

Professional Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Relating God's Gift to Joseph: An Exegetical Study of Genesis 41:16 at SDN 071090 Sisobaoho-West Nias

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in relating the theological meaning of God's gift to Joseph, particularly the acknowledgment that "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer" (Genesis 41:16), to classroom teaching and character formation at SDN 071090 Sisobaoho in West Nias. Using a qualitative descriptive design with an exegetical approach, data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with two CRE teachers, and focus group discussions with students. The exegetical analysis of Genesis 41:16 highlights Joseph's professional integrity, spiritual maturity, and the ability to integrate divine gifting with responsible action. Results show that CRE teachers at SDN 071090 Sisobaoho demonstrate strong mastery of biblical content but vary in their ability to translate theological insights into student-friendly pedagogical practices. Teachers who consistently integrate Joseph's God-centered humility into their teaching display higher relational competence, student engagement, and contextual sensitivity. Conversely, teachers who treat the text merely as cognitive material struggle to cultivate character transformation in learners. The discussion reveals that professional competence in CRE requires not only subject-matter mastery but also spiritual interpretation, contextual adaptation, and reflective teaching practices. The study concludes that a Joseph-inspired model of competence, rooted in humility, stewardship of divine gifts, and contextual relevance, can significantly strengthen the impact of CRE teaching in public school settings. This research contributes to ongoing discourse on biblically grounded pedagogy and the integration of spirituality within professional teaching practice.

Keywords: Professional Competence, Christian Religious Education, Exegetical Study

INTRODUCTION

Professional competence remains one of the most essential qualities required of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers as they guide students to understand theological truths and apply them in daily life. In the context of Indonesian public schools, such as

SDN 071090 Sisobaoho in West Nias, CRE teachers are expected to not only master pedagogical and didactic skills, but also interpret Scripture responsibly and communicate its meaning in ways that shape students' spiritual growth. This dual competency becomes especially important as students face increasingly complex cultural, moral, and social challenges that require biblical grounding and spiritual insight. One of the biblical passages that highlights the relationship between divine gifting and human responsibility is Genesis 41:16, where Joseph acknowledges that the ability to interpret Pharaoh's dream does not originate from himself. Instead, Joseph affirms, *"I cannot do it, but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires"* (Gen. 41:16). This confession encapsulates humility, dependence on God, and the responsible use of divine gifts, values essential for shaping professional competence among CRE teachers.

SDN 071090 Sisobaoho, located in the rural region of West Nias, presents a unique educational context where students face socio-economic limitations, limited learning resources, and varying degrees of spiritual exposure at home. In such an environment, the CRE teacher's competence in connecting biblical narratives to students' lived experiences becomes crucial. The story of Joseph offers fertile ground for exploring how divine gifts are recognized, interpreted, and lived out. A CRE teacher who can relate Joseph's God-given wisdom to the students' need for integrity, resilience, and purpose contributes meaningfully to holistic character development in the school. Therefore, investigating how professional competence is shaped by exegetical engagement with Genesis 41:16 is both theologically significant and pedagogically relevant. Genesis 41:16 sits within a broader narrative of Joseph's transformation, from a falsely accused prisoner to a divinely appointed leader in Egypt. Joseph's response to Pharaoh reflects a mature theological understanding: human ability is insufficient without God's empowerment. Scholars observe that Joseph's admission of dependence on God is a countercultural declaration within the Egyptian court, where divine authority was attributed to the Pharaoh himself. Joseph's rejection of personal credit emphasizes that spiritual authority and professional integrity stem from recognizing God as the source of all gifts. For CRE teachers, this insight functions as a foundational principle of professionalism: competence is not merely technical expertise but a faithful stewardship of God-given abilities, enacted with humility and responsibility.

The integration of biblical exegesis with teacher professionalism aligns with Indonesia's vision of religious education, which stresses moral formation, character development, and the ability of teachers to guide students through spiritual reflection. CRE teachers at SDN 071090 Sisobaoho must therefore understand Scripture not only as a religious text but also as a pedagogical resource capable of shaping student identity, values, and worldview. Joseph's acknowledgment of God's gift provides a model for teachers to demonstrate humility, honesty, and spiritual integrity in their instructional practice. By helping students see that God grants abilities for purposeful service, teachers cultivate an environment where learning is connected to divine calling and moral responsibility. Research that integrates biblical exegesis with the professional competence of CRE teachers in Indonesian elementary schools remains limited. Existing studies often focus on general pedagogical skills, teacher certification, or classroom management, while neglecting the theological foundations that inform professional practice. Therefore, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive exegetical and pedagogical analysis of Genesis 41:16 and its implications for the professional competence of CRE teachers at SDN 071090

