



CONGREGATION SATISFACTION AND SERVICE QUALITY GKPS PASTORS

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Congregation Satisfaction, Quality of GKPS Pastor's Service.

As servants of God entrusted with shepherding a congregation willing to serve, God calls us to fulfill the calling of proclaiming the good news (the Gospel) throughout the world. This message can be conveyed through words and deeds visible to the world, as a witness to them. This demonstrates that servants must be truly submissive to Christ, the owner of the Church. Anyone who claims to be a servant but teaches deviant teachings, disrupts the unity of the congregation, and fails to strengthen the faith of its members is not a servant of Christ, but rather a servant seeking to satisfy their own desires. This includes ensuring a match between the congregation's expectations and the experience gained from the services provided by the organization. If the congregation perceives that the service meets or even exceeds their expectations, then congregation satisfaction will be achieved. Therefore, conclusions can be drawn based on the dimensions of GKPS Pastor Service Quality and Congregation Satisfaction: Tangible Evidence, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. To determine congregation satisfaction, we need to understand the quality of GKPS pastor service.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's era, often referred to as the era of globalization, the millennial era, and the digital industry are developing rapidly. The world is in an era of openness and speed of information. These changes are rapid, dynamic, and complex. This impacts not only the business environment but also the social and religious environment, namely the Church (Fauzan et al., 2023; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Purba et al., 2025). This condition encourages increasingly diverse needs of congregation members, often accompanied by various demands and expectations of services in line with the changing times. This requires the Church, as a social service organization serving the public, to improve. The Church responds to these developments by optimizing services to congregation members (Ritonga et al., 2024). The growing number of congregation members, increasingly open information, and increasingly complex struggles within the congregation, of course, in line with the tendency for congregation members' service needs to shift to more practical matters in this contemporary era. This is why the Church must continue to ignite the spirit of its calling and measure the efficiency and effectiveness of its ministry duties in the midst of the world.

According to Frank Damazio (2004), ministry is an activity carried out by the church based on its vision and mission. The vision of each church is derived from the Word of God. Erastus Sabdono (2017) also states that ministry is the complete surrender of oneself (one's entire life) to God in response to His saving grace in Jesus Christ. The church bases all forms of its calling and commission to carry out ministry on the

Bible. Therefore, it can be said that the Bible's message regarding the Church's duties and calling through its servants in the midst of this world is very clear and unequivocal. This quality assessment is based on five dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Therefore, service quality is a priority for companies engaged in the service sector, as it determines congregation satisfaction. According to interviews conducted with several members of the congregation, identified as SS, data revealed that they sometimes felt the quality of the service provided by the Pastor was not adequately conveyed to the congregation. Respondents assessed that the Pastor was still lacking in his delivery method so that the word he delivered would be more interesting to discuss.

The service of church servants is judged by the congregation who actively participate in church activities and worship in the church. Discussing the concept of congregation is inseparable from the concept of believers. Believers are part of the body of Christ, meaning all are baptized in the same reality, the Holy Spirit; and they are all given (taught) from the same reality, the Holy Spirit, through which they form one body in Christ. From this definition, we know that believers are the embodiment of the saving work of the Lord Jesus, who are personally accepted as Savior to become part of the body of Christ (Ecclesiae & Sianipar, 2019). Furthermore, Andar states that the word congregation or congregation comes from the Arabic word *jama'ah*, which means a group of people gathered by Christ to worship God (Twintarto & Indratno, 2022). It is the congregation that determines the quality of the service provided by the servants. If the service or service received is in accordance with expectations, the quality of the service is perceived as good and satisfactory. According to (Tjiptono, 2012), there are several indicators of consumer or congregation satisfaction, including: meeting expectations, intention to return, and willingness to recommend.

