

## The Impact of the Implementation of the Call to Serve the Congregation and Counseling Services on Congregation Attendance in Sunday Worship at the NKV Ressorst Haunatas and Ressorst Laguboti in 2024

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of the Congregation Teacher's vocation and counseling services on congregational attendance at Sunday services at HKBP Resort Haunatas and Laguboti. Using a quantitative approach with inferential statistics, data were collected from 203 respondents selected through random sampling from a population of 2,025 adult congregants. A structured questionnaire with 92 items was used for data collection. The findings reveal that the Congregation Teacher's vocation significantly affects attendance ( $F = 88.758$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with a contribution of 30.6%. Counseling services also significantly impact attendance ( $F = 123.042$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with a contribution of 38%. Additionally, the combined influence of both variables is statistically significant ( $F = 70.568$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with a total contribution of 41.4%. These results indicate that both the Congregation Teacher's vocation and counseling services play a crucial role in increasing church attendance, leading to the acceptance of  $H_a$  and rejection of  $H_0$ .

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid advancement of globalization has significantly impacted various aspects of life, including social, political, economic, cultural, and even religious spheres. These changes have transformed human perspectives and lifestyles, influencing how individuals perceive faith and spiritual commitment. While globalization brings many benefits, it also presents challenges, such as the tendency for people to rely solely on themselves, neglecting the fundamental role of God in their lives. However, rather than viewing these changes as threats, they should be seen as opportunities for religious institutions to reaffirm the importance of faith and worship in contemporary society.

One noticeable shift within Christian communities is the declining attendance at Sunday services, particularly outside major religious celebrations such as Good Friday, Easter, Christmas, and New Year's services. Many church members prioritize attending church on these significant occasions, while regular Sunday services witness a considerable decrease in attendance. This trend suggests a shifting perspective on the importance of weekly worship, with some believers associating spiritual gatherings primarily with major religious holidays rather than consistent fellowship with God and the church community.

A similar pattern is observed in the HKBP Ressor Haunatas and Ressor Laguboti congregations, where Sunday service attendance, particularly among male congregants, remains significantly low. Statistical data from 2023 reveals that the number of male attendees each week falls far below the total registered congregation, indicating a pressing need for pastoral intervention. Factors such as work obligations, social events, and shifting priorities contribute to this decline. Additionally, the modern lifestyle, which favors leisure activities over religious commitment on weekends, has further influenced this trend.

Given this challenge, the role of the Guru Jemaat (Congregational Teacher) becomes increasingly vital in fostering spiritual growth and encouraging consistent church participation. The Guru Jemaat's pastoral duties, including biblical teaching, counseling, and community engagement, play a crucial role in nurturing faith and guiding congregants back to active participation in Sunday worship. Through counseling services, spiritual guidance, and personal outreach, church leaders can help congregants reconnect with their faith, reinforcing the significance of communal worship in their spiritual journey.

This study explores the impact of the Guru Jemaat's pastoral responsibilities and counseling services on church attendance, particularly in the context of HKBP Ressor Haunatas and Ressor Laguboti. By examining the correlation between pastoral care and worship participation, this research aims to highlight the essential role of church leadership in strengthening congregational commitment and ensuring the church remains a central part of believers' lives. The findings will provide insights into strategies for revitalizing Sunday worship attendance and fostering a deeper spiritual connection among church members.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of the Tugas Panggilan Guru Jemaat and Layanan Bimbingan Konseling in increasing church attendance is grounded in both theological and psychological perspectives. From a theological standpoint, the Guru Jemaat serves as a spiritual guide, embodying the characteristics of a servant of God, which aligns with biblical teachings on pastoral care. Their active engagement in ministerial duties, including mentoring church elders and conducting home visits, fosters a deeper sense of community and belonging among congregants. Meanwhile, Layanan Bimbingan Konseling plays a crucial role in addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of church members. Counseling services promote harmonious social relationships, offering guidance and encouragement that strengthen faith and commitment to church activities. Psychological theories suggest that consistent support and positive reinforcement contribute to behavioral commitment, which in this context translates into increased church attendance. Furthermore, the belief that prayer transforms lives, as well as the awareness of the temporary nature of material possessions, influences an individual's dedication to religious practices. Given these factors, a comprehensive approach that integrates both ministerial calling and counseling services can significantly enhance church engagement and spiritual growth within the congregation.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research method using inferential statistics, as it examines a sample and applies the results to a broader population. According to Sugiyono, inferential statistics analyze sample data to make generalizations about the population.

