PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY OF TEACHERS:
A HYPOTHESIS MODEL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The teaching professional learning communities have been held considerable engagement for capacity to sustain improvement in many countries. Although some concerned evidences have suggested their positive impact on school improvement, understanding effective professional learning communities in school and research into their existence, operation, and effectiveness are still at a relatively early stage of development in many countries, also in Thailand. This article aimed to present the hypothesis model of professional learning community of teachers in school wide culture.

Keywords: professional learning community, PLCs, teaching professional development

INTRODUCTION

The Professional learning community or "PLC" as it is often called, has been suggested by international evidences that educational reform's progression depend on teachers' individual and collective professional learning and its link with school-wide capacity for promoting students' learning. In the past decade, we have experienced the limits of formal, externally driven, professional development and school innovation. In addition, sustained change in the day-to-day practice of schools cannot be imposed, since it requires teachers' individual and collective learning and investigating processes to improve their own practices. The professional learning
community offers a context for the mention processes and for encouraging capacity in the school. Although the idea of a professional learning community appears to be acceptable, there are few schools accepted as professional learning communities. Until recently there has been still limited, hard research evidence about how to develop schools to professional learning communities. Using documentary study and a case study, this paper was focused on questions regarding the development of professional learning community:
    1. What is the professional learning community and its characteristics?
    2. How is the PLCs at a school-wide level created and developed?
    3. What facilitators make professional learning community effective?

LITERATURE & THEORY

Profession learning community is distinguished by its emphasis on group or collective learning. In the last decade the increased interest in professional learning community, that leads to various descriptions of the professional learning community. Hord (1997) [1] for example, described a professional learning community as a community of permanent research and improvement. Louis & Marks (1998) [2] regarded a professional community as a school-organizational structure with an intellectually-oriented culture. Summarizing the literature, there appears to be broad international consensus that it suggests a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way [3],[4] and operating as a collective enterprise [5]. The goal of such actions is to enhance their collective effectiveness as professionals.

A systematic reviewed of related literature, professional learning community is combined three important concepts [4], [6], [7], [8].
    - **professionalism** that is the client-oriented and knowledge based
    - **learning at all levels** in the school (individual, team, school) through critical self-reflection and inquiry with a view to the improvement of the professionalism
    - **community** as the quality of relations between the learning professionals making learning and improvement possible.

The mention concept defines the characteristics of professional learning community regarding to who, what and how. Even if the concept of professional learning community may take a wide variety of forms depending on a school's circumstances, it tends to share varieties of 5 common characteristics or features [9], [10], [11], [12], [13]:
    1. Shared values and vision: Having a shared vision and sense of purpose has been found to be centrally important, especially, the undeviating focus on all students learning [15]. The mature

profession learning community involves all their stakeholders in determine visions, and shared values that provides a framework for collective, and ethical decision making [14].

2. Collective responsibility: There is a broad agreement in literature that members of a professional learning community consistently take collective responsibility for students' learning, development, and well-being [5], [16], [17]. It is assumed that collective responsibility helps to sustain commitment, puts peers pressure and accountability on those who do not do their fair share and ease isolation. This also concerns staff involvement in developmental activities with consequences for several people, going beyond superficial exchanges of help, support, or assistance for example, joint review and feedback [18]. The link between collaborative activity and achievement of shared purpose is highlighted. So thorough the discussion of teachers and administrators who are members of professional learning community, the ideas of good teaching and classroom practice always be defined [19].

3. Shared learning: Learning within professional learning community involves active deconstruction of knowledge theory reflection and analysis, and its reconstruction through action in a particular context [3]. All teachers are learners, group as well as individual, learning is promoted; co-construction through collaborative learning with peers [14]. Professional learning community learns by means of emphasized in reflective approaches such as dialogue or the conversations about serious educational issues or problems involving the application of new knowledge in a sustained manner; 'deprivatization of practice' [14], frequent examining of teachers' practice, throughout mutual observation and case analysis, joint planning and curriculum development [19], seeking new knowledge (Hord, 2004); tacit knowledge constantly converted into shared knowledge through interaction [20] and applying new ideas and information to problem solving and solutions addressing students' needs [1].

