



The Impact of Leadership on the Participation of Congregation Member

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Abstrak

Quality of leadership is highly needed and essential in an organization, including the church. A reliable, responsible, loyal, diligent, and honest leader can have a positive influence on members to collaborate in achieving the church's goals. In the context of Christian leadership, spiritual leaders must demonstrate attitudes and characters by emulating the teachings and examples of Jesus. However, there are many cases where church leaders engage in misconduct and do not set a good example for the congregation, such as cases of sexual violence and other misconducts, resulting in members becoming inactive in the church due to this. This study uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach to find out the influence of leadership on the activity of congregation members. The results show that the views and expectations of congregation members towards leadership are very diverse, but the most important thing is that leaders must serve with full loyalty, patience, and show concern for the congregation members. Factors such as dissatisfaction in service, laziness in worship, family struggles, lack of trust, and busyness in work are the main causes of the inactivity of members in the church. Therefore, effective strategies are needed to provide motivation and support to congregation members to be active and willing to participate in every worship activity, including worship services.

Kata Kunci: *Leader, Activity, Congregation Member*

Abstract

Kepemimpinan yang berkualitas sangat dibutuhkan dan penting dalam suatu organisasi yang mencakup gereja. Pemimpin yang dapat diandalkan, bertanggung jawab, setia, rajin, dan memiliki kejujuran dapat memberikan pengaruh yang positif kepada anggota untuk dapat bekerja sama dalam mencapai tujuan organisasi gereja. Dalam konteks kepemimpinan Kristen, pemimpin rohani harus menunjukkan sikap dan karakter dengan meneladani ajaran dan keteladanan Yesus. Tetapi, ada banyak kasus dimana pemimpin gereja melakukan penyelewengan dan tidak menjadi contoh yang baik bagi anggota jemaat, seperti kasus kekerasan seksual serta penyelewengan lainnya sehingga anggota jemaat menjadi tidak aktif ke gereja diakibatkan oleh hal ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kepustakaan untuk mencari tahu pengaruh kepemimpinan

terhadap keaktifan anggota jemaat. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa pandangan dan harapan anggota jemaat terhadap kepemimpinan sangat beragam, tetapi yang terpenting adalah pemimpin harus melayani dengan penuh kesetiaan, kesabaran, dan menunjukkan kepedulian terhadap anggota jemaat. Faktor-faktor seperti ketidakpuasan dalam pelayanan, malas beribadah, pergumulan keluarga, kurang percaya, dan keseibukan dalam pekerjaan menjadi penyebab utama ketidaktifan anggota di gereja. Itulah sebabnya, strategi yang efektif diperlukan untuk dapat memberikan motivasi dan dukungan kepada anggota jemaat agar aktif dan dapat memberi diri untuk berpartisipasi dalam setiap kegiatan ibadah termasuk peribadatan.

Keywords: *Pemimpin, Keaktifan, Anggota Jemaat*

Introduction

Organization is an important container where quality leaders are born. In forming an organization, reliable, responsible, loyal, diligent, and honest leaders are needed to lead the organization. One of the main factors determining the success of an organization or group is the influence of leadership. Leaders can provide positive influence and enthusiasm in pursuing the vision and mission that is the goal of establishing the organization. Therefore, cooperation among the members within the organization is crucial so that the organization can function well. The same applies to church organizations or congregations. If the leader in a church can be responsible for their leadership, then their ministry can have a positive impact on the congregation. However, if the opposite is true, the fate of the organization or church can become chaotic and not function well.

According to White (1997), responsibility in leadership is not something trivial. A leader must be able to deny oneself, show compassion, and have the willingness to reach out to souls that have strayed far from the presence of God. In church leadership, God also desires the leader to move in the direction commanded by God and to act righteously without considering the consequences. God also wants a leader to remain steadfast in doing what is right because leading a congregation requires commitment and steadfastness against existing challenges, as

a leader must be able to set an example for the congregation members. As stated by Borrang (2019), good leadership in a church is a leader who can demonstrate service as Jesus Christ did when He was on earth. A Christian leader must have a character like Jesus, which means we must have wisdom in speaking and saying. According to Tari et al (2019), a good leader is one who can radiate the light of Christ's love in his life and can surrender everything to God and seek guidance from the Holy Spirit to do everything. In this ministry, Jesus never distinguished between His disciples and non-disciples. In other words, a leader must be an example as Jesus has shown. Successful leaders must rely on God in every aspect of their lives, including in the ministry they conduct (Kasingku et al., 2023).

