

## **Analysis of Communication Patterns at Pengharapan Baptist Church in Surabaya on Implementing Simple Church**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Keywords:**  
communication patterns;  
gbi pengharapan  
surabaya, simple church.

This study aims to analyze the communication pattern in GBI Pengharapan Surabaya in the application of the Simple Church model. Effective communication is a key element in supporting structural and operational change in church organizations. This study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews with three informants: one expert informant, one key informant, and one supporting informant. The results of the study show that downward communication, upward communication, and lateral communication at GBI Pengharapan Surabaya function well, with information and instructions flowing effectively from senior pastors and leaders to the congregation and vice versa through various channels. In addition, lateral communication among church committees shows strong synergy and effective coordination. The findings also show that church communication networks use a variety of patterns that support effective interaction, such as a chain pattern for sequential information flow, a wheel pattern with a clear information center, a circle pattern that allows cyclical communication among group members, a free-flow pattern that allows communication not to be limited by a formal hierarchy, and a Y pattern that connects information through two main channels to a central point. All of these patterns are well implemented, supporting operational efficiency and collaboration within the church.



### **Introduction**

Communication is an important foundation in the operations of organizations, including churches, which affects the flow of information and relationships between members (Kamal, 2014). A clear organizational structure helps in maintaining the orderliness of communication flow (Sutansah, Wibowo, & Danadharta, 2023). Communication pattern theory provides a foundation for analyzing how messages are sent, received, and interpreted in organizations. The church, as a religious institution, has an important role in society and must be able to adapt to social and technological changes to remain relevant (Setyawati, Prijowidodo, & Inggrit, 2018).

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In this era of globalization, organizations, including churches, play an important role in shaping and maintaining relationships between individuals and groups in society (Liliweri, 2020). The church is an organized religious institution or community with the aim of organizing worship, teaching religious teachings, and facilitating spiritual growth and service to members of the congregation and the wider community. Churches generally have a hierarchical structure with religious leaders, such as pastors, who are responsible for teaching and managing the church (Pace, 2013); (Akinmoladun, Ibukun, Afor, Obuotor, & Farombi, 2007).

The Church has a central position in many communities, so its way of communicating influences various aspects of social and cultural life. In an increasingly heterogeneous and complex society, the church must be able to convey its message in a way that is relevant and easy for all its members to understand. This research aims to understand how church communication can adapt to social and technological changes, as well as how churches can maintain their relevance in an ever-evolving cultural context. On the other hand, the effectiveness of church services is highly dependent on how messages and information are conveyed to the congregation. Ineffective communication can lead to confusion, misunderstanding, and even conflict within the church. Through this research, existing communication barriers can be identified and appropriate solutions can be proposed to increase congregational engagement and participation. Thus, the church can provide better and meaningful service for its members. In his book, Thom (Kapindo & Vebrynda, 2022) said that the church can be described into two types. The first is the church as universal, that is, all those who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior, to be a part of it. It does not look at denominations, types of churches, and so on. The second is the local church. This definition refers to the official organization of the church that has a clear church structure and system. Local churches have differences, while local churches that are the same will join a wider organization, can be called denominations.

GBI Pengharapan Surabaya is an interesting case study because it has applied the Simple Church approach, which emphasizes on simplifying the organizational structure to clarify the direction and mission of the church. The church streamlined its organization and unified the teaching curriculum for all categories of congregations, which overcame many communication barriers and improved efficiency (Robbins, Judge, & Breward, 2016).

Simple Church prioritizes a minimalist and focused approach in church management. In contrast to traditional church structures that are often complex and layered, Simple Church emphasizes simplifying organizational structures and processes, with the goal of clarifying the direction and mission of the church. The essence of Simple Church is to facilitate a deeper relationship between members of the congregation and God, strengthen faith growth through more personal and purposeful meetings, and optimize the church's ministry into the community (Pratiwi & Muhaimin, 2023). By reducing non-essential activities and programs, Simple Church helps congregations focus on important aspects of religious life such as worship, Bible study, and ministry, thus allowing for more substantive and sustainable spiritual growth.

