

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

The thrust for educators to collaborate has been consistently highlighted as a crucial factor in the processes of educational change and success. The old image of school teachers working independently and all alone in their classrooms with closed doors is no longer relevant today. The need in society to think and work together on issues of critical concern has recently been increased (Austin, 2000; Welch, 1998), shifting the emphasis from individual efforts to group work, from independence to interdependence. It is evident that in every successful school, educators must act as team players, collaborating with their colleagues to meet common organizational goals.

Research has consistently underlined the contribution of strong collegial relationships to school improvement and success (see e.g. Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Gossen & Anderson, 1995; Lieberman, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1990; Telford, 1996) and argued that high levels of collegiality among staff members is one of the characteristics found most often among successful schools. Purkey and Smith's (1983) model of school improvement also suggests that change efforts are long lasting when school culture embraces collaborative planning, shared decision-making, and an atmosphere of collegiality. According to Johnson (1990),

regrouping among teachers to promote collaboration in teaching and new configurations of teacher collegiality constitute integral parts of constructive schools. The key to promoting change in schools is through the establishment of collaborative cultures based on the principles of collegiality, openness, and trust (Lieberman & Miller, 1990), for “schools cannot be improved without people working together” (Lieberman, 1986, p. 6).

At the same time, attention has also been paid to the negative effects caused by the psychological isolation that characterized most schools (Bruffee, 1999; Heider, 2005). This accelerates the adoption of a collegial approach in school culture, ultimately encouraging the practice of teacher collegiality in the teaching profession.

The term collegiality refers to the cooperative relationships among colleagues. However, the exact meaning of the term remains conceptually vague in the literature. According to the *Webster's College Dictionary* (1997), collegiality is defined as “sharing responsibility in a group endeavor” and “cooperative interaction among colleagues” (p. 258). The term ‘collegiality’ is often used interchangeably with ‘collaboration’ in the literature, which according to the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2000, online version) means “to work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort”. As Fielding (1999), argued in his critique of the works of Hargreaves and Little, collegiality and collaboration are terms frequently used interchangeably in

reference to educational practices in schools. Hargreaves (1994) suggests that there is no such thing as 'real' or 'true' collegiality or collaboration, but many forms of them exist, each serving a different purpose and with a different consequence. Hargreaves (1994) notes that the term 'collegiality' is quite vague and imprecise, and therefore, is open to interpretation. He suggests that it is "mostly symbolic; motivating rhetorics in a mythical discourse of change and improvement" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 164). Little (1990) agrees, maintaining that the term "has remained conceptually amorphous and ideologically sanguine" (Little, 1990, p. 509).

Smyth (1991), coming from a critical, labor process perspective, asserts that collegiality is "not simply a matter of teachers conferring with one another" (Smyth, 1991, p. 325) and is "much more than a desirable teacher-to-teacher relationship" (Smyth, 1991, p. 327). Campbell and Southworth (1992) suggest that many people use the term as if it were commonly understood, but that understanding generally only means that teachers should "work together". Their review of collegiality concludes, "Collegiality is a hazy and imprecise notion" (Campbell & Southworth, 1992, p. 65).

Jarzabkowski (2002), however, tries to differentiate between collegiality and collaboration by defining collegiality as teachers' involvement with their peers on any level, be it intellectual, moral, political, social, and/or emotional. According to him, collegiality encompasses both professional and social/emotional

interaction in the workplace while collaboration mostly relates to the professional sphere of relationships. Collaboration is an aspect of the more general concept of collegiality and implies actually working together on a joint project or towards a common goal. It is seen as a subset of collegiality (Jarzabkowski, 2002; Little, 1999).

Teacher commitment, on the other hand, has also attained a lot of attention from scholars and researchers as it is also believed to be an important factor for the future success of education and schools (Huberman, 1993). Teacher commitment is thought to influence teachers' work performance as well as student achievement (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Reyes, 1990). Research has indicated that teachers with high levels of commitment work harder, demonstrate stronger affiliation to their schools, and illustrate more desire to accomplish the goals of teaching than teachers with low levels of commitment. Committed teachers are considered to have stronger psychological ties to their organizations, their professions, their students, or their subject areas (Firestone & Pennell, 1993).

Two broad categories of teacher commitment exist in the literature: organizational commitment, which encompasses identity, involvement, loyalty, and career continuance (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Day et al., 2005; Ingersoll & Alsalam, 1997; Mowday et al., 1979, 1982) and professional commitment, which includes occupational competence and efficacy (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Coladarci, 1992; Day et al., 2005; Firestone & Rosenblum, 1988; Ingersoll &

Alsalam, 1997). Both categories of commitment have been shown to be positively correlated to each other (Somech & Bogler, 2002). Professional commitment involves openness to new methods in teaching and positive teaching behavior (Allinder, 1994; Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997; Guskey, 1988); employees' commitment to their organization is considered as one of the major determinants of organizational effectiveness (Schein, 1970; Steers & Porter, 1975).