However, there is numerous evidence to suggest that some leaders misuse their leadership and do not set a good example for their congregation members. According to Andresen et al (2024) via BBC News Indonesia, a leader who should be an example, in fact, persecutes and abuses his followers. Furthermore, the news reports that the violence includes rape and abortion. As quoted in iNews, Jamil (2022) stated that violence continues to occur among congregation members, with this violence perpetrated by church leaders. Evangelical church leaders admitted to sexual violence against three children. This incident took place in Mexico. Another deviation

occurred in Indonesia, where a religious leader in Surabaya was suspected of raping an underage congregation member (Lumbanrau, 2020). According to Goni et al (2023), a leader must have commitment in the ministry undertaken. Not only has a commitment in social relationships important, but commitment in the relationship with God is also crucial. In leadership, a leader must be able to interact closely with members as it is a key factor in building communication within a congregation. However, there are certainly boundaries that must be observed. A leader must be committed to the service being carried out so that problems do not arise within the congregation.

Leadership in the current generation is important, as most young people in this generation are looking for a leader who can lead, guide, and develop the potential of the youth. That is why this research was conducted to find out how much influence leadership has on the loyalty of congregation members. Thus, in the end, leaders will continue to realize that there is a great responsibility held by Christian leaders towards the congregation they shepherd.

Method

The method used in this research is a qualitative method using a literature study approach. This study utilizes books, published articles, and websites related to the influence of leadership and the activity of congregation members.

Result and Discussion

Definition of Leadership and Christian Leadership

Leadership plays a crucial role in the success of an organization. According to Nurkolis (2023), leadership is a process where a leader influences and sets an example for followers with the aim of

empowering their performance to achieve the goals set by the organization. Previously, Maxwell (2014) stated that the true measure of leadership is the influence it has. If a leader thinks he is a leader but has no followers, he is just taking a walk. Leadership is about influence. The ability to influence others is essential. According to Handoko (2015), leadership is a process of exerting influence and motivation on others to achieve common goals. Leadership is related to management, where good management requires effective leadership to organize everything to achieve the desired goals.

On the other hand, Christian leadership refers to the concept of leadership within the community of Christians, but its meaning goes beyond that. Christian leadership describes leadership that reflects all aspects of the life of Jesus Christ as the ultimate leader in the behavior of a leader (Rumahlatu, 2011). Furthermore, according to Tomatola (2012), Christian leadership is a dynamic and planned process within the context of Christian ministry. This leadership involves several important factors such as time, place, and specific situations based on God's involvement in appointing a leader with the ability to lead God's people in an institution or organization, aiming to achieve God's goals. According to Sanderan (2021), Christian leadership is characterized by love, resilience, wisdom, and knowledge, as well as courage, social competence, and a reliable leadership style. Thus, Christian leadership is not only limited to the concept of leadership within a Christian community but goes beyond that. The life of Christ must be reflected in the life of a Christian leader. In the context of ministry, leadership is a dynamic process involving several important factors with the intervention of God appointing a leader to achieve God's goals. Christian leadership must

demonstrate characteristics as written in the Word of God.

A Christian leader is believed to be good at leading small groups or organizations based on the ability and excellence to develop or build the organization led. According to Iswantoro (2013), a Christian leader is an individual who has a role in Christian leadership. In addition, a leader must be faithful, humble, and fear God. The main responsibility of such a leader is to serve God. Moreover, he is responsible for leading and guiding the congregation in spiritual matters and in ministry (Siahaan et al, 2023).

