The Implementation of Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development in Primary Education in Taiwan

Chao-Wen Liu

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in Primary Education in Taiwan

Abstract

Teacher evaluation is an activity of assessing teachers' performance. It is equivalent to teacher appraisal/teacher performance management in England. This study explores the complexities of implementing Teacher Evaluation in primary schools in Taiwan. It concentrates principally on the development of Teacher Evaluation in Taiwan in the light of international research, especially that relating to the English context.

The philosophical perspective with which this study is most closely aligned is constructivism. In particular, using qualitative methods of documentary analysis and interviews, it explores the nature of Teacher Evaluation and the meaning held by implementers. Government publications, including books, journals and other documentation from public institutions were examined to trace the development of Teacher Evaluation in Taiwan, and how it might be influenced by globalisation. Interviews were carried out with 3 head teachers and 7 teachers from 3 primary schools in Taiwan and 3 officers from different levels of official organisations.

A Recommended Model of Teacher Evaluation was synthesised from the review of international research. Using the Recommended Model of Teacher Evaluation to evaluate the implementation of Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development in Taiwan, the effectiveness of the project was demonstrated. However, by looking at the empirical data, some limitations were observed, including deficiencies in the administrative system, teachers' heavy workload, the reluctance of teachers to accept changes, and insufficient knowledge of the relevant policy. Other obstacles were noted, including inadequately trained evaluators, the lack of a mechanism for professional dialogue, and the incoherence of the educational policy. This study shows that most teachers agree with the measures in the Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development implemented by the Ministry of Education, although some supplementary measures need to be established in a more sophisticated manner before it can be implemented fully.

Finally, this study further proposes suggestions for a Teacher Evaluation model based on the Recommended Model of Teacher Evaluation, the implementation of the current Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development, and ideal models mentioned by the interviewees.

Acknowledgements

…The sages, whose times are far away from us,   [哲人日已遠，]
Were models of great virtue in the distant past.   [典型在夙昔。]
By the window sill, I open the book and read.   [風簷展書讀，]
And feel the ancient rays of wisdom shining on my face.   [古道照顏色。]
                [The Poem of Righteousness, by Song Dynasty/Wen, Tian-xiang]

When one opens this thesis, one finds the presentation of a number of teachers' stories. The history of education in Taiwan is constructed by valuable stories like these, and they play an important role in the country's overall development. By undertaking this study, my respect towards teachers has dramatically increased. I hope that their great stories can be honestly presented in this thesis.

A PhD study is not done in isolation. Besides expressing my appreciation to the educators who participated in my research, I feel indebted to my family, friends and teachers, whose intellectual, emotional and practical help made this study possible.

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I also wish to thank my family. My parents have provided me with encouragement, especially when I started doubting myself. I am greatly indebted to my children, Frances and Sean, who unquestioningly accepted that my time was divided between them and this study.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my wife to thank her for believing in me, and for helping me to complete my lifelong dream.

Chao-Wen Liu

Bristol, March 2010

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Abbreviations

ASCL	Association of School and College Leaders (in England)
ATA	Assessment of Teacher Achievement (in Taiwan)
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers (in England)
CHC	Confucian Heritage Culture
CPD	Continuing Professional Development (in England)
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families (in England)
DfEE	The Department for Education and Employment (in England)
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (in England)
GB	Governing Body (in England)
LA	Local Authority (in England)
LGE	Local Government Employers (in England)
MoE	Ministry of Education (in Taiwan)
MTS	Mentor Teacher System
NAPO	National Alliance of Parents Organization (in Taiwan)
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (in England)
NTA	National Teachers' Association , R. O. C. (in Taiwan)
PAT	Professional Association of Teachers (in England)
PDP	Professional Development Plan (in the New Mexico, US)
PRP	Performance Related Pay (in England)
RIG	Rewards and Incentives Group (in England)
SIP	School Improvement Partner (in England)
STPCD	School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (in England)
STRB	School Teachers' Review Body (in England)
TEPD	Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development (in Taiwan)
TGS	Teacher Grading System (in Taiwan)
TLR	Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (in England)
TPM	Teacher Performance Management (in England)
WAMG	Workforce Agreement Monitoring group (in England)

