

## Human Resources Development as the Future Agenda of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Indonesian Ecclesiology in the Realm of Economic Digitalisation

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### Abstract

*This research seeks the priority of human resources development in Indonesian ecclesiology as the response to economic digitalization growth. The COVID-19 pandemic has created vast changes in the economic market and needs a long-term strategy in human resources management. As a community of people, a church needs to pursue the future agenda of 21st-century ecclesiology. Through the conducting of the sociology of religion method, this research finds out the old concept of ecclesiology and needs to improve as the immediate response for eliminating human resources. The study concludes by showing human resources as the priority agenda for development in economic digitalization.*

*Keywords— Human Resources Management; Indonesian Ecclesiology; Future Agenda of Church; Economic Digitalisation*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mencari pengembangan sumber daya manusia bagi eklesiologi Indonesia sebagai jawaban untuk perkembangan digital ekonomi. Masa pandemic COVID-19 menciptakan perubahan yang cepat didalam pasar dan memerlukan strategi jangka panjang dalam manajemen sumber daya manusia. Gereja, sebagai komunitas, memerlukan pencarian agenda utama pada abad ke 21 eklesiologi. Melalui metode sosiologi agama, maka penelitian mendapatkan konsep lama tentang eklesiologi dan memerlukan perubahan sebagai jawaban untuk eliminasi sumber daya manusia. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pengembangan sumber daya manusia sebagai agenda utama didalam ekonomi digitalisasi.

*Kata kunci— Human Resources Management; Indonesian Ecclesiology; Future Agenda of Church; Economic Digitalisation*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The pandemic has changed religious life in practice, rituals, rites, and pastoral actions. Religious change due to the use of technology is a driving factor for the shift in the concept of Indonesian ecclesiology—traditional ecclesiology, which emphasizes the spirituality of human resources, changes to the development of human resources towards technology. The research of Eugene Baron and Khamadi J. Pali confirms the power of technology to create a shift from a focus on spiritual development to pastoral practice as the church's response agenda to the needs of today's people (Baron & Pali, 2021). Digital-based economic growth has contributed to a shift in the church's response to human resource development. Therefore, technology during and after COVID-19 changed Indonesia's ecclesiological agenda towards human resources.

The shift in the concept of ecclesiology in Indonesia is currently influenced by two essential elements that hit the foundations of human life. First is the technological epidemic; the second is digital-based economic growth. The COVID-19 outbreak caused a contraction of the church community with strict restrictions, so the

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power of technology became the backbone of overcoming the contraction (Plüss, 2020). The development of a digital-based economy has implications for the erosion of human resources, which cannot adapt to the power of technology. This shift provides an opportunity for the concept of Indonesian ecclesiology to maneuver in saving human resources to face the changing times.

The pandemic changed the strategy of ecclesiology by relying on the media as an E-Church concept. Kartika Singarimbun emphasized that the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak altered the face of the church, forcing it to rely on technology to serve the congregation (Singarimbun, 2021). Therefore, Annette Potgieter confirmed that the concept of ecclesiology has shifted from physical to virtual through internet media (Potgieter, 2020). This shift opens opportunities for strategic changes to build human resources using the Internet. This has resulted in a shift in the focus of the old concept of ecclesiology to reposition and respond to the technological outbreak so that human resources can keep pace with the growth of technology as a virtual church.

Indonesia's economic growth during the pandemic has shifted to the power of technology as a selling and buying activity. Michael Spence views that developing a digital-based economy has changed the paradigm of producing and distributing goods and services to customers (Spence, 2021). Transactions of sellers and buyers through Internet media cause human costs for human resources that cannot adapt to technology (Pan et al., 2022). The development of the digital economy is not accompanied by staffing and skills for the management of the Church's human resources, so the effect of the digital economy is a human cost for the Church (Peters & Marnie, 2021). The Church is not only understood as the divine people but also as the organization. Therefore, the growth of the digital economy affects the shift in the development of church human resources to carry out the economy of life for a church as an organization. The effect of digital economic growth leads the Church to form an agenda for anticipating it.

