

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

The Hong Kong Secondary School System: *a critical analysis of its operations with special reference to the perspectives of principals in relation to the launch of the School Management Initiative in Hong Kong.*

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ABSTRACT

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The Hong Kong Secondary School System: a critical analysis of its operations with special reference to the perspectives of principals in relation to the launch of the School Management Initiative in Hong Kong.

by Dee So Han Wong

Modern civilisation demands making progress and reforms from time to time. In the world of education in recent years, decentralization of school management has been at the forefront of all major reforms since 1980's. Decentralization aims to divert managerial responsibilities from government authorities to school governing bodies by putting them in charge of their own affairs. The process of reform inevitably affects all levels of the school in terms of changes to the school management system, with the result which has highlighted certain dormant and newly discovered issues. In Hong Kong, decentralization has come in the form of School Management Initiative (SMI), its achievement depends intricately on the success of professional development and quality improvement. The value of SMI in quality improvement has been in question since its launch in 1991 and educationalists are not convinced by the significance of professional development towards its success. The research concentrates on the effect of integrating professional development and quality improvement on the implementation process of SMI in Hong Kong.

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PREFACE

The introduction of School Management Initiative (SMI) in Hong Kong was not reinforced by the support of professional development. The significance of the role of continuous professional development in quality improvement has often been disregarded by both the government and educationalists. Therefore, the focus of this study is to investigate whether professional development is necessary or worthwhile as an aid to the launch of SMI in Hong Kong and as a way for quality improvement.

The content of Chapter One includes a brief introduction of Hong Kong and its school management system. The purpose of SMI introduction and its interpretation by practitioners are discussed. The progress of professional development in school management for school principals in Hong Kong is also assessed. In Chapter Two, literature review deals with the development of school management and its impact in quality improvement. Methodology in Chapter Three simply outlines the research framework.

Chapter Four looks at the secondary data search which establishes the facts and any published opinions from people in the relative fields on the influence of professional development and SMI in school management. This is followed by Chapter Five, the data analysis of fieldwork which enables us to look at the factual figures, thus allowing us to formulate constructive criticisms in Chapter Six which is data interpretation of fieldwork. Conclusion in the final chapter offers certain recommendations which hope to rectify the present dilemma of professional development taking such a minor role in the process of SMI implementation.

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List of Abbreviation

CU - Chinese University

DEF - Department of Education

ED - Education Department

EMB - Education Managing Board

HEADLAMP - Headteachers' Leadership And Management Programme

HKCEE - Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination

HKHLE - Hong Kong Higher Level Education

HKU - Hong Kong University

IIP - Investment in People

INSTEP - In-service Teachers Education Programme

LMS - Local Management School

LEA - Local Education Authority

OFSTED - Office For Standards in Education

PAM - Principal Assistant Master/Mistresses

PGM - Principal Graduate Master/Mistresses

PTA- Parents and Teachers Association

QA - Quality Assurance

QAU - Quality Assurance Unit

SAA - School Administration Association

SAG - School Administration Group

SMI - School Management Initiative

SMTF - The School Management Taskforce

SAR - Special Administrative Region

SPA - Students and Parents Association

TQM - Total Quality Management

TTA - Teacher Training Agency

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Modern education around the world has gone through dramatic changes since the 1980s and this has transformed the operation and administration of schools in many countries (Ramsay & Clark, 1990). Decentralization of school management is flourishing and fast becoming the major reform in recent years amongst countries such as the UK, Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong. Local Management of Schools (LMS) was introduced in England and Wales by the Education Reform Act in 1988. The underlining principle of LMS is to secure the maximum delegation of financial and managerial responsibilities to school governing bodies. Effective LMS is believed to enable governing bodies and head teachers to plan their use of resources to the maximum effect in accordance with their own needs and priorities, and to make schools more responsive to their clients, i.e. parents, pupils, the local community and employers (Circular, 1988).

Following the steps of England, decentralization was introduced in the form of School Management Initiative (SMI) in Hong Kong in March 1991 when it was still under British rule. SMI, is a means for the government to raise the quality in education. It is drawn upon the experience from Australia, UK, USA and Singapore. The aim of the scheme is described as a way 'to encourage more systematic planning and evaluation of programmes of activities in schools and reports of their performance' (Education Department, Hong Kong, 1993).

SMI is the first substantial change made to the school management system in Hong Kong. Its launch has stirred up the traditional centralized school management system and caused a series of debates on the relevance and value of the scheme. The result of the implementation of the scheme is still vague several years after its launch and many schools still hesitate to join.