The application of the Simple Church model in Indonesia itself is still very limited, until now, there are only two churches that are known to have implemented this model, including GBI Pengharapan Surabaya. Although the Simple Church model is said to be able to simplify organizational structure and improve operational efficiency, there has been no research that specifically addresses communication patterns in the context of applying this model. The lack of previous research on this topic is the main reason why this research is important.

This study aims to analyze the communication pattern of the GBI Pengharapan Surabaya organization in the implementation of Simple Church, identify communication barriers, and provide solutions to increase congregation involvement and participation. With this analysis of communication patterns, it is hoped that the church can design a more efficient and structured approach in the implementation of Simple Church, strengthening the sense of togetherness and common purpose among the congregation.

## **Research Methods**

The research approach that will be used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research is research with the intention of understanding the phenomenon of what will be studied, and by describing it in the form of words and language, in a special context that is natural and by utilizing natural methods (Moleong, 2017). Descriptive research is a research method that prioritizes qualitative data and is described descriptively. In the Great Dictionary of Indonesia, it is defined as a trait that describes it as it is.

The subjects in this study are the pastors of the congregation, administrators, and congregations of the Indonesia Baptist Church of Hope Surabaya. Selected based on appropriate criteria, experience relevant to the research theme. And the object of this study is how the communication pattern in the implementation of the Simple Church management system in the management and congregation of the Indonesia Baptist Church Pengharapan Surabaya.

In this case, the researcher uses observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation to obtain data from the same source simultaneously. Triangulation of data collection that combines various data collection techniques and existing data sources.

## **Results and Discussion**

In this study, the author has made observations in the GBI Pengharapan Surabaya environment and participated in weekly activities carried out by this church. At this observation stage, the author sees activities that are different from other Baptist churches that the author has participated in. The researcher found that there was a change in the management structure due to the implementation of the new system in 2020 so that it affected the series of church activities. After making observations, the researcher conducted interviews to deepen the information. Interviews were conducted with 3 informants, namely DHS (Congregational Pastor), CBP (Assistant Pastor of the Church

and the current Chairman of the Church Designing Committee), SDA (Member of the church designing committee of the elderly discipleship choir).

### **GBI Organizational Communication Hope when Implementing Simple Church**

Improving the quality of an organization's communication is crucial in an effort to ensure that every member of the congregation understands, accepts, and supports these changes. The communication process began with the initial socialization to introduce the concept of Simple Church to the entire congregation carried out by the pastor of the congregation. GBI Pengharapan held a congregation meeting involving all members to explain the reason behind the implementation of Simple Church. In this meeting, church leaders laid out the vision, mission, and goals of the proposed changes.

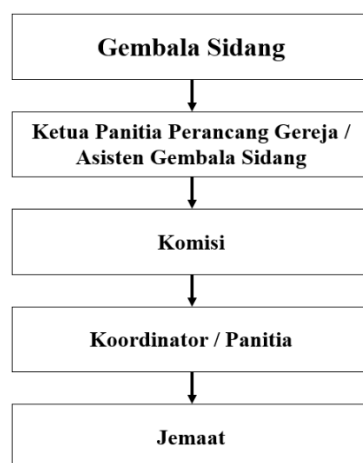
*"First there is a representative to follow the teachings to learn. And invited a person from the first Baptist church in Bandung. Then there was the form of Team 12 to be introduced to the Simple Church and then given to the congregation, introduced by the pastor of the church. But before that, yes, what passed was a planning meeting."* (SDA interview, July 31, 2024)

From the above statement, in addition to the introduction made by the pastor to the congregation, the written material in the book used for discipleship explaining the basics of Simple Church was also disseminated to the congregation to strengthen their understanding. The importance of a deep understanding of Simple Church encourages GBI Pengharapan to organize various church activities to achieve the vision and mission of the church.

