

**A study of primary school heads' perceptions of the
new Moral and Civic Education (MCE) curriculum of 2001
and the implications for its implementation in Hong Kong.**

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at the University of Leicester**

by

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Abstract

The research studies school heads' perception of the implementation of the new Moral and Civic Education (MCE) curriculum in Hong Kong primary schools. The MCE curriculum is positioned as a key task in curriculum reform since 2001. The present study recognises school leadership role in steering curriculum delivery in which school heads' perception is one of the determinants in shaping curriculum execution. Qualitative approach is adopted to uncover the factors affecting the perception of school heads and subsequent implementation strategies. Purposive sampling of six primary school heads is identified for interview to collect data. Content analysis is employed to make inferences from the data reviewing how school heads' personal belief and values orientation affect the delivery of the curriculum. The MCE curriculum, resting on virtue ethics projecting desirable values to be promoted, is appealing to the school heads. The MCE curriculum designed as values education, resonates Chinese culture emphasizing cultivation of virtue through education while at the same time addressing the societal expectation of the call for promoting national identity with the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997. Given the social and political context of Hong Kong, positive attitude is exhibited by all the sample school heads but they respond differently to the curricular role, reflecting a wide spectrum of understanding of the curriculum and pedagogical competency. The research findings propose the importance of a heightened awareness of school heads' cognition of the curriculum but their attitude towards the curriculum is deterministic how the curriculum is implemented. The attitude taken hinges on the values and belief of school heads vis a vis organisation values of the school. A model portraying school heads' awareness, attitude and action for curriculum implementation is recommended to further study school leadership with implications for theory building and practice.

Key words

school leadership, values and valuation, virtue ethics, perception, curricular leadership, values education, Moral and Civic Education curriculum.

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Chapter 1 Specification of research context

1.1 Introduction to the research

This research is a study of primary school heads' perception of the new Moral and Civic Education (MCE) curriculum of 2001 and the implications for its implementation in Hong Kong. The new MCE curriculum, constituting a structured learning for nurturing of values and attitudes of students, is positioned as one of the three building blocks of school curriculum. The other two building blocks are the domain of knowledge through Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and the domain of Generic skills. Hong Kong has undergone a fundamental change of curriculum structure in 2001 arising from the education reform which includes changes in school structure, assessment mechanism and interfacing with universities. The change in scope and depth is of large scale and unprecedented. Different stakeholders in education sector are involved to cope with the curriculum reform at the same time. School heads, as gatekeepers in policy implementation, are crucial in the process of change, given the position and responsibilities they hold.

Based on the data search in Hong Kong, among the doctoral and master level researches on education during the past two decades at universities level, there is hardly any one focusing on school heads' perception in the area of values education, and none related to curriculum change. An unexplored research area and a knowledge gap in the study of the relationship between school heads' perception and curriculum change are identified. The introduction of the territory-wide curriculum change at basic education level (Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 3) and senior secondary level (Key Stage 4) warrants research studies to provide information for an enhanced understanding of this large-scale curriculum change. It is hypothesized that school heads can make a difference in affecting curriculum implementation and their curricular role is too important to be ignored.

School heads play a vital role in curriculum change (Fullan, 2001). For effective implementation of the MCE curriculum, it is necessary for school heads to understand the process of change and the consequences of the change upon schools and students for sustainable impact. Second, a school head has to convince their teachers that the change is necessary with a view to minimizing the divergence of expected and realized curriculum. Third, school heads have to map out strategies on how the change should proceed, including the pace and the scope of change to be carried out. Fourth, school heads have to conduct situational analysis to assess the state of readiness of their school for curriculum implementation. As such, a study on the role of school

heads in curriculum changes has implication on local practice in Hong Kong.

In any process of change, school heads are facing the tensions generated from 'restructuring' (Elmore, 1990; Murphy, 1991) which is referred as a fundamental reform involving change in three dimensions, namely teaching and learning, occupational situation of educators, distribution of power between schools and their stakeholders. Any reform will involve changes in these dimensions but the changes may vary. The crux of change in education (Caldwell, 1993) lies in restructuring, be it curriculum, pedagogy, administrative structures, governance, teacher training and retraining. Common to this restructuring are either macro or micro reforms, which are different in scale and complexity. The change in either level will create repercussions upon the other level and school heads have a special role to play in managing the restructuring (Dimmock, 1999:139) because tension will be reflected from the restructuring and from different paces of change. The study on school heads' perception of the new MCE curriculum and subsequently the way they manage the change provides insight on the curriculum change taking place in Hong Kong.

The present study is aimed at understanding the relationship of school heads' value orientation upon their perception and cognition of the new MCE curriculum and subsequently the decisions in school practice. There are a host of complex factors affecting school heads' perception of the new MCE curriculum and to manage the change with regard to some contesting social, political, as well as school contextual variables. An attempt to understand the interaction of these variables requires an in-depth comprehension of the process and outcome of school heads' perception.

Qualitative approach, nesting on a constructive framework, is chosen to understand the process of change in which the research focuses on the relationship between school heads' perception and school practice in the area of curriculum implementation. A systematic understanding the way school leadership copes with and manages the new MCE curriculum provides knowledge for informed decisions in refining strategies for curriculum implementation and a deepened understanding of the axiological aspect of school leadership.

1.2 Research Context

(a) The change in Moral and Civic Education (MCE) curriculum

Education reform is consistently on the education agenda in Hong Kong since 2001. The magnitude, scope and pace of reform in education including curriculum reform are unprecedented, covering the whole range of schooling from pre-primary level to

tertiary level. The review of curriculum will complete by September 2009 when the new senior secondary structure commences. The new secondary school structure will be re-organised as three years junior secondary, three years senior secondary and four years tertiary education, referred as 3-3-4 academic structure. The change in school structure generates many issues to be addressed for the smooth interfacing between the critical stages, namely from primary to secondary and from secondary to tertiary. Alongside such a structural change in school structure, the school curriculum has to be redesigned to match the education reform.

Before 2001, MCE was perceived as a separate curriculum area with a distinct name. There are other related curriculum areas such as moral education, sex education, environmental education, drug education, life education, civic education, each being independent of one another. These curriculum areas are related to different personal and social issues but were seldom addressed holistically. The curriculum content and its organization focussed mainly on cognition, that is, the understanding of concepts or themes identified under their respective curriculum areas. Although all these curriculum areas were placed as non-examinable curriculum areas, schools perceived them as important with reference to the curriculum guidelines issued by the then Education Department (Education and Manpower Bureau but now re-named as the Education Bureau). Altogether there were four separate cross curricular curriculum guidelines, namely Moral Education Guidelines (1982), Civic Education Guidelines (1984, 1996), Sex Education Guidelines (1996) and Environmental Education Guidelines (1997). Such a segmented approach in the organization of curriculum in dealing with personal and social issues raises two main areas of concern:

- (i) Each specific curriculum area takes up curriculum time creating bottlenecks in time allocation in the already cramped and overloaded curriculum space.
- (ii) The segmented approach by isolating each curriculum area leaves a number of gaps in achieving whole-person development in students. Students find it difficult to establish connections between these areas in analyzing personal and social issues and making value judgements and decisions holistically.

In 2001, the school curriculum for primary and secondary level was reviewed to work in tandem the changes in the education system, namely the new senior secondary school structure. The MCE curriculum was reviewed and re-orientated to address a host of issues such as curriculum space, curriculum flexibility, central curriculum versus school-based curriculum, the relationship between MCE and other subject

curricula as well as appropriate pedagogical approach to whole-person development of students. An overarching framework is adopted with a view to helping students perceive personal and social issues holistically through nurturing in them core values. These values are considered to be the cornerstones for students to form moral judgements and as points of reference for decisions and actions. Values can be defined as ‘... the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable’ (Halstead & Talyor, 2000) or ‘.. the ideals that give significance to our lives, that are reflected through the priorities that we choose, and that we act on consistently and repeatedly’ (Hill, 2004).

"Values constitute the foundation of one's attitudes and beliefs, which subsequently influence one's behaviour and way of life. Values can vary across societies, as different social and economic conditions in different geographical locations may lead to different value emphases. However, across societies, we can also identify certain values that are commonly or universally emphasised. The emergence of these universal values illustrates the common concerns of human societies, the basic qualities for human existence, the common elements in human civilisation, and also the common characteristics of human nature...we call these universal values **core values**." And **sustaining values** are "other values that are also important at an instrumental level, being regarded as important or helpful for sustaining the core values."

(Learning to learn, 2001 : Appendix II-1)

Through public consultation with relevant stakeholders during the preparation of MCE curriculum in 2001, five core values namely, ‘*perseverance*’, ‘*respect for others*’, ‘*responsibility*’, ‘*national identity*’ and ‘*commitment*’ are identified as entry point for its promotion in which all schools have to observe and follow. The core values proposed stemmed from the considerations that student is an autonomous individual and human being as social animal entering into relationship with different social groups such as community, nation and the world of others as global citizen as well as the political situation in Hong Kong. In the course of personal and social development, young people face various expectations, challenges during the stage of development to adulthood. *Perseverance* is considered of pivotal importance in Chinese culture for individual to face challenges and to cope with adversities. Individuals do not exist in isolation and come to contact with and develop relationship with others. Mutual acceptance and *respect for others* to appreciate and tolerate views

and beliefs different from their own is important in a pluralistic society such as Hong Kong. Being a member of different social groups with various roles, he/she enjoys rights but at the same time assumes responsibilities within these groups. Individuals need to realize and appreciate that the well being of an individual is inextricably bound up with the collective well being of the community. To develop a sense of *responsibility* with regard to themselves, their family, society, nation and the well being of human-kind is one of the core values. The return of Hong Kong to the motherland in 1997 calls for a deeper understanding of the history, culture and national affairs of the Mainland of China with a view to showing concern and developing a sense of belonging to the motherland is expected and so *national identity* is highlighted as a core value for promotion in the MCE curriculum. In addition, individuals have to develop reflection upon one's values to become responsible individuals and *commitment* towards the community and the world at large as global citizens. The proposition of the five core values as entry point for promotion in the MCE curriculum is based on the social, political and contextual factors in Hong Kong (Basic Education Curriculum Guide 2002, Book 3A: 2-4). Extracts of details of the MCE curriculum are at Appendix I.

To reflect the societal expectations over time as well as the experiences generated since 2001, a mid-term review of the curriculum reform was conducted by the Education Bureau and the MCE curriculum was revised, expanded and launched in April 2008. Two additional core values, namely '*care for others*' and '*integrity*' are included alongside the five priority values to reflect the changing societal expectations. Hong Kong, being an international financial and commercial centre, the cornerstone for its continued success depends on the sustainability of the value of integrity. Being honest and trustworthy are the basic qualities not only for individual as an trustworthy person, but also for any profession and in daily life. Various issues such as Enron incident in 2001 and the later economic crisis in 2008 triggered off by financial sector worldwide enhance the societal awareness of the importance of upholding integrity as a universal core value. The importance of integrity as the core value contributing to Hong Kong as a cosmopolitan city free from graft has to be maintained and promoted through education in the young minds. With regard to family as a moral agent to socialise individuals the social norms, the moralizing function of family is gradually dysfunctional and is aggravated by the changing family structure with increasing trend of nuclear family and number of working parents. Caring for others, starting from the family as one of the values is advocated and highly treasured in society. In response to these social expectations, the two newly added core values together with the original five values together with the other sustaining values are proposed as part

of the MCE curriculum content (Revised Moral and Civic Education Curriculum framework : 2008). Extracts of details are at Appendix II.

For pedagogical approach, the traditional content-based orientation spelling out the concepts/themes/topics to be learned was adopted prior 2001. The previous curriculum content and approach do not firmly establish the relations with the needs and concerns of students and are remote from students' daily experiences. The new MCE curriculum emphasizes students' life experiences to construct knowledge, and to develop values and generic skills which are grouped under six themes for learning, namely personal and healthy life, family life, school life, community life, social life and life at work. These dimensions are devised as the essential themes covering students' life experiences to promote values development. The pedagogical approach recommended, named as Life Event Approach (LEA), uses students' life experience to promote the core values with a view to assisting students in deliberating personal and social issues in a coherent manner. Students' daily life experiences exemplified as 'life events' are designed as the learning context to help students scaffold and construct knowledge, values and skills pertinent to the six dimensions relevant to different Key stages (KS) of learning, namely KS 1 as junior primary, KS 2 as senior primary, KS 3 as junior secondary and KS 4 as senior secondary.

In short, the new MCE curriculum content and the pedagogical approach depart from the old paradigm of MCE which focuses on the cognitive aspects of concepts building in which a restricted, compartmentalized and segmented perspective of civic education is adopted, while leaving unattended other areas relating to personal growth such as sexuality issues, life education, drug issues and health issues. The new MCE curriculum aims at building an overarching framework with the focus of values and attitudes to help students address personal and social issues. The difference in both the curriculum content and the pedagogical approach recommended under the MCE curriculum before and after 2001 is notable and substantial. Whole-school participation from the school personnel is recommended and is considered to be effective in creating a conducive school ethos to nurture positive values and attitudes in students.

(b) Distinctiveness of MCE curriculum as values-based curriculum

Unlike other subjects of the Key Learning Areas (KLAs) such as languages, mathematics, science education, the MCE curriculum is distinct in nature and coverage. The implementation of the new MCE curriculum involves promoting whole-person development by focusing on the complex relationship among students'

knowledge of values (cognitive domain), feeling (affective domain) and action (behavioural domain). It involves the cultivation of desirable core personal and social values. More importantly, the curriculum aims at developing students' moral competence in terms of both the willingness to base one's behavior on universalizable moral maxims and the ability to apply these principles in one's behavior consistently. It is important to evaluate an action with regard to moral principles even if this is contrary to one's prior habits and opinions that constitutes the cognitive aspect of the MCE curriculum. This is referred to Piaget's concept of 'decenter', that is, to consider another person's point of view or G.H. Mead's concept of the 'generalized other'. This is equivalent to the modern concept of altruism or as exemplified in Confucianism of 'What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others' (Yu, 2007). The MCE curriculum is interpreted to be closely related to ethics for character building of students. Ethics ranks the first in the five aspects of education, namely in the order of ethics, intellect, social, physique and aesthetic which are highly regarded as the essence of education in Chinese culture. Ethics is of fundamental importance in education in Chinese society and it is equivalent to 'Ren' which is translated as humanity, benevolence, being conscientious and altruistic. 'Ren' is the centre of ethics in Confucian social theory (Yu, 2007).

The report on the reform proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong conducted by the Education Commission set the direction for curriculum reform. It is stated clearly that the overall aim of education for the 21st century is 'to enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes' (Learning for life, Learning through life, 2000:30). The aim of education reflects strong cultural influence in which ethics is of paramount importance. The report further states clearly that MCE 'plays a very important part in the whole-person development of students. It covers a range of issues, including ethics, healthy living, sustainable development and identification with and commitment to the country and the community' (Learning for life, Learning through life, 2000: II-1).

Although Hong Kong is under the influence of both western and oriental cultures, traditional Chinese beliefs and values have a place and influence upon curriculum design in addressing the question of 'What is worth learning?' (Learning to Learn, 2000:19, 23). The importance of ethics in education has been highlighted in the curriculum reform as the aims of education (Learning to Learn, 2000: 25). The new MCE curriculum has been designed with the aim to cultivate positive values and attitudes which 'students should develop as principles underpinning conduct and

behaviour’ and have to be ‘fostered through Moral and Civic Education’ and also across KLAs in appropriate themes (Learning to Learn, 2000: 25). This suggests that the nurturing of positive values and attitudes enlists teachers of all KLAs and other school personnel through the building of school ethos in addition to designated MCE teachers. The setting of the curriculum content and objectives in Hong Kong reflects Chinese cultural influence in which education is considered indispensable in nurturing the character and life orientation of individuals. The MCE curriculum, in particular is endowed with such role for character building of students in Hong Kong context.

Second, there are high expectations from different stakeholders including parents and the society (such as employers) that MCE curriculum should play the role to educate students to behave morally with reference to the social norm. Frequent surveys have been conducted by various associations of employers in Hong Kong, and the recent one revealed that what the employers count the most in selecting new recruits was the applicants and employees’ working attitude than professional knowledge and competency (Survey of employers, 2008). It is expected in Hong Kong that issues like healthy living, life education, personal and social issues including teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, gambling, smoking, cyber addiction could be addressed through the implementation of the new MCE curriculum. The implementation of the new MCE curriculum is highly regarded in society by various stakeholders and there are expectations upon its successful implementation.

1.3 School leadership, MCE curriculum and identification of the research problem

The promulgation of the new school curricula of 2001 covered eight Key Learning Areas (KLA) and four Key Tasks in which Moral and Civic education curriculum is one of them. The other three key tasks are Reading to learn, Project learning and Learning through information technology (IT). Schools have to accord priority to implement the MCE curriculum as one of the key tasks in addition to the eight subject areas such as English Education Key Learning Area (KLA), Chinese Education KLA, Mathematics Education KLA, Science Education KLA, Technical Education KLA, Personal, Social and Humanities Education KLA, Art Education KLA and Physical Education KLA.

What is recommended as the pedagogical approach for MCE curriculum is whole-school participation involving other subject areas and stakeholder like parents. School curriculum is value-laden and its delivery will transmit values to students through the teaching and learning process, teachers-students interaction, power relationship and

school ethos etc. Effective promotion of the core values as recommended in the MCE curriculum involves shared values and commitment of all the subject teachers, irrespective of their Key Learning Area. This hinges upon the concerted efforts of teachers and whether such a commitment is shared and recognized as part of the duties of teachers other than those responsible for MCE curriculum.

“.....the development of values and attitudes should become essential elements of the school curriculum. In fact, these values and their associated attitudes permeate the curricula of the eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and are reflected in the learning targets as well as curriculum objectives at different educational levels.”

(Learning to Learning, 2001 : Appendix II-1).

The building of the shared values and commitment among all the school personnel is a major challenge to the MCE teachers, taking into account their limitations in seeking the cooperation from other subject teachers as well as group and power dynamics in schools. It is more effectively and competently taken up by school leadership with their power and authority rendered by the leadership position. School heads have the authority to break the subject department barriers to minimize compartmentalization and create shared responsibility and commitment. The MCE curriculum is a cross subject/KLA curriculum area which transcends position authority of each subject area for effective values promotion among students. As such, the attitude and perception of school heads accorded to the MCE curriculum will be one of the determinants for implementation of the MCE curriculum to build up concerted efforts with MCE department from different subjects/KLAs heads who tend to define their obligation by the positional authority endowed with each subject department. This is echoed by the views expressed by teacher participants of seminars organised by Education Bureau that clearly indicated the pivotal role of school heads in the implementation of the new MCE curriculum.

“This MCE seminar (*21 November, 2003*) should be compulsory for each and every school head.”

“It would be better to have the content of the MCE seminar (*16 March 2009*) on the implementation of the revised MCE included in principal training course for every school head to enhance their understanding of the curriculum change.”

“The sharing of the two school heads in the MCE seminar (*3 November*

2009) had demonstrated that they were very supportive of the MCE and the impact was impressive. Without the support of the school leadership, how could curriculum reform in MCE be carried out?"

In addition, school heads have to face the imperative to implement the curriculum reform irrespective of the state of readiness. In the mid-term territory-wide survey of curriculum reform for school heads conducted by the Education Bureau in 2006, over 98% of the primary schools in Hong Kong responded that they implemented the MCE curriculum as a key task. However, there was little information concerning the quality of change in terms of the degree of implementation of the MCE curriculum either as what is recommended by the Curriculum Development Council (the Council is a Statutory body to promulgate any new school curriculum which is developed by the Curriculum Development Institute of the Education Bureau) or selectively adopted by schools in the implementation. There is limited information on how the new MCE curriculum is executed in schools, and even much less is known about school heads' conception of the new MCE curriculum.

Effective implementation of the MCE curriculum will depend on how a school head copes with (macro level) and manages it (micro level). In turn, it depends on a school head's perception of the new MCE curriculum. Support from school heads was indispensable as revealed by teachers in the MCE professional development programmes organized by the Education Bureau from 2002 to 2009. This reflects different perceptions of the place and importance of the MCE between school heads and teachers.

1.4 Purpose of the research

The research aims to find out primary school heads' perception and decisions in the implementation of the new MCE curriculum. Amidst various variables affecting school heads' decisions to realize the planned MCE curriculum, there are factors such as school heads' value orientations, administrative imperative from the education authorities, vision and mission of the school sponsoring bodies, considerations of stakeholders including students and parents, as well as societal expectations of MCE. The new MCE curriculum pitched as non-examinable curriculum gives schools great flexibility in its implementation and much room for school's adoption or adaptation. This will create discrepancy if the planned and the realized curriculum are congruent with each other. The role and purpose of the central curriculum is less clear. Attempts to understand school heads' comprehension and interpretation of the new MCE curriculum will enhance the knowledge of curriculum implementation in schools.

1.5 Design of the research

a. Selection of qualitative research

Qualitative research, defined as "multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 2), is considered appropriate to understand the meanings and make sense of the phenomenon to identify the relationship of school heads' perception and curriculum implementation. Qualitative analysis takes a systematic approach to understand the interaction of the variables in a complex situation. One of the aims of qualitative research is to collect detailed information from a smaller number of people via in-depth interviews, direct observation, and reading documents to provide a 'thick description' for analysis. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the strengths of the qualitative data which are rich and holistic have the potential to reveal the complexity and the interrelationship of the variables nested in the real context. The data provides clues for identifying the relations among variables, discovering categories and patterns.

In qualitative research, direct contact with research objects, school heads as in the present study, can be arranged. As a researcher, attempts can be made to enter into the natural fields such as schools to meet the people whom we study, and to have face-to-face interviews with the school heads to gather the data. This approach tries to reveal what is involved in the **process** as against concentrating on the **outcome** obtained. From the inductive analysis of the qualitative data, it can unfold the connections between the variables and a more sophisticated formulation of hypothesis can be made to explain the situation. The research process provides more flexibility in adjusting the research questions/design to arrive at a closer approximation to reveal the 'social reality' through answering the research questions.

b. Relevance to the present study

Since 2001, Hong Kong has been undergoing a major education change at both primary and secondary levels. The more complicated issue is the corresponding change in the school curriculum linking the changes in education structure to meet the needs of the requirement of human capital in the 21st century. The change in scope and depth is unparalleled within the time frame when the implementation of the new senior secondary curriculum starts in September 2009. It is a complicated process of change with interaction among different factors, key players and contextual variables. Among different stakeholders, the school head is one of the key figures who is facing a host of contending variables and situational factors affecting their decisions. The qualitative research approach helps enhance a better understanding of the factors

affecting school heads' decision, the relationship among the variables and how the school heads weight the competing variables in curriculum implementation.

1.6 Importance of the research

(A) Practical consideration

Working in the Education Bureau and being involved in the design of the new MCE curriculum, this study has both professional and personal relevancy. The research finding will provide input for the day-to-day running of my professional task. An enhanced understanding of the perception of the school heads of the curriculum will have implication upon the dissemination strategies such as fine-tuning the strategies to enhance school heads' understanding of the curriculum, the rationale of the design of the curriculum as well as their role in curriculum implementation.

The study of school heads' perception provides additional information for consideration in the delivery of the professional development programmes for school heads. It will throw light on issues such as: Are there any critical factors to be taken into account in the strategies for successful dissemination of curriculum change? What kind of professional development programme is appropriate for developing school leadership? Do school heads need a self understanding of their values orientation? Is additional training on instructional leadership necessary to deepen school heads' knowledge of the curricular role? Hopkins (2000) has pointed out that instructional leadership is a necessary condition for effective learning for students. It is suggested that 'the purpose of leadership is to improve teaching and learning' (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002).

(B) Theoretical consideration

The study helps illuminate leadership theory through an in-depth understanding of perception, curriculum implementation and axiological aspect of school leadership. Similarities and differences arising from managing the new MCE curriculum could be identified from a sample of 6 school heads. The contribution of the present research in terms of theoretical and practical considerations, as adapted from Gunter (2005: 170) can be tabulated as follows:

Values of the research for theory and practice

Theory	Practice
(a) Understanding meanings	(b) Understanding practice
<i><u>Ontological and epistemological consideration: to develop understanding</u></i>	<i><u>Instrumental consideration : to provide strategies for informed practice</u></i>

<u>of meanings of school leadership</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the meaning of school leadership? • What is school heads' interpretation of the MCE curriculum? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do school heads appreciate the challenges in managing the curriculum change in MCE? • How do school heads assess the school capacity in managing the curriculum change?
(c) Coping with change	(d) Delivering change
<u>Axiological consideration: to clarify the values and values conflicts in deciding what should be done</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the value orientation of school heads? • How do school heads' values orientation affect school leadership in decision making and resolving values dilemma and competing priorities against the new MCE curriculum? 	<u>Evaluative consideration: to assess the impact of school heads upon curriculum change</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the impact of the decisions of the school heads upon the implementation of the MCE curriculum? • What is the impact of the interplay between the school heads, the school context and key players in delivering the curriculum change?

1.7 Outline of the thesis

Chapter 1 briefly outlines the research context for the present study and gives a short account of the key issues involved in the research, the research process, methodology, the importance of the research in terms of practice and theory.

Chapter 2 is on literature review which reflects the position of the present study amidst the literature in school leadership through critically reviewing the strengths and gaps found in existing research literature related to the theme. This chapter helps reflect on the role and place of the present study and its contribution to the body of the literature and in the local context of Hong Kong schools in coping with the new MCE curriculum.

Chapter 3 specifies and delineates the main research question and some specific research questions within the theoretical framework for constructing the questions. It elucidates the rationale behind the formulation of the research questions within the parameters of the boundary of the present research on school leadership, decision making, managing curriculum change and the context of Hong Kong primary schools.

Chapter 4 concentrates on examining the research methodology. Justifications are

provided in selecting the research paradigm for the study. It also spells out in details the methodology and means adopted to ensure trustworthiness of the research design, administration and execution covering sampling, methods of data collection, analysis and presentation. Protection of the interest of research subjects is also spelt out to ensure that research ethics is being upheld.

Chapter 5 is about data analysis and presentation. Content analysis of the interviews is used for data reduction. Meanings are deduced and inferred from studying the transcripts.

Chapter 6 focuses on the concepts derived from data to recognise patterns and variables affecting school heads' perception. Research findings for construction of knowledge in school leadership theory are identified and discussed.

Chapter 7 is a summary of the findings from the study. Contributions, recommendations and the constraints in using the findings for possible transfer of the knowledge are highlighted. Implications for further research, both in leadership theory and school leadership in practice, are suggested.

Chapter 2 Literature review

"The starting point for improvement is not system change,
not change in others around us, but change in ourselves"
(Fullan, 1991: 167).

2.1 Researches in school leadership: ontological and epistemological perspective

School leadership is a theme of academic interest in educational research but there is a lack of shared understanding about what leadership is and should be in the field. Resting on different ontological assumptions, the interpretation of school leadership is rather divergent. Although there is no clear agreed definition of the concept of leadership (Cuban, 1988; Leithwood et al, 1999; Yukl, 2002), a central element of many definitions of leadership is an influence process in which the followers are induced towards goal achievement (Fidler, 1997: 25). The focus of educational research on school leadership will shift, depending on the aim of the research and interpretation of aspect of leadership being studied.

Among the various types of educational researches on school heads, Richman and Allison (2003: 44) have identified over thirty five prominent theories about school leadership from over thirty years of inquiry. The approaches to school leadership can be categorized and interpreted as a function of the individual, a function of the interaction between individuals and a function of the situation located within the school as an organization. Three conceptions of leadership as autonomous, interactive and contextual are proposed. The autonomous conception of school leadership focuses on a set of single variables such as individual to be independent of followers, portraying the trait and behavioural aspect of leadership. The interactive theories of leadership emphasize the relationship between leaders and followers. Contextual theories stress the importance of situational circumstances in determining school leadership as well as the interplay among leaders, followers and situation. These three conceptions of leadership range from a study of single variable to the more complicated interaction among different variables. Each approach in the study of school leadership has its distinctive features, depending on its focus in analyzing school leadership.

A study by Heck and Hallinger (1999) revealed that the concepts of instructional leadership (Heck et al, 1990) and transformational leadership (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000) form the two main tenets in the empirical studies on school leadership for more than two decades. The two main areas of studies emphasize the role of school

leadership facilitating ‘first order changes’ versus ‘second order changes’ (Hallinger, 2003: 338). For instructional leadership, it focuses more on ‘first order’ changes by influencing conditions with direct impact on quality of curriculum and instruction (Cuban, 1984; 1988). However, the majority of the researches focus on school leadership covering concepts of empowerment, shared leadership and organizational learning. The role of school leadership is on ‘second order changes’ aiming at changing the normative structure of organization (Leithwood, 1994), that is the capacity of the organization to cope with changes.

2.1.1 Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership emerges from early researches in 1980s on effective schools in the US elementary schools which are associated with strong, directive leadership focusing on curriculum and instruction (Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). The importance of instructional leadership derives mainly from studies examining change implementation (Hall & Hord, 1987), school effectiveness (Edmonds, 1979), school improvement (Edmonds, 1979) and program improvement (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). From the studies, school leadership is observed to play a key role contributing to successful change, school improvement and school effectiveness.

Effective schools are usually associated with strong instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986) in which instructional leaders are goal-oriented and academically oriented, fostering high expectations of students (Mortimore, 1993). Hallinger (2000) has identified three dimensions of instructional leadership construct including defining school mission; managing instructional programme and promoting a positive school learning climate. The instructional leadership model is the most common conceptualization of school leadership used in empirical researches between 1980 and 2000. The researches have produced the findings concerning the behaviour of the instructional leaders and school outcomes such as school effectiveness and student achievements (Hallinger, 2003). These researches suggest that school heads contribute to school effectiveness and student achievement indirectly through affecting what happens in schools. School heads are influential in defining the purpose and mission of schools and through setting alignment of school structure towards the school mission (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a; 1996b).

The research evidence reflecting the role of school heads as instructional leadership is derived mainly from small-sized elementary schools in the US with reference to schools of low socio-economic status and it is questionable of its applicability in

different school context such as large schools; with students of different socio-economic status and at secondary level (Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). It has been raised if school heads are really capable of combining the 'will and skill' as instructional leaders to raise school and student performance with the required expertise (Barth, 1986; Cuban, 1988; Lambert, 1998).

2.1.2 Transformational leadership

In 1990s, new interpretation of the concept of leadership such as shared leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership and transformational leadership prevailed because the approach of instructional leadership was questioned as it concentrated mainly on school leadership as the only source of the expertise, power and authority. Transformational leadership predominated around 1990s in the study of school leadership (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000b; Silins and Mulford, 2002) with the focus on studying the schools' capacity to manage change and ultimately support practices of teaching and learning. Transformational leadership is considered to be distributed among different key players with shared vision and commitments.

Transformational leadership emerged as a reaction against the top-down management driven initiatives of educational changes and the evidence from effective schools researches in 1980s (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a; 1996b). It was raised that leadership could be shared and could be coming from various stakeholders (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000a; Louis & Marks, 1998; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Transformational leadership rests on different motivational assumptions, behavioural components such as understanding the needs of individuals instead of organizational objectives as well as a bottom-up philosophy instead of top down approach. The focus is on transforming relationship in orchestrating change for improvement. Shared and distributive leadership is a characteristic in which changes are brought by bottom-up participation (Day et al., 2001; Jackson, 2000).

Instructional leadership focusing on direct impact on curriculum and instruction while transformational leadership is on increasing the capacity of others to produce the impact on learning, that is, to create a climate for change. Leithwood (1994) considers 'people effects' which include changes of behaviour rather than change in specific instructional practice as the cornerstone of transformational leadership (Bottery, 2001). Leithwood considered that the direct influence of school heads as transformational leaders is on fostering group goals, setting of role model, provision of individualized support and intellectual stimulation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999b). Other studies also reinforced the influence of transformational leadership arising from the commitment

to change, facilitation of organizational learning by school heads and their influence upon teachers' perception of reform changes (Bogler, 2001; Day et al., 2001; Fullan, 2002). The transformational leadership exhibits characteristics distinct from instructional leadership in its distributive nature of school leadership and the importance of capacity building of the various key players in schools. However, given its distributive nature, transformational leadership, is not limited to a single individual, and thus it will be difficult and complicated to measure the impact and effects. Evidence suggests that there is considerable resistance by teachers to participate in leading and shouldering shared leadership (Bishop & Mulford, 1996; Sheppard & Brown, 1996).

The conception of instructional leadership and transformational leadership has developed over different periods. Instructional leadership developed from researches in effective schools characterized by top-down management in the 1980s. It was replaced in 1990s by transformational leadership subsequent to the school restructuring and later moved towards a mixed mode of educational reform with both top-down and bottom-up management. However in the 21st century, the worldwide trend in educational reform shifted its focus back to learning and teaching and the discussion of instructional leadership was revived again. The emphasis on principal training also reverts back to instructional leadership (Gewirtz, 2003; Huber, 2003; Stricherz, 2001a, 2001b).

2.1.3 The search for alternative theory to school leadership

Central to the role of school leadership is its place in affecting the delivery of curriculum. Based on the literature review of the predominant studies on school leadership above in sections 2.1.1-2.1.2, the researches base on the ontological and epistemological claims of school leadership from attaining academic achievements as one of the indicators of effective school. The functions of school heads are more concerned with the academic progress of students. The roles of school leaders are perceived as supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum and monitoring student progress with the aim for developing high standards and expectations for continuous improvement (Hallenger, 2003). The focus on studying the axiological aspect of school heads' values, perception, decisions and school practices as well as their interrelationship is not noticeable. The role of school leadership is construed by Cuban (1988) as engaging in managerial and maintenance role which is 'embedded in the DNA of the principalship' (quoted in Hallinger, 2003: 335). The normative aspect of school leadership is seldom touched upon. The discussion of the role of school heads in a larger context covering value issues such as

the aims of education, what is worth learning for students and the essence of education is seldom addressed. The impact of school heads upon curriculum delivery is less clear and the search for an alternative theory in support of the present empirical study of school leadership relating to perception and curriculum implementation is deemed necessary for the following reasons:

- a. The values aspect of school leadership is not emphasized in these research studies. The axiological aspect of school leadership, with an implication on the direction of the running of the schools and the way to manage change deserves more in-depth study.
- b. The role of school leadership in managing curriculum change is not highlighted and there is a perforation in both theory and practice in school leadership in managing curriculum change.

School leadership is considered as second to classroom instruction as a factor contributing to what students learn in schools (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Leithwood and Jantzi (1996b) have identified school leadership as an exogenous variable with significant impact on school organizations and on students, however, the influence flows not in one direction, but is 'a complex set of interaction between leadership, school conditions, and family educational culture in the production of student outcomes.' (1996b: 471). If we take leadership as an influence process, it helps much to examine the goals or direction to be achieved and the action to be taken. Leadership needs to be grounded on some firm personal, professional and organizational values as education is considered as a moral enterprise. Bush and Glover (2003: 3) have defined leadership as a 'process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purpose. It involves inspiring and supporting others towards the achievement of a vision for the school which is based on clear personal and professional values.' The role of school leadership in affecting change, including curriculum change is beyond doubt.

Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) concur the view of the importance of values and emphasize that leadership should start with the 'character' of leaders, expressed in terms of personal values, self-awareness and emotional and moral capability. Moos, et al (1998: 70) reinforce the importance of leaders' 'clear sets of educational and personal values' and stress the need for a 'clear personal vision'. A study by Day et al (2001) of twelve schools in England and Wales reveals that good leaders need to be informed and communicate with clear set of personal and educational values

representing the moral purpose of schools.

2.2 Perception, values, attitudes and school leadership

2.2.1 Consensus for change: rhetoric or reality?

Education change is a common place for school improvement. It is too presumptuous to think that good intention will suffice to bring about change as desired. To realise the change as planned is a very complex process as there are many challenges to be overcome. It is unrealistic to assume that the individuals involved in the change would understand and believe in the change (Leonard, 1996). Without an adequate understanding of the change and attitude of the individuals involved, efforts to implement the curriculum change will tend to be feeble and fragile.

Second, not all the changes are agreed upon by different stakeholders especially at the initial stage. The extent of success of the change will depend on whether or not shared values are created among these organizational members. Fullan (1991:5) has remarked that 'solutions must come through the development of shared meaning.' The interface between individual and collective meaning and action in everyday solutions is where change stands or falls'. To perform the role in building up the espoused values and shared meaning among the stakeholders will mainly rely on the school heads. An attempt to understand how school heads construe the change will provide an additional dimension for a comprehensive picture of the change process.

