Impact of Professional Learning Communities Implementation on Teachers' Teaching Practice and Professional Learning in Saudi Arabia

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Statement of Originality

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge all the material in this thesis represents my own work including the result of original research and that no material is involved that has been submitted for any other award or qualification.

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Sultan Almalki

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Dedication

To my great Father and Mother

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Sincere thanks and praise to God-Almighty for his great bounty, the myriad grace, kindness, success and facilitation of all my affairs permanently.

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Abstract

This study investigated the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which have recently been introduced into Tatweer schools in Saudi Arabia as part of that country's educational reform efforts. The goal of the PLC model is to improve teachers' pedagogical practices and professional development to enhance students' learning and outcomes. The model is based on learning within the framework of collaborative work, shared practices and collective inquiry among teams of teachers. The broad aim of the study was to examine the impact of the implementation of PLCs from the perspectives of teachers and educational supervisors. The latter regularly visit schools in a monitoring capacity.

A mixed methods research design was employed to collect quantitative and qualitative data via an online survey and semi-structured individual interviews. The participants were teachers from secondary, middle and primary schools in the cities of Jeddah and Makkah. A total of 304 teachers and 42 supervisors participated in online surveys, and in-depth interviews were conducted with seven teachers and three supervisors from schools in Jeddah. The quantitative data were analysed through descriptive statistics and measures of central tendency using SPSS software. The qualitative data were analysed using thematic content analysis.

The findings indicated that the PLC had a variable impact on teachers, depending to a large extent on how the model was implemented in different schools. The key elements that appeared to influence the effectiveness of the PLC implementation were planning, meeting times, school leadership, supportive conditions, feedback, and continuous follow-up and assessment. Because the culture of learning through collaborative practice and collective inquiry was a recent innovation, there was some resistance to the change, and traditional teaching practices continued to predominate which indicate in this study that the PLCs have not been able to make a clear difference in the teaching methods used. The study also identified specific challenges to teachers' effective engagement with PLC activities, notably, low levels of motivation, lack of

ongoing encouragement, the pressures of the weekly workload and the absence of a fixed schedule for PLC meetings.

Overall, participants reported that the learning meetings provided a valuable opportunity for teachers to learn and discuss student-related issues in their schools. However, despite an encouraging start, they believed that more time was needed to effectively embed the new model in the school community and evaluate its impact.

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