What is the future agenda of 21st-century Indonesian ecclesiology in the realm of economic digitalization? The research of Yohanes Hasiloan Tampubolon commented that the church must be able to change its strategy through individual changes to structural changes, or vice versa, through the formation of collective networks between churches and individuals (Tampubolon, 2020). Network formation and individual change are strategies of the ecclesiological concept used in dealing with the economic development of capitalism. In line with this research, Feldy Lolangion proposed the concept of ecclesiology to empower church human resources by reconstructing traditional Indonesian cultural values to innovate in entrepreneurship (Lolangion, 2021). The concept of ecclesiology offered by previous research has yet to fully answer how the future agenda of the 21st century of Indonesian ecclesiology in the realm of economy digitalization is for human resources. Previous research focused on the old concept of ecclesiology with the same conclusion: saving human lives. However, previous research should have explained the growth of economic-based technology as the core of the problem. The problem in this research is determining the development of human resources based on the digital economy as the future agenda of 21st-century Indonesian ecclesiology. The solution was obtained by discussing the traditional concept of ecclesiology, then the impact of Indonesia's economic digitization growth on 21st-century ecclesiology, and finally, setting a future agenda for Indonesian ecclesiology.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Ecclesiology and Its Concept*

Ecclesiology is the study of the church in dealing with the critical issues for human resources in terms of salvation, the work of Christ, the work of the Spirit, and other Christian doctrines (Kgatle, 2020). Christian churches adopt ecclesiology to develop and increase human resources' faith in the Divine. According to Niemandt, the later development of the missional church has become the locus to access the expansion of the Kingdom of God through witnessing the Divine Christ (Niemandt, 2012). The relational community is a target for expanding the Kingdom of God. This concept formulates that ecclesiology follows mission as the position of Ecclesiology. Therefore, this concept is called the old paradigm of Ecclesiology. Avila (2021) points out the concept of old Ecclesiology as the evangelical position is to connect to the saving grace of the soul on the last day for the church's human resources. Avila's argument supports the idea of the old paradigm of Indonesian ecclesiology to develop the idea of faith in preparing for the coming Day of the Divine.

Christ's totality is the basic concept of ecclesiology to develop church human resources in responding to their faith through the work of mission in the community (Hwang & Lee, 2019). This thought led churches worldwide to build up their human resources by spreading the joyful message of salvation to unbelievers through good deeds. Allison presents that ecclesiology is to bind up the people through Christ's death in partaking in the Lord's Supper as the building of the church's human resources (Allison, 2012, pp. 10–11). The

focus of the old paradigm of ecclesiology is to build and develop human resources in the area of faith in responding to the work of Christ. Therefore, Christian ecclesiology is read to equip the church with human resources regarding spirituality as the sacred journey.

According to Pakpahan et al., ecclesiology is building technology to create human resources encountering the Highest Supreme (Pakpahan et al., 2022). Pakpahan et al. see that technological development encourages people to reinterpret the concept of ecclesiology during the COVID-19 pandemic. The concept of ecclesiology today reflects the needs of church human resources. Technology development makes the concept of ecclesiology reinterpret and contextualize the requirements of the people in the church (Nuban Timo et al., 2021). Therefore, the development of the Industrial Revolution placed the concept of ecclesiology to keep up with technological developments. The Industrial Revolution eroded the value of ecclesiology, and the concept is trying to regain its value in the public sphere. Cultural change makes understanding the concept of ecclesiology save humanity through changes that lead to digitalization (Brodd, 2019).

### *B. Digital Economy and Human Resources*

The growth of digital platforms creates an economy based on the digital through reflecting the spreading of the COVID-19 virus (Chen, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic stimulates the expansion of customers' consumption through digital-based technology. The new products and services will impact the economic growth of the nation. Jiang claims that the digital economy is vital in sustaining the economy during the post-pandemic (Jiang, 2020). The new scenario of the strategic economy is based on the digital platform to boost the circular economy in a country. This new economic change impacts human resources to adapt to technology for survival (Wang, 2021). Human resources are significant in the economy to compete effectively and be productive. A person's physical and spiritual abilities are a driving motor to be effective in production throughout the digital economy. Vertakova et al. (2019) point out that the reproduction of human resources should respond to the new knowledge and competency of the digital economy. Therefore, human resources are essential in engaging with the digital platform by equipping them with the ability and competency to survive through the expansion of consuming products.

The digital economy requires new demands of human resources to meet the economy's needs based on technology. Developing the digital economy involves understanding how traditional approaches and concepts of human resources development are no longer relevant for innovation and modern concepts in engaging with technology (Pan et al., 2022). The development of human resources is needed to form new human resources through the technology equipment for engaging in the digital economy. The level of development in the digital economy goes along directly with the industrial labor capital through improved labor literacy in the digital economy (Wang, 2021). Therefore, human resource development is critical in growing a technology-based economy.

