

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Whenever the topic of school comes up, what usually comes to mind are the teachers and students. However, only a few would directly think of the administrative staff. Moreover, not a lot would consider working as a staff in a school. This matter is often encountered in the school community. Often times, the main focus of leaders (Head of School, Principals and administrative managers) concerns the teachers and students but not towards the administrative staff.

One of the thing that is often overlooked is the growth of administrative staff in their technical and leadership skills that would help them be more effective stewards in the school. Based on the researcher's observation after three years working at two SPH campuses (Lippo Village and Sentul City), the administrative staff are mostly lacking ownership and initiative in the work they do, they prefer to stay quiet unless asked, and not wanting to take a risk by contributing in decision making and let the leaders make the decisions. Even simple things like talking to a leader may be daunting to some or even majority of the administrative staff. Some staff that were sharing in a job alike session for secretaries across the five campuses on October 2022 also stated that they prefer to let the leaders decide and they will execute. They sometimes disagree, but would not want to voice out their concerns and prefer to just say yes.

Another example is seen when some of the staff across the five campuses were being approached to join a management trainee program at SPH for their growth on October-November 2022, they chose to decline the offer because they

feel that they are not authoritative figures and are incapable of such challenge. This shows the lack of leadership skills in the administrative staff that also affects the whole school. In terms of technical skills, a very basic technology skill is also not a strong point within the administrative staff which also affect the efficiency and effectiveness of their work. On top of it, some of these staff does not have adequate education background in their work area and hence need to get extra help and guidance in order to continue to grow in their respective area's technical skills.

One of the support a school can give to its administrative staff's growth is through professional development (PD) program. Sadly, PD for administrative staff in a school is often overlooked. This is seen by the huge difference of research and resources available for both junior and senior school teachers compared to staff PD. Very few research was found that talks about PD for administrative staff in a school, especially in Christian school context. The closest is either teacher or academic leader PD in Christian school, or training for staff outside school context.

In addition, based on researcher's observation after three years working at SPH, both teachers and staff are equipped with professional development program from the school once or twice every year. PD session at SPH before the pandemic is done as a whole day program where teachers and staff gather in one big hall, have a chapel session together, and then the teachers will be split into smaller groups for other sessions while the staff remain as one big group for a session. Since the start of the pandemic, it is set as a half day program on around the month of November and March where both teachers and staff still have one big session for chapel, and then the staff have their own session while the teachers have breakout sessions discussing various topics. However, during 2021/2022 academic year, teacher and

administrative staff PD will be held together as a whole day PD in November, and two other half day PDs will be done in quarter three and four, following how the teachers PD are set up. Second, teacher PD are also better thought out with a lot of planning and bringing in great speakers and chance to collaborate with other teachers from other SPH campuses. This is shown by the existence of a PD team to plan and prepare, and also from the involvement from Head of School to plan and prepare. Third, teachers are equipped spiritually and in various skills through this PD with topics discussed such as understanding Christian education, learning to thrive, how to care for student's mental health, also usage of technology and various learning management system. However, the approach for staff PD is different. The topics discussed are mainly theological topics or personal growth. As an example from a finance staff's point of view, how does a theological topic connect to their daily work? However in the 2019/2020 academic year, there was an attempt to bring up a more practical skill topic which is customer care and relation, about service excellence, but it was not linked to the Christian faith and does not seem holistic. Additionally, it was not continued with a good planning and follow up for the next PDs.

The administrative staff PDs that occur at SPH also did not discuss about leadership skills. In reality, leadership skills are very important for administrative staff in the school. The better the leadership skills are in each of the administrative staff, the more likely they can problem solve, take initiative, be more innovative, and be able to give more positive contribution to the school. A better leadership skill also includes better interpersonal skill that could help with better communication and team work within the team.

SPH itself have five campuses: Lippo Village (LV), Pluit Village (PV), Sentul City (SC), Kemang Village (KV), Lippo Cikarang (LC). Lippo Village campus is the oldest and biggest campus which also serves as the central office. In February 2021, some informal interviews with some of the administrative staff at SPH Lippo Village was done to understand what they feel about the support from the school for their growth. The staff were saying that they really needed a skill training to help them with their daily work and to keep up with the demands of their work. Other than that, based on the observation made from the last two PDs, a lot of the administrative staff just see PD day as a day off work, or would even bring their laptop to do some work during sessions, or simply fall asleep. This might also occur because staff PD is scambly prepared and is not helping staff to grow holistically. The PD program becomes a reactive action from the current problem at hand and not proactive to prepare the team and prevent problems. A quick survey to the administrative staffs at SPH was also done previously in November 2020 to rate the relevance of the last PD's (November 2020) topic with their work from 1 (very irrelevant) to 5 (very relevant). 87 administrative staffs responded out of 146 administrative staffs, the mean score is 3.9 which is almost relevant but not quite yet. Hence, doesn't make the administrative staff eager to join and see it as an opportunity for them to grow.

An informal interview was also done to five leaders at SPH in March 2021 at their offices regarding what they think professional development for administrative staff should look like and what they sense is important for administrative staff's growth. All these leaders agreed that administrative staff should grow holistically. They would want the staff to grow spiritually and also in

various skills, including leadership skills. From there, in May 2021, researcher has discussed this issue with SPH Lippo Village head of school (HOS) who at the start of 2021/2022 academic year becomes the Executive Director of SPH, and SPH Lippo Village head of administration (HOA) who starting 2021/2022 academic year became the Director of Administration (DOA) of SPH. Both HOS and DOA agreed and supported for this research to be done because they would really love for the staff PD to be better managed, planned, and executed, and so that the administrative staff could grow in their skills.

