



The Spiritual Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Understanding God's Plan: A Reflection on Genesis 45:4 at SDN 097373 Saribujandi

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in understanding God's plan as reflected in Book of Genesis 45:4. Spiritual competence is an important dimension of teacher professionalism in Christian education because it enables teachers to interpret biblical teachings meaningfully and guide students in recognizing the presence of God in everyday life. The narrative of Joseph in Genesis 45:4 illustrates how God's providence works through human circumstances, even through conflict and suffering, to accomplish divine purposes. This theological message provides a strong foundation for helping students develop faith, resilience, and trust in God's guidance. This research employed a quantitative descriptive method conducted in the educational environment of SDN 097373 Saribujandi located in Simalungun. The research participants consisted of 109 Christian students and four Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher, resulting in a total of 113 respondents. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a Likert scale to measure perceptions regarding the teacher's spiritual competence and the effectiveness of teaching related to the understanding of God's plan. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to identify patterns and tendencies in respondents' responses. The findings indicate that the Christian Religious Education teacher demonstrates a high level of spiritual competence characterized by a clear understanding of biblical narratives, the ability to relate Scripture to students' life experiences, and the demonstration of spiritual attitudes such as humility, patience, and responsibility. The integration of biblical reflection and teacher spirituality therefore plays a significant role in strengthening character-based Christian education and nurturing students who are spiritually grounded and morally responsible.

Keywords: *Spiritual Competence, Christian Religious Education, God's Plan*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher competence is a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness of educational processes and the formation of students' character. In many educational systems,

including Indonesia, teachers are expected to possess several core competencies that enable them to perform their professional duties effectively. These competencies generally include pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competence. Within the context of Christian Religious Education, another dimension becomes particularly significant, namely spiritual competence. Spiritual competence refers to the teacher's ability to understand, internalize, and communicate spiritual values derived from biblical teachings while demonstrating these values through daily attitudes and behavior. Teachers who possess strong spiritual competence are able to guide students not only intellectually but also morally and spiritually. According to Robert W. Pazmiño, Christian educators are called to integrate faith, knowledge, and life experiences so that education becomes a transformative process that nurtures spiritual maturity among learners (Pazmiño, 2008). Christian Religious Education aims to cultivate a holistic understanding of faith among students. This educational process involves helping learners interpret biblical narratives in ways that are relevant to their daily experiences. Teachers therefore serve as mediators between biblical teachings and contemporary life situations. One of the key tasks of Christian educators is to help students recognize the presence and purpose of God in the events of human life. Such understanding requires teachers to possess deep spiritual insight as well as the ability to interpret Scripture responsibly. According to Thomas H. Groome, Christian education should connect the Christian story with the personal stories of learners, enabling them to recognize how God's work is manifested in everyday life (Groome, 2011). Through this process, students can develop faith that is both intellectually meaningful and spiritually transformative. A powerful biblical example of understanding God's purpose in human life can be found in Book of Genesis 45:4. In this passage, Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers and explains that despite their betrayal, God had a greater plan behind the events that led him to Egypt. Joseph's statement demonstrates a profound theological insight: human suffering and conflict can be transformed by God into instruments of divine purpose. According to Walter Brueggemann, the Joseph narrative in Genesis illustrates how God's providence works through complex human circumstances to accomplish divine purposes that may not be immediately understood by human beings (Brueggemann, 2010). Joseph's perspective reveals a mature spiritual understanding in which faith allows individuals to interpret life events within the broader framework of God's redemptive plan.

The message contained in Genesis 45:4 is highly relevant for Christian education because it teaches students to trust in God's sovereignty and wisdom even in difficult situations. For teachers, reflecting on this narrative encourages the development of spiritual maturity and resilience. Teachers who understand the theological meaning of God's providence are better equipped to guide students in interpreting life experiences from a perspective of faith. This ability is particularly important in contemporary educational environments where students often face various emotional, social, and moral challenges. Spiritual competence enables teachers to provide encouragement and guidance that helps students develop hope and confidence in God's purposes. Spiritual competence contributes significantly to the formation of a supportive learning environment. Teachers who possess spiritual maturity tend to demonstrate empathy, patience, and compassion in their interactions with students. These qualities are essential for building trusting relationships within the classroom. Educational research emphasizes that positive

