

Collaboration and Transformation of Church Ministers in District X Medan Aceh towards Increasing Congregation Attendance at HKBP Medan and Surrounding Areas

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Abstract: This research aims to evaluate the impact of collaboration and transformation within church ministries on the rising congregational attendance at HKBP in District X, Medan Aceh. The study is grounded in the urgent need for churches to adapt to the digital era and by strengthening ministry collaboration and implementing innovative service approaches. A quantitative approach was employed using an associative analysis method. Data were collected by distributing Likert-scale questionnaires to church ministers and active congregants in the research area. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and both simple and multiple linear regression utilizing SPSS software. The study involved 120 respondents ($n = 120$). The multiple linear regression analysis yielded an R^2 value of 0,654, an F -value of 110,56, and a significance level of $p < 0.01$. The findings indicate that ministry collaboration, which includes coordination among ministers and active congregational participation, has a significant and positive influence on congregational attendance ($\beta = 0,325$). Similarly, ministry transformation realized through program innovation, the utilization of digital technology, and capacity building for ministers has a meaningful impact on the level of congregational participation ($\beta = 0,485$). Collectively, these two independent variables contribute to an increase in congregational attendance, with ministry transformation demonstrating a more dominant influence than collaboration. This study theoretically enriches the literature on church ministry management within a quantitative framework, while providing practical recommendations for the HKBP church in District X to design ministry strategies that are contextual, collaborative, and responsive to contemporary developments.

Keywords: Ministry Collaboration, Ministry Transformation, Church Workers, Congregational Involvement, HKBP

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi pengaruh kolaborasi serta transformasi dalam pelayanan gereja terhadap peningkatan kehadiran jemaat HKBP di wilayah Distrik X Medan Aceh. Latar belakang dari studi ini didasarkan pada urgensi gereja untuk menghadapi tantangan era digital dan situasi pasca-pandemi melalui penguatan kolaborasi pelayanan serta penerapan inovasi dalam pendekatan pelayanan. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan metode analisis asosiatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui penyebaran angket berskala Likert kepada para pelayan dan jemaat aktif di area penelitian. Analisis data dilakukan dengan teknik statistik deskriptif, uji korelasi Pearson, serta regresi linier baik sederhana maupun berganda dengan menggunakan perangkat lunak SPSS sebagai alat bantu analisis. Penelitian ini melibatkan 120 responden ($n = 120$). Hasil uji regresi linier berganda menunjukkan nilai R^2 sebesar 0,654 nilai F sebesar 110,56, dan tingkat signifikansi $p < 0,01$. Temuan studi ini mengindikasikan bahwa kolaborasi dalam pelayanan, termasuk koordinasi antar pelayan dan partisipasi aktif jemaat, memiliki pengaruh signifikan dan positif terhadap kehadiran jemaat (koefisien regresi = 0,325. Begitu juga, transformasi pelayanan yang diwujudkan melalui inovasi dalam program, pemanfaatan teknologi digital, dan peningkatan kapasitas pelayan, memberikan dampak berarti terhadap tingkat partisipasi jemaat (koefisien regres = 0,485. Secara bersama-sama, kedua variabel independen tersebut berperan dalam meningkatkan kehadiran jemaat, dengan transformasi pelayanan menunjukkan pengaruh yang lebih kuat dibandingkan kolaborasi. Penelitian ini memperkaya secara teoritis literatur mengenai manajemen pelayanan gerejawi dalam kerangka pendekatan kuantitatif, sekaligus memberikan rekomendasi praktis bagi gereja HKBP di Distrik X untuk menyusun strategi pelayanan yang kontekstual, berbasis kerja sama, dan responsif terhadap perkembangan zaman.

Kata Kunci : Kolaborasi, Transformasi, Pelayanan Gereja, Kehadiran Jemaat, HKBP

INTRODUCTION

Church ministry in the digital and post-pandemic eras faces the demand to undergo strategic changes and strengthen the synergy between ministers and the congregation. In District X Medan-Aceh, the HKBP church, which is rooted in Batak culture and adheres to an episcopal presbyterian system, faces challenges in increasing congregational involvement, both in physical and virtual attendance. This condition is the primary rationale for this research, titled: "Collaboration and Transformation of Church Ministers in District X Medan Aceh toward the Increasing Attendance of HKBP Congregations in Medan and Surrounding Areas".

