



Pedagogical Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers and the Faithfulness of Eliezer (Genesis 24:34-36): A Contextual Study at UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul

Rislilis Iranova Banjarnahor

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

*correspondence: rislilisbanjarnahor33@guru.smp.belajar.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between pedagogical competence and the faithfulness of Eliezer in Genesis 24:34-36 within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE) at UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul, Dairi. Pedagogical competence is widely recognized as a core dimension of teacher professionalism, yet its theological grounding in biblical paradigms remains underexplored. Drawing on the narrative of Eliezer's entrusted mission, this research conceptualizes faithfulness as responsibility toward assigned tasks, consistency between mandate and action, transparency in communication, and loyalty to institutional and spiritual commitments. A quantitative correlational design was employed involving 27 Christian teachers (including CRE teachers) and a proportional sample of Christian students from a population of 203. Data were collected using validated Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and simple linear regression. The findings indicate that both pedagogical competence and faithfulness are rated at high levels. Statistical analysis reveals a strong positive correlation between faithfulness and pedagogical competence ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$), with faithfulness accounting for 50.4% of the variance in pedagogical competence ($R^2 = 0.504$). These results suggest that theological faithfulness significantly predicts and strengthens professional instructional practice. The study concludes that the integration of biblical reflection and empirical educational analysis offers a coherent framework for understanding teacher professionalism in Christian education. Faithfulness, inspired by Genesis 24:34-36, emerges as a meaningful ethical foundation that enhances pedagogical effectiveness within a public-school context.

Keywords: *Pedagogical Competence, Christian Religious Education, Faithfulness*

INTRODUCTION

The professional role of teachers in contemporary education extends far beyond instructional delivery. In modern pedagogical discourse, teachers are expected to

demonstrate integrated competence that encompasses instructional design, learner understanding, classroom management, assessment literacy, and reflective capacity. Among these dimensions, pedagogical competence occupies a central position because it directly determines the quality of learning experiences and student outcomes. Shulman (1987) emphasizes that effective teaching requires not only content knowledge but also pedagogical content knowledge, which integrates subject mastery with the capacity to make material comprehensible to learners. Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2006) argues that teachers' pedagogical expertise significantly influences student achievement, particularly when instruction is responsive to learners' developmental and contextual needs. Pedagogical competence is formally recognized as one of the four foundational competencies required of professional teachers, alongside personal, social, and professional competence (Republik Indonesia, 2005). This competence includes the ability to understand learners' characteristics, develop curriculum, implement dialogical learning processes, utilize educational technology, and conduct authentic evaluation. However, within Christian Religious Education (CRE), pedagogical competence cannot be interpreted solely through regulatory or technical standards. CRE teachers operate within a theological horizon that frames teaching as a vocation and moral trust. Pazmiño (2008) contends that Christian education involves faithfulness to God's redemptive purposes expressed through responsible pedagogical practice. Therefore, pedagogical competence for CRE teachers entails fidelity, not merely efficiency, in carrying out educational responsibilities. The theme of faithfulness finds a compelling biblical illustration in the figure of Eliezer in Genesis 24:34-36. In this passage, Abraham's servant introduces himself and recounts the mandate entrusted to him to secure a wife for Isaac. His speech reflects clarity of identity, loyalty to his master, and transparent representation of the mission assigned to him. Wenham (1994) notes that the narrative structure highlights the servant's reliability and careful obedience, presenting him as a model of entrusted stewardship. Likewise, Waltke (2001) interprets the episode as an embodiment of covenantal faithfulness, where obedience is expressed through wise initiative and consistent commitment to the master's will. Eliezer does not deviate from the mandate; rather, he articulates and fulfills it with integrity. This biblical portrayal offers a constructive theological metaphor for understanding pedagogical competence. Just as Eliezer was entrusted with a significant mission requiring discernment and accountability, teachers are entrusted with the intellectual and moral formation of students. Their responsibility extends beyond procedural compliance to faithful representation of educational and ethical commitments. Day (2004) argues that committed teachers sustain professional integrity through alignment between belief, identity, and practice. Such alignment parallels Eliezer's transparent articulation of his master's blessing and promise in Genesis 24:34-36.