teacher-student relationships play a significant role in promoting student motivation and engagement. According to Linda Darling-Hammond, effective teachers cultivate learning environments where students feel respected, valued, and encouraged to develop their potential (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In Christian Religious Education, such environments also provide opportunities for students to explore questions of faith, meaning, and purpose. The educational context of SDN 097373 Saribujandi located in Simalungun provides an important setting for examining how spiritual competence can influence the teaching of Christian Religious Education. In this school, there are 109 Christian students and four Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher. Within such a community, teachers play a central role in guiding students to understand biblical teachings and apply them in daily life. The spiritual competence of teachers therefore becomes an essential factor in shaping how students interpret Christian values and develop their personal faith. Relatively few studies explore how teachers' spiritual understanding influences their educational practice, particularly in relation to biblical interpretation. Yet, the ability of teachers to interpret and communicate biblical narratives is fundamental in Christian Religious Education because these narratives serve as the primary source of spiritual guidance and moral instruction. This study aims to examine the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in understanding God's plan as reflected in Genesis 45:4. By analyzing the theological message of the Joseph narrative and its relevance to educational practice, this research seeks to highlight the role of spiritual competence in shaping effective Christian teaching. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of Christian Religious Education by emphasizing the importance of integrating biblical reflection, spiritual maturity, and professional responsibility in the formation of Christian educators.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive research design was implemented to examine the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in understanding God's plan as reflected in Book of Genesis 45:4 within the educational environment of SDN 097373 Saribujandi located in Simalungun. Quantitative research was chosen because it allows the researcher to measure perceptions and responses related to spiritual competence using structured instruments and statistical analysis. According to John W. Creswell, quantitative research is appropriate for studies that aim to measure variables and analyze patterns through numerical data in order to explain relationships or describe phenomena systematically (Creswell, 2014). The population of this study consisted of 109 Christian students and four Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher, resulting in a total of 113 respondents. Because the number of respondents was relatively small and manageable, this study applied a total sampling technique, meaning that all members of the population were included as research participants. This approach allows the researcher to obtain a comprehensive representation of perceptions within the school community regarding the spiritual competence of the Christian Religious Education teacher and the understanding of God's plan conveyed through the teaching of Genesis 45:4. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale, which was designed to measure several indicators of spiritual competence. These indicators included the teacher's understanding of biblical theology, the ability to explain God's

providential plan in the story of Joseph, the demonstration of spiritual attitudes such as humility and trust in God, and the ability to guide students in interpreting life events through a perspective of faith. Each questionnaire item provided five response options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The instrument was designed to capture students' and teachers' perceptions regarding how effectively spiritual values were communicated in the learning process. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including the calculation of frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores in order to identify patterns in respondents' responses. This analysis aimed to determine the level of perceived spiritual competence demonstrated by the Christian Religious Education teacher and its influence on students' understanding of God's plan as described in Genesis 45:4. The results of the statistical analysis were then interpreted in light of relevant theological and educational literature to provide a comprehensive discussion of the findings. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide empirical insight into the role of spiritual competence in the practice of Christian Religious Education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers plays a significant role in helping students understand the meaning of God's plan as reflected in Book of Genesis 45:4. Based on the quantitative data collected from respondents in the educational environment of SDN 097373 Saribujandi located in Simalungun, which involved 109 Christian students and four Christian teachers, the overall results indicate that the spiritual competence of the Christian Religious Education teacher is perceived to be at a high level. The majority of respondents expressed agreement that the teacher demonstrates a clear understanding of biblical teachings, communicates the theological meaning of Scripture effectively, and exhibits attitudes that reflect spiritual maturity. These findings suggest that the presence of spiritually competent teachers contributes significantly to the development of students' faith perspectives and their ability to interpret life experiences within the framework of God's providential plan. The analysis of the data revealed several major themes that explain how spiritual competence influences the teaching and learning process in Christian Religious Education. The results show that students perceive the Christian Religious Education teacher as having a strong understanding of biblical narratives, particularly the story of Joseph in Genesis 45:4. This narrative is central to the theme of divine providence, where Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers and explains that the events leading to his arrival in Egypt were part of God's greater plan. Students reported that the teacher is able to explain this passage clearly and relate it to contemporary life situations. This indicates that the teacher possesses the spiritual insight necessary to interpret Scripture in a way that is relevant to students' experiences. The ability to interpret biblical texts meaningfully is an important component of spiritual competence because Christian education requires teachers to bridge the gap between ancient biblical narratives and modern life contexts. The Joseph narrative itself emphasizes that God's purposes can be fulfilled even through human mistakes and conflicts. According to Walter Brueggemann, the Joseph story demonstrates how divine providence operates through complex historical circumstances, transforming human wrongdoing into opportunities for redemption and salvation (Brueggemann, 2010). When teachers understand this

