



Pedagogical Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching the Value of Care for Others: A Reflection on Genesis 18:6-8 at SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in cultivating the value of care for others, inspired by Genesis 18:6-8, with a particular focus on SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun in Central Tapanuli, Indonesia. The research interprets Abraham's hospitality toward his guests as a theological model for relational pedagogy in Christian education. Employing a qualitative theological reflection supported by a systematic literature review, the study integrates biblical exegesis, educational theory, and classroom practice to identify how care-based pedagogy forms the moral and spiritual character of students. The findings reveal that pedagogical competence is not limited to instructional mastery but extends to relational empathy, moral consistency, and spiritual discernment. Through the narrative of Abraham's generous hospitality, teachers learn to embody compassion, humility, and attentiveness as expressions of divine love. Within the school context, such pedagogy encourages inclusive, participatory, and transformative learning environments where students experience faith through acts of mutual respect and service. Furthermore, the integration of care aligns with Indonesia's cultural philosophy of gotong royong (mutual cooperation), enhancing both spiritual and social harmony. The study concludes that pedagogical competence in Christian education must be rooted in a love that serves, listens, and uplifts—reflecting God's relational nature. By teaching through care, CRE teachers transform the classroom into sacred space, nurturing students not only intellectually but also spiritually, preparing them to live as agents of love and peace in their communities.

Keywords: *Pedagogical Competence, Christian Religious Education, Care for Others*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching in Christian Religious Education (CRE) is never a mere transfer of doctrinal knowledge; it is an act of shaping hearts and forming character through the living Word of God. Within this sacred vocation, pedagogical competence plays a crucial role in

ensuring that biblical truths are not only understood cognitively but also internalized as lived values. In Indonesia's pluralistic and multicultural educational context, especially in regions such as Tapanuli Tengah, the pedagogical task of the CRE teacher extends beyond classroom instruction to become an act of moral and spiritual formation. Among the many Christian virtues that teachers are called to nurture, care for others stands as a core expression of Christlike love—an ethic of compassion that mirrors the heart of God Himself. The narrative in Genesis 18:6-8 provides a profound biblical foundation for understanding the pedagogy of care. In this passage, Abraham demonstrates hospitality and attentiveness toward three divine visitors who appear by the oaks of Mamre. He hastens to prepare a meal, involving Sarah and the servants, offering bread, meat, and milk to his guests. This seemingly ordinary act of hospitality becomes an extraordinary revelation of divine encounter. In Abraham's compassionate initiative—his readiness to serve and his attentiveness to the needs of others—the narrative reveals a theological truth: God's presence often manifests in moments of care, generosity, and relational attentiveness. This story is not only about divine visitation; it is also about human participation in God's redemptive compassion. Thus, Genesis 18:6-8 is pedagogically rich—it invites educators to see acts of care as spiritual practices that mediate divine love in human relationships. In the context of SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun, a public junior high school in North Sumatra, this biblical vision holds particular significance. Students in this setting come from diverse socio-economic and religious backgrounds. Many face challenges such as limited access to educational resources, familial instability, or peer pressure that discourages empathy. Therefore, the task of the Christian Religious Education teacher is not merely to teach about care but to cultivate it as a lived and embodied value. The teacher must help students see that caring for others—whether through sharing, helping, listening, or comforting—is a tangible expression of their faith in God. Pedagogical competence in this sense goes beyond technical teaching ability; it encompasses relational wisdom, moral modeling, and spiritual discernment. Teaching the value of care involves integrating cognitive understanding of biblical texts that exemplify compassion and service, affective engagement that touches the emotions and moral imagination of students, and behavioral formation that encourages concrete actions of empathy and kindness. A teacher's competence is thus measured not only by the clarity of instruction but by the depth of transformation it inspires in the learner. As scholars such as Lickona (1991) and Palmer (2017) have argued, education that shapes moral and spiritual character must begin with the teacher's own integrity and empathy. In the CRE classroom, the teacher's life becomes a living textbook—the embodiment of what is taught. Exegesis of Genesis 18:6-8 reveals pedagogical implications for Christian education. Abraham's actions—his quick response, inclusive involvement of others (Sarah and the servants), and generous provision—illustrate principles of effective teaching: responsiveness, collaboration, and intentional generosity. His pedagogy is one of active participation rather than passive instruction. Similarly, Christian Religious Education teachers are called to create learning environments that reflect divine hospitality—spaces where every student feels seen, valued, and nurtured. Teaching care for others, therefore, becomes both content and method. The teacher models care in their interactions, encourages cooperative learning, and integrates acts of service into daily classroom life. Through this, students begin to recognize that spiritual maturity is inseparable from social compassion. The act of caring aligns with the very nature of God, who is relational and self-giving. As the Apostle John

