CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational and professional commitment in high-achieving and low-achieving public secondary schools of Islamabad. The study also identified the differences in teacher collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment between teachers in high-achieving and low-achieving secondary schools. It further examined the effects of teacher personal variables of gender, educational attainment, and professional experience on their collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. As many as 364 teachers from high- and low-achieving schools in Islamabad took part in this study by answering a survey questionnaire on collegiality and commitment.

This chapter summarizes and discusses the major findings of this study. In addition, this chapter also discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the findings and consequently suggests the viable ways of promoting teacher collegiality, professionalism, and commitment for the purpose of creating a positive instructional work climate and consequently improved school performance.

5.2   Summary of Major Findings and Discussion

The summary enumerated here corresponds to the answers to the research questions. Summary items (i) – (vi) pertain to the research question 1 and research question 2 which inquired about the impact of teachers' collegiality on their organizational and professional commitment in high-achieving and low-achieving public secondary schools of Islamabad. The summary items (vii) – (ix) refer to research question 3 which was about investigating the differences in teacher collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment between high-achieving and low-achieving secondary school teachers. Summary items (x) – (xviii) pertain to research question 4 which queried about the impact of teachers' personal variables of gender, educational attainment, and professional experience on their collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment.

(i) <u>Dimensionality of Teacher Collegiality</u>

The findings of the study indicated that teacher collegiality is a multi-dimensional concept and could be defined as the presence of seven teacher behaviors in schools: (a) demonstrating mutual support and trust among teachers; (b) observing one another engage in the practice of teaching; (c) jointly planning and assessing teaching practices; (d) sharing ideas and expertise; (e) teaching each

other; (f) developing curriculum together; and (g) sharing resources such as lesson plans, worksheets, and educational books.

The seven-dimensional concept of collegiality is one of the important contributions of this study and is of practical value in future educational research. These seven teacher collegial behaviors serve as concise and representative description of collegiality as practiced in Pakistani schools. This finding echoes others from previous research. Barth (1990) suggested four dimensions of collegiality in schools: *talking about practice, observing each other, working on curriculum, and teaching each other*. The current study supported these dimensions as well as added new dimensions to the concept of collegiality for example, *demonstrating mutual support and trust, joint planning and assessment, sharing ideas and expertise, and sharing resources*. Trust and support among colleagues is considered as important component of collegiality by many previous researchers (e.g., Barth, 1990; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Donaldson & Sanderson, 1996; Friend & Cook, 2000). Similarly, Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) suggested that teachers in highly collegial cultures are more likely to trust, value, and legitimize sharing of expertise; seek advice; and help other teachers.

Ashton and Webb (1986) in their study emphasized that sharing resources and supplies, planning cooperatively, and developing a "common sense of accomplishment" are crucial factors for establishing collegiality and collaboration among school teachers. According to Friend and Cook (1996), true collaboration

is demonstrated when all team members feel that their contributions are valued, they share decision making, and sense they are respected. Friend and Cook (1996) further claim that collaboration among teachers is based on sharing resources and knowledge. Lieberman and Miller (1999) state that professional collegial communities are built "when principals and staff enhance their resources by reinforcing a climate of support and respect for teachers' work and by pursuing a continuous cycle of innovation, feedback and redesign in curriculum, instruction and assessment" (p. 62).

John-Steiner, Weber, and Minnis (1998) suggest that collaboration not only includes planning, deciding, and acting jointly but also involves thinking together. According to them, "in a true collaboration, there is a commitment to shared resources, power, and talent: no individual's point of view dominates, authority for decisions and actions resides in the group, and work products reflect a blending of all participants' contributions..." (p. 776). Ross, Ertmer, and Johnson (2001) suggest that collaboration among teachers provides a structure for sharing ideas and practices, and establishes a network of support. Russell (2002) explains that collaboration is based on shared goals, shared vision, a climate of trust, respect, comprehensive planning, and shared risks. According to Hartnell-Young (2006), teachers working in a collegial environment talk about learning processes, plan activities and curriculum, and invite others into their classrooms.

Most of the additional dimensions of teacher collegiality generated by the current analysis are supported by the existing literature. The results of the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis suggest that TCS is an instrument that will prove useful in measuring teacher collegiality in Pakistan. Based on Cronbach's alpha values, the instrument has high reliability; thus, it can be used in further analyses.

(ii) Teacher Collegiality in Pakistan

The results of the descriptive analysis showed that public secondary school teachers in Islamabad (including both high-achieving and low-achieving schools) exhibited greater support to their colleagues and values of trust and respect were common among them. They felt comfortable in asking for suggestions to specific discipline issues or discussing their students' problems and classroom management ideas. However, they sometimes felt hesitant in asking for help on instructional issues. The practices of jointly planning and collectively analyzing teaching strategies were less obvious among school personnel. Similarly, they did not make collective agreement to test new ideas or approaches in teaching or accredit new programs together. Most of the staff believed that teachers in their schools liked to share knowledge as well as resources.