Church Members' Views on Leadership

The views of congregation members on leadership are an important component in the life of the church organization. Congregation members have different views and expectations regarding church leadership. Therefore, understanding the views and expectations of congregation members about leadership within the church is essential in efforts to improve the quality of leadership services in the church. According to Gidion (2018), leadership plays a significant role in being the strength and spirit in the growth of congregation members. Currently, many members think and believe that leadership in the congregation can only be led by someone with higher education, so most of them eventually do not want to be actively involved in the organization. A leader with high formal education is not a problem if he practices humble and caring leadership towards congregation members. According to Widjaja (2015), a Christian leader must serve congregation members with unwavering loyalty and unlimited patience. According to Pasaribu et al (2023), a leader is a servant who serves congregation members through preaching the Word of God, visiting sick members, providing strength and hope for grieving members,

regularly visiting congregation members, and so on. When a leader in the congregation performs his duties well, congregation members will be enthusiastic about serving together in the church. When the congregation is enthusiastic about ministry, they will be active in the church. Therefore, congregation members also need to play an active role in advancing a group or congregation. Hence, cooperation between congregation members and leaders is greatly needed. As stated by Rahmawati & Supriyanto (2020), cooperation between leaders and members is essential because through this cooperation, beneficial things can be created in an organization or group so that the development of the group can progress in achieving the ultimate goals of the organization or group. According to Lumentut et al (2017), leaders and members must be able to cooperate harmoniously and show closeness, so that the programs set in an organization or congregation can be implemented properly (Prajogo, 2019).

Many congregation members believe that there are leaders who only pay attention to individuals or families they know and those who give significant contributions to the leader. However, a serving leader must act professionally in dealing with fellow members without discriminating against their background or job type. As stated by Firmando (2021), a leader must be able to treat each member equally without considering the background of each member. The service provided by the servant of God must be voluntary, giving all the capabilities they must serve the church members.

Factors Influencing Inactivity of Congregation Members in the Church

There are many factors that influence the inactivity of congregation members in the church. From the many factors, here are

the 5 most common factors that occur in the church:

1. Dissatisfaction with church service

The pastor is the spiritual leader within the congregation. The activity of the congregation is greatly influenced by the extent of the service provided by the pastor. According to Padang (2023), pastors have a significant role in giving encouragement to the congregation members to be active in worship. The leadership of the pastor can provide exemplary behavior, encouragement, spirit, mobilize, and control the congregation in worship. It is important for these spiritual leaders to encourage congregation members to be actively involved in service. In other words, a pastor who does not fulfill his duties properly will result in the inactivity of the congregation when in church. According to Mobalen et al (2023), pastors must be active in the services held for the congregation members. Furthermore, according to Bua & Tari (2022), pastors must have an emotional relationship with the congregation members. This can happen if the pastor knows his congregation members well. But the problem is, the pastor does not have an emotional connection with the congregation members, he does not know the struggles of the congregation members because the pastor does not know his congregation members. Thus, dissatisfaction arises in the service of the pastor. Besides the pastor, the congregation council is the pastor's co-workers, and they are leaders in the congregation. Research conducted by Bua & Losong (2021) states that a factor influencing inactivity in the church is the dissatisfaction of congregation members with the ecclesiastical office function. Furthermore, Putnarubun (2021) states that there are congregation members who understand the true meaning of worship and decide to attend the worship service

created, but still feel disappointed and eventually decide not to attend the church service due to dissatisfaction with the service provided by the church leader. Therefore, there needs to be awareness from church leaders to show concern for the congregation members.

2. Laziness in Worship

Laziness is a challenge often faced by many people in daily life. Continuous laziness will affect a person's productivity, reducing motivation in life. The same goes for worship. Many congregation members are lazy to come to worship in church or some come to church but not on time. One of the places we worship is in the church. Unfortunately, when the worship order is not well organized, the sermon or reflection does not meet the needs of the congregation members listening, monotonous, causing boredom in worship and the congregation is lazy to participate in other worship (Leunupun, 2017). Research conducted by Mobalen et al (2023) states that one of the factors of inactivity of congregation members in the church is due to laziness. Interviews conducted with 30 respondents and the results are some stating that they are lazy to come to church because they do not understand the true meaning and purpose of worship for the life of a Christian.

