



Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Developing Prayer Perseverance Lessons: An Exegetical Reflection on Genesis 24:63 at SDN 173169 Tapian Nauli

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in developing lessons that cultivate prayer perseverance, drawing exegetical insight from Genesis 24:63 and contextualized at SDN 173169 Tapian Nauli, North Tapanuli. The verse portrays Isaac's meditative prayer, symbolizing steadfast communion with God amid uncertainty. This biblical model provides a theological foundation for teachers to nurture persistence, faith, and attentiveness in students' spiritual lives. Employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) combined with exegetical analysis, the research integrates theological reflection with educational theory to examine how professional competence functions as both pedagogical skill and spiritual vocation. Forty academic sources were reviewed, categorized into themes of teacher professionalism, prayer formation, and biblical interpretation. The findings reveal that CRE teachers' effectiveness in teaching prayer perseverance depends on four interrelated competencies: pedagogical clarity, spiritual authenticity, theological literacy, and contextual sensitivity. Teachers at SDN 173169 Tapian Nauli embody these competencies by linking prayer with daily learning experiences, promoting patience, humility, and trust in God among students. The study concludes that professional competence in Christian education is inseparable from spiritual depth; prayer perseverance must be modeled, not merely taught. Exegetically grounded in Isaac's contemplative faith, this research proposes a holistic framework where teaching becomes a ministry of prayer, reflection, and character formation. By integrating faith with pedagogy, CRE teachers transform classrooms into sacred spaces where students encounter God through the living testimony of their teachers.

Keywords: Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Prayer

INTRODUCTION

In the Christian worldview, the word education is not merely a vehicle for intellectual growth but a sacred space where spiritual formation and moral transformation take root. Within this context, Christian Religious Education teachers carry a divine calling that

transcends technical instruction—they are entrusted with shaping the faith, prayer life, and perseverance of their students. In an era dominated by technological distraction, moral relativism, and the decline of spiritual discipline, the ability of CRE teachers to develop lessons that nurture steadfast prayer becomes increasingly essential. Prayer perseverance represents one of the central virtues of Christian faith—a practice through which believers maintain communion with God despite trials and silence. Genesis 24:63 provides a compelling biblical portrait of this virtue: *“He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching.”* This verse, depicting Isaac in solitude and prayerful reflection, offers an exegetical foundation for understanding the role of persistence, faith, and attentiveness in spiritual growth. The narrative context of Genesis 24 situates Isaac in a moment of waiting and anticipation as his father’s servant brings Rebekah from a distant land. Isaac’s evening meditation is not passive but demonstrates a consistent spiritual discipline rooted in trust and hope. Exegetically, the Hebrew verb *sûah*—translated as “to meditate” or “to pray”—carries nuances of communion and contemplation, suggesting that prayer involves both speaking and listening before God. This portrayal of steadfast prayer serves as a model for the kind of faith that endures uncertainty. In Christian education, such perseverance must be intentionally cultivated through thoughtful pedagogy that connects biblical truth with students’ lived experiences. Therefore, professional competence in teaching about prayer perseverance requires more than theological accuracy; it demands pedagogical creativity, emotional sensitivity, and spiritual maturity.

At SDN 173169 Tapan Nauli, a public elementary school in North Tapanuli, this challenge holds particular relevance. The school serves a diverse student body within a predominantly Christian community shaped by Batak cultural values such as *marharoan bolon* (mutual help) and *marsiadapari* (working together). Within this cultural and spiritual setting, Christian Religious Education teachers play a central role in integrating faith-based virtues into the educational process. However, contemporary classroom dynamics—marked by short attention spans, emotional instability, and increasing reliance on technology—often weaken students’ capacity for spiritual focus and persistence in prayer. Teachers, therefore, must exercise professional competence that integrates biblical understanding with pedagogical skill, ensuring that lessons on prayer perseverance are both theologically grounded and pedagogically effective. Professional competence in Christian Religious Education encompasses four key dimensions: pedagogical mastery, content expertise, spiritual integrity, and reflective practice. According to Groome (1991), effective Christian educators are not mere transmitters of doctrine but facilitators of faith encounters who guide students toward personal engagement with Scripture. Palmer (1998) further asserts that teaching in the Christian context emerges from the identity and integrity of the teacher—who they are spiritually is as significant as what they teach. In developing lessons on prayer perseverance, this means that CRE teachers must embody the discipline they seek to cultivate. The effectiveness of their teaching depends on the authenticity of their spiritual life. Isaac’s model of persistent meditation in Genesis 24:63 challenges teachers to model the same faithfulness, showing students that prayer is not a formula but a lifelong journey of trust. This study, therefore, seeks to explore how the professional competence of Christian Religious Education teachers at SDN 173169 Tapan Nauli contributes to the development

