Integrating Sociology of Education and Public Governance into School Administration Teacher Education

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***Abstract*—This research aims to integrate sociology of education and public governance frameworks to provide guidance for teacher education in response to the current challenges facing school administration. Through an interpretive paradigm of qualitative research and the application of documentary analysis, this research addresses the question: "How should teacher education cultivate teachers so that they can become effective school administrators after entering the school system?" The findings indicate that teacher education should actively integrate administrative competencies, governance literacy, and ethical practice, enabling pre-service teachers to develop the knowledge, dispositions, and capacities needed to navigate the complexities of school administration during their preparatory stage. Effective school administrators are not merely executors of policy; they are governance practitioners who, within complex social contexts, value diversity and inclusion, coordinate multiple stakeholders, and uphold an ethic of care as the core of their practice.**

***Keywords*—public governance, school administration, teacher education, sociology of education**

I. Introduction

School education is confronting an unprecedented set of multiple structural challenges. The wave of digital transformation and frequent changes in educational policy have made the governance environment in which school administrators operate ever more dynamic and fraught with uncertainty. As contemporary society grows increasingly complex, dynamic, and diverse, the interdependence between social and political systems continues to intensify, and traditional top-down hierarchical governance models have become inadequate for addressing the realities of multiple actors, cross-boundary resource integration, and the need for real-time responses to change [1]. This observation also applies to schools. School administrators are no longer merely responsible for implementing policy directives. Instead, they coordinate multiple stakeholders—including parents, teachers, communities, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations—while balancing justice, care, and effectiveness [2–4]. While Shulman's concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) has become a core concept in teacher education—emphasizing that teachers need not only to master subject knowledge but also to understand how to effectively transform that knowledge into forms comprehensible to students—this orientation proves insufficient for addressing the multifaceted governance challenges that teachers increasingly face as they take on administrative roles such as department head, director, or principal in the years following their entry into schools [5].

Shulman [5] posed a profound question: which teacher education programs best enhance student learning outcomes, and how might teacher education significantly increase the likelihood of improved teacher performance? This inquiry also points toward the fundamental question of whether teacher education consciously prepares teachers for the administrative roles they may assume in the future. In responding to a continuously changing educational environment, administrator preparation programs need to integrate curricular innovation and structural adjustment, going beyond the transmission of techniques to cultivate administrative professionals capable of critical thinking and ethical judgment [6]. From the theoretical perspective of sociology of education, schools are not only sites of knowledge transmission but also complex organizations permeated by power relations, cultural reproduction, and dynamics of social construction. Durkheim [7] established the functionalist foundations of education as a mechanism of social integration, arguing that the purpose of education is to instill common values and norms, thereby maintaining social order and cohesion. Bernstein [8] further analyzed the profound connections among social class, patterns of language use, and educational processes, suggesting that teachers need not only to reflect on students' modes of learning but also to critically re-examine their own pedagogical practices and the cultural capital assumptions embedded therein. Ball's in-depth research on the process of educational policy formation analyzed how the direction of educational reform is shaped through the competition of multiple interests—a perspective that reminds school administrators that the policies they implement are not value-neutral but are politically charged outcomes of

Manuscript received September 29, 2026; accepted October 30, 2026; published November 12, 2026.

choice [9]. Giroux [10] proposed new theoretical directions in "resistance and education", incorporating a profound understanding of power, resistance, and human agency, arguing that school administration should actively create environments that support human agency in order to advance social justice. Apple [11] likewise highlighted the centrality of the "politics of meaning" in critically-oriented sociology of education, directing school administrators not to ignore the disparities among different groups' interests and the cultural politics embedded in their decisions. These insights from sociology of education collectively point toward the sociological sensitivity that school administrators must possess: the ability to read the power structures within the school context, to understand the educational significance of multicultural differences, and to maintain a commitment to social justice in complex institutional settings. Riehl [3] similarly proposed that administrators should pursue new understandings of diversity, foster inclusive school cultures, and build relationships between schools and communities—all as forms of practice rooted in the values of equity and social justice. Kooiman [12] distinguished among different governance modes—self-governance, co-governance, and hierarchical governance—as well as different levels of governance—first-order governance, second-order governance, and meta-governance—and argued that interactive governance emphasizes enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of governance through negotiation and cooperation among different actors. Kooiman further proposed that governability is jointly constituted by the system-to-be-governed, the governing system, and the system of interactions, and identified diversity, complexity, and dynamism as key variables affecting the governance effectiveness of social entities. As an organization that must simultaneously respond to the demands of multiple systems—including students, parents, teachers, communities, and government agencies—its administrators in practice play the central role of coordinating and mediating across different levels of governance interaction [13].