The reaction from school practitioners to the launch of SMI and the implementation of the scheme are the main concern of this study, which seeks to examine school principals' performance in coping with the newly delegated managerial duties and their need for systematic professional development in school management. It considers the significance of professional development in school management to quality improvement in education and cultural and ideological affects to the demand of professional development for school principals. Due to being an British colony for over one hundred years, the education system in Hong Kong, in many ways, is still over shadowed by the British system. This study will therefore, often refer to the experience of schools in England and Wales in LMS.

In this introductory chapter, the effects on the role of school principals brought by decentralization is first looked at. Factors which cause influence to the result of SMI to quality improvement in education are also studied. Following is a brief description of the history of Hong Kong and its education system. The provision and demand of professional development training for school principals in school management is finally discussed.

1.2. Introduction of Decentralization

1.2.1. Decentralization in school management

Decentralization is the delegation of managerial responsibilities from the government to school principals, governors and other stakeholders. Through delegation, the school principals share his/her authority with other people (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992). Delegation is not an easy task because if it is to be a genuine consent of authority, it then means a transference of considerable power in the process of decision making (Leigh, 1994). Some school principals may find it hard to decide on what elements to be delegated, to whom and to what extent. The way in which certain duties are delegated through the hierarchies depends on the kind of leader the principal is and his/her approach to leadership. As it is the manager's responsibility to assure the effectiveness of delegation, the consequences of delegation can therefore, be used as one of the measurements to assess a head's

achievement in school management. Accountability is thus, important in the process of delegation (Adam,1987, Leigh,1994).

The shift to self-managing schools contributes a cultural change in education; emphasizes on work, on effective schools and effective management and on inspections, have resulted in extensive and radical changes in the roles and responsibilities of school principals and other senior staff involved in school management (Bolam, 1997, Ehrich, 1997). In LMS, the principals have far more involvement in the financial planning and management aspect of their schools than before and the accountability of their work is greatly emphasized (Williams,1988). Their role is becoming increasingly diverse and complex and no longer can they afford to concentrate solely on being educational leaders. In order to maintain their schools' competitiveness and efficiency, they need to devote a great deal of their time on administrative duties, most of which are new to them. Bush (1995) believes that the introduction of LMS has pushed the significance of a school principal's leadership to the school's operation to the peak. The trend towards self-management has led to an enhanced appreciation of the importance of managerial competence for educational leaders.

1.2.2 Training for school managers of self-managing schools

Many countries changing their school into self-managing schools because decentralization in school management is regarded as potentially more efficient and effective. The efficiency of decentralization, in fact, depends on 'the nature and quality of internal management if the putative benefits of autonomy are to be realized' (Bush, 1995, p.5). Many educationalists in the UK have strong concerns on the inadequacy that many principals and senior staff might have in preparing for their new responsibilities. Trained as teachers rather than managers, many principals may need to acquire new skills if their schools are to thrive in the new climate of self-management.

In response to the changes to the roles of school principals in school management, and sometimes integral to the government's new policies, there have

been substantial changes to the training for school managers in England and Wales since the early 1980s:

- . the provision, organization and funding of school management training across the country was criticized as early as 1978 as being patchy and ought to be rationalized;
- . from 1983 to 1988, the government funded a university-based National Development Centre for school management training.
- . since 1987, school management training has been a national priority area in successive government funding schemes;
- . from 1989 to 1992, in order to support the implementation of its reform programme, the government funded the School Management Task Force to promote more effective control over management training by schools and more accessible provision of flexible and practical forms of training and support;
- . since 1991, the compulsory system of biennial appraisal for headteachers and deputy headteachers;
- . in 1992, the government funded national pilot schemes on mentoring for new headteachers;
- . in 1995, the Teacher Training Agency introduced the HEADLAMP scheme, in England only, to support newly appointed headteachers.

(Bolam, R., *Educational Management & Administration*, Vol. 25, No. 3, July 1997, p.271-272)

The development in the provision of in-service training in general including management training for school managers and senior teaching staff is summarized as follow:

- . since 1987, a regulated market for in-service training in which schools receive annual funding to provide and buy training and consultancy;
- . a substantial reduction in the capacity of LEAs to deliver training;
- . a substantial increase in the number of professional associations and unions, private trainers and consultants and other agencies specializing in the provision of school

leadership training and the growing involvement of industry in such provision;
more flexible and market-driven university structures up to masters level;
a substantial increase in the number of specialist education management degree courses available at universities throughout the country, including new taught doctorate.

