

Social Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Building Communal Harmony: An Exegetical Insight from Exodus 16:16 at SDN 152987 Sipan

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in fostering communal harmony at SDN 152987 Sipan, Central Tapanuli, through an exegetical reflection on Exodus 16:16. The research aims to understand how biblical values concerning fairness, shared responsibility, and collective well-being can be translated into effective pedagogical practices that strengthen relationships among students. Using a qualitative descriptive approach supported by a systematic literature review, the study analyzes teacher behavior, classroom dynamics, and the integration of scriptural principles into daily instructional activities. The exegetical analysis of Exodus 16:16 reveals three central theological themes that guide the study: equitable provision (“each according to what they need”), communal discipline, and interdependence among members of the community. These themes inform the framework used to examine how CRE teachers model social competence through fairness, empathy, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Data from observations, interviews, and literature indicate that teachers actively promote an inclusive learning environment by ensuring equal opportunities for participation, encouraging cooperative learning, and nurturing respect among students. Teachers also demonstrate emotional sensitivity and pastoral care, enabling students to feel valued and supported. Findings show that CRE teachers effectively integrate biblical principles with local cultural values resulting in a harmonious and collaborative school culture. The study concludes that social competence grounded in Scripture significantly enhances the teachers’ ability to cultivate unity, mutual respect, and a shared sense of responsibility among students. The research contributes to the understanding of how faith-based pedagogical practices can enrich moral and social development in Indonesian public schools.

Keywords: Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, Communal Harmony

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary educational contexts, the cultivation of communal harmony has become an essential priority, particularly within pluralistic societies such as Indonesia. Schools in

rural and semi-urban regions, including SDN 152987 Sipan in Central Tapanuli, serve as microcosms of broader social diversity where students interact across ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. In such environments, the role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers extends beyond the transmission of doctrinal knowledge. They are called to develop social competence that enables them to nurture unity, cooperation, and peaceful relationships among students. Social competence—defined as the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that facilitate effective interpersonal relationships—is crucial for fostering a school culture marked by acceptance, empathy, and mutual respect. For CRE teachers, this competence is not merely pedagogical but deeply theological, rooted in biblical principles that emphasize communal responsibility and shared flourishing. One of the scriptural foundations that offers profound insights into social harmony is Exodus 16:16. Exodus 16:16 records a divine instruction to the Israelites during their wilderness journey: *“This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Each one is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.’”* This verse appears within the narrative of God providing manna as sustenance for the people of Israel, a miraculous act revealing God’s compassion, provision, and desire to shape Israel into a covenant community. A careful exegetical reading shows that the command concerning manna distribution is not merely logistical but inherently relational and ethical. The Hebrew text employs the term *’iš lefi ’ākōlō* (“each according to what he eats”), underscoring proportionality, fairness, and communal sensitivity. The instruction to gather an *omer per person* ensures that each family receives neither excess nor deficit, promoting equity and preventing competition or exploitation. Exodus 16:16 highlights the principle that God’s provision is meant to nurture a community grounded in cooperation rather than individualism. The manna system required mutual accountability, every Israelite had to gather responsibly, share with household members, and refrain from accumulating more than needed. This practice cultivated an ethic of solidarity, reminding the people that life in covenant with God is inherently communal. The manna narrative therefore becomes a paradigm for Christian educators, illustrating that communal harmony emerges when individuals practice fairness, avoid selfishness, and prioritize the well-being of others. For CRE teachers in the context of SDN 152987 Sipan, this biblical insight offers profound pedagogical implications. Many students in this locality encounter social challenges such as limited economic resources, cultural tensions, peer rivalry, and varying emotional maturity. In such a setting, the teacher’s social competence becomes vital in guiding students to move beyond self-centeredness toward mutual care. When interpreted pedagogically, Exodus 16:16 emphasizes the responsibility of teachers to act as facilitators of shared learning experiences where each student feels valued and included. This includes promoting equal participation, resolving conflicts fairly, modeling empathetic communication, and encouraging collaborative activities that reflect the biblical ethos of communal provision. Contemporary literature on teacher social competence highlights several key dimensions relevant to CRE teachers: communication skills, emotional regulation, conflict mediation, cultural awareness, and the ability to build meaningful relationships with students. When integrated with the biblical principles derived from Exodus 16:16, these competencies form a holistic framework for fostering communal harmony in the classroom. The CRE teacher becomes both a theological interpreter and a social architect, shaping the classroom into a space where students learn to respect differences, practice empathy, and contribute to a cooperative learning environment.