Chapter 1 Introduction

Teacher evaluation is an activity of assessing teachers' performance. It is equivalent to teacher appraisal/teacher performance management in England. This study investigates the complexities of implementing teacher evaluation (hereafter abbreviated as TE) in primary schools in the Taiwanese context. It concentrates principally on the development of TE in Taiwan in the light of international research, especially that relating to the English context.

This chapter is divided into seven sections: rationale (Section 1.1), research aim, objectives and questions (Section 1.2), brief definitions (Section 1.3), assumptions (Section 1.4), methodology (Section 1.5), potential limitations (Section 1.6) and thesis plan (Section 1.7).

1.1 Rationale

1.1.1 Taiwan and Globalisation:

Giddens defined globalisation as:

> A complex set of processes, not a single one. And these operate in a contradictory or oppositional fashion. Most people think of it as simple 'pulling away' power or influence from local communities and nations into the global arena. And indeed this is one of its consequences. Nations do lose some of the economic power they once had. However, it also has an opposite effect. Globalization not only pulls upwards, it pushes downwards, creating new pressures for local autonomy. (Giddens, 1999: 3)

In many ways, the globalisation of policy and practice in education is a response to the common problems faced by many of the world's societies and education systems (Walker & Dimmock, 2002). How to think globally and act locally is an unavoidable path for developed countries. As Porter (2000) pointed out, "cultural differences can contribute to specialised advantages so important in improving the prosperity of nations" (p. 27). The accumulation of globalised narrations from different countries is conducive to enriching the academic field of school effectiveness and educational change. Thus, the various nations' experiences of teacher evaluation can inspire Taiwan to develop its own model of TE.

The contrasts between educational systems and between schools and educational systems (for instance, English-speaking systems and the countries of East Asia) reveal significant discrepancies. To cite an example, Confucianism influences Taiwan not only in

its national development goals and political loyalty, but also in its culture and education (Altbach, 1997: 237-238). Previous researchers (e.g. Walker & Dimmock, 2000: 164) claimed that cultural differences between English-speaking Western countries, (the U.S. and the U.K.) and Chinese societies (such as Hong Kong and Taiwan) reflect what has been labelled as the individualism/collectivism dimension. In other words, in Chinese societies influenced by Confucian heritage culture (hereafter abbreviated as CHC), the collective is more important than the individual; the interests of the collective supersede those of the individual. Thus we need to distinguish between individual and collective performance. Although the practice of classroom teaching may still be conducted in isolation from other adults at the beginning of the twenty-first century, most other aspects of teaching management and leadership are social activities. However, teacher evaluation is deeply influenced by traditional culture. Hence it is important to recognise that teacher evaluation in Taiwan will draw inspiration from various nations' experiences, while seeking to respect its traditional culture at the same time. Therefore this study will not only consider the extent to which research into TE in Taiwan is influenced by global research, but it also explores the possibilities for developing a model of TE that is congruent with the cultural context of Taiwan.

There are two reasons why I want to explore the education systems of other countries, especially that of England. The first reason is generally influenced by two Chinese idioms, both of which serve as a basis for my comparative study of education.

"The stones of other hills may be used to polish gems." (*The Analects of Confucius*) 他山之石,可以攻錯 (論語)

This idiom means that one can remedy one's own defects by listening to another's suggestions. In other words, we can follow a good example to improve our weaknesses.

"The tangerine moves to the Huai River and becomes the trifoliate mandarin" *(Zhou Ritual)* 橘逾淮而為枳 (周禮).