Third, even if relevant stakeholders agree that changes are worthwhile, there are different perceptions on the understanding and on how the change is to be coped with. Different perspectives on the curriculum change yield different approaches to deal with the issue. Among the many stakeholders involved in the curriculum change, interpretations will vary, depending on the role of the stakeholders. The perception of school head is one of the key variables in managing change that warrants an in-depth study.

2.2.2 Perception, values and attitudes

Perception is a process of attaining awareness, understanding of information which involves receiving, collecting, analyzing and apprehending information with the mind or senses (Merriam-Webster dictionary, Encarta on line dictionary). The interpretation of information is a result of the interplay between past experiences and one's culture while values are inescapably involved in the interpretation.

Value and sentiment are regarded as sources of human actions. A working definition

of values suggested by Kluckhohn ---- ‘values are a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action’ (quoted in Hodgkinson 1997:111) ---- is adopted for its robustness. Kluckhohn refers values as conceptions of the desirable which highlights the importance and its functions in making choices, in determining what is worthwhile, good and right.

Values are key variables in building up consensus among key players of organization for making change. As suggested by Rokeach (1979: 48), values are one of the important standards to determine what is worth and not worth arguing about and influencing others to believe in. Values are also criteria individuals employ to guide the processes of these conscious and unconscious justification and rationalization of action, thought and judgement. Successful change has to come through shared meaning at individual level which depends on whether the change is valued and then at an organizational level in which the change is collectively valued (Leonard, 1996). Baker (2002) argues that values determine how we interpret things, establish priorities, make choices, reach decisions and guide action.

Values and attitudes are interrelated. Attitude is evaluative statement of events or objects and it can be favourable or unfavourable, positive or negative, reflecting how one feels about them. The attitude one holds will determine whether or not one accepts the objects. There are three components of attitudes namely cognition, affect and behaviour. For example, the belief and recognition that disrespecting and discriminating others is wrong (which is a value statement) represents the cognitive part of an attitude. The affective component of attitude is the emotion and feeling reflecting like or dislike. The behavioural aspect is the intention to behave with respect to the attitude one holds. The attitude one adopts will affect not only the motivation to act but also the way how an issue is perceived, analysed and handled.

Values and attitude are some of the key factors determining leadership practice, frame personal views and views of others (Sergiovanni, 1992, Sarros et al 1999, Baker 2002, Haynes, 2002). Sergiovanni conceptualises school leadership in four types as bureaucratic, psychological, rational-technical, professional and moral. Bureaucratic leadership is considered as the lowest stage of moral development as it only relies on mandates, rules and regulations, job descriptions, expectations and outcomes as a means of monitoring staff and students. Psychological leadership draws the authority from motivating human relations and is mainly transactional in nature with the rewards and getting the work done philosophy. The technical-rational authority of

leadership rests on knowledge base but Sergiovanni believes teaching practice too idiosyncratic and complex to be standardized as effective. A higher level of leadership authority is in the professional and moral domains. According to Sergiovanni, if leadership is oversimplified as bureaucratic, psychological, and technical-rational authority, then school leadership will overlook the importance of professional and moral authority (commitment).

‘The heart of leadership has to do with what a person believes, values, dreams about and is committed to but it is more than vision. It is the person’s interior worlds; reflection, combined with personal vision and an internal system of values, which becomes the basis of leadership strategies and actions.’
(Sergiovanni, 1992:7)

Values and attitudes affect perception and behaviour as they influence people in deciding alternatives. Choice involves deciding what ‘ought’ or ‘ought not’ which resonates with Sergiovanni’s (1992, 2002) consideration that a school head, as moral leadership, not only ‘doing the things right’ but has to decide ‘doing the *right* things *right*’. Sergiovanni contends that values and commitment provide the kind of inspiration, meaning and motivation that ‘comes from within’ and school as a community that is concerned with relationships, shared values, commitments and obligations.

What has been advocated is moral leadership which is developed by many authors (Etzioni, 1998, 1993; 1986, Hodgkinson, 1991, 1996 Sergiovanni, 1991, 1992, 1996), Anello (1992) and Fullan (2002). It is argued that a school is different from enterprise or corporation in which school has moral obligation to educate the students. There are normative dimensions of education as schools are serving the young and school personnel is obliged to nurture and impart them the desirables for personal growth and development. As such, core values such as commitment, responsibility etc are fundamental in education and are to be expected of school leadership to make decisions and to steer the school.

2.2.3 Values and school leadership

Values and attitudes held by school leadership set the direction for the running of school. Hargreaves and Fullan (1998: 105) consider school heads are “gatekeepers and gate-openers of their schools”. Deal and Peterson (1994) consider that consistency in school head’s behavior and connection to convictions serve to mold core values as well as to encourage progress.

‘Technical problems require the analytical, rational problem-solving capabilities of a well-organized manager. Symbolic dilemmas require the sensitive, expressive touch of an artistic and passionate leader. Tomorrow’s principal in our view will be asked to be a combination of both.’ (Deal and Peterson, 1994:113).

While Sergiovanni (1996) considers the hand of leadership is the ‘decisions, actions, and behaviors of the leader’ (1996: 8) while ‘the heart of leadership is what a person believes, values, dreams about, and is committed to - the person’s personal vision...it is the person’s interior world, which becomes the foundation of her or his reality’(1996:7). The moral value of school leadership is shared by (Day, 2000) with the call for value-led school leadership as school heads require to make decisions and alternatives deciding compromise, sacrifice and trade-offs in educational policies (Haynes, 2002; Baker 2002). Moral leadership is important where school heads have to possess some educational core values for decision-making such as the practice of reflection (Schön, 1984), dialogue (Noddings, 2002), setting goals (Sergiovanni, 1998) and vision (Wheatley, 1999).

Maxwell proposes four truths about passion and its relationship to effective leaders. Passion is considered the first step toward achievement as passion increases willpower; passion changes person; passion allows people to become a more dedicated and productive person. He argues that “A leader with great passion and few skills always out performs a leader with great skills and no passion” (Maxwell 1999: 85). Whether or not a school is led towards realising the school vision and mission will depend upon the school leaders’ perception and goal. Central to a school is learning which is the core business of a school’s being and the fundamental purpose of school education. All school practices are expected to be orchestrated to facilitate and maximize students’ learning. The curriculum reform in Hong Kong is developed with the broad aim in mind to enable students to improve both academically and in personal enrichment. It is easily overlooked that school heads also play curricular role through creating conditions to assist learning such as decisions for curriculum implementation.

As shown in the course of preparation of principalship (school year 2009/10-2010/11) organised by the Education Bureau in Hong Kong, one out of six core areas of principalship training course is on ‘Learning, teaching and curriculum.’ Under the core area of learning, teaching and curriculum, school heads are expected to co-ordinate to achieve coherence across the curriculum and to ensure alignment between the curriculum, teaching and learning. Together with their school communities, school heads have to ensure that all students experience a broad,

balanced and relevant curriculum and learning experiences.

It is within the realm of rational expectation that school heads are assumed to possess a coherent set of educational values to base for school improvement. These values serve as fundamental principles on which to develop and design their schools and to provide consistency across all aspects of their leadership. A school head is expected to possess certain values of an education professional. Apart from personal values, there are mega values in education to be championed such as whole-person development of students, equal opportunities for all students, acting in the best interest of students. The Hong Kong Centre for the Development of Educational Leadership, Chinese University of Hong Kong, which provides principalship training for Hong Kong schools (2000), has identified eight pivotal values, namely:

1. Learning centeredness
2. Innovativeness
3. Lifelong learning
4. Education-for-all
5. Service-orientation
6. Empowerment
7. Equity and fairness
8. Whole-person development

2.3 School heads' dilemmas: values and decisions

School heads are inundated by various types of dilemmas in their execution of the professional role. This is especially so in the era of education change in Hong Kong. The magnitude and scope of education change have brought uncertainties and contradictions to school heads. School heads are subject to different expectations from stakeholders as well as their personal beliefs and values. There may not be a state of harmony between what school heads are expected and the changes taking place inside schools. Many dilemmas are perennial and some are added as a result of the education and curriculum reform with higher expectations upon school heads. These dilemmas are by nature 'conflictual situations that demand irreconcilable choices because of the existence of competing, deeply rooted values' (Walker, 2002: 206). Although the dilemmas are grounded in values, they usually emerge from structures, resources, relationship and the interactions between them. Cuban (1994) proposed that a practical understanding of these values conflicts and the way they are managed by school heads is needed. Dimmock (1996) has suggested analysis of the dilemmas for enhancing the awareness of school heads' conception of their professional lives in the continual restructuring. Holmes (1965) has pointed out that dilemmas stem from the

asynchronous changes taking place in society and education. Dimmock (1996) considers the asynchronous changes are ‘within and between norms and values, institutional practices and structures, and resources’ (Walker, 2002: 207). School heads have to make decisions out of the dilemmas and alternative choice. This would require judgement, compromise, sacrifices, trade-offs in educational policies (Haynes, 2002).

Walker (2002) has identified five themes of dilemmas in Hong Kong schools as cultural values (e.g. hierarchy, relationships), teaching and learning beliefs (e.g. format and style of teaching and learning), structures, personal conundrums (e.g. personal choice of career, survival) and expectations upon school heads (different roles of school heads, low or high public profile, internal school development or external participation in society), both internal or external to the school (Figure 2.1). All these dilemmas have the root in values conflicts in which curriculum delivery is an important part of them. In managing the new MCE curriculum, school heads have to face the dilemmas or new dilemmas arising from its delivery in schools.

The four components of schooling and three levels of dimensions affecting the school heads

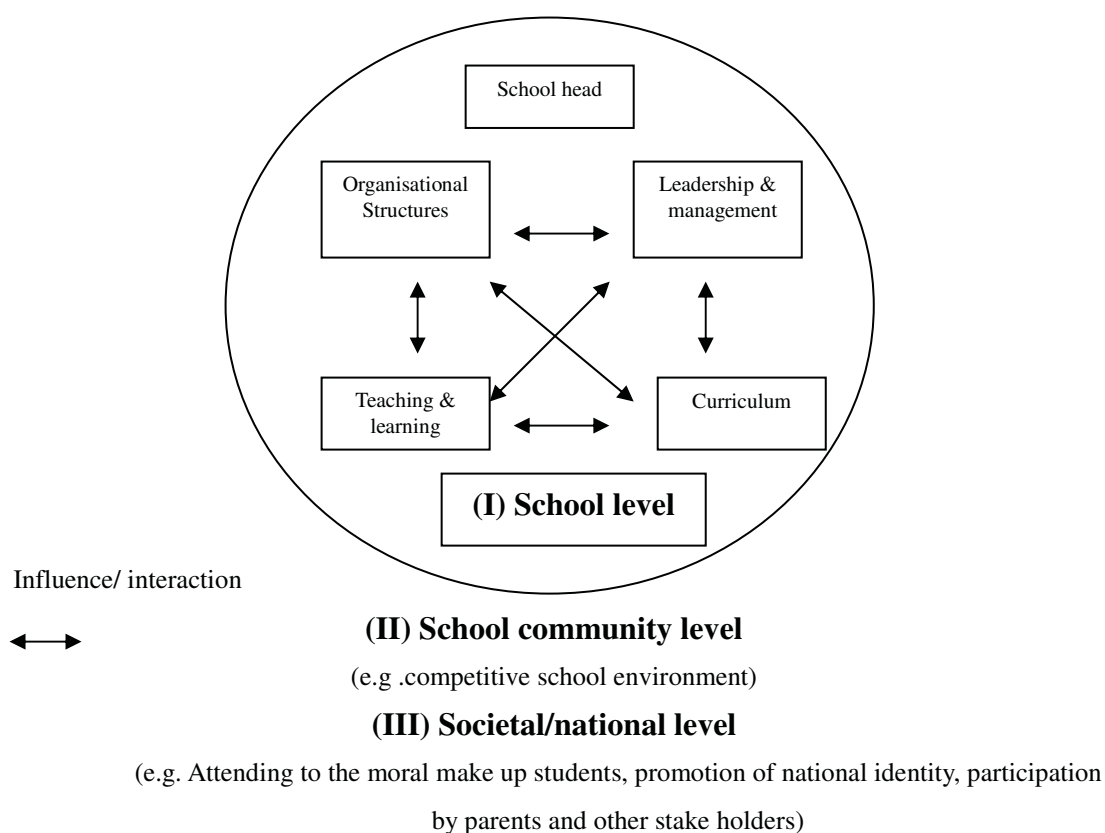


Figure 2.1 Adapted from Cross-cultural comparative insights into educational leadership and leadership by Walker and Dimmock (2002: 18)

Dimmock (2002) considers leadership as a high order set of abilities such as goal setting, visioning and motivating in which a school head plays a distinctive role as from management which is about maintaining performance through supervision, coordination and control. Being the leader of school, a school head is situated at the centre of stress as their role of school head is expected to be accountable for the performance of their school and to steer the school as an organization to face the changes. School heads are facing various types of tensions and challenges in the period of turbulent times (Shapiro & Gross, 2008). School heads, being situated amidst the change turbulence, have to steer the schools to meet the demands for changes. To cope with the changes, the four domains of schooling within the school boundary covering organizational structures, the management and decision making process, curriculum and its implementation as well as the teaching and learning process will be affected and have to adjust accordingly (Figure 2.2). Among the various types of decisions, decision about curriculum implementation is one of value-laden issues.

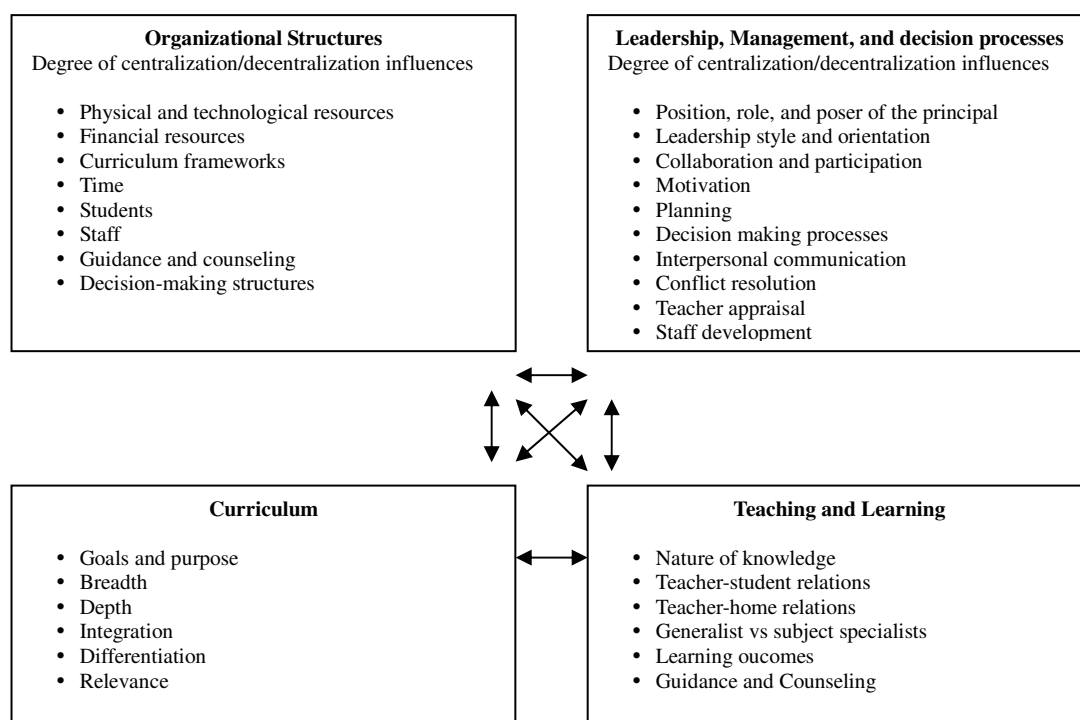


Figure 2.2 (Walker and Dimmock (2002: 21))

In Hong Kong, school heads, in setting of priorities areas, have to face the changing environment and the increasing competition among schools at district and territory level arising from demographic changes of student population. Another obvious change upon the school sector since the return of Hong Kong to the mainland China is the rising societal expectation for enhanced efforts to strengthen the national identity

of students through school curriculum. The promotion of national identity is one of the core values of the new MCE curriculum. The above aggregates of factors and forces of changes have heightened school heads' tension in setting of priorities. An exploration of school heads' perception, values and attitudes upon their curricular role will shed light on the normative aspect of school leadership.

2.4 Virtue ethics, character building and education

It has been argued that the purpose of education is to train the students to like and dislike what they ought, to love the good and hate the bad (Lewis, 1943:14-15). The main purpose of education is to let the young learn to praise what is praiseworthy and condemn that is not. Lewis cites ancient thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle to illustrate the defense of values and natural law which have to be inculcated through education (Lewis, 1943: 16). Lewis (1943) in "The Abolition of Man" discusses the concept of values and the consequences if such values are denied in education. Some of the basic values as parts of the *Tao* – the natural law are identified. The *Tao*, resembling Confucian and Taoist usage, is referred as the right path of values and behaviour acknowledged in human societies to be supported by different cultures. There is a set of values that has been shared, with minor differences, by cultures from the East and West, the Christian, the Pagan, and the Jew. Lewis prompts us to examine the moral groundings which enable us to think who we are and suggests embracing a life lived under something greater than oneself and to teach a kind of life under virtue for younger generation. The book (consisting of three lectures on education) induces us to revisit and contemplate the role of virtues ethics in education, to teach our young to learn to love what is good rather than being trained to become know-it-all but believes in nothing.

Similarly, to address the question raised by Russell (1960, quoted in Huang 2006:158) concerning what kind of student to nurture, it deems necessary to deliberate what is worth learning and the aim of education, to echo what Lewis has highlighted. Apart from intellectual development, does education need to nurture the mind and soul of student as autonomous individual? The discussion relates to virtue ethics which is about the cultivation of virtuous character traits and its relation to education. Character is the central issue of being a good person. What sort of person ought I to be is a fundamental question to answer in which virtue ethics entails a richer description. Virtue ethics emphasizes morality as character of moral agent/individual. The development of one's character is no less important alongside intellectual development in education. The discourse can be traced back to the oriental and occidental philosophies of virtue ethics such as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and

the role of training and education. It has been argued that Aristotelian virtue ethics necessitates character development as a matter of education in the cultivation of positive human attachments and inhibition of anti social tendencies (Carr, 2004: 225).

2.4.1 Aristotle and Confucius conception of virtue ethics and moral education

Aristotle defined virtue (arête) as a quality of character that makes life well lived and a good life is a life lived in accordance with virtue. The morality comes from intrinsic values in which Aristotle considers that virtue safeguards human relations. This is in parallel with what Confucius is advocating of ethics of character in Chinese culture. Confucius goes on further than Aristotle by stating how to live a good life and open up more situational considerations in identifying right solutions to particular ethical dilemmas. Confucianism is more focused on virtue ethics in that it suggests how a consideration can be made which will affect our closest loving relationships, then to extend our responsibilities towards others and that is how character is built (Chong, 2007).

Aristotle's conception of 'arête' (excellence of character) and Confucius's notion of 'ren 仁' are generally referred as virtue (Yu, 1998). They are used differently as 'ren' consists of two components, meaning 'human 人' and 'two 二' respectively, pointing out the importance of human relationships. The Confucius's conception of teaching is to let everyone learn to be good and becomes a person of 'ren'. In Athenian philosophy, arête is associated with aristos (excellent) and the goodness of a kind of thing which is translated as 'excellence'. While for Aristotle, something's virtue is relative to its own proper function (ergon). As human beings are concerned, virtue is human excellence or goodness regarding human function. Philosophically, arête is related to human function while 'ren' to human relations (Yu, 1998: 323).

As recorded in the utterances in Analects regarding Confucius's idea, the fundamentals of 'ren' is 'to love man' and 'to return to li 禮' ('li' ranges from 'rites' to 'propriety', 'ceremony', 'decorum' and 'manners'. Between the two, 'ren' is considered as love of fundamental meaning while the relation between 'ren' and 'li' can be understood in the following ways. The conformity to 'li' without inner feeling is only a formality and without any human goodness. For example, to love your parents and brothers as desirable quality can be coming from a robber or wicked person which illustrates the gap between love and human goodness. In this way, what is advocated is learning of 'li' which helps bring about human goodness and 'ren' has to be conformed with 'li' which is the totality of socially acceptable behaviour and lifestyles of both moral and non moral which is equivalent with Aristotle's ethos or

social custom/mores and cultural settings (Yu,1998: 326). 'Ren' is viewed as a comprehensive virtue (Yu, 1998: 324) all along with being clever, trustworthy, forthright, courageous, unbending etc. which are moral qualities determining human goodness (Chong, 1999: 298, 305).

'Ren' is considered to be the highest virtue and is referred as 'the highest ideal of moral excellence, the most difficult of attainment, and the highest development of the individual's distinctive nature' (Chong, 2007: 24). 'Ren' referred as humanity, benevolence, love is the summation of all the other virtues (Chong, 2007). 'Ren' signifying excellent character in accordance with 'li 禮' (rites), 'zhong 忠' (loyalty to one's true nature), 'shu 恕' (reciprocity) and 'xiao 孝' (filial piety) will constitute 'de 德' (virtue). All these ethical concepts are interconnected forming character ethics in which character formation is crucial (Chong, 2007). It is emphasized that the four 'xin 心' (the heartmind or Chinese psyche), namely compassion, shame, respect and a sense of right and wrong will develop into four virtues of 'ren 仁' (benevolence), 'yi 義' (dutifulness), 'li 禮' (observance of rites), 'zhi 智' (wisdom)' (Chong, 2007: 45). 'Xiaoti 孝悌' (filial piety) is the root of 'ren' which suggests family as an important social institution to nurture virtues.

Education is viewed by Confucius as the process of cultivation and is regarded as an extension of family education. Education (教育) in Chinese character, means 'jiao 教' (teaching) and 'yu 育' (nurturing) (Yu, 1998:337). This highlights that the purpose of education is not simply imparting knowledge, but also for shaping correct behaviour and internalizing virtues into the character which is referred as 'character building' (Hansen, 1994 quoted in Yu 1998:37). This implies that education is to be achieved by parents, teachers and noble people surrounding an individual that suggests parents and teachers playing the role in nurturing the character of individuals. To set a model for students is regarded as an important means for developing ethical behaviour (Yu, 1998:337). As expounded in the Analects, Confucius says that 'people are close to one another by nature or 'xing 性' and they diverge as a result of repeated practice 'xi 習' (Chong, 2007:1). 'Xi' as used by Confucius has educational implication which means that practices need to be learned at due times. 'Xi' links to learning within the context of self-cultivation and practices in which one learns in the sense of instilling in oneself virtuous habits (Chong, 2007:1). In the process of learning, individuals have to conform to 'li 禮' (rites). The 'zhi 質' which is interpreted as the 'basic stuff' (Chong, 2007:1) or substantial individual character will be modified through practice and self cultivation learning. Confucius emphasizes very much character motivation and attitudes over general principles. Role modeling is one of the ways to attain this

kind of greatness that requires practice, patience, perseverance etc (Yu, 1998).

For Aristotle, human virtue is the good performance of human function which is translated as 'the soul's activity which expresses reason'. Aristotle distinguishes virtue into two kinds as intellectual virtue ('dianoetike arête', or excellence of intelligence) and moral/ethical virtue ('ethike arête' or excellence of ethical character) (Yu, 1998: 325). *Intellectual virtue*, such as wisdom, understanding, prudence resulting from teaching, is the excellence of exercising reason while *ethical virtue*, such as temperance, courage, justice resulting from habit through actions and responses to situations, as excellence obeying reason. Ethical/moral virtues are considered as states of the desiring part of the soul while intellectual virtues as states of the rational part of the soul (Curren, 1999: 67). The human good such as 'happiness', 'flourishing' or 'well being' (eudaimonia) turns out to be the soul's activity expressing virtue. It is of great importance to raise people to gain the skills and are able to use reason to discover how best to act in any given situation. With reasoning develops, people can think of oneself which is the start of practical wisdom (phronesis). When combined with habitual responses, it leads to being virtuous. Aristotle's distinction of the two virtues points out dual dimensions of human souls as purely rational animal and as social animal. In this way, Aristotle suggests an expansion of the study of ethics in the study of moral knowledge and reasoning in developing good habits of feeling and action (Yu, 1998: 325). The interdependence between intellectual and moral virtues are important in Aristotle's theory and the human good which has strong implication for contemporary moral education (Curren, 1999: 69).

'...all the virtues are forms of practical wisdom,...it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without moral virtue....

(Nicomachean Ethics VI 13 1144b16-114512 quoted in Curren, 1999: 70)

In Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics, the pursuit of eudaimonia is the sum of what is worth seeking. Through this process, character building is crucial and goes with virtue in making up a good character (Kupperman, 1999:200). Aristotle's *golden mean* is central for character building. The discussion of mean is important in Aristotle's ethical thinking which states that virtue is a point between two vices (a state between an excess and deficiency). In the book of Nicomachean Ethics, virtues are considered to be the midpoint of two opposite vices. For example, courage is the point of moderation between rashness (excess) and cowardice (deficiency), patience lies between irascibility and lack of spirit, modesty lies between shyness and

shamelessness, temperance (self control) lies between licentiousness and insensibility etc. It is noted that the mean is about the proper emotional response to situations between an excess and deficiency. The determination of the mean requires judgement between two extremes and the judgement is context and situation specific, rather than following a rule or decision procedure (Kupperman, 1999:201). The ability to find the mean is an aspect of character which includes intelligence, moral imagination and sensitivity that are not formed at birth but need to be trained and developed (Kupperman, 1999). Education of character is not simply implanting something dogmatically for resolving problems of life but involves the shaping of development of good character which includes some virtues such as honesty, fortitude, considerations etc. Good character is more than a collective sum of a 'bag of virtues' (Kohlberg, 1981: 31). A working definition of character is proposed by Kupperman (1991:17) as 'a person's normal pattern of thought and action, especially with respect to concerns and commitments in matters affecting the happiness of others or of that person, and most especially in relation to moral choices'. Education of character is to make or shape souls (Kupperman, 1999: 202) or 'personmaking' in Confucius' ethics (Hall and Ames, 1987). Character of education, not only aims at developing the dispositions and abilities of 'what a person is like' but also a person able to make an ethical choice.

In the teaching of virtue, both Aristotle and Confucius consider good habits as the foundation. Habit formation is the heart of the education of character especially at early age. 'In educating the young, we steer them by the rudders of pleasure and pain' (Aristotle, 1172a 21-22 quoted in Kupperman, 1999:205). In Confucianism, in developing the virtue, it is advocated through the four 'duan' (sprouts or beginnings) which are referred as heart-mind or 'xi' of compassion, shame, respect, right and wrong to be developed into virtue (Chong, 2007: 45). These four sprouts require reflective thought, nurturance and nourishment to develop. A person has to learn and be taught to judge and learn through practice to become habituated towards ethics. Hence people need to learn rational thinking and habituation when facing each situation to become good through training which takes a lifetime to perfect.

'The soul of the student must first have been cultivated by means of habits.... Like earth which is to nourish the seed...The character then must somehow be there already with a kinship to excellence.'

(Nicomachean Ethics 1179b23-27, 30-32 quoted in Kupperman, 1999: 206).

'Virtue, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in

the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching...while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit,...none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature'

(Nicomachean Ethics II 1 1103a 14-20 quoted in Curren, 1999:68)

It has been argued that moral virtues are not something to be taught or caught in verbal instruction but to be brought by children acting consistently in the right ways and the development of habits is the target for moral education. The development of good habits is the target for present day moral education (Curren, 1999:68).

Socrates and Plato consider philosophy and habit are equally important (Kupperman, 1999: 204). It is pointed out in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics that virtues of character have their sources in habituation (NE 1103a 15-17 quoted in Spiecker 1999:216). In contemporary approach to moral education, the awareness of value of the Good and the pursuit for psychological harmony is important to advance moral education that requires virtue (Kupperman, 1999:206). Spiecker (1999) argues that affective dimension is no less important in upbringing and development of students' character (Spiecker, 1988; Oakley, 1992) and moral behaviour is best nurtured in students by friendly, caring, just and trustworthy persons capable of friendship and loving inter-personal relationship (Spiecker, 1999 : 211).

To sum up, appraising both oriental and occidental philosophies, the building of character is accorded much importance in education and has its root in cultures. While noting that there could be variations in the interpretation of the types of virtues and character, to be valued in different social, cultural and political context, virtues have to be nurtured/learned in various social institutions including family, religion and education so that individual can become virtuous person.

2.4.2 Values and education for citizenship

There is hardly any single view on what civic education or education for citizenship is and it is a subject of hot debate in society where pluralistic values prevail. Hargreaves (2002) has suggested that civic education is about civic virtues and decent behaviour that adults wish to see in young people that include the ability to raise questions about the sort of society we live in and ways to improve it. Crick (1999) considers citizenship more than a subject but has to begin in school and radiating out. Crick stresses social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and political literacy as the three interrelated strands in citizenship education (Kerr, 2005). It has been suggested that civic education is for social cohesion by transmitting some values and

attitudes for common end (Dewey, 1916; Butts, 1980; Janowitz 1983; Lister 1991).

The promotion of many social and moral values leads to different theories underlying the implementation of civic or education for citizenship (Rowe, 2000). Two main tenets in organizing education for citizenship can be identified. Under the cognitive paradigm, descriptive approach emphasizing the study of the constitution and public institutions is the characteristics of constitutional knowledge model. The focus is on social cohesion and civic virtue while controversy is minimized. For the patriotic model, with its long tradition (Lister, 1988), the focus is to promote loyalty to the state and civic cohesion by sanitizing or under-emphasizing negative image of state (Rowe, 2000: 196). The model is essential for the development of a sense of national identity, which is prominent in new nations. The approach tends to promote uncritical view of the state. The religious model to civic education is reflected through the teaching of civic virtues through religious education. Such an approach is considered to obstruct development of pluralist civic education. It also aims at teaching of 'good citizenship'. Under the pluralist model, it aims at developing morally autonomous citizens to think critically and contribute to public discourse as the model admits that human experiences values conflicts, reflecting different values positions. The concepts of justice, fairness, rights, equality, diversity etc will be concepts to be developed in which judgement, critical thinking and higher order thinking skills will be necessary for analysis of conflicts of values. The modern concept of education for citizenship in the UK as an example is to help equip people to have an influence in public affairs and to make them confident in finding new forms of involvement (Crick Group report, 1998) while Kerr (2005) considers to develop in students a sense of making difference in society, building up the notion of student efficacy, is both the crux and challenge of citizenship education.

Under the affective paradigm to the promotion of education for citizenship, it emphasizes the development of moral motivation and empathy. Damon(1988) argues that higher empathizers are likely to promote pro-social behaviour. Education for citizenship tends to address questions for educating the feeling and thinking self through using cases, narratives, videos etc to let students experience the feelings of others and to articulate one's own feeling. Another model using school ethos to develop value pluralism and respect of the rights of others in which power has to be used responsibly. The respect for others can effectively take root through permeating the school life to let students learn experientially. For instance, the core values of respect could be learned in classroom situation by students observing how such a value is realized in school life. Pupil participation in decision making helps enrich

community life, internalizing the value of respect (Harber, 1995). Lister(1988) suggests that civic educators need to shape the institution instead of only concentrating on planning of curriculum. For community action model, the focus is on promoting citizenship through community action so that students learn to identify local and national issue. Community programme is part of the structured learning programme in Denmark, Portugal and France (Best, 1992 quoted in Rowe, 2000). It is noted that education for citizenship is an important socialization process, inculcating some values treasured in the respective societies but tends to be used as a means of nation building or rebuilding (Skilbeck, 1989, Rowe, 2000:201). Crick (1962, 1992) considers political virtues such as compromise, prudence, adaptability, variety etc are important as an alternative to ideology in politics. It is noted that the implementation of education for citizenship involves the promotion of universal core values, social and moral ethics with an aim to maintain social continuity, social cohesion, as well as facilitating social change within a modern concept of citizenship (Lister, 1991: 144).

2.5 Values and school leadership on curriculum implementation

2.5.1 School head and curricular leadership

Endowed with authority and resources, a school head holds a leadership position and is the main decision maker. A school head is the one to steer, direct and determine the direction of a school. His or her elevated role will influence the overall school landscape and practice, while directing the running of the school as an organization. Without the blessing from school head, it is difficult to imagine how an education policy can be executed in school smoothly.

Second, the role of a school head is not confined to a restrictive conception of administrative and managerial functions. As an education professional, the core business of a school is curriculum delivery and teaching and learning. The ultimate aim of schooling is for enrichment and development of students in cognitive, affective and skills domains. Schools in Hong Kong are situated at a time of change in education structure and school curriculum, stretching from basic education to senior secondary level. Understanding the role of school heads in the curriculum change is one of the central issues in education.

Third, a school head is not and should not be regarded as a manager preoccupied with procedural matters for execution. The values underpinning their perception are a subject of interest. Contribution of school heads in curriculum delivery is no longer limited to teachers, but has extended to other stakeholders including parents. Effective promotion of the new curriculum requires whole-school participation in which school

heads have greater influence than a subject department at the middle management level. The creation of conducive school ethos to support the implementation strategies is beyond the ability and authority of school teachers other than those at the leadership position.

Fourth, curriculum and instruction are at the heart of an educational enterprise but the center of controversy. Curriculum is always a contested area in terms of who sets the learning agenda, what to learn and how to learn. The new MCE curriculum which is basically a values education curriculum is a value-laden and contesting issue. Discussion and debates about the content, approach and the way to implement it have always been a hot topic for discussion. Unlike the convention that curriculum matters are considered to be the concern of the relevant subject teachers, the new MCE curriculum draws much attention and concern from various stakeholders. It is hypothesized that the way school heads interpret the new MCE curriculum will shape its mode of delivery.

2.5.2 Challenges in research in values in school leadership

The study of values and impact on educational administration and in particular curriculum implementation draws limited scholarly attention. The universal agreement of its importance and the amount of scholarly discussion on values seems to be an anomaly (Willower, 1995: 32). The role of values in the study of educational administration is not popular in research but has drawn greater attention in past decade. Ribbins (1999) has suggested an explanation concerning the development of thinking over the past fifty years of relatively low popularity on values in the academic discourse in education. Under the logical positivist thinking, values are not considered as a subject for meaningful discourse as it is difficult to verify areas not resting on the assumption that are objectively verifiable by observation. Such thinking is mediated in administration as represented by Herbert Simon's book on Administrative Behaviour in 1945 which belittles the place of values in administration. Research studies tend to move towards realistic tasks which produce objective and value-free knowledge of what works in administration while giving up the search for subjective and value-laden prescriptions of what ought to be done. A natural science methodology prevails and definition of operationality is the key in which verifiability is the essence for academic pursuit (Culbertson, 1965). The influence of logical positivism is one of the factors in which objectivity and generalisability are the commonly acclaimed criteria for educational research. The discussion of 'is' and 'ought to' issues or statements in education is distinct in which 'what is' study is more prevailing. The philosophical view underlying values issues is not so popular as

compared with the large amount of scholarship in empirical studies of positive issues on 'what is'.

Values are not prevalent topics for sophisticated modern discourse. Wilson (1997) describes the present age as skeptical and people do not like to talk about it in a scholarly manner. It is interesting to note that 'most of us have a moral sense but have tried to talk ourselves out of it and tend to flinch ... from addressing fundamental questions about values' (Wilson, 1997: ix).

The concern of being accused to be imposing one's values upon the others has produced reluctance in further pursuit of studies in values related studies. A systematic study and approach to values is daunting and requires much effort to establish its credibility and convincing outcome in research. It has been argued that values are too abstract for practical inquiry with reference to the scientific approach which requires the separation of fact from values. However, the importance of the understanding of values contributes to the comprehension of intent and purpose of action and school practices. There is a tendency to separate values as an influence on school leadership from practice. This may be due to the problems in empirical verifications given its elusive nature of values. Values are specifically excluded from the study in the pursuit for objective and scientific inquiry under the positive tradition which claims the beauty of being value-free. Nevertheless, the challenges in venturing into values study in education should not overshadow its importance upon educational practice.

It is phony to consider educational issues as value-free where objectivity is the predominant yardstick for considering education research. In the present study, the new MCE curriculum is values education by nature which is subjected to different views and interpretations in which perceptions by stakeholders have inextricable influence in determining curriculum delivery. Without an enhanced understanding of perception, values and attitudes of school heads regarding its implementation, comprehension of the curriculum delivery will be incomplete with loopholes in analysing the planned and realized curriculum in schools.

