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ENGLISH TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS STUDENTS: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON ITS' IMPLEMENTATION

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This study investigates the English teachers' professional learning community from the students' perspective on its implementation. It is done at some senior high schools in Bekasi. The design of this study was based on qualitative methods with a descriptive design. The data collection technique is done through a semi-structured interview technique. The selected study respondents were based on the purposive sampling technique. Through this technique, the respondents selected to be interviewed were the outstanding principals in senior high schools. The research instrument used was an interview based on the checklist found in Olivier and Hipp's professional learning community model. The result of the study is that the professional learning community is very effective in school improvement practice and has a significant role in shaping teachers' personal and collective ability and application. The development of a professional learning community through strengthening the practice of the main functions that are the backbone of the professional learning community, such as collective learning practices and applications, can be seen to improve teachers' teaching practices and student learning activities which are basic practices in school improvement activities.

Keywords: *English teachers; professional learning community; implementation; perspective*

Introduction

Schools are leading educational organisations responsible for equipping the younger generation to face the world now and in the future, which is seen as increasingly challenging, rapidly changing and inter-

dependent. Thus, actions to strengthen schools by improving aspects of schools, teachers and students are seen as quite significant [1; 2]. One of the most recent practices in the school improvement process is the practice of professional learning communities, which is now very actively implemented in developed countries [3]. This practice is an ongoing effort made for school improvement with the collaborative involvement of the school community to achieve long-term findings [4]. Previous studies in developed countries' professional learning communities have shown that these practices can develop a high-level learning culture [5; 6]. This culture can substantially impact the community as it can bring about changes in teaching and learning methods and school management and leadership, especially involving teachers learning collectively and applying it and working together in a team [7]. In addition, teachers can also work collaboratively to find solutions to help improve student learning and achievement that can ultimately increase school effectiveness and improvement [8].

Schools in developed countries have introduced and practised many models concerning professional learning communities [9; 10]. The primary objective of professional learning community models is to highlight one of the school improvement process strategies that can be implemented continuously. The practices found in this professional learning community are seen to influence the learning of teachers and students, which has implications for the improvement of teacher competence and student development. This effort can be produced by creating a conducive learning environment for all teachers and students. In addition, schools are advised to adopt a professional learning community as one of the latest practices of the school improvement process and implement such practices in developed countries [11]. Although the practice of professional learning community is widely implemented in developed countries, it is relatively less implemented. It includes the main foundations of professional learning community practices that are collective teacher learning recommendations and applications that are less practised in many schools than just gathering to do formal management work [12], such as classroom management, student management, and relating to clerical

matters. Furthermore, there are not many studies related to the practice of this professional learning community at the school level. There are some mistakes and misunderstandings among school to understand the concept of professional learning community practice and the factors that influence its effectiveness. School see the implementation of professional learning community activities or practices involving only the classroom level and do not see it in a broader context outside the classroom [13].

Therefore, this study was conducted to look at the practice of professional learning community among teachers, especially related to the function of collective learning practice and application in schools. It is because the characteristics in this practice are essential to be the basis in the practice of continuous school improvement to obtain long-term effects on student achievement and well-being [14]. Based on the background of the study, the problem of this study is formulated in question, “How is the students’ perspective of English teachers professional learning community in senior high schools?”

Literature reviews

Professional learning communities are one of the school improvement practices that play an important role in shaping teachers’ personal and collective ability to meet challenges to improve student achievement [15; 16]. Professional learning communities enhance teaching practices and student’ learning activities, being fundamental in school improvement activities [17; 18]. To achieve that goal, schools need to provide a conducive learning environment, including a collaborative learning environment and how to apply it among school to provide space for school to develop their professionalism so that later changes and improvements to the school as a whole can be implemented [19]. Community practices of professional learning are often associated with school efforts to implement improvement and involve consensus among members as the warmth shown in a family, neighbour or any group that has close ties and tends to be family with good intentions [20]. In a broader aspect, a professional learning community refers to a school environment that involves teachers working collaboratively in a specially formed team to improve student achievement.

