



Persevering in Prayer: Pedagogical Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Teaching the Value of Devotion through Genesis 24:63 at SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in teaching the value of perseverance in prayer based on Genesis 24:63, which describes Isaac's deep devotion to God through consistent prayer and meditation. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar and aims to understand how teachers embody and communicate this biblical value in classroom settings. Using a SLR method, data were gathered through analysis involving CRE teachers and students. The findings reveal that pedagogical competence in teaching perseverance in prayer involves three essential dimensions: biblical integration, instructional creativity, and spiritual modeling. Teachers with strong pedagogical competence are able to interpret Genesis 24:63 not merely as a theological text but as a moral and spiritual framework for students' daily lives. Through contextual teaching strategies, reflective learning, and mentoring, students learn to see prayer not as a ritual obligation but as a form of relational perseverance with God. Moreover, the study highlights that consistent teacher modeling—through prayerful behavior, empathy, and humility—greatly influences students' internalization of the value of devotion. The research concludes that pedagogical competence in CRE must be both spiritually grounded and pedagogically innovative to effectively cultivate prayer perseverance among students in the modern educational context.

Keywords: *Pedagogical Competence, Christian Religious Education, Prayer*

INTRODUCTION

Education in Christian perspective is not merely a transfer of knowledge but a divine process of transformation that nurtures the heart, mind, and faith of learners. Within Christian Religious Education (CRE), teachers are not only conveyors of biblical information but also shepherds who form students' spiritual maturity and ethical sensitivity. Their pedagogical competence reflects the capacity to design, implement, and

evaluate learning that cultivates students' holistic growth. One essential dimension of Christian pedagogy is the ability to teach values that shape students' inner life, including perseverance in prayer as an expression of faith and dependence on God. Genesis 24:63 provides a profound biblical foundation for teaching the value of prayer and devotion. The verse narrates, *"He went out to the field one evening to meditate"* (NIV), referring to Isaac's contemplative act as he awaited God's guidance in choosing a life partner. The Hebrew word used for "meditate," *sûah*, carries connotations of conversing, reflecting, and seeking divine presence - a spiritual discipline that transcends mere ritual. Exegetically, this verse portrays prayer not as a fleeting moment of supplication but as a sustained practice of communion and surrender. Isaac's prayerful solitude reveals a model of perseverance - an inward dialogue between the believer and God that molds character, discernment, and peace. In the context of Christian education, such biblical insight becomes a pedagogical resource. Teachers of Christian Religious Education at SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar face a generation of students living amid digital distraction, moral pluralism, and pragmatic religiosity. Many students tend to approach spirituality as an occasional activity rather than a lifestyle of continuous devotion. Teachers must possess strong pedagogical competence to translate the theological essence of Genesis 24:63 into meaningful learning experiences. This competence includes the ability to plan lessons that integrate faith with reflective practice, use creative methodologies that engage students emotionally and spiritually, and evaluate the growth of students' prayer habits not only cognitively but affectively. Pedagogical competence, as described by educational theorists such as Shulman (1987), involves content knowledge, instructional design, and the moral dimension of teaching. In the Christian context, these competencies are illuminated by the teacher's vocation - the calling to embody Christ's presence in the classroom. A pedagogically competent CRE teacher, therefore, serves as both an instructor and intercessor, guiding students toward personal encounters with God. By modeling perseverance in prayer, the teacher becomes a living curriculum that inspires imitation and internalization of biblical values.

At SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar, the teaching of Christian Religious Education provides a platform for students to explore the discipline of prayer as part of their spiritual formation. Through reflective reading of Genesis 24:63, students are invited to see prayer as a relational engagement rather than a mechanical act. Teachers who demonstrate strong pedagogical competence can help students interpret biblical narratives contextually, relate them to daily life challenges, and practice prayer as a means of faith development and resilience. This alignment between pedagogical skill and spiritual mentoring forms the backbone of transformative Christian education. This study, therefore, aims to analyze the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in teaching the value of perseverance in prayer through the lens of Genesis 24:63. The research seeks to uncover how biblical principles are translated into classroom practice, how teachers foster devotional habits among students, and how pedagogical excellence supports the cultivation of faith-based resilience. Theologically grounded and pedagogically informed, this exploration contributes to a broader discourse on faith integration in educational praxis, reaffirming that effective teaching in Christian education is both a scholarly craft and a spiritual ministry.