(Bolam, R., *Educational Management & Administration*, Vol. 25, No. 3, July 1997, p.271-272)

Apart from increasing number and variety of training in school management, a nationally controlled inspection regime was introduced in 1995 by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) to ensure that all schools are inspected once every four years. Each school in England and Wales is now subject to external inspection by a team of private, fee charging inspectors with the national framework of criteria and procedures and the summary report is published. The process of preparation, inspection and follow-up action has stimulated a great deal of activity directed towards school improvement, as well as considerable stress and anxiety.

1.2.3. Decentralization in Hong Kong

Hong Kong has followed the British example to introduce self-management of schools into its system, however, it was not followed by a management training scheme for school managers and a special school monitoring system like it did in the UK. As Hong Kong is no longer under the sovereignty of Britain, the implementation of management training programmes, such as the HEADLAMP scheme or mentoring for new heads in England and Wales have not been adopted. The Education Department (ED) evidently shows no intention to reform the existing school inspection system or to set up a similar organization like the OFSTED to ensure regular evaluation of SMI schools.

The decentralization of school management was introduced to Hong Kong without the accompaniment of a comprehensive training and assessment programme but it does not mean that the practitioners are in no need for improvement or that the scheme has been implemented effectively. According to the SMI Report, 1991,

SMI has been introduced into a situation where some principals have been allowed to operate their schools as dictatorial 'little emperors' (SMI Report, 1991). Few schools appear to involve more than their senior teachers in the shaping of school goals and many principals are believed to be ill prepared or trained for their job. The government also admits that there are no training requirements before a promotion of headship, nor is there one for the appointment of a principal in Hong Kong. On the other hand, the number of school principals in Hong Kong who have obtained comprehensive management training before their headship is still small and the trend for heads pursuing in-job professional development is still weak (Wong, 1987a).

No thorough research has been carried out in Hong Kong previously to analyze the value of professional development in school management on the improvement of quality in education. Public data or information revealing school principals' performance in school management is also unavailable due to the lack of formal assessment. The government admitted that the present monitoring system serves nothing about producing statistic figures or information for the public's use (SMI Report, 1991). As so little systematic data and information regarding the Hong Kong education system has been published, it is rather difficult to compare standards between schools in Hong Kong and with other countries.

Due to the lack of evaluation of the school management process, the need for school principals' improvement in their leadership is therefore, not widely recognized. The importance of effective school management in quality improvement in education is not well concerned either. The introduction of SMI is the first important issue to bring up people's awareness on the importance of school management and the school principals' leadership quality in the process of school improvement. However, seven years after SMI was launched, people's concern on professional development for school managers in school management has still not increased significantly.

Several reports and projects have been produced by the government and universities to promote the possible advantages of bringing SMI into schools. However, comprehensive studies on reviewing people's perception to SMI or

assessment of the implementation of the scheme have always been avoided. This research will try to fill the gap by exploring the neglected areas i.e. educators' perception towards SMI, the effectiveness of the implementation of the scheme and the need of professional development in school management for school principals. The underlying target of this study is to encourage school principals' pursuit of continuous professional development for themselves and their schools.

Prior to deciding the approaches to assess the acceptance and implementation of SMI and the development of professional development for school principals, it is necessary to consider first the key variables which could influence people's interpretation, i.e. the political and cultural background of Hong Kong, the features of its education system and the government's intention in the introduction of the scheme. The political and cultural background of Hong Kong and the development of its education system will be introduced next followed by the description of the process of the launch of SMI.

1.3 Introduction on Hong Kong

Hong Kong is a very small city with a total area of 1,092 square kilometers which consists of Kowloon peninsula, the Hong Kong Island and a number of small islands. Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain by China in 1841 and the New Territories were simultaneously leased in 1898 for 99 years including the area north of Kowloon up to the Shum Chun River along with many islands (see Appendix 1). In total, Hong Kong has been occupied by Britain for over 150 years. The sovereignty of Hong Kong was returned to China on June 30th 1997 when the lease expired on the New Territories. China promised to keep Hong Kong's capitalist economy unchanged for half a century from that date in the form of a specially created and autonomous Special Administrative Region (SAR).

Although the bulk of the landscape in Hong Kong is mountainous, without any natural resources, it is situated in a strategic location with an industrious and enterprising population; the combination of which forms the ideal gateway for the rest of the world to trade with China. Much of Hong Kong relies on imports from

other countries to survive and China is the key provider. People earn their living mainly from secondary and tertiary industries.