Sisobaoho. The goal is to show how Joseph's understanding of divine gifting can enrich teachers' professionalism, improve their teaching approaches, and strengthen students' spiritual formation in contemporary educational settings.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach designed to explore the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers through an exegetical interpretation of Genesis 41:16 and its pedagogical application within the context of SDN 071090 Sisobaoho-West Nias. The research design integrated two complementary methodological components: biblical exegesis and educational field inquiry. First, the exegetical component utilized a textual-critical and literary analysis of Genesis 41:16, drawing upon historical, cultural background studies, narrative criticism, and semantic analysis to understand Joseph's theological perspective regarding divine gifting and human responsibility. Classical Hebrew word studies, particularly of key terms such as *bil'adai* ("not in me") and the phrase indicating divine initiative, were referenced through scholarly lexicons and commentaries to ensure accurate interpretation of the passage within the larger Joseph narrative. Second, the pedagogical component examined how insights derived from the exegesis inform the professional competence of CRE teachers, particularly their ability to guide students in understanding God's role in shaping human abilities and purpose. Data for the educational inquiry were collected through semi-structured interviews with two CRE teachers at SDN 071090 Sisobaoho, document analysis of lesson plans, and non-participatory classroom observations to understand how teachers integrate biblical values, humility, and spiritual responsibility in instructional practices. Purposive sampling ensured that participants selected were active teachers with at least three years of teaching experience and responsibility for developing spiritual formation activities in the school. The interview protocol included open-ended questions focusing on teachers' understanding of divine gifting, their interpretation of the Joseph narrative, and how these theological concepts inform their professional identity and pedagogical choices. Classroom observations focused on indicators of professional competence such as clarity of instruction, integration of biblical values, demonstration of integrity and humility, and the ability to connect Scripture to students' real-life situations. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Exegetical insights were coded separately and later merged with pedagogical themes to generate an interpretive synthesis. Triangulation was conducted by comparing exegetical findings, interview outputs, and observational data to ensure validity and coherence. Member checking was performed by allowing participants to review preliminary findings to confirm accuracy of interpretation. Ethical considerations included securing informed consent from teachers, ensuring confidentiality, and respecting the school's learning environment during observations. This methodological approach allowed the study to present a deeply integrated understanding of how divine-centered professionalism, as modeled by Joseph in Genesis 41:16, shapes, enriches, and guides the professional competence of CRE teachers in a real educational context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The exegetical analysis of Genesis 41:16 reveals Joseph's foundational theological attitude: he attributes the source of his wisdom not to himself but to God, saying, *"I cannot do it... but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."* This confession establishes a spiritual paradigm of humility, accountability, and divine dependence that becomes highly relevant for the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers. The data from interviews demonstrated that teachers at SDN 071090 Sisobaoho recognized this passage as emphasizing that all teaching abilities, especially moral guidance and spiritual formation, ultimately come from God. This recognition fosters a posture of humility and continuous self-improvement. Teachers reported that acknowledging God as the source of wisdom helps them avoid arrogance, remain teachable, and approach teaching as a sacred calling rather than merely a professional obligation. The exegetical finding, therefore, corresponds directly to the lived experiences of teachers who seek to embody Joseph's humble spirit in their pedagogy, helping students understand that their gifts and talents also originate from God. This theological awareness becomes a core foundation for their professional identity, shaping their ethical behavior, relational skills, and instructional decisions within the classroom. Field observations revealed that teacher professionalism at SDN 071090 Sisobaoho is strongly manifested through attitudes of humility, honesty, and integrity, traits that align closely with Joseph's character. Teachers consistently demonstrated fairness in evaluation, transparency in explaining academic expectations, and honesty in responding to student questions, even when uncertain. These behaviors reflect the theological principle found in Genesis 41:16, where Joseph's humility enables him to acknowledge the limits of his own abilities and point to God as the ultimate source of knowledge. The discussion emerging from the data indicates that humility becomes a professional asset rather than a weakness; teachers who exhibit humility are more approachable, more reflective, and more committed to professional growth. Furthermore, integrity strengthens trust relationships between teachers and students, enabling CRE teachers to effectively communicate moral and spiritual values. Students reportedly respond positively to teachers who show consistency between their teaching and daily conduct, reinforcing the idea that professionalism in Christian pedagogy is inseparable from moral character. Thus, the biblical principle embedded in the Joseph narrative not only informs the theological foundation of professionalism but also shapes practical behaviors displayed in the school context.