METHODS

A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach was used to examine pedagogical competence in Christian Religious Education (CRE) through the lens of Genesis 24:63, focusing on the cultivation of perseverance in prayer among students. The SLR method was selected because it allows a comprehensive synthesis of previous research, theological reflections, and pedagogical frameworks related to the integration of faith and learning. The aim was to identify the patterns, challenges, and best practices that define how Christian teachers embody pedagogical competence in nurturing devotional values within secondary education contexts such as SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar. In the identification stage, relevant databases. The search covered a publication range from 2010 to 2025 to ensure contemporary relevance. Both empirical and conceptual studies were considered, provided they addressed either pedagogical competence in religious education or the teaching of devotional values within Christian frameworks. During the screening and eligibility phase, 85 articles were initially retrieved. After removing duplicates and applying inclusion criteria - such as relevance to Christian pedagogy, explicit discussion of prayer or faith formation, and clarity of methodological framework - a total of 32 studies were selected for detailed review. The excluded articles were those that focused solely on general religious instruction without Christian-specific pedagogical context or that discussed prayer only as a theological concept without educational application. Each selected study was critically assessed based on its research design, theoretical grounding, and contribution to the understanding of pedagogical competence. Pedagogical competence as spiritual vocation emphasizing that effective CRE teaching is inseparable from the teacher's personal spirituality and prayer life, faith-based pedagogical strategies focusing on how teachers design learning activities that make biblical values experientially meaningful for students, prayer as pedagogical praxis identifying how teachers model, integrate, and evaluate prayer as a transformative educational tool. These themes were analyzed through both theological exegesis and educational theory. Genesis 24:63 served as a hermeneutical anchor, interpreted as a biblical paradigm for contemplative pedagogy. The exegetical dimension emphasized Isaac's perseverance in seeking God's will through meditation and waiting, which parallels the pedagogical process of guiding students toward consistent spiritual discipline. The educational dimension applied frameworks from Shulman (1987) and TPACK (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) to assess how teachers' content knowledge, pedagogical design, and spiritual disposition interact to produce effective learning experiences. The analysis was further contextualized through local data on Christian Religious Education practices at SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar, gathered through document review and informal observation reports. The SLR provided both a conceptual and contextual foundation to explore how pedagogical competence can be understood not merely as technical expertise, but as a sacred vocation that mirrors Isaac's perseverance in prayer - guiding teachers to cultivate devotion, reflection, and spiritual endurance within their students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this systematic literature review reveal that the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers is deeply intertwined with their spiritual maturity and personal commitment to prayer. Pedagogy in Christian education cannot be

separated from the teacher's inner life, since effective teaching is not only about knowledge transmission but the embodiment of divine truth in everyday interactions. Genesis 24:63 provides a powerful biblical foundation for this perspective. The verse states: *"He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching."* The Hebrew word *suach* used here carries meanings of both meditation and prayer, illustrating that Isaac's waiting was not passive but an active engagement of faith. Within the educational context, this imagery reflects the posture of a Christian teacher who, like Isaac, engages in perseverance, reflection, and spiritual attentiveness while guiding students to know and practice prayerful devotion. The first theme emerging from the literature relates to pedagogical competence as a reflection of spiritual vocation. According to Van Brummelen (2009) and Astley (2014), Christian educators are called not only to teach biblical content but to incarnate the values of the Kingdom of God within pedagogical praxis. This means that their methods, tone, and relationships with students must mirror the life of Christ. In this sense, prayer becomes both a personal discipline and a pedagogical principle. Teachers who live prayerfully cultivate classroom environments characterized by peace, patience, and compassion - qualities that foster students' receptiveness to spiritual learning. The review of studies from Smith (2018), Brown (2020), and Hunsberger (2022) indicates that schools with CRE teachers who model consistent devotion in prayer see significantly higher engagement and moral reflection among students. Such teachers integrate prayer not as a ritualistic routine, but as a formative act that aligns the learner's heart with divine purposes. The second major finding concerns faith-based pedagogical strategies that foster devotional character. In the literature, several models of integrating prayer into teaching practice were identified. The "Reflective Integration Model" proposed by Lovat (2017) suggests that educators can design learning experiences that allow students to reflect upon their personal experiences in light of Scripture. For example, teachers can encourage students to express gratitude, intercession, and reflection through journaling or group prayer circles. In SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar, Christian Religious Education teachers have adopted similar reflective practices, inviting students to pray before and after learning, not as mere formality but as intentional encounters with God. This resonates with the principle found in Genesis 24:63, where Isaac's act of meditation became the turning point that preceded divine fulfillment - the meeting with Rebekah. Pedagogically, this implies that prayer-oriented teaching cultivates spiritual readiness for divine revelation and life guidance among students. The SLR highlights the critical role of teacher modeling as the most effective form of instruction in spiritual formation. Drawing on the works of Palmer (1998) and Groome (2011), it is evident that students learn best not only through verbal instruction but through the teacher's authentic spiritual practices. When a CRE teacher demonstrates perseverance in prayer - for example, praying consistently for their students or involving them in community prayers - students observe and internalize the value of persistence in seeking God. The field context of SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar reflects this dynamic. Several local reports from school supervisors indicate that when teachers embody sincerity, humility, and consistent prayerfulness, students tend to emulate these virtues both in and outside the classroom. This finding underscores the importance of the teacher's inner formation as the foundation of pedagogical competence in faith-based education. Another emerging insight relates to the theological-pedagogical synthesis between prayer and learning. Exegetically, Genesis

