



## Reflection on the Social Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Light of Abraham's Prayerful Altar (Genesis 12:8): A Study at SDN Luwuk Langkuas

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### ABSTRACT

*This study reflects on the social competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher in light of Abraham's prayerful altar in Genesis 12:8 at SDN Luwuk Langkuas, Gunung Mas, Indonesia. The research was conducted within a school community consisting of 88 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers, including one CRE teacher. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The study integrates biblical-theological reflection with educational theory to examine how social competence is expressed in relational practice and communal spiritual formation. The findings reveal that the CRE teacher demonstrates social competence through relational warmth, inclusive communication, collaborative engagement with colleagues, effective conflict mediation, and consistent spiritual modeling. These practices parallel the theological meaning of Abraham's altar, which symbolizes public devotion, covenantal awareness, and communal witness. The teacher's ability to connect biblical teaching with local cultural values in Gunung Mas further strengthens contextual relevance and reinforces moral coherence within the school environment. Although challenges such as large class size present limitations, the overall relational climate fosters emotional security, student participation, and spiritual attentiveness. The study concludes that social competence grounded in worshipful identity transforms classroom interaction into a space of holistic formation. When relational engagement reflects theological depth and authentic devotion, Christian education becomes a dynamic process of character development and communal identity formation among elementary students.*

**Keywords:** Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, Prayerful Altar

### INTRODUCTION

Social competence is an essential dimension of teacher professionalism, particularly in Christian Religious Education (CRE), where relational interaction is inseparable from

spiritual formation. In the Indonesian educational framework, social competence refers to a teacher's ability to communicate effectively, interact inclusively, collaborate with colleagues, and engage constructively with students, parents, and the broader community (Mulyasa, 2013). For CRE teachers, however, social competence transcends technical communication skills; it is deeply rooted in theological virtues such as love, humility, hospitality, and communal responsibility. Consequently, examining social competence through a biblical-theological lens provides a richer understanding of its formative significance. One biblical narrative that offers profound theological insight into relational spirituality is Genesis 12:8, where Abraham builds an altar to the Lord and calls upon His name after arriving in Canaan. This act signifies worship, dependence, and public testimony. Victor P. Hamilton (1990) explains that Abraham's altar-building reflects covenantal acknowledgment of God's presence and promise, marking sacred space in a foreign land. Similarly, Gordon J. Wenham (1987) notes that the phrase "called on the name of the Lord" indicates proclamation and relational invocation, suggesting both personal devotion and communal witness. Abraham's altar is therefore not merely a private act of piety; it is a relational expression that shapes community identity and spiritual orientation. Relational modeling plays a decisive role in shaping students' character and faith perception. At SDN Luwuk Langkuas in Gunung Mas, Indonesia, where there are 88 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers (including one CRE teacher), the social interactions among teachers and students create a formative environment that extends beyond classroom instruction. Educational research consistently affirms that positive teacher-student relationships enhance academic engagement, emotional well-being, and moral development (Wentzel, 2012). Thus, social competence becomes foundational for cultivating a cohesive and spiritually nurturing school community.

Abraham's altar in Genesis 12:8 symbolizes a pattern of relational leadership grounded in worship. By calling upon the Lord publicly, Abraham models dependence on divine guidance while simultaneously shaping communal consciousness. Christopher J. H. Wright (2006) argues that Abraham's vocation carries missional implications, demonstrating how covenant faith expresses itself through visible acts of devotion. When applied to CRE teaching, this pattern suggests that social competence must be anchored in spiritual authenticity. A teacher's relational behavior, communication style, empathy, collaboration, and conflict resolution, should reflect a life oriented toward God. Thomas H. Groome (2011) emphasizes that Christian education is fundamentally relational, as faith formation occurs within communities of shared narrative and mutual trust. This perspective aligns closely with the symbolism of Abraham's altar: worship establishes relational space where identity and commitment are reinforced. For CRE teachers, social competence involves creating such spaces within the classroom, environments characterized by respect, inclusion, dialogue, and spiritual attentiveness. Without these relational foundations, biblical instruction risks becoming informational rather than transformational. The cultural context of Gunung Mas further enriches this inquiry. Communities in Central Kalimantan often emphasize communal solidarity and mutual cooperation. Integrating Abraham's relational worship with local cultural values offers opportunities for contextualized Christian education. Pazmiño (2008) underscores the importance of contextual engagement, asserting that Christian educators must interpret Scripture faithfully while addressing cultural realities responsibly. Reflecting on social