2.5.3 Values and curricular leadership

Values exist in a priori manner in daily life, choice and action. The prevalence of positivism tends to overlook values issue in education research, and facts and reality are perceived as an objective world which is rejected from the constructivist view. An analogy of values is just like what we can observe from the movement of waves and trees but the moment is the manifestation of the wind.

The view that education and school practices are perceived to be of facts and figures, rational process and decisions which are devoid of feelings, emotions, affect with unexamined values is contrary to our common sense and cognition. Without understanding the intent, motivations and purpose is incomplete study. The connectivity of the study of values and educational leadership is well embodied in Hodgkinson's (1991:164) comments

‘...educational administration is a special case within the general profession of administration... If leaders find themselves in what be called an arena of ethical excitement.....it embodies a heritage of value on the one hand, and is a massive industry on the other, in which social, economic, and political forces are locked together in a complex equilibrium of power. All this calls for extra-ordinary value sensitivity on the part of educational leaders.’

An elevated understanding of values will help renew interest in values and valuation process in school leadership, and the subtle, subdue, but substantial influence upon school leadership and school practices.

Hodgkinson (1996) holds the view that administration is philosophy in action as administration has something to do with purposes, especially the collective purpose applicable to organization. He distinguishes administration from management in that administration and management lies in a spectrum of experiences, behaviours and actions ranging from subjective and valuational to objective and mechanical. Administration is more qualitative and political while management is more quantitative and practical. In this light, administration relates more to policy making, determining the ends of the organization. The comprehension of the values of the decision maker in administration is the life history of the organization. The implementation of the new MCE curriculum is within part of the larger conception of administration and should not be mechanically interpreted as putting the curriculum documents into practice without reflection. In the interpretation of the curriculum content and its execution with reference to the school context, perception and decisions are embedded with values. Administration is the art of interpretation of organizational reality. As Nietzsche has remarked, ‘there are no facts, only interpretations’ and it is suggested that the process of interpretation is dialectical and value laden (quoted in Hodgkinson: 7).

2.6 Research in school leadership: an axiological perspective

2.6.1 The quest for values-based educational leadership

It is common to note that different professions have their meta-values which are values transcending and overarching core values, giving meaning and direction to work and people in those professions. These meta-values have bearing on the decision making and training for those preparing for the profession. Such meta-values reflect the fundamental nature and purpose of the organization or profession but these core values may be obscured within an environment or overshadowed by the values of efficiency and effectiveness prevailing in a culture or society (Begley, 2008). Education, as a profession, has its distinct features and criteria of success and effectiveness.

The need for focusing on values issues of school leadership is supported by Sergiovanni's call for moral leadership. Sergiovanni (1984; 1991; 1992) has highlighted the significance of moral leadership in school management and the importance of moral commitment. He believes that school management has much to do with the values orientation of school heads. Administration in schools involves decision of what to do and when to do what and the issues of right or wrong which is referred as the moral craft. The moral craft involves the value of purposing, building of shared values, bonding people together with common cause and transforming school into a community.

Education has its own meta-values with the purposes broadly classified as aesthetic purposes, economic purposes and ideological purposes (Hodgkinson, 1991). The aesthetic purposes of education are related to humanistic traditions of Greece with a focus on character formation. It is associated with transformational learning emphasizing reapplication of learning and personal transcendence (Miller & Seller, 1985). Economic purpose of education can be traced back to Romans when learning is conceptualised for learning which forms one of the mainstreams of thought today. The ideological purpose of education relates to the socialization function of education which is associated with citizenship building, complying with norms of society and contributing to the well-being of community. This is similar to the goals of education in Hong Kong in which education aims at facilitating the whole-person development of students in the five domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics (The Way Forward in Curriculum Development, 2001: 2).

In Chinese culture, education is not considered instrumentally for cultivating human capital to meet the changing needs of the economy and society, rather, it has its intrinsic value of nurturing the personal qualities of people. Within Chinese culture,

education is always associated with nurturing people's mind and soul through moral education. In Confucianism, education is to nurture the moral values (*te*) and the ultimate aim of education is to help people live with moral values and be a gentleman of no evil thought (Waley, 1996). In modern times, education in Chinese society is inextricably linked with nurturing virtues and moral values. It is deeply rooted in Chinese society that school heads and teachers are expected to set example or model for students to learn and imitate, in particular in the process of character building for whole-person development. The new MCE curriculum focuses on values building to be brought about by re-orientating school organization, teachers and student relationship and school ethos.

Begley (2008) has suggested that it is important for school leaders to realise the fundamental purposes of education in their decision making, managing people and deploying resources, while leading the school to reach the goal and trying to safeguard being carried away by competing agendas of different groups in society. Values are generally acknowledged to be central to the field of educational practice. Comprehension of school heads' values, beliefs and values orientation in education will give a more comprehensive account of their problem solving processes: the making of choices with respect to implementation strategies in curriculum. Hodgkinson (1978) advocates the separation of fact from values but considers values fundamental to the nature and practice of administration which is value-laden. Distinction has to be made in the rationale for change whether it is grounded in administrative necessity or desirability.

Willower has remarked that 'because a significant portion of the practice in educational administration requires rejecting some courses of action in favour of a preferred one, values are generally acknowledged to be central to the field' (Willower, 1992: 369). Willower further points out the importance of the normative aspect of administration and education. Values and facts of perceived reality cannot be separated in which values affect how one perceives the outside world. Values and perception deserve an intensive inquiry.

Making choice is an everyday practice and is part of our daily life in education. This is especially true in school heads' decisions. There are many issues involving judgements, grey areas, weighting of alternatives and selection of approaches. Curriculum implementation is one of the issues that warrants school heads' decisions which involve implementing the vision of school, determining what to be learned by the students, and how to achieve the aim. (Willower, 1995:33). Curriculum

implementation touches upon contesting issues of the politics of adoption versus objection, adoption versus adaptation, influence versus being influenced, the response and reaction from various stakeholders and groups, the feasibility and efficacy of implementing the curriculum, unanticipated consequences of the curriculum changes. Resolving all these issues in curriculum implementation involves *comprehension* of the content, *interpretation* of the change imperatives and *implementation* of curriculum. The choice in making various courses of actions hinges on school heads' perception and values orientation, not only towards the curriculum itself but the broader perspective of education as well. School heads also need to consider what is worth learning for students as opposed to other competing demands upon the schools. The judgement cannot be separated from school heads' valuation as logical positivism suggests. Ethics alone cannot help school heads in making decisions and in carrying out school practices as there are a full range of value conflicts that demand knowledge, skills and values to resolve these conflicts and competing demands.

In short, Begley (2008) raised the point that without purpose, educational leaders are prone to directing energy to inappropriate or wasteful tasks, subject to manipulation and exploitation by individuals, specialized groups, organizations (2008: 23). The relationship between educational purpose and school leadership can be understood from two dimensions. First, educational purpose influences the cognitive process of individuals and groups, reflecting how values and professional goals may determine human motivations and shape subsequent attitudes, speech and action of individuals. Second, values are important as yardstick for resolving dilemma and professional action. The educational purpose the school leaders subscribe to will be strategic in intent because it helps build consensus and shared values of organization to support action.

2.6.2 Values, curriculum intention and purpose of education

Purposes of education and values are related as the former are the values imperatives (Hodgkinson, 1991: 23), or the 'consented' end values of a society that educators consider necessary to emphasize at a given time (Peters, 1977). The values give content and direction to educational aims (Gardforth, 1985: 67), shape and dictate the means (Hodgkinson, 1991: 23) by which to achieve these aims, and they are the key elements to curriculum development (Miller & Seller, 1990). A better understanding of the values embedded in the purposes of education will help narrow the gap in understanding between educators' philosophical beliefs and school practices, linking theory and practices. Miller and Seller (1990) suggest a three dimensional framework

in categorising curriculum positions from three mega-orientations with each grounded in particular educational philosophies and purposes of education.

(a) ‘transmission mega-orientation’

Within the transmission orientation, schools are engaged in conveying a fixed body of knowledge, skills, and proper social norms. Teachers are the source and authority of knowledge while students are perceived as passive recipients of the content which is transmitted to be true and fixed. It is behaviouralistic and atomistic in approach. Helping students to acclimatize to the society is observed to be the underlying purpose of education (Leonard, 1999: 230).

(b) ‘transaction mega-orientation’

The transaction orientation emphasizes learning and individuals’ cognitive growth through interacting with the environment. Knowledge building is constructed by the learner through a process of creative problem solving and is not fixed. Emphasis is placed on problem solving, critical thinking, and the formation of appropriate citizenship in which the underlying assumption is primarily pragmatic.

(c) ‘transformation mega-orientation’

Under such an orientation, the focus is on the learner. It aims at the development of the whole person and the focus is on personal discovery, interconnectedness, and interdependency, social awareness and change. Intellectual development is thought to be just one aspect of student learning which is perceived as a holistic process integrating physical, cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions (Leonard, 1999: 230). Students are provided with opportunities to discover the interconnectiveness and interdependency of subject matter and learning. The paradigm is humanistic or transpersonal which attempts to develop the source and deeper nature of students’ identities, roles, and self-images.

Basically the first two mega-orientations (transmission and transaction) have the underlying assumptions of Bloom’s taxonomy of education. They emphasise cognitive and critical thinking skills in which the focus is on rationality and intellect. The development of a rational mind as the aim through education is found to be disenchanting, disembodied and arid. Affective part of education is generally not included. The left-brained approach to curriculum and education is common and conventional. Teaching and learning tends to regress into impersonal facts, figures and concepts.

The other approach of transformation mega-orientation to education and curriculum is humanistic, which stresses whole-person development in which compassion and interconnectiveness of the elements of learning are emphasized. The multi-facets of the development of persons including the affective and the spiritual dimension in addition to the cognitive area are covered. Learning is not perceived linearly as cognitive advancement and development of intellect alone.

The curriculum reform in Hong Kong has moved towards the direction of a transformation mega-orientation with whole-person development as the educational aim. How this aim is to be realized will be affected by school heads' perception of education and the role of new MCE curriculum in facilitating students' development in values and affective domains. School heads will find it difficult to be an effective curricular leader without a good grasp of the school curriculum. Through the delivery of school curriculum and other learning experiences, school is endowed with the mission to nurture students' personal qualities. It goes beyond mere knowledge acquisition, or training for skills to meet the needs of the economy. School leadership has to make decision and choice in deciding the accomplishment of the goals and missions of education specific to the culture, society and time of the place where the school is nested.

Russell (1960, quoted in Huang, 2006: 158) brings out a discourse on the essence of education: '....should we, in education, aim at filling the mind with knowledge which has direct practical utility, or should we try to give our pupils mental possessions which are good on their own account?' He considers education of character important and comes up with four characteristics of an ideal character – vitality, courage, sensitiveness and intelligence. Russell further (Huang, 2006: 160) raises an inspiring question by asking what kind of person we want to produce through education -- 'We must have some conception of the kind of person we wish to produce, before we can have any definite opinion as to the education which we consider best.' Such a question is a perpetual one while culture and context will influence defining the essence of education.

According to Dewey, the basis of education could be interpreted as 'reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experiences' (Dewey, 1916 quoted in Hlebowitsh 2006: 74). This suggests that one can learn from one's experience to make more informed future decisions. Then, curriculum is understood to be more than a schedule of courses at a particular time and in a particular school. In Hong Kong,

school curriculum is interpreted as students' learning experience (The Way Forward in Curriculum Development, 2001: 19).

‘The school curriculum defines the views of society about “what is worth learning”, commensurate with students' abilities at different stages with their ways of perceiving and learning about the world.

We have to move away from the concept of the curriculum as ‘documents’ to the concept of the curriculum as ‘learning experiences’ to enhance the effectiveness of learning. Learning experiences are a nexus of

- Aims
- Learning processes
- Learning contents
- Social environment ... ’

(The Way Forward in Curriculum Development, 2001: 19)

There is not much controversy in the concept of whole-person development as curriculum aim but in practice, what differentiates one school from another is the importance accorded to different aspects of aims of education in implementation to attain moral and intellectual development of students.

2.6.3 Research in values, educational administration and school leadership

Hodgkinson (1978; 1983; 1991; 1996) is one of the influential scholars in the research on values. Hodgkinson contributes to the development of values typology which provides the foundation for the later development in researches on values and educational leadership inquiry. He also provides a comprehensive framework for examining values in educational administration, incorporating the rational values of consequences and consensus, subrational emotions as well as transrational ethics. Willower (1992; 1994; 1999) focuses on reflective inquiry. Leithwood & Steinbach (1995), Begley (1996; 1999; Begley & Johansson, 1998), Leonard (1999) and Roche (1999) are of practitioner orientations, contributing to understanding the nature and influence of values in problem solving, particularly the predominance of valuation process in educational administration and decision making, the limits of ethics in the guide to practice, the influence of personal preference and self interest in affecting administration as well as resolution of values conflicts.

Leonard (1999) focuses on the influence of personal and professional values on decision making, Begley (1999) and Roche (1999) on valuation processes of school

administrators. Begley (1996) has developed an integrated framework from Hodgkinson's values theory and Leithwood & Montgomery's information process model for analyzing values in educational administration.

There is an increasing number of studies on the influence of personal and professional values in affecting school leadership and decision making (Begley 1988; Begley & Leithwood 1990; Campbell-Evans 1991; Campbell 1994; Ashbaugh and Kasten 1984; Leonard 1999). Despite the increasing attention towards values as an influence in educational administration, Begley (1996; 1999) argues that there is a lack of coherence and clarity in studies on values and school leadership. With the elusive nature of values as well as the ontological and epistemological ambiguities, it poses challenges for doing research in both leadership and values which are abstract and intangible concepts. The lack of clarity in these concepts increases the complexities to conduct research with difficulties in understanding **what** to look for and **how** to look for it.

There is a great debate on the role of values in educational administration among scholars such as Greenfield and Ribbins (1993), Hodgkinson (1978; 1983; 1991; 1996); Willower (1994), Evers and Lakomski (1991; 1996), Begley (1988; 1996) and Leonard (1997). The renewed interest in values and valuation process of school leadership since 1990s is a response to the post modern society which is characterized by increasing uncertainty in making decisions due to increasing number of choices relating to our behavior, identity and expected various roles. In educational administration, school leadership is increasingly sensitive to the values issues in a pluralistic society where competing demands prevail in everyday operation of schools (Begley, 1999: 52). There are increasing values conflicts in educational administration with interests manifested by individuals, groups or organizations with their influence upon defining the alternatives for making choices by school leadership. The values school heads hold will affect the decisions made in resolving conflicts and taking action. The school leadership is required to respond and orchestrate efforts to meet the changes and the boundaries have been extended to cover parents, students and neighbourhood in making decisions (Begley, 1999: 54). School leadership has to take into consideration the variables in making decisions such as changing educational context of schooling and new expectations arising from various stakeholders. The prevailing value of school accountability has also driven school heads to be more responsive to demands and competing values to cope with changes.

There are various value constructs relevant to the study of school leadership, such as

social ethics (Beck, 1993; Cohen, 1982), transrational principles (Hodgkinson, 1978), rational moral values of administration (Willower, 1994), personal preference (Evers & Lakomski, 1991). In the study of values and school leadership, Begley suggests a distinction between *personal* and *professional values* as well as the *values of organisation* in the study of the relationship between values in school leadership and *educational administration*. The interrelation among these elements has to be examined to understand their impact upon school practices.

2.6.4 Analysis of Value syntax

Begley (1999; 2001) has proposed a framework of analysis to reveal the relationship among values, action and school leadership. The framework of analysis comprises of:

- (a) understanding of the conception of value as in (section 2.5.4);
- (b) valuation and value conflicts as in (section 2.5.5); and
- (c) integration model of values and information process theory as in (sections 2.5.6-2.5.7).

The first issue to be addressed is a critical examination of the conception of value. The value syntax (represented diagrammatically below in figure 2.3) as proposed by Begley (1999; 2001) is modified from Hodgkinson's work (1978; 1991). The value syntax is useful to reflect the relationship between the individual and the action taken. The first layer is individual's perspective, represented by self while the most outer layer is the observable action. The action one takes hinges on the attitude which is the membrane between value and action: attitudes foreshadow actions which are influenced by one's values. Attitudes are the predispositions to act specifically as a result of values or value system one previously acquired and are reflected in various form such as speech, gesture and body language. The values one holds are responsive to various motivations. The motivation can be driven by the values one holds and considers to be right. It has to be noted that there could be a dichotomy as revealed in one's action and the values one holds. There is the possibility that one subscribes to certain value but commits to another that may associate with self interest or value of transrational base (Begley 1999: 56). Hodgkinson (1991; 1996) has proposed value as the main motivational base. Between the value and motive lies the available knowledge one acquires through life experiences, training and reflection that provides the linkage between motive and value to achieve the valued objective. People tend to behave or respond according to the kind of knowledge at one's disposition. The amount and sophistication of knowledge and understanding of the issue one possesses will influence the action to be taken to achieve the valued objective.

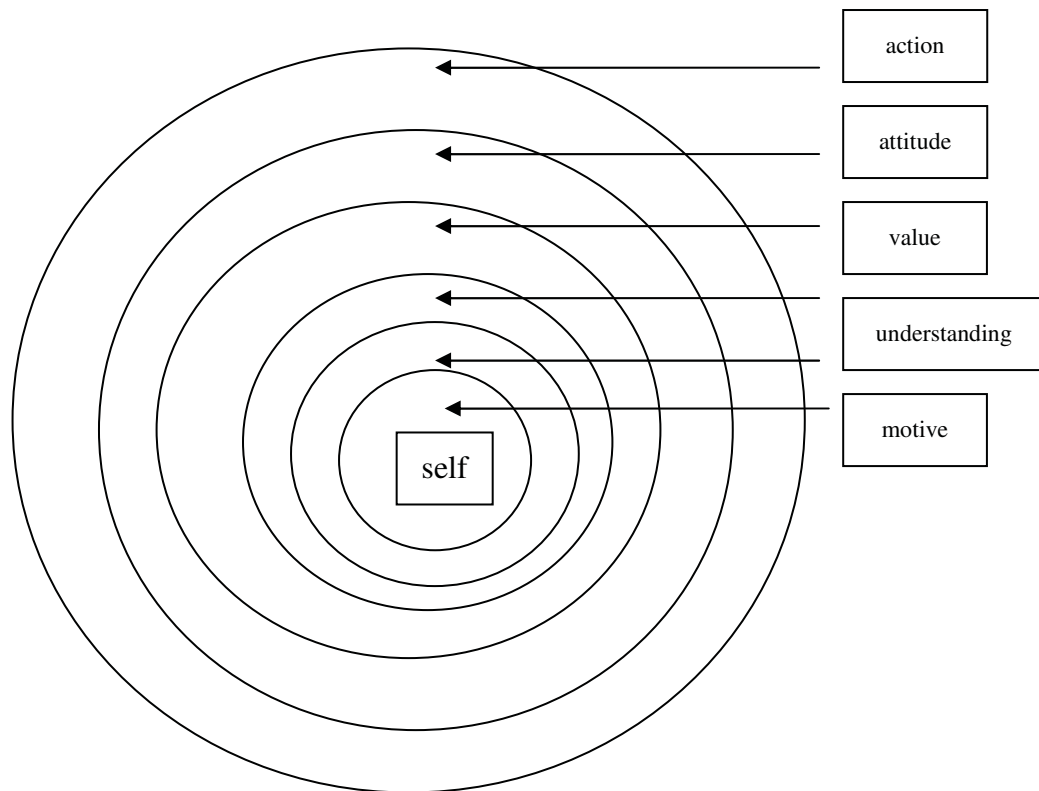


Figure 2.3 A syntax of values (Begley 1991; 2001; 2004)

The description of the value syntax will have its limited utility for carrying out research if it does not help to yield additional knowledge of **what** the individuals value and **why** they do so.

It is pointed out that one needs to be cautious in interpreting the value accruing to the motivational base of an action because a value can be held as motivation arising from preferences, rational values of consequences and consensus to transrational principles. The linkage between value and motivation can be there but is difficult to establish with certainty of the primary motivational base (Begley, 1999; 2001). Begley (2001: 360) has suggested that there could be four motivational bases of action, namely personal preference or self interest, an inclination towards consensus, an inclination towards or concern for consequences and response to ethics or principals. It is hypothesized that people can manifest more than one motivational base when responding to a given situation.

Four motivational bases are

1. Consequences based
 - Focus on desirable outcomes

- Rationally justified
- 2. Consensus based
 - Conformity with group norms, peer pressure, expert opinion
 - Rationally justified
- 3. Preferences/self-interest based
 - Experience, memory, comfort
 - Personal good, no rational justification required
- 4. Ethics/principles based
 - Wisdom of the ages e.g. honesty is the best policy
 - Established cultural norms
 - Entrenched societal values
 - No rational justification required

2.6.5 Arenas of valuation and value conflicts

The second issue to be examined is the dynamics in valuation and handling of value conflicts of school leadership. This will need a more in-depth study of the relation between an individual and the social formation of values. As an individual does not exist in isolation, the existence of self in different social contexts and social forces will have impact upon one's perception and values formation. Starting from the center of self, it extends to group, profession, organization, community and to a larger context of culture of society. The largest outer ring of transcendental arena such as religion represents the spiritual dimension. These layers represent the sources of one's values but at the same time also reveal sources of value conflicts. For instance, the professional values in education may come in conflict with the organizational value. The example in Hong Kong school is a typical case where survival of a school as an organization arising from demographic change of student population may come in conflict with the professional value of what is to be cherished in education for school practice. The arenas of values can be represented in figure 2.4 below.

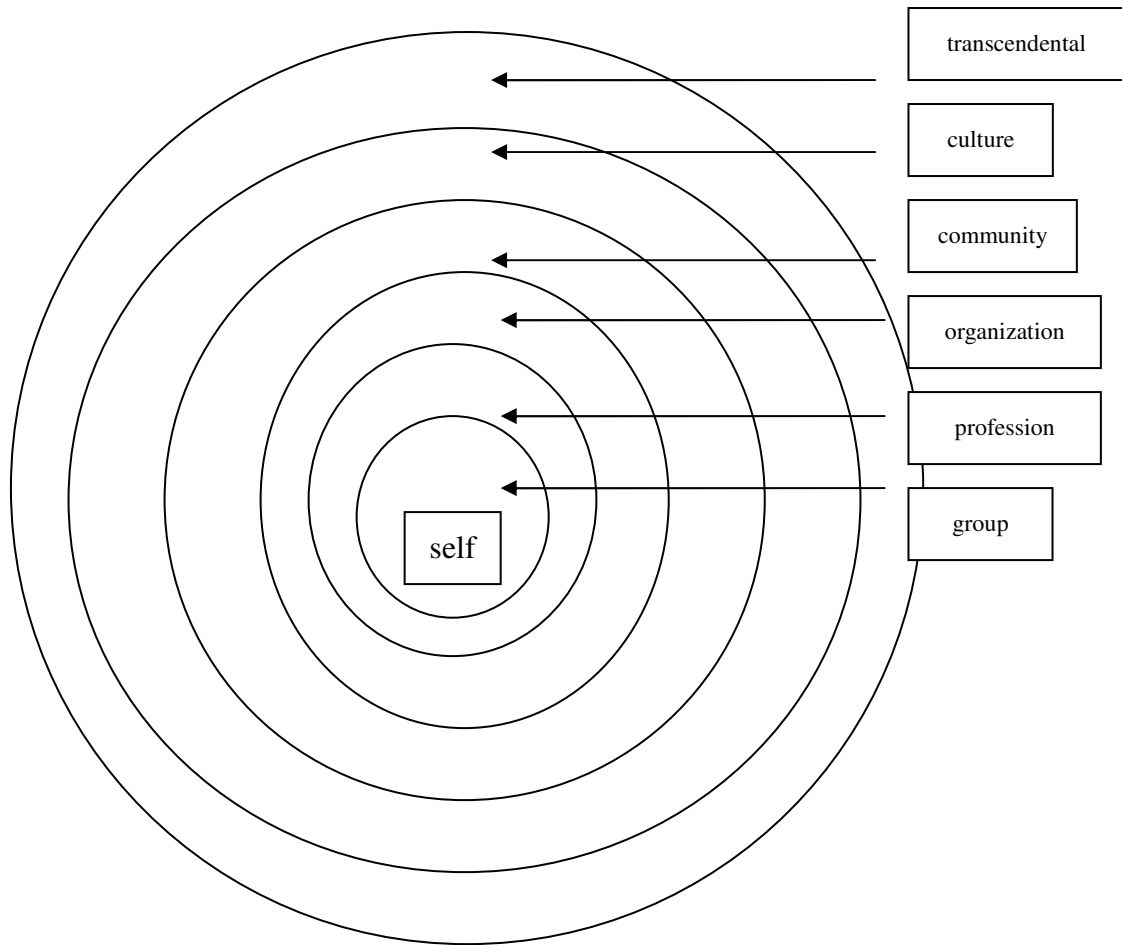


Figure 2.4 Arenas of administration (Begley 1991; 2001; 2004)

The representation of the sources of values and values conflict reflects the importance of environmental context on values formation of school leaders. It also shows the potentially competing or incompatible values school leaders may face in making decisions. It has to be noted that some values may be acquired through existential processes of the school leaders but are predominantly acquired from collective sources such as family, friends, community, culture and transcendental sources. The multiple sources of values are also possible sources of values conflicts while exercising school leadership. The application of values perspective in the study of school leadership will help cast an alternative view to understand the role of school heads in exercising the curricular leadership role in time of curricular change. As suggested by Begley, 'all leaders consciously or unconsciously employ values as guides in interpreting situations and suggesting appropriate administrative action. This is the artistry of leadership' (Begley, 2001: 364). Hodgkinson (1996: 8) has remarked 'if unexamined life is not worth living, the unexamined value is not worth holding.' It is against this corollary that the present study is designed to examine if the axiological perspective to understand school heads' perception will cast any new light on the

curriculum implementation in the new MCE and implication for future development of principalship. What is needed for the present day school leadership is leadership which is ‘knowledge-based, values informed and skillfully executed’ (Begley, 2004: 5). Focusing on the perception of school leadership will help develop a better understanding of the valuation processes conducive to help school heads construe their role within the school and social context in facing changes. Day (2000) also shares the view that a new type of principal which is ‘people-centred, achievement oriented and values-led’ is needed in the present day.

2.6.6 Values in theory and research

Hodgkinson (1978; 1983; 1991) has proposed values theory applicable to educational administration. His analytical model of value concept identifies three types of values forming the motivational bases for actions of individuals which are modified and presented below.

Grounding	Psychological correspondences	Philosophical correspondences	Values types
Principle	Conative	Religionism Existentialism Ideologism	Transrational (I)
Consequences (2a)	Cognitive	Humanism Pragmatism Utilitarianism	Rational (II)
Consensus (2b)			
Preference	Affective	Logical positivism Behaviourism Hedonism	Sub-rational (III)

Hodgkinson’s administrative values (1978) adapted from (Begley 1999: 408).

The type III values are individuals’ preferences considered to be ‘good’ which is grounded on affect and is self-justifying and it is considered to be primitive and sub-rational. Type II values (2b) are regarded to be rational based on consensus, expert opinion or the will of the majority and the other one of type II values (2a) is based on analysis of consequences supported by value judgement. Type I value is coined by Hodgkinson as transrational value type denoting principle which takes the form of ethical codes, injunctions or commandments. These values are based on will rather than reason, and represent an act of faith, belief or commitment. Type I values

are considered to be better justified, more valued, authentic and philosophically defensive. Type I values are utilized by administrators to resolve conflicts when there is an absence of domain specific knowledge (Begley, 1999: 409). But most of the values conflicts are resolved at the values II levels in a rational manner.

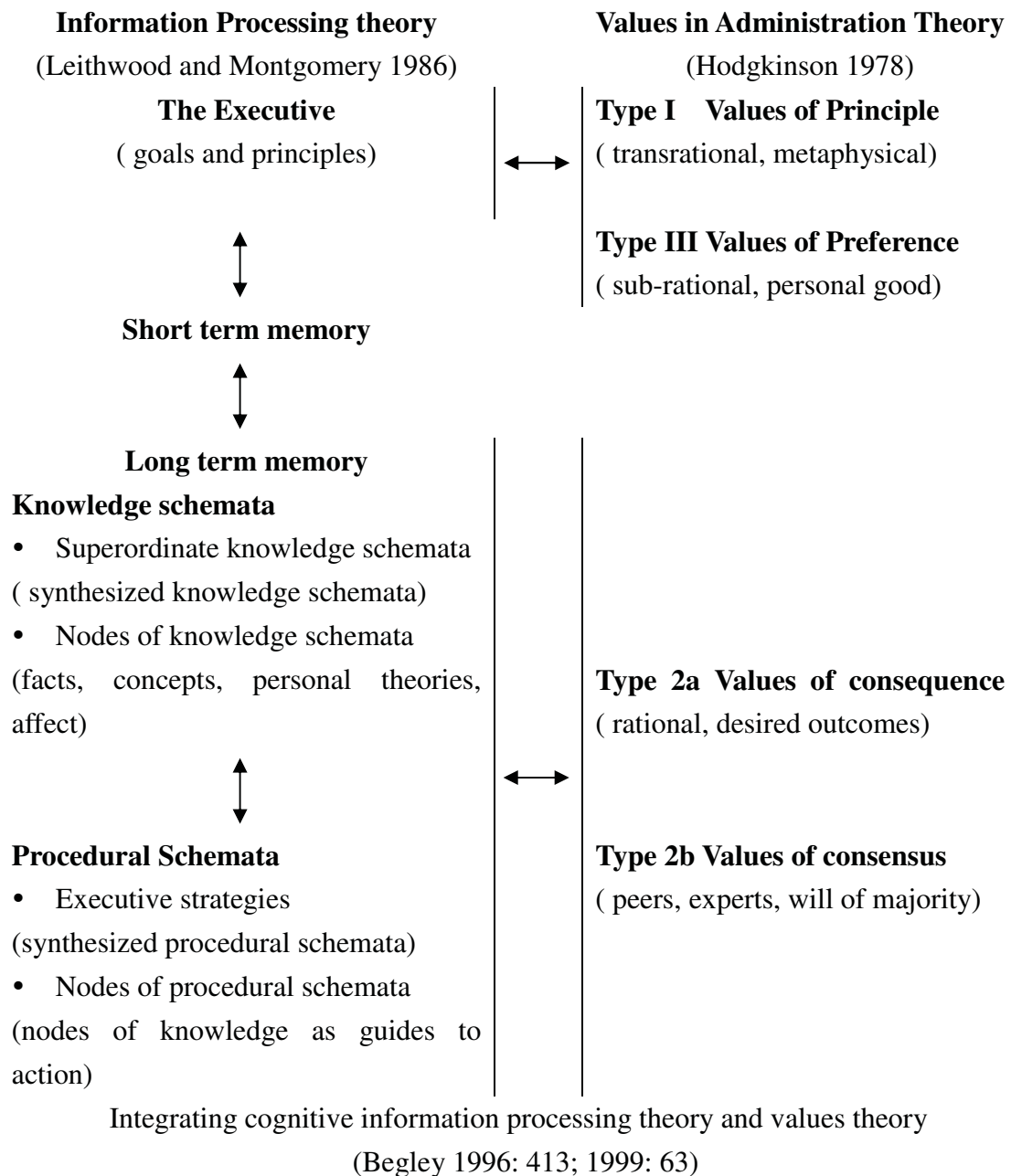
Despite criticism by other academics such as Evers (1985) and Lakomski (1987) on Hodgkinson's classification of hierarchy of values typology and its elitist orientations as well as the difficulties in distinguishing type I and III values, Hodgkinson's values analysis provides an important reference to study the values dimension in educational administration and its insight to examine the relationship between school leadership and school practices.

2.6.7 Integrated approach of information process and values theory

Leithwood & Montgomery (1986) have discovered that the information process theory (Bandura, 1977; Ormrod, 1995) in the cognitive psychology provides useful reference to studying principal practices in instructional leadership. It is proposed that in decision making, people can only handle a limited amount of information which resonates with Simon's concept of 'bounded rationality' of administration (Ormrod, 1995). It is the individuals who construct their own knowledge from their experiences (Chan, Burtis, Scardamalia and Bereiter, 1992 quoted in Begley, 1999: 62).

There are three components in information processing namely the *Executive*, *Short term memory* and *Long term memory* (Begley, 1996; 1999). The executive is referred to the 'agent in control of processing' (Ormrod, 1995: 46) which forces the mind to process information and it is located with goals and principles. Information from external environment will be perceived and is screened by the Executive to determine its relevancy in achieving the goals. The motivation to act will depend on the importance attached to the goal and judgement as to whether or not it is attainable. The short term memory is the working memory and is considered to be limited in processing capacity. It is used to make sense of the information passed on to the Executive. Long term memory is referred to schemata which consists of the organization of experience in the mind with a particular organized way of perceiving cognitively and responding to a complex situation or set of stimuli (Merriam-Webster's Medical Dictionary). It has a cluster of information for sense making and problem solving to accommodate the information. Within the long term memory, there are knowledge schemata, encompassing facts, concepts and principles as well as affective dispositions towards these elements and procedural schemata which is the guide to action (Begley, 1996: 417).

Based on the modified version of information processing theory derived from social psychology and the Hodgkinson's values theory, Begley (1996; 1999) attempts to integrate information processing theory and values theory to produce plausible explanation to cognitive processes of school administrators.



The integrative approach of information process and values theory helps generate theory to produce consistency, comprehensiveness, and explanatory unity. Under the integrative framework, the Executive is expected to filter and resolve the issues with reference to type I and III values of transrational and sub-rational values of perception of good or personal interest to highest ethics including faith, justice and humanism. Research (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1991) on the function of values in problem solving

shows that type I values are employed especially when domain specific knowledge is absent or unavailable in situations of high ambiguity and or when urgency makes rational process impossible and inappropriate (Begley, 1996: 419).

As proposed in the information processing theory, short term memory of the Executive will perform the rational processing function with the long term memory where the existing schemata of knowledge and procedure to guide action and accumulate and enlarge, giving rise to new schemata. This theorized function correlates with Hodgkinson type II values based on consequence and consensus, and suggests how the goals and principles of the Executive may evolve and develop.

The integrated model throws light on how value conflicts are resolved. Hodgkinson has suggested that profound values conflicts exist when type I and III values are in conflict as these types of values are non rational in nature, and are related to deeply held beliefs, spiritual matters or personal preference. In the school setting, conflicts usually emerge when competing knowledge schema and competing procedural schema exist or when the knowledge schema contravene with procedural schema. An example of such would be that detention class for students will do them good but will hurt their self-esteem. Other type of conflicts also exist between a set of values contravene with implied actions such as protection of students' privacy and offering chance for improvement as opposed to informing their parents or law enforcing institution when they have broken the law or regulations. Study (Begley & Johansson, 1998) has shown that individuals tend to hold a certain set of core values when knowledge schema is unavailable or when ambiguity exists or urgency requires while the value bases of consensus and consequences prevail for resolving conflicts. The integrated model is supported by some research studies and it suggests that an awareness of the self and be conscious of the values as well as heightened awareness of the values manifested by others is the characteristics of expert problem solvers. Raising the value consciousness that educators bring to educational decision is important an understanding of the execution of school practices (Garforth, 1985). Valuation is important to 'make unconsciously accepted or perpetuated in an incognizant way' (Leonard, 1999: 219).

