

## Teacher Collaboration: Student's Achievement and Professional Development in Libyan Higher Education

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### Abstract:

This research paper examines teacher collaboration in relation to student achievement and professional development in higher education in Libya. Defined as shared planning, instructional strategies, and reflective practices among educators, teacher collaboration is recognized as a crucial factor in improving educational outcomes. A questionnaire was distributed to a selection of English language teachers, with 50 respondents participating. Through a review of relevant literature and analysis of the collected data, the study highlights the importance of structured collaboration in creating an effective learning environment and fostering continuous professional growth. Findings also indicate that well-supported teacher collaboration can significantly enhance both student learning and teacher efficacy, advocating for its integration into educational practices to promote comprehensive improvements in education.

### ملخص:

تناول هذه الورقة البحثية التعاون بين المعلمين فيما يتعلق بإنجاز الطلاب والتطوير المهني في التعليم العالي في ليبيا. ويُعرّف التعاون بين المعلمين بأنه التخطيط المشترك، والاستراتيجيات التعليمية، والممارسات التأملية بين المعلمين، ويُعترف به كعامل حاسم في تحسين النتائج التعليمية. وقد تم توزيع استبيان على مجموعة مختارة من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية، حيث شارك فيه 50 معلماً. ومن خلال مراجعة الدراسات السابقة ذات الصلة وتحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها، تسلط الدراسة الضوء على أهمية التعاون المنظم في خلق بيئة تعليمية فعالة وتعزيز النمو المهني المستمر. وتشير النتائج أيضاً إلى أن التعاون المدعوم جيداً بين المعلمين يمكن أن يعزز بشكل كبير كل من تعلم الطلاب وفعالية المعلمين، مما يدعو إلى دمجها في الممارسات التعليمية لتعزيز التحسينات الشاملة في التعليم.

**Keywords:** linking teacher collaboration with student achievement, linking teacher collaboration with professional development.

### 1-Introduction

Teacher collaboration has increasingly been recognized as an essential element in enhancing both student achievement and professional development within educational settings. The concept of collaborative practice among educators involves shared planning, co-teaching, and participation in professional learning communities, all of which contribute to improved instructional effectiveness and enriched educational experiences (Vangrieken et al., 2015). This leads to collective efforts that can lead to more innovative teaching practices and a more coherent curriculum, ultimately benefiting student outcomes (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). Moreover, educators may share their knowledge to work on problem-solving, exchange of knowledge and resources. For example, collaboration allows teachers to influence each other's strengths, address individual student's needs more

comprehensively. Educators can work together, share knowledge and promote continuous improvement and professional growth. The collaborative supports the academic community, leading to enriched learning experiences and better outcomes for students (Vescio, Ross, and Adams, 2008). The more teachers collaborate, the more they are able to converse teaching and learning knowledge to improve their instruction (Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran, 2007). In order to understand this research, the following section highlights the link between teacher collaboration and students' achievement.

## **2- Linking Teacher Collaboration with Student Achievement**

Significantly, linking teacher collaboration with student's achievement can enhance students' learning outcomes. For example, teachers can engage in joint planning, share instructional strategies which lead to create a more effective learning environment. Collaboration among teachers promotes a more consistent and engaging learning environment that is crucial for student success (Johnson et al., 2014). This collaboration directly impacts students' performance as studies show that teacher collaboration is positively correlated with increased students' achievement, as it fosters a more dynamic and responsive educational setting (Vescio, Ross, and Adams, 2008; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Moolenaar et al, 2012). Furthermore, teacher collaboration supports a culture of continuous improvement, where educators are better equipped to address diverse student's needs and adapt their teaching strategies accordingly (Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran, 2007). Hattie (2009) also supports this connection, noting that collaboration among teachers contributes significantly to student success by enhancing the overall effectiveness of teaching. Furthermore, McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) state that strong collaborative cultures witness substantial gains in student achievement, as collective efforts to improve instruction directly benefit students. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) indicate that collaborative professional development can lead to significant gains in student achievement by providing educators with ongoing support and opportunities for growth. Moreover, collaboration among teachers promotes a more consistent and engaging learning environment, which is crucial for student success (Johnson et al., 2014).

The above studies collectively confirm that teacher collaboration is a key factor in increasing students' achievement and highlight the value of developing collaborative environments in higher education. The next section provides an over view about the relationship between teacher collaboration and professional development.