3. Family Struggles

Every family plays an important role in the life of the congregation. The church is a collection of families who believe in God. But often what happens is over time there are families who were active in the church, becoming inactive. One reason is that the family experiences struggle in life. According to Mobalen et al (2023), certain struggles within the family are one of the factors causing the inactivity of congregation members in worship. Church

leaders must pay attention to this situation by conducting visits to find out what struggles are being felt by the family so that they will become active in the church again. According to Kasingku & Haniko (2023), visitation is one of the pastoral tasks of the congregation leaders. Therefore, church leaders must be sensitive to visit when there are congregation members no longer active in the congregation. According to Lobb et al (2019), by conducting visits to the congregation members, especially those who are no longer active, the congregation members will feel cared for and will feel peace after being visited. According to Bua & Tari (2022), pastors must be able to actively listen to every struggle of the congregation members. When the servant of God practices this, then the struggles of the congregation members will be known, so that the right solution is given. In the end, inactive congregation members come to church, will return to worship in the church.

4. Lack of Faith

The church is a collection of believers who worship God. But there are many congregation members in the church, but their faith in God is questioned. There are congregation members when receiving God's blessings, will faithfully come to church. But when allowed to experience challenges in life, they finally decide to doubt or even not believe in God as the source of strength. Eventually, these congregation members are no longer active in church activities. According to Edison et al (2022), there are church members, but their faith has not grown. Family problems, economy, or work can cause serious problems in the church if not resolved. So, in the end, it causes a decline in faith both in quality and quantity. There are congregation members who experience a crisis of faith and feel bored in worship. This requires attention from church leaders to provide mentoring and strengthening, so

that it will strengthen faith and enthusiasm in worship (Maro, 2023). The same is conveyed by Sumampow (2023), the sermon of the pastor can affect the faith of the congregation members. Offense from congregation members with the content of the pastor's sermon, so congregation members criticize the pastor because of his sermon. In the end, it makes congregation members uninterested in worshipping in church.

5. Busyness in Work

Busyness at work often results in many people neglecting their worship obligations. The importance of managing time wisely can help God's people in dividing time and determining which is a priority between work and worship. According to Tapingku (2016), research conducted at the Toraja Church of Barru states that busyness is the main reason for the absence of men in every congregation worship. Previous research conducted by Aprilinda (2015) stated that congregation members at GPIB Tamansari Church prefer to focus on activities outside the church such as college, doing campus assignments, attending campus events, becoming committee members in campus activities. Residents of Sidi Baru feel that service and busyness in the church are very important, but they still find it difficult to share time. Another reason is that they still feel ashamed or inferior and lack confidence to be actively involved in church worship activities. According to Bua & Losong (2021), this happens because of a lack of self-awareness from congregation members. They choose not to involve themselves and distance themselves from existing groups. Congregation members also prioritize their busyness over involving themselves and prefer to stay away from the group.

Strategy to Address Inactive Congregation Members

Dealing with inactive congregation members in church services is a common challenge in many denominations. This phenomenon affects the spiritual and social life of the congregation. The church experiences a decline in attendance from its members, with only a few remaining faithful to attend church services. The inactivity of congregation members can reduce their involvement in the church, thus influencing the church's growth. Therefore, the church needs to develop strategies to motivate and support inactive members to re-engage and actively participate in the church. Here are three strategies that can be implemented to address this issue:

1. Personal Approach

In addressing issues related to the lack of active involvement of congregation members in the church, the first strategy is for leaders, in this case, pastors and the church board, to personally approach those inactive members. Personal approach can be done through home visits. According to Panjaitan & Siahaan (2017), their research shows that pastoral visits significantly influence church attendance. When church members are visited, they are more likely to attend church, significantly impacting the spiritual growth of elderly members who become more active in serving in church activities. Furthermore, research conducted by Kasingku & Haniko (2023) indicates that the higher the service provided by the pastor to their congregation, including home visits, the higher the attendance rate. In other words, personal service provided by pastors and the church board to inactive members significantly affects church attendance.