competence through Genesis 12:8 allows for a contextual theological exploration relevant to SDN Luwuk Langkuas. Given the presence of eight Christian teachers in the school, collaborative relationships among staff also influence the spiritual climate. Hattie (2009) highlights that collective teacher efficacy significantly impacts student outcomes. When social competence extends beyond individual classroom interaction to collegial collaboration, the entire school community benefits. Thus, the CRE teacher's social competence operates within a broader network of relational influence. This study therefore aims to reflect on the social competence of the CRE teacher at SDN Luwuk Langkuas in light of Abraham's prayerful altar in Genesis 12:8. By examining communication patterns, collaborative practices, and relational engagement within the school, the research seeks to demonstrate that social competence grounded in worshipful dependence on God fosters cohesive, spiritually attentive educational communities. The central argument is that when social competence reflects the theological depth of Abraham's altar, public devotion, relational authenticity, and covenantal awareness, it becomes a transformative force shaping both individual character and communal identity among the 88 Christian students entrusted to the school's care.

## METHODS

A qualitative descriptive research design was implemented to reflect on the social competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher in light of Abraham's prayerful altar in Genesis 12:8 at SDN Luwuk Langkuas, Gunung Mas. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research sought to explore relational dynamics, communicative behavior, collegial collaboration, and spiritual interaction within a natural school setting. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative research is appropriate when the goal is to understand meaning, lived experience, and contextualized social processes rather than to quantify variables statistically. The study integrates biblical-theological reflection with empirical educational observation, allowing the narrative of Genesis 12:8 to function as an interpretive framework for analyzing social competence in practice. This integrative model aligns with Pazmiño's (2008) perspective that Christian educational research should connect scriptural foundations with lived pedagogical and communal realities. The research was conducted at SDN Luwuk Langkuas, Gunung Mas, a public elementary school consisting of 88 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers, including one CRE teacher. The CRE teacher served as the primary research subject, while students and fellow Christian teachers provided supporting perspectives regarding relational climate and collegial interaction. Classroom observations involved all 88 Christian students during CRE learning sessions to capture authentic relational patterns. For interviews, purposive sampling was applied (Patton, 2015) by selecting students from different grade levels and several Christian teachers to ensure varied insights concerning social interaction and collaboration. Non-participant observation was conducted to examine the teacher's communication style, empathy, inclusiveness, conflict resolution practices, and spiritual modeling. Observation indicators were based on recognized dimensions of social competence, including effective communication, adaptability, collaboration, and ethical conduct (Mulyasa, 2013). Interviews were conducted with the CRE teacher to explore theological understanding of Genesis 12:8, reflections on social