2.7 Implications for the present research study

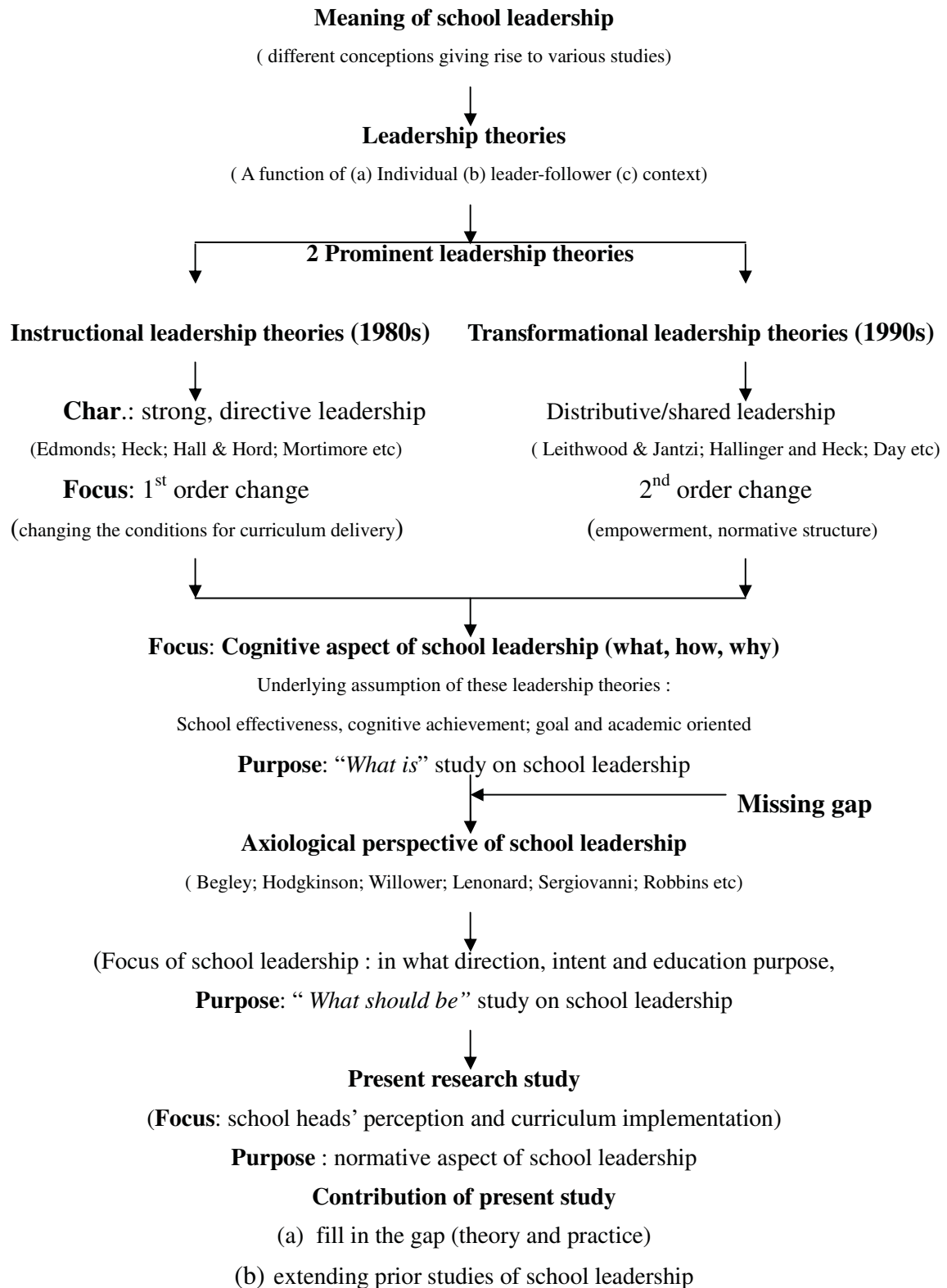
The study of school heads' perception, values and curriculum implementation is part of a larger picture related to educational values, educational administration, and school culture. Hodgkinson (1991) has proposed layers of values for study of educational administration, laying the foundation of further research in school

leadership from axiological perspective. The information process theory provides the cognitive aspect in the study of the research subject. In linking the information process theory with the values theory as expounded in sections 2.6.3-2.6.7 opens up a number of possibilities to analyse school leadership. The integration of the cognitive theory with values theory has its relevancy and applicability to my study of the relationship between school heads' perception and curriculum implementation. The theoretical model helps throw light on both cognitive and axiological factors which would affect school heads' interpretation of the new MCE curriculum and its implementation.

Begley's integrated theory of information processing and values theory underpins the structure in defining the research questions, delineating specific research questions and the scope of interview during data collection. In short, the proposed study contributes to an enhanced understanding of school leadership in two senses. First, as meaning emerges from context and connectiveness of elements, better understanding of school leaders' perception can be attained within the local context of Hong Kong. Second, the application of the axiological perspective to examine curricular leadership suggests possibility of filling in the gap of values and school practices.

2.7.1 A summary of literature review and relation to present study

Literature review on school leadership : A summary and relation to present study



Chapter 3 Clarification of research problem

3.1 Delineation of the research area and main research question (MRQ)

As the research is on school leadership which is a broad and embrative concept, delineation has to be set the aspect of school leadership relevant to curriculum change. Key concepts involved in the research study have to be well-defined to avoid ambiguity. Clarification of concepts is a prerequisite in the delineation of research context, data collection and analysis.

3.1.1 Delineating the main research question (MRQ)

The new MCE curriculum refers to the curriculum prepared by the Curriculum Development Council and recommended by the Education Bureau in 2001 which is applicable to the basic education covering the pre-primary, primary and the secondary level. The study also covers revised MCE curriculum launched in April 2008. The research boundary of the present study is limited to the basic education covering key stage 1 and key stage 2, namely primary school level.

School leadership is a very broad concept embracing various aspects and roles of school heads. In the present study, school leadership is defined as the leadership exercised by school head, that is, the head teacher of the school with a focus on his/her role played in managing the new MCE curriculum. The focal point is on the study of the perception of the new MCE curriculum by school heads and the impact upon its implementation in primary schools. The main research question (**MRQ**) is formulated as

‘How does school heads’ perception of the new Moral and Civic Education (MCE) curriculum of 2001 affect the implementation of the curriculum in primary schools in Hong Kong?’

3.1.2 Paradigm and worldview

Paradigm has subtle but influential impact upon one’s perception of problem and detailed examination of the concept of paradigm is needed in defining the research questions. Kuhn’s conception of paradigm and paradigm shift has relevancy in the selection of research methodology and understanding of the complexity in managing curriculum change. Kuhn’s elucidation of the concept of paradigm is some of the world changing ideas which opens up the pathways in planning and execution of research in science as well as other disciplines. Kuhn refers paradigm to consensus among a community of practising scientists about certain concrete solutions as ‘exemplars’ to central problems of their field. Their consensus is based on a

commitment to the paradigm and the commitment is derived from their training and values. Paradigms could be further understood in two senses as sociological and exemplary past achievements. Sociological past achievements mean a set of group commitments to concrete problem solutions while exemplary past achievements refer to paradigms as acquired similarity relations which serve as reference points. The foundation to paradigm is tacit knowledge and intuition (Kuhn, 1970: 191).

Kuhn explains in his *Structure of Scientific Revolution* that paradigms are the universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners. Paradigms are shared commitments and consensus by the community that govern the practitioners in defining the problems, suggest means for solution (Kuhn, 1979:103). Paradigm also serves as the criterion for determining the legitimacy of both problems and proposed solutions, and will provide directions for the community in map-making and acquisition of theory, methods and standards (Kuhn, 1979:109). Paradigm is an established usage in an accepted model which functions the replication of examples possible. The paradigm one holds shapes how the world is viewed and perceived.

Kuhn's conception and interpretation of paradigm will have implication upon the community of practitioners' perception of a problem, the proposed solution and the way how to analyze it as well as the way to interpret the world. The paradigm shared among the community will affect the perception of identification and analysis of problem. The curriculum change in MCE involves a change in the conception of MCE in terms of curriculum content and pedagogical approach, representing a paradigm shift in curriculum design and strategies for implementation. Effective implementation of the MCE curriculum requires paradigm shift in the stakeholders of school personnel as the prerequisite, in particular the school heads who play a pivotal role for successful curriculum change. An alternative view to address the long-held, obvious-seeming assumptions of MCE in the stakeholder is needed for curriculum implementation. The conceptual change in the new MCE curriculum has to be firstly understood by the school heads for developing implementation strategies.

3.2 Identification of the theoretical framework of the research

In formulating the research questions, a strong foundation has to be established to identify the appropriate analytical lens in designing the research questions so as to answer the questions raised in the study. It is necessary to recognise the kind of paradigm on which the specific research questions are based.

3.2.1 Selection of research paradigm

Guba and Lincoln (2004) consider paradigms as worldviews adopted by researchers in perceiving the phenomenon and the outside world which affects the kind of approach adopted for analysis. A paradigm is a worldview encompassing what is important, relevant and justifiable based on interpretations of ontological, epistemological and methodological questions. To address these three questions, selection has to be made from the two broad domains identified as positivist (quantitative) and interpretist (qualitative). Positivism includes paradigms focusing on a single truth and objectivity while interpretative paradigm includes stands embracing multiple truths and subjectivity such as constructivist-interpretative, critical theory, feminist (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). The present study subscribes to the interpretive paradigm in the construct of the qualitative research design. The interpretation of the reality is considered to be socially constructed and so does what the new MCE curriculum 'is' and 'should be' as interpreted by the school heads.

Ontological questions focus on discerning the nature of reality by questioning if an objective reality exists independent of human thought. Under the constructivist paradigm stance, reality is considered to be socially constructed and is bound within a historical, political and social context (Carr & Kemis, 1983) and the reality can only be approximated (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). The reality is not to be viewed as 'out there' which is regarded as naïve realism (Lincoln and Guba, 2000) because the view of 'there' is being questioned. The view of the world or identical experience shared by all people is also challenged. It is hypothesized that people conceive the world differently and reality is relative to each of us. Numerous constructions of reality exist and one of the purposes of social research is to understand and reconstruct what people hold. The reality is subject to further interpretations with additional and sophistication of information. It is this ontological assumption which underpins the qualitative inquiry.

Epistemological questions focus on the relationship between participants and researchers. Under the constructivist perspective, researchers immerse themselves in the culture and lives of those being studied and interact with the participants in a natural setting. It is asserted that both participants and researchers co-construct to make meanings (Guba & Lincoln, 2004; Ponterotto, 2005). Intense interaction with participants such as via observation and interviews is part of the research process. It is through the interactive process between the researcher and the school heads, as in this example, to understand how the school heads construe the new curriculum and respond to it.

Methodological questions concentrate on the method to collect and analyse data. The questions also address the issues of voice, ethics, values and vigor of the investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Under the constructive perspective, extended engagement with participants to obtain a ‘thick description’ of the phenomenon and enhanced understanding of the research subject such as via vis-a-vis in-depth interviews and/or observation.

3.2.2 Symbolic interactionism

The setting of research questions and the building of connectivity of the research questions in coherence is best situated in relevant philosophical framework. Symbolic interactionism, resting on the constructivism framework, offers a theoretical perspective for explanation of social phenomenon in which the interpretation of the new MCE curriculum is done through decoding related messages disseminated through various means and channels by the government. Through analyzing school heads’ interpretation of the new MCE curriculum, we can understand the way school heads cope with the curriculum.

It is proposed that human beings are to be understood within the environment and the interaction with the environment. Symbolic interactionism is based on three primary premises. First, human beings act towards objects on the basis of the meanings which the objects have for them (e.g. a curriculum document can be understood as a manifestation of the intention and direction of education policy of the education authority). Second, such meanings are the result of interaction of the individual with different stakeholders (e.g. messages disseminated by the Education Bureau in the briefing sessions on curriculum reform convey meanings to be interpreted by different stakeholders). Third, an interpretive process is used by the person in each instance in dealing with objects in the environment (e.g. different stakeholders may interpret the importance of the curriculum documents and messages from the government differently with respect to their role, the social and school context, areas of concern as well as culture).

Within symbolic interactionist theoretical framework, people are hypothesized to act based on symbolic meanings they find within any given situation. In human interaction, people interact with the symbols, forming relationships around them with the aim to create shared meanings. Herbert Blumer (1969:180) perceives that human interaction, as a form of symbolic interaction, will generate the formation of meanings for individuals and considers:

‘...human beings interpret or "define" each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their "response" is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions.’

3.2.3 Interpretation of meanings

In further development of the research questions, elucidation of the key concepts and terms has to be made as concepts are subject to different interpretations. It is unrealistic to consider that the meanings as conveyed through the curriculum documents are identical to what is expected and interpreted by school heads. Different perceptions of the new MCE curriculum by school heads will affect its implementation. It is necessary to examine the nature and content of meanings of concepts prior the development of specific research questions, that is, what meaning makes sense to whom (school heads, teacher, parents or students) and in what context (school, family, neighbourhood, society at large).

Meanings emerge from social processes but do not exist in the object itself. Both action and interaction are processes which occur within a linguistic world of symbols. Bodily movements also form obvious symbols of human interactions. Through action, anticipation and response to acts from others, people make meanings and form subsequent acts. It is too simplistic to assume that different persons use the same word and perceive it in the same way. The meaning is what people assign to it which is specific to the situation, context, culture and the role one holds. It is believed that a person interprets the meaning in accordance with his or her values or belief (Goffman, 1959). The personal experience of individual will affect how he or she interprets the meanings of the objects, concepts, symbols, phenomenon and gestures. Each individual has one's own personal experience which will affect the way each of them perceives the meanings of these symbols. For example, the concept of education has a variety of meanings which vary depending on who interprets it and in what context. Education can be interpreted as an aim, a process, function, content or as a value to be cherished. It is an interpretation of what education 'should be' more than what education 'is'. Education is not an objective reality which exists out there. The following quotations illustrate clearly that the meanings of education can be so diverse and multiple. People could be communicating on the same term (concept) but the meanings embedded could be entirely different or even contradicting.

(Education as an aim)

- We have an obligation and a responsibility to be investing in our students and our schools. We must make sure that people who have the grades, the desire and the will, but not the money, can still get the best education possible.

Barack Obama

- To penetrate and dissipate these clouds of darkness, the general mind must be strengthened by education.

Thomas Jefferson

- Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil.

C.S Lewis

- Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.

Malcolm Forbes

- If someone is going down the wrong road, he doesn't need motivation to speed him up. What he needs is education to turn him around.

Jim Rohn

(Education as a process)

- Education comes from within; you get it by struggle and effort and thought.

Napoleon Hill

- An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you know and what you don't.

Anatole France

(Education as a function)

- The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

(Education as content)

- Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is, not a preparation for life; education is life itself.

John Dewey

- Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.

Albert Einstein

- It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.

Albert Einstein

- The only thing that interferes with my learning is my education.

Albert Einstein

- Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten.

B.F. Skinner

Culture also affects how people perceive the meanings of language and human interaction. Hand shaking can mean a friendly gesture, while in other culture, hugging will convey the same meaning but it is not practiced in that way as in Chinese society. My personal experience in contact with my counterparts in the mainland China, for example, informs me that a refusal to take alcohol with glass upside down when greeted by them could be perceived as a sign of impoliteness. On the contrary, our Chinese counterparts consider greeting by offering alcohol to drink is a gesture of friendship, importance and respect. Culture is an influential factor in education, especially for MCE, which is perceived and commonly assumed by most stakeholders as having a special role in nurturing people's personal qualities in Chinese society. How such a cultural factor affects school heads' perception in interpreting the new MCE curriculum is relevant in the research. These examples illustrate that human beings are understood through an interpretation of the meanings of others' behaviour/object. Within a symbolic interactionist paradigm, it is hypothesized that meaning is anchored in behaviour and the meaning of an act is not predetermined, instead it is determined in the interaction.

Crotty (1998) suggests that (a) meanings are constructed by human beings while they engage in interpreting the world; (b) human beings make sense of the world based on their historical and social perspective. Human beings are born in a world of meanings which are bound by the culture and context in the interpretation and (c) the basic meaning of interaction, symbols, concepts arise through interaction with human community. In short, social reality is perceived as a subjective world constructed by human interaction based on the interpretation of the meanings from different symbols, language and behaviour.

In Hong Kong, different school personnel interpret differently the new MCE curriculum, creating meanings from their position with respect to their roles either as school heads, teachers or students. The interpretation is based on their personal experience and judgement in relation to a number of variables affecting their

decisions. Through qualitative study, open-ended questions are employed to understand the interpretations and views of the school heads in the context of Hong Kong primary schools. An inductive inquiry was employed to infer meanings from the data collected. The specific research questions are developed within the constructive perspective to elaborate the main research question for carrying out the research.

3.2.4 Discernment of perception

A key term in the research study is on perception which can be referred as variations in the way one sees the world in bipolar continuum of intuition and sensing (Lunenburg and Ornstein 2000:183). Perception is a faculty of apprehending by means of the senses or of the mind. It involves a process of awareness, comprehension, reasoning and judgement. As applied in the present study, perception involves a process comprising of *interpretation* of the messages, *processing* them in decision making and subsequently *exhibiting* them into school practice. The process entails extracting the meanings from the messages (the curriculum documents), in which contextual factors, including the social role and position of the message recipient (the decoder), the recipient's cultural background and the social context, are crucial in extracting the meanings. For instance, cultivation of national identity is one of the core values of the curriculum content of the new MCE curriculum within the social and cultural context of Hong Kong.

The perception of the new MCE curriculum by school heads entails three dimensions namely:

- a. Cognitive dimension: it involves having a grasp of the knowledge, comprehension and interpretation of what the new MCE curriculum is in terms of the aims, curriculum content, pedagogical approach, and recommended implementation strategies. The meanings are derived from the messages embodied in the curriculum documents as well as messages from the Education Bureau, stakeholders such as parents and societal expectations.
- b. Values dimension: perception entails a process of valuation which brings about identifying the intrinsic educational values of the new MCE curriculum, ranking its relative importance with respect to other competing ends/curricular change imperatives. This valuation process will affect decision making and prioritization of implementation strategies adopted.
- c. Behavioural dimension: The consequence of perception, based on the perceived interpretation of the new MCE curriculum, calls for decision

making in implementation. It reflects the way school heads resolve challenges and dilemmas in curriculum implementation. In other words, the way school heads cope with and manage the curriculum change can be construed and interpreted as the judgements of their discernment of the new MCE curriculum.

Within the symbolic interaction framework, the construction of the specific research questions has to mirror school heads' perceived understanding and discernment of the new MCE curriculum. Meanings of key concept such as '**importance**' have to be clarified and elucidated when designing the specific research questions.

3.2.5 Social construction of the meanings of importance

The interpretation of the importance of the new MCE curriculum is one of the key concepts in setting specific research questions. Its importance has to be understood from the perspective of the school heads who determine the implementation strategies. The new MCE curriculum is a central curriculum and is positioned as one of the key tasks by the Education Bureau. If such a message is held by school heads as the curriculum intention, then school practices will be adjusted accordingly. Otherwise, the implementation strategies will be adapted and adopted as appropriate to their school context, needs of the students and school heads' own interpretation. Discrepancy could exist between the intended from the realized MCE curriculum.

Second, the importance of the new MCE curriculum also hinges upon school heads' belief of the essence of education with regard to whole-person development. The personal vision and conception of education affect school heads' perception of the new MCE curriculum. The interpretation has its cultural bearing as Chinese culture has accorded much importance on the role of education in facilitating personal growth, development of virtues, character and morality as well as social awareness. It also matches the societal expectations in Hong Kong that education plays a key role in cultivating students' personal qualities and virtues to face the challenges during their development towards adulthood.

Third, considerations have to be given with regard to school heads' assessment of the issues and problems involved in implementing the new MCE curriculum. The decision making process unfolds the dilemmas to be resolved and finally the implementation of the new MCE curriculum. One of the dilemmas in implementing the new MCE curriculum is the pragmatic orientation of education in society, the concern for school achievement in terms of academic excellence against the intangible

effects of MCE on students' moral character. The importance of the new MCE curriculum by school heads is value-laden which is associated with the valuation process and value orientation of school heads.

3.3 Understanding school leadership and research context: Role of school leadership in curriculum change

School heads are one of the important stakeholders in managing and facilitating curricular change. School heads have a distinctive role to play at different stages of the change process, namely *mobilization*, *implementation* and *institutionalization*. At the initial stage of curriculum change, the key is on *mobilization* for change. School heads have to develop the knowledge of the curriculum change and familiarize school personnel with the content of the change. It is important to let the school personnel understand the rationale for the change and why the change is needed. Motivation has to be initiated in all those involved and affected by the curriculum change. School heads have to convince the stakeholders, including the parents, that the change is necessary and worthwhile. Teachers have to be convinced that change is necessary so that they are willing to embark on such change. In order to provide the momentum for the change, school heads have to provide the resources, support and leadership to create the conditions for change. One of the functions of school heads is to persuade and convince those 'blockers' who are hesitant or resistant to accept and engage in the curriculum change.

At the *implementation* stage, school heads need to map out the way that the curriculum change may take place. Situational analysis by school leadership has to be conducted to assess the state of readiness of the school to embark on the change in curriculum. A situational analysis including analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) of the school has to be carried out to assess both the human and non-human resources of the school in planning for change. During the implementation stage, school heads are endowed with the responsibilities to create ownership of goals and create consensus among the key players such as through participation in discussion, decision making and goal setting for consensus building.

Curriculum change is a continuous process which takes some period of time to sustain. School head can sustain the change initiative by embedding the change process into the school system through *institutionalization*. It is necessary to have a change in administrative structure and procedures to support the school practices. Delegating authority to relevant professional leadership at the middle management or frontline

teachers has to be institutionalized. A mechanism of institutional practice has to be in place for sustainability.

3.4 Interpretation of Moral and Civic Education : different perspectives

a. Documentary (official) explanation

The new MCE curriculum is prepared by the Curriculum Development Council, recommended by the Education Bureau for schools in Hong Kong. It is a central curriculum which refers to structured learning designed for basic education covering Key stage 1, 2 and 3 and senior secondary at key stage 4. In April 2008, the framework was revised and enlarged to pave way for the implementation of the new senior secondary curriculum scheduled for its launch in September 2009. The new MCE curriculum with its clear objectives and learning expectations suggested for accomplishment for the four key stages has well-defined curriculum content in the form of personal and social core values and sustaining attitudes. It is a values-based curriculum with an aim to build connections among students to address the challenges faced by the students during their personal growth. The building of positive values and attitudes as curriculum aims targets at enhancing students' self-esteem, self-confidence and assertiveness in facing adversities in life. Moreover, the emphasis of the cultivation of positive values is to facilitate students to develop their own values system which serve as a point of reference for them in making judgements with regard to the personal and social issues.

The overarching MCE curriculum framework provides the curriculum space and flexibility for schools to develop school-based MCE curriculum, taking into consideration school traditions, mission and vision as well as the needs of students. To ensure importance accorded to the new MCE curriculum, suggested time allocation is provided to facilitate schools in curriculum planning and implementation. The recommended curriculum time for MCE is 19% of the total curriculum time for key stages 1 and 2, 8% for key stage 3 and 5% for key stage 4, covering the time for learning experiences such as community service, form master period, school assemblies and various sorts of co-curricular activities (Basic Education Curriculum Guide 2002: 7, The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary – Action Plan for Investing in the Future of Hong Kong 2005: 30).

Subjects and Key Learning Areas are indispensable in helping with the promotion of positive values as highlighted in the new MCE curriculum for whole-person development. The subjects/KLAs play the role in providing the knowledge base, relevant values and attitudes as well as generic skills to facilitate the promotion of

new MCE curriculum. Whole-school participation involving different key players, for example parents, in creating a conducive school ethos such as a caring school environment is recommended in the promotion of the new MCE curriculum.

b. School heads' interpretation

School heads' interpretation of what MCE 'is and should be' is one of the variables to be built into the construction of research questions. An identical and consistent interpretation of the new MCE curriculum by school heads with the documentary (official) interpretation cannot be assumed. Given the various traditions of school and various school sponsoring bodies, school heads' perception of 'what' MCE is and 'how' the MCE curriculum can be effectively implemented to suit the needs of the students varies. As a non-examinable curriculum area, MCE provides great flexibility for schools to interpret and implement the curriculum. School heads' knowledge and interpretation of the new MCE curriculum will have great bearing upon the implementation strategies.

There can be discrepancies in school heads' conception of the new MCE curriculum as central curriculum. When school heads skew towards school-based interpretation of the new MCE curriculum by adopting part of the new MCE curriculum and adapting or absorbing it into their school-based MCE programme (such as school designed life education programme), can it be considered as implementation of the new curriculum? The implementation of the new MCE curriculum could be understood by school heads as incorporation of the nurturing of positive values in learning experiences for example service learning, various sorts of programmes such as school assemblies, form master periods and different forms of activities. There can be a wide spectrum of interpretation in terms of (a) content between central and school-based MCE curriculum and (b) implementation strategies as between structured programme learning and/or incorporation into the school life, between using subject approach and/or employing learning experiences (activities) strategies. In short, what is in the mind of school heads will affect the implementation strategies.

3.5 Delineating Specific research questions (SRQs)

To address the main research question as '*How does school heads' perception of the new Moral and Civic Education (MCE) curriculum of 2001 affect the implementation of the curriculum in primary schools in Hong Kong?*', specific research questions are designed in order to answer the research question step by step. The specific research questions are broken down into operationalised items for data collection and analysis. The SRQs are formulated with the underlying assumptions implicit within the

theoretical framework as discussed in section 3.2.

3.5.1 Considerations in the setting of specific research questions (SRQs)

In the setting of research questions, the concepts and terms used in the questions have to be clear and specific to minimize ambiguity in interpretation but at the same time allow sufficient space for the research subject to elucidate their comprehension and interpretation. A pilot study to let the research subject, for example a school head, interpret the research questions will be a pre-test on the clarity of the concepts of the specific research questions (SRQs).

The logical sequence and the relation among the SRQs as well as the connectivity of each SRQ are essential in designing the whole set of the questions. The connectivity between each specific research question and their construction should have the ability to address the issue raised in the main research question. The face value of each specific research question has to be established in that the specific question has its internal coherence and is complete in coverage to attend to the relevant parts of the research area.

The number of SRQs should be sufficient in terms of coverage to deal with the research area as identified in the main research question. The boundary of inquiry as delineated by the research area should be reflected in the SRQs. The number of SRQs has to be manageable and a balance has to be made with respect to coverage and quantity.

3.5.2 Specific Research Questions

The MRQ is broken down into five specific research questions (SRQs) for execution of the research study. The MRQ forms the basis of the construction of interview questions as follows:

1. How do school heads (SHs) construe MCE curriculum and its place in the school curriculum?
2. Do school heads see a role in the curriculum change?
3. How do school heads prioritize the curriculum change imperatives in school practices?
4. What challenges do school heads face when implementing the MCE curriculum?
5. How do school heads respond to the challenges in implementing MCE curriculum in policy practice?

Chapter 4 Selection of research methodology

Selecting the Research methodology

The selection of appropriate research methodology is about the choice a researcher makes with regard to the method of data collection and analysis (Silverman, 2006: 402). The choice of research methodology reflects the lens and perspective the researcher adopts to answer the research questions. The following sections discuss the research design, research method adopted and measures taken to ensure trustworthiness, transferability, credibility and confirmability of the execution of the research.

4.1 Qualitative analysis: rationale and choice

Social research methodologies could be classified very broadly into quantitative or qualitative methodology (Silverman, 2005: 99; Creswell, 2009). Generally speaking, quantitative research focuses more on numeric data which is counted and measured while qualitative research focuses on non-numeric data (words) looking for meanings, concepts, symbols, metaphors and definitions. It is implied that quantitative research assumes phenomena and experiences to be countable, measurable, quantifiable and similar while qualitative research suggests social phenomena and experiences difficult to be counted but are felt and lived (Berg, 2001; Punch, 1998). Qualitative research is usually employed to answer questions of complex nature of phenomena, with an aim to describe and understand the phenomena from the participant point of view, described as positivist, interpretative or constructive. Quantitative research tends to answer relationships among different variables with an aim for explaining and predicting and is often described as positive or experimental (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Guba and Lincoln, 2004).

The main distinction between qualitative and quantitative research rests on the philosophical assumptions about the ontological, epistemological and methodological stands. The philosophical assumptions and distinctive attributes of qualitative and quantitative research as modified from Creswell 1998: 74; Creswell, 2009; Bryman, 2004:10 – 31 are summarized below:

Assumptions	Questions	Characteristics of (Qualitative research)	Characteristics of (Quantitative research)
Ontological	What is the nature of reality?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed• A rationalist's view of	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reality is objective with a natural science world view• An empiricist view of

		knowledge	knowledge
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenomenological • Interpretivist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positivist • Positivist
Epistemological	What is the relationship between the researcher and the research subject?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher attempts to lessen distance between himself or herself and that being researched • Seek to understand participants' view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outsider perspective is adopted • Independent of the researcher
Axiological	What is the role of values?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value laden and bias acknowledged • Empathic understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims objectivity • Detachment and impartiality
Rhetorical	What is the language of research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher writes in a literary, informal style using personal voice such as an engaging style of narratives • Data presented mainly in the form of words, pictures or objects • Descriptive write-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal style of writing • Data presented mainly in the form of numbers and statistics • Abstract language write-up
Methodological	What is the process of research?	(a) Research Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepts subjectivity • Data driven • Inductive logic, studies the topic within its context • Theory emerging • Process oriented • Small-scale studies in depth • The researcher has intense contact with participants 	(a) Research Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims objectivity • Theory driven • Deductive analysis, statistic method • Theory testing • Outcome oriented • Large-scale studies • Researcher observes, measures, with not much personal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design emerges as the study unfolds new data 	<p>involvement with research subjects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most aspects of the study are carefully designed before data is collected
(b) Data Collection	(b) Data Collection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within natural settings • Purposive collection • Representative perspective sample 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial setting • Probabilistic and randomized • Representative population sample
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly textual data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerical data
(c) Data analysis	(c) Data analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretative • Discovery • Deals with qualitative data eg field notes, texts • Qualitative data is more rich, time consuming and less able to be generalized • Dependent on the researcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical analysis • Verification • Deal with numbers, counts • Quantitative data is able to test hypotheses, but may miss contextual details • Independent of the researcher
(d) Research outcome	(d) Research outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pose a hypothesis • Theory emerging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer a question/ hypothesis • Statistical evidence to prove a point
(e) Research strategies	(e) Research strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnography: describe culture or aspect • Phenomenology: study from informants' point of view, understand subjective aspects of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulation: Change a variable and measure difference it makes • Control: eliminate interfering variables • Randomization : reduce systematic bias

		behaviour	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unobtrusive observation: gather data without influencing • Participant observation • Interviews 	
		(f) Quality criteria	(f) Quality criteria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustworthiness • Contextual relevancy • Dependability • Transferability • Credibility • Confirmability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research rigour • Generalizability • Dependability • Reliability • External validity • Internal validity • Objectivity
Intentional	What is the purpose of the research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop theory/ a hypothesis • Explain a phenomenon • Understand research subject's perspectives • To complete detailed description with an aim explaining why • Contextualization • Search for patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test theory • Establish fact and prediction • Show causal or other relationship between variables • To construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed • Generalizability • Component analysis

Qualitative research is more concerned with understanding the process rather than outcome with an aim to understand the meanings of the research subjects' lives, their experiences and to make sense of the phenomenon. Fieldwork through direct contact with the research subjects can be conducted to record behaviour in a natural setting. The researcher could know the feelings of the research subjects through interactions such as interviews so that better articulation could be made among these data for interpretation. Human behaviour is a very complex and complicated process and is affected by the context in which the behaviour is situated. Qualitative research

therefore best fits the inquiry which aims at revealing the meanings and relationship among contextual variables of human behaviour and social phenomenon.

Another characteristics of qualitative research focuses on holistic interpretation. Denzin and Lincoln (1994; 2000) elaborate that qualitative research attempts to understand the whole picture of the phenomenon rather than focusing on individual parts. This helps reveal the interplay among various variables affecting the research subjects' experiences. Qualitative research further provides the chance for researcher to understand the issue from the perspective of the research subject.

Miles and Huberman (1994: 1) consider qualitative data sexy, providing a rich source of data for exploration, chronological traceable explanation of processes in identifiable local contexts which facilitate researcher to understand and discover the nature of social phenomenon. The qualitative data provides very rich information for researcher to analyse and make sense from the phenomenon of the complicated relationship and variables affecting the outcome within the research context. Qualitative research focuses on investigating 'how and what' of the phenomenon and a detailed study of the issue instead of adopting a macro perspective in analysis (Creswell 1998: 17).

The qualitative research paradigm best fits the research aims of the present study. It is a process study which attempts to reveal the variables affecting the way school heads interpreting the MCE curriculum, the conception of education, MCE and its implementation. The qualitative research method provides insight to understand the school leadership, its role in curriculum change in the local context of Hong Kong. The study of the interaction among *actor* (school heads), the *process* (factors affecting their decisions on implementing the new MCE curriculum) and the *context* (the primary schools in Hong Kong) is the focus.

4.2 Research methodology: possibilities and challenges

4.2.1 Sampling

Sampling refers to the selection of the subset of the population. The procedure for selecting the subset for study is sampling and it is important for estimating the degree of representativeness of the cases for study and the degree of confidence from which inference can be made (Silverman, 2006). In the sampling for the present research, purposive sampling with maximum variation is adopted in order to identify information-rich cases for study (Patton 1990: 169). A wider coverage of the sample schools is enlisted to gauge the views of school heads in coping with the change

imperative. The maximum variation method in identifying different types of primary schools aims to reveal a wide spectrum of implementation strategies adopted by school leadership. The criteria of which schools selected as samples were based on the judgement of their typicality and are specific to the research needs.

The selection criteria are based on variations of the sample schools in terms of (i) school sponsoring bodies, (ii) school size and (iii) background of school heads.

(i) Variation in school sponsoring bodies

In Hong Kong, primary schools are run by different sponsoring bodies with public funding while the school management and operation are basically independent of the government. Schools exhibit different traditions as they are managed by different sponsoring bodies with corresponding school missions and visions. There is a great diversity of school management and leadership style as well as school ethos. Schools with different missions and visions are closely related to the type of school sponsoring bodies such as religious affiliation, charitable organization, government schools, clan associations or independent bodies. The values orientations and beliefs of the school sponsoring bodies will have direct bearing on the direction of the school education offered and their interpretation of the essence in education to be emphasized to the students. As a consequence, distinctive ways to cope with the curriculum change as perceived by the school leadership can be observed. The purposive sampling aims to include schools of different types to reflect the school population at large.

(ii) Variation in school size and background

Another consideration will be the size of schools in terms of number of classes. The number of classes in schools, depending on the number of primary students the schools can enroll will have implications upon school heads' response to the education and curriculum change. For instance, the threat of decreasing number of student intake is one of the critical issues affecting the sustainability and continual existence of schools. In the selection of schools, primary schools of various sizes, ranging from eight classes with about 260 students to thirty classes of over 1000 students are included in the study. The variation in number of students and number of classes in sample schools is great.

The background characteristics of the six sample schools are widespread with variation in number of students, achievements in different aspects, banding (academic characteristics), socio-economic background of students, religion and

school history. The selection of sample schools tries to have the maximum variation to reflect the diversity of the general population of primary schools in Hong Kong and as a result, the challenges and issues faced by the school heads in implementing the new MCE curriculum.

(iii) Variation in background of school heads

School heads with different professional background are selected to identify how their background affects their perception of themselves in curricular role as educational leadership. Different backgrounds of school heads are included such as those with rich experience in school administration, or professional expertise in curriculum development got promoted recently to the post of school head or academics. Their various professional backgrounds will help elicit if there is any relation regarding their perception upon the implementation of the new MCE curriculum.

The school heads satisfying the conditions (i) to (iii) above are identified as critical cases typifying and representing the features of the wider population of primary schools in Hong Kong. Gender of school head is also considered in the purposive sampling in which school heads of both gender are also included. In addition to the variation to the type of schools, inclusion of novice school head and more experienced school heads are taken into account in the sampling.

In the 2007-2008 school year, there are 660 primary schools offering the main stream local curriculum in Hong Kong. The schools belonging to different categories are grouped under different religious affiliations, charitable organizations, government or miscellaneous backgrounds are tabulated below:

2007-2008 school year (primary schools in Hong Kong)

Background of school sponsoring bodies	Number of school	Sample size	Percentage of total primary schools in Hong Kong
Religious orientations			
Buddhism	25	1	3.8%
Catholicism	122	1	18.5%
Confucianism	1		
Taoism	14		
Islam	2		
Protestant/Christianity	191	1	29%
Miscellaneous			

Government	39	1	5.9%
Special school	55		
Business groups	20		
Clans groups	61	1	9%
Charity groups (Tung Wah group of Hospitals, Po Leung Kuk etc)	70	1	10.6%
Others	60		
Total	660	6	10%

Based on the above considerations, **six** primary schools heads coming from the following school backgrounds are identified namely:

- 1 from school of Catholic background
- 1 from Christian background
- 1 from Buddhist background
- 1 from secular background (e.g. charitable organisation)
- 1 from government school
- 1 from clan association

The number of sample is considered to be manageable by one researcher within the timeframe of the present course of study at doctoral level while allowing space for sufficient data collection for analysis.

4.2.2 Data collection

Interview with the sample school heads is employed to gauge their views and collect information concerning the school practices. Semi-structured interview questions are developed along the line of the five specific research questions to facilitate school heads to elicit the ideas and the rationale behind the policies and school practices.

