

## Analysis of Leadership Characteristics Expected by Congregational Members of Protestant Christian Churches in Bali

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the leadership characteristics expected by members of the Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB) in responding to church service dynamics and the challenges of Bali's multicultural and religious context. This research employs a qualitative approach using observation and in-depth interviews with members of the Daily Synod Council, the Full Synod Council, pastors, and leaders of regional and categorical church organizations (PBKW, PWDK, SKMR, and PP). The findings indicate that congregations expect church leaders to demonstrate spiritual leadership, servant leadership, inclusivity, cultural contextualization, effective communication, and participatory strategic decision-making. Transformational leadership and high integrity are identified as key factors in fostering trust and sustaining church ministry.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Church leadership plays a strategic role in determining the direction of ministry, faith development, and the church's relationship with the wider community. The church functions not only as a religious institution but also as a vibrant and dynamic social organization that interacts with social, cultural, and value changes in the surrounding community. Therefore, church leadership cannot be understood solely as a structural position, but rather as a calling to service that carries spiritual, moral, and social responsibilities. The quality of leadership is a key factor in maintaining the church's sustainability, relevance, and trust [1].

In practice, church leadership directly influences the formation of character,

spirituality, and the level of congregational participation. Church leaders are expected not only to convey the teachings of the faith but also to set examples of integrity, ethics, and service. Effective leadership can foster congregational trust, engagement, and commitment to the church's vision and mission. Conversely, weak, closed leadership that is insensitive to the congregation's needs has the potential to create internal conflict and reduce congregational participation in church life [2].

The problem formulation in the research is How What leadership characteristics are expected by GKPB congregation members? What factors influence the congregation's expectations of church leaders? And what are the implications of these leadership

characteristics for the effectiveness of church services?

The leadership context of the Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB) presents more complex challenges. The GKPB exists as a minority group within Balinese society, which has a strong social structure, customs, and religiosity. This situation demands church leadership that is not only capable of managing the internal dynamics of the congregation but also of building harmonious relationships within the multicultural and religious social environment. GKPB leaders are required to possess a high level of cultural sensitivity so that church services are socially acceptable without losing their Christian identity.

In addition to external challenges, the GKPB leadership also faces internal dynamics influenced by globalization, advances in information technology, and changes in congregational characteristics. Congregations are increasingly critical and have higher expectations for transparency, accountability, and professionalism in church management. Authoritarian and less participatory leadership styles are increasingly difficult to accept, especially among the younger generation. This situation drives the need for a leadership style that is dialogical, inclusive, and adaptive to changing times.

From a theological perspective, Christian leadership is rooted in the principle of servant leadership, modeled on the life of Jesus Christ. However, the church as an organization also requires effective and professional management. Therefore, the integration of theological values with modern leadership theories such as transformational leadership, servant leadership, and situational leadership is becoming increasingly relevant to address the complex challenges of church leadership today. Transformational leadership emphasizes vision and positive change, servant leadership emphasizes empathy and congregational development, while situational leadership emphasizes flexibility in responding to the diverse needs of the congregation.

Although numerous studies of church leadership have been conducted, most

research still focuses on the structural perspective or church leadership. Research that specifically positions congregation members as the primary subjects in assessing desired leadership characteristics remains relatively limited, particularly in the context of churches living in multicultural societies like the GKPB. Yet, congregations are the ones who directly experience the impact of church leadership and have empirical experience that is crucial to understanding.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the leadership characteristics expected by GKPB congregation members and the factors influencing these expectations. This study also examines the implications of these leadership characteristics for the effectiveness of church ministry. By integrating modern management leadership perspectives and Christian leadership theology within the Balinese cultural context, this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of church leadership studies and practical implications for developing a contextual, participatory, and sustainable GKPB leadership model.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 *Concept of Leadership*

Leadership is the process of influencing individuals or groups to achieve common goals through dynamic social interactions [3]. [4] views leadership as a process of influence that is not solely determined by structural position, but rather by relationships, communication, and shared goals [5], [6]. Effective leadership is characterized by the ability to build trust, make decisions, motivate, and manage individual and organizational interests in a balanced manner [7]. In the church context, leadership has moral and spiritual dimensions that emphasize exemplary behavior, service, and faith development [8]. Therefore, church leadership encompasses managerial, social, and spiritual aspects in an integrated manner,

making it relevant for study in the context of the Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB) [9].