Almost 65% of the teachers in both types of schools (high-achieving: 30.6% and low-achieving: 34.6%) indicated that most of the teachers in their respective schools were unable to find time to work collectively on preparing and designing

389

curriculum during a regular work day. Similarly, the practice of observing one another teaching is one of the important elements of collegiality less likely experienced by most teachers. Peer observations only occurred among a few staff members. The two items that scored the lowest mean values in the Teacher Collegiality Scale were Item 9 and Item 22 both inquiring about the aspects of peer observation. The low means indicated that teachers in Pakistan are required to change their attitudes about this practice. The lack of observation could have been due to the restriction of the common planning time schedule in schools or because of the teachers' mindset. Some teachers consider this practice as a part of evaluation and judgment rather than assistance and improvement. Thus, the presence of any other professional in their classrooms is viewed as one of scrutiny and surveillance instead of part of professional growth.

(iii) Teacher Organizational Commitment in Pakistan

The descriptive statistics revealed that organizational commitment was low among public secondary school teachers in Pakistan as compared to their collegiality and/or professional commitment. The main reason behind this finding might be the fact that, in Pakistan, the educational system is highly centralized and teachers feel that they should be committed to the federal educational administration rather than their workplace management. In Pakistan, hiring of public school teachers is centralized by the government and not done by the school itself. Hence teachers exhibit less commitment to their respective schools

as they could be transferred to any other school during their working period as a result of promotions and/or benefits. The descriptive analysis results for the two items (Item 43 and Item 55) provide more evidence to this conclusion as these two items showed the least mean values in the Organizational Commitment Scale. Item 43 inquired if teachers felt obligation to remain with their current employer and Item 55 asked about whether they would feel guilty if they left their organization.

Among the three components of organizational commitment, continuance commitment showed the highest mean values indicating that teachers in Pakistan are more aware of the costs associated with leaving the organization given the limited alternatives and opportunities. This finding contrasts with the earlier research conducted by Tayyab (2006) which showed higher affective and normative commitment than continuance commitment among Pakistani public employees. The difference may be due to the different professional environments.

(iv) Teacher Professional Commitment in Pakistan

When all the three study main variables were compared, professional commitment among Pakistani school teachers was found to be the highest. However, unlike organizational commitment, professional commitment was more evident for affective (desire-based) component than for continuance (cost-based) and normative (obligation-based) components.

The results of the descriptive analysis showed that public secondary school teachers in Pakistan feel proud to be in the teaching profession and never feel regret having entered the teaching profession. These statements were relatively more applicable for the teachers teaching in high-achieving schools. They believed that if they would change their profession at this stage of their lives it could cost them a great deal of personal sacrifice. They were of the opinion that whoever gets trained in a profession should spend a reasonable period in that profession. They also feel a great sense of loyalty in teaching.

However, two items (Item 62 and Item 68) showed the least mean values for Professional Commitment Scale. Both the items were related to the normative component. Item 62 was concerned with the teachers' view about leaving the teaching profession for their own advantage. Teachers showing their positive attitude towards this item might be because of their eagerness to acquire administrative positions. Item 68 inquired whether teachers feel guilty if they left teaching. Here again, the low mean values were in accordance to Item 62 and the reason behind it would be the same as mentioned earlier.

(v) Impact of Teachers' Collegiality on Their Organizational and Professional Commitment in Pakistan

The theories which support the positive impact of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational commitment and teacher professional commitment were

verified in this study. At the same time, it was also determined whether the impact of teacher collegiality on organizational commitment and professional commitment among public secondary school teachers was moderated by school performance (based on student academic achievement).

A positive impact of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational commitment was found in the current study which verifies the results of other researchers (Graham, 1996; Hoy, Tarter, & Bliss, 1990; Mutchler, 2005; Reyes, 1992). Similarly, the impact of teacher collegiality on teacher professional commitment was also found to be strongly positive and supports the past research (Barth, 1990; Firestone & Rosenblum, 1988; Hausman & Goldring, 2001; Rosenholtz & Smylie, 1984; Singh & Billingsley, 1998).

This study supports the social capital theory which determines that interdependence among groups is always effective for organizational outcomes. Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualization of social capital is focused on an individual's gains as a consequence of group membership. Grodsky and Gamoran (2003) claim that strong teacher networks can enhance teacher commitment and give teachers a sense of belonging. The results of the current study support the past research and claim that strong collegial relationships among teachers hold considerable potential to influence their attitudes towards their organizations and teaching profession.

(vi) <u>Differences in the impact of Teachers' Collegiality on Their</u>
<u>Organizational and Professional Commitment between High-Achieving and Low-</u>
<u>Achieving Schools</u>

The impact of teachers' collegiality on organizational and professional
commitment among public secondary school teachers in Islamabad was not
moderated by the school type based on achievement. Differences in impact of
teachers' collegiality on both types of commitment were statistically non-
significant for high-achieving and low-achieving schools. This indicated that
collegiality among teaching staff works in a similar way in influencing their
staffs' commitment towards their organizations and profession in both types of
schools.

(vii) <u>Teacher Collegiality and Student Achievement</u>

Building social capital, that is a professional collegial community in schools
appears to be associated with improved student achievement. Many educational
researchers have advocated the perception that student achievement increases
significantly when teachers work together as a team (Barth, 1990; Goddard et al.,
2007; Hord, 1997; Lee & Smith, 1996; Leonard & Leonard, 2003; Newmann &
Wehlage, 1995; Schmoker, 1999). Coleman (1990) argued that the quality of
exchanges existing between school staff members generate collective good which
affects the success of students. However, the current study did not support social

capital theory in terms of students' academic outcomes. Portes and Landolt (1996) and Engestrom (2001) pointed out that social capital developed in groups is not always beneficial for individual members. As in case of the present study, students did not get benefit from strong social networks among school staff in Pakistan.

The results of this study contradicting previous findings might be because most of the above mentioned studies were conducted in the developed world. Moreover, most of these studies did not quantify levels of teacher collegiality and none of them used the similar concept of collegiality as described in this study. Rather, those studies listed collegiality (or teamwork) as a factor repeatedly mentioned by teachers in response to open-ended questions asking teachers or administrators to identify reasons for their schools' success. The studies that quantified teacher collegiality or collaboration did not select schools based on prior performance on any achievement test.

Furthermore, studies involving student achievement should not ignore the effects of several other factors such as student personal characteristics, home environment, family income, parent's educational background, and parental involvement. Most specifically, family background variables play a vital role in influencing students' learning outcomes. During the data collection process, it was observed that most of the low performing schools were located in comparatively less advantaged areas. This might have affected the results of the

current study. Socio-economic status (SES) is considered as an important factor when student achievement is involved in a research framework.

The present study validates the work of Louis and Marks (1998), Supovitz (2002), Supovitz and Christman (2003), and Little (2006) which found that teacher collegiality could not be linked directly to improved student achievement in schools. These studies claimed that strengthening teacher relationships did not necessarily translate into more effective teaching and better student performance. In other words, the presence of collegiality among teachers alone does not ensure teacher engagement in deep discourse on improving instruction which ultimately will influence student learning. To gain greater benefits from teacher collegiality, the focus of collaboration should include instruction, professional growth, assessment of teaching practices, and strategies for improving school effectiveness. Moreover, students in low-achieving schools might require different instructional and pedagogical styles for effective learning as compared to their counterparts; these may be identified if teachers share their information.

Even though it is not evident in this research, teacher collegiality does offer considerable potential for increasing student achievement. In order to realize the benefits of teacher collegiality in student achievement, schools must re-establish the value of staff collegiality through exposure to the works of collegiality theorists. Secondly, true collegiality in schools will not occur without the emergence of teacher leaders who assume the responsibility for guiding the

academic activities of the school.

(viii) <u>Organizational Commitment and Student Achievement</u>

Organizational commitment in the current analysis was found to be statistically higher for teachers teaching in high-achieving schools versus low-achieving schools, suggesting a positive association between organizational commitment and student academic achievement. This result supports the findings of Kushman (1992), Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), and Reyes and Fuller (1995) who all found a positive correlation between teacher organizational commitment and student achievement in their respective studies. The relationship between organizational commitment and student achievement could be two-way. High student performance might help in increasing school commitment among teachers as teachers feel recognized and valued in such schools.

(ix) <u>Professional Commitment and Student Achievement</u>

Contrary to expectations, this study did not find a significant difference between high-achieving and low-achieving secondary school teachers' commitment to teaching. This result differs from most of the published studies (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Pressley, Rankin, & Yokoi, 1996; Riehl & Sipple, 1996; Rosenholtz, 1989). Researchers claim that higher degree of teacher professional commitment drives them to improve their teaching strategies and

skills and therefore, is positively associated with higher quality teaching and thus, can lead to greater student learning. Firestone and Pennell (1993), however, state that though high teacher commitment to teaching may not increase academic success, low teacher professional commitment did contribute to a reduction in student achievement.

The results of this study showing no significant difference between high-achieving and low-achieving secondary school teachers' commitment to teaching might be due to teachers overstating their professional commitment in this study. They perceived themselves as professionally committed but in reality the extent was not that high. The other reason could be the sensitivity of the instrument. The scale for measuring professional commitment among teachers was developed in North America. It might be over sensitive for Pakistan's culture. In this study, the sensitivity of the instrument was not tested beforehand and this could be the reason for such contradictory results.

(x) <u>Effects of Gender on Teacher Collegiality</u>

When male and female teachers were compared on their perceptions about collegiality, male teachers believed that their colleagues demonstrated mutual support, and that the level of trust among them was high. Similarly, they also believed that teachers in their schools do share ideas and expertise with one another. On the other hand, female teachers indicated frequent sharing of

398

resources and involvement in the joint activities of designing and developing curriculum. Overall, the differences were significant and showed higher collegiality for female teachers.

