

# 16-Article Text-122-1-2- 20210618

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**Submission date:** 18-Jun-2021 07:17PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1608543601

**File name:** 16-Article\_Text-122-1-2-20210618.docx (129.29K)

**Word count:** 6601

**Character count:** 39452

## Leadership Model and Planning Strategy for the Catholic Private Religion Colleges During the Covid-19 Pandemic

### ABSTRACT

This paper examines the leadership models and planning strategies for the Catholic private religion colleges during the Covid-19 pandemic. Using qualitative research methods consisting of three stages, namely literature review, presentation of research results, and analysis the groups of data with interactive models to provide an overview of the overall research interpretation. The results of this study indicate that the leadership model that often appears as a characteristic of the colleges leadership is a situational and distributed leadership model, with an emphasis on leadership principles that served to face the changing organizational needs. The planning strategy carried out shows a visionary leadership model, colleges leaders are able to rearrange strategies that are adapted to the situation in developing educational programs and improving the quality of higher education.

### KEYWORDS

leadership model;  
planning strategy;  
covid-19 pandemic;  
private catholic religious  
college

Received: 18 June 2021

Accepted: xxxx

Published: xxxx

### Introduction

This paper examines leadership models and planning strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic at the Catholic Private Religion Colleges (CPRC) in Samarinda with a literature review and case study design. The CPRC referred to here are colleges under the auspices of the Directorate General of Catholic Guidance at the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia which provide who serve to the nation and the church as well as a reliable pastoral agent for the Catholic Church in Indonesia (Kirchberger, 2014). The profile of graduates of the catholic religious education study program is to produce educators and teachers of the Catholic faith (religion teachers in schools), catechists (teachers of faith in parishes), and researchers (Sarumaha, 2018).

This study examines educational leadership model of the catholic religion college and concludes with a descriptive analysis of the leadership model during the Covid-19 pandemic from the results. Motivation 'Why PCRC?' Because the orientation of PCRC is to produce scholars who have expertise in the field of religion, who in the end become catholic religious education teachers, parish catechists, extension workers, or researchers (Sarumaha, 2018). Because Catholicism needs a cadre of leaders, especially regarding the availability of catechists and religion teachers, it is quite worrying, especially in public schools, there are still many catholic children who do not receive religious lessons from catholic religion teachers (John, 2018).

Among the studies on leadership models, Hermans (2021) reported the results of a research study of 198 Don Bosco catholic school leaders in India. The study measures three leadership scales,

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namely transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive leadership. Hermans (2021) explains that catholic schools need to build a model of leadership with discernment that can be characterized as individual and communal, future-oriented, dealing with decision-making in general, focusing on purity of heart and emphasizing theological ethics as a source of belief. The role of leadership is seen as a key factor to improve school effectiveness and performance (Ningsih et al., 2020; Day et al., 2016). The role of the leader in this position is unique because it is located between the public and internal areas (Tolo et al., 2020), so that in carrying out its leadership function it requires the support, trust, and active involvement of all components (Bryk, 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Sebastian et al., 2019), as well as creativity in innovating and advancing schools and improving learning outcomes (Pietsch et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2018).

In another study, Rokhman et al. (2020) analyzed growth leadership for leaders of private universities in Central Java in the era of disruption. The authors analyzed data from 225 private universities using a model participatory action and learning system by placing university leaders as objects as well as subjects in leadership training activities. Higher education leaders are asked to develop a vision and implement it into targets milestone measurable. The results of this study indicate that it is important for an educational leader to increase his/her capacity and quality, in order to be able to formulate and develop a better vision of higher education in the future. Currently, an educational leader must be brave to face challenges, know various things, be able to build an established and conducive organizational culture, build communication across various lines, and have a commitment to become a superior university (Bashori et al., 2020).

Leonangung Edu et al. (2019) investigated the leadership of catholic universities in Flores. This study involved 44 lecturers as participants from catholic colleges in Flores. The results of this study indicate that the leadership practice applied by the school principal is a collegial leadership model. This can be seen from the leadership strategy of the school principal who gives confidence to lecturers (especially young lecturers) to become leaders in lecturer meetings and tridharma activities. This is done by the head of the school with the aim of increasing the capacity of lecturers and contributing to improving the quality of higher education institutions. The issue of leadership models in catholic educational institutions is very interesting. According to Francis (2014), catholic leaders must be committed to acquiring distinctive leadership qualities and acting for the common good.

