Professional Learning Communities in Basic and Post-basic Schools in Muscat, Oman: The Need for Time and Supported Leadership

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Abstract

The professional performance of teachers in schools has always been thought to be a critical factor in the making of quality schools and in promoting students' academic achievement. A systematic professional learning community (henceforth PLC) seems to be instrumental in enhancing teacher professionalism. In this context, the main purpose of this study was to examine and analyse the implementation of the professional learning communities (henceforth PLCs) in Basic and Post-basic schools in Muscat, Oman. This study was conducted in five schools throughout Muscat. The schools were chosen to study the current implementation of PLCs, their impact on teachers' professional development and the obstacles that hinder teachers from implementing their activities. A systematic qualitative method was implemented. The findings showed that PLCs are to some extent available in Muscat schools but that their implementation is still weak. The implementation of PLCs is highly supported by schools principals and is believed to have a great impact on teachers' performance. However, obstacles such as an overloaded teaching timetable and administrative paperwork were the greatest impediments to teachers implementing PLC activities in Muscat schools. Therefore, this study recommends that Ministry of Education officials should consider removing these obstacles to help teachers implement PLCs effectively inside their schools, improve their performance and increase their students' achievements.

Keywords: Professional Learning Communities, Professional Development, Collaboration, Leadership Role, Oman, Muscat.

1. Introduction

There is a growing interest on the public to see more a meaningful and productive teaching put into place, because teachers have a vital role in the teaching/learning process. Students, administrators, policy makers and educational organisations have come to believe that the way to educational reform lies as much in improving the quality of teachers as in overhauling school programs and syllabuses (Darling-Hammond, 2012). It is widely accepted, based on a growing body of research, that teacher quality is the critical factor determinant of student achievement (Williams, 2021; Johnson, 2021; & Gilmour& Henry 2018). In this context Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), has a potential to be a grate scaffold to build teacher and organizational foundation for educational reform. The significance of teacher collaboratively learning from one another has also been stressed to be considerable in advancing educational systems (Hairon, 2016).

In Oman, over the last five decades, the quality of teaching has become an increasing concern of the Ministry of Education. The demand for high quality education has generated a wide range of requirements for the development of the society and its citizens. These requirements, such as promoting knowledge, educating people, moving society toward a democratic system, and spreading equity and justice, need more highly educated and skilled people (Al-Maawali, and Al-Siyabi, 2020). Thus, the Ministry of Education asserts that the teachers need to revamp their own knowledge, skills, and practices throughout their work-life. As a results,the Ministry of Education (2009) emphasized that: School headmasters and other educators such as supervisors, senior teachers and the head of the supervision department are well trained on how to provide constant assistance both for their new teachers and for their mentors.

However, even though the Ministry of Education recommends that supervisors and school principals must employ other supervision and evaluation data sources for supervising and gathering information. Beside classroom observation such as: Mutual visit; Reflective practice; Self-evaluation; Individual meeting; and Action research (Ministry of Education, 2009). There is no holistic documented guidelines to implement PLCs. This was supported by a number of Omani researchers for example like Al-Shammakhi (2020) and Al Ghatrifi (2016:15) as they concluded that there was little evidence of other wider teachers Continuous Professional development (henceforth CPD) activities, such as professional learning communities, mentoring, reflection and online learning. Moreover, Al-Shammakhi (2020) mentioned in his study that one of his respondents (senior teacher) said that the lack of CPD opportunities was because there were no professional communities between schools.

Therefore, Professional learning communities (henceforth PLCs) in Oman need more consideration as this mean is considered vital to identify the professional needs as well as enhance the teacher performance. Also, teachers must effectively participate in relevant in-service professional development activities inside and outside school to promote their professional growth.

Moreover, according to DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many (2010) PLCs must operate under the assumption that the key to improve learning for students is to consider PLCs activities continuous and job-embedded for educators.

2. Aims and questions of the study

A cumulative amount of research indicates that the quality of the teacher in the school is the particular most critical factor that affect the pupil performance (e.g., Duling, 2010; Leclerc, 2012; Darling Hammond 2012). Hence, PLCs are considered as a corner stone in teaching quality and schooling improvement. Consequently, this qualitative investigation aims to investigate whether professional learning communities in the selected schools in Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman is

implemented to achieve the desired main goals i.e., cooperation and teacher professional development. Therefore, the specific research questions are as follows:

(1) What are principals, senior teachers and teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of professional learning communities in Basic and Post-basic schools in Muscat, Oman?