24:63 shows Isaac's perseverance amid uncertainty. The narrative suggests that before encountering the fulfillment of God's promise, Isaac cultivated a steady rhythm of prayerful waiting. From a pedagogical perspective, this reflects the teacher's role in helping students navigate moments of intellectual or moral struggle with patience and faith. As highlighted by Knight (2016), Christian education should train students not only to think critically but also to "wait faithfully." In this light, perseverance in prayer becomes a pedagogical metaphor for resilience, encouraging students to see learning as both a spiritual and intellectual journey. The CRE teacher's task, therefore, is to weave faith practices - such as prayer, reflection, and discernment - into the curriculum so that students experience learning as an act of worship and devotion. Prayer as a pedagogical practice also contributes to students' socio-emotional growth. Studies reviewed from Davis (2019) and Cornelius-White (2021) indicate that consistent prayer routines in class enhance students' emotional regulation, empathy, and cooperation. When Christian teachers use prayer to begin lessons or resolve conflicts, students learn to respond to tension with reflection rather than reaction. This aligns with the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, which include patience and self-control - virtues closely connected to the discipline of prayer. In the case of SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar, classroom observations demonstrate that students exposed to structured devotional practices exhibit stronger collaboration and mutual care. Hence, the pedagogical competence of the teacher becomes evident not only in the mastery of content but in the ability to cultivate spiritual habits that shape the learner's moral and emotional integrity. A further theme found in the literature involves curriculum design that integrates devotional values. The integration of Genesis 24:63 into Christian education curriculum is best achieved when prayer is contextualized as a formative process rather than a doctrinal lesson. In the reviewed studies, researchers such as Cooling (2020) and Tisdell (2022) emphasize that effective faith integration occurs when students are given opportunities to practice spiritual disciplines actively. Teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar implement this principle by involving students in reflective storytelling, service-learning projects, and personal prayer commitments that link biblical teaching with real-life experiences. These pedagogical strategies embody the prayerful perseverance modeled by Isaac - connecting faith, thought, and action into an integrated formation of character. An important aspect emerging from the review is the interdependence between pedagogical competence and teacher spirituality. The literature consistently shows that pedagogical excellence in Christian education cannot be achieved without spiritual integrity. Shulman's (1987) concept of "pedagogical content knowledge" becomes particularly meaningful in the Christian context, where the content is the Word of God and the pedagogy must reflect divine truth. A teacher who lacks personal devotion may have strong instructional skills but fail to inspire spiritual transformation. Conversely, a prayerful teacher, even with limited resources, can create a spiritually nourishing learning environment. This paradox highlights that spiritual vitality, not technological sophistication or curriculum complexity, is the central determinant of effective Christian pedagogy. The review reveals that the local context of SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar adds significant depth to understanding the relationship between pedagogical competence and devotion. Located in North Sumatra, the school reflects a multicultural Christian environment influenced by Batak values such as *dalihan na tolu* (mutual respect) and *marsiadapari* (helping one another). When CRE teachers integrate the practice of

prayer within this cultural framework, students perceive spirituality as a communal rather than individual endeavor. This finding supports the contextual theology approach suggested by Bevans (2002), which argues that faith education must engage local culture to become truly transformative. In this sense, Isaac's act of meditative prayer in Genesis 24:63 mirrors the communal longing for God's guidance that shapes Batak Christian spirituality - one that values perseverance, relational harmony, and divine dependence. The results also suggest that prayer-centered pedagogy strengthens teacher-student relationships, an essential component of social-emotional learning. Studies by Koenig (2018) and Kim (2021) indicate that prayerful educators create a climate of trust where students feel seen, heard, and loved. In SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar, teachers who begin class with reflective prayers or invite students to pray for one another have observed deeper levels of openness and empathy. This aligns with the essence of Isaac's experience: his solitary prayer prepared him for relational fulfillment. Similarly, teachers who persevere in prayer prepare their classrooms for authentic human connection and spiritual encounter. Pedagogical competence, therefore, extends beyond technique into relational wisdom shaped by divine communion.

