

**PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND CURRICULUM CHANGE IN
HONG KONG PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and no material from this thesis has been used or published previously. I confirm that the thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

The aim of the study is to examine the perceptions of curriculum change and leadership of curriculum change among Hong Kong primary teachers in four case study schools.

The main research questions of the study are: *1. What perceptions of curriculum change do teachers hold?*, and *2. What perceptions of the leadership of curriculum change do teachers hold?* This case study employed multi-site methodology to gather qualitative data for a more in-depth and holistic understanding of the teachers' perceptions of curriculum change and leadership of curriculum change. A total of 24 teachers in four case schools participated in this study. The primary source of data was semi-structured interviews. The secondary source of data included school documents.

Key findings of the study are as follows:

- (1) The majority of the teachers regarded the purpose of curriculum change related to academic-rationalism. It is very rare for them to view curriculum change in terms of social-economic efficiency, social reconstruction and child-centredness.
- (2) There were varied attitudes among the teachers in the study. There exist different perceived support and difficulties for curriculum change in terms of three perspectives: technical, socio-cultural and political.
- (3) The participants in this study perceived leadership as multi-faceted.
- (4) The Principal, the curriculum development leaders and department heads were regarded as the key figures who had the greatest influence in curriculum change.

- (5) Teachers seemed not to regard themselves as change leaders. The positional holders with high ranks tended to be more active in leading change while those with lower ranks claimed more that they only dealt with managerial and administrative tasks in their roles.
- (6) Among the four case study schools, the teachers revealed that to a large extent, the nature of change initiated by the school was ‘top-down’.

Implications, recommendations and limitations of the study were also discussed.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Setting the Context

1.1.1 Curriculum change in Hong Kong

Since the beginning of 21st century, knowledge workers and their productivity are regarded as ‘the most valuable asset of 21st century institution’ (Drucker, 1999). A new role of knowledge has been advocated. The roles and expectations of schools are changing and education professionals are facing both opportunities and challenges every day. Visions of the future proliferate (Facer, 2011). It has been a time of great global change in all aspects of society. Under the influence of globalization and nationalization, Hong Kong has undergone rapid changes and challenges in the new century. Education is no exception.

Since the 1980s, education reforms have been inevitably affected by the dominant winds of neo-liberalism which have redefined education as an investment in human capital and human resource development, where the processes of globalisation have brought about marketization, privatisation, and internationalisation that are supposed to maintain and sustain competitive capabilities (Maringe & Foskett, 2012). Curriculum reforms in Hong Kong have embodied a paradigm shift of schooling (Cheng, Chow, & Mok, 2004; Cheng, 2018) moving towards ‘triplization’ which is regarded as the collective combination of ‘globalization, localization and individualization’ (Cheng, 2003) (Table 1.1).

According to Cheng (2009a, 2009b, 2013), there are three major waves in curriculum change in Hong Kong over the past twenty years. The first wave of

educational reforms was undertaken from the late 1980s. It emphasizes on the achievement of the planned goals through teaching and learning. The concept of school-based curriculum development (SBCD) was first introduced in Llewellyn Report in 1982 (Visiting Panel, 1982) proposing that there would be a change from centralized, uniform curriculum to decentralized, school-based one catering for diverse needs of students. Teachers were expected to change from curriculum deliverers to curriculum designers or developers. A School-based Curriculum Project Scheme (SBCPS) was launched to put the initiative forward (EC, 1988). However, the new initiative was once in a blue moon and could only bring about ‘marginal’ impact on curriculum development (EC, 1990, p. 12) due to a number of reasons such as teachers’ readiness, lack of support and change knowledge (McClelland, 1991; Lo, 1999). The project was product-oriented rather than process-oriented in its implementation (McClelland, 1991).

Table 1.1. New and traditional paradigms of schooling (Cheng, Chow, & Mok, 2004, p. 4).

<i>New triplization paradigm</i>	<i>Traditional site-bounded paradigm</i>
Individualized schooling: As a facilitating place for students Learning and development Multiple intelligence school Individualized schooling style Place for curiosity in learning Open process Sharing joy As a learning organization Localized and globalized schooling: Coupled with multiple sources Community and parental involvement Networked schooling World-class schooling Unlimited opportunities for learning Local and international outlook As a world-class and networked school	Reproduced schooling: As a centre of education Source of knowledge and qualifications Standard schooling style Place for transfer of knowledge Qualifying process Achieving standards As a bureaucracy Bounded schooling: Isolated school Weak community linkage Separated schooling Site-bounded schooling Limited opportunities for learning Alienated experiences As a bounded and separated school

The second wave focuses on the interface effectiveness in terms of school-based management, quality assurance, accountability and stakeholders' satisfaction. In 1991-1993, 'Targets and Target-related Assessment' (TTRA) was proposed by the Education Commission (EC, 1990, p. 71) to meet the following three major requirements:

1. provides students and teachers with the information they require for formative purposes,
2. provides employers and parents with a clear statement of students' achievements, and
3. enables the government, in consultation with the community, to set and monitor educational standards.

The change was launched 'all of a sudden' without any sufficient consultation from the frontiers and received lots of resistance (Lam, 2003). Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC) was then commenced in 1994 to replace TTRA (EC, 1994). Schools and teachers were encouraged to adapt the assessment practice in their schools to improve the process of teaching and learning. However, the major initiatives of TOC were similar to TTRA and were claimed to have 'amoebic characteristics' (Lam, 2003) as the shape and focus in its course of development were changed while the contents remained unchanged. The TOC initiative was not implemented as smoothly as expected owing to a number of reasons, namely lack of practicality, lack of teacher ownership, negative teacher attitudes, insufficient teacher training, shortage of resources as well as incongruence with the local 'deep-rooted examination-oriented culture' (Carless, 1997, 1999; Berry, 2011, p. 199).

The third wave was about enhancing educational relevance and creating new goals in response to pursue future effectiveness. According to '*Learning to Learn: The Way Forward in Curriculum Development*' (CDC, 2001) and 2013 Policy Address

(HKSAR, 2013), ‘all-round education’ and ‘lifelong learning’ is the overall goal of education in Hong Kong, which highlights the needs ‘to help students Learn to Learn, which involves developing their independent learning capacities leading to whole person development and life-long learning’ (CDC, 2001, p. 10). With regard to the document (CDC, 2001), four key tasks are suggested to be used as tools to promote effective learning and teaching:

1. Moral and civic education to help students establish their values and attitudes; (responsibility, commitment, perseverance, respect for others, and national identity as a priority for personal development and improving society);
2. Reading to learn broadly with appropriate strategies to learn more effectively;
3. Project learning to develop generic skills and build knowledge; and
4. Using information technology for interactive learning.

In 2014 the Basic Education Curriculum Guide (Primary 1-6) was updated to further enhance the reform highlighted in *Learning to Learn* and sustain and deepen the accomplishments achieved and to identify new focuses in the curriculum (CDC, 2014). Figure 1.1 indicates that the transformation of a traditional grammar school model into a more integrated and diverse learning mode in Hong Kong’s school curriculum under the new curriculum reform, *Learning to Learn*. Decentralization of power from the central authority to the school level, school autonomy and self-management, and participation of school constituencies are strongly encouraged to facilitate the school-based initiative for school development and effectiveness (Cheng, 1997). Schools have been encouraged to develop different curricula to maximize the potential of students and enhance the professionalism of teachers. With the overarching targets set in context, the roles of teachers are expected to undergo drastic change. Teachers are expected to be ‘facilitators’ of student learning who could help their students achieve the learning targets including knowledge, generic skills, values and

attitudes (CDC, 2000).

Assessment reform is also one of the highlights in curriculum change in Hong Kong primary schools. Assessment for learning (AfL) is emphasized and shifts a focus from the previous emphasis on assessment of learning. The Education Commission (2000) also proposed to eliminate excessive dictation exercises, mechanical drills, tests and examinations and recommended diverse modes of assessment. This paradigm shift of assessment remarks the profound changes in conceptions about learning, teaching and assessment (Table 1.2) (Carless, 2005; Chan *et al.*, 2006). This still requires ‘greater attention to the implementation of assessment for learning’ in Hong Kong classrooms’ (Lee, 2007, p. 180), where ‘broader Chinese cultural norms concerning examinations are part of school culture and may provide barriers for the assessment reform agenda in Hong Kong and other Confucian societies (Brown *et al.*, 2009, p. 347).



Figure 1.1. Overview of the Hong Kong school curriculum (CDC, 2014, p. 18).

Table 1.2. Nature of assessment reform (Chan *et al.*, 2006, p. 6).

<i>Before 2001</i>	<i>After 2001</i>
• Assessment of learning • To assess how well students have mastered their subject content knowledge and skills • To grade the students against the standards they have attained • No/ limited teachers' feedback given • Test and examination oriented • Emphasize summative assessment • Transmission of knowledge and drilling are common classroom activities • Emphasize the learning product	• Assessment for learning • To assess students' generic skills, especially those higher-ordered generic/ thinking skills identified as the learning goals of the reform • Teachers gives constructive feedback to enhance students' learning • Students are aware of their learning objectives and pick up teachers' feedback for continuous learning • Formative assessment and summative assessment are used • Process and product are stressed

As discussed, the recent curriculum reform puts much emphasis on the use of diversified learning and teaching pedagogies and assessment with an ambitious agenda to bring about the curriculum reform (CDC, 2001, p. 79; CDC, 2014), which include the following key elements of the curriculum change in Hong Kong (Kennedy, 2005, p. 111):

1. School subjects are grouped into Key Learning Areas to encourage more integrated approaches to curriculum development;
2. Assessment for learning is promoted to emphasise student improvement rather than achievement;
3. Four cross curriculum perspectives are identified to support student growth and development as citizens and as learners (moral and civic education, reading, project learning and using information technology [for interactive learning]) and the focus is to be on learners and their needs. Over the past few years, schools were proposed to own and enjoy its 'freedom' ownership in implementing curriculum change. It seems that the assessment system was reshaped from accountability purposes to a centrally developed curriculum initiative for improving teaching and learning, and finally to a school-based curriculum development (Lam, 2003).

Seeing such curriculum change driven by 'performativity' (Ball, 2003) with

emphasis on its proficiency and effectiveness, there has arisen a need to rethink and reshape curriculum change for continuous development and improvement. Successful curriculum change requires a system based on professionalism rather than managerialism. School leaders need to be more concerned with enhancing educational relevance and creating new goals (Fullan & Quinn, 2015).

1.2 Aims and Purpose of the Study

This study is attempting to explore the perceptions of curriculum change and leadership of Hong Kong primary teachers in four case study schools.

1.3 Research Questions

The study examined the perceptions of curriculum change and leadership of curriculum change among Hong Kong primary teachers in 4 case study schools. It was felt it would be valuable to explore the teachers' perceptions of leadership and curriculum change in Hong Kong primary schools for the following reasons; in recent years schools have been expected to implement a series of curriculum reform measures such as 'Targets and Target-related Assessment' (TTRA) was proposed by the Education Commission (EC, 1990), Target-oriented curriculum (TOC) (EC, 1994), Learning to Learn (CDC, 2001) and Learning to Learn 2.0 (and later 2.0+) (CDC, 2014); in both leadership literature and in practice the methods of implementing such changes follow varying courses; it is the responsibility ultimately of the classroom teachers to ensure any curriculum change is implemented effectively. Given such a context, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What perceptions of curriculum change do teachers hold?
2. What perceptions of the leadership of curriculum change do teachers hold?

The concepts of "curriculum change" and "leadership" are both complex and

multi-faceted. They differ from people to people and vary in different cultures and contexts. Perceptions, which act as “a filter of concerns and awarenesses” (Donovan, 1975), consist of personal expectations, evaluations and assessments upon the ideal and the reality. They play a significant role in enhancing teacher effectiveness. As teachers act as active constructors of their own learning and are “change agents” in this dynamic society (Fullan, 1993), their perceptions are worth exploring.

Since the focus of the study is on perceptions of middle leaders and teachers, the two research questions are important because they guide the interview questions in the collection of data and thus capture the views of the participants. These will also drive the literature review.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Over the past decades, studies have been conducted to investigate how teachers perceive and practise leadership in change processes in different school contexts, including early childhood education (Heikka, Halttunen, & Waniganayake, 2016), primary education (Sigurðardóttir & Sigþórsson, 2016), secondary education (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009) and teacher education (O’Hair & Odell, 1995). However, previous studies on leadership have mostly been conducted in Western countries. Such investigations are rare in Asian societies (Hairon & Dimmock, 2012). In particular, only a few leadership studies were conducted locally in different educational contexts in Hong Kong, including early childhood education (Ho & Tikly, 2012), primary education (Law *et al.*, 2014), and secondary education (Lai & Cheung, 2013). In terms of spectrum of research, a few studies on curriculum change and leadership have been undertaken locally (e.g. Ho, 2010; Wong, Wong, & Peng, 2010; Leung, 2014; Wan *et al.*, 2020). These studies were context specific and lacked

generalizability. What has not been explored in great depth are the perceptions of practising primary teachers to determine if leadership identifies sustainable leadership practices for school success.

Regardless of the context and scale of a curriculum change, teachers' views on the change should be valued. It is believed that teachers are change agents and they hold important knowledge concerning leadership reform efforts. Studies have found that the beliefs and attitude of teachers have a significant influence on the success of curriculum implementation (e.g. Cheng, 1996a; Shum & Cheng, 1997; Avidov-Ungar, & Eshet-Alkalai, 2011). Teachers are able to exercise their autonomy in their classrooms in the way they interpret and reinterpret official documents, emphasize or de-emphasize curriculum intentions and in the ways that they present their lessons and interact with their students (Chan, Kwan & Lidstone, 2012). They are the key to the success of implementing effective leadership practices. Teachers are thus given chances to exercise their professional responsibilities towards the curriculum change.

In addition, this researcher believes that barriers exist in schools that challenge the implementation of leadership. This concern can be explored through the teachers' identification of where the barriers exist and if they can be overcome. More research is needed at the elementary teacher level in a qualitative study to determine how leadership is distributed, when it is distributed, and the conditions under which distribution is effective in making reform changes in schools.

Because this study aims at examining teachers' perceptions on leadership and how they could improve the current curriculum initiatives, it is not my intention to trace the history of the emergence of ideas relating to leadership or how it differs from other conceptualizations. This task has been ably undertaken by others (e.g. Copland, 2003; Gronn, 2003; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Rather, the researcher

will here discuss the key concepts related to distributed leadership and subsequently link them to an empirical study in the context of curriculum change.

This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how teachers perceive change and leadership, and how they perceive to be facilitating and obstructing factors in the change process in Hong Kong primary schools. In this study, the strategies teachers utilize in facilitating the curriculum change in the school are investigated. The study may be useful to the teachers in taking the leadership of curriculum change or facilitating their professional development in Hong Kong schools. Most of the teachers may face similar limits and constraints in the change process. The study thus would provide some insights for the school administrators or teacher leaders to reflect on their leadership and school culture. With a better understanding of teacher leadership and how this fosters or inhibits a learning culture, teacher leaders will be able to lead other teachers in an innovative change process.

1.5 Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms have been defined:

CM/ APSM/ AM/ SAM/ PSM/ SPSM: Under the pay scale of Hong Kong Education Bureau, there are different job rankings, namely Certificated Master/Mistress (CM), Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress (APSM), Assistant Master/Mistress (AM), Senior Assistant Master/Mistress (SAM), Primary School Master/Mistress (PSM) and Senior Primary School Master/Mistress (SPSM), where APSM or above ranking is regarded as middle management in the school.

Subject panels: Subject panels are regarded as subject department heads who are in a position taking formal roles in leading different subject departments for subject curriculum development.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is comprised of six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. The second chapter outlines the literature review outlining the major concepts of change and leadership in this study. The third chapter is about the research methodology underpinning the study. The findings and discussions of this study are presented in the fourth and fifth chapters followed by conclusions and implications in the last chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to a study of the perceptions of leadership in the context of curriculum change. To achieve this, it begins with a brief overview of fundamental concepts of change and leadership. Relevant empirical studies are then explored and reviewed to provide different perspectives from which to examine how leadership might be linked to curriculum change. The relationship between curriculum change and leadership is explored through the lens of teachers' attitudes towards change, their involvement in leading curriculum change and leadership influence in the process of curriculum change. Conditions influencing leadership practice are then examined.

2.2 Studying Curriculum Change from Teachers' Perspectives

In Hong Kong, various local studies were carried out to explore teachers' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and emotions about curriculum reforms since the 1990s. In the 1990s, studies focused on studying teachers' perceptions on the Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC) (e.g. Carless & Wong, 1999; Adamson, Kwan, & Chan, 2000). Carless (1998) found that teachers were positive towards the innovation but discovered the crucial elements that might benefit or block the curriculum change process, including teachers' understandings of the innovation, teacher competency teacher professional development and teacher desire for self-improvement.

In the 2000s, the new curriculum initiative, *Learning to Learn*, became the focus in different studies. These studies came across different aspects, ranging from subjects

(e.g. English Language Education, Liberal Studies) (e.g. Carless, 2003) to Four Key Tasks (i.e. Project Learning, Reading to Learn, Civic and Moral Education, ICT in Learning and Teaching) (e.g. Lam, Cheng, & Choy, 2010) as well as different emphases as stated in the official curriculum guide (CDC, 2001; 2014) such as the development of generic skills (Chan & Yuen, 2014), assessment for learning (e.g. Carless, 2005; Brown *et al.*, 2009; Adamson, 2011; Lee & Coniam, 2013), catering for learner diversity (e.g. Yuen, Westwood, & Wong, 2005; Wan, 2017), home-school cooperation (e.g. Ho, 2003), STEM education (e.g. Geng, Jong, & Chai, 2018). Most of the studies revealed that teachers held positive attitudes towards the ideals of such curriculum initiatives but gaps between the ideals and the realities were commonly found, where conflicts, tensions and struggles were evidenced and discussed in these studies. Ng (2009) revealed that principals were more positive than teachers regarding and concluded that more attention was essentially required to the development of ‘a culture of collegiality and collaboration’ (p. 187). Besides, Yuen, Cheung, & Wong (2012) found that the progress about curriculum reform in secondary schools was perceived to be less than that in primary schools. Some scholars attempted to investigate factors affecting curriculum change. Lam, Lai, & Wong (2009) revealed that teacher commitment can be one of the critical factors affecting curriculum implementation. Teachers’ readiness to curriculum change as well as perceptions of practicality of the innovation were also found to have impacts on teachers’ curriculum implementation (Lee, 1999; Lam, Lai, & Wong, 2009).

During the past two decades, different studies consistently that teachers had high levels of personal stress and risks of burnouts (Hui & Chan, 1996; Jin *et al.*, 2008; Lau, Wang, & Myers, 2017; Wong, Chik, & Chan, 2018). Few scholars (Cheung & Yip, 2004; Leung, 2008) examined teachers’ concerns about new initiatives, such as school-

based assessment and project learning were also explored under the framework of Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hall & Hord, 1987). Leung (2008) found that teachers demonstrated higher impact concerns (i.e. consequence/ collaboration, refocusing concerns) in implementing project learning. On the other hand, Cheung & Yip (2004) explored that there was a decrease in the intensity of teachers' information and management concerns when they had more experiences in using the innovation (i.e. school-based assessment) but 'teaching experience alone could not motivate teachers to think more about the impact of school-based assessment on student learning, their professional development' (p. 153).

Various studies (e.g. Cheng, 2009; Lee & Yin, 2011; Cheung & Wong, 2012) commonly found that teachers' challenges in implementing curriculum initiatives included heavy workload, tightly-scheduled curriculum, exam-driven environment and great learner diversity. Lee, Cheng, & Ko (2018) examined the key challenges and difficulties in school-based curriculum reform and found that knowledge for change, time and space and creation of shared culture were found to be vital in enabling the school-based curriculum development.

Methodologically, most of the curriculum change studies used quantitative methods such as surveys (e.g. Cheung & Wong, 2011). Some applied qualitative methods, in which interviews were commonly used for data collection for eliciting teachers' views and understandings of phenomena as encountered in curriculum reform. Therefore, as what has not been explored in great depth are the perceptions of practising primary teachers across different levels (i.e. middle leadership in subject department and subject teachers) to determine if leadership identifies sustainable leadership practices when facing curriculum change.

2.3 Understanding Curriculum Change

2.3.1 Purposes of Curriculum Change

Before examining the literature of change in detail, it would be helpful to explore briefly the concept of change in terms of how it has been used in relation to the curriculum. To understand change, we must be clear about the purposes of change. Educational aims and the means designed to achieve those aims mirror a set of images, orientations, conceptions, characterizations, or value systems involving beliefs and assumptions about the learner, knowledge, schooling and society (Morris & Adamson, 2010). Among different scholars, Morris (1996) gives a comprehensive view on explaining the aims of education advocating very different philosophical orientations. The aims of education include social and economic efficiency, child-centredness, academic rationalism and social reconstruction.

‘Social and economic efficiency’ values education as an advancement tool to contribute to national economic growth. It focuses on the role of schools in preparing future citizens who are capable for fulfilling the societal needs and who are economically productive. Schools act as places to produce competitive manpower to suit the economic demands of the society. In this sense, curricula are planned to cater for the practical needs of the society. Individuals are valued in terms of their contribution to the economy or society. Students are trained to fit into this economic endeavour while teachers are their trainers and transmitters.

The ‘child-centred’ image stresses children’s personal development. The curriculum is based on individual students’ needs and interests while students are ‘active constructors of their own reality’ (Bottery & Wright, 2014, p. 53). Students are put at the core in schools. Teachers act as facilitators or constructors of beneficial

conditions to fit students' needs and interests. Schools are encouraged to provide diversified learning choices for children.

Academic rationalism is grounded in subject matters or disciplines. It focuses on learning skills, concepts and approaches derived from academic disciplines to enhance student achievements and promote students' generic skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Morris & Adamson, 2010). Students are inducted into an academic discipline and taught with knowledge of discipline (Schiro, 2013). Thus transmission of knowledge and search for truth are emphasised in such aspect.

Social reconstructionism looks at schools as having the power to change the society and seek for enhancement in the future. Bottery & Wright (2014, p. 53) consider schools as 'essentially concerned with pressing social issues', in which 'the purpose of education is to facilitate the construction of a new and more just society that offers maximum satisfaction to all of its members' (Schiro, 2013, p. 6). In this sense, students actively participate in social networks by interacting with their peers and gain educational identity. Teachers are suggested to have powerful roles in changing students' social attitudes, ideals and behaviours and schools could transform the society in turn. They are encouraged to facilitate and stimulate students' critical thinking towards the social issues. Social and cultural values are at the core of the schools.

In short, the purposes of curriculum change can be discussed in terms of the above curriculum ideologies. It is important to take into considerations the current and future societal needs and demands, the students' capabilities and needs, the cultural contexts and values and the need to construct worthwhile and useful knowledge.

2.3.2 Types of Curriculum Change

Change has been described as ‘a generic term embracing a whole family of concepts’ (Prescott & Hoyle, 1976, p. 2). Used generically, it is a value neutral concept, which can be ‘constant, turbulent, challenging and demanding’ (Telford, 1996). There exist some distinctions among different scholars in defining types of change (e.g. Stenhouse, 1975; Fullan, 2007). However, curriculum change has more precise, qualitative meanings when it is embodied with concepts such as innovation, renewal, development, reform and improvement. For instance, Stenhouse (1975) regards curriculum change as being ‘curriculum renewal’ or ‘curriculum innovation’. To him, curriculum renewal is about updating of teaching materials and keeping track on knowledge developments and pedagogies whilst innovation involves changes in the premises of teaching. The difference between innovation and development is that the former implies a radical break with former practice while the latter is a more gradual enhancement of it (Blenkin, Edwards & Kelly, 1992). Improvement implies that new practices are not different from when went before but they are further enhanced.

Fullan (1982) suggested the implementation of curriculum change should involve a three-pronged multidimensional approach, namely, using new or revised materials or resources; using new teaching approaches; and altering beliefs. The three approaches are in line with Stenhouse’s conception of renewal and Fullan’s own conception of innovation. All the three aspects of change are necessary to achieve a particular educational goal or set of goals. Change involves knowledge building and social learning is primarily based on interactions. New meanings, new behaviours, new skills and new beliefs may be generated depending significantly on whether teachers are working as isolated individuals or in collaboration.

Curriculum change can also be superficial and substantial. Cuban (1990) draws

explicitly upon similar formulations of Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland, and Richard Fisch and makes a distinction between two types of organizational changes: first-order change and second-order change. The terminology has been widely used in educational change as the two concepts are ‘incremental’ and ‘fundamental’.

First-order change aims to make what already exists more efficient and effective by correcting deficiencies in organizational policies and procedures. Cuban (1990) points out that it assumes that the existing goals and structure are adequate and desirable. The changes are intended to keep the structure so they are regarded as ‘incremental’. Usually they are some basic steps that a school takes. However, second-order change aims at changing the fundamental ways implemented in organizations. As explained by Cuban (1990), it introduces new goals, structures, and roles, and transforms familiar ways of performing duties into novel solutions. It goes beyond the expected route in solving problems.

Similar to Cuban’s first- and second-order change, Waters, Mazano & McNulty (2004a, 2004b) distinguish between ‘incremental change’ and ‘deep change’. Incremental change fine-tunes the system through a series of small steps that do not depart radically from the past whereas deep change alters the system in fundamental ways. A dramatic shift in direction and requiring new ways of thinking and acting is resulted. Thus, the order of the change affects the degree and type of support for leadership practice.

2.3.3 Stages of Curriculum Change

Change is complex and unpredictable. Berman & McLaughlin (1976) suggested three stages of innovation, namely, initiation, implementation and incorporation. In the initiation stage, decision-making activities about the reasons for change are conducted

to get ready for change. During the implementation stage, the selected change is put into practice. Adaptations might be involved in the organizational setting and behaviours. In the stage of incorporation, the change is reinforced into ongoing routines and work practices.

Miles (1986) and Fullan (1991) further discuss the 3-stage model for the curriculum change phases. They regard the three phases as initiation, implementation and institutionalization. Similarly, initiation is the catalyst and the will to start the change process. Implementation is the stage in which change is put into practice. It is the stage that has received the most attention. The main activities in this stage consist of carrying out action plans, developing and sustaining commitment and monitoring the progress. Institutionalization is the ultimate goal of the curriculum change process in which the new programme is incorporated into the school's system and becomes part of the school's culture. Institutionalization is marked by embedding, links to instruction, widespread use, the removal of competing priorities, and continuing assistance.

2.3.4 Strategies of Curriculum Change

Many researchers have used numerous terms to describe and define different strategies for bringing about change in organizations. For instance, Greiner (1967) used the distinctions between unilateral action, sharing of power, and delegated authority; Zaltman & Duncan (1977) contrasted facilitative, persuasive, re-educative, and power strategies, and Dunphy & Stace (1988) contrasted participation and coercion strategies for change. Among all these, Chin and Benne's work (1985) is considered the most comprehensive and integrative (Szabla, 2007; Burke, 2008; Quinn & Sonenshein, 2008) which is rooted in strategies of planned change from sociological and psychological perspectives. They categorize various strategies for effecting change into three groups

- empirical-rational, normative-re-educative, and power-coercive strategies (Table 2.1).

With empirical-rational strategies, people are assumed to be rational beings and their self-interest is of the first priority. The major ways of facilitating changes are scientific investigation, research, and education to disseminate knowledge. Successful change depends on the communication of information and the proffering of incentives. It is crucial to balance incentives and risk management according to this change strategy. Under this change strategy, change agents often rely on experts' information, support and consultation to see how their behaviours can be modified with reason and logic. Dissemination of knowledge through general education, personnel selection and replacement, and employing systems analysts as consultants are often strategies under this category (Chin & Benne, 1969). The focus is on the change and organizations rather than individuals. There are some other tactics and strategies based on empirical-rational approaches (Table 2.1).

Normative-re-educative strategies regard humans as social beings who will adhere to cultural norms and values. For change to succeed, we need to redefine and reinterpret existing norms and values, and immerse others to make commitment to the change. Culture is the focus of this change strategy. It is important to note if people's behaviours match their beliefs. Therefore, if organizational changes are to occur, rational informational processing is not the sole consideration. Rather, individuals' attitudes, values, normative orientations, institutionalized roles and relationships, and cognitive and perceptual orientations are taken into account (Chin & Benne, 1969; Quinn & Sonenshein, 2008). For long-term change, it is essential to build trust, partnership and commitment among the participants in the organization (Bennis, 2000). Examples of normative re-educative strategies are listed in Table 2.1.

Power-coercive strategies assume that power is legitimate and carries rights with

it. People should listen to those in power and follow their directions no matter whether the directions appear to be appropriate or not. The legitimate authority may punish those who do not follow their orders. More powerful people within an organizational hierarchy are expected to impose their will on the less powerful to exact their compliance (Nickols, 2016). Chin & Benne (1969) suggested the main strategies are the use of political institutions and manipulation of power elites. With the use of power-coercive strategies, change is achieved when those with power act out the plans under leadership of those with greater power upon agreement (Bennis, Benne, & Chin, 1969). Other strategies and tactics of this type of strategy are listed in Table 2.1.

In general, there is no single ‘best’ change strategy. The use of the three change strategies depends on the cultural beliefs and norms of different contexts. The choice of strategies varies based on a number of factors such as time, degree of resistance, expertise of people and organizational culture.

Change theory or change knowledge can be very powerful in informing curriculum change strategies and, in turn, getting results – but only in the hands (and minds, and hearts) of people who have a deep knowledge of the dynamics of how the factors in question operate to get particular results (Fullan & Quinn, 2015). Regarding strategies of change, Fullan (2001) pinpointed the connected relationship between the two main aspects involved in educational change – what changes to implement (theories of education) and how to implement them (theories of change). The two aspects have an interlocking relationship. Thus both the change and the change process should be clearly understood. In order to lead as change agents, teachers must work with others to understand how to initiate, implement and maintain change (Fullan, 1994). When trying to initiate change, it is necessary to take its relevance into considerations. That is, the need for the new practice, an understanding of what it is

and the utility of what it has to offer; readiness – whether people have the theoretical and pragmatic abilities to start and develop a new practice; and resources – the provision of support in the change process.

Table 2.1. Summary of change strategies.

<i>Form of change strategy</i>	<i>Assumptions</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Empirical-rational strategy	People are assumed to be rational in their behaviour and are interested to adopt change.	Persuasion with reasoning (Zaltman & Duncan, 1977), education and communication (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979), negotiation (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979), exchange (Falbe & Yukl, 1992), presenting the benefits of change (Nutt, 1996), using the rational appeals of experts (Nutt & Backoff, 1997), engineering intervention (Huy, 2001), and telling strategy (Quinn & Sonenshein, 2008)
Normative-re-educative strategy	Change can be brought about by re-educating so that they can redefine and reinterpret existing norms and values.	Distribution of power to non-positional people, goal-setting (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979), inspirational appeals (Falbe & Yukl, 1992), soft approach (Beer & Nohria, 2000), teaching intervention (Huy, 2001), analytical and guided learning approach (Huy, 2001), and participating strategy (Quinn & Sonenshein, 2008)
Power coercive strategy	Change is based on the exercise of authority and imposition of sanctions.	Power (Zaltman & Duncan, 1977), manipulation and co-optation/ coalition (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979), authoritative direction and coercion (Dunphy & Stace, 1988), hard approach (Beer & Nohria, 2000), commanding (Huy, 2001), unilateral action (Waldersee & Griffiths, 2004), and forcing strategy (Quinn & Sonenshein, 2008)

2.3.5 Viewing Curriculum Change from the Past to Present in Hong Kong: From Technical, Socio-Cultural and Political Perspectives

Schools are regarded as complex social organizations and held together by a symbolic webbing (Deal, 1990). Curriculum change involves a collective renegotiation of historically anchored myths, metaphors and meanings (Deal, 1990). Curriculum change can be viewed and understood from three key perspectives, namely, technical, socio-cultural and political (Sahlberg, 2010). Different local scholars (e.g. Dimmock & Walker, 1998; Lee, Cheng, & Ko, 2018) also did analyses and discussed about the implementation of curriculum change in Hong Kong. The implementation of change was discussed from three perspectives, namely, technical (structural), socio-cultural and political perspectives.

Technical Perspective

From technical perspective, curriculum change can be seen as a form of instrumental action. It is also regarded as a process of research, development and diffusion. Schools are assumed as rational organizations that are ‘readily manipulated and easily changed’ (Lieberman & Rosenholtz, 1987). The technical side of curriculum change compasses the organizational, curricular, and pedagogical strategies which are necessary to provide changes agents (i.e. schools, teachers, parents, students) with access to a common body of technical knowledge and resources. A single new technique cannot possibly smooth the way for any major structural change. Technical changes in any current curricular practice therefore require careful attention to the other corresponding planning and practices that are associated with such new practice. Curriculum change is unlikely to be workable until other practices in the system, for examples, educational policies and laws, provision of teacher education and training, school organizational structure, classroom settings, are reconsidered and made compatible with the new

change (Oakes, 1992). In other words, technical orientation focuses on the needs of school organizations, including human and social resources in producing desired change (Tichy, 1983). This technical side provides infrastructures that support the demands of change instrumentally, where obstacles and difficulties in dealing with change are estimated and analyzed in order avoid resistance and troubles.

In Hong Kong, much curriculum change has been typically developed from this perspective. First, change was regarded as a centralized and bureaucratic process (Morris & Adamson, 2010) in which the government planners attempted to have hierarchical control over the policy (Carless & Harfitt, 2013). Teachers often have little input or influence in proposing curriculum change in Hong Kong. The curriculum change proposals are often complied with well-presented visions, guidelines and syllabi are compiled without paying much attention to real classroom implementation (Carless & Harfitt, 2013).

Second, Hong Kong was once the British colony. Much of its education system was based on a British model. Many policies were transferred or borrowed from other countries over the past decades (Forestier & Crossley, 2015). They are so-called ‘borrowed innovations’ (Carless & Harfitt, 2013), for example, the introduction of task-based learning, inquiry learning and communicative approach. There exists criticism in such reforms as the needs of the real school contexts are often neglected by the policy-makers who are not working in education fields (Forestier *et al.*, 2016). A lot of school-based curriculum change is often regarded as ‘piecemeal, fragmented and shallow’ as there lacks a strong and broad shared knowledge base for curriculum development (Lee, Cheng, & Ko, 2018). Many teachers have wasted time ‘re-inventing the wheel’ when developing school-based curricula (Lee, Cheng, & Ko, 2018).

Socio-cultural Perspective

Curriculum change can be viewed from socio-cultural perspective. Culture is an ‘amorphous’ and ‘contested’ concept (Dimmock & Walker, 2002, p.71). Culture may be defined as the ‘system of values, beliefs, values, myths, tools, ideologies and practices through which we respond to our environment’ (Dimmock & Walker, 2002).

As Hargreaves (1994) puts this:

..... cultures of teaching comprise beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things among communities of teachers who have had to deal with similar demands and constraints over many years. Culture carries the community’s historically generated and collectively shared solutions to its new and inexperienced membership. It forms a framework for occupational learning. If we want to understand what the teacher does any why the teacher does it, we must therefore also understand the teaching community, the work culture of which that teacher is a part ... (p. 165)

Leading in a culture of change is often equated to creating a culture of change. Reculturing is a complex, sophisticated task. Dimmock & Walker (2000) ascertain the importance of viewing change from cultural perspective as ‘cultures at the organizational level, politics, economics and religion are other important forces in this respect – it appears to be a significant factor, and one duly recognized in other fields’ (p. 137). Culture plays a core role in the process and holds an organization together to move forward. It is more likely for a more productive change to happen if teachers and administrators discover the drawbacks of the existing school structures and try to work towards a new orientation gradually. In contrast, rapidly implemented new structures might create confusion, ambiguity, and conflict ultimately leading to retrenchment (Fullan, 1993). There are dilemmas in leading change. It is crucial for leaders to use different strategies for different circumstances in the complexity of change. As Achinstein (2002, p. 425) further explains:

Communities are often born in conflict because they demand substantial change in school norms and practices, challenging existing norms of privacy, independence, and professional autonomy, and may question existing boundaries between cultures and power groups at school sites (Hargreaves, 1994; Lieberman & Miller, 1990; Little, 1990; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Talbert, 1993). They remain in conflict as their valued norms of consensus and critical reflection, of unity and discord, are oftentimes incompatible.