Despite this, a large amount of research on leadership during the pandemic refers to the ideal leadership model, Ribbins (2007) states that there are still few detailed leadership studies and contextual reports on what leaders do and why they do it under what circumstances, how and why others respond to what they did, and what the results were (Ribbins, 2007:359). Based on this, this paper examines how the leadership model and planning strategy for private Catholic religious universities in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic are the main part of this study. The limited literature on Catholic college leadership is clear, so, this study intends to fill the literature gap by using evidence from a private catholic college in Samarinda, East Kalimantan.

## Literature review

The leadership literature is oriented towards models and instruments, describing different leadership styles that are considered important such as various leadership paradigms (Avolio, 2011), and service leadership (Ehrhart, 2004). The most commonly used models focus on one or two aspects of leadership, and ignore others. Furthermore, most models focus on the positive side of leadership. In particular, previous studies have tended to study leadership styles associated with positive leadership outcomes, although the negative aspects of leadership are more intensively studied today (e.g., ethical and despotic leadership, the relationship with leader social responsibility,



top management team effectiveness and subordinate optimism (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Hogan & Hogan, 2001).

The definition of educational leadership has evolved to encompass a wider spectrum of knowledge, characteristics, dispositions, and skills oriented towards competitive perspectives and understandings with little agreement on what should or should be included in the discipline of educational leadership (Bush, 2007). Beaudoin (2003:520) for example, argues that 'leadership speaks to a ubiquitous, identifiable set of human activities that support and assist, particularly in relation to change', meaning that leadership talks about a series of identifiable human activities that support and help especially for a change. The role of educational leadership is currently undergoing major changes, becoming increasingly complex (Kelkay, 2018), especially during this time of the pandemic Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19), many school leaders are experiencing stress due to the pandemic situation, they only rely on guidance on responses, processes, and practices. Covid-19 procedures, and protocols (Harris & Jones, 2020).

Leadership is a process by which a person influences a group of people to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2015). The role of the leader is not static but dynamic, changing over time. A recent study by Dagnew Kelkay (2020) reports that the role of a college leader has undergone major changes, has become more complex, and shifted from a manager-building role to a visionary situational leader. In terms of improving learning effectiveness, a study by Lochmiller and Mancinelli (2019) contributes to a global body of research examining the enactment of educational leaders' discourses and policy steps towards increasing leader autonomy. Like many countries in the world, the Australian school system is competing to improve learning achievement through national and international examinations (Drummer et al., 2014).

The conceptualization of educational leadership in this study refers to an educational leadership model that establishes the qualities, knowledge, and skills needed to lead educational institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Educational leadership aims to improve learning outcomes, create conditions for effective teaching and learning, develop learning organizations, build networks, and develop subordinates to become leaders (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Building trusting relationships and focusing on internal and external learning is at the core of the educational leadership role (Sebastian et al., 2019). Reliance on the collective or collaborative ability of organizational members and teams to lead change in a volatile or dynamic environment. However, leader-focused theory and authority structures make it difficult to fully benefit from the collective capabilities of groups or organizational members organisasi (Sebastian et al., 2019; Abonyi & Sofu, 2019). The underlying premise of leadership in complex organizations is that 'answers can be found in the community' in group-centered organizations where 'everyone can learn constantly' (Popper & Lipshitz, 1998).

According to Hallinger et al., (2020) from 1980 to 2014, the most studied leadership models were the distributed, instructional, and transformational leadership models. Purwanto et al., (2019) analyzed the influence of higher education leadership styles, involving 120 lecturers from 14 private universities in Tangerang. The results of this study conclude that transformational, transactional and authoritarian leadership styles have a positive and significant effect on performance. Educational leaders must navigate accountability and autonomy, equality and excellence, welfare and workload especially during the current Covid-19 pandemic (Netolicky, 2020). The Gardner McTaggart (2020) study investigates educational leadership in global crisis situations. This paper disseminates critical theory to examine educational leadership in the 21st Century. It is found that the global crisis facing today is caused by the dominance of system interests that harm the survival of many people. According to Gardner-McTaggart (2020), educational leadership today has the potential and influence to facilitate global thinking and intersubjectivities to address problems.

