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The Role of Pastoring in Increasing Youth and Teen Attendance in Church Sunday Worship

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the role of pastoral care in increasing the presence of youth and adolescents in attending Sunday services at GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang in 2024. The research instrument was a closed questionnaire; before the questionnaire was used to collect research data, a validity test was first carried out using the Pearson product-moment correlation formula, and the reliability test was carried out using the Alpha formula. After the validity and reliability tests were carried out, the results were declared valid because r count > r table (0.93-0.99 > 0.632), and the questionnaire was declared reliable because r11 was 0.74 in the High interval (0.600 - 0.799). So, the questionnaire is feasible and valid. The analysis results show that pastoral care's role in increasing the presence of youth and adolescents in Sunday services at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang congregation in 2024 is classified as good, with an average value of 3.22. This value is in the good category, where the average value ranges between 2.60-3.59. This study concludes that the pastor's pastoral care in increasing young teenagers' attendance to Sunday services at GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang in 2024 has been good.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of declining youth and teen attendance in Sunday worship services has become a pressing concern for many Christian communities. As congregations strive to engage younger generations, understanding the factors influencing their participation is essential (McDonald, 2021). This manuscript seeks to explore the pivotal role of pastoring in fostering an environment that encourages youth and teens to attend worship services regularly. By examining the dynamics of pastoral leadership, this study aims to identify effective strategies that can be employed to bridge the gap between the church and its younger members.

Pastoral leadership is often viewed as a cornerstone of church life, influencing the spiritual growth of congregants and their sense of belonging within the community (Dukes, 2023).

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Effective pastors possess the ability to connect with youth and teens on a personal level, addressing their unique challenges and aspirations. This connection is crucial, as it can significantly impact their willingness to participate in worship activities. By analyzing the characteristics of successful pastoral relationships with younger congregants, this manuscript will highlight the importance of mentorship, relatability, and open communication in fostering a vibrant church environment.

Moreover, the role of pastoring extends beyond mere attendance; it encompasses the holistic development of youth and teens within the church context. Pastors who actively engage with younger members can create programs and initiatives that resonate with their interests and needs (Parker, 2023). This proactive approach enhances attendance and cultivates a deeper spiritual engagement among youth and teens. By investigating various pastoral strategies, this journal aims to provide insights into how churches can adapt their worship practices to be more inclusive and appealing to younger generations.

This study examines the direct impact of pastoral leadership and consider the broader sociocultural factors that influence youth and teen attendance in Sunday worship. The changing landscape of religious participation, characterized by increased secularization and shifting values, presents challenges and opportunities for churches. Understanding these external influences is crucial for pastors seeking to engage younger congregants effectively. This journal will explore how pastors can navigate these complexities while remaining true to their faith and mission.

Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding youth engagement in religious practices by emphasizing the integral role of pastoring. This study aspires to equip pastors and church leaders with the tools necessary to foster a thriving worship community that resonates with youth and teens by synthesizing research findings, case studies, and practical recommendations. In doing so, it seeks to inspire a renewed commitment to nurturing the next generation of worshippers, ensuring that the church remains a relevant and vital part of their lives.

To ground this exploration in a practical context, the research presented in this journal is a case study conducted at GBI Mawar Sharon, a prominent church located in Kupang City, Indonesia. This church serves as a microcosm for examining the dynamics of youth and teen engagement in worship settings, providing a rich backdrop for understanding the challenges and opportunities congregations face in this region. Through qualitative methods, including interviews with pastoral staff, youth leaders, and congregants, as well as observations of worship services and youth programs, the study aims to capture the lived experiences of young attendees and the impact of pastoral leadership on their participation. Focusing on GBI Mawar Sharon, this research highlights the unique cultural and social factors influencing youth attendance in a specific context. It offers valuable insights that can apply to similar congregations seeking to enhance their outreach and engagement strategies.