declares, *"We love because He first loved us"* (1 John 4:19). This divine initiative forms the foundation of all Christian pedagogy. The teacher, inspired by God's love, becomes a vessel of that same love, nurturing empathy, respect, and cooperation among students. In the socio-educational landscape of Indonesia, such pedagogy serves a dual purpose: it strengthens students' spiritual identity while promoting social harmony across cultural and religious lines. This study explores how pedagogical competence in Christian Religious Education functions as a transformative medium for teaching the value of care for others, illuminated by the theological insight of Genesis 18:6-8. Specifically, it seeks to understand how CRE teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun embody this Abrahamic model of compassionate pedagogy in their daily practice. The study argues that when pedagogical competence is infused with biblical care, education transcends instruction-it becomes an act of discipleship that shapes both intellect and heart, forming students into compassionate followers of Christ who reflect divine hospitality in their relationships and communities.

METHODS

A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach was implemented to analyze and synthesize existing scholarly works on pedagogical competence in Christian Religious Education (CRE) and its relationship to teaching the value of care for others, as illuminated by the biblical narrative in Genesis 18:6-8. The SLR method was selected because it provides a rigorous and transparent framework for identifying, evaluating, and integrating previous research, enabling a comprehensive understanding of how pedagogical competence can foster moral and spiritual formation in educational practice (Snyder, 2019). The process of this systematic review followed four major stages: identification of research focus, selection of data sources, data analysis and synthesis, and interpretation of pedagogical implications. The primary focus of this review was to examine how pedagogical competence among Christian Religious Education teachers supports the cultivation of caring attitudes and behaviors among students. The study was guided by three core research questions: How is pedagogical competence conceptualized within the context of Christian education? What are the biblical and theological foundations for teaching the value of care, especially as reflected in Genesis 18:6-8? How can pedagogical practices be designed to embody the value of care in the classroom setting of SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun? The data for this review were collected from reputable international databases. Additional sources were drawn from Indonesian educational journals to provide contextual understanding of pedagogical practices within local schools, including SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun in Tapanuli Tengah. The inclusion criteria consisted of studies that discuss pedagogical competence in relation to moral or character education, address Christian or biblical perspectives on teaching, and explore values of empathy, hospitality, or care. Excluded materials were those unrelated to religious education, non-peer-reviewed essays, or works lacking methodological clarity. Data analysis followed an integrative synthesis model. Each selected source was carefully read, summarized, and coded according to key themes relevant to the study's focus. Thematic coding categories included: theoretical frameworks of pedagogical competence, biblical and theological interpretation of Genesis 18:6-8, and practical models of value-based teaching. These categories were then cross-analyzed to identify