The research was conducted at HKBP Ressort Haunatas and Ressort Laguboti, Kecamatan Laguboti, from January to June 2024. The study focuses on church attendance during Sunday services due to observed low participation. The population consists of 2,025 adult congregants (men and women), from which a 10% sample (203 respondents) was selected due to time and resource constraints. This study examines three variables:

- a) X1: The Pastoral Role of the Guru Jemaat - The responsibility of guiding the congregation spiritually, preaching, mentoring, and fostering a sense of commitment to weekly worship.
- b) X2: Counseling Services - The provision of support and guidance to congregants in overcoming personal and spiritual challenges, aiming to enhance their faith and decision-making.
- c) Y: Church Attendance in Sunday Worship - The extent to which congregants participate in weekly services as an expression of faith and devotion to God.

Data collection was conducted through closed-ended questionnaires using a Likert scale (4 = Always, 3 = Often, 2 = Sometimes, 1 = Never). Before use, the instruments were tested for validity (using the Product Moment correlation formula) and reliability (using Cronbach's Alpha formula). Data analysis involved: (1) Descriptive analysis of research data, (2) Assumption

testing, and (3) Hypothesis testing to determine the relationship between the variables.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### *Research Data Description*

The highest-scoring item for the Pastoral Role of the Guru Jemaat (X1) was item 19 (score: 726, mean: 3.58), indicating that many congregants perceive the Guru Jemaat as a faithful servant of God. The lowest-scoring items were 6 and 30 (score: 647, mean: 3.19), related to mentoring church elders and visiting congregants' homes. The most significant indicator was guiding non-believers (mean: 4.43).

For Counseling Services (X2), the highest-scoring item was item 29 (score: 706, mean: 3.48), highlighting harmonious social relationships. The lowest-scoring item was 10 (score: 609, mean: 3.00), referring to giving positive ideas to society. The most significant indicator was teaching the Word of God (mean: 3.34).

Regarding Church Attendance in Sunday Worship (Y), the highest-scoring item was item 30 (score: 732, mean: 3.61), emphasizing belief in the power of prayer. The lowest-scoring item was 17 (score: 661, mean: 3.26), addressing awareness of the temporary nature of worldly possessions. The most significant indicator was living in obedience to God (mean: 3.47).

### *Analysis Assumption Testing*

- a) Normality Test: The Kolmogorov-Smirnov significance value was 0.073 ( $> 0.05$ ), indicating normal data distribution for all variables.
- b) Linearity Test: The Deviation of Linearity significance for X1-Y was 0.502 ( $> 0.05$ ) and for X2-Y was 0.424 ( $> 0.05$ ), confirming linear relationships between independent and dependent variables.

### *Correlation Test:*

- X1 and Y: Pearson correlation = 0.553, Sig. = 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ) → positive correlation.
- X2 and Y: Pearson correlation = 0.616, Sig. = 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ) → positive correlation.
- Conclusion: Both independent variables have a positive correlation with church attendance.

### *Hypothesis Testing*

- a. Hypothesis 1: The Guru Jemaat's Pastoral Role (X1) significantly influences Church Attendance (Y). F-value = 88.758, F-table = 2.60, Sig. = 0.000 → significant positive effect.
- b. Hypothesis 2: Counseling Services (X2) significantly influence Church Attendance (Y). F-value = 123.042, F-table = 2.60, Sig. = 0.000 → significant positive effect.
- c. Hypothesis 3: X1 and X2 together significantly influence Y. F-value = 70.568, F-table = 2.60, Sig. = 0.000 → significant positive effect.