4. Shared leadership: Actually, joint action, the main characteristic of professional learning community has been described as distributed leadership [21], [22]. Leadership is an important resource for professional learning communities in terms of headteacher/principal [23]. The way principal manages school, is at least two respects: as an instructional leader that his expected duty in coordinate professional progression of his staffs, and as a whole management professional learning communities to encourage school change [24]. In particular the enquiry-minded principal is accepted as the significant facilitator to promote reflective enquiry. Many professional learning communities, principals work with teachers in joint enquiry and provide opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles related to bringing about changes in teaching and learning.
Additionally, some research findings suggest that, within the professional learning community, pedagogic leadership works in parallel with strategic leadership as teacher leaders and administrative leaders to develop new roles and relationships within their school [25]. However, the nature and quality of leadership is significantly influenced by the school culture, so it may be assumed to its involvement in professional learning community. The school culture that enhancing learning should be on condition that balance all stakeholders' interests, focuses on people rather than systems, makes people believe they can change their environment, makes time for learning; tales a holistic approach to problems, encourages open communication, believes in teamwork, and has approachable leaders [26].

5. Cared relationship: Working together productively in school depends on positive relationship and collegiality [14]. There are four dimensions of relational trust consist of respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity are considered as critical facilitators of professional learning [27]. Unless the mention facilitators, in particular trust, and respect from colleagues, it may be affected the feeling of unsafe [6][28]. When teachers trust and respect each other, a powerful social resource, is available for supporting collaboration, reflective dialogue, and deprivatization characteristics instrumentally affected the members participant in classroom observation and feedback, monitoring partnerships, discussion about pedagogical issues, curriculum innovations [29].

In Thailand, moreover, elements of professional learning community of teachers in school-wide culture, are implied the most significant of the caring relationship community depended on Thai tradition that lead to deep listening and trust among teachers. Other elements are: (1) courage leadership which reveal the ability of transformative leadership, (2) shared vision and faithfulness which create a powerful focused shared-vision, (3) teacher-cooperated open system focus on the students which create a full participation of students as the owner of the studying, (4) a professional team learning system that develops teacher's maturity and spirit, which stimulate the determination of professions, and development, and (5) the supportive system related to the job learning space through the work that create learning for change culture [30].

Developing the professional learning community appears to depend on working with a number of processes inside and outside the school. It is not developed solely through providing staffs' developing opportunities, but through supporting two types of essential conditions: (1) physical or structural setup such as time and space to meet and talk together, and (2) human qualities or capacities of professional learning

community involved teaching roles that are interdependent such as team teaching, integrated lesson, teaching monitoring and empowerment [31].

The idea of effective professional learning community is not new. It is widely to be effective when it is based on self-development and work-based learning. Some certain key features are evidences in the work of education writers in the early part of the last century. Such as Rubin, Plovnick, and Fry (cited in [32]) proposed the model of team effectiveness, or the GRPI model which it stood for four essential parts: (1) Goals: well-defined objectives and desired results, also clearly communicated priorities and expectations, (2) Roles: well-defined responsibilities, acceptance of a leader, (3) Processes: clear decision-making processes as well as work procedures, and (4) interpersonal relationships: good communication, trust, and flexibility. Tools for implementing such the features include professional profiles, action learning and research, mentoring and peer-assisted learning.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to develop hypothesis model of professional learning community of teachers in the school wide culture.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology was comprised of documentary research and a case study of purposive sampling school where has been achieved in professional learning community and developed own practical model. The data collections were document study and focus group discussion of 10 teachers who working at the sample school. Then the data were content analyzed.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The findings of document study revealed the hypothesis model of professional learning community was consisted of 5 components which presented in a diagram as a pyramid (see figure 1): (1) shared values and goals, (2) collective responsibility of students' learning, development, and well-being (3) shared learning, (4) shared leadership, and (5) caring relationship