Previous studies have revealed that cooperation among church ministers including pastors, elders (sintua), church teachers, and categorical board members along with active congregational participation, yields a tangible impact on the enthusiasm and involvement of church members (April, 2022). On the other hand, changes in church ministry involving the renewal of liturgical forms, service strategies, the utilization of information technology, and capacity building for ministers have proven capable of enhancing ministry effectiveness and congregational involvement (Penabiblos et al., 2023).

For instance, a study conducted at GBI Gradasi Bekasi 1 found that the use of online worship, virtual communication, and hybrid services successfully attracted congregational interest, particularly among the youth (Rezeki et al., 2023). In the context of technological development, Witzel (2023) stated that the Industry 5.0 era requires churches to integrate artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and digital platforms as integral parts of their ministry and mission strategies (Ronda et al., 2024).

Furthermore, research emphasizes the importance of revitalizing church ministry through social media, applications, and other digital systems so that the ministry remains grounded in faith while adapting to contemporary changes (Conference et al., 2024). Another study in Batam reminds us that the success of digital transformation in the church is highly dependent on readiness in digital literacy and ethical integrity in ministry, ensuring that spiritual depth and personal relationships are maintained (Natalia & Harefa, 2025).

Based on the background outlined above, the primary issues focused on in this research are as follows: How significant is the influence of collaboration among church ministers in District X on the level of congregational attendance?, How does ministry transformation encompassing methods, programs, technology, and training contribute to increasing congregational attendance?, Do collaboration and ministry transformation, both simultaneously and partially, have a significant impact on congregational attendance?

This research is crucial because HKBP District X needs to scientifically and measurably understand the factors that genuinely affect congregational attendance. An associative quantitative approach is used to analyze the relationship between the independent variables (collaboration and ministry transformation) and the dependent variable (congregational attendance). The results are expected to serve as a foundation for establishing more efficient and contextual ministry policies in facing contemporary social and technological challenges. Collaboration in church ministry can be understood as sustainable interpersonal interaction, devoid of significant power imbalances, aimed at fulfilling congregational needs and optimally utilizing available resources (Bjorke, 2018).

In practice, collaboration is not merely a trend or an effort to dismantle organizational "silos" but a strategic tool to achieve tangible outcomes for the ministry. The concept of shared leadership, as outlined by Kristantara (2021), demonstrates that the ministry structure is not solely centered on

formal positions but extends to the congregational level through the roles of group leaders. Church Ministry Transformation can generally be understood as a significant process of change in the form, nature, or function of an object or subject. In the context of church ministry, transformation is an increasingly evident reality in line with changing times. The Digital and Hybrid Era: Ministry transformation involves strategic changes that include new ministry methods, worship design renewals, the active use of digital technology, and the enhancement of minister quality through training programs. The advancement of technology, particularly the application of artificial intelligence in church ministry, can be viewed as a form of God's cultural mandate to humanity (Tuhan, 2024).

Technology must be used with ethical awareness, ensuring that digital advancements do not weaken faith identity but rather strengthen the testimony and relevance of the Gospel Post-Pandemic Ministry Adaptation: The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated transformation processes. Post-pandemic ministry approaches have shifted from being "church-centered" institutions to more "God-centered" spiritual relations (Nugroho, 2021). The level of congregational attendance is often used as a primary benchmark in assessing the effectiveness of church ministry. An organizational structure that provides space for active congregational participation in decision-making produces a strong shared sense of responsibility, subsequently impacting the increase in congregational attendance and loyalty to the church (Nurtjahja & Marbun, 2025). The integration of digital approaches and collaborative organizational workflows, when grounded in transformative leadership, has proven capable of fostering more inclusive services and sustaining congregation participation. The concept of shared leadership according to (Kristantara, 2021) opens avenues for the equitable distribution of responsibility and creates a stronger service network, thereby contributing to increased congregational engagement. On the other hand, the implementation of spiritual transformation influenced by advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technology, as revealed by (Nurtjahja & Marbun, 2025), can enhance efficiency in service execution when combined with a collaborative management approach. Simultaneously, this enables ministers to focus more deeply on personal and profound congregational discipleship.