2. Material and Method

Sunday worship is a special and holy worship only for God. Sunday is a day that is dedicated to carrying out worship to praise God, as stated in the IV Commandment. In this regard, Byers (2022) stated that to sanctify is to dedicate to God, to separate (from other days) to fellowship with God. Sunday worship is meaningful because this worship is evidence of a vertical relationship (humans with God) and a horizontal relationship (humans with humans) (McKinney, 2021).

a. Sunday worship as evidence of a vertical relationship (humans with God)

This relationship shows that God has a position as the creator of humans but wants to fellowship with His human creations. In this regard, Reedy (2023) stated that God's fellowship with humans is seen when humans respond to God's love by expressing gratitude, praising His name, and praising God's work.

b. Sunday worship as evidence of a horizontal relationship (humans with humans)

Von Allmen (2023) implies that in essence, worship is a form of longing from every human being to have fellowship with God, in his efforts to have fellowship with humans. That is why humans need worship, namely by listening to what God says". So, it is clear that Sunday worship is a form of fellowship with God in the form of worship that is carried out together in worship.

The role of pastoral care in increasing the presence of young people attending Sunday worship.

As explained in the previous discussion, pastoring is carried out by pastors or church servants. Pitts (2023) argues that a pastor or servant is obliged and responsible for caring for, maintaining, seeking, protecting, fostering, and helping members of the congregation and others so that they are free from burdensome and tense situations and gain new enthusiasm in their lives that occur because of the relationship between the shepherd and the people being shepherded with the hope that the congregation, especially the young people, have the desire to have fellowship with God which is shown through their presence in Sunday worship (Pitts, 2023).

The basis for the church's actions in carrying out shepherding to its members is to reflect on what God Himself has done, as witnessed in the Bible. Since the beginning of the Bible, our testimony is that the Lord God is the shepherd of His people (Briggs, 2021). As the Shepherd, God always leads, gathers, refreshes, nourishes, guides, and comforts His people. This shepherding by the pastor is done to increase the presence of Youth. Increasing the presence of Youth is the arrival of Youth in the church to attend Sunday worship. The presence of Youth is marked by the increasing statistics of Youth attendance every week in prayer and their active participation in worship activities.

Methodology

The research will be conducted at GBI Mawar Saron Kupang in 2024. The researcher saw an imbalance between the actual number of Youth and the number of Youth who attended Sunday services, and no researchers had conducted research at that place with the same title. This research began in September 2024.

Population and sample

Research activities are always related to the object being studied. According to Lund (2005), population is the entire object being studied in which there are subjects that can be used as a source of data for a researcher. The population in this study was all the Youth and Teenagers of GBI Mawar Saron Kupang in 2024, totaling 78 people.

Lund (2005) stated that a sample is a part or representative of the population being studied." In connection with this opinion, the author will use systematic sampling to take this sample. According to Mostafa & Ahmad (2018) systematic sampling is a sampling method, in which only the first element of the sample is selected randomly, while the next elements are selected systematically according to a certain pattern.

Since the population is 78, the researcher took a sample of 26 people. According to the author, 26 people have been able to represent the population in the study. So, in this sampling, the author plans to sort the young teenager's numbers with serial numbers 1-78. So the code to be a sample, as contained in Masri Singarimbun and Sofian Effendi (1989:160), is:

k = N/n

Note:

k = code that is the sample

N = Elementary units in the population

n = Sample size to be taken

So, k = $\frac{78}{26}$ = 3.

The first element of the sample must be selected randomly among elementary units numbered 1-3. Suppose the one chosen as the first element is elementary unit no. 2; The other elements of the sample are the numbered units that will be the sample. So for the Youth who get the numbers 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 35, 38, 41, 44, 47, 50, 53, 56, 59, 62, 65 68, 71, 74, 77.

The author's questionnaire is a closed questionnaire because it is easier and more appropriate to handle respondents, more effective and practical because respondents only need to choose the available answers, and confidentiality is more guaranteed so that respondents can provide honest answers.

Table 1
Questionnaire Grid

No	**variable**	**Indicator**	**No item**	**Total item**
1	The Role of Pastors in Increasing Youth Attendance at Sunday Worship.	a. Sermon in Sunday service	1,2,3,4,5	5
		b. Choir	6,7,8,9,10	5
		c. Bible study	11,12,13,14,15	5
		d. Home visits.	16,17,18,19,20	5
Total				**20**

For the validity test, Arikunto's (2002:273) product moment person formula was used as follows:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{\sum XY}{\sqrt{\left(\sum X^2\right)\left(\sum Y^2\right)}}$$

Note:

rxy = Correlation Coefficient of X and Y

X = Average Score of X (item)

Y = Average Score of Y (total)

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of data collection through research conducted by the author, the description of each aspect studied can be tabulated into a table according to the answers to each questionnaire item number. Before the data was analyzed into each element, the author first distributed respondents' answers about the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang Congregation in 2024. After the questionnaire was answered by the respondents properly, meaning that no questionnaire was unanswered to find out the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang Congregation in 2024, the author made a distribution of respondents' answers in tables II and III. The author tabulated the frequency of respondents' answers, which can be seen in Table IV.