The relevance of this reflection becomes particularly evident in the context of UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul, Dairi. The school community includes 203 Christian students and 27 Christian teachers, including CRE teachers. Within this demographic composition, Christian educators occupy a significant role in shaping both academic culture and moral atmosphere. Their pedagogical competence influences not only classroom effectiveness but also the transmission of values within a pluralistic public-school setting. Research consistently demonstrates that teachers' instructional quality is closely associated with

relational trust and moral credibility (Hattie, 2009). When teachers integrate professional expertise with ethical consistency, students experience learning environments that are both intellectually rigorous and morally coherent. Integrating the faithfulness of Eliezer with pedagogical competence invites dialogue between biblical theology and educational theory. Hamilton (1995) observes that Genesis 24 underscores providential guidance working through human responsibility. This interplay between divine trust and human action resonates with the vocation of Christian educators who navigate institutional mandates while remaining accountable to theological convictions. In such a framework, pedagogical competence is not value-neutral; it becomes an expression of fidelity to entrusted responsibility. Relatively few studies explore biblical paradigms as interpretive frameworks for professional practice in public educational contexts. By examining the faithfulness of Eliezer in Genesis 24:34-36 alongside contemporary theories of pedagogical competence, this study seeks to bridge that gap. Situated at UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul, Dairi, the research aims to analyze how theological faithfulness informs measurable pedagogical practice among CRE teachers. Through this integration, the study contributes to a more holistic understanding of teacher professionalism, one that unites regulatory standards, educational theory, and biblical vision in a coherent model of faithful pedagogical service.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design using a correlational approach to examine the relationship between the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and the construct of faithfulness as reflected in Genesis 24:34-36 within the context of UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul, Dairi. Quantitative methodology was selected because it enables objective measurement, statistical testing, and generalizable conclusions regarding relationships between clearly defined variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research adopted a cross-sectional survey model in which data were collected at a single point in time to capture the prevailing condition of pedagogical competence and faithfulness-oriented attitudes among respondents. The population of this study consisted of 203 Christian students and 27 Christian teachers, including CRE teachers, at UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul. Given the relatively small size of the teacher population, total sampling was applied to ensure that all 27 Christian teachers participated in the research. For the student population, proportional random sampling was used to ensure representation across grade levels. The minimum sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a statistically adequate number of respondents to represent the 203 Christian students. This sampling strategy was intended to maintain representativeness while ensuring feasibility in data collection. Two primary variables were measured in this study. The independent variable was the faithfulness construct derived from exegetical reflection on Genesis 24:34-36, particularly focusing on responsibility, loyalty to entrusted tasks, transparency in communication, and consistency between mandate and action. Although the biblical text is theological in nature, its core themes were operationalized into measurable behavioral indicators suitable for empirical assessment. The dependent variable was pedagogical competence, defined according to established educational frameworks that include understanding learners, instructional planning, implementation of effective learning

strategies, classroom management, and evaluation skills (Shulman, 1987; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Data were collected through structured questionnaires developed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Instrument development followed standard procedures in educational research, beginning with construct identification based on literature review and biblical analysis, followed by item formulation aligned with each indicator (DeVellis, 2016). Content validity was assessed through expert judgment involving specialists in Christian education and educational measurement to ensure conceptual clarity and theological coherence. A pilot test was conducted outside the research site to evaluate reliability and refine ambiguous items. Internal consistency reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable for research purposes (Hair et al., 2010). Data collection was conducted during regular school hours with permission from school authorities. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. Completed questionnaires were coded and processed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and percentage distribution, were used to describe the level of pedagogical competence and faithfulness orientation. Inferential analysis employed Pearson product-moment correlation to test the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. A significance level of 0.05 was applied to determine statistical significance (Field, 2018). Additionally, simple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the predictive contribution of faithfulness to pedagogical competence. Assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were examined prior to hypothesis testing to ensure the robustness of the statistical model. Through these systematic quantitative procedures, the study seeks to generate empirically grounded findings regarding the extent to which faithfulness, inspired by the example of Eliezer in Genesis 24:34–36, relates to and potentially predicts pedagogical competence among Christian educators at UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul, Dairi.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative analysis conducted in this study sought to determine the level of pedagogical competence among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and the extent to which the construct of faithfulness, conceptually derived from Genesis 24:34–36, contributes to that competence within the context of UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul, Dairi. Statistical findings reveal a meaningful and significant relationship between the two variables, indicating that theological faithfulness, operationalized in measurable behavioral indicators, is positively associated with pedagogical effectiveness. The results are presented integratively with theoretical and biblical reflection in order to provide a comprehensive interpretation. Descriptive statistical analysis shows that the overall mean score for pedagogical competence among the 27 Christian teachers falls within the high category ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.37$ on a 5-point scale). Among its dimensions, the highest mean was recorded in the indicator of understanding learners ($M = 4.26$), followed by instructional planning ($M = 4.21$), classroom management ($M = 4.15$), implementation of student-centered learning ($M = 4.12$), and evaluation practices ($M = 4.09$). These results indicate that teachers demonstrate strong mastery of instructional processes and learner engagement. From the students' responses (n determined proportionally from the 203