## 2.2 *Servant Leadership*

Servant leadership places service to followers at the heart of leadership. [10] asserts that true leaders are servants committed to the growth and well-being of their followers. Key characteristics of servant leadership include empathy, humility, listening skills, and a commitment to the development of others [11]. In the church context, servant leadership aligns with the example of Jesus Christ, who emphasized humility and sacrifice. This model is relevant for the GKPB because it strengthens the leader-congregation relationship and increases the congregation's active participation in church services [12].

## 2.3 *Transformational Leadership*

Transformational leadership focuses on a leader's ability to inspire change through meaningful vision and values. [13] state that this type of leadership enhances followers' motivation and performance by changing their attitudes and values. Its main dimensions include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention [14]. In the church context, transformational leadership is crucial for responding to social and cultural changes, encouraging congregational engagement, and maintaining the relevance of church services, particularly amidst Bali's cultural pluralism [15].

## 2.4 *Spiritual Leadership*

Spiritual leadership emphasizes spiritual values, meaning, and integrity as the foundation of leadership practice [16]. [17] defines it as the process of motivating through spiritual values to achieve spiritual well-being and sustainable organizational

performance. The core values of spiritual leadership include integrity, honesty, love, and exemplary behavior [18]. In the church, spiritual leadership is fundamental because the leader acts as a spiritual shepherd who guides the congregation's faith growth. In the context of the GKPB, spiritual leadership serves as an integrative foundation between theological, ethical, and managerial aspects [19].

## 2.5 *Theology of Leadership in a Christian Context*

Christian leadership theology views leadership as a divine calling realized through service and exemplary living. Jesus Christ is the primary example of leadership oriented toward love, humility, and sacrifice [20]. Christian leadership rejects the dominance of power and emphasizes relationships, service, and moral integrity [21]. In the context of the GKPB, Christian leadership theology serves as a normative foundation for church leaders in carrying out contextual ministry, building harmonious relationships with the Balinese community, and encouraging collective and participatory congregational participation [22].

## 2.6 *Participation Theory and Congregational Participation*

Participation theory emphasizes the active involvement of members in decision-making and the implementation of organizational activities [23]. In the church, congregational participation refers to the active involvement of congregation members in worship, ministry, and church management, which is theologically rooted in the principle of the universal priesthood of believers [24]. Congregational participation enhances a sense of belonging, commitment, and the effectiveness of church services [25]. Therefore, church leadership is

required to be inclusive and dialogical in order to empower the congregation without diminishing leadership authority [26].

### 2.7 *Balinese Cultural Sensitivity*

Balinese culturally sensitive leadership emphasizes the leader's ability to understand and adapt leadership to local cultural values, norms, and practices [27]. In the context of the GKPB (Gerindra Church), cultural sensitivity enables church services to operate harmoniously within the religious and communal Balinese community [5]. Key dimensions of cultural sensitivity include understanding local symbols and customs, a deliberative approach, and integrating theological values with local wisdom [28]. Leaders who are sensitive to Balinese culture are able to enhance leadership legitimacy, congregational participation, and the church's relationship with the community [29], [30].

### 2.8 *Synthesis of Leadership Theory*

A synthesis of leadership theories is necessary to explain the complexity of church leadership in the GKPB [31]. Servant and spiritual leadership are highly relevant because they are rooted in Christian theological values [32]. Transformational leadership plays a role in addressing social and generational change, while situational leadership provides flexibility according to the congregation's circumstances. The integration of these theories demonstrates that effective church leadership in the GKPB is servant-oriented, spiritually oriented, transformational, participatory, and sensitive to local culture.

### 2.9 *Previous Research*

Previous research has shown that church leadership significantly influences congregational trust and participation. Servant leadership with

integrity and transparency has been shown to increase congregational engagement and loyalty in church services [33]. Other research emphasizes the importance of contextual leadership based on local culture in increasing social acceptance and church sustainability. However, most studies are partial and do not integrate various leadership approaches. This research complements previous studies by integrating various leadership theories and placing the expectations of the GKPB congregation as the primary focus of analysis.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-interpretive design. This approach was chosen to deeply understand the perceptions, experiences, and expectations of congregation members regarding the leadership characteristics of the Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB) [34]. Church leadership is viewed as a social and contextual phenomenon imbued with spiritual meaning, cultural values, and social interactions, necessitating a qualitative approach capable of holistically capturing these complexities [35].

