

***Triple Mechanism of Teacher Ineffective Collaboration from
Bourdieu's Field Theory Perspective
-Based on the practice of Lesson Study in G primary school-***

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Abstract: *Teacher collaboration gradually become an important dimension of teacher professional development. Lesson Study is a typical practice of teacher collaboration. This study explored the mechanism of teacher collaboration by using qualitative research methods, from the perspective of Bourdieu's field theory. It is found that the collaboration of teachers in the Lesson Study is ineffective. The triple mechanism of institution, power and culture existing in the field of Lesson Study reproduced the teacher ineffective collaboration. Specifically, the top-down institutional logic accounts for the lack of initiative and enthusiasm of teachers; the power, based on capital, restricts teacher collaboration from outside to inside, which makes teachers "afraid" to express their opinions; the Chinese traditional face culture, forming the habitus of keeping harmonious relationships, shapes teacher collaboration from inside to outside, which makes teachers "ashamed" to express their opinions. Some suggestions for improving the effectiveness of teacher collaboration were proposed at the end.*

Keywords: *triple mechanism; teacher collaboration; field theory; Lesson Study*

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1. Introduction

Teacher professional development has attracted considerable attention since 1980s (Avalos, 2011; The Holmes Group, 1986; Rosebery and Puttick, 1998). The collaboration between teachers has gradually regarded as an important dimension of teacher professional development (Butler and Schnellert, 2012; Lavie, 2006; Levine and Marcus, 2010). Many scholars argued that teacher collaboration can strengthen the position of teachers, improve the achievement of students and promote the reform of schools (Goddard, Y., Goddard, R. and Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Honingh and Hooge, 2014). Various organizational forms, structures, consequences and factors of teacher collaboration were investigated in the existing literature (Clement and Vandenberghe, 2000; Egodawatte, McDougall and Stoilescu, 2011; Hairon and Dimmock, 2012; Johnson, 2003; Wong, 2010).

However, the process and mechanism of teacher collaboration has almost been ignored. There is also a lack of theory analysis about this issue. Bourdieu's field theory bridged the gap between subjectivity and objectivity, individual and society, theory and practice in traditional sociological research, which can provide a theoretical framework for analyzing the mechanism of teacher collaboration (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Therefore, this study explored the triple mechanism of teacher ineffective collaboration from the perspective of Bourdieu's field theory, which is based on the qualitative data of Lesson Study in G primary school. The findings can enhance our understanding of the issue of teacher collaboration, Lesson Study, and Bourdieu's field theory. It also can provide important implications for policy makers and school leaders to improve the effectiveness of teacher collaboration.

2. Literature Review

Teacher collaboration refers to a joint interaction that teachers have to finish all their works together for a specific purpose (Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes and Kyndt, 2015). Lesson Study is a typical practice of teacher collaboration. The whole process of Lesson Study, including design research course, observation research course and discussion research course, needs the collaboration of teachers (Lewis and Hurd, 2011). An indicated that Lesson Study is a kind of collaborative researcher activity which conducted by teachers for solving the problems of teaching (An, 2008). However, in the field of Lesson Study, there are few empirical studies focused on the teacher collaboration, especially the mechanism of teacher collaboration. In addition, although teacher collaboration has positive influences on teachers' professional development, students' achievement and schools' improvement, a few scholars have put forward that there are some hindering factors for teacher effective collaboration such as competition, individualism, lack of skills, ineffective leadership and time pressure (Cameron, 2005; Leonard, P. and Leonard, L., 2001; Rone, 2009). As we pointed out in our previous research, there is an implicit contradiction between the ideals and reality of Lesson Study (Dai and Wang, 2021). Virtually, teacher ineffective collaboration is common in practice. Thus, exploring the mechanism of teacher ineffective collaboration in Lesson Study is significant.