## **3-Linking Teacher Collaboration with Professional Development**

According to Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017), professional development that includes opportunities for teachers to work together, engage in reflective practice, and share insights is more likely to lead to meaningful improvements in teaching. Teachers can develop their teaching skills and strategies that are directly applicable in their classrooms. Engaging in collaborative activities allows teachers to share expertise, reflect on their practices, and continuously improve their skills (DuFour et al., 2016). This process is not only helps in refining teaching techniques but also enhances job satisfaction and reduces

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feelings of isolation among teachers (Ronfeldt et al., 2015). Collaboration among teachers helps to build a community of practice where educators collectively engage in problem-solving and address challenges. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) describe this concept, emphasizing that such communities facilitate knowledge sharing and professional growth. Teachers who are part of a collaborative network are better equipped to implement and adapt instructional strategies, leading to improved educational outcomes. Hattie (2009) also states that teacher collaboration has a positive effect on the quality of teaching which allows teachers to address student needs. Joyce and Showers (2002) highlight that professional development that includes follow-up support and opportunities for collaborative practice is more effective in changing teaching behaviors and improving student learning. This ongoing process ensures that new strategies are effectively integrated into teaching practices.

By working together, teachers not only share effective practices but also engage in reflective discussions that promote continuous learning and skill enhancement. This common professional growth helps reduce feelings of isolation, fosters a supportive work environment, and enhances overall job satisfaction. Consequently, teacher collaboration contributes to a more dynamic and responsive educational practice.

In reviewing the literature, it becomes obvious that the relationship between teacher collaboration, student achievement, and professional development is critically important. Prior studies consistently highlight that collaborative practices among educators are linked to improved student outcomes and enhanced professional growth (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008; Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran, 2007). These findings emphasize the significance of fostering collaborative environments within higher education institutions. This research builds on existing knowledge by exploring the teacher collaboration in relation to student's achievement and professional development which teacher collaboration influences student success and faculty development, offering new insights and practical implications for enhancing educational practices. By examining into this relationship, this study contributes valuable perspectives that align with and expand upon previous findings, reinforcing the importance of collaborative approaches in advancing both academic achievement and professional excellence.

#### **4-Methodology**

The quantitative method was appropriate to provide a comprehensive understanding of this study. The questionnaire was designed to address key areas that are related to teacher collaboration influences student achievement and professional development, offering valuable insights for enhancing educational practices in higher education.

#### **5-Participants**

The target population included Libyan faculty members from various English language departments within higher education institutions. The goal was to include a representative sample of educators to capture a broad range of experiences and perspectives.

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## 6-Data Collection Procedure

Faculty members received an invitation via email with a link to the survey, along with a brief introduction outlining the purpose of the study and the estimated time required to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed electronically online and statistics were used to summarize responses and identify patterns. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships between the extent of collaboration and student achievements, as well as between collaboration and professional development.

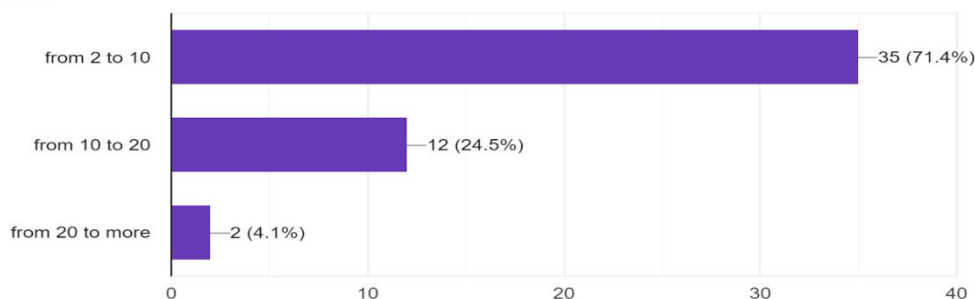
## 7- Data Analysis and Discussion

The descriptive statistics of the data from the questionnaires would be presented using a chart, with a brief description and discussion provided for each one. The process of analysis and discussion is conducted by presenting aspects of the data that have a relationship to the research. The findings of this research revealed important points relating to the teachers' collaboration with their own professional development and students' achievements in higher education.