## Methods

The paper uses qualitative research methods to analyze the overall context of interactions with participants and relies on descriptive data (Gay & Airasian, 1992). The approach used in this paper consists of three distinct stages. The first stage consisted of a literature review (Grant & Booth, 2009; Wee & Banister, 2016) on how to model college leadership during a pandemic. The next stage presents research data to see the planning and leadership strategies implemented by higher education leaders between March 2020 to May 2021. Data collection is carried out naturally as a source of finding data, then described thoroughly and intact.

The author tries to find the symptoms and social events that appear especially during the Covid-19 pandemic in the private catholic private religion colleges in Samarinda environment by involving school leaders and education staff consisting of 10 (ten) lecturers and 7 (seven) employees as sources of information. Data collection techniques used are interviews, observation and documentation (Miles dan Huberman, 1994). The third stage consists of analyzing focus group data using a combination of Creswell (2008), the process of data analysis using an interactive model to provide an overview of the overall research interpretation (Miles dan Huberman, 1994).

## Results and discussion

### *Leading and managing college during the pandemic*

At the beginning of 2020, Indonesia was shocked by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and it had an impact on all aspects of daily life, destroying economic growth and disrupting the education sector globally. In just a few months Covid-19 has become a 'supernova' (Azorin, 2020), creating undeniable chaos and shaking up the fabric of education. The pandemic has highlighted education leaders to define learning models as academic activities and get support for online learning. According to UNESCO, 1.6 billion young people have dropped out of school during this crisis, as Zhao (2020) pointed out that almost all schools have been stopped and teaching has been significantly regulated, including universities in Indonesia.

For leaders of private catholic religion colleges, working in these demanding and chaotic conditions, the pressure is relentless, the options are limited. Staff meetings, meetings with students, and corridor chats with coworkers, which are campus activities, have disappeared. All informal moments are halted, parts of students and faculty are now in an educational situation full of concern for their children, awaiting the return of normal services or hoping for some new normal that might offer stability, continuity and certainty. The obvious reality is that neither is likely to happen any time soon.

This is the perfect storm for educational institutions with imperfect leadership responses. Field notes from this study suggest that in times of crisis, leaders must act quickly and with foresight but also with a balance of anxiety and doubt over the choices, consequences, and side effects of the actions taken. No one can predict what might be the best solution, the good course of action, the side effects of every action taken from this crisis problem. The campus leadership acts like a 'blind man, leads the blind', there is no precedent and no guide for leading universities during a pandemic.

Current university leaders both rely on health protocol guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in their college environment. Lecturers and education staff are required to face extra pressures such as staffing problems and increased workloads. Higher education leaders also have to take on other important tasks, which are quite time-consuming, such as in the case of a private Catholic college in Samarinda, assisting in contact tracing and providing personal protective equipment for medical personnel, distributing hand sanitizers and masks for lecturers, employees, students, and the general public (Lorensius, 2020).



The main professionalism during the Covid-19 pandemic is described by Stone-Johnson and Miles Weiner (2020), that the role of university leaders as frontline workers is very important, because they deal with social problems, maintain student moral and communicate with parents in making policies, related to academic and non-academic activities on campus. In addition, although the work aspect of work is increasing, an indication of the central role of leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic is to improve the quality of universities and ensure the continuity of the student's academic learning process, such as the response of the vice chairman of the academic field when discussing education issues during campus closures during the pandemic.

"...I often remind students to stay focused on learning, even though at this time learning cannot be done face-to-face, we must switch to online learning to overcome student lecture problems, and must be prepared properly because it is important for us to maintain the quality of learning students." (Vice-Chairman).