### **Communication Flow Patterns in the Implementation of Simple Church**

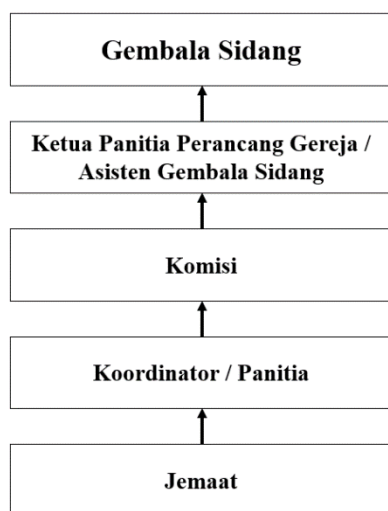
#### **1. Top-down communication**

Communication from above is communication that comes from the church planning committee. This communication takes place between church leaders and congregation members. Starting from the church design committee, the decisions of the information that flows from the church leadership to the congregation include the vision and mission of the church, important policies, and instructions for the implementation of church activities.



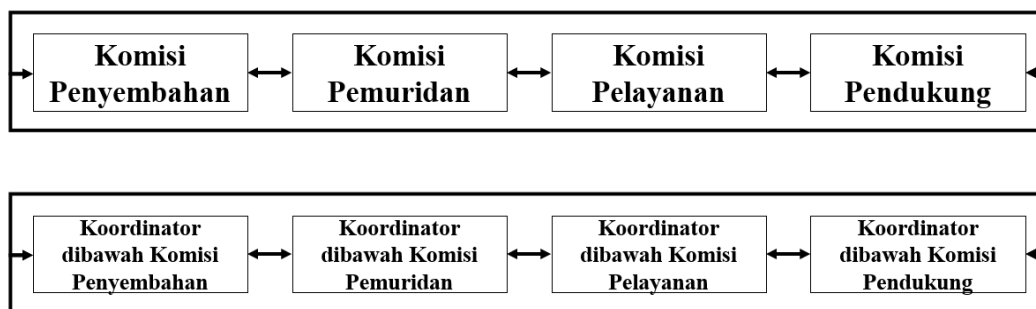
## 2. Bottom-up Communication

In contrast, bottom-up communication includes feedback from the congregation to church leadership. The communication from below is an input or suggestion from church members. Before the message is delivered to the pastor, the commission will first discuss with the coordinators the messages or suggestions brought from the coordinators.



## 3. Lateral Communication

Lateral communication is the exchange of information and coordination that occurs between individuals or units that are at the same level of hierarchy in an organization. This communication occurs in the body of the same commission, and also at the level of the same coordinator or committee of the management of the Indonesia Baptist Church of Hope Surabaya.

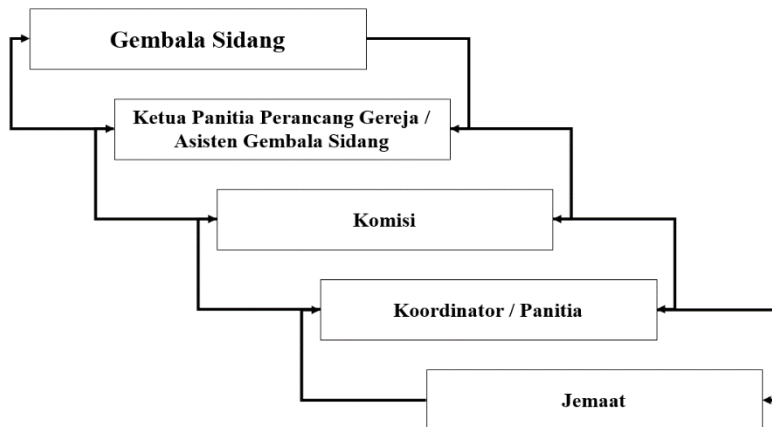


## Polan Communication Network in the Implementation of Simple Church

The application of Simple Church at GBI Pengharapan Surabaya provides an interesting example of how communication patterns can be adapted in a system that emphasizes simplicity and efficiency.

