



TECHNIUM
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Vol. 10, 2020

**A new decade
for social changes**

www.techniumscience.com

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

An Analysis on Schmidt V.A.'s Discursive Institutionalism and its implications to Taiwan's Teacher Professional Development Policy

Shu Chi Lin

National Taichung University of Education Postdoctoral Fellow of Teacher Education Research Center

lin898585@yahoo.com.tw

Abstract. This *Thesis* explored the theory, practices, and future prospects of the teacher professional development policy in Taiwan. Prof. Schmidt's discursive institutionalism pointed out an analysis of institutions must start from the ideas and discourses of the actors and must regard the coordinative political sphere of the policy for a policy idea to be communicated and become the consensus of political elites. Additionally, the top-down communicative political sphere was essential for ideas to be imparted to the general public. The length of participation in the professional policy in Taiwan was, on average, one to two years, because teachers there considered the policy unrelated to their classroom teaching. Although teachers were aware of the need to grow, few, in fact, take actions while most remained passive and stayed inertia. This *Thesis* argued that the languages of a policy idea were transmitted both by a top-down and bottom-up approach. If a ruling government fails to construct an effective discourse, its policy will not be successfully implemented.

Keywords. Discursive Institutionalism, Teacher Professional, Development, Education Policy

I. Introduction

In Taiwan, the teacher professional development policy was made by the “drafting panel for the of public junior high and elementary school teachers’ professional evaluation system”, which, after several negotiation and meetings, announced a three-year trial-implementation plan in November 2005 (from the school year of 2006 to 2008). Then in 2009, the trial plan was formalized into a ‘government action plan’ to officially initiate the policy of teacher professional evaluation. (MOE, 2006) This policy emphasized the importance of professional knowledge, devoted professionals, and professional assistance; meanwhile providing teachers with pragmatic assistance such as exams and consultations for self-diagnosis as well as the teacher counseling system in order to enhance their professional competency and teaching skills. (MOE, 2016) Almost ten years since the birth of the plan, the Ministry of Education (“MOE”) sent an instructive decree to every county and city halls on March 30, 2017. According to the letter, the teacher professional evaluation would be integrated with the “Better Teaching Quality Action Plan of All Elementary and Junior-High Schools under the 12-year Compulsory Public Education”. As a result, the “Action Plan for Teacher Professional Development” (“Action Plan”) was created.

Such integration can avoid overlapping and stacking similar policies and thereby teachers' administrative workloads; however, it is critical that whether the newly born Action Plan could facilitate teachers' professional development and how to facilitate. It is argued that, in order to successfully implement a policy, it is necessary to coordinate three aspects: a policy choice, the given political institution, and the dynamic of political powers thereof. From this viewpoint, the academic literature in Taiwan has few discussions with regard to issues such as how a teacher at first lines, administrative, and leaders understand the institutional environment; how actors balance and compromise between theories and political circumstances; also, how policy advocate transforms their belief into mobilizing collective actions and consensus. Therefore, the impetus of this *Thesis* is to discuss the concepts of discursive institutionalism of Schmidt V.A., other relevant publications and literature. With documentary research and analysis, this *Thesis* further examined the academic literature in Taiwan. Lastly, certain proposals are made for the reference of the authority and other educational practitioners. In short, this *Thesis* aims to focus on:

1. To summarize the criteria of discursive institutionalism for examining policy planning, implementation, and assessment; and
2. To contextualize the nature and measures of the teacher professional development policy by the concept idea force, communicative political sphere, foreground discursive abilities and foreground discursive abilities.

