



Teaching the Value of God's Covenant: The Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers Based on Genesis 15:18 at SMK Negeri 1 Amandraya

Borozisokhi Laia

Pendidikan Profesi Guru, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Kristen, IAKN Tarutung

* correspondence: borozisokhilaia14@guru.smk.belajar.id

ABSTRACT

The concept of covenant is a central theme in biblical theology and plays an important role in Christian Religious Education (CRE). Understanding the value of God's covenant helps students recognize the nature of God's faithfulness and the ethical responsibilities that arise from a relationship with Him. Genesis 15:18 records a significant moment in which God establishes a covenant with Abraham, promising land to his descendants and demonstrating His commitment to His people. In the context of Christian education, explaining this theological concept requires teachers to possess strong professional competence that integrates biblical knowledge, pedagogical skills, and contextual teaching strategies. This study aims to examine the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in explaining the value of God's covenant based on Genesis 15:18 at SMK Negeri 1 Amandraya, South Nias. The research employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to analyze scholarly literature related to Christian education, teacher professionalism, and covenant theology. Relevant academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and theological studies were systematically identified, screened, and analyzed to synthesize key perspectives regarding effective teaching practices in Christian Religious Education. The findings indicate that professional competence among CRE teachers includes mastery of biblical interpretation, the ability to integrate pedagogical content knowledge, and the capacity to contextualize biblical teachings within students' daily experiences. Strengthening the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers is essential for enabling students to understand the meaning of God's covenant and to apply its values in their personal and social lives.

Keywords: Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, God's Covenant

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in shaping the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of students. Within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), the educational process is not merely aimed at transmitting knowledge about the Bible but also at forming students' understanding of God's relationship with humanity and how this relationship

influences ethical behavior and spiritual identity. One of the essential theological themes within biblical teaching is the concept of covenant between God and His people. The covenant represents God's commitment, faithfulness, and promise to guide and bless humanity, while at the same time calling believers to respond with obedience and faithfulness. Understanding this covenantal relationship is therefore a fundamental aspect of Christian education. In the book of Genesis, the covenant between God and Abraham becomes one of the foundational theological moments that shapes the biblical narrative of God's relationship with His people. Genesis 15:18 describes God's covenant with Abraham, where God promises a specific land to Abraham's descendants as part of His divine plan. This passage illustrates the seriousness and faithfulness of God's promise, emphasizing that the covenant is initiated by God's grace rather than human merit. According to Walter Brueggemann (2010), the covenant with Abraham in Genesis represents a pivotal theological moment in the Old Testament because it establishes the framework for understanding God's ongoing commitment to His people throughout biblical history. This covenantal theme later becomes central to the identity of the people of Israel and continues to influence Christian theological understanding of God's relationship with humanity. The responsibility of explaining biblical themes such as God's covenant rests largely on the competence of the teacher. Teachers are not only expected to deliver biblical content but also to interpret and communicate theological concepts in ways that are understandable and meaningful for students. Professional competence among teachers therefore becomes essential for effective learning. According to Lee S. Shulman (1987), professional competence in teaching includes mastery of subject matter, pedagogical knowledge, and the ability to transform academic content into forms that are accessible to learners. In Christian education, this competence includes the ability to interpret Scripture accurately and connect biblical teachings with students' daily lives. Professional competence in Christian Religious Education is particularly important because biblical concepts often contain deep theological meanings that require careful explanation. Without proper interpretation and contextualization, students may struggle to understand the relevance of biblical teachings in contemporary life. As noted by Robert W. Pazmiño (2008), Christian education must integrate biblical knowledge, theological reflection, and pedagogical practice so that students are able to internalize faith and apply it in their daily experiences. Teachers therefore function not only as instructors but also as interpreters of biblical truths who guide students toward spiritual understanding. The context of modern education also introduces new challenges for Christian Religious Education teachers. Students today are exposed to diverse sources of information through digital technology and social media, which may shape their worldview and values. In this environment, teachers must demonstrate professional competence not only in biblical knowledge but also in pedagogical strategies that engage students in meaningful reflection. Effective teachers are able to present biblical narratives in ways that encourage critical thinking, moral reflection, and spiritual awareness.