From socio-cultural perspective, Hong Kong curriculum change has encountered big contradictions between the ideals of the prescribed curriculum (written curriculum) and the realities of curriculum (implemented curriculum). Significantly, ‘cultural appropriateness’ of curriculum change was widely questioned and discussed (Carless, 1999; Li, Rao, & Tse, 2012). Socio-cultural factors are generally considered as one of the main reasons for problematizing the ‘adoption’ of curriculum reforms that did ‘not appear to have made a big impact on schools’ (Berry, 2011, p.199), where such reforms ‘ought to be taken pragmatically but programmatically as the complexity embedded cultural process in which all the local practices and values of its stakeholders operate in the same cultural space’ (Carless, 1997; Chan & Law, 2011, p. 25; Wong & Cheung, 2015).

Hong Kong is under great influence of the Chinese cultures. Confucian-heritage cultures are placing much impact on curriculum change. Yeung (2009) examined teachers’ perceptions of the implementation of inquiry learning as student-centred pedagogy and found that cultural factors and traditional values about teaching and learning have great influence on the implementation (Yeung, 2009). As teachers are often regarded as authoritative figures in traditional Chinese cultures, they feel their roles are challenged under this initiative.

Another example of curriculum reform greatly influenced by Chinese values in Hong Kong is the assessment reform. Hong Kong is well-known as a highly competitive and selective city. Examination (assessment of learning) is often emphasized. Assessment reforms such as assessment for learning have been bounded by exam-oriented cultures deeply rooted in Hong Kong (Carless, 2005; Berry, 2011; Hui, Brown, & Chan, 2017). Thus much resistance towards change exists in the education field upon the introduction of the change.

In Chinese socio-cultural values, academic subjects are of higher priority for its potential in possessing higher prospects. Academic subjects are often placed in higher priority and esteem leading to highly remunerated jobs in the service-based economy in Hong Kong (Johns & Dimmocks, 1999). Schools are sandwiched between pressures from the central authority and from societal and parental values and expectations, leading to a policy-practice gap where core subjects struggle for survival and resources (Johns & Dimmock, 1999). This leads to marginalization of curriculum subjects in Hong Kong. For example, subjects such as Music, Physical Education and Visual Arts are marginalized in the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum as they are not regarded as the core subjects in secondary schools.

Political Perspective

Apart from technical and socio-cultural perspectives, change can be viewed from the political angle. Culture and politics in an organization are closely linked to each other. From the micro-political perspective, the core notion is to understand organizational behaviours of members in one organization who have different interests (Blasé & Blasé, 2001). Micro-politics perspectives emphasize that individuals or groups use tactics and strategies to 'acquire and exercise power' in order to 'protect and promote' own interests, where the 'public and private transactions' are involved in the processes

(Malen, 1994, p. 147), which can be in form of collaboration and conflict, within the organization and/or in the external environment. In the school as an organization, the key actors include the school principal, the teachers, the parents and the school board members (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002), who have ‘personal or collectively shared interpretations’ of political processes and their values and motives are ‘intertwined with the history of the school’, in which the micro-political actions between teachers and principals depend on the working conditions that both can maintain each other’s interests (i.e. job security, school survival) (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002, p. 108).

Cuban (1992) identified ‘economic, demographic, political, social and cultural changes mediated by groups and individuals reshape school inexorably and alter policies and practices at the district and school levels’ (p. 215-216). There is a plethora of literature that accords with Rudduck’s (1986) claim that radical change in schools and classrooms (i.e. change that profoundly affects the basis of practice) involves change in the culture of the working group. Learning achievement is more likely to be happened if we see change as a cultural problem paying attention to context and to the creation of shared meaning within working groups instead of viewing it just as a technical problem (Rudduck, 1986). The micro-politics of schools should not be underestimated. The existing cultures would accommodate, absorb or expel innovations that are at odds with the dominant structures and values that hold habit in place (Rudduck, 1986).

A vast body of literature indicates that collaboration and collegiality are important elements for school improvement. Hargreaves (1994) introduces the two concepts in search for teacher cultures which enhance or inhibit school improvement. He comments, ‘the micropolitical perspective encourages us to discriminate between the different forms that collaboration and collegiality take’ (p. 191). In collaborative

cultures, teachers maintain an evolutionary relationship by building mutual trust and supporting each other to work for organizational goals. For contrived collegiality, teachers meet and work to implement the curricula and instructional strategies developed by others and there are only administratively contrived interactions. The former fosters teacher and curriculum development whereas the latter enhances administrative control making school decisions 'highly centralized' (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 193).

Schools are complex and ever-changing organizations. Schools are often characterized with organized anarchy and loose coupling (Salo, 2008). The micropolitical behaviour in schools could be described as a continuing struggle for control, power and influence. These struggles go on, for instance, between the leadership and the teaching staff or between different categories of teachers (Blase & Anderson, 1995). Blase & Anderson (1995) suggest that leadership is incorporated with both styles and goals. Leadership is categorized into four types according to the types of leadership style and whether the goals are transformational or transactional. The four types of leadership include authoritarian, adversarial, facilitative, and democratic, empowering leadership as illustrated in Figure 2.1. Under authoritarian leadership, principals tend to exercise strict control on policies and rules through formal structures. For adversarial leadership, principals tend to provide a forum for teachers to voice their opinions though they are fundamentally authoritarian. Principals with facilitative leadership try to promote more teacher involvement in administrative management towards pre-established goals while those with democratic, empowering leadership treasure teacher participation and promote distributed and collective leadership.

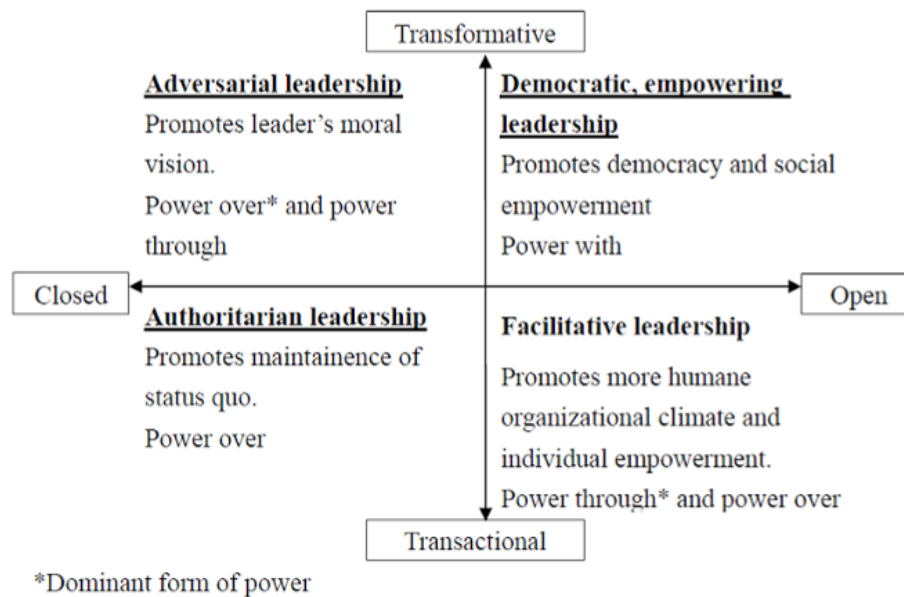


Figure 2.1. Micropolitics leadership matrix (Blase & Anderson, 1995, p. 18).

A number of literatures argue that schools are ‘intrinsically political in that ways must be found to create order and direction among people with potentially diverse and conflicting interests’ (Morgan, 1986, p.142). Malen (1994, p.148) observes that, ‘schools are mini political systems, nested in multi-level governmental structures, charged with salient public service responsibilities and dependent on diverse constituencies’. Blasé & Blasé (1997, p.138) point out that ‘the everyday micropolitical facilitative strategies and personal characteristics of exemplary principals have influenced and enhanced teachers’ sense of empowerment’. As observed by Lieberman & Grolnick (2005, p.40),

... teacher interdependence and collaboration in the construction of curriculum differ fundamentally from the norms of a profession that has traditionally isolated its members with their classrooms, ideological and technological changes inherent in reform efforts have elicited an unprecedented interest in networks, coalitions and school/university partnerships.

O’Neill (2000, p. 19) points out that ‘normative models of professional collaboration

tend to develop worrying surface cracks which may indicate far more structural faults'. Unavoidably, with more collaboration and collegial relationships in the school, conflicts might be sparked (Achinstein, 2002) and schools might become more political (Johnson, 2003). There might be higher frequency of power and influence-based interactions between principals and teachers, and the 'expected' kinds of political interactions (i.e. power with vs. power over interactions) from all participants that may have greater trust and respect or not (Blasé & Blasé, 1999, p.350; Johnson, 2003). As observed by Lee (2011) and Wong & Tsui (2007), it is commonly found that teachers are less willing to share teaching experiences with peers and tend to provide only positive remarks to their colleagues to maintain harmonious and collegial relationships.

Curriculum change is often viewed as a process of conflicts, negotiation and compromise among different parties (Carless & Harfitt, 2013). After returning to the sovereignty of China in 1997, the Hong Kong government sought to establish its legitimacy by launching curriculum change apparently different from the colonist government in the past (Morris, 2002). For instance, the introduction of the New Senior Secondary system (NSS) was one of the major initiatives aiming at bringing about structural change in Hong Kong school system.

Ko, Cheng, & Lee (2016) highlighted the inconsistency and lack of empirically supported assembled links and effects of the development of school autonomy and accountability on school education, where strong leadership, comprehensive continuous professional development and a positive, collaborative school climate are key elements to enhance school autonomy in order to bring about positive change.

In sum, curriculum change can be viewed in many forms or types. It can be brought about by different strategies and can be understood from different perspectives. Whatever form change takes, whatever strategy is used to bring it about or from

whatever perspective, studying aspects of leadership will inevitably be encountered.

2.4 Understanding Leadership

During the past decades, there has been an emergence of growing concepts of leadership. There are no universal definitions of leadership (Bolden, 2011). Leadership is a complex concept which has different meanings to different people. Leadership is recognized as a value-laden concept (Gronn, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2001). Due to a traditional, hierarchical conceptualization of school leadership, leaders in the past were often described in terms of their assigned roles and formal positions in the literature (Hart, 1994). Such as a traditional view of leadership presumes a top-down influence of the leader on followers, where the leader is the primary originator and conductor of leadership (Drath, 2001). Much of the leadership literature has been devoted to this approach and has investigated individual leader traits, skills, and behaviours (see Bass & Stogdill, 1990). In the face of an increasing demand for innovation and flexibility, organizations have begun to view leadership holistically as concertive action (Gronn, 2002) and to shift some traditional leadership roles onto other team members. Similarly, researchers have begun to acknowledge the importance of leadership, wherever it occurs (Hunt & Dodge, 2000).

The recent move to reconceptualise leadership as shared and distributed assumes everyone to share the responsibility for student achievement and to take up leadership roles in their competent and skilled areas (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). That means, leadership functions in teams where everyone contributes and collaborates instead of small groups or individuals performing tasks separately.

2.4.1 Conceptual Models of Leadership

A wide range of conceptual models of leadership having been adopted over the past few decades in numerous studies, namely, transformational leadership, instructional leadership, teacher leadership and distributed leadership.

Transformational Leadership

In the 1980s, ‘transformational leadership’ was introduced by J.M. Burns in his classic work. According to Burns (1978), leadership must serve a collective purpose and the effectiveness of leaders is determined by their ability to bring about social changes. There is an interplay of conflict and power between the leader and follower. Burns makes a clear distinction between two basic kinds of leadership: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership emphasizes supervision, organization and group performance. Leaders use rewards and punishments to direct followers to work towards the organizational goals. There is not a mutual purpose between the leader and follower but power relationships occur between the two. On the contrary, transformational leadership promotes engagement, motivation and morality. Both the leader and follower work towards shared vision. In this way, leaders and followers are united in pursuit of higher-level goals common to both. Both want to work for the best and shape the school in a new direction (Sergiovanni, 1990).

The most substantial adaptation of the transformational leadership construct is found to be Leithwood (1994)’s conceptual model which was built on Burn’s and Bass’s work. His model has been extensively studied and investigated over the past decade. Seven elements were also identified in his model: offering individualized support, establishing shared goals and building school vision, providing intellectual stimulation, creating a productive culture, demonstrating high expectations, offering individualized support, modelling the best practice and important organizational values and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions (Leithwood, 1994).

In short, transformational leadership focuses on the commitment of followers and organization capacity building towards school improvement. The leaders work with the subordinates together to identify the change and inspire the others to act out the plan with a shared vision. Through a variety of mechanisms, the motivation, commitment and morale of the followers is enhanced and fostered as the followers build up trust, admiration, loyalty and respect towards the inspiring leaders (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). Under this kind of leadership, a new dynamic and creative organizational culture is embedded with a sense of commitment and community (Sharpe, 1995).

Instructional Leadership

Since the early 1980s, instructional leadership has been established a strong presence in research and practice within the related fields of educational leadership, school improvement and school effectiveness (Boyce & Bowers, 2018; Salo, Nylund, & Stjernstrøm, 2015). It has been identified as one of the most significant leadership conceptions among different countries such as UK, North America, Australia, New Zealand. It is shown that instructional leadership is also highly relevant to teaching and learning in various empirical studies (e.g. Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Blasé & Blasé, 2002; DeMatthews, 2014; Timperley, 2006; Bush & Glover, 2009; Bush *et al.*, 2010).

There is no agreed definition of instructional leadership (Bush, 2011). There are different terms regarding the concept of instructional leadership in different research contexts. It is often equivalent to ‘instructional leadership’ (e.g. Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, R. (1999) 1999; Blase & Blase, 2002); ‘instructionally focused leadership’ or ‘leadership for school improvement’ (Murphy *et al.*, 2007); ‘leadership for/ of learning’ (Bush, Briggs, & Middlewood, 2006) and ‘learning-centred leadership’ (Southworth, 2005; Timperley, 2006).

However, there existed criticisms in the early empirical studies about instructional leadership which was mainly focused on the centrality of principals' roles in educational improvement with their strong administrative leadership (e.g. Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). Most of the empirical studies focused on the impact of instructional leadership on student academic outcomes. Hallinger (2003, p.330) claimed that there was 'broader dissatisfaction with the instructional leadership model, which many believed focused too much on the principal as the centre of expertise, power and authority'.

There is a global interest in education reform centering on student learning. Thus, the research direction of instructional leadership shifted from principalship to transformational or distributed leadership (e.g. Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001; Hallinger, 2003). Some scholars have proposed the term 'learning leader' over 'instructional leader' (DuFour, 2002). Thus it is crucial to involve colleagues collaboratively in mutual learning and development, with the main purpose of improving teaching and learning when enacting instructional leadership (de Lima, 2008). Numerous leadership activities have been described as part of instructional leadership, including developing a school mission and vision; coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating curriculum, instruction, and assessments; promoting a safe and supportive learning environment for students; and creating a supportive and collaborative work environment for teachers (Murphy, 1990). More broadly, this work can be about setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization around high-quality curricula and instruction (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004). Effective principals should build a professional learning community maintaining collaboration among all school members. They should also develop quality education with the focus on student learning by recognizing that assessments, unit plans, and daily lessons to be

aligned to standards, and developing assessment and data-collection systems to monitor, evaluate, and adjust these systems to increase teacher and student performance.

Teacher Leadership

The concept of teacher leadership has been paid much attention as an integral part of the whole-school reform since the early 1990s (Wenner & Campbell, 2017; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). There exist diverse definitions and meaning of teacher leadership by different scholars without reaching an universal definition (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teacher leadership is often associated with instructional leadership (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Hallinger, 2005), pedagogical leadership (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011), transformational leadership (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Bass, 1998; Yammarino & Bass, 1990) or distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2003; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001).

Such a concept is highly related to learning and teaching, which is the core of education. Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001) defined teacher leaders as those who can ‘lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice’ (p.5). They characterized leadership practices as three domains: 1. demonstrating leadership among students or other teachers by mentoring, being a curriculum specialist or creating new teaching approaches; 2. showing leadership in operational tasks by being an action researcher or a taskforce member who can lead the school to move towards its goals; and 3. showing leadership in decision-making process or partnership by serving an internal or external member of a school improvement team.

Harris & Muijs (2004) categorized the roles for teacher leaders into four dimensions: 1. a brokering role that ensures the links within schools are secure and opportunities are maximized for teacher development, 2. a participative role fostering more collaborative ways for teachers to work towards collective goals, 3. a mediating role enabling the school to draw critically upon additional and external resources and expertise for school improvement, and 4. a role preceding close relationships among individual teachers within professional learning communities. In such sense, it seems that the roles of teacher leaders can be both formal and informal. Wenner & Campbell (2017) put this forward by providing an operational definition about teacher leadership as ‘teachers who maintain K-12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities, while also taking on leadership responsibilities outside of the classroom’ (p.140). The concept of teacher leadership is changing and varied from formal, senior, administrative, positional leaders to informal, regular, non-positional teachers who do not carry any official duties or responsibilities other than teaching duties (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Teacher leadership is multi-dimensional and should not be restricted to seniority of roles and within the school boundary.

In short, there seem to be diverse definitions of teacher leadership. The key ideas of teacher leadership are closely linked to teachers’ professionalism and collegiality (Szeto & Cheng, 2018). It is often regarded as a set of collaborative and collective leadership practices that lead to increased student achievement, improved school decision-making and enhanced teaching profession for the 21st century (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Commission, 2008).

Distributed Leadership

Recently distributed leadership has garnered considerable attention worldwide. Different scholars demonstrated direct and/or indirect impacts of distributed leadership

on student learning (e.g. Gronn, 2000; Muijs & Harris, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2004) and school performance (e.g. Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Silins & Mulford, 2002; Harris & Muijs, 2004; Hulpia & Devos, 2009). Some researchers have argued that distributing leadership is only desirable if the quality of leadership activities contributes to ‘assisting teachers to provide more effective instruction to their students’ (Timperley, 2009, p. 220). Distributed leadership therefore could be seen as a ‘mediated leadership’ (Bolden, 2011) that ‘was positively correlated to the conditions within the organization, including staff morale, which in turn impacted positively upon student behaviour and student learning outcomes’ (Day *et al.*, 2006).

Distributed leadership is often closely related to concepts like shared leadership, collaborative leadership, democratic leadership and delegated leadership. It is often used to indicate that school leadership involves multiple leaders. As such, leadership is regarded as an organizational quality rather than an individual attribute. Although the term ‘distributed leadership’ means different things to different people, there seems a mutual agreement that distributed leadership is not the same as assigning tasks and responsibilities to individuals and asking them to complete them solely and separately. Distributed leadership can be thought of as ‘a way of thinking about leadership’ (Bennet *et al.*, 2003, p. 2) rather than another technique, where distributed leadership should involve dynamic interactions between multiple leaders and followers who perform tasks with collective efforts (Timperley, 2005; Scribner *et al.*, 2007). Scribner *et al.* (2007) criticised that many schools which claim themselves to be practising distributed leadership are actually delegating responsibilities to the existing positional leaders within the existing authority but not sharing the tasks among different school members. Harris (2005, p. 261) regards this as ‘misguided delegation’.

Distributed leadership goes beyond charismatic leadership. It is not about one

single leader who transforms an organization. Rather, distributed leadership implies that leadership is stretched over multiple individuals in an organization who interact with each other to accomplish tasks (Spillane *et al.*, 2001). The interactions among the members in the organization are a key element in distributed leadership. Task responsibilities are distributed across traditionally defined organizational roles. 'Decisions about who leads and who follows are dictated by the task or problem situation, not necessarily by where one sits in the hierarchy' (Copland, 2003, p. 378). Apart from the interactions, the contexts in which the interactions occur are equally important (Harris, 2005; Spillane *et al.*, 2001). Thus, distributed leadership is regarded as 'the sharing, the spreading, and the distributing of leadership work' across individuals and roles across the school organization' (Smylie *et al.*, 2007). Multiple actors across multiple roles are involved in multiple levels of a school organization. Distributed leadership can exist in both top-down and bottom-up initiatives. The taxonomy of distribution is comprised of six forms: formal, pragmatic, strategic, incremental, opportunistic and cultural distribution (Duif *et al.*, 2013). The first four forms the top-down initiative as the starting point while the latter two are characterized as bottom-up forms of leadership distribution.

Among the scholars who have attempted to develop a conceptual model of distributed leadership, Gronn (2000, 2002) and Spillane *et al.* (2004) are perhaps the most comprehensive ones, which are further discussed below.

Gronn's (2000) distributed leadership theory is founded on activity theory. Leadership is assumed as 'emergent work-related influence' (Gronn, 2000, p. 7). He suggests that distributed leadership may be viewed from two broad perspectives: the numerical or additive perspective and holistic perspective.

From the numerical or additive perspective, 'distributed leadership' refers to

‘the aggregated leadership behaviour of some, many or all of the members of an organization or an organizational sub-unit’ (Gronn, 2002, p. 655). Leadership is ‘dispersed rather than concentrated’ (p. 3). Leadership is additive because not only the principalship or headship matters but also the leadership co-performed by other stakeholders such as subject panels, teachers, school board members and students. There are some guiding principles involved:

- Leadership among individuals is equally shared.
- Individuals’ behaviour is equally accountable.
- All members have equal opportunities to take up leadership positions.

From the holistic perspective, leadership is viewed as a ‘concertive action’ (Gronn, 2002, p. 656). He argues that leadership is ‘more appropriately understood as a fluid and emergent, rather than as a fixed, phenomenon’ (Gronn 2000, p. 324). The focuses of this kind of leadership are delegation and sharing, coordination and collaboration, and dispersion and democratization of leadership. Role is not the primary focus. Rather, collaboration and engagement are involved when leadership is stretched across the social and situational contexts of different schools. Leadership is evident when different school members are engaged in exchanging and discussing ideas and thoughts to execute tasks or solve problems together.

Another scholar, Spillane (2006) describes distributed leadership as an activity stretching over leaders, followers and situation. Distributed leadership is not about how school principals use their power to delegate tasks to others but it involves the complicated relationship and interactions between people and situations.

The two core concepts in Spillane’s distributed leadership are the leader-plus aspect, and the practice aspect. The *leader-plus* aspect of distributed leadership recognizes that leadership is a matter of multiple individuals regardless of their

positions or formality of roles (Spillane, Camburn & Pareja, 2007). Spillane & Orlina (2005) argue that the leader-plus aspect is a prerequisite of distributed leadership but documenting the social distribution of leaders and their skills is not sufficient to provide the holistic view on distributed leadership. Purely relying on the social distribution would result in decontextualizing the school leadership and leading to too many ‘critical interdependencies among people and aspects of their situation’ (Spillane & Orlina, 2005, p. 162). Thus, an integrative conceptual model with addition of the second element (the practice aspect) is proposed to explore the interaction of leaders’ thinking, behaviour, and their situation.

The *practice aspect* turns to the very activity of leadership. From this perspective, distributed leadership is neither a top-down nor a bottom-up approach. It recognizes that different people have different leadership roles at different times. To better understand the interlocking relationship, Spillane *et al.* (2004) developed a conceptual framework for understanding ‘how’ leaders distribute leadership. The four key concepts are: (a) leadership tasks and functions, (b) enacting leadership tasks, (c) social distribution of task enactment, and (d) situational distribution of leadership practice.

Leadership is viewed as ‘constitutive of leadership practice’ (Spillane *et al.*, 2004, p.20-21). It is ‘stretched over the social and situational contexts’ of the organization. Leadership acts should be recognized within wider contexts (Bolden, 2011). There exists an interdependence among teachers, students, subject departments and the overall school culture and context.

Spillane *et al.* (2004) provide a comprehensive framework for studying leadership in schools. There exists a paradigm shift from reliance on a single leader to a more complex view of leadership across multiple actors. To better understand the

complexity and comprehensiveness of leadership, they assert that complex organizations need to be studied with multiple methods such as observations, structured and semi-structured interviews and videotaping leadership practice. Different kinds of organizational routines, artefacts and tools can be used to understand the interactions among multiple actors and situational contexts. For example, organizational routines can be grade level meetings, teacher evaluations, school assemblies and department meetings. Artefacts such as programme plans and curriculum frameworks and observation protocols can also serve as some useful tools to study interactions among people. Spillane recognizes that leadership practices can be influenced by organizational structures whether or not it is positive or negative. Structures can be fluid and changed depending on how they are created by the school leaders. Changing the practice can lead to improvement.

In short, leadership is immersed in the daily activities and interactions of everyone in any organization, regardless of position. It does not matter if it is a small, incremental, informal and emergent act or a large-scale transformational change. The more people in an organization exercise their influence, the greater the leadership distribution. Leadership is enacted by multiple participants and there is interdependence among leaders, followers and the situation.

2.5 Leadership of Curriculum Change

In the 21st century, the world is ever-changing with unprecedented events going on every day. The key of change is leadership (Fullan, 2005). Leadership can be seen as the individual and collective efforts to change the world better in response to challenges ahead. Teachers act as change agents and play unique roles in leading change. Teachers are the core of learning and teaching process. They can take the leading role and use their knowledge and capability to make change happen in both classrooms and schools. Lieberman & Miller (2004) regard teacher leaders as critical partners in transforming schooling where there may be shifts from balkanization (Hargreaves & Macmillan, 1994) to team work (Scribner *et al.*, 2007); from teacher-centred to learner-centred and from managerial practice to collective practice of problem-solving.

In addition, there are a number of potential benefits of developing teachers' leadership. If teachers are engaged and committed in decision-making in the change process, they are likely to be empowered. Professional growth is fostered in terms of instructional and pedagogical practices (Ovando, 1996), leadership and organizational skills (Ryan, 1999) and increased sense of professionalism and commitment to teaching (Smylie & Denny, 1990). More positive student outcomes and a collaborative culture in schools are likely to occur. Thus, change is more likely to have higher impact if we value and respect teachers, engage them in the process and provide them with sufficient support for their leadership roles.

The key drivers of change in leadership practice are teachers' involvement in the change process, teachers' attitudes towards change, and teachers' leadership influence in the change process. These key drivers are discussed in more details as

follows.

2.5.1 Teachers' Involvement in Curriculum Change Process

Teacher involvement in decision-making is believed to be crucial for any educational change (Lieberman, 1992; Smylie, 1992; Little, 1995) as teachers are key players in the curriculum development processes as they are at the frontline who promote and facilitate student learning. There is a great deal of research regarding the positive influence of teacher participation in decision-making towards the process of school enhancement and improvement (e.g. Murphy, 2005; Muijs & Harris, 2007). Studies (e.g. Newcombe & McCormisck, 2001; Nir, 2003) reveal the positive impacts of teacher involvement in decision-making on teachers' job satisfaction, commitment, and trust towards colleagues. As a result, there is empowerment of teacher leadership and school improvement.

Pashiardis (1994) found that teachers' involvement in decision-making could develop their stronger sense of ownership towards curriculum change. Higher degree of teacher participation in school decision-making was also found to be one of the factors leading to a decrease in teacher absenteeism (Sickler, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989). Oloruntegbe (2011) claims that teachers' resistance towards curriculum change and lack of commitment lead to low involvement in the process of curriculum development. Meanwhile, teachers' job satisfaction could be raised by their freedom to make decisions in the classrooms and thus teacher effectiveness could be enhanced (Kington *et al.*, 2009). Arar & Abu-Romi (2016) found significant differences in teachers' perceptions of pedagogical improvement and participation in decision-making according to schools with more experiences in school-based management whilst teacher participation in decision-making was found as the strongest predictor of teacher satisfaction. Harrison *et al.* (2016) revealed that experienced teachers regardless of

position indicated that they were slightly more involved than the less experienced teachers, however, teachers perceived that they had a higher degree of involvement in decision-making at classroom level more than at school level whilst they ‘expressed a need for all staff to become more involved’ in ‘discussions, meetings and reciprocal meetings between staff and school leadership’ (p. 169).

Teachers are involved in school decision-making in different ways. Arnstein’s (1969) ‘*A Ladder of Citizen Participation*’, originally used in public involvement by governments, provides a comprehensive framework in understanding teachers’ participation and involvement in decision-making processes. Eight types of participation are classified and these eight types are further categorized into three main groups, namely, citizen power, tokenism and non-participation (See Figure 2.2). At the top of the ladder, ‘citizen power’ includes citizen control, delegated power and partnership. In the middle of the ladder, ‘tokenism’ includes placation, consultation and informing. At the bottom, ‘non-participation’ consists of therapy and manipulation.

Arnstein (1969) points out that there is a redistribution of power that enables the citizens previously having no power in the political and economic processes to get involved in the decision-making process. The level of participant engagement in decision-making differs in Arnstein’s ladder. In the lower rungs, more external control from the authority is exerted in the process where manipulative and passive participation is allowed. In the tokenism stage, participants are given the opportunities to take part in receiving information in the processes of informing and consultation but the decision-making power is still held by those in power. More interactive participation is seen at the top of the ladder when people participant in initiating, planning, enacting and strengthening the measures with joint collaboration and active participation. That means, the decision-making power is in hands of the participants.

The three types of involvement in Arnstein's ladder provide a more precise way to investigate how teachers participate in the decision-making process.

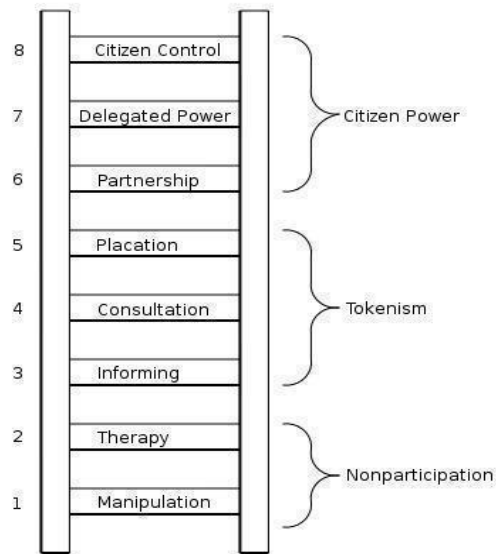


Figure 2.2. Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217).

Transformational leadership is likely to be present in the tokenism stage while transactional leadership seems to be enacted at the non-participation level. As teachers are given more chances to be involved through informing, consultation and placation in the decision-making process, they might feel more committed to change and build up trust and respect towards the leaders. They may be more willing to perform tasks and work towards pre-established goals. Yet, teacher involvement is limited at the bottom of Arnstein's ladder as teachers are only passive receivers under external power and control. They are directed to work towards the organizational goal by transactional leadership. It seems that there exists distributed leadership when decisive power is shared among the participants through building partnership and engaging them actively participating in decision-making process on the upper deck of the ladder.

2.5.2 Teachers' Attitudes towards Curriculum Change

Attitudes are defined as 'a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through

experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on the individual's response to all objects and situations to which it is related' (Pickens, 2005, p. 44). Different literatures highlight the application of 'tri-component attitude model' (e.g. Howard & Sheth, 1969; Dunham *et al.*, 1989; Wilkie, 1994; Pickens, 2005), which is composed of three aspects of attitudes, namely affective (feelings), cognitive (thoughts), and behaviours (actions). In terms of curriculum change, attitudes may simply be an enduring judgment of change (e.g., 'I like change'), or other emotional reactions to objects and to people (e.g. 'I dislike change' or 'Change makes me puzzled'). Attitudes also provide people with inner thoughts or beliefs about change (e.g., 'Teachers usually resist new ideas' or 'Our teachers do not like change.'). Attitudes cause people to behave in a particular way toward change (e.g. 'I take more professional development courses because I don't know much about this change' or 'I am inclined to try new ideas'). Teachers' attitudes towards change is s a key factor in the process of change (Avidov-Ungar & Eshet-Alkalai, 2011) as attitudes reflect how a person tends to feel, think or behave positively or negatively towards the object of the attitude (Arnold, Cooper, & Robertson, 1995). Thus, to introduce or promote change in a better way, we need to understand and explore teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change.

Vast literatures on curriculum change suggested that teachers' attitudes is one of the reasons explaining the differences between teachers' perceptions and actual practices in change process. A number of researchers (e.g. Mowlaie & Rahimi, 2010) argue that attitudes are such important factors that they can be considered to affect teachers' success or failure in a classroom. Teachers' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about curriculum change determine whether a new curriculum change is accepted or rejected as they 'influence and shape the meanings that the teachers eventually attach to the new reforms' (Bantwani, 2010, p. 89). Any investment in a curriculum change

seems to be a waste of time and energy without teachers' full support (Mowlaie & Rahimi, 2010). Teachers' attitude towards change may not be the only indicator to impact change or innovation but it is of essence in determining its success and failure (Richardson, 1996; Lee, 2000).

Hence, it is necessary to acknowledge the significance of the interconnections between attitudes and teaching behaviours. These interconnections are clearly presented in what is referred to as 'theory of planned behaviour' (Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996). This theory argues that attitudes lead to intentions that, finally, will be transformed into actions. Nevertheless, attitudes alone do not result in intentions; according to this theory two other important elements also come into play: subjective norms (one's perception about a specific behaviour being influenced by significant others) and perceived behavioural control (one's ease or difficulty to perform a specific behaviour) (Ajzen, 2013).

Teachers' attitudes are closely linked to their past experience, self-efficacy, and sense of ownership towards change. Szebla (2007) found that teachers' attitudes towards planned change can be categorized into cognitive, emotional and intentional responses which are closely related to their perceived change leadership strategies. Research concerning teacher attitudes towards curriculum change has been studied in different countries all over the world (e.g. Cronin-Jones, 1991; Haney, Czerniak & Lumpe, 1996; Li, 1998; Handal & Herrington, 2003; Jones, 2004; Sembiring, Hadi, & Dolk, 2008; Terhart, 2013; Chiu & Churchill, 2016; Zhang & Wang, 2016; Liu, Lin, & Zhang, 2017; Yada & Savolainen, 2017). Despite the fact that teachers in these regions commonly held positive attitudes, they felt frustrated and showed concerns in their self-efficacy, implementation issues and support.

To a certain extent, teachers' past experience affects their receptivity to new

ideas and changes (Knight, 2006). Teachers with different professional life phrases have distinctive characteristics and features. As teachers gain more expertise and experience, their perceptions and instructional choices are likely to change. On one hand, some research (e.g. Borko & Putman, 1996) shows that novice teachers' beliefs are more likely to be shaped by their experience as students while veteran teachers' beliefs are more affected by their professional experiences. It seems that more experienced teachers tend to be more resistant to change than fresher teachers as they have more experience. On the other hand, some research (e.g. Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997) shows that teachers with more experience would be more capable of making change as they gain experience from their former practices. Day *et al.* (2006) conclude that there exist variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness. Thus, it is suggested by Day *et al.* (2006) that learning spaces should be provided for teachers to 'relearn' or 'unlearn' the former practice in order to accept the new one.

The second factor that is related to attitudes towards change is teacher self-efficacy. This represents the teacher's belief in the degree to which their own abilities to perform tasks can overcome external control factors such as students' family background (Bandura, 1977; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teachers with a low sense of teacher efficacy operate from an external locus of control, whereas teachers with a high sense of teacher efficacy operate from an internal locus of control (Soodak & Podell, 1996). The higher teachers' personal efficacy is, the more confident teachers are about their teaching competencies resulting in higher teaching effectiveness (Guskey, 1988). Teachers with more self-efficacy appear more likely to accept change and enact new instructional practices. In contrast, teachers with a low sense of teacher efficacy lack the capability and confidence in making change. Their resistance against change becomes an obstacle in the implementation of change.

Teachers' ownership is also believed to be a factor affecting teachers' attitude towards change. Teachers' ownership is directly related to their involvement in curriculum decision-making process (Smith, 2016). Lee (2000) claims that teachers are more willing to take part in change if they find the change is beneficial to them. Teachers accept change if they make meanings of the change. If teachers are more involved in decision-making process, they feel stronger ownership of change. They are more likely to be more positive towards change. They feel there is an urgency or necessity to make change and raising issues concerning change (Vandeyar, 2017). On the contrary, teachers tend to refuse, resist or reject change if they are just receivers of change. They are likely to oppose curriculum changes and find the changes unnecessary if the changes are centrally imposed by the central authority (Bishop & Mulford, 1999).

2.5.3 Teachers' Leadership Influence in the Process of Curriculum Change

Leadership is a 'process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals' (Northhouse, 2010, p. 3) or, collectively, getting people to work together to make things happen (Ejimabo, 2013, p. 5). Yukl (2006, p. 8) ascertains leadership as influence by regarding it as 'the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives'. Hence leadership is closely connected to influence.