II. Promotion Measures Adopted in Taiwan after the Integration of Professional Development Policies

After 10 years of the implementation of the teacher professional evaluation policy in Taiwan (Evaluation Policy), many valuably and feasible measures and practices were created. The newly formed Action Plan synergized the original two policies and prevent the problem of overlapping and stacking. It also paid high importance to creative teaching and in-classroom realization. Below is the summary of the practices and measures resulted from the implementation of the Action Plan:

1. Resource coordination: the 10-year implementation made some positive changes in terms of teachers' professional knowledge, their devotion, and more effective administrative assistance. Still, the previous decade-long policies also inevitably generated many routine tasks. After the integration, the Action Plan synergized overlapping tasks such as school visiting, evaluation, advanced on-job training, and other administrative tasks.
2. Professional assistance: the Action Plan consolidated content of its predecessors, establishing a new career development ladder for teachers; initial stage (with 3-year experience and below), experienced stage (between 3 to 8 years of experience), transformative stage (between 8 to 15 years of experience), leadership stage (between 15 to 25 years of experience), and advisor stage (above 25 years of experience and sometimes continues after retirement). Based on this ladder, the Action Plan distinguishes two types of supporting systems: regulatory and autonomous. The regulatory system designed the essential support for teachers in accordance with their stages, e.g. teacher professional advance training act (which certified teachers for certain professional abilities) and teacher professional diagnose the system. The autonomous system, on the other hand, contained support for teachers in accordance with both their stages and their needs. The supports covered physical and digital resources, inside and outside the schools. The support can be pedagogical-oriented or academic-discipline-oriented, regardless of the form of support being either individual-based or group-based. (許籐繼 · 2019)

3. Implementation supporting groups and platforms: in addition to the typical supporting groups such as teacher professional advance training, teacher professional diagnose the system, the Action Plan allowed teachers to choose alternatives, e.g. peer coaching, learning group, peer evaluation and feedback, teacher professional learning groups, advance training programs, workshops, seminars, discipline-based learning center, regional teaching castle school, and online learning system, and other diverse formats in autonomous support systems. (許籐繼 · 2019)
4. Human resource training: the plan categorized teachers into either beginner or advanced feedback giver, teaching counselor and lecturer. (Research Engines for Regulations of MOE, 2017b)

III. The Principle and Nature of the Discursive Institutionalism

In *Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse*, Prof. Schmidt proposed the discursive institutionalism to explain the forces of discourses, the dissemination of discourses, and policy actors' back and forth between ideals and discourses. Prof. Schmidt illuminated the importance of both the underlying ideas of a policy and its discourse. These two concepts influenced political reality by functioning as the policy actors' explanation for their behavior. The concepts showed how the policy actors create and communicate the ideas (i.e. to whom) while contextualizing the circumstance how the idea was circulated (i.e. when and where). (Schmidt,2008b) His ideas received much attention from academic communities and were even regarded as the fourth school among others regarding new institutionalism. Prof. Schmidt believed that policy analysis should be made from a framework consist of five variables; e.g. the underlying ideas, coordinative discourses, communicative discourses, discursive power on both the future and the past. Below is the summary of Prof. Schmidt's ideas:

1. Ideational forces

According to Prof. Schmidt, the ideational forces referred to the process of how discourse is expressed, used to convince or even to impose on the policy actors' cognitive ideas and normative ideas, individually or collectively. As a result, a policy obtained its legitimacy and thus its foundation. The essence of the ideational forces was elaborated through three general levels: the formation of a policy idea, the planning of how to make a discourse convincing, and the dissemination of the idea, be either a philosophical idea or a paradigm shift. Additionally, in each level, cognitive ideas were distinguished from normative ideas. The former referred to any discourses concerning the policy arrangements, e.g. the definition, instructions, action plans, particular guidance, etc. The latter included non-value-based factors in creating a policy; for example, values, beliefs, social recognition. It functioned as a guideline and an anchor, brought about normative values to societies, and offered some reasons why a given policy should be appropriate. (Schmidt, 2008a/2009/2016)

Chart 3: The Types of Ideational Forces of Discursive Institutionalism

TYPES	Cognitive ideas	Normative ideas
Definition	The policy arrangements in actions of a policy	The values embedded in actions of a policy
Scope	Definition, instructions, action plans	Values, believes, and social recognition.