Direct face-to-face interview is adopted as the main vehicle to collect the data. Before the interview, the interview questions are mailed to the school heads to let them have a general idea of the subject area of the interview. The interview also touches on their life history in education profession, their vision of education as well as values and beliefs in life. Prior notification of the interview content is justified on the ground that the school heads should have a general picture of the content of the interview as it covers a wide spectrum of issues. Sufficient time for school heads to think ahead before the interview is reasonable. The possibility of interviewees making up stories to prepare for the interview is unlikely because it is a low-risk exercise and school heads are ensured of confidentiality and anonymity in the research.

The school heads are informed in advance both by telephone and mails about the nature of the study as a private pursuit for academic excellence. School heads are informed to reflect in the interview what they have done and how they have managed the curriculum change in MCE. No extra nor additional efforts by the school heads are needed for the interview. The interview will be conducted in a natural setting so that school heads can freely express themselves as critical friends of the Education Bureau, including their view on what the new MCE should be.

The interview, lasting for about two hours, is to collect a 'thick description' of the decision making and considerations behind the decisions, providing substantial information to understand and analyse their values orientation. As qualitative analysis is employed, direct interview provides the chance for school heads to elucidate their ideas and let them freely express their thinking.

In addition to the interview, documentary analysis will be needed, as appropriate, to triangulate the information gathered from interview. The researcher reads school's year plans which outline at least three years proposals on how curriculum reforms are implemented and future school development plans. School publications including newsletters, reports, newspaper cuttings are also included as part of the data when available. Touring the school premises are also useful means to understand initiatives such as involvement of Teachers Parents Association, community services etc.

4.2.3 Selection of research method for analysis

The analytical method of content analysis (CA) commonly used in social sciences is applied for the present study in analysing recorded interview transcripts. Weber (1990: 9) refers content analysis as a research method using 'a set of procedures to make valid references from text'. CA is referred to by Holsti (1969: 25) as any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically indentifying specified characteristics of messages. Krippendorff (2004; 2008) considers content analysis as a research technique for making replicative and valid inferences from data to their context. The technique in content analysis is used for making references by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages (Kimberly & Neuendorf, 2002). An in-depth analysis is adopted while the issues of objectivity, reliability, validity and generalisability and replicability will be addressed.

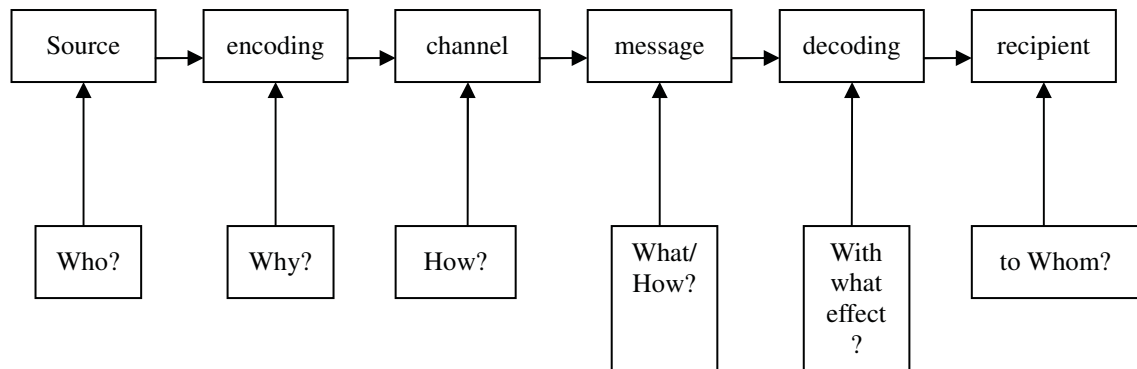


Figure 4.1 Content analysis (Adapted from Holsti 1969: 25)

Any communication goes through six elements: namely *source* of a sender, an *encoding process* which results in a *message*, a *channel* of transmission, a *detector* or recipient of the messages and a *decoding process*. The purpose of the CA is to make inferences about all other elements of the communication process. It is a process involving ‘who says what, to whom, how and with what effect and why’ (Holsti 1969: 24). The aim of CA is to interpret data source (as in the present study data source from six interview transcripts) and make inferences on the relationship between content variable X (school heads’ perception) and content variable Y (implementation of the new MCE curriculum). The research method is employed to study the relationship of the two variables within the context of new MCE curriculum in Hong Kong primary schools.

Based on the assumption that language mirrors the mental process and reflects peoples’ different cognition, attitudes and the perceived realities, content analysis is selected as the research method. The interview transcripts record school heads’ comprehension, interpretation and decisions with regard to the implementation of the new MCE curriculum. Through studying the texts, systematic analysis can be made, resting on defined steps and procedure for producing reliable analysis and making inferences.

The research methodology of content analysis is adopted in analyzing the interview texts which reflect mostly the perception, values, interpretations and concerns of the interviewees in the communication. A detailed analysis of the text will yield much information for making inference of the relationships among variables. The frequencies of the texts which reflect the meanings will be one of the indications of the importance accorded to them. The key word identified will represent the key message. The linguistic property of the text can also convey the meanings or intention

of the school heads such as the choice of words which imply an obligation for instance ‘must’, ‘should’. The texts are to be understood with respect to the emotion of expression.

To achieve reliability and consistency in analysis, the key concepts will be identified and then categorised to see if there is any pattern of similarity. The categorisation of concepts is situated within the overarching framework of the interpretation of perception as defined in the present study in section 3.2.4. The grouping of concepts will help elicit pattern to identify whether relationship exists among the key concepts of perception, values, attitudes and school practices in the implementation of the new MCE curriculum.

4.2.4 Challenges of Content Analysis

The methodological challenges of the content analysis can be discussed in terms of (a) classification issue, (b) reliability issue and (c) validity issue. Content analysis mainly bases upon analyzing large volume of texts. In the data reduction process, the texts are classified and grouped into categories in making meanings and deriving relationship. Consistency is to be maintained in the classification of texts into categories. Difficulties will arise if ambiguous words are used in the text. In the making of the classification, extra care will be made if the variables are classified appropriately in the category that can measure the construct of the investigation. In defining the categories for grouping of texts/words, the definition has to be clear and specific so that it can facilitate categorising the concepts and texts suitably.

Reliability is another issue of concern. Krispendortt (1980) has brought out the issue of stability which is about the ability to yield the same meaning over time. In analyzing the text, if more than one researcher is involved, in order to achieve consistency, inter coder reliability and intra-coder reliability have to be observed so that different coder will have consistency in coding and categorizing.

Validity is another challenge in using content analysis. Decision has to be made if the analysis is addressing the issue under investigation. Caution has to be maintained if the interpretation of the relationship sufficient to be identified as causal one. In the analysis of the interview text, inferences and judgement will be made. This is particularly important as there could be both manifest contents of the meanings of the text as well as the latent meaning. The intentionality as derived from the texts and its implications are the focuses of the qualitative study which helps reveal the relationship among variables, that is, school heads’ perception with regard to

implementation strategies. Meanings of language and body language of school heads can convey meanings beyond the surface meaning of the texts. This involves interpretation by researcher and the issue of subjectivity will creep in, threatening the validity of the analysis and for generalisability. It is noted that the pitch of the sound and body language which will have implied meanings transcending the textual connotations.

4.2.5 Attempts to overcome challenges in content analysis

To maintain trustworthiness of the analysis, coding rules and definition of categories are prepared for reference to maintain consistency in coding and categorization. As there is only one researcher (myself) in the study and the analysis is to be conducted within a relatively short and fixed timeframe, the inter coder reliability and intra-coder reliability are not a major challenge in the study. Stability can be maintained because the analysis is carried out not over years but within a relatively short time frame.

Validity is about the generalisability of the analysis. Face validity is the weakest in the content analysis and extra care is made to ensure correspondence between the definitions of categories which help measure the questions under study. As meanings are derived from inferences from the texts, values issues will be involved and the possibility of bias is inevitable, especially when English translation of Chinese text is involved as different languages imply cultural differences. Effort will be made through enhanced self awareness of the possibility of personal bias when conducting the analysis. To avoid bias and cultural difference in translation, the meanings conveyed in Chinese during interview will be the key issue for consideration in translation.

Regarding the methodological challenges of CA, the issue of counting the number of frequency of key words, themes in category to show the importance of the message has to be used with caution. High frequency in the appearance of the key words may not necessarily reveal its importance instead inferences can be made for terms which occur in conjunction with references to the subject under study rather than frequency with the symbols (Holsti 1969:7).

In using CA, it generally means reference to the manifest content, that is, the surface meaning of the text. It has to be noted that to analyse the deeper layers of meaning embedded in the documents is equally important. The manifest-latent issue (Holsti 1969:12) can be considered at two levels. The requirement of objectivity requires only those appearing in the messages to be recorded. The coding stage specifies the word,

themes and the like in the text and the category. Extra care has to be taken in ‘reading between the lines’ while interpreting the messages in order to address the meanings of the latent issue of the data source.

4.2.6 Praxis of the conduct of content analysis

According to Weber (1990), a coding system has to be designed with reference to the research construct on understanding perception and implementation of the new MCE curriculum. The following procedures will be taken:

(a) Creating coding scheme

The coding scheme is designed for coding of key word, word sense, sentence and paragraph as appropriate.

(b) Defining the categories

Definition will be developed to define the categories for grouping of the coded texts. Caution will be made to determine if the scope of the categories is too narrow or restrictive which limit the practicality. Too many categories may hinder the analysis while too few will be too broad of practical use. In the setting of categories, they will be set as clear as possible to avoid ambiguity. In the present study, parameters under the broad construct of perception will form the basis for building up categories. Dimensions of the interpretation of perception, namely cognitive dimension, affective dimension and behavioural dimension are adopted for defining categories.

(c) Testing of coding and categorizing on sample text

The coding is tried out in some sample interview text to see if the design is workable, accurate and reliable.

(d) Revising the coding rules

Amendment will be made with reference to the trial-out of the coding and categorizing.

The techniques employed in the content analysis will involve text encoding, word frequency lists and category counts. Owing to the relative size of the sample, statistical analysis is not adopted.

Example:

Items	Descriptions
Code	Personal Values (PEV)
Brief description	School heads values and values system
Full definition	The values of school head relating to his/her understanding of the importance of education/MCE to students
Example	“I think that MCE is the most important in education.”

Adapted from Codebook Structure (MacQueen 1998: 213)

4.2.7 Limitations of the research methodology

Owing to the limited resources and time, the present study can only accommodate six sample school heads for more in-depth interview. In relation to the total number of 660 primary schools in the 2007-2008 school year, the pool of six sample schools is found to be relatively small but representative enough of the population. If a pattern of typology of school heads has to be drawn, a larger sample size covering more schools will be desirable to generate more data for pattern analysis.

As far as data collection is concerned, interview with other stakeholders including middle management in school such as prefects of studies, teacher coordinators and frontline teachers could be included. Parents and students can be included for interview to triangulate the information obtained from school heads. It will provide another dimension of data, from the co-partners of school heads and the end users, that is, students.

Since the present research study is written in English, an option is offered in the selection of language used for the interview. Five out of six school heads preferred to use Chinese (Cantonese dialect) for the interview. There could possibly be variations in interpretation. This has to be borne in mind as limitations since some language in local context cannot be easily translated into English without the loss of the original meaning.

Purposive sampling method with maximum variation in school backgrounds and school heads is adopted to resolve the challenges of limited sample size. The school heads selected aim to yield samples with a close approximation to the population size of primary schools in Hong Kong. Such a sampling process will help enhance the trustworthiness of the research as the typicality of the sample school heads could produce the research result for possible transferability. The variety of backgrounds of

school heads can generate a high degree of representativeness of the larger population, enhancing the generalisability of research finding.

4.3 Issues of trustworthiness: reliability and validity

In the execution of the research procedures and steps, every attempt is made to ensure (a) reliability and (b) validity to enhance the academic rigour of research. The possibilities to repeat the research procedures and methods to generate similar results with a high degree of assurance under constant conditions are the main concern of reliability. The process adopted to maintain consistency of results is the principle behind the concept of reliability in research. Different procedures will be adopted to make sure reliability in both data collection and analysis during the research process. Through repeating the data collection procedures, same results will be yielded if the research method is able to attain a high degree of reliability. Audit trail will be documented and kept to facilitate repetition of the steps and procedures such as invitation letters, interview questions, interview record, transcriptions, data analysis, coding and categorization of the data.

Validity is concerned with the degree of authenticity in the research with an attempt to describe how accurate the research is supposed to measure what the researcher intends to measure. It is important to secure validity to enhance the trustworthiness and robustness of the study as well as the explanatory power of the research with a view to generating acceptance to the finding of the research.

Various methods for data collection namely semi-structured interview, documentary analysis of the school papers, programme plans as well as school publications such as school year books are vetted to cross reference the interview to ensure the trustworthiness of the study in both data collection and analysis.

Efforts have been made to maintain internal validity of the research tool to accurately represent the phenomenon of the research. First, in setting the interview questions, face validity is achieved in the setting of questions which are designed logically related to the perceived purpose of the research study. The question items have to be valid and relevant to the research aims. In order to ensure its internal validity, previewing and comments have been sought from school heads for refinement and to check the logical consistency of the questions set. Second, content related evidence for validity has to be secured. That means information gathered should be able to measure adequately the conceptual domain of what is going to measure. Exploration has been done to identify variables reflecting school heads' perception and its

connection with the school practices in managing the curriculum change.

4.3.1 Triangulation for enhanced trustworthiness

Validation of data collected from the interview is triangulated with documentary analysis of the information gathered such as school year plans, school newsletters and reference materials to check against consistency. Cross checking of data is a necessary step to ensure trustworthiness.

In the interpretation of data, it is important to secure insiders' confirmation of the accuracy of data. The key issue is to ensure respondent validation in which the research subject finds the interpretations of their perceptions and experiences credible.

4.3.2 Research feasibility and accessibility to sources of information

Invitation letters and consent form are mailed to the six sample school heads for action. Since the research targets are the school heads, their consent is sufficient to secure the source of information. To have triangulation of information and to ensure research credibility, the consent from school heads have to be obtained with information access to school documents while school plans are available in the public domain.

The school heads are offered the choice in the language, English or Chinese, in the interview. Since Chinese is the mother tongue and if the school heads find themselves more fluent and comfortable to express their ideas in Chinese, translation will be made in the transcription for data analysis.

4.4 Research trajectory and audit trail

(a) Research trajectory

A research trajectory is a research journey showing how the initial idea of the research is conceived and implemented step by step. It demonstrates a research path revealing the stages of progression of the research and the interconnection of the stages. It exhibits how the research idea is being executed and followed through to arrive at the research findings. The trajectory serves as a documentation of the research path revealing the operationalization of the thinking process involved in the study. It is a *macro* perspective to exhibit how the research is being conceived and action taken to execute the idea to address to the research problem. The research trajectory records the sequence of the phases of development, covering *sensitizing, conceptualizing, locating, exploring, analyzing and interpreting* as well as *evaluating*, leading to the framework of the present study and is elaborated below.

1. Sensitizing

My research began with an interest to know how the new MCE curriculum is implemented in schools under the broad framework of education reform in 2001. My work in Curriculum Development Institute of the Education Bureau and involvement in developing the new MCE curriculum framework are part of the motivation. My work experience reminds me that a large scale curriculum change is not likely to be smooth as it involves so many stakeholders and the magnitude of change is territory-wide while the state of readiness of each school varies greatly.

In addition, the feedback from teacher participants of curriculum dissemination sessions organized by Education Bureau over the years since 2002 reveals that support and attitude of school heads are one of the key factors for effective implementation of the new MCE curriculum. My contact with school heads also indicates that there are differences in their interpretation of the new MCE curriculum and process in managing the curriculum.

The surveys conducted by the Education Bureau in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 on the progress of the curriculum reform did not reveal much qualitative information how the MCE was implemented and the role of school head in the curriculum change. It prompts me to have an in-depth study on the implementation of the new MCE curriculum as I believe this will be a worthwhile endeavor.

2. Conceptualizing

Given the special position of school heads as school leaders and their influence in shaping the direction of the running of schools and implementation of educational initiatives, it warrants a vigorous study to examine their role in the curricular change by conceptualizing the research area into a manageable and worthwhile academic study.

3. Anchoring

School leadership is a very broad area and literature search is necessary to locate what and how many related studies have been done to see if there is any gap in research, both locally and internationally. A review of the school leadership literature demonstrates a knowledge gap in studying the relationship between the school leadership and curriculum change, especially in local context of Hong Kong schools.

4. Identifying

The theme of the study is anchored on the study of school leadership with a focus on examining school heads' perception upon the curricular change as discussed in Chapter 3.

5. Exploring

An appropriate research paradigm is identified to anchor and support the selection of corresponding theoretical framework for the research methodology and rubrics. Bridging the research aims with the operation of the research tools and procedures in data collection is elaborated in Chapter 4.

6. Analyzing and interpreting

Theoretical framework as explained in Chapter 2 is referred to for analyzing and interpreting the data. Mind map and diagrams are employed to present the relationship between school heads' perception and implementation of the new MCE curriculum to reveal any new knowledge resulting from the data analysis in Chapters 5-6.

7. Evaluating

The findings of the research are reviewed and reflected for policy implications and on the school leadership literature. Recommendations and limitations of the research are spelt out in the conclusion Chapter for further research.

(b) Audit trail

From a *micro* perspective, an audit trail is a record of the steps taken to ensure the reliability and validity of a research so that a reproduction of the steps taken should be able to yield similar research findings. It allows an external reviewer to inquire into the process to judge if the procedure was reliable and confirmable. Audit trail is a documentation of the process of data gathering and data analysis (Akkerman 2005:167) and is a material object for evaluating the quality of qualitative researches. The comprehensive record of the audit trail provides a systematic procedure and components for evaluation by external auditor the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. The provision and record of the materials could be grouped and categorised under the three criteria of visibility (*Are decisions explicated and communicated?*), comprehensibility (*Are the decisions substantiated?*) and acceptability (*Are the decisions acceptable according to the standards, values and norms in the research domain?*) for external review and validation for the purpose of establishing trustworthiness of the research.

The detailed documentation of the procedures are recorded and are grouped in phrases of data collection and data analysis both for internal audit and for external review as appropriate. All the interview records were kept in electronic form and hard copies for auditing. The interviews were transcribed and systematically filed.

(i) Procedure of data collection

(a) Pre-interview process :

Prior consent has been secured from the interviewees to participate voluntarily into the research and a consent form has to be signed by each interviewee who is informed of their right and liberty to withdraw from participating in the research in the invitation letters. The invitation letter has included the aims of the research, the commitment of the research subject and their contribution by participating in the research so that the interviewees understand thoroughly the nature and purpose of the research. The appeal for their support is based on the value of the research in order to secure trustworthiness and independence of the research. The invitation letter together with the outline of interview questions were sent to the school heads for their preview at least two weeks before the actual interview was conducted.

(b) Conduct of Interview

For the conduct of the interview, pilot testing is carried out beforehand and comments from school head were received to refine and improve the clarity and the coherence of the interview questions. The questions are written in English and if the interviewee opts for Chinese for their interview, translation of the interview questions into Chinese will be performed.

While conducting the interview, the interview is recorded and each school head is provided with 2 to 2.5 hours for the interview and each school head is provided with sufficient time to elaborate and cover all the related aspects of the specific research questions. Transcription will be done for analysis.

Field notes are kept when school visits are arranged to understand the school ethos and environment. Extracting information from documents, school publications and school web pages are included as part of the data collection process.

(ii) Data analysis

Through content analysis of the data collected, memoing, field notes, coding, category, themes are kept to demonstrate whether patterns and relationships of concepts and observations are generated. Mind maps and diagrams are used to show the relation with reference to relevant research literature to establish credibility.

4.5 Research ethics

The ethical issue of research is one of the key issues of concern and has to be addressed critically to ensure that the interest of the research subject is being protected. The conduct of the research should not violate issues like protection of the research subject's privacy and the operation of the research is not to be justified on its own without due regard given to the interest of the research subject. Research ethics is considered in respect of (a) the intent and purpose of research, (b) research relation, (c) administration of research method, and (d) interpretation of data.

4.5.1 Intent and purpose of the educational research

The research in new MCE curriculum under the Hong Kong education context is justified on its own with a clear purpose in research of intrinsic value. Whole-person development of students is stressed as one of the aims of education. The re-structuring and positioning of MCE as one of the building blocks of the school curriculum for whole-person development. The research outcome attempts to enlighten the way forward for the implementation of MCE curriculum in Hong Kong primary schools.

4.5.2 Research relation

The research relation is concerned with the power relationship between the researcher and the research subjects. Threat should not be created in affecting the conduct of the research through maintaining an equal position between the researcher and the research subject. In the administration of the research, the status of the researcher should not impose an undue pressure or influence upon the research subjects. My official capacity as curriculum developer in the Education Bureau may impose pressure upon school heads. The research may be interpreted by school heads as a means to monitor their progress of implementation of curriculum reform. To lessen possible pressure and unnecessary speculation, it is spelt out clearly at the first instant that the research is entirely an independent study on my own. The possible role conflict in carrying out the research is one of the ethical considerations because of my insider status. In this connection, the official capacity of myself in the Education Bureau will not be highlighted in the communication with the research subject instead the purpose and the value of the research will be made explicit with a view to enhancing the independence of the study.

In collecting the information from respondents, efforts have been taken to ensure confidentiality of the information of the respondents and that the identity of the research subjects could not be recognized. The protection of privacy of the respondents is important to ensure authentic information which truly reflects the

perception of the school heads towards the new MCE curriculum.

Respect for informed consent has to be secured. School heads will be informed of the purpose, the consequence involved in the conduct of the research. Voluntary consent of the school heads has to be respected and secured and they have the right to refuse to take part in and withdraw from the research. The consent forms were signed and kept.

4.5.3 Administration of research method

Being involved in the curriculum development work of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, self awareness is upheld throughout the research process to avoid possible conflict of interest to avoid creating pressure upon the interviewees. Triangulation of data from different sources including document analysis could be adopted to reduce the possible risk of personal bias.

Another ethical consideration in research is to maintain a balance between the researcher's right to know and research subject's right to privacy. The school heads may show concern if their views would affect them adversely if they reveal their position upon the curriculum reform in Hong Kong. School heads will be assured of the research as a private study and the identity of school heads will be kept anonymous. The result will not bring undesirable consequence upon them arising from the views expressed.

The adoption of research instrument such as interview, the wording and structure of the question stems are designed to be easily understood by school heads. This is an important consideration not only from the point of easy comprehension for the respondents but it also facilitates school heads to understand the meaning of the questions.

4.5.4 Interpretation of data

The proposed research is a qualitative research in which the search for meaning and explanation of the school heads' perceptions of MCE curriculum is the center of study. Interpretation of data is one of the areas where ethical consideration is too important to be neglected. The research that I am going to work on involves analyzing the perception of school heads for informed practices. It touches on the value orientation of the school heads. One of the key reform proposals is to cultivate among students a sense of national identity which is a subjective orientation for affection towards the motherland through enhanced understanding of its culture and current developments.

Such an orientation is one of the aims in the curriculum. However, upholding the principle of integrity and the search for truth should not be compromised for meeting expectations of society. The interpretation of data collected should truly reflect school heads' perception instead of being circumscribed by societal expectations.

Chapter 5 Analysing and presenting the data

5.1 Procedure of data analysis: an overview

Subsequent to the interviews conducted with six sample school heads in May 2009, the interviews were transcribed into texts. As five school heads prefer the interview to be conducted in Cantonese, English translations of the scripts are made while only one school head opted to use English in the interview which will be transcribed for data analysis.

The transcripts are read over to check against the tapes for accuracy for each interview. As Cantonese is used, there may not be English equivalent on text to text basis in the transcriptions. As such, the response to the interview questions in Chinese texts are translated into English as much as possible and the English text will form the primary source of raw data for analysis.

The process of data analysis is a process of data reduction. The massive amount of data from the interviews, with a total of about 15 hours of interview, has to be reduced for identification of the concepts and their connections to find out if there is a relationship as suggested in the main research question --- the relationship between school head's perception and the implementation of the new MCE curriculum in primary schools.

The texts are studied using content analysis for comprehension and deducing meaning from the data. From the trunk of information, key terms are identified, analyzed and coded. The coding of the transcribed texts is appended against the transcriptions and is tabulated. The data of similar nature are categorized and grouped together and themes emerge in accordance with the concepts elicited from the data. The coding and values classification of school heads' perception of the MCE curriculum are categorised for analysis as (a) personal value, (b) professional values as school head (c) attitude towards the MCE curriculum (d) the perceived role as school head (e) knowledge and awareness of the MCE curriculum and (f) implementation strategies. Full explanations are at Appendix III table 5.1

Excerpt of coding descriptions

Code (P)	Personal value	Descriptions
PEV	Personal values	The values one holds with respect to what is worthwhile and desirable, affected by one's personal experiences

Code (S)	Professional value as SH	Descriptions
SMV	School vision and mission upheld by SH	The values to be cherished by the school sponsoring bodies/school head
SVE	Values of education	Conception of education and importance of education and personal reflection of the essence of education
SVM	Value and importance of MCE	Value and role of MCE in whole-person development of students

Code (K)	Knowledge and awareness of MCE	Descriptions
KME	Knowledge of MCE	Knowledge, understanding and awareness of the new MCE curriculum, content and latest development

Illustration of transcripts

Excerpt of the interview transcripts of one of the school heads is presented as illustration of how the data is analysed with reference to the coding at Appendix III.

Code	Theme	Sub themes	SH 4 (School Head 4)
			Description/memoing
SVM	Awareness of the role of MCE Awsh	Aware of the importance and role of MCE in education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Our students might not be good at academic results but we all expected that the students to become <u>good citizens</u>. It was our belief. • ‘We could also use MCE to handle some ad hoc issues. We also made use of activities such as national day celebration to promote the <u>core value</u> of national identity. We also made use of issue such as the Earthquake in Sichuan in 2008 as <u>life events</u> for promoting MCE. • ‘I was thinking if we did more in primary school, it might not help him/her much, but to give him/her more positive message and energy, would it help? I thought the <u>responsibility in primary school</u> was important.’
KME			
SVE			
SVE			

SVE			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When they entered in primary school, it was about 6 to 7 years of age, did we not do something? Definitely, I felt that it was an <u>important learning process</u>. It took many years to develop and change one's values. In the teaching and learning process, every incident would provide possible message especially <u>learning to prepare for adulthood</u>
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Further details are provided at Table 5.2 at Appendix IV to show how the transcripts are analysed within the framework of cognitive, values and behavioural dimensions as suggested at section 5.2 below. The analysis of data is based on (a) the frequency of the key terms/messages/values as mentioned in the interview/scripts; and (b) the relative weight and importance of the key terms/concepts/values to be inferred within the context. The frequency of the key terms/concepts/values is not the only determinant of the importance of the message in the data analysis. Key messages covering values and concepts are analysed to examine if any relationship exists between perception of school heads (SH), their value orientation and school practice. The connectivity of the concepts reveals the differences and similarities of the school leadership with regard to their curricular role in the implementation of the MCE curriculum.

5.2 Presentation of the summary of interview analysis of six school heads

First, analysis of the data is started from studying school heads' *conception* and interpretation of the MCE curriculum. This includes analyzing if the school heads are aware of the new MCE curriculum, what is the change involved (both the content and the approach advocated) and the rationale for change. The second part will focus on what kind of *attitude* the school heads adopt when facing the new MCE curriculum. Different attitudes are adopted by school heads, depending on the way they perceive the curriculum change in relation to their role as school heads. Their values orientation including the conception of what is important in education and for personal development of students as well as the school vision and mission will affect their attitude towards the curriculum. The third part will concentrate on how the school heads manage the change imperative, the analysis of the *school practices* and the way they prioritize competing demands arising from the whole curriculum change in the basic education. Inquiry will be made to examine the interrelationship between school heads' perception of new MCE curriculum and curriculum implementation within three dimensions of perception as discussed in Chapter 3 section 3.2.3, namely

- (a) **Cognitive dimension:** school heads' conceptual understanding, knowledge and interpretation of the new MCE curriculum;
- (b) **Values dimension:** the attitudes towards the new MCE curriculum, approach, its place in education and for whole-person development; and
- (c) **Behavioural dimension:** Leadership role in curriculum reform, decisions made and school practices to implement the new MCE curriculum.

The summary presentation of data of the six school heads at Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 at Appendix V is an important process of data reduction for extracting concepts, variables to generalize patterns, if any. In order to ensure the fluency in the thesis presentation, details of the analysis and presentation of data are grouped in Appendices III – V. The observations and findings from analyzing the data for addressing the research questions and generating new knowledge will be discussed in details in Chapter 6 and 7.

Chapter 6 Observations and research findings

From the data analysis at Chapter 5, it has revealed that the school head has an important role to play in curriculum delivery. They are performing the instructional leadership role as identified by Hallinger (2000) in defining school mission, setting expectation of students and promoting positive school climate. Different school heads realize the instructional role in different capacities. One thing in common is that a bottom up approach is adopted to generate consensus and shared values from teachers whose support is crucial. This is what is advocated for school head to build connectedness with teachers with shared community values, ideas, and ideals for effective school leadership to lead for change (Deal & Peterson, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1996; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998).

It is noted that interpretation of the MCE curriculum by school heads affects the implementation strategies. The instructive leadership role can be discussed through analyzing their perception within the framework of cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions to recognise the relations among these variables.

6.1 Interrelationship of values, perception and school leadership

6.1.1 Three dimensions of school heads' perception of MCE

(a) Cognitive dimension

Comprehension and understanding of the new MCE curriculum by the six school heads vary from a general awareness to a thorough understanding of the content and the pedagogical approach. Understanding ranges from a rich knowledge of to an insufficient comprehension of the new MCE curriculum. There is an obvious relation between the amount of cognitive knowledge of the new curriculum and the strategies adopted in schools. It is noted that a lack of understanding of the new MCE curriculum will be difficult to generate ownership by school heads and the support offered to facilitate its implementation is not effectively articulated. Disengagement from the school practices are noted while the school heads' involvement in promoting values will largely depend on school heads' style and preference. The lack of ownership will create detachment and it is difficult to generate shared values and alignment of teachers for implementation, even though concurrence with the aims of the new MCE curriculum exists. On the other hand, a good grasp of the knowledge of the new curriculum, coupled with school heads' concordance of their personal beliefs with the aims of the curriculum facilitate effective implementation. It is reflected by better articulation of strategies linking up other key tasks. There are also evidence of cross curricular support, sustainability in school plan, systematic staff empowerment programmes and resources support.

Cognitive understanding of the new MCE curriculum by school heads
and curriculum implementation

	Knowledge poor (new MCE curriculum)	Knowledge rich (new MCE curriculum)
Professional judgment (School head)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uninformed professional judgment • Substantial freedom for subject department and individual teachers • Little knowledge of what works in MCE curriculum • Inconspicuous focus for addressing the needs of the students • Based on personal preference and past experience • Administration-led strategies • Unaware of the impact of the new approach and its effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed decision with respect to prescribed implementation to school based adaptation and adoption • Self analysis for assessing school readiness • Relevant school practices and strategies to initiate and sustain the reform changes • Better focus in the implementation with respect to schools' strengths, areas of concern and students' needs
External prescription (MCE curriculum)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum documents are taken at face value • Uninformed prescription • Not sufficient consideration in addressing the school-based needs with respect to the central MCE curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed prescription from curriculum documents providing an overarching framework for implementation strategies • Corresponding empowerment support for enhancing teachers' capabilities • Strategies more defined and in focus e.g. better focus on values education in school plan

The data reveal that government's dissemination strategies enhancing school heads' awareness and understanding of the rationale, the content and the approach of the new curriculum are essential to create ownership among school heads for effective

curriculum implementation. This is the first step for successful change. The second step is to intensify school heads' perception to accept, recognize, endorse and agree with the new curriculum. School heads' concordance with the new MCE curriculum is associated with the attitude adopted towards it and the perception is related with school heads' values-orientation and conception of the importance of the new MCE curriculum. Heightening school heads' awareness of the curriculum change is a *necessary* condition to make possible the change.

(b)Values dimension of school heads' perception

(i) Attitude of the school heads towards the new MCE curriculum

Variations of interpretation of the new MCE curriculum exist among the six school heads but the sample school heads support the value-based approach in the new MCE curriculum. They are aware of the shift from knowledge-based approach in MCE before 2001 to the currently value-based new MCE curriculum by focusing on development of values and attitudes for whole-person development of students.

From the interviews, it is noted that the attitude adopted by school heads have great implications on school practices. The way the school heads perceive and construe MCE curriculum is one of the key factors affecting its implementation in schools. It ranges from total adoption to local adaptation of the new MCE curriculum with the existing school practices. First, the design of the MCE curriculum has taken into account the nature of non-examinable curriculum of MCE which gives much flexibility to schools to tailor-make the content and approach to suit the needs of the students. The non-examinable MCE curriculum permits schools with flexibility in its adoption and adaptation. Second, the overall design of the MCE curriculum acknowledges and appreciates the existing strengths of schools in promoting the MCE, given the diversities of schools run by different school sponsoring bodies.

All the sample school heads have exhibited very **positive** attitude towards the new MCE curriculum. Their attitude is manifested through various initiatives and measures to carry out the new curriculum. There is a close relation between the way school heads interpret the importance of MCE in education and to the students in character building as well as their perceived role to play. No school head has shown an apathetic or negative attitude towards the new curriculum. They are affirmative of the merits and strengths of MCE curriculum and consider that the MCE curriculum provides an alternative perspective and approach in character development through nurturing students' positive values. The only school head from government primary school considers it an obligation to implement the curriculum but still regards MCE

addressing the issues facing the young. A proactive attitude is adopted by all the school heads to implement the new MCE curriculum into the existing school practices such as morning assembly, daily school life or making use of the curriculum documents for building shared values among the key players. Although a school head adopts a skeptical attitude about the means to promote the new MCE curriculum, the promotion of the core values corresponds with his personal belief and school mission. The positive attitude towards the MCE curriculum is further supported by school heads because they are of the view that positive values of students will complement the academic achievements of students.

The school practices reflecting the attitude adopted by school heads towards the new MCE curriculum is tabulated below.

Attitude towards MCE	School practice reflecting school heads' attitude towards the new MCE
Positive attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipative of problems • Forward looking in planning to cope with the changes • Proactive to prepare the school/staff for the change • Expectation of the impact of the new MCE upon students • Persistent to continue and work on • Idealized, visionary with goal and objective • Receptive to changes • Belief to improve, make-a-difference conception • Inviting/welcoming views/comments to improve • Deal with the problem professionally, compassionately and expediently • Encouraging remarks to staff on the task relating to new MCE • Setting expectations on the role of staff (e.g. to support, to contribute) • Open to comments/views • Create shared values and commitment from middle management and frontline teachers • Show a sense of responsibility • Project own judgement • Make attempts to sustain the changes • Systematic measures • Mobilize support/resources • Plan and act in view of changes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous adaptations • Define problem and adapt (new MCE) with reference to school mission/vision/needs of students • Perceived as an attempt for enhanced awareness of moral character of students
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The positive attitude towards the curriculum is further reflected by school heads' awareness in generating support and consensus from teachers which is one of the characteristics of transformational leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000a; Louis & Marks, 1998; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Transformational leadership is envisaged through rallying the support and generating ownership from subject teachers and middle management. Dialogue is made with middle management for building espoused values, commitment and shared meaning between individual and collective that is crucial for change (Fullan 1991). It is observed that shared values are important especially in school B when the leader took up the leadership within a relatively short period of time. Frequent communication with the teachers was also noted in school A, D and E that generates organisational support to the implementation strategies.

(ii) Personal value orientation towards education

In analyzing the six interviews, it reveals that the attitude taken by the school heads towards the new MCE curriculum has much to do with their values and belief of what is desirable in education for students. All the school heads have exhibited a strong personal belief on the conception of education, arising either from their religious belief, past life experience, influence of their teachers or upbringing (Sergiovanni, 1992, Sarros et al 1999, Baker 2002, Haynes, 2002). This is shown by the high frequency of messages/concepts associated with their interpretation of the value of MCE to students' whole-person development (Table 5.3). There is a close link between school heads' conception of what to be treasured in education and students' personal development in the implementation of new MCE curriculum. The observation resonates the call for self awareness of personal values in execution of school leadership (Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993; Moos, et al, 1998). Sergiovanni (1992, 2002) advocates moral leadership (deciding the right things right) in decision making concerning values issues. It reflects what Sergiovanni stresses that 'the heart of leadership has to do with what a person believes, values, dreams about and is committed to but it is more than vision' (Sergiovanni,1992:8). The decision involves valuation on what is worth learning to students in school curriculum. The strong inclination in nurturing students into 'good citizens' with moral and civic mindedness through the MCE curriculum is obvious, promoting the motivation for school heads to cope with the change.

