

On Educational Management and Educational Governance

YANG Yue

Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China

In the study of educational management theory and practice, educational management is a relational concept. It is related to, and especially different from, educational governance. Educational management refers to the planning, organization, control, and other activities carried out by governments or schools to achieve educational objectives. Educational governance, on the other hand, entails the collaborative interaction and joint management of educational public affairs by governmental bodies, social organizations, interest groups, and individual citizens through certain institutional arrangements. They are interrelated and mutually constitutive, forming the fundamental concepts of modern educational management science, and should be clearly distinguished.

Keywords: management, governance, educational management, educational governance

Educational management is a broad concept, stemming from the overarching concepts of big education and big management in modern society (Shuai, 2006, p. 34). It is also a relational concept, which is related to and distinct from educational governance. Therefore, integrating relational analysis and comparative research methods into the definition of educational management, distinguishing it from the concept of educational governance, may be more conducive to break through the traditional definitions, and further understand, grasp, and reveal its inherent quality.

Management and Governance

Compared to management, governance can be a little tricky to understand and grasp. The reason is that management has existed in various activities of human beings for a very long time, while governance is the product of social development to a certain stage. It emerges as human economic, cultural, and political development progresses into highly advanced civilized societies. In ancient Chinese, both “治” and “理” are monosyllabic words, and their combined use first appeared in the Warring States period. *Shuowen Jiezi* explains that “治” originally refers to the name of a river, which is later extended to mean governance, management, rule, and so on. In the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (published in 1978, the seventh edition was published by the Commercial Press in 2016), the basic meaning of governance has two levels: The first is to rule and manage, such as governing the country, and the second is to treat and renovate, such as governing the Huaihe River, (Dictionary Editing Office of the Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2016, p. 1690). It does not have the specific meanings that people use today. For example, the neoliberal governance thought or the New Public Management (NPM) theory has emerged in the West since the 1990s, which refers to the way of managing, controlling, or ruling in accordance with neoliberal or new public management ideas. (Neoliberalism

Acknowledgement: This paper is one of the series results of the key project of Zhejiang Zheshe Regulation 2021, “Unification of Classical Logic and Value Logic—Research on the General Theory of Education Management” (21NDJC003Z).

YANG Yue, School of European Language and Culture, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China.

is the major faction of modern British political thought, which advocates the maintenance of individual freedom, the mediation of social contradictions, and the maintenance of free competition in the capitalist system in the new historical period. It is a political-economic philosophy that opposes the intervention of the state in the domestic economy. The new public management is a management theory and model that has emerged in Western society since the 1990s, attempting to replace the traditional public administration. It proposes to adopt the successful management methods and competition mechanism of the private sector in the public sector of the government, attach importance to the efficiency of public services, emphasize the enhancement of effectiveness and responsiveness in solving public problems and meeting the needs of citizens, emphasize the interaction of top-down authoritative power and bottom-up autonomous power, emphasize the negotiation and cooperation and cooperation between the government and civil society, and emphasize the low-cost operation of the government, and also emphasize the quality and final results of public services, emphasize the introduction of several mechanisms and methods of business management to reform government, emphasize customer-first and consumer sovereignty, and emphasize the simplification of government functions, “flattening” of organizational structures electronic work processes, etc.)

In English, “govern” predates “governance” and is derived from the French “gouverner” or Italian “governare”. The word appeared in the late 11th century, with the meaning of authoritative rule. In the late 12th century, another related term, “government”, emerged, initially encompassing the act of managing the state in addition to referring to the ruling body. By the late 13th century, “governance” appeared, denoting the behavior and manner of managing, controlling, or ruling something or someone (including the state). From the 1960s to the end of the 1970s, governance was mostly used in the management of educational institutions and urban management, because they both involved management, yet were not solely governed by the government, so it was better to use “governance” than “government”. Both have the meaning of management and governance, but the latter can avoid people’s association with the government, which seems to be a better choice. Until the 1990s, “governance” was rarely used in the field of government administration and public domain, and its meaning had not undergone significant changes. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “governance” refers to the activities of managing a country or controlling a company or organization, and also the way of governance and control of a country, company or institution.