This idiom means that a measure may be effective in certain situations, but using that measure in another circumstance may bring failure. In terms of the two idioms, another country's experience is 'the useful stone' or 'the trifoliate mandarin'. The key lies in placing another country's experience into the Taiwanese context and finding out its meaning within the new environment.

Secondly, numerous studies, in Taiwan, have introduced the development of English education (Fu, 1998; Huang, 2003; Wu, 2005; Liu, 2006; Chang, 2007; Chen, 2007; Liu,

2007) and showed successful education experiences in England. The implication of these studies is that the Taiwanese Government is borrowing the successful experiences of English education to influence its educational reforms.

With regard to the consideration of international perspectives, my standpoint is that the Taiwanese cultural context should be valued. Also, local implementers' voices need to be respected, as they may be influenced by cultural factors which are very different from those of the West. For example, individualism is generally emphasised in Western culture, but collectivism is often more important in the East (this will be described in detail in Section 2.2.2). In my study, I will examine the development of TE in Taiwan in the light of international research, especially that pertaining to the English context. Drawing inspiration from other countries' experience of TE might be able to help Taiwan develop a more effective TE system.

1.1.2 Why Teacher Evaluation? Perspectives of an Educator and a Parent

"During the 1990s, most education systems in the English-speaking world moved towards some notion of performance management." (West-Burnham, O'Neill and Bradbury, 2001: 6) This is largely attributed to the cumulative and increasingly widespread perception that education systems were under-achieving or failing to perform. The anxiety was reinforced by the increasing amounts of data available, which allowed more specific and detailed measurement of various components of school performance.

My interest in teacher evaluation derives from the disparities I perceive between educational research and practice, from being a father and my observations and experiences as a head teacher in The Affiliated Experimental Elementary School of National Chengchi University in Taiwan. As a parent, I am appreciative of some of the teachers who have taught my two children. The quality of the teaching profoundly influenced my children's development. However, not all students are fortunate enough to receive education of a high quality, and one of the factors contributing to high quality education is the variable expertise in teachers. One of my son's teachers was so temperamental that her mood during teaching led to students being frightened. This has subsequently affected their emotional development. She often used sarcastic language in her oral feedback for students and, as a consequence, children use the same language to criticise other people. In addition, some new teachers in our school adopt what they call 'active teaching methods' that lead to students becoming over-excited, even out of control.

They explain that the modern teacher is expected to tolerate students' behaviour. According to the present regulation of TE, to struggle against the problem of inadequate teachers is the responsibility of the "Teacher Evaluation Committee". Unfortunately, the Committee could not do anything to challenge the inappropriate behaviour of teachers because the committee members are selected from school teachers, and in Taiwanese school culture, no one is willing to harm their relationship with their colleagues.

In contrast, under the pressure of international competition, teacher evaluation in universities experienced a sudden growth in Taiwan.

> Since 28th December 1995, TE in institutions of higher education in Taiwan has become compulsory according to the *University Act*. The 21st Article of the *University Act* states that a college should formulate a teacher evaluation system that (1) decides on teacher promotion, and (2) continues or terminates employment based on college teachers' achievement in teaching, research and so forth. The effects of implementing TE in colleges caused some lecturers with insufficient publications to retire earlier. After that, universities started to formulate schools' regulations based on the *University Act* and began executing TE. According to the official documentation, 47.9% of the universities in Taiwan present their regulations and related methods online, and 60% of the colleges stipulate that teachers have to pass the evaluation before receiving a promotion. (cited from http://epaper.heeact.edu.tw/archive/2007/09/03/330.aspx)

Generally, teaching is a respected career in Taiwan, because teachers are the role models for students in every aspect. Moreover, the impression of the teacher's role is to transmit his/her knowledge to his/her pupils. However, the National Foundation of Policy Research described some negative news about teachers' improper behaviour, and this news became publicly known when it was reported by the mass media recently. In Kaohsiung, a 57-year-old homeroom teacher was accused of violating a schoolgirl many times. He also forced the student to have sexual intercourse with him. In another case, a school teacher took spirits to share with more than ten of his students at junior high school. One of them died because of alcohol abuse. In other news, two deans of a college were also suspected of violating their students when they participated in a social event after school.

