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Collective Leadership and Church Growth: A Study of Leadership and Church Growth at GKPB "Masa Depan Cerah" Surabaya, Indonesia

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Abstract

The complexity of twenty-first century church leadership calls for adaptive models that move beyond the dominance of a single pastoral figure. This study examined the effect of collective leadership on pastoral ministry and church growth, with pastoral ministry tested as a mediating variable. The research was conducted at the Gereja Kristen Perjanjian Baru (GKPB) "Masa Depan Cerah" in Surabaya, Indonesia, involving 100 valid respondents drawn from both leaders and active members. Data were gathered through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire and analysed using linear regression and mediation analysis. The results indicated that collective leadership had a positive and significant influence on pastoral ministry ($R^2 = 0.514$). Furthermore, both collective leadership and pastoral ministry together explained a substantial proportion of church growth ($R^2 = 0.706$). The mediation test revealed that pastoral ministry significantly strengthened the effect of collective leadership on church growth. This suggests that leadership structures are most effective when translated into concrete pastoral practices that equip and nurture the congregation. Theologically, these findings affirm the principle of the body of Christ in Ephesians 4:11-16, which stresses the complementarity of diverse leadership gifts in building up the church. Church growth is thereby understood not merely in numerical terms, but also in spiritual maturity and congregational involvement. This study provides one of the first quantitative examinations of collective leadership within an Indonesian church context. It demonstrates that a model of collective leadership integrated with pastoral ministry can serve as a biblically grounded and contextually effective strategy for sustainable church growth, and contributes fresh insights from the Global South to current global debates on church leadership.

Keywords: collective leadership, pastoral ministry, church growth, Ephesians 4:11-16, local church

Introduction

Leadership in the twenty-first-century church is shaped by rapid digital change, shifting congregational demographics, and rising expectations for transparency and accountability. These dynamics place pressure on traditional pastor-centred leadership models, which often struggle to respond effectively to the complex realities of post-pandemic ministry (Maxwell, 2004; Warren, 2004). As churches navigate these changes, leadership structures that emphasise collaboration and shared responsibility are becoming increasingly relevant (Barna, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

Recent studies show that collaborative leadership models enhance organisational adaptability, support healthier decision-making, and reduce dependency on a single figure (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2016; Niemandt, 2015; Silva et al., 2022). Classic ecclesial literature similarly recognises the value of distributed ministry, noting that no single leader can effectively meet the full range of pastoral demands within a congregation (Peters, 2002; Wagner, 2003). Within Christian theology, leadership plurality is rooted in Scripture. Ephesians 4:11-16 presents a ministry shaped by diverse gifts working together toward the maturity of the body of Christ, while 1 Corinthians 12 emphasises interdependence

within the community of faith (Enns, 2004; Wongso, 1999). These texts frame leadership as a shared vocation grounded in the distribution of gifts given by Christ to His church.

Although the theological basis for collaborative leadership is well established, empirical research in Indonesian church contexts remains limited. Studies generally emphasise individual pastoral leadership, charismatic authority, or hierarchical models (Abineno, 2006; Dever, 2010; Mahoney, 2007). This leaves a notable gap in understanding how collective leadership shapes pastoral practice and congregational development, particularly in urban churches facing organisational complexity (Engle, 2010; Rice, 2006). This gap is significant because Indonesian congregations continue to grow in size, ministry scope, and leadership diversity.

This study addresses that gap by examining collective leadership at GKPB "Masa Depan Cerah" Surabaya. The research focuses on three objectives:

(1) analysing the influence of collective leadership on pastoral ministry effectiveness;

(2) evaluating its impact on church growth; and

(3) assessing whether pastoral ministry mediates the relationship between collective leadership and church growth.

By integrating biblical theology with quantitative analysis, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on church leadership in the Global South. The findings offer empirical evidence relevant to Indonesian congregations and provide insights for churches seeking leadership models that are both theologically grounded and organisationally adaptive (Knoetze, 2022; Nganyu, Oduor, & Kamau, 2025).

