



Social Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching the Value of Honesty: A Study of Genesis 44:16 at SDN 173131 Tarutung

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the value of honesty based on Genesis 44:16 at SDN 173131 Tarutung. The research is grounded in the assumption that effective moral instruction in CRE is strongly influenced by teachers' relational abilities in interacting with students and modeling ethical behavior. A quantitative correlational design was employed involving 13 Christian teachers and a stratified random sample of approximately 175 Christian students drawn from a population of 313 students. Data were collected through a teacher social competence questionnaire, a student learning test on honesty values, and a student perception survey. All instruments were validated by experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. Descriptive statistical analysis indicates that the social competence of CRE teachers is generally in the good category, characterized by effective communication, empathy, fairness, and supportive classroom relationships. Students' understanding and attitudes toward honesty are also found to be moderately high, particularly in narrative comprehension and moral recognition. Inferential analysis using Pearson correlation reveals a significant positive relationship between teachers' social competence and students' honesty outcomes. Regression analysis further shows that teachers' social competence contributes meaningfully to students' moral learning, although other contextual factors remain influential. The study concludes that strengthening teachers' relational and social capabilities is essential for enhancing the internalization of biblical honesty values in elementary education. These findings highlight the importance of socially grounded pedagogy in advancing character formation within Christian Religious Education in Indonesian public schools.

Keywords: Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, Honesty

INTRODUCTION

Teacher competence is widely recognized as a central determinant of educational quality and student character formation. In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK), teacher competence carries an even broader mandate because instruction is expected not only to transmit knowledge but also to cultivate biblical values that shape students' moral and spiritual lives. Among the four core competencies mandated for teachers in Indonesia, social competence occupies a strategic position because it directly influences how teachers model relational ethics, communicate values, and build a moral learning climate in the classroom. Social competence refers to a teacher's ability to interact effectively with students, colleagues, parents, and the wider community in ways that reflect professional ethics and positive character (Mulyasa, 2013). In CRE, this competence becomes particularly significant because students often learn moral values not only from what teachers say but also from how teachers relate and behave. The teaching of honesty as a Christian virtue is deeply rooted in biblical theology and moral education. Honesty forms a foundational component of Christian character, shaping integrity, trustworthiness, and accountability in social relationships. One important biblical text that illustrates the value of honesty is Genesis 44:16, where Judah openly acknowledges responsibility before Joseph. This narrative moment demonstrates moral courage, truthfulness, and accountability in the face of potential punishment. According to biblical scholarship, Judah's confession represents a turning point in the moral transformation of Joseph's brothers, highlighting the redemptive power of truthful speech and moral responsibility (Goldingay, 2015). For elementary students, however, the ethical depth of this narrative is not automatically grasped. It requires careful pedagogical mediation and strong teacher modeling to translate the biblical message into meaningful character learning. Previous studies consistently show that teacher competence significantly influences both cognitive achievement and character development among students. Research on teacher effectiveness emphasizes that socially competent teachers tend to create more supportive, trusting, and morally formative classroom environments (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In religious education contexts, the teacher's relational credibility is especially critical because moral values are often internalized through identification and imitation processes. Groome (2011) argues that faith education becomes transformative when learners encounter authentic witnesses who embody the values being taught. Therefore, the social competence of CRE teachers is not merely a professional requirement but a theological necessity for effective character formation.

Teaching honesty presents particular challenges. Students at the primary level are still developing moral reasoning and often interpret ethical concepts concretely rather than abstractly. Without relationally sensitive instruction, biblical teachings on honesty risk being reduced to moral slogans rather than lived virtues. Furthermore, rapid social change and exposure to digital culture have increased concerns about declining honesty among students, including issues such as cheating, avoidance of responsibility, and peer dishonesty. These realities heighten the urgency of effective CRE instruction that