(2) what is the impact of professional learning communities on teacher professional development in Basic and Post-basic schools in Muscat, Oman?

(3) What are the obstacles that affecting the implementation of the professional learning communities in Basic and Post-basic schools in Muscat, Oman**?**

3. Theoretical framework
3.1 The Definition of Professional Learning Community
Despite that there is no consensus on the real definition of PLC, no universal definition about what a PLC is in the literature (Stoll et al., 2006), and that there are some ambiguity about its description, there is a wide conception that PLCs are an important notion in the educational sector. However, PLC are a process in which teachers work collaboratively in repeated ways of collective inquiry and action research to improve the student achievement. It creates supported environment by where teachers acquire job satisfaction and student achievement.

Stoll et al. (2006, p. 5) in her study define a professional learning community as an

> "Inclusive group of people, motivated by a shared learning vision, who support and work with each other, finding ways, inside and outside their immediate community, to enquire on their practice and together learn new and better approaches that will enhance all pupils' learning".

She also added that PLC is commonly perceived as

> "A group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth promoting way" (Stoll et al., 2006a, p. 223).

Therefore, in the education context, PLC refers to a group of teachers and educators who collaborate with each other continuously to improve their performance by sharing their skills, experience and knowledge to increase their students' achievements.

3.2 The Benefits of Professional Learning Communities
According to Serviss (2020) PLCs reap huge benefits for both students and teachers. She stated that there are four benefits in which PLCs enhance teaching and learning and these are as follow:

1. PLCs gives educators the opportunities to directly improve teaching and learning,

2. PLCs build stronger relationships between team members,

3. PLCs help teachers stay on top of new research and emerging technology tools for the classroom,

4. PLCs help teachers reflect on ideas (Serviss, 2020).

Thus, for the teachers in the school to benefit from the advantages of professional learning communities, it is important to them to know what elements that influence the professional learning communities' procedures and what are the perceptions of the teachers towards these elements. It is obvious that teachers can be upgraded their performance through professional learning communities

if it is taken critically, accomplished by proficient leadership, and supported by collective focus on student achievement (DuFour et al., 2010). Merely by this way, professional learning communities can accomplish its fundamental objectives.

3.3 Research Framework

For the purposes of this study, the researchers developed the framework of DuFour et al. (2010), Forgarty & Pete (2009), Hord (2003) and Murphy & Lick (2005) on the effective professional learning community system (Figure 1). This framework underlines the elements that impact the efficiency of professional learning community's system. Those elements are **Collaboration, Shared vision and value, Leadership role, Collective focus on student learning**, **Data usage and Shift from teaching to learning.** Although Bolam et al. (2005) and Stoll et al. (2006) added several other related effective elements, they could be collapsed under some of the major categories. For example, the mutual trust, respect, and support among staff members can be shrunken in the factor Collaboration. The elements are described as follow:

Figure 1: Effective professional learning communities (adapted from DuFour et al.,2010, Forgarty & Pete, 2009, Hord, 2003 and Murphy & Lick, 2005).

Collaboration: Professional learning communities must establish a well-organized collaboration between teachers. This implies teacher involvement in professional activities inside and outside the school. Stoll et al. (2006) suggest that professional learning communities call that teachers develop some acceptable criteria to organize their discussion and solve any disagreement among them.

Shared vision and value: teachers acquiring clear vision and acceptable values are critical in school environment. However, this does not take place without the positive supportive environment exist. Darling-Hammond (2012) note that mentoring teachers reflecting in their teaching help them to creates new visions of what, when, and how they should learn. Teachers who participate collaboratively can create a clear vision for developing a coherent professional learning community

(PLC). In such a community, collaboration, cooperative learning, continuous day to day reflection, and revealing professional practicing are very crucial.

Leadership role: it is obvious that leadership can offer the support for promoting and sustaining a PLC. Hord (2009) suggests two elements should leader provide and maintain to pave the way in front of teachers: enough time for teachers to plan, train and cooperate with others and place where can teachers meet and communicate effectively.

