

The Effect Of Ethical Leadership Of Pastors And Interpersonal Communication Of Deacons On Congregation Satisfaction Of The GBKP Congregation In The Medan Region.

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Abstract: This study is to examine the effect of ethical leadership of pastors and interpersonal communication of deacon elders on congregational satisfaction of the Karo Protestant Batak Church (GBKP) in Medan. The method used in this research is quantitative which is included in correlational research. The instrument used in this research is a questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale based on the indicators of each variable. The participants of this study were GBKP congregations in Medan city with a total of 325 people consisting of 212 men and 113 women. The method used to obtain the research sample was purposive sampling technique. The results of the study indicate that there is a relationship between the ethical leadership of the pastor and the interpersonal communication of the deacon elders on congregational satisfaction with a coefficient value of 0.522.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership, Interpersonal Communication, Congregational Satisfaction, GBKP congregation, Multiple Regression Analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

GBKP (Karo Protestant Batak Church) is a tribal Protestant Christian church denomination that has strong roots in the Kabanjahe area, North Sumatra. GBKP's principle that GBKP residents / congregations are the main actors / subjects in carrying out GBKP's mission (active in the three tasks of the church). However, the reality that occurred in GBKP in 2023 was that out of 323,602 (100%) only 40% (129,448) of the congregation were active as the main actors in the three tasks of the church (koinonia, diakonia and marturia).

Although the number of members of the Batak Karo Protestant Church (GBKP) continues to increase, their level of participation in church activities is still low. Data from GBKP R&D (GBKP SKMS, 2023) shows that the average participation is only around 40%, far from the target of 70% (Ginting, 2022; Tarigan, 2023). This low participation demonstrates the challenges of actively engaging congregants and may indicate a lack of satisfaction with church services.

Low congregational participation can be attributed to their dissatisfaction with church services. Referring to Oliver's (2015) concept of customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction arises when church services fail to meet congregants' expectations. A simple survey showed that 61.1% of congregants were dissatisfied, particularly with aspects of leadership, internal communication, facilities, and board responsiveness. This dissatisfaction has the potential to cause a decrease in participation, even a move to another church or the cessation of religious activities.

Bangun (2010) explains that churches need pastoral leaders (pastors) who are professional, have integrity and have a solid spiritual and exemplary life. Some pastors and church leaders have been criticized for behavior that is considered detrimental to congregants' interest in continuing to attend church services (Churchleaders; McConnell, 2007; Waggoner, 2006). Rainer (2012) highlighted that the impact of inappropriate behavior from pastors and church leaders on congregants can be damaging, and about 15% of survey respondents stated their dissatisfaction with the church was due to moral or ethical failures of church leadership.

Studies by Waggoner (2006) show that disappointment with the pastor in congregational leadership can contribute to reluctance and changes in motivation to attend church services. Bangun (2010) revealed that many leadership experts argue that the progress or decline of an organization is due to the leader. Based on the phenomenon of ethical leadership of pastors in GBKP as described, the ethical leadership variable in this study is important to do. The purpose of this study is to clearly see whether there is an influence of the ethical leadership of pastors at GBKP on the membership of the congregation.

Apart from ethical leadership, congregational satisfaction can also be influenced by interpersonal communication. This was shown by Sinambela (2019) through research that the influence of interpersonal communication has a significant effect on congregational satisfaction. In the study, researchers found that the majority of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the way the deacon elders' interpersonal communication. According to Walgito (2003), interpersonal communication is a process of interaction between two or more people involving the exchange of meaningful symbols.

McLean (2005) Interpersonal communication as a communication interaction that usually occurs between two people. Thus, the higher the encounter or interaction between elders and congregants, the higher the likelihood of interpersonal communication occurring. Saunders (1999) One of the factors of congregational satisfaction is congregational harmony. A satisfied congregation is influenced by congregation members who get along well and support each other, creating a comfortable and satisfying environment for everyone in the congregation. This study examines the relationship between pastors' ethical leadership and deacons' interpersonal communication with GBKP congregation satisfaction, given the high rate of dissatisfaction identified.

This study aims to analyze the influence of these two variables on congregational satisfaction, as well as provide strategic recommendations for GBKP in improving services and congregational participation. The results of the study are expected to help the church in creating a more inclusive and satisfying service environment.

II. METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach that aims to examine the relationship between variables, namely ethical leadership and interpersonal communication as independent variables and congregational satisfaction as the dependent variable. The quantitative approach allows the collection and analysis of numerical-based data with statistical procedures, as explained by Creswell and Creswell (2023). The research design used is a correlational design, which aims to evaluate the relationship between the variables of ethical leadership and interpersonal communication with the variable of congregational satisfaction.