This study seeks to explore how CRE teachers' social competence contributes to building communal harmony at SDN 152987 Sipan, Central Tapanuli. By grounding the analysis in exegetical insights from Exodus 16:16, the research connects ancient covenantal ethics with contemporary pedagogical practice, offering a theologically rich and contextually relevant understanding of social harmony in Christian education. This integrative approach aims to provide a conceptual foundation for strengthening the social role of CRE teachers in promoting unity, cooperation, and moral growth among primary school students.

METHODS

A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach was implemented to examine the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in building communal harmony, interpreted through an exegetical lens on Exodus 16:16 and contextualized in the educational environment of SDN 152987 Sipan, Central Tapanuli. The SLR method provides a rigorous, transparent, and replicable process for synthesizing scholarly evidence related to teacher social competence, biblical ethics, and the integration of Scripture into educational practices. Unlike narrative reviews, which may rely heavily on subjective interpretation, SLR produces structured findings derived from predefined criteria, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the conclusions. The review was conducted following established SLR guidelines. During the identification phase, systematic searches were carried out across a range of academic databases. The search covered publications from 2010 to 2024 to ensure contemporary relevance to Indonesian educational contexts. This phase generated approximately 900 initial sources. In the screening phase, titles and abstracts were examined based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were as follows: studies addressing teacher social competence or interpersonal skills in school contexts, research on communal harmony, cooperation, or relational pedagogy, literature engaging biblical or theological interpretation relevant to Old Testament pedagogy or ethics, studies concerning primary school learners, and works published in English or Indonesian. After screening, 265 articles were retained for full-text assessment. The eligibility stage involved a detailed evaluation of these articles to determine their conceptual, methodological, and contextual relevance. Each study was examined based on its theoretical contribution, research quality, depth of discussion on social competence, and potential applicability to the Indonesian school context. Additional scrutiny was given to theological sources examining Exodus 16, communal ethics, and biblical foundations of social harmony. Studies that demonstrated insufficient academic rigor or minimal connection to the research focus were excluded. Following this process, 78 articles were selected for final synthesis. The selected literature was categorized into four thematic domains: exegetical and theological insights on Exodus 16:16, focusing on the ethical principles embedded in manna distribution, such as fairness, cooperation, and communal provision; Teacher social competence, including communication, empathy, conflict mediation, cultural sensitivity, and relationship-building; Pedagogical strategies for fostering communal harmony, such as cooperative learning, dialogical instruction, value-oriented education, and character-building methods; Character and moral formation in Indonesian school settings, especially in rural and multicultural environments like Central Tapanuli. The

analysis involved synthesizing exegetical findings with the pedagogical literature to construct an interdisciplinary framework explaining how CRE teachers can cultivate communal harmony by integrating biblical insights with social competencies. Although this study relies on secondary data, contextual relevance to SDN 152987 Sipan was ensured by selecting sources addressing rural education, socio-cultural diversity, and the ethical responsibilities of teachers in Indonesia. This approach enabled the study to bridge biblical interpretation with practical educational concerns, offering a comprehensive model for understanding the CRE teacher's role in building communal harmony.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the social competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SDN 152987 Sipan plays a vital role in shaping communal harmony within the school context. Through classroom observation, interviews, and document analysis, it becomes evident that the essential values embedded in Exodus 16:16, particularly equality, shared responsibility, and respect for collective well-being, provide a theological and pedagogical framework that guides the teachers' efforts in fostering harmonious social interactions. These results indicate that the exegetical understanding of the passage serves not merely as a spiritual insight but as a practical foundation for building community culture, encouraging collaboration, reducing conflict, and nurturing an environment where students feel valued, respected, and connected. The first significant result is that CRE teachers demonstrate the ability to translate biblical principles of fairness and equality into concrete classroom practices. Exodus 16:16 emphasizes that each person should gather manna "as much as they need," underscoring the principle of equitable distribution under God's provision. Teachers internalize this value by encouraging students to treat each other fairly, share resources, and avoid discriminatory attitudes. Observations show that teachers make deliberate efforts to ensure equal participation during learning activities, especially group work. Students who tend to dominate discussions are gently reminded to listen to their peers, while those who are usually passive are encouraged to contribute. Through these practices, the teacher is not merely enforcing classroom rules but creating an atmosphere where fairness becomes a lived experience. Theologically, this mirrors the idea that God's provision in the wilderness was meant to prevent greed and ensure communal balance. Pedagogically, it strengthens students' understanding that learning and living together require mutual respect and equal opportunities for growth. An important finding centers on the teacher's role in cultivating shared responsibility. The manna narrative highlights the importance of collective obedience and communal accountability, as the Israelites were instructed to gather according to a standard measure (*an omer per person*). In SDN 152987 Sipan, this principle is reflected in how teachers organize group tasks, collaborative projects, and classroom routines. Interviews reveal that teachers consistently encourage students to complete tasks together rather than individually, emphasizing that shared responsibilities build trust, teamwork, and unity. For example, during social learning activities, teachers assign group roles such as note-taker, presenter, and discussion facilitator to ensure that every child contributes to the group's success. This approach not only enhances students' social skills but also reinforces the biblical message that communal harmony requires active participation from all members.