The impression of teachers' roles in Taiwan was badly influenced by the news above; in other words, the majority of the teachers became demoralised. Such events caused me to think about whether there are any limitations or weaknesses in the current system of teacher evaluation in practice. Further, what are TE's implications for the teaching profession if we were to describe teaching as a profession?

According the "Online Dictionary of the Social Sciences", a profession can be defined as:

> … an occupational group that is largely self-regulating. Such a group has the legitimate authority (usually delegated from government) to set its own standards for entrance, to admit new members, to establish a code of conduct, to discipline members and it claims to have a body of knowledge (achieved through education) which legitimizes its autonomy and distinctiveness. Examples of professions would be physicians, lawyers, clinical psychologists, or real estate agents. (cited from http://bitbucket.icaap.org/dict.pl?alpha=P)

Millerson considers that if an occupation is termed a profession, it should have three features, namely "education and training certified by examination", "a code of professional conduct oriented towards the 'public good'" and "a powerful professional organization" (Millerson,1964, cited from Whitty, 2006: 2). To be a teacher, one not only has to complete the relevant education and obtain the teachers' qualifications, but must also have knowledge of the educational professional, pedagogical content and subject professional (Shulman 1987: 6). Thus, from the conditions of "standards for entrance", "admission of new members", "code of conduct", "discipline of members" and "body of knowledge", teaching can be declared as a professional occupation.

Since teachers are important people (Hazeltine, 2006) who influence the development of a child's personality and learning, the foundation for the development of a national policy strongly recommends the implementation of TE for maintaining the quality of education in Taiwan (cited from http://www.npf.org.tw/particle-1798-3.html).

TE is the critical measure to encourage teachers' personal development and enhance students' learning. Although the importance of teachers' quality in Taiwan is emphasised, TE is still not legislated in Taiwan. As a result of the opposition from the National Teachers' Union, there is still a sizable gap between the views of teachers' groups and the Government. Hence, at the heart of my study is an attempt to close the gap between theory and practice in the application of performance management systems in Taiwan. I had two opportunities to discuss the issue of primary school teacher evaluation with the Minister of MoE in the summers of 2007 and 2008, when I collected some data in Taiwan. He showed concern about my study and expressed his eagerness to know the results of the study. It is hoped that my research will be able to support the Taiwanese Government in formulating related regulations.

Varied aspects of English educational issues were recently discussed in Taiwan (Fu, 1998; Huang, 2003; Lee, 2006; Liu, 2006; Chang, 2007; Chen, 2007; Liu, 2007). Liu (2006) described the successful educational reform in Britain since 1997. Chang (2007: 1-22) explored the development of TE. Fu (1998) documented the development of TE in England. All of the previous studies are based on the official documentations. There is a paucity of empirical research which allows the implementers' voices to be heard. In addition, their data does not take into account the implementation of the present regulation in 2006, i.e. the *Education (School Teacher Performance Management) (England) Regulations 2006* (DfES, 2006). My study uses documentary analysis and interviews of implementers and examines how the most recent data from the English government can be applied to the Taiwanese context. In my study, implementers are defined as teachers, head teachers and relevant officers.

1.2 Research Aim, Objectives and Questions

1.2.1 Research Aim

This is an investigation into the complexities of implementing teacher evaluation at primary school level in Taiwan. It focuses primarily on the development of teacher evaluation in Taiwan in the light of consideration of international research, especially that pertaining to the English context, and aims to provide a significant resource for future enactment and promotion of TE policy in Taiwan.