Collective focus on student learning: such collective concentration cause to actual commitment, drive teacher and colleague to be more collective and more productive, although teacher culture is difficult to change. This principal requires building a trust among teachers, develop certain criteria, encouraging share responsibilities, and creating safe environment for learning Mabrook (2021).

Data usage: collecting, analysing, and explaining data is very vital in PLC. Those process can lead to learn how to assess the learning, the evaluating strategic and tools aim at mastering knowledge to solve obstacles facing learning process.

Shift from teaching to learning: accordingly changing practices, behaviours, values and attitudes that teachers acquire.

At Present, a great deal is unfolder about the way to teaching quality and about the developmental change in the school arena. This qualitative research seeks to develop a more understanding about the PLC in the Omani context and the perceptions of principals, senior teachers and teachers of the Implementation of PLCs in their schools. For this purpose, the literature is reviewed and utilized in the study finding and interpretation.

3.4 The Omani context:

In identifying the situation of professional learning communities in Oman, one must prop the purposes, values and approaches pertaining to PLC, the researchers investigated the relevant statements of the ministry as reflected in some issued documents such as handbooks, reports and directions which spell out the notion of professional learning communities. However, in most cases, these issues were inferred by the researcher himself given that "the educational system in Oman is relatively young, the documents devoted to explaining this topic are scarce" (Alyahmadi, 2012). Consequently, in the absence of a holistic documented guidelines, the only dependable foundations of the data collected are documents issued by the ministry and schools as a guideline for implementing professional learning communities. The main purpose of these documents was to illustrate the strategies of teacher professional development and imbedded by the professional learning communities in schools. That comprise its main goals, procedures, tools, and strategies.

The Purposes of professional learning communities in Oman is to improve the pupil learning. Based on the formerly mentioned documents, the following aims can be summarised as; a) Instructional enhancement b) Professional Development, c) Students' Learning d) Remediation procedures, e) Training Needs, and f) Accountability. Therefore, the collaboration and mutual sharing concentrate on several practical matters, such as support teachers to adopt a more to the approach of keeping student is the centre of the teaching learning process (Evidence obtained from Ministry of Education, 2006, 2008, some school documents). These documented recommendations are in turn theoretically to be applied in the scheduling of the professional learning community's plan.

The Procedures of professional learning community are formulated by principals, supervisor, senior teacher, and teachers themselves. They are well trained on how to support teachers through the PLC. (Evidence obtained from Ministry of Education, 2006, 2008, some school documents). No recognized documented evidence on how to formulate these communities and their procedure details on how to work properly and what is the role of each member. Documents mentioned that,

besides the classroom observation and teacher portfolio teacher urged to develop some sources such as: "Mutual visiting; Reflective practice; Self-evaluation; Individual meeting; and Action research (Evidence obtained from Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 33)". Professional learning community in Oman, as shown in a variety of documents suggests the school's ambitious to develop the teacher quality by identifying clear goals, acceptable discretion and adequate procedures. However, the programmes need to be executed as intended to achieve its goals.

3.5 Examples of an International and Omani PLCs Studies

The literature is full of studies about PLCs. There is, however, little systematic research available about how PLCs were examined in terms of the barriers of their implementation and their impacts on teacher's performance. The following examples show some of the international and Omani studies that investigate and explore the barriers in implementing PLCs inside schools and the impact of its implementation on teachers' professional development. These studies were listed according to the year of conduct as follow:

Clarke (2014) conducted a mixed-methods study aims at identifying the achievements and barriers in implementing professional learning communities (PLC) within many schools in America. Quantitative and qualitative data were collecting by the means of survey and semi-structured focus group interviews. Findings revealed some achievements and barriers of implementing PLCs. Among the achievements: improved school concentration on learning, curriculum orientation, and increased teacher experience in developing common evaluation. School was found to be the largest challenge, that implies complicated school structure, inadequate time for planning and training and school size.

The purpose of the longitudinal study conducted in Hong Kong in (2014) by Angela Choi was to explore the impact of a professional learning community (PLC) in altering teachers' attitudes and pedagogies. Responses were interviewed and observed. The study results indicate that the main characteristics of PLC that affect teacher attitudes and pedagogies are a coherent structure, a collaborative culture, and effective learning activities. "Teachers change in five dimensions (curriculum, teaching, learning, roles of teachers, and learning to teach) and three patterns (change in practice but not in belief, change in belief but not in practice, change in practice and belief) were detected" (p: 1). It is argued that cultivating an effective PLC is important to teacher growth.