As mentioned earlier, there are few studies focused on theoretical analysis. In order to

overcome this limitation, we introduced Bourdieu's field theory to analyze the mechanism of teacher ineffective collaboration. Field theory is an important part of Bourdieu's theoretical system of social practice. Field, capital and habitus are the core concepts of Bourdieu's field theory, and they are also the three basic analysis units to explain social practice. Bourdieu believes that the research object of social science is neither a simple individual nor an abstract society, but a field composed of countless individuals and a larger field comprehensive structure composed of countless fields.

The term of field is defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), which is a complex of various social forces and factors formed by the relationship network of specific agents (Gao, 2004). Each field is composed of different sub-fields, and each sub-field can be regarded as an open social space established according to its own logical rules. Conflict and competition are the characteristics of field. "The analogy here being with a battlefield, in which participants vie to establish monopoly over the species of capital effective in it...and the power to decree the hierarchy and 'conversion rates' between all forms of authority in the field of power" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

The conflict of the field results from the competition for specific forms of capital by agents with different types and quantities of capital (Swartz, 1998). The capital here is different from the notion of capital in economics. It refers to the accumulated resources that can be occupied by agents or groups, including economic capital, social capital and cultural capital. The economic capital refers to the type of capital that can be directly converted into money, which is institutionalized in the form of property rights. The social capital refers to the type of capital that composed of social connections, which is institutionalized in the form of noble titles. The cultural capital refers to the type of capital that related to culture or cultural activities, which is institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications (Bao, 1997). Bourdieu's concept of capital means the ability to control the production or reproduction of the field's structures and rules. Therefore, capital is a form of power.

In the field, it is not capital but habitus that directly dominates the behavior of agents. According to Bourdieu, habitus is an open, lasting and convertible system of potential behavioral tendency (Bourdieu, 1992), which is a generative (if not creative) capacity existing as an art deeply in the disposition system (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). It not only has the characteristics of passivity and reproducibility of habit, but also has the characteristics of creativity and productivity, which can constantly adjust its own structure with the development of the field. Thus, the concept of habitus has the characteristics of "double structuralization", that is, the external structuralization of subjective thoughts and the internal structuralization of objective environmental conditions (Gao, 2004). It has become a bridge connecting subjectivity and objectivity, individual and society, theory and practice. Furthermore, habitus also has the diachronique characteristic. It is a system of various generative schema internalized in the consciousness of agents after long-term accumulation.

As shown above, field, capital and habitus interact with each other, and interact with

social practice together. It can be expressed in a formula: (habitus × capital) + field = practice (Zhou, 2010). Practice is the result of the interaction among field, capital and habitus. Field provides the space for practice, capital provides the tool for practice, and habitus provides the rule for practice (Gong, 2007). The field is a space where all kinds of capital compare, exchange, compete and redistribute. The competition between agents with different types and quantities of capital becomes the driving force for the operation and transformation of the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). There is a bidirectional generative relationship between field and habitus: field shapes habitus and habitus constructs field (Dong, 2013). Bourdieu compared the field to a game, and capital and habitus to trumps in the game. He indicated that capital and habitus define the essential attributes for agents in the field, and determine the form and result of the game (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

From the perspective of Bourdieu's field theory, Lesson Study can be regarded as a network composed of various powers, institutions, organizations and cultures and their relationships, that is, an independent field. It provides a space for teachers to collaborate with each other. In the field, teachers with different types and quantities of capital occupy different positions, which makes teachers show different behaviors when they collaborate in Lesson Study. Meanwhile, a series of psychological tendencies about Lesson Study accumulated on teachers under specific historical conditions make the collaborative behaviors have similarity and stability.

To sum up, in previous studies, researchers hardly devoted attention to the mechanism of teacher ineffective collaboration in Lesson Study. Both theoretical analyses and empirical evidence are scanty on this issue. Based on this, the paper aims to reveal the triple mechanism of teacher ineffective collaboration in Lesson Study with the theoretical framework of Bourdieu's field theory.

3. Methodology

In order to explore the mechanism of teacher collaboration, this study adopted a qualitative approach, which is effective for revealing the development process of events.