1.2.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of my research are:

1. To review the international literature relating to the strengths and limitations of teacher evaluation models.

2. To draw upon the English experience of implementing teacher evaluation.

3. To carry out a detailed critical analysis of the development of the TE policy in Taiwan.

4. To undertake empirical studies in Taiwan to elicit implementers' perspectives of the strengths and limitations of the trial/experimental models.

5. To explore the implications of TE in Taiwan.

6. To apply my personal experience and knowledge as a teacher to the research.

1.2.3 Research Questions

The aim of this study is translated into seven research questions:

1. What is the trend of TE in the international context?

2. To what extent does the international development of TE significantly influence the TE model in Taiwan?

3. How has TE been developed in the English context?

4. What is the nature and effectiveness of existing evaluation systems and those that are being trialled in Taiwan's primary schools in terms of:

    (1) Policy and practice?

    (2) The evaluation culture and climate in school?

    (3) Effectiveness of the goal(s)?

5. What are the implementers' perspectives of the potential advantages and limitations of the evaluation of teacher professional development?

6. What factors are likely to facilitate or hinder the implementation of statutory performance evaluation programmes at the primary school level in Taiwan, in the light of the English experience and the implementers' viewpoints?

7. What implications do the findings of this study have for issues of TE?

1.3 Definition

Before I embark on discussing my study, I shall explain how I distinguish between the terms "teacher evaluation" and "teacher appraisal", and to what extent these terms will be adopted. I will be discussing the terms "evaluation" and "teacher evaluation" in greater detail in Chapter 3.

In Chinese, both 'evaluation' and 'appraisal' mean 'assessment' ("評鑑"). The term appraisal is popularly used in the UK, whilst evaluation is used in the U.S. There are a few overlaps between the meanings of appraisal, assessment and evaluation in English; therefore I will clarify the terms I am using in my thesis.

According to the Oxford Online Dictionary, appraisal is "a formal evaluation of the performance of an employee at work over a particular period; evaluation or assessment in this manner, intended to improve individual and organizational performance", and

evaluation is defined as "the action of evaluating or determining the value of (a mathematical expression, a physical quantity, etc.), or of estimating the force of (probabilities, evidence, etc.)".

However, the Department of Education and Science (abbreviated as DES) has different viewpoints about the conventions proposed by DES in 1985 (Wragg *et al.*, 1996). The definitions of the aforementioned terms are given below:

Evaluation: a general term used to describe any activity by the institution or LEA where the quality of the provision is the subject of systematic study.

Appraisal: emphasizing the forming of qualitative judgments about an activity, a person or an organization. (Wragg *et al.*, 1996: 3)

The Department for Education and Skills (2005) presents a coherent view. Appraisal is defined as "the process of examining options for meeting policy objectives and weighing up the costs, benefits, risks and uncertainties of these options before a decision is made", and evaluation is "a retrospective analysis of a policy to assess how successful or otherwise it has been and what lessons can be learnt for the future." (2005: 1)

Montgomery and Hadfield (1989) organised those concepts into the figure below to explain the relationship between evaluation and appraisal:
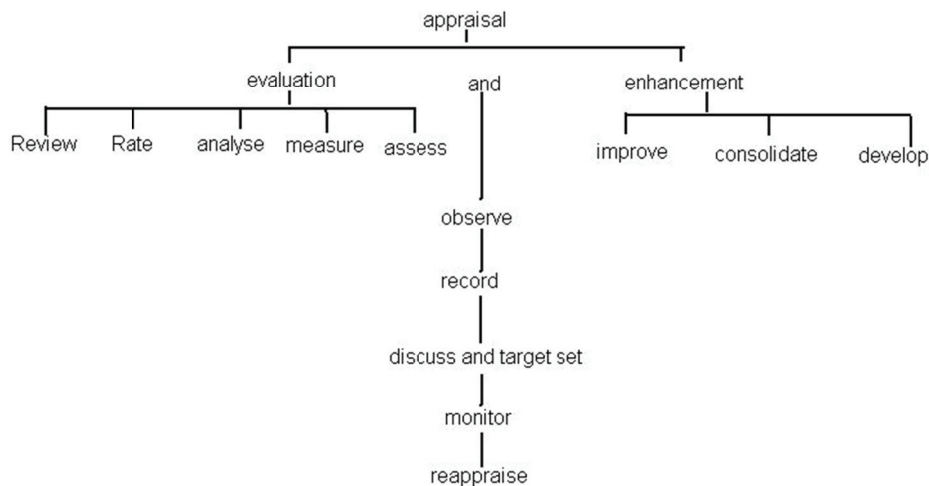