Christian students), the perception of teachers' pedagogical competence also fell within the high range ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.41$), suggesting convergence between teacher self-assessment and student evaluation. Such convergence enhances the credibility of the findings and suggests that pedagogical competence is not merely self-perceived but observable in classroom practice. The descriptive analysis of the faithfulness construct similarly indicates a high level of internalized commitment among teachers ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.33$). The highest scoring indicator within this construct was responsibility in fulfilling entrusted tasks ($M = 4.31$), followed by consistency between instructional objectives and implementation ($M = 4.25$), transparency in communication ($M = 4.22$), and loyalty to institutional and spiritual mandates ($M = 4.18$). These findings suggest that teachers perceive their vocation not simply as contractual employment but as entrusted stewardship. The operationalization of faithfulness reflects key theological elements observed in Genesis 24:34–36, where Eliezer articulates his identity, recounts his master's blessing, and affirms his entrusted mission. His speech structure demonstrates clarity of responsibility and loyalty, qualities mirrored in teachers' high agreement with statements reflecting disciplined commitment to assigned duties. Inferential analysis using Pearson product–moment correlation indicates a strong positive relationship between faithfulness and pedagogical competence ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$). This coefficient signifies a high correlation according to conventional interpretation standards, demonstrating that higher levels of faithfulness orientation are associated with stronger pedagogical competence. The significance value below 0.05 confirms that the relationship is statistically meaningful and not due to random variation. Simple linear regression analysis reveals that faithfulness accounts for approximately 50% of the variance in pedagogical competence ($R^2 = 0.504$). This result indicates that half of the variability in pedagogical competence scores can be statistically explained by differences in faithfulness orientation. While other factors undoubtedly contribute to competence, the predictive power of faithfulness is substantial. The strength of this correlation invites careful theoretical reflection. In Genesis 24:34–36, Eliezer does not merely execute technical tasks; he embodies entrusted responsibility through transparent narration and loyal representation of Abraham's will. His competence in negotiation and communication flows from his fidelity to the mandate. Translating this theological pattern into the educational context suggests that pedagogical skill is strengthened when grounded in a deeply internalized sense of entrusted responsibility. Teachers at UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul appear to demonstrate this integration. Their high mean scores in both constructs and the strong correlation between them imply that professional effectiveness is closely intertwined with vocational faithfulness. In practical classroom terms, teachers who scored high on faithfulness indicators also tended to demonstrate consistent instructional planning and reflective evaluation practices. Regression coefficients show that for every one-point increase in faithfulness score, pedagogical competence increased by 0.68 points ($\beta = 0.68$, $t = 6.21$, $p < 0.001$). This statistically significant coefficient reinforces the conclusion that faithfulness functions not merely as a theological abstraction but as a measurable predictor of professional behavior. Teachers who perceive their work as a trust are more likely to prepare thoroughly, implement lessons conscientiously, and evaluate learning outcomes responsibly.

The demographic context of UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul further illuminates these findings. With 203 Christian students and 27 Christian teachers, including CRE educators, the school presents a relatively substantial Christian presence within a public institutional framework. Such a setting may cultivate communal reinforcement of shared values, thereby strengthening the alignment between faith orientation and pedagogical execution. Students' high perception scores support this interpretation; they recognize coherence between teachers' commitments and instructional conduct. In educational research, such coherence contributes significantly to credibility and moral authority in the classroom. Teachers who consistently align belief and practice tend to foster trust and engagement, which in turn enhance learning outcomes. The discussion also highlights the structural parallels between Eliezer's narrative fidelity and pedagogical processes. In Genesis 24:34-36, Eliezer begins by clarifying his identity ("I am Abraham's servant"), recounts the blessing bestowed upon his master, and articulates the entrusted mission. This pattern mirrors effective pedagogical sequencing: establishing relational identity with learners, contextualizing instructional content, and clearly communicating learning objectives. Teachers who demonstrate faithfulness tend to articulate lesson purposes transparently and align instructional methods with stated goals. The strong correlation found in this study suggests that theological identity reinforces professional intentionality. Another important finding concerns the dimension of transparency in communication. Teachers who scored highly on transparency were also rated highly by students in classroom management and relational clarity. This relationship reflects the narrative dynamic in Genesis 24, where Eliezer openly recounts circumstances without manipulation. Faithfulness, therefore, appears linked to ethical communication practices in teaching. In educational settings, transparent communication reduces ambiguity, clarifies expectations, and strengthens student trust. The quantitative data indicate that such transparency significantly correlates with effective pedagogical implementation. Although the statistical findings demonstrate strong associations, it is necessary to interpret them within realistic boundaries. An R^2 of 0.504 indicates that 49.6% of the variance remains unexplained by faithfulness alone. Factors such as professional training, teaching experience, institutional support, and personal motivation likely contribute to pedagogical competence. Nevertheless, the substantial predictive value of faithfulness underscores the importance of integrating theological formation into professional development for CRE teachers. Faith-informed commitment appears to function as a motivational and ethical anchor that stabilizes instructional practice.

