

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Today's world has become ever guide so complex and dynamic. In the education system, leaders, teachers, and students alike are pushed to think critically not only in one subject but across a range of subjects. Moreover, the importance for educational personals to engage in interchangeable skills has also increased. The 21st century has shifted today's education from single-track learning to cross-subject learning. Students and teachers need learn to realize that underneath the various subjects and disciplines there are connections and differences that can be drawn. Added to that, today's students need to explore relevant themes and issues and strive to explore ways to solve problems through these connections.

One way of obtaining this cross-subject approach in learning is through interdisciplinary learning. However, the implementation of interdisciplinary is not an easy pursuit. It is a journey that demands educators to work together and come up with a problem based or thematic approach to connect course content across various disciplines. In trying to cohere various disciplines to a particular theme, teachers may face a few challenges in trying to implement an interdisciplinary approach. One of these challenges according to Ibsen and Eriksen (2022) is related to the diversity of strategies and method of each individual (teacher) in approaching a particular subject. Added to that, Ibsen and Eriksen also mention the different terminologies that may be specific to one field of expertise which could lead to misunderstandings. Therefore Daniel et al. (2022) states that a critical element of an interdisciplinary approach is finding and establishing fruitful collaborative teams to reduce various misunderstandings that may appear. This can be a challenge because teaching is conventionally an isolated practice. In a classroom, there is usually one teacher or an

exchange of one teacher that is in charge of the teaching and learning process of the students. But with interdisciplinary, teachers need to set time to come together and learn to work with other teachers. These teachers may have different teaching backgrounds, characteristics, teaching methods, teaching skills etc. With that being said, another aspect that may aid in the collaboration process is the school leaders as they encourage and build a collaborative spirit among the teachers.

In a learning environment like XYZ which consists of many different schools spread across Indonesia, teachers come from all types of educational backgrounds, and each teacher has their own learning style too. Added to that, each organisation or educational institution has its own learning style too. These different learning styles require an ideal leadership style so that the school can run effectively, since an interdisciplinary approach requires collaborative work from teachers.

A school can be considered an organisation that is filled with many different types of personnel with various behaviours. These people from the leaders, staff, and teachers all have a goal they strive to achieve. In a school organisation, individuals need coordination so that even with the many differences, these individuals can come together and strive to achieve a certain goal so that the vision and mission of a school can be achieved. The correct type of leadership is needed in this type of environment so that the school can run efficiently and effectively.

Transformational leadership is one type of leadership that has evolved for many years. In an educational setting, transformational leadership is a term that is quite familiar. But during these past few years, transformational leadership has become even more important, especially in the world of education. Even with the pandemic that is gradually transitioning to an endemic, the effect it had on individuals, organisations, and communities as a whole is undeniable. This effect has led to educational leaders today faced with the challenge of

coming up with ways to operate schools in a way that is more effective.

In the center of this school operation is the community of teachers who need guidance from a leader. Teachers play a big role in the education system and schools can only go as far as the teachers can take them. So for schools to go far and reach their full potential, the leaders of the school need to be aware of the teachers' wellbeing and guide them so that teachers can have the ability to implement teaching and learning strategies such as interdisciplinary learning.

As mentioned before, the school organisation will not be able to run without a leader, a principal. However, the success of the principal to run the school is directly correlated to the teamwork of all the stakeholders in the school especially the teachers who are work with the principal. In leading and managing the school, the principal is also expected to create a system where the teachers can work together, improve, and carry out their professional duties as good as possible, such as implementing interdisciplinary learning. A teacher's work performance needs to be accompanied by good cooperation between teachers who then become the driving force for teachers to work and implement interdisciplinary learning even better. In every activity such as interdisciplinary learning, the teachers don't only teach the students, but they also need to cooperate with other teacher. The collaboration is carried out so the goal of interdisciplinary learning will be achieved.

In terms of transformational leadership at school, it is not the traditional top-down approach rather a bottom-up approach. This means leaders at school look to empower the teachers, share the leadership and organize the learning (Yamamoto & Yamaguchi, 2019). Moreover, Yamamoto and Yamaguci (2019) in their research state that transformational leaders create the conditions which enable teachers to be self-motivated to work for improvement by a practice driven approach. This practice driven approach can help to create

a space for innovations, such as integration, collaborations, and problem solving. All these factors are all closely correlated to interdisciplinary learning.

After observing all of this, the researcher would like to conduct further research on the relationship between a transformational leadership style and teacher collaboration on the ability of teachers in implementing interdisciplinary learning. The researcher was encouraged to make XYZ the object of research because XYZ has transformational leadership that plays an important role in the running of the school. Moreover, XYZ leaders also encourages their teachers to collaborate with each other to implement an interdisciplinary approach.