Within this context, SMK Negeri 1 Amandraya in South Nias provides an important setting for examining how Christian Religious Education teachers explain the value of God's covenant to students. As a vocational secondary school where Christian students participate in formal CRE classes, the role of the teacher becomes crucial in helping students understand biblical teachings that shape their faith and ethical perspectives. The

explanation of Genesis 15:18 in the classroom therefore becomes an opportunity for teachers to demonstrate their professional competence in interpreting Scripture and connecting it with students' life experiences. Previous studies in religious education emphasize that effective teaching of biblical themes requires a combination of theological understanding and pedagogical skill. Teachers who possess strong professional competence are better able to translate complex theological concepts into accessible learning experiences. This competence allows students not only to understand biblical texts intellectually but also to appreciate their spiritual significance. Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in explaining the value of God's covenant based on Genesis 15:18. By exploring scholarly perspectives and educational literature, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how professional competence contributes to effective biblical teaching in Christian education. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of more effective approaches to teaching biblical theology in schools, particularly in helping students understand the meaning of God's covenant as a foundation for faith and moral responsibility.

METHODS

A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach was used to examine the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in explaining the value of God's covenant based on Genesis 15:18 within the context of Christian education. A Systematic Literature Review was chosen because it allows researchers to synthesize and analyze findings from previous scholarly studies in a structured and comprehensive manner. According to Barbara Kitchenham (2004), an SLR is a research method used to identify, evaluate, and interpret all relevant studies related to a particular research question through a systematic and transparent process. This method enables researchers to develop a broader theoretical understanding of a topic by examining patterns, concepts, and findings from existing academic literature. The SLR process in this study followed several stages. The first one was formulating the research focus, which centered on the professional competence of CRE teachers in teaching biblical covenant values, particularly the covenant described in Genesis 15:18. This focus guided the selection of relevant literature related to Christian education, teacher professionalism, biblical theology, and pedagogical competence in religious instruction. Literature was collected from scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, theological publications, and academic databases that discuss teacher professional competence, Christian Religious Education, biblical covenant theology, and pedagogical strategies for teaching Scripture. The literature search prioritized credible academic publications that have contributed significantly to discussions on Christian education and teacher professionalism. Then, the collected sources were carefully reviewed to ensure their relevance to the research topic. Only publications that directly discussed professional competence in teaching, biblical interpretation within educational contexts, or Christian Religious Education were included in the analysis. Sources that did not contribute directly to the research focus were excluded to maintain the quality and relevance of the review. The selected literature was analyzed by identifying key concepts, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings related to teacher competence and the teaching of biblical covenant themes. The analysis

focused on how professional competence influences the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education teachers in explaining theological concepts and guiding students toward deeper understanding of biblical teachings. The results of the literature analysis were synthesized into thematic findings. These findings were then interpreted to explain how professional competence enables CRE teachers to communicate the meaning of God's covenant in ways that are pedagogically effective and spiritually meaningful for students. Through this systematic process, the study provides a comprehensive academic perspective on the importance of professional competence in teaching biblical values within Christian education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The systematic literature review conducted in this study reveals several important findings regarding the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in explaining the value of God's covenant as presented in Genesis 15:18. The synthesis of scholarly literature highlights that professional competence in Christian education involves a complex integration of theological understanding, pedagogical skill, contextual awareness, and spiritual commitment. These components collectively enable teachers to communicate biblical teachings in ways that are both intellectually meaningful and spiritually transformative for students. The analysis of literature further demonstrates that the concept of covenant occupies a central place in biblical theology, making it an essential theme within Christian Religious Education. Therefore, the teacher's professional competence plays a decisive role in ensuring that students are able to understand the theological significance of the covenant and apply its values in their personal lives. One of the primary findings emerging from the literature is that professional competence in Christian Religious Education requires a strong foundation in biblical knowledge and theological interpretation. Teachers who possess a deep understanding of Scripture are better equipped to explain complex theological concepts to students in ways that are both accurate and accessible. Genesis 15:18 describes a pivotal moment in the biblical narrative when God establishes a covenant with Abraham, promising that his descendants will inherit a specific land. This covenant represents God's initiative and faithfulness, demonstrating that the relationship between God and humanity is rooted in divine grace rather than human achievement. According to Walter Brueggemann, the covenant with Abraham is one of the foundational theological themes in the Old Testament because it establishes the framework through which God's relationship with Israel is understood throughout biblical history. When CRE teachers possess adequate theological competence, they are able to guide students to see that the covenant is not merely a historical event but a theological foundation that reveals God's faithfulness and purpose for humanity.