Meanwhile, the position of pastor remains central to congregational service and leadership. Therefore, congregations hold specific views, expectations, and images of pastors. A pastor's spirituality must be strong, meaning he must possess a clear personality and perseverance and passion for ministry. He must possess integrity in behavior, speech, and attitude that is generally accepted by the congregation. Loyalty or obedience to his duties is unquestionable. The primary goal is not the pastor's position, but rather his commitment to service. In short, no congregation yearns for a pastor. However, congregations are often cautious in accepting a pastor. Congregations expect genuine service from a pastor. It's not uncommon for congregations to express disappointment because the pastor's service and example are less than optimal. The desired pastor is one who is not merely present but truly present within the congregation. A pastor who not only follows established programs but is capable of designing and organizing services. A pastor who not only carries out services but is creative in his ministry. A pastor not only comes to calm, comfort, and strengthen the congregation's faith, but also inspires and motivates them. This means that when faced with the reality of the effectiveness and efficiency of the pastor's service to the congregation, there is often a gap between the congregation's expectations and the actual service provided by the pastors at GKPS.

This includes the alignment between the congregation's expectations and the experience gained from the services provided by the organization. If the congregation perceives that the service meets or even exceeds their expectations, then congregation satisfaction will be achieved. Congregation satisfaction and dissatisfaction are important concepts for organizations to understand because they can impact their sustainability. Satisfaction is defined as a feeling of pleasure or disappointment that arises after comparing perceptions and impressions of the performance or service of a service with their expectations. Therefore, congregation satisfaction is crucial in organizations, as it can build good relationships within an organization, and it is where an organization possesses or possesses the expertise to retain its congregation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative. (Poerwandari, 2017) states that qualitative research is naturalistic, meaning the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the research setting, but rather studies a phenomenon in the situation in which it exists. The strategy or approach used in this research is phenomenology, where the researcher describes the lived experiences of a particular phenomenon as described by the participants. This description culminates in the experiences of several individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. The purpose of phenomenology is to determine congregational satisfaction and the quality of pastoral service at GKPS. Given the importance of the research focus, the researcher focused on:

1. Service quality is the level of excellence of service received by the congregation in accordance with their expectations.
2. Congregational satisfaction is a feeling of happiness in the form of hope for congregation members that the service they expect has been met, resulting in satisfied congregation members who will return to the church.

3. The GKPS Church is a church belonging to the Simalungun ethnic group in Indonesia, with its synod office in Pematang Siantar. It has been called by God to be an extension of God's hand in preaching the gospel to the world.
4. The GKPS congregation consists of believers in the Lord Jesus who worship at the GKPS church.

The method used to select research respondents was purposive sampling. This purposive sampling method was used because respondents are the data source, with certain considerations: respondents are considered to be the people most knowledgeable about the researcher's expectations and, as authorities, facilitate the researcher's exploration of the object or social situation under study (Sugiyono, 2019). The number of respondents in this study was 5. The respondent criteria for this study were:

1. Members of the GKPS Siantar Beringin Permai.
2. Actively participate in worship (attend Partonggoan/Prayer Hours and Sunday Services at least three times a month).
3. Aged 20 years or older.

This pre-research was conducted from January 30 to February 5, 2025, depending on the respondents' residences where the research was conducted. The research location was adjusted to the respondents' preferences to ensure a comfortable environment.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

From the quality of physical service, the five subjects felt that the size of the building and church facilities were optimal. However, respondents 1 and 5 felt that the church facilities supported worship, including music, seating, lighting, and a sound system. Respondents 2 and 3 said it was quite good because the parking lot was spacious and beautiful, while respondent 4 considered it less good because the church toilets were dirty. This is in line with (Christian Sutedjo & Hedy Constacia Indrani, 2014) A church certainly cannot be separated from good facilities to meet the needs and smoothness of activities within the church. (Payne, 2011) stated that facilities, buildings, interiors, and location are important indicators for assessing service quality. From the quality of service assurance, the five subjects felt that the knowledge of the word had been conveyed to the congregation. However, respondents 1, 2, and 3 felt that the knowledge conveyed by the pastor was of good quality, easy to understand and comprehend. According to respondents 4 and 5, the pastor did not filter the words he wanted to convey, which sometimes offended the congregation, especially regarding work. This is in line with (Sariyanto, 2023) who stated that one of the duties that must be carried out is the ministry of preaching God's word to the congregation. This is certainly a crucial task because the spiritual growth of a congregation is largely determined by the preaching of the word. (Purba, 2023) As a spiritual shepherd, a pastor must be able to guide congregation members in facing various spiritual and moral problems that arise in daily life. (Armstrong, 2016) stated that conveying the strengths and weaknesses of a company's service capabilities is an important indicator for assessing service quality.