The research subjects were GBKP adult congregations in the Medan city area selected through purposive sampling technique. The sample selection was based on certain criteria, namely the congregation was at least 18 years old, was a GBKP congregation located in the Medan city area, and was willing to participate in the study. The number of samples is determined based on the calculation of Hair et al. (2019) with the total variable indicators used in the study multiplied by seven, resulting in a sample size of 325 respondents consisting of 212 men and 113 women. The data collection technique was conducted through a survey using a questionnaire in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, which was designed to measure the congregation's perceptions of the research variables.

The research instrument consisted of three main scales. The congregational satisfaction scale was adapted from Silverman et al. (1983), which covers eight aspects, including leadership, members, facilities, services, education, policies, special programs, and pastors consisting of 32 items. Ethical leadership was measured using dimensions developed by Brown (2005), such as integrity, humility, empathy, personal growth, fairness and justice, and empowerment consisting of 16 items. Interpersonal communication in this study was measured using the dimensions proposed by Devito (1995), namely openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness and equality consisting of 20 items. The reliability value obtained from statistical tests using Cronbach's Alpha for the congregational

satisfaction variable is 0.984 while the reliability value obtained from the statistical test of the ethical leadership variable is 0.951 and the reliability value of the interpersonal communication variable is 0.972.

Prior to the multiple regression analysis, the measuring instrument was tested for validity with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ensure the factor structure of the research variables. CFA value measurement uses the standard value proposed by Hair et al. (2019), namely, Chi-square (χ^2) of > 0.05 , CFI and TLI of > 0.93 , RNI of > 0.93 , RMSEA of < 0.08 . Furthermore, the reliability test is carried out by looking at the Cronbach's Alpha value to assess the internal consistency of each scale, with the recommended value being > 0.80 (Azwar, 2017). The validity and reliability values are presented in Table 1 and Table 2, and passed the validity and reliability tests based on the recommended value standards.

Table 1 *Validity Test Results (CFA)*

Variable	Chi-square (χ^2)	CFI	TLI	RNI	RMSEA
Congregation Satisfaction	1.00	1.00	1.07	1.06	0.00
Ethical Leadership	1.00	1.00	1.05	1.04	0.00
Interpersonal Communication	1.00	1.00	1.07	1.06	0.00

Table 2 *Reliability Test Results*

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Congregation Satisfaction	32	0.984
Ethical Leadership	16	0.951
Interpersonal Communication	20	0.972

After the measuring instrument was declared valid and reliable, the research data was then tested using the classical assumption test, which included normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests, before multiple regression analysis was conducted. The analysis process was conducted with IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22 software.

III. RESULTS

This study involved 325 respondents of the GBKP congregation in the Medan City area. An overview of the research subjects based on the social category of the congregation can be seen in Table 3. The results showed that the majority of respondents were from the Mothers (48.92%), followed by the Fathers (25.85%) and Youth (19.08%). The Elderly group has a lower participation rate, which is 6.15% of the total respondents.

Table 3 *Overview of Research Subjects Based on Church Categories*

Congregation Category	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Father's Fellowship (Mamre)	159	48.92%
Mother's Fellowship (Moria)	84	25.85%
Youth Fellowship (Gem)	62	19.08%

Congregation Category	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Elderly Fellowship (Saitun)	20	6.15%
Total	325	100%

Prior to regression analysis, a classical assumption test was performed to ensure that the data met the necessary statistical requirements. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test is normally distributed if the Exact Sig. value is > 0.05 (Mehta & Patel, 2010). In the linearity test, the Linearity line must have $p < 0.05$ for the relationship between variables to be declared linear (Shadiqi, 2023). The Glejser test is used to identify heteroscedasticity, and if the p -value > 0.05 , then there is no heteroscedasticity in the regression model (Ghozali, 2006). In the Multicollinearity test, if the VIF value is < 10 and Tolerance > 0.10 , then there is no multicollinearity problem (Hair et al., 2010; Kutner et al., 2005).

The classical assumption test results shown in Table 4 indicate that the data meets the requirements of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and does not experience multicollinearity, so it can be used in multiple regression analysis.

Table 4 *Classical Assumption Test Results*

Test	Result	Interpretation
Normality Test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test)	0.039 (Exact Sig.)	Normally distributed data ($p > 0.05$)
Linearity Test	$p = 0.000$	Variable relationship is linear ($p < 0.05$)
Heteroscedasticity Test (Glejser Test)	$p = 0.671$ (Ethical Leadership), $p = 0.083$ (Interpersonal Communication)	No heteroscedasticity ($p > 0.05$)
Multicollinearity Test	VIF = 1.529 Tolerance = 0.654	No multicollinearity problem (VIF < 10 , Tolerance > 0.10)

After ensuring that the regression model met the basic statistical assumptions, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of ethical leadership and interpersonal communication on congregational satisfaction.

