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Christian Leadership Spirituality: Realizing Effective and Sustainable Church Management in the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa (GMIM)

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Abstract

This study examines the spirituality of Christian leadership in constructing effective and sustainable church management within the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa (GMIM) through socio-humanistic and philosophical approaches. Methodologically, this research employs an analytical-descriptive approach through conceptual study. The primary focus is directed toward the relationship between spiritual values, leadership practices, and the socio-cultural dynamics of Minahasan society. The findings reveal that leadership spirituality functions as a value construction that shapes work ethos, decision-making patterns, and the quality of social relations within church governance. Ecclesiastical leadership is understood as a social practice influenced by local culture and organizational structures. Furthermore, its philosophical foundation explains that spirituality is positioned as an ethical orientation guiding leadership actions toward effectiveness and sustainability. In the final stage, the study integrates these findings by emphasizing that leadership spirituality constitutes an essential factor in developing adaptive, reflective, and sustainable church management within the social context of GMIM.

Keywords: Spirituality, Leadership, Church Management.

INTRODUCTION

Studies on church leadership over the last few decades have tended to be dominated by two principal approaches, namely the theological-doctrinal approach and the managerial-organizational approach. The theological approach generally emphasizes

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the normative dimensions of Christian leadership, such as ministry, shepherding, and spirituality as a calling of faith (Schein, 2010). Meanwhile, the managerial approach places greater emphasis on organizational efficiency, institutional governance, and the professionalization of ecclesiastical systems (Nouwen, 1989). Nevertheless, both approaches tend to operate separately and have not fully integrated the philosophical-spiritual dimension with socio-cultural realities in a contextual manner. Therefore, this study contributes a strategic interdisciplinary approach by integrating multiple paradigms to analyze fundamental problems in church leadership.

Within the context of research on the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa (GMIM), the issue of fragmented approaches has become increasingly relevant. GMIM is not merely a religious institution but also a social entity embedded within the cultural space of Minahasan society, which possesses collective value systems, deliberative traditions, and a strong communal work ethic (Nendissa et al., 2025). However, academic studies specifically linking leadership spirituality with the socio-cultural dynamics of Minahasa within the framework of sustainable church management remain relatively limited. Eka Darmaputera argues that Christian leadership emerges within diverse cultural contexts and therefore requires a philosophical foundation for charismatic leadership (Darmaputera, 2001). Nevertheless, most studies on Christian leadership spirituality primarily focus either on church history or organizational aspects without adequately examining the philosophical-spiritual dimension as the ethical basis of leadership.

Previous studies, such as the work of Purba, have explored the integration of contextual leadership and its philosophical foundations (Butar-Butar & Purba, 2023). Their study examines how leadership spirituality always exists within its contextual circle. In addition, Belay analyzed leadership spirituality from a biblical perspective (Belay, Hermanto, & Rivosa, 2021). Unlike Purba and Belay, Bina (Lase et al., 2025) and Zebua (Zebua & Suparyadi, 2024) both examined integrity patterns in ecclesiastical leadership, although their approaches remained relatively conventional. Based on these previous studies, there remains an analytical gap in understanding spirituality not only as an individual religious experience but also as a philosophical value construction shaping leadership practices within church organizational structures.

Based on this research gap, this study offers novelty in two major aspects. First, it integrates socio-humanistic and philosophical approaches to interpret church leadership not merely as an organizational structure but as the result of fundamental social practices laden with meaning and values (Berger & Luckmann, 2016). This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how spiritual values shape work ethics, decision-making

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patterns, and social relations within the church body. Second, this study positions leadership spirituality as a key variable that is not only normative but also fundamentally operational within church management. Spirituality, in this context, is not understood abstractly but as a concrete ethical orientation embedded in everyday leadership practices.

This article employs Max Weber's theory of charismatic leadership to analyze how social life and cultural capital become benchmarks for leadership. Weber explains charismatic leadership as a form of authority arising from followers' belief in the extraordinary qualities possessed by a leader (Weber, 1978). Charisma may emerge naturally, although there are also structural schemes that shape charismatic leadership. According to Weber, the power of a charismatic leader does not primarily derive from law, tradition, or formal structures, but rather from social recognition that the leader possesses extraordinary abilities, vision, or power (Weber, 1947). This perspective is combined with the ideas of James MacGregor Burns and Bernard M. Bass concerning transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders inspire followers through vision, motivation, social change, and the transformation of fundamental values.

