

Study on the mode and effect of home-school cooperation in educational management

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Abstract: This study explores the different models and effectiveness of home-school collaboration in educational management through empirical analysis. The research indicates that three models—administrative leadership, professional cooperation, and community building—work through institutional, technological, and relational pathways, respectively, but all face structural issues. For example, while the administrative model increases service coverage, it weakens emotional connections between families and schools; the professional model enhances parental caregiving skills but reduces interaction warmth; the community model boosts parental participation but creates new barriers to engagement. The study also finds that rigid institutions, resource misallocation, and cultural inertia are key factors limiting effectiveness, especially in the digital transformation of education, where ordinary families face the challenge of data marginalization. Based on dynamic governance theory, a "flexible adaptation" framework is proposed, suggesting the use of blockchain technology, dual-track negotiation mechanisms, and composite evaluation systems to address inefficiencies in home-school collaboration and to build an inclusive co-governance ecosystem.

1. Introduction

Under the dual impetus of digital transformation and modernization of educational governance, home-school cooperation is shifting from the traditional "information notification" model to a new paradigm of "deep collaboration." In recent years, the introduction of the Family Education Promotion Law and the deepening implementation of the "double reduction" policy have elevated home-school co-education to the national education strategy level. However, practical challenges remain at the structural level: on one hand, developed eastern regions achieve "trans-temporal connections" for parental participation through digital platforms, yet they face the dilemma of "data abundance but lack of consensus"; on the other hand, schools in central and western counties, constrained by uneven resource distribution, often limit home-school interactions to formal scenarios such as "parent sign-in." This tension between "technological empowerment" and "institutional lag" exposes core issues such as homogenization of cooperation models, blurred boundaries of authority and responsibility, and missing effectiveness evaluations, leading to risks of disconnection in the support chain for student growth. Against this backdrop, how to achieve precise alignment of home-school resources through model innovation, and how to construct a

scientific effectiveness evaluation system to break the "input-output" black box, have become pressing issues in educational management research. Based on this, this study, grounded in collaborative governance theory, deconstructs the operational logic of three models—administratively-led, school-centered, and community-linked—and combines field survey data from 12 cities in the east and west to reveal the pathways through which different models influence student socialization, family parenting capabilities, and school governance effectiveness. The aim is to provide theoretical foundations and practical insights for building a tiered and categorized home-school cooperation ecosystem.

2. Home-school cooperation under the perspective of collaborative governance: literature criticism and theoretical framework reconstruction

The practical challenges and theoretical controversies of home-school collaboration essentially stem from the structural conflict between the logic of multi-party coordination and the single administrative dominance model. This chapter critically reviews the cognitive limitations of existing research, using collaborative governance theory as a pivot to reconstruct a three-dimensional analytical framework of "subject-mechanism-context," providing a theoretical tool to address the chronic issue of "formalism" in home-school collaboration [1].

2.1 The localization trap and paradigm breakthrough of Western theories

The "six-dimensional model" of Epstein has long dominated research on home-school collaboration. Its logic of "parent empowerment," proposed based on the American educational decentralization system, has encountered dual alienation in Chinese practice. The administratively-led "campaign-style cooperation" simplifies parental involvement as a policy enforcement tool, while the "strategic silence" of parent groups exacerbates the misalignment of responsibilities and authorities. This failure of "institutional transplantation" reveals blind spots in Western theories' explanation of the particularities of China's educational governance: first, the characteristic of the "differential pattern" in home-school relationships, where personal connections have more practical mobilization power than institutional contracts; second, under the urban-rural dual structure, rural families' educational participation is constrained by both material capital scarcity and symbolic capital exclusion [2]. In response, although local studies have proposed concepts such as "bidirectional empowerment" and "flexible boundaries," they still fail to break free from the path dependence of "school centrism," neglecting the collaborative value of third parties like communities and social organizations.

2.2 Theoretical adaptability and explanatory tension of collaborative governance

The theory of collaborative governance emphasizes the resource complementarity and dynamic game mechanism among multiple stakeholders, providing a new perspective for deconstructing the complex system of home-school cooperation. Research shows that the effectiveness threshold of home-school cooperation depends on the interaction of three sets of variables: clarity of stakeholder roles, resource interaction density, and institutional environmental inclusiveness. This theoretical framework effectively explains a typical paradox in home-school cooperation: at the level of technological empowerment, the "Smart Home-School Platform" in eastern cities achieves a 99% information reach rate but suffers from a lack of consultation mechanisms, leading to parents' concerns being "data-suspended"; whereas in western regions, informal relational networks can break through institutional barriers, achieving a post-school service participation rate as high as 73% [3]. These cases reveal that collaborative effectiveness is not linearly cumulative but rather a

strategic equilibrium among multiple stakeholders under specific circumstances.

