

Pedagogical Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Instructing Students about God's Providence: An Exegetical Study of Genesis 47:23-24 at SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in instructing students about God's providence, using Genesis 47:23-24 as the theological framework and SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua as the locus of research. The passage, which highlights God's abundant provision to the Israelites through Joseph and the corresponding human responsibility to cultivate and steward what is given, serves as a foundational text for understanding how divine providence can be meaningfully taught within a contemporary educational context. Employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) combined with exegetical analysis, this study analyzes biblical scholarship on providence, pedagogical approaches in CRE, and current educational practices in Indonesian vocational schools. The results show that pedagogical competence in CRE involves more than the transmission of doctrinal content; it requires the integration of theological insight, contextual understanding, and student-centered instructional strategies. Teachers who skillfully interpret Scripture and relate it to students' lived experiences are able to cultivate deeper spiritual awareness and moral responsibility. At SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua, the CRE teacher demonstrates strong pedagogical expertise by contextualizing the Genesis narrative, employing participatory learning methods, and fostering relational engagement that supports character formation. Students respond positively, showing increased understanding of God's care, gratitude, diligence, and stewardship. This study concludes that pedagogical competence in CRE is holistic, combining exegetical accuracy, contextual relevance, and relational pedagogy. Strengthening these competencies is essential for enabling teachers to guide students toward a mature understanding of divine providence and to cultivate values that shape responsible, spiritually grounded lives.

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

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary Christian religious education, pedagogical competence is increasingly recognized as a decisive factor in shaping students' spiritual understanding and moral development. Within the Indonesian educational context, particularly in vocational schools such as SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua, Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers face complex responsibilities as they guide students to interpret life's realities through the lens of biblical truth. One of the central theological themes that remains highly relevant for students navigating economic, social, and emotional challenges is the doctrine of God's providence. In vocational environments where students prepare for real-world demands, including employment uncertainty, family responsibilities, and rapid socio-cultural transitions, understanding God's ongoing care becomes deeply formative. Therefore, the pedagogical competence of CRE teachers in explaining God's providence is not merely instructional; it is pastoral, transformative, and identity-forming. Genesis 47:23-24 serves as a significant biblical passage for exploring divine providence within an educational framework. Situated in the narrative of Joseph's administration during a severe famine, the passage records Joseph's words to the people of Egypt: *"Now that I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh, here is seed for you so you can plant the ground. But when the crop comes in, give a fifth of it to Pharaoh. The other four-fifths you may keep as seed for the fields and food for yourselves and your households and your children."* This text highlights divine providence expressed through human agency, resource management, and shared responsibility. Theologically, the passage reveals that God's care often operates through structured systems, wise leadership, and cooperative action. Joseph, acting under divine guidance, becomes an agent of provision; seed is given, land remains usable, and sustainable life becomes possible despite crisis. In exegetical terms, the verb *nāṭan* ("to give") and the imagery of "seed" symbolize God's sustaining grace, while the economic structure (a fifth for Pharaoh, four-fifths for survival and future planting) reflects a divinely guided model of stewardship rather than exploitation. Thus, Genesis 47:23-24 provides a rich theological foundation for teaching students that God's providence is not passive or magical but practical, relational, and intertwined with human responsibility. For students at SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua-many of whom come from agricultural, low-income, or economically fluctuating family contexts-the message of God's providence holds substantial relevance. Their lived experiences often include concerns about financial stability, employment prospects, and the unpredictability of modern social realities. In such contexts, CRE teachers must possess strong pedagogical competence to help students internalize that divine providence includes wisdom, diligence, ethical decision-making, and responsible stewardship. Effective pedagogical competence requires the integration of biblical exegesis, contextual application, and student-centered learning approaches. Teachers must be able not only to interpret Scripture accurately but also to translate theological truths into meaningful life guidance that resonates with students' vocational identities. Previous studies emphasize that pedagogical competence in religious education involves mastery of instructional methods, understanding of student characteristics, competence in curriculum implementation, and the ability to connect biblical principles with real-life situations. However, limited attention has been given to how pedagogical competence shapes students' understanding of abstract theological concepts such as God's

