



Research on Collaborative Governance of Shadow Education Based on SFIC Model

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Abstract. Shadow education governance is an important measure to improve the quality of education in the post ‘double reduction’ era. The governance of shadow education is public and complex. Therefore, collaborative governance has become an important model of shadow education governance, but there are still many deficiencies in the process of collaborative governance. Based on the SFIC model, this paper analyzes the difficulties faced by the collaborative governance of shadow education from the four dimensions of starting conditions, facilitative leadership, institutional design and collaborative process, and puts forward four strategies of constructing incentive mechanism, facilitative mechanism, safeguard mechanism and communication mechanism in order to better realize the collaborative governance of shadow education.

Keywords: SFIC model · shadow education · collaborative governance

1 Introduction

Educational governance refers to the process in which state organs, social organizations, interest groups and individual citizens cooperate and interact through certain institutional arrangements to jointly manage public affairs in education [1]. Collaborative governance is a concept of the coupling of ‘coordination’ and ‘governance’. On the basis of respecting diversity, collaborative governance theory seeks to achieve the coordination of objectives and means between various subsystems. The result of complying with this rule is to achieve win-win situation for all parties.

In recent years, shadow education institution have become more and more popular in China. While meeting the diversified educational needs of students and parents, there are also problems such as uneven institutions and chaotic training market. Under the background of the educational governance concept of “co-construction, co-governance and sharing,” China’s regulation of shadow education must break the simple model of “linear structure” gradually transformed from the government’s unilateral efforts to the complex model of “multi-center collaborative governance”. At present, there are problems in the process of collaborative governance, such as insufficient motivation of participants and lack of transparency in the process. This is the optimization path to improve the education governance system and shape the new pattern of high-quality development of education in the post “double reduction” era of China.

At present, there are abundant studies on the governance of shadow education in the academic circle, but there are few studies based on the perspective of collaborative governance, and there are fewer studies using the theoretical model to explore the governance path of shadow education. Based on this, this paper uses collaborative governance theory and SFIC theory framework to depict the realistic picture of China's current shadow education governance, explore the practical dilemma of collaborative governance, and seek solutions to the dilemma. The significance of this study is to study how to unite more subjects to participate in governance, form a community of governance destiny, and provide reference for the government to better realize the goal of shadow education governance.

2 The Adaptability of Collaborative Governance Theory and Shadow Education Governance

Synergetics originates from Greek, which is meant to be 'knowledge of coordination and cooperation' [2]. Collaborative governance theory is the cross theory of synergetics and governance theory. In the state of collaborative governance, multiple governance subjects in complex social systems burst out the sum of forces beyond all independent subjects by exerting their own different abilities and roles, thus forming a joint force of governance and maximizing governance efficiency. The governance of shadow education is a public, complex and open problem, involving the interests of the government, schools, families, industry associations and other subjects. The governance model of relying solely on the single subject of the government has little effect. At present, it calls for a cooperative governance model based on the cooperation of multiple governance subjects, intergovernmental cooperation and government-society linkage.

SFIC model is a Classical Model of Cooperative Governance Theory. Ansell and Gash conducted a 'successive approximation' analysis of 137 cases from different countries and different policy areas, and obtained a model consisting of four parts: starting conditions, facilitative leadership, institutional design and collaborative process [3]. The collaborative process is the core of the whole model, while other parts set the background for it. Ansell and Gash involved a wide range of fields in case studies, fully considering the relationship between universality and particularity. Therefore, SFIC model has strong application potential and wide application range, which has been used in many different research fields. Therefore, as shown in Fig. 1, this paper takes SFIC model as the basic model of shadow education collaborative governance.

2.1 Starting Conditions

The subjects participating in coordination in shadow education governance are diversified, and the relationship between different subjects is complex. It includes not only horizontal and vertical intergovernmental relations, but also behavioral games between the government and stakeholders such as off-campus training institutions and the public. Any independent governance body can not fundamentally solve the problem, which contributed to the possibility of cooperative relations. If the resources, power and knowledge of all parties in the coordination are unequal, there may be the possibility that the interests