The literature also emphasizes that professional competence includes the ability to transform theological knowledge into effective teaching practices. The process of teaching biblical concepts involves more than presenting scriptural information; it requires the ability to interpret the meaning of the text and communicate it in ways that connect with students' experiences. Lee S. Shulman introduced the concept of pedagogical content knowledge, which refers to the integration of subject mastery and teaching strategy. In the context of Christian Religious Education, pedagogical content

knowledge allows teachers to explain theological ideas, such as covenant, grace, faithfulness, and obedience, through illustrations, discussions, and contextual applications that are relevant to students' lives. Without such pedagogical competence, biblical teachings may remain abstract and difficult for students to internalize. Another significant finding of the literature review concerns the importance of contextualizing biblical teachings within students' real-life situations. The covenant described in Genesis 15:18 represents a relationship characterized by commitment, trust, and faithfulness. These values are highly relevant to contemporary educational contexts because students often encounter situations that challenge their sense of responsibility, loyalty, and integrity. When teachers explain the covenant in relation to students' daily experiences, such as commitments to family, friendship, and moral responsibility, students are more likely to understand its significance. Robert W. Pazmiño emphasizes that Christian education becomes meaningful when biblical teachings are connected with the lived experiences of learners. Teachers who demonstrate professional competence are therefore able to bridge the gap between ancient biblical narratives and the modern realities faced by students.

The systematic review also indicates that professional competence in Christian education includes the ability to foster critical and reflective learning. Teaching biblical themes such as covenant requires more than passive instruction; it involves encouraging students to engage actively with the text and reflect on its implications for their own lives. Through guided discussion, reflective questioning, and collaborative learning activities, teachers can help students explore the meaning of God's covenant in a deeper and more personal way. This reflective process allows students to consider how biblical values influence their attitudes and decisions. In educational theory, reflective learning is widely recognized as an effective method for promoting deeper understanding and personal transformation. Another important dimension highlighted by the literature is the role of professional competence in shaping students' spiritual awareness. Christian Religious Education aims not only to increase biblical knowledge but also to nurture faith and spiritual growth. The covenant in Genesis 15:18 demonstrates God's faithfulness and His commitment to fulfilling His promises. When teachers explain this concept effectively, students begin to recognize that faith is rooted in trust in God's character and promises. This understanding can encourage students to develop a deeper relationship with God and to view their lives within the broader narrative of God's plan. Teachers who possess strong professional competence are able to communicate biblical teachings in ways that inspire both intellectual understanding and spiritual reflection. The literature review also identifies several pedagogical strategies that support the effective teaching of covenant theology. One commonly recommended approach is narrative-based learning, which emphasizes the storytelling dimension of the Bible. Because the biblical covenant with Abraham is embedded within a narrative context, presenting it through storytelling can help students grasp the historical and relational aspects of the covenant. Narrative-based teaching allows students to see the unfolding story of God's interaction with humanity and to recognize the covenant as part of a larger theological narrative. This approach also helps students appreciate the continuity between the Old Testament covenant and the broader biblical message.

Dialogical learning has been identified as an effective strategy for teaching biblical concepts. Dialogical learning encourages students to ask questions, express interpretations, and explore the meaning of biblical texts through discussion. This approach aligns with contemporary educational principles that emphasize active learning and critical engagement. When teachers facilitate open discussions about the meaning of covenant, students are encouraged to think deeply about the relationship between God's promises and human responsibility. Such discussions also allow teachers to address misunderstandings and guide students toward a more accurate theological understanding. Another key theme emerging from the literature is the importance of teacher integrity and authenticity. Professional competence in Christian education is not limited to academic expertise; it also includes the teacher's personal character and commitment to Christian values. Students are more likely to respond positively to biblical teachings when they see those values reflected in the teacher's behavior. Integrity, humility, and consistency between teaching and practice enhance the credibility of the teacher's message. Educational scholars frequently emphasize that teachers serve as role models whose attitudes and actions influence students' perceptions of moral and spiritual values. The literature also highlights several challenges faced by Christian Religious Education teachers when explaining biblical covenant concepts in contemporary classrooms. Some students may already possess familiarity with biblical narratives, while others may have limited exposure to Scripture. Teachers must therefore adjust their teaching strategies to accommodate varying levels of understanding. Professional competence includes the ability to assess students' prior knowledge and design learning activities that gradually build their comprehension. Another challenge relates to the broader cultural context in which students are immersed. Modern society often emphasizes individual autonomy and immediate gratification, values that may conflict with the biblical emphasis on faithfulness, obedience, and long-term commitment. The covenant in Genesis 15:18 reflects a relationship built on trust in God's promises over time. Teaching this concept effectively requires teachers to address cultural attitudes that may undermine the importance of commitment and faithfulness. By engaging students in reflective discussion about these cultural tensions, teachers can help them appreciate the relevance of biblical values in contemporary life.