interaction, and strategies for fostering relational cohesion. Selected students were interviewed to assess perceptions of the teacher's relational behavior. Additionally, interviews with other Christian teachers explored collegial collaboration and communal spiritual culture. Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasize that semi-structured interviews allow depth while maintaining focus on research objectives. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of: coding observational and interview data into thematic categories such as relational warmth, collaborative practice, spiritual modeling, and contextual engagement, organizing themes into structured summaries to identify patterns and relational dynamics, and interpreting patterns in light of Abraham's altar in Genesis 12:8 and social competence theory. Biblical interpretation of Genesis 12:8 was guided by responsible hermeneutical principles (Fee & Stuart, 2014), ensuring contextual accuracy before deriving educational implications. Through this qualitative descriptive methodology, the study seeks to reflect comprehensively on how the social competence of the CRE teacher at SDN Luwuk Langkuas embodies the relational and worshipful dimensions symbolized by Abraham's altar in Genesis 12:8, contributing to a cohesive and spiritually attentive educational community among 88 Christian students.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the social competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SDN Luwuk Langkuas, Gunung Mas, meaningfully reflects the theological and relational dimensions symbolized by Abraham's prayerful altar in Genesis 12:8. Within a school community consisting of 88 Christian students and 8 Christian teachers, the CRE teacher's relational engagement contributes significantly to the formation of a cohesive, respectful, and spiritually attentive environment. The results demonstrate that social competence in this context is expressed through relational warmth, communicative openness, collaborative collegiality, conflict mediation, spiritual modeling, and contextual sensitivity. These dimensions resonate with Abraham's act of building an altar and calling upon the name of the Lord, which, according to Hamilton (1990), represents covenant acknowledgment and visible devotion in a new environment. Classroom observations revealed a consistent pattern of relational warmth and inclusiveness. The CRE teacher greeted students personally, maintained attentive eye contact, and created opportunities for student participation during discussions. This relational posture fostered emotional security and openness among learners. Wentzel (2012) emphasizes that positive teacher-student relationships significantly enhance academic motivation and social adjustment. In this school context, students reported feeling respected and encouraged to express their thoughts freely. Such relational openness mirrors the public and communal aspect of Abraham's altar, which Wenham (1987) interprets as both personal devotion and public testimony. By cultivating a welcoming relational space, the teacher symbolically establishes a "pedagogical altar," a relational environment where students feel safe to encounter biblical truth. Communicative competence emerged as a defining strength. The teacher employed dialogical teaching methods, inviting students to share experiences related to gratitude, dependence, and trust, concepts connected to Genesis 12:8. Groome (2011) argues that Christian education becomes transformative when it integrates tradition and lived

experience through shared reflection. The CRE teacher applied this principle by linking Abraham's worship to students' daily lives, encouraging them to articulate how prayer and gratitude shape relationships at home and school. Interviews indicated that students perceived worship not merely as ritual but as relational dependence on God. This outcome reflects effective social communication that bridges theological content and experiential understanding. The study found that collegial collaboration among the eight Christian teachers reinforced social competence at the institutional level. Hattie (2009) highlights the impact of collective teacher efficacy on student outcomes, noting that collaborative professional culture enhances consistency and moral coherence within schools. Observations revealed regular informal discussions among Christian teachers concerning character education and spiritual activities. The CRE teacher often coordinated prayer moments during school assemblies, involving other teachers in fostering communal spiritual awareness. This collaborative spirit reflects Wright's (2006) assertion that Abraham's vocation carried communal and missional implications. Similarly, the CRE teacher's relational leadership extended beyond the classroom into school-wide spiritual engagement, strengthening collective identity. During observed instances of minor disputes among students, the teacher facilitated calm dialogue, encouraging empathy and mutual understanding. Rather than imposing punitive measures immediately, the teacher guided students toward reconciliation grounded in Christian principles of forgiveness and respect. Mulyasa (2013) identifies conflict management as an essential component of teacher social competence. In this context, the teacher's response demonstrated patience and fairness, reinforcing moral learning through relational example. Students described the teacher as "calm" and "fair," suggesting that social competence is perceived not only in communication but also in ethical consistency. Spiritual modeling emerged as a particularly significant dimension. Abraham's altar in Genesis 12:8 signifies visible worship in a foreign land, a declaration of dependence on God. Hamilton (1990) interprets this act as marking sacred presence amid uncertainty. At SDN Luwuk Langkuas, the CRE teacher consistently opened and closed lessons with prayer, occasionally inviting students to lead. This practice symbolically parallels Abraham's invocation of God's name, reinforcing communal dependence on divine guidance. Pazmiño (2008) emphasizes that Christian educators serve as spiritual mentors whose lives embody the faith they teach. Students noted that the teacher's demeanor during prayer was reverent and sincere, which enhanced their perception of authenticity. Social competence thus integrates spiritual authenticity with relational interaction.