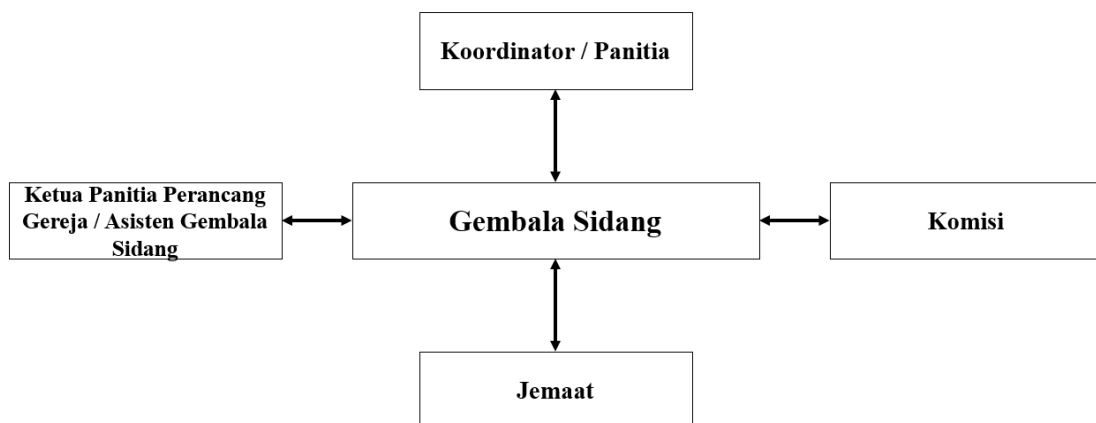
### 1. Chain Pattern

Chain pattern is a form of communication in which information flows through a series of members in sequence. This pattern ensures that messages are received sequentially and can reduce the risk of information distortion. For example, a pastor may give important instructions or announcements to church administrators, who then relay the message to the members of the congregation.



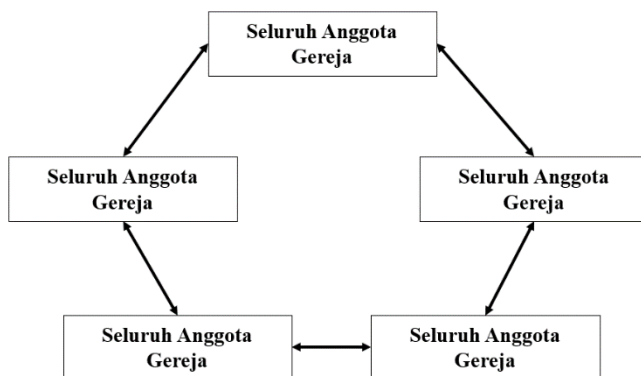
### 2. Wheel Pattern

In the implementation of Simple Church at GBI Pengharapan Surabaya, a wheel pattern is used to ensure that important information and decisions can be disseminated quickly and efficiently to all members of the organization (Ruliana, 2014). In the process, the pastor of the congregation gathers information from various sources, prepares a strategic plan, and then conveys this information directly to the management and department heads in regular meetings or through direct communication.