Besides, the growth of technology provides promises of convenience, speed, accuracy, and convenience for human resources. Technological development has a hidden agenda for human resources that cannot compete (Martono, 2011, pp. 200–204). This technological growth causes human costs, so human resources cannot compete with rapid technological developments. The economy's return through technology makes it difficult for human resources to keep up, so the promises of technology become myths for change (Ghosh et al., 2021). Therefore, digital economic growth through technology creates significant social changes and even tends to kill human resources themselves. The rapid development of the Industrial Revolution made the concept of ecclesiology look at rapid social change and even formed steps in saving human resources.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a sociology of religion to bring up the emic perspective to reveal the problem's core. By accessing journal articles, books, scientific writing, and newspapers, the sociology of religion's method analyzes difficulties in obtaining solutions and determines the foremost program for the future agenda of the 21st century of Indonesian ecclesiology (Okutan, 2020; Paolucci, 2020; Thomson, 2020). The solution was obtained by discussing the traditional concept of ecclesiology, then the impact of Indonesia's economic digitization growth on 21st-century ecclesiology, and finally, setting a future agenda for Indonesian ecclesiology.

#### IV. RESULT/FINDING

The old paradigm of ecclesiology no longer answers the need for the development of the church of human resources in facing the economy based on technology. The idea of ecclesiology is to develop human resources for facing the world's changes regarding faith for the spiritual journey. However, faith also faces the reality of life itself. The inability of church human resources to engage with the development of digital platforms creates the personal problem of ecclesiology itself. The development of faith for human resources supports the teaching of skills in terms of digital and technology to adapt to the digital economy as a part of the development of ecclesiology to make them survive. The value of ecclesiology is to equip human resources to improve the quality of life through teaching faith both before and in the afterlife. This thought is one of the twenty-first-century agendas of Indonesian ecclesiology in improving an economy based on technology. Indonesian churches are urged to respond to the massive development of technology through the human resources development program by teaching and engaging digital platforms to equip the sojourners of this world for life, surviving as the reality of faith.

#### V. DISCUSSION

##### **Indonesian Traditional Ecclesiology Concept**

The traditional concept of ecclesiology is understood as an extension of the concept of the kingdom of God on earth. Research conducted by Tumanggor (Tumanggor, 2021), which is supported by Hwang & Lee (Hwang & Lee, 2019), explained that the traditional concept of ecclesiology tends to the concept of expanding the church as expanding the kingdom of God on earth. The traditional concept of ecclesiology makes it an obligation for God's people as churches to plant new churches and increase the number of people. Opening new churches and increasing the number of congregations are priorities for the traditional concept of ecclesiology to carry out the great commission. Therefore, the concept of ecclesiology puts forward the concept of saving the lives of human resources to fulfill the call of the significant mandate. In line with the research above, I Made Priana views that the concept of ecclesiology is the implementation of the expansion of the kingdom of God through evangelism and the conversion of human resources to enter the kingdom of God as a reflection of the existence of the church in the world (Priana, 2019). The traditional concept of ecclesiology places the church's expansion through evangelism to attract human resources to come to the church to represent the kingdom of God in this world. The emphasis on the concept of ecclesiology is to build religiosity for human resources biblically in expanding the kingdom of God.

The church is also understood as the administrative place of the Word of God and the sacraments in ritual life. This ecclesiological concept places the church as a bulwark in maintaining tradition, namely preserving the sanctity of the Word of God from modern life. This idea is supported by Kobetiak (Kobetiak, 2020), who states church as an institution has full control over the message of the Word of God as the administration of the concept of ecclesiology. The life and activities of the apostles created church as a main vision and mission, namely saving the lives of human resources as a guideline for the traditional concept of ecclesiology in rites, rituals, and pastoral actions. The activities of the apostles according to the Word of God have three basic elements, namely 1) preaching the gospel of salvation; 2) show the way of truth; 3) practice the sacrament as a sign of saving souls. The sacraments performed by the apostles support the vision and mission of the church as a religious institution to save spirits and souls. Research conducted by Naat (Naat, 2020) and Masinambow (Masinambow, 2020) emphasizes that the sacrament has a sacred meaning for the concept of ecclesiology and its implementation in the ecclesiological rite. Therefore, the traditional concept of ecclesiology places the practice of expressing the Word of God and the sacraments as the main mission of the traditional concept of ecclesiology.