There is a vast literature about the impact of teachers' influence in leading about effective curriculum change (e.g. Anderson, 2004; Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012; Lai & Cheung, 2015). There has been an increasing recognition that the well of teacher talents provides a powerful knowledge base for driving change and bringing about improvement in schools (Murphy, 2005; Fullan, 2007). The following section is a discussion of the approaches and strategies teachers use to influence others in the change process.

Aspects of Teacher Influence during Curriculum Change

Lai & Cheung's (2015) identified three teacher leadership approaches to change (see Table 2.2). Complying leadership is a kind of leadership whereby teachers focus on meeting the requirements of reforms and tend to be dependent on external guidance on curriculum and pedagogical decisions.

Adapting leadership occurs when teachers work collaboratively to accomplish the goals for the change. Teacher involvement is much greater than in the complying approach. They make commitments to adopt or adjust the curriculum for the benefits of their students. Collaborative culture is built among the teachers within schools and teacher professional development is enhanced and fostered. Capacitating leadership promotes professional community practice beyond schools and seeks extended professional networks and build partnership with institutions and community organizations. Leaders tend to explore and exploit new possibilities to make further improvement for their schools.

Table 2.2. A typology of teacher leadership approaches (Lai & Cheung, 2015, p. 688).

	<i>Complying approach</i>	<i>Adapting approach</i>	<i>Capacitating approach</i>
Teacher participation	Taking external demands as givens and focusing on satisfying reform requirements in teaching and learning practices	Adjusting curricular structure and pedagogical practices to facilitate student learning and curriculum delivery	Exploring and exploiting new possibilities to support curricular and pedagogical improvement
Teacher learning	Engaging in understanding the new curriculum requirements and implementation procedures	Advancing teacher learning in communities of practice within schools	Extending teacher learning in communities of practice beyond schools
Teacher influence	Relying heavily on curricular and pedagogical guidance provided by external sources of expertise	Collaborating with teachers within schools to improve curricular and pedagogical practices	Forming extended professional networks

It is reasonable to assume that leaders using both adapting and capacitating leadership approaches would value the essence of teacher empowerment and the establishment of a sharing culture in their schools. They would try to align the internal contextual factors in their schools and the external demands when facilitating change and promoting school improvement. Teacher capacity building is as important as development of school capacity. Lai & Cheung (2015) suggest that leaders should provide sufficient opportunities for teachers to make good use of their talents and develop their leadership capacity to innovate change.

There has been a tendency in recent years to regard schools as learning communities. Within such communities teacher professional development is considered to be very essential to bring about growth of the school and facilitate school improvement. It is argued that to promote professional learning communities, teachers need to take a wider perspective on the societal demands, school context and the learning and teaching concerns (Wan, 2011). As a result, teachers could develop and build up their capabilities, interact in professional dialogues, exchange good practices and ideas and implement change with shared decision-making.

Strategies for influencing others

In order to examine the strategies teachers use to exert influence in the change process, Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann (2009) suggest that leaders make their influence in the schools by conveying convictions about a better world, striving for excellence in learning, teaching and assessment practices, facilitating communities of learning, confronting barriers in the school's culture and structures, translating ideas into sustainable systems of action, and nurturing a culture of success.

Fairman & Mackenzie (2012) propose another conceptual model, Spheres of

Teacher Leadership Action for Learning, based on a literature review and empirical study in seven Maine schools in USA. The model is fit for examining teachers' use of different strategies in exercising their influence in curriculum change. The spheres describe how the persons participated in the activity, their actions and the scope of the activity (Figure 2.3). Different types of teacher leadership activities are shown in the spheres in line with the student learning goals. Teachers might work in one or more spheres at the same time. Fairman & Mackenzie (2012) highlighted that teachers usually focus on their own learning and classroom teaching and then move on to considering the collaboration with colleagues and influence other stakeholders on wider perspectives, where teachers would participate in professional development to build on their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to deal with conflicts.



Figure 2.3. Spheres of leadership action (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012, p. 231).

2.5.4 Conditions Influencing Leadership Practice in Curriculum Change

Leadership practice is mediated and/ or influenced by a number of variables, which are described in three categories, namely, school culture and context, roles and relationships, and structures.

School Culture and Context

A vast body of literature (e.g. Dimmock & Walker, 2002; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009) finds that school culture and context is a key factor influencing the practice of curriculum leadership in schools. Leithwood & Riehl (2003) highlighted that school culture sets a tone and context within which work is undertaken and goals are pursued. On one hand, school culture and context can be a support for successful leadership practice in the sense that there is a school-wide focus on learning, inquiry, and reflective practice (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). On the other hand, it can be a deterrent in that there is a lack of focus on learning, inquiry and reflective practice.

It is more likely for enacting leadership practice in curriculum change a positive organizational culture. It is now widely recognised that teachers are the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement. With positive organizational culture, effective leadership can be achieved with teachers' active involvement in teamwork and shared decision-making process. Engagement and commitment is crucial for teachers to make connections towards change. If there is a collaborative culture among teachers, leadership is viewed and valued as a tool to professional learning (Little, 1988a). Teachers are more willing to engage in leading change. Leader improvement sense giving is also more likely to happen that dissemination and meaning-making of new information are enabled and people are encouraged to think about their own work

(Foldy, Goldman, & Ospina, 2008). Chew & Andrews (2010, p. 71) claim that ‘when teachers are able to exercise their individual talents and professional insights in and outside of the classroom they increase their school’s capacity to respond to new challenges posed by external school environment’. As a result, change is more likely to be more sustainable and effective.

On the contrary, ‘balkanized’ culture is made up of ‘separate and sometimes competing groups, jockeying for position and supremacy like loosely connected, independent city states’ (Hargreaves, 1992, p. 223). In such culture, there exists ‘individualism’ that teachers work in isolation and compete with each other in schools. Lacking systematic perspective and strategic and professional direction and coordination becomes roadblocks to leadership practice (Duke, 1994; Hallinger, 2010). Lacking a clear direction may lead to reform overload and work intensification. As a result, it saps the energy and motivation of those who must implement the change and introduce contradictions into the system (Hallinger, 2010). If teacher leadership is only viewed as career advancement (Little, 1995), there appears a ‘crab bucket culture’ wherein teachers drag each other down instead of supporting and inspiring one another (Duke, 1994). Change becomes a battle of power and control. Norms of isolation and individualism can also be a constraint to teacher leadership (Hart, 1994). Conflicts among teachers sparkle and the school is like a political arena (Ball, 1988; Blasé, 1991).

Roles and Relationships

The involvement in leadership is higher with the presence of a positive atmosphere in schools (Little, 1988a). The positive atmosphere is set up when colleagues recognize and respect those who lead as teachers with subject area and instructional expertise (Little, 1988a). Moral purpose, relationships and organizational success are closely interrelated. It is more likely to facilitate change in schools where there exist high trust

and positive working relationships among peers and with administrators.

The emotional dimension should not be neglected when we explore the change process. Hargreaves & Fullan (1992) claim that emotions and feelings always coexist with the change process. Teaching is regarded as a passionate vocation (Fried, 1995). Good teaching is usually associated with positive emotion. Good teachers are enthusiastic and passionate about teaching and try to do more than required to inspire their students. Change may be ruined if teachers' feelings and emotions are abandoned.

Building on positive and trusting relationship with others is one of the most effective ways for leadership practice. Kouzes & Posner (2006) claim that organization can keep moving and change is alive if leadership has a relationship built on trust and confidence. People would feel being valued, understood and supported if leaders actively listen to their opinions and work together to accomplish tasks with thorough communication and interaction.

Igniting change involves loose-tight leadership (Maughan, Teeman, & Wilson, 2012). Leaders can use both top-down and bottom-up strategies interchangeably according to the situations. On one hand, while persuading teachers to enact the change, leaders provide sufficient support at the same time. In such way, tight leadership provides guidance from the centrality to the teachers during implementation (Maughan *et al.*, 2012). On the other hand, ownership and autonomy can be promoted through loose leadership as creativity and innovation are promoted and encouraged without much control from central agency.

On the contrary, one big obstacle to curriculum leadership is ambiguities about teacher leaders' roles and expectations (Ovando, 1996). Inadequate communication and feedback among teacher leaders, principal, and teacher staff hinder the exercise of

curriculum leadership in schools (Hart, 1994). With lack of clarity in roles and expectations in leadership roles, teachers find it difficult to manage and balance the roles of being classroom teacher and leader.

Structures

Leading a change is often determined by structures of the organization (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Research reveals that time is one of the biggest constraints to teacher leadership (Wasley, 1991; Schiff, 2001). Taking up leadership roles demands a lot of time. Time is crucial for teachers to participate in inquiry, reflecting about teaching, peer coaching, and building expertise (Hertzog, 1995). According to Hallinger (2010), some curriculum change failures in Hong Kong are partially due to reform overload. Teachers need to cope with different changes at the same time. Although it seems to be paradoxical, change needs a certain degree of stability. With adequate time and space, teachers feel more at ease to participate in collaboration, learning, and leading.

Change often ends with failure if there is a mismatch of change initiatives and the local context. Past studies have ascertained that administrators, especially principals, play a key role in teacher leadership either as a support or constraint. Traditionally, there has been a tendency for school structures to be hierarchical and bureaucratic. Hierarchical organizations define power and authority in ways that inhibit the possibility of shared leadership. Teacher leadership is discouraged by the traditional structure of schools in which teachers are firmly fixed on the bottom rung of the bureaucratic ladder (Kelley, 1996). Teachers are left with limited power in making decisions outside their own classrooms (Smyser, 1995). Educational outcomes that schools target on would be misdirected by management tools of the bureaucratic paradigm (Wise, 1989). Isolation of teachers may also result from traditional schedules and structures (Coyle, 1997). Site-based, participatory decision-making structures and

processes help promote curriculum leadership in schools (Fessler & Ungaretti, 1994) with removal of hierarchical structures in schools and districts (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997).

2.5.5 Paradigm Shift of Leadership Studies

Over the past decades, studies have been conducted to investigate how teachers perceive and practice teacher leadership in curriculum change process in different school contexts, including early childhood education (Heikka *et al.*, 2016), primary education (Sigurðardóttir & Sigþórsson, 2016), secondary education (Crowther *et al.*, 2009) and teacher education (O’Hair & Odell, 1995). There have been changes in researching leadership over the past decades (Sharpe, 1995). Among the studies of leadership with different focuses, four main phases are broadly classified (Murphy, 1991). In the first phase, personal qualities and characteristics of ‘successful leaders’ were put into the centre. Trait theories of leadership were dominant in this phase. Up to the 1950s, studies attempted to describe the traits and behaviours which characterize good leaders. In the trait theory of leadership, leaders are assumed to study the lives of great men or women leaders in history and try to emulate their behaviours and attitudes. It is assumed that leadership effectiveness is dependent on distinctive physical and psychological characteristics (Manning & Curtis, 2007) and that leaders have superior qualities which are distinct from their followers.

Studies of leadership based on this assumption show that a few traits appear frequently. Doll (1996) summarized these as (1) empathy, or identification with the emotional needs of others; (2) surgency, or enthusiasm, geniality, alertness, expressiveness, cheerfulness; (3) group recognition, or obvious ability to fit the norms of the group without seeming different or odd; (4) helpfulness, or ability to give

practical, direct assistance; (5) emotional control, or ability to give the appearance of serenity or poise; (6) intelligence, including verbal and social adeptness as well as academic brightness; and (7) interest in leading, or full-heartedness in assuming leadership responsibilities.

The second phase was marked by the development of behavioural theories of leadership. It is assumed that there are distinctive actions that effective leaders take in such leadership theories (Manning & Curtis, 2007). A number of studies have been done on the relationship between leadership behaviour and subordinate satisfaction and performance (Yukl, 1989). In 1945, Ralph Stogdill and others developed the Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). Two dimensions of leadership behaviour were identified, that are, people-centred and task-related behaviours which initiate structure and show consideration. Many theories about these two dimensions of leadership emerged in the 1960s.

In the third phase, studies in the 1970s put emphasis on the situational or contingency approach to leadership. Situational theorists suggested that leadership is concerned with situational demands (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Situational leaders try to maintain the focus and growth levels of followers by assessing the competency level and commitment of the followers. They vary or adjust their leadership styles to suit the development levels of the followers they are trying to influence. Early studies were mainly concerned with how situations influence leader's behaviour. Later studies focused on how situations moderate the relationship of leader traits or behaviour to leadership effectiveness. In this phase, one significant contribution was the development of flexible and adaptive leadership epitomised by Hersey & Blanchard (1982) in which the model was based on the level of maturity of the followers.

The fourth and current phase of thinking about leadership puts emphasis on the

nature of leadership as transformational, collaborative and distributed. It is argued that this kind of leadership is much needed in educational change where tasks are manifold and complicated (Glatthorn, 2000). Numerous scholars (e.g. Elmore, 2000; Gronn, 2003; Spillane, Diamond & Jita, 2003) assert that leadership is more than the traits of a single leader. Rather, the situation plays a vital role in the leadership practice. Boyce & Bowers (2018) synthesized 109 quantitative studies about instructional leadership across 25 years. The three factors most researched in relation to instructional leadership in the empirical studies were teacher satisfaction, teacher commitment, and teacher retention (Boyce & Bowers, 2018). As education is facing complex changes, there needs to be shared leadership or distributed leadership which requires collaborative and participatory decision-making at multi-levels. Timperley (2005) suggests that leadership has always been distributed in organizations and is surprised how long it has taken to create a framework in which to study it. However, this perspective on leadership has been difficult to identify in practice.

2.5.6 Local Studies about Leadership of Curriculum Change

Previous studies on leadership have mostly been conducted in Western countries while very few studies have directly examined leadership of curriculum change in Hong Kong (Hairon & Dimmock, 2012). Local leadership studies were carried out in different educational contexts, including early childhood education (Ho & Tikly, 2012; Cheung *et al.*, 2018), primary education (Hallinger & Lu, 2014; Wan, Law, & Chan, 2018), and secondary education (Lee & Dimmock, 1999; Lai & Cheung, 2013). Different key types of leadership were studied in alignment with the global trends of leadership studies in educational administration and management (Szeto, Lee, & Hallinger, 2015; Bryant, Walker, & Qian, 2017), including strategic leadership (Pang & Pisapia, 2012; Chan, 2018), transformational leadership (Yu, Leithwood, & Jantzi,

2002), instructional leadership (Lee, Hallinger, & Walker, 2012; Kwan, 2016), distributed leadership (Law, Galton, & Wan, 2007, 2010; Wan, Law, & Chan, 2018), curriculum leadership (Lee & Dimmock, 1999; Law & Wan, 2006), and teacher leadership (Li, 2015; Cheng & Szeto, 2016; Wan *et al.*, 2020).

Past leadership studies focused more on principalship, including principals' styles (Cheng, 1991, 2000; Wong, 2003), principals' behaviours (Chui, Sharpe, & McCormick, 1996), motivation to lead (Walker & Kwan, 2009), and their impacts on schools, in particular student learning (Cheng & Chan, 2000; Cheung & Wong, 2011), teacher attitudes (Cheng, 1996a; Shum & Cheng, 1997), teacher receptivity to curriculum change (Lee, 2000), teacher professional development (Hallinger & Lu, 2014; Li, Hallinger, & Ko, 2016), teacher commitment (Yu, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2002; Choi & Tang, 2009), job satisfaction (Lam & Yan, 2011), and teacher collaboration (Hallinger, Lee, & Ko, 2014). Few studies (e.g. Li, Hallinger, & Walker, 2016) found that trust is a mediating factor in influencing principalship and teacher learning. Studies on relational trust have shown unusual findings related to the educational context, such as the difficulty of maintaining trust placed on the principal when teachers are under increased pressure due to reforms in Hong Kong (Li, Hallinger, & Walker, 2016).

With the initiation of school-based management policy in the late 1990s, more studies were found in exploring school leaders' experiences of curriculum reforms and their encountered challenges (e.g. Walker & Dimmock, 2000; Kwan, 2009a, 2009b, 2011). Meanwhile, higher demands are exerted on school leaders in the context of accountability (Dimmock & Walker, 1998; Walker & Ko, 2011). Leadership studies therefore tended to explore how professional development contributed to leadership development, where more studies were done to inquiring programs about aspiring principalship (e.g. Wong, 2004; Keung, 2007; Ng, 2013) and aspiring vice-

principalship (e.g. Kwan & Walker, 2008; Kwan, 2009a, 2009b; Lee, Kwan, & Walker, 2009; Kwan & Walker, 2010). After the 2000s, there have been rapid changes in the educational landscapes. With the rise of decentralization of power and democracy, together with the newly launched curriculum reform, Learning to Learn, few scholars (e.g. Ho, 2010; Law *et al.*, 2014; Lai & Cheung, 2015; Bryant, 2018) started studying how leadership was perceived and experienced taking different stakeholders' perspectives rather than relying on the senior leadership (i.e. principalship or vice-principalship) solely. For example, Adamson & Yin (2008) studied teachers' conceptions of task-based learning approach in a two-year longitudinal study in three secondary schools with the use of document analysis, observation and interviews and found that 'the lack of senior leadership is significant in causing the innovation either to wither or to become diffuse' (p. 180). Ha *et al.* (2008) further evidenced that novice teachers 'consistently' required strong leadership and support within and outside the school in promoting 'collegiality' and 'knowledge of educational contexts' whilst experienced teachers showed great concerns about 'continuous learning' and 'change process' (p. 77).

Few studies attempted to explore how principals and teachers carried out leadership practices, where how teachers did problem-solving and decision-making in case schools were explored. Ho (2011) explored multiple perspectives of different school stakeholders, including school governors, principals, teachers, supporting staff and parents, in a qualitative study and found that the teachers, members of support staff and parents quite often viewed themselves as followers and were dependent on a single leader, the school head, who was recognized as role model, school manager and mentor for curriculum and pedagogy. Meanwhile, Ho (2012) revealed the 'paradox of power' in leadership, where the centralization and decentralization dilemmas existed in the

process of school change (p. 264). Law *et al.* (2014) revealed the effects of leadership styles and power on communication networking systems of the two subject teams involving a principal, subject department head, team leader and subject teachers, in which ‘restricted and extended modes’ of communication in team meetings were found in restricting or encouraging teacher participation and reflection regarding pedagogical innovation. Wan, Law, & Chan (2018) revealed the significant differences between teachers’ roles in the highest positions and dimensions of improvement of learning and teaching, as well as principal leadership whilst teachers’ perceptions of distributed leadership were related to teachers’ roles, including delegated responsibilities and degree of role participation in the schools. Wan *et al.* (2020) found that there were insufficient opportunities for enacting teacher leadership in terms of teacher collaboration, shared leadership and reflective practice.

On the other hand, very few local studies specifically looked into how middle leaders such as heads of department work together with general teachers (Wan *et al.*, 2020). Wong, Wong, & Peng (2010) indicated the impact of teacher and middle-level leader emotional intelligence on school teachers’ job satisfaction. Tam (2010) used explored secondary school middle leaders (heads of department)’ challenges facing curriculum change, which included teachers’ low receptivity of school-based curriculum development (SBCD); teachers’ limited time and expertise in SBCD; and a lack of effective collaboration in the department. Ng & Chan (2014) evidenced that there were insufficient training opportunities for middle leaders in primary schools. Using a quantitative study in secondary school settings, Ko, Hallinger, & Walker (2015) evidenced that subject departments represents ‘an influential context’ for teachers where ‘department cultures may be more influential than the culture of the school as a whole’ (p. 234). Similarly, in a quantitative study about English language curriculum

reform, Li *et al.* (2018) discovered that middle leadership at the subject department level has ‘direct’, ‘substantial positive’ impacts on ‘teachers’ change in pedagogical practices, their participation in system-wide professional development activities, teachers’ receptivity toward the reform and their perceived student learning’. In a case study of three secondary schools, Bryant (2019) revealed that how middle leadership was enacted in schools, where middle leaders were able to engage in leadership activity at both organization and system levels, under the enabling conditions, including clearly defined work in alignment with school mission and purpose, capacity building with rich professional development opportunities, as well as autonomy in enacting own roles.

To conclude, there are still spaces to build on the efforts of former local leadership studies. First, based on most of the findings of the local leadership studies, the dominant influence of culture is a commonly found as a significant factor that has great impacts on leadership practice, where the high power distance and hierarchical structures are undoubtedly a key factor affecting how leadership takes place in the local Chinese context (Schermerhorn & Harris, 1997; Cheng, 2000; Walker, 2004; Hallinger, 2018; Edwards-Groves *et al.*, 2018). Whilst ‘strong leadership’ of principals has been realized as a necessary condition for educational change (Leung, 2010), how the ‘threads’ of leadership links middle management with general teachers is still underexplored (Wong, Wong, & Peng, 2010; Chow, 2013). Chow (2013) urged for ‘the need for further investigations into the mediating roles of culture of subject disciplines and contextual variables that shape the dynamics of educational management (p. 34). Second, previous studies tended to use one single case study (e.g. Law, Galton, & Wan, 2007, 2010) or two single cases for comparison (e.g. Lee & Dimmock, 1999), whilst some studies were conducted based on case-based

innovations, for example, Information Communication and Technology (ICT) implementation (e.g. Yuen, Law, & Wong, 2003; Tam *et al.*, 2018), Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC) (e.g. Carless, 1998). These studies may tend to ignore the ‘meat in the sandwich’ of leadership practice (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009, p. 296), where ‘the complexity of the leadership role within the middle of the school hierarchy’ (Busher & Harris, 1999; Ng & Chan, 2014, p. 873) is not yet completely understood. Realizing ‘leadership as a collective and transformational endeavour, functioning in communities of practice to support school development at different levels’ (Lai & Cheung, 2013, p. 322), what and how leadership comes across different levels of teachers (i.e. middle management and general teachers) in different school milieu facing the same curriculum reform within the same Chinese context can be further explored (Dimmock & Walker, 2000) in order to ‘examine the contextual variables, apart from personal beliefs of subject department heads, which affect the choice of leadership approaches adopted by these heads, and whether there are commonalities in the culture of curricular disciplines that shape educational management and the organizational dynamics within subject departments’ (Chow, 2013, p. 52). In this connection, previous studies suggested more attention can be paid to the investigation of the ‘co-construction’ processes of building teachers’ leadership and subject team development with the facilitation of principals and middle leaders (Law, 2011; Cheng & Szeto, 2016), whereas ‘contextualizing’ is an important element in educational leadership practice (Hallinger, 2018), serving the purpose of ‘bringing context out of the shadows of leadership’ through investigating ‘how leadership responds and adapts to different contexts’ (p. 5) when taking ‘the practical constraints (and opportunities)’ (p. 19) arising from the specific context into consideration.

The mentioned research studies regarding transformational and distributed

leadership shed some light on the perceptions of leadership in the context of change. However, much of the previous literature put too much focus on the examination of single leaders in formal positions of authority, primarily principalship. Little research had shed its light on other sources of leadership. This created a large blind spot concerning how leadership is exercised by individuals and collections of individuals throughout schools. Meanwhile, the previous studies relied heavily on quantitative tools such as questionnaires. These measures are inappropriate to explore the complicated, evolving concepts of leadership in relation to curriculum change process. There exists a need to examine the leadership practice through more diverse lenses and methods to fill this blind spot.

The study of educational leadership is moving towards new directions. Rather than looking at principalship, leadership is increasingly associated with teachers. Instead of associating leadership with sole authority, leadership is becoming more related to tasks, activities, and accomplishments, which may be executed by multiple actors within the school. Leadership is perceived as being diffused through the organization, distributed across the professionals. This distributed perspective offers a reconceptualization of leadership. Distributed leadership highlights the collective nature of organizational change and improvement. It posits the essence of a strong collegial relationship to improve classrooms, enhance teachers' self-efficacy and to promote change in a school. Leadership is dynamic and complex in itself and involves multiple levels of phenomenon. Qualitative studies on leadership and change in Hong Kong contexts are needed to understand and explore the complexity of leadership in a deeper sense.

2.6 Summary

In short, curriculum change and leadership are interrelated to each other (see Figure 2.4). Their relationship is explored through the lens of teachers' perceived purposes of curriculum change, their attitudes towards change, their perceived change strategy, their involvement and leadership influence in the process of change whereas both are affected by different conditions in the context. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how teachers perceive and experience leadership in the context of curriculum change, and how they perceive to be facilitating and obstructing factors influencing curriculum change in Hong Kong primary schools. The study may be useful to the teachers to facilitate leadership of curriculum change and enhance their professional development in leading change in Hong Kong schools. Most of the teachers may face similar limits and constraints in the change process. The study thus would provide some insights for the school administrators or teacher leaders to reflect on their leadership and school culture. With a better understanding of teacher leadership and how this fosters or inhibits a learning culture, teacher leaders will be able to lead other teachers in an innovative change process. The main research questions are:

1. What perceptions of curriculum change do teachers hold?
2. What perceptions of leadership of curriculum change do teachers hold?

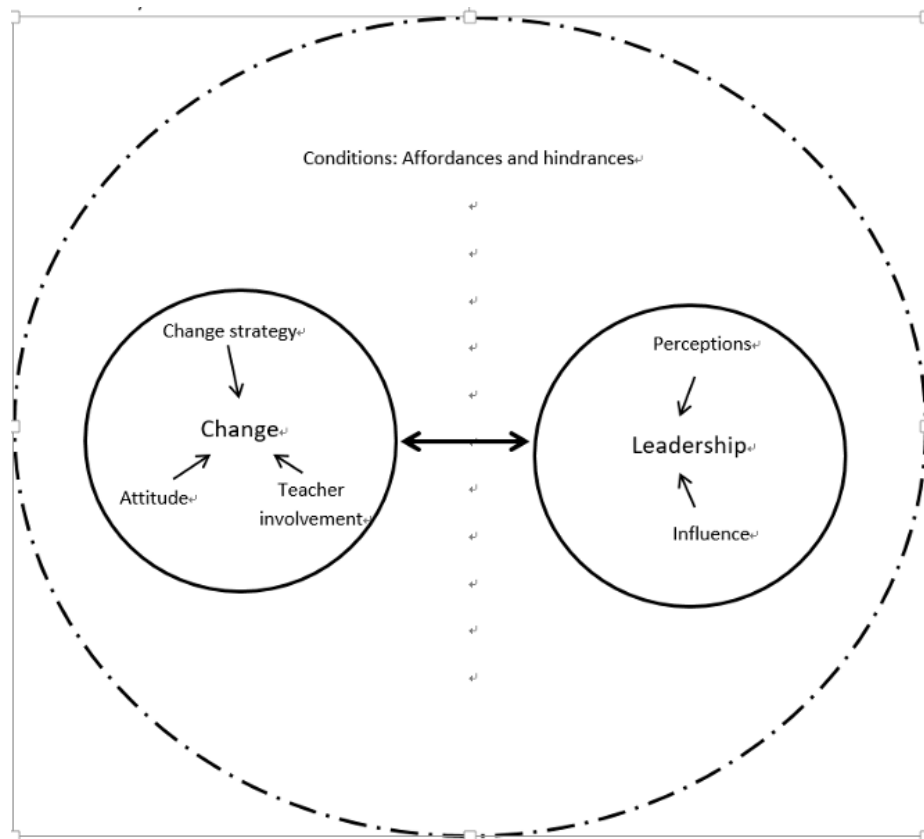


Figure 2.4. Conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the philosophical assumptions and the design strategies underpinning the research study. Common philosophical assumptions are reviewed and presented: the interpretative paradigm was identified for the framework of the study. In addition, the chapter discusses the research methodologies. The respective strengths and weaknesses of this stance are briefly explored and the rationale for methodology is set out. The research design used in the study including strategies, instruments, and data collection and analysis methods are explored. The issues and ethics of conducting research and the informed consent are discussed.

Multi-site case studies were conducted in four primary schools in Hong Kong. This research, and the literature review that underpins it, was guided by the following overarching research questions:

1. What perceptions of curriculum change do teachers hold?
2. What perceptions of leadership of curriculum change do teachers hold?

3.2 Process of Research Design

Conducting research involves defining a research problem, specifying the research questions, designing the research methods, collecting, analyzing and interpreting data and reporting results. This study used Maxwell's (2009) five components of a research study: goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity. Each component includes several relevant issues and ethical issues are involved in every aspect of design. This model seems to be appropriate as it covers all necessary and

interrelated issues for a research design which would be discussed in the chapter.

3.3 Research Paradigm: Adopting an Interpretive Approach

This research is carried out with use of interpretive approach in collecting data. It is crucial for qualitative researchers to be aware of the influence of research philosophy such as ontology and epistemology. The knowledge of related philosophy provides me as a researcher an appropriate lens to understand meanings that people give to their experiences or to social phenomena. The way that I understand research paradigms will also guide my research approach, research questions and research methods. As an EdD researcher, exploring my own specific context, it is more preferable to adopt an approach which looks in-depth at a small-scale case and does this in situ paying much attention to the testimony of individuals. In my view, there is no single reality and any ‘truth’ I draw out is constructed by multiple participants in real processes. Distinguishing rationally among different types of inquiry is the task of those involved in social research. ‘It facilitates judgments about what sort of work would best serve particular purposes, and what can and cannot reasonably be expected from any particular study’ (Hammersley, 2000, p. 8).

There exist two major research paradigms in the field of social sciences – positivist and interpretive paradigms (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). After reviewing the research paradigms, an interpretive perspective was selected for this study for the following reasons. First, the purpose of this study is to understand in depth the perceptions about leadership and curriculum change among a group of primary teachers in Hong Kong. As a result of this aim, it is necessary to elicit their perceived meanings of leadership and change strategies, attitudes towards curriculum change, roles and responsibilities in curriculum change, their involvement in curriculum

change, as well as their perceived leadership influence in curriculum change. Their views of the context and change processes they have experienced and to do this on the basis that there will be multiple perceptions and interpretations of these issues. A number of researchers have described leadership and change as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon which needs the appropriate research design to capture its complexities (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Morrison, 2002, Day & Leithwood, 2007).

Secondly, as the present study aims at examining these perceptions on a case basis and does not seek to generalize but to establish trustworthiness, a positivist approach does not appear suitable for the study as it would be more concerned with testing, on a broader basis, the confirmation or falsification of ‘universal laws’ and the production of statistically significant, generalized description. This study has deliberately chosen a small sample of schools in order to achieve depth.

Thirdly, in an interpretive approach, the researcher has the chance to interact constantly with the setting to make sense of it and to understand how all the parts work together to form the whole. It is more concerned with individuals as in this study. Research into human behaviour is an attempt to understand the subjective world of human experience. Human action is coloured by human intention. A theory comes from an understanding about individuals and their interpretations of the world around them. It gives insights and understanding about people’s behaviour rather than rules about people’s actions. The interpretive paradigm often involves qualitative research. Qualitative research seeks to make sense of or to interpret the phenomena in their natural settings in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This study accordingly starts with individuals and sets out to understand their perception of the world around them. Thus, the interpretive approach with qualitative research methods was chosen because it fitted the planned research.

The interpretive paradigm emphasizes the significant role of context in research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), whilst the central focus of this study was to understand leadership practices in the context of a sample of broadly typical Hong Kong primary schools and to explore the role of school context (internal and external) in their practices. It is concerned with understanding people's perspectives [that is the emic, insider's view] within their natural settings rather than the researcher's perspective [that is etic, outsider's view] (Pike, 1954). It was hoped that this paradigm would elect 'to carry out research in the ... context of the entity for which study is proposed' (Patton, 2002, p. 39) in order to explore the deeper meanings, to understand human behaviour, and to have an in-depth understanding (Patton, 2002). Taking these reasons into account, the researcher decided that an interpretive perspective can provide me with a lens to see how primary teachers perceive leadership and curriculum changes and how they construct meanings of this phenomenon within their school contexts in a more in-depth, detailed and holistic way. The interpretive paradigm seemed more relevant to the study as it relies upon gaining and 'interpreting participants' views of the situation being studied' (Creswell, 2003, p. 8), as opposed to assuming that there is an objective social reality which the research will uncover (Basit, 2010, p. 14). Hence, the interpretive framework that the researcher adopt reflects the basic set of beliefs that guide my actions throughout the research process.

3.4 Justifications for Using Qualitative Multi-Site Case Study Methodology

In this study of leadership and curriculum change, it was determined that qualitative data would be gathered and interpreted, largely using the change and leadership concepts discussed in Chapter 2. The researcher felt that in common with many other research projects that qualitative research could play a pivotal role in a study of

leadership and curriculum change due to the extremely and enduringly complex nature of the phenomena. Leadership is conceived as embedded in a ‘nest’ of phenomena: the intrapsychic, the behavioural, the interpersonal, the organizational and the environmental (Avolio & Bass, 1995). It involves ‘multiple levels of phenomena, possesses a dynamic character, and has a symbolic component’ (Conger, 1998, p. 109) while leadership practices are always shaped by contextual change. Quantitative methods are insufficient to investigate thoroughly phenomena with such characteristics.

Numerous scholars ascertain the value of qualitative methodology to study leadership and change (e.g. Ying & Ho, 2015; Hallinger, *et al.*, 2017; Shek, *et al.*, 2017; Cheung, *et al.*, 2018). In this study, the use of qualitative methodology allows the researcher to probe the phenomena she is researching in context, which is important for understanding the complexity of leadership practice from the perspectives held by different teachers and the influencing factors involved in the change process. Thus, qualitative research methodology is found to be more suitable for this study to capture the rather complex issue to investigate the construction of leadership and curriculum change in Hong Kong primary school settings.

This study also adopts a multi-site case study approach. As asserted by Robson (1993), case study may be described as a strategy for carrying out practical research into a topical issue as ‘it involves the empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within a real life context using multiple sources of evidence’ (p. 146). The particular strength of case study is the facility that the methodology provides for the consideration of contextual conditions, in the belief that ‘they may highly pertinent to the phenomenon of the study’ (Yin, 1994, p. 3). Case study is used to ‘gain in-depth understanding replete with meaning for the subject, focusing on process rather than outcome, on discovery rather than confirmation’

(Burns, 2000, p. 460).

A multi-case or multi-site study is commonly known as ‘collective case study’ (Mills *et al.*, 2010). It exists when researchers use more than one case to research a defined, contemporary phenomenon in two or more real-world or naturalistic settings. Merriam (1998) describes the multi-site process as collecting and analysing data from several sources. The use of multiple data sources is highly desirable in any data collection activity. It is used in this study because evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, robust and instrumental than a single-site case study (Tran, Hallinger, & Truong, 2018).

This study follows a replication logic as described by Yin (2003). It fits the common definitional aspects of multi-site case study research as reported by Yin (1994, 2004) and Bassey (1999). First, the aim of the study is to study how a policy was implemented in schools. It aims at examining a contemporary phenomenon with the researcher having little ‘control’ over the behaviour of the research subject within its real life context, i.e. curriculum leadership as it is defined and experienced within the context of four local Hong Kong primary schools. It raised questions about how the teachers perceive the change strategies used in their schools, their experience of leadership and their perceived support to make curriculum change. These questions are concerned with ‘how’ and ‘why’. Hence the researcher chose to look at the phenomenon within schools. Second, it acknowledges that the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (the concept of curriculum leadership and how it is perceived and enacted is problematic and predicted to produce contradictions and tensions amongst participants at the case study sites). Third, the study relies on multiple sources of evidence (semi-structured interviews and document analysis) so that triangulation becomes possible. Fourth, it benefits from the prior

development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis from the related empirical studies). Lastly, it provides an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments. It serves as an important part of any viable research study is the need to gather comprehensive data that can be used in a defensible way in support of the case study reports.

Thus, a multi-site case study approach is employed in this study by examining the variation of leadership and change in the interesting and rich descriptive contexts of the four schools in parallel so as to gather more in-depth and comprehensive insights into the complexities of the issues and processes. The case is regarded as a sampling strategy where the case itself is the policy change.

3.5 Research Methods for Studying ‘Cases’

This section explores the methods used to collect data from which these cases could be understood. As identified above, these methods are selected to provide different forms of data which were intended to enable the examination of change and leadership in a variety of means, an approach intended to take account of their complexity. Two methods, namely, documents and interviews were used to collect data. The combination of the different sources was intended to establish a more thorough picture of the individual cases.

First of all, the data was collected from documents relating to the organizational structure and change happening in the case study schools. These include the organizational chart, school programme plans and annual reports. These documents serve as the secondary source to understand the school context and changes in the school.