All of the school heads have a common view that the need for developing students' character is no less important than acquisition of knowledge which is repeatedly reflected in the interview as an indispensable part of education (Table 5.3). The argument for developing students' character for 'good person/citizen' through MCE as a goal very is obvious. They are executing their curricular role with a purpose in the strategies as 'people-centred, achievement-oriented and values-led' principalship (Day, 2000). MCE is advocated as it is playing an important role to pave the way for students towards adulthood and facing the challenges in life. School heads are of the same view that the MCE curriculum contributes to the empowerment of students' ability in discerning their values position during their personal development. To develop students' ability to make responsible decisions and judge what is right and wrong is desirable and urged by school heads. Positive view of the MCE curriculum is further supported as they believe MCE curriculum is complementary to the pursuit of knowledge which requires perseverance and self discipline.

Although there is variation among the school heads in their interpretation of the essence of education, it is common that all the school heads have exhibited strong commitment in education and have projected their vision and mission in education. It is close to the finding of twelve schools in UK by Day et al (2001) that a clear set of personal and educational values held by school leadership are desirable representing the values orientation of schools. School head A considers passion in education, personal contact and positive support to students important in nurturing students' character. To spell out the expectations upon the students will provide motivation for students to improve. School head B has the vision of creating the school into a family-like environment in which modeling is stressed to help develop the students. Her conception of education to nurture students' personal qualities is very obvious. Driven by personal and religious belief, school head C regards a conducive school environment will prompt the students to have a fulfilling life and education can nurture the 'inner side' (psyche) of a person. Having a positive attitude towards children, the belief that every student is teachable reflects in his school practice. School head D exhibits a strong sense of responsibility and insists that education is for the people and education should help students handle personal issues and to become good citizens. Education is regarded as a process to provide social mobility for the students and primary schooling is particularly important. Similar to the other school heads, school head E holds the view that helping students to develop the potentials and life skills is the essence of education. Motivated by her religious belief, a proactive role is played to implement the MCE curriculum with great enthusiasm with

various initiatives. Being fond of her students, she creates a favourable school environment for them to blossom, both academically and in their character development. Same as the other school heads, love is considered by school head F to be the essence of education and opportunities should be provided for students to develop.

The value of commitment of the school heads provides strong motivational base and sense of direction (Begley, 1999; 2001) for school heads to initiate changes and institutionalize measures to sustain the changes as in all the school heads. In school F, the head inclines more on personal contact and individualized approach than system building to implement the curriculum. The value orientation of school head is also an important determinant for them to resolve dilemmas in school practice and education administration (Walker & Dimmock, 2002). The asynchronous changes and tensions generated from curriculum reform and demographic change in student population further elicit the importance of values for school heads in making decisions. School head D clearly illustrates his commitment in whole-person development as yardstick in deciding school priorities and implementation of the curriculum even in face of school uncertainty of its continued existence.

(c) Behavioural dimension

Considerations of school practices in managing the new MCE curriculum

The strategies adopted mirror the considerations made in curriculum implementation as against the possible constraints and the school-based needs. There is a continuum of total adoption of the new MCE curriculum to a liberal approach to let school heads and teachers with the flexibility and freedom employing their school-based approach.

The curricular role of school head can be expressed and analysed at three levels, namely macro level (overall school planning), meso level (organization and coordination) and micro level (teaching and learning) to reveal how the role is performed to observe if there is a relation among school heads' curricular role, their conception of MCE, values orientation and sense of commitment in education. At macro level, it is about setting goals for the school plan and the positioning of the overall strategy to cope with and manage the curriculum change. At meso level, it focuses on the organization and coordination of strategies and different curriculum areas, human and non-human resources in executing the curricular role. The micro level is more concerned about the teaching and learning process of the delivery of the curriculum.

A close relationship in the implementation strategies with school heads' beliefs is observed. Value orientation and personal qualities determine the response the school head perceives the situations and interprets the meaning of the work and responds accordingly (Greenfield, 1987a, 1987b, 1991a, 1991b, 1995). Different patterns of curricular leadership with respect their values towards the curriculum are noted and is classified as '*visionary curricular leadership*' and '*pragmatic curricular leadership*'.

(i) Visionary curricular leadership

Different school heads have exhibited similarities in the qualities of leadership in managing the new MCE curriculum. Obvious characteristics of school heads in performing the curricular role cluster and a pattern of curricular leadership style emerges. Based on the characteristics and similarities, a category of school leadership named as '*visionary curricular leadership*' which mirrors the strong influence of school heads' values orientation, belief and vision in education in managing the curriculum change.

Macro level

The head of school A is aware of the importance in assessing the state of readiness of the school to embark on curriculum change. Self understanding of the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) is conducted in school and attempts are made to fill in the gaps to prepare the school for curriculum implementation. She is aware of her leadership role and influence upon the other key players and students. She steers and initiates new idea in promoting MCE such as the setting up of elderly college to engage primary students to provide service to the elderly of the neighbourhood and introduced service learning since 1998.

In school head B, the school head interprets MCE within her own conception of what an effective school is. She takes further steps to elaborate the school mission which outlines the direction of the school to be run when she took up the school headship two years ago. It is obvious to note direct involvement of school head in setting of themes and priority values in promoting the MCE. Overall assessment is made by the school head to consider the state of readiness of the teaching staff. Efforts are made to maintain the sustainability of the curriculum change, such as building up of documentation in school. She has proposed to have evaluation on curriculum implementation to monitor the effectiveness of the measures. Connectivity is made with other initiatives to promote MCE for coherent curriculum planning. The core values of the new MCE curriculum are referred to set the theme for the five-year school plan.

In school C, the school head has exercised a strong influence in designing the school plan reflecting the school mission and his personal belief. In order to achieve alignment and consistence in implementing school policy, teachers with similar belief and concordance with school mission and vision are recruited. The school head has a strong sense of direction in running the school and concentrates on the needs of the school instead of responding frequently to changes imposed from outside environment.

Similarly, in school D, even in face of uncertainties of the school, the school head insists on nurturing students' positive values such as a sense of justice, on top of the core values of the new MCE curriculum. The nurturing of the value of accommodating and openness are the foci instead of focusing solely on academic achievements to attract students' enrolment. The message that students' learning should not be affected by uncertainties of the school exists throughout the interview. The school head's strong sense of commitment demonstrates himself as a role model to both the teachers and students as a means in promoting MCE.

In school E, the head has persistently set the school development plan in accordance with the new MCE curriculum since 2001 and personally she heads a new MCE committee to oversee the curriculum change. The core values of the new MCE are incorporated in different curriculum areas and learning experiences for students as an overall school practice. The six-year curriculum plan is devised with the core values recommended under the new MCE curriculum as the overarching theme of the year plan. Making reference to the latest development of the Bureau, new initiatives such as evaluation strategies are incorporated as appropriate into the design of the school plan.

Meso level

At meso level, school heads of visionary type exhibit very strong curricular leadership at the organizational level. Partnership has been built with teachers and key players such as parents and school social workers to facilitate the implementation of the new MCE curriculum as in schools A, B, D and E. Consensus among teachers is promoted through communication and meetings with the middle management to develop shared values and alignment with frontline teachers. Attempts are made to convince the teachers who are lukewarm in response to the curriculum change such as by listening to their views and challenges facing them in carrying out the new MCE curriculum. Teacher empowerment is strengthened through encouraging them to attend

professional development programmes. Common to them is the importance accorded by school heads in building espoused values and share commitment among teachers for managing the change (Deal & Peterson, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1996; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998). Resources from outside are identified to offer support to the implementation of the curriculum. In particular, in school D, the head is alert about the school's constraint and threat but mobilizes resources to support teachers who can be left to concentrate mainly on teaching and learning. The school head is sympathetic with the teachers and adopts a more considerate approach to help tackle the problems facing them such as the grievances aired by the parents, the demand from parents' expectation for placing emphasis on academic performance.

The head of school A emphasizes immersion of the MCE core values in school subject curriculum, life education and Biblical teaching. Collegial partnership from the teachers is built through teachers' participation and their views are listened to. This helps create teachers' ownership and the religious belief serves as one of the cementing agent and sustaining force.

In school B, administrative support such as special timetabling arrangement is adopted to facilitate students to participate in activities such as service learning and special time allocation for MCE lesson. Teachers are also encouraged to do action research as a means for developing the competency of teachers for self improvement which the school head considers effective for continuous improvement. Each subject department is required to have self evaluation for filling the gaps between theory and practice as well as professional enhancement.

School head C has maintained a constant communication with the middle management and opportunities are provided for capacity building of teachers. He is conscious of linking the change imperatives with the needs of the students of his school.

In school E, the head takes a more elaborative role by taking the lead in developing expected learning outcomes to observe the result of the implementation of the new MCE curriculum. To ensure that the school plan is carried out as designed, clear messages on how to promote MCE under the new curriculum framework are disseminated in meetings at the middle management level. Written materials in the form of newsletters and various publications are used to inform the key stakeholders, both parents and teachers, of the school MCE messages.

Micro level

At the teaching and learning process, in school B as an example, with her rich experience involved in curriculum development as PSMCD, the head involves herself in developing teaching resources. She expects the teachers to be able to acquire the skills and competency in designing teaching resources. Positive reinforcement is always used to give support to students as a means of modeling in promoting MCE. In school D, the head has personal involvement in teaching in class with an aim to get direct feedback from students as well as passing the message of not departing from staff as a team. Various initiatives, including school-based projects relevant to the school context such as 'Ganbadai', mosaic decoration of the student toilets, design of birthday card for school founder are adopted in school B to promote the core values of care and sharing, self esteem, self confidence, acceptance and ownership to school. Direct positive reinforcement is given to students by all the sample school heads to show their concern and care for the students. Personal contact is believed to be an effective and important means in promoting core values.

In school A, the school head engages herself in contacting students through an informal way in school life such as school activities, morning assembly. Her expectations are made explicit to the students and exhortation is used to create a modeling effect to promote students' values development.

In response to the needs of the students of school C, the head thinks that the mode of teaching and learning as well as the mindset of teachers have to be adjusted. Provision of key project to widen students' learning experience, language abilities, development of life skills and values are introduced. Resource support is given to provide students the learning experience.

(ii) Pragmatic curricular leadership

On the one hand, all the school heads are aware of the new MCE curriculum as it is within part of the larger educational change in the new century in Hong Kong. On the other hand, it is noted from the six school heads that variation exists in the conceptual understanding of the rationale for change, the content and the new pedagogical approach. The variation can be understood as a reflection of the larger school population. Arising from variations in interpretation, the self-perceived role of school head in the curriculum change will be quite different. Although all the six school heads have demonstrated a commitment towards education and love towards the students, there is a difference in personal involvement and role to play in implementing the new MCE curriculum. The role of pragmatic curricular leadership is

again examined at three levels covering macro level, meso level and micro level.

Macro level

In school F, no specific direction is given regarding the overall school plan in the implementation of the new MCE curriculum. The role of the school leader is basically functional in nature in which the responsibility to implement the curriculum is considered to belong to the teachers-in-charge of this specific curricular area. The school is maintaining what is being practiced with the addition of some projects of which the school leadership has very limited knowledge. The personal preference of the school head has influence upon the promotion of values in students but it is very much idiosyncratic in nature. Taking up the leadership role in setting the direction, design of overall school plan to implement the new MCE curriculum by the school head is not obvious. The responsibility is delegated or assigned to the subject department or teacher-in-charge and the function executed by the leadership is more of task-based nature. It is considered as pragmatic curricular leadership.

Meso level

Although the school leadership concurs with the importance of nurturing values and attitudes, there is little evidence revealing such a value being conveyed to teachers for alignment. Teachers' empowerment through professional development programmes are at the needs of the teachers. Conscious attempt from the school head to enrich the teaching force for effective implementation of the new MCE curriculum is difficult to be identified.

Micro level

Love is being treasured in school education and the promotion of the core values is basically exercised by the school leader herself, making use of her charismatic qualities through personal contact with students to influence them. Systematic curricular means to facilitate frontline teachers to embed MCE in the teaching and learning process is not evident. Along her thought, the school head is more in favour of providing opportunities for students to develop.

6.2 Perception of school heads on curricular role: leader or administrator/manager discourse

As remarked by Dimmock (2002), school head plays a distinctive role in goal setting and steering the school instead of maintenance function as a manager. From the data collected, it has been revealed that all the school heads have performed the curricular leadership role, but in different capacities, degree of involvement resting on

different rationalities. The following views prevail why school heads are involved in the curricular role. First, the curriculum aims of the new MCE curriculum are situated within a broader aim of education in which the nurturing of students' character has been accorded an important role. This is well accepted and considered as an indispensable component of education within the Chinese culture. Ethics is ranked the first among the others namely cognitive, physique, social and aesthetic aspect as essential components of education. It is an established norm in Chinese society that MCE is a key vehicle for nurturing of students' qualities and addressing their moral make-up. It will be contrary to the societal norm, education professional values and commitment that school leadership is not involved in the promotion of MCE.

Second, the promotion of new MCE curriculum is a key task which means it is obligatory for primary schools in Hong Kong to implement as recommended by the Curriculum Development Council and the Education Bureau. In addition, schools in Hong Kong are subject to accountability to carry out the curriculum reform when inspections of schools by the Education Bureau are carried out at regular time. The introduction of External School Review (ESR) mechanism as applied to schools provides another impetus for school heads to implement the new MCE curriculum which is a domain for review.

Third, the changing school environment with decreasing student population imposes threats and challenges on school to achieve sufficient student enrolment. If the schools fail to make efforts in providing opportunities for students to excel, contribute to community services, and participate in various kinds of projects, they will easily be out-competed by school counterparts. That is why one school head considers this "show case" mentality contrary to his conception of what education should be. Given different backgrounds, geographical locations and student intakes, schools seldom concentrate solely on academic achievements as the highlight for attracting students. Schools which are perceived in the public as providing conducive learning environment for students to develop and nurture is welcome by parents in selection of school.

Fourth, the increasing threats from the changing social environment such as drug abuse, sexuality issue, cyber addiction, frustrations arising from life, pressure from studies and peer relationship etc. upon the personal growth and development of students have alerted the school the need to address the moral make up of students at primary level. The urge from parents, society upon the school sector for enhanced effort is imminent and obvious.

The discourse on the role of school leadership in curriculum matters is not a matter of affirmative or negative response instead it is concerned about the degree of involvement and the capacity of the curricular role. Apart from taking the leading role Dimmock (2002), emphasis is also placed on building of shared values (Fullan, 1991:5) among the teachers and stakeholders to synergise efforts which will enhance the normative structure and interpersonal relationship for curriculum delivery. This is raised by Hargreaves and Fullan (1998: 116) for managing change that ‘the principal of the next decade (1998-2008) should be leading the way to redefine collaboration so that it encompasses alliances with groups and individuals outside of the schools’.

Conceptualizing on the six interviews of the school heads, the difference in the two roles can be summarized below:

Curricular leadership role	Leader	Administrator/manager
Value orientation and rationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission based • Professional oriented • Long term consideration • Proactive • More concerned with sustainability • Highly motivated • Direct involvement • Leading/ directing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task based • Administration oriented • Short term aim • Receptive • Short term/piecemeal consideration • Passive • Detached • Assigning/allocating
Level of implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macro level (goal setting, positioning and setting of overall implementation strategy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall planning • Goal setting • Initiating • Sustaining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive to task requirement • Achieving target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meso level (organization and coordination) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating • Consensus building • Monitoring • Evaluating • Empowering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegating to responsible department

• Micro level (teaching and learning)	• Direct involvement/ participation	• Responsibility of designated teachers
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It is reflected in the interviews that the school leadership as executed by five out of six sample school heads leans towards curricular leadership role. It is raised by Robbins & Alvy (2003) that ‘educational leaders ensure that curricular design, instructional strategies, and learning environments integrate appropriate technologies to maximize learning and teaching’. School heads should have a clear sense of direction in positioning the new MCE curriculum with regard to the school context and needs of the students. There is a link between what he/she says and does. Concurring with the aims of the curriculum, the school heads have demonstrated the capacities in leading and steering the direction of the school with respect to their belief, school mission and values orientation to cope with the curriculum change.

A proactive attitude is exhibited by their direct involvement in school planning and establishment of mechanism for sustainability of implementation strategies. A realistic approach is adopted in setting the implementation strategies within the school context, taking into considerations the strengths and areas of concern. As Lashway (1996) has commented that ‘leaders concentrate on doing the right thing, not on doing things right’ and it involves a value issue which clearly illustrates that school leader is not an administrator simply engaging in managing tasks or challenges procedurally. In coping with the new MCE curriculum, there are many decisions to be made which involves values, dilemmas and prioritizations. Attempt to ‘doing the right thing right’ (Bellingham & Cohen, 1989) with their commitment and belief of what is important in education and to the whole-person development of students is observed.

6.3 Reflection on curricular leadership: valuation and practice

6.3.1 Valuation and school leadership

From the interviews, school heads have demonstrated a strong personal inclination in interpreting of what is considered to be worthy and valuable in education as well as MCE curriculum. They have their own interpretations of the curriculum and curricular role based on their value orientation, personal belief, past school experience and religious belief. The influence of their values conception is rather subtle but obvious and substantial as reflected in the following aspects. This phenomenon is supported by the arguments (Willower 1992, 1995; Hodgkinson 1991; Gardforth 1985) that values are the crux in decision making of education issues in which curriculum development and implementation is one of the value-laden issues.

- Consideration of importance of education and MCE curriculum with respect to the accrued benefits to the students, for example, developing students life skills, desirable personal qualities and decision making skills to face dilemmas in livelihood;
- Decision in setting of priorities, defining the curriculum content and specifying the aims in the delivery of MCE curriculum, for example, core values to be included, the approach and school practice taken to manage various change imperatives;
- Adoption of strategies in which values are implicitly promoted through, for example, modeling, personal contact with students or opening up opportunities for students to experience, forging partnership with parents, inclusion of content of learning experience and school life;
- Engagement of school heads, for example, direct contact with students, personal touch with students to demonstrate care and concern, engagement in teaching and learning to build up trust and support to students; and
- Expectation of students made explicit to show what school heads treasure as core values and personal qualities as learning outcome.

All the school heads exhibit qualities of moral leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992) and display devotion and dedication in education. It is obvious to note the sentiments, contentment, joy, excitement, delight emerged from school heads' recollection of episodes or incidents reflecting students' improvement, exhibiting desirable personal qualities and virtues. This is observable in the face-to-face interviews of all school heads, though these sentiments are difficult to be captured in words. Their commitment and dedication in education, representing the 'heart' (Sergiovanni, 1996), is clearly reflected in their personal narrative to the interview questions, supported by many past experiences and measures under their self-initiation in directing the school to implement the new MCE curriculum.

Another episode illustrating school heads' positive attitude towards the implementation of the MCE curriculum is revealed in the handling of dilemmas/threats to schools when conflicting values prevail. School heads maintain a balance in managing the demand from parents for academic performance and developing students into 'good citizens' when academic performance is regarded as one of the considerations by parents in selection of schools. School heads' persistence in upholding their vision of education against the dominant view of hegemony of academic achievement as the goal of education is well manifested in their interviews. The conception of education and MCE curriculum associated with developing

students into ‘good citizens’ and for character building is apparent and consideration has been made from the perspective of students. Their value orientation has shaped the strategies adopted to promote the new MCE curriculum with respect the school context and needs of the students.

School heads’ value perception of MCE curriculum

Values	School head A	School head B	School head C	School head D	School head E	School head F
Aim of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate student to be ‘a good guy’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be a good person is the most important in education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurturing students’ character is the aim of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be good citizens is the goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education should be more on nurturing students’ character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To become good citizens and MCE is needed
Function of MCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCE should stress learning to respect others Moral education is more important than knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCE is words and action, through life experience in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider MCE and life education very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasise the role of MCE paving way for students in adulthood MCE will have great impact on students in developing the positive values and attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most important curriculum of the school Belief in students’ character can be changed by education Education can make a difference and shape character development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic achievement is not enough and students need to learn how to think those issues affecting their life
Attitude towards MCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome the new MCE curriculum Modeling is the most important Support whole school participation Moral education can have positive impact on students’ academic achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurture and not to teach MCE and academic performance are complementary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistency of my belief, school mission and the aims of MCE curriculum It is our Buddhist belief that the behaviour of individual is the result of environment The school would accept students and help them to have good upbringing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing one’s values is particularly important in primary school Whole-person development is important and education should not be instrumental as most parents are concerned if the curriculum content is examinable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCE curriculum provides direction for implementation Chinese culture, her Christian belief and Biblical studies help internalize the cores values to implement the MCE curriculum Set the MCE curriculum as the first priority of the change imperatives Changes in MCE will have positive impact upon changes in other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult to teach values by books Advocate students to judge what is right and wrong Promote through daily life but no need to do it on purpose Work with heart is important

Personal belief upon students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give positive support to students • Like to contact students and teach in class • The core value of respect should be promoted in students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be positive, optimistic and to show concern to others • To donate and commit is the belief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong belief in changing the values of a person is the most important • I like to be with students • Everyone can be changed under the influence of environment • Belief of everyone is teachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility of a school head is important • Need to help students to handle personal issues and to become good citizens • Teach students to live with positive values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by religious belief, a personal commitment to serve and help people • Full commitment in work is my Christian ethical value • Like to reflect and self evaluate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that SH will affect the school and its direction
Personal vision of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for students to develop • Good personal contact is more important for character building • Believe in personal contact with students and good teacher and student relationship for character building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect the school to be like a family • Modeling is the key and she behaves what she believes • Open up opportunities for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want students to understand the meaning of life • Personal contact is the key to change the students • Provide students opportunities to develop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for ideal in education and to realize it in school • With many grassroots families, the school is positioned to serve these students • The school can provide fine and delicate education targeted at these students • Provide students the opportunities to develop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be good at academic results and in conduct • Expect students to be responsible, committed, respectful and develop their potential with confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning attitude and how to get along with others are more important than academic achievement • Give students the opportunities
Value orientation towards education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion is important in education • My Catholic school background affects my conception of the importance of family in youth development • Expectation of students as motivational force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey positive thinking of never giving up • Education is important to nurture qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious background and Chinese culture affect my understanding of human nature and education • Education is not a job but helps fulfill our life • Education needs to nurture the inner side of a person • Education can change people and every child is good by nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education is for people and should not be commercialized • Believe in education to provide mobility in society • Primary education is particularly important to develop students • Traditional Chinese culture influences my thinking and students are expected to have these core values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A belief to help students develop the potentials and life skills • Fond of children and help them develop into responsible people • Subject to the influence of my previous teacher and school head, extend the love and care to the next generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love is the essence of education • Education can make a difference • Something to touch the students and good relation with students will be effective

6.3.2 Curricular leadership in practice

(a) In practice, the curricular role of school leadership has to be discussed with respect to teaching and learning which is considered as one of the cores of school education. The curricular leadership role has to be understood as an agent facilitating students' learning through the delivery of the curriculum. There are two facets of curricular leadership, first, the context and content-specific aspect to manage the MCE curriculum in schools. It involves pedagogical content knowledge of MCE which covers knowledge, skills and tactic knowledge in the delivery of the curriculum. It is rather unusual to expect the school head in possession of the pedagogical content

knowledge (Shulman 1987: 8) of the MCE curriculum in order to perform effectively the curricular role, unless their professional background is on related disciplines. The second aspect of curricular leadership is more generic and managerial covering ways to manage curriculum change such as human resources deployment, administrative support, for example, timetabling, resources allocation, alignment of goal. From the content analysis of the interviews, visit to school campus and reading of the documents such as school year plan, school head plays a pivotal role in managing curriculum change in the above aspects. The role is best to be understood in the school practice covering the following three levels, namely system level, organizational level and teaching and learning.

(b) At system level, the curricular leadership has set direction of and positioned the way the new MCE curriculum is to be implemented. Being a cross curriculum, the interface of the MCE curriculum with different subjects such as Chinese, English, Mathematics, General Studies, Physical Education has been established in the implementation strategy. A positive learning attitude such as the cultivation of the core value of perseverance of the MCE curriculum is instrumental to the academic performance of students. Second, attempts have been made to build up alignment of the different key players to synergise the efforts in promoting the curriculum as whole-school participation. Third, the school head has played the leadership role to convince the teachers who have alternate views to participate as a team member in promoting the new MCE curriculum.

It is noted that school heads with relevant professional background and experience in curriculum development such as in school B and E, the professional role as a curriculum leader is very conspicuous as mirrored in the school practice. In schools such as A, C and D, the school practices in implementing the new MCE curriculum exhibit obvious traces of the values the school heads uphold. While in school F, in alternate direction, there is distributed leadership to teachers responsible for the curriculum. It is very evident that the heads are leading the school in the direction through setting of policies priorities in school plans.

Cur. Role	School head A	School head B	School head C	School head D	School head E	School head F
System level (macro level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel the influence as a school head upon other key players • SWOT analysis of school readiness • Invite teachers' participation • Create teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborate the school mission to create a sense of direction for school • Clear vision of role of school head and goal setting • 5 years of planning for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insist outside environment not affecting school priority • School policy suits the needs of students' family background • Emphasize counseling, guidance and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-year school development plan with theme for continuity and connectivity • Set school plan covering P1 to P6 • Ease teachers' worry about the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set whole school participation • Head a new central MCE committee • Set clear aims at the start of the school term • Initiate change and invite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the lead in change as a government school • Adopt existing school practice to promote MCE

	ownership and shared values/ consensus • Uphold the school vision and belief for sustainability	sustainability • Create a caring school environment • Special issue to highlight the building of core value such as caring and love • Permeate in school life to promote MCE • Assess the readiness of the teachers • Overall planning, setting of road map and evaluation plan • As reflective practitioner and is aware of the importance of readiness and dedication with the heart from teachers • Sensitize the need for building connectivity of various curriculum areas	positive support to students • Influence in design of school plan, reflecting school mission and vision • Overall strategy in line with the school vision while making reference to counterparts • Provide students the opportunities to nurture themselves is the school policy • A balance is maintained for academic achievement and life skills.	future of the school • Insist students' learning not to be affected arising from school's uncertainty • Insist developing students' positive values and to become good citizens instead of solely on academic achievement as the goal	comments, guide stakeholders, help refine teaching skills of teachers, help to solve problems of stakeholders • Set six-year school plan on MCE for continuity	
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(c) At organizational level, curricular leadership is executed in achieving both *vertical* and *horizontal* coherence of the curriculum implementation. By horizontal coherence, it means bringing connectivity among various initiatives of the curriculum reform, for example, the promotion of the other key tasks such as Reading to Learn, Project Learning to tie in with the promotion of MCE. Connectivity is made to address the issue of compartmentalization of various change imperatives and to ease the pressure of the teachers. In vertical coherency, the school head has played the role in overseeing how the curriculum is promoted across different levels of primary school, in other words, to ensure continuity from junior primary to senior primary level.

Sustainability of the curriculum change is observed as evidenced by establishing mechanism for the transfer of experience among teachers. The constraints of the teachers have been minimized by providing them with professional development programmes. Administrative matters under the leadership of the school heads such as flexi-timetabling as in school B and resources are identified to facilitate the promotion of MCE curriculum.

Cur. Role	School head A	School head B	School head C	School head D	School head E	School head F
Organisational level (meso level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immerse MCE in Chinese and GS, religious studies, Biblical teaching, life education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dovetail school curriculum with MCE Stress participation of all teachers Share with colleagues and work in partnership Make use of staff meeting to disseminate messages for consensus building Encourage self evaluation Consensus building among teachers Frequent communication with staff to understand their concern Encourage staff for action research for improvement Build connectivity of various projects/curriculum areas Encourage parents and students to participate in school project for building ownership Administrative arrangement e.g. timetabling to facilitate MCE curriculum Rally the support from parents Deploy human resources in accordance with their strengths Stress each subject department for self analysis to fill in gap Introduce school based management and self evaluation to enhance effectiveness Build up filing system for sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family visits to understand the needs of students Stress counseling to provide positive support to students Use of ECA to widen students' horizon Change the mindset of middle management is important Make use of General Studies to help students learn life skills, attitude, cooperation etc MCE is incorporated in life education and Religious Studies Recruit teachers concurring with school mission Maintain communication with middle management Provide capacity building for teachers Identify resources for schools Link change imperative with students' needs Administrative support such as timetabling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers participation with designated MCE teachers Merge MCE with Life education Life education teachers, school social worker and MCE teachers work together MCE lesson for creating a sense of importance and responsibility Evaluate implementation against planned curriculum Identify resources and let teachers concentrate on teaching and learning Rally parental support As a bridge between teachers and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create positive school culture, link school curriculum and learning experiences Invite parents to promote the new MCE curriculum Gather evaluation from different stake holders Ensure sufficient coverage of MCE in various dimensions and in line with the curriculum Provide staff development programme on MCE Various initiatives are suggested to promote MCE curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service learning is used to develop students' qualities Life education is provided MCE is embedded in morning assembly, weekly assembly, GS etc Cooperate with NGOs to organize programmes Existing school practice continues to promote MCE Consider team spirit is important but school head can do little Let the MCE group of teachers take care of the programmes Discuss with teachers and listen to their views for consensus building Solicit the support from PTA No special course for teachers on MCE but let teachers develop by themselves

(d) At teaching and learning level, curricular leadership is expressed through direct involvement in curriculum planning, classroom teaching and participation in leading learning activities such as exchange programme in the mainland. This helps build ownership and collaboration between the school leadership and the frontline teachers. Personal engagement of school heads through direct contact with students further shortens the psychological distance between school head and students. This kind of personal touch or love as pointed out by school head, for example in school D, is very crucial for the success of nurturing of positive value and attitude among students.

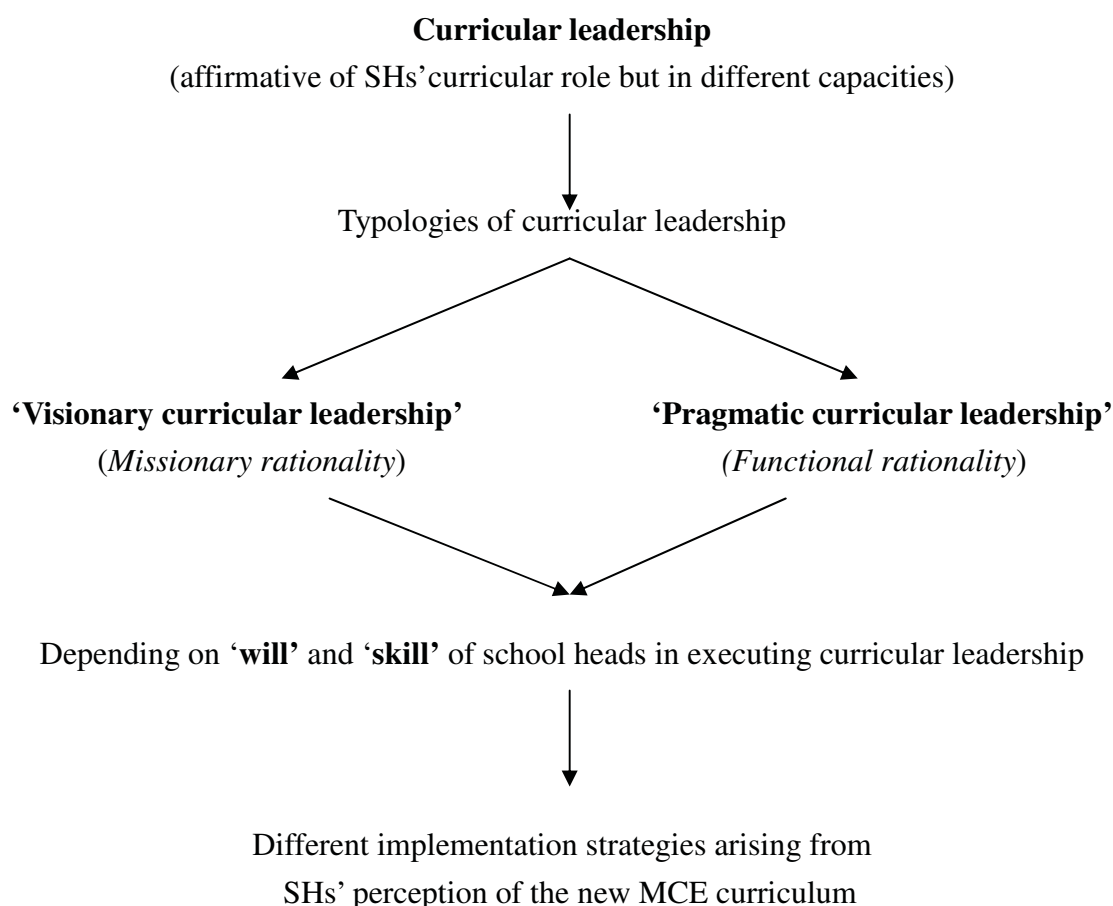
Cur. Role	School head A	School head B	School head C	School head D	School head E	School head F
Teaching and learning (micro level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role modeling • Use exhortation • State her expectation of students • Maintain contact with students e.g. morning assembly and ECA activities • Introduce elderly college to students as community service • Exhortation for promoting MCE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer permeation in school life to promote MCE • Develop teaching resources by herself • Positive encouragement for cultivating values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECA to widen students' horizon • Changing the mindset of middle management is important • Change he mode of learning • Promote MCE through school culture, life experiences, cooperative learning and classroom management (grouping of students with mixed abilities) to develop self confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space for students to express their views in MCE lesson and learn to be accommodating and open • Tasks for students to nurture core values in MCE lesson/learning experience e.g. visit to old aged home • Stress free atmosphere for students to discuss and appreciate the diversities of views in class to develop their values • Teach MCE not to depart from frontline teachers • Have personal involvement to get the feedback and know the strengths of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct evaluation by teachers, parents and students • Provide positive reinforcement to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like to meet parents and students at the entrance and greet them to build relationships with them • Dine with students as a means of encouragement and provide contact with students • Engage in some programmes with students such as exchange to the mainland

From the school practice, it has been revealed that the implementation of the new MCE curriculum in schools shows traces of influence of school heads' perception of the new MCE curriculum, values orientation, broader conception of what is desirable in education and the contextual challenges facing the schools. The measures adopted to cope with the change are the result of the interplay among these variables. It is noted that the perception of the school heads has a special role to play in the change process. Inherently, it is through imparting values by personal contact with students and explicitly through administrative measures by spelling out school heads'

expectations on students. Although the school heads play a leading role in setting the direction of change, distributive leadership to the middle management has been established. The concurrence of school heads' conception with the curriculum aims of the new MCE curriculum provides the motivation for the schools to sustain the change momentum. The data collected from interviews, contact with school heads, analysis of the school plans and observations from the school environment denote an affirmative answer to the influence of school heads' perception in managing curriculum change and in different capacities and dimensions.

6.3.3 Summary of conceptualization of data analysis

Conceptualisation of data analysis of 6 sample school heads (SH) on their perception and curriculum implementation



6.4 Implications for knowledge building of school leadership

As reflected in the literature review in Chapter 2, the axiological perspective provides an alternative dimension in studying school heads' perception of education issue that fills in the knowledge gap in school leadership theory. The findings from the six sample school heads have unfolded values as one of the deciding factors in execution of school practices and education administration (Hodgkinson 1918, 1983, 1991, 1996; Begley 1996, 1999; Leonard 1999; Willower 1995, 1999). The values dimension affects school heads' perception in the information processing of the new curriculum and the way to cope with and manage it as suggested in Begley's integrated approach (Begley 1996). The values of school heads affect their comprehension, interpretation and subsequently the selection of school practice in managing the new MCE curriculum.

Close relation between school heads' values and perception of the curriculum issue is noted from the data analysis sections 6.1-6.2. There are a host of values affecting school heads' perception of issues. The first one is on individual level, that is, the personal values and belief. The second one relates to the educational values of the profession and organization, that is, the education values one holds as a school head, the organizational values of school expressed in terms of mission and vision as well as the mega values of education. Two situations relating to the values dynamics affecting school leadership decisions are derived from the research findings with implications for leadership theory.

(a) Equilibrium situation: concordance of personal values and educational values

If concordance exists between the personal values and belief of school head with the professional values of school leadership such as protection of the interest of the school, interest of the school personnel, school vision and mission and consideration of what is worth learning for students with the aims of MCE curriculum, high motivation to implement the curriculum is noted. Structural change, coupled with corresponding change in normative structure of the power relationship, is created to provide favourable conditions for curriculum delivery. The school practice reflected strongly school heads' inclination and values orientation as in school heads A, B, C, D and E. The concordance of their personal values, organizational values of the school and the educational values of MCE motivates school heads to implement the new curriculum with enthusiasm and devotion.