Figure 1-1: The structure of Appraisal
(Cited from Montgomery & Hadfield, 1989: 23)

According to Figure 1.1, appraisal includes evaluation and enhancement. Evaluation is more than looking over past events in a structured way, as in a review. It may include reviewing, rating, analysing, measuring and assessing, but it also implies value judgments

about what is seen and done. Enhancement implies improving, consolidating and developing.

According to the discussion above, "appraisal" has a wider scope and a holistic process, including the implementation of evaluation programmes and related supplementary measures (i.e. improving quality strategies), whilst "evaluation" is focused on a specific programme. The difference between "appraisal" and "evaluation" is that appraisal emphasises improvement, while evaluation focuses on judgment.

The reason for using evaluation instead of appraisal is because it is a term that is commonly used in Taiwan; therefore, it is a term with which most teachers are familiar. A great number of official documents, like guidebooks for head teachers and school staff in Taiwan use the term evaluation. Even the regulation and experiment plan held by the Ministry of Education (hereafter abbreviated as MoE) in Taiwan applied the term evaluation. In contrast, "teacher appraisal" was replaced by "teacher performance management" in the UK. The equivalent of the latter term in Taiwan is "Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development". Hence, I choose to adopt the term 'evaluation' in my study (apart from citations for my literature review).

1.4 Assumptions

The assumptions underlying this study are derived from my personal experience. I have lived, and carried out research in both England and Taiwan. On such a basis, I anticipate that there would more deliberation in the policy-making process in England, and that there would be evidence of greater levels of satisfaction in teachers' perception. The reasons behind such an assumption are based on the recent policy changes, as embodied in the following:

- *Teaching Quality* (DES, 1983) suggests that the effects of evaluation could lead to the best teachers obtaining relatively greater rewards for their classroom expertise.

- *Better Schools* (DES, 1985a), showed the official government position on primary school education. Arguments advanced by Sir Keith Joseph to the 1984 North of England Conference for the establishment of the teacher profession identified and removed incompetent teachers. This document emphasises resource management and, more specifically, the management of the teaching force.

- *Quality in Schools: Evaluation and Appraisal* (DES, 1985b) explores the management responsibility of heads. Attempts to introduce evaluation would mean that each individual's professional autonomy would have to be reconsidered in the light of the overall requirements of the schools.

- *The Education (School Teacher Appraisal) Regulation* (DES, 1991a), is the first formal regulation of teacher evaluation.

- *School Teacher Appraisal (Circular 12/91)* (DES, 1991b) describes in detail the process and methods of teacher evaluation.

- *Education (School Teacher Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2001* (DfES, 2001) requires governing bodies to appraise the performance of their head teachers on an annual basis to ensure that objectives have been agreed or set for them on or before 31st December each year.

- Education (School Teacher Performance Management) (England) Regulations 2006 (DfES, 2006) is the statutory basis for performance management in England.

The obvious shift in emphasis from the assessment of teachers' achievement to teachers' professional development will be explored in my study. The latter focuses almost entirely on the professional development needs of each teacher, with targets (using the language of the appraisal regulations) on professional development activities (i.e. the support needed to reach the next stage in the career of the teacher). The education policy of teacher performance management implies that encouraging English teachers to perform better in their professional career would contribute to promoting the quality of teaching.