Leadership is contextually specific. As this study intended to explore leadership

and curriculum change in the Hong Kong primary school context, it is necessary to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences in situ of their own contexts within the case study schools. A variety of documents were gathered to understand the organizational structures, school cultures, curriculum change in the case study schools. These included school organizational frameworks, strategic policies and plans, annual reports, newsletters and so forth. The school documents were useful in informing the researcher of the way of the school functions and are an insight into '...the ways in which organizations constitute reality' (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 26). An array of demographic information on the school, the community it serves and the participants in the study was gathered through various documentation on the public record. These were treated as required by ethical clearance protocol and principles outlined in Appendix 3.2.

Interviews were adopted as the main source of data. A series of interviews were conducted with the teachers in the four case study schools. These were intended to provide the participants' perceptions on the leadership and change undergone in their schools. The semi-structured interviews provide insights into the teachers' perceptions and leadership practice during the change in the four case study schools. Leadership is a complicated issue. It is not something what leaders do. Rather, it is about how it is perceived and interpreted by people in the social construct of curriculum change.

Semi-structured interview is 'a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions' (Given, 2008). It is a very flexible technique for small-scale research. It is based on a semi-structured interview guide, which is a schematic presentation of questions or topics and need to be explored by the interview. The interview guide serves a purpose of exploring many respondents more systematically and comprehensively and keeping the interview

focused on the desired line of action (Jamshed, 2014). The questions in the interview guide are comprised of the core question and many associated questions related to the central question.

In other words, the researcher has more control over the topics of the interview than in unstructured interviews. The detailed structure is left to be worked out during the interview, and the person being interviewed has a fair degree of freedom in what to talk about, how much to say, and how to express it (Drever, 1995).

Semi-structured interview is a more flexible in the sense that ‘it allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewee’s responses’ (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p.88). In other words, the power dimension could be lessened as interviewees are able to take the discussion to the areas they are interested in more easily.

According to Dörnyei (2007), a ‘good’ qualitative interview has two key features: ‘(a) it flows naturally, and (b) it is rich in detail’ (p. 140). A number of considerations need to be taken into account to conduct a quality interview. The interviewer should establish an appropriate atmosphere through which his/her interviewees would feel more at ease and thus talk freely. It is necessary for researchers to be a neutral and active listener who ‘always seek the particular’ from the interviewees (Richard, 2003, p.53). Barbour & Schostak (2005, p.42-43) identify the following key concepts that researchers should also take into consideration when using interviews as a tool for data collection:

Power relation: this refers to the interrelated power within the interview. Such power may (intentionally or unintentionally), but not necessarily, emerge from the interviewer’s side towards his/her interviewees. Extending the

interview, therefore, would help balancing this relationship.

Value: this refers to the value of the interview itself, and the value of the interviewees' words.

Trust: this refers to the extent to which the research guarantees objectivity, accuracy and honesty.

Meaning: this refers to the meaning the interviewer intends to convey. This process might sometimes be incorrectly done, and therefore an alternative truth or reality might be declared.

Wording: this refers to the wording of questions asked in the interview. It is noted that 'the shorter the interviewer's questions and the longer the subject's answers, the better an interview is' (Barbour & Schostak, 2005, p. 43).

It is vital to maintain the momentum of the interview. Berg (2007, p.210) suggests that it is important for interviewers to maintain their 'interviewee's motivation by keeping boredom at bay'. This can be done in various ways, for example by keeping to a minimum demographic (e.g. age) and personal (e.g. income) questions. As to its typical duration, as Schostack (2006) notes, an interviewer would be expected to spend at least half an hour to unravel the investigated phenomenon. Yet, this overlooks the question that Dörnyei (2007) refers to as often not mentioned in research projects, which is whether to make a single or multiple interview sessions. Obviously, the answer to this is based on the research questions, sources available, and amount of data needed. Furthermore, Talmy (2011) stresses that interviewees should be given a chance at the end of the interview, to bring up comments or ask questions. Additionally, researchers should, at this point, re-express their gratitude to their interviewees and discuss ways of future contact. Importantly, moreover, it would be beneficial for

researchers to have a piloting session before carrying out their interviews as this will not just refine the interview content, but also determine its feasibility and usefulness as a research instrument (Creswell, 2009).

Semi-structured interview was selected as the means of data collection in my study because of two primary considerations. First, it is appropriate to use them to explore the perceptions and opinions of participants regarding the complicated issues like curriculum change and leadership in this study and enable probing for more information and clarification of answers. Second, the varied professional, educational and personal histories of the sample group precluded the use of a standardized interview schedule. Thus, semi-structured interviews were used within this qualitative research framework to explore leadership in the context of curriculum change in the case study schools. Qualitative interviews enable the researcher to ‘understand the world from the participants’ viewpoints and unfold the meaning of their lived world’ (Kvale, 2006). The voices of different people are heard by allowing them to talk freely in their own words and a ‘closer personal interaction’ between the researcher and participants is built (Kvale, 2006). Thus, individual semi-structured interviews were considered a suitable method for collected empirical data that represented the perceptions and viewpoints of all those involved in the leadership process of the case study schools. The aim of using individual semi-structured interview is to expand, elicit and clarify views from the participants. Interview techniques were guided by the work of researchers such as Spradley (1979), Mischler (1986), Seidman (1990) and Anderson (2000). Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000, p. 268) point out that this type of interview serves three important purposes: (a) it may be used as the principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives; (b) it may be used as an exploratory device to help to identify variables and relationships; and (c)

it may be used in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking to follow up unexpected results or to validate other methods or to go deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do.

Though qualitative interviews play a significant role in gaining more in-depth study, the issues of power asymmetry of the research interviews need to be paid attention. The qualitative interviews 'entails a hierarchical relationship with an asymmetrical power distribution of the interviewer and interviewee' (Kvale, 2006, p.484). There exists issues of power, domination and resistance in research interviews. A number of ethical considerations such as building trusting relationship with participants and member checks are taken into account to address the power issues. They are discussed in more detailed in later section.

3.6 Selecting Cases and Informants

The selection of the case schools in this study was an important decision that determined whether the data collected would be adequate, useful and relevant. Prior to making this decision, the author had given careful consideration to the suitability of the potential case to minimize the chances of misrepresentation and to maximize the access needed to collect the case study evidence (Yin, 1994).

There are several reasons that the researcher chose the four case study schools and teachers. First, the researcher had some knowledge of the four case study schools and they provided reasonably typical examples of Hong Kong local primary schools. In the year 2012-2013, there are 569 primary schools in Hong Kong (EDB, 2013). Around 80% of all Hong Kong primary schools are government or subsidized schools. The case study schools are examples of subsidized schools where Incorporated Management Committees are set up and such school structures are commonly found

in Hong Kong. Second, the researcher gained easy access to the four school sites and was able to identify the teachers she wanted to study. Third, the researcher has built up a trusting relationship with the teachers in School A as she was a teacher there. The researcher also built a network with the Heads of Curriculum Development in the four schools through the EDB network of curriculum development leaders. Fourth, these teachers have had different kinds of leadership experiences and get involved in various kinds of school-based curriculum development activities.

The four primary schools in this study are all government funded subsidized schools. One is located in Kowloon while the other three are in the New Territories. There are two main groups of participants involved in this study. One group is comprised of middle managers and the other group is mainstream teachers. The purpose of the inclusion of both middle managers and non-middle managers is to elicit a more ‘balanced’ view on curriculum change while the influence of positionality could be a preeminent on teacher perceptions on leadership and change (Wan, Law, & Chan, 2018). The participants were chosen from three different departments of three core subjects (Chinese, English and General Studies) in each school. The profiles of the four case study schools would be presented in more detail in Appendix 3.1.

Convenience sampling was used to select the participants in the study. It can be defined as ‘reliance on participants who are readily available and accessible to the researcher’ (Abrams, 2010). In this qualitative research, 24 teachers were nominated by the four case study schools to participate in the study. Six participants were invited from each case study school. Three participants were middle managers while three were mainstream teachers. The participants were chosen from three different departments in each school. The chosen informants were selected by convenience sampling as they were ‘likely to have key insight on their chosen topic, and then

proceed to recruit and sample available participants within the setting' (Abrams, 2010).

3.7 Instrument Piloting

According to Bryman (2008), it is always desirable if it is all possible to conduct a pilot study before administering an interview. He argues that piloting the instrument does not only ensure that survey questions operate well but has also a role in ensuring that the research instrument as a whole functions well. Piloting is of great importance to help clearing any problems that may emerge.

In this study, the researcher conducted the pilot study at two different schools. In mid-July 2013, the questions in the proposed semi-structured interview guide were piloted to two teachers from two primary schools which were not involved in the actual study. The interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and analyzed. During the pilot study, some interviewees sought clarification on some questions so changes to interview questions were made to better elicit responses in relation to the research questions. This also eliminated any misunderstanding on the wording of the questions. The pilot study was not included in this main study but it helped to refine questions for the main study. Bryman (2008) observes that 'questions that seem not to be understood or questions that are often not answered should become apparent' (p. 248).

In the pilot study, the researcher observed that one teacher became nervous with questions that related to the effectiveness of leadership and also how much decision-making power she had as a result of leadership. This agrees with Bryman (2008) who argues that in interviews, it may be possible to identify questions that make respondents feel uncomfortable. This suggested that, as it later turned out to be, she feared retribution. The teacher was reassured of the confidentiality of the interview data. This was a useful guide for me in the main study. The researcher had to assure all

participants in the main study that their responses would be confidential and anonymous. Some amendments were also made according to the cross-check with the supervisors and from the feedback from the involved teachers after the pilot study. The order of the interview questions were rearranged and the wordings of the questions were changed to create greater clarity. For instance, the question ‘What is a leader meant to you?’ was changed to ‘What does leadership mean to you?’ The question ‘Do you do some extra work you could choose?’ was changed to ‘Do you do any voluntary extra work?’ This was done so as to verify the validity of the questions. Meanwhile, the purpose of the questions was to get a more holistic understanding of the issues being raised, as well as to search for seeking explanations rather than just descriptions of the issues.

The researcher found the pilot study very helpful as a confidence booster. The interview transcripts were carefully studied and at the same time the researcher reflected on the whole process, thinking of how that could have been done better. As Bryman also notes, ‘piloting an interview schedule can provide interviewers with some experience of using it and can infuse them with greater sense of confidence’ (p. 247).

Piloting, which is a small-scale replica of the main study is necessary for preparing the main case study because it helps the researcher to estimate how long the survey is likely to take, how the people will react and how much to include in the interviews (Bryman, 2008). From the pilot study, the researcher learnt the following lessons after self-assessment:

- Not to talk at the same time with the interviewees as this caused problems with transcribing when the two voices came out together.
- To be aware of any background noise which could affect the clarity of the recording.
- To listen carefully to responses and make follow up questions if needed.

- Re-assess questions that need to be clarified to improve informants' understanding.

3.8 Data Collection

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers from four primary schools which were selected using a convenience sampling method (Appendix 3.3: Participant Information). These interviews were structured around a series of open questions with a range of supplementary prompts. The questions were considered as being a suitable method for encourage the participants to talk openly about their perceptions and observations regarding curriculum change and leadership and how the leadership was enacted within the school. Such interviews, if conducted effectively, are able to 'generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experiences' (Silverman, 1993, p. 91). Silverman refers to this as 'active interviewing' which he depicts as consistent with a constructivist mode of inquiry. These interviews form the major part of the data record which was used to undertake the mapping process within the school contexts.

By the end of the study, 24 individual interviews were conducted with the nominated participants within the four case study schools. Six participants were invited from each case study school. Three participants were middle managers while three were mainstream teachers. The participants were chosen from three different departments in each school. The interviews were carried out from October, 2013 to December, 2014. The interviews were conducted in the use of mother tongue (i.e. Cantonese). The design of the questions was based on the responses drawn from the literature review. The time required for interviews was about an hour. An interview guide was used for the researcher to ask the written questions but the exact sequence

and wording does not have to be followed with each respondent (see Appendix 3.4: Individual Semi-Structured Interview Guide). Using an interview guide is useful in supporting to give clear instructions and maintenance of discretion during the interview process.

Interviews are generally time consuming and that is why it is important for the investigator to ensure that the respondent will have enough time for the interview (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 260; Gillham, 2000, p. 61). For this purpose, the researcher developed selection criteria for the choice of time and setting. The time selection was guided by the informants' availability. The place for conducting the interviews in the study was within the case study schools.

All respondents were asked to sign an agreement to participate in the research which included agreement to have the interview audio recorded. Full transcripts of interviews were treated in line with the procedural principals outlined in negotiation of accounts to endure fairness, relevance and accuracy. In order to protect the identity of all individuals involved in the study, names and locations which could be used to identify individuals or the school have been removed or replaced with pseudonyms. The ethical considerations will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

3.9 Data Preparation, Analysis and Triangulation

In this study, the data was analysed for each school individually and presented in cross case analysis for comparison. Content analysis, a set of systematic, rule-guided techniques (Mayring, 2000), was used to analyze the informational contents of the textual data in interviews. In general, the data were analyzed in a five-stage interpretational analysis system adapted from Tesch (1990, pp. 92–96):

1. Reading and rereading the data to become familiar with it.
2. Delineation of all meaning units pertaining to the phenomenon.

3. Grouping of the meaning units into common themes.
4. Reading of the themes in relation to the whole interview transcript and another searching of the transcript to see whether new categories needed to be made.
5. Use of any contextual material pertaining to the text to reinterpret the categories.

After data collection, the data analysis process follows. Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. This is another critical stage in the research process whereby the researcher will need to analyse, interpret and give meaning to the collected data in order to be able to produce findings.

The documents collected from data collection are mainly administrative documents from the case study schools. Themes were extracted and generated from the documents and the data was used as contextual data to understand the school contexts such as the organizational structures and cultures. This was done to explore how leadership was practised. It is vital for researchers to review the reliability of the documents by identifying and understanding the objectives of the documents as some documents may contain unmitigated truths (Yin, 1994).

The data analysis of the interviews was divided into two phases. Firstly, the researcher prepared the transcripts. Three helpers who study education at a university in Hong Kong were employed to help me do the transcription work. To ensure the quality of the transcriptions, the researcher provided training for them and used the data gathered from the pilot study for doing a dry run. Since the helpers might not have enough background or involvement in the field, they were not familiar with some of the jargon used by the informants. When they did the transcription work, the researcher maintained close communication with them to provide clarification and further information if necessary. To ensure the accuracy of the transcripts, the three helpers cross-checked one another's work and the researcher did a final check. The

transcriptions were first done in Cantonese and then translated into English with cross-checking by the helpers and the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

After the completion of final checking of the interview transcripts, the researcher began to do the data coding by using colour coding and a qualitative data analytical tool, NVivo 10. Analysis proceeds in several stages that often overlap. The first stage is recognition, in which the concepts, themes, events, and topical markers in the interviews are found (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Then she examined the different interviews to clarify what is meant by specific concepts and themes and synthesized different versions of events to put together her understanding of the overall narrative. The themes might need to be refined, elaborated and integrated during the coding process. This process was back and forth. The researcher inductively developed codes and categories and remained open for emerging themes from the data (See Appendix 3.5 for an example of coding and thematic analysis). The interview data were coded according to five key categories: (a) Teachers' perceptions of leadership of curriculum change; (b) teachers' attitudes towards change; (c) perceived roles and responsibilities of teachers in curriculum change; (d) teachers' perceived influence on curriculum change; and (e) perceived difficulties and support for curriculum change.

NVivo 10 assisted with the identification of recurring codes and categories and the frequency counts of categories. 20% of the data was coded by a teacher educator, who had been an experienced teacher in school and is currently working as a teacher educator at a university. More than 90% in the inter-rater reliability of all codes were attained while uncertain cases were discussed and agreed between the author and the teacher educator (Morse *et al.*, 2002).

To ensure the plausibility of the interpretations, the researcher sent the coded transcripts to the informants for member checks. Since it was a back-and-forth process,

she decided to select one case study school at a time just in case many of the informants in that school did not agree with her interpretations. Once she was satisfied, she then proceeded to do the member checks with the other schools.

After finishing coding the transcripts, the researcher started writing case summaries of individual interviews. The process enabled her to get a holistic understanding of the data before she applied codes to the text to dissect it into segments. She noted down the background of each informant, his/her job history and responsibility/involvement in school, his/her views on leadership and change in his/her school. In the last part of the report, the researcher recorded her own reflections on each interview. This would provide her with insights when doing the data analysis.

Meanwhile, in each interview, the researcher jotted down some notes which helped her keep track of the key points and important views expressed by the informants and allowed her to facilitate the flow of interviews. She also wrote memos afterwards including her observations and points of enquiry on what she had heard. As Charmaz (2006) argues, it was an initial but important step to data analysis.

After writing up all the summaries, the researcher wrote the case study reports for all the four case study schools by thematising and doing reflections of the interviews. (See example of case study report in Appendix 3.6). Cross-case analysis was then done after the researcher accumulated all the data about the four case study schools. The case knowledge was processed for comparison and contrast.

3.10 Ethical Considerations in the Study

Undertaking research brings with it a set of ethical considerations that must be anticipated and planned for wherever possible. Ethical issues related to educational research are very important, particularly as the nature of the qualitative methodological

approach adds its own complexity.

To protect the participants' rights and conducting the study in an ethical manner (Wiersma, 1995), the research ethics approval of this study was obtained from the School of Education of the University of Nottingham in October, 2012. In the data collection process, the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the participants.

It is also important to build up trust relationship with the teachers. The researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the research and indicated the extent of commitment required of the participants. The research data were also kept confidential. Permission was requested from the principals to interview the teachers (see Appendix 3.7: Letter to Principals). A consent form was distributed to all the participating teachers (see Appendix 3.8: Participant Consent Form). All participating teachers were voluntary and had the rights to withdraw at any time. It was clearly stated before the interview that no person would be identified. Some participants showed some concerns about the questions in the pilot study. Thus, the researcher re-stated that the purpose of study was to understand a general picture of teacher' perceptions and experiences in curriculum changes and leadership at the beginning of the individual semi-structured interviews. The names of the participating teachers were also kept confidential and pseudonyms for individual teachers were applied in order to protect their identities. The results of the study will also be communicated to the participants. All the data were kept for 5 years and then they will be discarded.

3.11 Trustworthiness of the Study

The issue of trustworthiness is always a concern to qualitative researchers. The basic question addressed by the notion of trustworthiness is, 'how can an inquirer persuade

his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?’ Trustworthiness is often described in terms of credibility, dependability and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). In the following, the researcher explained what strategies that have adopted to meet these aspects in this qualitative research.

Credibility is often concerned with internal validity. It deals with the focus of the research and refers to confidence in how well data and processes of analysis address the intended focus (Polit & Hungler, 1999). The researcher attempts to ‘demonstrate that a true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny is being presented’ to achieve credibility (Shenton, 2004, p. 63). Guba & Lincoln (1981), Lincoln & Guba (1985), Merriam (1998), Stake (1995), Yin (1994) and Patton (2002) suggest that qualitative research can better ensure its credibility with several basic strategies: triangulation, member checks, peer examination and researcher’s biases.

Triangulation refers to the combination of investigators, methods, and sources of data in a single study to determine the accuracy of emerging findings (Patton, 2002). One of the strengths of triangulation is the ‘development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation and corroboration’ (Yin, 2009, pp. 115-116). It attempts to map out more fully, the richness of the phenomenon by studying it from more than one single method and one single source. In this study, triangulation is done by collecting data from a wide range of informants. Individual viewpoints and experiences can be verified against each other to gather richer data of how leadership is perceived in the context of curriculum change.

Interview transcription is practiced in multiple ways, often using naturalism, in which every utterance is captured in as much detail as possible, and/or denaturalism, in which grammar is corrected, interview noise (e.g. stutters, pauses, etc.) is removed

and non-standard accents (ie, non-majority) are standardized (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005). Member checks, also known as ‘respondent validation’ (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000), means the procedures of taking data collected from the informants, and the researcher’s tentative interpretations of these data, sending back to the informants from whom they were derived, asking if the interpretations are plausible. In this study, the researcher asked the informants to check the contents of transcripts and the themes generated from my interpretations. She anticipated this back-and-forth process would take a long period of time. Peer examination refers to the process of involving peers or colleagues as critical friends to examine the data and to comment on the plausibility of the emerging findings. Two friends who obtained their doctoral degrees in Education were invited to be my peer reviewers for cross-checking the plausibility of the data.

Researcher bias means the presentation of the background, experience and orientation of the researcher at the beginning of the study. This enables the readers to better understand how the data might have been interpreted in the manner they were. The researcher has identified the understanding of primary school leadership in related to her own biographical influences and theoretical preferences in the first chapter. This process is essential for the personal biases and values to be exposed to external examination and also for critical self-reflection. Research positioning also needs to be addressed in interview transcriptions in qualitative research. Issues of ‘outsiderness’ and ‘insiderness’ should be considered in the process of data analysis (Cassell & Symon, 2004). As the researcher is the outsider without any relationship with the participants in the case schools, the effects of researcher bias are minimized.

Trustworthiness also includes the question of transferability which is concerned about external validity. It refers to the extent to which the findings of one study can be

transferred or applied to other situations (Polit & Hungler, 1999). To facilitate transferability, the research findings in this study are presented in the specific context with detailed and clear descriptions of culture, selection and characteristics of participants as well as the data collection and analysis processes. According to Schofield (2002, p. 182), the provision of high quality data through ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973) provides the information necessary for the reader to make informed judgments about the degree and extent that conclusions from one case will ‘fit’ other particular cases of interest.

Dependability deals with the issue of reliability. Lincoln & Guba (1985, p. 299) pointed out dependability is achieved by taking both ‘factors of instability’ and ‘factors of phenomenal or design induced changes’ into account. To strive for dependability, ‘researchers can ensure the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented’ (Tobin & Begley, 2004). In this study, member checks were used in the data collection process and the coding of the data was audited by a teacher educator.

3.12 Summary

This Chapter presents the research design and its methodology, as well as methodological issues about the implementation of the study. The next two chapters (i.e. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) present the findings of the case schools, while teachers’ perceptions of curriculum change and leadership are presented and discussed. Then a cross-case analysis and discussion is presented in Chapter 6. The final chapter (i.e. Chapter 7) provides a summary of the findings and presents a discussion of contributions and implications for policy and practice.

Chapter 4

Teachers' Perceptions of Curriculum Change

4.1 Introduction

Curriculum change has been a challenging aspect and has affected many schools extensively. Schools have to undergo and overcome such change, which has to be congruent with leadership that directly and indirectly impacts how schools cope with curriculum change. This study therefore investigates teachers' perceptions of curriculum change and leadership in Hong Kong primary schools. The main research questions of the study are:

1. What perceptions of curriculum change do teachers hold?
2. What perceptions of the leadership of curriculum change do teachers hold?

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 report on the findings of the study based on teachers' perceptions of curriculum change and their perceptions of leadership respectively. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. It starts with discussions on teachers' perceptions of curriculum change and their attitudes towards curriculum change. This is followed by an analysis of their perceptions of the difficulties and required support when curriculum change occurs according to technical, socio-cultural and political perspectives and discussion of the findings based on the first research question is then presented.

4.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Curriculum Change

4.2.1 Purposes of Curriculum Change

From an analysis of the interview data, teachers held varied perceptions of the purposes of curriculum change (Table 4.1). Nearly all the teachers perceived curriculum change

as a ‘vehicle’ to enhance students’ learning skills and knowledge. Traces of the notion of curriculum change based on an academic rationale were predominantly evident in the interview data.

Table 4.1. Teachers’ perceptions of purposes of curriculum change.

School	<i>Academic rationalism</i>		<i>Child-centreness</i>		<i>Social and economic efficiency</i>		<i>Social reconstructionism</i>	
	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP
A	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
B	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
C	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
D	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	0

Remark: P = positional leaders; NP = non-positional leaders (ordinary teachers)

Comparing Case Schools

Among the four case study schools, the teachers perceived the purposes of curriculum change related to academic rationalism. It appeared that all the informants in School C viewed curriculum change as means to achieve higher student outcomes or achievements in their schools. For example, one of the teachers (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014) perceived change as a great way to appreciate Chinese poetry and language. Even so, she showed some disappointment towards the overarching exam-oriented culture with negligence of the cultural aspect of change.

Some teachers in School A and B (for example, A04, English teacher, School A, 13/1/2014 and B003, General Studies teacher, School B, 9/7/2014) also regarded curriculum change as means to academic achievement. They thought the purpose of curriculum change as a means to enhance the students’ writing skills and consolidate the basic knowledge for less able students.

Only a few teachers in the four case study schools regarded curriculum change in terms of child-centreness and social and economic efficiency. None of the

informants in the case study schools viewed curriculum change as social reconstructionism.

Comparing Positional and Non-Positional Teachers

When comparing the positional leaders and ordinary teachers, it seems that their perceptions on purposes of curriculum change are similar. Both positional leaders and ordinary teachers viewed curriculum change as academic-rationalism rather than child-centredness and social and economic efficiency.

Notably there is not much evidence showing that child-centredness is teachers' perceived notion of curriculum change. One positional leader claimed that his department aiming at preparing students for global awareness. He said,

We hope our students to pay more attention to things in this world and things nearby (B01, General Studies panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

It is also rare for both positional leaders and ordinary teachers to view change as a means to meet societal needs and keep oneself updated with new practices in education in keeping with a 'social and economic efficiency' (Morris, 1996) conception of curriculum. By way of example, one teacher commented:

As you can't lag behind, you have to improve, like you are a teacher, if you are very conservative, you think it will be the same even after 10 years, as the world changes, you have to follow, you should not stand still but advance yourselves. (D06, English teacher, School D, 11/12/2014)

This is obviously not in a balance with the schools' intended purpose of curriculum change as stated in their official school curriculum development documents, in which they claimed that their school curricula were based on the Education Bureau (EDB)'s curriculum guidelines which highlight the 'four education views' (CDC, 2014) of a curriculum, namely social and economic efficiency, children-centredness,

academic-rationalism and social reconstructionism. Thus, the study revealed a discrepancy between teachers' perceived notions of curriculum change and schools' notions of curriculum change.

Table 4.2. Examples of teachers' perceived purposes of curriculum change.

<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Examples of interview extracts</i>
Academic-rationalism	The leader think the writing ability of the students may not be as good as before, so they hope we can enhance the writing skills of the students ... the number of writing drills increase ... (A05, Chinese teacher, School A, 13/1/2014)
Child-centreness	We hope our students to pay more attention to things in this world and things nearby (B03, General Studies teacher, School B, 9/7/2014)
Social economic efficiency	As it's an ever-changing world, you should not ask the others to cater for you, it's you who need to make change to cope with the societal and economical needs ... (D06, English teacher, School D, 21/8/2014)

4.2.2 Teachers' Attitudes towards Curriculum Change

This study revealed discrepancies in the teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change among and within the participating schools. The degree of acceptance of curriculum change varied from school to school and teacher to teacher with different positional rankings in the school. Teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change are captured according to teachers' comments on curriculum change that convey an attitude (positive or negative or neutral) about curriculum change in relation to cognition, emotions or actions. Table 4.3 shows some examples about teachers' positive, negative and neutral comments on curriculum change. Overall, teachers tended to be more positive towards curriculum change (Tables 4.4 and 4.5) whilst more teachers demonstrated their cognitive attitudes.

Table 4.3. Examples of teachers' attitudes about curriculum change.

<i>Attitudes</i>	<i>Examples of interview excerpts</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Affective</i>	<i>Behavioural</i>
Positive	I think it's okay [to make change] as we hope the students can really practice that we are teaching and make improvement. (A04, English teacher, School A, 9/1/2014)	✓		
	I am satisfied. I learnt something as every change got new elements. We tried and had reflection on our own teaching methods. (D05, General Studies teacher, School D, 11/12/2014)		✓	
	I think we have to keep track [with the change], that means, we have to review the effectiveness regularly and improve it. (C06, English teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)			✓
Negative	Feeling? I think we had done many things. ... It is not obvious [to see impacts] even teachers had done many things. For example, spelling is difficult for SEN [special educational needs] students. (C01, General Studies panel, School C, 11/7/2014)	✓		
	We can only accept if the EDB [Education Bureau] wants to launch that, we can't say no. (A01, General Studies panel, School A, 9/1/2014)		✓	
	They [teachers] can't really give some opinions, they will only talk, keep saying some shallow things. So I usually rely on the AT [advisory teacher] for advice. (B02, English panel, School B, 9/7/2014)			✓
Neutral	Changes are quite difficult for them [other teachers]. I am okay with that [change] as the world has 2.x% people who do not want to change. (D03, Chinese teacher, School D, 30/3/2015)	✓		
	I am glad to see that [change] although I might have little complaint... because too busy last year. (C04, General Studies teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)		✓	
	It's hard to launch a perfect reform at once. It depends on the team or the leading of the principal and the colleagues so we can do that together. So we cannot make that for sure, so you can only try your best to make it. (D02, General Studies panel, School D, 21/8/2014)			✓

Table 4.4. Summary of teachers' attitudes towards change in participating schools.

<i>Attitudes towards change</i>	<i>Positive</i>		<i>Neutral</i>		<i>Negative</i>	
	<i>Positional teachers</i>	<i>Non-positional teachers</i>	<i>Positional teachers</i>	<i>Non-positional teachers</i>	<i>Positional teachers</i>	<i>Non-positional teachers</i>
School A	1	3	0	0	2	0
School B	0	1	1	1	2	1
School C	1	1	1	1	1	1
School D	1	2	1	1	1	0
Sub Total	3	7	3	3	6	2
Overall Total	10		6		8	

Table 4.5. Teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change in participating schools.

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Teaching experience</i>	<i>Stage of career</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Positional rank</i>	<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Attitude</i>
A01	A	15-20	4	General Studies panel	high	APSM	negative
A02	A	15-20	3	Chinese vice panel	low	CM	negative
B01	B	15-20	4	General Studies panel	low	CM	negative
B02	B	11-15	3	English panel	high	APSM	negative
B03	B	>20	5	General Studies teacher	high	APSM	negative
C01	C	5-10	3	General Studies panel	low	CM	negative
C02	C	15-20	4	Chinese teacher	high	APSM	negative
D01	D	<5	2	Chinese panel	low	CM	negative
B04	B	15-20	4	Chinese panel	high	APSM	neutral
B05	B	<5	1	English teacher	low	CM	neutral
C03	C	5-10	3	Chinese panel	high	AM	neutral
C04	C	<5	2	General Studies teacher	low	CM	neutral
D02	D	11-15	3	General Studies panel	low	CM	neutral
D03	D	11-15	3	PSMCD, Chinese teacher	high	PSM	neutral
A03	A	5-10	3	English panel	high	AM	positive
A04	A	11-15	3	English teacher	low	CM	positive
A05	A	5-10	3	Chinese teacher	low	CM	positive

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Teaching experience</i>	<i>Stage of career</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Positional rank</i>	<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Attitude</i>
A06	A	5-10	3	General Studies teacher	low	CM	positive
B06	B	5-10	3	Chinese teacher	low	CM	positive
C05	C	>20	5	English panel	high	AM	positive
C06	C	<5	1	English teacher	low	CM	positive
D04	D	<5	2	English vice- panel	high	PSM	positive
D05	D	15-20	4	General Studies teacher, librarian	high	APSM	positive
D06	D	<5	1	English teacher	low	CM	positive

Comparing Case Schools

Based on Table 4.4, amongst the four case schools, School A teachers were more positive towards curriculum change while those in School B were more negative and conservative towards change. For School C, the teachers' attitudes were evenly distributed. For School D, the teachers inclined to be positive or neutral towards curriculum change.

Comparing Positional and Non-Positional Teachers

In general, the positional teachers with low job rankings (i.e. certificated master/mistress teachers) tended to be more negative than the non-positional ones (i.e. those not in panel positions and low job rankings) (Table 4.5). On the other hand, those positional leaders with high job rankings (i.e. assistant primary school master/mistress, assistant master/mistress, primary school master/mistress) were more likely to be positive towards curriculum change.

Some evidence in the study shows that teachers' attitudes towards changes were affected by previous experiences and beliefs prior to the curriculum change. One teacher was willing to voice her opinions and she felt glad about the Principal's open-mindedness to accept her opinion during the curriculum implementation. She would also be reflective about the curriculum practice whether her opinions are accepted or not.

The Principal once said that he wanted the student writing to be better, so he requested the students to write 6 passages in a term ... I think the schedule is very tight, as we have to teach and mark each passage, so I have requested to reduce the number of writing and it succeeded. (A05, Chinese teacher, School A, 9/1/2014)

I'll be happy if my opinions are accepted, if my opinion is not accepted, I may think that my expression may not be good enough, or the others have better solutions. (A05, Chinese teacher, School A, 9/1/2014)

Some teachers with bad experiences in previous curriculum change showed some reservations towards the current curriculum change. The former failure seemed to be a barrier that was dragging them down. For instance, an experienced positional leader was disappointed by the conflicts in the rationale for change between the new principal and herself.

During the process of teaching, I announce that we have to focus on students' interest but our school Principal wants to focus on academic results. Students' interest and results are no difference ... (C05, English panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

Being a Chinese teacher, I think this is really a big success. Since if the students read books frequently, naturally they can write and learn lots of words and vocabulary but they may not be the students who get 90 marks in examinations. Therefore, I think marking of Chinese examination and cultivation of Chinese are two different things but nowadays maybe examination is more important because... it is no way ... this primary school ... It's a must in order to go to secondary schools. (C02, Chinese teacher, School C,

25/10/2014)

The overall interpretation of data revealed that participants viewed change from various perspectives – students, teachers and the principal. Thus, they expressed that they faced conflicting feelings towards change depending on their stance of viewing curriculum change. The participants in the study had mixed feelings towards curriculum change in the school arena.

The data revealed that teachers who were positional holders had contradictory feelings as a result of curriculum change. Some teachers tended to be optimistic about curriculum change as they thought teachers should be flexible and aim high for improving the current practice. For example, this teacher shared that,

We have to try that [change] first... As we want to improve we make the reform. So we can try first, be more flexible and can go back. ...I think we should be open to reform. (D04, English vice-panel, School D, 11/12/2014)

In their minds, there always exist paths to success or failure and they seemed to be courageous to give a try to new practices.

As we may want to improve, we make the reform. So [the teachers] can try first, be more flexible and can go back ... if I think it's not ok, we can go back flexibly, so I think we should be open to the reform, give it a try. (D04, English vice-panel, School D, 11/12/2014)

4.3 Teachers' Perceptions of Difficulties and Support in Curriculum Change

This section presents the findings about teachers' perceptions of difficulties and support as needed when facing curriculum change from three perspectives – technical, socio-cultural and political. The technical perspective mainly concerns those educational aspects that impact the performance as brought about by curriculum

change. The socio-cultural perspective is about the aspects concerned about the longstanding traditions in the educational milieu (i.e. schools and its surrounding communities) and associated ways of thinking and working practices. The political perspective emphasizes the aspects that power and conflict dynamics for the sake of protection and influence over own self-interest.

4.3.1 Perceptions of Difficulties in Curriculum Change

(Un)Common Difficulties Encountered by Schools: From Technical, Socio-Cultural and Political Perspectives

Teachers' perceived difficulties and support as required when facing curriculum change were based on three change perspectives, namely, technical, socio-cultural and political. From the technical perspective, time, resources, professional development and guidelines are the major difficulties that teachers faced when implementing curriculum change in schools. The socio-cultural perspective consists of the challenges regarding student learning, teaching practice, and school culture. From the political perspective, teachers' conflicts of interests and views on curriculum change and departmental competition for resources are the key tensions in carrying out curriculum change. Based on the data analysis of teachers' perceived difficulties facing curriculum change, the technical factor played a relatively dominant role in affecting teachers, where the technical factor was commonly found across the four schools (Table 4.6), as followed by the socio-cultural factor and political factor. However, there existed some differences in the degree to which the type of difficulties affected teachers, which are discussed in the following sections.

Table 4.6. Summary of factors affecting teachers facing curriculum change in terms of difficulties and perceived support as needed.

Perspective	<i>Technical</i>				<i>Socio-cultural</i>				<i>Political</i>			
School	Difficulties		Perceived support		Difficulties		Perceived support		Difficulties		Perceived support	
	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP
A	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	2
B	2	3	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
C	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	3	3	1	0
D	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
Total	6	7	6	6	7	6	4	6	6	6	3	5

Remarks:

P = positional teachers; NP = Non-positional teachers

The number is counted on the basis of the quantity of individual teachers according to technical, socio-cultural and political perspectives.