Hong Kong is one of the most densely-populated region in the world. At the end of 1995, its population reached 6.3 million, averaging 5,759 people per square kilometer. (*Hong Kong Series*, China International Press, 1997, p.1). This small city which is praised as the oriental pearl is the fifth largest financial centre in the world. The reserve of foreign currency of Hong Kong is ranked seventh in the world while the personal foreign currency reserve is ranked second (source of figure: Hong Kong Government, June, 1997).

1.3.1. People's political concern during colonial rule

During the colonial rule, Hong Kong was administered by the local Government and its administration was developed from the basic pattern applied in all British-governed territories overseas. The head of the Hong Kong Government was the Governor who was directly appointed by the British Government to administrate affairs in the colony. The Executive Council and Legislative Council are the two bodies which follow the Governor's order to rule Hong Kong. The Executive Council members and most of the Legislative Council members had always been either appointed officially (only well reputed professional and successful merchants who did not hold an opposite view to the British government would be appointed) or appointed directly by the Governor.

The colonial government had tactfully and successfully diverted people's interest from politics to economics. One of the effective way of doing this was to deprive people from even the most basic social benefits with which they could rely on. The concept of getting help from the government almost did not exist before. Social benefits such as sickness benefit, unemployment benefits, or child benefit were not heard of by the general public. Parents use to say, 'if your hands stop, all mouths at home will have to stop eating too.' People had to work hard to make a living as well as saving up for a rainy day. Self-reliance was in fact the colony's watch word.

Another effective way was by suppressing people's political knowledge and concerns through education. For examples, schools were instructed by the ED not to encourage their students to participate in political activities. Activities such as the formation of students unions was also discouraged. Gradually, the majority of people in Hong Kong were not enthusiastic in politics but were adaptable to new governmental issues imposed by the colonial government.

Furthermore, people were not given the chance to experience or exercise real democracy by the colonial Government. People did not have the right to vote for any one in the previous Legislative and Executive Councils and had no say in influencing government's policies. Direct elected seats in the Legislative Council had never been expected from the general public until the last Governor, Chris Patten introduced it in 1988. He proposed to give eighteen seats out of the total sixty in the Legislative Council through democratic voting. However, this rare chance of democracy for the people of Hong Kong came too late. Although the direct election for one third of the total seats in the Legislative Council eventually took place in 1995 but it had stirred up huge criticism from both the public and the Chinese government. The public blamed the government for implementing the direct-electoral system so late in the process that they could not have time to build up a mature democratic system before the return to China. The Chinese Government criticized the Governor's intention for constructing a democratic time bomb to destroy the Legislative system of Hong Kong after the handover.

No matter whether the Governor's action was a success or failure and no matter whether his intention was sincere or hostile, the direct-electoral system really came too late. The cycle of each direct-election was three years which meant that the second partial-direct election would take place in 1998, one year **after** the return of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China. Hong Kong's first partial direct-elected Legislative Council under British rule was abolished at the same time when the last Governor left Hong Kong. This is why the first self-elected Legislative Council of Hong Kong was mocked as also being the **LAST** !

A Temporary Legislative Council was set up on the 1st July 1997 by the Chinese Government to replace the Legislative Council in which all the seats in the Council were directly elected by the one thousand Hong Kong residents nominated by the Chinese government. The first formal Legislative Council was established in August, 1998 and all the seats in the council are elected by the residents of Hong Kong. Being a SAR of China, the education system of Hong Kong is supposed to remain unchanged but it is unavoidably that, the education system which is still rich with the influence of colonial culture will be evolved gradually.

1.3.2. The cultural impact on the education system

The education system of Hong Kong, a hybrid mixture of the mix of East and West, has its distinctive Chinese culture as well as strong colonial features. Culture explained by Deal (1985) is an expression that tries to capture the informal, implicit - often - unconscious side of business or any human organization. It consists of patterns of thought, behaviour, and artifacts that symbolize and give meaning to the workplace. Meaning derives from the elements of culture: shared values and beliefs, heroes and heroines, ritual and ceremony, stories, and an informal network of cultural players.

Chinese have long emphasized the value of education which was once strongly influenced by Confucius's thinking who laid great emphasis on learning (Wong, 1996). He was the first to open the door of education to all. He believed that, by nature, men were alike, and it was through learning and practice that they became apart. Also emphasized by Confucius is that everyone can 'make it' if one works hard (Wong, 1996).

Confucius's pragmatic attitude towards life and his emphasis on learning, had tremendous influence on the mind of Chinese people (Wong, 1996). Education is valued as a key to personal advancement and as a major factor in social stability and economic progress. In Chinese community, the first goal that most parents set themselves as their living standards improve, is always to give their children the best

possible opportunity in education. In the past, being able to provide basic schooling for children so that they could read and write was the most parents could dream. Today, the ambition of most ordinary families is to hope that their children can go on to some kind of post-secondary education.