In fact, in the language of many countries, the concept of governance originally did not exist. Just 25 years ago, even in English, the usage rate of the word “governance” was very low. The term “governance” first appeared in the report of the World Bank in 1989, and then began to be widely used in the political field, social economy, and management field in many countries. The explosive growth of its use frequency appeared after 1990, and it has cooled down in recent years. However, within China, research on this topic has surged. Initially in the late 1990s, there were some introductory studies on foreign countries (there were also some local governance research literature before, but it was more directed to management, or synonymous with management, or expressed the meaning of remediation, treatment, etc.). Subsequently, the term “governance” frequently appeared in media and public discourse; especially after the proposal of national governance system and governance modernization during the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in November 2013, “governance” has become a trendy buzzword, almost becoming the synonym of public management and public administration. Its influence extended far beyond the fields of public management, public administration, and political science, giving rise to concepts such as corporate governance, urban governance, global governance, government governance, social governance, and new public governance.

The academic community generally experiences phenomena such as being unclear, incomprehensible, blindly adopting, and following trends in research. Few people go back: Where did this concept come from? Does it have accurate connotation and extension? Are governance concepts used the same across domains? Is governance described by different scholars in the same field the same thing? Are various governance theories based on normative theories of ideology or inductive theories based on empirical research? What are the similarities and differences between the concept of governance proposed by the Party Central Committee and the concept of governance popular in academia? What are the similarities and differences between management and governance? And so forth.

First of all, it should be made clear that governance is a theoretical trend of thought formed in Western society since the 1990s under the influence of neoliberalism and new public management concepts. It spans different disciplines and fields, and involves all aspects of social life, with a distinct coloration of Western mainstream ideology. From the theoretical perspective of neoliberalism, management and governance are both corresponding to, yet not entirely corresponding to, the concept of “management” in management studies. Instead, it corresponds more to public management or public administration. In other words, only at the level of public management, management and governance, and thus education management and education governance, are comparable. (A search of the Web of Science found that from 1967 to 2017, there were nearly 50,000 papers on governance, of which 18.7% were related to economics and management, and 17.5% were related to science and technology, ranking third in government and law, and fourth in public administration. In addition, a large number of papers related to environmental science, ecology, international relations, regional studies, urban studies, geography and social sciences have also been published in other fields. A search on CNKI shows that since 1949, CNKI has collected about 300,000 papers with the word “governance” in their titles, far higher than the number of papers on governance included on CNKI. Of these, about 240,000 have been published since 2006, of which just over a quarter are in the fields of public administration and public administration (27%), while about three-quarters are divided into economic management (30%), environmental and resource management (22%), engineering management (20%), and higher education management (1%). In the latter types of papers, the meaning of governance is basically management, rectification, and treatment, and often the two are interchangeable, while in the field of public management and public administration, governance is more or less influenced by the emerging Western governance literature.) So what is governance? According to the study “Our Global Partnership” published by the Global Governance Commission in 1995,

Governance is the sum total of the many ways in which individuals and institutions, public or private, manage their common affairs, and it is the ongoing process by which conflicting or different interests are reconciled and joint action is taken. (Council on Global Governance, 1995, p. 23)

This definition emphasizes four characteristics of governance: First, governance is not a set of rules and regulations, but a process; second, the governance process is not based on control, but on coordination; third, governance involves both the public and private sectors; fourth, governance is not a formal system, but an ongoing interaction.

Neoliberal governance theory argues for a shift from government to governance, with the state withdrawing entirely from certain areas and leaving them entirely at the disposal of the market. More specifically, in the past, public administration was a solo performance by the government, which operated in a hierarchical manner from the top down. Now, the government is no longer the only center in public management, there are also many non-

governmental centers, and the relationship between the centers is horizontal, not subordinate; the government must work with non-governmental partners to manage public affairs. The basic position of this argument is clear: Public management by the government is not advisable, because there is no need for the government to “row” everything by itself; whereas it is good to conduct public administration in the way of governance, because the government should not row the boat itself, its role is only to “steer the boat”. In the literature on neoliberal governance, concepts such as new governance, good governance often appear. They believe that changes in all aspects have made the government no longer have the ability to conduct public management alone, and the new governance is characterized by “governing without government”. Government agencies communicate and rely on a variety of stakeholders (including other government agencies, corporations, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens), and the latter are equally important as the former, and may even be more important.