Since the *Teacher Education Act* was enacted in Taiwan in 1994, the issue of how to maintain and manage the quality of school teachers' performance has become the main focus of educational reform. Although attaining a good quality in school teachers' performance is a common aim in Taiwan, the education policy of teacher evaluation still has many flaws. The main cause of the problem is that Taiwan's National Union of Teachers (NUT) strongly opposes the TE policy. Hence, it is important to explore NUT's viewpoints, particularly when the Government is trying to implement TE smoothly. Thus, the chair of Taiwan's National Union of Teachers is selected as an interviewee for my study.

From the administrators' viewpoint (administrators refer to officers and head teachers), the policy-making process and implementation of teacher performance management (hereafter abbreviated as TPM) in England is more deliberative than in Taiwan, while the perception of teachers is also likely to differ. I have made some initial assumptions, and they are described below:

- The development of teacher evaluation in Taiwan can be inspired by the English experience.

- The perception of teachers, head teachers and officers varies from one country to another.

- The challenges for Taiwan in developing TE are influenced by CHC; therefore it is recognised that some benefits can be reaped from critiquing Western models and considering their relevance carefully.

The present regulation of the Assessment of Teacher Achievement (hereafter abbreviated as ATA) in Taiwan cannot facilitate professional development, not only because the concepts of the regulation are too old-fashioned (in relation to contemporary theory of the teaching profession), but because it tends to borrow TE models uncritically from international research.

I believe that these assumptions can be evaluated when the study is completed.

1.5 Methodology

Generally, my research emphasised meaning rather than "the truth". This meaning was generated from the cultural context in Taiwan. In other words, this study did not explore "what is TE"; instead, it focused on such questions as "why do we need TE?", "how do we implement TE?", "when is the best timing to implement TE?" and "what is the meaning of TE in Taiwan?" from the implementers' perspectives. If the meaning of TE cannot be consistent with the implementers' viewpoints, the effects of implementing the system will be reduced, and may even be rendered meaningless.

Regarding TE, teachers were evaluated, but they were also implementers of this policy. Traditionally, teachers were "the recipients of the educational policy" and were often "dominated by the government", as they rarely had the opportunity to participate in the formulation of the policy. However, if policy implementers, including officers, head teachers and teachers, did not fully participate in the policy-making process, the policy

would be alien to their values and beliefs. These implementers might silently endure what they disagreed with, or they might even carry out the evaluation procedures with a perfunctory attitude. In contrast, through some relevant dialogue with the wider environment, these implementers' meanings could be embraced into the policy. Such a policy is alive, and thereby becomes meaningful.

Therefore, this study aimed to elicit the meaning of TE from the implementers' perspectives. The interview method was used to encourage my participants to express their opinions about TE in order to generate an enforceable policy.

The methodological paradigm with which this study is most closely aligned is constructivism, as addressed by Guba and Lincoln (1994). My goal was to understand and reconstruct the meaning of the development of teacher evaluation in Taiwan in the light of international research. In particular, I explored the nature of teacher evaluation and the meaning held by implementers. Thus the meaning, constructed by multiple interpretations in the Taiwanese context, was identified as the reality in my study. In this study, I believe that an effective policy is coalesced to form the needs of society, the coherence of theory development and the implementers' acceptance, and the meaning of the policy is built on the implementers' interpretations. Therefore the aim was for increasingly informed and sophisticated constructions, moving towards consensus, as well as increasing everyone's awareness of the content of TE and the meaning of competing constructions. My role in this study was that of a participant and a facilitator of this process. Advocacy and activism are the key features of a constructivist inquiry.