Function	To criticize the existing situations and offer a better and more effective new policy	To legitimize a policy during its implementation
Ways of Examining	through three levels of analysis: the idea formation, the discourse convincing process, and the idea dissemination.	

Source: This Thesis, based on Prof. Schmidt's viewpoint (2010b/2009/2016)

2. Coordinative policy sphere

Regarding the role of a discursive in policy implementation, some important questions should be asked such as “what discourses during the implementation”, “who made the discourses”, “how do the discourses disseminate”, “who legitimize the discourses”. By these questions, it is able to understand why the policy should be implemented, how policy actors did for the implementation, who the actors communicated with during the implementation, how the actors convinced and changed other's thoughts, etc. As a result, because of this emphasis on a substantial level and their relationship to discourses, a better characterization about policy changes could be made. (Schmidt,2008a) The coordinative discourse is an analysis with a certain degree of subjectivity. When different discourses would be made by actors, governmental officials, experts, consultants, interest group leaders, and powerful political elites, they would likely to openly advocate their viewpoints, defend their interests, solved their issues, and led to the adjustment of a given policy. Consequently, mutual languages and consensus were mutually created. In short, the coordinative policy sphere was where a new policy was generated by coordinating political elites to form a consensus and mutual languages.

3. Communicative Political Sphere

Discourses were circulated and communicated among people in generally two ways: coordinative discourses and communicative discourses. According to Habermas, all actions are intentional; that is, every action is based on a certain set of “objectives”, meaning, actions are made for a certain purpose by an individual with free will to obtain his/her intentional outcome, thereby a policymaker can choose and decide freely in its own capacity (Habermas, 2003). Discursive institutionalism attempted to explain the norms and policy changes thereof by analyzing the interaction between languages and reasoning of either a certain school of thought or a certain institution's circumstance, which included communications between or within events, thoughts, exchanges of materials, and institution/environments. Also, as an idea or plan is imparted by discursive interaction, a policymaker will also consider what actions others might adopt and how much justifications it has to support or to convince others, for its judgment. How “reasonable” a policy would be is proportional to how much the policy has been imparted. Moreover, Prof. Schmidt argued that a policy should be grounded on the viewpoints of elites in order to guide the world, because ordinary people will follow the elites' perspective. Thus, the communicative political sphere, a top-down approach to some extent, highlighted how leaders think about crises and how they talk to ordinary people via, among others, media coverages, television debates, internet forums, political campaigns, etc. Prof. Schmidt thought policy discourses and actions were not born by itself and thus need to be acceptable to the public, often after several negotiations and discussions. The communicative political sphere covered more than just how actors expressed and promoted their ideas; this sphere also examined how actors exchanged ideas and solutions with one another. This sphere is a way of how the public deliberates or elaborates on a policy, a symbol in which the public is able to challenge any

dictatorships and their narratives, ensuring the decision-making power not be monopolized by elites. (陳癸郁 · 2014 ; Schmidt, 2008b/2015)

In sum, the policy spheres mentioned in Prof. Schmidt's discursive institutionalism contained: (1) the coordinative policy sphere among policy-makers and (2) the communicative policy spheres between a policy-maker and the public, as below:

Chart 4: Comparison Between the Spheres in Discursive Institutionalism

Types	Coordinative policy sphere	Communicative political sphere
Definition	A co-contribution among the elite's discourses, thus their mutual languages and consensus.	A top-down communication to impart ideas on the public.
Scope (Issuers)	Policy-makers, officials, scholars, experts, consultants, leaders of interest groups.	Political leaders
Scope (Participants)	Political elites	Ordinary people
Forms	Alliances, recognized communities, constructs of knowledge.	Media coverages, televised debates. Internet, political campaign.
Functions	To construct a mutual viewpoint and language for a new political idea.	To let new policy and discourse become the norms of the public.
Explanation on discourses and institutions	Discursive spheres gradually influence between the response to policy and the functions of institutions, back and forth, in a spiral dynamic.	

