Exploring The Relationship of School Collegiality and Professional Development of Senior Secondary School Teachers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract
Education is the major channel of sharing and cooperation among all faculty members working inside an institute. Strong bonds of teamwork and active collaboration provide smooth and vital pathways for attainment of desired aims. Collegiality refers to professional relationship at workplaces. This relationship is considered vital for the professional development of colleagues in any field of life especially in the field of education. This study intends to explore the collegiality among senior secondary school teachers from the perspective of their professional development at secondary school level, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The objectives of the study were to explore the level of senior teachers’ collegiality, and to explore the role of their collegiality in the professional development of senior secondary school teachers. Following case study qualitative research design twelve study participants were selected through purposive sampling techniques and the data were collected through semi-structured interview protocols. The validity of the interview protocols was estimated through experts’ opinion and backward forward method was used for translating the interview protocols for the respondents. The collected data were analyzed following thematic
Exploring The Relationship of School Collegiality and Professional Development …

analysis techniques. The results revealed that senior secondary teachers have highly positive collegiality from social perspectives, they respect each other, give space, discuss their professional problems. However, they were found reluctant in sharing the professional experiences for the purpose of learning and professional development. Furthermore, the results also showed that senior teachers were unable to explore each other’s professional strength for professional (pedagogical, classroom management and assessment) learning. Results of the study highlighted the dire need and recommended that collegiality among novice and senior teachers always help in resolving relevant issues and promotes friendly academic environment which make easy the achievement of aims. It was also recommended that it promotes team teaching, microteaching, and protocols of peers’ assessment involved in school discipline related decisions so that they may directly or indirectly learn from one another continuously in their professional career.

Keywords: Collegiality; Professional Development; Pedagogical Skills; Secondary Schools

Introduction
Collegiality refers to the process of active relationship among the colleagues of an organization's colleagues where they work together towards the achievement of desired aims. Barth (1990) defined collegiality as a cooperative, interactive, collaborative and reflective relationship of professionals at working place. Furthermore, Kelchtermans (2006) has labeled collegiality as the eminence quality of the relationship of school colleagues. Similarly, in the words of Shah (2011-2012) collegiality is the cooperative relationship that exists among educators at school and that enhance the efforts of colleagues to achieve the desired targets of the educational institutions. Researchers are agreed on certain common aspects of collegiality that is collaborative relationship in a working place, used for the achievement of organizational goals and the nature of its quality actually leads towards its desired effects (Lazega, & Wattebled, 2011; Hatfield, 2006).

Collegiality is a multifaceted term and has been defined and explained by different educationists and researchers from their own perspective of thoughts and experiences. Collegiality has been discussed under different terms like respect and values of peers, highly esteemed and intellectual peers’ interactions, community, and sense of oneness (Austin, Sorcinelli, and McDaniels, 2007). Nature of collegiality reveals its operational aspects, as explained by Little (1990) through classification of collegial practices that includes assistance and support, scanning and storytelling andshouldering the responsibilities, but she calling these three as weak practice of collegiality. According to her the strong collegiality is the joint work of the professional as it enables them to trust on each other, talking and assigning responsibility and letting each other to critique the practices aim to improve it. Clark (2013) has added that senior and intellectual colleagues emphasize on the professional experiential knowledge to novice individual in an organization. It starts with the orientation of the novice teachers from the seniors and it leads towards continues professional development in performing the professional duties. It also pay ways to the strong aspect of working jointly and the evidences of which can be seen in team teaching, work plan for school and the
arrangement of events at secondary school level. Furthermore, there are different means to effectively utilize collegiality at school level which has been discussed by Bess (1988) that includes cultural, structural and behavioral norms within the organization. It is pragmatically proved that high level of collegiality among staff members is one of the major factor for successful academic aims at one side and the gateway to the teachers’ professional development on the other side. It has been observed that the prospect of collegiality is lacking among different cadres of the teachers with one other affirmation. Teachers collegiality has multi sided benefits on teachers and professional development along with career professionalism. Collegiality paves the tracks of systematic guidance to novice as well as senior teachers through debarring against sink-or-swim, trail-and-error mode in the journey of their academic performance.

Nature of collegiality reveals its operational aspects, as explained by Little (1990) through classification of collegial practices that includes assistance and support, scanning and storytelling and shouldering the responsibilities, but she is calling these three as weak practices of collegiality. According to her the strong collegiality is the joint work of the professional as it enables them to trust on each other, talking and assigning responsibility and letting each other to critique the practices aim to improve it. Collegiality ensures the professional expertise and identities of the senior teachers among the group and on the other hand it provides them the opportunity to share their valuable knowledge and skills to the new generation. That reduces the errors chance and thus makes the newly inducted / joint members of the group to improve their knowledge skills. According to Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007) the key elements of a true collegial environment includes; collaboration in teaching and research, friendship and social connections that sometimes requires organization and its culture, however the absence of these and isolation from the peer faculty are the symbols of the absence of collegiality. Furthermore, collegiality has direct relationship with the professional development of all faculty members, as it provides the collaboration; develop trust and unity towards the desired targets.

