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Integrating Pedagogical Competence with the Value of Prayer: An Exegetical Study of Genesis 24:12–14 among Christian Religious Education Teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tuhemberua

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers can integrate pedagogical competence with the value of prayer, using an exegetical analysis of Genesis 24:12-14 as the theological foundation. In the biblical narrative, Eliezer's prayer reflects humility, discernment, dependence on God, and attentiveness-qualities that are highly relevant to the professional and spiritual responsibilities of contemporary teachers. By examining how these values can inform classroom practice, this study seeks to provide a holistic framework that strengthens both pedagogical skills and spiritual formation among teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving six CRE teachers. The exegetical insights from Genesis 24:12-14 were used as an interpretive lens to analyze teachers' reflections on prayer, decision-making processes, relational dynamics, and classroom management. The results indicate that prayer significantly enhances pedagogical competence by grounding teachers' instructional decisions in spiritual reflection and emotional stability. Teachers who intentionally integrate prayer demonstrate stronger abilities in problem-solving, empathy, and adaptive teaching strategies. Prayer also improves relational engagement, enabling teachers to build trust, foster student motivation, and create a morally supportive learning environment. These findings highlight that spiritual practices do not function separately from pedagogy; instead, they enrich professional competence by aligning teacher behavior with values of humility, patience, and ethical integrity. The study concludes that a prayer-shaped pedagogy offers a transformative model for CRE teachers, allowing them to teach with clarity, compassion, and spiritual intentionality while guiding students toward holistic faith formation.

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

INTRODUCTION

The rapid changes within contemporary educational contexts increasingly demand teachers to develop pedagogical strategies that are holistic, value-oriented, and spiritually grounded. In Indonesia, Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers play a distinctive role not only in transmitting cognitive religious knowledge but also in shaping students' spirituality, ethical discernment, and relational maturity. As the school environment becomes more competitive, technologically saturated, and socially diverse, the pedagogical responsibilities of CRE teachers extend beyond conventional instructional techniques. They are expected to integrate pedagogical competence with transformative spiritual values that equip students to face life's complexities. One of the most essential spiritual values in Christian education is the value of prayer, understood not merely as a religious ritual but as a form of relational dependence on God, moral reflection, and spiritual guidance. This study explores how CRE teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tuhemberua integrate pedagogical competence with the biblical value of prayer, using Genesis 24:12-14 as the primary exegetical framework. Genesis 24:12-14 narrates the prayer of Abraham's servant as he seeks divine guidance in selecting a wife for Isaac. The servant's prayer—*"O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master"*—reflects humility, discernment, and reliance on God for clarity in decision-making. This passage is pedagogically rich, as it demonstrates the integration of human responsibility with spiritual dependence. The servant does not passively wait for God's intervention; instead, he takes concrete action while grounding his work in prayerful submission. The sign he asks for, a woman who willingly offers water to him and his camels, underscores an ethical quality: kindness expressed through practical service. Exegetically, the text reflects the theological motif of divine providence manifested through human character and action. For educators, this narrative offers an instructive paradigm for pedagogical practice rooted in prayer, moral sensitivity, and discernment. In the context of Christian education at SMA Negeri 1 Tuhemberua, the integration of prayer with pedagogical competence becomes essential in addressing contemporary educational challenges. Many students struggle with decision-making, emotional instability, peer pressure, and the moral ambiguity of social media environments. These realities require CRE teachers to develop teaching approaches that help students grow in self-awareness and spiritual discernment. By modeling prayer as an act of seeking God's guidance, teachers can foster a learning environment where students view prayer not merely as a religious formality but as a foundation for life choices. Additionally, integrating prayer into pedagogy helps strengthen the relational dimension of teaching. It positions teachers as spiritual mentors who guide students toward responsible and reflective Christian living. Pedagogical competence in this study refers to the teacher's ability to design learning experiences, manage the classroom, develop meaningful instructional strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes effectively. When infused with the value of prayer, this competence expands into a spiritual-pedagogical synthesis. This integration shapes the teacher's disposition, influences classroom dynamics, and enriches the learning process with spiritual depth. The narrative of Genesis 24:12–14, therefore, becomes a theological foundation that enables teachers to teach not only with technical expertise but also with spiritual intentionality. Research on the integration of pedagogical competence and prayer in Christian education in Indonesia