Al-Mahdy, Al-Harthi, & Al-Rawhia (2016). Conducted a study aims at identifying the availability of the dimensions of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and the leadership systems that lead them in selected Egyptian and Omani schools. The study utilized a developed survey to evaluate PLC dimensions, and leadership procedures that support PLCs in schools. The study revealed that the sample "rated highly both the availability of PLC dimensions and the leadership practices that support them" (Al-Mahdy, Al-Harthi, & Al-Rawhia, 2016, p: 271).

Ibraheem & Al-shouhomi (2018) Conducting a study aims to investigate the role of the principals in developing the professional learning development in the Sultanate of Oman from the supervisor's perspectives. The descriptive approach was conducted in this study by the mean of survey that applied upon 57 supervisors. The study revealed that, the role of the principals in developing the professional learning development in the Sultanate of Oman from the supervisor's perspectives was very high level in all the study dimensions.

In Malaysia Kareem, Kin, Musa, & Ghouri (2019) conducted a study aims at examining and comparing the execution of professional learning communities (PLCs) in Day Secondary School (DSS) and National Religious Secondary School (NRSS). They utilized a survey to collect data.

They found that; the study sample of school attained the level satisfactory in PLCs depending on the study criteria. The study gains deep knowledge for educational and researchers in promoting a more holistic analysis in exploring PLCs towards continuous and sustained school improvement.

Wilfried, Wouter, Loes, Yolande& Henk (2019) conducted a study aims at investigating Professional Learning Community in Dutch schools. They utilized qualitative research by means of documents analysis, one to one interview and focus group interviews. From their investigation, they conclude that the more entrenched an intervention was in the school culture, the more sustainable it appeared to be.

Recently, Alshuaili & Ibraheem, (2020) in Oman studied the role of school principals in building Professional learning Communities in basic education schools. The study employed a mixed method approach by the means of questionnaire and interviews to collect data. The study reveals that the role of school principals in promoting the PLC from the teachers' point of view was high-level degree. The study also, found that the headmasters paved the way in front of the teachers to share values and vision, collective Learning and Application, share personal practice, and provide a supportive condition.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using the qualitative method. In fact, qualitative approach can reveal a deep understanding of peoples' life of the phenomenon under study, yet the other types of research methodology often do not help to describe the situation more deeply. Neergaard (2008,p.383) argue that qualitative approach is "multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter". That implied that qualitative researchers study issues in their natural situation, trying to understand, analyse and suggest some solutions.

For this study, five basic schools from the first and second cycle in Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman were chosen to conduct this study, with three senior teachers, six teachers and five school principals as the subjects. Semi-structured interviews with experts in the filed including, teachers and school principals were the key means of data collection.

Each informant was interviewed once, but in some cases, follow-up interviews were steered for assuring certain issues and indiscretions. The interviews were depending on a protocol of semi-structured and open-ended questions. The questions were developed to probe into the professional learning communities, its definition, context, implementation, and challenges. Regularly I posed unstructured questions during interview sessions to obtain profound evidence. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The purposeful-sampling technique was implemented by the means of snowball sampling and convenience sampling.

The researchers followed the procedures suggested by Creswell (2008): firstly: the sites were selected based on the researchers experiences of the schools that implement the professional learning communities precisely. The researchers then contacted the Ministry of Education to get permission to visit those schools and conduct the interviews. With the assistance of the principals, the researchers selected the way of conducting the interviews and with whom. Thirdly, the researchers tried to build a respected relationship with the informants to pave the way on the interview's execution. Finally, the researchers developed applicable notes to collect as much information as possible during the interview's session.

Furthermore, analysis of the ministry of Education and school documents related to professional learning communities was considered the primary tool in the data collection as well. Reviewing the formal documents issued by the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman pertaining to the professional learning communities; particularly, those documents which explain purposes,

implementation and strategies pertaining to professional learning communities. This is designed to provide profound understanding regarding the professional learning communities since there is no thorough documented handbook for professional learning communities to date. This study extensively collects and analyses some documents pertaining to the concept of professional learning communities. The schools offered some formal and informal helpful documents. Formal documents include official Ministry documents, such as decrees, reports, teachers-memos, educational-guide and the electronic portal of the Ministry, on the other hand, Informal documents comprise the documents obtained by the researcher but not published by the Ministry such as e-mails, and handwritten responses written by teacher, principals and supervisors (Alyahmadi& Alfahdi, 2014).