It is noticeable in school heads B, C, D and E that transrational values (Hodgkinson 1978; Begley 1999) of being 'good citizen' and the belief that MCE curriculum can facilitate students' whole-person development are one of the key considerations in designing the implementation strategies. There is a close relationship between their positive attitudes and motivation of the school heads in proposing new initiatives to implement the curriculum. Both structural changes are advocated as in B or the school head personally lead a team in managing the new curriculum as in school E. The strategies adopted, such as personal contact with students as modeling, reflect their personal values and beliefs with concordance with the aims of the MCE curriculum and school mission.

(b) Disequilibrium situation: dissonance between personal values and educational values

A disequilibrium situation exists when there is values conflict between personal values and the education values of school head and the organizational values arising

from changes (Dimmock, 1996, Walker, 2002). This is shown in school F when a dissonance among the personal values and organizational value is noted. The motivation for the implementation of MCE curriculum is more driven by pragmatic consideration as a government school based on 'values of consequences' deliberation (Begley 1996, 1999). School head does not skew towards the need for taking up the curricular leadership role although she personally subscribes that MCE curriculum facilitates whole-person development of students. The task is perceived to be within the purview of responsible teachers. The role in steering, coordinating and empowering school personnel for curriculum implementation is considered to be the responsibility of the respective teachers. The implementation strategy adopted is idiosyncratic in nature, reflecting school head's values inclination and belief.

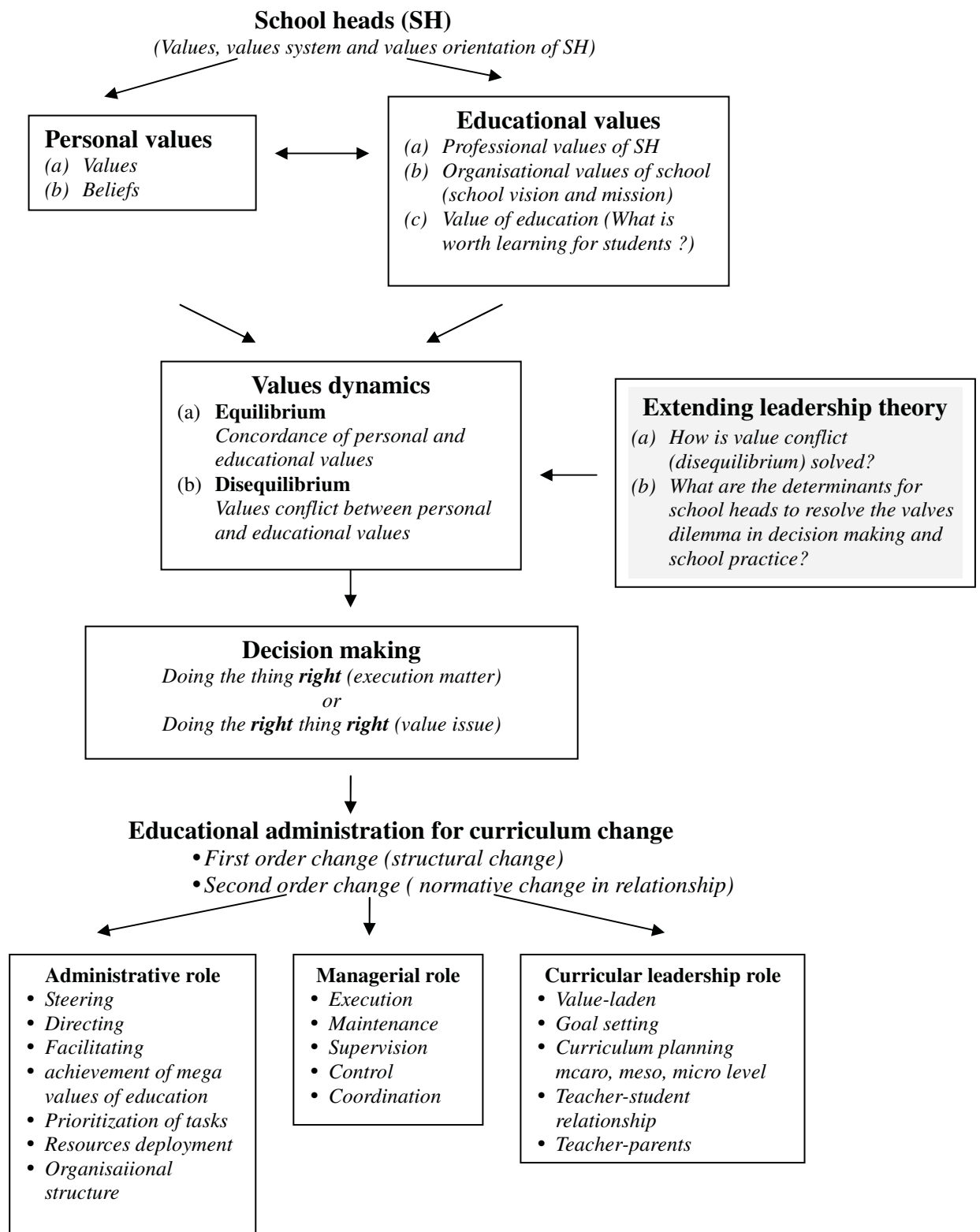
The values conflict of school heads' personal values, organizational values of the school and the professional values of school head, for example in school D, is resolved differently. As a school head, maintaining school survival in face of decreasing student population is of paramount importance. A more pragmatic approach to attract students seems more appealing from the point of view of the organization. It is noted that although school head D is facing challenges arising from low student in-take, his strongly held personal belief for character building as the mega education value and his positive attitude towards the MCE curriculum provides him the persistence to initiate rather than adopting market-driven approach for enhancing publicity of the school to attract student enrolment. The disequilibrium between personal values and belief with the organization values is common arising from the threat to schools because of demographic changes in student population. The situation is further aggravated by the prevailing acceptance of academic achievement as the indicator of successful schools. This will intensify the values conflict to school heads in deciding priorities in school practices.

The most daunting disequilibrium situation will be a dilemma when school heads have to make a choice between two desirable values, that is personal values and professional values as school head which are of intrinsic value such as upholding the core value of whole-person development while the organization values exemplified as school vision and mission or values of parents are equally desirable such as the search for academic excellence as the priority value. Given the limitation in time and resources, the attainment of these core values will be a decision amidst the values dilemma for school heads to resolve in curriculum implementation. This has been experienced by school head D and C in the present study.

The equilibrium or disequilibrium situations reflect the values dynamics and dilemmas for decision making. Extended study in the axiological aspect of school leadership helps build up the knowledge in theory development. How to create concordance of personal values and educational values of school heads and the resolution of values conflicts (by transrational, rational and sub-rational values [Begley 1999]) of the school heads in decision making is an area deserves exploration in school leadership theory. Further discussion will be made in section 7.2 of Chapter 7.

6.4.1 Summary: Implications for knowledge building of school leadership

Figure 6.2 Axiological dimension of school leadership



Chapter 7 Conclusion and recommendations

7.1 Conceptualizing findings from the research

A school head is pivotal in planning and managing the curriculum change in schools. As revealed in the present study, the perspective of the school head has undue influence upon the strategies employed to cope with the change. The perception of school heads depends upon the degree of *awareness* and kind of *attitude* adopted by school leadership for *action* to implement the new MCE curriculum in schools.

7.1.1 Visionary curricular leadership versus pragmatic curricular leadership

An affirmative attitude towards the new MCE curriculum generates acceptance of the change imperative. Coupled with personal commitment and concurrence with the aims and role of MCE curriculum upon nurturing students' personal qualities, high motivation (Begley 1999; 2001) of the school heads to enhance the capacity of the school and competency of school personnel to implement the new curriculum is observed in the sample schools. Steering and guidance even down to the micro level of teaching and learning is envisaged. The personal commitment of school heads in managing the change process generates positive ripple effect upon the stakeholders to carry out the new curriculum. Direct involvement of the school heads is evident through contacting the students as a means to promote MCE. School heads' personal engagement signals a positive message to key stakeholders including teachers and parents. The enthusiasm and the initiatives to maintain the momentum of change in school is very obvious. This is what is advocated that school leadership should venture in moral core values such as honour, dignity, curiosity, candour, compassion, courage, excellence and service (Bogue, 1994) and without these core values, education seems lose its identity as compared with other organization. The school leadership is one with a moral dimension built around purpose, values, and beliefs.

The term '*visionary curricular leadership*' is used to describe school heads exhibited high commitment with clear expectation of students' outcome in terms of the core values and personal qualities to be possessed. The impact of the school and the pro-activeness of school heads in implementing the new MCE curriculum are noticeable. On the other hand, '*pragmatic curricular leadership*' is used to describe school leadership which delegates the majority of the task to the responsible middle management/department with minimal involvement from the school head. The steering and coordinating role mainly falls within the positional authority of the responsible department and teachers. This kind of school is typified by continuation of the existing programmes which are modified to fill in selectively the content of the

new MCE curriculum. Compartmentalization in implementing the various curriculum changes or key tasks has to be addressed and synergizing of efforts among various change initiatives has to be built. The role of the school leadership in facilitating the coordination and building of coherency in change management is vague and indistinct.

7.1.2 Comprehension and interpretation of curriculum change: awareness for change, attitude for change and action for change

The perception of school heads on the MCE curriculum starts from analyzing the perspective adopted by them to construe their curricular role. It depends on the perspective taken by school heads as what is worth learning for students. If the school heads concur with one of the curriculum aims ‘to develop students into informed and responsible citizens with national identity’ in the Hong Kong context, then the role performed will be quite different from that of the role to be interpreted as being positional responsibility.

From the analysis of the data, a theoretical construct (figure 7.2) has been developed linking the key variables demonstrating the interrelationship among the variables with regard to school heads’ perception and school practice in managing the new curriculum. The conceptualization of these variables and its interrelationship prompts further thought about the factors contributing to effective school leadership in the management of curriculum change.

7.2 Awareness, Attitude and Action for Change: proposition of the 3As model for analyzing school leadership in managing change

7.2.1 Awareness for change

The promulgation of the new MCE curriculum in 2001 rekindles school heads’ awareness to revisit the content, the approach and the role of MCE in developing students into ‘responsible citizens’. The MCE curriculum documents heighten school heads’ awareness to deliberate issues pertaining to the rationale for curriculum change such as:

Change imperatives in MCE curriculum:

- What is the change in the MCE curriculum?
- Why is there the need for change?
- How to cope with the change?
- How does it relate to my school?

- Any consequences if my school does not embark on the change?

Considerations for accepting change in MCE curriculum

- An established education policy and important curriculum documents
- Changing education structure leading to change in curriculum
- Demonstration effect of school counterparts
- School accountability, External School Review (ESR), school inspection
- Changing external environment
 - Demographic changes e.g. decreasing students population leading to decreasing number of primary schools {2001/2002 school year (777 primary schools) 2008/2009 (557 primary schools)}
 - Increasing competitiveness from school counterparts
 - Expectations from parents for enhancing students personal qualities
 - Primary and secondary school interface

The new MCE curriculum, being part of a larger context of curriculum change, has to be implemented in the schools offering local curriculum. The issues raised above further enhance the awareness of the school heads to put into practice the new MCE curriculum. It is noted from the interviews that variations in the approach and treatment of the new MCE curriculum in schools are linked to the kind of attitude adopted by school leadership towards the new curriculum vis-a-vis contextual considerations of the schools. Given the change imperative and the time frame for implementation of the new curriculum, the state of readiness to embark on the change is an issue of concern of the school but the need for action is more imminent. It is observed from the sample school heads that **awareness for change** is the key to action but the way how the new MCE curriculum is to be executed depends on the **attitude** taken by school heads.

7.2.2 Attitude for change

The overall education landscape and the timetable for implementing the curriculum reform have enhanced school heads' awareness of change imperative. The intensity of school heads' motivation to act connects to the kind of attitude being adopted in positioning the new MCE curriculum. The attitude towards the curriculum change in MCE can be *positive*, *negative* or *apathetic* to the need for change. All the six sample school heads have exhibited very positive attitude towards the new MCE curriculum. Their positive attitude towards the new MCE curriculum is associated with their recognition that MCE helps develop students' moral character, building a sense of purpose in life, civic mindedness, national identity and the personal qualities such as

perseverance conducive to academic achievement. They are of the view that MCE is a meaningful learning experience for students' personal growth and future role as adults and citizens in society. Second, the affirmative attitude to MCE curriculum is associated with their belief that education can make a difference to students that MCE curriculum is indispensable to help develop their civic mindedness and responsibilities as individuals in the nation and the world as global citizens. The affirmative attitude towards the new MCE curriculum provides the motivation to build up consensus and shared values among teaching staff to create conducive school environment to implement the new MCE curriculum.

Paradoxically, variations exist in the interpretation to the MCE curriculum with respect to their personal orientation, religious belief and cultural background. It ranges from total adoption of the whole new MCE curriculum to partial adaptation to fit school context and needs. The variations in interpretation hinge on school heads' conception of what is important in education and worth learning to students, with respect to students' present and future needs in personal development. The concurrence of their personal belief with the aims of the MCE curriculum motivates the school heads to realize the leadership role in managing the curriculum change. The personal engagement by school head in overseeing the overall plan stretches from steering the implementation strategy as reflected in schools B, C and E to direct personal involvement in teaching in classroom to get first hand experience as in school D. The motivation is further illustrated in school B and E that mechanism is put in place to steer, guide and monitor the progress of the implementation. Sustainability of the school practice is highlighted in maintaining the change momentum. School-based initiatives and new ideas appropriate to the school context are proposed to promote the core values of the new MCE curriculum. Additional core values are highlighted to address the needs of their students. Most noticeable is the personal engagement of school heads through personal contact to educate the students. There is a continuum of direct personal involvement, ranging from high to low, in implementing the curriculum through modeling (Figure 7.1).

Teaching and learning should be the core business as the school is an organization for learning and all school practices should be geared towards this goal. There are many things students should learn and learning should go beyond the restrictive conception of knowledge and skills. One thing we often miss or put aside when compared with imparting subject knowledge is the importance of teaching students to find and cultivate a purpose. Helping students to find their goal in life and the reasons for doing the things they do is no less important than subject knowledge. It is argued by

Damon (2008) that students who have a purpose generally tend to do better in many more areas than those who are ‘drifters’ or ‘dabblers’, who may have short-term goals but lack a long-term unifying goal. Damon maintains that cultivating a sense of purpose gives both kids and adults a reason to try hard, a passion about what to learn, and a reason to endure both good and bad. How to instill a sense of purpose in the lives of children is something worth to be promoted in school and through the MCE curriculum. School heads subscribing to this view reflect in their positive attitude towards the new MCE curriculum.

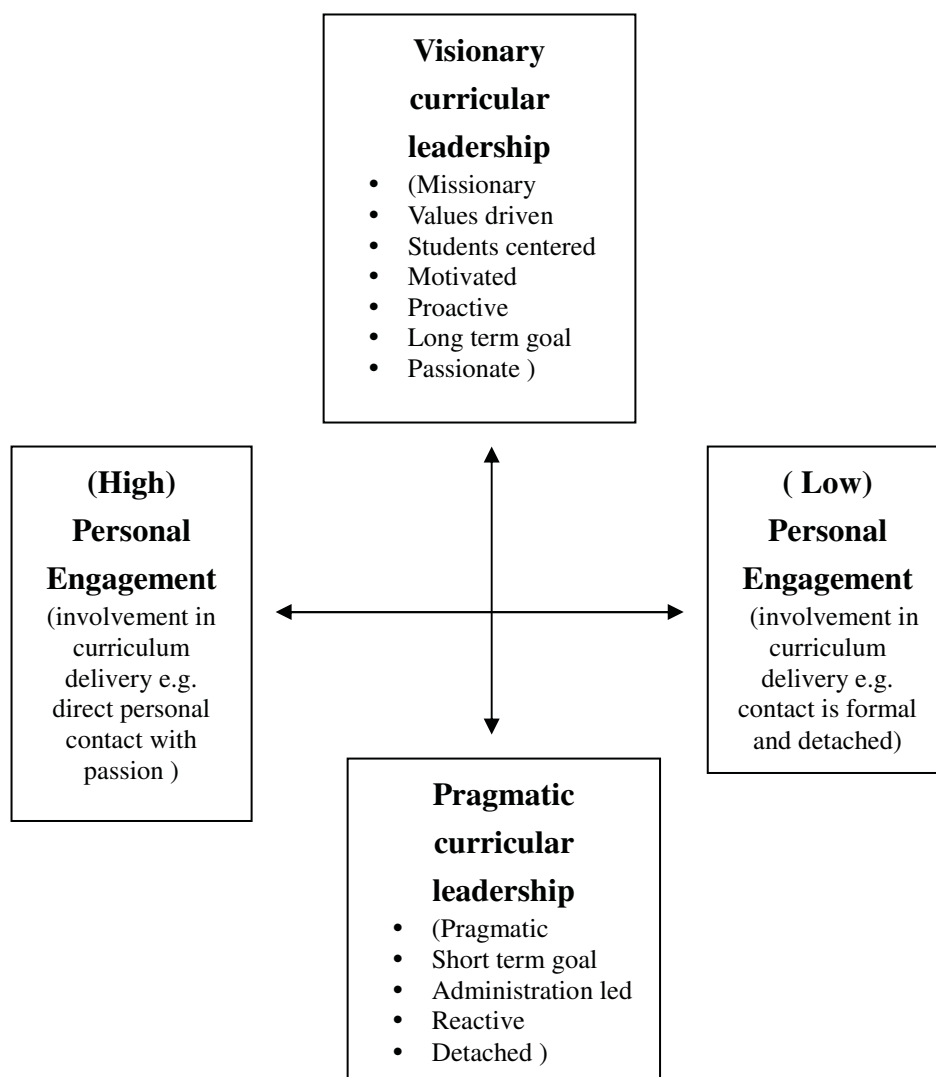


Figure 7.1 Relationship between types of curricular leadership and school head engagement

7.2.3 Action for change

The practices by the sample schools to implement the new MCE curriculum have revealed the inclination, rationale and considerations taken by the school heads. The school practices in implementing the new MCE curriculum mirrors the value

orientations underlying such considerations which can be categorized as two types of rationalities: *missionary rationality* or *functional rationality*. These two types of rationalities are similar to Hodgkinson's value types (1978) of transrational, rational and sub-rational and Begley's integrative cognitive information processing in decision making (Begley 1996, 1999). School heads are resorting to these broad types of rationalities in resolving values dilemmas and making decisions. Different types of rationalities in decision making give rise to different implementation strategies as shown below. The study by Leithwood and Steinbach (1991) supports the present study that the value of principle, values of consequences or values of consensus (Begley 1996, 1999) are employed for decision-making depending on the amount of domain specific knowledge the school heads possess, how strong the personal and professional values they hold.

The missionary rationality refers to the considerations of the school practice which highlights the desirable core values which are cherished as being positive and conducive to students' personal and moral development. Communication and personal contact with students are envisaged as a means to deliver the curriculum and that reflects what Noddings (2002) advocates for modeling, dialogue, interpersonal relations and care in education.

Missionary rationality

Values exhibited by school heads in school practice	Considerations of school practices
Whole-person development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium and long term goal
Personal value such as social justice, openness, respect for others, getting along with others, be optimistic, learn to donate and commit, acceptance, caring, being kindness, to become good citizens,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate desirable values into the school plan • Modeling is important and practiced • Expectations of students made explicit
Persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insist the promotion of MCE in school as the essence of education • Minimise outside environment affecting education in school • Education is for people
Equality, opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open up opportunities for students
Student-centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student is teachable

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let my school meet the needs of the family of the students
Student participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal opportunity for students
Whole-school participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let teachers participate and acquire the experience
Treasure MCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accord priority in moral education than knowledge building
Love of student, student-centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage myself to contact with students through assembly, activities etc Support my students Turn my school like a family Treat students like my son or daughter
Passion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School head needs to have passion
Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair to every student
Ideal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To let students have a fulfilling life
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility to a school head is important
Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belief in education can make a difference Education can provide social mobility

Functional rationality in the curricular context refers to the considerations in the school practice which are based on the consideration in terms of the post/position held to manage the curriculum change and are largely pragmatic in nature

Functional rationality

Values exhibited by school heads in school practice	Considerations of /practices in school
Do as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have to do it as a government school
Remain status quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No special attention and it is within the daily life Let the responsible teachers handle Spontaneous contact with students School head can do very little I do not have anything special for developing teachers Year plan instead of medium or longer term planning

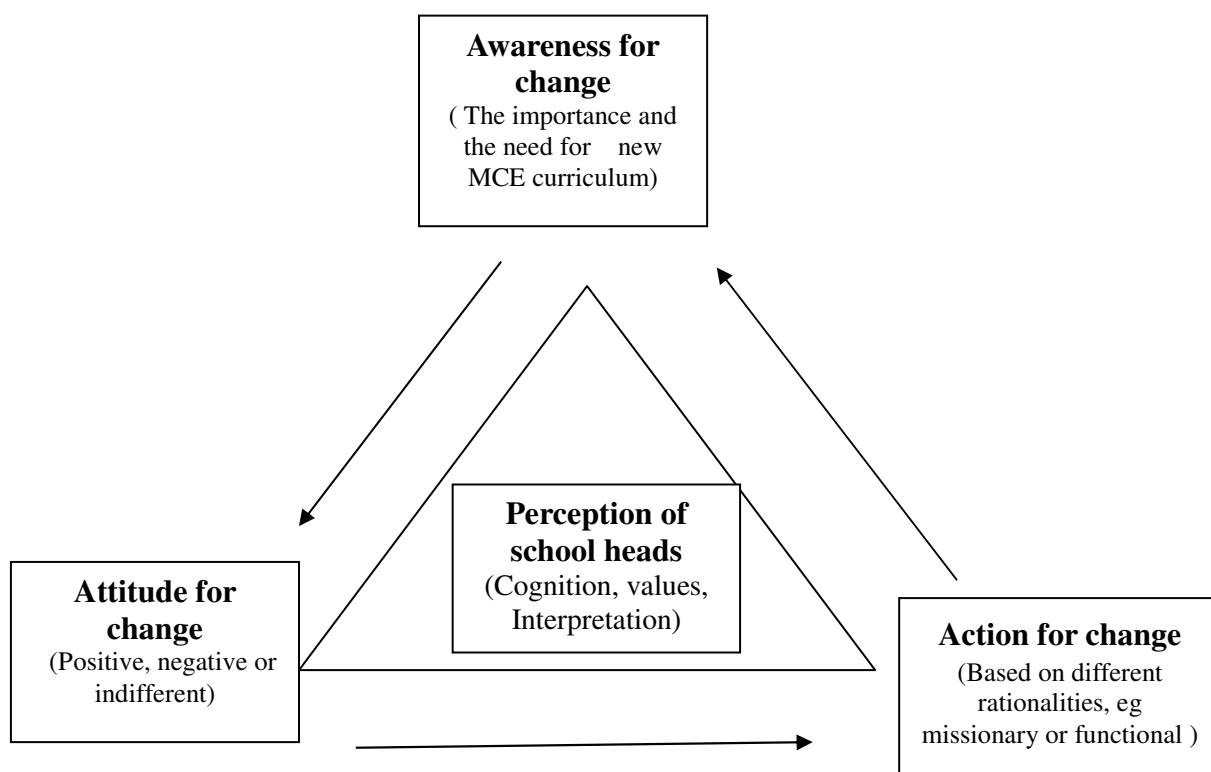


Figure 7.2 Relationship among awareness for change, attitude for change, action for change and curricular role of school leadership- **3 As** model

In summary, the interrelationship among the three concepts of **awareness**, **attitude** and **action** (the three **As** model) derived from the analysis of the data illustrates perception of the curriculum and subsequent implementation of the new MCE curriculum is presented in figure 7.2. The action for change (that is, implementation of the new curriculum) goes through a process of valuation, prioritization and resolving values conflicts such as priorities in realizing the school aim, searching for academic excellence or addressing the moral make up of students through the new curriculum. The realization of both aims involves competing for time, resources and curriculum space in which values held by school heads play an influential role in the decision. It is noted that the new MCE curriculum documents signal a heightened awareness of the importance attached to values building and the whole-person development of students. It is plausible to suggest that the awareness for change is only a **necessary** condition but affirmative attitude to embark on change deems to be the **sufficient** condition for action.

7.3 Recommendations and contribution of the research: theory and practice

7.3.1 Theory building on school leadership

Although six sample schools represent about 9% of the total primary school

population in Hong Kong (six out of the 660 in 2007-2008 school year), the variety of the school backgrounds and the school heads are representative of the total primary school population. The finding has implication revealing noticeable issues for further enquiry in theory and practice concerning school leadership. The interviews from the school heads have identified variables such as school heads' perception upon curriculum change and the factors influencing their perception shapes school practice in managing the change. In the existing literature concerning the study of school leadership, focus has been placed on the generic concepts such as leadership styles, types of school leadership and determinants of school leadership. Studies on the more finite aspect of school leadership in facing curriculum change are fewer than those on school leadership in general. The literature on instructional leadership rests on ontological and epistemological assumptions such as study of effectiveness of schools in terms of academic achievements and programme effectiveness. The present study attempts to address the issue of perception and the variables affecting school heads' perception in which the axiological dimension towards curriculum change is the focus. The study heightens the importance of awareness and attitude to manage curriculum change which prompts deliberation if further knowledge and understanding is needed to fill in this knowledge gap on school leadership.

If we accept Socratic's view that we are wise to the extent that we are aware, not of how much we know, but of how little we know (Alexander 1989: 13) (quoted in Leonard, 1999 : 233), then the present study contributes to the understanding of how little we know about the relationship between perception and curriculum implementation. The research adds to the limited knowledge of our understanding of values, perception and its implication upon curriculum change. This revelation on the research subject throws light on the need to better understand the connection between school heads' values and school practices. The enhancement of a 'conscious reflective intentional action of man, as opposed to mere reflect or mechanical responses to stimuli' (Hodgkinson 1991:43) is an important ingredient of reflective practitioner or 'enlightened practice' (Leonard 1999: 233).

The present study has emphasized the place of values and attitudes underlying school heads' perception and strategies as well as approaches to manage change in schools. School heads, as the key figures in schools, are influential in determining how a change is to be coped with. It is difficult to imagine that initiation for and sustainability of change can take place smoothly if a negative attitude is adopted by school heads. By the same token, as revealed in the present study and feedback of teacher-participants in seminars, positive attitude from the school heads for any

change is a blessing that the change can be given a good start. School heads' perception and prioritization of measures to cope with the curriculum change relates to their value orientation and personal belief of what is worthwhile and important to students vis-a-vis the competing demands for according priorities amidst various change agendas. From the present study, it has unfolded the influential role of school heads in determining the direction and manner, either implicitly or explicitly, in managing the curriculum change. The boundary of research in school leadership could be extended to understand the more finite part on the process and the factors affecting school heads decision making in managing change.

The concept of instructional leadership as applied in the current literature has different assumptions resting mainly on the cognitive aspect of instruction as knowledge building through measurement in terms of tangible outcome for studying effective school leadership (Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Hallinger, 2003). The affective domain and values issues, constituting the other pillar of school curriculum, are not the focus but these curriculum areas are no less important than subject disciplines. In oriental society such as Hong Kong, the building of positive values and nurturing of students' personal qualities through education, named differently as moral education, character education, ethical education, life education, civic education etc., are essential and highly regarded in society and education sector. Common to these curricula is the focus on building life orientation, and positive values which are important for students to discern personal and social issues as well as to prepare themselves in their future roles as independent autonomous persons. The affective part of school leadership such as the need for passion, commitment and discourse on the essence of education for effective school leadership are worthwhile areas for further research.

The finding has revealed that the role played by school heads in curricular leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a; 1996b) is more elaborate and refined. The conception of school leadership in managing curriculum change can be general and not domain-specific. School leadership involves in (a) mobilization – motivating those affected to make the change, convincing others change is required, needed and worthwhile and creating the conditions of change; (b) implementation – creating ownership of the goals and details plan for change, participation, decision making, goal setting, consensus building; and (c) institutionalization – embedding change in the school procedure and administrative practices. From analyzing the data, it is observed that curricular leadership is more finite involving domain-specific knowledge which includes conceptualizing experience for effective learning in MCE

such as school based project/initiatives, personal involvement in teaching and learning to refine change strategies, initiating new ideas to facilitate and consolidate students' learning through community services, involvement in self evaluation for building a self regulatory mechanism for improvement in implementation strategies. The curricular role is more finite than a broad-brush approach at school level. School heads' involvement in the interplay between domain specific metacognition (knowledge applied to specific subject and content area such as MCE) and domain general metacognition (knowledge transcends particular subject or content such as goal setting.) is evident in school heads of visionary curricular leadership as proposed.

In addition, there are values issues related to the commitment, value orientation and personal belief that are crucial factors for sustaining change. The persistence for curriculum implementation, even in face of the challenges facing schools, relies on some core values relating to education the school heads hold on. The personal values and commitment in education reflect in their direct engagement in steering the change strategies. More importantly, the devotion and commitment to realize their personal belief for the benefits of the students are indispensable. These have to do with school heads' values orientation, moral commitment and personal belief which affect the attitude towards any curriculum change.

7.3.2 School leadership in practice

In the preparation for school principalship, as in the case of Hong Kong, there are six core areas of leadership training, namely (a) Strategic direction and policy environment, (b) Learning, teaching and curriculum, (c) Teacher professional growth and development (d) Staff and resources management (e) Quality assurance and accountability (f) External communication and connection to the outside world for 2009-10 to 2010/11 school year (Education Bureau, 2009). The coverage of the principalship course is broad covering managerial and administrative dimension. The underlying rationale aims to provide general background information for the principal to operate and manage the school as an organisation. It is beyond doubt that school heads need to possess *strategic knowledge* involving knowing *what* (factual or declarative knowledge), knowing *when* and *why* (conditional or contextual knowledge) and knowing *how* (procedural or methodological knowledge) to perform the leadership role (Hartman, 2001). In actual practice, there are many issues inextricably linked with values and decisions. Curriculum implementation is one of the many values issues which have great impact upon students' learning. Sufficient space should be provided for school heads to deliberate on core issues such as the nature and essence of education, what is worth learning for students, and professional

values to uphold as school principal. The study has suggested that values occupy an important position in school heads' perception to steer the implementation of school curriculum.

Education, being a moral enterprise, involves various value issues. For example, What are the core values school heads to uphold and to live by in managing the school and facing challenges? What is worth learning and important to students? There are different values dilemmas facing school heads in decision making such as the dilemma in the search for academic excellence against the need for providing a moral compass for students (Gardner et al, 2001). The criteria and values for making decisions amidst competing demands are key issue facing the school heads. MCE is education *from* the heart, *of* the heart and *with* the heart. Moral commitment and passion are crucial (Sergiovanni, 1996). Deliberation and self reflection of school heads' values orientation in education, the aim of education, what are the benefits in the interest of students, core values of moral commitment, passion in education, are essential for stakeholders, especially for school heads. Internalisation of these values will affect the school heads' perception on education issues, and decisions relating to policy setting and school practices.

The reflective practice of thinking about oneself and its role in the education profession is a metacognitive process. The metacognitive knowledge, which is knowledge about understanding of the school heads themselves, helps to inform both present and future task-oriented situation as well as the global conception of themselves as 'leader' or 'administrator' in curriculum implementation. The importance of value awareness will enhance school heads' attentiveness to (a) role awareness as a leader, (b) strategy awareness (c) task awareness (d) performance awareness as components of metacognitive knowledge. As such, the area of school leadership and curricular role need to extend to cover the clarification and self reflection of values and valuation in their execution of school leadership role. The deliberate effort for self reflection helps school heads make explicit the formerly unconscious, intangible or reflexive processes or events. Such a deliberation process will enhance the awareness of school heads as actors in the environment and heighten the sense of ego as an active, deliberate goal setting leader in curricular leadership. One practical application is the inclusion of a 'Module on values and school leadership' in principalship training to heighten the values awareness as school heads.

Education should help student learn and grow as human beings. Good intention is not enough for curriculum implementation and administration in education. Therefore

valuation as a scientific and systematic method in helping school heads to self reflect one's values position in making decision is desirable. The purpose of proposing valuation as part of principalship training is to suggest a process and an established procedure to help school heads clarify their epistemological values position in an open manner instead of imposing a pre-given set of absolute values of what they should be (Willower 1994: 34). The result is an informed and thoughtful practice in the deliberation of curriculum implementation. The purpose of institutionalization of valuation is to install a system in which mechanism could be established to build up shared values, norms and established procedures and practices to handle values issues. To institutionalize is not to ritualize the practice which will easily become alienated. The reflective culture has to be set up for informed decision and alignment by stakeholders in school for coping with changes.

7.3.3 Valuation for self understanding and professional reflection

The kind of attitude adopted towards the new MCE curriculum provides the motivation for school heads to cope with the change. The attitude could be positive, producing motivational impetus or negative, generating inertia, hindrance or even counteracting force in implementation. An understanding of one's values orientation in education enriches our knowledge of school heads' perception towards educational issues in general.

Opportunities could be provided for school heads to experience the process of valuation which is referred as 'application of methods of inquiry to moral problems' with competing ends (Willower 1994:132). The process can prompt school heads to have self reflection on the values they hold regarding education and related contesting issues. The deliberation process enables one's reflective thinking, making values implicit to be explicit for contemplation as part of the meta-cognition. Clarification of one's values both personal values, overarching values of education and professional values as a school head enhances school heads' awareness in decision making and the values/ethical implication of school practices. What core values to be upheld as educational professional and core values of school are essential elements for self understanding to perform the leadership role. The clarification of values position facilitates school leadership to differentiate their professional role, degree and level of involvement among different engagements. Helping school leaders to deliberate personal and professional values should be accorded an important place for school leadership development, both for practicing school heads and aspiring school leadership as well.

Clarification of philosophical beliefs and values is important for any praxis. As school head sets the direction of school practices and the practice of self understanding in the axiological dimension of principalship is too important to be slighted. Self reflection on personal values and the professional mega values in education one holds in making choices is indispensable for empowering principalship. The self understanding of the values and values dynamics of the school is important to help promote espoused values in schools for alignment and coping with changes. The educational values advocated by school and values in practices may not be congruent and when dissonance between the two exists, school heads will be the gatekeeper to make decisions which will affect the way how curriculum change will be implemented. In facing the challenges, creating espoused values or shared organizational values of the stakeholders, promoting a self examination by school heads and negotiation of conflicting values is a preliminary step in developing principalship.

Distinction has to be made between acceptance of values in education and commitment in the values in execution through school practices. If the espoused values of school are transformed into underlying assumptions, they will be the herald to understanding the educational landscape (Leonard 1999: 233). Examining, analyzing value orientations and understanding the dynamics of values and values conflicts relating to education will help contribute to narrowing the gap between theory and educational practice. To be reflective practitioners in the sense of Schon (1983), Barth (1990), Sergiovanni (1992) and Hodgkinson (1991) are advocated. To advocate a personal reflection and adopt a values perspective on school leadership can help transform the vague advice into something specific enough to act on (Begley 2000: 245)

It is proposed that people tend to reconcile inconsistency between attitude and behaviour so that consistency is maintained between the two. Attempts will be made by a person to maintain an equilibrium state by changing either the attitude or the behaviour. For example, either quit the behaviour of smoking or change the attitude towards smoking if someone considers smoking disgusting. The real life is of course far more complex than a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. Festinger (1956) and Elster (1983) proposes the theory of cognitive dissonance trying to explain the linkage between attitude and behaviour. It is suggested that the inconsistency or incompatibility between attitude and behaviour will create pressure and uncomfortable feeling to the person in restoring the state of equilibrium. However, the desire to change either the attitude or behaviour will depend on the relative importance of the elements generating the dissonance, the assessed ability in changing

it, the relative importance of the dissonance and the possible gains from the restoring the equilibrium. It is hypothesized that if valuation process in principalship training helps enhance school heads' values awareness in education, it will facilitate school leaders to adhere to maintain consistency between their belief and action, leading to an enlightened and reflective practice to cope with change.