The perspective of interactive governance indicates that promoting the development of partnerships among different governance institutions, as well as collaboration that transcends geographic and sectoral boundaries, is important pathways to enhancing governability; moreover, governance processes should emphasize dialogue about governance principles and values [14]. Kooiman [15] further argued that the analysis of governance systems must simultaneously consider both the actor level and the structural level in order to fully understand the operation of governance and governability. These governance perspectives point directly to the capability needs of school administrators: not only must they be familiar with institutional operations, but they must also possess practical governance capacities including cross-sectoral communication, multi-actor collaboration, and adaptability to dynamic environments. Wilkinson and Kemmis's [16] practice-theory analysis of school leadership confirmed that changing administrative practice in schools requires not only changes in individual professional practice knowledge but also changes in the overall school context. Shulman [17] proposed the concept of "pedagogical reasoning", emphasizing that teacher education curricula should be grounded in a research base, guiding pre-service teachers to engage in principled reasoning and reflection in authentic educational contexts, and arguing that teacher education curricula should not be limited to skills training and teaching practicum, but should focus on the pedagogical knowledge of taught subjects, fully integrated throughout the teacher education program. Shulman [18] further proposed the concept of "signature pedagogy", arguing that each professional field develops its own distinctive pedagogy that shapes practitioners' habits of mind, habits of heart, and habits of practice; he stressed that a sound professional pedagogy should seek balance among the cognitive, technical, and moral dimensions of practice.

Of particular note, Shulman [18] observed that the fundamental tension between serving individual clients and the public good in professional educational practice can never be fully resolved but must be managed in every act—a perspective that resonates strongly with the everyday situation of school administrators balancing individual student needs against the overall interests of the organization. Shulman [19] also highlighted the importance of analyzing the interaction among theory, research, and the scholarship of teaching, and emphasized the value of broad participation from both university representatives and practitioners in the field, developing a new generation of practical wisdom through experimentation, documentation, and trial and error in ways that others can learn from. Beck's [2] argument for the centrality of the ethic of care in educational administration, and Begley's [20] argument that self-knowledge, moral reasoning capacity, and sensitivity to the orientations of others are preconditions for authentic principal leadership, both point to the ethical dimension of teacher education curriculum design in cultivating administrative competencies that must not be neglected. Together, these perspectives indicate that, if teacher education is to effectively cultivate teachers' administrative competencies, it must, building on professional teaching knowledge, further integrate the cultivation of governance thinking, sociological sensitivity, and ethical practice, forming a more complete picture of professional competence. In sum, while teacher education has attended to the cultivation of teachers' core pedagogical competencies, it has not yet formed a systematic curricular response to the public governance knowledge, sociological sensitivity, and practical ethics that teachers need once they enter schools and work in administrative settings. Integrating the insights of sociology of education on power, culture, and social justice in the school context, together with the analytical framework of public governance theory on governance complexity and interactive governance mechanisms, can help us re-examine how teacher education can more fully prepare teachers for their administrative roles. This research therefore applies the interpretive paradigm of qualitative research, through documentary analysis, to

address the research question: "How should teacher education cultivate teachers so that they can become effective school administrators after entering the school system?"

II. Literature Review

A. Teacher Education

Shulman [21] proposed the concept of PCK and arguing that, in addition to subject matter knowledge, teachers need to be able to transform knowledge into forms appropriate for student comprehension. Teacher education curriculum design should be grounded in research and should continually attend to common conceptual misunderstandings and learning difficulties that students encounter in the learning process, so as to meet the standards of understanding required for teaching. Shulman proposed the concept of pedagogical reasoning, arguing that teacher education curricula should prioritize an intellectual foundation rather than merely training for overt skills, and should fully integrate pedagogical content knowledge of the subjects taught, enabling pre-service teachers to engage in principled pedagogical reasoning and to deeply analyze and examine their teaching actions through professional communities. Shulman [17] noted that teacher education has a responsibility to promote improvement in educational quality, and that the perspective of a "knowledge base for teaching" should not lead to an over-technologizing of teaching but should instead promote teachers' deep understanding of the teaching process and of disciplinary characteristics. Shulman [18] suggested that a sound professional pedagogy should seek balance among the cognitive, technical, and moral dimensions, and noted that there is an inherent tension between serving individual clients and the public good in professional educational practice; responsible professional pedagogy must confront this tension and help students develop the professional competencies for managing these issues. Each profession develops its own distinctive signature pedagogy that shapes practitioners' habits of mind, habits of heart, and habits of practice; cross-professional comparisons help to promote pedagogical innovation. Shulman [5] demonstrated that teacher education research should integrate multiple studies to form systematic understanding and achieve the social responsibility of teaching through rich empirical research.