The results also suggest that faithfulness influences reflective practice. Teachers with high faithfulness scores reported greater consistency in evaluating and improving their teaching. This finding resonates with the biblical portrait of Eliezer as attentive to detail and responsive to unfolding circumstances. His success in fulfilling Abraham's mandate required adaptive discernment. Similarly, pedagogical competence requires ongoing evaluation and adjustment. Faithfulness, in this context, supports perseverance and attentiveness rather than rigid formalism. The findings affirm that theological narratives can provide meaningful conceptual resources for professional discourse. The quantitative evidence indicates that faithfulness derived from Genesis 24:34-36 is not an extraneous spiritual ideal but a construct with observable behavioral correlates. Within UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul, teachers' sense of entrusted responsibility significantly strengthens

their pedagogical effectiveness. This integration offers a model for contextual Christian education research that bridges scriptural theology and empirical measurement. The positive student perception data suggest that faithfulness enhances relational credibility. Students recognize when teachers consistently embody commitment and clarity. Such recognition likely fosters a supportive learning climate, reinforcing the connection between moral identity and instructional success. In this respect, faithfulness contributes indirectly to educational quality by cultivating trust-based classroom environments. The quantitative findings demonstrate a strong and statistically significant relationship between pedagogical competence and faithfulness inspired by Genesis 24:34-36. The high descriptive scores, strong correlation coefficient ($r = 0.71$), significant regression model ($R^2 = 0.504$), and positive student perceptions collectively indicate that faithfulness meaningfully predicts and strengthens pedagogical practice. Within the specific context of UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul, Dairi, where 203 Christian students and 27 Christian teachers share a substantial communal presence, faith-informed professionalism emerges as a coherent and measurable reality. The narrative of Eliezer thus provides not merely illustrative symbolism but a constructive theological framework that supports empirical educational development.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the relationship between pedagogical competence and the faithfulness of Eliezer in Genesis 24:34-36 within the context of UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul, Dairi. Through a quantitative correlational design, the findings demonstrate that faithfulness, conceptualized as responsibility toward entrusted tasks, consistency between mandate and action, transparency in communication, and loyalty to institutional and spiritual commitments, has a strong and statistically significant relationship with pedagogical competence among Christian teachers. The high descriptive scores for both variables, combined with a substantial correlation coefficient and meaningful regression results, confirm that theological faithfulness is not merely a devotional ideal but a measurable contributor to professional effectiveness. In this school context, which includes 203 Christian students and 27 Christian teachers (including CRE teachers), pedagogical competence appears closely intertwined with a shared sense of vocational responsibility. Teachers who perceive their work as an entrusted mission demonstrate greater consistency in instructional planning, learner engagement, classroom management, and reflective evaluation. The narrative of Eliezer in Genesis 24:34-36 provides a constructive theological analogy: just as Eliezer faithfully represented Abraham's mandate with clarity and integrity, teachers who internalize a similar sense of entrusted stewardship tend to perform their pedagogical responsibilities with intentionality and coherence. The findings contribute theoretically by bridging biblical theology and empirical educational research. While pedagogical competence is commonly analyzed through regulatory or psychological frameworks, this study demonstrates that scriptural paradigms can enrich professional discourse. Faithfulness functions as a motivational and ethical foundation that strengthens technical competence. In practice, this means that teacher development in Christian Religious Education should not focus solely on methodological skills but also on cultivating vocational integrity grounded in theological reflection. The study acknowledges that

pedagogical competence is influenced by multiple factors beyond faithfulness alone, including professional training, experience, institutional culture, and educational resources. Faithfulness explains a significant proportion of variance in competence, yet it operates within a broader ecosystem of professional development. Future research may expand the scope by incorporating additional variables or employing longitudinal designs to examine changes over time. This study affirms that in the context of UPT SMP Negeri 4 Sumbul, pedagogical competence is strengthened when anchored in a deep sense of entrusted responsibility inspired by Genesis 24:34-36. The integration of biblical faithfulness and professional expertise offers a coherent model of Christian teacher professionalism, one in which theological conviction and pedagogical skill function not as separate domains but as mutually reinforcing dimensions of faithful educational service.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs*. Jossey-Bass.
- Day, C. (2004). *A passion for teaching*. RoutledgeFalmer.
- DeVellis, R. F. (2016). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson.
- Hamilton, V. P. (1995). *The book of Genesis, chapters 18–50*. Eerdmans.
- Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Routledge.
- Pazmiño, R. W. (2008). *Foundational issues in Christian education: An introduction in evangelical perspective* (3rd ed.). Baker Academic.
- Republik Indonesia. (2005). *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen*.
- Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1–22.
- Waltke, B. K. (2001). *Genesis: A commentary*. Zondervan.
- Wenham, G. J. (1994). *Genesis 16–50*. Word Books.