Methodologically, this study employs a descriptive-analytical approach to examine key concepts and leadership practices within the GMIM context. The analysis is conducted through conceptual and contextual interpretation of church leadership dynamics while paying close attention to their relationship with Minahasan cultural values. This approach allows the research not only to remain at the descriptive level but also to enter the philosophical level of meaning-making concerning leadership practices. From a socio-humanistic perspective, church leadership can be understood as a social phenomenon inseparable from cultural structures and surrounding social relations. Meanwhile, from a philosophical perspective, spirituality is positioned as an ethical foundation that directs leadership actions. Therefore, integrating these two perspectives is expected to produce a more comprehensive understanding of how churches are managed within dynamic social contexts.

Objectives

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research design to deeply understand the relationship between Christian leadership spirituality and church management practices within the context of the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa (GMIM). A qualitative approach was chosen because it enables researchers to explore meanings, values, and interpretations attached to ecclesiastical leadership

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practices, which cannot merely be reduced to numerical data or statistical measurements (Creswell, 2015). Epistemologically, this study departs from the assumption that the reality of church leadership is a social construction formed through the interaction between spiritual values, organizational structures, and local cultural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, understanding this phenomenon requires an interpretative approach capable of reading the meanings behind practices rather than merely observing their external forms.

The primary data source in this study was obtained through library research, as this article aims to introduce a more philosophical conceptual framework. The literature review involved examining various relevant materials, including books, scientific journals, academic articles, ecclesiastical documents, and historical sources related to Christian leadership, spirituality, church organizational management, and the socio-cultural context of Minahasa. These sources were selected selectively based on conceptual relevance and analytical depth regarding the topic under investigation (Moleong, 2018). In the data collection process, this study employed documentation techniques by identifying, classifying, and reviewing various written sources related to the research theme (Arikunto, 2013). The collected data were then systematically analyzed to identify conceptual patterns related to leadership spirituality and its implications for church management.

Data analysis techniques were conducted through content analysis and interpretative analysis. Content analysis was used to identify major themes emerging from the literature, while interpretative analysis was employed to understand the philosophical and social meanings of these concepts within the context of GMIM church leadership. The analytical process was iterative, involving repeated reading, categorization, and interpretation of the data to obtain deep and consistent understanding. In addition, this study utilized a contextual approach by situating concepts derived from the literature within the socio-cultural framework of Minahasan society. This approach is important to ensure that the analysis is not ahistorical or detached from the surrounding social realities, but remains rooted in relevant empirical contexts.

DISCUSSION

Dichotomy of Approaches in Church Leadership Studies: A Theoretical Approach

Studies on church leadership over the last several decades demonstrate a tendency toward the dominance of two principal approaches, namely the theological-doctrinal approach and the managerial-organizational approach. These two approaches emerge from different scholarly traditions, and each contributes significantly to

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understanding the practice of church leadership. However, in many studies, both approaches continue to operate separately and therefore have not yet produced a comprehensive understanding of church leadership as a simultaneously spiritual, social, and organizational practice. Consequently, the impact of an excessively theological-doctrinal orientation has resulted in an anomic paradigm (paradigmatic anomaly). In line with Thomas Kuhn's notion of paradigm revolution, such conditions require a fundamental and structured transformation of knowledge (Kuhn, 1970). Kuhn provides an important conceptual foundation for this discussion, particularly regarding how interdisciplinary methods operate within pluralistic frameworks.

The theological-doctrinal approach is rooted in the Christian theological tradition that positions leadership as a divine calling. Within this perspective, church leaders are understood as shepherds of the congregation who possess spiritual responsibilities to serve, guide, and preserve the faith community (Stott, 1992). The primary focus of this approach lies in normative dimensions such as spiritual character, fidelity to biblical teachings, and moral life reflecting the example of Christ. Stott appears to argue that church leaders are not merely organizational managers, but also servants of God who carry out spiritual mandates within the congregation. Leadership understood as a mandate generally operates through missional principles because missionary doctrine is embedded within its leadership pattern (Bosch, 1991). Therefore, one of the fundamental expectations in the study of Christian spiritual leadership concerns the philosophical-conceptual understanding of a leader's morality.