According to the existing literature, scholars tended to select schools in developed cities. However, in China, the numbers of schools in county, town and rural areas account for more than 80% of the total number of schools. Compared with the schools in developed urban areas, the schools in county, town and rural areas are more representative. On the other hand, China adopts an educational management system of "hierarchical management, county based". The schools in county areas lead the development of basic education in county, town and rural areas. Hence, this study selected G primary school in G county through the method of purposive sampling.

G county is located in eastern China and in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei economic circle. In recent years, G county has obtained many development opportunities. Its economic and social development is at the middle level in China, which is representative across the country. G primary school is an experimental school in G county. It is also a public primary school directly under the Culture, Education and Sports Bureau of G county. No matter the size of the school, the quality of teachers and the number of students, G primary

school has the typical characteristics of county-level primary schools.

The qualitative methods of interview and observation were used to collect the empirical data. The interview outline and observation scale were formulated before the investigation. We have interviewed 20 teachers and 6 leaders and the information of the interviewees is shown in Table 1. We have also observed various activities of the Lesson Study and the information of the relevant participants is shown in Table 2. Considering the privacy of the participants, this study coded them according to the order of interview or observation.

Table 1. Information of the interviewees.

No.	Position	Gender	Subject	Code
1	Leader	Male	Math	L1
2	Leader	Female	Chinese	L2
3	Leader	Female	Chinese	L3
4	Leader	Female	Math	L4
5	Leader	Male	Math	L5
6	Leader	Female	English	L6
7	Teacher	Female	English	T1
8	Teacher	Female	English	T2
9	Teacher	Female	Math	T3
10	Teacher	Female	Chinese	T4
11	Teacher	Female	Science	T5
12	Teacher	Female	Math	T6
13	Teacher	Male	Math	T7
14	Teacher	Male	Math	T8
15	Teacher	Male	English	T9
16	Teacher	Female	Chinese	T10
17	Teacher	Female	Chinese	T11
18	Teacher	Female	Chinese	T12
19	Teacher	Female	Chinese	T13
20	Teacher	Female	Science	T14
21	Teacher	Female	Math	T15
22	Teacher	Female	Math	T16
23	Teacher	Female	Math	T17
24	Teacher	Female	Math	T18
25	Teacher	Female	Chinese	T19
26	Teacher	Female	Chinese	T20

Table 2. Information of the participants.

No.	Position	Gender	Subject	Code
1	Teacher	Female	Math	LST1
2	Teacher	Female	Math	LST2
3	Teacher	Female	Math	LST3
4	Teacher	Female	Math	LST4
5	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST5
6	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST6
7	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST7
8	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST8
9	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST9
10	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST10
11	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST11
12	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST12
13	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST13
14	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST14
15	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST15
16	Teacher	Female	Chinese	LST16
17	Teacher	Female	English	LST17
18	Teacher	Female	English	LST18
19	Teacher	Female	English	LST19
20	Teacher	Female	English	LST20

All the interviews and observations were recorded by audio or video and transcribed verbatim after the investigation. The authors read the transcripts of interviews and observations repeatedly and analyzed the data through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). To ensure the validity, the coding process was conducted by the three authors separately, and the consistency of the analysis results was checked by the three authors together.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Teacher Ineffective Collaboration in Lesson Study

Lesson Study is a collaborative research activity. Teacher collaboration throughout the whole process of Lesson Study. The teachers in G primary school believe that they can collaborate with each other to solve the problems of teaching practice in the Lesson Study:

“The teacher who prepared the lesson introduced his/her design, and all the teachers discussed how to perfect it.” (T2)

“The effect is good. Preparing lessons alone has its limitations. Preparing lessons together can learn from each other, because everyone has his/her own understanding of the lesson.” (T8)

However, the collaboration between teachers is the discussion of teaching contents and methods in the traditional sense of knowledge-centered, which is contrary to the ideal of student-centered of Lesson Study:

The teacher LST9 believes that the teacher LST7 has a deep interpretation of the text, which has risen to the height of educating students to be filial to their parents. (LS1)