7.3.4 'Will' and 'skill' consideration

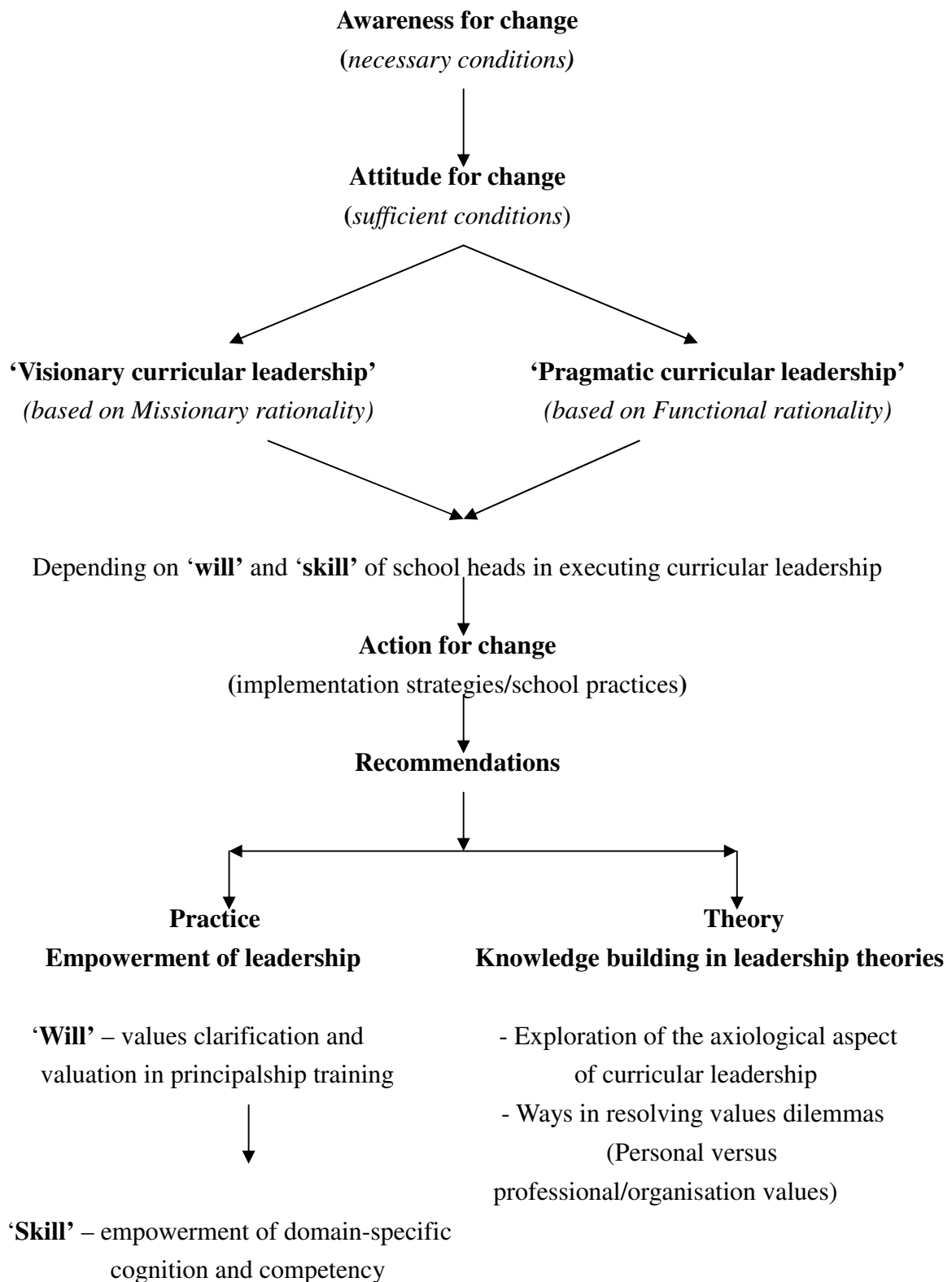
It is beyond doubt that the six school heads have shown positive support to the new MCE curriculum, dedication in education and strong affection towards their students. There are no adverse comments or strong resentment to the proposed new MCE curriculum. Their humanistic overtone and caring attitude in managing the school together with the affirmative attitude towards the new MCE curriculum give a good start to implement the new curriculum in schools. Taken into account different backgrounds of schools, endowments and needs of students and variations in the approach to manage the new curriculum exist among six sample schools. As reflected from the data, if there is a concordance of will (intention) and skill (competency) of the school heads, there is high motivation for implementation. With a good grasp of the understanding of the new MCE curriculum and rich experience in curriculum development, school heads of B and E, for example, have exhibited very strong curricular leadership role. The competency of the school heads in the curriculum areas enhances their capability and orientation in steering the direction of schools in promoting the new MCE curriculum. The matching of the will of positive attitude (the affective domain) with skills (cognitive understanding) has produced strong momentum for the school heads to initiate and sustain the change. This is reflected by the school plans, the administrative support and established mechanism to continue the reform changes. Initiations and new measures are proposed to carry out the reform with reference to the school context and the needs of the students.

The affective domain of 'will' constitutes a *necessary* condition while cognitive understanding of 'skill' is the *sufficient* condition for effective delivery of the new MCE curriculum. Without sufficient understanding of the new curriculum, the implementation of the new MCE curriculum is spontaneous in approach, lacking articulation in different curriculum areas as well as other change imperatives. A good intention is found to be insufficient as the role of school heads need to direct, steer and set an overarching framework to facilitate the delivery of curriculum. The administrative strategies adopted have to be supported by the micro foundation backed by a general understanding of how values are being promoted and the creation of learning conditions conducive to values development for students. With an

enhanced cognition of the content and approach advocated under the new MCE curriculum, administrative measures such as human resource deployment, provision of teachers' professional training, timetable arrangement, role and involvement of other stakeholders can be dovetailed to complement the pedagogical approach for effective implementation of the curriculum.

7.3.5 Summary of recommendations

Recommendations derived from findings of 6 sample school heads (SH) on perception and curriculum implementation



7.4 Limits of the research

The research is rather small scale with a sample of six primary school heads. There will be difficulty to form generalization from the samples patterns of curricular leadership and apply them to the whole primary school population. The suggested types of curricular leadership style, namely visionary curricular leadership and functional curricular leadership, are derived from the interviews of the sample school heads. The proposed typology of school leadership requires further research to establish for wider transferability.

The triangular relationship among the three variables namely awareness of the change, attitude towards change and action for practice, though reveals a close link from the interview and data analysis, however it needs to be confirmed from more schools. The close link of the variables from the limited cases needs to be substantiated to establish the causal relationship among the three variables, even if that exists.

Although the sampling of the schools is at random with maximum variation in the school backgrounds and conditions, the six school heads have exhibited personal commitment in education and concurrence with the aims of the new MCE curriculum. The commonality of the six school heads is that they all exhibit positive attitude towards the new MCE curriculum, giving a fertile ground for its implementation. If sample school heads with an indifferent or negative attitude towards the new MCE curriculum are included, it may elicit variable, pattern of behaviour or reaction that warrants further investigation.

7.5 Conclusion

The MCE curriculum, though bearing the name of Moral and Civic education, in essence, is values education for character building with strong virtue ethics overtone. Various researches (Berkowitz and Bier, 2004; DeRoche and William, 2001; Lickona 1991) have revealed that school leadership is playing a pivotal role in implementing education for character. Effective implementation of education for character involves three aspects namely understanding, commitment and action while school head needs to (1) “get it” (2) “buy into it” and (3) “live it” (Berkowitz and Bier, 2004: 77). This suggests that understanding by school leader is only the first step for successful implementation of the values curriculum, to be followed by commitment and vision to implement. Possessing the necessary skills and competency to carry out the curriculum is equally important. To realize the values in daily life by school leadership personally and in school practices forms the cornerstone for effective delivery of the programme. Study by Greenberg et.al.(1995) proposes that interest and

commitment of school leaders while Valentine, Trimble and Whitaker (1997) consider school leader's competency is essential. These imply that school leader needs to learn the why (head) and the how 'hand' but develop the commitment and motivation 'heart' to lead the character programme. This corresponds to Sergiovanni's (1992) call for head, hand and heart for moral leadership. The present research from the six sample school heads reinforces the findings as identified by Berkowitz and Bier (2004). Both conceptual understanding of the MCE curriculum and the commitment to implement it are necessary condition but professional competency and possession of domain specific knowledge in MCE is the sufficient condition for the implementation of the MCE curriculum as planned.

The appeal of the MCE curriculum to school leadership is reflected in their positive attitude towards the MCE curriculum that could be understood in the light of virtue-theoretical basis. The theoretical construct of the MCE curriculum, nesting on character building with virtues, recognizes the intrinsic values rather than extrinsic or instrumental significance of any form of knowledge (Peters, 1966 quoted in Carr, 1999: 244). The promotion of the MCE curriculum underpinned by core values and virtues is supported by school heads for its own sake of moral engagement and character development as against the extrinsic goals of socialization or training (Carr, 1999: 245) and are reflected in the interview conceptualized in section 6.1.1 (b) on p102. The cultivation of virtues through the MCE curriculum could be perceived as a learning process enhancing students' awareness and appreciation of the worth of moral virtues, civic competency as well as national identity building situated in the social and political context of Hong Kong with the return of Hong Kong to the Mainland of China in 1997. The core values together with the acquisition of analytical skills constituting the curriculum content of MCE attempt to meet the societal expectation for the need of character building and the call for making value judgements in discerning personal and social issues. It is not surprising to find the virtue-theoretical approach to the MCE curriculum could enlist the support from the school leadership, irrespective of the school and religious background of school heads. The neo-Aristotelian approach with a balance on both self-regarding and other-regarding virtues is worth having (Slote, 1999:103). The MCE curriculum, emphasizing the two, namely self-regarding (focusing on the virtues of individual e.g. perseverance) and other-regarding virtues (focusing on altruistic behaviour, commitment etc) are appealing to school leadership and support from school heads is found to be positive, facilitating curriculum implementation.

For the implementation of moral education, it has been argued by Aristotelian virtue

ethicists that it is not purely a cognitive process. It is equally important to have proper development in the affective capacities and sensibilities, the development of moral engagement with others and affective disposition as well as sensitive appreciation to the circumstances of others. This involves the cultivation of appropriate feelings (Carr, 2004: 225). The role of school heads in the implementation of the MCE curriculum could be perceived through the way moral sentiments is promoted. Emotions are considered to be ubiquitous features of human life and emotional expression is morally relevant (Spieker, 1988; Lind, 1990; Sherman, 1990 in Flanagan and Rorty, 1990; Oakley, 1992,). Emotion associated with moral norms and values accounting for moral conviction helps establish its worth. The joy associated with an altruistic behaviour, completion of an obligation or a sense of guilt or shamefulness could be strong motivational force to cultivate a moral act or for an agent to refrain from doing an immoral behaviour. The efforts made by the sample school heads by creating a virtue-enriching school culture to nurture among students the emotion morally relevant are in concordance with the argument for a role of affective domain in producing virtuous behaviour (Lind 1990; Sherman 1990 in Flanagan and Rorty, 1990). The commitment of the school heads to promote MCE curriculum is evident and is reflected through their behaviour such as modeling (e.g. greeting students early in the morning to demonstrate politeness is valued), affirmative image of students (e.g. every one is teachable, positive regard shown to students to enhance their self esteem) and creating supportive school ethos (e.g. school heads having lunch with students to better understand them and showing concern, mottos and words of wisdom displayed in school premises) etc are common school practice, in one way or the other, in these six schools. Empathy and moral sentiments are exhibited by school leadership for inspiring students to commit in moral act because the promotion of MCE curriculum is more than cognitive understanding or solely on moral exhortation from top down. School heads' personal engagement in delivering the core values is recognized in the interviews and observed in the school practices. The passing of core values through living with them (Spiecker 1999 : 211) is more convincing to implement the MCE curriculum. The 'visibility' of the realization of core values such as caring, dedication, concern for the welfare of students and the building up of a welcoming school environment is apparent in the sample schools.

In addition, it is argued that emotions, passions and feelings are sources of information about the world (Carr and Steutel, 1999: 250-251) and affective sensibilities are important for the promotion of moral education. Moral education is not confined to intellectual grasp of principles. It is noted that there are sources of disaffection among delinquency young children (Carr and Steutel 1999: 251). The

situation prompts us to rethink about the role of affective nurture for the promotion of moral education. As in the present study, the school heads have performed the curricular role by vitalizing the promotion of affect and create a school culture of love and concern is equally important as a means for promoting the MCE curriculum. Communal partnership among school, family and community in promoting moral education is advocated (Carr and Steutel, 1999: 252) to create a joint responsibility for character development and moral formation of students. Such thinking is being realized by the sample school heads who construe the MCE curriculum and its implementation in the way which is concurrent with school practices supported in literature and the world trend (Carr and Steutel, 1999.)

The belief in make-a-difference among the school heads is also obvious as the sample school heads possess a strong sense of efficacy through personally involved in promoting MCE such as modeling and direct engagement with students in producing a conducive learning environment, involvement in teaching and learning, participating in learning experiences such as study trips and even participating in curriculum design relating to the implementation of the new MCE curriculum. The case of school head D, as an example, illustrates the influential role of personal values on school practices. He is aware of the situation that the promotion of virtues/character is easily marginalized under the hegemony of pragmatism, marketisation of education and the dominance of measurement of school effectiveness in terms of intellectual development expressed in achievements in examination. School head, such as D, with a strong personal vision of core values and mission of education, for example, upholding justice, insist on his values in the implementation of the MCE curriculum in school. The personal commitment of school heads, characterized by their idiosyncratic interpretation of the curriculum and value orientations generates variations in depth and breadth in implementing the MCE curriculum.

With regard to development of national identity as one of the core values of the MCE curriculum, it is receptive to the school heads given the societal expectation for a higher sense of awareness and commitment towards the country with return of Hong Kong to the mainland of China in 1997. The finding resonates the patriotic approach to education for citizenship (Lister, 1988; Rowe, 2000) with the aim to promote a sense of national identity and social cohesion which are considered as civic virtue. The support to the promotion of national identity by school heads provides both motivation for implementation of the MCE curriculum but also pose challenges within the pluralist approach for the call of developing a critical thinking in public discourse.

To conclude, as educators, we are concerned about students' learning which should cover both intellectual and character development as well as nurturing of virtues that are sustainable with personal development. In this way, we care about school curriculum and its delivery. What makes a school head inspiring and illuminative in education requires a school leadership which is value-based, well-informed and skillfully executed with a clear direction, leading students to excel, both intellectually and spiritually. If we accept the argument that the ultimate end of education is for the benefit of the whole-person and all-rounded development of students, then all the efforts made including educational administration and school practice should be geared towards this end.

Educational administration is situated in school as a context and carried out with an aim to achieve. Center to education and educational administration is on learning of what is valuable, right and justified. The attainment of this educational goal is through creating conducive conditions for curriculum delivery. School head is one of the key stakeholders in steering and gate-keeping the attainment of the goal. The decisions on setting of the goal and the way to achieve it are a matter of 'will and power: of bending others to one's will and of being bent in turn by others' (Hodgkinson 1991: 8). The overlap between education and administration is therefore substantial and unavoidable. Values and perception of the educational issues are the crux and the interpretation of these issues will determine how they are managed. The study tries to open up a gateway to the world of values, its complexities and dilemmas in unrelenting challenges to attain the good and to better the education for students through school leadership. It is hoped that the research will provide food for thought on what Hodgkinson (1991,1997) has highlighted as the trichotomy of **philosophy, value** and **practice (praxis)** which touches on the underlying assumptions and values in school practice and leadership.

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Values and attitudes as generic elements in the school curriculum

1. *"Learning for Life, Learning through Life - Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong"* by the Education Commission (September 2000) puts forth the following, amongst others, as the Vision of the Education Reform:

- To raise the overall quality of students: to improve the overall quality of our society through upgrading the knowledge, ability and **attitudes** of all students
- To acknowledge the importance of **moral education**: to provide students with structured learning experiences in the areas of moral, emotional and spiritual education

2. To realise the above vision, the development of values and attitudes should become essential elements of the school curriculum. In fact, these values and their associated attitudes permeate the curricula of the eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and are reflected in the learning targets as well as curriculum objectives at different educational levels.

Core Values, Sustainable Values and Attitudes

3. **Values** may be defined as those qualities that an individual or society considers important as principles for conduct and that are intrinsically worthwhile. Values may be broadly categorised as **core and sustaining values**. They are fundamental to the formation of **attitudes**, which in turn affect the acquisition and application of values. An elaboration of these terms is provided below:

"Values constitute the foundation of one's attitudes and beliefs, which subsequently influence one's behaviour and way of life. Values can vary across societies, as different social and economic conditions in different geographical locations may lead to different value emphases. However, across societies, we can also identify certain values that are commonly or universally emphasised. The emergence of these universal values illustrates the common concerns of human societies, the basic qualities for human existence, the common elements in human civilisation, and also the common

characteristics of human nature...we call these universal values **core values**." And sustaining values are "other values that are also important at an instrumental level, being regarded as important or helpful for **sustaining the core values**." (extracted from the *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools* (1996), pp. 12 and 14)

4. The following set of core and sustaining values and attitudes are proposed for incorporation in the school curriculum:

Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development, Appendix II, II-1, 2001

A Proposed Set of Values and Attitudes for Incorporation in the School Curriculum

Core Values:	Sustaining Values:	Core Values:	Sustaining Values:	Attitudes
Personal -sanctity of life -truth -aesthetics -honesty -human dignity -rationality -creativity -courage -liberty -affectivity -individuality	Personal -self-esteem -self-reflection -self-discipline -self-cultivation -principled morality -self-determination -openness -independence -enterprise -integrity -simplicity -sensitivity -modesty -perseverance	Social -equality -kindness -benevolence -love -freedom -common good -mutuality -justice -trust -interdependence -sustainability -betterment of human kind	Social -plurality -due process of law -democracy -freedom and liberty -common will -patriotism -tolerance -equal opportunities -culture and civilisation heritage -human rights and responsibilities -rationality -sense of belonging -solidarity	-optimistic -participatory -critical -creative -appreciative -empathetic -caring and concerned -positive -confident -cooperative -responsible -adaptable to changes -open-minded -with a respect for •self •life •quality and excellence •evidence •fair play •rule of law •different ways of life, beliefs and opinions •the environment -with a desire to learn -diligent -committed to core and sustaining values

It is believed that the development of the above values and attitudes, together with the strengthening of students' self-management and interpersonal skills, should enable them to make wise decisions on emerging issues in society and cope with stress and negative influences from various sources. Different KLAs have, in their contexts, included a range of learning objectives contributing to the development of these values and attitudes at different key stages of learning. These learning objectives, however, are by no means implying that values and attitudinal development should progress in the order of key stages. They are proposed to facilitate the planning of relevant learning experiences in or across the KLAs

Towards Good Virtues: Nurturing Morality & Civic Mindedness in Our Next Generation

The Revised Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework

What is Moral and Civic Education?

Moral and Civic Education is an essential element of whole-person education, which aims at fostering students' positive values and attitudes through the school curriculum and the provision of diversified learning experiences. It also develops students' ability to analyze and judge issues relating to personal, family, social, national and global levels they encounter at different stages of development, and to commit themselves to practising all the good virtues.

Moral and Civic Education: Revision of the Curriculum Framework.

Moral and Civic Education was identified as one of the Four Key Tasks in the Curriculum Reform launched in 2001 and has gained wide support from the education sector since then. In response to the rapid societal changes and the public's expectations on the younger generation, the Education Bureau has revised and enriched the Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework as follows:

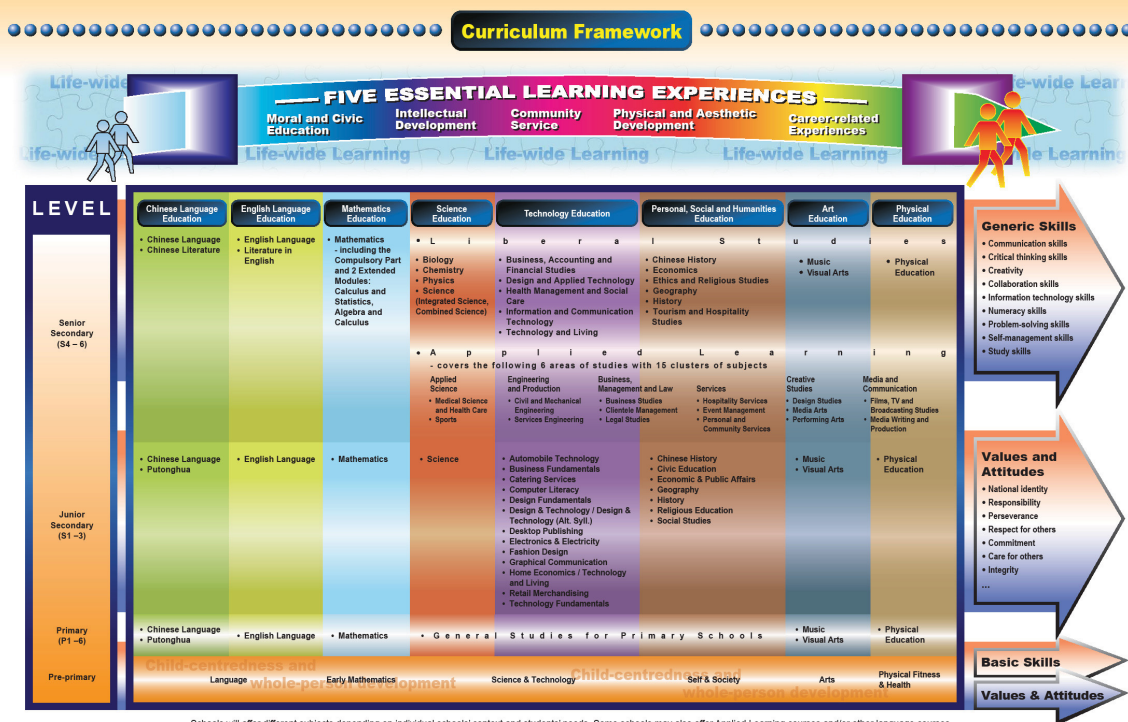
- Encourage school engagement in cultivating positive values among students by building a better connection with all subjects and learning activities;
- Two new values, namely “Care for Others” and “Integrity”, are introduced as the priority values in addition to “Perseverance”, “Respect for Others”, “Responsibility”, “National Identity”, and “Commitment” to address students' personal development and basic needs;
- Enhance national education to strengthen students' knowledge of and identity to the motherland;
- Expand the curriculum coverage by adding the theme of “Life at Work”, and provide more exemplars of “Life Events”;
- Set out the characteristics of students' personal development and learning expectations at different Key Stages of Learning in support of the ongoing and systematic school curriculum planning. (The developmental characteristics and

expected learning outcomes of young people at different Key Stages are suggestions based on the views sought from school heads, teachers, social workers, parents, scholars and educational psychologists with regard to relevant theories which will serve as reference for schools in their curriculum planning.)

Prepared by
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April 2008

Learning to Learn - The Hong Kong School Curriculum

Life-Long Learning Whole-Person Development



For Chapter 5

**Table 5.1 Coding, values classification and SH's perception
with respect to the new MCE curriculum**

Code (P)	Personal value	Descriptions
PEV	Personal values	The values one holds with respect to what is worthwhile and desirable, affected by one's personal experiences
PEB	Personal beliefs	The beliefs and conviction, acceptance of an alleged fact/idea as true or right
PEc	Personal values (cultural influence)	Influence of culture e.g. Chinese culture, traditional culture etc upon one's values and values system
PEf	Personal values (family influence)	Influence of family and family members upon one's values and values system
PEr	Personal values (religious influence)	Influence of religion, transrational in nature, upon one's values and values system
PEs	Personal values (school influence)	Influence of school, school heads and teachers upon one's values and values system

Code (S)	Professional value as SH	Descriptions
SMV	School vision and mission upheld by SH	The values to be cherished by the school sponsoring bodies/school head
SVE	Values of education	Conception of education and importance of education and personal reflection of the essence of education
SVM	Value and importance of MCE	Value and role of MCE in whole-person development of students

Code (A)	Attitude	Descriptions
AME	Attitude towards MCE	Attitude towards MCE curriculum The stance taken by SHs towards MCE. The interpretation of the new MCE curriculum as “opportunities” or “challenges” will affect the attitude as positive or negative (Leithwood and

		Montgomery, 1986:128) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neutral – curriculum implementation is considered as given, obliged to do it, being indifferent, ‘don’t care’, considering not within my professional ambit
AM+	Positive attitude towards MCE	To show support, mobilize resources, structural changes, encouragement to staff for professional development etc.
AM-	Apathetic attitude towards MCE	Disagree with the MCE documents. Entirely on school based approach

Code (R)	Perceived role as SH	Descriptions
RHR	Role of school head as education professional	Perceived role of SH; leadership or managerial role (running “a smooth ship” (Leithwood and Montgomery, 1986: 131)
RCr	Curricular role	Self perception of the curricular role
RLr	Leadership role	Leadership role: to lead, direct and reflect
RAr	Administrative role	Higher order function in the running of school as an organisation
RMr	Managerial role	Managerial role, to implement as required or directed by the MCE curriculum documents, routine work

Code (K)	Knowledge and awareness of MCE	Descriptions
KME	Knowledge of MCE	Knowledge, understanding and awareness of the new MCE curriculum, content and latest development
KIm	Implementation of MCE	Knowledge of the mode of MCE implementation

Code (I)	Implementation of MCE	Descriptions
IME	Implementation of curriculum documents	Total adoption : Implementation in accordance with curriculum documents / recommendations
IMp	Existing school practice	Making use of existing structures and practice to carry out changes

IMS	School based implementation	Adaptation: School-based implementation
IMo	Organizational and structural change	Modification in school structure in coping with the new MCE
IMn	New initiatives for change	New structures for coping with the new MCE

Table 5.2 Coding and data analysis of the transcripts of School Head 4

Code	Theme	Sub themes	SH 4 (School Head 4)
			Description/memoing
AM+	Attitude of school head towards MCE Ash	What is the attitude towards the MCE curricular change ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘We considered <u>MCE positioned as a Key task was a good entry point</u> and let us make use of lesson time and promote MCE more systematically. Compared with the past MCE was rather segmented and I <u>preferred the way nowadays.</u>’ • ‘I considered <u>MCE had its strong impact</u> in nurturing students’ values and attitude but definitely not in developing knowledge as in CEM subjects’ • ‘I determined that to develop one’s values and how to <u>become a good guy</u> was important, particularly in primary school.’ • ‘I also considered it was not an indoctrination in promoting MCE. In MCE lesson we gave more space for them to <u>express their views</u> and let different views intermingled and let others understand the difference in opinions.’ • ‘Parents were more concerned if the content was examinable, needed for secondary school place allocation. They were concerned about entering into secondary school. I thought education should not be so instrumental and <u>whole person development was very important.</u>’
AM+			
AM+			
SVM			
SVM			
PEV			
PEV			
IMS	Knowledge of MCE Kmce	How much they know about the MCE curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘In our school, we <u>merged MCE with life education</u> as result of the tight timetabling. MCE and Life education was held in alternative cycle.’ • ‘Both MCE and Life education were taught by the <u>same group of teachers</u>. Our school social worker also joined in designing MCE
IMS			

IMS			and Life education curriculum..’
IMS			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘There was a <u>school plan from P1 to P6 to develop the core value</u> and what had been promoted in MCE curriculum. Through these six years, the students would have the opportunity to experience and learn gradually through the <u>total immersion in these experiences.</u>’

PEV	SH’s belief and role of mce Bmce	What is the role and importance of MCE to students and schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Every year, we were worrying about our future. I could not tell the colleagues because it would bring worry to them. These two years, I adopted another perspective to discuss it with the teachers. The <u>spirit of (the name of the school) was there</u> even if the school had to close down and the spirit would blossom. We only scattered in different place and in that sense, we wouldn’t be worrying.’
PEV			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The spirit would be there where we worked and it would not disappear. Let the <u>spirit grew</u> in that school if there was no such spirit. We <u>should not limit our future to (the name of the school) primary school.</u>’
PEV			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘If we adopted this perspective, we would <u>not worry about school closing down.</u> This worry would affect the teachers in teaching. The way how students learnt should not be affected.’
PEV			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘If we could think in that way it would help. I <u>wouldn’t worry about my post as a school head, less salary for less classes etc.</u> I did not need to think of changing school. <u>I could use the school to help the students and I treasured this opportunity and the place.</u>
PEV			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘...if it was through a happy and free <u>without pressure situation to discuss the values</u> and let the students to understand the views of
PEV			

PEV			<p>their peers on the same issue, the pros and cons , the positive and negative impact of an incident, it would help cultivate and nurture them the positive values.’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘I emphasized in school, the <u>whole school education should stress the importance of teaching students to live with positive values</u> although we could not change the mindset of placing high value on academic achievement. To be a good guy meant to be a good citizen, at least not to <u>doing anything harmful to society.</u>’
PEV			
PEc			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘I did not have religious belief. Chinese culture might have influence upon me. <u>Traditional Chinese virtues, such as diligence, perseverance</u> had influence upon me during my school.’
PEV			
PEV			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘These values (Chinese values) were important and I <u>wanted my students to have these qualities.</u> These I considered to be the qualities for passing on to the next generation.’
PEc			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘No religious belief. I had <u>good teacher who affected me</u> and there was traces of their influence. My teacher was nice. He was a good role model.’
PEV/ SVM			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘ if we treated our students <u>just like our sons or daughters</u>, the situation would be different. <u>My daughter was also studying in this school. My son</u> also studied in my school and they studied for six years and they <u>felt happy.</u>’
PEs			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘It was important to let them <u>grow and be happy.</u>’ • ‘<u>My teacher influenced me and I could be a good teacher.</u> I had many good teachers....’
PEV			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘I wanted the students to become a good citizen when leaving the school.’

PEV			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘When the students considered <u>anything unfair, they would voice out</u> their opinion expressing a sense of justice.’
PEV			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What were <u>good citizens, it was not simply to obey</u> . A good citizen should be able to voice out their view when he/she saw something unjust.’
PEV			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The <u>students were good reflecting the spirit of my primary school. This was my expectation of the students.</u>’

RCr	Curricular role of SH	How SH manage the MCE curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘We had decreasing number of classes and students. I not only consider my role in administration but I <u>stressed very much curricular work.</u>’
RLr	Rcu	Different role as curricular head?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘I considered myself to <u>support the teachers in teaching and learning</u> and to me it was the most important.’
RCr			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘I as SH would analyse the issue from the perspective of teachers. <u>I would also teach in class.</u> I taught in mathematics lessons and MCE lessons as well. It was important to me as I did not depart from frontline teachers I could know students’ learning and it was important. I thought I should have <u>the obligation to teach MCE</u> as it was related to my teacher training background’
RCr			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The implementation of MCE in my school was very much school based and I needed to experience the process. <u>I could know what are our strengths and the feedback from students.</u>’
RCr			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘This was the core... <u>I would ask my staff the curriculum design if it was implemented as originally designed and implemented in classroom.</u> They were all important to be assessed. I studied curriculum design in Chinese university and <u>I stressed curriculum</u>

RHR			<p><u>planning and implementation in my school.</u>'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'IF the gap between curriculum document and classroom implementation was minimized, it would depend on teachers and students. In the school executive structure we had to think if it helped such as resources, if teachers wanted to implement, <u>did'nt let administration and executive matters to interfere them.</u>'
RHR			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Administrativewise, we needed to let teachers <u>feel comfortable</u> to carry out or to <u>support them with the necessary resources.</u> The result would be good and I was concerned with the curriculum implementation.'
RHR			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Every year, we were worrying about our future. <u>I could not tell the colleagues</u> because it would bring worry to them'
RHR			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'In my previous school, I might not be able to implement my ideal because I was not in the leadership level. Now in this school as school head, <u>I had the responsibility</u> and the school did not have many students.'
PEV			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '<u>I considered as a SH was to serve others</u> . As such I would not take an administrative perspective to execute my role. <u>I would support teachers' teaching and learning such as resource allocation, liaising with parents etc ie those could not be performed by teachers.</u>'
RHR			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'As a SH, I could perform <u>this role. How to</u> convey the school mission and vision to parents, our orientation and it was this SH could perform.'
RLr			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I could play the <u>role as a bridge</u> between parent and teachers.'
RHR			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I considered this belief should be insisted. Parents might have their views on teachers,

RHR			but I would tell the parents if there were complaints <u>I would help to handle.</u>
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PEV	School practice in mce (Action) Psch	Any school initiatives relating to MCE? Any connection to SH's values orientation or school mission?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘..the atmosphere was very harmonious, <u>mutual acceptance of each other among the students.</u> This kind of accommodating attitude was important for a harmonious society..’ • ‘If there was no MCE lesson, could you have <u>the space to discuss them.</u> I thought it was difficult to teachers to do so in Chinese lesson. General Studies could have the space to discuss with students.’ • ‘In our school, we could <u>promote through some tasks assigned to students</u> such as school prefect, librarian assistant, cleaning team, IT assistant, Through the execution of the tasks and let them learn. It would be difficult to do it by GS. The voluntary work was also put inside MCE. Through their work, we expected students to learn to commit and to learn to accept. This let the students to help others from another perspective.’ • ‘If we considered it to be important, we <u>had to put it in school curriculum and practise it.</u>’ • ‘(P.3) We offered to P6 students to <u>visit old people's home</u> and chat with them. Students prepared some Chinese knots and played with the elderly.’ • ‘I thought <u>MCE curriculum could provide the students opportunities to learn</u> especially when the school did offer the curriculum time for them to learn.’
SVM			
IMS			
SVM			
IMS			
SVM			

PEV	School mission MSch	How it set the direction of the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘My school served many grassroot families. The parents of the children always reminded their kids not to take up the hard job as they
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PEV		practices for whole person development of students	<p>did and expected them to find a better job. Then our school was positioned to serve these students and we expected them not only have achievement in academic result but also in their <u>character through education</u>. I stressed very much this belief.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'We could work in this direction. I shared with my colleagues we could provide more <u>fine education</u> just like a delicate inn as compared with a hotel.'
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SVM	Motivation of school heads in mce MoSH	Is it related to SH's belief and values orientation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'It provided me the ideas to improve next time and I could tell my staff what to be improved. <u>I could better MCE with these experience.</u>' • 'We felt that it was <u>our pride</u> to have this student. We would share with parents of other graduates.' • 'Although our school did not have much resources, <u>we trained the students to excel and made success</u>. This student impressed me because not many students could still remember their primary school. This student did and felt <u>proud of my school</u>' • 'I felt <u>satisfied and content.</u>' • 'I received a letter from a secondary school by stating that the student of our school entered into University of Science and Technology of Hong Kong studying engineering. The student was once studying in SEN class ie his performance was behind other normal student for two years. Even when he was in secondary school, he still had contact with our teachers. Our teachers did not let him go home and let him study. We had a table tennis played with him. <u>We spent time to help him with the studies</u>. He also made success in secondary school
PEV			
PEV			
PEV			

			<p>through continuous effort. HE was a typical example and it demonstrated that my primary school had educational impact upon students. The students also expressed gratitude to us.'</p>
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Table 5.3 Coding of key concepts under category/theme

Appendix V

Code	SH A	SH B	SH C	SH D	SH E	SH F
Code (P)						
PEV	2	6	10	22	7	6
PEB	5	2	2			2
PEc	1		1	1		
PEf	2	1				1
PEr	1		8		5	1
PEs	1		5	2	2	1
Code (S)						
SMV	1		3	1		1
SVE	6	1	10	3	7	4
SVM	6	18	12	13	10	
Code (A)						
AME						3
AM+	2	1	6	3	3	2
AM-						
Code (R)						
RHR	3	2	1	7	6	12
RCr	4	9	2	6	9	2
RLr	1	16	5	2	3	
RAr			2			
RMr						
Code (K)						
KME	5	3	4	1	6	2
KIm					7	
Code (I)						
IME					1	
IMp		7				8
IMS	7	11	20	8	5	1
IMo						
IMn					1	

Table 5.4 Conceptualisation of the key concepts and themes

Concepts (code)	Categories	Themes	Sub total of key concepts	Total (No. of key concepts in each theme)
PEV	Personal values	Affective	53	
PEB			11	
PEc			4	
PEf			4	
PEr			15	
PEs			11	
SMV	Professional values		5	
SVE			28	
SVM			59	
AME	Attitudes		3	
AM+			17	
AM-			0	
			total	210
RHR	Role recognition	Cognition	31	
RCr			32	
RAr			27	
RLr			2	
RMr			0	
KME	Awareness/ knowledge		21	
KIm			7	
			total	120
IME	Implementation	Action/ behaviour	1	
IMp			15	
IMS			52	
IMo			0	
IMn			1	
			total	69