Within several strands of literature discussing Christian leadership, the central orientation of this approach is strongly influenced by the thought of Henri J. M. Nouwen, who emphasizes that authentic church leadership is grounded in the spirituality of service rather than power or control (Nouwen, 1989). Similarly, John Stott argues that Christian leadership must always remain centered on the Gospel and the character of Christ as the ethical foundation of church ministry (Stott, 1992). Although the theological-doctrinal approach functions to preserve the identity of the church as a faith community, it is frequently criticized for giving insufficient attention to the complexity of modern church organizations. In the contemporary church context, including Indonesia, the church does not merely function as a spiritual community, but also emerges as a social institutional entity managing human resources, finances, and increasingly complex ministerial programs.

On the other hand, the managerial-organizational approach views the church as a symbolic representation of a bureaucratized social organization requiring effective and

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efficient systems of management. This perspective emphasizes the fundamental principles of modern management such as strategic planning, organization, leadership, and performance evaluation as essential components within church leadership studies. In this context, the church is understood through its internal-external organizational character within the language of institutions that must adapt to social, technological, and economic transformations. Such flexibility beyond rigid dichotomies actually contributes alternative perspectives for researchers, although the means of interpreting them often remain ambivalent. Therefore, this study proposes a relatively new approach by attempting to integrate practical schemes with philosophical foundations.

The managerial-organizational approach is heavily influenced by the thought of Peter F. Drucker, who emphasized that nonprofit organizations, including churches, require professional management in order to function effectively in achieving their social objectives (Drucker, 1990). Within this framework, the church is perceived as an organization that must be managed rationally and systematically so that ministry may function effectively. Furthermore, Edgar H. Schein argues that organizational culture significantly influences leadership effectiveness, including within religious institutions (Schein, 2010). This implies that the church also constitutes a cultural space possessing values, norms, and interactional patterns that must be consciously managed. Schein's explanation reinforces the argument that patterns of Christian spiritual leadership form an essential basis for managing culture, both as an internal and external social construction.

Nevertheless, the managerial approach proposed by Drucker also possesses limitations because it tends to reduce the church into merely a functional organization. In several cases, spirituality and theological values may become marginalized by the logic of efficiency and productivity. Such tensions generate problems between the demands of organizational professionalism and the identity of the church as a faith community. This explains why the dichotomy of approaches not only influences academic documentation through scholarly writing, but also affects practical realities. Beyond influencing leadership patterns, relations of power likewise become oppressive shadows, which is why bureaucratic cultures of obedience frequently marginalize peripheral voices (Foucault, 1977). Consequently, as a mediating framework capable of bridging these tensions, this study proposes a practical-theoretical scheme asserting that Christian leadership spirituality is not merely conceptual, but also material in practice.

The dichotomy between theological-doctrinal and managerial-organizational approaches in church leadership studies demonstrates an unresolved epistemological tension. The theological-doctrinal approach positions leadership as a divine calling

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emphasizing spirituality, moral integrity, and fidelity to faith traditions. However, its normative orientation is often insufficiently responsive to the complexity of contemporary church organizations that demand managerial competence, structural adaptation, and effective resource management. Conversely, the managerial-organizational approach offers a rational-instrumental framework focusing on efficiency, effectiveness, and institutional governance. Although this approach contributes significantly to the professionalization of church ministry, it tends to reduce spirituality into a secondary aspect, thereby potentially reducing the theological meaning of leadership into merely an administrative function.

As a consequence, conceptual boundaries between spiritual, charismatic, and organizational leadership become increasingly blurred. Such uncertainty reflects a paradigmatic stagnation within church leadership studies, in which existing analytical frameworks remain incapable of comprehensively integrating spiritual and structural dimensions. From Kuhn's perspective, this condition may be understood as a phase of scientific anomaly demanding a paradigm shift. Therefore, an integrative approach is required that understands church leadership as a holistic socio-spiritual praxis. Within this framework, spirituality functions as a source of values and ethical orientation, while management becomes an operational instrument for realizing the church's vision. Thus, church leadership should no longer be understood dichotomously, but rather as a dynamic synthesis between faith and organizational rationality capable of responding to the complexity of social contexts more effectively and sustainably.