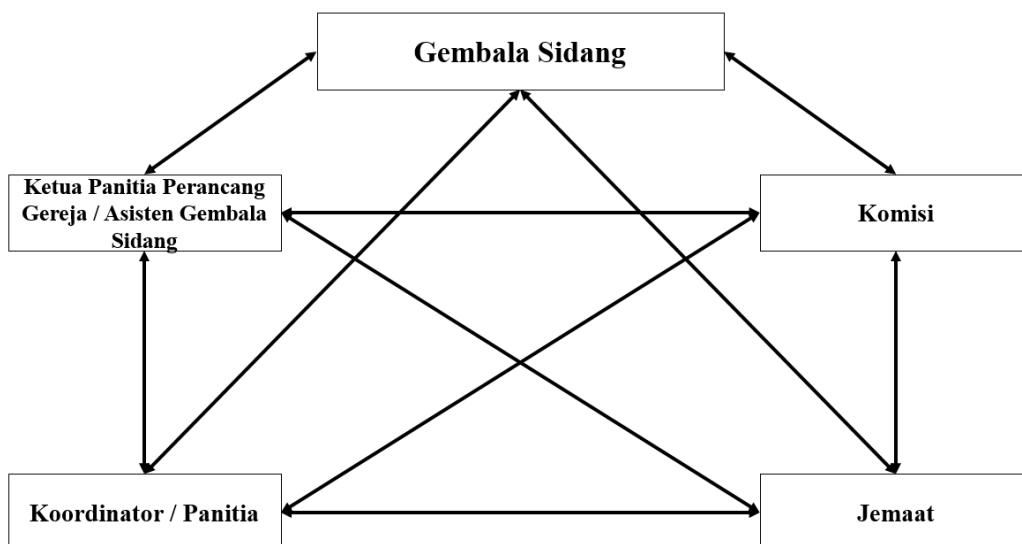
### 3. Circle Pattern

The circle pattern allows each member in the circle to communicate directly with two other members who are close to each other. This creates a more decentralized and collaborative communication structure, where each member has the opportunity to share information and opinions directly with other members.



### 4. Free Channel Pattern

The free-channel pattern allows each member of the organization to interact directly with each other member without going through formal communication channels or hierarchies. This encourages an open and interactive communication environment, where ideas, feedback, and information can be shared freely and immediately. In the implementation of Simple Church at GBI Pengharapan Surabaya, a free channel pattern is used to encourage the full involvement of all members, both administrators, congregations and pastors.



### 5. Y Pattern

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The Y pattern has a structure in which communication starts from the center (the shepherd of the congregation), branching out into two or more paths (commissions and administrators). In the implementation of Simple Church at GBI Pengharapan Surabaya, the Y pattern is used to harmonize communication between various departments and congregation groups, ensuring effective coordination in church activities and programs. By disseminating information through department heads and gathering feedback from various groups, this pattern allows for an efficient and responsive flow of information.



## Communication Barriers in the Implementation of Simple Church

The implementation of the Simple Church model at GBI Pengharapan Surabaya aims to create a more efficient church environment, focused on the main mission, and reduce structural complexity. However, along the way, the church faces a number of obstacles that affect the effectiveness and smooth implementation of this model.

### 1. Embedded Organizational Culture

An organizational culture that is already embedded in a church includes values, habits, and traditions that have developed over the years. At GBI Pengharapan Surabaya, this culture reflects the old ways of operating and worshipping, which are ingrained among the members of the congregation and the management.

### 2. Difficulties of Human Resources (HR) to Keep Up with Change

The implementation of the Simple Church model requires changes in different ways of working and approaches. Many HR members, including church staff and volunteers, may face difficulties in adjusting to this new way. They lack the skills or understanding necessary to implement such changes.

## Conclusion

This study analyzes the communication pattern in GBI Pengharapan Surabaya in the application of the Simple Church model, which aims to simplify the organizational structure to increase operational effectiveness and efficiency. The results show significant changes in organizational structure and communication patterns, despite facing several challenges such as cultural resistance and human resource difficulties. The new, leaner structure improves coordination, responsiveness, and communication from leadership to subordinates, vice versa, from subordinates to leaders, and laterally between departments.

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Various communication patterns, such as chain, wheel, circle, free channel, and Y patterns, are implemented to support efficiency and collaboration. However, the obstacles that arise are faced with the values of the church and the teachings of the Bible, emphasizing love, unity, and service. Biblical principles are used to resolve conflicts and ensure spiritual integrity in every decision. GBI Pengharapan Surabaya has successfully implemented this model with better communication quality, offering important insights for other churches, and is expected to achieve success.

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