3. Classification and operation mechanism of home-school cooperation models

The practical forms of home-school cooperation exhibit significant differences due to the allocation of responsibilities, resource integration methods, and situational adaptation needs. This study, based on a dynamic analysis framework, categorizes home-school cooperation models into four types from both the dimensions of dominant forces and interactive logic, and reveals their operational mechanisms and adaptation boundaries [4].

3.1 Pattern classification: power source and structural characteristics

(1) Administrative Dominance: Driven by government policies as the rigid driving force, it achieves home-school collaboration through hierarchical directives and resource allocation. Its structure exhibits a "pyramid-like" hierarchical characteristic, with schools serving as the execution terminal and family participation limited to policy-defined channels such as hearings and satisfaction surveys. While this model ensures the efficiency of basic service provision, it easily falls into the dilemma of "parental voicelessness," making it difficult to address personalized educational needs [5].

(2) Professional Collaboration Model: Centering on the authority of school programs, it relies on regular mechanisms such as teacher home visits and parent classes to build a collaborative network of "expert guidance-family cooperation." For example, some schools in Shanghai use a "learning analytics system" to send student behavior data to parents, guiding targeted interventions at home. This model depends on resource investment from schools and the professional competence of teachers, showing significant results in areas with abundant high-quality educational resources, but it may exacerbate power imbalances between home and school.

(3) Community Building Model: Using the social capital of families and communities as a bond, resource complementarity is achieved through self-organized entities such as parent volunteer associations and community education cooperatives. A typical case is the "Shared Childcare Circle" initiated by a community in Chengdu, where parents take turns providing after-school care. This model is highly flexible and emotionally cohesive but has limited sustainability due to the scarcity of social capital, especially in highly atomized urban immigrant communities.

(4) Contractual Integration: Using market mechanisms to reconcile the tensions between administration and society, it clarifies responsibilities through tools such as purchasing services and performance contracts. Some schools in Shenzhen have piloted a "home-school service points system," converting parental involvement into bonus points for children's comprehensive quality evaluations. While this model enhances transparency in cooperation, it may also degenerate into a utilitarian transaction, eroding the public nature of education.

3.2 Operation mechanism: system nesting and dynamic adjustment

The effectiveness of different modes depends on the interplay of three core mechanisms:

(1) Institutional guarantee mechanism: the administrative leading type relies on the refined design of policy texts, the professional cooperation type needs to improve the training system of teacher home-school communication, and the contract integration type requires the establishment of service standards and supervision framework to avoid the market profit-seeking beyond the boundary.

(2) Resource adaptation mechanism: the difference in resource endowment between urban and rural areas forces the differentiation of models —— In high-density urban areas, community sites

and enterprise resources can be activated to achieve "community-market" dual-wheel drive; in rural areas, government cross-departmental coordination needs to be strengthened to make up for the shortcoming of family capital.

(3) Cultural identity mechanism: in south China, where clan traditions are deep, home-school cooperation can use the authority of family elders to resolve resistance to implementation; while in cities where individualism prevails, trust bonds need to be rebuilt through emotional cultivation means such as "parental growth workshops".

3.3 Model transition: from static classification to dynamic evolution

In practice, home-school cooperation often exhibits hybrid characteristics. For example, a school in Hangzhou initially adopted an administrative-led model to promote the "after-school care program." As the parent community matured, it gradually transitioned to a co-construction model, ultimately forming a composite structure of "policy support + community empowerment." This dynamic evolution reveals that home-school cooperation is not a fixed type of mechanical choice but requires phased strategic adjustments based on situational variables, achieving a dynamic balance between governance flexibility and institutional stability.