Table 5 *Regression Analysis Results (F-Test)*

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F-Test	p-value
Ethical Leadership → Congregational Satisfaction	0.434	0.433	248.000	0.000
Interpersonal Communication → Congregational Satisfaction	0.377	0.375	195.810	0.000

The regression analysis results in Table 5 show an R Square value of 43.4%, meaning that the variability in congregational satisfaction can be explained by ethical leadership by 43.4%, while R Square 37.7%, meaning that the variability in congregational

satisfaction can be explained by interpersonal communication by 37.7%. The significant F-Test value ($p < 0.001$) indicates that the regression model as a whole has good predictive power.

Table 6 Hypothesis Test Results (T-Test)

Model	Beta Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Ethical Leadership → Congregational Satisfaction	0.459	9.867	0.000	Ethical Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Congregational Satisfaction
Interpersonal Communication → Congregational Satisfaction	0.357	7.682	0.000	Interpersonal Communication has a positive influence on Congregational Satisfaction

The results of hypothesis testing show that Ethical Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Congregation Satisfaction. Interpersonal Communication also has a direct positive effect on Congregation Satisfaction.

Table 7 Simultaneous Test Results (F Test)

Model	Sum of Squares	F	p-value	Interpretation
Ethical Leadership and Interpersonal Communication → Congregational Satisfaction	91163.643	175.783	0.000	Ethical leadership and interpersonal communication together have a positive and significant effect on congregational satisfaction.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results showed that pastors' ethical leadership and elders' interpersonal communication have a significant relationship with GBKP congregation satisfaction in the Medan area, with a coefficient of 0.522. This finding is in line with the research of Waggoner (2006) and Rainer (2012), which highlight the importance of ethical leadership in maintaining congregational satisfaction and engagement. Waggoner (2006) stated that congregational dissatisfaction often stems from the unethical behavior of church leaders, which can lead to reduced motivation to actively participate in church activities. Meanwhile, Rainer (2012) adds that the moral or ethical failure of a church leader can have a major impact on the level of congregation satisfaction, potentially triggering a move to another church.

In the context of this study, pastors' ethical leadership plays an important role in building trust and increasing congregational satisfaction. According to Brown (2005), ethical leadership includes integrity, humility, empathy, personal growth, justice, and empowerment. These dimensions contribute to creating a transparent and supportive church environment, which ultimately increases congregational satisfaction. The results of this study reinforce Bangun's (2010) idea that the progress or decline of an organization-including churches-is largely influenced by the leadership applied.

In addition, elder-deacon interpersonal communication is also proven to have an important role in congregational satisfaction. This finding is in line with Sinambela's (2019) research, which states that effective interpersonal communication

between church leaders and congregants has a significant impact on their level of satisfaction. Walgito (2003) and McLean (2005) explain that interpersonal communication is not just an exchange of information, but also reflects emotional closeness and deeper social engagement. In this study, openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality described by Devito (1995) are important factors in building a healthy communication relationship between elders and congregants.

Theoretically, this study corroborates the consumer satisfaction theory proposed by Oliver (2015), in which congregational satisfaction can be understood as a match between congregational expectations and church services. When church leadership is ethical and interpersonal communication is effective, congregants feel more valued and supported, thus increasing their level of satisfaction with the church.

From a practical perspective, the results of this study provide insights for GBKP to increase congregational participation. By strengthening the ethical leadership aspects of pastors and developing elders' interpersonal communication strategies, the church can create a more inclusive and supportive environment. Pastors can be given specialized training in ethics-based leadership, while elders can be given assistance in improving their interpersonal communication skills.

While this research provides valuable insights, there are some limitations that need to be noted. First, this study was only conducted on GBKP congregations in the Medan area, so the results may not be generalizable to other churches or other denominations. Further studies could expand the scope of the research area to be more comprehensive. Second, the sampling method used purposive sampling technique, which although useful for obtaining relevant respondents, still has limitations in ensuring a thorough representation of the population.

As a suggestion for future research, future studies could use a mixed-method approach by combining quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of congregational satisfaction. In addition, further research could explore other factors that contribute to congregational satisfaction, such as church organizational culture, the quality of worship services, or the role of technology in church interactions.

V. CONCLUSION

This research shows that pastors' ethical leadership and elders' interpersonal communication have a significant relationship with congregational satisfaction of GBKP in the Medan area, as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.522. These results confirm that ethics-based leadership and effective communication play an important role in building a supportive and satisfying church environment for congregants. Theoretically, these findings strengthen the concept of congregational satisfaction as a form of fulfilling expectations of church services, while practically, this study provides insights for churches in improving leadership strategies and internal communication. Given the limitations of this study which only focused on one region and used a quantitative approach, future studies are advised to explore other factors that may influence congregational satisfaction as well as apply mixed-methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

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