Table II
Distribution of Respondents' Answers Regarding the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang Congregation in 2024 Based on Option

No	**No Item**																			
Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	a	b	b	a	b	a	a	a	a	c	a	a	b	a	a	c	a	a	a	a
2	a	b	b	a	b	b	a	a	b	a	a	c	a	c	d	a	a	a	a	a
3	b	c	b	a	b	c	a	a	b	b	a	b	c	b	a	a	a	a	a	a
4	a	a	b	a	c	c	c	a	c	a	b	b	b	a	b	b	a	b	b	a
5	b	a	b	a	c	d	c	a	a	b	c	c	a	a	b	b	a	b	b	a
6	b	a	b	a	a	a	c	a	d	a	a	c	a	b	b	c	a	b	b	b
7	b	b	b	a	a	a	b	a	a	a	b	b	b	b	a	c	a	b	b	b
8	b	b	b	a	a	a	b	a	b	a	b	c	c	b	a	a	b	a	a	a
9	a	a	b	a	a	c	b	a	c	b	c	a	c	a	a	a	b	a	b	a
10	c	a	a	a	a	c	d	b	c	b	c	a	a	a	a	a	b	c	b	a
11	a	b	a	a	a	c	a	b	a	a	b	c	b	a	b	a	b	c	c	a
12	b	b	c	a	a	b	a	b	b	c	c	c	b	c	a	a	b	a	b	a
13	c	b	c	a	c	b	a	a	a	a	b	c	b	c	a	b	a	a	b	a
14	c	b	c	a	a	b	a	a	a	c	c	b	b	a	a	b	b	a	b	a
15	a	b	c	a	b	b	a	c	a	a	b	b	a	a	a	b	a	b	a	b
16	a	b	c	a	b	c	b	c	d	b	b	b	b	a	b	a	a	b	a	b
17	a	c	c	a	b	c	b	c	d	b	b	b	a	b	b	a	b	a	b	a
18	a	c	c	a	a	a	a	c	d	a	b	c	c	a	b	a	a	a	b	a
19	b	a	d	a	a	a	a	a	d	c	b	d	c	a	a	a	c	a	a	a
20	b	a	d	b	a	d	c	a	a	c	c	c	a	b	b	b	a	a	a	b
21	c	c	c	b	c	b	c	a	c	a	c	b	a	a	b	b	b	b	b	c
22	a	a	c	c	d	b	c	b	b	a	c	b	a	b	c	b	b	b	a	a
23	b	a	a	a	a	c	c	b	c	a	b	b	b	b	b	a	a	a	b	a
24	c	b	c	c	b	c	a	a	c	a	b	b	b	a	b	a	a	a	b	b
25	a	b	b	b	a	c	a	a	b	a	b	b	b	a	a	a	a	a	a	b
26	c	a	b	b	c	c	a	c	d	a	c	b	a	b	a	a	a	b	b	b

Table III
Distribution of Respondents' Answers Regarding the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang Congregation in 2024, Based on Option Weights

