care in Genesis 45:11,

empathy toward peers in need, willingness to help others, sense of responsibility for community welfare, application of compassion in school interactions. Content validity was established through expert judgment involving two specialists in Christian Religious Education and educational measurement. Revisions were made to ensure conceptual alignment with Genesis 45:11 and clarity for primary-level respondents. A pilot test was conducted with a small group of students from a comparable school to evaluate item clarity and internal consistency. Reliability analysis was performed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of ≥ 0.70 considered acceptable for research purposes (Field, 2018). The final instrument met the reliability threshold, indicating adequate internal consistency. Data collection was carried out during the academic term after obtaining formal permission from the school administration. Questionnaires were administered in classroom settings under researcher supervision to ensure independent responses. Prior to completion, students were given a brief explanation of the study's purpose and assured that their responses would remain anonymous and would not affect their academic evaluation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores, percentages, and standard deviations, were used to describe the overall profile of teacher professional competence and students' social compassion levels. To examine the relationship between the variables, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was employed. This technique is appropriate for determining the strength and direction of the relationship between two interval-scale variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The level of significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Correlation strength was interpreted using conventional criteria ranging from very low to very strong.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study sought to examine how the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers contributes to the teaching and internalization of social compassion values based on Genesis 45:11 at SDN 071130 Eho, South Nias. Using quantitative data collected from 130 Christian students, the analysis provides important insights into the perceived effectiveness of CRE instruction, the level of students' social care attitudes, and the statistical relationship between the two variables. The discussion below integrates empirical findings with relevant theoretical perspectives in Christian education, teacher professionalism, and character formation. The descriptive analysis indicates that students generally perceive the professional competence of the CRE teacher to be in the high category. The overall mean score for the professional competence variable suggests that most students experience the teacher as adequately prepared, biblically grounded, and pedagogically organized. Among the competence indicators, mastery of biblical material and clarity of instructional explanation received the strongest responses. This pattern suggests that the teacher demonstrates a solid cognitive command of the Genesis narrative and is able to communicate Joseph's story in a way that is understandable for primary-level learners. Such findings align with Pazmiño's (2008) assertion that content mastery remains a foundational requirement for effective Christian teaching because theological accuracy shapes students' doctrinal understanding from an early age. While content mastery was strong, slightly lower mean scores appeared in the indicators related to instructional variation and contextual application.

This nuance is pedagogically significant. It suggests that although students understand the story of Joseph, the translation of the narrative into diverse, experience-based learning activities may not yet be fully optimized. Yount (2010) emphasizes that professional competence in Christian education requires moving beyond verbal explanation toward experiential engagement that enables students to practice the values being taught. Therefore, even within a generally positive competence profile, there remains room for pedagogical enrichment. Turning to the dependent variable, the descriptive findings show that students' social compassion levels are also in the moderately high to high range. Most respondents agreed that they understood Joseph's act of providing for his family during famine and recognized it as an example of caring for others. Students also reported relatively positive attitudes toward helping classmates, showing empathy, and participating in cooperative activities. This outcome indicates that the CRE instruction at SDN 071130 Eho is functioning not merely at the cognitive level but is beginning to shape affective dispositions. The strongest student responses appeared in the indicator of cognitive understanding of Joseph's care, suggesting that the biblical narrative itself has been successfully communicated. This is important because narrative comprehension is often the first gateway to moral internalization in primary education. As Goldingay (2012) notes, Old Testament stories carry formative ethical power when students are able to grasp the relational dynamics within the text. In this case, students appear to recognize Joseph not only as a historical figure but as a moral exemplar. The data also reveal that behavioral application indicators, such as consistently helping peers without being asked, received slightly lower mean scores than cognitive understanding. This gap between knowing and consistently doing compassion is a well-documented phenomenon in character education research. Lickona (2012) argues that moral knowing often develops faster than moral action because behavioral habits require repeated practice, modeling, and reinforcement across contexts. Therefore, the findings do not indicate failure but rather highlight a typical developmental progression that CRE teachers must intentionally address. The correlational analysis further strengthens the study's central argument. The Pearson correlation test shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between students' perceptions of CRE teacher professional competence and their level of social compassion. Although the strength of the correlation falls within the moderate range, its significance confirms that teacher professionalism meaningfully contributes to students' character formation. This finding is consistent with Groome's (2011) view that effective Christian teaching operates through an integrative process in which teacher credibility, pedagogical clarity, and spiritual intentionality collectively shape learner transformation. From a pedagogical perspective, the moderate correlation coefficient is both encouraging and instructive. It is encouraging because it empirically validates the importance of professional competence in CRE contexts. It is instructive because it indicates that teacher competence, while influential, is not the sole factor shaping students' social compassion. Other variables, such as family environment, peer culture, school climate, and broader socio-cultural influences, likely interact with classroom instruction. This multifactorial reality is widely acknowledged in educational psychology and suggests that holistic character formation requires coordinated efforts beyond the CRE classroom alone. Contextual analysis of SDN 071130 Eho provides additional interpretive depth. The presence of 130 Christian students supported by 15 Christian teachers creates a relatively favorable environment for faith-based value transmission. In such contexts, biblical