The meaning of teacher evaluation may be interpreted through multiple, apprehensible, and sometimes conflicting social realities that are produced by different implementers, but that may change as they become more well-informed about the process. In this study, I recognised that construction is contingent on multiple "knowledge" related to social, political, cultural, economic, and ethnic factors; hence, different interpreters would inevitably present different interpretations. This reflects a relativist ontology in which "realities are apprehensible in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 110). Based on the ontology, hermeneutics and dialectics underlined my research methodology. Through such a process, more sophisticated constructions were formed. The nature of TE as a social construction was acknowledged. Individual teachers'

constructions could be elicited and refined through the interaction between and among respondents and myself (researcher); in other words, we were interactively linked so that the findings are "literally created" as the investigation proceeded (Guba & Lincoln, 1998: 207).

A qualitatively-oriented study was chosen for this inquiry, using multiple case studies and drawing on different methods of data collection in order to construct multiple interpretations of teacher evaluation from related fields. The information collected will, in some circumstances, be relevant to more than one research question. In this study, I adopted documentary analysis and interviews. Documentary analysis was used to examine government publications, including books, journals and other documentation from public institutions, in order to trace the development of TE in the Taiwanese context, and how it might be influenced by globalisation. Meanwhile drawing upon some dissertations, which investigate educators' perspectives of Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development (hereafter abbreviated as TEPD) in each county respectively, I carried out a meta-analysis of teachers' viewpoints based on the statistical results. From this analysis, I gained a general overview of how teachers feel about TEPD in Taiwan. Moreover, the English official documentations were also explored in order to understand the development of TPM in England. Some of the relevant aspects in the English system provided an insight into the development of teacher evaluation in Taiwan.

Interviews were carried out with 3 head teachers and 7 teachers from 3 primary schools (in order to present balanced views from different "socio-economic status" area, an urban school and a suburban school were selected from 178 primary schools participating in the experimental Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development plan) in Taiwan and 3 officers from different levels of official organisations. The teacher is an implementer with a direct interest in teacher evaluation. The head teacher is the one who executes TE and has indirect interests in it. The chief of the National Union of Teachers, who represents all teachers, knows the teachers' heartfelt wishes, and can clearly explain the standpoint of the National Union of Teachers and the development of the resistance movement. Both the officers of the MoE and those from the local Bureau of Education represent the government's position. Consequently, my interviews investigated the multi-dimensional views of educators' perceptions about the implementation of TEPD in Taiwan. By integrating the above data with different implementers' voices during the policy-making

process of teacher evaluation, it is hoped that the effectiveness of the implementation of TEPD could be facilitated in Taiwan.

In order to understand the implementation of teacher evaluation in different countries, I also drew upon my informal conversations with teachers and head teachers in England.

1.6 Potential Limitations

This study was considerably restricted by events and circumstances, among which three specific points will be raised here: "the issue of conceptual equivalence", "methodological complexities" and "changes in TE".

1.6.1 The issue of Conceptual Equivalence

In different cultures, concepts may have variable meanings. For example, an apparently unambiguous term like "effective teaching" can have different meanings in different cultural contexts. Osborn claims that such an issue is called "conceptual equivalence":

> Conceptual equivalence is one of the most basic theoretical questions in comparative analysis and is whether the concepts under study have any equivalent meaning in the cultures under study (Osborn, 2004: 269).

Many terms do not have universal definitions, but contextual definitions; likewise, the concept of evaluation assumes a different connotation in Chinese societies, such as in Hong Kong and Taiwan, where direct face-to-face exchange of views – more associated with Anglo-American culture - is considered threatening (Walker & Dimmock, 2000: 175). Because the Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) has a profound impact on Taiwan, particularly with regard to the differences between collectivism and individualism, some concepts or elements of TPM developed from Western cultures could have a different meaning in the Taiwanese context. In cross-cultural research, a major challenge is to "provide conceptual definitions that have equivalent, though not necessarily identical meaning in various cultures" (Osborn, 2004: 269). In this study, the translation issue was a key challenge; therefore, my aim was to achieve conceptual and linguistic equivalence in this thesis.

In my study, all the terms were used carefully and were explained with reference to the cultural context. I avoided using certain words if their meanings were not considered to be equivalent in different cultures.