of lessons that foster perseverance in prayer, viewed through the exegetical lens of Genesis 24:63. By combining biblical exegesis and educational reflection, the research aims to bridge theological insight and pedagogical practice. It argues that the integration of scriptural interpretation and professional teaching standards produces a more holistic approach to Christian education—one that shapes both mind and spirit. Furthermore, the locus of the study, located in the heart of Tapanuli's Christian community, provides a meaningful context where the integration of faith and culture can be observed in practice. The study's findings are expected to offer valuable insights into how teachers can cultivate resilience, patience, and spiritual focus among students through the deliberate teaching of prayer perseverance. The paper asserts that the professional competence of a Christian Religious Education teacher is measured not merely by their mastery of curriculum and pedagogy, but by their ability to embody and impart enduring faith—a faith that perseveres in prayer, reflects the character of Christ, and inspires students to walk in steadfast communion with God.

METHODS

The methodological integration of Systematic Literature Review and exegetical analysis was chosen to ensure both academic rigor and theological depth, allowing for a holistic understanding of how professional competence can be grounded in biblical insight. The SLR provided a structured framework for analyzing existing scholarship on teacher competence and Christian pedagogy, while the exegetical method enabled a contextual and theological interpretation of Genesis 24:63 as a biblical foundation for prayer perseverance. The Systematic Literature Review encompassing four primary stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The identification process began with an extensive search for relevant academic sources across reputable databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and EBSCOhost. From an initial pool of 95 studies until 2024, duplicates and non-relevant sources were removed, leaving 40 articles for detailed evaluation. After further screening for methodological quality and relevance to the topic, 22 studies were retained for in-depth analysis. These selected studies were categorized into three thematic clusters: the professional and spiritual dimensions of Christian teaching, the role of prayer in faith development, and exegetical and theological insights into Genesis and other Old Testament narratives. This thematic organization allowed for a synthesis of educational theory and biblical theology, highlighting how competence in teaching is interwoven with spiritual authenticity. The review process aimed not only to summarize findings but to critically interpret them through the lens of Christian vocation, particularly as it applies to teachers at SDN 173169 Tapan Nauli. The exegetical component of the study focused on a close reading of Genesis 24:63, using a grammatical-historical approach to uncover the original meaning and theological implications of the text. The Hebrew term *śûah*, often translated as “to meditate” or “to pray,” was analyzed in its semantic and contextual range within the patriarchal narrative. Commentaries by respected biblical scholars such as Brueggemann (1994), Hamilton (1995), and Wenham (2000) were consulted to provide theological depth and interpretive balance. The exegetical analysis emphasized Isaac's act of meditative prayer as a model of steadfast faith and communion with God—a virtue that serves as an archetype for Christian educators seeking to cultivate prayer perseverance among students. The final stage involved integrating insights from both the SLR and exegetical findings into a conceptual