Technical perspective

Most teachers in the study were concerned about the provision of professional development opportunities in supporting them in managing curriculum change. Time is a very crucial factor affecting teachers' works in the processes of curriculum change, whilst lack of time was always mentioned by the teachers who felt that they could not plan and do the works. This teacher shared that,

...this [reform] would spend a lot of time for teachers to decide and think... Really not enough time to do. Not enough time to create and check. Ai... therefore ... I think the teachers are required to create things continuously, what can they do when they do not have enough time? Just copy. And there are worksheets for tutoring classes. (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

The second major problem that teachers faced in implementing curriculum change was the lack of professional development in supporting the new initiative. Teachers perceived that they did not have sufficient knowledge and skills in managing the new imitative. For example, this teacher from School B mentioned that,

... especially for promoting self-regulated learning, firstly, I have no idea what self-regulated learning is and there are a lot of interpretations over self-regulated learning, it may be pre-lesson, or using books to train their self-motivation, or surveillance, etc. When I don't know how to do but I have to do it, and I have to tell my colleagues how to do it. I think it's quite difficult. (B04, Chinese

panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

Without previous experiences or teacher training about the new initiative, teachers were doubtful about what and how to do the change for the ‘best’ effectiveness of learning and teaching. In doing cooperative learning approach as a new initiative in school, teachers from School C shared that,

Since I was not really familiar with the arrangement of grouping. When should we carry out grouping to get a perfect effect? (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

I don’t mean that promoting the reform is difficult but sometimes it is difficult to make a topic to be understood by students easily. (C04, General Studies teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

Interestingly, time factor is likely directly or indirectly associated with the problem of insufficiency of professional training about the new initiative. This teacher expressed that,

... as XYR [a pseudo for a teacher education institution] won’t teach these thing as they are new methods, and there are no such things when we are studying like thinking tactics. So to be honest, teachers have to know it by themselves, so as a class teacher, I have searched a lot of information. If you don’t have time for the workshop you can search for it there... In our intranet, there’s only a reference to the teachers. (B01, General Studies panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

A few teachers expressed their concerns about the lack of clear guidelines in supporting the new initiative in their schools. For example, this teacher mentioned that,

... many things were said to be school-based and the words were vague. It did not mention about how to do the things when it was not one-size-fits-all but it would count the marks in the examination.... I think although the Education Bureau always says that it would support the teachers, I don’t know how you support me when the objective is so unclear. The mission and vision of the Education Bureau is very clear for people to follow and just ask the schools to do. Then it’s ok. Why didn’t it set a frame? However, it just sent people to support, that is, tell you where your weakness

was. The Education Bureau didn't show people the overview, how can people know that those are their weaknesses? In fact, the Education Bureau is really shrinking its responsibility. (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

More apparently, this request for guidelines is associated with that most teachers especially teachers from Schools C and D, tended to have low self-efficacy and appeared to be powerless when considering their role in the curriculum change process, where some teachers regarded themselves as 'small potatoes', 'little citizens', 'little soldiers' and 'junior' in leading curriculum change and saw themselves to be 'followers' in the change process. One teacher (C06, English teacher, School C, 25/10/2014) claimed that teachers would be given a 'recipe' during the implementation of e-learning initiatives in her school and her opinions might not be important in the process.

I'm only the person to vote [whether to agree or disagree with the change] ... giving opinions and making decisions are matters of the seniors. (D04, English vice-panel, School D, 11/12/2014)

In other words, teachers would like to 'follow' a standard about what schools and teachers have to do so as to fulfil the government's requirements (i.e. external school review).

Besides, there is a problem of lack of resources including human resources and hardware. For example, one of the teachers expressed her concern that,

We will have concerns about the resources, for example, human resources, other resources, any support provided? If we can't get any support or insufficient resources, we will do more discussion and try to find more resources. ...The main challenge is the resources. We need to consider the students as well. Which is the best method for the students? We have to think through the methods and do more observations as we can. (D05, General Studies teacher, School D, 11/12/2014)

This example reveals that teachers' purpose of searching for resources in supporting

the new initiative is to suit the needs of students, rather than the ‘hard’ resources.

Socio-cultural Perspective

The findings indicated that teachers are influenced by social and cultural factors that may obstruct and discourage them from making curriculum change. Relatively, School C teachers tended to be more bound by the traditional Chinese values about student academic success and felt it would be hard to give up the current teaching practice in helping students ‘accomplish’ the learning of large amounts of content through teachers’ daily teaching practice of ‘chalk and talk’. The teachers had insecure feelings about the change because it might not guarantee students’ good performance. This teacher shared her view that,

... we have to take care of weaker students ... we spend so much time for preparing questions and predicting their learning situations ... the evaluation of students’ performance is not ideal. The result shows that they [students] do not get familiar with what they have learnt and they are of low ability ... even teachers reviewed the curriculum and found the gap [between the high and low ability students] cannot be solved. (C01, General Studies panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

In addition, there was a change of the principal in School C. Teachers felt more pressurized to get good academic results and attempted to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum change whilst adjusting the new curriculum to satisfy the external assessment demands. This teacher expressed that,

Honestly, the school principal was changed to another person. And this [new] school principal focuses on academic results and final outcome, students’ interest is not first concern. ... We have to do many things to make the programme fit with TSA [Territory-wide System Assessment]. ... (C05, English panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

Moreover, as a new initiative can be opposed to teachers’ common teaching practice. Teachers felt it hard to adapt themselves to the new change which was not

their usual teaching practice. This teacher shared that,

... Since I was a conservative person, I really liked questions and answers, and then think together and express. There is the whole class but not small groups. The presentations of small groups would spend me a whole lesson and I taught in the next lesson. That's my way to do that. However, when there was class observation [for appraisal], I needed to teach a little bit and then had some group activities. Then I did not know which I should do first. If there were no class observation, I would just teach during a whole lesson and then have group activities in the next whole lesson. I always carried out group discussion for half an hour. (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

This implies external demands such as lesson observation for appraisal may push teachers to make a temporary change but such change is then not sustainable or even desired.

In relation to the time factor, teachers found it necessary to have time to adjust their current practice according to the school situation. This teacher mentioned that,

I think the school can be very flexible, it's not a must for the school to follow what the government and EDB [Education Bureau] launch, we have to see the whole group, like whether the teachers and students can follow, and we cannot change everything at once, we have to change it bit by bit. We need time to pick up as this is somehow different from what we have been doing in the classroom. (D02, General Studies panel, School D, 21/8/2014)

Furthermore, teachers were used to working in a higher power distance school cultures. They found it difficult to reject the change in the current curriculum and eventually decided to accept it because of the power relationships in the school system (e.g. appraisal). For example,

Since maybe the panel was always leading. Some teachers might grumble or have some opinion but they would not raise that during the meetings because when you raise some opinion about reducing work. That means you are lazy. Even other teachers have the same opinions as yours, no one would say about that. Since the panel could control quite many things such as appraisal and appointment

assessment, the teachers might not express their opinions honestly.
(C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

This is very likely aligned with the leadership practice which tends to be based on hierarchical relationships and structures in schools, which is to be further investigated in Chapter 5.

On the other hand, teachers' ideological orientation about the significance of certain subject may be a driving force of curriculum change. In contrast, if the subject is of low status culturally, the need for the change is marginalized. For example,

... the school doesn't have many music things in the past, then the other teachers may think music classes waste their time, I guess, but it hasn't happened so I don't know. ... (D06, English teacher, School D, 21/8/2014)

The above example implies that the pace of changing subject curriculum development may be related to teachers' recognition of the values of the subjects.

Political Perspective

From the political perspective, teachers encountered more difficulties in facing conflicts of interest and views amongst teachers as well as resources competition across subject departments. Apparently, teachers from the four schools, in particular School D, had the problem of getting a consensus about curriculum decision-making because of diverse interests and opinions amongst teachers. The following are the interview excerpts about School D teachers' views about making consensus in their school.

... when there are more people, and all have their own opinions, it's hard to make a consensus ... People may think I want to get promoted, but I think it doesn't matter how the others think of me, I did well individually, that's enough... (D01, Chinese panel, School D, 21/8/2014)

Getting the mutual agreement on the issue discussed is the most difficult part as everyone has his/her points of views based on

teaching experience, school position and subject, etc. (D03, Chinese teacher, School D, 30/3/2015)

... we have different views on it [change], it actually depends on the personal style, um... we [subject department heads] voice out their opinions, but I'll ask them to calm down as our utmost concern is to help the students... (D04, English vice-subject panel, School D, 11/12/2014)

The above examples may imply that teachers' confronting divergent interests may be owing to the diversity of teacher groups such as position, teaching experience, personality, and so on. Teachers showed much more worries in assuming their roles as leaders in dealing with teachers who had diverse conflicting views and uncertainties upon curriculum change. As one subject panel in School D said that,

... everyone doubted if it is a must to [implement the change] ... at that time I have to be a leader and tell them it's a must to do it as told by the EDB [Education Bureau] ... I don't know what my position is ... I was so doubtful ... finally I passed the matter to the experienced colleagues to make the decision (D01, Chinese panel, School D, 21/8/2014)

This diversity of interests and conflict dynamics seemingly represents a lack of coalition goals about the curriculum initiative.

Seemingly curriculum change may pose a threat to teachers who had to give up the current teaching materials and rebuild a new set of teaching materials. At the same time, teachers were asked to participate in meetings and workshops to prepare the materials whilst they still had to do markings of homework. Teachers were generally concerned about 'waste of time' and time clash. Teachers felt it time-consuming in participating in 'unrelated' events. For example, this teacher shared that,

Actually we are very busy after school, therefore I think it is a waste to spend the teachers' development day for the purpose of playing games. (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

Another teacher shared that,

It is a waste of time, especially the meeting for all teachers... The average duration is half an hour to two hours. We have no other choices of time period except the time after school. This deprives the time you can spend on other class events or other things. (C01, General Studies panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

This reveals the problem of heavy workload on the shoulders of teachers, who had to contribute more time on preparing the new materials on the one hand whilst having to find 'additional' time to do their original work such as marking assignments. One teacher described that the heavy workload made her 'very tired and exhausted' (C04, General Studies teacher, School C, 25/10/2014). In other words, there is a dilemma in making curriculum change due to a clash with personal interest and values (i.e. time for marking vs. time for preparing for change) when coping with the new demands of curriculum change.

Apart from conflicts of interests and views amongst teachers, there were competitions over resources across different subject departments. One teacher shared that,

You cannot do it subject-by-subject as some subjects will then far lag behind and they are unhappy. The English Department at this school has been the pioneer of curriculum reforms for 5 to 6 years. With the supportive and cooperative panel head and subject teachers, almost all resources have been given to them, and they have really shown some remarkable achievement by enhancing students' English standard. (D03, Chinese teacher, School D, 30/3/2015)

Teachers found that there was not an even distribution of resources across different subject departments. Their motives in making change in their subjects may thus be varied according to the preference and status of the subjects involved. Another teacher expressed that,

... as the classroom in our school is small, but we have to set a classroom for learning music, but if we hold many music classes,

there may be a crash in the usage of the classroom. I have to give up if there is no support. (D06, English teacher, School D, 21/8/2014)

This implies that the pace of the change may be influenced by the administrative arrangement.

Comparing Case Schools

In general, there were some variations in the degree to which case schools faced difficulties based on the three aspects of curriculum change. However, as a whole, amongst the four case schools, School C demonstrated greater difficulties in all the three aspects of making curriculum change.

School B and School C teachers were more concerned about the technical aspect of making curriculum change. Although teachers from all the four schools outlined the problem of the lack of time, School C teachers in particular highlighted this frustrating problem which directly affects the meeting schedule and pose an obstacle to teacher collaboration in preparing teaching materials, engaging in peer observation and participating in sharing sessions. The following are some of the excerpts about the time problem as encountered by teachers in School C.

The difficulties would be arrangement of time because we have to hold meetings, prepare teaching materials, observe each other's lessons to understand students' situation... And, you have to spend time to think about the teaching materials. (C03, Chinese panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

... we could not adopt what's taught in the training [workshop]. It's so hard to find time for training ourselves since when we were observing the class, it's already during the lessons rather than training before trying. (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

School C teachers obviously had more conflicts about their workloads due to the change of principalship. Teachers' views upon the needs of curriculum change

seemingly were not aligned with the will of the principals of the school. In School C, the focus of the reform was the promotion of a cooperative learning approach. Teachers of School C felt that this change was not necessary in their teaching practice. One of the School C teachers shared that,

When carrying out the reform, I think I like using PowerPoint and then ask some questions to motivate students to express but now... I am forced to group my students and let them play. If I did not do these big items in doing cooperative learning, how could I hand in my homework as demanded by the school? (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

Another teacher from School C shared her view in this way,

I recognized that it [cooperative learning] is not 'playing'. However, the educational environment in Hong Kong is exam-oriented. If we implement *Genius Programme* (pseudonym), we will have to prepare many supplementary exercises for students which can suit TSA [Territory-wide System Assessment] but lose the original meaning of [this Programme] ... I hope we can get the balance between interest and result, developing both of them simultaneously. (C05, English panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

The above two examples showed that teachers had to give up their preferred way of teaching and cater for the reality of exam cultures by giving more exercises as homework on one hand whilst they still had to satisfy the requests from the principal. This may be associated with the problem of heavy workload.

... sometimes the workload is heavy as we have to spend two hours for co-planning after school. However, we also have to mark the homework and prepare lessons. It is quite hard... (C06, English teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

Teachers of School C and School D showed more concerns about the socio-cultural aspect of how to deal with curriculum change, whilst School C teachers also had more concerns about the political aspect of how to manage curriculum change.

Comparing Positional and Non-Positional Teachers

As a whole, there were not many differences in the positional and non-positional teachers' perceptions of difficulties. Both positional and non-positional leaders needed technical, socio-cultural and political faced quite similar difficulties.

4.3.2 Perceptions of Support for Curriculum Change

Key Types of Support for Making Curriculum Change: From Technical, Socio-Cultural and Political perspectives

Teachers' perceptions of support as needed for conducting curriculum change can be categorized according to the three change perspectives – technical, socio-cultural and political (Table 4.7). Technically, the provision of professional development and administrative planning are perceived as the most important elements in facilitating curriculum change, as followed by socio-cultural support which includes cultivating teachers' social capital, developing new mindsets, and getting family understanding, as well as political support that comprises the development of collegial relationships, obtaining principal support and winning teacher support.

Technical perspective

From the technical perspective, professional development is regarded as an important type of support in facilitating their curriculum change. Some teachers claimed that they lacked pedagogical and content knowledge when implementing the curriculum change in their schools. Teachers realized that external support from the Education Bureau or other tertiary institutions was essential to equip teachers with knowledge and skills about the new change as they can share the relevant materials and teaching experiences as well as give advice to teachers.

For the resources outside school, I think this means the school has to get a group of supporting staff or support from tertiary institutions to help and give you some suggestions. Even I am a CD

[curriculum development officer], my professional knowledge is limited. ... I, myself, cannot think of so many ideas and work out the plan solely. You have to seek for help from your colleagues, especially those younger and more energetic ones. ... having cooperation with universities is a fruitful process. ... Without their help and mind-clashing ideas, how could teachers organize such a different event to students? (D03, Chinese teacher, School D, 30/3/2015)

Table 4.7. Teachers' perceived support for curriculum change.

<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Key support</i>	<i>Examples of interview extracts</i>
Technical	Provision of professional development	... regarding technology, primary school teachers are actually weaker, as there are few science teachers. Even if you studied science, the science foundation is not that good, as the experiment is following the book there is no need for creativity. Now the students need to make a car to join competition, like what is wheel, I studied, but I didn't have any experience. So the school must hold more teacher workshop to assist the teachers, or finding some outsiders to help. ... Like there is some organization who is specialized for science, some dedicated themselves to make a lot of things, so they may be invited to teach the students, and also the teachers. Even the workshop provided by the publisher. (B01, General Studies panel, School B, 9/7/2014)
	Administrative planning	The long duration of meetings is quite harsh for busy teachers. The frequency of meetings is once a week. It may be too dense. Hence, it is better to shorten the duration or time of meetings. If the program can help to prepare teaching resources like teaching materials, it will be much better. Otherwise, we have to spend extra time to prepare them. (C03, Chinese panel, School C, 11/7/2014)
Socio-cultural	Cultivating teachers' social capital	I think it's the collaboration and support among colleagues. There was suddenly one more exercise book to teach. If there was only me, I don't think I could handle it that well. The best thing is that we would discuss among the panel. I may think of a quicker way to solve this question but I may not be able to solve the next question. Maybe my colleague can think of that. We supplement and support each other. (A06, General Studies teacher, School A, 13/7/2013)
	Developing new mindsets	Sometimes even we share and ask, there would be some things that have not been mentioned. You have listened quite a lot lessons ... the teachers were also appointing some students to do something and telling them what to do in a group. However, seriously, it may not be handled by adults. Maybe after training for one or two years, you are still not familiar with that even the seating positions do not change. There is a need to change the mindsets. (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)
	Getting family understanding	Actually we have different homework types, but you cannot ask them [students] to do homework on their own, so we have to teach them to do a few in the lesson, as usually the support from their family is little, so they rely on the school, it's important to give a clear guideline to them so that they know how to do at home, especially for junior level. (B05, English

<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Key support</i>	<i>Examples of interview extracts</i>
		teacher, School B, 9/7/2014)
Political	Obtaining principal support	The support from the Principal is really essential. If I want to do something which is not supported by the Principal, I can't do it. We often have new ideas, and the colleagues would voice lots of comments, I can't defend much. If Principal supports, for example, the idea has not carried out before, the colleagues will be more convinced. They may doubt more when I propose the idea. The Principal says something supportive will help that situation. (D03, Chinese teacher, School D, 30/3/2015)
	Getting compromises amongst teachers	I think it's the cooperation, as everyone has different opinions, but we have to decide which suit the directions of the schools. yet, there are colleagues that if they do not agree the policy, they won't follow strictly, so I think cooperation is very important, even if you are not very supportive of the policy, you should try on to see the effect. (A05, Chinese teacher, School A, 13/1/2014)
	Winning teacher support	Our dear teachers are needed of course, because ... because I can actually we can write a grand or bravo curriculum framework, but whether it can be put in practice depends on the willingness of teachers who are the implementers in the classroom. (B04, Chinese panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

Teachers, both positional and non-positional teachers, were generally inclined to rely on professional advice on doing curriculum change as they realized their limitations in previous experiences and knowledge in the related areas. Both tended to rely highly on the advice of external experts who were described to be more 'professional' on the implementation of new curriculum change. This teacher elaborated that,

... regarding technology, primary school teachers are actually weaker, as there are few science teachers. Even if you studied science education, the science foundation is not that good, as the experiment is following the book and there is no need for creativity. Now the students need to make a car join competition events, like what is a wheel, I studied about that but I didn't have any experience. So the school must hold more teacher workshops to assist the teachers, or finding some outsiders to help. ... Like there is some organization who is specialized for science, some dedicated themselves to make a lot of things, so they may be invited to teach the students, and the teachers ... (B01, General Studies panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

Another teacher also mentioned that,

... as consultants are familiar with curriculum and did many analyses ... their research discovered that the knowledge taught in Primary 1 will not duplicate in higher grades. They are professional ... it can only be done by consultants but not us (C06, English teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

This indicates that teachers need professional learning not only in pedagogical knowledge but also subject content knowledge.

Besides, getting planning time support is another type of technical support that teachers wanted to get for promoting curriculum change. This teacher explained that,

Having sufficient resources is significant, as well as administrative support and arrangement. The most complicated issue to us now is we really wish to create more time and space for teachers to develop school-based support. So how can we arrange and allocate a certain amount of financial and human resources to employ some contract teachers to do the abovementioned project? This really needs a detailed planning... (D03, Chinese teacher, School D, 30/3/2015)

Apart from providing sufficient resources, teachers expected that there can be a better time arrangement in the planning to support curriculum change. This is exactly in line with what teachers always mentioned about the time factor that was seriously perceived as a great obstacle in implementing curriculum change in the previous section. This teacher mentioned that,

The long duration of meetings is quite harsh for busy teachers. The frequency of meetings is once a week. It may be too dense. Hence, it is better to shorten the duration or time of meetings. If the program can help to prepare teaching resources like teaching materials, it will be much better. Otherwise, we have to spend extra time to prepare them. (C03, Chinese panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

Socio-cultural perspective

From a socio-cultural perspective, teachers realized the significance of cultivating teachers' social capital for the facilitation of curriculum change. Teachers considered that sharing and collaborative lesson planning are important to build up teachers'

confidence and set up the common vision of improving student learning. This teacher shared her experience that,

There are sharing sessions every term. ... The colleagues are free to tell us about their difficulties. I think the success [of these sharing sessions] is making the colleagues more united when facing a new teaching trend. And they are very willing to accept the others' comment. (A03, English panel, School A, 9/1/2014)

Teachers realized collaboration is a problem-solving process where teachers can seek help from each other when encountering problems. This teacher expressed that,

I think it's the collaboration and support among colleagues. ... The best thing is that we can discuss among the panel. I may think of a quicker way to solve this problem but I may not be able to solve the next problem. Maybe my colleague can think of that. We supplement and support each other. (A06, General Studies teacher, School A, 13/7/2013)

Moreover, developing new mindsets is another essential aspect in supporting teachers to face curriculum change. Teachers highlighted that gradual change is more acceptable whilst it takes time to adjust themselves to face new changes. This teacher claimed that,

If you can rely on yourself, you cannot really...sometimes I know something, but we have to see the abilities of teachers to adapt, you have to say a lot of things, so sometimes I will limit myself, not saying all the things, as they may not accept all or even resist changes. (B02, English panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

Very few teachers thought that getting parental understanding about curriculum change is essential. This teacher shared that,

... usually the support from their family is little, so they rely on the school, it's important to give a clear guideline to them [parents] so that they know how to do at home, especially for junior level. (B05, English teacher, School B, 9/7/2014)

Political perspective

From the political perspective, obtaining principal support for a more teacher-initiated change is one of the key ways to facilitate curriculum change. The power and roles of the principal are regarded as fundamental elements in bringing about curriculum change. This teacher shared her view that,

The support from the Principal is really essential. If I want to do something which is not supported by the Principal, I can't do it. We often have new ideas, and the colleagues would voice lots of comments, I can't defend much. If the Principal supports, for example, the idea has not been carried out before, the colleagues will be more convinced. They may doubt more when I propose the idea. The Principal says something supportive will help that situation. (D03, Chinese teacher, School D, 30/3/2015)

Moreover, teachers generally recognized and expected the high abilities of the principal. This teacher mentioned that,

When it is about the education reform or change in the environment, the principal has a wider vision. Sometimes he can find the problem before we realize it. He will tell us, then it is way better. (A06, General Studies teacher, School A, 13/7/2013)

In relation to the earlier section on teachers' perceived difficulty in getting consensus amongst teachers when coping with curriculum change, teachers realized getting compromises amongst teachers is another vital component in driving curriculum change. Few teachers realized the importance of winning teacher support is the root of curriculum change. This teacher described that,

Our dear teachers are needed of course, because ... because I can actually we can write a grand or bravo curriculum framework, but whether it can be put in practice depends on the teachers. Teacher support, regardless of skill support or material support or you teach me how to do, that is how to arise is very important. (B04, Chinese subject panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

Interestingly, teachers, especially subject panels, put more emphasis on the significance of teachers' 'cooperation'. For example, this subject panel teacher

expressed that,

I think it's the cooperation, as everyone has different opinions, but we have to decide which suit the directions of the schools. yet, there are colleagues that if they do not agree the policy, they won't follow strictly, so I think cooperation is very important, even if you are not very supportive of the policy, you should try on to see the effect. (A05, Chinese teacher, School A, 13/1/2014)

This may be related to the hierarchical structures and relationships with teachers in the administrative management system.

Comparing Case Schools

Variations can be found in the demands of the three aspects of support in making curriculum change across the four case schools. School A, School B and School D showed their demands on the technical, socio-cultural and political support for curriculum change in a quite balanced way. School A and School B teachers required more support in the technical side of how to manage curriculum change. Although School C teachers had greater difficulties in making curriculum change as mentioned in the earlier section, they did not show that more support is needed in implementing curriculum change. School D substantively requires all the three aspects (technical, socio-cultural, political) of support to deal with curriculum change. This represents that School D may have a relatively weak capacity in curriculum change.

Comparing Positional and Non-Positional Teachers

Both positional and non-positional leaders had higher demands on technical support in implementing curriculum change. Positional leaders had a relatively lower care for socio-cultural and political aspects of support. However, non-positional leaders had an equally high demand for the three aspects of support for curriculum change. Such a difference may reveal that non-positional leaders have to get more backups when

making curriculum change.

4.4 Discussion

On the basis of the above findings, three emergent issues are discussed in this section, including: aligning intended notions with perceived notions of curriculum change, assessing teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change, and addressing challenges and support for curriculum change.

4.4.1 Aligning Intended Notions with Perceived Notions of Curriculum Change

The study revealed a discrepancy between teachers' perceived notions of curriculum change and schools' intended (written) purpose of curriculum change. Teachers in the study had diverse interpretations upon the notions of curriculum change, where they mostly saw academic rationalism as the key notion for curriculum change. However, the school documents stated that schools carried out curriculum development according to the government curriculum guidelines (i.e. Learning to Learn) which emphasize that, 'Schools should carefully consider their positions in curriculum development and areas that are worth adopting and avoid being confined to a particular education view' (CDC, 2014). Therefore, on one hand, there is still a lack of clarity about what curriculum change is meant to teachers (both positional and non-positional teachers) who may not play 'consistent' roles in bringing about curriculum change in parallel with what and how curriculum change can be done. On the other hand, the predominance of academic rationalism seemingly very likely is still the potential obstacle to curriculum reform, which is consistently aligned with the findings of other studies which found teachers in Hong Kong more likely valued the academic orientation (e.g. Cheung & Wong, 2002; Cheung & Wong, 2011; Hui, Brown, & Chan, 2017), where the significance of academic success is deeply 'rooted in cultural values

and social norms' (Kennedy, 2002, p. 440). Such an incongruence between the 'perceived' notion of curriculum change and the 'intended' notion of curriculum change as initiated in schools may 'suffer from the failure to be used in the intended manner' (Cheung & Wong, 2012, p. 41) and result in widening the 'gap' between the intentions and implementation of curriculum change (Lo, Cheng, & Wong, 2017). Therefore, teachers' understandings of the proposed change and the implementation of that change have to be taken into account to foster change implementation.

4.4.2 Assessing Teachers' Attitudes towards Curriculum Change

In the study, teachers tended to be positive towards curriculum change. However, it is noted that teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change varied between and within schools respectively. While positive attitudes towards a curriculum innovation may not be an accurate predictor of implementation of an innovation (Morris, 1995), this diversity in teachers' attitudes may mark 'the edges of chaos' (Kauffman, 1995; Baranger, 2000, p. 10; Fullan, 2005), where some teachers in the study had paradoxical thoughts towards curriculum change in their schools. On one hand, they seemed to accept change. On the other hand, they showed some concerns and reservations towards curriculum change. Some even declared that the mere rumour that the curriculum might change again affected their attitude to the new curriculum, as they anticipated it would later be a 'dead curriculum' (Troudi & Alwan, 2010, p. 114). This 'complexity' of teacher attitudes helps underpin teachers' interactions within the 'nested' network (Huberman, 1995; Bidwell, 2001) in schools when making modifications (changes) to the current form of curriculum facing an ever-changing, dynamic and non-linear school environment (Morrison, 2002).

Meanwhile, teachers emphasized more on their cognitive attitudes (beliefs and thoughts). In other words, cognitive attitudes play a more important driver of

curriculum change (Limón, 2001; Vogel & Wänke, 2016). More attention is still needed to paid to teachers' attitudes (in particular cognitive attitudes) towards curriculum change for the facilitation of curriculum change (Richardson, 1996; Lee, 2000). Previous studies (e.g. Bridges & Reynolds, 1968; Kelleher, 1981) found that teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change are affected by age, sex and experience. However, the findings of this study showed that teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change are closely related to their positional ranking and past professional experiences. Change leaders thus need to develop an awareness of the school administrative structure (job ranking allocation) in cultivating a healthy and supportive school culture (Gu, 2014) and how much curriculum change can impact and/or be impacted by teachers' professional and most importantly teachers' personal lives, whilst taking care and being sensitive to teachers' emotions and well-being are as important as change planning and implementation (Wedell, 2009). Moreover, on facilitating curriculum change, change leaders should understand teachers' life experiences and events that may influence teachers' resilience in managing curriculum change so as to build teacher capacity for change (Lai, 2014) and sustain teachers' motivation and commitment to teaching (Gu & Day, 2007; Gu, 2014), where teacher attitudes alone do not necessarily result in intentions (Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996).

4.4.3 Addressing Challenges and Support for Curriculum Change

Difficulties and support as needed for supporting curriculum change were revealed in the study. Teachers' perceived difficulties 'discover' the holes of implementing curriculum change, where change leaders may have ignored the three aspects of obstacles in managing curriculum change effectively. This, in other words, indicates that there is a lack of synchronization of relevant measures for supporting the current curriculum change whilst there has not yet a careful systematic view of curriculum

change into account (Guerra & Nelson, 2010; McGurk & Pearson, 2018). At the same time, teachers' perceptions of support as needed for facilitating curriculum change is more oriented to a deficit-thinking approach such as the provision of professional development and resources (Guerra & Nelson, 2010; Valencia, 2012; Murray-Johnson & Guerra, 2017). Interestingly, there is no consistency across teachers' perceptions of the difficulties and support as needed within each school and across schools. This reveals that teachers are 'able' to identify problems but may not be able or attempt to find out 'solutions', whilst they may not have sufficient understandings of the problems or lack an awareness about what solutions can be sought to deal with these identified problems. This demonstrates that school leaders and teachers are 'somewhat unstructured' (Higgs & Rowland, 2005, p. 144) and may lack change leadership capability (Higgs & Rowland, 2000) in leading and managing curriculum change in schools. This study also reflects that the place of systematic thinking is still marginalized and peripherally rooted in teachers' minds in this milieu of curriculum change in spite of calls for the urgency of development of system thinking in developing school leaders and teachers over the past decades (Hoban, 2002; Shaked & Schechter, 2017). There can be further steps in creating conditions for developing system thinking approaches in assisting teachers and school leaders in ensuring and enhancing 'coherence' of implementing curriculum change across people, process and policy (Fullan, 2005; Birkland, 2015; Fullan & Quinn, 2015).

The collected data in the study revealed that the demands on curriculum changes posed on teachers need to be made gradually so that teachers' feelings, workload and time are taken into account. Other than technical factors, the findings of the study reflected that the socio-cultural and political factors (i.e. human factors) also play strong influential roles in the change processes that engage teachers' human sides

‘gratifying personally’ (Szabla, 2007, p. 549) whilst ‘sectional interests’ (Wilmore & Betz, 2000) across different subject departments have to be better addressed in schools.

It is also vital to develop teachers’ self-efficacy. In the study, teachers were more likely to commit to the new change if they had high levels of self-efficacy. Teachers seemingly were constrained by the existing challenges such as lack of time, high level of workload, insufficiency of professional knowledge, and so on. In developing teachers’ self-efficacy, teachers have to be given the opportunities for professional growth and autonomy actively involving in the change process, where teachers’ involvement should be well-planned and justified to make a balance between the planners’ and participants’ expectations.

4.5 Summary

This Chapter presents the investigation of teachers’ perceptions of curriculum change, in particular teachers’ perceived notions of curriculum change, their attitudes towards curriculum change, and their perceptions of difficulties and support as needed when making curriculum change. Three emergent themes are discussed: aligning intended notions with perceived notions of curriculum change, assessing teachers’ attitudes towards curriculum change, and addressing challenges and support for curriculum change. It is essential to look into the leadership side of curriculum change that can directly and/ or indirectly be interconnected with teachers’ perceptions of curriculum change, which is presented in Chapter 5 accordingly.

Chapter 5

Perceptions and Experiences of Leadership of Curriculum Change

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents the findings of teachers' perceptions and experiences concerning the leadership of curriculum change in addressing the key research question: 'What perceptions of the leadership of curriculum change do teachers hold?'. Three themes emerged from the study, namely teachers' more general perceptions of leadership and its role in curriculum change, teachers' experiences of the actual leadership of curriculum change and change leadership strategies, as well as teachers' perceptions of the influence of leaders on curriculum change. The data presentation is then followed by a discussion of the findings regarding the leadership of curriculum change.

5.2 Perceptions of Leadership

In this study, it is found that teachers in the four case study schools had varied perceptions of leadership. They perceived leadership in terms of power relationships, traits and shared instructional leadership. The interviews involved positional leaders and ordinary teachers. The former group in talking about leadership gave perceptions about both senior leadership (i.e. above their own level) and about their own roles as leaders. Therefore the data contains a mixture of standpoints on the issues.

5.2.1 Leadership as Power Relationships

There exists a tendency in perceiving leadership as power relationships in all the case study schools, regardless of the teachers' positionalities. From the data, it is clear that

leadership was often perceived to involve decision-making. Top-down decision-making was perceived as the dominant feature in the perceptions of teachers about leadership.

Leadership was perceived by the teachers as a power relationship among hierarchically arranged school members. This perception is more prevalent in case study school A. In School A, all the teachers with positional and non-positional responsibilities regarded leadership being designated to those with greater power, or higher position in schools within the hierarchy. The teachers felt that they were subordinates or followers in the hierarchical structure of the school organization. The tasks were assigned to them by the ones above their levels in the hierarchical structure.

I think it's actually one person who makes the decision, but we may give opinions, and the final decision is made by the leader. (A05, Chinese teacher, School A, 9/1/2014)

It's like the one who makes decisions and tells us what we should do. (A04, English teacher, School A, 9/1/2014)

Among the four case study schools, some teachers regarded decisions as solely made by the most powerful persons in the school. In their minds, the most powerful persons were perceived to be the principal and the middle managers in the school. This is aligned with teachers' perceptions of the most knowledgeable person in curriculum development, in which teachers mostly mentioned about principals and curriculum managers. For example, this teacher mentioned that,

... PSMCD [curriculum manager] teaches P.3 this year. Usually she would share her teaching first. That's it.... because she's clearer about curriculum ... right, yes. And also, she uses different teaching strategies in her teaching. So she shares with us and then we would try them out.... (B06, Chinese teacher, School B, 9/7/2014)

However, there exists a difference in teachers' perceptions in the purposes of

leadership. On one hand, a few teachers among the four case study schools regarded leadership served the purpose of monitoring and supervision. Transactional leadership was perceived by them. Leader was perceived to serve others according to their assigned role and perform his/ her delegated tasks. As two teachers commented that,

Leadership [is] to lead someone to finish something. (A01, General Studies panel, School A, 9/1/2014)

Leader is a resource-provider or ... a message deliveryman [for colleagues to do the work] ... I ... regard myself as a watchdog. (B04, Chinese panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

On the other hand, most teachers especially positional holders, regardless of job rankings, regarded leadership as transformational. They perceived vision-building and understanding people as important elements in leadership. Leadership was perceived to serve the purpose of school improvement.

I think leader is someone who can observe the difficulties, solve problems, suggest improvements and set up the direction of school. (C01, General Studies panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

Leadership means to lead a group of colleagues and the leader necessarily knows the strength of everyone, so the leader can assign the job based on their strength or weakness [to get] the best outcome. (D05, General Studies teacher, School D, 11/12/2014)

I think regardless of any types of leadership, I look on the leaders from the perspective of [me] being a servant in helping improving student learning. (B04, Chinese panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

Therefore, teachers in the study perceived leadership as a power relationship which lies in the varying degree of teacher involvement in decision-making, which is more likely on the basis of hierarchical structures and relations.

5.2.2 Leadership as Traits

The data analysis indicated that a few teachers, including positional leaders and ordinary teachers in all the case study schools perceived leadership as traits. It appears that leaders were expected to possess a set of common traits. The traits include being knowledgeable, committed, passionate, open-minded, having highly developed communication skills, flexibility, a sense of empathy with others, having a belief that all children are important and capable of success, pursuing clear mission and vision, and holding a belief that schools can make a difference.

Teachers perceived leadership as owned by persons being knowledgeable in curriculum trends and able to utilize expertise in developing the school curriculum and guiding colleagues to work out curriculum plans.