Theological Foundation

Many interpreters note that the list of leadership functions in Ephesians 4:11 forms a single grammatical unit governed by the verb ἔδωκεν ("he gave"), indicating that Christ distributes multiple ministry roles to the community rather than concentrating authority in a single office. This structure highlights plurality and complementarity, not hierarchical singularity. Griffiths (Griffiths, 1991) emphasises the cooperative nature of these roles in building up the body of Christ; Abineno (Abineno, 2006) stresses that ecclesial ministry is inherently synergistic and oriented toward equipping the congregation; Enns (Enns, 2004) presents the diversity of gifts as a unified system of shared ministry within the body; and Wongso (Wongso, 2001) situates pastoral work within the wider framework of distributed spiritual responsibility. The body metaphor in Ephesians 4:15–16 further reinforces this interpretation, as Paul describes growth as the result of "every joint" and "each part" working together according to its function—an image that presupposes interdependent, collective leadership.

Paul's metaphor of the "body of Christ" in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 further illustrates unity in diversity of spiritual gifts. Each member has a unique function, yet all work together for the growth and health of the whole body (Wongso, 1999; Peters, 2002; Vine, 1989). The implication is that no single leader or office can meet all the pastoral and missional needs of the congregation. Instead, church leadership must be exercised collectively, with each leader bearing part of Christ's mission (Wagner, 2003; Warren, 2004; Barna, 2002).

This pattern is not a modern innovation, but is already visible in biblical tradition. In the Old Testament, Moses was supported by the seventy elders of Israel (Num. 11:16-17). In the New Testament, Jesus sent out the disciples two by two (Mark 6:7), and the early church was led by the apostles together with the elders (Acts 15:1-6). These examples reveal that God's design for leadership among His people has always been collaborative (Wongso, 1999; Rice, 2006; Bons & Strom, 2008).

From this perspective, collective leadership may be understood not only as an efficient organisational model, but also as an expression of the theology of spiritual gifts and the body of Christ. In this sense, church growth is not merely a matter of numerical increase,

but also of growth in faith, spiritual maturity and active participation in ministry (Wagner, 2003; Warren, 2004; Wongso, 2001).

Focused Literature Review

Church Leadership

Church leadership differs from secular leadership in that it is rooted in divine calling and motivated by love. Engstrom and Dayton (2007) describe leadership in terms of position, relationship and action. Maxwell (2004) frames leadership as influence, while Kouzes and Posner (2006) emphasise shared vision, collaboration and modelling. Within an ecclesiological framework, Abineno (2006) highlights the servant nature of leadership, patterned after Christ (Matt. 20:28). Blackaby and Blackaby (2005) enrich this perspective by describing spiritual leadership as discerning God's direction and guiding others into His purposes. Healthy church leadership, therefore, is characterised by integrity, example and courage to act in accordance with Scripture (Barna, 2002; Meyer, 2007).

Collective Leadership

Before discussing its application in church ministry, it is necessary to clarify how *collective leadership* differs from two related concepts often found in leadership studies: *shared leadership* and *distributed leadership*. *Shared leadership* highlights mutual influence among team members, where leadership flows through interactions rather than a single formal role (Avolio et al., 2016). *Distributed leadership* emphasises the structural spread of leadership functions across roles, systems, and organisational processes (Silva et al., 2022). In contrast, *collective leadership* refers to the coordinated sharing of roles, responsibilities, and decision-making toward common goals. It is not only shared influence or structural dispersion, but the intentional integration of leadership functions carried out together for mission fulfilment (Chen & Zhang, 2025; Niemandt, 2015).

This study uses the term *collective leadership* because it aligns most closely with the ecclesial pattern of collaborative ministry described in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12, where leadership is expressed through diverse gifts working toward the maturity of the body of Christ.

Collective leadership refers to the distribution of influence and responsibility across leaders. Management literature shows a positive correlation between collective leadership and team effectiveness, especially in complex contexts (Avolio et al., 2016; Silva et al., 2022). Chen and Zhang (2025) confirm its benefits while warning of potential role ambiguity when structures are poorly defined. In church contexts, Niemandt (2015) highlights complex leadership as a way of enabling adaptive mission, while Tefo and Geyser-Fouché (2025) interpret Nehemiah's leadership as a collaborative, community-based model. Classic ecclesial literature also emphasises that congregational leadership is not merely hierarchical, but the distribution of gifts and responsibilities within the body of Christ (Peters, 2002; Wagner, 1990; Warren, 2004).