In addition, not only university leaders and lecturers are required to have technical skills to meet the demands of online learning, but they are also required to pay attention to academic needs and build partnerships with students' parents and the community to ensure an inclusive and effective approach to solving learning problems. This illustrates what Dagnew Kelkay (2020) means that the role of leaders in managing higher education is currently increasingly complex, leading to a visionary situational leadership model. Even in a difficult situation due to the pandemic, all elements of education managers must be optimistic about completing their tasks, this is in line with Hallinger et al., (2020) in a systematic review of leadership models, that the most studied leadership model is distributed leadership. Furthermore, the Deputy Head of Academic Affairs stated:

"Our lecturers ask us to adjust the learning process at this time, because it is not possible to conduct face-to-face lectures, we have also asked students, especially those who live in dormitories, to return to their parents' houses because we will close the dormitory. can also monitor student learning with the help of parents from home." (Vice-Chairman)

The head of college also emphasized the importance of being flexible and adaptable when managing external expectations and pressures. For example, with little waiting, school principals began receiving a wealth of information through circulars and information shared on social media that required immediate planning decisions to be made at the internal campus level. This situation is also described by Netolicky (2020) that today's educational leaders must be able to navigate the direction of leadership that is appropriate to the situation, especially during the current pandemic.

"...it's really worrying, the information circulating in the community from social media is very fast, and it also has an impact on the campus, because there are parents of students, is the campus still open or closed? So according to the letter from the government, we follow that and our decision to send back students who live in dormitories and make adjustments to academic activities to prevent the spread of covid in this campus environment." (Chairman)

The results of interviews with university leaders illustrate that distributed leadership has become one way to maintain the academic learning process at the catholic private collage in Samarinda. Distributed and situational leadership has become the response of higher education leadership in overcoming the current crisis, and this leadership model is a necessity to survive in difficult situations due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. The results are reinforced by the statement of Harris dan Jones (2020) that distributed leadership is the default in responding to the current crisis. However, the concept and need for implementing distributed leadership is not new, and there are many versions (Spillane, 2004). Nonetheless, one consistent aspect of distributed leadership that remains constant in the literature is that distributed leadership practices are shaped in organizational interactions and situations (Spillane, 2004).

## 1 Leadership and planning strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic 5

Leadership practices and collage planning strategies have changed a lot, in large part due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This study underscores that the principles of good leadership in this situation are constant and context-responsive, namely having a clear vision and being responsive to changing situations in educational leadership practices due to Covid-19. Crisis management is an important skill of a university leader, especially to assist the implementation of tasks and solve problems in the management of the college-led (DeLoogh dan Den Hartog, 2008; Hogan dan Hogan, 2001). The empirical data of this study shows that the delegation and division of tasks and leadership responsibilities can no longer be carried out because the workload and work stress levels of staff are increasing. As stated by the head of private Catholic Religious Colleges below.

"Currently we are trying to protect lecturers, employees and students from being exposed to Covid, that's why the division of tasks for academic activities and Easter service or community service has been abolished from March 18 to April 20. In fact, lecturers and staff are always eager to work together, accept assignments, especially those who are still young, but now everything is limited and we also understand this situation, so it's no wonder why some of the tasks we are given can't be carried out, it's not as usual always ready." (Chairman)

In this regard, university leadership appears to be faced with increasing planning and leadership responsibilities under pressure and being distributed among other staff members. During this data analysis, it appears that the most dominant theme that emerged from the data group was a strong ethics of caring for all campus academics, as stated by the following leaders:

"I feel that it is time for us to take care of ourselves more, by adhering to existing health protocols, so we don't give too heavy a task to lecturers or staff on campus assignments, so that they don't get more stressed with the current situation coupled with piled up tasks." (Vice Chair)

"We temporarily stop campus academic activities so that lecturers and staff can take more time to rest and take care of their health with their families at home, we also limit their duties such as thesis supervisors, which can be done online, without having to come to campus again, as well as online lectures, if possible, can be carried out from home, we do not give too heavy a task, because we are all currently under pressure from the Covid-19 situation." (Chairman)

The current situation has presented the education system with unexpected challenges, at the decision-making level, interviewed university leaders are sometimes unhappy with circulars from the government regarding planning strategies during the pandemic. The following statement illustrates this.