For traditional ecclesiological concepts, the expression of the salt and light of the world in improving morality is a special calling for the church. Winarto explained that the church, as salt and light, contributes to Christian characters' moral values in the disruption era (Winarto, 2020). Moral values are the domain for the traditional concept of ecclesiology to improve ethics in the digital era and place value standards for society. Changes in the digital era that occur in society have made the church set value standards for digital concepts. Agung commented that the church still plays a role in determining ethical values that affect society as salt and light around it today (Gunawan, 2020). Therefore, every social change of society is responded to by the church as a worldly change, and it sets its standards so that the concept of the church is not lost in its trace in the life of

society. The essence of salt and light for traditional ecclesiastical became the dominant teaching in today's society.

### **Impact of Digital Economy Growth**

The COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in digital platforms proliferating as intermediary media in the Indonesian economy. Nizar and Soleh revealed that the role of the digital economy provides opportunities for Indonesia's economic growth due to the SARS-Cov 2 pandemic (Nizar & Sholeh, 2021). The digital platform has established itself in the market share as an economic resilience contributing positively to economic growth. Fuadi et al. (2021) studied consumer behaviour during the pandemic, who relied on digital platforms for economic transactions and claimed digital platforms to expand market access for the business world. Therefore, the digital economy has become the driving force and support for the Indonesian economy in overcoming the contraction due to the pandemic. The digital economy is a savior for Indonesia's economic stagnation and is a leading program in the future.

Economic growth affects the church in supporting its organization in serving its congregation. The effects of economic stagnation have a direct impact on the life of the church. Tafonao's research explains that the digital economy affects the congregation's lives, causing them to adapt to digital platforms in all aspects of life and anticipate changes in the congregation (Tafonao, 2020). This behavior change allows the church to change its strategy in anticipating the digital era in rituals, rites, and pastoral services that rely on financial offerings from the congregation. Tecoalu et al. explained that digital platforms influence changing the behavior of church communities in the face of digital economic growth (Melitina Tecoalu et al., 2021). Financial offerings for the church treasury experienced a contraction because the church's human resources did not yet have the skills ready for the digital era. The church's human resources were not able to compete, so the church's cash finance contracted. Therefore, the growth of the digital economy will contribute to a shift in the ecclesiological agenda in the future.

The shift in the focus of the Indonesian economy to the digital economy provides an open space for the church to reposition the ministry agenda. Dalensang and Molle describe the difficulties of the church in Indonesia in dealing with changes in the digital era, which impact the readiness of human resources to face the digital economy (Dalensang & Molle, 2021). The focus of church growth on the concept of rites, rituals, and pastoral care for human resources biblically has shifted when there was an impact on the concept of the digital economy in the pandemic era. Tambunan's research clearly emphasizes that churches must be prepared to shift the concept of ministry based on the digital era (Tambunan, 2020). The shift in the focus of pastoral care is carried out solely to save human resources to compete in the digital world. The church's human resources are faced with economic-based applications in fulfilling lives. Therefore, church human resources not equipped with knowledge of digital economy concepts are eliminated in the digital era and impact church operational costs, so the church must reposition the concept of ecclesiology.

The impact of the digital economy affects the church's human resources, experiencing social capital degradation. Irtyshcheva's research confirms that human resources experience social degradation due to the shift to digitization (Irtyshcheva et al., 2020). The growth of the digital economy causes human resources to lose confidence in their incompetence in the digital era. Boiliu proves that the phenomenon of the shift in the concept of the digital economy creates human costs for the inability of the church's human resources to adapt to the concept of the digital economy (Boiliu & Pasaribu, 2020). Because of this phenomenon, the church experiences social capital degradation due to its inability to equip and save human resources for the digital era. The social degradation of the church's human resource capital has resulted in a loss of confidence in the ability of the ecclesiology concept to build human resources development that is physically and mentally healthy for the development of the digital economy. The loss of the social value of capital, the value of trust, on the concept of ecclesiology has a harmful impact on the development of God's incredible message for the church as an institution that increases the quality of human resources.