Source: This Thesis, based on Prof. Schmidt's viewpoint (2008b/2014)

4. Background ideational abilities

When examining a policy in an operative manner, that is, in more precise and detailed terms with more systematical, consistent, and compatible principles, it would give us comprehensible signs to better understand a policy. Explaining the nature of ideas and discourses helps to illustrate the policy rationales as well as the interests and values of the actors within an institution. The background ideational abilities explain how actors internalize the norms and formulate their subjective understanding. (Schmidt, 2008b) By looking into how the actors impart ideas, their intentions can be discovered; more importantly, the discrepancy between actors' intentions and between the factor causing policy changes. The ideational abilities refer to a set of abilities of how a policy operates and respond, an internal sense institution of a policy. This institution comprised of thoughts, speeches, and behaviors to contextualize human's habitual behaviors and instinctual compliance with the current practices. (Searle, 1995; Bourdieu, 1990) A policy, or a political idea, expectedly convinces other elites and the public and thus can become a new norm, only when actors use the ideational ability to formulate both an institutional situation and future institutional planning. Consequently, a reasonable institution is an outcome that is inferred from the actors' background ideational abilities.

5. Foreground discursive abilities

A policy change transpired when existing policy becomes dysfunctional; as a result, the policy blueprint and new planning based on the ideational abilities eventually stimulate elites and become accepted by the public after one and another negotiation, debates, and discussion. As such, this type of ability to pave visions and rosy future to the ordinary people is defined as “foreground discursive abilities.” (Schmidt, 2015) This type of discursive abilities is a type of capacity by which actors use the discourses and communications to explain the crux of changes in political actions; this crux then influences how a policy moves forward. This type of capacity is an interactive behavior to actualize inner ideas into actions. In Prof. Schmidt’s viewpoint, both the foreground and background abilities were inherent from actors, which explains why a policy change was not always caused by external factors. Actors’ discourses and interpretation inside can give a reasonable explanation as to why there is a change and thus influence the public’s imagination and compliance toward a policy. Below is the summary of the internal forces in the discursive intuitionism.

Chart 5: The Inherent Abilities in Discursive Institutionalism

Types	Background ideational abilities	Foreground discursive abilities
Definition	Actors’ habitual actions and follows the current practices formulate their subjective understanding toward a institutional situation.	Actors use discourses and communications to influence how a policy developed and proceeded.
Scope	Actors’ internalized norms and customs	Actors’ plan inside to explain actions outside
Function	To arrange a beautiful policy blueprint	To transform an idea inside into a collective consensus and action.
Explanation on discourses and institutions	How actors’ discourses inside describe, interpret, construct and influence the groups’ imagination and response to an institution, a transformation from inner factors into outer factors to incrementally cause institution changes.	

Source: This Thesis, based on Prof. Schmidt’s viewpoint (2008b/2014)

IV. Analysis of the Professional Development Policy from the Discursive Institutionalism

This *Thesis* discussed how in Taiwan the evaluation policy was implemented in three phases: the solid growth phase, the expedite expansion phase, and the reconstruction phase. Below is further analysis of the phases from ideational forces, coordinative policy sphere, communicative political sphere, foreground discursive abilities, and background ideational abilities. The purpose is to explore how at different times the evaluation policy differed in its planning, implementation, and assessment (especially how actors disseminate their policy ideas, imparted what kind of explanations to policy changes and exercised their powers.)