B. Sociology of Education

Durkheim [7] established the theoretical foundations of sociology of education, arguing that throughout history, the fundamental purpose of education is to instill in people ideas about human nature, duty, society, and individuals, thereby manifesting the socializing function of education and the essential nature of schools as social institutions. In the domain of critical sociology of education, Giroux [10] critically analyzed theories developed around the concepts of "reproduction" and "resistance", proposing new theoretical directions that emphasize understanding of power, resistance, and human agency in support of schools' pursuit of social justice. Apple [11] described the research orientation of "politics of meaning" in critically-oriented sociology of education, arguing that sociology of education exhibits tremendous diversity in its theoretical orientations, methodological preferences, research purposes, and political sensitivities, prompting researchers to reflect on the relationship between knowledge production and power in educational settings. With respect to language and socialization, Bernstein focused on the relationship among social class, language use, and socialization, arguing that teachers need not only to re-examine students' patterns of language use but also to reflect on their own pedagogical approaches and students' modes of learning—a perspective that suggests teacher education should cultivate teachers' sensitivity to social structures and students' cultural backgrounds [8]. Ball [9] focused on the origins, purposes, and impacts of educational policy, providing an in-depth analysis of the considerations of stakeholders in advancing policy change, situating educational policy analysis within a clear theoretical framework and offering profound insights into how policies are made—thereby highlighting how school operations are deeply shaped by political and social contexts. Jacobs and Hanrahan [22] analyzed how cultural sociology encompasses multiple dimensions including ethnicity, class, gender, collective memory, and institutions, and noted that the "cultural turn" has fundamentally transformed social science and humanities research.

C. Public Governance

The concept of "governance" has become a core keyword in the social sciences and political science [1]. Kooiman [12] identified the common core elements of governance as: emphasizing institutional rules and system characteristics, enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of governance through cooperation, and attending to emerging governance processes and public-private partnership arrangements; and distinguished among self-governance, co-governance, and hierarchical governance; with respect to governance levels, he distinguished among first-order governance (focused on problem-solving), second-order governance (focused on institutional conditions), and meta-governance (focused on normative principles and values). Kooiman [1] further conceptualized governance as a process of interaction among different social and political actors, arguing that as contemporary society becomes increasingly complex, dynamic, and diverse, the interdependence between social and political systems continues to intensify; on this basis he constructed a sociopolitical perspective that deepens systematic understanding of governance, governance mechanisms, and governability. With respect to the theoretical construction of "governability", Kooiman [15] defined it as "the overall quality of any social entity to be governed", and proposed that governability is constituted by three interrelated components: the "system-to-be-governed" that requires governance, the "governing system" responsible for formulating policies and implementing governance actions, and the "system of interactions" between the two. Kooiman *et al.* [14] further

highlighted the need to actively explore the diverse possibilities of interactive governance modes, including promoting the development of partnerships among different governance institutions and collaboration that transcends geographic and sectoral boundaries, as well as the importance of incorporating learning mechanisms into the governance process so that governance can continuously adapt and improve. Diversity, complexity, dynamism, and scale are important variables affecting governability, and the scale and scope of the governing system should match the characteristics of the system-to-be-governed [14].

D. School Administration

Beck [2] argued for the centrality of "caring" in educational administration, contending that an ethic of care not only enhances academic performance but also fosters responses to social problems and a rethinking of organizational strategies; the training of school administrators should be reformed in this direction. Starratt [4] proposed that the supporting foundations for building an ethical school should encompass the two ethical themes of justice and caring, emphasizing school administrators' responsibility for fostering an ethical environment within the school. Begley [20] further argued that the prerequisites for authentic principal leadership are self-knowledge, moral reasoning capacity, and sensitivity to the orientations of others; the key to achieving self-knowledge and sensitivity to others lies in personal reflective practice in professional environments. Riehl [3] drew on normative, empirical, and critical literature to examine the role of school administrators in responding to diverse student needs, arguing that administrators should seek new understandings of diversity, foster inclusive school cultures and instructional programs, and build relationships between schools and communities—indicating that inclusive administrative practice, rooted in the values of equity and social justice, is a key mechanism for promoting school transformation. Wilkinson and Kemmis [16] employed a practice-theory perspective to demonstrate that leadership practice exists both in formal positions such as that of principal and in the everyday activities of teachers and students; changing leadership practice requires not only changes in individual professional practice knowledge but also changes in the cultural discourses, material economies, and socio-political arrangements of the practice field. Murphy [6] reviewed the evolution of administrator preparation programs over a century, arguing that the future direction of administrator preparation should integrate curricular innovation and structural principles in order to respond to the continuously changing educational environment.