Furthermore, from the perspective of social science, such tensions may be explained through Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, which argues that structures and human actions mutually constitute one another (Giddens, 1984). More specifically, church leadership cannot merely be understood as a collection of organizational structures or spiritual systems, but rather as a tactical social practice formed through the interaction of both dimensions. This interaction supports the development of spirituality even though no absolute measure exists. Giddens' perspective demonstrates how such patterns expand through relational constructions grounded in social interaction. Although sociological in nature, these networks may emerge through organizational structures and depend substantially upon the integrity of leaders in constructing relational networks.

Moreover, the social-constructivist approach of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann explains that social reality, including church institutions, is formed through processes of interaction and socially constructed meanings (Berger & Luckmann, 2016). This strengthens the argument that church leadership constitutes a social construction

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simultaneously influenced by spiritual values and organizational structures. Therefore, the preliminary conclusion is relatively straightforward, namely that there exists a need to develop more integrative and interdisciplinary approaches within church leadership studies. Integrative and interdisciplinary approaches no longer separate spirituality from management because both are viewed as complementary dimensions. In this regard, spirituality provides ethical direction and meaning, while management offers operational instruments for effectively realizing the church's ministerial vision.

Within the GMIM context, an integrative approach to church leadership becomes highly significant because the church functions not merely as a religious institution, but also lives within networks of social entities amidst the cultural, economic, and social dynamics of Minahasan society. In simple terms, church leadership can no longer be narrowly understood solely as a spiritual function, because it must integrate theological, cultural, and organizational dimensions in a balanced manner. Spirituality remains the primary foundation providing ethical direction in church ministry. Nevertheless, Minahasan cultural values such as collectivism, deliberation, and social solidarity must also be integrated as contextual strengths within ecclesiastical decision-making processes. At the same time, technological developments and the demands of modern managerial systems require the church to possess adaptive and professional organizational capacities.

GMIM, Leadership Spirituality, and the Minahasan Cultural Context

The concept of charismatic leadership within Weber's perspective has been extensively revisited in the literature of sociology, organization, and modern leadership studies. Weber positioned charisma as a form of authority derived from followers' recognition of the extraordinary qualities (nature of power) possessed by a leader, functioning as an agent of social change and as a constructor of a new social order. Harold B. Jones, in the International Journal of Social Science Research, emphasized that Weber's charismatic model constitutes a social process beginning from dissatisfaction with the status quo and culminating in the transformation of social structures through the emotional legitimacy granted by followers to the leader (Jones, 2001). This reinforces Weber's argument that charisma is not merely individual in nature, but also relational and situational, depending upon the positioning in which the subject leads and the community toward whom leadership is exercised.

Meanwhile, in the Journal of Classical Sociology, Christopher Adair-Toteff explained that Weber sharply distinguished charismatic authority from traditional and

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rational-legal authority. Charisma is “extraordinary” and personal, thereby possessing revolutionary potential because it is not bound by formal regulations or bureaucratic structures (Adair-Toteff, 2005). Christopher interprets Weber’s conception of charisma as being constructed through personal ways of life closely attached to traditional lineage. His interpretation is consistent with the framework that understands charismatic Christian spiritual leadership in managing church organizations through the leader’s provision of traditional authority, such as “divine revelation,” or even rational-legal authority, such as formal educational preparation before exercising ministry. Within the rational-legal framework described by Christopher, GMIM leadership is more appropriately situated within a rational-legal scheme because it adheres to Protestant doctrine.

Indeed, charismatic leadership, particularly in the administration of church institutions, is often identified with pastors who are believed to have “received divine revelation” or a “calling to ministry.” However, this concept is more closely associated with the charismatic movement rather than Protestantism. Paul Joosse, in the Journal of Classical Sociology, developed a constructivist interpretation of Weberian charisma by emphasizing that charisma is the result of social construction through interactions between leaders and followers, rather than a fixed inherited attribute or “bloodline” (Joosse, 2014). This perspective expands Weber’s concept by positioning charisma as a continuous process of “charismatization” occurring socially. Within organizational studies, an article published in The Leadership Quarterly demonstrates that Weber’s concept of charisma became the foundation for modern transformational leadership theory, wherein leaders are understood as agents of change capable of inspiring followers and enabling them to transcend personal interests (Conger, 1993). In simple terms, this demonstrates the continuing relevance of Weber’s theory within contemporary leadership studies.