Figure 1 the model of professional learning community
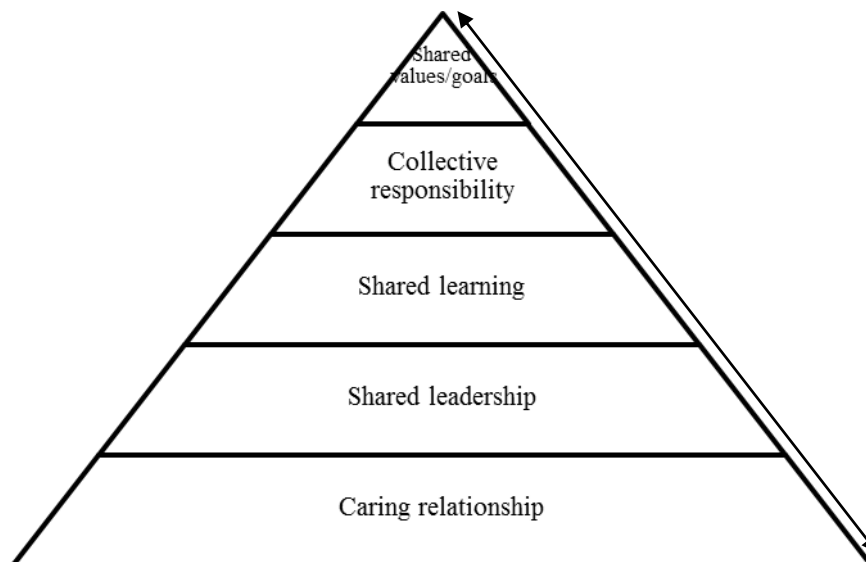
A case study of purposive sampling school revealed: The 10 members of professional learning community were comprised with the school principal, his 2 assistances, 3 subject-leaders, and 4 teachers who were representative of class levels. The current visions of the school are "good education, discipline, learning attention, development the environment and technology". In the academic year 2015, the school initiated a professional learning community which the model concerned activity was lesson study. The following year, the model was revised and named "Poucharm Model" (used the name of school). The activities of model composed of 4 steps: Purpose, Plan, Observation, and Reflection. The content analysis of

data collected from these participants revealed the practical activities of professional learning community in the school-wide (see table 1).