III. Methodology

This research applies the interpretive paradigm of qualitative research, which facilitates analysis of the theoretical foundations of integrating sociology of education and public governance perspectives and their implications for school administration teacher education, thereby deepening systematic understanding of the complexity of teacher education. This research adopts documentary analysis as its research method. The research materials are academic literature directly relevant to the research question, encompassing teacher education [5, 17–19, 21], sociology of education [7–11, 22], public governance [1, 12–15], and school administration [2–4, 6, 16, 20] in order to respond to the context of educational practice.

IV. Research Findings

Shulman [17] proposed that teacher education should center on a "knowledge base for teaching", encompassing dimensions of subject matter knowledge, PCK, curriculum knowledge, learner knowledge, educational context knowledge, and knowledge of educational purposes. He further identified that the core of "pedagogical reasoning" lies in the cyclical process of comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, and reflection; teacher education curriculum design should guide pre-service teachers to reflect and practice in authentic educational contexts [17]. Accordingly, if teacher education is to cultivate effective teachers with administrative competencies, it should integrate reasoning practice in administrative settings into the curriculum, enabling pre-service teachers to understand, before entering schools, the ethical judgments, resource coordination, and professional community interactions involved in administrative decision-making. He demonstrated that each profession develops its own distinctive "signature pedagogy" that shapes practitioners' habits of mind, habits of heart, and habits of practice [18].

Bernstein [8] proposed that teachers need to re-examine students' patterns of language use and to reflect on their own pedagogical approaches; this perspective guides teacher education to cultivate teachers' nuanced understanding of students' sociocultural backgrounds, so that in administrative settings they can prioritize responding to the diverse needs of students. Giroux [10] suggested that teachers should possess a critical consciousness of "resistance" in support of schools' pursuit of social justice. Apple [11] further argued that critically-oriented educational research must respond to the relationship between knowledge production and power in educational settings. Ball's [9] policy sociology perspective indicates that school operations are deeply shaped by political and social contexts, and that administrators need to possess policy analysis literacy. The socializing foundations of education established by Durkheim [7] highlight the important responsibility of school administrators in transmitting social values and shaping school culture—a sense of responsibility that should be emphasized already at the teacher education stage.

Kooiman [1] conceptualized governance as a process of interaction among different social and political actors, arguing that as society becomes increasingly complex, dynamic, and diverse, the interdependence between the governing system and the system-to-be-governed continues to intensify. Kooiman [12] distinguished among different modes of governance—self-governance,

co-governance, and hierarchical governance—and demonstrated that the core of governance lies in enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of governance through cooperation.

Kooiman [15] argued that diversity, complexity, and dynamism are key variables affecting governability, and that the scale and scope of the governing system should match the characteristics of the system-to-be-governed. Teacher education curricula should guide pre-service teachers to develop a deep understanding of the diversity and complexity of the school context, cultivating their adaptive capacity and decision-making judgment in the face of uncertain situations, so that upon entering schools they can effectively respond to the complex challenges of school administration—responding to Kooiman *et al.*'s [14] articulated need to actively explore the diverse possibilities of interactive governance modes. Beck [2] emphasized the centrality of the ethic of care in educational administration, arguing that the training of administrators should be reformed in this direction. Starratt [4] proposed that building an ethical school requires encompassing the two ethical themes of justice and care. Riehl [3] proposed that inclusive administrative practice, rooted in the values of equity and social justice, is a key mechanism for promoting school transformation. Wilkinson and Kemmis [16] employed a practice-theory perspective to demonstrate that leadership practice exists not only in formal positions but also in the everyday activities of teachers and students; changing leadership practice requires changes in the cultural discourses and socio-political arrangements of the overall practice field.

V. Conclusion

Teacher education should not be confined to the transmission of pedagogical content knowledge but should actively integrate administrative competencies, governance literacy, and ethical practice, enabling pre-service teachers to establish the mindset and action capacity for navigating school administrative complexity during the preparatory stage. The critical consciousness of sociology of education and the systemic thinking of interactive governance provide important shifts in perspective for teacher education: effective administrators are not merely executors of policy but are governance practitioners who, in complex social contexts, value diversity and inclusion, coordinate multiple stakeholders, and uphold an ethic of care as the core of their practice. If curricular reform lacks the institutional collaboration of teacher education institutions, school organizations, and educational authorities, its effectiveness will be limited. Guided by integrated institutional design, teachers' willingness and capacity to engage in administrative work can be fundamentally enhanced.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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