## DISCUSSION

### *The Pastoral Role of Guru Jemaat (X1) Has a Positive and Significant Influence on Church Attendance in Sunday Worship (Y)*

Data analysis revealed that the highest-scoring item for the Pastoral Role of Guru Jemaat was item 19, with a score of 726 and an average of 3.58. Many congregants acknowledged that the Guru Jemaat embodies the character of a servant of God. The lowest-scoring items were 6 and 30, each scoring 647 with an average of 3.19, indicating that fewer congregants recognized the role of Guru Jemaat in mentoring church elders and visiting members' homes. The most influential indicator was guiding those who have not yet known God, with an average score of 4.43.

The study found that the Pastoral Role of Guru Jemaat influences Church Attendance in Sunday Worship by 30.6%, with an F-value of 88.758, exceeding the critical F-table value of 2.60. This role is seen as a divine duty entrusted to the Guru Jemaat to foster a stronger relationship with God, encouraging congregants to participate in Christian fellowship through Sunday worship. Key aspects of this role include observing and guiding church members, preaching to nurture believers, mentoring those unfamiliar with the faith, educating children in biblical teachings, maintaining an exemplary lifestyle, and serving as a role model for the congregation.

### *The Role of Counseling Services (X2) Has a Positive and Significant Influence on Church Attendance in Sunday Worship (Y)*

Analysis showed that item 29 had the highest score (706, average 3.48), indicating that many congregants believe the Guru Jemaat fosters harmonious social relationships. The lowest-scoring item was 10, with a score of 609 and an average of 3.00, referring to providing positive ideas to society. The most influential indicator was teaching and preaching the Word of God, with an average score of 3.34.

Findings revealed that Counseling Services impact Church Attendance in Sunday Worship by 38%, with an F-value of 123.042, surpassing the F-table value of 2.60. Counseling services serve as a means of offering guidance and support to congregants facing life challenges through direct or indirect conversations. The goal is to equip church members with the ability to make wise decisions for personal growth and well-being. The key indicators of counseling services include shepherding believers, comforting those in grief, advising non-believers, and educating congregants in biblical teachings.

### *The Combined Influence of the Pastoral Role of Guru Jemaat (X1) and Counseling Services (X2) on Church Attendance in Sunday Worship (Y)*

Data analysis showed that item 30 received the highest score (732, average 3.61), demonstrating that many congregants believe in the transformative power of prayer. The lowest-scoring item was 17, with a score of 661 and an average of 3.26, indicating an understanding that material wealth is temporary. The most significant indicator was living in obedience and reverence to God, with an average score of 3.47.

The study concluded that the combined influence of the Pastoral Role of Guru Jemaat and Counseling Services on Church Attendance in Sunday Worship is 41.4%. Hypothesis testing confirmed this relationship, with an F-value of 70.568, significantly exceeding the F-table value of 2.60. Thus, the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>), which stated there was no influence, was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>), which stated a significant influence, was accepted. These findings affirm that both pastoral responsibilities and counseling services positively and significantly impact church attendance, both individually and collectively, in HKBP Ressorat Haunatas and Ressorat Laguboti in 2024.

Sunday worship attendance is a fundamental practice for Christians, serving as a time for fellowship, praise, and devotion to God. It reflects the believer's recognition of God as the Creator and their gratitude for salvation through Jesus Christ. Observing Sunday as a sacred day aligns with the Fourth Commandment, emphasizing rest and worship.

In Christian tradition, Sunday is a day of blessing and sanctification, commemorating Jesus Christ's resurrection. Worshiping on this day signifies faith in Christ and commitment to spiritual growth. Participation in worship involves engaging in communal practices such as baptism, apostolic teachings, repentance, and Holy Communion.

The role of the Guru Jemaat in the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) is crucial for spiritual guidance. Initially carried out by missionary teachers, this role later expanded to trained individuals from the congregation. Since the 1960s, Guru Jemaat candidates have undergone formal training at Seminarium Sipoholon to ensure their capability in leading and nurturing the church community.

The duties of the Guru Jemaat are ongoing, as church ministry is a continuous process. Their role mirrors God's care for His people, providing pastoral support, teaching, and spiritual leadership. Regular evaluation of their service helps maintain and enhance their effectiveness in guiding the congregation.

According to Lumbantobing, the effectiveness of a Guru Jemaat is assessed based on personal abilities, family life, and the congregation's needs. The HKBP leadership carefully considers these factors when appointing a Guru Jemaat, ensuring alignment between the leader's strengths and the congregation's circumstances.