In nutshell, the effective strategies lead to effective collegial environment that ensures the professional development and organizational wellbeing of teachers and students. Lack of collegiality at school may negatively influence the competent and skillful teachers. Its negligence makes it difficult to achieve the desired aims. Furthermore, there is a dire need of the exploration of the effective mechanisms and strategies for enhancement of collegiality among novice and senior teachers required at secondary school level.

**Statement of the research problem**

Teachers spend a huge amount of time in schools, and they do interact with each other frequently. This time is precious and need to be utilized for different professional ventures, which may include discussions on students’ problems, classroom management practices, pedagogical skills, assessment skills and knowledge sharing on the emerging trends in school education. Therefore, this study intends to explore that how teachers do spend their school time and their collegiality for their own professional development?

**Objectives of the study**

The following were the main objectives of this research study;

1. To explore the nature and level of senior secondary school teachers’ collegiality in the
exploring the relationship of school collegiality and professional development ...
Exploring The Relationship of School Collegiality and Professional Development ...

Moustakas (1994), two general questions regarding his/her experiences were designed while how they experienced these experiences were accumulated through further questions. The researcher utilized sub-questions, as per the view of Creswell (2017), to make sure that the interpretation and descriptions of the participants in their interviews really show their experiences with the phenomena. Before the final data collection, the interview protocols were validated through expert opinion. These interview protocols were given to three PhD experts along with the research objectives and research questions with the aim to ensure the content validity. After the finalization of the interview protocols the data were collected from the study participants. All the collected data from the interviews with senior secondary school teachers were analyzed following Braun and Clarke (2006) method of thematic analysis. This method is comprised of six steps which were followed for data analysis.

Results and Discussions

Before presenting senior secondary school teachers views and experiences about their collegiality at school level, the background information were presented to the readers to bitterly understand their background. All these 10 study participants have teaching experience from 11 to 27 years in teaching and all of them were professionally qualified (PTC, CT, B.Ed and M. Ed), there were three teachers with MPhil in teacher education and all of them were posted in Government High Secondary Schools of District Mardan. All these teachers were married, and have M.A/M.Sc academic degree qualifications. After the transcribing, coding, extracting sub-themes, and themes the results were presented and were discussed in the light of previous research studies. The presentation of the results was made in the light of research objectives.

1. Nature and level of senior secondary school collegiality at school level

![Diagram](image_url)

*Figure 1 Nature and level of collegiality of senior secondary school teachers*

On the right side of the diagram, the are three major themes obtained from the collected data including social nature of their school collegiality where they are visiting each other places on different occasions. Furthermore, the nature of their collegiality is stagnant as they are not...
criticizing professional practices, neither ask for feedback, which reduce the chances of their professional development through their school collegiality. Likewise, they were also found reluctant in sharing their professional experiences in free time, which reduce their learning space. As according to a participant, "we teachers mostly involved in classroom related preparation during our free time and are unable to share our own teaching experiences with each other. Apart from it this time is a leisure time which is not supposed to spoiled with professional matters, yes sometimes policy related matters, social incidents, and events of different nature come under discussions".

Furthermore, on the left side of the diagram, same three major themes were extracted from the collected data reveals the level school collegiality of senior secondary school teachers. It was revealed the senior teachers have close and strong social bounds which bring them together and create a sense of oneness among senior teachers. As one study participant concluded that "we are as family, and therefore, we take care of each other on every event. And never let our friends alone particularly in bad times". Their teaching experiences enable them to trust and respect each other, therefore, they do care for their own position in everyone try to give a cover. Furthermore, their mutual understanding of senior teachers further contributes into the sustainability of their own school collegiality. "We have code language and symbols that enable us to communicate even in the presence of third person" as mentioned by a participant. On one side this sense of unity of senior teachers brings them to gather but, on the side, it leads to level of their collegiality. "I believe that the way I teach my student is the best method as my students understand my method of teaching, and I am following this method from a long time. Furthermore, I never need any professional assistance as I have gone through different trainings along with my B.Ed and M.Ed professional degrees, where I learn a lot about teaching and assessment.