recurring patterns and conceptual overlaps. The results of this thematic synthesis formed the foundation for interpreting how biblical care can be integrated into the pedagogical competence of CRE teachers. The synthesis also employed hermeneutic reflection to connect biblical interpretation with pedagogical theory. Genesis 18:6-8 was treated as a narrative model for relational pedagogy, highlighting Abraham's attentiveness, initiative, and hospitality as didactic principles. These were then correlated with educational models proposed by scholars such as Shulman (1987), Lickona (1991), and Palmer (2017), who emphasize the moral and spiritual dimensions of teaching competence. The final stage involved contextual interpretation to relate the findings to the real educational environment of SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun. The results were examined in light of Indonesian cultural values such as mutual cooperation and family spirit, which resonate with the biblical ethic of care. This contextual reflection ensured that the pedagogical recommendations derived from the literature would be both theologically grounded and culturally relevant. Ethical consideration was maintained by giving proper citation to all sources and ensuring that interpretations of biblical texts respect theological diversity within Christian education. Through this SLR process, the study sought not only to consolidate theoretical knowledge but also to offer a biblically informed pedagogical framework that empowers Christian Religious Education teachers to model and nurture care for others-an essential virtue of faith-based education that reflects the spirit of Abrahamic hospitality in contemporary classrooms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the systematic literature review reveal that pedagogical competence in Christian Religious Education (CRE) is not limited to cognitive or methodological mastery but encompasses the teacher's spiritual, ethical, and relational capacity to model and transmit biblical values. Within the context of Genesis 18:6-8, the value of care-embodied in Abraham's act of hospitality-becomes a theological and pedagogical cornerstone for shaping compassionate, relational, and transformative learning environments. The analysis of more than thirty peer-reviewed sources indicates three primary dimensions of pedagogical competence relevant to this study: the integrative nature of biblical care in pedagogy, the teacher's relational role in fostering student empathy and service, and contextual application in Indonesian schools, particularly SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun, through culturally resonant Christian education practices. These three dimensions intertwine to form a holistic framework of care-based pedagogy that reflects the ethos of both Scripture and local cultural wisdom. The first result concerns the theological integration of care into pedagogical competence. In Genesis 18:6-8, Abraham rushes to serve three visitors with eagerness and generosity-symbolizing an act of relational care that transcends social boundaries. Exegetically, the verbs "hurried," "ran," and "brought" highlight Abraham's proactive attitude, suggesting that care in the biblical sense is not passive empathy but active love manifested through deeds. Scholars such as Brueggemann (2005) and Hamilton (1990) emphasize that Abraham's hospitality prefigures the moral foundation of covenantal relationships, where righteousness is demonstrated through tangible acts of concern for others. In pedagogical terms, this mirrors the teacher's readiness to anticipate student needs, provide nurturing support, and design inclusive learning experiences that reflect God's compassion. Pedagogical competence, according to Shulman (1987), includes content knowledge, pedagogical

content knowledge, and knowledge of learners. When infused with biblical care, this competence transforms into what Palmer (2017) calls the “pedagogy of the heart,” wherein teaching becomes a relational encounter rather than a transactional exchange of information. The CRE teacher thus moves beyond being a transmitter of religious facts toward becoming a living example of divine love. The integration of care into pedagogy implies that the teacher’s competence is rooted not only in mastery of subject matter but also in spiritual discernment and moral intentionality. Teaching, therefore, becomes a sacred vocational service of love grounded in the example of Abraham who recognized the divine presence in ordinary encounters. This interpretation aligns with the ethical pedagogy framework proposed by Noddings (2013), who argues that care is the foundational virtue in educational relationships. However, the Christian perspective deepens this notion by grounding care in *agape*, or divine love, rather than in mere human sympathy. The CRE teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun is thus called to imitate Abraham’s attitude by welcoming students’ uniqueness, addressing their emotional and spiritual needs, and creating a classroom atmosphere where compassion and respect flourish. The teacher’s pedagogical competence is seen not in how well students memorize Bible verses but in how effectively they embody the moral and relational lessons derived from Scripture. The second key finding reveals that social and emotional dimensions of pedagogical competence are crucial in cultivating students’ care for others. In many studies on Christian pedagogy (e.g., Van Brummelen, 2009; Astley, 2014), teachers are portrayed as spiritual shepherds who nurture the inner lives of students. This relational model resonates with the biblical motif of Abraham as host, who opens his tent not only physically but emotionally. His action becomes a metaphor for the educator’s calling to open the “tent of knowledge” and invite students into a safe and welcoming learning space. At SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun, where students come from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, the CRE teacher’s social competence determines how effectively the values of care and empathy are conveyed. Research by Lickona (1991) on character education supports this, showing that moral values are best transmitted through interpersonal modeling rather than direct instruction. The teacher’s kindness, patience, and attentiveness serve as lived theology-what Freire (1998) refers to as “the praxis of love.” Through consistent demonstration of empathy, teachers shape students’ moral imagination, helping them to see care not as obligation but as a joyful expression of faith. The SLR results indicate that in Indonesian contexts, pedagogical competence also involves understanding cultural values that reinforce biblical principles. The local wisdom of mutual help) and familial spirit deeply complements the Abrahamic ethic of care. Studies by Suyanto and Juwita (2021) emphasize that effective Christian educators integrate local cultural ethics into their teaching strategies to create moral coherence between home, school, and faith. For instance, when a CRE teacher encourages students to help one another during group projects, the activity becomes both a reflection of Abraham’s hospitality and a reinforcement of Indonesian communal values. The relational competence of teachers must address the emotional dimension of learning. Studies in educational psychology (e.g., Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) reveal that emotionally supportive teachers promote higher student engagement and empathy. Within Christian education, this emotional intelligence is guided by spiritual discernment-the teacher’s sensitivity to the inner struggles of students, much like Abraham’s attentiveness to his guests. By combining emotional awareness with biblical instruction,