The concept of a professional learning community is a school that combines professional involvement among administrators and teachers to add knowledge and share learning practices on an ongoing basis to improve student achievement [21]. The professional learning community concept is a joint activity that involves school administrators and teachers in gathering information, making decisions, and implementing those decisions. In other words, it shows the existence of an element of collective learning and application among teachers and school [22]. The concept of collaboration embodied in a professional learning community with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement is also agreed upon. They explained that the professional learning community had shown personal and interpersonal improvement of teachers and organisational capacity, particularly involving a commitment to professional development that ultimately leads to student achievement. There are three main ideas of a professional learning community that need to be reflected by every administrator and teacher if they want to see the basic concepts of a thriving professional learning community. Among them are a) ensuring that students learn, that is, focusing on student learning compared to teacher teaching; b) collaborative culture, i.e. teachers are willing to work in teams with a common goal in education; and c) focusing on outcomes that are responsible for improving outcomes, especially student achievement. The first idea of a professional learning community is to ensure that students do learn. Teachers must be given adequate training and exposure to prioritise student learning over teacher teaching in every aspect [23]. Fair and equitable space and opportunities should be given to every student to learn because they have the same right to acquire knowledge following the slogan “Learning for All”, as often chanted by every school. Schools that implement a professional learning community will be able to identify the differences in their students and immediately address the problems between students, especially those related to students with diverse levels of intelligence. The goal is for students with these various levels of intelligence to be able to spend extra time or be given separate guidance until they can master what they are learning [24].

The professional learning community cannot be separated from the culture of collective learning and application among teachers and school. Teachers should not work separately, completing tasks related to their essential tasks only without collectively working together to achieve student success and school quality. Schools, especially senior leader team (SLT) leaders, especially principals, must encourage teachers to cooperate in planning or action, and each program and activity formed must be implemented as a team, not individually or separately. The environment exists for a school that practices a professional learning community forming strong cooperation that includes a systematic process involving teachers working in a team to analyse and improve [25]. Implications from such efforts will improve student achievement, which is the ultimate goal of a school's improvement practices or, in other words, to achieve the aspirations and importance for student success.

Six factors can improve the effectiveness of a professional learning community. The meant factors are a) sharing mission, vision, values and goals and teachers who appreciate the vision and mission of the professional learning community will make learning activities the central vision of their careers; b) collaborative team as the basis of the success of professional learning community is activities implemented collaboratively among school to achieve the vision of professional learning community set is through efforts implemented collaboratively, the capacity of school can be increased compared to efforts carried out individually; c) implementation of collective inquiry A professional learning community team is formed to evaluate the effectiveness of practice to identify expected achievements; d) action and solution-oriented School who practice a professional learning community are required to make their theories or views a reality; e) the process of continuous improvement to achieve this goal, the school needs to have a strategic plan and be able to answer questions, and f) outcome-oriented. All the factors contributing to the effectiveness of the professional learning community as mentioned above need to be embodied in the form of outcomes [26]. Thus, school leaders need to make school aware of the importance of the professional learning community to its outcomes to identify their strengths and

weaknesses. Furthermore, the data and information encourage the school to implement inquiry and learning activities on an ongoing basis [27].

It can be concluded that the practice of online learning community is a school improvement practice that needs to be implemented by teachers and school staff to achieve long-term findings, especially related to student development and school quality improvement [28]. Many aspects should be emphasised and put into practice by teachers and school, as listed in the model of an online learning community. One of the functions that can be used as a reference for success in implementing the school's online learning community is the practice of collective learning and the application that exists among teachers and school staff [29]. The school, especially the principal as SLT, who is involved as the prominent leader in the school, should provide a suitable climate and atmosphere in the school to encourage teachers to work collectively in each program and activity implemented and prioritise partnership as a team and not individually or separately [30]. This study looks at the practice of professional learning community characteristics found in the function of collective learning practice and application based on the professional learning community model produced in a secondary school in based on the perspective of an outstanding principal [31].

Research method

The design of this study was based on qualitative methods with a descriptive design. The data collection technique is done through a semi-structured interview technique. This review was conducted to ensure that the questions provided to be asked to the respondents were in line with the professional learning community and the function of collective learning practice and application so that it can later meet the objectives outlined. The selected study respondents were based on the purposive sampling technique. The respondent was selected to be interviewed by an outstanding principal of Senior High Schools through this technique. The research instrument used was an interview protocol formed based on the checklist found in the professional learning community model produced by Olivier and Hipp [32]. This study involved

three stages of data collection procedure based on the adaptation of the study framework from the ADDIE Model, the three stages referred to are as follows: a) analysis stage, a) design stage, and c) evaluation stage.