The purpose of the current study is to identify the impact of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational commitment and teacher professional commitment in high-achieving and low-achieving public secondary schools of Islamabad. The city of Islamabad is chosen for the current inquiry because policies are initially implemented in Islamabad as it is the capital city of Pakistan. It is also portrayed as the model for the major urban cities in Pakistan. The study also identifies the differences (if any) among teacher collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment in schools categorized as high-achieving and low-achieving based on students' academic results acquired on the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) examination. The literature shows the diversity of results concerning the effects of gender, educational qualifications, and years of experience on teacher collegiality as well as teacher commitment; therefore, these demographic variables are also included in the current investigation to clarify the situation in the Pakistani context.

## 1.2 Background of the Study

The literature review of the last couple of decades shows a considerable interest by both the researchers and practitioners, in investigating the strategies capable of supporting interactions and collaborations among teaching staff. Most specifically, in the last decade, a virtual campaign to break the bounds of privacy in teaching has been witnessed (Little & McLaughlin, 1993). According to Dimmock (1995), teacher culture which emphasizes individualized and privatized methods of work has become strongly ingrained over many decades. Teachers are increasingly being admonished to move away from the traditional norms of isolation and autonomy and to move towards greater collegiality and collaboration (Louis & Kruse, 1995; Marks & Louis, 1997).

Teacher collegiality capitalizes on each other's strengths, stimulates enthusiasm (Inger, 1993) and fosters a sense of shared responsibility among teachers. A wider range of demands can be addressed by using a collaborative approach than by individual, isolated efforts (Gable et al., 2004). Collegiality helps teachers to cope with uncertainty and complexity, respond effectively to rapid change and create a climate that values risk taking and continuous improvement (Hargreaves, 1997). Jarzabkowski (1999) also states that teachers who work together become more flexible in times of change and are better able to cope with new demands that would normally exhaust the energies of teachers working alone.

Collegial activities not only create a sense of belonging among organizational members but it makes the bonds more cohesive. It is seen as an opportunity to involve many individuals in solving the complex educational problems of modern times. On the other hand, schools that do not support collegiality among their staff and allow their teachers to work alone in their classrooms waste human resources and contribute to disenchantment with teaching as a career (Zahorik, 1987).

McLaughlin (1993) states, that collegial communities create such a collaborative and cooperative climate that not only heightens the level of innovation, enthusiasm, and energy but also provides a continuous support for staff professional growth and learning. Hargreaves (1997) further supports this view by mentioning that collegiality helps teachers to create ongoing professional learning cultures. In any organization, especially in educational institutions, there must be a spirit of cooperation among staff members. Such cooperative cultures encourage teachers to contribute their ideas, suggestions, and opinions, and their feedback is considered and responded more appropriately which in turn makes them feel more committed to their organization and to their profession. If cooperation and collaboration exist among staff members, the working climate can provide mental relaxation and a cheerful atmosphere which is a crucial factor in enhancing working efficiency. Teachers enjoy working with their colleagues and are enthusiastic, accepting, and mutually respectful of their colleagues.

Traditionally, schools have been isolating places for teachers to work in where they often feel separated from each other, seldom engaging with their peers in conversation, professional sharing, or problem-solving (Little, 1982; Lortie, 1975). Sociological literature on education has also consistently portrayed teachers as isolated (Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975). Sparks (1983) and Bruffee (1999) further support the view, stating that collegial cooperation among educators is not a common practice in most educational organizations. Teachers' extreme busy schedules, course loads, and additional managerial duties make it difficult for them to make the time to talk or work together. Teachers need opportunities to collaborate with each other to best serve their students, to make their work more meaningful, and to transform schooling in a way that keeps it vibrant and relevant (Dillon, 2003).

The conception that educators perform better when working together professionally is supported by organizational theory models which emerged earlier in the corporate sector (see e.g., Covey, 1991; Lawler, 1986; Senge, 1990). Such conceptions view authentic teamwork as an essential characteristic of the successful organization as its members interact regularly to share their ideas and expertise and develop common understanding of organizational goals and the means to their attainment (Leonard & Leonard, 2003).

More than three decades ago, Lortie (1975) reported that teachers worked in circumstances that placed them physically and intellectually separate from their

colleagues and that there was limited professional sharing among them. He claimed that despite the recognized value of collegial sharing among teachers, schools continued to emphasize teacher autonomy more than collaboration and for decades, the “cellular organization” of schools has persisted, where teachers expect to teach students without assistance from colleagues and are assigned specific areas of responsibility. Indications of individualistic and isolationist orientations were also evident in Goodlad’s (1984) work, *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future* where he reflected upon the evidence that teachers tended to interact little either within or among schools, a circumstance further noted by Flinders (1988) and Rosenholtz (1989).