intentionally cultivates honesty through both teaching and teacher example. SDN 173131 Tarutung provides a meaningful context for examining this issue. Based on school data, the institution serves 313 Christian students and is supported by 13 Christian teachers, including the CRE teacher. This demographic composition creates a conducive environment for implementing Christian Religious Education while also offering a substantial population for empirical analysis. Preliminary observations indicate that while CRE instruction is regularly conducted, variations exist in how teachers model social interaction, encourage truthful behavior, and connect biblical narratives to students' daily experiences. These variations suggest the need for a systematic investigation of teachers' social competence in relation to students' understanding of honesty. Effective CRE teaching should integrate biblical interpretation, relational pedagogy, and character modeling. Shulman (1987) emphasizes that effective teaching requires the transformation of subject matter into forms accessible to learners, while Groome (2011) highlights the importance of lived witness in faith education. When teachers possess strong social competence, they are more likely to foster open communication, build trust, and create reflective learning spaces where moral values such as honesty can be internalized. Conversely, limited social competence may result in moral instruction that remains verbalistic and less transformative. Empirical research specifically examining the social competence of CRE teachers in teaching biblical honesty at the elementary level remains limited, particularly in Indonesian public schools. Most existing studies focus on pedagogical or professional competence rather than the relational dimension of teaching. This gap indicates the need for focused research that connects teacher social competence with students' moral learning outcomes grounded in specific biblical texts. This study aims to analyze the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in teaching the value of honesty based on Genesis 44:16 at SDN 173131 Tarutung. Specifically, the research seeks to measure the level of teachers' social competence, examine students' understanding and attitudes toward honesty, and analyze the relationship between teacher social competence and student learning outcomes. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the discourse on competence-based Christian education and practically to the improvement of CRE teaching quality in Indonesian primary schools.

METHODS

A quantitative correlational design was implemented to examine the relationship between the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE/PAK) teachers and students' understanding of the value of honesty based on Genesis 44:16. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables objective measurement of teacher competence and student outcomes using numerical data, while the correlational design allows the researcher to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between variables without manipulating the natural classroom setting (Creswell, 2014). This design is appropriate for portraying authentic instructional conditions in an elementary school context. The research was conducted at SDN 173131 Tarutung, North Tapanuli. The school context is relevant because it serves a substantial population of Christian students within a public-school environment where Christian Religious Education is formally implemented. The relatively large number of Christian teachers in the school also

provides an appropriate setting to examine teachers' social competence in CRE instruction. The population consisted of 313 Christian students enrolled at SDN 173131 Tarutung. Because the population size was manageable yet sufficiently large for statistical analysis, the study applied proportionate stratified random sampling across grade levels to ensure representation. Using the Slovin formula at a 5% margin of error, the final student sample comprised approximately 175 students (rounded for practical field implementation). These students served as respondents for measuring learning outcomes and perceptions of teachers' social competence. The school has 13 teachers who are Christian, including the CRE teacher. Due to the relatively small number, the study used saturated sampling, meaning all 13 teachers were included as research subjects to obtain comprehensive data on social competence within the school. The study examined two main variables: Independent Variable (X): Social Competence of CRE Teachers, social competence was operationalized based on national teacher competency standards (Mulyasa, 2013) and CRE relational pedagogy. The indicators included: effective communication with students, eEmpathy and responsiveness to student needs, ability to model honest and ethical behavior, collaboration with colleagues and parents, creation of a respectful and trusting classroom climate, and sensitivity to students' social and emotional development; Dependent Variable (Y): Students' Understanding of Honesty (Genesis 44:16), student understanding was measured through cognitive and affective indicators, including: knowledge of the Genesis 44:16 narrative, understanding the meaning of honesty and responsibility, ability to explain Judah's truthful confession, willingness to practice honesty in school situations, and positive attitudes toward truthful behavior and accountability. All instruments underwent content validation by experts in Christian Religious Education and educational measurement to ensure construct alignment and theological accuracy. Instrument reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum acceptable coefficient of 0.70 indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the value of honesty based on Genesis 44:16 at SDN 173131 Tarutung. The findings are presented by integrating quantitative results with theological interpretation and educational theory to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teachers' social competence contributes to students' internalization of honesty values. The analysis involved responses from 313 Christian students and contextual data from 13 Christian teachers, including CRE teachers. The quantitative analysis revealed that the overall level of teachers' social competence was categorized as high. This was indicated by the mean score of the social competence variable, which fell within the upper interval of the Likert scale used in the study. Students generally perceived their CRE teachers as approachable, communicative, empathetic, and fair in classroom interactions. Among the measured indicators, the highest mean score appeared in the dimension of communicative openness, suggesting that teachers were effective in establishing two-way communication with students. This aligns with the view that social competence is reflected in a teacher's ability to build meaningful interpersonal relationships within the learning environment (Mulyasa, 2013). When students experience relational warmth and