providence, especially in vocational schools where students face unique developmental and socio-economic challenges. This research fills that gap by showing how Genesis 47:23–24 offers a biblically grounded pedagogical framework through which CRE teachers can guide students to appreciate God’s active care in both personal and communal life. The locus of this study, SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua in South Nias, provides a compelling context due to its cultural richness, close-knit community structures, and prevailing socio-economic realities. Students often negotiate between traditional values, family obligations, and aspirations for professional growth. CRE teachers, therefore, function not only as instructors but also as mentors who equip students to understand that God’s providence empowers them to grow, act responsibly, and contribute meaningfully to society. By examining how pedagogical competence supports the communication of God’s providence, this study seeks to demonstrate how CRE teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua can cultivate resilient, spiritually grounded, and ethically responsible young people prepared to face changing societal dynamics.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design that combined exegetical analysis of Genesis 47:23–24 with field-based inquiry to understand the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education teachers in instructing students about God’s providence at SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of teachers’ instructional reasoning, interpretive frameworks, and classroom practices within their natural context. The study began with an exegetical investigation using the historical–grammatical method to uncover the theological and educational significance of Genesis 47:23–24. This exegetical stage involved several steps: a close reading of the Hebrew text to identify key lexical elements related to provision, stewardship, and responsibility; situating the passage within the historical context of Joseph’s administration in Egypt during a time of famine; and analyzing the literary structure of Genesis 47 to understand how the narrative communicates themes of divine care mediated through human agency. The findings from this exegetical process were used as analytical lenses for understanding the pedagogical practices of the CRE teacher. The field component of the study was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua, a vocational school in South Nias characterized by diverse student backgrounds and a strong emphasis on character formation. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure the involvement of individuals who directly engage with the instructional process. These participants included one CRE teacher as the primary informant, ten students from the CRE class who shared their learning experiences, and one school leader who provided institutional perspectives regarding curriculum and religious education. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Interviews explored the teacher’s biblical understanding of God’s providence, their pedagogical approaches, and contextual challenges faced in teaching abstract theological concepts to vocational students. Students were interviewed to assess their comprehension and the extent to which the lessons helped them connect biblical teachings with real-life situations. Classroom observations were conducted over three CRE sessions to document instructional methods, teacher-student interactions, and the use of narrative strategies in explaining providence. Documents such as lesson plans,

teaching materials, and student worksheets were examined to identify how biblical themes were incorporated into curricular planning and learning assessment. Data analysis followed a thematic approach consisting of familiarization with all collected data, initial coding, categorization of patterns, and the development of overarching themes related to pedagogical clarity, contextualization, student engagement, and alignment between exegesis and teaching practice. The exegetical findings were integrated into the analysis to evaluate whether the teacher applied sound biblical interpretation in a pedagogically meaningful way. Trustworthiness of the study was ensured through triangulation of data sources, member checking with the teacher to verify interpretations, and the use of thick description to present a clear contextual understanding. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring voluntary participation, safeguarding confidentiality through pseudonyms, and securing permission from the school administration. Through this combined exegetical and field-based method, the research aimed to present a comprehensive understanding of how CRE teachers translate biblical teachings on God's providence into effective pedagogical practice.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal multilayered insights into how the Christian Religious Education teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua exercises pedagogical competence in teaching students about God's providence through the exegetical framework of Genesis 47:23-24. The results demonstrate that the teacher's instructional practices are shaped by a combination of biblical understanding, contextual challenges within vocational education, and intentional strategies to connect Scripture with daily life realities faced by students. Interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis consistently show that the teacher approaches the theme of divine providence with a holistic pedagogy that integrates exegetical fidelity, moral formation, and relevant life applications. The first major finding concerns the teacher's biblical understanding, which is deeply influenced by the structure and message of Genesis 47:23-24. Exegetical analysis reveals that Joseph's instruction to the Egyptians, to receive seed, cultivate the land, and give a portion back—illustrates a profound interplay between divine providence and human responsibility. The teacher internalizes this structure and interprets God's providence not as passive divine intervention but as God's continuous care that requires human participation through diligence, stewardship, and gratitude. This understanding forms the backbone of the teacher's lesson plans, which explicitly outline learning outcomes related to recognizing God's sustaining work and responding appropriately. In classroom discussions, the teacher frequently emphasizes that divine provision does not eliminate the need for effort; instead, it dignifies human labor as a means through which God nurtures growth. Observation notes reveal that the teacher consistently uses questions such as *"How does God provide through your family?"* or *"What responsibility do we have when God entrusts us with resources?"* These questions mirror Joseph's challenge to the Egyptians and encourage students to reflect on providence not as a distant theological concept but as an active component of their lived experience. A second finding concerns the teacher's strategy of contextualizing biblical teaching within the socio-economic realities of vocational students. Most students at SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua come from agrarian or low-income households, and many are involved in farming, fishing, or small-scale family businesses. The teacher effectively connects Genesis 47:23–24 with students'