### 7.1 Teacher's Experience

The below chart shows that the majority with moderate experience (71%) of teachers have between 2 to 10 years of teaching experience. This suggests that a significant helping of the faculty is relatively experienced but not yet at the most senior levels. (24% )of teachers have 10 to 20 years of experience. This group likely possesses a wealth of knowledge and expertise, which can contribute positively to instructional quality. Only (4%) of teachers have 20 years or more of experience. This indicates a smaller representation of highly experienced educators, which may affect the overall mentorship and leadership dynamics within the faculty.

**Char1: teaching experience**



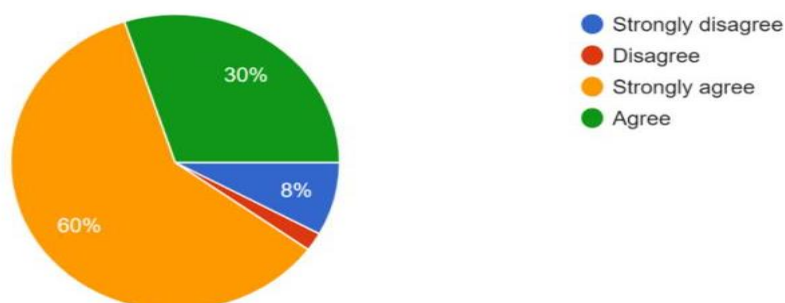
### 7.2 Important of Collaboration

The data indicating that (90%) of teachers benefit from collaboration while only (10%) disagree highlights the significant role that collaborative practices play in enhancing both student learning and teacher development. This highlights that instructional quality can be enhanced through collaboration. For example, collaboration offers a great opportunity to

work together, share knowledge, and teach strategies. Vangrieken et al. (2015) also confirm that collaborative practices among teachers contribute to higher-quality teaching by allowing educators to integrate different perspectives and methods into their instruction. In addition, teachers may lead to engaging with peers, allowing them to reflect on their practices, receive constructive feedback, develop new skills and solve educational problems.

The (10%) of teachers who do not benefit from collaboration may encounter specific challenges such as time constraints, lack of effective collaboration structures, or differing teaching philosophies that might contribute to this disagreement (Popp and Pugh, 2008). Addressing these barriers is essential for maximizing the benefits of collaboration for all teachers. This implies that Libyan teachers need to collaborate effectively to improve student achievements and professional development institutions can also create supportive conditions for collaboration. This includes providing structured time for collaborative activities, fostering a positive collaborative culture, and offering training on effective collaboration techniques (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

**Chart 2: Important of collaboration**



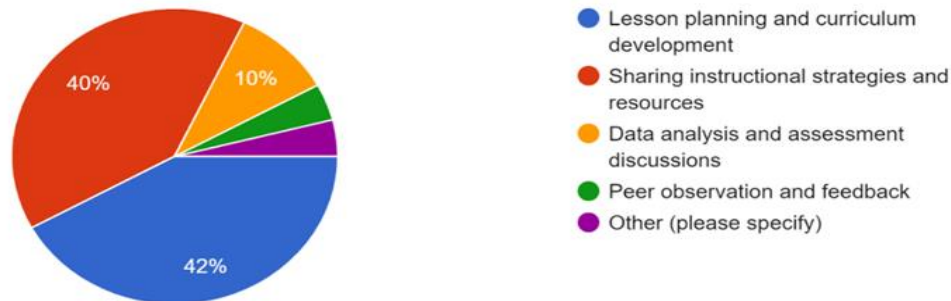
### 7.3 Types of collaborative activities

The data reveals that a significant helping of teachers prioritize specific types of collaborative activities, with (42%) selecting lesson planning and curriculum development as their preferred focus..Collaborative practice can help to process of setting objectives, making plans, delivering lessons and evaluating the outcomes( Taşdemir and Yıldırım, 2017) . While, (40%) of respondents favor sharing instructional strategies and resources. By working together on these aspects, educators can enhance their teaching methods.

In contrast, only (10%) choose data analysis and discussions, while a mere (8%) express interest in peer observation and feedback.This distribution indicates a strong emphasis on practical aspects of teaching, such as lesson planning and resource sharing, which are crucial for day-to-day classroom effectiveness. Cooperative process includes co-planned lessons, mutual problem solving, shared classroom responsibilities (Taşdemir and Yıldırım, 2017). From these findings, teachers need to be trained on several types of collaboration activities. This can help teachers recognize the value of these collaborative activities in improving student outcomes. Teachers' engagement in collaborative activities with other

teachers can support professional learning (Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran 2007).