These results are not in conformity with the findings of the study of Lazega, and Wattebled (2011) that teachers share their teaching experiences which become the source of learning and through peer share and pair teachers learn from each other’s. On the contrary, teachers’ mutual understanding, trust and care are some of the major aspects prominent among schools’ teachings at school level as concluded by the study of Hatfield (2006). Another important aspect of these results reveals that the nature of school collegiality is social in nature not professional which reduce the chances of professional development but lead towards the professional stagnation.
2. Relationship between teachers’ collegiality and their professional development

The major themes extracted from the open-ended interviews of senior secondary school teachers revealed that teachers share their professional experiences, they do share peer feedback and help when asked by any teacher but rarely share teaching or any other professional experiences. As one participant was of the view that “mostly in schools there is no concept of peer feedback, sharing professional experiences and talking on assessment and classroom management strategies, but, if anyone ask, teachers are never reluctant in sharing experiences and giving feedback”. On the question that have you ever share your professional experiences or discussed anything about your own teaching and assessment skills? He replied that “in the initial days of teaching profession I used to ask for help from my senior teachers who were generous and were competent, but I was always hesitant in sharing my experiences with them, because there were some teachers who used to laugh on me”.

On the question of relationship between school collegiality and teachers’ professional development one participant was of the view that “teaching is a learning process, a famous proverb is to teach is to learn twice, all of us do learn from one another but not in a formal manner. Some of our young teachers are also very intelligent from whom we do learn various kind of software used with which we were illiterate. But now adays people have problems of superiority and inferiority complexes which has deteriorated the situations. Furthermore, most of the participants were of the view that school collegiality is one of the significant sources of professional learning, but it needs to be properly utilized. Because “every individual is a
unique creature of Allah and has been bestowed with unique qualities, benefit from which is the ultimate aim of our social life, same in the case of teaching too” said by a study participant. All the participants were agreed that hesitation, lack of time, and unnecessary demands of the management are impediments in utilizing school collegiality for the professional development of teachers.

These results are in favor of the findings of Little (1990) who concluded that nature of collegiality that it is beneficial for the professional learning. Same findings were also supported by the results of Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007) who while explaining the process of utilizing school collegiality for professional learning that there are different factors that foster and stagnant the school collegiality of teachers for their professional learning.

3. Used Strategies used in fostering collegiality at school level

![Diagram of Strategies for fostering school collegiality among teachers]

The 3rd objectives of this study were to collect the data about the strategies used for fostering collegiality for the professional development of teachers at school level. All the respondents were of the view that there are four main strategies that could boost the school collegiality for teachers’ professional development. It includes developing a culture of collegiality for professional purposes via team teaching, collaborative learning, time, and space for professional experiences and through the development of celebrating mistakes as these are the learning points for teachers. As one participant believed “these are the mistakes which teach us”.

Another participant opined that “team teaching concept may be a live venture for observing and rectifying teaching techniques along with a sense of competitiveness”. These strategies are not prevailing in the school but could pay ways for fostering school collegiality for teachers’ learning and development.

These results are not different from the study results of different educators and researchers including Popham (2011), and Clark (2013) where Popham concluded in his paper a teachers’ confession that he made numerous mistakes during his initial days of teaching and those mistakes enable him to learn. Likewise, Clark (2013) also concluded that its collegiality that ensures you continues learning as it poses questions of justifications.
Conclusions
Based on the results and discussion it was concluded that public schools’ senior teachers do have positive collegiality, but the nature of their collegiality is more social than professional which become a source of stagnation in their professional development. Furthermore, there mutual understanding and unprecedented care for each other refrains them from positive criticism which reduce the space for learning from one another professional experiences. Similarly, it was also concluded that teachers were agreed that sharing of professional experiences about teaching, assessment and classroom management skills have close relationship with the professional learning of teachers but mostly teachers don’t utilize their free time for these activities. It was also concluded that lack of free time, unnecessary administrative activities and their persona hesitation are the major impediments in utilizing the school collegiality for teachers’ professional development at school level. The results also concluded that there are different options available for the fostering of school collegiality in relation to the professional development of teachers, but teachers never follow these strategies for fostering collegiality. Four major strategies were identified by the teachers for fostering collegiality (team teaching, development of culture of collegiality, celebrating mistakes and sharing experiences).

Recommendations
1. Training sessions are significant from the perspectives of the development of school collegiality in relation to the professional development of teachers through the department of education of universities.
2. School heads are also recommended that in current situations where professional development opportunities are less for teachers, they may work on the development of culture of collegiality at their respective schools, which may be a strong venture for the satisfaction of professional needs of teachers.
3. As accepted by most senior teachers that there is close relationship between school collegiality and teachers’ professional development therefore, it is imperative to properly utilize this opportunity for the professional development of teachers.
4. It is also recommended that seminars should be arranged for principles of collegiality and its major role in academic performance.

References
Exploring The Relationship of School Collegiality and Professional Development …