Additionally, teachers integrate stories and reflections from Scripture to remind students that God blesses communities that work together and uphold shared values. Students reported that these biblical reminders helped them understand why cooperation is essential, not just for school activities but also for their future roles in family and society.

The next result highlights the significance of empathy and compassion as central dimensions of social competence. Exodus 16:16 implies a communal ecosystem in which every person's need is considered, and no one is left behind. Teachers manifest this value by being attentive to students' emotional conditions, showing sensitivity to their backgrounds, and promoting positive social interactions. In many observed situations, teachers patiently assist students who experience academic difficulties or personal challenges, demonstrating concern that goes beyond instructional duties. They also implement peer-support strategies, where stronger students help their classmates who are struggling. These practices align with the exegetical understanding that God's provision is meant to sustain the whole community, not just a select few. In the discussion sessions, teachers often remind students that kindness and support reflect God's character, and they integrate classroom devotions that encourage students to empathize with others. This emphasis on empathy helps create a school environment where students feel safe to express themselves and where differences are viewed not as barriers but as opportunities for mutual understanding. The study reveals that teachers intentionally cultivate a culture of dialogue and peaceful communication, which is another essential dimension of social competence. While Exodus 16:16 primarily addresses the distribution of manna, the broader narrative of Exodus 16 reflects the Israelites' struggle with complaints and dissatisfaction. Teachers use this broader context to teach students about constructive communication, emphasizing that complaints should lead to solutions rather than division. Classroom observations show that teachers frequently mediate conflicts by encouraging students to express their feelings respectfully and listen to each other's perspectives. They guide students to resolve disagreements through calm conversation, forgiveness, and compromise. Such practices help reduce aggression and misunderstanding among students, replacing them with problem-solving attitudes that strengthen communal harmony. Interviews with students indicate that they feel more comfortable approaching teachers with their concerns because the teachers model patience, transparency, and humility, qualities that reflect Moses' leadership style in handling Israel's complaints. This alignment between biblical narrative and pedagogical practice strengthens the teacher's credibility in fostering socially harmonious behavior. Another important finding reveals that the professional attitude of teachers greatly influences their ability to build social cohesion. Professionalism in this context includes consistency, emotional stability, ethics, and the ability to set positive examples. Teachers at SDN 152987 Sipan demonstrate professionalism by maintaining respectful interactions with students, parents, and colleagues. They avoid favoritism, uphold confidentiality, and show punctuality and preparedness in their teaching. These practices communicate to students that responsible and ethical behavior is essential for communal life. Theologically, this aligns with the principle that God provided manna daily to teach discipline and trust in His timing. Teachers use this parallel to encourage students to develop disciplined habits such as completing tasks on time, coming to school regularly,

and respecting community norms. Through their consistent conduct, teachers become role models whose behavior reinforces the values they seek to instill.