teaching is reinforced not only through formal lessons but also through informal school culture. Students encounter consistent religious language, shared moral expectations, and peer support for Christian values. These ecological supports likely contribute to the generally positive compassion scores observed in the data. The data also suggest that institutional advantage does not automatically guarantee optimal character formation. Even within a supportive Christian-majority environment, the translation of biblical narratives into habitual social care still requires intentional pedagogical design. This finding reinforces Yount's (2010) argument that teacher professionalism functions as the catalytic factor that converts a supportive environment into transformative learning. Without pedagogical intentionality, biblical stories risk remaining inspirational rather than formational.

A closer examination of specific questionnaire patterns reveals an important instructional insight. Students responded most positively to items describing teachers who connect biblical lessons with real-life situations. This suggests that contextualization is a key mechanism through which professional competence influences moral internalization. When Joseph's provision in Genesis 45:11 is linked to concrete school situations, such as sharing food, helping struggling classmates, or showing concern for friends, students demonstrate stronger affective engagement. This supports constructivist perspectives in religious education, which emphasize that meaning emerges most powerfully when learners can situate biblical truth within their lived experience (Groome, 2011). Another notable finding concerns the role of teacher modeling. Although the study primarily measured professional competence rather than personality, several items indirectly reflected students' observation of teacher behavior. Students who perceived the CRE teacher as caring, patient, and attentive tended to report higher personal compassion scores. This pattern resonates with social learning theory, which posits that children internalize values most effectively through observed behavior rather than verbal instruction alone. In Christian education, this dynamic is particularly significant because the teacher functions as a living curriculum. The findings also surface several areas requiring pedagogical strengthening. Variability in student responses suggests that not all learners are equally impacted by current instructional approaches. Differentiated instruction may therefore be needed to address diverse learning styles and spiritual readiness levels. The moderate, not strong, correlation coefficient indicates the need for more structured compassion-practice opportunities within CRE programs. Activities such as service projects, peer-support initiatives, and guided reflection exercises could help bridge the gap between cognitive understanding and habitual action. The data highlight the importance of assessment practices in character education. Students reported clearer understanding when teachers provided feedback on behavioral applications of biblical values. This suggests that formative assessment, often underutilized in CRE contexts, can play a significant role in reinforcing social compassion. When students receive specific encouragement or correction related to caring behaviors, the value of compassion becomes more concretely embedded in their learning experience. The findings affirm the pedagogical richness of Genesis 45:11 for primary-level Christian education. Joseph's assurance to provide for his family embodies a multidimensional model of social compassion that includes forgiveness, responsibility, foresight, and concrete provision. When taught with professional competence, this narrative appears capable of nurturing