Even before 1980, the concept of collegiality started its development from teacher interaction and norms of collaboration. Authors such as Armor et al. (1976) and Rutter et al. (1979) considered teaching as a collective action within the collaborative settings of effective schools to sustain teacher growth and learning and classroom success. In addition, authors such as Bishop (1977) and Bridges and Halliman (1978), concluded that in comparison with their isolated counterparts, teachers committed to the norms of collaboration interact more about professional matters and interact with a greater number of colleagues (Rosenholtz et al., 1986).

After 1980, Little’s work (1982, 1983), added to the concept of “collegiality” and “norms of collegiality” (Little, 1982, p. 325) and concluded that:

In successful and effective schools, teachers value and participate in norms of collegiality and continuous improvement; and they persuade a greater range of professional interactions with fellow teachers and administrators, including talk about instruction, structured observation, and shared planning or preparation.

Organizational commitment, on the other hand, has also been identified as an important factor in determining and influencing organizational outcomes and success. It is a concept that seeks to capture the nature of the attachments formed by individuals to their employing organizations (Ketchand & Strawser, 2001). Employees' commitment to the workplace is considered as a hallmark of organizational success. The concept of organizational commitment was initiated in the early 1950s. Most of the earlier research on organizational commitment was focused on defining the concept, identifying the factors that caused its formation among individuals and how it influenced organizational consequences after being formed.

However, the recent research in the organizational psychology and organizational behavior literature has examined organizational commitment through two popular approaches, commitment-related attitudes and commitment-related behaviors. Most of the recent research on organizational commitment is more focused on identifying the existence of its multiple dimensions and finding the relationships of these dimensions and sub-dimensions with important

antecedents, correlates, and consequences.

Professional commitment which refers to the attachment of individuals to their profession is, however, a relatively new and less researched concept. It has only started its recognition in the late 1980s. Most of the earlier work on professional commitment was based on organizational commitment studies. An increased attention to professional commitment by scholars and researchers might be attributed to the significant changes in important characteristics of the workforce. With an increase in mergers, acquisitions, and layoffs (Bremner et al., 1991), many individuals are unable to depend on a single organization to sustain their entire career (Nussbaum, 1991). Higher education levels have also influenced individuals' interest to their professions rather than their organizations (Burris, 1983). Employees are now thought to be less dependent upon their employing organizations and are more willing to keep their attachment to their occupation, career, and/or profession (Cohen, 2007).

Focusing on the link between teacher collegiality and teacher organizational and professional commitment, many studies have indicated that in schools where teachers work together to plan school improvement, select instructional methods and activities, and plan teacher professional development and training, teachers tend to be more committed to their profession as well as their organization (Barth, 1990; Hausman & Goldring, 2001; Reyes, 1992; Singh & Billingsley, 1998). Hargreaves (1997) also supports the view that collegiality among teaching

personnel helps them to better develop higher commitment levels.

Talbert and McLaughlin (1994) in their study found that collegiality among school teachers stimulate their professionalism and their commitment. Troncoso-Skidmore (2007) claims that both professional and organizational commitment can be nurtured and developed in a collegial school culture. The research literature on teacher culture has identified organizational and professional commitment as two important variables that are most frequently influenced by the variations in the levels of collegiality among teaching staff members. More importantly, keeping teachers in their profession and committed to their organization is also vital to maintaining standards and improving school performance specifically in terms of student achievement.

However, in the case of Pakistan, teacher collegiality is a relatively less studied topic. Strong collegial relationships among teaching staff members are believed to be still rare and until recently have not received much attention. Even organizational and professional commitment among Pakistani school teachers is less focused by the educational researchers. The literature review shows a limited number of studies conducted in Pakistan on teachers' collegial relationships as well as on teachers' commitment towards their school and/or teaching profession.

### **1.2.1 Background Context of Pakistan Educational System**

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan emerged as an independent state on August 14, 1947, as a result of the partition of the Indian sub-continent with the departure of the British as the colonial power. Geographically, Pakistan is situated in southern Asia, covering an area of 796,096 square km. It consists of four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, besides the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Other than this, there is a federal territory, Islamabad, the capital of the country.

Pakistan, the world's sixth largest country is estimated to have a population of 164 million of which, one half is below the age of 18 years. Nearly 97% of the Pakistanis are Muslims. Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and English is the official language.

The educational system of Pakistan is among the least-developed in the world. It was based on the British colonial educational system, which was elitist and was meant to educate only a small portion of the population in order to run the government. Despite many changes since independence, the Pakistani educational system has still retained its colonial elitist character, a factor preventing the eradication of illiteracy.

