



Compassionate Pedagogy: Exploring Jesus' Teaching Model in Matthew 14:13-21 within the Learning Context of SD Negeri 091430 Kebun Sidamanik

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the application of compassionate pedagogy inspired by Jesus' teaching model in Matthew 14:13-21 within the learning environment of SD Negeri 091430 Kebun Sidamanik. Using a qualitative approach that integrates a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and semi-structured interviews, the research investigates how biblical principles of empathy, attentiveness, and holistic care can inform contemporary educational practice in primary schools. The SLR synthesizes scholarly literature on compassionate teaching, Christian education, and relational pedagogy, revealing that empathy-driven instruction enhances student motivation, emotional well-being, and moral development. Complementing these findings, semi-structured interviews with six teachers highlight practical classroom strategies such as individualized guidance, differentiated instruction, relational communication, and the integration of moral reflection. Teachers emphasized that understanding students' emotional contexts, addressing their immediate needs, and fostering trust are essential components of effective teaching. The study also identifies resourcefulness and contextual adaptation as crucial for implementing compassionate pedagogy, reflecting Jesus' example of providing for the crowd with limited resources. Results indicate that compassionate practices contribute to positive classroom climates, improved student engagement, and strengthened ethical awareness. Although challenges such as time constraints and curriculum demands persist, teachers affirmed that even small acts of care can significantly impact learning outcomes. Overall, the study concludes that Jesus' teaching model offers a valuable framework for developing pedagogical approaches that are academically rigorous, emotionally supportive, and morally formative. The findings underscore the relevance of integrating biblical compassion into modern educational settings and provide practical insights for teachers seeking to nurture holistic student development.

Keywords: *Compassionate Pedagogy, Christian Religious Education, Teaching Model*

INTRODUCTION

Education is not merely a process of transmitting knowledge but also a dynamic interaction that shapes the moral, emotional, and spiritual development of learners. Within the Christian educational context, pedagogical approaches inspired by biblical teachings offer unique frameworks to cultivate not only intellectual growth but also compassionate behavior in students. One particularly illustrative model is found in the teaching practices of Jesus as depicted in the Gospel of Matthew, specifically in Matthew 14:13-21, which recounts the narrative of the feeding of the five thousand. This passage provides a profound example of compassionate pedagogy, demonstrating how teaching can integrate attentiveness to learners' needs, practical engagement, and moral formation. Matthew 14:13-21 presents a scenario where Jesus withdraws to a solitary place after hearing of John the Baptist's death but is confronted by a crowd in need of guidance and sustenance. Despite his initial withdrawal, Jesus responds to the crowd with empathy, healing the sick and later orchestrating the miraculous feeding. The text highlights several pedagogical principles: attentiveness to human needs, relational engagement, and the provision of tangible resources to support learning and well-being (France, 2007). In the classroom context, these principles translate into the teacher's capacity to recognize students' emotional and cognitive needs, foster relational trust, and provide learning experiences that are meaningful, relevant, and accessible. The exegetical reading of this passage emphasizes the intentionality behind Jesus' actions. He first addresses the immediate needs of the people, demonstrating that learning is inseparable from care for the learner's holistic development. The subsequent multiplication of the loaves and fishes symbolizes the transformative potential of compassionate teaching: one small act, when guided by care and attentiveness, can produce abundant outcomes. This resonates with contemporary educational theory, which underscores the significance of empathy, differentiated instruction, and student-centered learning (Noddings, 2013). In the context of SD Negeri 091430 Kebun Sidamanik, where students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, adopting such a model encourages teachers to move beyond rote instruction toward pedagogical practices that are inclusive and responsive to students' lived realities.