No	**No Item**																			
Resp.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	3	4	4	2	4	4	4	4
2	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	2	4	2	1	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	2	3	4	3	2	4	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	3	4	2	2	2	4	2	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	4
5	3	4	3	4	2	1	2	4	4	3	2	2	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	4
6	3	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	1	4	4	2	4	3	3	2	4	3	3	3
7	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	2	4	3	4	3
8	3	3	3	4	4	4	1	4	3	4	3	2	2	3	4	4	3	4	4	4
9	4	4	3	4	4	2	3	4	2	3	2	4	2	4	4	4	3	4	3	4
10	2	4	4	4	4	2	1	3	2	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	4
11	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	3	4	4	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	2	2	4
12	3	3	2	4	4	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	4	4	3	4	3	4
13	2	3	2	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	2	4	3	4	4	3	4
14	2	3	2	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	2	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	4
15	4	3	2	4	3	3	4	2	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3
16	4	3	2	4	3	2	3	2	1	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	3
17	4	2	2	4	3	2	3	2	1	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	4
18	4	2	2	4	4	4	4	2	1	4	3	2	2	4	3	4	4	4	3	4
19	3	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	1	2	3	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
20	3	4	1	3	4	1	2	4	4	2	2	2	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	3
21	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	4	2	4	2	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	2
22	4	4	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	4	2	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	4	4
23	3	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	4
24	2	3	2	2	3	2	4	4	2	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	3
25	4	3	3	3	4	2	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
26	2	4	3	3	2	2	4	2	3	4	2	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3
Sum	83	84	71	96	86	69	80	89	71	89	73	71	83	89	88	90	95	91	84	94
$\overline{X}$	3, 19	3, 23	2, 73	3, 69	3, 30	2, 65	3, 07	3, 42	2, 73	3, 42	2, 80	2, 73	3, 19	3, 42	3, 38	3, 46	3, 65	3, 50	3, 23	3, 61

Table IV
Frequency Tabulation of Respondents' Answers on the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang Congregation in 2024

No. Item	Frequency Distribution of Answers								**Total Resp.**	**Total Score**	Average
	A = 4		**B = 3**		**C = 2**		**D = 1**				
	f	sc	f	sc	F	sc	f	sc			
1	11	44	9	27	6	12	-	-	26	83	3,19
2	10	40	12	36	4	8	-	-	26	84	3,23

3	3	12	15	45	6	12	2	2	26	71	2,73
4	20	80	4	12	2	4	-	-	26	96	3,69
5	13	52	8	24	5	10	-	-	26	86	3,30
6	6	24	7	21	11	22	2	2	26	69	2,65
7	13	52	4	12	7	14	2	2	26	80	3,07
8	16	64	5	15	5	10	-	-	26	89	3,42
9	9	36	6	18	6	12	5	5	26	71	2,73
10	15	60	7	21	4	8	-	-	26	89	3,42
11	4	16	13	39	9	18	-	-	26	73	2,80
12	3	12	13	39	10	20	-	-	26	71	2,73
13	10	40	11	33	5	10	-	-	26	83	3,19
14	14	56	9	27	3	6	-	-	26	89	3,42
15	13	52	11	33	1	2	1	1	26	88	3,38
16	15	60	8	24	3	6	-	-	26	90	3,46
17	17	68	9	27	-	-	-	-	26	95	3,65
18	15	60	9	27	2	4	-	-	26	91	3,50
19	10	40	14	42	1	2	-	-	26	84	3,23
20	17	68	8	24	1	2	-	-	26	94	3,61
Total										**1676**	**64,40**
Average											**3,22**

Furthermore, to find out the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang Congregation in 2024, the following aspects were analyzed:

Table V
Questionnaire Analysis of the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang Congregation in 2024

No	Research Questions	Average	Category
1	In preaching the Word, does the pastor explain it well so that it encourages you to attend Sunday worship?	3,19	Good
2	Does the sermon delivered by the pastor stir your heart continually to attend Sunday worship?	3,23	Good
3	Can you feel the presence of God through the preacher's sermon delivered during Sunday worship?	2,73	Good
4	Does the preaching of the Word invite you always to attend Sunday worship?	3,69	Very Good
5	Does the sermon delivered by the pastor during worship build your spiritual life?	3,30	Good
6	The choir is a vehicle for preaching the Word. Do you participate as a choir member so that you always attend Sunday worship to help preach the Word?	2,65	Good
7	If you are not actively participating in choir practice, are you reprimanded by the pastor to be active again?	3,07	Good
8	Do you always enjoy the lyrics of the Youth Choir so that they encourage you constantly to attend Sunday worship?	3,42	Good