### 3.1 *Data collection technique*

Data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews. Observations were conducted in a non-intrusive, participatory manner during various church activities, such as worship services, council meetings, service coordination, regional meetings, and categorical activities [36]. Observations aimed to identify leadership practices, communication patterns, decision-making processes, and interactions between leaders and congregations within the Balinese cultural context [37]. All observations were recorded in structured field notes.

In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured

manner, using a guideline formulated based on a theoretical framework of leadership, including servant, transformational, spiritual, situational, and participatory leadership. The interviews aimed to explore the congregation's expectations of church leadership, their experiences interacting with leaders, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of GKPB leadership. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, lasting approximately 60–90 minutes, recorded with the informants' consent, and transcribed verbatim.

### 3.2 Research Informants

Research informants were purposively selected, with the criteria being internal GKPB members with experience and direct involvement in church leadership. Informants included the Daily Synod Assembly, the Full Synod Assembly, pastors, and regional and categorical organization leaders. To broaden the range of perspectives, a snowball sampling technique was used based on recommendations from initial informants. The number of informants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which occurs when additional interviews no longer yield significant new information.

### 3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. Data reduction was carried out by identifying key themes and categories related to the leadership characteristics expected by the congregation. The reduced data were then presented in descriptive narrative form and thematic tables for ease of interpretation. Conclusions were drawn iteratively by linking the

empirical findings to the leadership theoretical framework used [38].

### 3.4 Data Validity

Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and theories. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from various groups of informants [30]. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing observation and interview results. Theoretical triangulation was conducted by interpreting the data using various leadership theory perspectives. Furthermore, member checking was conducted by confirming preliminary findings with several informants to ensure the researcher's interpretations aligned with their experiences [39].

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Leadership Characteristics Expected by the GKPB Congregation

The research findings indicate that members of the Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB) expect a multidimensional and contextual model of church leadership. Based on in-depth interviews and field observations, six key leadership characteristics were identified as important by the congregation: servant leadership, spiritual leadership, transformational leadership, situational leadership, participatory leadership, and sensitivity to Balinese culture.

### 4.2 Servant Leadership as the Foundation of Church Leadership

Research findings indicate that servant leadership is the most dominant characteristic expected by all GKPB congregations. Church leaders are expected to position themselves as servants who are present among the congregation, listening to aspirations, demonstrating empathy, and prioritizing the congregation's interests over structural or

administrative concerns. The leader's direct presence in church activities, pastoral care, and social service is perceived as a key indicator of authentic and credible leadership.

These findings align with the concept of servant leadership, which emphasizes service, empathy, and follower empowerment as the core of leadership. In the context of the GKPB, servant leadership is not merely theologically normative but also serves as a social mechanism for building trust, loyalty, and cohesion within the church community.

#### **4.3 Spiritual Leadership and Moral Legitimacy of Leaders**

The spiritual dimension of leadership is also a key characteristic expected by congregations. Church leaders are viewed not merely as organizational managers, but as spiritual leaders who possess integrity, exemplary faith, and consistency between Christian teachings and daily practices. Congregations believe that the legitimacy of church leadership depends heavily on the leader's moral and spiritual authority.

These results confirm that church leadership at GKPB is values-based, with spirituality being the primary foundation for decision-making, communication, and social relations. Without a spiritual dimension, leadership is considered to lack meaning and inspiration for the congregation.

#### **4.4 Transformational Leadership: Vision, Inspiration, and Regeneration**

Transformational leadership has emerged as a crucial characteristic, particularly in urban settings and among younger generations. Congregations expect leaders with a clear vision, the ability to inspire change, and encourage innovation in church ministry. The desired transformation extends beyond administrative aspects to

encompass spiritual renewal, congregational capacity development, and church preparedness to face socio-cultural challenges.

Furthermore, transformational leadership is seen as crucial to the regeneration process of church leaders. Mentoring practices, cadre development, and the involvement of the younger generation in leadership are indicators of the success of transformational leaders in the GKPB.

#### **4.5 Situational Leadership and Service Flexibility**

The research also shows that congregations expect church leaders to be flexible and adaptable to diverse congregational circumstances. Situational leadership allows leaders to adjust their communication style, ministry approach, and decision-making based on age, social background, level of faith maturity, and regional context.

This flexibility is seen as crucial for maintaining internal harmony, minimizing conflict, and ensuring services remain relevant and effective. Overly rigid and bureaucratic leadership is deemed inadequate to address the dynamics of the GKPB's heterogeneous congregation.