everyday life by drawing analogies between Joseph's leadership during famine and the challenges families face with limited resources. The teacher explains that just as Joseph facilitated survival through careful management, God equips families with the wisdom and opportunities needed to sustain themselves. This contextualization helps students better understand providence in practical terms such as budgeting, work ethic, and gratitude for small blessings. Interview data from students show that many of them begin to perceive divine involvement in simple aspects of life, such as harvest cycles, parental efforts, or community cooperation, after the lessons. The teacher's pedagogical competence is demonstrated not only through the clarity of explanations but also through the ability to translate ancient biblical principles into meaningful contemporary lessons. A third significant result relates to the teacher's use of narrative and participatory teaching methods. Observations show that the teacher regularly employs storytelling, group reflection, and scenario-based learning to help students internalize the concept of providence. For instance, the teacher retells the Genesis narrative using visual aids and dramatization to engage students' imagination. After presenting the biblical story, the teacher invites students to create short reflective stories about situations where they felt God's help or experienced unexpected solutions to problems. This approach aligns with constructivist pedagogy, which holds that students learn best when they can connect new knowledge to personal experiences. The teacher's ability to integrate narrative learning with theological instruction reflects a mature pedagogical competence that promotes deeper comprehension. Students also describe these activities as meaningful and enjoyable, noting that the reflective storytelling helps them articulate gratitude and recognize moments of divine care. Through these methods, the teacher bridges biblical exegesis and student experience, making the lesson both cognitively and affectively impactful.

The other finding concerns the teacher's emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between divine providence and human response. Genesis 47:24 underscores a pattern: God provides seed (divine providence), humans cultivate the land (human agency), and a portion is returned (gratitude and responsibility). The teacher uses this structure to teach students three ethical principles: diligence, stewardship, and gratitude. Through direct instruction and classroom discussions, the teacher highlights that students must cultivate their talents, develop discipline, and respect the resources entrusted to them. Observations reveal how the teacher uses concrete examples, such as maintaining school facilities, being truthful about assignments, and appreciating parental support, to reinforce stewardship and gratitude. These everyday applications illustrate the teacher's ability to transform biblical content into actionable moral guidance. Students respond positively to this emphasis, with many indicating that they feel more responsible in completing school work or assisting with household tasks after understanding that diligence is a form of honoring God's provision. This demonstrates that the teacher succeeds in linking theological concepts with character formation, an essential goal of Christian Religious Education. Next finding emerges from the teacher's handling of vocational school challenges, including low academic motivation, varying levels of biblical literacy, and practical learning preferences among students. The teacher addresses these challenges by employing differentiated teaching strategies. For students with low reading comprehension, the teacher summarizes key texts and uses visual aids to clarify the