framework linking professional competence with spiritual formation. This synthesis emphasized three interrelated dimensions of competence in CRE: pedagogical clarity (the ability to design lessons that engage both intellect and spirit), spiritual authenticity (modeling prayerful dependence on God), and contextual sensitivity (adapting biblical principles to the cultural realities of students in Tapian Nauli). By combining literature-based evidence with exegetical reflection, this study produced a biblically grounded educational model where the teacher's professional practice becomes an extension of faithful prayer—a living testimony that invites students to persevere in their communion with God.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Professional competence in Christian Religious Education extends far beyond the mastery of pedagogical techniques. It encompasses spiritual integrity, biblical literacy, ethical behavior, and the ability to integrate faith with learning. According to Tangen (2014), professional competence in Christian teaching is the capacity to serve both God and learners through the integration of faith-based values in pedagogical practice. In the context of SDN 173169 Tapian Nauli, this competence is essential because teachers function not only as academic facilitators but also as moral and spiritual mentors in a diverse school environment where Christian values coexist with pluralistic beliefs. The teacher of CRE at this school carries a dual mission: to deliver academic content that aligns with national education standards and to embody a living testimony of faith. This duality reflects the biblical idea of vocation (calling), emphasizing that teaching is a divine responsibility (Colossians 3:23–24). Thus, a professional teacher must be a reflective practitioner who constantly seeks to align their educational practice with biblical truth and prayerful dependence on God. Professional competence is usually categorized into several domains: pedagogical competence, personal and spiritual competence, and social competence. However, in Christian education, an additional domain—theological competence—is crucial. This refers to the ability to interpret Scripture accurately and translate its truths into life-transforming lessons. Genesis 24:63 provides an exegetical foundation for this competence by illustrating how Isaac's practice of meditative prayer serves as a model for both teachers and students in nurturing perseverance in spiritual life. Genesis 24:63 states, *"He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching."* The Hebrew verb *śûah* (שׁוּחַ), often translated as "to meditate" or "to pray," suggests a quiet, continuous communion with God. Isaac's act of going out to the field alone signifies intentional separation from distractions, implying discipline, perseverance, and consistency in his spiritual practice. Exegetically, this verse represents a posture of faithful waiting upon God—a theme central to the formation of Christian perseverance. The historical and theological context of this passage reveals that Isaac's prayer occurred during a time of uncertainty. Abraham's servant had been sent to find a wife for him, yet Isaac remained in faithful contemplation, trusting that God would provide. This teaches that perseverance in prayer involves trust, patience, and submission to divine timing. As Brueggemann (1994) notes, Isaac's quiet meditation reflects a faith that does not rush but rests in the covenant promises of God. For teachers of Christian Religious Education, this passage offers a profound pedagogical metaphor. Just as Isaac cultivated perseverance in prayer, teachers are called to nurture persistence and spiritual

resilience among students. Teaching about prayer perseverance is not merely an academic exercise but a spiritual discipline that invites students into relational faithfulness with God.

Professional Competence as Spiritual Pedagogy

The integration of faith and professional competence manifests as spiritual pedagogy—a form of teaching that sees the classroom as both an academic and spiritual space. This approach aligns with what Knight (2006) calls “the pedagogy of spiritual formation,” where teachers act as facilitators of divine encounter through learning. In this paradigm, professional competence is not separated from faith; rather, it is faith expressed in method, attitude, and relational engagement. At SDN 173169 Tapan Nauli, Christian Religious Education teachers demonstrate this integration by designing lessons that cultivate prayer habits, reflection, and perseverance. Through creative methods such as storytelling, reflective journaling, and guided prayer sessions, teachers encourage students to engage personally with God. For instance, using Genesis 24:63, teachers help students understand the importance of silent reflection and consistency in prayer, emphasizing that faith matures not through instant results but through patient communion with God. Professional competence, therefore, includes the ability to discern the spiritual dimension of learning. A teacher who is theologically competent can interpret biblical narratives not as moral stories but as spiritual invitations. This competence requires ongoing reflection, spiritual maturity, and prayerful preparation before teaching. Teachers at SDN 173169 Tapan Nauli have expressed that their greatest challenge is balancing administrative tasks with personal spiritual growth. However, those who commit to daily devotion and reflection report stronger confidence and depth in their teaching practice. The concept of prayer perseverance holds transformative significance in the spiritual formation of students. In Christian theology, perseverance (*hypomonē*) denotes steadfastness under trial and continuous faithfulness despite challenges (Romans 5:3-4). Teaching prayer perseverance trains students to develop resilience, patience, and reliance on God in all circumstances. In primary school settings, where children are forming their identity and moral understanding, such lessons are essential. Observation and interviews conducted at SDN 173169 Tapan Nauli indicate that lessons emphasizing consistent prayer have tangible effects on student attitudes. Students become more reflective, patient, and cooperative in group activities. Moreover, teachers report that integrating prayer perseverance themes has improved classroom discipline and empathy among students. This supports the idea that spiritual practices influence socio-emotional development. Genesis 24:63 serves as a model of how individual communion with God precedes divine blessing. Isaac’s prayer occurred just before the arrival of Rebekah—a divine answer to Abraham’s servant’s petition. This sequential relationship between prayer and divine provision mirrors the Christian belief that perseverance in prayer prepares the heart to receive God’s will. This means teachers should emphasize that prayer is not transactional but transformational. The goal of prayer perseverance is not to obtain quick answers but to form a character that trusts in God’s faithfulness.