openness, moral instruction, such as the teaching of honesty, becomes more easily internalized. The second strong indicator was empathy and respect toward students' opinions. Students reported that CRE teachers listened attentively and responded respectfully during discussions about biblical narratives, including the story of Judah's confession in Genesis 44:16. This finding supports the argument that moral education is most effective when delivered through dialogical pedagogy rather than authoritarian instruction (Lickona, 2012). In the context of Genesis 44:16, where Judah openly admits responsibility before Joseph, the teachers' empathetic approach appears to mirror the biblical value being taught. The congruence between pedagogical behavior and scriptural message strengthens students' moral reception. Another important finding concerns teachers' ability to model honest behavior. Students reported high agreement with statements indicating that their CRE teachers demonstrated consistency between words and actions. Modeling is a central mechanism in moral formation; according to Bandura's social learning theory, students learn ethical behavior significantly through observation of credible role models (Bandura, 1986). The high score on this indicator suggests that social competence in CRE teaching is not merely relational but also performative, teachers embody the ethical values they teach. This embodiment is particularly crucial in Christian education, where character formation is inseparable from lived witness. However, the data also revealed moderate scores in the dimension of collaborative engagement with the broader school community. While teachers maintained positive relationships with students, their involvement in cross-subject moral integration and peer collaboration was less optimal. Some students indicated that discussions about honesty were mostly confined to CRE classes rather than reinforced across the wider school culture. This finding indicates a partial gap between individual teacher competence and institutional moral ecology. Contemporary character education research emphasizes that honesty values are most effectively cultivated when supported by a whole-school approach (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). Therefore, although CRE teachers at SDN 173131 Tarutung demonstrate strong interpersonal competence, the systemic reinforcement of honesty values could still be strengthened.

The integration of Genesis 44:16 into classroom teaching proved pedagogically meaningful. The exegetical emphasis on Judah's confession, "God has uncovered your servants' guilt" was used by teachers to highlight themes of accountability, repentance, and moral courage. Students' responses indicated that they were able to connect the biblical narrative with real-life situations such as admitting mistakes, returning lost items, and avoiding cheating during exams. The relatively high mean score on the student honesty scale confirms that the biblical approach, when mediated through socially competent teaching, can effectively translate abstract theology into practical ethics. Statistical correlation analysis further showed a positive and significant relationship between teachers' social competence and students' honesty attitudes. The correlation coefficient fell within the moderate-to-strong range, indicating that improvements in teachers' social competence are associated with higher levels of student honesty. This finding is consistent with previous studies emphasizing that teacher-student relational quality is a strong predictor of moral behavior in learners (Wentzel, 2015). In practical terms, when students perceive their teachers as fair, caring, and trustworthy, they are more likely to adopt the moral norms promoted in the classroom. The regression analysis

suggested that among the components of social competence, fairness and non-discriminatory treatment had the strongest predictive power for student honesty. This implies that students are particularly sensitive to issues of justice when evaluating moral messages. If teachers consistently apply rules fairly, especially in assessment and classroom discipline, students are more inclined to value honesty themselves. This resonates deeply with the narrative of Genesis 44:16, where the moral tension revolves around justice, responsibility, and truthfulness before authority. The pedagogical implication is clear: teaching honesty cannot be separated from practicing fairness. The relatively large population of Christian students (313 individuals) in the school provides a supportive socioreligious environment for CRE instruction. The data indicate that peer influence also plays a reinforcing role. Students reported that classroom discussions and group reflections helped them better understand the importance of honesty. Social competence of teachers facilitated these peer-learning processes by creating psychologically safe spaces for moral dialogue. This finding supports Vygotskian perspectives that social interaction is foundational to internalization of higher-order values (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, teacher social competence functions as a catalyst that activates both vertical (teacher-student) and horizontal (peer-to-peer) moral learning. Several nuanced challenges emerged from the data. First, a small but notable proportion of students still perceived honesty primarily as rule compliance rather than as an internal moral conviction. This suggests that while social competence supports relational engagement, deeper moral reasoning development may require more explicit reflective pedagogy. Teachers may need to incorporate more case-based discussions, moral dilemmas, and reflective journaling to move students from external obedience toward internalized virtue. Second, time allocation for CRE lessons was reported as relatively limited, which may constrain sustained character formation. Prior scholarship emphasizes that virtue education requires continuity and repetition across contexts (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008).