Borrowing from research published in the Journal of Organizational Behavior, charismatic authority is emphasized as playing an important role in organizational transformation because it creates emotional loyalty that cannot be explained solely through formal structures (Conger & Kanungo, 1994). Therefore, studies concerning GMIM leadership cannot be separated from their relationship with the complex socio-cultural structure of Minahasa. Within this context, the church does not merely appear as a religious institution operating within the spiritual sphere, but also as a social entity directly involved in the construction of values, power relations, and cultural practices within society. Consequently, interpretations of leadership spirituality within GMIM cannot be conducted solely through normative theological approaches, but must be situated

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within a socio-critical analytical framework that views the church simultaneously as both a product and a producer of culture.

Within Berger's sociology of knowledge perspective, social reality, including church institutions, is the result of human construction through processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization. This means that leadership within the organizational sphere of GMIM does not exist within an abstract space, but is instead shaped through historical interactions between Christian faith and Minahasan culture. Since the encounter between Minahasan culture and Christianity, conflicts of principle have frequently emerged in various dimensions, with doctrinal issues constituting the most significant tension (Pinontoan, 2019). Although this process has produced forms of leadership that are not epistemologically neutral, the encounter between culture and Christianity always remains within networks of social meaning that continue to be negotiated (Lattu, 2018). As an effort to negotiate such tensions, intergenerational dialogue becomes necessary in order to avoid being trapped within a singular perspective or "single narrative."

Leadership spirituality as a social construction constitutes a historical fact that binds subjects within various institutional contexts. Leadership spirituality within GMIM is frequently understood as a transcendental quality attached to the figure of church leaders, particularly those perceived as recipients of divine revelation or calling. However, GMIM itself does not adhere to charismatic theological streams because it emerged from Protestant roots. Critically examined, such spirituality actually constitutes a socially constructed value system formed through the institutionalization of ecclesiastical values and local culture. In this sense, spirituality does not merely stand as representation or as a purely metaphysical entity, but rather as the product of social interaction functioning as a mechanism of legitimacy within church leadership structures. Its nature is therefore constructive and deeply influenced by religious teachings.

The concept of spiritual leadership as proposed by Louis W. Fry emphasizes that spirituality-based leadership functions to create meaning, vision, and altruistic love within organizations (Fry, 2003). However, within the context of GMIM, this concept requires deeper criticism through the following question: "Does spirituality truly function as a transformative ethical source, or does it instead become a mechanism of structural legitimacy that reinforces ecclesiastical hierarchy?" At this point, it becomes important to interpret leadership spirituality as a discursive practice, namely a discourse that shapes the way congregations understand church authority, whether in divine or moral terms. In other words, spirituality is not merely a formal project that is "implemented," but is

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continuously constructed through language, liturgy, church organizational structures, and culture itself.

Minahasan culture as a structure of meaning also preserves dimensions of charismatic leadership inherited through the tradition of wali'an (ancient Minahasan religious leaders). Furthermore, Minahasan culture plays a central role in shaping patterns of leadership within GMIM, whether emerging from tradition or from processes of negotiation. Values such as collectivism, deliberation, and social solidarity become cultural foundations that support the operation of a normative framework shaping how the church functions institutionally. Practices such as mapalus or ma'ando (kinship-based cooperation systems) represent what anthropology identifies as a communal reciprocity system, namely a social system based upon reciprocal exchange within the community. This framework explains why Minahasan communities tend to maintain closer relationships with their leaders and frequently operate through more informal and non-bureaucratic patterns.

Nevertheless, the integration of culture and Christianity within Christian leadership is not always harmonious because tensions continually color social spaces. In many cases, processes of cultural selection and reinterpretation occur within church institutions, where certain values are accommodated while others are renegotiated according to institutional interests. Such discourse frequently appeared within the records of Dutch missionaries who labeled Minahasa as alfoeren or alifuru (Graafland, 1991). This process clearly demonstrates that culture is not a static entity, but rather a site of meaning contestation. Based upon this perspective, church leadership within GMIM may be understood as a form of cultural hybridity, namely the fusion of Christian values and local culture that produces a form of leadership neither fully theological nor entirely traditional.

A deeper problem also emerges in the tension between spirituality and institutionalization. One of the principal issues within GMIM leadership is the tension between spirituality as a normative ideal and church institutionalization as structural reality. Schein explains that every organization possesses three layers of culture: artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. Within the GMIM context, spirituality is frequently positioned at the level of articulated values; however, in practice, it risks being reduced into symbolic artifacts without producing genuine structural transformation. This condition creates what may be termed an institutional paradox: "the church claims itself as a spiritual community, yet operates through highly bureaucratic organizational logic." Excessive bureaucratization risks causing leadership spirituality to lose its critical power and become merely institutional legitimacy. All of this remains

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embedded within binding power relations involving leaders and their institutional commitments.