The teacher LST5 thinks that the teacher LST8 asked students to observe Qiu Shaoyun's expression in a picture and imagine his pain can help them understand the main idea of the text. (LS1)

Moreover, as pointed out in our previous research, the teaching including goals, contents and evaluations in G primary school still present some traditional knowledge-centered characteristics (Dai and Wang, 2021). The teacher collaboration in Lesson Study didn't improve the teaching practice substantially, but further strengthened the knowledge-centered traditional education. According to Ausubel, meaningful learning is the course of establishing a non-human and substantial connection between the new knowledge represented by symbols and the existing concepts in learners' cognitive structure (Han, 1989). From the perspective of the meaningful learning theory, there is an ineffective collaboration between teachers in G primary school.

4.2 Triple Mechanism of Teacher Ineffective Collaboration

This study put forward that the triple mechanism of institution, power and culture existing in the field of Lesson Study reproduce the teacher ineffective collaboration.

4.2.1 The Top-Down Institutional Logic

Institutional logic refers to the institutional arrangement and action mechanism that exist stably in a field (Li, 2013). The field of Lesson Study is an independent social space with its own unique institutional logic. Lesson Study is a teaching research activity organized voluntarily by Japanese primary and secondary school teachers in the 1960s, which was ignored by the Japanese government at the beginning. It was only ten years later that the Japanese government began to realize the significance of Lesson Study and provided financial and policy support (Fernandez and Yoshida, 2004). Thus, the implementation of Lesson Study in Japan follows the bottom-up institutional logic.

On the contrary, the implementation of Lesson Study in China follows the top-down institutional logic. As early as 1950s, China's Ministry of Education put forward a requirement of "learning from the advanced experience of Soviet education". A lot of teaching research groups have been set up in Chinese schools to improve the quality of teachers in basic education (Liang, Lu and Huang, 2011). With the development of teaching research system, China's primary schools have formed a top-down organizational structure from the principal to the directors and group leaders of teaching research, and then to teachers. In the 21st century, Lesson Study was introduced into China and gradually became an important part of school-based teaching research in primary schools, but the top-down institutional logic has been retained.

According to the policy documents of the government and the practical situation of the school, G primary school has formulated a series of systems on the Lesson Study. It also has set up teaching research office, teacher development center office and other institutions to manage the activities of Lesson Study. One of the vice presidents is responsible for the supervision of Lesson Study. As the vice president said:

"Our school now adopts the way of hierarchical management. The academic affairs

office and teacher development center will conduct a selective examination. Then, the group leaders of teaching research for each subject take charge of the implementation of Lesson Study.” (L2)

For teachers, they were passively involved in the Lesson Study:

“As a teacher, we have to do the things that our leaders required.” (T1)

It's not hard to find that the implementation process of Lesson Study is the top-down implementation of the policy. The collaboration between teachers does not come from their own wishes, but the requirements of the policy. As a result, when talked about the feelings on the teacher collaboration in the Lesson Study, a teacher said:

“I have a negative attitude towards this...It's not voluntary in many cases.” (T4)

As indicated above, the top-down institutional logic makes teachers become the executors of the policy. The collaboration between teachers is just a passive response to the requirements of the policy. It is difficult for teachers to keep full enthusiasm all the time. Their initiative and enthusiasm can't be fully played so that the effective collaboration between teachers would not be realized.

4.2.2 The Restriction of Power

Owing to the top-down institutional logic, the collaboration between teachers is carried out under the organization of the directors and group leaders of teaching research. However, it is because of the existence of the directors and group leaders of teaching research, teachers do not show their real state. They usually are “afraid” to express their opinions during the course of discussion which results in the teacher ineffective collaboration. There are two scenes that can show the restriction of power on teacher collaboration. The following scene of Lesson Study was organized by a group leader of teaching research.