Result and discussion

As explained earlier, the function of learning practice has been broken down into two parts and detailed as follows:

Collective learning practices Table 3 below shows the collaborative learning practices implemented in schools due to interviews with outstanding principals in the study schools and validation of reviews by experts.

Table 3.

Findings of the study for the function of collective learning practice

Collective learning practices	Outstanding principal interview	Expert review
1. Teachers work together to increase knowledge, pedagogical skills, and practice teaching and learning.	Yes	Yes
2. The good looks among teachers reflect their commitment to school improvement efforts.	Yes	Yes
3. Teachers work together to plan problem-solving to meet the needs of students.	Yes	Yes
4. Collective learning is implemented through open discussion.	Yes	Yes
5. Teachers collaboratively analyse various data sources to achieve effectiveness in teaching practice.	Yes	Yes
6. Teachers collaboratively analyse student achievement to improve pedagogical skills and practice teaching and learning.	Yes	Yes
7. Teachers are actively involved in introductory courses, especially pedagogical skills and practice teaching and learning.	Yes	Yes

The findings show that six learning practices are collectively practised as found in the checklist of the original questionnaire. In addition to these six practices, there is one additional practice suggested by outstanding principals that should be available and implemented in the practice of collective learning in schools. The practice is that “Teachers are actively involved in important courses, especially related to pedagogy and practice

teaching and learning”. This practice was not included in the checklist of the original questionnaire. However, based on recommendations obtained from interviews with outstanding principals and validation of reviews by referred experts, this practice was accepted as a joint practice that formed the function of learning collectively and practised by teachers in the study schools. The interviews conducted showed that the principals agreed that the practice of collective learning is implemented in the school. Teachers successfully build good relationships and collectively work together to improve pedagogical knowledge and skills and teaching and learning practices. Discussions held between teachers and analysis of various data sources, including participation in courses related to pedagogy and teaching and learning practices, can increase the effectiveness of teaching practice.

Teachers’ collaboration and discussions are usually in the form of groups or during self-improvement programs known as In-Service Training programs. Through this program, teachers will discuss various matters related to pedagogical knowledge and skills and teaching and learning practices and problem-solving to meet the needs of students. Principals also added how teachers work collectively in solving problems that do not show excellence in student results. Usually, for each course or content in the In-Service Training program, teachers will first be asked what form of program or content is required. Each teacher requires different filling according to their levels and competencies. In addition to cooperation and discussions conducted to increase pedagogical knowledge and skills and teaching and learning practices, teachers are also encouraged to analyse various data sources to achieve effectiveness in their teaching practices. The emphasis is always to analyse student achievement data such as test and examination results.

From the above findings, it can be concluded that collective learning is implemented in schools. According to the explanations of the interviews with the excellent principals, teachers are encouraged to build good relationships and work collectively in improving pedagogical knowledge and skills and teaching and learning practices. Apart from that, open discussion, analysis of various sources and involvement in courses related to pedagogy and teaching and learning practices are also created to increase the effectiveness of teachers’ teaching practices.

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that this function of applied learning is practised in the study school, as explained in the interviews with outstanding principals. Among those implemented in the study, the schools are the efforts of teachers to try various strategies in the pedagogical process and daily teaching and learning practices, cooperation between teachers in trying pedagogical strategies and teaching and learning practices, teachers' involvement in staff development training and how to input -new input obtained by teachers from the courses attended can be shared with other teachers and practised in their teaching classes. The interviews also confirmed that applied learning practices are also implemented in schools, as explained by the principal. Table 4 below shows the applied learning practices implemented, the proposed results of interviews with outstanding principals in the study schools, and the validation of reviews by experts.

Table 4.