Pastoral Ministry

Pastoral ministry encompasses spiritual guidance, teaching, comfort and discipleship. Wongso (1999) stresses that its purpose is to equip believers for active service. Bons and Strom (2008) describe its essence as mediating God's love through personal relationships with the congregation. Abineno (2006) and Dever (2010) remind that sound pastoral ministry must be grounded in the Word and directed towards building up the body of Christ, not merely church programmes. More recent studies highlight the importance of structural accountability in pastoral practice, ensuring that collective leadership does not deteriorate into uncoordinated ministry (Mlambo, 2024).

Church Growth

Church growth includes both quantitative dimensions (numerical increase) and qualitative dimensions (spiritual maturity, ministry involvement). Peters (2002) and Warren (2004)

emphasise the need for balance between the two. Wagner (2003) defines healthy churches as marked by strong teaching, prayer, evangelism and member participation. Others underline the role of sound governance to ensure that growth is not only numerical but also transformative (Verson & Tsplund, 2003; Rice, 2006). Contemporary studies in East Africa confirm that collaborative leadership teams are associated with healthy congregational growth (Cheboi & Njonori, 2025; Nganyu et al., 2025).

Relationships among the Variables

On the basis of existing literature, the following propositions can be formulated:

- Collective leadership is expected to have a positive effect on the effectiveness of pastoral ministry (Knoetze, 2022; Niemandt, 2015; Abineno, 2006).
- Collective leadership also has a direct impact on church growth through shared vision and distributed roles (Cheboi & Njonori, 2025; Chen & Zhang, 2025; Warren, 2004).
- Pastoral ministry is expected to mediate this relationship, as spiritual nurture strengthens the impact of leadership on congregational growth (Wongso, 1999; Bons & Strom, 2008; Mlambo, 2024).

Based on this framework, the study formulated four hypotheses:
H1: Collective leadership has a positive effect on the effectiveness of pastoral ministry.
H2: Collective leadership has a positive effect on church growth.
H3: The effectiveness of pastoral ministry has a positive effect on church growth.
H4: The effectiveness of pastoral ministry mediates the relationship between collective leadership and church growth.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach using an explanatory survey design. The design was selected to examine the causal relationships among collective leadership (X), pastoral ministry (Y_1), and church growth (Y_2), including the mediating role of pastoral ministry. Explanatory surveys are suitable for testing theoretically informed causal pathways because they allow systematic measurement of constructs and evaluation of hypothesised relationships (Arikunto, 2006; Gulo, 2007; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2019). This design is also appropriate for organisational research in congregational settings, where leadership perceptions can be captured reliably through structured questionnaires (Friedrich, Vessey, Schuelke, Ruark, & Mumford, 2009; Plowman et al., 2007).

In addition, the design offers practical advantages, such as efficient data collection and the ability to model direct and indirect effects. However, as with most cross-sectional survey approaches, it cannot establish temporal causality and depends on self-reported data, which may introduce perception-based bias. These considerations are acknowledged to ensure methodological transparency in interpreting the findings.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of members and ministry leaders at Gereja Kristen Perjanjian Baru “Masa Depan Cerah” (GKPB MDC), Surabaya. Purposive sampling was used with three criteria: (1) active participation in church ministry for at least two years, (2) sufficient understanding of congregational leadership practices, and (3) willingness to complete the questionnaire. A total of 118 questionnaires were distributed, and 100 were retained for analysis after screening for completeness and internal consistency.

The final sample meets the statistical requirements for multiple regression involving three predictors. According to Cohen’s (Cohen, 1992) guidelines, a minimum of 84 cases is required to achieve a power level of 0.80 with a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$). Thus, the

obtained sample size is adequate and supports the reliability of the analyses conducted (Hadi, 2002; Subagyo, 2004).