Before the activity, teachers talked about the trifles in their life. About ten minutes after the bell rang, several teachers gathered around the group leader of teaching and research. She asked one of the teachers to speak on “how to improve pupils’ interest in mathematics”. Then, the teachers discussed freely in dialect. After the discussion, the group leader of teaching research announced the end of this activity. (LS2)

Different from the relaxed state in the activity organized by the group leader of teaching research, teachers are more serious in the activity organized by the director of teaching research:

Before the activity, teachers entered the meeting room one after another. They all held notebooks and pens in their hands, and some teachers also held cups. After the bell rang, the director of teaching research arranged the course of this activity and required the teachers to express their opinions in turn. All the teachers spoke in mandarin. After the discussion, the director of teaching research summarized and asked all teachers to evaluate the performance of other teachers. (LS1)

Comparing the two scenes, it can be found that teachers’ performance in the presence of the director of teaching research is slightly different from that in the presence of the group leader of teaching research. First of all, the teachers were chatting before the activity organized by the group leader of teaching research. The activity didn't begin until ten minutes after the bell rang. The whole activity was in a casual atmosphere. While before

the activity organized by the director of teaching research, the teachers came to the meeting room in advance with notebooks, pens and cups. The whole activity was more serious. Secondly, in the activity organized by the group leader of teaching research, teachers spoke freely in dialect. While in the activity organized by the director of teaching research, teachers spoke in turn with mandarin. Finally, the activity organized by the group leader of teaching research ended after the teachers' discussion. While at the end of the activity organized by the director of teaching research, teachers were not only evaluated, but also asked to evaluate the performance of other teachers.

The reason for this phenomenon is that the quantity of capital occupied by the director of teaching research, the group leader of teaching research and teachers is different in the field of Lesson Study. As is well-known, bureaucracy is the management system widely adopted in primary schools in China. The principal, vice principal, director of teaching research, group leader of teaching research, teacher and other positions constitute a pyramidal structure. The director of teaching research has more teaching experience and higher social status than the group of leader teaching research. According to the division of capital in Bourdieu's field theory, the former has more social and cultural capital than the latter. Similarly, the group of leader teaching research have more social and cultural capital than ordinary teacher. The quantity of capital determines the power of agents (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Therefore, compared with the group leader of teaching research, the director of teaching research has more power. It is easier for him/her to obtain the control in the field, and even have the power to evaluate teachers. Due to occupying less capital, teachers are in a weak position in the competition of the field, and their power is marginalized. The difference in power leads to different performance of teachers in collaboration: when the group leader of teaching research is present, teachers can collaborate with others in a more relaxed attitude, and express their opinions casually; when the director of teaching research is present, because of his/her power, teachers usually are more tension and "afraid" to express their real ideas, even appear a false unity to yield to authority. Consequently, there is no effective collaboration between teachers, and the quality of Lesson Study is greatly reduced.

To sum up, based on capital, power restricts teachers' collaborative behavior from outside to inside, which makes teachers "afraid" to express their opinions, and results in the teacher ineffective collaboration.

4.2.3 The Shaping of Culture

As mentioned before, during the process of Lesson Study, teachers can collaborate with each other to solve the problems in teaching practice. However, influenced by the Chinese traditional face culture, the teachers usually are "ashamed" to express their real views which results in the teacher ineffective collaboration:

The teacher LST7 introduced the topic of her teaching, and reviewed the teaching effect from two aspects of goals and process. Finally, she reflected the shortcomings in guiding students to read the text aloud. Then, the teacher LST8, who taught the same topic as the teacher LST7, also reviewed the goals and process of her teaching. Finally, she reflected the shortage of organizing effective group learning. After that, the director of teaching

required other teachers to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the two teachers' teaching. The teacher LST6 indicated that the degree of students' participation in the LST7 is high. In the teacher LST11' view, the teacher LST8 grasped the main line of the text and explained the text clearly...At the end of this activity, the director of teaching made a summary and emphasized the importance of preview. (LS1)

Although the teachers have collaborated with each other and discussed the content and method of teaching, they only reflect the disadvantage of their own teaching. When it comes to evaluating other teachers' teaching, they tend to point out the merits, rather than the drawbacks.