Leaders necessarily have clear mission, goal and a predicted result as well as directions for launching some policies. And they are the ones who allocate jobs, to check and practice these measures, and finally evaluate the results. (A03, English panel, School A, 9/1/2014)

They needed to be talented and be able to provide a holistic picture of curriculum development and concise curriculum contents. Those who lead were perceived to give objective opinions on matters concerning curriculum development. Leadership was also perceived to involve coordination between planning and action in curriculum development.

... the leader is the one who leads the direction for the whole subject group as we follow his/her step. If we have different directions, it will become a trouble and hence no improvement. It is clearer for us if we are told the direction. However, the leader does not tell us, we can just follow his/her action as we do not know the target. (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

Moreover, leaders were perceived to understand the school needs and make

good use of different teachers' strengths and expertise to pursue the goal of curriculum changes. Student improvement and achievement were perceived to be the ultimate goal of any curriculum changes enacted by leaders. Leadership was perceived to put students at the centre of the learning and teaching process in any curriculum change.

I think the leader will have their own ideas that are good for the group and they will raise that so as to improve or lead the team to become better or increase the students' learning efficiency. (D01, Chinese panel, School D, 21/8/2014)

Being passionate and active in curriculum matters was also perceived as one of the personal characteristics of curriculum leaders. Both teachers with positional and non-positional responsibilities perceived leaders as pioneers of curriculum changes and active participants in leading changes. Leaders were perceived to be role models in the curriculum change.

(The leaders) have to set a good example, that is, when you tell people to do this, you have to give guidelines and demonstrate it. A leader cannot be not familiar with that and then ask the others to do. (B02, English panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

The teacher believed that her colleagues were more convinced to act out changes if she pioneered any curriculum initiatives as a department chairperson.

Critical thinking, communication and problem-solving skills were perceived as vital elements in leadership. Teachers suggested that leaders should give opportunities for teachers to voice their opinions and be able to make reference to their ideas objectively. Negotiation skills were perceived to be essential in leadership in making curriculum change. Some subject panels would see themselves as negotiators who try to 'drive', 'lobby' or 'persuade' teachers towards the curriculum change.

I think [leadership] is a macro concept, and then you have to get the colleagues' consensus so as to launch some new ideas and the

reform. (A02, Chinese vice-panel, School A, 13/1/2014)

When we encounter problems, the leader can find a solution to the problem, and he can recognize the problem to improve the practice ... (D01, Chinese panel, School D, 21/8/2014)

A sense of empathy was frequently mentioned in teachers' perceptions of leadership. Teachers commented that leaders should understand colleagues' needs and concerns. They should be able to value colleagues' viewpoints and be able to give collegial support when facing difficulties.

If you can convey some positive and clear message to the colleagues, then they can follow it more easily. So in the reform process we must be a coordinator, letting the colleagues to think they are not alone, there are always people who can provide support. (B01, General Studies panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

If you want the subordinates to cooperate with you, the leader has to encourage and inspire them. (C03, Chinese panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

To the teachers, leaders were perceived to build partnership with the colleagues to act out curriculum change. Leaders should encourage and inspire others to cooperate with them.

5.2.3 Shared Instructional Leadership/ Teacher Leadership

Most teachers perceived leadership to be enacted by multiple leaders instead of single leader, where leadership was grounded in shared processes among teachers in relation to instructional matters. Shared instructional leadership was perceived by the teachers especially those in School B, where sharing of information was emphasized among all the teachers regardless of their delegated roles.

Leadership was also perceived as existing on multiple levels including school level, department level and classroom level. Teachers were perceived to perform different leading roles in different levels. The leadership roles were both distributed

formally and informally across the schools. For instance, the department chairpersons perceived themselves to have initiating, planning, monitoring, supervision roles while teachers perceived themselves to have implementing roles. One teacher perceived that leadership as shared and distributed among all the participants in the school. She pointed out that ‘everyone can be a leader and contribute to school development and improvement’ (D06, English teacher, School D, 21/8/2014).

Professional development was perceived to be important in understanding the curriculum change before action. Some teachers perceived that leadership acts as a learning catalyst to leaders’ and other teachers’ learning. They indicated that leadership could enhance teachers’ professionalism and invite them to improve curriculum content.

Leaders? I think they must have knowledge about the school and the subject, and then they have to think of some ideas so as to help the school to develop. And they will discuss with the colleagues, serving as a team so as to launch a subject or an activity. (D04, English vice-panel, School D, 11/12/2014)

[The colleagues] will reflect some opinions ... like little leaders in certain circumstances ... to make better learning. (A02, Chinese vice-panel, School A, 13/1/2014)

It is rare for the informants in the case study schools to regard leadership as teacher leadership. The notion of teacher leadership was mentioned by only one ordinary teacher in School D. She perceived leadership as ‘democratic’ and leaders would ‘discuss’ and ‘collaborate’ with others to carry out curriculum change and solve problems together.

To sum up, the majority of teachers perceived leadership as power relationships. Shared instructional leadership or teacher leadership was not frequently mentioned by the teachers (i.e. especially non-positional holders).

5.3 Leadership of Curriculum Change: Teachers' Experiences

5.3.1 Perceived Change Leadership Strategies

Interview data was analysed using the theoretical framework of change leadership strategies as initiated by Chin & Benne (1969), namely power-coercive strategy, rational-empirical strategy and normative-reeducative strategy. The results showed that teachers perceived the dominant change strategy the four case study schools adopted to be top-down power-coercive. Most of the positional and non-positional teachers claimed that change in their schools was initiated by the school principals and the administrators with positional power. The leaders mandated compliance from the followers. The teachers were informed about the change and agreement was sought during the general meetings and subject meetings. They were asked to enact the change so as to fulfil the requirements of the Education Bureau.

However, half of the participating schools (School B and School C) also used what might be considered normative re-educative strategies for some changes. Consultants or experts were employed to discuss the implementation plans with the teachers in certain departments. The change was enacted by the subject panel members after collaborative planning. Some class observations were conducted followed by reflections on learning and teaching. Teacher participation was much greater under this approach.

5.3.2 Teacher Involvement in Curriculum Change

In all the four case study schools, the School Principals of the participating schools were claimed by the subject panels and teachers to be the most influential person who asserted power on different school matters and was most likely to initiate curriculum change. In collaboration with the administrative teams, they led the school

improvement by using the strategy of vision building.

Both positional leaders and ordinary teachers also regarded the curriculum development team leader (PSMCD) and subject panels as key figures in initiating curriculum change. Subject panels also claimed themselves as pioneers of curriculum change.

As I was the pioneer, and I have done more than them, so they couldn't say no anymore. (B02, English panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

Most of the positional leaders and ordinary teachers in the four case study schools, however, regarded themselves primarily as curriculum implementers. They focused on managerial tasks when they described their roles and responsibilities. They primarily regarded themselves as curriculum implementers rather than curriculum developers. Their roles were claimed to collect, 'review and deliver information or just to teach students. For examples,

We have to finish things that are ordered by the school like teacher handbook, subject project, activities or coordination. (A01, General Studies panel, School A, 20140109)

My duty is to teach two classes and this is to follow the leader of the subject department. (C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

I have no special role in General Studies. Just to teach. (D05, General Studies teacher, School D, 11/12/2014)

Another ordinary teacher claimed that her role is to follow the subject panels' instructions. For instance, she commented,

... during the circulation of the exam papers, we will check if there are typo mistakes ... the panel will give instructions for us to change ... (B05, English teacher, School B, 9/7/2014)

Despite the commonalities in teachers' involvement in the four participating

schools, there seemed some differences in teachers' involvement in curriculum change. Some new posts such as vice-panel (vice department chairperson) and grade level coordinator were created. However, there were some variations in the roles of the holders of the new posts in different schools. On one hand, in Schools A and D, the role seemed to be taking a lead in the department but apparently this was not the case. As reflected by the teachers, the holders of the new posts seemed to act as sandwiches between the subject panels and ordinary teachers. They mainly regarded their roles as assistants of subject panels doing managerial tasks. As one vice-panel mentioned that,

Maybe sometimes I give opinions ... but the major decision is actually made by the panel, they may listen to people's opinions if they think it's ok ... (D04, English vice-panel, School D, 11/12/2014)

In these two schools, some of the non-positional teachers (i.e. those without middle management ranking) perceived themselves performing managerial tasks and communicating with the others rather than leading or making decisions in the departments as grade level coordinators. One grade level coordinator described her role as having 'to do some worksheets or there is something to modify, the grade level coordinators will find the colleagues of that grade level to discuss' (A05, Chinese teacher, School A, 13/1/2014). Similarly, as described by one subject panel head, the role of grade level coordinator was 'to coordinate and check the activity conditions' (A01, General Studies panel, School A, 9/1/2014).

On the other hand, in Schools B and C, the vice-panel and grade level coordinators were expected to take a lead to mediate the curriculum change to the teachers. As the General Studies subject panel in School B explained, the vice-panel 'will help me to bring these elements (in curriculum change) to each grade level. They will follow and then give advice'.

In a similar vein the General Studies subject panel in School C opined that the grade coordinator ‘should make decisions and help promotion of the programmes. He should plan how to implement a program smoothly and lead others to imply it.’

Mr Po (pseudonym) is the vice-panel. He will help me to bring these elements (in the curriculum change) to each grade level. [The GS colleagues] will first follow and then give advice to us. (B01, General Studies panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

The panels will consider the teachers’ opinions by consulting teachers informally and discussing with vice-panels. If they agree with the opinions, then they will hold a formal meeting to discuss about that. (C04, General Studies teacher, School C, 9/7/2014)

Grade level coordinator should make decisions and help promotion of the programmes. He should plan a program smoothly and lead others to imply it. (C03, Chinese panel, School C, 9/7/2014)

In addition to the holders of newly created posts, the mentors of novice teachers in School C were also perceived to have a role to play in the curriculum change process. As the English Subject panel in School C said that,

In the past, the mentor only had to bring the freshmen to walk around the school and tell them about the routines in the school. But now, as I’m mentoring two freshmen this year. I have to tell them the marking ... I have to check everything like how to mark the homework, exams and co-planning records. (C05, English panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

5.3.3 Teacher Voice and Ownership in Curriculum Change

In all the four case study schools, the experience told by the teachers revealed that to a large extent, the nature of change initiated by the school management was still ‘top-down’. Both positional leaders and ordinary teachers reflected that the decisions to make change were done by the senior in their schools.

When comparing the four case study schools, there seems to be higher degree of teacher voice in School B than the other three case schools. The teachers in School

B reflected that they had the ‘say’ and could voice out their opinions in the decision-making. One teacher (B06, Chinese teacher, School B, 9/7/2014) claimed that the teachers could have a vote for the decision and be ‘free’ to reflect their opinions to the curriculum leader in his school. As commented by one positional leader:

... the principal will listen to the teachers’ opinions, especially from our subject heads ... he would support you saying ‘You can try’ ... ‘I’ll support you’ (B01, General Studies panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

In Schools A and D, the decisions were discussed by the principal and subject panels and some ‘consultation meetings’ were held before the decisions were made. However, in School C, ordinary teachers’ voice seemed to be limited. As commented by the ordinary teachers in School C, they had ‘no say’ in making change and the decisions were ‘announced’ by the senior’ and teachers were ‘told to do so’.

The school management used so-called ‘consultation’ for building up the common goal. In fact, the nature of the consultation itself was just like a briefing session giving some space for the teachers to discuss the implementation of change rather than the direction of change. In general, a ‘top-down approach’ of management was quite accepted by the teachers of the schools. The researcher would interpret that the school management gave some ‘autonomy’ to the teachers in implementing the change in daily operation as a ‘token’ for exchange, in which subject panel heads play an administrative role in organizing and coordinating the implementation process of new plans whilst ordinary teachers would be involved in giving opinions to those plans rather than doing planning and making decisions about what to do. The following are the examples of what the subject panel heads talked about their roles.

Usually, the principal, the principal will hold an administration meeting, discussing with the administrator, the administrative decision will be made by them ... but if it involves subject, it will... sometimes in our staff meeting, they will get the teachers’ opinions.

(A01, General Studies panel, School A, 9/1/2014)

Frankly speaking, we will give a basic plan, and let us discuss, as panel and two vice-panels take six levels, so we may have different opinions. After modification, we will tell the principal. (A02, Chinese vice-panel, School A, 13/1/2014)

Still I [as a panel] will give advice as they may accept our suggestions. We [Subject panel heads] are actually those who will voice out when something happens. (B04, Chinese panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

The words ‘persuasion’ or ‘lobbying’ were sometimes used by the positional leaders to describe the way to build up common goals. Meanwhile, they indicated that there was a time for consultation of the curriculum changes being implemented.

When I promote the English programme of Smart City [in pseudo] to my colleague or when school wants to make some changes, we have to let all teachers get familiar with it first. I have lobbied them. (C05, English panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

I require no worksheet or exercise. For example, I want to publish a booklet but teachers oppose it. I have to explain the reasons for the change ... encouraging them to accept and adore. (C05, English panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

During the process, ordinary teachers regarded the role of the positional leaders being subject panels as providers of information but they did not realize that they needed to participate in making decisions themselves. This teacher mentioned,

The panels organize and filter information for us. They tell us what to do after discussion. (C06, English teacher, School C, 9/7/2014)

Some positional leaders and ordinary teachers reflected that they tended to remain silent and unwilling to voice their opinions towards the curriculum change as it appeared to be the norm in the schools or they lacked chances to really give a voice on policy making. As commented by two teachers:

We could discuss what to be taught in this chapter, the writing skills

and maybe the contents but there was no way to discuss the policy.
(C02, Chinese teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

I'm new here ... I would just like to sit there and finish my work quietly ... I know it's pessimistic, but not all people can accept new things. (A02, Chinese vice-panel, School A, 9/1/2014)

In addition, although a few teachers seemed to enjoy ownership of change, the majority of the teachers appeared to be more passive and preferred curriculum renewal rather than curriculum innovation (Stenhouse, 1975). Some teachers considered the 'book' to be the curriculum and 'curriculum change' as having a new set of teaching materials. This dominant role of the 'book' as the centre of the curriculum manifested itself in the data in that teachers perceived the available material as having priority over anything they wished to add in order to meet students' needs. Instead of being curriculum makers, teachers were given some autonomy in curriculum implementation, where they could choose the use of books.

(What's the major curriculum change in your school?) In the past, the teachers only finished the passage and then asked the students to do homework or train the 4 skills, and I thought that's not enough, so we browsed in the internet to find some listening materials, and we discovered that the book was not useful, so we changed the book, the new book has key vocabulary, listening, videos, etc. so it increases the chance of doing drills. (D01, Chinese panel, School D, 21/8/2014)

As the evaluation of students' performance was not ideal [after implementing the school-based curriculum] ... So we [teachers] decided to change back to use textbooks gradually (one grade per year). (C05, English panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

Teachers more likely tend to give up the ownership in designing their own teaching materials. On the contrary, they tended to be a curriculum implementer rather than change agent, which perhaps is linked with their self-efficacy in making curriculum change and socio-cultural aspects of difficulties in the transformation of current teaching practice, as discussed in Chapter 4.

5.4 Leadership Influence in Curriculum Change

5.4.1 To What Extent Did the Teachers Perceive Their Influence on Curriculum Change?

In this study, the teachers' perceived personal influence across different levels varies among different schools. The data demonstrated that principal, positional teachers (middle leaders) and teachers (non-positional) had inter-related influences amongst each other.

All the teachers in the four case study schools, regardless of respondent status, regarded the principal as the most powerful person in the school and his/her influence on the school was perceived to be the greatest.

If you ask about leadership and the impact of school principal. I can answer there's 100%. (C05, English panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

I think I'm an executor, usually if there are opinions in the grade level, the subject panel head will discuss so as to see if our advice is useful or any other viable method, and then ask the principal for comments, if there are modification, we will discuss that in the regular meeting. (A05, Chinese teacher, School A, 13/1/2014)

These examples hint that teachers work in a hierarchical structure where non-positional teachers have 'fair' influence on department level and 'low' influence on school level as they have to come along bureaucratic structural relations across different layers in school system (i.e. grade level – subject panel – school principal).

From Positional Teachers' Perspectives

It is found that teachers leading school improvement work were reluctant to see themselves as leaders, and rarely referred themselves or others as 'leaders'. Positional teachers used the terms like 'support', 'give opinion', 'communication bridge', 'find information', 'coordinate', 'check', 'monitor' to describe their roles and

responsibilities as subject panels.

For teachers with positional responsibilities, most department chairpersons felt that they had no or little influence at school administration level while only four of them claimed that they had some influence at administration level depending on their involvement in the administrative teams and their teaching experience.

I ... [give] advice, as they [school principal and senior teachers] may accept our [subject panels'] suggestions. We are actually those who will voice out when something happens. (B04, Chinese panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

As I have been here for 5 years, so I think I may have certain influence, otherwise the principal won't give me a heavy job. (B01, General Studies panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

... As I am in the middle level, I can discuss with the school principal in the meetings of managers. I can also help decision making. (C03, Chinese panel, School C, 21/8/2014)

... As when it comes to big decision, seniors will have more influence, we, subject panels, or a group member, may convey our opinions, but it's the senior who makes decision or the principal will decide. We have influence, but not the biggest. (D02, General Studies panel, School D, 21/8/2014)

Thus, teachers' influence is likely dependent on the status in the school. It is perceived that there is a growing influence of the teachers with more teaching experience and higher positional rank.

However, if the teachers were the core members in the administration teams in the schools, they perceived themselves having more influence on the administrative structure and vice versa. For example, this teacher mentioned that,

I am responsible for human resources ... I can have influence more in assigning human powers [in supporting curriculum implementation]. (D05, General Studies teacher, School D, 9/7/2014)

Meanwhile, leadership influence is closely related to teacher involvement in decision-making. Most of the teachers with positional responsibilities felt that they had greater influence on department level due to their job nature. They stated that they had more influence because of their decision-making power in the departments.

I'm responsible for English. We hope to enhance the English atmosphere so my influence is quite obvious. (A03, English panel, School A, 9/1/2014)

Despite the delegation of responsibilities as a subject panel, these positional leaders did not surely realize their role as 'leaders', rather than, they regarded themselves as 'normal' teachers and tend to have a restricted, hesitant view upon their own influence in decision-making. The following examples of what those subject panels with a low job ranking (i.e. certificate mistress teacher) who talked about their influencing in their subject departments.

We [subject panels] influence that secretly, like we won't do anything in the meeting, and if we think the students cannot learn a lot of things, we may choose some topics to be taught in depth so as to let them learn more, we will do that privately, but we don't know the influence. (D01, Chinese panel, School D, 21/8/2014)

... as there are a lot of more experienced teachers, so it's hard to change them, that is time is needed ...I'm teaching many subjects, and no teacher is responsible for teaching GS [General Studies] only. ... As a subject panel, I need to provide ways so as to allow the teachers to join them [workshops] easily. I would recommend them to join some workshops, but if they don't have time, I would find some information for them to read at leisure time. (B01, General Studies panel, School B, 9/7/2014)

These examples demonstrate that positional teachers without the high job rankings may find hard to manage curriculum change due to different types of difficulties (please refer to Chapter 4) and they would choose to make changes in a low-profile way whilst they may not have 'high' expectation upon certain subject (such as General Studies),

where teachers commonly are required to teach General Studies due to inadequate teaching hours if teaching only one subject. Moreover, these low-ranked positional leaders mainly work on managerial and administrative works. For example, one General Studies subject panel, who was a certificate mistress (CM) teacher, expressed that,

This post [General Studies panel] has many things to do, such as preparing teaching materials, minutes, homework in the end of semester, administrative work of promoting specific issues, arranging site-visiting for students and monitor the progress of project learning. (C01, General Studies panel, School C, 11/7/2014)

On the other hand, working experiences of being a subject panel may be a factor affecting teachers' perceived influence on curriculum change. One vice-subject panel in School A stated that she had little or no influence on both administrative and department levels as she lacked the status and support in initiating curriculum change as a new member in the school. She perceived her role as a supporting or assisting role in the department resulting in less influence.

From Non-Positional Teachers' Perspectives

Non-positional teachers mostly described themselves as 'teachers', whilst only one teacher described her role as 'developer and promoter'. She mentioned that,

I think I am a developer and promoter. I have to assist the school to develop something or initiate something. I try my best. However, my role is really a developer, or making decisions or organizing. When it comes to leading a team, I can't teach all the classes. I can only discuss with others, and try to initiate something. (D03, Chinese teacher, School D, 30/3/2015)

Very likely teachers in these schools had to handle daily routine work such as exam papers and doing training sessions for student competitions. Yet, very few teachers mentioned about their roles in co-planning or panel meetings, which were the planned

regular activities in schools.

For the teachers without positional responsibilities, most of them perceived that they had little or no influence on administrative level and department level (Table 5.1). But three of them felt that they had some influence in curriculum planning and implementation because they could voice their opinions in the subject departments.

... as I'm not the senior ... as the senior will make more decision, as they know everything, when the decision comes to us, they have already made all the decisions. (A04, English teacher, School A, 9/1/2014)

In fact, we just receive what to teach and then teach what's told. (B06, Chinese teacher, School B, 9/7/2014)

Panels sometimes listen to me. They will consider your opinions, consulting other teachers informally and discussing with vice-panels. If they agree with it, then they will hold a formal meeting to discuss about it. (C04, General Studies teacher, School C, 25/10/2014)

The leadership influence of the teachers is greatly related to the leader characteristics and department culture in the school. It seems that teachers perceived more influence if they had voices in the department. If there is an open and transparent structure in the department or school, the teachers would be given opportunities to communicate and interact. They would be more willing to express their thoughts during the process of decision making in curriculum change. In this sense, the teachers could be active participants in the change process rather than passive recipients. Transformational leadership would be promoted.

Table 5.1. Comparisons between positional and non-positional teachers' perceived influences on curriculum change at school level and subject department level.

	<i>None</i>		<i>Little</i>		<i>Some</i>		<i>High</i>	
	<i>P</i>	<i>NP</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>NP</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>NP</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>NP</i>
Influence on school level	3	2	5	9	4	1	0	0
Influence on subject department level	0	1	2	8	9	3	1	0
Total	3	3	7	17	13	4	1	0

Remarks: P=Positional teachers; NP=Non-positional teachers

5.4.2 Influence of Teachers on Curriculum Change

Although teachers in the study regarded themselves as less influential roles in curriculum change, the findings indicated that teachers attempted to exert their influence with three different approaches as identified by Lai & Cheung (2015), namely, a complying exercise, an adapting exercise and a capacitating exercise, which delineate how teachers approached the implementation task. Though the study of Lai & Cheung (2015) focused on the change in new senior secondary curriculum in Hong Kong, it still shed light on the findings in this study in Hong Kong primary school context.

First, some teachers tended to use complying approach to leadership in practice. They were found to rely heavily on curricular and pedagogical guidelines provided by external sources of expertise as mentioned in earlier section. Most of the teachers intended to emphasize the need of attending professional development activities held by Education Bureau so as to seek more information about the updates of curriculum change. Some teachers also showed a strong demand for straightforward answers from government officials when they pay class observations instead of reflecting on their own practice. Some teachers were inclined to take external demands as givens. They regarded implementation as compliance exercise to meet the 'objective alignment of external requirements' (Honig & Hatch, 2004, p.16).

Second, some teachers claimed that they adapted current practices to

accommodate curriculum change requirements. They tried to adjust some school conditions (such as subject matters, time and people) to implement change. For example, in all the four case study schools, the General Studies department panels suggested the inclusion of newspaper cutting to arouse students' awareness of current issues and develop their critical thinking skills.

To bridge the gap with secondary school, General Studies provides training for critical thinking and multi-angle thinking. The curriculum is added with current news. The students can think and analyse the news in the lessons. We hope our students can apply the knowledge in daily life rather than reciting the knowledge only. (C04, General Studies teacher, School C, 11/7/2014)

The other example is that the department chairpersons would implement curriculum change for specific levels first. They would arrange some experienced and passionate teachers to start curriculum change and add in new members in the implementation.

Normally, the school would pick some energetic and passionate teachers, as well as their teaching forms to begin the reform. It's stepwise, when the reform succeeds in showing some effective changes and improvement, it will also start in the rest forms progressively. (D03, Chinese teacher, School D, 30/3/2015)

Under this adapting approach, teacher leadership influence is more likely apparent through collaboration. For instance, teachers would standardize assessment practices and address issues of student learning during collaborative lesson planning.

The third approach to leadership influence is the capacitating approach. It is not commonly found in all the case study schools. Some teachers extended their influence beyond their schools through networking with teachers from other schools. They tried to explore and exploit internal and external possibilities to support learning and teaching. For example, some schools would invite external expertise to hold professional development activities for the teachers. Some teachers were involved in

school-based support schemes and did professional exchange with teachers from other schools and government officials. In such way, the influence on department level would be likely to extend to school level.

5.4.3 Strategies for Influencing Others

In this study, teachers used different strategies to influence others towards the goal of improving teaching and learning. First, they collaborated with colleagues in co-creating curriculum development plans and evaluating students' performance in collaborative lesson planning sessions. Second, the curriculum development team leader and department chairpersons pioneered the curriculum change after being actively involved in professional development and coached colleagues in new instructional practice. Some department chairpersons also acted as mentors to novice teachers who needed more support from the school. Third, some department chairpersons were perceived to be open-minded and willing to listen to colleagues' voices towards change. They modelled positive professional attitudes. Fourth, it is apparent in some case study schools that professional learning community was perceived to be vital for immersing people in curriculum change. Some teachers claimed that they had participated in some professional development activities in which they disseminated their teaching practice with other schools in the community or had professional exchange with some external expertise.

These findings can be further discussed by using Fairman & Mackenzie (2012)'s spheres of leadership action (cf. Chapter 2). One dimension of leadership is related to whether the influence is direct or indirect. It is found that all teachers would have opportunities to indirectly influence their colleagues by modelling professional attitudes or dispositions by participating in some professional development activities (Sphere A) or experimenting with curriculum change and reflecting on the results

(Sphere B). They have also gone through spheres C to G where teacher collegiality is also critical. They had direct influence on others by sharing ideas and collaborating in specific curriculum change.

Another dimension of leadership action is related to the formality of influence. Most positional holders in this study worked both formally and informally to build up consensus in their departments to improve classroom practice and student support. The formal leadership influence appeared in the teachers' positional roles as department chairpersons, team leaders, curriculum development team members and department committee members. Apart from forming some formal groups for sharing and collaborating on tasks, teachers in this study also had informal sharing in different occasions. For example, they mentioned that they would discuss student performance through informal talk and sometimes initiated small groups to examine problems with school climate, structures or programmes (Spheres C through Sphere H). Only a few teachers have gone through Sphere I as they experienced sharing and presenting their teaching practice outside her own school at sharing sessions or conferences.

5.5 Discussion

Based on the above findings, six emergent issues are discussed in this section, namely Extending multi-faceted perceptions of leadership, Enacting curriculum change systematically, Expanding leadership influence for curriculum change, Engaging teachers in curriculum decision-making, Empowering middle leadership, Exploring cultural influence on leadership, as well as Encouraging mutual support through mentorship.

5.5.1 Extending Multi-faceted Perceptions of Leadership

Findings of the study indicated that the teachers' perceptions of leadership are closely

related to different leadership literatures over the past decades. Findings in this study indicated that the teachers still perceived leadership as traits to a certain extent. Indeed, leader traits, skills, and behaviours are still potentially important to collective leadership whereas they are helpful and allow one to more easily think like a leader and be an active participant in creating leadership. Collective leadership, however, is not a characteristic of a person, but involves the relational process of an entire team, group, or organization (Hunt & Ropo, 1997). Based on the findings of the study, top-down hierarchy is still embedded in teachers' minds when perceiving what leadership is. Most of them had a sense of 'superior-subordinate relationship' in their leadership perceptions. Leaders earn influence by adjusting to the expectations of their 'followers'.

Meanwhile, teachers in this study were aware that leadership roles should be performed by numerous stakeholders in the school rather than the principal solely. The findings appeared to be consistent with the leader-plus aspect of distributed leadership that both formal and informal leaders can assume the responsibility for leadership (Spillane & Orlina, 2005, p. 162). It is also similar to Gronn (2000)'s distributed leadership from the 'addictive perspective'. In this sense, 'the aggregated leadership behaviour of some, many or all of the members of an organization or an organizational sub-unit' (Gronn, 2000, p. 655). The epicentre of collective leadership is not the role of a formal leader, but the interaction of team members to lead the team by sharing in leadership responsibilities. As a process, collective leadership presumes that leadership can be embedded in the dynamics of a social system (Dachler, 1992), and need not be constrained to acts of a heroic or charismatic individual (e.g. Yukl, 1999; Hunt, 2004).

Findings in the study were partially consistent with the study of Wan (2007) in the way that teachers mostly perceived curriculum leadership as facilitative leadership. Facilitative leadership is 'an open transactional leadership which appropriates a

discourse of change and participation while engaging in bureaucratic manipulation towards pre-established goals' (Blase & Anderson, 1995, p. 20) and promotes more participation and a more humane and professional school climate (Blase & Anderson, 1995). It seems that teachers favoured the decentralization of power in their perceived leadership to facilitate curriculum change. They preferred schools to use open approaches ('power through' and 'power with') to leadership. This implies that teachers seemed to perceive curriculum leadership as distributed among a group. They thought it is essential to build teams or communities of people in organizations who will work together effectively. Collaboration, involvement of persons in school change, the role of making decisions and the role of a catalyst in teachers' learning were seen as important elements in leadership for leading curriculum change.

However, adversarial leadership was more prevalent in the actual leadership practice in this study while the most apparent one was authoritarian leadership in the previous study (Wan, 2007). Under adversarial leadership, principals tend to be more proactive and engaged in politics more publicly and with a greater appearance of openness although they are fundamentally authoritarian in style (Blase & Anderson, 1995). The differences between the two studies might be due to the school contexts in different Hong Kong primary schools. This implies that leadership is 'socially constructed' within each school context (Barker, 1997), where leadership is established within a social milieu where multiple, overlapping and constantly shifting contextual factors are pursuing (Walker, 2005), taking the factors including cultural, political, historical and economic influences into account.

Obviously, a 'holistic model of distributed leadership' (Gronn, 2000) seems not to be apparent in this study despite the small sampling size. Only one teacher in this study perceived leadership as 'spontaneous and collaborative forms of leadership

engagements’ that arise in the workplace and that ‘stretch leadership function across the social and situational contexts of the school’. As a whole, the findings of teachers’ perceived leadership experiences reflect the overlook of leadership types and strategies adopted by school leaders whilst the findings about teachers’ perceptions of leadership indicated that teachers did not have sufficient knowledge and skills in playing their leadership roles in the process of curriculum change. This absence of ‘holistic’ views of leadership may have linked with the difficulties in bringing about curriculum change as uncovered in Chapter 4.

5.5.2 Enacting Curriculum Change Systematically

Based on the findings of the study, power-coercive change strategy was the most dominant one in dealing with curriculum change. However, other types of change strategies such as empirical-rational strategy and normative-reeducative strategy also co-existed. This implies that the adoption of change strategies is ‘not articulated’ or ‘based on any tacit theoretical model or framework’ (Higgs & Rowland, 2005, p. 144). Rather, this ‘mismatched’ curriculum change is likely carried out in a messy way that drives an originally planned change to a more ‘complex’ change, which finally may suffer from failures. Important to note, this lack of curriculum change leadership may be related to teachers’ previous experiences including teacher education or teaching experiences which put more focus on pragmatic methods in teaching, rather than school management and leadership development, where teachers seldom have opportunities to think and engage critical reflections in school improvement and leadership for leading curriculum change (Orchard, 2015; Szeto & Cheng, 2018; Orchard & Wan, 2019). This very likely may be related to the dominance of power-coercive change leadership strategy in schools, which favours those in positional power in terms of job rankings rather than delegated responsibilities when carrying out

curriculum change. This leads us to consider that delegation of roles likely can be reinforced by positional job rankings and this may be a facilitating or mediating effect in enacting curriculum change (MacBeath, 2005; Hammersley-Fletcher & Kirkham, 2007). This also helps extend current understandings about the enactment and empowerment of curriculum leadership, which is not only about the given roles but also the mapping of ‘intersectional’ (Moorosi, 2014) balance in the distribution between work and power (Higgott & Cooper, 1990; Heng & Marsh, 2009; Wan, Law & Chan, 2018).

In the study, although there is a co-existence of different change leadership strategies including rational-empirical strategy and normative-reeducative strategy and power-coercive strategy, power-coercive change strategy was found to be the most dominant change leadership strategy in leading curriculum change. This power-coercive change leadership strategy puts high emphasis on ‘power’ (Chin & Benne, 1969) that is based on ‘position within a social or organizational hierarchy’ (Szabla, 2007, p. 529) and potentially affects the effectiveness of curriculum change because of higher risks in causing ‘those with less power to resist change’ as a result of ‘force and oppression by those in power’ (Szabla, 2007, p. 535). This ‘potential risk’ of power-coercive change strategy is consistently evidenced in the findings of teachers’ perceptions of difficulties arising from the ‘crucial’ role of leaders who have the power to formulate rules and policies and control resources in a hierarchical, bureaucratic school system (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991), rather than a flattened, dispersed school system that promotes democratic decision-making (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Lumby, 2019). Adoption of change strategies very likely is associated with leadership (Szabla, 2007). Seeing the existence of perceived difficulties about curriculum change, those change strategies as currently held by change leaders in implementing curriculum may

have underscored changing through action and behavioural change (Babad, 2009).

5.5.3 Expanding Leadership Influence for Curriculum Change

The findings in this study are consistent with that of Fairman & Mackenzie (2015) in some aspects regarding teachers' spheres of influence, where teachers have some indirect influence on colleagues. Teachers, regardless of positionality, realized they had less influence on school level rather than department level, whilst positional teachers with a low job ranking did not perceive themselves as leaders whilst non-positional teachers also did not see that they had great influence in leading curriculum change. Few teachers in the study mentioned that they participated in co-planning meetings and panel meetings, teachers regarded themselves as 'small citizens'. These findings are consistent with other studies by Wan, Law, & Chan (2018) that reveal that teacher influence may be directly or indirectly related to 'closeness' and 'connectedness' with own departments which allow or does not allow the expansion of teacher influence in the school administrative structure which favours or obstructs the collective process of facilitating individual and collective efforts in accomplishing shared goals (Yukl, 2006) and getting people to work together to make things happen (Crowther et al., 2009; Northhouse, 2010; Ejimabo, 2013). Nevertheless, on the whole, teachers' images of 'less' influential roles may reflect that teachers' identities in playing their roles as middle leaders or ordinary teachers are not yet well developed or weakly bonded with schools and departments. teachers' construction of their professional identities in schools may be weakened and marginalized due to the strong leadership of principal or senior management at the top of the school system that mostly rely heavily on the use of power-coercive strategy which is based on the hierarchical structures that demonstrate high power distance (Hofstede, 1991) between the top leader (i.e. principal) and followers (teachers), where Confucian societies tend

to accept large differences in power, status, and rank as normal. More attention has to be paid to the processes of transforming school curriculum on the whole-school level by reviewing and restructuring the current school administration system. The quality of collaborative lesson planning thus needs to be further explored and re-examined. Opportunities for engaging teachers in decision-making and problem-solving in reinforcing and empowering teachers should be given to teachers (Coppieters, 2005), who can have meaningful, shared purposes in implementing curriculum change.

5.5.4 Engaging Teachers in Curriculum Decision-making

In this study, the schools seem to be categorized as ‘tokenism’ in the ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969) in which teachers’ opinions are invited and consulted in the decision-making or planning process. Staff meetings and department meetings were used by the schools as means for consultation in which teachers were ‘free’ to express their ideas. However, they seemed to be pseudo consultation and their effectiveness doubtful was questionable. The decision-making power was still under control of the administrators and seniors. The teachers claimed that they were only informed about the change in the meetings. Teachers’ voices seem not to be taken as a significant role in the schools in this study.