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of five-point Likert-scale items (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). All indicators were adapted from established scales and contextualised for congregational ministry.

1. **Collective Leadership (X)**.
   Items were adapted from Pearce and Conger (Pearce & Conger, 2003), Friedrich et al. (Friedrich et al., 2009), and Chen and Zhang (Chen & Zhang, 2025). The indicators measured participation, collaboration, and role distribution, supported by broader leadership literature (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Northouse, 2021).
   Example item: "Leadership responsibilities in this church are shared according to each person's gifts."
2. **Pastoral Ministry (Y_1)**
   Items were adapted from Wongso (Wongso, 1999) and supported by recent pastoral leadership studies (Dever, 2010; Knoetze, 2022; Lartey, 2003; Mlambo, 2024; Sunkudon, 2023). Indicators included teaching, spiritual guidance, and congregational care.
   Example item: "Pastoral leaders in this church provide spiritual guidance that helps members grow in faith."
3. **Church Growth (Y_2)**
   Indicators were adapted from Peters (Peters, 2002) and Warren (Warren, 2004), capturing both quantitative (membership increase) and qualitative growth (spiritual maturity, ministry involvement). Additional conceptual support comes from Van Gelder and Zscheile (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2018) and Wagner (Wagner, 2003).
   Example item: "More members are actively participating in ministry compared to previous years."

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was evaluated through expert judgement by three theological lecturers and two ministry practitioners (Subyantoro & Suwarto, 2007). Factor analysis was not performed because all items were adapted from validated instruments with clear construct definitions; however, internal reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, and all constructs met the $\alpha > 0.70$ threshold, indicating strong internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019).

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed both in person and online to accommodate the availability of respondents. Each participant received a brief explanation of the research objectives, confidentiality assurance, and the voluntary nature of participation, including the right to withdraw at any time (Idrus, 2009; Sugiyono, 2011). Only fully completed questionnaires were retained for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were processed using SPSS. The analysis followed the steps below:

1. **Validity and reliability testing**

   Construct validity and internal consistency were examined using item–total correlations and Cronbach's Alpha, following recommended thresholds (Hair et al., 2019; Subagyo, 2004).

2. **Regression analyses**

- **H1** was tested using simple linear regression to examine the direct effect of collective leadership on pastoral ministry.
- **H2 and H3** were tested using multiple regression, which is appropriate for examining the contribution of multiple predictors (Cohen, 1992; Hadi, 2002).

3. **Mediation testing**

   The mediating role of pastoral ministry (H4) was analysed using the Baron and Kenny (Baron & Kenny, 1986) procedure and bootstrapping to obtain bias-corrected confidence intervals for indirect effects (Hayes, 2018). Bootstrapping strengthens the robustness of mediation testing by avoiding normality assumptions.

A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was applied for all statistical decisions.

Methodological Note

Factor analysis (EFA/CFA) was not conducted because all measurement items were adapted from established scales with clear construct boundaries. This is acknowledged as a limitation, although the reliability and expert-reviewed content validity provide adequate measurement assurance for the purposes of this study.

Research Ethics

The study complied with standard ethical principles, including voluntary participation, anonymity and the use of data strictly for academic purposes (Arikunto, 2006; Subagyo, 2004).

Research Findings

Respondent Characteristics

The study involved 100 valid respondents, comprising both active members and leaders of GKPB “Masa Depan Cerah” Surabaya. Demographic data indicated a balanced and representative sample of the congregation.

By gender, 52% were female and 48% male, reflecting active participation from both genders in church life and ministry. In terms of age, respondents were distributed as follows:

- 22% aged 20–30 years
- 38% aged 31–40 years
- 27% aged 41–50 years
- 13% aged over 50 years

This distribution suggests intergenerational involvement, with the majority in the 31–40 age group, often active in core ministries.

By ministry background, respondents consisted of:

- 30% pastors or elders
- 40% ministry commission leaders (e.g. youth, music, diaconal)
- 30% active members

This composition ensured a range of perspectives, from strategic decision-makers to frontline ministry participants.

Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Three main variables were measured: Collective Leadership (X), Pastoral Ministry (Y_1), and Church Growth (Y_2). Table 1 presents the results.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and reliability

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Cronbach's α
Collective Leadership	100	38.21	5.12	25	50	0.91
Pastoral Ministry	100	42.87	4.95	30	50	0.88
Church Growth	100	39.34	5.07	27	50	0.87

All three variables were rated highly by respondents, with reliability coefficients above 0.80, indicating strong internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019).

Assumption Testing

Before regression and mediation analysis, data were tested for statistical assumptions. The results showed that all assumptions were met:

- **Normality:** Kolmogorov–Smirnov test $p > 0.05$ for all variables.
- **Multicollinearity:** VIF < 5 and Tolerance > 0.1, indicating no multicollinearity.
- **Homoscedasticity:** Glejser test $p > 0.05$, confirming homogeneity of residual variance.

The data therefore qualified for regression and path analysis without modification.

Effect of Collective Leadership on Pastoral Ministry (H1)

Simple linear regression indicated that collective leadership significantly affected pastoral ministry.

$B = 0.722$, $t = 11.072$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.514$

Table 2. Regression of collective leadership on pastoral ministry (H1)

Predictor	B	t	p	R^2
Constant	8.802	2.837	0.005	
Collective leadership	0.722	11.072	<0.001	0.514

This means 51.4% of the variance in pastoral ministry could be explained by collective leadership, with each one-point increase in collective leadership corresponding to a 0.722-point increase in pastoral ministry.

Effects of Collective Leadership and Pastoral Ministry on Church Growth (H2 & H3)

Multiple regression was used to test H2 and H3.

- Collective leadership: $B = 0.519$, $t = 9.130$, $p < 0.001$
- Pastoral ministry: $B = 0.178$, $t = 3.145$, $p = 0.002$
- $R^2 = 0.706$

Table 3. Regression of collective leadership and pastoral ministry on church growth (H2–H3)

Predictor	B	t	p	R^2
Constant	16.676	8.544	<0.001	

Predictor	B	t	p	R^2
Collective leadership	0.519	9.130	<0.001	0.706
Pastoral ministry	0.178	3.145	0.002	

Together, these two variables explained 70.6% of the variance in church growth. Both predictors contributed significantly, showing that growth was shaped not only by leadership structures but also by the quality of pastoral ministry.

Mediation Effect of Pastoral Ministry (H4)

Mediation analysis tested whether pastoral ministry mediated the effect of collective leadership on church growth.

- Direct effect ($X \rightarrow Y_2$): B = 0.519, $p < 0.001$
- Indirect effect ($X \rightarrow Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$): 0.722 × 0.178 = 0.129, $p < 0.01$ (bootstrap 5,000 samples, 95% CI [0.052, 0.231])
- Total effect: 0.648

Table 4. Mediation analysis of pastoral ministry (H4)

Path	B	P	Note
$X \rightarrow Y_1$ (collective → pastoral)	0.722	<0.001	Direct effect
$Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$ (pastoral → growth)	0.178	0.002	Direct effect
$X \rightarrow Y_2$ (collective → growth)	0.519	<0.001	Direct effect
$X \rightarrow Y_2$ via Y_1 (indirect)	0.129	0.01	95% CI [0.052, 0.231]

(*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001*)

The results indicate that pastoral ministry significantly mediated the effect of collective leadership on church growth, strengthening the overall relationship.

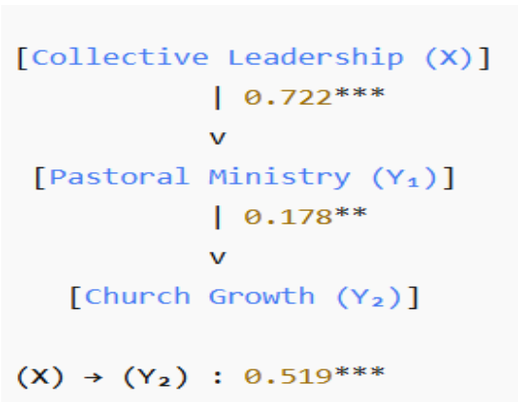
Path Model

The relationships among the variables can be illustrated as follows:

- $X \rightarrow Y_1$: 0.722***
- $Y_1 \rightarrow Y_2$: 0.178**
- $X \rightarrow Y_2$: 0.519***

(*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001*)

Image 1. The relationships among the variables



This shows that collective leadership influenced church growth both directly and indirectly through pastoral ministry.