Understanding these factors helps identify adoption barriers and design appropriate strategies to enhance youth engagement with technology within the church context (Ojo, Adelaja, Adio, & Afolaranmi, 2024). The historical trajectory demonstrates that religious practices have always progressed alongside technological advancements, shaping how believers interact with their faith and community. In ancient times, technology played a pivotal role in constructing and reinforcing religious rituals. The construction of monumental temples, sacred architecture, and the development of writing systems for holy texts served as means to preserve and express faith (Bowker, 2016). Astronomical knowledge in Mesopotamia was utilized to determine worship calendars, while in ancient Egypt, sophisticated irrigation systems supported religious celebrations.

Throughout history, technological advancements—from the printing press to broadcast media have continuously shaped religious practices and facilitated the dissemination of faith (Bowker, 2016; Hoover & Clark, 2002). However, the digital revolution and the recent post-pandemic situation demand more than mere technological adoption; they necessitate a comprehensive transformation of ministry and active, structured collaboration among church workers.

While previous studies have broadly explored digital ecclesiology and online church adaptation globally (Campbell, 2022; Ojo et al., 2024), there is a distinct empirical gap regarding localized contexts. Specifically, there is limited quantitative research examining how ministry collaboration and transformation directly influence congregational attendance within the unique

cultural and presbyterial-synodal system of the HKBP church, particularly in District X Medan Aceh. The empirical reality in this district shows fluctuating physical and virtual attendance, highlighting the urgent need for a contextualized strategy.

Therefore, this research directs its focus on the relationship between these specific variables. It is hypothesized that sustainable interpersonal collaboration among church ministers (X1) combined with strategic digital and methodological transformation (X2) will cohesively drive a significant increase in congregational attendance (Y). By addressing this research gap, the study provides a focused empirical analysis rather than a broad historical overview, directly linking theoretical concepts of pastoral innovation to tangible congregational outcomes. The digital revolution from the late 20th century to the early 21st century ushered religious practices into the online realm. The internet, social media, and mobile applications enabled the formation of virtual spiritual communities that transcend geographical boundaries (Campbell, 2022). Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have been utilized to build fellowship, share spiritual content, and expand church ministry (Horsfield & Tazzyman, 2018; Corrigan & Carlson, 2015). This potential opens significant opportunities for churches to reach the tech-savvy younger generation without compromising the spiritual depth that lies at the core of Christian worship (Ojo et al., 2024).

Developments in communication and information technology have transformed how congregations, particularly the younger generation, interact with worship practices. One relevant theoretical framework for understanding this phenomenon is the Diffusion of Innovations Theory developed by Everett Rogers (1962, 2003). This theory explains how an innovation is introduced, accepted, and adopted by members of a social system. In the church context, innovations can range from live-streamed worship services and mobile applications for spiritual discipleship to the utilization of virtual reality as a medium for faith learning. Rogers notes that the adoption process begins with the "innovators" group, who are quick to try new technologies, followed by "early adopters" who hold significant influence within the community. For instance, churches that integrated live streaming into their liturgy early on were able to reach wider audiences and facilitate the participation of congregants unable to attend physically (Cho, Negen, & Mager, 2019). This allows the church to design appropriate approaches through training, faith formation, and guidance in technology usage.

Another crucial aspect is the communication channels used to diffuse information about the innovation. In church ministry, these channels may include social media, official websites, fellowship networks, and direct encouragement from spiritual leaders (Campbell, 2022). Effective communication strategies not only promote the benefits of technology but also address concerns such as the loss of spiritual depth or the displacement of face-to-face interactions. Rogers (1962) describes the innovation-decision process through five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Among young congregants, this process occurs when they consider using digital media in worship beginning with gaining knowledge of the technology, weighing its benefits, deciding to use it, putting it into practice, and finally confirming the decision based on their experience (Hsu & Huang, 2018). Consequently, churches can strategically manage digital transformation, ensuring that technological implementation is not merely a temporary trend, but a means to deepen faith and expand ministry outreach.

To ensure that social media utilization remains effective and aligned with the church's mission, a clear strategy is required. Shared content must be consistent with church values and delivered in edifying language. Involving the congregation in the content creation process can enhance a sense of ownership while enriching perspectives. Programs such as spiritual webinars,

online Bible classes, or Q&A sessions with pastors can increase active congregational participation. Furthermore, churches need to provide education regarding digital ethics, wise social media usage, and the importance of maintaining a balance between online and spiritual life. Thus, digital technology serves not only as a communication tool but also as a forum for faith formation that strengthens the congregation to remain rooted in the Word of God amid a fast-paced era.