The data collected was analysed by means of NVivo10, a Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) computer software package produced by QSR International. This software was utilized for managing, coding, and analysing the data collected. The coding scheme was developed based on the research question and the theoretical framework. The coded data were then classified to some categories according to the emerging themes. Data collected by the means of interviews were confirmed by documents obtained from the Ministry and the schools.

The analysis of data was conducted by employing the technique of constant comparative method. Corbin and Strauss's (2008) constant comparative method of data analysis was found to be well-suited to this study's purposes, although this method of analysis was originally developed for theory building.

Constant comparative method of the interview data of all the 14 participants is a primary factor of the analysis process. The main purposes of constant comparative method as stated by Elliott and Jordan (2010):

> "Through the process of comparing concept to incident that the researcher can check to see if further incidents fit with the newly developed concepts and, in so doing, ensure that the concepts are capable of accounting for all related incidents in the data"(pp. 34-35).

Conclusively, the researchers must admit that the relatively small sample limited the study from generalizations. However, rich information gained are sufficient to indicate the situation of the professional learning communities in Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman. Moreover, it is acceptable to consider the category of challenges which obstruct the professional learning communities in reaching its main purposes.

5. Findings and Discussion

The information obtained from this investigation offered many fascinating aspects regarding the situation of professional learning communities. These were discussed as follow:

5.1 The first research question: in this part, the researchers tried to reveal the perceptions of school principals, senior teachers and teachers' regarding the implementation of professional learning communities and the leadership role in Basic and Post-basic schools in Muscat, Oman. To answer this question the interviewees were asked to express their opinion about to what extent they believe that PLCs were implemented inside their schools and whether the principals supported teachers to implement PLCs inside their schools or not. The results showed that all informants believe that even though PLCs implementation is still weak inside schools, most of the principals of schools tried their hard to involve teachers in PLCs activities and support their implementation inside their schools. For instance, when the informants were asked about the leadership role in

implementing PLCs activities inside the school and the collaboration between teachers inside schools, one of the female principals said,

> *I believe that our frequent meetings with female teachers, and our focus on being one hand, and our follow-up to what is taking place in professional learning communities in terms of cooperation and advice has the greatest impact on spreading the team spirit among my teachers.*

Another one confirmed their support by even involving teachers in the decision the they make by saying,

> *"Yes, all of my teachers are involved in most discussions related to decision-making and some matters pertaining to the educational level. I find my teachers frequently interacting in this aspect, and they often resort to me to solve their problems".*

This result showed that there is a level of shared values and vision and it does congruent with what Louis et al. (2010) and her colleagues said that:

> "Increasing teachers' involvement in the difficult task of making good decisions and introducing improved practice must be at the heart of school leadership"(p. 332).

This senior teacher also stated that their school principal is supporting them to implement PLCs by saying,

> *"Yes, my school principal offers support and assistance, and we feel that we are one family. Also, all teachers, have the opportunity to participate in PLCs and in developing and improving work inside the school".*

According to Louis et al.(2010, p.319),

> "While many factors affect whether or not PLCs exist in schools, one of the most significant factors is strong principal leadership".

Therefore, one of the most responsibilities rely on school principals is to create opportunities for teachers to collaborate with each other. For example, this senior teacher stated that,

> *My school principal has a high leadership spirit and she continuously encourages us to assume this role with our students and with our teachers.*

These results confirm that the principals tried their best to implement PLCs activities and support the collaboration between teachers inside their schools as an important elements of teachers CPD despite the lack of time and guidance. Moreover, the results in this part congruent with Al-Mahdy, Al-Harthi, & Al-Rawhia (2016) study which revealed that the sample of their study rated highly both the availability of PLC dimensions and the leadership practices that support them. In addition, these results support the findings of Alshuaili & Ibraheem (2020) study which showed that the role of school principals in promoting the PLC was high-level degree and they have paved the way in front of the teachers to share values and vision, collective Learning and Application.