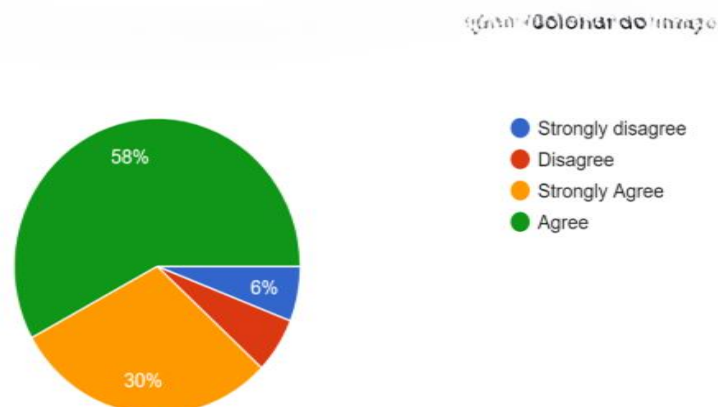
**Chart 3: Types of collaborative activities**



### 7.4 Professional development

Collaboration is viewed as a vital component of professional growth among the majority of educators, suggesting that opportunities for shared learning can lead to enhanced teaching practices. The analysis shows that (83%) of respondents agree that collaboration offers a great opportunity for more professional development. For instance, collaboration can foster innovation, creatively in teaching methods and reflect on their practices and gain new insights. Teacher collaboration may benefit teachers' practice which may affect student achievement (Moolenaar et al, 2012). However, the (17%) of respondents their disagreement may stem from various factors, including time constraints, past experiences with collaboration, or a preference for individualized development paths. Additionally, some educators may feel apprehensive about sharing their practices or receiving feedback. Acknowledging the (17%) who may prefer more individualized or self-directed professional development can help create a more inclusive approach. This deviation highlights the importance of providing a range of professional development options that cater to diverse needs. The implication is that Institutions could explore ways to facilitate collaboration, such as professional learning communities, workshops, or peer observation programs

**Chart 3: Professional development**

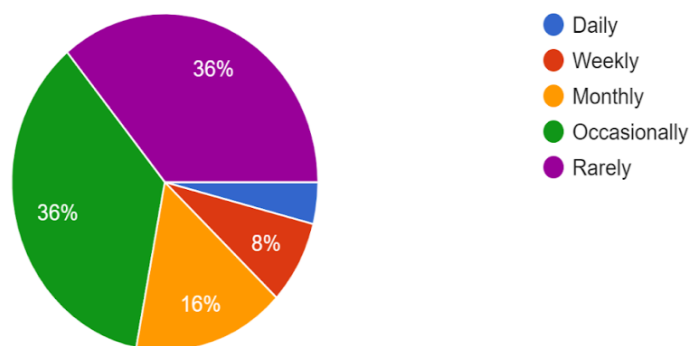


### 7.5 Frequently engagement

The chart indicates a notable lack of frequent engagement in collaborative activities among teachers, with (36%) occasionally engaging and another (36%) rarely participating. Only (16%) of teachers engage in collaborative activities on a monthly basis, and a mere (8%) do so weekly. This distribution suggests that while some teachers recognize the importance of collaboration, many are not regularly involved in structured, collaborative practices. The findings highlight a significant gap in collaborative engagement within the teaching community. The high percentage of teachers who only occasionally or rarely participate in collaborative activities may reflect barriers such as time constraints, lack of structured opportunities, or insufficient administrative support. This result is related to time for collaboration (see chart 6). Taşdemir and Yıldırım (2017) also confirm that difficulties arise due to the lack of administrative support.

For example, when teachers are not frequently collaborating, it becomes difficult to align teaching approaches and curricular goals, which can affect student learning outcomes. This implies more arranged and structured opportunities for collaboration, such as dedicated time during staff meetings or professional development days. Also, training sessions are useful for teachers to feel more prepared to engage in collaborative activities with support and encouragement. By addressing these implications, educational institutions can foster a more collaborative environment that not only enhances professional development but also improves teaching practices and student learning outcomes.