Rather, teachers, in particular non-positional teachers, tended to be only concerned about their own classrooms whereas they realized that school administrators neglected the opportunities for them to grow professionally (Harris & Anthony, 2001). They would be more hesitant to participate in curriculum development partially because of their status in the work lives of classroom teachers as shown in the findings of this study. This may be due to various factors such as working relationships between teachers-principal, collegial relationships, satisfaction and resources alignment (Smylie, 1992; Li, Hallinger, & Ko, 2016), which are seemingly akin to teachers’

perceived difficulties and support in managing curriculum change as mentioned in Chapter 4. In this connection, teachers' unwillingness to 'actively' participate in curriculum change may be attributed to the lack of professional collaboration in schools (see Chapter 4), where schools as professional learning communities are not yet well-established to empower teachers to become involved closely in decision making within the school, thus contributing to the democratisation of schools (Gehrke, 1991; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). To empower teachers in the process of curriculum change, three basic fundamental conditions for developing curriculum leadership therefore should be taken into account in developing leadership in schools. First, there is a need for building professional relationships amongst teachers and thus institutionalizing professional exchange and sharing in routine practice for curriculum change (Fullan, 1991). Second, ample time and space for reflective dialogues should be given to teachers who can voice out their ideas and share them (Ford, Ford, & D'Amelio, 2008; Law, 2011). Teachers' voice should be emancipated and empowered and teachers can have the right to actively exercise professional judgement and contribute expressively to develop curricula (Mullick, 2013, p. 37). This should also be integral to transformational leadership whilst teachers' concerns and receptivity towards change are considered (Lee, 2000). With this approach, teachers as change agents can view resistance as a tool that provides them with a deeper understanding of how the change process might manifest (Ford, Ford, & D'Amelio, 2008) and therefore foster leadership capacity by creating interactional, stimulating 'vision-oriented, collaborative cultures' (Lambert, Zimmerman, & Gardner, 2016, p. 40). Third, engaging teachers in curriculum decision-making can be fostered through the provision of higher actual participation concerning issues related to students and teachers than 'less welcomed' managerial and technical issues at individual, group and

school levels in schools (Chan, Ching & Cheng, 1997; Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013), which helps develop teachers' positive attitudes towards the chances for more participation in school-based curriculum decisions, as well as their sense of self-efficacy and job satisfaction in this regard. Fourth, teachers' professional knowledge and practices for curriculum change within and beyond their schools should be enhanced and based on 'the well of teacher talents' that forms 'a powerful knowledge base for driving change' (Murphy, 2005; Fullan, 2007) so that they can possess professional expertise and skills and hence develop self-efficacy and readiness for curriculum change (Campbell, Lieberman, & Yashkina, 2015).

5.5.5 Empowering Middle Leadership

The findings indicate that there lack 'strategic' roles among positional teachers (i.e. middle leaders). Positional teachers (i.e. subject panels) seemingly lack certainties and systemic thinking about their leadership roles in putting curriculum change into practice (Shaked, Schechter, & Daly, 2018). This may be related to the local Hong Kong context where whether the existence of the role of vice or assistant subject panel depends on school-based decisions and thus the task and job nature of this role as vice subject panel seems to be vague. At the same time, this is very likely related to their previous unsystematic professional training and ignorance of its importance in teacher education in Hong Kong (Orchard & Wan, 2019).

In addition, this type of middle leadership may not be exactly aligned with the current school administrative structure, in which positional teachers do not have much influence on school policy and administration. This means that this lack of influence on school administration can directly or indirectly hinder or block the understanding of 'actual' needs from the perspective of direct curriculum implementers, and therefore favourable conditions for curriculum change may not be constructed.

Therefore, coherence amongst different layers of the school system (school principal-senior-middle-teachers) should be highlighted (Fullan, 2015; Fullan & Quinn, 2015), where the roles of middle leaders in curriculum change should be clarified and empowered with appropriate professional job status. Leadership development for middle leaders, regardless of job rankings, should be given appropriate and timely professional development opportunities about leadership development (De Nobile, 2018), which can be in structural or job-embedded ways. Coordination across the top to the bottom leadership should be further developed to facilitate the interactions from top leaders to middle leaders to ordinary teachers (Fullan, 1994).

5.5.6 Exploring Cultural Influence on Leadership

Based on the findings of the study, the power relationship still exists as a norm in schools. The principal and the middle managers are often regarded as having more superior roles than ordinary teachers. Some teachers prefer to complete their jobs as what their job titles are supposed to be. For instance, the ranking of the teachers played an essential role in determining the division of labour under the hierarchical school culture. The higher the rank of the teachers, the greater decision-making power they seemed to hold. This might be one of the reasons why the teachers were reluctant to speak out and were not actively involved in decision-making during the curriculum change. The non-involvement of teachers may result in a sense of a lack of ownership, which will directly influence their understanding and consequently affect the implementation of curriculum change (Huizinga *et al.*, 2014). It is reported that teachers often show resistance and lack of commitment in implementing curriculum change because they are seldom involved in the development or establishing how best to implement them (Oloruntegbe, 2011). Teachers in the study were very likely influenced by their cultural beliefs and their own experience in leadership. This is

closely related to Chinese leadership characteristics which are mirrored with Chinese beliefs and values in Hong Kong schools (e.g. Carless, 1998; Wan et al., 2020), where there is a saying ‘bu zai qi wei, bu mou qi zheng’ (不在其位，不謀其政) in Confucianism, which means that ‘if you are not at that position, you should not get involved into the role’. This concept is prevalent in people’s mindset in Chinese societies. Confucianism, along with traditional Chinese culture, is long-held in Hong Kong.

In the study, teachers rely a lot on the principal and senior leadership but ignore their own influence on curriculum change. This social norm of hierarchy in school administration implies greater power among administrators at the top of the hierarchical organization. It is the ‘natural inclination’ of stakeholders in Southeast Asia to provide a polite, often unquestioning, audience at the announcement of change initiatives (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2001). Unfortunately, this politely passive response may lead to insufficient understanding and lack of emotional connection to the change initiatives among the stakeholders (Hallinger, 2010). These ‘leadership-resistant architectures’ (Donaldson, 2001, p. 11) of the schools may prohibit teachers from planning, organizing, and following through the change process, where teacher isolation and individualism and the hierarchical relationships in schools may doom collaborative effort. Thus, it is necessary to get a thorough understanding of what change is going on, the possibility of successful change is doubtful. It is also important for school administrators to create a sense of belonging amongst teachers who will be responsible for putting innovative ideas into classroom practice in order for curriculum implementation to succeed (Carless, 1997) despite the deeply rooted Chinese cultural values in the education field.

5.5.7 Encouraging Mutual Support through Mentorship

From the teacher's claim in the study, it seems that the mentor in the school is supposed to provide technical assistance rather than being a reflective and collaborative partner. It should be noted that the effectiveness of mentorship programmes is closely related to the school culture, personal and professional engagement, the willingness and ability to share understandings and values. A beginning teacher is at the most crucial stage of the teaching career as they have to transit from student to student teacher to novice teacher. Beginning to teach is internationally recognized as a particular and complex stage of a teacher's career (OECD, 2005). It can quickly become a battle for survival, as teachers become swamped by the complexity of the role and the demands and expectations of students, colleagues, and parents (Mann & Tang, 2012, p.475). Mentors' roles vary from providing short-term technical assistance to being more long-term reflective companions, just as mentoring programmes can vary from a single mentor-mentee meeting at the beginning of a school year to a highly structured and frequent program in which both parties have timetabled release time (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

5.6 Summary

This Chapter presents the findings about the exploration of teachers' perceptions and experiences of leadership of curriculum change, where the findings of the study exactly demonstrate the specific context of the school that influence and is influenced by the leadership practices that occur, as well as change leadership strategies in leading curriculum change. Teachers' perceptions of leadership, how to facilitate curriculum change, and cultural influence on leadership are discussed.

Chapter 6

Analysis and Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter is mainly a cross-case examination and analysis of the overarching themes that emerged followed by discussions. The overarching themes of the cross-case analysis include: Perceiving curriculum change as means to academic-rationalism, varying attitudes towards curriculum change, differing perceived support and difficulties in curriculum change and perceiving leadership of curriculum change as power-coercive decision-making. There emerge three issues to be discussed: predominance of traditional heritage values in curriculum change, possession and power over curriculum change, and preparation for curriculum change.

6.2 Cross-Case Analysis

6.2.1 Perceiving Curriculum Change as Means to Academic-rationalism

Among the four case study schools, there is a tendency for most of the teachers, regardless of their positionalities to perceive curriculum change as a means to achieving academic-rationalism. Curriculum change was viewed as a means to attain higher academic results. It is very rare for them to view curriculum change in terms of social-economic efficiency, social reconstruction and child-centredness.

6.2.2 Varying Attitudes towards Curriculum Change

There seems to be a variation in the teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change. Teachers in Schools A and D seem to be more optimistic about change in their schools while those in School B tend to be more conservative towards change. There is an even

distribution in teachers' attitudes towards change in School C. Some evidence suggested that teachers' attitudes towards change were affected by their former practice and beliefs.

With regard to the positionalities of the teachers, the positional teachers with low-job rankings tended to be more negative than the non-positional ones. Likewise, the positional teachers with higher job rankings were more positive towards curriculum change.

6.2.3 Differing Perceived Support and Difficulties in Curriculum Change

Following (Sahlberg, 2010) an analysis framework was used to classify the perceptions according to three categories, technical, socio-cultural and political. Using this framework, the perceived support and difficulties with curriculum change were analysed. As a whole, there were not many differences in the positional and non-positional teachers' perceptions of difficulties. Both positional and non-positional leaders faced similar difficulties in the technical, socio-cultural and political perspectives. However, there were some variations in the degree to which case schools faced difficulties based on the three aspects of curriculum change.

Amongst the four case schools, School C demonstrated greater difficulties in all the three aspects of making curriculum change. School B and School C teachers were more concerned about the technical aspect of making curriculum change. Although teachers from all the four schools outlined the problem of the lack of time, School C teachers in particular highlighted this frustrating problem which directly affects the meeting schedule and pose an obstacle to teacher collaboration in preparing teaching materials, engaging in peer observation and participating in sharing sessions. The following are some of the excerpts about the time problem as encountered by

teachers in School C.

School C teachers obviously had more conflicts about their workloads due to the change of principalship. Teachers' views upon the needs of curriculum change seemingly were not aligned with the will of the principals of the school. In School C, the focus of the reform was the promotion of a cooperative learning approach. Teachers of School C felt that this change was not necessary in their teaching practice. There seems to be some evidence that teachers had to give up their preferred way of teaching and cater for the reality of exam cultures by giving more exercises as homework on one hand whilst they still had to satisfy the requests from the principal. This may be associated with the problem of heavy workload. Teachers of School C and School D showed more concerns about the socio-cultural aspect of how to deal with curriculum change. School C teachers had more concerns about the political aspect of how to manage curriculum change.

Regarding support for curriculum change, there exist some differences in the demands of the three aspects of support in making curriculum change across the four case schools. School A, School B and School D showed their demands on the technical, socio-cultural and political support for curriculum change in a quite balanced way. School A and School B teachers required more support in the technical side of how to manage curriculum change. Although School C teachers had greater difficulties in making curriculum change as mentioned in the earlier section, they did not show that more support is needed in implementing curriculum change. School D substantively requires all the three aspects (technical, socio-cultural, political) of support to deal with curriculum change. This represents that School D may have a relatively weak capacity in curriculum change.

Both positional and non-positional leaders had higher demands on technical

support in implementing curriculum change. Positional leaders had a relatively lower care for socio-cultural and political aspects of support. However, non-positional leaders had an equally high demand for the three aspects of support for curriculum change. Such a difference may reveal that non-positional leaders have to get more backups when making curriculum change.

6.2.4 Perceiving Leadership of Curriculum Change as Power-Coercive Decision-Making

Among the four case study schools, the teachers revealed that to a large extent, the nature of change initiated by the school was ‘top-down’. Power-coercive decisions were dominant in the case study schools except for some changes in Schools B and C being claimed as normative-reeducative. Upon the power-coercive strategy, teachers are told what to do by the legitimate authority and act out the plans in the curriculum change (Nickols, 2016).

It appears that most of both positional and non-positional teachers in all the four case study schools perceived leadership as power relationships. Only a few teachers perceived leadership as traits. Shared instructional leadership or teacher leadership were rarely perceived. Findings in the study also indicated that the Principal, the curriculum development leaders and department heads were regarded as the key figures who had the greatest influence in curriculum change. Teachers seemed not to regard themselves as change leaders. Few teachers showed desire for the ownership of change. Most of them regarded themselves as ‘curriculum implementers’. They tended to be passive and preferred ‘curriculum renewal’ than ‘curriculum innovation’. The positional holders with high ranks tended to be more active in leading change while those with lower ranks claimed more that they only dealt with managerial and administrative tasks in their roles. Teachers’ voices seemed not to be significant in the

schools. Hierarchical culture was still prevalent where there was a leader-subordinate relationship. It seems that teachers favoured the decentralization of power in their perceived leadership to facilitate curriculum change.

In this study, teachers felt that they were being managed and manipulated under a hierarchical school culture. This has been shown to result in a loss of teacher commitment to curriculum change (Leithwood, Menzies, & Jantzi, 1994; Woods et al., 2019). The consequence of this was that teachers resisted or even rejected the change as they felt themselves to be passive receivers of instructions from school leaders about how to behave and how to change their practices in line with the expectations of the new curriculum. Teachers are key drivers of change (Fullan, 2005). If they simply enact a curriculum change without having any ownership, it is unlikely that the curriculum change will be sustained. When teachers express a commitment to curriculum change, they are motivated and enthusiastic to participate in leading that change. They are likely to make conscious meaning of the change, voice their opinions and concerns about it, and then be more active in its development. As a result, they are likely to change their classroom practice accordingly (Coburn, 2003). In this study teachers had limited opportunity to take ownership in this manner and so the extent of change was limited. This could have been better managed had teachers been informed, trained and involved in the process of curriculum change (Oloruntegbe, 2011). This issue will be discussed in more detail in the later section.

6.3 Discussion

On the basis of the cross-case analysis, three major issues are discussed in this section, including:

1. Predominance of traditional heritage values in curriculum change;

2. Possession and power over curriculum change; and
3. Preparation for curriculum change

6.3.1 Predominance of Traditional Heritage Values in Curriculum Change

As discussed in the cross-case analysis, it is found that the purpose of curriculum change was dominant to be academic-rationalism in this study. It is believed that most of the teachers, regardless of their positionalities in the case study schools are bound by traditional Confucian heritage values. They are very likely influenced by societal expectations and cultures (Lam, Ho, & Wong, 2002; Ma, Siu, & Tse, 2018). Likewise, they tend to use power-coercive strategies in leading curriculum change. These strategies are featured as ‘top-down’ intent of decision-making (Qian & Walker, 2019). Decisions were perceived to be made by the key figures (the Principal, the curriculum development leaders and department heads) in the schools. The seniors were perceived to have superior power and the greatest leadership influence in the traditional Chinese societies. Teachers regarded themselves as ‘small potatoes’ or ‘small citizens’ in the study (see Chapter 5). There still exists a great power distance between the key persons and teachers under the hierarchical organizational structure in Hong Kong. The schools could encourage democratic decision-making, devolvement of authority, and empowerment through different culturally-sensitive leadership practices (Schenck & Waddey, 2017). For instance, the schools could designate some work domains as free from autocratic influence; provide special training to teachers for empowerment and facilitation of democratic decision-making; and encourage the use of democratic forms of evaluation.

However, it seems that the traditional Confucian values are still prevalent in the schools to a certain extent. Imposing leadership models into the cultural settings may

yield negligible or even counterproductive outcomes in different cultural contexts due to fundamental value differences (Hofstede, 2005, 2011; Dimmock & Walker, 2000, 2002, 2005). Although leadership practices may be culturally contingent, in countries and contexts that seem similar, leadership practices are often interpreted very differently on a personal and everyday level. It is thus essential for the schools to note the variability of leadership in their own settings and contexts.

6.3.2 Possession and Power over Curriculum Change

Findings in the study showed that the teachers' ownership and voice in curriculum change seemed to be limited. The attitudes towards curriculum change varied from school to school. The positional leaders with higher job rankings were likely to be more positive and optimistic about curriculum change in their schools.

This is consistent with the findings in some research studies (e.g. Wan, Law, & Chan, 2018) that revealed the delegation of both roles and positional power can affect teacher engagement in distributed leadership practice. Under the micropolitics of the school, there tends to be power and conflicts in the complex organization (Blase & Anderson, 1995). Teachers are more likely to engage in curriculum change and possess the 'ownership of change' if they have 'delegated roles' in their schools (Wan, Law, & Chan, 2018). Meanwhile, they have to be given adequate power to carry out their roles and responsibilities. In other words, assigned roles have to be necessarily and sufficiently supported by 'power'. Schools thus have to play important roles in empowering teachers to get involved in curriculum decision-making by giving them 'power' and providing socio-cultural environments that benefit teacher collaboration (Wan *et al.*, 2020).

6.3.3 Preparation for Curriculum Change

In this study, the positional and non-positional teachers perceived different kinds of

support and difficulties with regard to the three perspectives, technical, socio-cultural and political. Schools should provide sufficient support to teachers and get them prepared for curriculum change. There may exist variations in the measures that are used to support curriculum change. The measures can be: enhancement and reinforcement such as appraisal system, routine acknowledgment of efforts and works in assisting teachers in the process of curriculum change, keeping teachers informed and aware of the needs and necessary conditions for facilitating curriculum change in schools through establishing and enhancing social bonds and supportive professional development in the teacher communities in order to support teachers' 'cognitive' and 'emotional' change in response to curriculum change (Hargreaves, 2001, 2005; Gaines, Osman, Maddocks, & Warner, 2019; Lee, 2019). Professional development is influenced by various factors at the level of the self, the training, and the school administration' (Gaines, *et al.*, 2019, p.62). There should be a balance between institutional needs and individual needs in professional development. Teachers should be given choices to enrol in a wide range of professional development in order to facilitate curriculum change. A 'flexible' perspective on leadership practice such as contextual intelligence leadership should be infused and integrated in teacher professional development with a focus on leadership for learning for all types of teachers, varying from positional to non-positional teachers (Bush & Glover, 2014; Chan, 2018). It is necessary to build up leadership across different teacher levels. Meanwhile, more innovative ways of professional development should be launched and initiated in teacher leadership preparation and continuous professional development activities. They should take socio-cultural values in varied school contexts in the designs whilst taking the variations of schools and teachers into consideration (Gordon, Oliver, & Solis, 2016).

Currently, teacher leadership development is still lacking (Cheng & Szeto,

2016; Orchard & Wan, 2019) and the understanding of ‘distributed leadership’ or ‘shared leadership’ should be reinforced. Every teacher can be a leader (Levin & Schrum, 2016). Teachers should be empowered and encouraged to pursue teacher leadership capacity. It is vital to provide professional development to both in-service and pre-service teachers. Soft skills should be facilitated at the early stage of the teaching profession. Although sharing power towards the teachers in curriculum change, the role of Principals are still perceived to be very influential in curriculum change. Thus principalship should match with the growth of teacher leadership (Mangin, 2007). Principals should create social norms for teacher collaboration in the school environment so as to motivate and encourage teachers to be more willing to take risks and make change (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 2000; Leo & Wickenberg, 2013; Robinson, & Gray, 2019).

6.4 Summary

This Chapter presents a cross-case analysis of the study followed by discussions based on the three themes, including 1. predominance of traditional heritage values in curriculum, 2. possession and power over curriculum change, and 3. preparation for curriculum change. The final chapter provides a summary of the findings and presents a discussion of contributions and implications for policy and practice.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Implications

7.1 Introduction

This Chapter is mainly to conclude the key findings in relation to the two research questions of the study: (1) What perceptions of curriculum change do teachers hold? and (2) What perceptions of leadership of curriculum change do teachers hold?. The Chapter discusses policy and school practice implications, together with personal insights regarding curriculum leadership as learnt from this study. This last chapter is in its essence to provide useful, practical ideas to the government, school administrators, and teachers in order to help enhance and embrace leadership for curriculum change.

7.2 Key Findings

This cross-case study, with the use of qualitative method, was carried out in four local primary schools in Hong Kong, aiming at exploring Hong Kong primary teachers' perceptions of leadership and curriculum change.

Here is the overview of the findings in addressing the research questions.

7.2.1 Research Question 1: What Perceptions of Curriculum Change Do Teachers Hold?

- The majority of the teachers regarded the purpose of curriculum change related to academic-rationalism. It is very rare for them to view curriculum change in terms of social-economic efficiency, social reconstruction and child-centredness.
- There were varied attitudes among the teachers in the study. Some tended to be optimistic about change in their schools while some showed reservations towards

change. Some evidence suggested that teachers' attitudes towards change were affected by their former practice and beliefs.

- Following (Sahlberg, 2010) an analysis framework was used to classify the perceptions according to three categories, technical, socio-cultural and political. Using this framework, the perceived factors causing difficulties with curriculum change were as follows:

- Technical: time, resources, lack of professional development and guidelines
- Socio-cultural: student learning, teaching practice and school culture
- Political: conflicts of interests and views and competition for resources

- The perceived factors leading to support for curriculum change were as follows:

- Technical: providing continuous professional development and administrative support
- Socio-cultural: cultivating teachers' social capital, developing new mindsets, getting family understanding
- Political: obtaining principal support, getting compromises amongst teachers and winning teacher support

7.2.2 Research Question 2: What Perceptions of Leadership of Curriculum Change Do Teachers Hold?

- The participants in this study perceived leadership as multi-faceted. Most of them perceived leadership as power relationships. Some teachers perceived leadership as traits. Shared instructional leadership was rarely perceived. Such 'pluralistic' views (Kezar, 2000) appeared to be useful to reframe current understandings of leadership and seek out possible ways to harness curriculum transformation with the multiple

sides of leadership.

- Findings in the study also indicated that the Principal, the curriculum development leaders and department heads were regarded as the key figures who had the greatest influence in curriculum change.
- Teachers seemed not to regard themselves as change leaders. Few teachers showed desire for the ownership of change. Most of them regarded themselves as ‘curriculum implementers’. They tended to be passive and preferred ‘curriculum renewal’ than ‘curriculum innovation’. The positional holders with high ranks tended to be more active in leading change while those with lower ranks claimed more that they only dealt with managerial and administrative tasks in their roles.
- Among the four case study schools, the teachers revealed that to a large extent, the nature of change initiated by the school was ‘top-down’. Teachers’ voices seemed not to be significant in the schools. Hierarchical culture was still prevalent where there was a leader-subordinate relationship. It seems that teachers favoured the decentralization of power in their perceived leadership to facilitate curriculum change.

7.3 Contributions

The current study aims at exploring the perceptions of curriculum change and leadership of Hong Kong primary teachers in four case study schools. It adds values to the existing body of knowledge in the field of curriculum change and leadership at both research and practical levels. Some implications for policy and practice at different levels are discussed as follows.

7.3.1 Research Implications

The major contribution of this study is the cross-case exploration of Hong Kong primary teachers’ perceptions of curriculum change and leadership of curriculum change from the

perspective of teachers with varied positionality (positional teachers vs non-positional teachers) to case study schools. The present study adds some knowledge to the existing research on curriculum change and leadership of curriculum change. As mentioned in the literature review, most of the previous studies in the related areas were done in Western countries. Some local studies were conducted in examining curriculum change from teachers' perspectives (e.g. Carless & Wong, 1999; Adamson, Kwan, & Chan, 2000; Cheng, 2009; Lee & Yin, 2011; Cheung & Wong, 2012) without the intentions to inquire any similarities and/or differences across different types of teachers (i.e. ordinary teachers vs. teachers with middle leadership roles). However, most of them used quantitative methods rather than qualitative ones, which have likely ignored the importance of getting an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

Case studies have their strengths in rich descriptions and investigations into new or surprising empirical phenomena and trends (Ridder, 2017, p.302). This cross-case study aims at exploring the perceptions of practising primary teachers across different levels (i.e. middle leadership in subject departments and subject teachers) on curriculum change and leadership of curriculum change in different school contexts. The strategies the teachers utilized in promoting curriculum change was also explored. Both researchers and readers can benefit from such rich descriptions in understanding and analyzing the phenomena.

In this study, there exists multi-faceted perceptions of leadership in the four case study schools. The previous discussion of the findings indicate that there are indeed differences among the case study schools in terms of different contexts and cultures. This provides a useful opportunity for different stakeholders to become aware of the different contextual elements that might affect their leadership perceptions. We need to view leadership from multiple lens with an integrated and contextualized approach, which allows for looking at leadership in a more flexible and holistic way and take wider

dimensions about how leadership is perceived amongst related key players in school.

Meanwhile, culture does matter, and not in a small way. It matters in how leaders emerge, are selected, developed, and seen (or not seen) as role models to be emulated, and it matters in ways that are predictable, and that organizations can respond to strategically (Dickson, Aditya, & Chokar, 2012). In short, this study shows that individual school differences and teachers' varied perceptions have to be taken into account in leading curriculum change across different cultural settings. We also need to consider the role of societal values if we are to optimise the highest level of organizational commitment and satisfaction with leaders. As there exist different interaction patterns in different settings and contexts, the level of sensitivity to individual and societal cultural differences should be noted when examining leadership among different schools.

7.3.2 Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study provide contributions for the training and development both of international leaders and of local staff with an awareness of leadership in different contexts in the globalization of the education field. The study provides some insights and implications for policy and practice at different levels, namely, the government, school and teachers.

For the Government

The findings in this study provide some implications for leadership preparation and practice in the new era. There are a number of factors affecting teachers' perceptions of curriculum change and leadership of curriculum change. There should be corresponding measures and support in facilitating curriculum change. It is essential for the government to provide appropriate and timely professional development, for example, professional learning networks between schools and the Education Bureau, in order to arouse teachers'

awareness and understandings of the related curriculum change and leadership development in supporting such curriculum change, where professional development needs to be contextualized and encompass all activities that cater for both the personal and professional needs of teachers and the institutional needs of the whole school (Bell, 1991; Walker, 2005). Such professional development has to occur in an authentic way through teachers' active engagement, participation and collaboration (Hargreaves, 1997; Gordon, 2004). This is evident in the findings of this study that teachers strongly believed that collegial support is one of the key elements in creating success in curriculum change, whilst collaboration is always regarded as an essential ingredient of teacher development and thus school improvement (Day *et al.*, 2007). Taking this advantage, this further suggests the utilization of professional learning communities that 'organically' emerge in collaboration cultures within the school (Anderson, 2001), which helps create teachers' professional confidence, allow for interactions amongst teachers in which they can reflect and on their practice and develop their ideas and thinking through social construction and negotiation of meanings by means of sharing, collegiality and reflection (Day, 1999; Harris, 2003). As shown in the findings, teachers showed more concerns and interests about classroom practice. So this paves the way to arouse teachers' interests in joining professional learning communities, where teachers put what they have learnt and their new learning into practice and the is based on teachers' interests about classroom practice (Harrison *et al.*, 2016). Collaborative cultures are therefore expected and working relationships are likely to be spontaneous, voluntary, development oriented and teachers' professional growth and school improvement are likely to occur (Harris, 2002; Huffman & Kalnin, 2003).

Meanwhile, resources should be appropriately given to support professional learning networks in initiating curriculum change and promoting innovative pedagogical

ideas through professional collaboration with teacher education institutions, in which teachers have opportunities to learn and develop their leadership through co-working with professionals in curriculum development.

For School Principals and School Middle Leaders

The findings imply that schools should have a holistic planning of leadership development for the ‘key’ persons and build up their understanding of what, why and how concerning ‘leadership’ and ‘curriculum change’, where more attention has to be paid to the creation of collaborative cultures in which apart from the principal and senior leaders, both middle leaders and teachers to empower themselves as change agents and enact curriculum change leadership. Contextual factors should be taken into account to shape and strengthen leadership for curriculum change. Creating a supportive win-win relationship is essential to the implementation of change. Taking cultural factors into account in the Chinese society, an administrative and management structure should be matched with the nature of tasks and responsibilities that positional and non-positional teachers are expected to do. There should be a balance of power for different key actors to engage in curriculum change processes. Principals and/or seniors cannot do curriculum change all themselves (Duignan, 2007). Instead, more attention should be paid to moving towards sustainability and scalability in leadership for future school curriculum development. This form of leadership must be embedded in the hearts and minds of the many, and not rest on the shoulders of a heroic few (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003), where every person acts as ‘a leader’ (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 14). Collective intelligence should be emphasized in leadership practice. The members of the school have to work together and build trust and partnership to create a learning community to lead the school towards improved practice. Leadership should be promoted in the connected and networked web of co-workers in the schools instead of reliance on single leaders, who have to maintain ‘a balance act’ in which they

can have flexibility, endurance and ‘the capability to continually adapt their strategy to the changing environment’ (Pisapia, 2006, p. 6). Teachers should be arranged with relevant roles and responsibilities according to their strengths and characteristics.

In supporting the growth of leadership practice in form of learning communities as abovementioned, increasing communication amongst those concerned and clarifying significant roles are necessary (Bolman & Deal, 1991a, 1991b). The school can easily become disorganized and chaotic without an effective system of communication (Iannone, 1995) and therefore struggling with power might result. Principals should promote open communication and time for self-reflection in the school (Elliott, 1999), establish a collaborative alliance over school issues (Linotos, 1993), and create a positive, supportive organizational climate (Reynolds, 1997) so as to build on teachers’ strengths and stretch their potentials (Loucks-Horsley *et al.*, 1998) and gain competence, confidence, commitment and a sense of the joy of teaching (Anderson, 2001; Day & Sachs, 2004). To overcome resistance towards change, leaders should determine who are resistant to change and why as well as convert the information into useful knowledge. Close communication among different parties is needed to build up mutual understanding in the school. Furthermore, schools should inspire teachers’ commitment towards change by identifying beliefs, sharing meanings and connecting the meanings about proposed changes, and sustaining teachers’ commitment to a particular reform or design for change (Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005).

Structures are crucial for human action (Archer & Archer, 1995) and are seen as one of the influential factors determining the success of promoting leadership in schools. Structure can be viewed as the medium and outcome of practice (Giddens, 1979, 1984). On one hand, structure could enable and constrain leadership practice. On the other hand, it could also be reproduced and potentially transformed in leadership practice. Thus, when

putting leadership in practice, how social structure is constitutive of and constituted in practice should be taken into account through administrative support including provision of time and space, and provision of professional development. On one hand, there is urgency to flatten the present hierarchies and create structures that empower teachers to collaborate with one another and to lead from within the heart of the school and the classroom (Coyle, 1997), where teachers have the agency, time, space, and access for collaboration in participating in shared curriculum decision-making and are encouraged to make best use of their ‘curriculum potentials’ to deliberate and design a curriculum that best fits the needs of their students so that the leadership of teachers can be fostered (York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Lam & Lo, 2012). To facilitate the leadership within and beyond the schools, no teachers should be left behind. Teachers’ engagement is of great value in promoting collaborative leadership (Little, 1988a). The promise of sustainable success in curriculum change lies in creating cultures of distributed leadership throughout the school community, not in training and developing a tiny leadership elite (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003). Leadership should go beyond one organization, but throughout the community. Distributed leadership gives depth and breadth to the idea and practice of sustainable leadership. Distributed leadership means more than delegation, which only involves passing across lesser and often unwanted tasks to others.

On the other hand, the provision of organizational routines (Law, Kamyliis, & Punie, 2015), such as collaborative lesson planning schedule for subject teachers (teacher level), subject panel meetings for sharing practice (subject department level) and curriculum development team meeting (curriculum development team level) for discussing change strategies, can help build teacher capacity in managing curriculum change at different levels in school, in which different subject leaders, as ‘leading professionals’ (Hord & Murphy, 1985), can collaborate to create supportive sub-cultures of professional

collaboration and distributed leadership, establish bartered leadership structures and walk the talk of a shared system of monitoring and evaluation (Ghamrawi, 2010) in a ‘web of relationships’ (Drath *et al.*, 2008, p. 641) that creates a culture of initiative and opportunity, where all teachers can suggest and propose new directions and start changes for the sake of the students and the schools despite the challenges ahead. In its fullest development, distributed leadership extends beyond the staff to the students or even parents.

All in all, principals as school leaders play crucial roles in the performance and outcomes of teacher leadership, whether it is exercised individually or in a collective context (Barth, 2001). School leaders have to see the importance of strategic leadership for the enablement of leaders in altering their thinking and actions to adjust to a contemporary, complex world with ‘the hyperrationalization and chaos of the postmodern condition’ (Diamond, 2008, p. 36) and look for the scalability of change or innovations by building up supportive infrastructures and getting the right people onto the right bus (Collins, 2001), in which teachers are given incentives, guidance, and administrative support and can focus on meaningful work (Little, 1988b) rather than administrative works (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). On this point, Pisapia (2006) reminds that curriculum change can be fit in the environment(s) when organizational work is taking place and there are strong needs for school leaders to ‘fit’ their organizational reforms into its environment in order to survive and evolve such reforms appropriately. In other words, school leaders should play a role as strategic leaders who have capacities in ‘the application of this principle necessitates a continual rethinking, revising, and restructuring of the organization in order to stay connected to the environment’ (Diamond, 2008, p. 36), where transformations are regarded as a learning process for the continuous development and growth of schools. Different voices from the staff should be heard in implementing professional development. A ‘cohesive’ network should be established to enhance good communication among the

participants in professional development policy in the school (Elliott, 1999), whereby capacity building across different key stakeholders in the school can be established for making curriculum change through the establishment of shared mission and vision and continuous review of the alignment between professional development and curriculum change. Viewing that teachers in this study regard external support as a crucial element in facilitating curriculum change (Fullan, 1999), the principal should effectively use the strategic planning process, and serve as a liaison to the outside world, bringing in new ideas to the school based on the context of change (Reynolds, 1997; Sebring & Bryk, 2000). In short, the principal has to demonstrate his/her leadership in helping people to adopt a schoolwide perspective of the professional development programmes and activities (Reynolds, 1997; Garet *et al.*, 2001) and thus encourage teachers as change agents.

For Teachers

As shown in the findings, there seems to be a tendency for the schools to move from complying approach towards adapting approach and slightly into capacitating approach in leading change. Teachers could interact more with the school's organizational structures, shared values and expectations, and principles of organizing knowledge to shape the alignment between external demands and the school's internal circumstances. As a result, interactive teacher leadership practices are more likely to provide a facilitative organizational context for implementing educational change and achieving school improvement goals (Lai & Cheung, 2015).

At the core of teacher influence is the recognition that teachers' intellectual and personal resources have an inimitable position in developing school capacity. Teachers, as 'curriculum makers', are encouraged to engage in both individual reflection and group deliberation in curriculum matters. They are the ones who can provide 'a backwash possible from the classroom to the curriculum' (Candlin & Rodgers, 1985, p. 104).

Teachers' voices are important to be heard in creating the curriculum and their voices should not be just 'cried in the wilderness' (Burns & Hood, 1995; Carl, 2005, p. 223). Thus, teachers should be provided with opportunities to make use of their talents and leadership capacity to develop the school's capacity to innovate. They should share leadership by being active decision-makers and be open to any opportunities to learn more about leadership and get involved in leading curriculum change. Teachers having the knowledge and class experience must contribute to the process by conveying their ideas and transmitting know-how; they must be in the planning stage of what they are going to implement.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

There are limitations in the present study. The study may be limited because of the risk of bias arising from the researcher's prior knowledge of the Hong Kong's education system. The sample is based in Hong Kong where the traditional Chinese culture meets the Western culture. The findings may be limited to this specific scenario as the cases are located in Hong Kong primary school context. This uniqueness may make the generalizability of the conclusions less likely although the study has striven to be trustworthy.

Another limitation was the reduced access that the researcher was allowed. It would have been useful to have sampled departmental meetings to be able to analyse the ethos of middle leadership and to compare this with the perceptions of those interviewed but this proved impossible to negotiate.

In terms of methodological limitations, the researcher acknowledges some difficulties in the research sampling. As the four sample schools have systems that are not the same, some organizational aspects lie outside the researcher's jurisdiction. As convenience sampling was used in the study, more specific sampling goals might not be

able to be pursued (Patton, 2002). The depth or breadth of information from individual cases was hard to assess. Although some limitations and critique may have arisen from these issues, the researcher decided to follow a partly non-parallel research pattern, to adapt the study in response to the different contexts. As a result of these limitations, this study's findings cannot be generalized beyond the four case study schools.