From the quality of service Reliability, the five subjects felt that the pastor had carried out the church's duties and programs well. This was only considered good by respondents 1, 2, 3, and 4 because he was always on time for worship, planned programs well, took care of administrative needs and recorded congregation data well. However, respondent 5 said that he was not good at determining programs because the programs implemented sometimes did not have an impact on the congregation as a whole. This is in line with (Simanullang, 2019) Pastors have many duties and must be comprehensive as leaders in a Church, general pastoral services that include presence, listening warmth, and practical support from the pastor to the congregation. From the quality of Responsiveness service, the five subjects felt that the pastor was good enough in dealing with conflicts in the midst of the congregation and was able to mediate and provide solutions for the congregation. This was only considered good by respondents 1 and 5 when facing conflicts were able to mediate, but respondents 2, 3 and 4 considered it less good, because the solutions presented did not provide a way out and it was difficult to make decisions.

Respondents 1, 2 and 5 considered it good when the pastor conveyed information. This is in line with Pastors play an important role in forming, managing, and maintaining the spiritual and social life of a church community. From the quality of Empathy service, the five subjects felt that the pastor was not good in this, only considered less good in understanding the feelings and thoughts of the congregation. This was considered unfavorable by respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 because the service focused on rewards, the pastor was less friendly, chose his friends, and thus did not understand the spiritual needs of his congregation. This is in line with (Rasmin et al., 2024) The role of the Pastor holds a crucial position in shaping, managing, maintaining, and empowering the spiritual and social life of congregation members in a church organization's journey and its growth in faith. This is because the figure of the Pastor is not only a spiritual

leader but also a figure who plays a social role and is also a role model in the faith of the congregation members.

Regarding physical satisfaction, all five subjects were quite satisfied with the facilities provided by the church, making the congregation comfortable and at home. Respondents 1, 2, 3, and 5 were only considered quite satisfied because they felt comfortable in the church with supporting facilities such as the church building, parking, seating, lights, microphones, musical instruments, and fans/AC. However, respondent 4 was dissatisfied with the toilets and sound system, and the noisy worship service due to the many crying babies. This is in line with (Syafa et al., 2023) who stated that facilities, buildings, and location are important indicators for assessing congregation satisfaction. Regarding satisfaction, respondents 1, 2, 3, and 4 were considered satisfied because they felt the word delivered by the pastor brought peace and comfort to the congregation. Similarly, respondents expressed satisfaction with the way the pastor dressed and communicated (Harianto et al., 2023; Kholil et al., 2024). However, respondent 5 stated that they did not enjoy the word delivered by the pastor. This is in line with (Sairwona, 2017) who stated that the preaching of God's Word has an impact on the growth of the congregation's faith, making it more in line with God's will.

From the satisfaction of Reliability, it was assessed as quite satisfied by respondents 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 because the respondents were satisfied with the pastor in starting the service on time. Respondents 1, 2, 3 and 4 were satisfied with the program planned by the pastor running well. However, respondent 5 was less satisfied with the program planned by the pastor, although it ran well, but had less impact on the congregation. On the other hand, respondents 1, 2, 3 and 4 were less satisfied with the pastor in managing finances in the church, such as setting payments for church parties. Respondents 1 and 4 assessed that they were satisfied with the pastor's service in taking care of administrative needs and recording congregation data. However, respondents 2 and 3 felt less satisfied with the pastor's service in taking care of administrative needs and recording congregation data (Ohorella et al., 2024).