The literature review also suggests that professional competence in Christian Religious Education is strengthened through continuous professional development. Teachers must remain engaged with theological scholarship, educational research, and pedagogical innovation in order to maintain the effectiveness of their teaching. Participation in workshops, theological seminars, and academic discussions enables teachers to deepen their understanding of Scripture and improve their instructional methods. Continuous learning is therefore an essential component of professional competence. In the specific context of SMK Negeri 1 Amandraya in South Nias, the insights derived from the systematic literature review highlight the importance of equipping Christian Religious Education teachers with both theological expertise and pedagogical skill. As a vocational secondary school, students are preparing for professional careers while simultaneously developing their moral and spiritual identities. Teaching the value of God's covenant within this environment provides an opportunity to emphasize themes such as responsibility, trustworthiness, and commitment, qualities that are essential not only for

spiritual life but also for professional integrity. The findings of this systematic literature review demonstrate that professional competence plays a critical role in the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education. Teachers who possess strong theological knowledge, pedagogical expertise, contextual awareness, and personal integrity are better able to communicate the meaning of biblical covenant in ways that resonate with students. Through effective teaching practices, students can come to understand that the covenant described in Genesis 15:18 is not merely a historical event but a profound expression of God's faithfulness and His ongoing relationship with humanity. This understanding can encourage students to respond to God's covenantal love with faith, commitment, and responsible living in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in explaining the value of God's covenant based on Genesis 15:18 through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The findings demonstrate that professional competence plays a crucial role in ensuring that biblical teachings are communicated effectively and meaningfully within the context of Christian education. Teaching about the covenant between God and Abraham is not merely a matter of conveying historical or theological information; rather, it involves guiding students to understand the deeper spiritual significance of God's promises and their implications for faith and moral responsibility. The results of the literature synthesis indicate that professional competence in Christian Religious Education consists of several interconnected elements. Teachers must possess strong theological and biblical knowledge in order to interpret Scripture accurately and responsibly. Understanding the covenant in Genesis 15:18 requires familiarity with the broader biblical narrative and the theological significance of God's relationship with His people. Teachers must demonstrate pedagogical competence, which includes the ability to transform theological concepts into teaching methods that are accessible, engaging, and relevant to students. This integration of subject knowledge and teaching strategy enables students to grasp complex biblical ideas more effectively. The study highlights the importance of contextualization in teaching biblical values. Professional CRE teachers are able to connect the meaning of God's covenant with the realities of students' daily lives. By relating biblical teachings to themes such as commitment, trust, responsibility, and faithfulness, teachers help students understand that the covenant is not only a historical event but also a moral and spiritual principle that shapes Christian life. Professional competence also involves personal integrity and spiritual authenticity, because teachers serve as role models whose attitudes and actions influence students' perceptions of Christian values. The findings also emphasize that effective teaching of covenant theology requires interactive and reflective learning strategies. Methods such as narrative-based instruction, dialogical discussion, and contextual reflection allow students to engage more deeply with biblical texts and to explore their relevance in contemporary contexts. Through these approaches, Christian Religious Education becomes a transformative process that encourages both intellectual understanding and spiritual growth. In the context of SMK Negeri 1 Amandraya, South Nias, the professional competence of CRE teachers becomes particularly important because students are in a stage of preparing for both vocational careers and responsible

participation in society. Teaching the value of God's covenant can help students develop attitudes of faithfulness, commitment, and moral responsibility that are essential for their personal and professional lives. When teachers demonstrate strong professional competence, they are able to guide students to recognize God's faithfulness and to respond with faithful and responsible living. In conclusion, the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers is a key factor in the effective teaching of biblical values, particularly the concept of God's covenant as presented in Genesis 15:18. Teachers who combine theological understanding, pedagogical expertise, contextual awareness, and personal integrity are better able to facilitate meaningful learning experiences that shape students' faith and character. Strengthening the professional development of CRE teachers will therefore contribute significantly to the advancement of Christian education and to the formation of students who live in accordance with the values of God's covenant.

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