Another point of discussion relates to the professional development of CRE teachers. Although current social competence levels are high, sustaining and enhancing this competence requires ongoing reflective practice. Teachers in the study reported informally that peer discussion forums and church-based training contributed positively to their relational skills. This aligns with the notion that teacher competence is dynamic rather than static (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Continuous mentoring, especially in integrating biblical exegesis with socio-emotional pedagogy, would likely strengthen future outcomes. The use of Genesis 44:16 proved contextually appropriate for elementary-level moral instruction. The narrative structure, conflict, confession, and moral resolution, provides a clear pedagogical arc that young learners can grasp. Teachers who demonstrated higher social competence were more effective in dramatizing and contextualizing the story, often using role play, guided discussion, and reflective questioning. These interactive strategies significantly enhanced student engagement scores. This confirms that social competence is closely intertwined with pedagogical creativity; relationally skilled teachers are better able to implement participatory learning methods. The discussion also highlights the importance of cultural context. Tarutung, with its strong Christian cultural heritage, provides fertile ground for integrating biblical values into public school settings. However, the findings suggest that cultural familiarity alone

does not guarantee moral internalization. Rather, the teacher's relational credibility remains the decisive factor. Students repeatedly indicated that they practiced honesty not merely because the Bible commands it, but because they trusted and respected their CRE teachers. This underscores a key principle in Christian education: moral authority flows through relational authenticity. It becomes evident that the social competence of CRE teachers at SDN 173131 Tarutung functions as a significant mediating variable between biblical instruction and student character formation. High levels of communicative warmth, empathy, fairness, and role modeling contribute directly to students' appreciation of honesty as taught through Genesis 44:16. The effectiveness of this process could be further amplified through whole-school moral integration, deeper reflective pedagogy, and sustained professional development. The results affirm that social competence is not a peripheral skill but a core professional requirement for CRE teachers who aim to cultivate biblical character values in students. In the specific context of teaching honesty, relational credibility, fairness in practice, and dialogical engagement emerge as the most influential factors. These findings provide both empirical support and practical direction for strengthening Christian character education in Indonesian elementary schools, particularly within contexts similar to SDN 173131 Tarutung.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the value of honesty based on Genesis 44:16 at SDN 173131 Tarutung. The findings confirm that the social competence of CRE teachers plays a significant and positive role in fostering students' appreciation and practice of honesty. Quantitative results indicate that teachers are generally perceived by students as communicative, empathetic, fair, and consistent in modeling ethical behavior. These relational qualities create a supportive moral climate in which biblical values are more readily internalized by learners. The study demonstrates that communicative openness and empathetic engagement are key strengths of CRE teachers in this context. Through dialogical interaction and respectful listening, teachers successfully connect the narrative of Judah's confession in Genesis 44:16 with students' everyday moral experiences. As a result, many students show a meaningful understanding of honesty not only as a rule to obey but as a value connected to responsibility before God and others. This confirms that socially competent teaching enhances the transformative potential of biblical instruction in elementary education. Statistical analysis further reveals a significant positive relationship between teachers' social competence and students' honesty attitudes. Among the dimensions examined, fairness and non-discriminatory treatment emerged as the strongest predictor of student honesty. This finding underscores an important pedagogical principle: students are more likely to embrace honesty when they experience justice and integrity in their teachers' own practices. In other words, the credibility of moral instruction depends heavily on the relational and ethical consistency of the teacher. The study also identifies areas for improvement. The integration of honesty values across the broader school environment remains moderate, suggesting the need for a more systemic, whole-school approach to character formation. Some students still interpret honesty primarily in terms of external compliance, indicating that deeper reflective and

critical moral pedagogy should be strengthened in future instructional practice. Time limitations in CRE learning sessions also present a structural challenge that schools should address. Based on these findings, several practical implications emerge. Continuous professional development programs should prioritize the enhancement of teachers' social competence, particularly in dialogical pedagogy, restorative communication, and fair classroom management. Schools should promote cross-curricular collaboration so that honesty values are reinforced beyond CRE lessons. CRE teachers are encouraged to employ more reflective learning strategies, such as moral dilemmas, role play, and guided self-evaluation, to deepen students' internal moral conviction. The social competence of CRE teachers at SDN 173131 Tarutung has proven to be a crucial catalyst in teaching the value of honesty grounded in Genesis 44:16. When teachers demonstrate relational authenticity, fairness, and empathetic communication, biblical moral teaching becomes more than cognitive knowledge, it becomes lived character. Strengthening this competence through sustained professional support and whole-school integration will be essential for advancing effective Christian character education in Indonesian elementary schools.

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