## **1.2 Problem Identification**

As a school, the education of XYZ has a mission to: Proclaim the preeminence of Christ and engaging in the Redemptive Restoration of all things in Him through Holistic Education. As an effort to *restore*, the teachers and students at XYZ are challenged to look for relevant issues in the world and put in the effort to redeem and solve these issues. This effort is not done in just one aspect of the students' education, but it attempts to face it as a whole: through holistic education. This holistic approach is done through interdisciplinary learning. In carrying out the interdisciplinary learning approach at XYZ, each school is not the same. The leader(s), usually the *curriculum coordinator and teacher trainer* (CCTT), gives the freedom to the teachers at the school to decide which teacher they want to collaborate with. It is not mandatory for each teacher to implement the interdisciplinary learning approach in their classroom but it is something that is highly encouraged by the leaders. So if the teachers do finally decide to implement the interdisciplinary learning approach, it usually consists of at least two teachers and can go up till five teachers or even more, depending on the theme or topic being discussed and how relevant the theme/topic is to the particular subject being taught.

However as mentioned before, implementing interdisciplinary learning comes with many challenges. These challenges may lead to some of the following problems:

1) Interdisciplinary Learning

At XYZ, implementing interdisciplinary learning can be fairly new among some teachers who maybe still are accustomed to the traditional single- track learning. As a result, teachers may need to go through some learning challenges to adapt to an interdisciplinary approach.

2) Teacher collaboration

In interdisciplinary learning, teachers also need to learn how to collaborate with other teacher with various teaching background. This can cause some issues due to the fact that, each teacher has a way of teaching that may interfere with teachers from another subject.

3) Leader's influence

The leaders at XYZ have a tall responsibility of influencing its teachers to overcome the challenges faced by the teachers. Leaders need to guide the teachers so that they are able to plan and execute interdisciplinary learning. Added to that, leaders need to be able to guide the teachers in the collaboration so that teachers can combine their ideas.

### **1.3 Scope of Research**

This research is limited to prevent the discussion from being too broad. These limitations are as follows:

1. In conducting this research, the researcher will examine how XYZ transformational leadership influences teachers' ability in implementing interdisciplinary learning.

2. The objects of research are XYZ teachers, and people who are able and willing to provide information.

#### **1.4 Research Question**

1. Is there a positive influence between transformational leadership in XYZ Schools and teachers' ability in implementing interdisciplinary learning at XYZ?
2. Is there a positive influence between teacher collaboration and teachers' ability in implementing interdisciplinary learning at XYZ?
3. Is there a positive influence between transformational leadership in XYZ Schools and teacher collaboration?

#### **1.5 Purpose of the Study**

The research purpose of this paper is:

1. To analyse if transformational leadership has a positive influence on teachers' ability in implementing interdisciplinary learning?
2. To analyse if teacher collaboration has a positive influence on teachers' ability in implementing interdisciplinary learning at XYZ.
3. To analyse if transformational leadership has a positive influence on teacher collaboration at XYZ.

#### **1.6 Benefit of the Study**

The researcher hopes to better understand how school leaders with their leadership styles can support teachers at school. The results of this study are expected to have the following benefits:

1. For leaders:

By knowing the influence of transformational leadership on teachers' ability in implementing interdisciplinary learning, the results of this study are expected to help leaders be more effective with promoting and encouraging teacher in interdisciplinary learning at XYZ.

2. For academics:

This research can be used as material studies or references for further research on transformational leadership, teacher collaboration, and interdisciplinary learning.

3. For other researchers:

This research gives an opportunity for other researchers to be able to deepen their knowledge and theoretical concepts on the topic of transformational leadership, teacher collaboration, and interdisciplinary learning.

## **1.7 Research Systematics**

For a clearer understanding and guideline concerning this research, the author presents this research in 5 chapters. The five chapters are as follows:

### Chapter 1 Introduction:

This chapter describes the background of this research problem based on the influence of transformational leadership, interdisciplinary learning, and teachers' ability. This is explained through the background, problem identification, scope of research, research question, purpose of the study, and benefits of the study.

### Chapter 2 Literature review:

This chapter talks about the theoretical groundwork of existing literature to support the research. The purpose of this chapter is to obtain a theoretical basis that will become the

basic reference for trying to solve the problems of each variable and their interrelationships with each other. This chapter is also aimed to start the bases for building a hypothesis for further research.

### Chapter 3 Research Method

This chapter focuses on the research method used and the type of quantitative research method used. It talks about how the research was carried out from the preparation to the data collection and the type of data analysis. It also talks about the setting, subject, sample, and the place of the research.

### Chapter 4 Result and Discussion

In this chapter the researcher presents the results and the discussion of the research. The results focus on the what the researcher was able to obtain from the data analysis. And the discussion strives to answer the research questions and from the theories.

### Chapter 5 Conclusion

The last chapter contains the conclusion obtained from the results that have been explained in the previous chapter. This chapter also contains suggestions for further research that may be carried out again in the future for a deeper understanding.