The reason for this phenomenon is that under the influence of Chinese traditional face culture, teachers have formed the habitus of keeping harmonious relationships in the field of Lesson Study. Face is a psychological process and result for individuals to judge whether the evaluation of others is consistent with their own expectation (Zhai, 2011). It is not only a unique cultural psychological phenomenon of Chinese people, but also the primary identity characteristic of Chinese people (Smith, 1894). Different from the more objective systems and laws in western society, the evaluation of a person in Chinese society is whether he has protected others' face, avoided possible conflicts and maintained harmonious relationships. Fei Xiaotong put forward the concept of "the Pattern of Difference Sequence" to explain the importance of relationship to Chinese people (Fei, 2008). In his view, western society is like a bundle of firewood and Chinese society is like a circle of ripples pushed out when a stone is dropped on the water. For Chinese people, the society has become a network of private relations. According to Bourdieu's field theory, habitus is a disposition system composed of a series of historical relationships accumulated in the individual. It is usually unconscious and independent of human will (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Therefore, the habitus of keeping harmonious relationships makes teachers unconsciously adopt strategies such as compromise and avoidance to hide their true thoughts, which makes it easy to ignore the real problems in teaching, and results in the superficiality collaboration. It is worth noting that although the director of teaching research has more power, which makes teachers afraid to express their true views, at the same time, the teacher identity of the director of teaching research also makes her affected by the habitus of keeping harmonious interpersonal relationships. As a result, she will not clearly point out the problems existing in other teachers' teaching.

In summary, influenced by the Chinese traditional face culture, the habitus of keeping harmonious relationships shapes teachers' collaborative behavior from inside to outside, which makes teachers "ashamed" to express their opinions, and results in the teacher ineffective collaboration.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzed the teachers' collaborative behavior in the Lesson Study of G primary school, from the perspective of Bourdieu's field theory. It is found that teachers in G primary school didn't achieve meaningful collaboration in the Lesson Study. The triple mechanism of institution, power and culture existing in the field of Lesson Study may be responsible for reproducing the teacher ineffective collaboration. Specifically, the

top-down institutional logic makes teachers passively participate in the Lesson Study, which leads to the lack of sufficient motivation for teachers to collaborate with each other; the power, based on capital, restricts teachers' collaborative behavior from outside to inside, which makes teachers "afraid" to express their opinions; the Chinese traditional face culture, forming the habitus of keeping harmonious relationships, shapes teachers' collaborative behavior from inside to outside, which makes teachers "ashamed" to express their views. This can also be understood as the deep reason why the curriculum reform in China has not achieved ideal results. In this regard, we can focus on the following aspects to explore the solution:

First of all, combine the top-down and bottom-up institutional logic to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm and initiative of collaboration. The requirements and suggestions of teachers should be paid attention to. The course of policy making could also involve some teachers. The leaders of schools should provide more opportunities for teachers to collaborate, which can find and solve problems of teacher ineffective collaboration in practice. The government could provide financial, technical and institutional supports for schools during the process of Lesson Study.

Secondly, strengthen the professional role of the directors and group leaders of teaching research and improve teachers' collaborative ability to enable teachers to collaborate freely and equally. Habermas argued that communication in the public sphere should be free from the oppression of power factors, so that people can interact and talk independently and express their inner needs (Li and Xiong, 2013). Therefore, the schools should emphasize the exemplary of the directors and group leaders of teaching research, and change the competitive evaluation mode to provide a relaxed environment for teachers to collaborate with each other. Moreover, schools could also invite experts to guide the collaboration between teachers to improve teachers' collaborative ability.

Last but not least, building a collaborative culture for teachers. Culture is a deeper basic assumption and belief. According to Bourdieu's field theory, although the habitus is stable and persistent, it does not mean that it will never change (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). As a product of history, habitus is constantly influenced by experience and strengthens or changes its own structure (Bao, 1997). Schools could devote attention to create a strong collaborative atmosphere and establish a common vision of collaboration for teachers. A competency-based management system could also be considered to establish, which could provide more opportunities for teachers to express themselves freely. For the teachers who put forward different reasonable views should be reward.

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