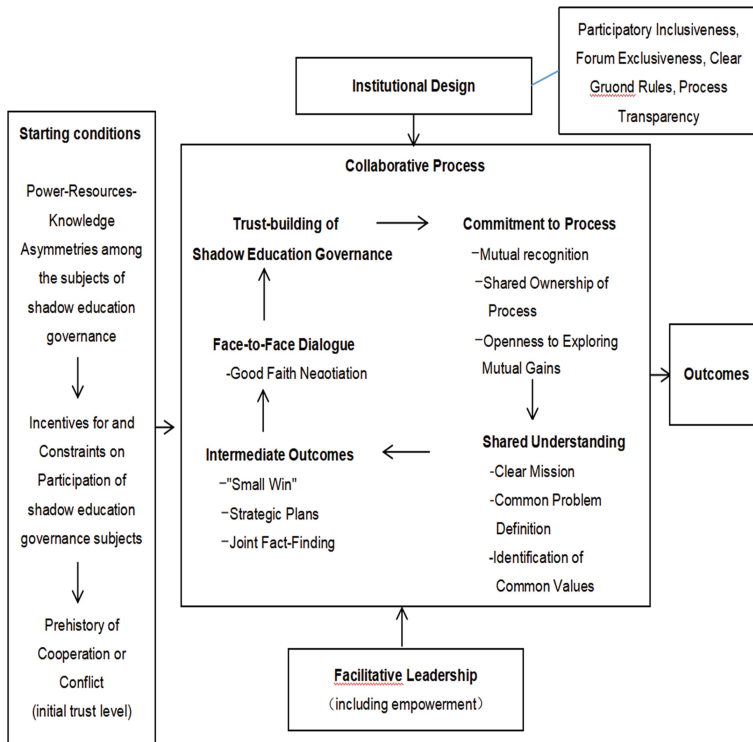


Fig. 1. Theoretical model of Collaborative Governance of Shadow Education

of the weak party are manipulated by the advantage party, which constitutes the constraints of collaborative governance. The prehistory of cooperation or conflict constitutes the constraints and incentives of the governance process of shadow education.

2.2 Facilitative Leadership

Educational administrative departments play a leading role in shadow education governance. Rayn believes that in collaborative processes, effective leadership should be defined to mean ensuring that the process is adequately managed, that technical credibility is maintained, and that the group is enabled to make credible and convincing decisions that are acceptable to all [4]. Facilitative leadership plays three roles in the collaborative governance of shadow education: (1) Coordinate and integrate multi-stakeholder relations, (2) Mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of grass-roots governments, industry associations, families and schools through authorization or decentralization, (3) Part of the institutions caused by non-compliance with the operation of a variety of labor disputes, property disputes and other cases act as an arbitrator and mediator role, resolve the friction generated in collaboration.

2.3 Institutional Design

The system design must follow three points: (1) to create conditions for all parties with different backgrounds and foundations to participate in collaboration, to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to enter the cooperative alliance. (2) to set clear and operable collaborative rules, to make clear definitions of the behavior standards, boundaries of rights and responsibilities, and problem-solving mechanisms of all participants. (3) to ensure that the process of collaboration is highly transparent, the flow of information in collaboration is smooth, and various resources are accessible in bilateral or multilateral exchanges.

2.4 Collaborative Process

A circular and cyclic structure of the collaborative process is the key to the collaborative governance of shadow education. Face-to-face communication is the starting point of building trust. After the establishment of trust, coordination is often accompanied by the transfer of power, such as transferring decision-making power to the grassroots departments and the public, clarifying the mechanism of investment and compensation of all parties, and gradually reaching a consensus. The gradual achievement of phased results in the process, such as strategic planning, joint fact-finding, organization and personnel identification, will be fed back to the collaborative process, which will ultimately achieve long-term governance.

3 Practical Dilemma of Collaborative Governance of Shadow Education

From the perspective of SFIC theoretical model, the author analyzes the current situation of collaborative governance of shadow education in China according to the initial conditions, catalytic leadership, institutional design and collaborative process, and finds that there are four major difficulties to be solved.

3.1 The Difficulty of Starting Conditions

The public, schools and industry associations are more regulated objects in collaboration, and the power, ability and resources are relatively weak. The role in the discourse system of collaborative teaching and training is marginalized, and it is easy to be controlled by the “strong side”-government, resulting in low enthusiasm for participation in collaboration.

Since the ‘double reduction’, China’s private education association has led a number of off-campus training institutions to issue proposals, and local private education associations have precedents for signing self-regulatory conventions, but most of them are guided measures, less binding, and mostly follow and echo existing policies and regulations. For off-campus training institutions, the improvement of school threshold after governance and the rise of standardized operating costs will greatly compress their profit margins. In addition, market compression will increase training costs, leading to some parents’ opposition to the governance of shadow education. The internal momentum of participation of all parties is weak, and it is difficult to build a collaborative community.

3.2 The Difficulty of Facilitative Leadership

Compared with public security, market supervision and other departments, the education administrative department lacks mature working mechanism and guarantee conditions such as evidence collection, processing and execution. Although it plays a guiding role in shadow education governance, the law enforcement function remains in the market supervision department. This shows that the education sector is weak in terms of power, capacity and resources and cannot mobilize the enthusiasm of other government functions to participate in co-governance. In addition, the governance of a single government body has limitations, resulting in insufficient mobilization of social participation, unable to reverse parents' anxiety and runaway behavior, indicating that the government's catalytic leadership role in society is insufficient.

3.3 The Difficulty of Institutional Design

Firstly, there are still many amendments to the relevant policies and regulations of shadow education governance. The coordination mechanism is still in its infancy, and there are still some problems such as insufficient overall planning and weak resultant force in some places. Secondly, there is no specific implementation rules for the participation of industry associations, families, schools and other subjects in the current policy system, and the coordination mechanism remains to be explored, which leads to no rules to follow in the process of collaborative governance. Third, the transparency of the governance process is still insufficient. Since the "double reduction", the Ministry of Education and many educational administrative departments have set "exposure stations" for illegal acts on the official website. However, the author finds that the number of illegal acts in the exposure stations is relatively small, which is different from the number of illegal cases announced locally.