Overall, the transformation of pastoral ministry through social media utilization opens vast opportunities for churches to reach and serve congregations effectively amidst the dynamics of technological advancement. The presence of social media serves not only as a means of communication but also as a strategic medium to strengthen spiritual connectivity, expand ministry scope, and adapt pastoral methods to contemporary human interaction patterns. With the right approach, the church can maintain its relevance while responding to the continuously evolving spiritual needs of the congregation in alignment with changing times.

METHODS

Based on the formulation of the research questions and the established theoretical framework, the hypotheses in this study are formulated as follows:

H1: Ministry collaboration (X1) has a positive and significant partial effect on congregational attendance (Y) at HKBP District X Medan and surrounding areas.

H2: Ministry transformation (X2) has a positive and significant partial effect on congregational attendance (Y) at HKBP District X Medan and surrounding areas.

H3: Ministry collaboration (X1) and ministry transformation (X2) have a positive and significant simultaneous effect on congregational attendance (Y) at HKBP District X Medan and surrounding areas. This research applies a quantitative approach aimed at examining the impact of collaboration and church service transformation on the increase of HKBP congregation attendance in the Medan area and its surroundings. The population in this study consisted of all active participants in church ministry activities in District X.

The population in this study consisted of all active participants in church ministry activities comprising pastors, elders (sintua), and active congregants across various resorts in HKBP District X Medan Aceh, with an estimated total population of 2,500 individuals. The sample was selected using purposive sampling techniques based on specific inclusion criteria: (1) registered as an active congregant or church worker in District X for at least one year, and (2) consistently participating in church activities or worship services.

Based on these criteria, a sample size of 120 respondents was established. This number is considered robust and adequately satisfies the minimum requirements for multiple linear regression analysis, aligning with the rule of thumb proposed by Hair et al., which suggests a minimum of 15 to 20 observations per independent variable. The respondents were distributed across several key resorts to ensure representativeness, specifically: HKBP Ressort Medan with 45 respondents, HKBP Ressort Medan Timur with 40 respondents, and HKBP Ressort Padang Bulan with 35 respondents. The primary data were gathered using closed questionnaires structured on a five-point Likert scale.

The sample was selected using purposive sampling techniques. The data were gathered using closed questionnaires structured on a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and inferential analysis involving Pearson correlation tests and multiple linear regression using SPSS software. The frequency, consistency, and perceived level of congregational

participation in worship and church activities over the past six months, measured through respondent self-report Likert-scale perceptions.

Table 1. Operational Definitions

Variable	Indicators/Sub-Variables	Operational Definition
Ministry Collaboration (X1)	1. Cooperation among ministers 2. Congregational involvement 3. Internal communication 4. Joint activities	The level of synergy and cooperation between church ministers and the congregation in church activities.
Ministry Transformation (X2)	1. Changes in ministry methods 2. Work program innovation 3. Utilization of IT 4. Minister training	Strategic changes in the methods, approaches, and tools used by the church to enhance ministry effectiveness.
Congregational Attendance (Y)	1. Weekly worship attendance 2. Categorical activity participation 3. Ministry consistency 4. Social activity involvement	The frequency and consistency of congregational participation in worship and church activities over the past six months.

Table 2. Blueprint of the Research Instrument

Variable	Indicator	Item Numbers	Scale
Collaboration (X1)	Cooperation among ministers	1, 2	Likert 1–5
	Congregational involvement	3, 4	Likert 1–5
	Internal church communication	5, 6	Likert 1–5
	Joint minister-congregation activities	7, 8	Likert 1–5
Transformation (X2)	Changes in ministry methods	9, 10	Likert 1–5
	Work program innovation	11, 12	Likert 1–5
	Utilization of IT	13, 14	Likert 1–5
	Minister training & development	15, 16	Likert 1–5
Attendance (Y)	Weekly worship attendance	17, 18	Likert 1–5
	Categorical activity participation	19, 20	Likert 1–5
	Ministry consistency	21, 22	Likert 1–5
	Church social activity involvement	23, 24	Likert 1–5