Findings of the study for the function of applied learning practice

Collective learning practices	Outstanding principal interview	Expert review
1. Teachers work together to try various pedagogical strategies and teaching and learning practices in their assignments.	Yes	Yes
2. Teachers engaged in discussions that sparked various ideas to encourage further exploration.	Yes	Yes
3. Staff Development Training is more focused on improving knowledge to enhance pedagogical skills and teaching and learning practices.	Yes	Yes
4. Staff Development Training is more focused on improving knowledge to enhance pedagogical skills and teaching and learning practices.	No	Yes
5. Teachers are committed to programs that can enrich learning.	Yes	Yes
6. Teachers who attend the course conduct in-house training to share pedagogical knowledge and colleagues' teaching and learning practices.	Yes	Yes
7. Teachers who attend the course are encouraged to apply the skills acquired in pedagogy and their teaching and learning practices.	Yes	Yes

Table 4 above shows five applied to learn practices as listed and implemented in schools. Apart from the five practices listed above, two additional practices in this function are also implemented as suggested by the outstanding principals. The two practices are “Teachers who attend the course conduct in-house training to share pedagogical knowledge and teaching and learning practices with colleagues” and “Teachers who attend the course are encouraged to apply the skills acquired in pedagogy and their teaching and learning practices.”

These practices are not on the checklist as found in the professional learning community model. However, on recommendations obtained in interviews with outstanding principals and validation of reviews by referred experts, these practices are accepted as a shared practice that shapes the function of applied learning. The interviews showed that the principals agreed that teachers use various methods to try various strategies in the pedagogical process and daily teaching and learning practices. In addition, cooperation between teachers is also established in staff development training to increase knowledge and increase teaching skills. Teachers are also committed to the programs implemented in schools to enrich student learning. Even for teachers who attend courses from within or outside the school, it is recommended to share with other teachers to apply the acquired skills in teaching-learning practices. The principal said cooperation and discussions were held among the teachers, especially during the in-service training program.

The principal also explained that the staff development training program was implemented with more focus, significantly improving knowledge or increasing pedagogical skills and teaching and learning practices. There are usually certain times when this program is run. The focus of discussion and sharing is according to need or subject. Teachers can apply the skills acquired during the session or program, and there is learning with teachers in resolving related issues. The next thing that the principals emphasised was the new inputs needed by the teachers through the courses they attended, especially concerning the subjects that needed to be emphasised. Next, the principal also said the need for teachers who had attended the courses to share with other teachers. Usually, there will be an in-house training program to explain to other teachers.

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that this function of applied learning is practised in the study school, as explained in the interviews with outstanding principals. Among those implemented in the study, the schools are the efforts of teachers to try various strategies in the pedagogical process and daily teaching and learning practices, cooperation between teachers in trying pedagogical strategies and teaching and learning practices, teachers' involvement in staff development training and how to input -new input obtained by teachers from the courses attended can be shared with other teachers and practised in their teaching classes.

Overall the results of this study can be concluded that the teachers in the study school adopt the characteristics found in the function of collective learning practice and the application model of the online learning community. The intended features are: teachers work together to improve knowledge to improve pedagogical skills and teaching and learning practices, good looks among teachers reflect their commitment to school improvement efforts, teachers work together to plan problem solving to meet the needs of students, learning collectively implemented through open discussion, teachers collaboratively analyse various data sources to achieve effectiveness in teaching practice, teachers collaboratively analyse student achievement to improve pedagogical skills and teaching and learning practices, teachers collaborate to try various pedagogical strategies and teaching practices and learning to be applied in their assignments, teachers engage in discussions that trigger a variety of ideas to encourage further exploration, staff development training is more focused on improving knowledge to enhance pedagogical skills as well as teaching and learning practices, teachers in applying new knowledge to solve problems, and teachers committed to programs that can enrich learning. However, three additional features are practised by teachers in the study school but are not listed in the features professional learning community model. The intended characteristics are: “Teachers are actively involved in important courses, especially related to pedagogy and teaching, and learning practices”, “Teachers who attend courses conduct internal training in

order to share pedagogical knowledge and teaching and learning practices with colleagues”, and “Teachers who attend the course are encouraged to apply the skills acquired in pedagogy as well as their teaching and learning practices”.

It explains that the recommendations of the professional learning community related to the cooperation of teachers in improving competencies and work performance are aspects that the principals emphasise. Teachers are encouraged to observe each other, provide feedback and share ideas related to effective teaching practices. In addition, all teachers, including excellent teachers, are allowed to be coaches to guide their friends in applying their learning to be shared with other friends. Principals also emphasise collaborative practices among teachers in analysing assignments and student achievement data in designing activities and continuous improvement.