In addition, there are arguments for a shift in the level of power from public institutions to private institutions because the latter are more efficient and diverse, which can be called “societal self-governance”. Some people argue that the power level should be transferred from public institutions to semi-public independent organizations and institutions, and more participation can improve the quality of governance, which can be called “network governance”. Some advocate for the horizontal transfer of power from government administrative departments to legislative and judicial departments, believing that this promotes checks and balances, which can be called “balanced governance”. Some people advocate a vertical transfer of government power, that is, from the central government to the lower levels of government, which can be called “decentralized governance” or “multi-level governance”. Some people advocate transferring power from national governments to international organizations, such as transferring power in European countries to the European Union, the European Court of Justice, the European Parliament, and transferring power in the world to international and multilateral organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the World Health Organization. This can be called “global governance”, and so forth (Wang, 2018). In a word, the essence of new governance is to lighten the government’s load. The government does not need to be responsible for all affairs, and should withdraw from as many fields as possible.

Taking into account the above tracing of the concept of governance, we can clearly grasp the connotation and characteristics of management and governance at the level of neoliberalism theory and new public management thought, and explore the relationship between them. Management refers to the process in which people or organizations plan, organize, lead, coordinate, and control the resources they have in order to effectively achieve their goals. Governance, on the other hand, is a process in which various stakeholders maintain public order and realize public interests through dialogue, negotiation, cooperation, and other means within a defined scope. Both denote activities of planning, organizing, leading, coordinating, and controlling by subjects towards objects, directed towards the functional processes implemented on the objects. The subjects are individuals or organizations, and the objects are also individuals or organizations and entities; both of them pursue specific goals, maximization of benefits, sharing and sustainability, and their behaviors are certain goal-oriented behaviors. Governance is included in management, which is a better form of management and a new and higher level of public management. It is necessary to continuously optimize management methods, improve management subjects, and enhance management efficiency in order to meet the interests and needs of the majority of relevant parties. This process is the transition from management beginning to change to governance. Management should ultimately evolve to governance, and good governance is the common pursuit of all mankind (Xu, 2017).

There are five differences between management and governance. First, the subject of their implementation is not exactly the same. The subject of management is singular, mainly referring to the government, or the government predominates in management activities, which is often manifested as being above the object and commanding or controlling the object. The subject of governance is plural, including the government, political parties, social organizations, people's groups, etc. The relationship between subject and object is often manifested as a close and equal network relationship, which advocates the cooperation and co-governance among multiple subjects. Second, the two approaches are not entirely the same. Management mainly refers to the deployment and control of social affairs by the government relying on its own power, with relatively single means and the color of administrative orders, which is a vertical, top-down hierarchical management. Governance, however, entails cooperation among diverse entities, utilizing various means, including dialogue, negotiation, interaction, and other means. In the process of governance, the government is no longer controlling, regulating, and ruling, but rather guides, coordinates, and plans on a macro level, which is a kind of flat management with autonomous negotiation. Third, the interests of the two are not exactly the same. Management tends to prioritize the interests of managers themselves, and the interest relationship considered is usually personal interests, which emphasizes efficiency, effectiveness, and maintenance of order. Whereas governance involves coordinating the interests of multiple parties, often prioritizing public interests. It emphasizes "good governance", stressing the shared and long-term nature of interests among a diverse multitude under certain social conditions or within specific scopes when interests are aligned. Fourth, the source of power authorized by the two is not exactly the same. The management power of the government comes from the authorization of the authorities. Although the authorization of the authorities is fundamentally the authorization of the people, the authorization of the people is indirect after all. A considerable part of the governing power is exercised directly by the people, which is called self-government and co-governance. Fifth, they do not operate in the same way. The operation mode of management is one-way, compulsory, and rigid, and it is operated by a single subject singing a sole performance, the legitimacy of its behavior is often questioned, and its effectiveness is often difficult to guarantee. The operation mode of governance is complex, cooperative, and inclusive, the rationality of its behavior is paid more attention, and its effectiveness is greatly increased (Jiang, 2014).

It should be noted that the above distinction and connection between management and governance are elucidated from the perspective of Western neoliberalism and new public management definitions. In essence, it is a normative theory rather than an empirical theory, lacking empirical foundation. It is characterized by a reverence for "good governance", as defined by the World Bank, and the exaltation of Western-style liberal democracy. This is fundamentally different from the governance proposed by the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in "promoting the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity". The former is a special reference, that is, it refers to the Western specific governance mode, method, and way defined by the neoliberal governance theory, and it refers to a new public management thought. The latter is a general reference, that is, it refers to the general ways, methods, ways, and capabilities of public management. According to the Japanese-American scholar Francis Fukuyama, governance refers to the government's capacity to formulate and enforce rules, as well as its ability to provide services, irrespective of whether the government is democratic. If governance is defined in this way, it can be said to revert to the original meanings of the English term "governance" and the Chinese term "治理". Here, management and governance are mutually inclusive, interlinked, and often interchangeable. Governance does not mean marketization or privatization, nor does it mean "governance without government", and nor does it mean "more governance and

less rule”, or “from rule to governance”. The following analysis of educational management and educational governance is based on this discourse and integrated with the main viewpoints of Western neoliberal governance and new public management.