This also opens dimensions of unequal power within church leadership structures, potentially resulting in immoral practices. Furthermore, critical interpretations of GMIM must also consider the dimensions of power relations within ecclesiastical leadership structures. Borrowing Weber's typology, authority within organizations may take traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic forms. Within GMIM, these three forms of authority frequently coexist simultaneously, although not always in ideal balance because inequalities often occur systematically and massively. Charismatic authority, for example, is frequently legitimized through narratives of spirituality, while rational-legal authority is embodied through synodal structures and church bureaucracy. The tension between these forms creates complex leadership dynamics in which legitimacy appears not only to derive from formal structures, but also from congregational spiritual recognition. Such symbolic legitimacy may be reflected in hegemonic expressions such as, "he is a pastor, wise, and a servant of God."

Optionally, leadership as socio-spiritual praxis should be displayed openly in order to prevent disorder within ecclesiastical organizational structures. From the entirety of this analysis, leadership within GMIM may be understood as social-spiritual praxis, namely practice situated at the intersection between faith, culture, and organization. The proposed approach rejects the dichotomy between spirituality and management, and instead positions both within a dialectical relationship. Furthermore, leadership is no longer understood as a "neutral" position or disposition because leadership constitutes a continuous meaning-making process occurring through social interaction within the church. The fundamental thesis is that spirituality is not a static entity, but rather an ethical energy continuously negotiated within organizational practice.

Based upon the analytical patterns concerning GMIM leadership, this study demonstrates that church leadership studies require interdisciplinary approaches integrating theology, sociology, anthropology, and organizational theory. Singular readings or "single narratives," whether purely theological or managerial, are no longer adequate for explaining the complexity of contemporary ecclesiastical realities. Therefore, GMIM leadership in its effort to achieve managerial effectiveness and efficiency may be understood as an epistemic-practical space (an equilibrium between ideology and practice) wherein spirituality, culture, and organizational structures interact dynamically. Consequently, leadership is never final, but always in the process of

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becoming—formed, negotiated, and reconstructed according to continuously changing social contexts, even within conditions of dishoming or discomfort.

Integration of Spirituality, Culture, and Church Management as Scholarly Novelty

Studies concerning church leadership within contemporary academic discourse reveal the existence of a significant tendency toward epistemological fragmentation. On the one hand, theological-doctrinal approaches position spirituality as the center of transcendent and absolute faith normativity (Bass, Bernard M., 1994). On the other hand, managerial-organizational approaches construct the church as an institutional entity subjected to the logic of efficiency, effectiveness, and instrumental rationality. Although both approaches provide important contributions to the development of church leadership studies, in practice they frequently operate within separated relations (parallel discourse), because of their excessively operational nature (Fowler, 1987), thereby failing to produce an adequate conceptual synthesis—an "antithesis of antithesis"—capable of interpreting the complexity of the church simultaneously as an institution and as a faith community.

Based on the foregoing interpretation, this article offers novelty situated in an integrative effort that connects leadership spirituality with socio-humanistic and philosophical approaches, thereby generating a more comprehensive analytical framework for understanding church management. Such a framework has been widely developed within interdisciplinary methods (plural approaches) as an effort to reject the "single narrative" derived from feminist notions of "episteme-liberation" (Held, 1995). Nevertheless, this integrative effort is not merely methodological, but also epistemological and practical, because it attempts to reconstruct (re-) perspectives regarding church leadership as a dynamic socio-spiritual phenomenon rather than merely an administrative structure or a religious expression isolated from approaches concerning feeling and human sensibility.

Conceptually, leadership spirituality within this reinterpretative framework is not understood in an essentialist manner as a "theological fundamental," nor as an inward quality inherently attached to individual leaders, but rather as a socially constructed meaning system formed through interactions between theological texts, organizational practices, and cultural contexts. Referring to Berger's perspective of social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 2016), the reality of church leadership is understood as the result of dialectical processes between the externalization of values, the objectification of institutions, and the internalization of meaning within faith

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communities. This implies that spirituality is not a static entity, but rather a dynamic process continuously negotiated within ecclesiastical social spaces.