1. Solid growth phase (2006-2012)

Since the introduction of the evaluation policy in 2006, the policy has highlighted professional development and democratic voluntary participation as two core concepts. The purpose is to effectively improve student’s learning and performance with better administrative efforts, methods of self-reflection, and peer collaborations. The use of power in this phase is the first

type of power use, that is, using ideas to exercise powers. Before a new policy idea is adopted, it is necessary to explain the “appropriateness” of that policy and, if adopted, the possibility for that policy to change society for the better. Only so, a new policy will be accepted and will create a substantial impact. The evaluation policy targeted to diagnose what professional aspects teachers need to grow. Then, this idea of evaluation was born and used to plan how to convince the public so as to gain the recognition of the teachers at the front lines and the public. Of all ideational forces, the paradigms, and philosophical ideas of a policy are the most fundamental, most abstract, and least evolving. Thus, MOE emphasized that it was neither mandatory for schools or teachers to opt-in the implementation of the evaluation policy nor to assist with resources. For the purpose of a stable, firm development at this phase, some measures adopted to transform the ideas into discourses were: 1. For the promotion, the standard way to implement the policy is by way of trial implementation; 2. for developing local communities, the school-based learning communities were adopted; 3. regarding the evaluation criteria, adjustments and updates were made. Since the objective of the policy at this phase was to consolidate teachers’ consensus and recognition; thus, the idea “would rather be slow than fail” was emphasized and every teacher was allowed to formulate its own way for professional growth.

The idea of the evaluation policy at this phase served to provide a set of basic background ideas regarding their societal implication, such as normative recognitions, values, and beliefs. For an idea to become policy, the idea must have a certain degree of feasibility in terms of administration, politics, and policy-making. Yet, an idea usually doesn’t last long enough. Given this, the evaluation policy consisted of formulating ideas and educating about the plan content in order to create a mutual understanding of the core of an idea. Still, front-line teachers did not fully embrace the evaluation policy. Unfortunately, the core of the policy idea was understood differently between the public and the government, influencing the development and objectives of the policy.

In this phase, considering theoretical viewpoints, academic researches, practices, and societal needs, several negotiations and communicative spheres were employed for teacher’s professional growth. Led by elites for justifying policy ideas and achieving consensus, this approach could, in fact, be expected given that there was such a discrepancy of understanding. In sum, during this phase the policy demonstrated the nature of idea forces, discourses, force patterns from the discursive institutionalism, as below:

Chart 9 Summary of the Idea Force, Discursive Types, Dynamic Patterns from Discursive Institutionalism in the Stable Growth Phase

	Idea Forces			Coordinative Discursive	Communicative Discursive	Background Abilities	Foreground Abilities
Solid Growth	Policy Formulation	Persuasion	Idea Promotion				
Phase	✓		✓	✓		✓	

Source: This Thesis

2. Expedite expansion phase (2013-2018)

Theoretically, discourses occurred both in top-down and in bottom-up; in empirical cases, elites almost always only took the top-down approach to dominate the process; the institutionalization of a policy idea was completely informed of the ideas and discourses of the elites. (陳滢郁 · 2014a ; Schmidt,2010a,2010b, 2012)

Oppositions against the elites from rivals, civil society groups, and private sectors were mostly shown via referendum, opinion polls, stock market performance, protests, labor strikes, and marches. (Schmidt, 2013) Years after the introduction, the evaluation policy gained its equilibrium, internally and externally; whereas the implementation encountered difficulties, e.g. lack of publicity, of administrative resources and education guidance systems, insufficient trust among peers and their dialogues, questionable validity and credibility of evaluation criteria and tools, as well as low teachers' participation ratio. (李清偉 · 2015 ; 王素貞 · 2012)

Introduce a policy needs much time in the beginning; expectedly, slower acceptance at this time was foreseeable. Later on, the implementation became increasingly expedient and smooth. Why? This must require further optimization of the effectiveness and also an overhaul of administration, politics, and policy-making. For the long-existing evaluation, the policy could offer ideas and objectives for teachers' professional growth, in practice, the effectiveness and progress were far from obvious. The MOE demonstrated an unprecedented determination for the implementation; a bottom-up approach based on constructive consensus which spreads throughout the front-line teachers gradually. For expanding the policy, several changes were made: one, decentralizing powers for regional autonomy, two, integrating platforms while promoting the website "Resources and Platforms for Elementary and Junior High Teachers' Professional Growth," three, Reinforcing the communication among front-line teachers with regular meetings, four, setting up "Professional Development Centers for Deans and Teachers" at every city/county, five, regularly demonstrating certain selected outstanding models, six, hosting training workshops, seven, Encouraging teachers to form professional learning communities, eight, Making relevant subsidies flexible with additions such as reimbursements for general purpose, for equipment and personnel, and lastly, simplifying instructions and rules of the official teachers' professions criteria of the 105th year to only three major dimensions, ten criteria, and twenty-eight check items. (MOE, 2017a)

