

Breaking Barriers: Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Urban Evangelism and Mentoring

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Abstract - This narrative inquiry examines the lived experiences of participants engaged in interdisciplinary collaboration within the context of urban evangelism and mentoring. By weaving together stories from diverse academic and ministerial backgrounds, the study explores how collaborative efforts overcome traditional disciplinary boundaries to address the multifaceted challenges of urban ministry. The study's themes include faith, bridging, learning, innovation, and transformation. Participants' narratives reveal how shared faith, mutual learning, and cross-disciplinary synergy contribute to both personal growth and the effectiveness of evangelistic and mentoring initiatives. This study affirms the value of narrative to capture the complexity and transformative potential of interdisciplinary engagement in faith-based community work.

Keywords: faith, innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, mentoring, urban evangelism

I. INTRODUCTION

Urban evangelism and mentoring face complex challenges that cannot be addressed by a single discipline alone. Interdisciplinary collaboration integrates diverse perspectives, skills, and methods to create holistic and effective ministry strategies (Klein, 2017). Such partnerships enable the church to respond more fully to both the spiritual and practical needs of urban communities (Banks & Ledbetter, 2004).

Interdisciplinary initiatives encourage creativity, build connections, and advance long-lasting community impact by dismantling conventional boundaries. Cross-disciplinary cooperation enables innovative approaches to problem-solving and culturally sensitive ministry strategies (Repko & Szostak, 2021). These collaborations have the power to change the ministry environment and its participants, increasing the effectiveness of mentoring and evangelism in multicultural urban environments.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Interdisciplinary Collaboration is the intentional integration of knowledge, methods, and perspectives from multiple disciplines to address complex problems that surpass the capacity of a single field (Bruun et al., 2005). In faith-based and educational contexts, it involves weaving theological insights with academic and professional expertise—such as pedagogy,

social sciences, and community development—to create solutions that are both practically effective and spiritually grounded (McMillan, 2010). This approach moves beyond parallel work toward genuine synthesis, enabling stakeholders to co-create new frameworks that reflect diverse perspectives while remaining anchored in shared values.

The benefits of such collaboration include increased creativity, broader problem-solving capacity, and the development of more holistic solutions tailored to community needs (Augsburg, 2006). Participants often gain personal growth through exposure to unfamiliar perspectives, while organizations benefit from stronger innovation and impact. However, challenges persist, including disciplinary jargon, conflicting priorities, and differing epistemological assumptions (Stokols et al., 2008). In faith-based contexts, tensions may also arise when secular methodologies intersect with doctrinal commitments, requiring deliberate dialogue and trust-building to ensure mutual respect and goal alignment.

The researchers sought to answer the following questions:

1. What stories do participants narrate about their experiences of interdisciplinary collaboration in urban evangelism and mentoring?
2. How do participants make meaning of these collaborative experiences in shaping their personal, spiritual, and professional growth?

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section discusses the methodological positioning, research instruments, research design, research setting, and participants. It also discusses data gathering procedures and ethical considerations. Furthermore, it discusses the data analysis.

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research paradigm, using narrative inquiry to explore the lived experiences of student participants in interdisciplinary collaboration for urban evangelism and mentoring. Narrative inquiry is grounded in the understanding that people make meaning of their experiences through stories, which reveal the interplay of personal, social, and cultural contexts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This approach is particularly suited for capturing the depth and complexity of participants' faith-informed, collaborative ministry experiences (Riessman, 2008).

This study used a qualitative research design, specifically narrative inquiry, to examine the experiences of student participants in interdisciplinary collaboration for urban evangelism and mentoring. Narrative inquiry was selected because it provides a way to understand how people interpret and give meaning to their experiences through storytelling (Riessman, 2008). Written, open-ended interview prompts were used to collect detailed accounts from

participants about their roles, challenges, and learning in collaborative ministry. The design focused on identifying recurring themes and patterns to show how these experiences influenced their personal, spiritual, and professional growth in urban ministry (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Setting, Participants, and Sampling

This study took place in an urban ministry context where students were involved in evangelism and mentoring activities. The setting was diverse, with different cultures and community needs providing opportunities for faith-based collaboration. Participants were students from various academic backgrounds, such as theology, who had worked together in ministry projects. They were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they could share meaningful stories about their experiences in interdisciplinary teamwork for urban ministry (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Tools and Instruments

This study used written interviews to collect participants' stories. Each participant received clear instructions about the study's purpose, the main research questions, and sub-questions. They were also given a brief explanation of interdisciplinary collaboration as the integration of theories, methods, and concepts from different disciplines.

Procedures

Participants were encouraged to share personal experiences from urban evangelism and mentoring, especially moments when collaboration led to new ideas or solutions. This method allowed them to reflect deeply and share their experiences in their own words, capturing the richness needed for narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Ethical considerations were strictly followed in this study. Before giving their consent, each participant was provided with clear information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. Time was given for questions to ensure full understanding, and participation was completely voluntary with no pressure or coercion at any stage (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). All participants joined willingly, and measures were taken to protect their privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, including the removal of any identifiable information from the data. Personal data were securely stored and handled under established ethical research standards (Tracy, 2020).

Analysis Techniques

Participants provided written responses to open-ended prompts designed to capture rich, detailed accounts of their experiences. Responses originally written in Bahasa Indonesia were carefully translated into English for analysis. The translated data were reviewed, and recurring

ideas and patterns were organized into themes. Consistent with the immersive nature of qualitative research, the researcher sought to enter the participants' world and view the experiences from their perspectives (Creswell, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings highlight that interdisciplinary collaboration in urban evangelism and mentoring thrives when anchored in shared faith, which serves as both a unifying principle and a motivational force. Participants' experiences show that bridging diverse disciplines—such as theology, education, and community development—creates fertile ground for mutual learning and innovative ministry approaches. This collaborative synergy fosters personal transformation, as individuals expand their perspectives and skill sets, while simultaneously enhancing the collective impact of evangelistic and mentoring efforts. The interplay of faith, bridging, learning, innovation, and transformation demonstrates how integrating multiple perspectives can dismantle traditional boundaries and generate holistic solutions to urban ministry challenges. These results affirm the narrative approach's capacity to capture the nuanced, relational, and transformative nature of interdisciplinary engagement in faith-based community contexts.

V. CONCLUSION

This study affirms that interdisciplinary collaboration in urban evangelism and mentoring is most effective when rooted in a shared faith that unites diverse perspectives and motivates collective action. By blending the strengths of many disciplines, participants not only generated innovative approaches but also experienced personal and communal transformation. Ultimately, the findings underscore that faith-centered collaboration can transcend disciplinary boundaries, foster mutual growth, and produce holistic strategies that address the complex realities of urban ministry.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that faith-based organizations intentionally cultivate interdisciplinary collaboration by creating structured platforms where professionals from diverse fields can regularly share expertise and co-develop ministry strategies. Training programs should emphasize both theological grounding and cross-disciplinary skills—such as communication, project design, and community engagement—to equip leaders for complex urban contexts. Furthermore, ongoing mentorship and reflective practices should be integrated to sustain innovation, strengthen relationships, and ensure that collaborative efforts remain responsive to the evolving spiritual and social needs of urban communities.

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