"The situation is different, the government's policy requires us to conduct online lectures, while most of our students are from remote areas where internet signals are difficult to reach, we have tracked almost 50% of our students living in areas with poor signal, and they have to look for a signal to the capital city. sub-districts that are far from their villages, it is not possible to conduct online lectures in the near future, for strategic leadership there is not yet, because we are still thinking of solutions for that, so that students who have returned home can still go to college." (Chairman)

"...I think there needs to be strategic leadership from above in order to overcome the learning problems in this situation." (Staff)



"The facts on the ground are different, we are in Samarinda and in Java, we have to be able to adjust the situation, be more able for good decisions, we need that leadership strategy, we as lecturers are very worried, we don't know what to do." (Lecturer)

The situation above shows that collage leaders are currently still confused to solve the problems that occur, even though there is a planning strategy from the government but it is not properly applied to the collage they lead everything needs adjustment, for now the leadership can do nothing but surrender to the situation, because the most important thing for them at this time is to ensure the safety of everyone's health and not be stressed in facing a tense situation. As the catholic private colleges differ from public collages, in this situation the leaders of private collage are left alone to navigate this new terrain (Gardner-McTaggart, 2020), some of the information and solutions they receive are deemed inadequate to enable strategic leadership and planning to take place, appropriate and distributed, it appears to be a source of frustration for them.

The situation above shows that college leaders are currently still confused to solve the problems that occur, even though there is a planning strategy from the government but it is not properly applied to the college they lead. Everything needs adjustment, for now, the leadership can do nothing but surrender to the situation because the most important thing for them at this time is to ensure the safety of everyone's health and not be stressed in facing a tense situation. As the catholic private college differs from public universities, in this situation the leaders of private universities are left alone to navigate this new field. Some of the information and solutions they receive are deemed inadequate to allow for proper and distributed leadership and planning strategies, instead, it appears to be a source of frustration for them.

Different from other colleges, private catholic religious colleges have completed dormitory facilities for students, but this is not enough to be a solution in the Covid-19 emergency situation, it is even considered to have the potential to spread the virus. However, after a long time finally found a solution by daring to take risks with the decision made, namely asking students to return to the dormitory by adhering to strict health protocols. The purpose of this policy is that students can continue their lectures that have been stopped, even though they continue through online lectures facilitated by the campus. This was conveyed by the leadership, lecturers, and staff during further interviews.

"Currently we have issued a decision to accept students back into the dormitory, this decision is indeed difficult but it must be done so that students and lecturers can complete the lectures that were delayed because it is impossible to wait until the situation is safe, ... will soon enter the new academic year, then we agree to this policy with all the risks." (Chairman)

"...yes, students have to go to dormitories so they can study online, parents and they are also willing to follow strict health protocols, we have provided all the necessary health facilities, ... we are ready with a careful planning strategy, lecturers- lecturers will continue to work from home, students study from dormitories, and employees can enter the office, we adjust everything according to government policies, ... students must show the results of the covid test to ensure they can enter the dormitory and campus environment." (Vice-Chair)

"...it was a decision in a joint meeting. This strategic plan will continue until next semester, we employees will help to handle all student equipment in the dormitory and provide online administration, because they are not allowed to leave the environment. dormitories, ... dormitories and campuses are currently integrated, ... all facilities to support this policy have been prepared in advance with the leaders and lecturers." (Staff)

Based on the description above, leaders, lecturers and educational staff show the characteristics of an attitude of concern, open communication from various directions, decision making is carried out jointly or by consensus, direct supervision and monitoring of the process, and



motivates by meeting the needs needed in overcoming problems faced. The precautionary principle forms the basis for the decisions made, with conclusions about overcoming, managing and surviving in difficult situations due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Of course, the language used by the informants is very similar and accurately describes the emergency they face. Coming to a fairly normal situation, after going through a difficult period of approximately two semesters of study, finally the head of the school was able to continue and develop institutional programs, such as assistance in preparing for institutional accreditation, further studies of lecturers and employees, and developing collaboration with government agencies.

Development of student education programs both academic and extracurricular in accordance with the pandemic situation, such as technical guidance activities for learning media, faith and character development activities for dormitory students through monthly recollections, daily mass and worship, student entrepreneurship, talent development and interest in music and church liturgical singing, as well as monthly communal recreation. The program of activities is carried out online and offline, adjusting to the situation and conditions.