**Chart 4: Frequently engagement**

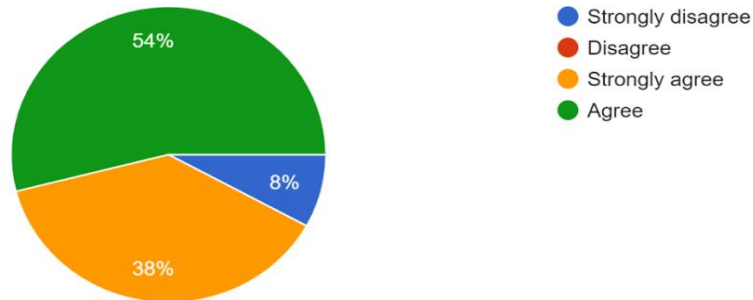


### 7.6 Students' achievements

The chart indicating that (92%) of respondents positively agree that teacher collaboration impacts their students learning achievements. These respondents who agree have a strong belief that collaborative teaching enhances their students learning experience. Teachers collaborate can help to create a consistent learning experience for students (Hattie, 2015). Only (8%) of respondents who expressed negative opinions that could point to specific

concerns such as inconsistency in teaching styles or a lack of communication between teachers that might detract from the positive effects of collaboration. It can be suggested that teachers may consider more collaboration with other teachers to lead to better educational students' outcomes. Training sessions can be focused on collaborative strategies that could help teachers maximize the benefits of working together. This includes team-teaching workshops or collaborative curriculum design. Collaboration among teachers promotes a more consistent and engaging learning environment, which is crucial for student success (Johnson et al., 2014). The strong support for teacher collaboration among students suggests that when educators work together, it positively influences student achievement. By addressing any concerns raised by the minority and promoting a collaborative culture, can further enhance the educational experience for all students, leading to improved outcomes and engagement.

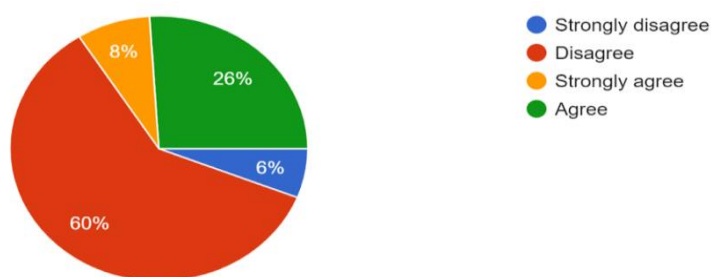
**Chart 5: Students' achievements**



## 7.7 Time for collaboration

This analysis highlights a significant divide among teachers regarding their time availability to collaborate. The (66%) of teachers who have time to collaborate likely benefit from shared ideas, resources, and support, which can enhance their teaching practices and student outcomes. Teachers who collaborate may be more effective in their teaching, leading to better student engagement and achievement. Vangrieken et al. (2015) also confirm that collaborative practices among teachers contribute to higher-quality teaching by allowing educators to integrate different perspectives and methods into their instruction.

However, the (34%) of teachers who do not have time for collaboration agree that they face various barriers, such as heavy workloads, lack of administrative support, or scheduling conflicts. Wilson (2016) who also indicates that co-teachers do not have enough time to appropriately and effectively pre-plan every aspect of their lessons. Therefore, understanding these barriers is crucial for addressing the issue. Those who do not have time to collaborate may miss out on valuable strategies and insights that could improve their instructions. This suggested that universities could consider adjusting schedules to allow for more collaborative time and providing professional development. Overall, addressing the collaboration gap could lead to a more supportive and effective teaching environment, benefiting both educators and students.

**Chart 6: Time for collaboration**

## 8- Conclusion

Teacher collaboration in higher education plays a pivotal role in enhancing both student achievement and professional development. The overwhelming consensus among Libyan teachers about the positive impact of collaborative practices highlights its significance in fostering a dynamic and supportive educational environment. This research, based on a comprehensive questionnaire targeting higher education faculty, has identified areas where current collaboration efforts may not fully address the educational needs of students or the professional growth of teachers. The findings reveal that collaboration positively influences student learning outcomes, especially when there is more scheduled time dedicated to collaborative activities. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that collaboration provides valuable opportunities for professional development. The implications of this research call for expanding collaborative efforts among educators, with increased support from Ministry of Education officials and pedagogical experts.

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