narrative. For students with limited biblical background, the teacher offers simplified explanations of theological terms such as “providence,” “stewardship,” and “divine care.” For highly practical learners, the teacher introduces hands-on activities such as group farming projects or community service tasks, which serve as real-life illustrations of cooperating with God’s provision. These differentiated strategies demonstrate that the teacher’s pedagogical competence includes sensitivity to learners’ needs and the ability to tailor instruction accordingly. Moreover, the teacher conducts periodic reflections at the end of each lesson, encouraging students to identify practical steps they can take in response to God’s care, such as improving time management or helping peers. This reflective component supports metacognitive development and strengthens the internalization of biblical principles.

Another important finding relates to lesson planning and assessment practices. Document analysis of lesson plans reveals a consistent structure that integrates biblical objectives, competency-based curriculum standards, and character development goals. The teacher outlines clear indicators of understanding, such as students’ ability to explain the meaning of providence, analyze Joseph’s actions, and apply stewardship principles in daily life. Assessment practices include oral questioning, reflective writing, and informal performance tasks. The teacher uses these assessments not merely to measure knowledge but to deepen understanding by encouraging students to articulate their own interpretations. Observation data show that the teacher provides constructive feedback aimed at guiding students to think critically about their responsibilities in response to God’s provision. This reflects a high level of pedagogical competence, as effective assessment practices are integral to meaningful learning. The study also uncovers the teacher’s reliance on relational pedagogy as an essential component of teaching providence. Interviews with students indicate that the teacher fosters a classroom atmosphere of trust, encouragement, and openness. Students feel comfortable sharing personal experiences of struggle or gratitude, which enriches the learning process. This relational approach corresponds with the theological content, as the theme of providence is deeply connected to relational trust in God. The teacher models this trust by leading prayers, expressing gratitude for small blessings, and demonstrating empathy toward students’ challenges. This modeling reinforces the message that God’s providence is not only a biblical concept but also a lived reality experienced through relationships and care within the school environment. The relational climate contributes to students’ willingness to engage with the material and enhances the moral formation aspect of CRE. The integration of exegetical findings with pedagogical practices forms a central theme in the discussion. The study suggests that the teacher’s pedagogical competence is strengthened by a solid theological foundation derived from Genesis 47:23-24. The exegetical insight that God’s providence operates through structured processes of giving, receiving, cultivating, and returning helps the teacher conceptualize lessons in a way that highlights both divine initiative and human participation. This integrated approach prevents the lesson from drifting into moralism, where human effort is overemphasized, or passive spirituality, where divine action is viewed as automatic. Instead, the teacher presents a balanced theology that encourages students to see themselves as active participants in God’s ongoing work of caring for creation and sustaining life. This theological, pedagogical integration is a hallmark of advanced CRE teaching competence.

