Leading Schools to Transform: Exploring the Dynamics
between Different Forms of Capitals and School Development

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Tracing back to the global development of school effectiveness and leadership research, the knowledge production process not only represented a dynamic combination of policy-driven trends and critiques to earlier theoretical propositions, but also revealed the constraint of lacking cultural perspective. Responding to one-fits-all limitation and the gap between theory and practice, context becomes a critical element that needs to be taken into account in the research. Situated in Asian cultural context, we are interested in exploring how principals lead the schools to transform. With the presumption that schools that have been transformed or have made good progress are adept in strengthening and aligning four forms of capitals (intellectual, social, spiritual and financial) through good governance, this study employed Bourdieu's perspective for analysis. The interplay between agency (schools) and structure (internal and external context) in transforming schools can be understood more explicitly as a game "played" by agents in terms of Bourdieu's terminology, in which the object of the game is to maintain or advance position by multiplying the quantum of capitals that is at stake in the field possessed by each position. The logic of actions or the collective social embodiment of particular proclivities in the game is operated as "habitus" in any given field – the most obvious site of capital accumulation, the embodiment of particular social practices. In order to make sense of the transformation in Taiwan's schooling field, the habitus, capitals and field in three case schools are identified, and furthermore action paths taken by schools for making good progress are investigated.