It is a highly centralized system where the Ministry of Education (MOE) is in charge of coordinating all the institutions involved in academic and technical education, up to the intermediate level. According to the latest survey (2004-2005) by the MOE, Pakistan has a total of 230,519 educational institutes all over the country with a student enrollment of 31,262,261 and total teacher population of 1,189,870 (AEPAM, 2004-2005).

Even though the education system has expanded greatly, the adult literacy rate is still very low. It went up from 45% in 2000 to 54% in 2006, but Pakistan still has one of the lowest adult literacy rates in the world. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan (2004-05), the present (2004) projected adult literacy rate is 54% (male: 66.25% and female: 41.75%). However, UNDP Human Development Report (2007-2008) mentions that Pakistan's adult literacy rate (age 15 and above, 2005) is 49.9% (male: 63% and female: 36%).

School enrollment has increased, from 19% of those aged 6-23 years old in 1980 to 24% in 1990. But along with that the primary school dropout rates remained fairly consistent. In 2001, only 45.3% of the children who were enrolled in grade one continued till grade five. Nearly 49% of the boys and 40% of the girls made it to the fifth grade (Shah et al., 2005). The middle school dropout rates in 1993 were 7% for boys and 15% for girls. The pupil-teacher ratio at the primary level was estimated to be 48.43 to 1 in 1999 (MOE, Pakistan).

There are two systems of education prevalent in Pakistan: the traditional religion-based education system and the modern formal education system which had started under the British colonial rule and continued after the country's independence. Both systems are financed by the Ministry of Education, although the government scrutiny of standards in the modern education sector is closer than for the religious schools.

The formal educational system in Pakistan comprises the following five stages: primary (grade one through five), applicable to children from 5-9 years old; middle (grade six through eight), for children of age 10-12; high (grade nine and ten, leading to the Secondary School Certificate (SSC), also called a 'matriculation' stage), for children of 13 and 14 years old; intermediate (grade eleven and twelve, leading to a Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC)); and university programs leading to graduate and advanced degrees like baccalaureate, professional, and master's and doctorate degrees. The SSC and the HSSC examinations are conducted by the Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education. The formal structure of education system is presented in Appendix A.

The medium of instruction is Urdu at elementary and secondary level in public schools, but at higher education level both English and Urdu are used as a medium of instruction and assessment. Although primary education is not compulsory, it is free throughout the country.

As compared to other sectors, limited resources have been allocated to the educational sector in Pakistan which indicates that education has remained a low priority. On the average, 2.2% of GNP (8% of national budget) is allocated for education which is very low as compared to other developing countries or the needs of the education sector. UNESCO recommends at least 4% of GNP (or 20% of the national budget) for education in developing countries such as Pakistan. According to the HRCP Annual Report (2005), Pakistan remains among the 12 countries of the world that spend less than two percent of their GDP on education. Due to the lack of financial resources allocated for the educational sector, the budget for teacher education and training is also quite nominal.

The system needs massive investment to increase the number of educational institutions and to train and recruit an adequate number of educators at all levels but the government has limited financial resources. In short, the educational system of Pakistan has been unable to meet the educational requirements of the Pakistanis.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Teachers in Pakistan's public educational sector are still struggling in isolation to educate large groups of learners and have fewer resources to help them (Riaz, 2008; Rizvi & Elliot, 2005). Teachers exhibit poor morale and less committed behavior resulting in high absenteeism, dissatisfaction, and high levels

of burnout (Warwick & Reimers, 1995). According to the EFA 2000 Country Assessment Report for Pakistan, the majority of teachers in the public sector are neither motivated nor committed to the teaching profession. This issue was also highlighted by the representatives from the Ministry of Education, educational researchers, and teachers during a National Conference on Teacher Education held in December 2004 in Islamabad.

To make matters worse, the concept of providing in-service training to the working teaching corps is almost non-existent in the Pakistani school system. There is no institutionalized arrangement for providing regular on-the-job training. Teachers in Pakistan get their training in teaching only once in a lifetime, that is, at the start of their career. The situation is changing however, but its pace is still very low which is evident from the fact that the National Education Policy (1998-2010) has highlighted the importance of teacher in-service training and has stated that both formal and non-formal means shall be used to provide increased opportunities for in-service professional growth and learning to the working teachers, preferably at least once in five years.

The unavailability of in-service teacher education in Pakistan is due to the limited resources allocated for the educational sector. In such a situation, the only remedy is to develop the ability in teachers to take control of their own learning in order to maximize its full potential and this can be best done by developing collegial culture in school settings. As Jarzabkowski (2003) mentioned, that

collegiality is much more important for those teachers who do not have the opportunities for continuous professional growth and learning. Many other educators and researchers have also advocated methods of teacher growth and enhancement that are based on continuous collegial interaction and support (Hargreaves, 1988; Little, 1982; Nias et al., 1989; Shachar & Shmuelovitz, 1997; Smylie, 1988).