theological message, they are able to guide students toward a deeper trust in God's sovereignty and wisdom.

The findings indicate that the teacher demonstrates spiritual attitudes that reinforce the theological message conveyed in the classroom. Respondents noted that the teacher exhibits humility, patience, compassion, and responsibility in interactions with students. These qualities reflect spiritual maturity and are essential components of spiritual competence in Christian education. Students often interpret religious teachings through the behavior of their teachers; therefore, the personal example of the teacher becomes an important medium for communicating spiritual values. When teachers consistently demonstrate attitudes that align with biblical teachings, students are more likely to perceive Christian values as authentic and applicable to daily life. Educational research emphasizes that the moral character of teachers influences the ethical climate of the classroom. According to Robert W. Pazmiño, Christian educators are called to embody the values of the gospel in their professional practice so that their teaching becomes an expression of faith lived out in community (Pazmiño, 2008). In the context of this study, the teacher's spiritual attitudes appear to reinforce the message of God's providence and faithfulness described in Genesis 45:4. The results show that the teacher effectively encourages students to interpret personal experiences through a perspective of faith. Many respondents indicated that classroom discussions often involve reflection on how God may be working through challenges and difficulties in life. This approach is closely related to the theological theme found in the Joseph narrative, where suffering and injustice ultimately lead to the fulfillment of God's saving purposes. By helping students recognize that God can work through complex circumstances, the teacher fosters a sense of hope and resilience. This perspective is particularly important for students who may face social, emotional, or economic challenges in their daily lives. Understanding that God's plan can unfold even in difficult situations helps students develop a more mature faith and a positive outlook on life. The concept of interpreting life experiences through faith is also consistent with the principles of Christian pedagogy. According to Thomas H. Groome, Christian education involves a process of reflection in which learners connect the Christian story with their own personal experiences in order to discover meaning and purpose (Groome, 2011). Through this process, students learn to see their lives as part of a larger narrative shaped by God's guidance and care. The study reveals that the teacher's spiritual competence contributes to the creation of a supportive and respectful learning environment. Respondents indicated that the classroom atmosphere is characterized by openness, mutual respect, and encouragement. Students feel comfortable asking questions about biblical teachings and discussing personal experiences related to faith. Such an environment is essential for effective Christian education because spiritual growth often involves dialogue, reflection, and personal exploration. When students feel respected and valued, they are more likely to engage actively in the learning process. Educational research consistently shows that positive teacher–student relationships are associated with higher levels of motivation and academic engagement. According to Linda Darling-Hammond, effective teachers create learning environments where students feel safe, supported, and inspired to pursue their intellectual and personal development (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In the context of Christian Religious Education, this supportive

environment also enables students to explore deeper questions about faith, morality, and life purpose.