This finding supports the idea that gender plays a vital role in determining peer collegial relationships in the workplace and further reinforces the findings of several researchers (e.g., Cahill & Sias, 1997; Celep, 2000; Conway & Vartanian, 2000; Fritz, 1997; Huang & Fraser, 2009; Odden & Sias, 1997) who claimed that females are more people-oriented and perceive greater collegiality at their respective workplace.

(xi) Effects of Educational Qualification on Teacher Collegiality

Groups of teachers with different educational levels also illustrated significant differences regarding staff collegiality. Teachers having the highest degree showed the most positive trend towards collegiality when compared with less qualified teachers, indicating educational qualification as the predictor of teacher collegiality. This finding corroborates that of Sveiby and Simons (2002).

Further analysis showed that in Pakistan, this difference exists for two groups (i.e., bachelor versus masters and bachelor versus MPhil/PhD). The differences were not significant for master versus MPhil/PhDs for most of the collegiality subscales.

(xii) <u>Effects of Professional Experience on Teacher Collegiality</u>

Professional experience influences collegiality among teaching staff in Pakistan. The result of this study suggests that as experience increases, so does collegiality. This result is inconsistent with Sveiby and Simons (2002). Their study suggests that working experience influences teachers' perceptions about collegiality. The current study further showed that the effects of the length of service on collegiality were prominent for less experienced teachers (i.e., teachers with less than five years of experience). These effects became non-significant when the comparisons were made between the groups of more experienced teachers.

(xiii) <u>Effects of Gender on Organizational Commitment</u>

When the effects of gender on teacher organizational commitment were investigated, the findings showed that gender plays a predicting role for organizational commitment. The differences for organizational commitment were significant for male and female teachers. In Pakistan, female teachers were found to be more organizationally committed as compared to their male counterparts. Unlike the findings of Harrison and Hubbard (1998) who claimed that Mexican female employees are less committed to their organization because of their major role as family care givers, Pakistani females showed higher commitment to their respective schools, even though they are also believed to be more family oriented.

This finding contradicts the hypothesized perception of Pakistani females as being less committed and provides further support to the previous researches done on organizational commitment in Pakistan by Alvi and Ahmed (1987) and Tayyab (2006). Alvi and Ahmed (1987) stated that unlike the results of most previous studies involving industrialized societies, the degree of female commitment to the employing organization in Pakistan appears to be much higher than that of male workers. Similarly, Tayyab's (2006) study further affirmed Pakistani females' higher commitment to their organization in the public sector as compared to their male counterparts. Higher commitment of females shown in schools might be because females in Pakistan do not feel comfortable in relocating due to the cultural and social restrictions.

(xiv) Effects of Educational Qualification on Organizational Commitment

Most of the researchers concluded that educational qualification is negatively correlated with organizational commitment (see e.g., Angle & Perry, 1981, 1983; Harrison & Hubbard, 1998; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday et al., 1982). Surprisingly, the results of the current study were not in accordance with the previous studies. Highly significant differences were observed for all three subscales of organizational commitment, showing that educational level determines an individual's commitment to his/her respective organization.

For Pakistani school teachers, this association between educational qualification and organizational commitment was found to be positive. However, here again, the differences were significant for two types of groups (i.e., bachelor versus master and bachelor versus MPhil/PhD). These differences were not statistically significant when a group of teachers having the master's degree was compared with teachers having MPhil/PhD degrees. Based on the overall analysis, the study concludes that increasing educational level could correspondingly increase organizational commitment among teachers in Pakistan.

(xv) Effects of Professional Experience on Organizational Commitment

Similar to educational attainment, professional experience also affects organizational commitment among school teachers and the association between these two variables is also positive. This finding supports the studies of Cheng (1990), Jorde-Bloom (1988), Hellman (1997), and Kushman (1992). These researchers claimed that teachers with higher levels of experience are more organizationally committed and therefore, less likely to leave their organization.

The current study indicates that all three components of organizational commitment were influenced by the length of professional experience among public school teachers. These differences were observed most specifically when the groups of teachers with less than five years of professional experience and that with five to ten years of experience were compared with any other group. These

differences became less significant for the groups of more experienced and senior teachers (e.g., 10-15 years versus 15-20 years, 10-15 years versus > 20 years, and 15-20 years versus > 20 years).

These findings show that in Pakistan, teachers' commitment to their school remains low until they acquired higher experience in the educational field. This might be attributed to their becoming less adventurous and starting to feel comfortable with the status quo. These factors force them to remain attached with the same employer and the same organization.

Young teachers, on the other hand, possess higher degree of uncertainty in the field of education. Less organizational commitment shown by the young employees might be due to the high societal expectations. Because of these expectations, young teachers are more vulnerable to the job hopping habit and to seek higher incentives. Sometimes, the organizations are unable to utilize their energies well and their high motivations to do something innovative make them decide to change organization and fulfill their desires to enhance their professionalism.