Table 1
The hypothesis model of professional learning community

Elements	Documentary study results	Case study results
1. shared values and goals	PLCs member: - determine their contingent visions/goals focused on students' learning and are able to encourage the school's visions/goals - have the opportunity to share broadly in making decision on the school visions/goals and missions.	-in harmony to school visions, the PLCs focused their goals to develop learning activities for students' fulfillment of the 21st century skills. -notification a clear policy statement for to be a year of PLCs -the principal provided the leaders who were good at relationship to keep the school on track and articulated visions/goals to PLCs members and colleagues. -PLCs members had their opportunities to share knowledge and ideas
2. collective responsibility	PLCs members: -commit to the concerned duty and work together to strengthen the school visions and missions -commit to make significant and lasting progress of students' learning, development, and well-being -transform the collective power, faithfulness, values and norms to be the power of change -individual commit to concerned duty in students development and collaborative investigation learning innovation or classroom pedagogy and joint lesson planning	-providing a supportive and reinforce system for collective problem solving to enhance effective teaching and learning -collective activities: writing a lesson plan, their partners' classrooms observation, supervision of classroom pedagogies, and brainstorming to improve the learning plan -there were a lot of public relation by way of group line, face book, website, presentation via VDO clip
3. shared learning	PLCs members in group as well as individual should: - co-construction learning and collaborative learning with peers - practice and enjoy a high level of collaboration in their daily work lives - be opened-mind, willingness to accept feedback and work toward improvement - respect and trust among PLCs members and colleague	-the school intently investigated systems of thinking and PLC activities, for their own practical model -the school provided accessible sources of necessary knowledge for collaboration means, classroom pedagogies, research-based teaching, and thinking skills development through educators and lecturers of local higher education institution, and Internet -the community members' requested to share their teaching methods with difference subjects ones to complementary their own
4. shared leadership	PLCs members: -involve in considering and decision making on the goals setting, PLCs goals and their meanings in term of their class, students and subject area, and instructional innovations -be provided opportunities to take on leadership roles related to bringing about changes in their teaching effectiveness. -working with principal and administrator staffs toward the same goals and be provided opportunities to take on leadership roles related to bringing about changes in teaching and learning	-provided opportunities, time and space for individual and group to distribute his/her techniques and instructional innovation. -implementing supervision system called Kalyanamir supervision based on a cared relationship which its activities: 1) the supervisory group was comprised with 3 volunteers were from familiar group at the beginning, after that were from unfamiliar ones 2) the cycle of supervision and improvement of learning planed by 2-3 rounds depended on the number of classrooms available 3) the schedule of monitoring and occasional meetings were held every two weeks at the beginning, then respectively increase and more informal meetings. Members of the group meeting were teachers who took turns teaching and supervising each other.
5. caring relationship	PLCs in group as well as individual: -together create a friendly atmosphere, so that all members feel respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity that cause the safe feeling	-all PLCs members felt comfortable sharing both their success and failures and willing to support for each other's troubles -done relaxing atmosphere such as share the care of each other, bringing snacks together at the meeting -the relevant practices such as the use of quality tools in the workplace include storytelling and giving awards - Openly expressed themselves, accepted each other and allocated of time to exchange learning that

		extended the scope of their relationship

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were corresponded with other finding about 5 elements of the professional learning community. Respectively, shared values and goals [14], [15]; Collective responsibility [5], [17, [18], [19]; shared learning [3], [14], [19], [20]; shared leadership [21], [22], [23], [24], [25] and caring relationship [6], [14], [27], [28], [29]. Especially, the care relationship, the distinctive characteristic of professional learning community were in the circumstance of schools in Thailand [30]. The results also showed an indicator of the outcomes of being a professional learning community, such as personal changes in the enthusiasm of the professional development of the members that consistent to [13], [14]. Finally, the case study of sampling school implied, the knowledge management tools to support effective knowledge exchange include: lesson study, storytelling, catching the key points of the story, reflection, after-action review (AAR), and intellectual learning, which it can be assumed by the finding of [14]. The case study concurred to Darling-Hammond [33] that teachers needed their opportunities to share what they know, to consult with their colleagues about problems of teaching and learning and to observe peers teaching so that they could be deepen their understanding.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

In this study we found that the hypothesis model of professional learning community of teachers was consisted of 5 elements. They were shared values and goals, collective responsibility of students' learning, development, and well-being shared learning, shared leadership, and caring relationship. The hypothesis model and the model of the school case study were concordantly. Furthermore findings were factors supporting the success of the professional learning community that including with knowledge and experience used as tools in the community process. In particular knowledge management (KM) tools, such as lesson study, storytelling, catching the key points of the story, reflection, after-action review (AAR), in addition with intellectual learning that related to teachers' concentrate on work and their activities.

Future work depended on the research findings encourage how to implement the model of professional learning communities that depends on engaging teachers in ongoing monitoring, feedback and self-reflection about teaching and learning that are directly related to their daily work with students. For that to happen, school leaders and also outside school educators must provide support, feedback and cultivate an atmosphere of trust and the conditions in which professional learning communities can thrive. When educators foster these professional learning environments, teachers can act on the guidance that fellow teachers provide to solve significant issues faced by educators and as a profession. The result of this research is the basic knowledge to follow the mission of academic service that will be met Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University's strategy for centralization of learning and academic services and social research and development [34].

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