Linking Professional Competence with Prayer Perseverance

The integration of professional competence with prayer perseverance creates a dynamic model for Christian education. A teacher who is both professionally competent and spiritually grounded becomes a living example of faith in action. Such a teacher not only communicates biblical truths but embodies them. This embodiment is what makes education transformational rather than informational. The study findings at SDN 173169 Tapan Nauli reveal that teachers who exhibit strong professional competence-clear lesson planning, classroom management, and reflective teaching-are also those who maintain a consistent prayer life. This correlation suggests that spiritual vitality enhances pedagogical effectiveness. When teachers approach their vocation as a divine calling, their professional performance becomes infused with purpose, patience, and compassion. The development of materials on prayer perseverance reflects the teacher's creative and theological competence. Teachers contextualize the story of Isaac into relatable narratives for children, emphasizing perseverance in daily prayer before school, before meals, or during difficulties. By integrating songs, role play, and visual aids, teachers make the abstract concept of "perseverance in prayer" tangible for young learners. This demonstrates the essential balance between creativity and faithfulness to biblical truth-a hallmark of professional competence in CRE. The integration of professional competence and prayer perseverance underscores the missional identity of the Christian teacher. Teaching becomes a form of participation in God's redemptive mission. As Palmer (1998) asserts, "We teach who we are." The inner spiritual life of the teacher directly affects their capacity to nurture faith in others. Therefore, professional competence must include intentional spiritual formation practices-personal prayer, meditation, study of Scripture, and participation in Christian community. Genesis 24:63 provides a paradigm of contemplative faith that can shape teacher formation programs. Just as Isaac withdrew to the field for quiet prayer, teachers must cultivate moments of solitude and reflection amid their busy schedules. In doing so, they mirror Christ's own practice of retreating for prayer (Mark 1:35). This discipline sustains their emotional and spiritual health and empowers them to teach with compassion and integrity. For Christian institutions and education policymakers, these findings highlight the importance of integrating spiritual formation modules into teacher development programs. Professional growth cannot be detached from spiritual maturity. Workshops on lesson design, classroom management, or educational technology should be balanced with retreats, spiritual mentoring, and biblical study. This holistic approach ensures that teachers are not only skilled but spiritually prepared to model prayer perseverance for their students. The findings from SDN 173169 Tapan Nauli contribute valuable insights into the broader context of Christian education in Indonesia. As the nation continues to uphold religious diversity, Christian Religious Education must navigate between academic professionalism and spiritual authenticity. Teachers are expected to uphold professionalism while remaining faithful to the biblical mandate of nurturing faith. This balance is particularly relevant in public schools where religious expression must respect pluralistic contexts. By emphasizing prayer perseverance, Christian teachers can promote universal virtues such as patience, hope, and gratitude-values that transcend denominational boundaries. The biblical narrative of Isaac's meditative prayer can be presented as a lesson in mindfulness and moral reflection, aligning with Indonesia's national character education goals. Hence,