The questionnaire indicators were systematically adapted from previous studies, utilizing frameworks from Kristantara (2021) for shared leadership and collaboration, and Nurtjahja & Marbun (2025) for ministry transformation models. Prior to the actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted on 30 non-sample congregants to evaluate the instrument. The validity test, utilizing Pearson Product-Moment correlation, confirmed that all questionnaire items are valid, yielding calculated r-values ranging from 0.455 to 0.825, which comfortably exceed the r-table threshold of 0.361 at a 5% significance level. Furthermore, the reliability test demonstrated strong internal consistency across all constructs. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were 0.820 for Ministry Collaboration (X1), 0.845 for Ministry Transformation (X2), and 0.815 for Congregational Attendance (Y). Because all values surpass the standard acceptable threshold of 0.70, the instrument is confirmed to be highly reliable for capturing the research data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A total of 120 respondents participated in this study, comprising 40% church ministers (pastors, elders, church teachers) and 60% active congregants from various resorts in District X. The re-spondents' ages ranged from 25 to 60 years, with the majority (70%) having been involved in the church for over 5 years.

The high mean values indicate a positive perception of collaboration and ministry transformation, as well as relatively high congregational participation.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Ministry Collaboration (X1)	4.12	0.45
Ministry Transformation (X2)	4.08	0.48
Congregational Attendance (Y)	4.21	0.42

The correlation test results show a significant relationship between the two independent variables and the dependent variable:

- Ministry Collaboration (X1) to Congregational Attendance (Y): $r = 0.678$, $p < 0.01$
- Ministry Transformation (X2) to Congregational Attendance (Y): $r = 0.712$, $p < 0.01$

This demonstrates that higher levels of collaboration and ministry innovation correlate with higher congregational attendance. These results indicate that both variables significantly contribute to congregational attendance, with ministry transformation exhibiting a slightly more dominant influence compared to collaboration.

The findings in this study tangibly support previous research emphasizing that innovative church ministries utilizing digital and participatory approaches have a massive impact on increasing congregational activity (Natalia & Harefa, 2025; Conference et al., 2024). Meanwhile, close involvement between ministers and congregants successfully builds a strong spirit of togetherness and reinforces the congregation's identity as part of the body of Christ.

The significant regression findings indicate that ministry collaboration and digital transformation are two fundamental aspects of creating consistent and sustainable congregational involvement. Overall, this research demonstrates that collaboration among ministers and the digital transformation of church ministry are not merely supplementary methods but have become core strategies in cultivating a church that grows both in numbers and spiritual depth.

The findings of this study demonstrate that both ministry collaboration and ministry transformation are significantly associated with congregational attendance in HKBP District X Medan Aceh. The descriptive results indicate that respondents generally perceived the implementation of ministry collaboration, ministry transformation, and congregational participation positively. The relatively high mean scores for Ministry Collaboration ($M = 4.12$), Ministry Transformation ($M = 4.08$), and Congregational Attendance ($M = 4.21$) suggest that collaborative relationships, innovation in ministry practices, and congregational involvement have become important components of church life within the research context. These findings indicate that congregational attendance cannot be understood merely as an individual decision to participate in worship but should also be considered in relation to the organizational, relational, and technological environment created by the church.

The correlation analysis further confirms that ministry collaboration has a strong and statistically significant positive relationship with congregational attendance ($r = 0.678$, $p < 0.01$).

This relationship suggests that stronger coordination among pastors, elders, church teachers, categorical leaders, and congregants tends to be accompanied by higher levels of congregational involvement. Collaboration allows ministry responsibilities to be distributed more effectively, improves communication among church stakeholders, and creates opportunities for congregants to become active participants rather than passive recipients of church programs. Consequently, congregants may develop a stronger sense of belonging and responsibility toward the church community, which in turn encourages more consistent participation in worship services, categorical activities, and other forms of ecclesial involvement.

This finding is consistent with the concept of shared leadership proposed by Kristantara (2021), which emphasizes that ministry effectiveness is strengthened when leadership responsibilities are not concentrated exclusively in formal ecclesiastical positions. Within a collaborative ministry structure, pastors and other church workers remain important leaders, but congregants are also given meaningful opportunities to participate in planning, implementing, and evaluating church activities. Such participation may strengthen collective ownership of ministry programs and reduce organizational distance between church leaders and members. In this sense, collaboration functions not merely as administrative cooperation but as a relational mechanism through which trust, communication, mutual responsibility, and commitment to the church community are developed.