This section explores the planning strategies used by leaders of private Catholic universities in Samarinda during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results obtained from this study show that unsurprisingly, in many cases, evaluation and planning activities that were agreed upon prior to the pandemic have become less of a priority for university leaders. On the other hand, these difficult times saw the emergence of newer plans to implement online learning, and beyond that the health and welfare of students, faculty and staff of higher education institutions emerged. Furthermore, as described in the interviews, school principals and their staff, lecturers and staff spoke about the need to limit distributed leadership and planning in their universities. This is a significant break from the period before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Excellence education aims to provide students with inspiring learning experiences about their course of study. Universities must carry out educational innovations to help students experience superior learning experiences. The current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic indicates the importance of networking in education, especially to address the learning problems of lecturers and students. A positive aspect of the current pandemic is the emergence of collaborative networks during uncertain times (O'Hara et al., 2021), and collaborative and distributed leadership is a new imperative in educational leadership. This distributed leadership practice is in line with the opinion of Beauchamp et al., (2021) that the distributed form of leadership becomes a real strength and allows the delegation of responsibilities and some continuity of decision making in a network in an educational environment.

Educational leadership is currently centered on social interaction in the educational environment. Literature review on the interaction of administrative and work in organizational systems: (1) rational systems theory and scientific management principles related to efficiency and effectiveness (misalnya Fayol dan Storrs, 1949; Taylor, 1947), (2) the theory of human relations with nature alam (McGregor and Cutcher-Gershenfeld, 1960), and (3) open systems theory (Callahan, 1962). The recent leadership literature is largely empirical with much of the research grounded in organizational theory. In international leadership studies, many researchers investigate how educational leaders contribute to institutional success and the impact of leadership models is seen as an influence variable and a control variable (Leithwood & Wahlstrom, 2008). Leadership at Catholic universities, Sandiasa (2017) suggests using the characteristics of leadership, both when leading and when choosing prospective leaders. The same concept has been expressed long before by Pope Francis, that there is only one path to leadership and that is service (Francis, 2014).

The current Covid-19 pandemic is a challenge for universities to find effective educational planning strategies to ensure the continuity of academic activities on campus. The emphasis of leadership practice here is more on responsibility that is applied in interactions and actions. This view presupposes that leadership is not confined to those in formal leadership roles but that

influence and agency are widely shared (Harris dan 1) Flaminis, 2016). The challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, as illustrated in this study, are those opportunities to exercise influence and agency are significantly limited by remote work, identification of government policies and policies from school leaders, and sometimes the reality of pressure experienced by lecturers and employees.

## Conclusion

This paper shows the general aspects of how to model leadership and college planning strategies for discussions about 5 possible long-term implications in leadership practices in private Catholic religious universities during times of crisis, such as the current Covid-19 pandemic. This study illustrates how leadership is studied from many perspectives, not only to enrich general knowledge, but also to contribute to deepening knowledge about the phenomena that occur. This demonstrates the importance of moving beyond traditional leadership concepts and seeking new aspects of educational leadership to open oneself up to the unexpected but also to consider clearly and in detail, such as the various 6 aspects of knowledge and learning associated with leading.

The conclusion from the results of this study shows that, the leadership model that often appears as a leadership characteristic of the catholic private religion college during the current Covid-19 pandemic is a situational and distributed leadership model, i.e., college leaders are able to switch from traditional leadership models to other leadership models, with an emphasis on the principle of servant leadership to meet changing organizational needs. The planning strategy carried out shows a visionary leadership model, because even in stressful and stressful situations, college leaders are able to rearrange strategies that are adapted to the situation to develop educational programs and improve the quality of higher education. Of the various leadership models that have been discussed, situational leadership and servant leadership are the most suitable for the catholic private religion college leadership model; leaders want the best for their followers by raising the spirit of service proportionally.

Based on the findings in this study, we realize that this study is still limited to certain groups, namely leadership models and planning strategies 17 at by the head of the catholic private religious colleges in Samarinda, East 23 Timantan. New research is needed to corroborate the results of this study, with the hope that the results of this study can contribute to adding information about leadership in catholic religion college in the future.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to all parties taking part in this study. Our gratitude also goes to the anonymous reviewers for providing us with constructive comments on the earlier version of this paper. 3

## Funding

This research 3 did not receive a specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or non-profit sector.

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