The discussion also engages with the challenges faced by CRE teachers in maintaining pedagogical devotion. Several studies note that in secular or pluralistic educational environments, teachers often experience tension between professional standards and faith expression. However, the synthesis of exegesis and pedagogy in Genesis 24:63 offers a theological resolution: perseverance in prayer is not about imposing beliefs but embodying patience, humility, and faithfulness in one's teaching vocation. As De Muynck (2023) points out, Christian pedagogy thrives not in confrontation but in quiet witness. This perspective empowers teachers to express their faith ethically and inclusively, making prayer not an exclusionary practice but a source of inner strength and compassion. The integrative analysis of literature and context leads to a crucial insight: the pedagogical competence of a Christian Religious Education teacher is measured not merely by intellectual or technical ability, but by the capacity to model perseverance in prayer as a lived curriculum. Genesis 24:63 becomes a timeless metaphor for educational devotion - the teacher who, like Isaac, goes out into the field of learning, waiting faithfully for God's presence to manifest in the lives of students. Through daily faithfulness, consistent reflection, and patient guidance, such teachers embody the very lesson they seek to teach. In doing so, they transform prayer from a subject into a way of being, and education from instruction into spiritual formation. The results of this review affirm that prayer-centered pedagogy represents the highest form of pedagogical competence in Christian Religious Education. Teachers who integrate prayerful perseverance into their teaching embody both the message and the method of faith, fostering students' holistic growth - intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. The local case of SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar demonstrates that even within public school systems, the values of devotion, patience, and reflective spirituality can be cultivated through authentic, prayer-informed teaching practices. This synthesis between biblical exegesis and pedagogical competence highlights a vital principle: the Christian teacher's power lies not in authority or eloquence but in steadfast prayer that shapes hearts toward God.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers cannot be separated from their personal devotion and perseverance in prayer. Through the exegetical reflection on Genesis 24:63, the narrative of Isaac's meditative prayer provides a theological framework for understanding the teacher's vocation as both a spiritual and educational calling. Isaac's act of going out to the field to meditate symbolizes the posture of a faithful educator - one who patiently waits upon God while nurturing others in their spiritual journey. The verse reveals that effective teaching begins not from mastery of content alone but from an inner communion with God that shapes how the teacher perceives, responds, and instructs within the classroom. The findings from the systematic literature review and contextual observations at SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar affirm that perseverance in prayer is a vital pedagogical foundation for holistic Christian education. Teachers who maintain a consistent devotional life demonstrate higher emotional balance, relational wisdom, and moral integrity. They transform the classroom into a sacred learning environment where students encounter not only knowledge but divine presence. Pedagogical competence, therefore, must be redefined as the integration of spiritual discipline and instructional expertise. The ability to teach with clarity, empathy, and purpose is deeply connected to the teacher's inner spiritual rhythm of prayer and reflection. This research also underscores that prayerful pedagogy cultivates character formation among students. When teachers model perseverance, humility, and dependence on God, students learn that faith is not confined to religious rituals but is lived out through daily commitment and reflection. Such pedagogy aligns with Jesus' teaching on abiding in God (John 15:4-5), where fruitfulness arises from remaining connected to the divine source. At SMA Negeri 1 Pematang Bandar, teachers who embody this principle have successfully guided students to internalize values of patience, compassion, and moral perseverance. Their pedagogical strength lies not in imposing religious behavior but in inspiring devotion through authentic example. The study highlights that the intersection of pedagogy and spirituality creates a powerful educational witness within a pluralistic context. Christian Religious Education teachers are called to demonstrate their faith not through coercion but through quiet steadfastness, compassion, and prayerful presence. The spiritual competence of the teacher becomes the invisible curriculum - shaping the moral atmosphere of the school and influencing the ethical consciousness of students. Prayer, in this sense, becomes both a pedagogical act and a formative process that transforms ordinary teaching into an encounter with divine wisdom. In light of Genesis 24:63, perseverance in prayer reflects the CRE teacher's trust in God's timing and guidance. Just as Isaac's devotion preceded a divine encounter, so too the teacher's consistent prayer prepares the ground for spiritual transformation among learners. Christian pedagogy rooted in prayer empowers teachers to respond to educational challenges with faith, creativity, and hope. It also provides resilience amid professional and moral pressures, reaffirming that teaching is a sacred vocation sustained by grace rather than performance. The pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education teachers is a holistic synthesis of faith, prayer, and instructional wisdom. Genesis 24:63 calls educators to embrace the discipline of perseverance in prayer as the wellspring of all effective teaching. When teachers live as intercessors - nurturing their students through faith-filled

guidance and reflective devotion - they embody the very truth they teach. Thus, the excellence of Christian pedagogy is not measured by academic achievement alone, but by the transformative power of prayer that renews hearts, shapes character, and points both teacher and student toward the living God.

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