Furthermore, recent educational policies in Pakistan are recommending school-based education reforms as a strategy for decentralization. The reform in education in Pakistan is to dismantle the highly centralized education system and create a devolved system of education ensuring significant degree of institutional autonomy (Memon, 2003). As a result most of the decision-making on school improvement would be done at the individual school level. This kind of initiative requires a highly collegial school culture where teachers are involved in healthy collaborative activities. Without effective collegiality among staff members, any attempt to change the status quo would be almost impossible. Therefore, the study of teacher collegiality in the Pakistani context becomes more important under such circumstances.

Collegiality is also linked to increased teacher commitment by many educational researchers (see e.g. Barth, 1999; Rosenholtz & Smylie, 1984; Singh & Billingsley, 1998; Troncoso-Skidmore, 2007). Therefore, the current study identifies whether collegiality among school teachers is a viable factor in

influencing their commitment levels in Pakistan.

Collegiality among school staff is although a hot topic in recent educational research and is often advocated by many educational researchers, yet its effects are less frequently investigated (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007). Jarzabkowski (2003) claims that most of the research studies on teacher collegiality have investigated its advantages and benefits for the students rather than for teachers. More specifically, the researchers have focused a strong linkage between teachers' collegial practices and student learning outcomes; the social benefits of teacher collegiality for teachers themselves is often neglected (Jarzabkowski, 2002). Little (1990) suggests that the benefits to students from teacher collegiality are not totally convincing. However, Little (1990) does suggest that there are practical benefits for teachers and the school community in general.

On the other hand, Goddard et al. (2007), upon reviewing the literature on teacher collegiality and collaboration stated that many research studies have focused on finding the positive outcomes of collegiality for teachers rather than for students. They reported a paucity of research investigating the extent to which teachers' collaborative school improvement practices are related to student academic achievement. Other researchers (e.g., Abel, 2005; Baron, 2005; Fulton et al., 2005) have also supported similar views saying that a great deal of the evidence of success for collegial models relates to teacher efficacy or anecdotal

reports on school improvement initiatives; few directly link teacher collegial practices to measurable improvements in students' academic achievement. The current study, therefore, intends to include both the factors simultaneously; thereby investigating the impact of teacher collegiality on teacher commitment, as well as its link with student academic achievement.

The studies that have reported positive outcomes of collegiality for teachers, mostly include more positive attitudes toward teaching (Brownell et al., 1997), enhanced job satisfaction (Woods & Weasmer, 2002), improved efficacy (Shachar & Shmuelewitz, 1997), high morale and professional development (Wasley et al., 2000), reduced staff turnover (Jarzabkowski, 2003), assistance to new and beginning teachers (Little, 1990; Nias, 1998), and increments in the levels of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Little has been done, however, to test the prediction that teacher collegiality is associated with increased organizational and professional commitment. Although these attributes are regarded as essential for successful and effective schools, still little attention is given to them in the educational research.

A few studies in the literature that have looked at the association between teacher collaboration and commitment showed contradictory results making the argument more debatable. For example, some researchers (Graham, 1996; Reyes & Fuller, 1995; Singh & Billingsley, 1998) found that teacher collaboration (defined as two or more teachers working together on a task) was associated with

higher levels of teacher commitment while on the other hand, Rosenholtz (1989) found no association between commitment and collaboration. Moreover, using the same set of data, but different definitions of teacher collaboration, Reyes (1992) found a strong association between collaboration and commitment, while Rutter and Jacobson (1986) reported a weak association between the same variables.

For the purpose of this study, both types of commitment that is commitment towards organization and commitment towards profession are focused. The reason behind it is the assumption that for educated employees like teachers, professional and career goals are much more important. These people, therefore, are less likely to depend upon their employer or organization and are more willing to change organizations whenever their personal and professional expectations are not met. For such employees, it is their commitment to the profession that will affect their behavior rather than their commitment to the organization (Cohen, 2007). For most of the researchers and scholars, professional commitment has been regarded as a concept separate from and sometimes in conflict with organizational commitment. Therefore, it is required to study both types of commitment simultaneously.

Teacher collegiality is also hypothesized to have a strong association with student achievement. The literature review of the last couple of decades supports the idea that student achievement increases significantly when teachers work together as a team (Lee & Smith, 1996). The search for school and teacher traits

that enhance student performance and academic achievement provided empirical proof that teacher collegiality is related to student achievement in secondary education (Louis & Marks, 1998). Moreover, Little (1983) also associated the focus of collegial relationships in schools with student achievement. However, many years later when Little (2006) performed a new literature review on teacher collegiality, she pointed out the results of Lee and Smith (1995) that “found measures of staff cooperation to be unrelated to student achievement, even though a spirit of cooperation is no doubt desirable from a workplace perspective” (Lee & Smith, 1995, p. 40).

