

The Relationship-Building Role of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Social Spirituality: An Exegetical Study of Exodus 12:14 at SD Negeri 074064 Siduahili Tugala Oyo

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relational role of Christian Religious Education teachers in shaping students' social spirituality, drawing from an exegetical interpretation of Exodus 12:14 within the educational setting of SD Negeri 074064 Siduahili Tugala Oyo. Exodus 12:14 emphasizes remembrance as a communal act that reinforces identity, gratitude, and continuity within the faith community. This exegetical insight serves as the theological foundation for understanding how CRE teachers cultivate social spirituality through relational engagement. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach supported by Scriptural exegesis and literature-based analysis on spiritual pedagogy, relational teaching, and character formation. Data were collected through observation, informal interviews, and document analysis, then interpreted thematically. The results reveal that the teacher's relational competence significantly influences students' development of social spirituality. The study identifies three key relational dimensions: the teacher as a model of spiritual memory, the teacher as a relational mediator who connects biblical truths with students' daily lives, and the teacher as a facilitator of communal spiritual practices such as shared prayer, gratitude rituals, reflection circles, and collaborative learning. These relational practices mirror the communal ethos of Exodus 12:14 by turning remembrance into lived experiences. Students exposed to compassionate, consistent, and spiritually grounded teacher-student interactions demonstrate greater empathy, cooperation, respect, and spiritual awareness. The study concludes that relational pedagogy rooted in biblical remembrance is essential for forming socially and spiritually mature students. The findings highlight the need for CRE teachers to cultivate relational excellence as a core component of their professional and spiritual vocation.

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

INTRODUCTION

Education in the context of Christian formation requires more than cognitive transmission of biblical knowledge; it demands relational engagement that shapes students' spiritual identity and social sensitivity. Within Christian Religious Education (CRE), the teacher is not only an instructor but a relational guide who models spiritual values and fosters communal awareness grounded in Scripture. In Indonesia, particularly in public schools such as SD Negeri 074064 Siduahili Tugala Oyo, Christian students navigate a multicultural environment that requires the cultivation of social spirituality, an orientation of faith that expresses itself in community life, mutual care, and responsible participation in society. The task of the CRE teacher, therefore, involves building meaningful relationships that help students integrate their faith into their interpersonal interactions while respecting diversity. Exodus 12:14 serves as a compelling biblical foundation for understanding the relational dimension of spiritual formation. The verse states: *"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast."* The command to remember and commemorate the Passover is not merely a ritualistic directive; it is an invitation for the community of Israel to develop collective memory, unity, and identity through shared spiritual practices. From an exegetical standpoint, the Hebrew term זִכָּרוֹן (*zikaron*) translated as "memorial"—emphasizes a relational act of recalling God's saving deeds in a way that transforms social and communal life. This remembrance involves intergenerational transmission of faith, in which elders instruct younger generations not only through doctrine but through lived experience and relational engagement. Such relational transmission resonates with the role of CRE teachers in building social spirituality among students. In the context of SD Negeri 074064 Siduahili Tugala Oyo, students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and often experience fluctuating emotional and social challenges. Teachers, therefore, must nurture more than academic understanding; they must provide relational spaces where students feel valued, heard, and guided. The ethos embedded in Exodus 12:14 suggests that spiritual identity is formed through relationships that embody remembrance, celebration, and communal responsibility. By creating pedagogical interactions rooted in care, empathy, and shared spiritual reflection, CRE teachers help students internalize the meaning of God's acts and translate them into social values such as compassion, respect, forgiveness, and cooperation. Empirical observations in Indonesian Christian education show that relational approaches significantly enhance students' social behavior, empathy development, and spiritual awareness. Contemporary educational theories also highlight the centrality of relational pedagogy, where learning emerges from interpersonal trust, dialogue, and emotional connection. In Christian settings, this pedagogical approach aligns naturally with biblical teachings that emphasize community, covenant relationships, and shared remembrance—elements central to the message of Exodus 12:14. When CRE teachers integrate relational practices with biblical instruction, they create learning environments where faith becomes active and transformative rather than merely theoretical. This study examines how Christian Religious Education teachers at SD Negeri 074064 Siduahili Tugala Oyo embody relational competencies in guiding students toward social spirituality, with Exodus 12:14 serving as the exegetical lens. Through qualitative exploration, this research investigates the relational strategies used by