(xvi) Effects of Gender on Professional Commitment

Most of the researchers claim that gender is associated with professional commitment (Ingersoll & Alsalam, 1997; Karakus & Aslan, 2009). For the

current study, it was hypothesized that male teachers will be more professionally committed than female teachers. In Pakistan, females are believed to be more involved in family and home activities and their close involvement in family life makes it difficult for them to remain professionally committed. But surprisingly, no differences were found between male and female teachers' commitment to teaching; the suggested hypothesis could not be supported by the current data set.

This finding contradicts that of Ingersoll and Alsalam (1997) and Karakus and Aslan (2009) which found gender to be significantly correlated with teacher professional commitment. However, Ingersoll and Alsalam (1997) in their study of elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States found minimal differences between male and female teachers' commitment to teaching.

In the case of Pakistan, male and female teachers are equally committed to their profession and it is therefore concluded that gender does not impact professional commitment among Pakistani public secondary school teachers.

(xvii) Effects of Educational Qualification on Professional Commitment

It is believed that educational attainment is positively correlated to general career commitment (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990). For the current study, it was hypothesized that teachers become more committed to their profession as their educational level increases. The result supports the study hypothesis as well as the

conclusions drawn by many other researchers in the field of education and organizational psychology (Carson & Bedeian, 1994; Colarelli & Bishop, 1990; Debbie, 2006; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2007; Surendra & Anita, 1988). It is therefore, concluded that in Pakistan the level of education determines teachers' commitment to their profession.

The results for the group comparison tests further enlightened that the differences in the professional commitment were significant for all three groups (bachelor versus master, bachelor versus MPhil/PhD, and master versus MPhil/PhD) showing that each group with higher degree was more professionally committed than the group with lower educational attainment.

(xviii) Effects of Professional Experience on Professional Commitment

The findings indicated that teacher personal variable (i.e., professional experience) is positively correlated with teachers' commitment to their profession. All three components of professional commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) showed significant differences when groups of teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience and those with 5-10 years of experience were compared with any other group. However, these differences were non-significant for highly experienced staff. For example, when teachers with 10-15 years of experience, 15-20 years of experience, and teachers with more than 20 years of experience were compared with each other, no significant differences were found.

But the overall analysis showed that for the public secondary school teachers of Islamabad, increase in the professional experience enhances their professional commitment.

The present finding seems to be consistent with the previous studies in the related fields (Carson & Bedeian, 1994; Debbie, 2006; Hung & Liu, 1999; Surendra & Anita, 1988). This might be because the longer the working experience in a particular profession the lower the chances to acquire new fields of interest. Senior and highly experienced teachers find it hard to leave their comfort zone and this might be the cause of their high professional commitment. On the other hand, less experienced and young professionals show lower degree of commitment to teaching as their passion to achieve socio-economic success in society makes them avail themselves of other opportunities in different fields or positions with higher fringe benefits.

5.3 Implications and Suggestions

The findings of this study suggest that teachers' commitment to their schools and to the teaching profession can be enhanced by increasing collegiality among teachers. The study also suggests that the presence of collegiality alone does not ensure school effectiveness and student performance as no significant differences in teacher collegiality were found between high-achieving and low-achieving schools. Similar to teacher collegiality, professional commitment is also not

directly associated with student academic achievement in Pakistani schools. However, organizational commitment is positively correlated to student achievement in secondary schools as teachers in high-achieving schools were found to be more committed to their respective schools as compared to the teachers teaching in low-achieving schools.

Teacher personal variables (e.g., gender, educational attainment, and professional experience) were determined as antecedents to teacher collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. Only gender was not found to be correlated to teacher professional commitment as hypothesized earlier. Teacher collegiality was more evident among female teachers than their male counterparts. Similarly, female teachers in Pakistan were found to be more organizationally committed. Teachers with higher educational qualifications as well as teachers with more experience perceived collegiality to be higher in their respective schools. Increase in educational level and professional experience heightens teachers' commitment towards their organization and profession.

5.3.1 Theoretical Implications

Based on the previous discussions, conceptual framework of this study, and the use of multivariate analytical techniques for example, SEM analysis, latent mean structure analysis, and MANOVA, the following theories are generated. These theories are the imperative contributions to the current body of knowledge

in this area:

1. Teachers who perceive a higher level of collegiality in their schools are most likely to be organizationally committed.

2. Teachers who perceive a higher level of collegiality in their schools are more committed to teaching.

3. A higher level of collegiality among teaching staff does not necessarily affect student academic achievement.

4. Higher professional commitment among teachers does not always improve student academic achievement.

5. Teacher organizational commitment is positively associated with student academic achievement in secondary schools.

6. Gender is a significant predictor of teacher collegiality. Females in Pakistan are more collegial in the schools' setting than male teachers.

7. Gender acts as an antecedent to organizational commitment in secondary schools. Females in Pakistan are more committed to their respective schools as compared to their male counterparts.

8. Gender does not predict teachers' professional commitment in Pakistani schools.

9. Higher educational attainment plays a vital role in contributing higher collegiality among teachers.

10. As the educational level increases among teachers, so does their commitment towards their organization, that is, there is a direct proportionate correlation between educational level and organizational commitment.