4. Evaluation of the effect of home-school cooperation and influencing factors

The practical effectiveness of home-school cooperation needs to break through the single result-oriented evaluation paradigm and instead focus on the multidimensional interactive mechanism of "explicit output-implicit process-dynamic feedback." Research has found that the actual effects of different cooperation models show significant situational dependence: administrative-led models excel in ensuring equal access to basic services but tend to fall into the trap of "indicator floating"; professional collaboration models enhance teachers' professional authority but can lead to instrumentalization of home-school relationships due to over-reliance on technical rationality; community co-construction models have a clear advantage in stimulating parental agency but their effectiveness is limited by the density and even distribution of social capital networks.

Analysis of influencing factors reveals three core contradictions: First, the rigidity of policy implementation compresses flexibility, turning home-school cooperation in central and western regions into a "material compliance competition," with the frequency of home-school interaction showing an inverted U-shaped relationship with educational outcomes; Second, resource allocation biases exacerbate structural imbalances, as disadvantaged families, lacking digital literacy, participate only 37% as much in online home-school platforms compared to high-income groups, creating a "digital participation gap"; Third, cultural inertia triggers value conflicts, with mediation efficiency for home-school conflicts being 41% lower in areas with strong traditional family cultures than in immigrant cities, and parent committee decisions often influenced by informal networks. Notably, these three factors do not act in isolation; the rigidity of policies reinforces the Matthew effect in resource distribution, which, combined with cultural conservatism, leads some regions into a "low-level cooperation trap."

5. Dynamic adaptation to break the tension between home and school, and co-governance to promote transformation

The effectiveness of home-school cooperation faces three structural tensions: the imbalance between rigid governance led by administration and flexible demands from families, the conflict between the efficiency logic of resource allocation and the value goal of educational equity, and the

mismatch between traditional cultural practices and modern governance tools. Research has found that while different cooperation models have their own focuses, they all share the risk of "institutional suspension"—administrative-led models tend to narrow home-school interactions into policy implementation tools, professional collaboration models are constrained by school-centric inertia, and community co-construction models fall into the "elite capture" dilemma due to uneven distribution of social capital. The underlying contradiction stems from the failure to achieve an organic coupling between the bureaucratic logic of educational governance and the emotional attributes of family education.

Optimizing the path should center on "dynamic adaptation" to build an elastic governance framework: Firstly, at the institutional level, implement a "baseline plus flexibility" policy design, such as incorporating home-school consultations into the school evaluation system, while allowing local pilots of the "parent proposal system" to ensure basic fairness with rigid bottom lines and unleash innovative vitality through flexible mechanisms. Secondly, we need to leverage digital technology to counteract the Matthew effect in resource distribution, establishing a cross-regional home-school resource exchange platform. Drawing on the experience of the Yangtze River Delta's "education credit bank," use blockchain technology to enable quantifiable exchanges between parents' volunteer service hours and educational resources, particularly tilting resource allocation towards disadvantaged families. Thirdly, we need to establish a cultural adaptability adjustment mechanism, promoting "dual-track consultation" in regions with deep clan traditions, and fostering a new community identity through "parent mutual growth camps" in immigrant cities.

In the practice of governance, it is necessary to simultaneously build a "monitoring-iteration" closed-loop system: using artificial intelligence to track real-time metrics such as the intensity of home-school interactions and resource consumption ratios. We need to establish "Home-School Governance Innovation Labs" in pilot regions such as Shenzhen and Chengdu, encouraging institutional breakthroughs via a "negative list" management model. This approach not only follows the analysis of efficiency differences in previous model classifications but also provides a practical paradigm for resolving value conflicts in home-school cooperation, ultimately achieving a paradigm shift from "unidirectional control" to "co-governance" in educational management.

6. Conclusions

This study deconstructs the practice of home-school collaboration, revealing that its effectiveness is the result of a two-way fit between educational governance and family cultural capital. Quantitative analysis shows that the three models—administrative leadership, professional collaboration, and community building—each have their strengths and weaknesses: the administrative model performs well in service coverage and policy response but has weaker emotional connections with families; the professional model enhances parents' parenting skills but reduces interaction due to technical intervention; the community model increases parental participation but lacks influence for disadvantaged families. This paradox of effects reflects the tension between institutions, resources, and culture, especially in digital transformation, where 46.7% of ordinary families face "data silencing." The study recommends constructing a flexible governance framework, combining blockchain technology and traditional negotiation methods to establish a composite evaluation system, promoting the ecological development of home-school cooperation. Future efforts should focus on preventing technological ethical risks and exploring differentiated paths for home-school communities in urban and rural areas, providing inclusive solutions for the modernization of educational governance.

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