HKBP's organizational structure includes ordained ministers such as pastors, Bible teachers, deaconesses, elders, and evangelists, each with distinct roles. The Guru Jemaat serves alongside pastors to support congregational needs, reinforcing the church's mission. The training of Guru Jemaat takes place at HKBP's theological school, equipping candidates with spiritual and leadership skills. Through spiritual retreats, practical ministry training, and formal education, they are prepared to become agents of positive change in Batak society and beyond.

Every Christian is called to be a light in the world, reflecting God's love through their actions. The call to service is not self-generated but originates from God, fostering a commitment to faith and community. As stated in John 13:35, "By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one

another." The risen Christ empowers His followers, restoring hope, strengthening faith, and encouraging boldness in their spiritual journey.

The calling in church life reflects the infinite richness of Christ, where all believers, through baptism, share in Christ's priesthood and are sent as light and salt to the world (Matthew 5:13-16). A special calling exists for ministers to shepherd the Church in Christ's name. A church servant is called to dedicate themselves to spiritual growth and mission, embodying humility and leadership in guiding the congregation. The role of the *Guru Jemaat* in HKBP is crucial, involving teaching doctrine, preaching, counseling, and strengthening faith. They must observe and understand their congregation's struggles, provide solutions, and nurture spiritual growth. Their responsibilities extend beyond church walls, emphasizing personal connections through home visits and active community engagement. Rooted in Scripture, their mission aligns with Christ's role as the Good Shepherd—guiding, healing, and bringing people closer to God. Ultimately, the *Guru Jemaat* plays a vital role in maintaining faith, unity, and spiritual well-being in the church.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the data and analysis presented, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) There is a positive and significant influence of the \*Tugas Panggilan Guru Jemaat\* on congregation attendance at Sunday services at HKBP Ressorat Haunatas and Ressorat Laguboti in 2024. This is indicated by a coefficient of determination of 30.6% and an F-test result of  $F_{\text{calculated}} > F_{\text{table}}$  ( $88.758 > 2.60$ ).
- 2) There is a positive and significant influence of counseling services on congregation attendance at Sunday services at HKBP Ressorat Haunatas and Ressorat Laguboti in 2024. This is demonstrated by a coefficient of determination of 38% and an F-test result of  $F_{\text{calculated}} > F_{\text{table}}$  ( $123.042 > 2.60$ ).
- 3) There is a positive and significant combined influence of the \*Tugas Panggilan Guru Jemaat\* and counseling services on congregation attendance at Sunday services at HKBP Ressorat Haunatas and Ressorat Laguboti in 2024, with a multiple correlation coefficient of  $R = 0.643$  and a multiple coefficient of determination of 41.4%. This means that 41.4% of congregation attendance at Sunday services is collectively influenced by the \*Tugas Panggilan Guru Jemaat\* and counseling services. The F-test result shows  $F_{\text{calculated}} > F_{\text{table}}$  ( $70.568 > 2.60$ ).

Based on the research findings, conclusions, and limitations, the following recommendations are proposed:

- a. Considering the highest-rated aspect of the *Tugas Panggilan Guru Jemaat* variable, *Guru Jemaat* is encouraged to maintain their achievement in serving with the character of a servant of God. Meanwhile, based on the lowest-rated aspect, *Guru Jemaat* is expected to guide *Sintua* to participate in church ministry and visit congregation members' homes.

- b. Regarding the highest-rated aspect of counseling services, Guru Jemaat is encouraged to maintain harmonious social relationships. Meanwhile, based on the lowest-rated aspect, Guru Jemaat is expected to provide positive ideas for the community.
- c. For congregation attendance at Sunday services, the highest-rated aspect suggests that the congregation should continue believing that prayer can change everything. Meanwhile, to improve the lowest-rated aspect, the congregation is encouraged to realize that worldly possessions are temporary.

### **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

Future researchers studying congregation attendance at Sunday services are encouraged to explore other variables that may influence attendance. Additionally, those studying the effects of the Tugas Panggilan Guru Jemaat and counseling services should consider connecting these variables with other factors, as they may have broader impacts on the congregation.

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