11. Increase in educational qualification among school teachers heightens their professional commitment.

12. Professional experience influences teachers' collegial relationships. More experienced teachers perceive their staff to be more collegial than less experienced teachers.

13. There is a positive association between professional experience and teachers' organizational commitment. As teachers gain more experience in teaching, they become more committed to their schools.

14. Teachers with higher experience in teaching show a greater degree of

commitment towards their profession.

This study used the powerful SEM technique for testing and estimating hypothesized causal relations. SEM technique works very well when the conceptual model is a hybrid model with multiple latent variables each measured by multiple indicators, and paths specified connecting the latent variables. It also helps in testing models overall rather than coefficients individually.

The use of measurement model (CFA) helped in affirming the operational definition of the concept of teacher collegiality and validating the construct. The goodness of data fit to the model shown by the SEM analysis indicated that the hypothesized model was adequate and supported the strong positive impact of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational and professional commitment.

Furthermore, MANOVA affirmed the hypothesized relationships of teacher demographic variables of gender, educational attainment, and professional experience with teacher collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. The post hoc comparison procedures in MANOVA further identified the group differences for the teacher personal variables.

The overall conceptual model of the study was found appropriate. All but one of the hypothesized relationships between teacher background variables and study main variables were found to be significant. Only gender did not affect

professional commitment among school teachers. According to the conceptualized model, teachers' collegiality and their organizational and professional commitment would be significantly different in high-achieving and low-achieving schools. However, the study indicated non-significant differences between the two types of schools for their staff collegial relations as well as teachers' commitment towards their profession.

5.3.2 Practical Implications

The practical implications and suggestions for consideration for public schools in Pakistan are presented below. The following sections elaborate the suggestions for school leaders, teachers, and teacher educators.

(i) Implications and Suggestions for Principals

Collegial activities among teaching staff are positively associated with teachers' professionalism and their commitment to school but do not directly influence student achievement. Collegiality among teachers in the Pakistani school system might not be able to influence teaching and instructional practices which eventually affects student learning. Therefore, school leaders need to put more guidance and resources into ensuring that teacher collegiality is well-structured. Principals must arrange such opportunities for their staff where consistent and sustained focus on instruction could be placed.

Principals are required to develop training programs for their teaching staff to structure collegiality that could benefit both teachers and students. These programs and sessions must be organized under the supervision of experts or teacher leaders where the focus should be on improved instruction, professional growth, assessment of practices, and strategies for improving school effectiveness. Designing and arranging meaningful activities will foster collegial dialogue, discussion of practice, debate over issues, and consideration of new approaches. However, these strategies should always be flexible and resources should always be provided to support program redesign when possible. Such programs and activities give teachers more opportunities to be part of the solution to school-wide concerns. Principals in schools must provide teachers with the vision of what the school actually hopes to accomplish through staff collegiality. This vision must be clear and agreed upon among the staff of the school.

In addition, administrators need to work toward establishing a school-wide culture of collegiality. According to Lawlor (1998), principals' role in developing a supportive collegial environment and an atmosphere of openness and professionalism in schools is vital. The finding that collegiality may increase teachers' commitment implies that school leadership put in place structures to facilitate the long-term development of teacher relationships.

The first step in creating collegial environment among teachers that result in sustained learning within the school is to provide teaching personnel with sufficient time. Teachers need to be provided with compatible schedules and convenient meeting places to collaborate during the teachers' contractual day so that they can meet frequently, focus on joint planning, and share the challenges of practice for the benefit of their students and the school community. These schedules should be designed to allow collaborative meetings that are frequent and long enough to be effective. A number of researchers have emphasized scheduling as a crucial issue in establishing teacher collegiality (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Rice, 2003).

School administrators must recognize that teachers require time for collegial inquiry, peer observation, as well as joint planning before a school can expect to accrue positive benefits for students. If principals encourage open classrooms whereby teachers are given access to each other's classes to observe and experience hands-on activities, this may in turn facilitate further collegiality as well as help improve instruction.

Teachers should be advised to work jointly on preparing curriculum with their colleagues. Common academic skill areas should be identified school-wide and across subjects. Male teachers were less likely to share educational materials with their peers. Hence principals in schools in general and male schools in particular, must encourage their staff to share instructional resources. Similarly,

female school principals are required to stimulate their staff in jointly planning and assessing their teaching practices.

School administrators should also motivate staff with less educational qualifications to pursue higher degrees as findings of the study indicate that higher education helps in improving collegiality as well as commitment. It is advantageous for principals to build a friendly and cooperative teacher culture specifically for the novice teachers who perceive collegiality to be low as indicated by the findings of this study. In addition, the novice teachers also exhibit lower degree of commitment toward their organization as well as profession.

In short, principals and school heads can support building of effective collegiality by making time in the schedule for teachers to work together, providing training on effective strategies for team-building, and offering incentives and benefits for teachers to collaborate (Blase & Blase, 2001; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2000).