Prof. Schmidt explained the communicative discourse process, in essence, was a process of public persuasion. In this phase, it was to intentionally and appropriately to impart the ideas to the society. By more communications, regular meetings, teacher professional centers, and workshops, the purpose was to obtain a collective consensus and thus to adjust government policy. In this phase, both the number and ratio with respect to teacher participation obviously doubled up. For a long time, the power to speak about the policy was dominated by the elites and actors, both of who used discursive communication; meanwhile, their audience was from the public to the front-line teachers. All of these seemed to bear some effect. Still, did the double number really initiate teachers to grow at their own initiatives? Did the result make teachers feel supported for their growth? Also, the implementation became even more challenging after a MOE reorganization, which not only caused personnel turnover, measure changes, and expatiated implementation but also led to in-fights among actors and promoters during this period of "communicative political sphere." Under the circumstance, although the policy still continued, the backlashes and criticisms grew further. Below is the summary of how the policy manifested the idea force, discursive types, dynamic patterns from discursive institutionalism in this phase.

Chart 10 Summary of the Idea Force, Discursive Types, Dynamic Patterns from Discursive Institutionalism in the Expansion Phase

	Idea Forces			Coordi native Discur sive	Commu nicative Discursi ve	Backg round Abiliti es	Foreg round Abiliti es
Expa nsion Phase	Policy Formu lation	Persuas ion	Idea Promotion				
	✓	✓			✓		✓

Source: This Thesis

3. Reconstruction phase (2019-present)

On October 4, 2016, the MOE issued a news release to announce the transformation of the evaluation policy, into the teacher professional support system (MOE E-paper, 2016) In 2017, the evaluation policy was integrated with the “Better Teaching Quality Action Plan of All Elementary and Junior-High Schools under the 12-year Compulsory Public Education”. As a result, the Action Plan for Teacher Professional Development was created, unifying the multiple systems into a singular overarching mechanism. In this reconstruction phase, the main purpose was to make the idea of teacher professional development as teachers’ initiatives. The elites thus consistently showed their welcoming attitude to front-line teachers for their difficulties. Also, another purpose was to lessen the administrative burden of cities/counties, schools, and teachers. Many of the various plans regarding teachers’ professional development under different agencies were combined. For management, standardized process and authority hierarchy and division were formalized in regulations and policy. A special channel solely for reimbursing cities/counties was designated and such subsidies would be permitted soon after the application without subsequent applications. The power use in this phase was another type of power use, that is, using powers in ideas. Multiple measures and arrangements were made as above-mentioned to form structures and frameworks with respect to teacher professional growths and also to simplify the processes while avoiding overlapping efforts. Further, clear and official information concerning the policy for professional development was formulated to enhance the education practitioners’ participation. The measures adopted were: 1. Providing teachers with versatile professional development paths in accordance with their career stages; 2. Encouraging the collaboration on curriculum preparation among schools at the same or different cities/counties; and 3. Arranging regional educational counseling on teachers’ advance training or on-site assistance offered by teachers’ training universities. Still, the question is that was the teachers’ expectation and need to be fulfilled by injecting new resources and measure into the same existing foundation? After every city/county began to control the wheel, we see polarization in promoting the professional growth; some returned to pretentious posturing again while some others promisingly seized the opportunities to develop a new education landscape. Attitude toward policy integration was the key.