Furthermore, Louis and Marks (1998) from their research found that though collegiality was related strongly with the social support for achievement and authentic pedagogy it had no direct effect on student achievement. Similarly, the research conducted by Supovitz (2002) also supports the view that collegiality cannot be linked directly to improved student achievement. Supovitz and Christman (2003) stated that the link between greater teacher collegiality and improved student academic achievement was not as direct as initially believed. Interventions designed to improve teamwork and communication among teachers, fostering sharing of best practices, and strengthening teacher relationships did not necessarily translate into more effective teaching and better student performance. Findings of the research conducted by Bolam and his colleagues (2005), however, demonstrated a positive, though weak link between collegiality and pupil outcomes.

The above arguments show a clear need for further clarification about the impact of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational commitment and teacher professional commitment as well as its link with student academic achievement which are the basic aims of the current study.

The literature review shows that most of the studies on teacher collegiality are conducted in the United States and Australia. The findings of these studies cannot be generalized to the Pakistani situation, neither their implications could be drawn on Pakistan's educational institutions because of the entirely different cultural and educational contexts. Most of the teachers in Pakistan still work in isolation and school managements do not give much importance to healthy collegial relationships among teaching staff. School leaders must be aware of the significance of effective collegiality in their respective schools and its effects on their staff and school outcomes. Teacher professional developmental and training programs in developing countries such as Pakistan still do not focus much on increasing and nourishing teachers' attitudes and behavior towards effective teamwork.

More importantly, the influence of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational commitment and teacher professional commitment and its link with student academic achievement has yet to be studied in the Pakistani context. None of the studies on the similar topic has ever been conducted in Pakistan or

elsewhere. In the case of Pakistan, the only single study found in the literature on effective schools, conducted by Farah and colleagues (1996) focusing on rural public primary schools of all four major provinces highlighted teacher collegiality to be one major antecedent of school performance. Farah et al. (1996) claimed that high teacher collegiality was one of the recurring elements found in the high-performing schools of their study. The current study, however, focused on schools in urban settings as teacher collegiality is regarded as much more significant for urban schools as these schools face more challenges and are less being studied (Peterson & Brietzke, 1994).

The main focus of this study was to verify the research theories about positive impact of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational commitment and teacher professional commitment (Graham, 1996; Reyes, 1992; Reyes & Fuller, 1995; Singh & Billingsley, 1998) and its relationship with student academic achievement (Erb, 1997; Goddard et al., 2007; Inger, 1993; Louis & Marks, 1998; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Rosenholtz, 1989) in the Pakistani context as has been claimed in the developed world. For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that teacher collegiality did affect organizational and professional commitment of the teaching staff and would be positively linked to student academic achievement.

Another feature prominently observed in the literature on teacher professional collegiality is that most of the research studies have often been conducted in

primary/elementary schools (Little, 1981; Rosenholtz, 1989; Zahorik, 1987) even though the importance of collegiality is much more evident in the secondary school organizations, as they are more complex organizations where teachers are often more involved with a subgroup in the school, such as a subject-area department as compared to the primary or elementary schools (Legters, 1999). In secondary schools, teachers may collaborate closely with a small number of colleagues, but have very little to do with faculty working in other departments. Collegiality among secondary school teachers is also regarded as more beneficial as these teachers have little control over the whole task of educating students and their work is often fractionalized, with little coordination across subject areas and little knowledge and responsibility for comprehensive student learning (Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984).

Furthermore, review of literature also suggests that most of the studies on teacher collegiality have used the single or multiple case study approach to explore the phenomenon rather than finding its impact on other variables considered important for school improvement and teacher enhancement. Wheelan and Tilin (1999) assume that these case studies are powerful in helping to define the characteristics of effective faculty teamwork but they mostly relied on general observations and discussions with staff to formulate conclusions. No quantifiable measure of collegiality was explored. Moreover, the generalizability of these studies' findings is also limited.

The current study therefore, uses a quantitative methodology where survey is the major source of data collection. Data were collected from teachers teaching in high-achieving and low-achieving (including both male and female) public secondary schools only located in the federal capital district of Islamabad. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). SEM is considered as a powerful tool which effectively deals with latent variables such as teacher collegiality and teacher commitment.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

Research questions to be addressed in this study were:

1. What is the impact of teacher collegiality on (a) teacher organizational commitment; and (b) teacher professional commitment among high-achieving public secondary schools of Islamabad?
2. What is the impact of teacher collegiality on (a) teacher organizational commitment; and (b) teacher professional commitment among low-achieving public secondary schools of Islamabad?
3. What are the differences in teacher collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment between high-achieving and low-

achieving public secondary school teachers in Islamabad?