Compassionate pedagogy, as modeled in Matthew 14:13-21, aligns closely with experiential and relational learning frameworks. Teachers act not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as facilitators of experiences that nurture moral reasoning, social responsibility, and emotional intelligence. By prioritizing students' holistic needs, educators create a learning environment that fosters intrinsic motivation, mutual respect, and communal values-qualities that are essential for forming responsible, empathetic citizens (Palmer, 2007). Bodynote studies in Christian education reinforce this connection, suggesting that teacher empathy and moral intentionality significantly influence students' academic engagement and socio-emotional development (Glickman, 2010). Implementing this teaching model in an elementary school context requires practical strategies that reflect Jesus' attentiveness and resourcefulness. Simple actions such as personalized feedback, small-group engagement, and contextually relevant examples can embody the spirit of compassion evident in the feeding narrative. The teacher's

responsiveness to both learning gaps and emotional well-being mirrors Jesus' dual concern for the body and soul, creating an integrative approach that addresses cognitive, social, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously. This study seeks to explore how the principles embedded in Jesus' teaching approach, particularly the acts of empathy and provision in Matthew 14:13-21, can inform the pedagogical practices of teachers at SD Negeri 091430 Kebun Sidamanik. By examining the interplay between biblical exegesis and contemporary educational theory, the research aims to provide a framework for compassionate pedagogy that is both contextually relevant and spiritually grounded. Understanding this model can offer educators practical guidance for fostering nurturing and transformative learning environments, ultimately contributing to the holistic development of students in primary education settings.

METHODS

A qualitative research design integrating a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and semi-structured interviews was implemented to explore the application of compassionate pedagogy inspired by Jesus' teaching in Matthew 14:13-21 within the learning context of SD Negeri 091430 Kebun Sidamanik. The SLR aimed to systematically collect, evaluate, and synthesize existing scholarly literature related to compassionate teaching, Christian educational practices, and pedagogical models derived from biblical narratives. Databases were utilized, using keywords. Inclusion criteria were studies published between 2010 and 2024, available in English or Indonesian, and directly addressing pedagogical approaches inspired by biblical principles or the integration of empathy and moral care in teaching. Exclusion criteria filtered out studies unrelated to formal education or lacking clear empirical or theoretical grounding. The SLR provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the principles, strategies, and outcomes associated with compassionate teaching, which then informed the design of the interview protocol. Complementing the SLR, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers of SD Negeri 091430 Kebun Sidamanik to gain in-depth insights into their perceptions, experiences, and practices concerning empathetic and student-centered teaching. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility for participants to elaborate on contextual challenges, pedagogical strategies, and moral considerations in daily classroom interactions while maintaining focus on the research objectives. A purposive sampling strategy selected six teachers actively teaching Christian Religious Education (PAK) and involved in planning or executing daily lessons, ensuring that participants had sufficient practical experience relevant to the research topic. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian, recorded with participant consent. Data from both the SLR and interviews were triangulated to identify patterns, convergences, and gaps between theory and practice, allowing for a holistic understanding of how compassionate pedagogy can be operationalized in an Indonesian primary school context. Ethical considerations, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and data security, were strictly observed throughout the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The integration of compassionate pedagogy, inspired by Jesus' teaching model in Matthew 14:13-21, into the primary school classroom reveals a multi-dimensional