7.5 Recommendations for Further Study

This study is a multi-case study to explore teachers' perceptions about curriculum change and leadership. A more comprehensive study involving more schools can be obtained to get a better understanding of the teachers' perceptions of curriculum change and the leadership practices in Hong Kong primary schools. Hence, widening its scope may reveal more promising findings, which validate a set of leadership practices in primary schools. It is suggested that more sophisticated empirical studies and greater theoretical analysis could be done in future research. The study can be replicated taking the life histories of the participants into considerations to investigate how teachers' past experiences influence and impacts on current conceptions of leadership. It would also be worth studying the perceptions of curriculum change and leadership in practice among different subject departments.

Further studies could also be extended to take account of samples from different countries. This would facilitate international dialogue on educational leadership in primary education in the contexts of societal cultures and globalization, and fill in the gap of leadership studies in primary education as well.

7.6 Conclusion: My Personal Insights

As a middle leader in my own school context and a change agent in change process, it is worthwhile to explore the perceptions of curriculum change and leadership. As a middle

leader in a primary school, I was interested in examining the issue. The study contributed to my understanding and meaning of curriculum change and curriculum leadership from the lens of middle leaders and teachers. The study contributed to some implications for myself in providing professional development for my colleagues. Practically, as a curriculum developer, I would like to run leadership programmes or develop leadership projects for the teachers in my school context. Change is always happening in the school. As a middle leader, I would consider different factors such as teachers' emotions and attitudes towards change when bringing about change. Teachers' motivation and willingness to initiate change should be taken into account. In enacting change, I would extend multi-faceted leadership in the school whilst decisions are made collaboratively by colleagues who should voice out their opinions in different channels formally and informally. Distributed leadership is encouraged in the school context. Teachers should be empowered and encouraged to engage in the curriculum decision-making. Their self-efficacy should be raised. They should also be given sufficient support in the technical, socio-cultural and political perspectives. Educators should be trained to process leaders in order to create a balance between demand and support in support in promoting their learning of new leadership practices. Thus I would like to share the findings of my study by presenting my research in different educational conferences or publishing some educational journal papers.

In broader sense, the government, other schools and teachers can also get some insights in facilitating curriculum change and leadership. Curriculum change can be viewed in three perspectives: technical, socio-cultural and political. These perspectives should be taken into considerations in initiating and managing change in curriculum development. Leading curriculum change is not a systematic, rational process (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). There exists a complex interplay of all the key players in creating

curriculum change, where change processes cannot solely rely on one key player and CPD is not the only one player for making school change. There is an inter-related network amongst different stakeholders in different aspects in the processes of curriculum development, consisting of inter-relationships amongst the key players in generating curriculum change. Capacity building can be done by empowering, involving and developing teachers. Making change does not occur at a time; rather, it needs a 'good' combination across different layers and players in the whole 'political' process (Achinstein, 2002). At the same time, the fundamental technical sides of curriculum change have to be well-addressed. In other words, the importance of infrastructures (e.g. time schedule, guidelines) for building up team capacity should be underestimated.

To conclude, this study highlights the interwoven, organic relationships between curriculum change and leadership. Change leaders have to get a holistic view of these relationships involving people, process and policy to maximize and utilize the 'best' success in curriculum transformation.

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Appendices

Appendix 3.1: Profiles of Four Case Study Schools (Academic Year 2013/14)

	School A	School B	School C	School D
Location	The New Territories	The New Territories	Kowloon	The New Territories
School type	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided
Year of establishment	1984	1977	1969	1959
Religion	Catholicism	/	Catholicism	/
Medium of instruction	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
Class size	24	18	21	9
Number of teachers	42	35	33	19
Qualifications				
Teacher Certificate/ Diploma in Education	100%	98%	100%	100%
Bachelor Degree	98%	54%	100%	100%
Master/ Doctoral degree	38%	37%	11%	13%
Special Education Training	45%	25%	50%	20%
Teaching experience				
0-4 years	2%	11%	21%	26%
5-9 years	22%	9%	12%	0%
10 years or above	76%	80%	67%	74%
Areas of concern	1. To develop self-regulated learning of students 2. To arouse students' environmental awareness	1. To enhance bi-lingual and tri-literate competency of students 2. To foster self-regulated learning of students 3. To foster the school-based moral and civic curriculum	1. To enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching 2. To arouse students' learning motivation and active learning 3. To develop students' healthy lifestyle and attitude	1. To enhance students' satisfaction continuously 2. To cater for learner diversity by enhancing teachers' teaching techniques

Appendix 3.2: Ethical Clearance and Approval Form

2012/22/JM

School of Education – Research Ethics Approval Form



The University of
Nottingham

Name Wan Wai Po Eunice
Main Supervisor Philip Hoods
Course of Study EdD
Title of Research Project: Perceptions of educational leadership in Hong Kong primary schools
Is this a resubmission? No

Date statement of research ethics received by PGR Office: 03/10/12

Research Ethics Coordinator Comments:

The information provided is detailed and clear. However, the letter to the School Principal should have a postal address and also contain the supervisors' contact details. In the first line of the Information Sheet there is a typographical error with the word 'in' being repeated. If these are amended, the submission meets the criteria for ethical approval of the research.

I consider this research to be above minimum risk

☐

Outcome:

Approved ☒

Revise and Resubmit ☐

Signed: *W. J. Morgan*

Name: Prof W. J. Morgan
(Chair of Research Ethics Committee)

Date: 22/10/12

Appendix 3.3: Participant Information

School A

Name*	A01	A02	A03	A04	A05	A06
Gender	F	F	M	F	F	F
Teaching experience	18 years	15 years	8 years	13 years	8 years	8 years
Ranking	APSM	CM	AM	CM	CM	CM
Qualification attained	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degree	Certificate of Education , Master degree	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degree	Certificate of Education, Master degree	Certificate of Education, Master degree	Certificate of Education, Master degree
Major subject(s) in the graduating institution	General Studies	Chinese	English	English	Chinese	Math
Major subject(s) taught	General Studies, Chinese	Chinese	English, Religious Studies	English, Visual Art	Chinese, Music	Math, General Studies, IT
Position	General Studies panel	Chinese panel	English panel	English teacher	Chinese teacher	General Studies teacher

Remarks: (*) Pseudo names are used.

School B

Name*	B01	B02	B03	B04	B05	B06
Gender	F	F	F	F	F	F
Teaching experience	20 years	14 years	24 years	16 years	1 year	8 years
Ranking	CM	APSM	APSM	APSM	CM	CM
Qualification attained	Certificate of Education, Bachelor of Education	Certificate of Education, Master degree	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degree	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degree, Master degree
Major subject(s) in the graduating institution	Music	English	Visual Art	Chinese	English	Chinese
Major subject(s) taught	General Studies, Music	English	General Studies, Chinese	Chinese, Putonghua	English, General Studies	Chinese, Music
Position	General Studies panel	English panel	General Studies teacher	Chinese Panel	English teacher	Chinese teacher

Remarks: (*) Pseudo names are used.

School C

Name*	C01	C02	C03	C04	C05	C06
Gender	F	F	F	M	F	F
Teaching experience	7 years	20 years	10 years	4 years	30 years	2 years
Ranking	CM	APSM	AM	CM	AM	CM
Qualification attained	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degrees	Master of Education; BBA	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree (Surveying); PGDE (Math)	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degree	Bachelor of Education (Language Education)
Major subject(s) in the graduating institution	Bachelor: Psychology/ Liberal Studies, PGDE (English)	Chinese, History, Putonghua	Chinese, Math, General Studies	Mathematics	English	English, Music
Major subject(s) taught	English, General Studies	Chinese, Putonghua	Chinese, Putonghua, Music	General Studies, Math	English, Religious Studies	English, Music
Position	General Studies panel	Chinese teacher	Chinese panel	General Studies teacher	English panel	English teacher

Remarks: (*) Pseudo names are used.

School D

Name*	D01	D02	D03	D04	D05	D06
Gender	F	F	F	F	F	M
Teaching experience	4 years	12 years	14 years	4 years	17 years	2 years
Ranking	CM	CM	PSMCD	PSM	APSM	CM
Qualification attained	Master of Education,	Master of Education, Bachelor of Education	Master degree	Master degree, Bachelor of Education	Bachelor of Education	Bachelor of Education, PDGE (English)
Major subject(s) in the graduating institution	Chinese	English, PE	Chinese	Sports and Leisure management	Social Studies, Chinese, Mathematics	English
Major subject(s) taught	Chinese, Librarian, Visual Arts	English, General Studies, PE	Chinese, Mathematics	English, PE	General Studies, Librarian	English, Music
Position	Chinese panel	General Studies panel	Chinese teacher	English vice panel	School Librarian, General Studies teacher	English teacher, Music panel

Remarks: (*) Pseudo names are used.

Appendix 3.4: Interview Semi-Structured Interview Guide

香港小學教師對領導及課程改革的觀感研究

訪問指引

Perceptions of Leadership and Curriculum Change in Hong Kong Primary Schools

Interview Protocol

A. Biographical Information on Informants 被訪者的背景資料

Gender: 性別	☐ M 男 ☐ F 女
Teaching experience: 教學經驗	_____ years 年
Ranking: 職位	☐ CM ☐ APSM ☐ AM ☐ PSM ☐ SPSM ☐ Others (please specify): _____
Highest qualification attained: 已獲取的最高學歷	☐ Certificate of Education 教育文憑 ☐ Bachelor degree 學士學位 ☐ Master degree 碩士學位 ☐ Doctoral degree 博士學位 ☐ Others 其他 (please specify): _____
Major subject(s) in the graduating institution: 在大專院校主修的科目	☐ Chinese 中文 ☐ English 英文 ☐ Math 數學 ☐ General Studies 常識 ☐ Others 其他 (please specify): _____
Major subject(s) taught: 主要任教科目	☐ Chinese 中文 ☐ English 英文 ☐ Math 數學 ☐ General Studies 常識 ☐ Others 其他 (please specify): _____

B. Perceptions of leadership 對領導的觀感

- How are decisions made in the school? 學校是如何進行決策的? - Can you describe how the department functions? 你所屬的科組是怎樣運作的? - What does leadership mean to you? 對你來說，領導是甚麼? - What should a leader do? 你覺得領導者應做些甚麼? - Describe the leadership style in your department for non-leaders. 你形容所屬的科組內無擔任領導角色的同事的領導風格。 - Do you talk to any of your colleagues about what to teach or how? Is there any a formal structure to this or how does that work?
--

7. 你會和其他同事傾談你的教學嗎？可否說說具體情況？(科組/行政人員/普通傾談)

Probes: department, small learning community, administrators, casual conversations.

8. What are your formal responsibilities as a teacher/ department chair?

作為老師/科主任，你在科組有甚麼正式的職責？

9. Do you do any voluntary extra work? How do you come to have this work?

你還選擇其他額外的職責嗎？那些職責是甚麼？為何你有那些職責？

10. To what extent do you think you can influence or change the school structure/ systems?

How and why?

你在學校行政架構的影響力如何？為甚麼？

a. What role do you play in the team? 當中你擔當甚麼角色？

b. Who work(s) with you as a member in the team? 誰與你一起共事？

c. Who influence(s) your work? How? 誰對你的工作有所影響？怎樣影響？

11. To what extent do you think you can affect the department? How and why?

你在科組的影響力如何？為甚麼？

a. What role do you play in the team? 當中你擔當甚麼角色？

b. Who work(s) with you as a member in the team? 誰與你一起共事？

c. Who influence(s) your work? How? 誰對你的工作有所影響？怎樣影響？

C. Group Interaction/ Contexts for Improvement Efforts 團體互動

1. Do you have opportunities to attend/ get involved in some of the meetings at this school?

你有機會參與學校的會議嗎？是甚麼會議？可否說說會議的情況？(如組織成員、會議目的……)

If yes, tell me about some of these meetings you have attended?

Probes: Composition of the group

Purpose/ goal of this group

2. Do these meetings influence how you teach? 這些會議對你的教學有影響嗎？

If so, which meetings? How? 若有的話，怎樣影響？

3. Have you been involved in any professional development activities related to the curriculum changes that you have mentioned?

你覺得哪些教師專業發展活動對你的教學最具影響力？

If so, please describe the activity (ies). 若有的話，請形容一下那些活動。

a. Who do you work with in the professional development activity(ies)?

誰會參與那些教師專業發展活動？

b. Who was responsible for leading the professional development activity(ies)?

誰會負責那些活動？

c. What processes are used for managing such work?

那些教師專業發展活動是怎樣管理/進行的？

- d. What do you think of the professional development activity(ies)?

你覺得那些教師專業發展活動怎麼樣？

- e. How are they influential?

它們怎樣影響你？

D. Perceptions and experiences of leadership practice and curriculum change in department context 對課程領導實踐及課程改革的觀感

1. What are the issues/ goals your department has been working on in the past three years?/

What are the major curriculum initiatives in your school?

在這近三年內，學校有甚麼主要的課程改革？你的科組有甚麼課程改革？

- a. Who initiate(s) the reform? 誰開展這些改革？
b. Who is/ are involved in the change? 誰會參與這些改革？
c. What are their roles? 他們有甚麼角色？
d. How does the reform work? / How does it emerge? 這些課程改革是怎樣推展的？
e. What else is involved? In what ways? 這些課程改革涉及甚麼呢？可否說說一些例子？
f. Does it influence the way you teach? 這些課程改革對你的教學有甚麼影響？
g. Is there a normal way the school approach to making changes like this?
你的學校通常怎樣面對這些課程改革？
h. What difficulties have you encountered during the implementation of these changes?
在實行這些課程改革時，你有經歷過困難嗎？那次的經歷是怎樣的？
i. Did you manage the change successfully? How?
在實行這類型的課程改革時，你有經歷過成功嗎？那次的經歷是怎樣的？

2. Can you talk about one project/ curriculum initiative in which you participated?

你可否分享一下你有參與的一個課程改革？

- a. What curriculum change was this? 那個課程改革是甚麼？
b. When was the change? 何時進行？
c. What motivated you to participate? 誰推動你參與這個課程改革？
d. What were your role(s) and responsibilities in the project? 你擔當甚麼角色和任務？
e. Who initiated the project? 誰開展這個改革？
f. Who made decisions in the project? 誰會參與這個改革的決策？
g. How was the work distributed? 你們的工作分配是怎樣的？
h. Please describe that experience. 那次經驗如何？
i. How was the project run? (e.g. planning, implementation, evaluation) 這個改革如何進行？(如策劃/執行/檢討階段)

- j. How effective was it? 這個改革的成效如何？
- k. What do you think about the advantages and disadvantages of the way the work was distributed? 你覺得這樣分工有甚麼優點和缺點？
3. How do you feel about the curriculum change? 你對這些課程改革有甚麼感受？
4. Do you think the curriculum changes were effective? Why?/ Why not?
5. How do you normally react to mandated/ imposed curriculum change?
你通常怎樣面對這些課程改革？
6. What kind of support do you perceive to be most useful in carrying out the curriculum change?
你認為在推行課程改革時哪些支援是最重要的？
7. What kind of support do you perceive to be least useful in carrying out the curriculum change?
你認為在推行課程改革時哪些支援不太重要？
8. Who has the greatest influence in leading such initiatives in the school?
誰對推動課程改革最具影響力？為甚麼？

E. Wrap-up 總結

1. To sum up, we have been talking about leadership and curriculum change.
Can you tell me how you see 'leadership' in this context?
這研究是關於領導與課程改革的。你怎樣理解「領導」？
2. If there were one message from you about curriculum change, what would it be?
若果你需提出一句關於課程改革的訊息，那會是甚麼？
3. Who else should I talk to in this school in order to understand the leadership of curriculum change?
若我需要了解更多關於課程領導的事宜，我可找誰來談談？

Appendix 3.5: Examples of Coding and Thematic analysis

<i>Key themes</i>		<i>Code</i>
Perceived purposes of curriculum change	Academic-rationalism	
	Social reconstruction	
	Social economic efficiency	
Perceptions of leadership	Traits	knowledgeable, committed, passionate, open-minded, communication skills, flexibility, sense of empathy, child-centred, clear mission and vision
	Leadership as power relationships	Hierarchical, top-down
	Shared instructional leadership	Distributed, shared, collaborative
	Positive	Cognitive, affective, behavioural
Perceived attitudes towards curriculum change	Neutral	
	Negative	
	Technical	Time
Perceived difficulties in curriculum change		Resources
		Professional development
		Guidelines
	Socio-cultural	Student learning
		Teaching practice
		School culture
	Political	Conflicts of interests and views
		Competition for resources
	Technical	Provision of professional development
		Administrative planning
Perceived support for curriculum change	Socio-cultural	Cultivating teachers' social capital
		Developing new mindsets
		Getting family understanding
	Political	Obtaining principal support
		Getting compromises amongst teachers
		Winning teacher support

Appendix 3.6: An Example of Case Report

Introduction of School B

School B is a subsidized primary school in the New Territories. It has been established since 1977. There were 18 classes in the academic year 2013-2014 and the number of classes remained unchanged in the consecutive years. The majority of students lives in the nearby estates and come from lower socio-economic families. In the year 2013-2014, there were 35 teachers, 92% of whom hold Bachelor degree or above. Around 80% of the teachers got ten or more years of teaching experience.

Documentary Analysis

Organizational Structure of the School

The school is sponsored by a charity organization in Hong Kong. From the school documents, different groups and taskforces are under the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC). The composition of IMC includes the representative from the sponsoring body, the Principal, teacher representative, parent representative, alumni representative and individual. Each of these people has several people reporting into them and the number of people at each level increases as you move down the structure. It see that the school has a hierarchical organizational structure. As shown in Figure A below, there are different subject departments under the Curriculum Development Team. The teachers in the school carry out multiple roles and responsibilities in the school.

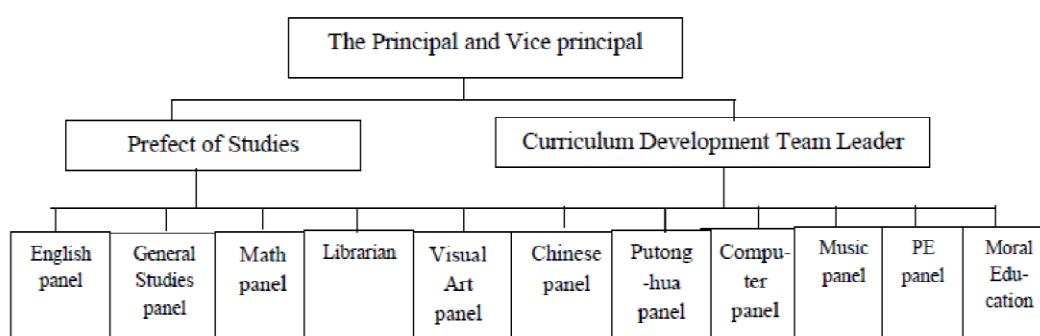


Figure 1: Organizational structure of Curriculum Development Team in Case School B

Figure A. Organizational structure of Curriculum Development Team in Case School B.

Enacted Change in the School

Three major concerns were identified in the school development plans as follows:

1. To develop P.2 and P.5 moral and civic education and integrate the related strategies and elements in different subjects
2. To arouse students' self-regulated learning skills in Chinese reading

The two areas of concerns are related to values education and self-directed learning which are hot issues in curriculum changes in Hong Kong.

Analysis of Interviews

Participant Role and Responsibility Profile

The six participants have varied roles and responsibilities in the school. Five participants were experienced teachers with more than eight years of teaching experience. One of them was a novice teacher with only one year of teaching experience. Out of the three panel chairpersons, the chairperson of General Studies Department held a certificated mistress post (CM) with a lower rank in the school while the other two held the post of Assistant Primary School Mistress (APSM). The details of the participants were listed in the table below:

Table A. Profile of Participants in Case Study School B.

	B01	B02	B03	B04	B05	B06
Gender	F	F	F	F	F	F
Teaching experience	20 years	14 years	24 years	16 years	1 year	8 years
Ranking	CM	APSM	APSM	APSM	CM	CM
Qualification attained	Certificate of Education, Bachelor of Education	Certificate of Education, Master degree	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degree	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	Certificate of Education, Bachelor degree, Master degree
Major subject(s) in the graduating institution	Music	English	Visual Art	Chinese	English	Chinese
Major subject(s) taught	General Studies, Music	English	General Studies, Chinese	Chinese, Putonghua	English, General Studies	Chinese, Music
Position	General Studies panel	English panel	General Studies teacher	Chinese Panel	English teacher	Chinese teacher

Involvement in the change process

Initiation of curriculum change

Most of the teachers said that most of the changes were initiated by the ones who hold positional roles (the Principal, Curriculum Development Team Leader and the subject panels). According to the teachers, the changes were initiated by Curriculum Development Team Leader and subject panels upon the permission of the Principal. The initiatives were discussed in the school administrative group and the subject meetings. Then the teachers agreed and they started to implement the changes.

Decisions? Er ... they are made in the administrative group ... as I heard that they said 'the plans were discussed in the administrative meeting ... we have something to tell you' ... sometimes, some decisions are asked in the meetings. Then we have to vote. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

The teachers said they usually agreed with the school direction and plans but they would give opinions and comments when the initiatives were carried out. Their voices were also heard by the Curriculum Development Team Leader and subject panels.

The teachers perceived that the ultimate goal of curriculum change is to promote student learning. One teacher emphasized that curriculum changes should be focused and directional.

I think curriculum change is ... to focus. Er ... er... don't change always ... haha... don't change all the time. Because if there are changes all the time, the students would be confused. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

The teachers also perceived that the change would be regarded as successful because the perceived change led to positive student outcomes.

I think it's successful because the students' foundation is consolidated after using the teaching materials. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

Roles of the participants in the change process

The roles of the teachers with and without positional roles differ in the change process. For the teachers with positional roles, they take active part in allocating resources, communicating, and planning and monitoring curriculum. According to the teachers, the curriculum initiatives were usually brought about by senior managers in the school. The PSMCD and the panel were perceived to be the ones who initiate the curriculum change and determine the administrative matters like timetabling and teaching allocations. Teachers were perceived as subordinates in this sense.

Usually the subject head will prepare and they will tell us how to do ... we teach by using what they have prepared. (B03, School B, 9/7/2014)

Some subject panels regarded themselves as ‘information delivery man’, ‘resource provider’ and ‘mentor’. They would inform teachers updated information and provide teachers with sufficient resources to carry out changes. They would also assist and support the teachers to launch the changes. In this sense, they are ‘training the trainer’ and try to develop professional practice.

First, I think I’m playing the role of a reviewer. I will the best out of a variety of choices and make the best arrangement. Second, you can regard me as a deliver man. For example, as we will have a sharing session so as to let others know [the information]. (B04, School B, 9/7/2014)

We have brother and sister scheme, that is, every teacher has [mentors] ... and will be taken care by the panels and curriculum head. (B05, School B, 9/7/2014)

The colleagues may be stressed ... I’ll try to ask them if they need my help. I try my best to help them relieve. (B04, School B, 9/7/2014)

As I was the pioneer, I had to do more than the others so that they couldn’t say no anymore. (B02, School B, 9/7/2014)

Some teachers said that teachers’ involvement in the change process is to implement rather than to plan or initiate new ideas. The teachers perceived their role as curriculum implementer. For example, one of teachers stressed that her responsibility was to teach the students the content in the programme in the ‘Read and Write’ programme. She was involved in modifying the curriculum content with other colleagues. Teachers could give their views and reflect on how the change would be carried out.

I would see how the students react ... as we have evaluation on how much the students gain ... we discuss about the effectiveness of the activities and see how we can do follow-up in the co-planning sessions. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

In addition, she perceived that the main responsibility for being a level coordinator is not to lead, but to deal with managerial matters.

actually ... the level coordinators are there ...er ... to make things ... like dictation, writing ... so I said the level coordinators need to collect those stuff. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

However, the initiatives in School B were not always started with the positional ones. According to the teachers, the pioneers of the initiatives could be subject panels or the enthusiastic teachers.

It depends on whether it has been prepared. If yes, we'll announce in the meeting. If no, vice panel and I will launch it first. (Wong, School B, 9/7/2014)

As for the successful experience, that is practising KIP. Since those enthusiastic ones were assigned, the chance of success increased. (Ching, School B, 9/7/2014)

All the non-positional teachers in School B said that they were involved in implementing the curriculum change, rather than initiating new plans. They perceived their role as curriculum implementer. Their responsibility is to teach the students the content in the programme and to be involved in modifying the curriculum content with other colleagues.

Professional exchange exists in the school and the teachers said that teachers tended to take active roles in professional dialogues. The teachers reviewed that there was some impact on their teacher learning and student learning due to the curriculum change. Some teachers revealed that they learnt more through professional development. They also found students' performance improved after some initiatives were acted out. Supportive culture seen to be there in the school.

Sharing is not done solely level coordinators. Well, PSMCD also teaches P.3 this year. Usually she would share her teaching first. That's it. (Why?) Because she's clearer about curriculum ... right, yes. And also, she uses different teaching strategies in her teaching. So she shares with us and then we would try them out.' (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

Some teachers increase their professional development and widen their horizons. The results of the students in school exam or TSA improved, especially for composition. (B05, School B, 9/7/2014)

The Read & Write Programme is very impressive to me. I think it's successful because students' foundation is consolidated after using the teaching materials. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

There will be someone who does better than the others, but we will not blame the one who has done less desirably. Instead, we will encourage each other or give some good samples for reference. (B01, School B, 9/7/2014)

However, one teacher highlighted the value of collaboration and sharing in the collaborative lesson planning. Contribution of teaching ideas should be at the core rather than managerial matters.

We have a meeting for all teachers to discuss how to teach the content in depth. It is my favourable form of co-planning. However, it changes to another format now. We take turns to prepare lesson and share with other teachers. The person in charge has to prepare the plan and materials such as PowerPoint. We have more leisure but greater pressure. It is no longer a meeting for gathering ideas but a meeting of division of labour. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

Attitudes towards curriculum change

On one hand, some teachers showed positive attitudes towards curriculum change. They were optimistic about curriculum changes. Some would be active in understanding the change in order to act out more smoothly.

New things ... er ... accept the change first. If you don't accept it, that would be very difficult to continue. The path would go straight if we keep going. If I don't accept the change, I would be mad about it when I do it. So I think ... if I know there would be something new, I would understand what it is all about first ... otherwise, it's hard to carry on. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

On the other hand, some teachers showed concerns towards changes. The concerns include the time, stress and workload brought about by the changes. Teachers' confidence and readiness were also mentioned.

There are both sides. Workload increases. Actually it is difficult to change. To be honest, in the past few years there are model answers. You don't want the students to answer a lot of things. But now, it's different. Every student answers different things as everyone has a unique mind. So it makes the marking difficult. And we need to give some comments to their work. So the workload increases. (B01, School B, 9/7/2014)

As XYR [a pseudo for a teacher education institution] won't teach these things as they are new methods ... there were no such things when we were studying like thinking tactics. So to be honest, teachers have to know it by theelves. So as a class teacher, I have searched a lot of information ... (B01, School B, 9/7/2014)

Some teachers questioned the focus of the current curriculum change. Teachers emphasized that curriculum changes should be focused and directional.

I think curriculum change is ... to focus ... Er... don't change always ... if there are changes all the time, the students would be confused. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

I just feel that we talk about self-regulated learning in the recent years ... maybe two or three years ago, we talked about cooperative learning ... we talked about something else a few more years ago. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

Impacts of curriculum changes on teacher learning and student learning

The teachers agreed that there was some impact on their own teaching due to the curriculum change whilst some disagreed. The engagement of teachers in the change process depends on individual teacher's own experience.

Regarding the curriculum, we, new teachers are more willing to voice out our opinions. (B05, School B, 9/7/2014)

It enables me to grow ... as we were pilot when PLP-RW was launched in

2007 ... I have changed the way I taught. I was very traditional in the past. They visited my class at least once in a year. I was very nervous and I might do a lot of preparation beforehand. Since I became the subject head, I was no longer afraid of open classroom. I was used to it and I'll improve according to others' feedback. (B02, School B, 9/7/2014)

Er... for me ... the influence on me? Actually not much ... I only need to teach the students what I have learnt in the programme ... we teach the same way... the programme just continues in this way. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

Some teachers reflected that the changes could be beneficial to student learning. The learning objectives were perceived to be achieved. They felt a sense of satisfaction and tried to improve their teaching accordingly.

(What is the influence in your teaching?) Teachers think that it arouses students to think more. I can see that the students can give some suggestions, as we taught them various tactics, they know what elements are they coming from, giving suggestions according to different aspects. And we can see that our students are very willing to answer the questions, like in the worksheet, the question only carries 3 marks, and they answered 400 words ... they have written down all advices. And we can also see the effect, of course not all students, as different people have different abilities, but as we launched in a class with better students, they did very excellent. And students who are not that good are catching up and learning it too. (B01, School B, 9/7/2014)

Perceptions of leadership in the process of curriculum change

Perceptions of leadership

Setting directions

With regard to the teachers, a good leader should have clear vision and mission. He/ she should be clear about the direction and objectives to be achieved. Leaders were perceived to be the ones who made changes leading to school improvement.

To me, the understanding [leadership] is ... that's super ... haha ... (Why?) That is, just like creating a mind map. We put different concepts linked to the central idea. But you need to keep in mind what the central idea is all about. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

[Leader] is the one who lead the subject panel, other than holding meetings, sometimes making subject advancement and policies. (B03, School B, 9/7/2014)

Being knowledgeable

Curriculum leaders were perceived to have expertise in curriculum development. They should be capable of current curriculum practices and trends.

For the subject panel ... er ... er ... of course, she has a leading role. I think she needs to be clear about the curriculum ... yes ...and she needs to have good

communication with every Chinese teacher. That's the role ... what I think leadership is about. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

Being communicative and flexible

Some teachers regarded humans as the biggest obstacle in implementing curriculum changes. Leaders should therefore communicate with the teachers closely and understand their concerns and needs.

The most difficult problem to solve is human. It's always better if the Principal sends the order ... a successful reform needs to change the heart of a human ... even we have money and resources, it's a must for teachers to have the faith. (B02, School B, 9/7/2014)

Our dear teachers are needed of course. I can actually write a grand or bravo curriculum framework, but whether it can be put into practice depends on the teachers. (B04, School B, 9/7/2014)

I think the leader must have to communicate with others actively. If he only gives commands, it's actually tiring ... if the leader is not active and open-minded, the teachers have to do it unwillingly. It actually harms the students. (B05, School B, 9/7/2014)

Developing people

In some teachers' eyes, a good leader would not solely shine in his/ her own classroom but also influence others to act out changes. The teachers would reflect on their own teaching as influenced by the PSMCD.

she always shares her teaching experience with me ... it makes me think more ... shall I do some more to teach my students? What would make my students learn better?' (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

The leader has to drive the others to work together. (B02, School B, 9/7/2014)

Teachers should be reflective practitioners. Teacher growth should not be neglected in carrying out changes. Tang preferred professional development activities that could enhance her subject content expertise.

[What professional development activities are] most influential? Hmm ... as I like Music more, I think those professional development activities related to Music have greater influence to me. It's because I could learn something there ... I joined a course about creating Music this year. Then I really find ten songs and ask my students to create songs in the ways I learn in the course. I teach my students to try out the methods. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

Strategic management of resources

Teachers perceived that the change could be implemented more effectively if there exist adequate resources and support such as professional development.

If I just follow what's written in the lesson plans solely, I could not understand

the rationale. If someone comes over to talk about the teaching plans, that would be easier and clearer for me. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

Leader is a resource provider ... the aim is to serve the students or colleagues ... I also regard myself as a watchdog so as to make advancements. (B04, School B, 9/7/2014)

The teachers also pointed out the difficulty of making curriculum change is having time and space for the change. One teacher mentioned that her team came across a difficulty in selection of the curriculum content. They needed to make professional judgement in curriculum tailoring when they implemented the programmes. Adjustment was made so as to improve the curriculum.

actually we did talk about our difficulty when we were teaching the programme ... we couldn't finish all the units because of the programme. We talked about it for several times ... we needed to think about the solution at the end of the term ... maybe we really talked about the difficulty for quite a number of times ... the panel was also there. She asked us for suggestions. So we suggested to cut some units and we talked about the criteria of cutting some of the units. The criteria is ... whether the learning objectives covered in the abandoned units could be supplemented by other units ... then at the end, we came up to the decision about the content of the school-based textbook. That's what we did. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

Mutual support

Moral leadership is essential. To act out changes successfully, the leaders should build up trust and rapport with others. They should also be open-minded active listeners who are willing to listen to the voices, opinions and concerns from their co-workers. Leader should bear in mind the co-workers' feelings and concerns.

I think you have to build a partnership, the feeling of coordination... don't let them think you assign things but you do nothing. I think it's not just to lead, but to support. (B01, School B, 9/7/2014)

I think [teachers] have to clearly understand how the reform is going on. Even they don't like it, I know it's hard. But they have to know the reason of reforming ... we have to make sure that the teachers have confidence in reform, making them think that they have the abilities to teach well. (B04, School B, 9/7/2014)

Leadership in practice

Who enacted leadership roles?

In School B, leadership was perceived to be the ones with positional power. We found that school personnel did not attribute leadership actions and influence only to one source, and not always to the principal. The individuals or groups identified as providing leadership included a mix of principals and teachers in formal leadership roles (e.g.,

curriculum development team leaders, grade or subject team leaders).

The one who's important to curriculum change? Er ... that must be PSMCD. Because she needs to bring along the curriculum and we know what the change is. She needs to inform us about the curriculum change. If not, how could we know what's going on, what programmes we can join, how we can implement ...' (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

Some teachers felt satisfied with their role in decision-making in curriculum planning and development. They viewed their responsibility as implementing the curriculum plan imposed by the school administrative group. Their desired level of participation and the actual participation level tend to be low. There seems to be decision equilibrium in the school (Ho, 2010).

I think it's reasonable. Actually, we need to teach ... anyway... if the curriculum is useful to the students ... I think the programme could help improve students' achievement.' (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

I intend to do my part if I am told to do so. Right, I have thought of its disadvantages ... sometimes we may need chances to make choices ... we don't have much chance to choose right now. Anyway, I am not that type of person. So it doesn't affect me much. (B06, School B, 9/7/2014)

What patterns of leadership exist?

The teachers felt that only the ones with positional roles hold the decision-making power as they were in the hierarchical structure. The tasks were distributed top-down. When distributing the work, the panels and core members of the project took the most workload. However, during the implementation, the teachers would take active roles in discussing with other colleagues. They would also speak up in the subject meetings especially the novice teachers. The teachers would adapt the teaching materials and reflect on their actual practice to make improvement. The teachers' involvement in the leadership was mainly on practice aspects.

Leadership influence?

Among the three panels being interviewed, the Principal was regarded as the most influential one at school. They felt that they had little influence on the administrative structure. Rather, they perceived that they had greater influence in their subject departments.

The three teachers proposed that they had little influence at school but they had some influence at department level and classroom level as they could voice out their opinions in the process of curriculum implementation.

Appendix 3.7: Letter to Principal

Dear Principal,

Re: Request for Permission to Conduct Research

I am currently involved in a research project concerning educational leadership. The title of the project is “Perceptions of Leadership and Curriculum Change in Hong Kong Primary Schools”, aiming to explore teachers’ perceptions of leadership and curriculum change. The study is performed as partial fulfilment of the requirements of my Doctor of Education degree in lifelong education at the University of Nottingham in England. Teachers’ participation in this project will provide useful information on this topic. I sincerely ask you for the favour of granting me a chance to conduct this study in your school.

In the study, six teachers will be asked to participate in individual interviews each lasting for 40 minutes for understanding their perceptions of educational leadership from May to July. I will come to your school to conduct the interviews at your most convenient time. Teachers’ participation in this study is strictly voluntary. All data from this project are confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Data from instruments are anonymous.

I look forward to hearing from you. Should you have any enquiries, I can be easily reached at xxxxxx (mobile) or xxxxxx (email). Thank you very much as I look forward to your support and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,
Wan Wai Po Eunice

Appendix 3.8: Participant Consent Form

GENERIC PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

{Notes in *italics*}

Project title Perceptions of leadership and curriculum change in Hong Kong primary schools

Researcher's name Wan Wai Po Eunice

Supervisor's name Dr Philip Hoods & Dr Andrew Townsend

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped / videotaped during the interview.
- I understand that data will be stored in the researcher's office and all data will be kept strictly confidential.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed (research participant)

Print name **Date**

Contact details

Researcher: {Email: eunicewpwan@gmail.com }

Supervisor: {Emails: Philip.Hood@nottingham.ac.uk /
Andrew.Townsend@nottingham.ac.uk}

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator: educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk