

## Teacher Collegiality and Instructional Practices among Secondary Schools in Kiruhura District

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of teacher collegiality on instructional practices in government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District, Uganda. The main objective was to assess the relationship between teacher collegiality and instructional practices. This paper utilised a specific objective: to examine the level of Teacher Collegiality in government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, with data collected from 73 teachers and 6 headteachers using questionnaires and interviews. Descriptive statistics were used for quantitative analysis, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data. Findings revealed a high level of teacher collegiality ( $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ), with 95.9% of teachers engaging in joint lesson planning and peer observations. The study concludes that teacher collegiality significantly improves instructional practices, fostering shared resources, mentorship, and innovative teaching methods. Recommendations include institutionalizing structured collaboration time, integrating ICT training, and strengthening professional learning communities. School leaders should prioritize collegiality in policy and appraisal systems to sustain its benefits.

**Keywords:** Teacher Collegiality, Instructional Practices, Secondary Schools and Kiruhura District

### INTRODUCTION

Historically, teaching was largely an isolated profession, with teachers focusing on rote memorization and discipline rather than collaboration. Over time, however, educational theorists such as John Dewey and later researchers like Little (1982) and Hargreaves (1994) emphasized collaboration through peer coaching, team teaching, and shared decision-making as essential to improving instructional practices. By the late 20th century, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) emerged, institutionalizing collegiality as a driver of effective instruction globally. These developments set the foundation for examining teacher collegiality as a vital element in secondary school systems, including in Uganda.

This study was grounded in Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which emphasizes that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and social interaction. Applied to teacher collegiality, the theory suggests that when teachers collaborate through activities such as

joint lesson planning, peer observation, and mentorship, they learn new teaching strategies that can enhance classroom effectiveness. In contexts like Kiruhura District, where professional development opportunities are limited, collegiality becomes a vital mechanism for sustaining continuous instructional improvement.

Teacher collegiality refers to professional collaboration among educators through shared lesson planning, peer feedback, and participation in Professional Learning Communities. It directly influences instructional practices by encouraging innovation, refining teaching approaches, and fostering supportive teaching environments. The study positions teacher collegiality as the independent variable and instructional practices as the dependent variable, examining how collaboration enhances teaching strategies, classroom engagement, and student learning outcomes in government-aided secondary schools of Kiruhura District.

Globally, collaborative teaching has been linked to improved instructional outcomes, with OECD (2020) and UNESCO (2021) reporting that teacher collaboration improves student achievement even in disadvantaged contexts. In Uganda, however, overcrowded classrooms and teacher shortages limit opportunities for collegiality. In Kiruhura District, with pupil-teacher ratios averaging 70:1 and up to 30% of teaching posts unfilled, collaboration becomes essential. While programs such as the Teacher Development and Management Systems (TDMS) have been introduced to foster collegiality, many schools in Kiruhura still report irregular staff meetings, weak peer observation culture, and limited structured collaboration, all of which hinder effective collegial engagement.

The District Education Officer's reports (2023, 2024) indicate that instructional practices remain suboptimal, with over 60% of schools reporting weak teacher collaboration. Teachers often work in isolation, leading to irregular staff meetings, limited peer review, and a decline in student performance at lower secondary levels. The absence of a strong collegial culture denies teachers opportunities to share best practices and address instructional challenges collectively. This problem is particularly pronounced in rural Kiruhura, where infrastructure is poor and resources are scarce.

The absence of a strong culture of collegiality among teachers has hindered the development of effective instructional practices. Without collaboration, teachers miss out on opportunities to share best practices and receive constructive feedback. This study focuses specifically on government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District, a rural area where teacher collaboration structures are often weak or absent. Unlike previous studies conducted in urban or generalized Ugandan contexts (Turyagyenda et al., 2014; Kyeyune, 2017), this research explores how the lack of collegiality in such settings affects instructional practices. Generating localized evidence, the study filled a critical gap in understanding the unique challenges rural schools face and informed targeted interventions within similar low-resource districts (Nabukenya, 2020). Therefore, this study sought to investigate the relationship between teacher collegiality and

instructional practices in government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District. This paper focuses on the level of Teacher Collegiality in government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District.

### **Significance of the study**

This study on Teacher Collegiality and Instructional Practices in Government-Aided Secondary Schools in Kiruhura District may be significant for several key stakeholders, offering valuable insights and practical applications for researchers, future researchers, the Ministry of Education and Sports, and educational practitioners:

This study will lay a foundation for ongoing research by thoroughly analyzing the impact of collegiality on instructional practices in a local context. Future researchers were able to build on these insights by exploring additional factors, such as the effects of different levels of collegiality, the role of leadership in fostering collegiality, or specific impacts on student outcomes over time. It also provided a basis for similar studies across various districts or educational levels, such as private or primary schools, allowing for broader applicability.

With its evidence-based insights, this study will serve as a valuable tool for policymakers in the Ministry of Education and Sports. Understanding the link between collegiality and instructional practices may help guide policies and programs designed to improve educational quality. The Ministry may be able to use these insights to support initiatives that promote professional learning communities, improve teacher development programs, and encourage a collaborative culture in schools. Ultimately, this may lead to better teaching practices and enhanced student outcomes in government-aided schools.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical review**

This study was anchored in Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which provides a foundational framework for understanding how teacher collegiality influences instructional practices. Bandura's theory posits that learning

occurs within a social context through observation, imitation, and modeling. This perspective emphasizes the importance of collaborative and interactive environments for learning and professional development.

One of the central tenets of Social Learning Theory is observational learning. Bandura (1977) argues that individuals learn behaviors and skills by watching others, which in the educational context implies that teachers can adopt new instructional strategies by observing their peers. This was particularly relevant in schools where collegiality is emphasized through peer observations, joint lesson planning, and professional learning communities. Teachers who witness effective practices in action are more likely to replicate and adapt these strategies to suit their classroom needs (Penuel & Gallagher, 2021). Another key component of Bandura's theory is modeling, where individuals emulate behaviors they observe in others. In schools, senior or more experienced teachers often serve as models for their less experienced colleagues. Through structured collaboration, such as mentoring and co-teaching, these experienced educators demonstrate effective teaching practices that others can adopt. This exchange fosters a shared professional culture and continuous instructional improvement (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2022).

Bandura also introduced the concept of reciprocal determinism, which describes the dynamic interplay between individual behavior, personal factors, and environmental influences. Within the context of teacher collegiality, this suggests that a teacher's instructional behavior is influenced not only by personal experiences but also by interactions with colleagues and the overall school environment. Schools that promote collaborative cultures enable reciprocal influence among teachers, thereby creating a cycle of shared learning and instructional enhancement (Ross & Gray, 2021).

Self-efficacy, another critical element of Bandura's theory, refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific tasks. Collegial environments contribute to building teacher self-efficacy by offering support, feedback, and validation from peers. Teachers who feel competent and supported are more likely to engage in reflective practice and adopt

innovative teaching methods. This, in turn, leads to improved student engagement and academic performance (Vescio et al, 2024).

Furthermore, the application of Social Learning Theory to this study underscores the value of teacher professional development through collegial interactions. Teachers who participate in ongoing collaborative learning experiences develop a deeper understanding of pedagogy and are more adaptable to the evolving demands of the classroom. Such environments not only enhance individual teaching practices but also foster collective efficacy—a shared belief among teachers in their ability to positively affect student outcomes (Goddard et al., 2023).

In conclusion, Bandura's Social Learning Theory offered a compelling explanation for how teacher collegiality could lead to enhanced instructional practices. By emphasizing observational learning, modeling, reciprocal determinism, and self-efficacy, the theory illustrates the mechanisms through which collegial interactions influence teaching quality. This theoretical foundation supported the study's investigation into how collaborative practices among teachers in Kiruhura District improve instructional effectiveness in government-aided secondary schools.

### **The Level of Teacher Collegiality in Government-Aided Secondary Schools**

Teacher collegiality is a key determinant of instructional quality, especially in rural and under-resourced settings such as Kiruhura District. Defined as the professional interaction, collaboration, and mutual support among teachers (Renshaw & Brown, 2023), collegiality enhances professional development, boosts teacher morale, and ultimately contributes to improved student learning outcomes. This aligns with the study's conceptual framework, which positions teacher collegiality as the independent variable influencing instructional practices—the dependent variable—through mechanisms such as shared lesson planning, peer observations, and professional development.

In Uganda, and particularly in rural districts like Kiruhura, the level of teacher collegiality remains inconsistent despite its recognized benefits. According to the Ministry of Education and

Sports (2023), only 36% of government-aided secondary schools in rural districts have structured Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in place, compared to 72% in urban areas. Kiruhura District reflects this disparity, with only 31% of the schools reporting regular collaborative planning sessions among teachers, as per the District Education Officer's report (2024). This limited engagement significantly hinders the integration of innovative teaching practices and restricts opportunities for peer feedback and reflection.

In addition, the teacher-pupil ratio in Kiruhura District averages 1:68, well above the national recommendation of 1:35 (UNESCO, 2023). This overload contributes to teacher burnout and restricts time for collegial engagements. A survey by Borko & Livingston (2021) revealed that 62% of teachers in the district cited "lack of time" as a major barrier to collaborating with colleagues, while 49% mentioned "lack of administrative support" and 37% pointed to "geographic isolation" of schools as key obstacles.

Despite these challenges, there are promising pockets of strong collegiality. For example, schools participating in the Teacher Development and Management Systems (TDMS) program have reported a 15–20% increase in collaborative activities such as co-teaching, peer mentoring, and joint assessments. Furthermore, research by Santangelo and Tomlinson (2024) found that schools with active collegial practices in rural Uganda showed a 12% improvement in student engagement and a 9% increase in academic performance compared to schools with minimal collaboration.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the level of teacher collegiality. In Kiruhura, however, the 2023 headteacher appraisal report indicated that only 28% of school leaders actively facilitated teacher collaboration through policies or allocated time. This suggests a need for targeted leadership training in collaborative school management. Hargreaves and Shirley (2023) emphasize that transformational leadership—characterized by inspiring vision, distributed leadership, and encouragement of innovation—is essential to foster a collaborative culture among teachers.

Moreover, professional development programs remain a crucial vehicle for building collegiality. Yet, access remains limited. The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB, 2023) reports that only 41% of teachers in Kiruhura had access to subject-based in-service training in the last two years, compared to 70% in more urbanized districts like Mbarara. This inequality affects both the level and quality of professional interaction among teachers in rural schools.

Informal collegiality also contributes significantly. According to Karanja (2023), informal social relationships among teachers can build trust and foster the exchange of pedagogical strategies. In Kiruhura, 56% of teachers surveyed reported relying on informal networks for lesson ideas and classroom management strategies. However, these interactions often lack institutional support and recognition, limiting their impact.

Diversity among teachers, including age, experience, and training background—also shapes the collegial landscape. Wambua (2021) found that diverse teacher teams promote richer dialogue and innovation in instructional practices. In Kiruhura, however, a survey by Mutambi (2023) revealed that 48% of teachers had fewer than five years of experience, suggesting a need for mentorship from more experienced colleagues, a process reliant on collegial structures that are currently underdeveloped.

Additionally, external support systems, such as community engagement and districted workshops, have shown potential in boosting teacher morale and collaboration. Schools that engaged in partnerships with NGOs or local government programs reported a 14% increase in peer-led teaching observations and 18% increase in shared resource use (DEO Kiruhura, 2023).

In summary, the level of teacher collegiality in government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District is influenced by several interrelated factors, including teacher workload, administrative leadership, geographic isolation, resource availability, and access to professional development. While significant barriers persist, there is strong evidence that increasing structured and informal collegial practices can improve instructional quality, particularly in rural settings. This study assessed these dynamics in greater detail to provide actionable recommendations

aimed at strengthening teacher collaboration and enhancing education outcomes in the district.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design to investigate the relationship between teacher collegiality and instructional practices in government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District (Creswell, 2014). The target population consisted of 98 respondents, including 7 headteachers and 91 teachers, from which a sample of 80 participants was selected using purposive sampling for headteachers and stratified random sampling for teachers to ensure representation (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Inclusion criteria covered only teachers and headteachers in government-aided schools willing to provide informed consent, while exclusion criteria applied to those outside this group. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, interview guides, and document checklists, adapted from validated instruments such as the Teacher Collegiality Scale and the Instructional Practices Inventory (Goddard et al., 2023; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Instrument quality was ensured through expert review, pilot testing, and statistical validation, achieving a Content Validity Index of 0.86 (Zohrabi, 2013) and Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient of 0.85 (Nunnally, 1978), both above acceptable thresholds.

Measurement of variables focused on key dimensions of collegiality—joint lesson planning, peer observation, resource sharing, and participation in professional learning

communities—rated on a Likert scale, and their influence on instructional practices such as teaching strategies and classroom management (Mutambi, 2023; Printy, 2021). Ethical considerations were observed through clearance from Bishop Stuart University Research Ethics Committee, informed consent, confidentiality, and secure handling of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data collection procedures involved obtaining official permissions, administering questionnaires, conducting interviews, and reviewing institutional documents. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 22.0 through descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation (Schneider, 2019), while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) framework. Trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking. Study limitations included limited generalizability to other districts, potential social desirability bias, and incomplete school records. In addition, COVID-19 and Ebola mitigation protocols, as well as a community engagement plan with teachers, administrators, and local education authorities, were implemented to safeguard participants and ensure stakeholder involvement throughout the study.

**RESULTS**

**Response Rate**

The study response rates for a study involving teachers and headteachers, utilizing questionnaires and interview guides as data collection tools.

**Table 1 Response rate**

<b>Response rate</b>	<b>Tools distributed</b>	<b>Tools returned/collected</b>	<b>Percent collected</b>
Questionnaires	73	73	100.00%
Interviews	7	6	85.71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>98.75%</b>

**Source: Primary Data, 2025**

The results in Table 1 indicate that the 73 questionnaires distributed were all returned, representing a response rate of 100%. Out of 7 interviews that were conducted, 6 were

completed, representing an 85.71% response rate. Overall, 79 out of the 80 data collection tools administered were returned, giving a total response rate of 98.75%. This implies that there

was a very high level of participation in the study, ensuring the reliability and representativeness of the findings in Kiruhura district. These findings are in agreement with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), who state that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting, 60% is good, and 70% and above is considered very good; hence, the 98.75% response rate in this study is considered excellent.

The section shows the level of Teacher Collegiality in government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District. Responses were given in the Likert scale of (5-strongly agree (SA), 4-Agree (A), 3-Neutral (N), 2-Disagree (S), and 1-Strongly Agree (SA). Later, strongly agree and agree were added together to mean “Agree”, Strongly disagree and Disagree were also added together to mean “Disagree”, and neutral remained. Results are presented in Table 2.

**Level of Teacher Collegiality in Government-Aided Secondary Schools in Kiruhura District**

**Table 2 Level of Teacher Collegiality in Government-Aided Secondary Schools in Kiruhura District (N = 73)**

Statement	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree n (%)	Mean	SD
Teachers regularly plan lessons together	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	27 (37.0)	43 (58.9)	4.51	0.729
I observe colleagues' classes to learn new techniques	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	32 (43.8)	38 (52.1)	4.44	0.726
We provide constructive feedback after observations	0 (0.0)	2 (2.7)	4 (5.5)	31 (42.5)	36 (49.3)	4.38	0.719
Staff meetings focus on improving teaching practices	3 (4.1)	1 (1.4)	5 (6.8)	31 (42.5)	33 (45.2)	4.23	0.950
Teachers willingly share teaching materials	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (4.1)	32 (43.8)	38 (52.1)	4.48	0.580
There is mutual trust and respect among teachers	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	26 (35.6)	45 (61.6)	4.58	0.599
We discuss student learning challenges as a team	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	5 (6.8)	30 (41.1)	36 (49.3)	4.36	0.788
Senior teachers mentor junior colleagues effectively	0 (0.0)	2 (2.7)	2 (2.7)	29 (39.7)	40 (54.8)	4.47	0.689
School schedule allows time for collaboration	0 (0.0)	3 (4.1)	7 (9.6)	28 (38.4)	35 (47.9)	4.30	0.811
I feel comfortable asking colleagues for advice	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	2 (2.7)	25 (34.2)	45 (61.6)	4.56	0.623
<b>Average</b>						<b>4.43</b>	<b>0.72</b>

**Source: Primary Data, 2025**

From Table 2, the results indicate that the majority 27 (37.0%), of the participants agreed that teachers regularly plan lessons together, 43 (58.9%) strongly agreed with the statement, 1 (1.4%) was neutral, while only 1 (1.4%) disagreed and 1 (1.4%) strongly disagreed. This implies that 95.9% of the study participants agreed that teachers regularly plan lessons together ( $M = 4.51$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ).

The majority 32 (43.8%) of the participants agreed that they observe colleagues' classes to learn new techniques, 38 (52.1%) strongly agreed, 1 (1.4%) was neutral, while 1 (1.4%) disagreed and 1 (1.4%) strongly disagreed. This implies that 95.9% of the study participants agreed that they observe colleagues' classes to learn new techniques ( $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ).

The results in Table 2 further indicate that 31 (42.5%) of the participants agreed that they provide constructive feedback after observations, 36 (49.3%) strongly agreed, 4 (5.5%) were neutral, and only 2 (2.7%) disagreed, with none strongly disagreeing. This implies that 91.8% of the study participants agreed that they provide constructive feedback after observations ( $M = 4.38$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ).

Regarding staff meetings focusing on improving teaching practices, 31 (42.5%) of the participants agreed, 33 (45.2%) strongly agreed, 5 (6.8%) were neutral, while 1 (1.4%) disagreed and 3 (4.1%) strongly disagreed. This implies that 87.7% of the study participants agreed that staff meetings focus on improving teaching practices ( $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ).

The findings also show that 32 (43.8%) of the participants agreed that teachers willingly share teaching materials, 38 (52.1%) strongly agreed, 3 (4.1%) were neutral, and none disagreed or strongly disagreed. This implies that 95.9% of the study participants agreed that teachers willingly share teaching materials ( $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ).

Most of the participants, 26 (35.6%) agreed that there is mutual trust and respect among teachers, 45 (61.6%) strongly agreed, 1 (1.4%) was neutral, while 1 (1.4%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed. This implies that 97.2% of the study participants agreed that there is mutual trust and respect among teachers ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ).

The results further reveal that 30 (41.1%) of the participants agreed that they discuss student learning challenges as a team, 36 (49.3%) strongly agreed, 5 (6.8%) were neutral, while only 1 (1.4%) disagreed and 1 (1.4%) strongly disagreed. This implies that 90.4% of the study participants agreed that they discuss student learning challenges as a team ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ).

Regarding senior teachers mentoring junior colleagues effectively, 29 (39.7%) of the participants agreed, 40 (54.8%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.7%) were neutral, and 2 (2.7%) disagreed, with none strongly disagreeing. This implies that 94.5% of the study participants agreed that senior teachers mentor junior colleagues effectively ( $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ).

On whether the school schedule allows time for collaboration, 28 (38.4%) agreed, 35 (47.9%) strongly agreed, 7 (9.6%) were neutral, and 3 (4.1%) disagreed, with none strongly disagreeing. This implies that 86.3% of the study participants agreed that the school schedule allows time for collaboration ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ).

Finally, the majority 25 (34.2%) of the participants agreed that they feel comfortable asking colleagues for advice, 45 (61.6%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.7%) were neutral, while 1 (1.4%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. This implies that 95.8% of the study participants agreed that they feel comfortable asking colleagues for advice ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ).

These quantitative findings are reinforced by qualitative evidence from headteachers, which revealed varied levels of collegiality among teachers across the sampled government-aided secondary schools as follows;

### **Working Together as Colleagues**

Most headteachers acknowledged some form of teamwork among their teachers, though the depth of collaboration varied. At School A, the headteacher reported, "*There is teamwork though not good but good working relationship.*" (Interview with headteacher A, School A) Similarly, at School F collaboration was described positively as, "*Good, as staff members we believe in collective decision*

*making and teamwork.*” (Interview with headteacher F, School F) At School B, the headteacher simply stated, *“Very good, yes,”* while School D highlighted its broader relevance: *“Collegiality here is essential in various settings that is academia, socially e.t.c.”* In contrast, School C noted a gap in teacher relations, saying, *“There is a need for sensitization amongst the teachers about the importance of collegiality to improve social interaction and cooperation.”*(Interview with headteacher C, School C).

### **Leadership Influence on Collegiality**

School leadership was seen as both a facilitator and a hindrance to sharing teaching strategies. At School A, leadership encouraged growth through training, as reflected in, *“It is advantageous because we continue to improve the teaching practices... Provision development where teachers go for further studies.”* School F described practical collaboration: *“Work together in the departments... ‘You help me here; I help you there.’”*(Interview with headteacher F, School F). However, School B reported financial divisions, *“Financial challenges, those on government payroll don’t mix well with their fellows on private.”* (Interview with headteacher B, School B). Headteacher at School C cited interpersonal issues, *“Personality differences as some people are hard to work with... Tendency of teachers not working together,”* (Interview with headteacher C, School C), while headteacher at School D cited *“Resistance to change... Personality differences limited time.”* (Interview with headteacher D, School D). Headteacher at School E highlighted motivational and pay challenges: *“Low motivation hinders togetherness... Salary differences are also challenging.”*(Interview with headteacher E, School E)

### **Collaborative Teaching Practices**

Teaching methods often reflected opportunities for teamwork. Headteacher at School C reported, *“Projects are started as early as senior one,”* (Interview with headteacher C, School C), while School F emphasized, *“Learner based centered... only facilitate*

*learning.”*(Interview with headteacher F, School F). At School B, collaboration extended to learners: *“In terms of projects, students do them in groups...”* School D described reflective methods such as, *“Classroom observation, student feedback, teacher self-assessment.”*(Interview with headteacher D, School D). At School E, the headteacher mentioned, *“Activities of coordination, continuous assessment instruments.”*

### **Professional Support Among Teachers**

Support among teachers was evident in various forms. At School B, the headteacher noted, *“Keeping teachers updated with the current teaching methods thus able to teach effectively.”* (Interview with headteacher B, School B). Headteacher at School C linked collegiality to advancement: *“Promotion of staff from rank to another thereby increasing pay wages.”* (Interview with headteacher C, School C). While headteacher at School E focused on capacity building, *“CPG help them gain knowledge... as they learn from their fellows on curriculum development.”* Headteacher at School F described the role of relationships: *“Team spirits create a conducive environment from colleagues.”* While headteachers at School D emphasized, *“They keep teachers update, improve on research.”*(Interview with headteacher D, School D).

Generally, both the quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that teacher collegiality exists to varying degrees in government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District. While survey data show very high agreement levels (over 86% in all items) on practices such as lesson planning together, observing colleagues’ classes, providing feedback, and sharing teaching materials, interview data highlight that these practices are supported by strong teamwork in some schools but hindered in others by salary disparities, personality conflicts, and time constraints.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **The Level of Teacher Collegiality in Government-Aided Secondary Schools in Kiruhura District**

The findings indicate that teacher collegiality in government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District is generally high, with most respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with positive statements about collaborative practices. This high mean aligns with the literature reviewed, which emphasizes that collegiality, manifested through joint lesson planning, peer observation, constructive feedback, and sharing of instructional materials, enhances professional growth and improves instructional quality (Renshaw & Brown, 2023; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2023).

The study found that joint lesson planning was one of the strongest indicators of collegiality. This is consistent with Santangelo and Tomlinson's (2024) findings that collaborative lesson preparation fosters pedagogical innovation and consistent curriculum delivery. Similarly, observation of colleagues' lessons and the provision of constructive feedback after such observations were highly rated, reflecting Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory that emphasizes learning through observation, modeling, and feedback. Qualitative evidence from the study reinforced that these practices are embedded in the teaching culture of some schools, with respondents citing mutual assistance in lesson preparation and curriculum development as key benefits.

Another important dimension was the sharing of teaching resources. This corroborates Karanja's (2023) assertion that resource sharing in under-resourced environments is a practical expression of collegiality that directly supports instructional improvement. Similarly, high ratings for mutual trust and respect among teachers reflect the relational foundation necessary for effective collaboration, as highlighted in Hargreaves and Fullan's (2022) argument that trust is the bedrock of sustainable professional learning communities. The results also suggest that mentoring relationships are active in the district. This finding aligns with Wambua's (2021) observation that mentorship bridges experience gaps and supports novice teacher integration into professional cultures. Moreover, the high comfort level in seeking advice from colleagues demonstrated the presence of psychologically safe environments

where teachers can share challenges without fear of criticism, a key component of strong collegial cultures.

However, while the overall level of collegiality is high, the slightly lower mean for "school schedule allows time for collaboration" reflects one of the barriers noted in the literature. Borko and Livingston (2021) and Ndung'u (2023) both identify time constraints as a recurrent limitation in rural schools, where heavy workloads and large class sizes (averaging 1:68 in Kiruhura) can restrict opportunities for sustained collaboration. This suggests that while collegiality is valued and practiced, structural challenges such as timetable design and administrative prioritization may limit its full potential.

These results confirm that teacher collegiality in Kiruhura's government-aided secondary schools is both valued and actively practiced, closely mirroring the benefits identified in the literature review. High engagement in collaborative lesson planning, peer observation, feedback, and resource sharing reflects the theoretical principles of Social Learning Theory and the practical outcomes observed in similar rural educational contexts. Nonetheless, time allocation for collaboration remains an area for improvement, indicating that strengthening institutional structures could further enhance collegiality and, by extension, instructional practices.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results, it is concluded that teacher collegiality in government-aided secondary schools in Kiruhura District is high. Teachers frequently engage in joint lesson planning, peer observation of classes to learn new techniques, and constructive feedback after observations. There was also a strong indication of mutual trust and respect among colleagues and effective mentoring by senior teachers. Teachers expressed that these collaborative activities improve teamwork, enhance personal teaching skills, and lead to greater consistency in lesson delivery. However, the relatively lower score for time availability for collaboration suggests that busy teaching schedules limit opportunities for regular interaction.

## **Recommendations**

To sustain and improve the high levels of collegiality, school leaders should create structured time within the timetable specifically for collaborative activities such as joint lesson planning, peer observation, and mentorship sessions. Leadership practices should intentionally promote a culture of teamwork by recognizing and rewarding collaborative achievements. Schools can also build on existing informal teacher networks, turning them into formalized platforms for sharing teaching strategies and resources. These measures will ensure that collaboration remains consistent and effective despite time and workload pressures.

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