4. What are the effects of the selected demographic variables (gender, educational attainment, and professional experience) on (a) teacher collegiality; (b) organizational commitment; and (c) professional commitment among public secondary school teachers in Islamabad?

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the impact of teachers' collegiality on their organizational commitment and professional commitment in high-achieving and low-achieving public secondary schools of Islamabad. The study also determined if the impact of teacher collegiality on teacher organizational commitment and teacher professional commitment was equivalent across the two groups (i.e., high-achieving school teachers versus low-achieving school teachers). The study further comparatively identified the differences in teacher collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment between high-achieving and low-achieving secondary schools. The effects of demographic variables such as gender, educational attainment, and professional experience on teacher collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment were also examined.

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

Garmston and Wellman (2003) warned that collaboration and collegiality in any organization “doesn’t happen by chance; it needs to be structured, taught, and learned” (Garmston & Wellman, 2003, p. 8). They pointed out that laying the groundwork for a collaborative and collegial culture is essential for school leaders, “who realize that a collection of superstar teachers working in isolation cannot produce the same results as interdependent colleagues who share and develop professional practices together” (Garmston & Wellman, 2003, p. 8). This issue was further highlighted by Watson and Fullan (1992) who state that strong collaborations are carefully planned rather than taking place by accident.

Scott and Smith (1987) argued that the process of collegiality is likely to work only when a significant number of teaching personnel at a specific school becomes convinced that it will actually lead to improved teaching and learning. Its development takes conscious care (Donaldson, 2001). According to Graves (2001), “strong, emotionally connected professional relationships are such important energy givers that teachers have to take matters into their own hands to establish these relationships and to advance existing relationships” (Graves, 2001, p. 12).

Collegiality among teaching staff is much more important for those organizations where members are not provided with the opportunities of

continuous professional growth and development as in the case of Pakistan. Therefore, this study becomes more significant for the Pakistani educational context, more specifically for the public secondary schools where teachers' enthusiasm and commitment is much more needed as the academic results at this level are significant for students in determining their mainstream career in higher secondary schooling or college.

Research on teacher collegiality in other countries has shown that there are certain aspects of the staff interpersonal relationships which not only affect the commitment levels of teaching staff but also determine the school quality. It is hoped that this study would provide some evidence to support the view that teacher collegiality may indeed impact individuals' levels of commitment to their organizations and profession. The results of the study would enable teaching staff to better develop relations with their colleagues and build strong collegial climate in their respective organizations.

The current research is apparently the first attempt to study teacher collegiality and its effects on teacher organizational commitment and teacher professional commitment in the Pakistani context. Therefore, the findings of this study could provide some evidence and empirical data for future research on this particular topic. This study in attempting to identify teachers' perceptions regarding their collegiality might yield useful information about the educational environments of the sampled schools and their bearing on academic staff

commitment. The resulting information could be used for further research to improve collegial environments with a view to maximizing organizational outcomes. More importantly, if the central hypothesis of the study would be supported, school administrators, educators, educational leaders, and policy makers might begin to attach more significance to teacher interpersonal relationships and regard them as an alterable variable highly affecting teacher commitment levels.

The current study will add to the body of research, supporting the link (if any) among the study variables. The study will also explore the impact of demographic variables such as gender, educational qualification, and professional experience on teacher collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. The relationships of the teacher personal variables of gender, educational attainment, and professional experience with teacher collegiality and commitment may provide useful information that would be of value to the school administration.

A study of collegiality among teaching staff is necessary in an era of continuous school improvement. It is also important because the unprecedented explosion of new knowledge and high technology necessitates teachers' continuous growth and learning and sharing of professional expertise. This study will provide adequate knowledge for understanding the importance of collegiality among public secondary school teachers for enhancing their commitment levels.

District administrators, school principals, teachers, policy makers, and other educational researchers could identify the role of collegial cultures in developing school systems as coherent learning organizations for both students and teachers.

Another significance of the current study is that information gathered for it would enable the education departments as well as the policy makers to address the issues of eliminating isolation and fostering teacher collegiality in public secondary schools of Pakistan. The relevant authorities would be able to outline strategies to ensure the building and enhancement of strong and healthy collaborative teacher culture in educational organizations. It is hoped that findings from this study would further dialogue and research about ways to develop strong collegiality among school staff.

The study could help teachers to understand the need for effective collegiality in enhancing their professionalism as well as their attachment to the organization. This study is intended to provide information that would assist teachers in their efforts to work within a collegial culture. School leaders might discover methods of promoting collegial structures within their own school community, thus enhancing school improvement efforts. Administrators, principals, and teachers can plan interventions to prevent isolation and school officials can provide greater opportunities and enough time to teaching staff in order to assist them in enhancing their interpersonal relationships within the school setting.