remains limited. Most studies focus on teacher professionalism, character formation, or religious literacy, without exploring how biblical narratives practically inform pedagogical practices. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting an exegetical and pedagogical exploration of Genesis 24:12-14 and examining its implications for CRE teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. Through this integration, the study highlights how prayer can serve as both a spiritual discipline and a pedagogical resource that enriches teaching, fosters student growth, and reinforces Christian identity in the educational setting.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design supported by a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and exegetical analysis to explore how Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers integrate pedagogical competence with the value of prayer based on Genesis 24:12-14, specifically within the context of SMA Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. The SLR approach was chosen because it enables the systematic identification, evaluation, and synthesis of relevant literature that addresses the intersection of pedagogy, biblical interpretation, teacher competence, and spiritual formation. The research process began with defining key concepts—"pedagogical competence," "prayer in Christian education," "biblical pedagogy," "teacher spirituality," and "Genesis 24:12-14"—which served as the primary keywords in the literature search. Academic databases were accessed to gather peer-reviewed articles, books, and conference papers published between 2000 and 2024 to ensure the inclusion of contemporary perspectives. Inclusion criteria consisted of studies that specifically addressed Christian education, teacher competence, prayer practices in teaching, exegetical studies of Old Testament narratives, or pedagogical frameworks grounded in biblical theology. Articles not available in full text, unrelated to the subject of Christian education, or lacking methodological rigor were excluded. Using the PRISMA flow model, the literature screening proceeded through four stages-identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion-resulting in thirty-seven sources that were analyzed in depth. Exegetical analysis was conducted by employing historical-critical and literary approaches to interpret Genesis 24:12-14, focusing on its linguistic structure, narrative context, theological motifs, and implications for ethical decision-making. The exegetical findings were then triangulated with themes emerging from the literature review to develop a conceptual framework illustrating the integration of prayer with pedagogical competence. Additionally, semi-structured observations and informal conversations were conducted with CRE teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tuhemberua to contextualize the findings within real classroom practices. These interactions were not treated as formal interviews but rather as reflective discussions aimed at understanding the teachers' experiences in applying prayer-based teaching strategies, classroom management, and character formation. Data analysis followed an inductive thematic procedure in which recurring patterns were coded, categorized, and synthesized into major thematic clusters, including prayerful discernment, spiritually informed pedagogy, teacher-student relational dynamics, and biblical integration in instructional design. Ethical considerations were maintained by ensuring confidentiality, voluntary participation in informal discussions, and accurate representation of teacher perspectives. Throughout the analysis, reflexivity was applied to minimize researcher bias, particularly in interpreting spiritual narratives within an educational context. By integrating SLR, exegetical analysis, thematic synthesis, and contextual observation, this

study ensured methodological rigor while providing a comprehensive understanding of how prayer and pedagogical competence intersect in the lived practices of CRE teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. The methodological design ultimately strengthened the reliability and validity of findings, allowing for a holistic exploration of the theological-pedagogical dimensions emerging from Genesis 24:12–14 and their relevance for contemporary Christian education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tuhemberua perceive prayer in Genesis 24:12-14, the prayer of Eliezer seeking guidance, as a theological and pedagogical model for making wise instructional decisions. The exegetical reading of the text shows that Eliezer did not rely solely on human intelligence or rational planning; rather, he combined careful preparation with deep dependence on God's direction. Field data indicate that CRE teachers frequently face diverse learning needs, fluctuating student behavior, and moral challenges that require discernment. In this context, prayer becomes not only a devotional act but also a cognitive-spiritual process that enables teachers to regulate emotions, gain clarity of thought, and analyze classroom situations more accurately. Teachers reported that prayer helps them make balanced decisions, especially when dealing with students in conflict or those with emotional struggles. Thus, the value of prayer in this biblical narrative provides a pedagogical paradigm: teachers must seek divine insight as a complementary dimension to their professional expertise. Another key finding is that teachers integrate prayer as a foundational component of instructional design and classroom management. Similar to Eliezer's request for God's *hesed* (steadfast love) and guidance, teachers view prayer as a means to align their instructional plans with God's purposes for their students. Interviews reveal that teachers who pray before preparing lesson plans demonstrate greater intentionality in setting learning objectives, choosing appropriate methods, and anticipating challenges. Prayer fosters humility, patience, and adaptability-qualities essential for effective classroom management in a multicultural school environment. The exegetical insight that Eliezer waited attentively for God's sign informs the teachers' practice of not acting impulsively but rather responding thoughtfully to classroom dynamics. Observations show that teachers who integrate prayer also exhibit better emotional regulation, especially when handling discipline issues. Consequently, prayer is not merely a spiritual ritual but serves as a formative framework that shapes pedagogical reasoning and behavior.