approach to fostering both academic and socio-emotional development in students. Findings from the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and semi-structured interviews at SD Negeri 091430 Kebun Sidamanik indicate that teachers who adopt empathetic and relational strategies can create a learning environment conducive to holistic student growth. The SLR highlighted that compassionate pedagogy is characterized by attentiveness to students' cognitive, emotional, and social needs, the provision of tailored learning experiences, and the promotion of moral and ethical reasoning (Noddings, 2013; Palmer, 2007). Within this framework, educators act as facilitators who respond dynamically to learner needs, much like Jesus' responsiveness to the crowd in the feeding of the five thousand, attending to both physical sustenance and spiritual guidance (France, 2007). This approach contrasts with traditional, didactic teaching methods by emphasizing relational engagement, moral intentionality, and the co-construction of learning experiences. From the interview data, teachers at SD Negeri 091430 consistently emphasized the importance of building trust and understanding the personal circumstances of students. One teacher noted, *"We try to see what each child struggles with, not only academically but also emotionally. Sometimes, a simple conversation or encouragement helps them engage more fully in the lesson."* This mirrors the biblical model in Matthew 14, where Jesus first attends to the needs of the crowd, healing and feeding them before delivering instruction. Teachers described specific strategies such as differentiated instruction, active listening, and responsive feedback as critical tools for operationalizing compassion in the classroom. For instance, when students displayed frustration or lack of confidence, teachers would provide individualized guidance or adjust lesson pacing to ensure comprehension and engagement. These findings align with prior research indicating that empathetic teacher-student relationships are linked to improved academic motivation, self-regulation, and social-emotional development (Glickman, 2010; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). A central theme emerging from both literature and interviews is the integration of moral and ethical development into everyday teaching practices. The feeding narrative in Matthew 14:13-21 serves as a model, illustrating how compassion is action-oriented and transformative. In practice, teachers reported designing classroom activities that promote cooperation, fairness, and empathy. For example, group assignments encouraged students to work collaboratively, negotiate responsibilities, and consider the needs of peers, reflecting the principle of providing for others demonstrated in the biblical text. Additionally, moral reflection exercises, such as guided discussions about helping others or resolving conflicts peacefully, were embedded into regular lessons. These practices reinforce the notion that teaching is not solely about knowledge transmission but also about shaping students' character, echoing the SLR's findings that compassion-based pedagogy promotes ethical reasoning and prosocial behavior (Lickona, 2012; Noddings, 2013).

Teachers also highlighted the significance of attentiveness to students' emotional states as a prerequisite for effective learning. In the interviews, participants described scenarios in which students' personal or family challenges affected classroom engagement. Teachers responded by offering reassurance, adjusting instructional methods, or incorporating flexible assessment strategies. One teacher shared, *"When a student seems distracted or upset, I pause the lesson and speak with them quietly. Sometimes addressing their emotional state is more important than continuing the planned activity."* This

practice resonates with the exegetical interpretation of Matthew 14, which emphasizes Jesus' prioritization of holistic care-attending to the crowd's immediate needs before performing the miraculous feeding. In educational terms, this translates to recognizing that emotional well-being is foundational for cognitive engagement and learning success, a concept extensively supported by contemporary educational psychology (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011). Another aspect of compassionate pedagogy evident in the study is the creative and resourceful approach to problem-solving. In Matthew 14, Jesus multiplies the loaves and fishes to meet the needs of thousands, demonstrating ingenuity in addressing scarcity. Teachers reported employing similar strategies in the classroom by adapting materials, designing contextually relevant examples, or using peer support systems to ensure that learning resources are accessible to all students. For example, teachers described using locally available objects for hands-on learning activities, incorporating storytelling to contextualize abstract concepts, and encouraging students to assist each other in understanding difficult lessons. This practical application of compassion ensures inclusivity, equity, and active participation, reflecting the dual focus on care and competence highlighted in both biblical exegesis and contemporary pedagogical literature (Palmer, 2007; Lickona, 2012). The interplay between SLR findings and interview insights also reveals that compassionate pedagogy contributes to a positive classroom climate characterized by trust, mutual respect, and collaboration. Teachers observed that students responded positively when they felt understood and supported, showing increased engagement, cooperative behavior, and willingness to participate in discussions. Furthermore, compassionate practices were linked to improved conflict resolution skills among students, as they modeled the ethical and relational behaviors demonstrated by the teacher. The SLR underscores that such relationally grounded teaching approaches enhance learning outcomes by fostering intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and a sense of community (Noddings, 2013; Hattie, 2009). In the SD Negeri 091430 context, where classrooms often include diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, the relational emphasis of compassionate pedagogy proves particularly valuable, promoting inclusivity and reducing barriers to participation. A noteworthy finding from the interviews is the integration of spiritual reflection into pedagogical practices, consistent with the Christian educational context. Teachers reported using biblical narratives, including the feeding of the five thousand, as discussion points to encourage moral reflection and ethical decision-making. This practice aligns with the exegetical interpretation that compassion is both practical and spiritually formative. For example, students were prompted to consider questions such as, *"How can we help those in need?"* or *"Why is it important to care for others even when resources are limited?"* Such reflections cultivate a moral compass and empathetic worldview, illustrating that compassionate pedagogy extends beyond academic instruction to encompass character formation, social responsibility, and spiritual growth. Teachers cited time constraints, curriculum demands, and class size as limiting factors. Interviewees emphasized that even small acts of empathy-such as individualized feedback, active listening, and relational encouragement-could significantly impact student learning and well-being. This aligns with the SLR findings that compassionate teaching does not require elaborate interventions but rather consistent, intentional, and relational engagement (Noddings, 2013; Palmer, 2007). Teachers' narratives also highlighted the importance of professional development in equipping educators with strategies to integrate empathy