Hence, it can be concluded that administrative staff's growth in their leadership skills is important and that could be done with a better use of the PD program. This is not only important for the staff, but also for the organization. A strong program for staff development will support staff to have better and stronger knowledge and skills that will help them to innovate and problem solve (Gregory 2003, 5).

Therefore, there needs to be a change in how administrative staff PD is executed in order to be able to help staff grow holistically including in their leadership skills, and be able to make even more positive contribution to the school and thus be a blessing even more to the community for the glory of Christ. And that would not be possible if administrative staff is not seen as an important thing and get the attention they need and deserves. Especially when talking about the PD program for administrative staff which is a perfect opportunity to help their growth.

1.2 Problem Identification

Administrative staff's role in a school is to support the academic team. They not only need to have adequate spiritual and technical skills, but also leadership

skills. However, there is not much leadership skills growth for the administrative staff and there are some problem present at SPH:

- 1) Lack of leadership skill in the administrative staff
- 2) Lack of support from the school for the administrative staff's leadership growth
- 3) Lots of focus to the spiritual side of development but not a holistic approach in the PD topics
- 4) Lack of proper planning for the administrative staff PD
- 5) Lack of follow up from the PD sessions

1.3 Scope of Research

From some of the problems identified, the researcher found that there are various problems about administrative staff's leadership skill and professional development (PD) in the school. Researcher will define the terms to the issue being researched, which is in the scope of Sekolah Pelita Harapan that focuses on how the leadership skills could be developed through a better planned professional development program.

Hence, the purpose of the research is to develop Sekolah Pelita Harapan administrative staff's leadership skills through a professional development program that is based on the school's and leaders' vision for the school, and the crucially needed leadership skills for administrative staff to thrive in their work and role at school. The development will not only occur through needs analysis done through interview and focus group discussions (FGD), but also based on input from various experts. This will then be tested out as a mini trial.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background, problem identification and border, hence the research questions for this research are:

- 1) What are skills needed by the administrative staff at SPH, especially in leadership area?
- 2) How should a PD program look like to help develop the leadership skills of administrative staff?
- 3) How effective is the designed PD program in developing administrative staff's leadership skills?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The goal of this research are as below:

- 1) To determine the skills need of administrative staff at SPH, especially in the leadership area.
- 2) To determine a PD program to help develop leadership skill for administrative staff.
- 3) To determine if PD is an effective way to develop leadership skills for administrative staff.

1.6 Significance of the Study

It is expected that this research can give positive benefits and value, not only for the researcher but also to the school community that includes school leaders, teachers, staff from all different departments in SPH.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

From a theoretical point of view, the hope is for this research to be able to play a part in education's growth especially in thinking about the administrative staff's role and growth in a school. Moreover, since there are almost no research about administrative staff leadership growth and PD in a Christian school context. Hence this research could enrich research about administrative staff leadership skill and professional development. On another note, it is a great hope that from this research, other researchers can use it for a reference to continue doing research with topics that are connected to this and can be a reading source that can give a broader knowledge and valuable to readers, especially for Christian educators and staff.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

From a practical value, the hope is for this research to be give benefit for the school leaders, human resources department and especially the administrative staff. First of all, for the school leaders, the hope is for this research to help them make strategic planning and guidance for the human resources department on the development of administrative staff's leadership skills growth at SPH, especially through the PD program. Secondly, for the human resources department, this research help them identify what are the main topics and leadership areas that staff really need. Last, this would be beneficial for the administrative staff too since they will get the chance to grow, increase their quality in their work and personal skills, and hence help the school grow and bless the community even better as a whole.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis will consist of six chapters with explanations in each chapter. In chapter one, the researcher will write about various important things that relate with the background of why this research is done which is based on the observation done at SPH regarding leadership skills gap and PD execution gap between the needs and the practice. Continued by the identification of various problems that correlates with the background which includes lack of leadership skills, lack of support from the school, lack of proper PD planning, and no holistic approach to the PD. Other than that, the border of the problem is also discussed, which is focused to SPH. Based on that, the three research problems are determined and will be answered through a series of research and reach the goal intended which is to identify the leadership skills needed, identify the PD program needed, and determine the effectiveness of the PD program designed. This research is also aimed to be useful and will have a structure in the writing.

In the second chapter, there will be theory explaining the variables in the research which would mainly be about leadership and PD. In this chapter, all the references that is used to explain the theory about leadership theories and professional development will be discussed. While the third chapter will discuss the issue from the Christian worldview. Discussing its importance and effect from a Christian perspective.

In the fourth chapter, the research methodology will be discussed. Research design, steps, and instruments that will be used to gather, analyze, and interpret data will be explained. This research will use evaluation study method and will analyze needs through qualitative methods of interview and FGD. Other than

that, the research setting and subject will also be explained. For this research, the setting would be at SPH and the subject focusing on the administrative staff and looking also from the leaders' point of view.

The fifth chapter will answer the problem statements that have been stated in the first chapter. This will be done by explaining all the research results and the analysis of it, including the data interpretation and the connection it has with the theory stated in the second chapter.

The last chapter will include conclusion, managerial implication and suggestions that could be useful for other researchers that would like to continue the research. Other than that, research limitation would also be mentioned.