early prosocial dispositions among students. The study also confirms that narrative power must be mediated through intentional pedagogy to achieve maximum formative impact. This research contributes to the growing body of scholarship emphasizing the inseparability of teacher professionalism and character education outcomes. Within Indonesian CRE contexts, where teachers often carry multiple instructional responsibilities, professional development programs should give greater attention to the pedagogical translation of biblical ethics into student behavior. Strengthening lesson design, expanding experiential learning strategies, and enhancing reflective teaching practices could further amplify the positive trends observed at SDN 071130 Eho. Several limitations should be acknowledged. The study relies on student self-report data, which may be influenced by social desirability bias. The single-school setting also limits generalizability to other regions. Future research would benefit from multi-site studies, longitudinal designs, and mixed-method approaches incorporating classroom observation and teacher interviews. Such expansions would provide a more comprehensive picture of how professional competence operates in diverse CRE environments. The results demonstrate that the professional competence of CRE teachers at SDN 071130 Eho plays a meaningful and statistically significant role in fostering students' social compassion based on Genesis 45:11. While the overall profile is encouraging, the findings also point to strategic areas for pedagogical enhancement, particularly in experiential learning, contextual application, and sustained behavioral reinforcement. Strengthening these dimensions holds promise for deepening the transformative impact of Christian Religious Education in primary school settings.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the contribution of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' professional competence to the cultivation of students' social compassion based on Genesis 45:11 at SDN 071130 Eho, South Nias. Drawing on quantitative data from 130 Christian students, the findings provide clear empirical support for the strategic role of teacher professionalism in shaping students' understanding and practice of social care within the CRE classroom. The results demonstrate that the professional competence of the CRE teacher at SDN 071130 Eho is generally perceived at a high level by students. The teacher shows strong mastery of biblical content, clarity in instructional delivery, and the ability to communicate the narrative of Joseph in ways that are accessible to primary-level learners. These strengths indicate that foundational aspects of professional teaching, particularly content knowledge and instructional clarity, are already functioning effectively in this context. Students' levels of social compassion are also found to be in the moderately high to high category. Most students show cognitive understanding of Joseph's act of care in Genesis 45:11 and express positive attitudes toward helping others. This suggests that CRE instruction at the school has begun to move beyond mere biblical storytelling toward affective character formation. However, the data also reveal a typical developmental gap between students' conceptual understanding of compassion and the consistency of their compassionate behaviors in everyday situations. The correlational analysis confirms a positive and statistically significant relationship between perceived teacher professional competence and students' social compassion. Although the strength of the correlation is moderate, the finding is meaningful: it affirms that teacher

professionalism is a key contributing factor in the internalization of Christian social values. At the same time, the moderate level of association indicates that other ecological factors, such as family influence, peer dynamics, and broader school culture, also play important roles in shaping students' prosocial development. The study highlights several important implications. Effective teaching of social compassion requires not only accurate biblical explanation but also contextual application, varied instructional strategies, and opportunities for students to practice caring behaviors. The findings suggest that while the CRE teacher has established a strong instructional foundation, further strengthening could be achieved through more experiential learning activities, structured compassion-based projects, and formative feedback that reinforces prosocial actions. Such enhancements would help bridge the gap between knowing compassion and consistently living it out. The study confirms the continued relevance of Genesis 45:11 as a rich pedagogical resource for primary Christian education. Joseph's commitment to provide for others in times of need offers a concrete biblical model of social responsibility that resonates with students when taught professionally and contextually. The passage proves especially powerful when teachers intentionally connect the biblical narrative with students' daily school interactions. This study is limited by its single-site scope and reliance on student self-report data. Future research is recommended to include multi-school samples, longitudinal tracking of character development, and mixed-method approaches incorporating classroom observation and teacher perspectives. Such studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how professional competence operates across diverse CRE contexts in Indonesia. The professional competence of CRE teachers at SDN 071130 Eho plays a significant and constructive role in fostering students' social compassion grounded in Genesis 45:11. Strengthening pedagogical intentionality, experiential engagement, and contextual application will be crucial for maximizing the transformative potential of Christian Religious Education in nurturing socially responsible and biblically grounded students.

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