The positive relationship between collaboration and attendance also has important implications for the ecclesiological context of HKBP. As a church with an established organizational and cultural structure, effective collaboration requires sensitivity toward existing patterns of authority, congregational traditions, and local social relations. Collaboration should therefore not be interpreted as eliminating formal leadership structures, but rather as strengthening interaction between formal church leadership and congregational participation. When pastors, elders, church teachers, categorical organizations, and congregants are able to communicate openly and coordinate their roles effectively, the church is more capable of identifying congregational needs and developing programs that are relevant to those needs. This may explain why collaborative ministry is associated with stronger congregational attendance and involvement.

Ministry transformation demonstrates an even stronger relationship with congregational attendance ($r = 0.712$, $p < 0.01$). The regression results also indicate that ministry transformation has a larger coefficient ($\beta = 0.485$) than ministry collaboration ($\beta = 0.325$), suggesting that transformation represents the relatively stronger predictor within the model. This result is particularly important because it indicates that congregational participation is increasingly influenced by the church's capacity to adapt its ministry practices to contemporary social and technological developments. Ministry transformation in this study encompasses changes in ministry methods, innovation in church programs, utilization of information technology, and the development of ministers' competencies. Therefore, transformation should be understood as a multidimensional process rather than simply the adoption of digital technology.

The stronger contribution of ministry transformation may reflect changes in the way contemporary congregants interact with religious institutions. Digital communication, social media, online information, and hybrid forms of participation have increasingly become integrated into everyday social life. Under such conditions, conventional ministry approaches alone may not always be sufficient to respond to diverse congregational needs. The findings support previous studies emphasizing the importance of adaptive and digitally responsive church ministries. Natalia and Harefa (2025), for example, highlight the opportunities and challenges created by digital

transformation within faith communities, while Ronda et al. (2024) emphasize the need for churches to respond strategically to the development of digital society. Similarly, Rezeki et al. (2023) show that the utilization of technological media can contribute to more transformative forms of ministry.

Nevertheless, digital transformation should not be interpreted merely as transferring conventional church activities to online platforms. Effective transformation requires the church to reconsider how communication, discipleship, worship, pastoral care, congregational education, and community building are organized. Technologies such as social media, messaging platforms, live-streaming services, and digital church information systems can increase accessibility and improve communication; however, their effectiveness depends on whether they are integrated meaningfully into the broader objectives of ministry. Technology therefore functions most effectively when it strengthens rather than replaces interpersonal relationships between ministers and congregants.

This interpretation is particularly relevant when considering the post-pandemic development of church ministry. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital and hybrid forms of religious participation, creating new expectations concerning accessibility, communication, and flexibility in church services. Although physical worship remains central to congregational life, digital communication has increasingly become complementary to face-to-face ministry. In this context, churches that are capable of combining physical fellowship with appropriate digital engagement may be better positioned to maintain relationships with congregants who face geographical, occupational, family, or other practical limitations. Ministry transformation can therefore contribute not only to numerical attendance but also to continuity of communication and congregational connectedness.

The simultaneous influence of ministry collaboration and transformation provides another important insight. The multiple regression model explains approximately 65.4% of the variation in congregational attendance ($R^2 = 0.654$), indicating that the combination of these two variables accounts for a substantial proportion of differences in congregational participation. This result suggests that organizational relationships and adaptive ministry practices should not be treated as separate strategies. Technological innovation without collaboration may result in programs that are technically sophisticated but poorly accepted by congregants. Conversely, strong interpersonal collaboration without adequate innovation may limit the church's capacity to respond to changing patterns of communication and participation. Sustainable ministry therefore requires the integration of relational collaboration and organizational transformation.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce the argument that church growth and congregational participation are multidimensional phenomena. Congregational attendance is influenced not only by theological motivation or personal spirituality but also by organizational management, leadership practices, communication structures, technological adaptation, and opportunities for participation. The findings are therefore compatible with shared leadership perspectives, in which effective ministry emerges through distributed responsibility and active engagement among church stakeholders. They are also consistent with the broader perspective of ministry transformation, which emphasizes organizational adaptability in response to changes within society.

The findings can also be interpreted through the Diffusion of Innovations framework. Innovations within church ministry are unlikely to be adopted uniformly by all congregants. Some individuals may readily accept digital communication, hybrid worship, or new ministry programs, whereas others may require more time, information, and guidance before accepting such changes.