teachers nurture both cognitive and affective growth, helping students understand that caring for others is integral to knowing God. The third result focuses on contextual application. SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun, located in Tapanuli Tengah, represents a typical rural public school setting where Christian Religious Education must coexist within pluralistic classrooms. In this context, the teacher's pedagogical competence is tested not only by academic demands but also by the challenge of maintaining inclusivity and compassion in a multi-faith environment. The literature review shows that contextual theology-especially liberation and incarnational perspectives-provides a useful lens for interpreting how biblical care can be embodied in such contexts (Bevans, 2002). Genesis 18:6-8 presents care as a concrete, situational act. Abraham does not wait for ideal circumstances but acts within the limits of his resources to serve his guests. Similarly, CRE teachers are called to enact care in their daily interactions, even when institutional or material constraints exist. For instance, when resources for classroom materials are limited, a teacher can still model generosity by sharing time, attention, and encouragement. These small acts of kindness cultivate a culture of care that students can replicate in their social relationships. Studies in faith-based pedagogy (e.g., Smith & Smith, 2014; Tisdell, 2016) affirm that moral formation occurs most effectively when students witness the embodiment of faith in their teachers. In the Sibabangun context, the CRE teacher functions as both a moral compass and community builder. By using biblical narratives such as Abraham's hospitality as pedagogical tools, teachers can invite students to dramatize or reflect on how they can show care to others-whether through service learning, classroom cooperation, or social projects. This approach moves beyond cognitive learning to moral praxis, allowing students to experience faith in action. Pedagogical competence in this context includes the ability to integrate interdisciplinary learning. For example, the teacher may link the story of Abraham's hospitality with environmental education or civic responsibility, helping students see that caring for others also includes caring for creation and community. Such integrative pedagogy aligns with holistic Christian education models (Knight, 2006) that emphasize the unity of knowledge, faith, and character. The discussion also highlights that effective care-based pedagogy requires institutional support. School culture must encourage teachers to collaborate, reflect, and pray together. Studies on professional learning communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998) show that when teachers collectively model caring relationships, students internalize these values more deeply. Therefore, the development of pedagogical competence among CRE teachers should include regular reflection sessions on biblical values and collaborative workshops on integrating faith and learning.

Genesis 18:6-8 embodies a divine-human interaction where care becomes the medium of revelation. Abraham's hospitality opens the way for divine blessing and promise. This suggests that in the educational realm, acts of care by teachers can also become moments of divine encounter. When a teacher listens patiently, guides compassionately, or disciplines with gentleness, these actions mirror God's relational nature. The classroom thus becomes a sacred space where God's love is revealed through human relationships. The implication is that teaching care requires intentional formation of teachers themselves. Several scholars (e.g., Palmer, 2017; Van Brummelen, 2009) assert that teachers can only teach what they embody. Therefore, professional development for CRE teachers should not focus solely on instructional techniques but also on spiritual growth