5.2 The second research question: in this part, the researchers discussed the impact of professional learning communities on teacher professional development in Basic and Post-basic schools in Muscat, Oman from the respondents perceptions.

The results showed that the very first interviews indicated that the informants participate in professional learning communities seeking the promotion of their professional development and ensure quality for their performance. This was clear when the interviewers asked the informants if teachers inside schools work as a team and do a mutual visit to each other and collaborate to share knowledge, skills and strategies and applying them in their work? one principal for example said,

> *"Yes, we apply here and with complete effectiveness what we learnt in the Specialized Institute for Training, which is rounds learning. So, I or my assistant with a group of teachers make rounds to some of the teachers while they teach in their classes to get acquainted with the teaching method they used and the interaction of the students in no more than 7 minutes, then we move to another class and so on. We have found a great effect of this kind of supervision and follow-up, as all teachers are involved in this process as visitors".*

Another one is a teacher who added

> *"Yes, there is an exchange of visits between teachers, each of whom seeks to benefit from the experiences of his colleagues and to benefit from their experiences".*

However, the situation directed sometime in the other way while the researchers went forward in conducting the interviews. The information revealed that the professional learning community's implementation have slight influence in teacher performance and student achievements. Likewise, the information revealed that there are some mutual contextual, institutional, and practical factors that have an impact on the informants' perceptions regarding the real situation of professional learning communities.

5.3 The third research question: in this part, the informants were asked to express their opinion about the obstacles that affect the implementation of the professional learning communities in schools in Muscat, Oman**.**

The results showed that there are a number of obstacles that affect the effective implementation of PLCs inside schools. According to the informants the most obstacle that hinders teachers inside their schools from participating and implementing PLCs activities are the lack of time because of the teaching load and administrative paperwork. As this senior teacher express his feeling by saying,

> *"The biggest challenge is the lack of time, as our teachers have overload teaching periods that may reach 23 periods a week or more, as well as some administrative and coordination tasks, which means that we don't have enough time to meet other colleagues or visit their classes to share experience and knowledge ".*

This result congruent with Clarke (2014) study which concluded that inadequate time for planning and training was one of the largest challenges. The overload teaching timetable is one of the most hindrance that faced teachers everywhere while trying to implement PLCs activities. This issue needs more consideration by the Ministry of Education officials if they want teachers to have the opportunity to practice and implement PLCs activities inside and outside their schools.

However, another obstacle that most of the informants expressed was the lack of clear evidence and guidance on how to implement PLCs inside and outside schools. This was expressed during the interviews as this teacher for example said,

> *"Another problem we faced is the lack of clear evidence on how to implement PLCs and most of what we have mentioned is either due to the experience that school principal transferred to us from what they learnt from the specialized institute, or by their personal efforts which could be right or wrong".*

One more obstacle was regarding the lack of expert teachers who can transfer knowledge and experience to other teachers. As this senior teacher expressed her feeling by saying,

> *"I also think that one of the obstacles facing us is that our school is like a bridge that the teacher comes, and after a year or two moves to her governorate or another school, and many of the efforts made with that teacher are lost".*

Finally, the results in this part suggested that these obstacles were hindering teachers and educators from implementing effectively PLCs activities inside schools which need to be solved by the Ministry of education officials.

6. Conclusion

This study is conducted to reveal the practices and challenges concerning the initiatives of PLCs implementation in Basic and Post-basic schools in Muscat, Oman. The results showed that PLCs is available in Muscat schools but still weak and their implementation is highly supported by schools principals. The results also suggested that the informants of this study believed that PLCs have a great impact on teachers' performance which could lead to promoting their continuous professional development. However, establishing PLCs in Muscat schools faced some challenges. most of the informants stated that obstacles such as overload teaching timetable and administrative paperwork were among the most obstacles that hinder teachers from practising and implementing PLCs activities inside their schools. There is also an absence of clear evidence and a thoroughly documented handbook for professional learning communities to guide teachers on how to implement PLCs activities except the dated one provided by MOE. Therefore, the MOE officials should reconsider solve these issues and investigate its effectiveness not only in Muscat schools but all over Oman to help teachers implement PLCs activities inside schools, improve their performance and increase their students' attainments.

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