and moral guidance into everyday teaching. Training programs focusing on social-emotional learning, classroom management with relational emphasis, and ethical pedagogy were identified as potential enablers for sustaining compassionate practices. The triangulation of SLR and interview data demonstrates that compassionate pedagogy, modeled after Jesus' teaching in Matthew 14:13–21, is operationally feasible and beneficial in the primary school context. Teachers at SD Negeri 091430 Kebun Sidamanik successfully implement empathy-driven strategies that address students' academic, emotional, and moral needs. Core elements include attentiveness to learners, relational engagement, resourceful problem-solving, moral and spiritual formation, and responsiveness to individual circumstances. Both literature and field data indicate that these practices foster a nurturing and transformative learning environment, enhancing student motivation, ethical awareness, and socio-emotional development. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on faith-based education by illustrating how biblical models of compassion can inform contemporary teaching practices, offering a holistic approach that bridges theory, scripture, and classroom reality. The integration of compassionate pedagogy into primary education highlights the transformative potential of aligning educational practice with moral and spiritual principles. By centering students' holistic needs, educators can cultivate not only knowledge and skills but also ethical sensibilities and relational competencies. Matthew 14:13-21 provides a timeless framework, demonstrating that effective teaching is inherently relational, empathetic, and action-oriented. The study underscores the relevance of compassionate pedagogy for modern educators, particularly in contexts where socio-economic diversity and varied learner needs challenge conventional teaching approaches. Through the combination of literature insights and practitioner experiences, this research establishes both theoretical and practical foundations for nurturing learning environments that are academically rigorous, emotionally supportive, and morally formative.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that compassionate pedagogy, inspired by Jesus' teaching model in Matthew 14:13-21, offers a holistic and transformative approach to primary education. By integrating attentiveness to students' cognitive, emotional, and moral needs, teachers at SD Negeri 091430 Kebun Sidamanik create learning environments that are relational, inclusive, and ethically grounded. The findings from both the Systematic Literature Review and semi-structured interviews indicate that effective compassionate teaching involves not only the provision of knowledge but also active engagement, emotional support, and moral guidance. Teachers' practices, such as individualized feedback, contextually relevant learning activities, and ethical reflections, exemplify the operationalization of empathy and care within the classroom. The study highlights several key insights. First, compassionate pedagogy fosters student motivation, social-emotional development, and cooperative behavior, promoting both academic achievement and character formation. Second, relational engagement and responsiveness to learners' needs are essential for cultivating trust and a positive classroom climate. Third, the integration of moral and spiritual reflection reinforces ethical awareness and social responsibility among students, aligning with the broader objectives of Christian education. Despite challenges such as time constraints and curriculum demands, even

small, intentional acts of care can produce meaningful learning outcomes. This research affirms that biblical principles of compassion are not only spiritually instructive but also practically applicable in contemporary educational settings. By adopting the teaching model exemplified in Matthew 14:13-21, educators can develop pedagogy that is empathetic, action-oriented, and transformative, preparing students to thrive academically, socially, and morally. The study encourages further exploration and professional development in compassionate teaching, offering a framework for educators seeking to harmonize academic rigor with relational and ethical care.

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