Therefore, effective ministry transformation should include processes of communication, education, experimentation, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Church leaders should explain the theological and practical purposes of innovation rather than presenting technological change as an objective in itself. Such an approach may reduce resistance while ensuring that innovation remains consistent with the spiritual identity and mission of the church.

Another important implication concerns the development of church ministers. Since transformation includes minister training and development, the effectiveness of innovation depends considerably on the competencies of those responsible for implementing it. Ministers require not only theological and pastoral competence but also communication skills, collaborative leadership capacity, and adequate digital literacy. Training programs should therefore be designed to help church workers understand how technological tools can support pastoral communication, congregational education, administrative efficiency, and community engagement. At the same time, ethical considerations, privacy, responsible communication, and the preservation of personal pastoral relationships must remain fundamental elements of digital ministry.

The findings also suggest that ministry transformation should remain contextual. Not all forms of innovation will automatically increase congregational participation, and strategies successfully implemented in one congregation may not necessarily produce identical outcomes in another. HKBP District X therefore needs to consider demographic characteristics, technological accessibility, cultural preferences, generational differences, and the specific needs of individual congregations or resorts when designing ministry programs. Younger congregants may respond positively to social media-based communication and interactive digital programs, while older congregants may prefer more conventional forms of communication. An inclusive ministry strategy should accommodate these differences rather than imposing a single model of participation on the entire congregation.

Practically, the results indicate several strategic priorities for HKBP District X Medan Aceh. First, communication and coordination among pastors, elders, church teachers, categorical organizations, and congregants should be strengthened through regular collaborative planning and evaluation. Second, congregants should be provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute ideas and participate in the implementation of church programs. Third, digital platforms should be utilized strategically for worship information, pastoral communication, Christian education, discipleship, and congregational engagement. Fourth, church workers should receive continuous training in leadership, communication, technological literacy, and innovative ministry development. These strategies can help ensure that collaboration and transformation become institutionalized practices rather than temporary initiatives.

However, the findings should be interpreted within the methodological boundaries of the study. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling and the variables were primarily measured through self-reported Likert-scale responses. Consequently, the findings represent respondents' perceptions of collaboration, transformation, and attendance rather than independent observational measurements of all aspects of congregational behavior. Furthermore, because the study focuses specifically on HKBP District X Medan Aceh, generalization to other denominations, districts, or cultural contexts should be conducted cautiously. Future studies may strengthen these findings by incorporating longitudinal designs, actual church attendance records, comparative studies across congregations, and qualitative interviews exploring the experiences of ministers and congregants in greater depth.

It is also important to recognize that the model explains 65.4% of the variation in congregational attendance, meaning that a substantial proportion remains associated with factors outside the two variables examined in this research. Such factors may include personal spirituality, family circumstances, occupational demands, geographical accessibility, quality of pastoral relationships, worship experience, demographic characteristics, and broader socioeconomic conditions. Future research could incorporate these variables to develop a more comprehensive model of congregational participation.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that ministry collaboration and ministry transformation constitute complementary dimensions of contemporary church ministry. Collaboration strengthens relational bonds, shared responsibility, communication, and congregational ownership, while transformation enables the church to remain adaptive, accessible, and responsive to changing social and technological conditions. The relatively stronger contribution of ministry transformation does not reduce the importance of collaboration; instead, it suggests that innovation becomes more effective when supported by strong interpersonal and organizational relationships. For HKBP District X Medan Aceh, sustainable congregational participation is therefore likely to depend on the church's ability to integrate theological faithfulness, collaborative leadership, contextual innovation, digital competence, and meaningful interpersonal fellowship within a coherent ministry strategy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study examining the impact of collaboration and church ministry transformation on the increasing attendance of HKBP congregations in District X Medan Aceh, several key points can be formulated. First, ministry cooperation which includes synergy among church ministers, effective in-ternal communication, and active congregational involvement has been proven to contribute positively to increased attendance. Second, changes in ministry patterns encompassing innovative approaches, digital technology application, program development, and capacity building for ministers have a significant impact. This transformation enables the church to remain relevant in addressing contemporary challenges. Third, regression analysis reveals that both collaboration and ministry transformation simultaneously exert a strong influence on congregational attendance, with transformation playing a more dominant role. By considering these results, churches are encouraged to continuously develop ministry pat-terns that prioritize collaboration and transformation to foster sustainable increases in congregational participation, both physically and digitally.

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