Findings indicate that six learning practices are collectively practised checklists. The intended practices are: a) teachers work together to increase knowledge to increase pedagogical skills as well as teaching and learning practices; b) goodness among teachers reflects their commitment to school improvement efforts; c) teachers work together to plan problem-solving to meet the needs of students; d) collective learning is implemented through open discussion; e) teachers collaboratively analyse various data sources to achieve effectiveness in teaching practice; and f) teachers collaboratively analyse student achievement to improve pedagogical skills as well as teaching and learning practices. The study findings obtained in this study are coincident with the study conducted by early researchers related to the professional learning community. The practice of collective learning will be achieved if teachers can work in a team collaboratively [33; 34]. It is because the team formed will be able to make appropriate plans to improve student achievement.

Teachers should not work separately. They must sit together in a team to produce a culture of collective learning that can boost student achievement and, in turn, result in quality improvement for the school [35]. Building a professional learning community in schools requires a

long time, effort and energy collectively from all parties [36]. In addition to achieving collective learning practices in schools, school administrators are also advised to always be with the school staff, presenting clear policies and procedures to assist teachers [37]. Close cooperation between teachers and school administrators can be further strengthened through collaborative cooperation created among school.

In addition to these six practices, there is one additional practice suggested by outstanding principals that should be available and implemented in the practice of collective learning in schools. The practice is “Teachers are actively involved in important courses, especially related to pedagogy and teaching and learning practices”. This practice was not included in the checklist of the original questionnaire. However, based on recommendations obtained from interviews with outstanding principals and validation of reviews by referred experts, this practice was accepted as a joint practice that formed the function of learning collectively and practised by teachers in the study schools.

Furthermore, the findings show that five applied learning practices are practised as found in the checklist for applied learning practices. The intended practices are: a) teachers work together to try various pedagogical strategies as well as teaching and learning practices to be applied in their assignments, b) teachers engage in discussions that trigger a variety of ideas to encourage further exploration, c) developmental exercises staff are more focused on improving knowledge to enhance pedagogical skills as well as teaching and learning practices, d) teachers work with PTAs in applying new knowledge to solve problems, and e) teachers are committed to programs that can enrich learning.

The study findings obtained in this school are very much in line with previous studies that have been conducted. Teachers who engage and work together, share skills, and exchange expertise and knowledge to achieve a common focus will significantly impact student success and improvement in school quality [38]. It is because teachers can equally apply their skills to other school. The same thing when his results showed that professional learning community practices allow teachers to be actively involved in discussions that focus on assessment, teaching practice and

student intervention planning [39]. Apart from the five practices listed above, two additional practices in this function are also implemented as suggested by the outstanding principals. The two practices are “Teachers who attend the course conduct in-house training to share pedagogical knowledge and teaching and learning practices with colleagues”, and “Teachers who attend the course are encouraged to apply the skills acquired in pedagogy and their teaching and learning practices”.

Both of these practices are not on the checklist as found in the Professional learning community model [39]; however, on recommendations obtained in interviews with outstanding principals and validation of reviews by referred experts, then these practices are accepted as a shared practice that shapes the function of applied learning. The interviews showed that the principals agreed that teachers use various methods to try various strategies in the pedagogical process and daily teaching and learning practices. In addition, cooperation between teachers is also established in staff development training to increase knowledge to increase teaching skills. Teachers are also committed to the programs implemented in schools to enrich student learning. In fact, for teachers who attend courses or new inputs from within or outside the school, it is recommended to share with other teachers and even encouraged to apply the acquired skills in their pedagogy and teaching and learning practices.

Conclusion

The professional learning community is very effective in school improvement practice and has a significant role in shaping teachers’ personal and collective ability and application. The aim is to meet the challenges of improving student achievement and school quality. The development of a professional learning community through strengthening the practice of the main functions that are the backbone of the professional learning community, such as collective learning practices and applications, can be seen to improve teachers’ teaching practices and student learning activities which are basic practices in school improvement activities. This study has identified six critical features

in collaborative learning practice and five features in applied learning practice that schools implement in the professional learning community model. However, three other characteristics should be given a role and practised by school to achieve the desire to improve student achievement and school quality. All the features found in the function of collective learning practice and its application should be understood and practised comprehensively to achieve the desire to improve student achievement and school quality.

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