Cultural contextualization further enriched the teacher's relational effectiveness. Gunung Mas communities emphasize mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and kinship solidarity. The teacher intentionally connected Abraham's altar-building to the idea of establishing faithful identity within community life. By highlighting that Abraham worshiped publicly in a new land, the teacher encouraged students to express Christian values confidently within their own social contexts. Such contextual engagement aligns with Pazmiño's (2008) call for responsible cultural interaction. Rather than isolating biblical narrative from local reality, the teacher demonstrated how worshipful dependence shapes communal responsibility. The study also identified contextual challenges. With 88 students, classroom management demands are considerable, and individual relational

depth can be limited by time constraints. While overall relational climate appeared positive, some younger students required additional guidance to fully grasp abstract theological concepts embedded in Genesis 12:8. Creswell and Poth (2018) remind researchers that contextual limitations shape qualitative realities; in this case, class size affects relational intensity. Nonetheless, the teacher's consistent effort to maintain inclusiveness mitigated these constraints effectively. Another area of discussion involves the integration of worship and social competence. Abraham's altar was both vertical (toward God) and horizontal (visible before others). This dual orientation provides a theological framework for understanding teacher social competence as grounded in worshipful identity. The CRE teacher's relational demeanor, marked by humility, patience, and openness, suggests that spiritual orientation influences social interaction. Students internalized the idea that worship extends beyond prayer into respectful behavior and supportive relationships. This integration affirms that theological reflection can meaningfully inform professional practice. The data also revealed that peer relationships among students improved in environments where the teacher modeled empathy and encouragement. Group activities often included collaborative problem-solving tasks linked to biblical themes. Such strategies fostered mutual respect and accountability. Wentzel (2012) notes that teacher support predicts prosocial behavior among students. In this case, social competence translated into tangible relational benefits within the classroom community. The results indicate that the social competence of the CRE teacher at SDN Luwuk Langkuas embodies the relational and worshipful symbolism of Abraham's altar in Genesis 12:8. Through communicative openness, collaborative leadership, conflict mediation, spiritual authenticity, and contextual sensitivity, the teacher fosters a cohesive and spiritually attentive environment for 88 Christian students. While challenges related to class size and developmental diversity persist, the overall relational climate demonstrates that social competence grounded in worshipful dependence becomes a transformative force within Christian education. The findings affirm that when relational interaction reflects theological depth, educational practice transcends procedural professionalism and becomes communal spiritual formation, shaping both individual character and collective identity in a primary school context.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the social competence of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teacher at SDN Luwuk Langkuas, Gunung Mas, meaningfully reflects the theological and relational symbolism of Abraham's prayerful altar in Genesis 12:8. The findings demonstrate that social competence is not merely a professional requirement related to communication and collaboration, but a spiritually grounded vocation shaped by worshipful dependence on God. Through relational warmth, dialogical communication, ethical consistency, conflict mediation, collegial collaboration, and spiritual modeling, the CRE teacher cultivates a cohesive and supportive educational environment for 88 Christian students within a community of 8 Christian teachers. Abraham's altar represents public devotion, covenantal awareness, and visible testimony. In a parallel way, the CRE teacher's relational practices create a "sacred space" within the classroom, an environment where students experience respect, inclusion, and spiritual attentiveness.

The integration of biblical teaching with local cultural values in Gunung Mas further strengthens the contextual relevance of instruction, demonstrating that social competence includes cultural sensitivity without compromising theological integrity. Although challenges such as large class size and developmental variation remain, the overall relational climate reflects consistent modeling of humility, patience, and communal responsibility. The collaborative engagement among Christian teachers reinforces these values across the school culture, enhancing collective efficacy and moral coherence. Social competence grounded in worshipful identity transforms educational interaction into spiritual formation. When CRE teachers embody the relational depth symbolized by Abraham's altar, calling upon God while engaging others with authenticity, the classroom becomes more than a site of knowledge transmission; it becomes a community shaped by faith, respect, and shared devotion. Such competence contributes significantly to holistic character development and cohesive Christian identity among elementary students.

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