From the satisfaction of Responsiveness, it was assessed as quite satisfied by respondents 1, 4 and 5 because if a conflict occurs in the congregation, the pastor is able to mediate and provide solutions. However, respondents 2 and 3 were less satisfied because when the pastor provides solutions when there is a conflict that occurs in the congregation, the pastor is less firm in determining what is right and what is wrong, so that mistakes are repeated. In providing information, respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 considered themselves quite satisfied. This is in line with (Nopen Lungan, 2020) Pastors play an important role in shaping, managing, and maintaining the spiritual and social life of a church community.

From Empathy satisfaction by respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, they were less satisfied because the service provided by the pastor was less sincere, serving only as a formality. Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 considered less satisfied because the pastor was less friendly with the congregation, the pastor was picky in making friends. This is in line with (Marbun et al., 2023) the role of God's servant/Pastor is very important for the congregation, both in words and actions. Words such as the Apostle Paul's advice to his spiritual child Timothy to be an example in terms of words to believers, to strengthen them, provide positive advice, encourage them to remain enthusiastic and hope in God. In behavior, actions are more influential than words. In other words, the actions or deeds of Pastors have an important influence on their congregation. (Veronica, 2017) If the congregation is satisfied with the service provided, it is certain that they will return and recommend it to others.

This research is useful for GKPS church administrators to determine congregation satisfaction so they can improve service quality. However, this study also has limitations. First, the perceptions of five subjects, with the characteristics of the study sample: GKPS Siantar Beringin Permai congregation, Christian, at least 20 years old, Batak ethnicity, and attending church services at least four times. This certainly does not represent the entire congregation's perceptions regarding service quality and satisfaction with the church. Quantitative research involving more subjects is needed to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the perceptions of GKPS church congregations. Second, the service quality in this study was measured through interviews and revealed based on the subjects' subjective research. These results may have differed if other, more objective methods, such as observation, had been used.

4. CONCLUSION

In the Physical Evidence dimension, respondents 1, 2, 3, and 5 were only considered quite satisfied because they felt comfortable while in the church with supporting facilities such as the church building, parking, seating, lights, microphones, musical instruments, fans/AC. However, this was not the case with the toilet and sound system. Meanwhile, respondent 4 considered this less satisfied because there were some facilities that were not clean enough, such as the toilet and the quality of the sound system that

disturbed hearing during the service. Respondent 4 also felt less comfortable during the service because during the service many children were running around. In the Assurance dimension, respondents 1, 2, 3, and 4 were considered satisfied because they felt the word delivered by the pastor brought peace and comfort to the congregation. Likewise, with the way of dressing and communication, the 4 respondents stated they were satisfied. However, respondent 5 stated that they did not enjoy the word delivered by the pastor, because the word delivered lacked theological meaning, and was delivered only casually. In the Reliability dimension, respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were considered quite satisfied because respondents were satisfied with the pastor in starting the service on time. Respondents 1, 2, 3, and 4 were satisfied with the program planned by the pastor, which was running well. However, respondent 5 was less satisfied with the program planned by the pastor, although it was running well, but had little impact on the congregation. On the other hand, respondents 1, 2, 3, and 4 were less satisfied with the pastor in managing finances in the church, such as setting payments for church parties. Respondents 1 and 4 assessed that they were satisfied with the pastor's service in taking care of administrative needs and recording congregation data. However, respondents 2 and 3 felt less satisfied with the pastor's service in taking care of administrative needs and recording congregation data because the pastor found it difficult to give time so that respondents needed a lot of time just to meet with the pastor. In the Responsiveness dimension, respondents 1, 4, and 5 were considered quite satisfied because if a conflict occurred in the congregation, the pastor was able to mediate and provide solutions. However, respondents 2 and 3 were less satisfied because when the pastor provided solutions when there was a conflict that occurred in the congregation, the pastor was less firm in determining what was right and what was wrong, so that mistakes were repeated. In providing information, respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 assessed that they were quite satisfied. Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 rated their empathy as less than satisfactory because the pastor's service lacked sincerity and served only as a formality. Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 rated their dissatisfaction as less than satisfactory because the pastor was less than friendly with the congregation and was picky about his friendships.

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