### **Future Agenda of 21st Century of Indonesian Ecclesiology**

Human resource development is the main element in preparing the next generation for the church. Human resources are an asset for the global growth and development of the church's existence. Liang's writing explains that the 21st century is carrying out church reform through character education to deal with changes in the nation's economy (The, 2020). Liang prioritizes character education in dealing with the changing focus of the

economy, but not touching the digital economy is a factor that weakens the church's strength in the absence of the power of financial offerings. The digital economy requires the development of human resources to collaborate with digital concepts to support the concept of ecclesiology. Saragih proposes the concept of entrepreneurship through digital concepts for church human resources (Saragih, 2019). Pasande and Tari urge that the church needs reforms to prioritize physical needs through digital-based entrepreneurship (Pasande & Tari, 2019). The thoughts of Pasande and Tari anticipate the digital era for the church, especially the weak economy of the congregation. Therefore, the development of church human resources is needed to change the traditional ecclesiology emphasis in building human resources on the religious concept to the digital concept of religious economy. The concept of ecclesiology is expected to provide space for the development of human resources in terms of physical needs to deal with the rise of the digital economy as a priority for the Indonesian nation and to build a generation of churches based on a digital religious economy.

The church generation needs human resources who can adapt to the concept of the digital economy to continue the concept of ecclesiology as God's people. The concept of a digital economy that focuses on technological expertise makes developing human resources a priority for the future agenda for the concept of ecclesiology in the 21st century. Empowering human resources with digital skills provides lessons for those who cannot afford it. Mwambazami and Banza's research proposes learning for those who can and those who have not been able to adapt to expertise (Mwambazami & Banza, 2014). Therefore, empowering the church's human resources provides a space to equip capabilities in the digital field to respond to the digital economy. The concept of ecclesiology must have the flexibility to respond to social change and these changes by prioritizing the protection of human resources. De La Cruz and Fernandez stated that the church must be able to adapt to economic changes based on religious values for the welfare of human resources (De La Cruz & Fernández, 2019). Social change by prioritizing the development of human resources to maintain the church's existence in the future.

The development of human resources with digital capabilities is the development of the concept of ecclesiology in the digital economy. Human resource development programs complement the capabilities of human resources through the use of digital for transactions and interactions through applications. The development of human resources through digitization places Donnelly and Johns as a research priority in the digital economy (Donnelly & Johns, 2021). The church, as an institution for the formation and development of human resources, is involved in saving human resources in the era of the digital economy. Church congregations must be able to grow and adapt to the concept of the digital economy through digital education in human resource development programs. Pasande and Tari's research stimulates churches to change and take a stand to do digital education for church human resources in the digital economy (Pasande & Tari, 2019). Therefore, the concept of Indonesian ecclesiology dares to educate the church's human resources in developing digital technology to face the changing focus of the digital economy. This change impacts the church's offering in carrying out its mission as light and salt.

The future agenda of 21st-century Indonesian ecclesiology is to place human resource development with digital teaching programs on economic change. Digital teaching is in the form of device use, product marketing, and product promotion through digitization (Wahyuningtyas et al., 2021). The church must adjust and equip human resources in the digital economy to respond and save people from a human inability to face the changing focus of the digital economy. In other words, ecclesiology does not necessarily focus on saving human souls but on building human resources to have the concept of survival for the church in the future. Therefore, empowering human resources is a priority for the 21st-century ecclesiology concept to save them from destruction in the Indonesian digital economy program (Sijabat, 2020).

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Changes in the strategy of the Indonesian ecclesiology concept are needed to save the church's human resources. The changing focus of the Indonesian economy in the digital economy, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, destroys the potential of the church's human resources to exist in the economic world. The inability of the church's human resources to use digitization contributes to the failure of ecclesiology as the concept of saving the whole human being. The concept of traditional ecclesiology, so far, emphasizes saving human lives and must set the focus on developing human resources that adapt to the digital world as the future agenda of the 21st Century of Indonesian Ecclesiology. The development of human resources in the Indonesian church through education in the church is the beginning of structuring the concept of ecclesiology that interacts with the current state of the world. Digitalization training may be an urgent program for church members to cope with the development of the digital economy.

We suggest further research on the program's implementation in the development of human resources in churches. Some of the suggestions are: (1) using a quantitative methodology in measuring the improvement of church human resources with the engagement of technology, and (2) adding some variables to measure the improvement and development of human resources in churches.

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