Analysis of classroom observations showed that teachers integrated the concept of divine gifting into their teaching through devotional moments, storytelling, discussion-based learning, and reflective prayer activities. During Bible lessons, teachers often highlighted how God equips individuals for their mission and how students can discover and develop their talents responsibly. This instructional approach mirrors Joseph's acknowledgment that true competence stems from God, empowering students to view learning not merely as academic attainment but as stewardship of divine gifts. Teachers employed pedagogical strategies that encouraged students to identify areas where they feel gifted and explore how these gifts can be used to serve others. This aligns with holistic Christian education, which emphasizes cognitive, moral, and spiritual development. The data indicates that when teachers explicitly connect biblical truths with students' daily lives,

students become more engaged, more reflective, and more confident in expressing their abilities. This integration is a concrete expression of professional competence, as it demonstrates the teacher's ability to contextualize biblical principles in age-appropriate and culturally relevant ways. The findings thus confirm that the Joseph narrative becomes a powerful pedagogical tool when carefully interpreted and applied in the classroom. Interviews revealed that CRE teachers intentionally use Joseph's story of divine gifting, humility, and responsibility to strengthen student character formation. Teachers emphasized values such as respect, gratitude, perseverance, and reliance on God, values that Joseph embodied throughout his journey from suffering to leadership. Students were encouraged to understand that success is not solely dependent on effort but also on moral integrity and faithfulness to God. This perspective shifts the focus away from performance-based achievement toward character-centered growth. In practice, teachers facilitated activities that encouraged collaborative learning, respectful communication, and empathy toward peers. Observations confirmed that students in these classes were more likely to show cooperation, gratitude, and self-discipline, suggesting that teachers' professionalism had a measurable impact on classroom climate and student behavior. The data supports the argument that professional competence in Christian education extends beyond instructional skill to include the teacher's ability to model and nurture character. By integrating Joseph's example into character education, teachers successfully cultivate a learning environment that promotes spiritual depth, relational maturity, and personal responsibility among students. Teachers also reported challenges in consistently applying biblical insights to daily teaching. Some noted limited access to theological resources, insufficient time for deep Bible study due to administrative workload, and the difficulty of simplifying complex theological ideas for young learners. While teachers at SDN 071090 Sisobaoho expressed a strong desire to ground their teaching in Scripture, they sometimes relied on traditional storytelling rather than deeper exegetical engagement. This gap reflects the need for ongoing professional development in biblical interpretation and pedagogical innovation. Nevertheless, the commitment to reflect Joseph's humility and dependence on God remained evident, even when structural limitations made it difficult to fully implement exegetical insights. Teachers also expressed the challenge of addressing diverse student backgrounds and learning styles, which required additional pedagogical creativity and patience. These challenges do not diminish professionalism; rather, they highlight the complex realities of teaching in rural contexts and the need for holistic support systems. The findings suggest that enhancing teacher competence requires institutional encouragement, theological training opportunities, and collaborative learning communities where teachers can grow together in both biblical knowledge and pedagogical skill.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that the professional competence of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SDN 071090 Sisobaoho is profoundly enriched when grounded in the theological and pedagogical insights of Genesis 41:16. Joseph's confession, acknowledging that his wisdom and interpretive abilities come from God, provides a formative paradigm for teachers who aspire to integrate spiritual humility, divine dependence, and moral integrity into their professional identity. Through

interviews, observations, and exegetical analysis, it becomes evident that teachers who internalize this biblical principle develop a deeper awareness of their calling as God's servants in the educational ministry. Their professionalism is not merely defined by technical expertise or instructional proficiency, but by their character, attitudes, and relational ethics, which reflect the humility exemplified by Joseph. The study confirms that when teachers operate from a posture of spiritual humility, they become more reflective, responsible, collaborative, and responsive to student needs. Their commitment to integrity strengthens trust within the classroom, enabling them to carry out character formation effectively. Furthermore, the integration of biblical truths into instructional practices helps students understand their talents not as personal achievements but as divine gifts to be nurtured and used responsibly. As a result, the classroom becomes a transformative space where cognitive learning is enriched by moral and spiritual development. The research also indicates that the application of exegetical insights in teaching is not without challenges. Teachers face limitations related to resources, time, and access to continuous theological training. While their commitment is strong, their ability to explore deeper dimensions of Scripture is sometimes constrained by systemic factors. This highlights the need for institutional support, professional development programs, and collaborative theological learning opportunities to strengthen teachers' interpretive skills and pedagogical creativity. This study concludes that the professional competence of CRE teachers is most impactful when grounded in spiritual authenticity and supported by a deep understanding of Scripture. Joseph's acknowledgment of God's gift provides a powerful model for teachers as they guide students academically, morally, and spiritually. Strengthening this integration between faith and pedagogy will not only enhance teaching effectiveness but also contribute to the holistic formation of students in ways that honor God and foster a transformative educational environment. The findings affirm that Christian education reaches its fullest potential when professional competence and spiritual integrity function together, shaping teachers who serve faithfully, lead humbly, and teach with God-centered purpose.

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