(ii) <u>Implications and Suggestions for Teachers</u>

Hargreaves (1994) argued that principals could not impose collegiality and collaboration on the staff from above. Dedicated and visionary administrators can provide opportunities to staff for building effective collegiality, but, by

themselves, they cannot nurture and sustain this collegiality. Rather teachers must step forward and build a collegial atmosphere by initiating contacts with their peers inside as well as outside their schools.

The main implication for teachers is the need to recognize the value of working together and to focus on how they can improve their practices for organizational benefit. This study suggests that teachers need to see the value of joint work. It must be recognized that collegiality must be far more purposeful and involved, than the kind of incidental sharing of information. Ultimately, rather than mere colleagues who work in parallel, teachers need to share their expertise among their colleagues to enhance their professional development. The main implication here is that regardless of what topics teachers interact around, the ultimate focus of their collaboration should be their instructional practices.

Teacher collegiality being non-significantly different in two types of schools indicates the presence of other mediating factors. These mediating factors could be pedagogical skills and instructional styles of teachers that ultimately influence student achievement. For getting enormous benefits from teacher collegiality in schools, teachers need to apprehend how collegiality can increase student learning. It is suggested that collegiality must act as a tool of instructional improvement in schools and teachers are advised to link collegiality with improved teaching and instructional skills which will enhance school effectiveness and student achievement.

A further implication of the findings is that teachers must value peer observation as an accepted practice within the educational community. Therefore, teachers must be prepared to open their classrooms to each other, with the expectation of observing and being observed. In this way, teachers may begin to regard each other's work without evaluating but instead searching for potential improvements in their own teaching skills.

Similarly, when teachers are closely involved in academic activities especially in developing curriculum together, they take ownership in the work they accomplish and there is compelling evidence that they positively influence achievement outcomes. In the absence of teachers' own initiation for working in a collegial atmosphere, teacher interactions on curriculum will remain at a relatively superficial level. Teachers must also develop their own informal networks with other educational institutes to further enhance their teaching and pedagogical skills. Teachers should involve themselves in designing instructional programs with their colleagues.

In short, it is imperative for teachers in any school setting to be highly collegial in all facets of school activities. High involvement in the school activities forces teachers to remain committed to their respective schools.

(iii) <u>Implications and Suggestions for Teacher Educators</u>

The findings of this study also present implications for teacher educators. Teacher educators need to introduce collaborative practice as an explicit component of teaching and an integral part of the teacher education curriculum. The aim has to be for future practitioners to view teaching as a group work rather than as a solitary activity.

Teacher educators must explicitly teach collegial approaches in teacher educational institutes. They must assist teachers in modifying instructions through collaboration and finding commonalities across academic areas. It is further suggested that teacher preparation programs must be revised to focus on understanding the benefits of collegiality for effective teaching and learning. In this same vein, the findings imply that special programs and initiatives must be organized to provide training on effective strategies for team-building.

In short, collegiality must be linked to the norms of continuous improvement and experimentation in which teachers are consistently seeking and assessing better practices in their schools. This study suggests that the focus of increased teacher collegiality is the key to the creation of the highest level of commitment among school personnel.

5.4   Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The current study is delimited to the teachers of urban public secondary schools of Islamabad. The sample used in this investigation included only grade sixth through grade tenth teaching personnel. Therefore, the results of this study would be limited by the perceptions, beliefs, and practices of the sampled teaching group.

The generalizability of the results from a small sampling - teachers from eight high-achieving and nine low-achieving secondary schools located in a single city is recognized as a limitation. Teachers from only a single city of Pakistan are included in this study to limit any effects that might be introduced into the study by the inclusion of wide variations of teachers from other provincial cities.

This current study uses a survey methodology. A limitation of survey research is the willingness of the participants to take part. For this reason, one major source of error in such studies is the non-response (Dooley & Linder, 2003) which might result in non-response bias and limit the external validity of the study. To generalize findings more accurately, a higher response rate is required. The current study minimized this error by choosing the way of collecting data from the respondents by personally contacting them and visiting the research sites rather than sending mail surveys or using online web-based surveys.

Another limitation of this study is the use of a self-reporting instrument. Reliance on self-report data could be a limiting factor. The measures used in this study were based on Likert-type responses which do not allow participants to construct their own responses; nor do they allow the researchers to probe to gain additional insight. To fully understand collegiality among school teachers and teachers' commitment to their workplace and teaching profession, educators and researchers need more elaborative studies. Furthermore, the present study only focuses on teacher- teacher relationships within the school organization, although the concept of collegiality also includes teacher-principal relationships (Barth, 2006; Butt & Retallick, 2002; Little, 2002).

Because teacher commitment might be influenced by a number of other independent variables not controlled for this study, rival explanations of the effects of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational commitment and teacher professional commitment cannot be eliminated. However, in an attempt to help explain these effects, some controlled variables of gender, educational attainment, and years of experience are included in the study. But the number of these variables as relevant individual personal characteristics is also limited. This study focuses on one way effect of collegiality on commitment rather than examining the two-way effect. Higher levels of school commitment among teachers could enhance their interpersonal relationships with peers.