9	Does the pastor explain to the youth that by joining the choir, the youth praise and glorify the name of God so that they are encouraged to attend Sunday worship?	2,73	Good
10	Do you join the church choir or singers at the altar?	3,42	Good
11	Does joining the choir make you feel closer to God so you are encouraged to attend church worship?	2,80	Good
12	Does the church, in this case the pastor, hold a service through Bible Study for Youth?	2,73	Good
13	Are you willing to attend Bible Study at church because of the pastor's recommendation and invitation?	3,19	Good
14	Does Bible Study help you understand the Word of God better so that you know that attending worship is one of the proofs of a proper understanding of God's Word?	3,42	Good
15	Understanding the Word of God through Bible Study encourages you to attend Sunday worship.	3,38	Good
16	By implementing Bible Study, are you more diligent in attending worship?	3,46	Good
17	When one of your family members is grieving, and the pastor provides comfort, does that encourage you to attend worship?	3,65	Very Good
18	Is your church's pastor willing to comfort the grieving congregation members?	3,50	Good
19	The pastor always shows his friendliness to every congregation member. Does that encourage you to attend Sunday worship?	3,23	Good
20	When a congregation member is sick, and the pastor visits him, does the ministry provided by the pastor encourage you to attend worship?	3,61	Very Good

The research results above show that the average value of the aspects studied is 3.22, which is in the good category (2.60 – 3.59) with the following calculation.

$$\overline{X} = \frac{64{,}40}{20} = 3{,}22$$

The study's results on the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang Congregation in 2024, based on the data analysis, showed that, in general, the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang Congregation in 2024 was good.

The data results show several items with a higher average value than the others. Item no. 4, regarding the role of the pastor in inviting Youth and Teenagers to always attend Sunday worship through the preaching of the Word, is included in the very good category with an average value of 3.69. Next, item no. 17, regarding the role of the Pastor in providing comfort to grieving congregation members, is included in the outstanding category with an average value of 3.65.

Thus, the research on the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang Congregation in 2024 is good. This is obtained from the aspects studied, namely the Role of Pastoring in Increasing the Attendance of Youth and Teenagers in Sunday Worship at the GBI Mawar Sharon Kupang congregation in 2024, which is included in the good category with an average value of 3.22 in the range of values between 2.60 - 3.59. Because Pastoral Pastoring plays a role in increasing the attendance of Youth and Teenagers attending Sunday Worship, it can be seen that other factors

cause the attendance of Youth and Teenagers attending Sunday Worship at GBI Mawar Sharon, Kelapa Lima, Kupang in 2024 to be lacking, so this research can be accepted.

4. Conclusion

In light of the theoretical framework and research findings presented in this study, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the role of pastoring in enhancing youth and teen attendance in Sunday worship.

Theoretical Conclusions

Pastoring has long been recognized as a fundamental aspect of church life and a vital ministry since the Israelites. The concept of shepherding or pastoring, synonymous with "pastoral service," encompasses the responsibilities of pastors and church leaders to care for, nurture, protect, and support their congregants (Hansen, 2012). This relational dynamic is essential for alleviating burdens and fostering renewed enthusiasm in the lives of individuals stemming from the connection between the shepherd and those being shepherded. The theological foundation for this practice is deeply rooted in biblical teachings, which consistently portray God as the ultimate Shepherd who leads, gathers, refreshes, and comforts His people. This divine model is a guiding principle for pastoral care within the church community.

The primary objective of pastoral shepherding is to enhance youth attendance in worship services. This increase is evidenced by a rise in youth participation in Sunday services, reflected in weekly attendance statistics and active involvement in worship activities. The pastor's role is crucial in creating an inviting and engaging environment encouraging young people to attend and participate in church life.

The last is that to increase youth attendance effectively, pastors must fulfill their responsibilities by proclaiming the Word of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments. This includes shepherding and caring for congregants, actively inviting members to worship, comforting those in grief, visiting the sick, and collaborating with church leadership to uphold church discipline and maintain doctrinal integrity. Pastors can inspire youth to engage more fully in the church by exemplifying faith, love, and good works.

Research-Based Conclusions

The study's findings, derived from a questionnaire administered to respondents, indicate that shepherding significantly contributes to increasing youth and teen attendance in Sunday worship at GBI Mawar Sharon in Kupang. The data analysis revealed an average response score of 3.22, categorizing the role of shepherding as "good" within the established range of 2.60 to 3.59. This positive assessment underscores the effectiveness of pastoral efforts in fostering youth engagement in worship.

In summary, the literature review and empirical research affirm that pastoral shepherding is vital in enhancing youth attendance in Sunday worship. By embodying the principles of care, guidance, and active engagement, pastors can create a supportive environment that attracts young people to church and nurtures their spiritual growth and commitment to the faith. This study highlights the importance of intentional pastoral leadership in addressing the challenges of youth engagement in contemporary worship settings.

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