#### **4.6 Participatory Leadership and Congregational Involvement**

The dimension of participatory leadership is a key expectation of congregations across all regions and categories of the GKPB. Congregations expect leaders who foster dialogue, involve the congregation in decision-making, and value the contributions of church members. Congregational participation has been shown to increase a sense of belonging, commitment, and loyalty to the church.

Participatory leadership also contributes to congregational capacity development and leadership regeneration. By being actively involved, the congregation becomes not only a recipient of services but also a key factor in the church's mission.

#### **4.7 Balinese Cultural Sensitivity as a Contextual Dimension**

Another important finding is the emergence of Balinese cultural sensitivity as a crucial leadership characteristic. The GKPB congregation lives within a strong Balinese cultural context, so church leaders are expected to understand and respect customary values, local traditions, and the Tri Hita Karana philosophy. Leaders who are sensitive to local culture are considered better able to build harmonious relationships, increase social legitimacy, and maintain the sustainability of church services.

This cultural sensitivity strengthens the situational and participatory dimensions, while also demonstrating that church leadership in GKPB is contextual, not universalistic.

#### **4.8 Integrative Discussion**

The research findings confirm that church leadership in the GKPB cannot be reduced to a single leadership approach. The leadership expected by the congregation is an integration of servant leadership and spiritual leadership as moral and theological foundations, transformational leadership as a driver of vision and change, situational leadership as a response to congregational diversity, participatory leadership as a mechanism for inclusion and empowerment, and Balinese cultural sensitivity as a contextual dimension.

The novelty of this research lies in its emphasis on congregational expectations as the primary subject of

leadership evaluation, as well as its integration of modern leadership theory, church leadership, and the local Balinese cultural context. These findings offer practical implications for the development of GKPB leadership policies, particularly in planning leader training, leadership regeneration, and strengthening congregational participation on an ongoing basis.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the leadership characteristics expected by members of the Protestant Christian Church in Bali (GKPB) are multidimensional, integrative, and contextual. The congregation does not expect a single leadership model, but rather leadership that combines various approaches in a balanced manner, in keeping with the dynamics of church ministry and the Balinese socio-cultural context.

The research results show that servant leadership and spiritual leadership are the primary foundations of church leadership expected by congregations. Ideal church leaders are those who serve with empathy, are actively present in the congregation, and exemplify faith and moral integrity in their daily lives. These two dimensions serve as sources of leadership legitimacy, build congregational trust, and strengthen church community cohesion.

Furthermore, transformational leadership is crucial for developing a ministry vision, inspiring change, and encouraging innovation and regeneration among church leaders. Situational leadership is considered crucial for addressing the diverse character of the congregation, including age, social background, and level of faith maturity. Meanwhile, participatory leadership plays a role in increasing congregational engagement, a sense of belonging, and the sustainability of church ministry.

Another important finding is the emergence of sensitivity to Balinese culture as an integral dimension of leadership. Church leaders in the GKPB are expected to be able to

integrate Christian spiritual values with local Balinese wisdom, so that church leadership remains relevant, socially accepted, and able to build spiritual, cultural, and social harmony.

Thus, this study confirms that church leadership in GKPB must be holistic, combining service, spirituality, vision, flexibility, participation, and cultural sensitivity to address the diverse expectations of the congregation and the challenges of church ministry in Bali.

## 6. SUGGESTION

Based on the research findings, there are several managerial implications that can be applied by GKPB and similar church organizations:

The development of the GKPB Leadership Model needs to formulate a church leadership model that explicitly integrates servant leadership, spiritual leadership, transformational, situational, participatory, and Balinese cultural sensitivity as an official framework for church leader development. Church Leader Training and Development The training program for pastors and church councils needs to emphasize:

1. service competence and empathy,
2. spiritual development and personal integrity,

3. visionary communication skills,
4. situational adaptation skills,
5. and understanding of local Balinese culture.

Leadership Regeneration and Cadre Development These findings support the importance of a sustainable mentoring and cadre development system, especially for the younger generation and categorical groups, in order to create continuity in church leadership that is relevant to current developments.

Strengthening the Participation of the GKPB Congregation is recommended to expand the mechanism for congregation participation in planning, decision-making, and evaluation of church services, so that the congregation does not only become an object of service, but an active subject in the church's mission.

Contextualization of Church Services Balinese cultural sensitivity needs to be institutionalized in church service policies, including adjusting activity schedules, communication approaches, and service program designs that are in line with traditional values and local wisdom.

This implication shows that church leadership is not only a spiritual issue, but also a strategic managerial issue that determines the sustainability of church organizations amidst social and cultural dynamics.

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