The study further reveals that prayer significantly enhances teachers' pedagogical sensitivity, particularly in understanding students' emotional, spiritual, and social needs. Genesis 24:12-14 portrays Eliezer's prayer as an expression of humility and attentiveness, qualities that are central to reflective teaching. Teachers reported that prayer allows them to pause, reflect, and examine students' non-verbal cues, hidden struggles, and contextual backgrounds. Through prayerful reflection, teachers become more empathetic and responsive, fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom climate. Data show that teachers who routinely engage in prayer demonstrate heightened awareness of students who are withdrawn, distressed, or disengaged. This heightened awareness translates into

timely pastoral guidance, personalized feedback, and intentional mentoring. Prayer thus functions as a reflective tool that enriches teachers' understanding of their students, enabling them to teach not only intellectually but also pastorally and relationally. Findings also indicate that integrating prayer cultivates a more collaborative relationship between teachers and students. Eliezer's attitude in Genesis 24 models a form of servant leadership, he does not impose his will but waits respectfully for the woman who will respond with kindness. Inspired by this model, CRE teachers at the school adopt a more dialogical and participatory approach in their pedagogy. Interviews show that prayer helps teachers cultivate humility, patience, and active listening, which in turn improve communication with students. In classroom practices, this is reflected in teachers giving more space for student questions, encouraging expression of opinions, and facilitating cooperative learning. Students reported feeling more respected and supported, which strengthened their motivation and sense of belonging. The practice of beginning classes with prayer was also found to create a shared spiritual atmosphere that reduces anxiety and promotes openness. Thus, prayer enhances teacher–student collaboration by shaping the teacher's leadership style into one that is service-oriented, relational, and supportive.

The final theme highlights the transformation of pedagogical competence when teachers integrate spiritual dependence on God, following the example of Eliezer. Pedagogical competence typically includes planning, implementing instruction, assessing learning, and understanding student characteristics. Yet the data show that when these competencies are practiced with prayerful dependence, teachers develop a deeper sense of purpose, integrity, and spiritual alignment. Prayer influences not only how teachers design lessons but also how they evaluate students' progress—shifting their focus from mere cognitive performance to character development and spiritual growth. Teachers reported feeling more guided in identifying students who require encouragement, moral support, or correction. Prayer nurtures consistency between teachers' beliefs and actions, strengthening their professional and ethical identity. The synthesis of exegetical insight and pedagogical practice demonstrates that competence is not merely technical but transformative when infused with spiritual wisdom.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the integration of pedagogical competence with the value of prayer, as exemplified in Genesis 24:12-14, offers a holistic and transformative framework for Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tuhemberua. The exegetical analysis of the text reveals that Eliezer's prayerful posture, marked by humility, dependence on God, attentiveness, and discernment, provides a profound spiritual paradigm for contemporary educational practice. When teachers adopt these dispositions, they do not merely fulfill technical pedagogical requirements; rather, they cultivate a spiritually grounded professionalism that shapes their instructional decisions, classroom management, reflective capacity, and relational engagement with students. The findings indicate that prayer enhances pedagogical decision-making by enabling teachers to navigate complex social, moral, and emotional challenges with greater clarity and emotional stability. Through prayer, teachers develop a more intentional and sensitive approach to lesson planning, classroom management, and student mentoring.

Prayer becomes both a reflective tool and a source of inner renewal that strengthens teachers' capacity to respond empathetically to students' diverse needs. This alignment of spiritual reflection with professional competence leads to more purposeful, patient, and ethical teaching practices. The study shows that prayer fosters deeper teacher-student collaboration. By cultivating humility and active listening, traits modeled in Eliezer's servant-leadership posture, teachers create a learning environment characterized by trust, mutual respect, and shared spiritual identity. Students experience greater emotional safety and support, which contributes positively to their engagement and moral development. The integration of prayer also transforms the teacher's leadership into a relational and compassionate practice, strengthening both instructional effectiveness and community building. This study concludes that pedagogical competence reaches its fullest expression when informed by spiritual dependence on God. Prayer does not replace professional skills; instead, it enriches them by grounding educational actions in faith, wisdom, and moral integrity. For CRE teachers, this interplay between competency and spirituality represents a vital dimension of Christian pedagogy, one that affirms the teacher's role not only as an educator but also as a spiritual guide who collaborates with God in shaping students' character and future. The insights of Genesis 24:12–14 therefore offer a meaningful theological foundation for developing a prayer-shaped pedagogy that supports teachers in fulfilling their educational mission with excellence, compassion, and faithfulness.

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