and ethical reflection. This formation helps teachers internalize the values they are expected to teach, ensuring authenticity and integrity in their practice. Another significant finding is that care-based pedagogy enhances not only moral formation but also academic engagement. Research by Wentzel (2010) and Jennings (2015) demonstrates that students who perceive their teachers as caring exhibit greater motivation, cooperation, and responsibility. In Christian terms, care builds trust, and trust opens the heart to transformation. The teacher-student relationship thus becomes a microcosm of divine grace-where learning is both intellectual and spiritual renewal. In light of the socio-cultural context of Sibabangun, care also serves as a bridge between faith and civic life. Indonesian educational philosophy (Ki Hajar Dewantara) emphasizes nurturing the heart-knowing, feeling, and doing. This philosophy parallels the biblical notion of holistic education. By aligning Christian pedagogy with national educational ideals, CRE teachers can demonstrate that biblical care is not sectarian but universal, contributing to moral development and social harmony. This study proposes a conceptual model of care-based pedagogical competence derived from Genesis 18:6-8 and contextualized for SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun. The model consists of four interrelated components: The teacher's ability to discern God's presence in everyday teaching moments, recognizing students as divine image-bearers deserving compassion and respect. Living out values of hospitality, humility, and generosity as Abraham did, thus becoming a moral reference point for students. Creating dialogical, inclusive, and empathetic classroom interactions that encourage cooperation and service. Integrating local cultural wisdom and social realities into biblical teaching to make care relevant and actionable. This model emphasizes that pedagogical competence in Christian Religious Education is inseparable from spiritual and ethical formation. The teacher, like Abraham, becomes a mediator of divine hospitality, extending grace and care to students within and beyond the classroom. The results and discussion affirm that Genesis 18:6-8 offers more than a story of ancient hospitality-it is a pedagogical paradigm for Christian educators today. Abraham's readiness to serve, his respect for strangers, and his joyful attitude toward giving provide timeless lessons for teaching the value of care. In the classrooms of SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun, where students learn not only about God but also how to live out their faith, this narrative serves as both inspiration and blueprint for shaping a generation characterized by compassion, cooperation, and spiritual maturity.

CONCLUSION

The reflection on Genesis 18:6-8 unveils that the essence of pedagogical competence for Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers lies not merely in mastering instructional techniques, but in embodying the spiritual and ethical dimension of care. Abraham's spontaneous act of hospitality toward his three guests-performed with urgency, humility, and joy-reveals a profound theology of relational care that transcends culture and time. His readiness to serve and his discernment to recognize the divine presence within ordinary human encounters exemplify the foundational attitude every Christian teacher must cultivate. Teaching, in this theological light, is not only a profession but also an act of worship and service-where knowledge and compassion intersect to form lives according to the image of God. The findings of this study affirm that pedagogical competence rooted in care transforms the classroom into a sacred space of relational

formation. Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Sibabangun are called to reflect Abraham's example by building an atmosphere of acceptance, encouragement, and service. When care becomes the foundation of pedagogy, students experience not only academic growth but also moral awakening and spiritual transformation. They learn that to know God is to love and care for others. This theological principle aligns with the biblical mandate in John 13:34-35, where love is the hallmark of true discipleship. Thus, pedagogical competence for CRE teachers must be grounded in a love that acts, serves, and sacrifices. The integration of the value of care within pedagogical practice offers several practical implications. First, teacher training and professional development should include spiritual formation programs that help educators internalize biblical values. Competence in Christian education cannot be separated from character; effective teaching emerges from a heart transformed by the Word. Second, schools should encourage collaborative learning communities where teachers support one another, share best practices, and reflect on Scripture together. Such communities cultivate mutual care and strengthen the spiritual identity of educators. Third, the curriculum of Christian Religious Education must be designed to balance knowledge transmission with character formation-through service learning, reflective dialogue, and experiential activities that model compassion and cooperation. In contextual terms, care-based pedagogy also resonates deeply with Indonesian educational and cultural philosophy. When teachers integrate these values into their pedagogy, they create bridges between faith and culture, ensuring that Christian education contributes positively to the nation's moral and social harmony. In this way, the classroom becomes a microcosm of the Kingdom of God-where students learn to practice empathy, unity, and respect in diversity. The study underscores that Abraham's hospitality in Genesis 18:6-8 is not a mere narrative of kindness but a theological model for pedagogical vocation. The Christian Religious Education teacher is invited to emulate Abraham's attentiveness, generosity, and reverence toward others. Through such imitation, the act of teaching becomes a continuation of divine hospitality-welcoming students into the presence of truth, nurturing their spiritual growth, and guiding them to encounter God through the daily rhythms of learning. Cultivating the value of care through pedagogical competence is not simply an educational strategy; it is a sacred calling. It demands that teachers see every student as a guest at the table of learning-worthy of respect, attention, and love. When Christian educators teach with hearts that serve as Abraham served, the classroom transforms into holy ground where both teacher and student are sheltered by the grace of God and shaped by His love. In such a setting, education fulfills its truest purpose: forming individuals who know God, love others, and live out faith through acts of compassionate service.

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