This study will also provide useful feedback to the teacher training institutes to review their programs and teaching curriculum so as to produce a more effective, cooperative, and congenial teaching corps. The current research could provide adequate knowledge to teacher educators and teacher training planners to emphasize on staff collegial activities, collaborative and cooperative behavior, and teamwork skills among school teachers in order to build a productive atmosphere in educational institutions.

In short, teacher collegiality and teacher organizational and professional commitment might be viewed as assumed requisite for increasing the effectiveness of the educational enterprise, and therefore, would be of interest to educators, educational administrators, and researchers.

## **1.7 Operational Definitions of Important Terms**

To provide a clear understanding of how the terms are used throughout this study, the relevant terms are defined below.

**1.7.1 Teacher Collegiality:** For the purpose of this study, teacher collegiality is defined and conceptualized as the presence of the following seven specific teacher behaviors in schools:

- Teachers in school *demonstrate mutual support and trust*.
- Teachers in school *observe each other* engage in the practice of teaching.

- Teachers in school engage together in *planning and assessing* their practices.
- Teachers in school *share ideas and expertise* with each other.
- Teachers in school *teach each other* the art of teaching and learning.
- Teachers in school *develop curriculum* together.
- Teachers in school *share resources* with each other like lesson plans, work sheets, educational books and so forth.

**1.7.2 Organizational Commitment:** For the purpose of this study, organizational commitment as defined by Meyer and Allen (1991) will be used as a framework/guide in the data collection process and data analysis. Meyer and Allen (1991) describe organizational commitment as a multi-dimensional, psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization, and has significance for his/her decision to continue membership in the organization. They defined organizational commitment as the presence of three major components:

- Affective organizational commitment: refers to an individual's attachment to, identification with, and involvement within the respective organization.
- Continuance organizational commitment: refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization.
- Normative organizational commitment: refers to a feeling of obligation to continue membership with the organization.

**1.7.3 Organization:** For the purpose of this study, the organization refers to the public secondary school in Islamabad, Pakistan.

**1.7.4 Professional Commitment:** For the purpose of this study, professional commitment as defined by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) will be used as a framework/guide in the data collection process and data analysis. Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) defined professional commitment (they used the equivalent term: occupational commitment) as the presence of three distinct components:

- Affective professional commitment: refers to identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to the profession.
- Continuance professional commitment: refers to commitment based on the employee's recognition of the costs associated with leaving their profession.
- Normative professional commitment: refers to commitment based on a sense of obligation to the profession.

**1.7.5 Profession:** For the purpose of this study, the profession refers to teaching.

**1.7.6 Public Secondary Schools in Pakistan:** For the purpose of this study, public secondary schools in Pakistan refer to the institutions (managed and financed by the provincial governments or local bodies) where students who have passed the Primary School Examination are prepared for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination/matriculation conducted by the Board at the end of

the high school stage. Such schools include grade 6th through grade 10th, leading to the Intermediate level. Secondary schools in Pakistan are sometimes categorized as middle schools (Grades 6-8) and high schools (Grades 9-10), but they are often held in the same building and are under the same management; therefore, are not considered as separate physical or administrative entities.

**1.7.7 Teachers:** For the purpose of this study, teachers refer to both male and female teaching personnel of grade sixth through grade tenth of public secondary schools of the federal capital district of Islamabad.

**1.7.8 High-Achieving School:** A school in which 100% of the students had passed the SSC Annual examination on the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) and more than 50% of the students had achieved either A+ or A grade. The results were checked for the 2009 SSC Annual examination and then rechecked for the previous school year that is 2008.

**1.7.9 Low-Achieving School:** A school in which (1) at least 20% of the students could not pass the SSC Annual examination on the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) by either getting compartment (failing in one or more subjects) or had completely failed, and (2) 50% of the passing students either got C grade or less than C grade. The results were checked for the 2009 SSC Annual examination

and then rechecked for the previous school year that is 2008.

## **1.8 Organization of the Thesis**

This chapter is divided into seven sections. Initially, a brief introduction is offered which is followed by the background of the study. The problem statement is explored in detail in the third section. The research questions and the purpose of the study are presented in the fourth and fifth section respectively. The sixth section illustrates the importance of the study. Lastly, the operational definitions of the key terms are described.

The remainder of the study is organized in the following manner: Chapter II, titled 'Review of Related Literature' portrays a review of the literature related to teacher collegiality, organizational commitment, and professional commitment. Chapter III, entitled 'Methodology' presents the research framework and delineates the design of the study, which includes the data collection procedures, sample and participant selection, as well as instrumentation; Chapter IV, 'Analysis of Data' discusses the analyses and interpretations of the collected data; and Chapter V, titled 'Summary, Implications, and Conclusion' presents the summary of the major findings, discussion of results, limitations of the study, theoretical and practical implications, and recommendations for further research.