3.4 The Difficulty of Collaborative Process

At present, the construction of collaborative governance mechanism is still difficult to become the mainstream cognition. The '1 + N' form of double reduction policy system belongs to the 'top-down' restrictive policy, and lacks the 'bottom-up' governance strategy and face-to-face communication platform with multiple participation and common interests. In the governance of shadow education, multi-subjects still face multiple interests game, and the conflict between each other's governance concept and behavior logic remains to be resolved. The government's high-level coordination ability is insufficient and inefficient, and the public lacks information collection and feedback channels. The off-campus training institutions continue to operate by using institutional defects and regulatory blind spots, which is difficult to form a virtuous circle of collaborative ecology.

4 Collaborative Path of Shadow Education Governance

4.1 Incentive Mechanism of Collaborative Governance of Shadow Education

First of all, the government should strengthen the publicity of shadow education governance policies and improve the internal driving force and policy perception of each

subject to participate in governance. For example, the “Overall Education Tutor System” in Shandong Province is an innovation to enhance the collaborative motivation of multiple subjects. Secondly, we should give full play to the advantages of “internal governance” of industry associations, expand the discourse power of industry associations in the governance alliance, and give full play to the third-party role of industry associations in the evaluation of governance effect. We should learn from Germany’s “governance model of combining weak supervision, high standards and strong self-discipline”, and form a government-industry association collaborative governance and internal and external synchronous governance system. Secondly, we should give full play to the advantages of “internal governance” of industry associations, expand the discourse power of industry associations in the governance alliance, and give full play to the third-party role of industry associations in the evaluation of governance effect. We should learn from Germany’s “governance model of combining weak supervision, high standards and strong self-discipline”, and form a government-industry association collaborative governance and internal and external synchronous governance system.

4.2 Facilitative Mechanism of Collaborative Governance of Shadow Education

First, the enforcement power of the educational administration should be corrected; secondly, expand the education administrative department law enforcement resources, follow the ‘who approves who is responsible, who is in charge of who is responsible’ principle of law enforcement, the relevant departments to perform their duties, accelerate the integration of law enforcement resources, improve the utilization rate of their administrative resources; finally, comprehensively improve the efficiency and effect of education law enforcement. By opening up the information barriers and punishment differences between different departments, strengthen the law enforcement convergence between departments, shorten the time of case handling and reduce the dispute of case handling.

In addition, the government should combine multiple subjects, integrate teachers, students, industry associations and parents into the governance team, shape the decision-making and supervision mechanism of flat and optimized combination, give various forms of rewards to individuals or groups with governance contributions, and give full play to the inherent advantages of the public’s self-regulation.

4.3 Safeguard Mechanism of Collaborative Governance of Shadow Education

On the one hand, the system should guarantee the formation of horizontal resultant force. Improve the education and public security, prosecution, judicial information sharing, case notification, case transfer system; on the other hand, the system should also ensure the formation of vertical resultant force. Construction of education administrative departments responsible for classification, territorial management supervision system, the focus of governance down, the shadow education governance into the village (community) grid management, according to the principle of unity of power and responsibility, to the power and resources synchronous down.

4.4 Communication Mechanism of Collaborative Governance of Shadow Education Institutions

The government should give full play to its leading role in collaborative governance and build a multilateral communication platform. Firstly, in view of the current situation that the enthusiasm for training is still high, we can learn from the practice of Beijing. The education department leads to build an online tutoring platform for primary and secondary school teachers. The government finance is used as a guarantee for funds. Students with remedial needs can connect with school teachers through the official platform. Second, formulate the minimum wage standard and welfare standard of teachers in shadow education institutions, ensure the reasonable salary and welfare of teachers, and improve the sense of belonging and stability of teachers; third, establish an intelligent evidence-based regulatory network based on data evidence, so that the information communication in the collaborative process is more smooth and accurate. Government departments can introduce third-party assessment agencies to conduct intelligent assessment of the operation of training institutions based on data evidence, and take detailed assessment reports as an objective basis for government departments to perform regulatory responsibilities and take measures. At the same time, relying on the comprehensive supervision and timely feedback of the public offline, the high integration of online intelligent supervision and offline entity supervision is realized.

5 Conclusions

Shadow governance should form a governance pattern dominated by government and participated by multiple subjects, which must be carried out in a collaborative mode. As a theoretical framework of collaborative governance, SFIC model has good adaptability to this problem. Based on the SFIC model, this paper analyzes the four dilemmas in the process of collaborative governance of shadow education in China, and puts forward the corresponding solutions. The significance of this study is to provide strategic reference for the government to improve the effectiveness of shadow education governance, and ultimately improve the educational ecology. However, this paper is an empirical research based on theory and model, and the view may be one-sided. It is hoped that academic circles can comprehensively use quantitative and qualitative methods to make more valuable research on the collaborative governance of shadow education.

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