Despite the limitations noted, any associations or impacts unveiled in this study would advance the notion of collegiality as a viable premise for future research. Furthermore, an educational study of this nature would hopefully contribute to the generation of new ideas and perspectives for increasing teacher commitment through enhancing interpersonal relations among school personnel.

5.5   Recommendations for Further Research

The present study outlined the impact of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational and professional commitment among public secondary schools in Islamabad. The collegial relations among teaching staff were considered in this research. However, a more comprehensive approach could be taken by including teacher-principal relationships along with teacher-teacher relationships, as it is also considered as an important aspect of the concept of collegiality. Principals' relations with teachers are also believed to play a vital role in varying teachers' organizational and professional commitment in schools.

Additional studies can be conducted to examine the benefits of staff collegiality instead of just focusing on the commitment factor. Many other factors can be taken into account for a more comprehensive picture. Similarly, additional studies on peer observation could be employed as it was one of the least preferred practices in Pakistani schools. The focus must be on exploring how teachers could

change their practice based on their observations and feedback from their colleagues.

Investigating the factors that encourage and hinder teacher collegiality and the ways of enhancing collegiality among school staff could be explored. This study can be replicated in private schools which are less centralized and where decisions are mostly made by the school administrators and stakeholders rather than the federal or provincial government entities.

The role of the principal must be identified in developing collegial relations among teachers. Principal leadership is regarded as an important factor that plays a vital role in developing, maintaining, and enhancing collegiality among teaching staff (Chance & Segura, 2009; Numeroff & Acker-Hocevar, 2005). It also acts as a major antecedent or predictor of organizational commitment (Dunham et al., 1994; Ketchand & Strawser, 2001; Tatlah, Ali, & Saeed, 2011) and professional commitment (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Coladarci, 1992; Singh & Billingsley, 1998; Sun, 2004).

As indicated by the results of this study, teacher collegiality does not always influence student achievement. This shows that there might be some other factors that are linked with student achievement such as external tutoring, SES of student, or student personal factors. Similarly, it is also argued that teacher performance

and instructional style sometimes act as intervening variables in such studies (Lee, Smith, & Croninger, 1995). It is therefore, suggested that further studies on investigating the effect of collegiality on student achievement must include a more comprehensive model of predictors which could allow for a simultaneous analysis of the effect of other mediating factors.

Furthermore, to support the quantified data, additional qualitative data should be collected and analyzed to determine the presence of true collegiality among teaching staff rather than staff's predisposition to collaboration. In addition, future research might explore if building on collegiality to include teaching practices and instructional and pedagogical styles impact student achievement.

The findings of this study could be expanded by investigating the effect of teacher collegiality on teacher learning and professional growth and identifying whether successful collegial relationships influence teacher performance. More detailed studies, conducted over an extended period of time would determine how collegial activities could enhance and improve teaching and instructional practices. Information generated from these investigations would be helpful in promoting and implementing collegial cultures within schools, making them the standard for advancing teacher and student learning.

5.6 Conclusion

The consistent argument in the literature about the contributions of teacher collegiality for augmenting teachers' commitment towards their organization and profession is strongly supported by this study. However, the research shows that collegiality among teachers does not always ensure student academic performance, yet its impact on school effectiveness cannot be denied.

In Pakistan, collegiality is already embedded in the culture and the presence of interdependence among people is clearly evident in the work environment. In educational organizations, educators need to enhance some of the crucial elements of teacher collegiality such as peer observation, joint planning and assessment, and collaborative curriculum development.

Collegiality in Pakistan acts as a strong hidden factor in retaining individuals to their organizations and professions. Their social grouping develops the strong cohesive bonds which force them to remain in the same organization and make them ready to sacrifice their personal preferences. By getting moral, social, and/or professional assistance from their peers, teachers become more professionally and organizationally committed.

Teachers' commitment towards their respective schools was found to be relatively lower and this might be due to the highly centralized school system and

lack of school-based management in public schools. The current government policies in Pakistan encourage teachers to assume the whole school system as their workplace organization, and therefore, remain acceptable for transferring to any school during their tenure. Teachers' professional commitment in Pakistan is found to be higher than their organizational commitment. Once teachers entered the teaching profession, they started to feel attached and obliged to it. While they strive to get managerial and administrative positions for their career enhancement, they do not abandon teaching as a profession.

Teachers should acknowledge the hidden power of collegiality to enhance their professionalism and school commitment. They must step forward to initiate contacts with their colleagues, value peer observation, involve efficiently in activities regarding curriculum development and instruction, and share resources with each other.

School administrators and principals must recognize that collegial activities among teaching staff are essential for enhancing their school and teaching commitment. However, collegiality should be structured and organized to influence teaching and instructional practices which eventually affects student learning. Principals must arrange opportunities for their teaching staff such as providing them with sufficient time, compatible schedules, and convenient meeting places to collaborate during a regular workday.