

**Curriculum Leadership of Hong Kong Secondary  
School Principals in Times of Reform**

By

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**Doctor of Education**

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## **CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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*In memory of my father and dedicated to my mother who have given me  
endless love and support*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |      |
|--|------|
| CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY .....                              | I    |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....   | III  |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS.....   | IV   |
| LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES.....  | VIII |
| ABSTRACT .....   | IX   |
| CHAPTER ONE .....  | 1    |
| INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....   | 1    |
| THE CONDUCT OF THIS STUDY .....  | 4    |
| ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS .....   | 4    |
| CHAPTER TWO.....   | 6    |
| LITERATURE REVIEW.....   | 6    |
| BACKGROUND TO EDUCATION REFORMS IN HONG KONG .....                       | 6    |
| CURRICULUM REFORMS IN HONG KONG .....                                    | 8    |
| THE CHANGING ROLES OF PRINCIPALS .....                                   | 15   |
| LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS .....  | 17   |
| <i>Instructional Leadership</i> .....                                    | 18   |
| <i>Transformational Leadership</i> .....                                 | 20   |
| <i>Distributed Leadership</i> .....                                      | 21   |
| <i>Sustainable Leadership</i> .....                                      | 23   |
| SCHOOL LEADERSHIPS AND EFFECTIVE LEADERS .....                           | 24   |
| PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP IN HONG KONG .....                                  | 29   |
| CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP.....   | 32   |
| PREPARATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPALS IN HONG KONG..... | 34   |
| SUMMARY.....   | 36   |
| CHAPTER THREE.....   | 38   |
| RESEARCH METHOD.....   | 38   |
| PURPOSE OF RESEARCH .....  | 38   |
| <i>Key Research Question</i> .....                                       | 39   |
| <i>Specific Research Questions</i> .....                                 | 40   |
| DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH METHOD .....                                     | 41   |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <i>Case Study</i> .....  | 42        |
| <i>Selection of Participants</i> .....   | 45        |
| <i>Data Collection</i> .....   | 45        |
| <i>Data Analysis</i> .....   | 47        |
| <i>Ethical Issues</i> .....  | 48        |
| <i>Trustworthiness</i> .....   | 51        |
| SUMMARY .....  | 52        |
| <b>CHAPTER FOUR</b> .....  | <b>53</b> |
| <b>THE CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION OF THE SCHOOLS AND THE PRINCIPALS IN THE STUDY</b> ..... | <b>53</b> |
| SCHOOL A .....   | 53        |
| SCHOOL B .....   | 54        |
| SCHOOL C .....   | 55        |
| SCHOOL D .....   | 56        |
| SCHOOL E .....   | 57        |
| SCHOOL F .....   | 58        |
| SUMMARY .....  | 59        |
| <b>CHAPTER FIVE</b> .....  | <b>61</b> |
| <b>THE PRINCIPALS' BELIEFS AND UNDERSTANDINGS</b> .....                                | <b>61</b> |
| THE CURRICULUM REFORM .....  | 62        |
| <i>Rationale for the Curriculum Reform</i> .....                                       | 62        |
| <i>Practicality of the Curriculum Framework</i> .....                                  | 64        |
| <i>Governments' Schedule and Strategies for Curriculum Reform</i> .....                | 67        |
| CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP .....  | 72        |
| <i>Role of Principals in the Curriculum Reform</i> .....                               | 72        |
| <i>Qualities and Attributes of Ideal Curriculum Leader</i> .....                       | 74        |
| <i>Problems and Difficulties in Leading the Curriculum Reform</i> .....                | 76        |
| <i>Multifarious roles of principals</i> .....  | 76        |
| <i>Teacher resistance</i> .....  | 78        |
| <i>Student problems</i> .....  | 80        |
| <i>Parent problems</i> .....   | 81        |
| <i>Time and energy constraints</i> .....   | 81        |
| PRINCIPALS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT .....                                 | 84        |
| <i>Principals' Professional Development</i> .....                                      | 84        |
| <i>Support and Resources for Principals</i> .....                                      | 86        |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| SUMMARY .....  | 87  |
| CHAPTER SIX.....   | 90  |
| PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS.....                             | 90  |
| CURRICULUM CHANGES IMPLEMENTED IN SCHOOLS .....                    | 90  |
| PRINCIPALS' APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES .....                        | 93  |
| <i>Creating a Facilitative Environment and Culture</i> .....       | 104 |
| <i>Distributing Leadership and Developing Middle Leaders</i> ..... | 109 |
| <i>Building Teacher Capacities and a Learning Community</i> .....  | 111 |
| <i>Partnership with Stakeholders</i> .....                         | 113 |
| PRINCIPALS' PERCEIVED INFLUENCE AND WISHES .....                   | 115 |
| PRINCIPALS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT .....             | 119 |
| SUMMARY .....  | 123 |
| CHAPTER SEVEN.....   | 126 |
| DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....                                    | 126 |
| PRINCIPALS' BELIEFS AND UNDERSTANDINGS .....                       | 126 |
| PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLES AND STRATEGIES .....                 | 131 |
| ENABLING FACTORS AND CONSTRAINTS IN THE CURRICULUM REFORM .....    | 144 |
| PRINCIPALS' TRAINING AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ..... | 147 |
| IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY.....                                       | 149 |
| IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE .....                                    | 151 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES.....                           | 153 |
| FINAL THOUGHTS.....  | 155 |
| REFERENCES .....   | 157 |
| APPENDICES .....   | 172 |
| APPENDIX A: INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS .....               | 172 |
| APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FROM PARTICIPANTS .....                   | 173 |
| APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PRINCIPALS .....           | 174 |
| APPENDIX D: EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS ON THE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ..... | 176 |
| APPENDIX E1: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF PRINCIPAL A.....               | 177 |
| APPENDIX E2: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF PRINCIPAL B.....               | 182 |
| APPENDIX E3: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF PRINCIPAL C.....               | 187 |
| APPENDIX E4: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF PRINCIPAL D.....               | 192 |
| APPENDIX E5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF PRINCIPAL E.....               | 197 |
| APPENDIX E6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF PRINCIPAL F .....              | 202 |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>APPENDIX F: PROFILES OF SIX CASE STUDY SCHOOLS .....</b> | <b>207</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX G: PROFILES OF SIX PRINCIPALS .....</b>         | <b>208</b> |
| <b>GLOSSARY .....</b>                                       | <b>209</b> |



## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Figure 2.1: Building on Strengths of Basic Education</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Table 5.1: Expected qualities, skills and attributes of an ideal curriculum leader</b>           | <b>76</b> |
| <b>Table 5.2: Problems encountered or anticipated in the curriculum reform</b>                      | <b>83</b> |
| <b>Table 6.1: Major curriculum initiatives implemented in the six schools</b>                       | <b>92</b> |
| <b>Table 6.2: The principals' approaches and strategies for implementing curriculum initiatives</b> | <b>98</b> |

## ABSTRACT

This study was designed to examine the leadership role of secondary school principals in the ten-year curriculum reform in Hong Kong to gain insights into the complexities of curriculum leadership and management in schools. While studies of principal leadership in relation to school reforms and successful quality interventions in education have been quite common, principal leadership during the ten-year reform has barely been studied in Hong Kong.

A purposive sampling technique led to the identification of six principals from different school contexts who had experienced the process of the Hong Kong Curriculum Reform since 2000. Adopting a case study method, the research examined the insights and experiences of principals who were midway through the historical ten-year curriculum reform. Data were gathered from semi-structured interviews, school documents and External School Review Reports by the Government. These data were analysed to generate information pertaining to their understanding of the curriculum reform, their leadership role and their leadership behaviours.

The major finding was that all six principals agreed with the need for education reforms in Hong Kong and accepted that the new curriculum framework was necessary to keep pace with changing social and global trends. All of them adopted a mix of leadership styles in leading the curriculum change in their schools. The leadership strategies they adopted resembled some of the characteristics of effective principals reviewed in the literature, namely: *possess clear vision and strategic planning, create a facilitative environment and culture for change, distribute leadership and develop middle leaders,*

*build teacher capacity, build a learning and collaborative community, apply appropriate leadership styles, and seek and provide resources and support.* The enabling factors and constraints they identified through the implementation of the reform and their views and experiences relating to their professional development are also reported in the study. Implications for policy, practice and further research are offered.