Another important finding from the data analysis concerns the role of spiritual competence in shaping students' moral perspectives. Respondents indicated that lessons about the story of Joseph often include discussions about forgiveness, reconciliation, and trust in God. These themes are central to the Joseph narrative, particularly in the moment when Joseph forgives his brothers and acknowledges God's plan behind the events that separated them. Through these discussions, students learn that faith involves not only belief but also ethical behavior and attitudes toward others. The teacher's guidance helps students understand that forgiveness and reconciliation are important aspects of Christian life. This moral dimension of Christian education is closely related to theories of moral development. According to Lawrence Kohlberg, individuals develop moral reasoning through interaction with ethical concepts and role models in their social environment (Kohlberg, 1984). Teachers who demonstrate moral integrity and encourage ethical reflection therefore play a crucial role in shaping students' moral development. The educational context of SDN 097373 Saribujandi further highlights the significance of teacher influence in Christian Religious Education. With 109 Christian students and four Christian teachers, including the Christian Religious Education teacher, the school community provides a setting where spiritual values can be integrated into everyday educational practices. In such a context, the teacher functions not only as an instructor but also as a spiritual mentor who guides students in their faith journey. The relatively close relationships between teachers and students allow for personal interaction and mentorship, which can strengthen the impact of spiritual guidance. Students who regularly observe the teacher's commitment to Christian values are more likely to internalize these values in their own lives. The findings also emphasize that spiritual competence involves both cognitive and affective dimensions. On the cognitive level, teachers must possess a solid understanding of biblical theology and the ability to interpret Scripture accurately. On the affective level, teachers must demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that reflect the spiritual truths they teach. The integration of these two dimensions is essential for effective Christian education. A teacher who possesses theological knowledge but lacks spiritual integrity may struggle to inspire students, while a teacher who demonstrates spiritual enthusiasm without sufficient biblical understanding may provide incomplete guidance. Therefore, the development of spiritual competence requires continuous personal reflection, theological study, and spiritual discipline.

The results suggest that spiritual competence contributes to students' sense of purpose and hope. When students learn that God's plan can operate through difficult circumstances, they develop a more resilient perspective on life challenges. This perspective encourages perseverance and trust in God's guidance. In an increasingly complex world, where young people often encounter uncertainty and anxiety, such spiritual perspectives are particularly valuable. Christian Religious Education therefore plays an important role in helping students develop a worldview grounded in faith and hope. The results of this study demonstrate that the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers significantly influences how students understand and apply biblical teachings in their lives. By interpreting the message of Genesis 45:4 and

demonstrating spiritual maturity in daily interactions, the teacher provides both intellectual guidance and moral inspiration. The integration of biblical reflection, spiritual attitudes, and supportive relationships creates an educational environment where students can grow spiritually and morally. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening spiritual competence in teacher formation programs so that Christian educators can effectively guide students in understanding God's plan and living according to Christian values.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the spiritual competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in understanding and communicating God's plan as reflected in Book of Genesis 45:4 within the educational context of SDN 097373 Saribujandi located in Simalungun. The findings demonstrate that spiritual competence plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education because it enables teachers to interpret biblical teachings meaningfully and guide students in understanding life experiences from a faith perspective. The narrative of Joseph in Genesis 45:4 highlights the theological principle that God's providence works through complex human circumstances to accomplish divine purposes. This message provides a powerful foundation for teaching students about trust in God, perseverance, and hope in the midst of challenges. The results indicate that the Christian Religious Education teacher demonstrates a strong level of spiritual competence, which is reflected in the ability to explain biblical narratives clearly, connect scriptural teachings with students' daily experiences, and model attitudes consistent with Christian values. Students perceive the teacher not only as an instructor but also as a spiritual guide who helps them understand the meaning of God's plan in their lives. Through classroom discussions, reflection activities, and personal interactions, the teacher encourages students to interpret both positive and difficult life experiences within the broader framework of divine providence. Such guidance contributes to the development of students' spiritual awareness and moral understanding. The study highlights that spiritual competence is not limited to theological knowledge but also involves the demonstration of spiritual attitudes such as humility, compassion, patience, and responsibility. These qualities help create a supportive learning environment in which students feel respected, encouraged, and motivated to engage in discussions about faith and moral values. The teacher's personal example therefore becomes an important instrument for transmitting Christian values and fostering character formation among students. In the context of SDN 097373 Saribujandi, where 109 Christian students are guided by four Christian teachers including the Christian Religious Education teacher, the influence of teacher spirituality is particularly significant. Teachers serve not only as educators but also as role models whose attitudes and actions shape the spiritual climate of the school community. By embodying the message of God's providence as reflected in Genesis 45:4, teachers can inspire students to develop faith, resilience, and confidence in God's guidance. The integration of spiritual competence and biblical reflection is essential for strengthening the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education. Teachers who possess deep spiritual understanding and demonstrate consistent Christian character are better equipped to help students recognize God's presence and purpose in their lives. Therefore, the development of spiritual competence should be emphasized in teacher

preparation and professional development programs so that Christian Religious Education teachers can effectively fulfill their role as educators, mentors, and witnesses of faith within the school community.

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