Educational Management and Governance

Educational management and educational governance are not opposites. The concept of educational governance cannot be used to negate or replace the concept of educational management. Instead, they represent a relationship between new and old forms of educational public management. Among them, educational management is a series of functional activities such as planning, organizing, and controlling the educational system in order to achieve the educational goal. Relatively speaking, it refers to the traditional public management process of education. Educational governance is developed under the background of globalization, neoliberalism, and new public management. It refers to the process in which state organs, social organizations, interest groups, and individual citizens collaborate and interact through certain institutional arrangements to collectively manage educational public affairs, referring to a new type of educational public management activities. Both of them indicate that their respective subjects plan, organize, lead, coordinate, control, and other activities on the object of educational public affairs, which are the management of educational public affairs, and their functions contain and overlap each other. Both are directed towards specific goals, the pursuit of profit maximization, sharing and sustainability. Educational governance is included in educational management, transcending traditional educational management methods. It represents the democratization of educational management, embodies the modern form of educational management, and represents a new, higher-level form of educational public management.

The difference between educational management and educational governance is profound and extensive. First, the participants of the two are not exactly the same. The subject of education management is singular, emphasizing the top-down and unidirectional management of the state and government education departments. The subjects of education governance are plural, including government agencies, social organizations, interest groups, and individual citizens. These entities converge around a common goal, participating and collaborating together. The typical feature of these subjects is democratic co-governance, that is, democratic participation, cooperative management, and joint governance of multiple subjects (Chu, 2020). Here, democracy is both the goal and the means, and democratization is its essence. Democracy will not only bring good governance, but also bring good education. In other words, educational governance is an important manifestation of the modernization of educational management, with significant features of democratization, legalization, and rationalization. It also fully embodies the basic characteristics of modern society under the background of market economy: first, the diversification of governance subjects, including the joint participation of government, schools, parents, and society; second, the complexity of governance systems, which lies in correctly managing the relationships among government, schools, families, and society, and establishing a unified and comprehensive governance structure; third, the diversification of governance means, emphasizing coordination and cooperation among various entities, besides administrative measures.

Secondly, the subject-object relationship and interest demands of the two are not exactly the same. The subject of educational management is often shown as overtaking the object, taking over the public affairs of education, commanding or controlling the object, and focusing on vertical and top-down management. And the relationship between subject and object in educational governance is often manifested as a democratic way, and

the state of equality and cooperation between subject and object is reflected, focusing on flat governance. Of course, this does not preclude the government, as an “elder of the same generation”, from playing a leading role in “meta-governance”. Educational management tends to prioritize the interests of the managers themselves, often considering the interests of a single entity, namely the interests of the state or government education departments. Educational governance coordinates the interests of multiple subjects, and the interests it takes into account are often the common interests among government agencies, social organizations, interest groups, and individual citizens. Under the framework of educational governance, the state educational institutions, society and citizens are not antagonistic relations, but joint cooperative relations committed to win-win good governance, and various educational interests can be fully expressed, and educational decision-making, education policies, and education legislation can be fully discussed and demonstrated. The superiority of educational governance is the logical premise of its rise, while the new changes in social and educational development pose the challenges to management in education, forming its practical basis.

To sum up, educational management and educational governance are a set of interrelated yet distinct concepts. They jointly constitute the conceptual foundation of educational management studies and are fundamental concepts that cannot be overlooked in the study of this discipline. Among them, educational management refers to a series of purposeful continuous activities such as planning, organizing, and controlling carried out by the government or school to implement the educational policy and achieve the training goal, while educational governance refers to the activities in which government agencies, social organizations, interest groups, and individual citizens cooperate and interact to jointly manage educational public affairs through certain institutional arrangements. In the construction of modern education management science, it is necessary to reflect, discern, and accurately grasp the relationship and differences between them, in order to use them scientifically and normatively, so as to promote the healthy prosperity and development of education management discipline in China. Insights and guidance from colleagues in the academic community are welcomed.

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