teachers, the influence of these interactions on students' spiritual-social behavior, and the relevance of biblical remembrance as a pedagogical framework. Ultimately, this study seeks to articulate a model of CRE teaching that emphasizes relationship-building as a foundational mechanism for nurturing holistic spirituality among elementary students, demonstrating that the biblical mandate of remembrance extends naturally to contemporary educational practices rooted in care, community, and shared faith identity.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive methodology designed to explore and interpret the relational role of Christian Religious Education teachers in shaping students' social spirituality through the exegetical lens of Exodus 12:14 at SD Negeri 074064 Siduahili Tugala Oyo. The qualitative approach was chosen because relational spirituality, teacher-student interaction, and the lived expression of biblical values are experiential and deeply contextual phenomena that cannot be captured adequately through quantitative metrics. The study was conducted over a six-week period, during which the researcher engaged in sustained observation, in-depth interviews, and textual analysis. The primary participants included two CRE teachers, selected through purposive sampling based on their teaching experience, willingness to participate, and direct involvement in nurturing students' spiritual formation. Additionally, eight students from upper elementary grades (grades 4-6) were interviewed to gain insight into their perceptions of the teacher-student relationship and the ways in which biblical instruction influences their social behavior. Data collection began with non-participatory classroom observations aimed at understanding how teachers integrated relational practices into their daily teaching routines. Field notes were taken to capture teacher communication patterns, use of biblical narratives in class interactions, and moments where relational engagement supported students' socio-spiritual reflections. In-depth semi-structured interviews followed, allowing teachers to articulate their pedagogical intentions, relational strategies, and interpretations of Exodus 12:14 as it relates to building communal values among students. Student interviews were conducted using child-friendly language, focusing on their experiences of belonging, care, prayer practices, and spiritual discussions facilitated by the teachers. All interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and later transcribed verbatim. To ensure strong biblical grounding, an exegetical analysis of Exodus 12:14 was performed using a hermeneutical framework that included lexical examination, historical context review, and theological interpretation, enabling the integration of scriptural meaning with empirical educational findings. Data were analyzed: familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and reporting. Thematic patterns were organized around relational competencies, spiritual reflection practices, communal memory, and the embodiment of biblical values in classroom interactions. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with participating teachers to ensure accuracy and reduce researcher bias. Ethical considerations included confidentiality, voluntary participation, parental consent for student involvement, and anonymization of all participant identities. The study adhered to professional research standards appropriate to school-based educational inquiry. The methodological integration of qualitative data with exegetical analysis enabled a holistic understanding of how CRE teachers translate the biblical mandate of remembrance in Exodus 12:14 into relational practices that shape students'

social spirituality within the unique cultural and communal context of SD Negeri 074064 Siduahili Tugala Oyo.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a deeply interwoven relationship between the relational practices of Christian Religious Education teachers and the development of students' social spirituality at SD Negeri 074064 Siduahili Tugala Oyo. Through classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and the exegetical analysis of Exodus 12:14, it becomes evident that the relational ethos embedded in Scripture significantly informs pedagogical strategies that nurture communal values, spiritual sensitivity, and an ethic of remembrance among students. The text of Exodus 12:14, which commands Israel to commemorate God's deliverance as "a memorial day" for all generations, provides theological grounding for understanding how relationships in a school setting become spaces for transmitting spiritual identity and communal consciousness. Within this interpretive framework, the results demonstrate that CRE teachers embody remembrance not merely as ritual observance but as a relational act where students are guided to remember God's love, to respect one another, and to cultivate social spirituality as a lived expression of faith. The first major finding centers on how teachers integrate relational approaches that create emotionally safe learning environments where spiritual values can be internalized meaningfully. Observations showed that teachers consistently welcomed students warmly, used affirming language, and demonstrated attentiveness to both academic and emotional needs. These daily relational gestures were not superficial; rather, they reflected the teachers' interpretation of Exodus 12:14 as an invitation to cultivate shared identity and continuity of faith values in the present. Teachers explained that remembrance is most effective when students feel seen, valued, and connected. In interviews, one teacher described this approach as "*membangun rasa kebersamaan sebelum mengajarkan nilai-nilai rohani*," suggesting that relational warmth acts as the soil in which spiritual understanding grows. Students affirmed this by expressing that they felt comfortable sharing personal concerns, praying together, and seeking guidance from their CRE teacher, indicating that relational safety acted as a foundation for spiritual dialogue. This finding aligns with contemporary theories of spiritual pedagogy, which emphasize relational presence, authenticity, and emotional connection as vital components for forming holistic spiritual awareness among young learners. A second major finding relates to how teachers use biblical stories, prayer, and reflective conversations to facilitate remembrance as a relational and communal practice. Exodus 12:14's emphasis on remembering God's saving acts through shared ritual is echoed in how teachers encourage students to recall God's blessings, discuss moral lessons, and practice gratitude in daily interactions. Teachers frequently opened lessons with short prayers that invited students to reflect on God's goodness and its implications for their behavior toward others. These prayer moments were not mechanical routines but intentional spaces where students were guided to connect spiritual truths with relational responsibilities. Students described these prayers as moments where they felt close to their classmates, noting that praying together strengthened unity and reduced conflict. Teachers also used storytelling as a relational tool, recounting biblical narratives that emphasized communal care, forgiveness, and