The findings indicate that the teacher's practice aligns with contemporary educational theories that emphasize contextual learning, student-centered pedagogy, and character formation. The use of narrative, reflection, and real-life analogies corresponds with constructivist approaches, while the focus on responsibility, gratitude, and stewardship aligns with value-based education frameworks. The ability to merge biblical exegesis with these pedagogical models demonstrates that the teacher not only understands Scripture but also possesses the pedagogical creativity needed to make theological content accessible to diverse learners. This fusion of theology and pedagogy positions the teacher as both an educator and a spiritual guide. The study's discussion also highlights several broader implications. First, vocational students benefit significantly when CRE integrates practical, life-oriented applications of biblical teachings. Genesis 47:23-24 provides a narrative that resonates with students from agrarian or economically vulnerable backgrounds, making the theme of providence relatable. Second, pedagogical competence in CRE requires more than mastery of content; it requires the ability to contextualize, communicate clearly, engage students emotionally and intellectually, and model faith in tangible ways. Third, CRE teachers play a crucial role in helping students understand divine providence as a source of hope, resilience, and ethical responsibility, especially in socio-economic contexts where uncertainty and hardship are common. The teacher's work at SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua illustrates how thoughtful pedagogy can transform biblical knowledge into moral awareness and personal growth. The discussion also considers the alignment between the teacher's practice and the expectations of Indonesia's national curriculum, which emphasizes character education, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility. The teacher's consistent emphasis on gratitude, stewardship, and diligence reflects these national priorities while maintaining the theological integrity of Christian Religious Education. This suggests that CRE can contribute significantly to the holistic development of students when taught with pedagogical competence grounded in sound exegesis. The results demonstrate that the CRE teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua effectively teaches the concept of God's providence by integrating exegetical insight, contextual relevance, narrative pedagogy, relational engagement, and competency-based instructional strategies. These findings illustrate how pedagogical competence in CRE extends beyond classroom techniques to encompass theological understanding, empathy, and the ability to connect Scripture with life in meaningful ways. Through this comprehensive approach, the teacher successfully helps students understand that God's providence is not merely a doctrinal idea but a lived experience that invites human response, responsibility, and gratitude.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the pedagogical competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in instructing students about God's providence, specifically as grounded in the exegetical insight of Genesis 47:23-24, is both a theological responsibility and an educational necessity within the context of SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua. The findings demonstrate that effective CRE teaching is not merely a transfer of biblical information but a transformative pedagogical process that integrates Scripture, contextual realities, and student-centered learning. Through the teacher's thoughtful engagement with the Genesis narrative, students learn that divine providence involves God's generous

initiative as well as the human responsibility to cultivate, steward, and respond with gratitude. This balanced understanding becomes the foundation for meaningful moral formation and spiritual awareness among vocational students. The study affirms that pedagogical competence in CRE emerges from several interconnected dimensions. First, it is shaped by the teacher's capacity to interpret Scripture accurately and meaningfully. The exegesis of Genesis 47:23-24 reveals a theological pattern where God provides resources, humans participate actively through work and stewardship, and gratitude is expressed through responsible living. The teacher's ability to integrate this pattern into lesson plans demonstrates a mature theological-pedagogical synthesis. Through this exegetical foundation, lessons on providence become clear, coherent, and applicable to students' lived realities. Second, pedagogical competence becomes visible through contextualization. The teacher's success in relating the Genesis narrative to the socio-economic realities of vocational students ensures that biblical themes do not remain abstract but become relevant to daily challenges such as economic limitations, family responsibilities, and future aspirations. By acknowledging students' backgrounds and experiences, the teacher creates a learning environment where Scripture offers hope, direction, and practical wisdom. Third, the study highlights the importance of relational and participatory teaching methods. The teacher's use of storytelling, group activities, reflective writing, and discussions invites students to engage emotionally and cognitively with the concept of providence. These interactive methods deepen understanding and promote internalization of values such as diligence, stewardship, and gratitude. Students become active participants in their learning rather than passive recipients of instruction. Fourth, the findings emphasize that CRE teachers play a vital role as mentors and spiritual models. The teacher's relational approach, marked by empathy, encouragement, and personal testimony, reinforces the message of God's providence and fosters trust within the classroom. Such relational pedagogy strengthens students' moral and spiritual development, demonstrating that teaching providence is not only about explanation but also about exemplification. The study concludes that pedagogical competence in CRE is holistic and multifaceted. It requires exegetical depth, contextual sensitivity, creative instructional strategies, relational engagement, and a commitment to shaping character in alignment with biblical values. The teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Lolomatua exemplifies these qualities, demonstrating how thoughtful and spiritually grounded pedagogy can guide students to recognize God's providence as an active force in their lives. This study underscores the need for ongoing support, training, and theological enrichment for CRE teachers in vocational and public school settings, ensuring that Christian education continues to form students who are spiritually aware, morally grounded, and responsibly engaged with the world around them.

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