Within another framework, culture is positioned as a structuring structure (structural normalization) that simultaneously influences and is influenced by church leadership practices. In the context of Minahasan society, values such as collectivism, deliberation, and social solidarity are not merely dominant cultural backgrounds, but also function as a normative framework shaping the way the church manages authority and decision-making processes. This perspective corresponds with the observations of an ambtenaar (Dutch colonial bureaucratic official) who stated that Minahasan society lives through cultural solidarity (Robertus, 1886). Such realities can be observed through social practices such as ma'ando, which represents a form of communal rationality that cannot be fully explained through the logic of modern managerialism, but instead possesses strong ethical and relational foundations.

Church leadership may also be interpreted as a form of cultural hybridity, namely the result of encounters between Christian values and local cultural structures that generate unique and contextual configurations of leadership. This process of hybridity does not occur harmoniously or automatically, but instead contains tensions, negotiations, and even conflicts of meaning between faith traditions and cultural practices. Furthermore, the church does not merely function as a spiritual agent, because it simultaneously exists within arenas of symbolic and cultural contestation. This perspective aligns with Homi Bhabha's concept of the "third space" as a site for negotiating identity (Gates, 2004). Indeed, the primary indication concerns the repositioning of leadership itself, from a merely normative managerial-organizational orientation toward a transformative orientation.

Likewise, church management within this integrative perspective is no longer narrowly understood as an administrative mechanism oriented toward efficiency, as emphasized within Peter F. Drucker's modern organizational paradigm (Drucker, 1990), but rather as a praxis containing ethical, spiritual, and social dimensions simultaneously. The effectiveness of church management therefore cannot merely be measured through structural achievements or programmatic success, because such measurements may produce unequal contestation or even "moral arrogance." More importantly, effectiveness must be evaluated according to the extent to which ecclesiastical practices are capable of reflecting spiritual values and sustaining social relations within faith communities. Consequently, leadership spirituality functions as an ethical orientation system that provides normative and ontological moral direction for managerial actions.

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CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the discourse on church leadership, particularly within the context of GMIM, can no longer be adequately understood through a single approach, whether theological-doctrinal or managerial-organizational. Although both approaches provide significant and crucial contributions, they simultaneously generate an epistemological fragmentation—an epistemic stagnation or a "critical moment of knowledge saturation"—that obstructs a holistic understanding of church leadership as a socio-spiritual praxis. The present article clearly argues that thinking out of the box—moving beyond intellectual comfort zones—offers a new horizon within the diversity of approaches. As an effort to reduce such fragmentations, critical reasoning becomes an essential point in developing relatively novel ideas.

Within the GMIM context, church leadership constitutes a social construction formed through the dynamic interaction between Christian spirituality, Minahasan culture, and ecclesiastical organizational structures. Local values such as collectivism, deliberation, and solidarity do not merely function as conventional normative cultural backgrounds; rather, they operate as a normative framework shaping leadership patterns. Historically, however, the integration process has never been neutral, but instead characterized by negotiation, selection, and even contestation of meaning between local traditions and church institutionalization. Nevertheless, initiating a paradigm transformation through the approach of Christian leadership spirituality, combined with social and philosophical inquiry, may provide a more fundamental orientation.

The conclusion further emphasizes that leadership spirituality cannot be reduced merely to a normative or symbolic dimension; instead, it must be understood as a socially constructed meaning system operating within organizational practices. This conceptual framework enables spirituality to function simultaneously as an ethical orientation and a mechanism of legitimacy capable of both strengthening and critically evaluating church structures. At the same time, the tension between spiritual and managerial dimensions indicates the existence of a paradigmatic stagnation within church leadership studies. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach is required to bridge this dichotomy through the integration of theology, sociology, anthropology, and organizational theory, so that latent anomalies may be addressed through both conceptual innovation and practical application.

Accordingly, the principal novelty of this study lies in the formulation of church leadership as a socio-spiritual praxis, namely a practice that dialectically integrates faith, culture, and organizational rationality. In this sense, leadership is no longer understood

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merely as existential managerial operations or as a formal structural position, but rather as an “essence” emphasizing the ongoing dynamic process of meaning-making within changing social contexts. Consequently, this approach opens space for a more adaptive model of church management, characterized by a reflective, empathetic, and sustainable orientation in responding to the complexities of contemporary society.

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