According to Prof. Schmidt (2014), the reason for failures was beyond institutional problems; it largely involved with the leadership style—how they thought to handle a crisis and talked to ordinary people. Elumbre (2014) applied the discursive institutionalism to explain the regionalism shown during the development of ASEAN. He accentuated the concept “a coherent narrative” which incrementally evolved conceptually in the process of idea exchanges. Policy

inevitably needs dynamic adjustment but both negotiations and communicative spheres played important an role in subsequent adjustments.

The most challenging part of a policy was to mobilize members' mutual commitment and collective actions. Their substantial and meaningful realization can occur only when they reflect and communicate in an ideal discursive sphere. A discursive sphere could expiate a distortion or misunderstanding. Granted, a place without dominant power, full of reflections and reasoning as well as equality and rational discussion might be a utopian, i.e. an ideal type, unrealistic in reality.

However, an open, public, collaborative approach would help integration essentially. For ten years, although the evaluation policy did not cause a fad like the "Flipped Classroom Teaching", undeniably it brought transparency and improvements into classrooms; many teachers progressed by observing others in an open classroom. Varying in auditing, discussing, competing, collaborating, teachers learned new horizons in open classrooms. Progress will happen by more learning, comparing, reducing shortcoming. Whatever approach for professional growth, it was all for the same purpose, a better teacher professional growth. A good policy discourse would lead us to understand how to transform the policy content, how to relate to the problems we experienced at the actual circumstance in schools, thereby a meaningful interpretation and understanding. (黃新民 · 2018 ; 黃瑞祺 · 2001)

V. The Challenges of Promoting Teachers Professional Development in Taiwan

Below summarize the existent structural restrictions which impaired the substantial effects of the professional development policy to date.

1. The existent structural restrictions affected the true meaning of community learning. Open classroom and class observation with professional feedback were recognized as the most effective way for teachers to improve their teaching techniques. In response to the new curriculum guideline, teachers and deans need to teach in open classrooms each semester. Many schools have used funding from the Action Plan to conduct lesson preparation, observation, discussion, professional dialogue, and other related activities. All of these transformed the original professional community of teachers into a school community and a cross-school community. The new model of community emphasized the implementation of professional practice and effective teaching. However, most teachers are accustomed to a top-down (led-by-the-bureaucracy) approach for their growth and training. Such tendency caused the texts and practices about professional development policy to be simplified and understood as a mere new skill to be learned, ignoring the philosophical perspectives that are rooted in different teaching discourses and practical issues in teaching practice. Seeing obtaining certification as the sole purpose, teachers ignored their professional growth.

2. Differences in promoting the teacher professional development by city/ county governments The MOE gave the leadership of the professional development of teachers to the county/city governments. The Ministry chose to play a supportive role, providing both intangible and substantial resources. In the hope that by allowing the regional halls to control, teachers and schools would find their own suitable path of development. This decentralized strategy with the central government as a supporter was to recognize that both the top and lower tier of an administration are entities, thereby providing effectiveness and guidance while better conforming to the social values and expectations. However, the degree of familiarity and clarity

varied greatly among the officials in different counties/cities toward the professional development policy. One reason is that the counties/cities were not as active in promoting professional growth; second, having diversified channels for teacher professional growth, some counties/cities might not rely on the policies promoted by the central government as the main force for propelling the professional growth.

3. Most teachers still adopted a passive attitude toward professional growth

In recent years, the education scenes in counties/cities reflected an excessive administrative burden on schools and teachers, for primary and secondary schools were overwhelmed by an overload of administrative works, visits, evaluations, and studies unrelated to teaching. Previous as the commander, the MOE, and the local education offices/departments now changed into supporter and assessor. Such shift resulted in an overflow of various teacher professional development systems, each of which can be viewed differently. Because of this diversified and complex systems, a quantified measure on the systems was very difficult. The findings of this *Thesis* suggested that most teachers still held a passive, observant attitude towards the idea of professional growth. Although these teachers were aware of the need to grow professionally, few took initiatives proactively.