Discussion

Collective Leadership and Pastoral Ministry

The results show that collective leadership has a strong and significant effect on pastoral ministry ($\beta = 0.722$; $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.514$). This indicates that higher levels of shared participation, coordinated decision-making and role distribution lead to more effective pastoral care. The magnitude of this effect aligns with findings in organisational leadership studies, where collaborative leadership structures enhance team performance in complex environments (Friedrich et al., 2009; Plowman et al., 2007). In congregational settings, such structures allow pastoral responsibilities to be shared among leaders, reducing dependence on a single figure and enabling broader coverage of congregational needs.

These findings affirm that pastoral ministry gains clarity, reach and consistency when leadership is practised collectively. Rather than functioning through isolated roles, leaders work interdependently, enabling more timely responses and balanced ministry distribution. In the Indonesian context – where churches often rely heavily on individual pastoral figures – this provides empirical support for transitioning toward more collaborative systems that foster sustainability and prevent overload.

Collective Leadership and Church Growth

The analysis also shows that collective leadership significantly influences church growth ($\beta = 0.519$; $p < 0.001$). Congregations appear to grow more effectively when leadership is shared, coordinated and aligned with a common mission. This supports broader literature arguing that shared leadership models enhance participation, mobilisation and organisational adaptability (Cheboi & Njonori, 2025; Chen & Zhang, 2025). Because responsibilities are distributed, more members are engaged in ministry, which strengthens both quantitative and qualitative growth.

The findings are consistent with church growth theory, which emphasises that healthy congregations exhibit balanced ministry structures and collaborative leadership (Wagner, 2003; Warren, 2004). For Indonesian churches, which frequently face resource constraints and shifting demographics, collective leadership offers a practical mechanism for sustaining ministry effectiveness and facilitating expansion without over-reliance on a single leader.

Pastoral Ministry and Church Growth

Pastoral ministry also demonstrates a significant positive effect on church growth ($\beta = 0.178$; $p = 0.002$). Although smaller than the leadership coefficient, the effect confirms that pastoral care – through teaching, guidance and congregational support – contributes to the vitality of the church. Effective pastoral ministry fosters discipleship, nurtures relational bonds and encourages member participation, which are key elements of long-term congregational health (Dever, 2010; Wongso, 1999).

This result highlights that numerical or programmatic expansion alone is insufficient without consistent spiritual guidance. In Indonesian congregations, where members often depend on pastoral presence for stability and direction, the relational and formative dimensions of ministry become essential in sustaining growth.

The Mediating Role of Pastoral Ministry

The mediation analysis shows that pastoral ministry significantly mediates the effect of collective leadership on church growth (indirect effect $\beta = 0.129$, $p < 0.01$). This means collective leadership contributes to growth most effectively when translated into concrete pastoral practices. Leadership structures provide coordination, but pastoral ministry embodies these structures in daily congregational life through teaching, care and encouragement. This aligns with current leadership research, which emphasises that organisational influence is strengthened when strategic coordination is linked with relational engagement (Avolio et al., 2016).

The mediating effect is particularly relevant for Indonesian churches, where pastoral expectations are high and leadership burnout is common. The findings suggest that collective leadership alone is insufficient; it becomes impactful when integrated with well-distributed pastoral responsibilities that ensure continuous spiritual support for members.

THEOLOGICAL, CONTEXTUAL, AND GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study carry significant implications for the theology of leadership, the practice of pastoral ministry, and the relevance of the church in both the Indonesian and global contexts.