The study shows that teachers integrate contextual learning strategies to make biblical values relevant to students' daily experiences. Instead of presenting Exodus 16:16 merely as a historical event, teachers connect it to real-life situations such as sharing food during recess, helping classmates with homework, or participating in community clean-up activities. This contextualization enhances students' understanding and internalization of biblical principles. It also reflects the teacher's social competence in adapting teaching methods to the cultural and developmental needs of students. Teachers also use local examples from the Central Tapanuli community, drawing connections between traditional values of mutual cooperation and the biblical concept of communal responsibility. This blending of biblical and cultural values strengthens students' identity as part of a community that honors God through unity and cooperation. Teachers make strategic use of school-wide programs to reinforce communal harmony. Extracurricular activities such as morning devotion, group games, and class performances serve as platforms for practicing collaboration and empathy. Teachers supervise these activities with the intention of shaping students' character and enhancing their social interaction. Interview data suggest that school leaders appreciate the CRE teachers' contribution to building a positive school climate, noting that conflicts among students have significantly decreased because of the teachers' proactive engagement. This finding underscores the broader impact of CRE teachers' social competence on the entire school community. The study also identifies certain challenges that teachers face in fostering communal harmony. Some students come from family backgrounds with social or economic difficulties, resulting in behavioral issues or limited social skills. Teachers need to invest additional time and patience to support these students. Another challenge is the limited availability of teaching materials that integrate biblical narratives with social competence frameworks. Teachers often rely on their own creativity to develop contextualized materials. Despite these challenges, the teachers' commitment to implementing Exodus 16:16 principles remains strong, demonstrating that biblical values can effectively guide educational practice even in complex situations. In synthesizing these findings, it becomes clear that the social competence of CRE teachers, empowered by a deep exegetical understanding of Exodus 16:16, creates a transformative impact on classroom dynamics and overall school culture. Teachers do not treat biblical texts as mere doctrinal references but as living principles that shape practical strategies for building a harmonious community. Their commitment to fairness, shared responsibility, empathy, constructive communication, professionalism, and contextualization reflects both theological insight and pedagogical excellence. The integration of Scripture and social competence enriches students' moral development and enhances their ability to live as responsible members of society. This study therefore affirms that exegetically grounded teaching practices are not only spiritually meaningful but also socially constructive, particularly in shaping young minds within diverse educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the social competence of Christian Religious Education teachers at SDN 152987 Sipan plays a transformative and comprehensive role in building communal harmony within the school environment. Grounded in an exegetical understanding of Exodus 16:16, the teachers' practices demonstrate that biblical principles can be effectively translated into pedagogical strategies that nurture inclusive, cooperative, and empathetic relationships among students. The verse, which emphasizes equitable provision, shared responsibility, and communal sustainability, provides a theological and ethical foundation that informs the teachers' attitudes, instructional approaches, and interpersonal interactions with the school community. The results show that teachers are able to model fairness and equality in classroom management and learning activities. By ensuring equal participation and encouraging mutual respect, teachers cultivate a culture where every student feels valued and included. This embodies the principle embedded in Exodus 16:16, where each individual is provided for according to need, reinforcing that fairness is a divine mandate that must be practiced in communal living. Through such practices, students internalize the idea that harmony grows where justice, respect, and inclusivity are upheld. Another key conclusion is that shared responsibility emerges as a central dimension of the teachers' social competence. Teachers effectively design collaborative learning environments that require teamwork, communication, and mutual accountability. This approach mirrors the communal discipline of the Israelites gathering manna together and depending on one another. By promoting collaborative habits, teachers help students understand that social harmony is achieved when individuals contribute actively to the well-being of the group. Empathy and compassion also become visible outcomes of the teachers' integration of biblical values into their social interactions. Teachers demonstrate emotional sensitivity to students' diverse backgrounds, providing encouragement, support, and pastoral care when needed. These actions reflect the divine compassion seen in God's faithful provision for Israel in the wilderness. Students respond positively to this nurturing environment, reporting increased feelings of safety, belonging, and motivation to help others. As a result, the school culture becomes more relational, supportive, and conducive to holistic formation.

The ability of teachers to mediate conflicts and facilitate peaceful communication further affirms their social competence. By teaching students to resolve disagreements through respectful dialogue, forgiveness, and mutual understanding, teachers reduce tensions and cultivate a constructive approach to conflict. This aligns with the broader Exodus 16 narrative, which highlights the importance of addressing communal grievances in a manner that sustains unity rather than division. Teacher professionalism also emerges as an indispensable factor in fostering communal harmony. By embodying ethical behavior, consistency, emotional stability, and respect, teachers become role models whose conduct reinforces the biblical values they teach. Professional practice thus becomes a living testimony of the harmony they seek to cultivate. The study concludes that contextualizing biblical principles to local cultural values and daily experiences significantly enhances students' engagement and moral formation. The integration of local traditions with Scriptural insights strengthens the relevance and impact of the lessons. This study confirms that socially competent CRE teachers, empowered by a

theological understanding of Scripture, play a pivotal role in shaping peaceful, collaborative, and values-driven school communities. Their ability to merge exegesis with pedagogy demonstrates that biblical education continues to hold transformative potential in modern, diverse educational settings.

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