VI. Conclusion

In Taiwan, the professional development policy provided teachers with better models, alternative strategies, and practices for their professional growth. While teachers needed professional growth, the problems of the policy implementation, in reality, were complicatedly intertwined. Prof. Schmidt's discursive institutionalism introduced the concepts of ideas and discourses to highlight the actors' autonomy and subjectivity, who brought forth inherent dynamics and factors inside an institution to influenced a policy change. As shown that in Taiwan, the main cause of the cessation of the professional development policy was the on-site teachers did not reckon any benefit of the policy. They usually opted out after one or two years, on average, because the policy appeared remotely related to their classroom teaching. After participating, their burden outweighed the benefits of growth and learning. Some teachers' groups thus demanded the cessation of the policy. Prof. Schmidt's discursive institutionalism emphasized that for obtaining a consensus of political elites, the coordinative policy sphere was necessary. It was also essential to focus on the top-down communicative political sphere so the ideas can be conveyed to the general public. From Taiwan's experience in promoting teacher professional development policies, the discourse of policy ideas was no longer a top-down one-way transmission but a communicative political sphere that also included bottom-up communication. For teachers' internalization of professional growth, administrative bodies must promulgate effective policies and regulations. Schools and relevant organizations also must cooperate with one another. If the ruling government fails to construct an effective discourse of the policy, the policy will not be successfully implemented. The moment in which a direction in education was formed and in which teachers' lesson preparation and observation are based on improving students' learning performance and their teaching quality and practical knowledge, teachers' professional development will occur under such mutual recognition, experiences, and values.

References

- [1] Su Zhen Wang (2012). The status quo of implementation of the National Primary School Teacher Professional Development Assessment, dilemmas and responsive strategy. *School Administration Bi-monthly*, 77, 182-215.

- [2] Ching Wai Lee (2015). New campus movement creates new value in campus space. *Taiwan Educational Review Monthly*, 4(3), 102-105.
- [3] Lin Xian Ming. (2017). The 1992 consensus's transformation and extension: from the new system theory to the theory of discourse on institution. *National Development Research*, 16(2), 101-152.
- [4] Ministry of Education (2006). *The Subsidized Pilot implementation of teacher professional development evaluation*. Order Tai Guo (4) No. 0950039877D dated April 3, 2006.
- [5] Ministry of Education (2016). *Ten years of professionalism for teachers - developing teachers' professionalism to teaching in the future*. Taipei City, Taiwan.
- [6] Ministry of Education (2017a). *An analysis of the situation of professional development assessment of primary and secondary school teachers*. Taipei City.
- [7] Ministry of Education's Laws and Regulation Inquiry System (2017b). *Guidelines of Ministry of Educations subsidized program for the practice of teachers' professional development*. (Last visit: March 12, 2020, from <https://edu.law.moe.gov.tw/LawContent.aspx?id=GL000567>)
- [8] Ministry of Education Newsletter (2016). *Teacher Professional Development Assessment will transform into a Teacher Professional Development Support System since the 106th school year*. (Last visit: January 26, 2017, from http://www.edu.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=9E7AC85F1954DDA8&s=55BD57743E88E277)
- [9] Ten Gi Xu (2019). Exploring the structure of support systems for primary and secondary school teachers' professional development: perspectives on the intersection of norms and autonomy. *Taiwan Education Review Monthly*, 8(2), 01-06.
- [10] Yi Yu Chen (2014a). An evaluation of Schmidt's "Discourse on Institutionalism" and its implications for policy making. *Taiwan International Studies Quarterly*, 10(4), 145-179.
- [11] Yi Yu Chen (2014b). Ratiocination of the State and the Function of the State: a Historical Sociological Perspective. *Global Political Review*, 48, 179-206.
- [12] Xin Ming Huang (2018). Rethink the possibility of promoting the support system and strategy and administrative business of the teacher professional development. *Taiwan Educational Review Monthly*, 2019, 8(2), 15-21.
- [13] Rui Qi Huang (2001). *Critical Sociology*. Taipei: Liwen Publishing Group.