Theological Implications

Collective leadership integrated with pastoral ministry reflects the nature of the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). The church is not built by one dominant leader, but by the shared participation of all members under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Leaders are called to equip the saints so that the body of Christ may grow towards maturity (Ephesian. 4:11-13; Banks & Ledbetter, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

Thus, collective leadership is not merely an organisational choice, but is rooted in the New Testament ecclesiological vision that emphasises reciprocity and collaboration. Northouse (Northouse, 2021) also affirms that team-based and collaborative leadership increases organisational effectiveness, a principle equally relevant to the church.

Pastoral Implications

Pastoral ministry has been shown to be a vital channel linking collective leadership to church growth. This highlights that Christian leadership cannot be separated from pastoral dimensions. From the early history of the church, pastoral care has been the primary function of spiritual leaders (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964; Lartey, 2003). Without effective pastoral ministry, collective leadership risks becoming a dry and formal structure. Leadership theology must therefore always be integrated with pastoral spirituality that reflects the love of Christ, the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:2-4; John 10:11; Dever, 2010).

Contextual Implications

In Indonesia's plural context, the church faces complex social, economic and cultural challenges. Lartey (2003) stresses the importance of culturally sensitive pastoral care through an intercultural approach. Collective leadership in this setting functions to embrace diversity and to cultivate unity amidst plurality. Through participatory leadership grounded in pastoral ministry, the church can become an inclusive space that not only strengthens the faith of its members but also bears constructive witness in Indonesia's multicultural society (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2018; Wongso, 2001).

Global Implications

The relevance of this study extends beyond its local context. Global discussions reveal that individualistic models of leadership often undermine the sustainability of ministry (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2018), whereas collective, team-based leadership strengthens the church's resilience in the face of social crises and global change (Friedrich et al., 2009; Plowman et al., 2007). Cross-cultural research further demonstrates that collective leadership is more adaptive to the complexity of the modern world (Knoetze, 2022; Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Thus, collective leadership integrated with pastoral ministry is not only a local strategy but part of the church's global response in building inclusive, resilient and missional communities of faith in a rapidly changing world (Warren, 2004; Wright, 2006).

Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide practical guidance for churches to:

1. Develop leadership systems based on teams rather than individuals (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Northouse, 2021).
2. Strengthen the function of pastoral ministry so that it aligns with leadership structures (Clebsch & Jaekle, 1964; Lartey, 2003).
3. Provide training for leaders on integrating collective leadership with pastoral ministry (Banks & Ledbetter, 2004; Maxwell, 2004).
4. Understand church growth not only in quantitative terms, but also in the quality of faith, spiritual maturity and social witness (Warren, 2004; Peters, 2002).

In this way, collective leadership carried out within the framework of pastoral care is not only theologically and contextually relevant, but also makes a significant contribution to the global conversation about the future of church leadership.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that collective leadership significantly strengthens both pastoral ministry and church growth, with pastoral ministry functioning as an important mediating factor. These findings align with the biblical vision of ministry in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12, where diverse gifts work together for the building up of the body of Christ. By integrating theological foundations with quantitative analysis, the study contributes a rare empirical perspective to Indonesian church leadership studies, which often remain descriptive or theoretical.

At the same time, several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design prevents firm causal conclusions, the self-reported data may introduce perceptual bias, and the absence of factor analysis limits psychometric depth. The use of a single congregation also narrows the generalisability of the findings. Even so, the methodological approach remains sufficiently robust to support the interpretations offered.

The results carry practical implications for churches in Indonesia. They underline the need for leadership structures that distribute responsibility and encourage coordinated ministry rather than relying on a single pastoral figure. For such structures to be effective, they must be accompanied by strong pastoral practices – teaching, mentoring, visitation and discipleship – that translate leadership collaboration into tangible congregational growth. These insights offer concrete pathways for churches seeking sustainable ministry grounded in biblical theology.

Future research may build on this work by involving multiple congregations, applying longitudinal designs or incorporating qualitative methods to deepen theological and practical insights. Further psychometric refinement through factor analysis would also strengthen future measurement. Taken together, this study affirms that collective leadership, when embodied through pastoral ministry, provides a theologically faithful and empirically supported foundation for healthy church growth in Indonesia.

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