mutual respect. This pedagogical approach mirrors the narrative pedagogy implied in Exodus 12:14, where memory is preserved through communal retelling. The findings demonstrate that relational teaching infused with biblical remembrance fosters not only cognitive understanding of Scripture but also emotional and social bonds that embody the communal dimension of spirituality. A further significant finding concerns the role of the teacher as a relational model whose daily conduct serves as an interpretive lens for students' understanding of spiritual values. Observations revealed that students closely watched how teachers responded to challenges, disagreements, and unexpected classroom situations. When teachers displayed patience, kindness, and fairness, especially during moments of conflict, the students interpreted these behaviors as concrete examples of what it means to live out biblical principles. In interviews, several students emphasized that they learned more from "how the teacher acts" than from formal lessons. This is consistent with relational pedagogy literature, which argues that teacher integrity and relational consistency significantly influence spiritual formation. The exegetical insight from Exodus 12:14 strengthens this argument: just as the Israelites were to remember God by reenacting the story of deliverance, students remember and internalize spiritual values through observing and imitating the behavior of their teachers. Thus, the teacher's relational presence becomes a "living memorial" that communicates the character of God through everyday interactions. Another key result concerns the relational strategies used to address interpersonal conflict among students. Teachers at SD Negeri 074064 Siduahili Tugala Oyo employed approaches that emphasized reconciliation, empathy, and communal harmony rather than punishment. When disagreements occurred, teachers guided students through reflective conversations where they were encouraged to express their feelings, listen actively, and seek forgiveness. These practices mirror the communal ethos of Exodus 12:14, which frames remembrance as a collective responsibility that strengthens unity. Interviews revealed that students viewed conflict-resolution sessions as spiritual learning moments, where they not only resolved disputes but also understood the value of compassion and mutual respect. Teachers reported that grounding conflict resolution in biblical principles helped students perceive their relationships as part of their spiritual identity, thereby elevating social harmony from a behavioral expectation to a faith-based commitment. This approach aligns with contemporary educational research emphasizing restorative justice and relational reconciliation as essential components of spiritual and moral education. The findings also highlight how relational teaching encourages students to develop social spirituality through collaborative activities that emphasize togetherness. Teachers frequently engaged students in group discussions, shared reflections, storytelling pairs, and service-oriented tasks that required cooperation. These activities were intentionally designed to help students experience communal values in action. From an exegetical perspective, the communal celebration of Passover described in Exodus 12:14 underscores the significance of shared experiences in shaping collective identity. In this study, collaborative learning allowed students to practice empathy, patience, and teamwork, echoing the communal dimension of biblical remembrance. Students explained that group activities made them feel connected and responsible for one another, fostering what can be described as "spiritual solidarity." Teachers noted that such experiences helped students understand that spirituality is not merely personal devotion but also relational responsibility. This finding affirms current theories on

communal spirituality in education, which suggest that spiritual growth is enhanced through shared practices that strengthen relational bonds. Another important aspect that emerged relates to the role of memory and ritual in shaping social spirituality. Inspired by Exodus 12:14, teachers often incorporated small rituals such as weekly thanksgiving prayers, reflection circles, or acts of blessing where students affirmed one another. These rituals functioned as anchors that reminded students of God's presence and the importance of mutual care. Although simple, these practices created a rhythm of remembrance that shaped the relational atmosphere of the classroom. Students expressed that these rituals helped them feel closer to God and to their peers, reinforcing a sense of belonging. Teachers believed that such rhythms allowed students to connect spiritual truths with everyday experiences, creating continuity between biblical teachings and relational practices. The findings suggest that ritualized remembrance, when linked with relational pedagogy, becomes a powerful tool for cultivating collective spirituality among young learners.