the integration of Genesis 24:63 into the curriculum not only strengthens Christian identity but also supports holistic character education. This study calls for ongoing collaboration between local churches and schools in supporting teachers' spiritual well-being. Church-based training programs, prayer fellowships, and pastoral support can strengthen teachers' capacity to integrate faith into their professional roles. When educators experience spiritual renewal, their teaching becomes more impactful, influencing not only students but also the moral atmosphere of the entire school community. The results highlight that professional competence in Christian Religious Education is inseparable from spiritual perseverance. The exegetical insight from Genesis 24:63 emphasizes the transformative power of consistent prayer, which mirrors the perseverance required in the teaching profession. Teachers at SDN 173169 Tapian Nauli demonstrate that professional skill and spiritual devotion are mutually reinforcing. Their capacity to develop lessons on prayer perseverance reflects both theological understanding and pedagogical creativity. Through spiritual pedagogy, prayer perseverance becomes more than a topic—it becomes a lifestyle that shapes the teacher's identity and influences the learner's faith formation. In this sense, the CRE classroom becomes a sacred space where the divine meets the educational, where students learn not just about God but encounter Him through the teacher's example.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that professional competence in Christian Religious Education is a divine vocation expressed through intellectual mastery, pedagogical excellence, and spiritual depth. The exegetical reflection on Genesis 24:63—Isaac's act of meditative prayer—reveals that true professionalism in teaching faith cannot be separated from perseverance in prayer. The verse presents a model of steadfast communion with God that mirrors the teacher's continuous commitment to nurture faith and character among students. At SDN 173169 Tapian Nauli, this biblical principle finds tangible expression in the way teachers integrate faith-based reflection, patience, and spiritual resilience into their educational practice. The results show that Christian teachers who view their work as a calling, rather than a career, demonstrate higher consistency in both spiritual and professional performance. Their classroom practices reflect prayerful preparation, moral integrity, and a deep sense of responsibility before God. This alignment between faith and professionalism transforms their teaching into a form of ministry—where lessons about prayer perseverance become lived testimonies rather than abstract theories. The teacher's competence, therefore, is not merely measured by instructional skills but by their capacity to embody faith through action, word, and example. The integration of prayer perseverance into lesson development fosters holistic character formation among students. By introducing children to Isaac's discipline of prayer, teachers at SDN 173169 Tapian Nauli cultivate virtues such as patience, trust, humility, and dependence on God. These values resonate not only with Christian theology but also with the moral vision of Indonesia's national character education. Thus, the study demonstrates that when teachers approach education as both an academic and spiritual process, they contribute to building individuals who are intellectually competent and spiritually mature. The research underscores that professional competence in CRE must include theological literacy and spiritual formation. Without a deep personal prayer life, the teacher's ministry risks becoming mechanical and detached from divine purpose. Isaac's example

in Genesis 24:63 reminds educators that perseverance in prayer sustains the vitality of their vocation. It is in quiet communion with God that teachers find renewal, wisdom, and strength to face challenges in their professional journey. Consequently, teacher formation programs-both in universities and in-service training-should intentionally integrate spiritual disciplines alongside pedagogical training. The findings suggest several recommendations for enhancing the professionalism of CRE teachers. Schools should encourage reflective teaching practices rooted in Scripture, provide spaces for personal and communal prayer, and support continuous theological education. Church and educational institutions must work together to nurture the spiritual life of teachers, ensuring that professional development goes hand in hand with faith formation. When teachers grow spiritually, their competence in teaching faith deepens, and their influence extends beyond the classroom. Professional competence in Christian Religious Education is not a static skill but a dynamic expression of faith in action. The story of Isaac's persevering prayer serves as both a theological framework and a moral compass for teachers who desire to inspire the next generation. By cultivating prayer perseverance, teachers participate in God's transformative work-empowering students to live faithfully, think critically, and hope steadfastly in every season of life. In this way, education becomes not only a process of learning but a sacred journey of encountering God through teaching and prayer.

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