According to Ratu & Panjaitan (2016), a poor congregation servant is one who is lazy in providing pastoral care to congregation members. Therefore, a good pastor should pay attention to the

congregation members they shepherd. Purba (2023) states that one of the important responsibilities of a pastor, in addition to serving, teaching, nurturing, and discipling congregation members, is to provide pastoral care. After preaching the gospel from the pulpit, a pastor's task has just begun. They need to visit congregation members at their homes, communicate with them, and pray with them. There are families that may not accept God's truth unless through His gracious actions entering their homes and guiding them on the right path (White, 2012). Therefore, to reach those who are becoming inactive in church activities or have become entirely inactive, the strategy to be employed is to continually strengthen through home-to-home pastoral care.

2. Designing Programs

Inactivity in the church is often due to the lack of interesting programs developed within the congregation. Therefore, designing attractive programs is an effective strategy that can be implemented in the church. These programs are designed with the aim to encourage inactive congregation members, fostering their re-engagement within the congregation. They can feel more connected and enthusiastic in fulfilling their roles as part of the church. According to Marbun (2020), in efforts to design programs that meet the spiritual needs of congregation members, pastors should analyze the spiritual needs of the congregation members to design suitable programs for them.

There are many programs that can be created when church leaders know the needs of the congregation members, one of which is small groups. According to Perangin Angin et al (2022), small groups have many benefits for congregation members. Small groups are a means to nurture faith and grow in Christian maturity.

Small groups are also an essential part of the church to provide guidance to church members. In other words, when an inactive congregation member is embraced through pastoral care and brought into a small group, church leaders can provide guidance and remind church members to re-engage actively in worship activities within the church.

Small groups can serve as a means of nurturing faith and can train believers to disciple other believers. According to Maki et al (2021), the role of small groups is significant for congregation members. One of them is that small groups can play a crucial role in reaching out to every congregation member in the discipleship mission. Sosinggih et al (2023) state that through small groups, there will be an impact on the building of fellowship among congregation members, good communication, enlivening prayer life where they will pray for one another in the small group, motivate each other, provide assistance, and create openness among each other. Many activities can be done in small group meetings and can be tailored to the interests of the small group participants or the target congregation members who have become inactive. For example, discussing the word of God, evangelism activities together, congregation members running businesses according to interests supported by the small group (Kembuan & Sudarma, 2021). Another program that can be carried out is by socializing well, reaching out through work, for example, gardening, and doing cooperation (Barana et al., 2020).

When pastors and the church board provide intensive pastoral visits, invite congregation members to small groups, and then provide seminars or spiritual training within the small group about the importance of attending worship services, along with prayers and reading the scriptures, and other activities to support

active involvement of congregation members in worship, these actions will stimulate the attendance of inactive congregation members better, making them active again in the church.

3. Training

Church leaders play a crucial role in maintaining the activity of congregation members. The dilemma faced by church leaders is how to reach and motivate inactive congregation members to become actively involved in church worship. To address this situation, specialized training is needed for church leaders to have the ability to understand and apply effective methods to reach inactive congregation members. Leadership training will provide a deeper understanding of how to reach congregation members and increase their activity. Therefore, church leaders need to be equipped in service to improve their ministry. According to Panjaitan et al (2023), church leaders must have creative and proactive thinking in training congregation members to achieve spiritual maturity, thus contributing actively to building God's church.

Furthermore, besides providing training to congregation members, leaders also need to provide structured and continuous leadership training. Conducting seminars, creating joint reflections on spiritual growth, and so forth. The task of a shepherd is to provide training to congregation members (Hutagalung & Lie, 2021). Because, as conveyed by Suryady (2023), training is one of the main bases important for the church because training is the core of the church's purpose. So, don't underestimate training in the church. Leaders must have a plan to advance God's work within the church. That is why, training for congregation members and training for church leaders must be carried out, so that active congregation members come to church, they remain strong in faith and

know how to reach their friends or family who have become inactive in attending worship at church. Similarly, with church leaders, they will know what to do in maintaining and increasing attendance in the church.

Conclusion

Leadership plays a significant role in determining the success and quality of its service to the congregation, especially to inactive members in church worship. Christian leadership should be able to influence and inspire its congregation members. Leaders must be able to reflect the character of Christ in their lives. Collaboration between leaders and congregation members, as well as understanding the views and desires of the congregation regarding church leadership, is crucial in increasing the quality and effectiveness of church services. Likewise, leaders can design various strategies to engage members who are no longer active in church worship.

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