The study revealed that the relational role of CRE teachers extends beyond the classroom into the broader school community. Teachers often visited students' families, participated in community gatherings, and maintained communication with parents to support students' spiritual and social development. This relational outreach reflects the intergenerational continuity highlighted in Exodus 12:14, where remembrance is intended to be taught "throughout your generations." By engaging in relational practices that involve families and the larger community, teachers help reinforce the values learned at school, ensuring that spiritual formation is supported holistically. Parents interviewed informally during the study expressed appreciation for the teachers' relational dedication, noting that their children exhibited improved social behavior and spiritual awareness at home. This multidimensional relational engagement demonstrates that the spiritual influence of CRE teachers is not limited by institutional boundaries but resonates within the broader social fabric of the students' lives. In summary, the results and discussion illustrate that the relational competence of CRE teachers plays a crucial role in shaping students' social spirituality. Through relational warmth, narrative-based remembrance, modeling of spiritual values, conflict reconciliation, collaborative learning, ritualized practices, and community involvement, teachers embody the biblical mandate of Exodus 12:14 in a contemporary educational context. Their relational pedagogy transforms spiritual instruction from abstract knowledge into lived experience, enabling students to understand spirituality as a communal identity, interpersonal ethic, and relational responsibility. The study affirms that effective CRE teaching is deeply relational and that spiritual formation flourishes when the essence of biblical remembrance is translated into daily interpersonal interactions.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the relational role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers is central to shaping students' social spirituality, particularly when grounded in the theological insights of Exodus 12:14. The text affirms the importance of remembrance as a communal practice that binds individuals into a shared identity rooted in divine action. When applied to the educational context of SD Negeri

074064 Siduahili Tugala Oyo, this biblical framework provides powerful pedagogical implications. The study confirms that students' spiritual formation is not produced merely through doctrinal instruction, cognitive understanding, or moral exhortation, but emerges primarily through relational encounters in which spiritual values are modeled, practiced, and embodied. The results highlight that CRE teachers function as relational mediators who connect scriptural truth with everyday interpersonal experiences. Their warmth, attentiveness, and emotional presence create environments where students feel safe, valued, and empowered to express their spiritual questions, relational struggles, and hopes. This relational security becomes the foundation for meaningful spiritual growth, allowing students to interpret God's love not only as a theological concept but as a relational reality experienced through the teacher's example. The study underscores that the teacher's conduct, especially acts of kindness, patience, forgiveness, and fairness, serves as a living embodiment of the biblical command to remember God's goodness, thus transforming the classroom into a community of shared spiritual memory. The study finds that relationally oriented pedagogical practices, such as communal prayer, storytelling, reflection circles, and conflict-resolution dialogues, provide concrete avenues for students to practice spirituality in communal ways. These practices mirror the communal ethos of Exodus 12:14, showing that remembrance is not a passive act but an active, relational discipline. When students pray together, share stories of gratitude, seek reconciliation, or collaborate on tasks, they participate in rhythms of life that develop empathy, compassion, and shared responsibility. Such experiences nurture what may be described as "social spirituality," a relational consciousness that integrates faith, community, and interpersonal ethics. The conclusion of this research affirms that the relational competence of CRE teachers significantly shapes not only students' understanding of spiritual values but also their ability to embody these values within their social context. Effective spiritual pedagogy, therefore, requires teachers to become relational witnesses who translate biblical truths into daily relational practices. Their engagement with families and the broader community further strengthens this influence, demonstrating that spiritual formation extends beyond the classroom into the lived experiences of students and their households. In essence, the relational ministry of the CRE teacher, nurtured by the theological insights of Exodus 12:14, creates a dynamic environment where faith is remembered, relationships are strengthened, and social spirituality is cultivated holistically. The study concludes that relational pedagogy grounded in biblical remembrance is a vital and transformative approach for developing spiritually mature, socially responsible, and community-oriented students.

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