Traditional culture affects not only people's value and attitude on education but also the development of human relationship inside schools and even the development of the education system. In the early days of colonial rule, structured schooling was provided mainly by western missionaries. The school principals of these schools were either missionaries themselves or appointed members (westerners) of the church. They had the full authority over the operation and management of the schools. Parents regarded the principals and teachers highly and believed that parents' responsibility was only to ensure that their children catching up with the curriculum. They would rarely challenge or criticize the school's policies or the principal's leadership. This culture in education still exists in today's economy. Many parents would blame their children or themselves instead of the teachers or the school system if their children are not catching up in school. They will look for remedies themselves, such as employing home tutors, to help their children to solve their academic difficulties. In today's families, it is not unusual for some parents taking a whole week off from work to help their children to revise for school exams. Paying for extra home tutorial for their children has become an unavoidable expense in most of the families in Hong Kong.

The school management system in Hong Kong is like a mini version of the colonial system, i.e. the degree of democracy given to the people had always been at the discretion of the authority. At school, the principal is appointed and empowered by the sponsoring group to operate the institution who has the right to decide on the extend of authority sharing with the other stakeholders. The concept of principal having the ultimate authority in school management has embedded into the general public's mind since schooling became available in the society and therefore, people do not have the ideology of sharing the principals' responsibilities of school management. Parents have neither the tradition nor the encouragement to participate

in their children's school activities. They always see a school as the place for their children to learn and that parents have no role to play.

The role of the governors in school management, however was even more ambiguous and difficult for the public to understand. To students and parents, governors in their mind are the VIP guests during prize giving ceremonies. To teachers, school governors are honourable members of the sponsoring group who should be kept informed with the progress of the school and its staff's performance. To the principal, the governors are the people he/she needs to be accountable for and report to. There is a common concept that school governors should not be bothered with school management, the principal is the only person who should be responsible for all aspects of school management duties.

This brief introduction of the culture in education in Hong Kong shows that SMI is introduced into a community in which education is valued highly but parents, teachers and governors traditionally take a very small part in school management process. Most of the school principals are managing their schools single-handedly and are strongly dependent to the government's central instruction. The education system generated from such a complex cultural background is described next.

1.4. Understanding the Education System of Hong Kong

1.4.1 The chronology of education system

In the 1960s, Hong Kong survived by providing cheap labor for Western investors. Most of the parents at this time could only afford to provide some sort of basic schooling for their children. After a decade, in the 70s, Hong Kong developed into an industrial city. In order to raise the standard of literacy to improve the labor force so that Hong Kong could be more competitive with other Asian countries, six years of free primary education was introduced by the government in 1971 but places for secondary schools were still limited and did not come free. Only those who passed the Secondary School Entrance Examination and afforded to pay for tuition fee could go into secondary education.

The Secondary School Entrance Examination was abolished following the launch of a nine years free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 15 (or up to the completion of Form 3) in September, 1979. On completion of primary schooling, pupils are allocated free junior secondary places with a choice of government, aided or private secondary schools. The allocation system, known as the Secondary School Places Allocation System, is based on internal school assessment, ranked by a centrally administered Academic Aptitude Test, and further determined by parental choice and the division of the territory into 19 school nets (boroughs). Students' academic ability is assessed and ranked into five bands by the Academic Aptitude Test (Band one is the top class and Band five is the lowest). They are allocated to schools according to their academic banding and geographical location.

To enforce this nine years of compulsory education, employing children under the age of 15 became illegal in 1980. A Junior Secondary Examination (for all the Secondary Three students, aged 15-16) was set up to allow a selection of students for the limited places beyond Secondary Three. Though school fees are charged for education beyond Secondary 3, they are highly subsidized by the government. Students who passed the Junior Secondary Examination, up to Secondary 5, need to go through the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) before they can be accepted for advanced level education. Beyond this, there is also the Advanced Level Exam awaiting students who wish to advance into universities or colleges. In 1998 over 85% of the 15-year-olds were provided places at Secondary 4; but less than 20% continue to Secondary 7 (Source of data: Hong Kong Government, 1998).

Before the granting of the nine year free education, the education system in Hong Kong was described as an 'elite' system. Public exams were described as being used by the authority to filter out the potential candidates for further education and for the benefit of the economy. Those who did not do well in exams would have no chances to continue with further education. Today, children are entitled to nine years free and compulsory education and they must complete this minimum level of

education regardless of their ability. Schools are not allowed to expel students for poor academic performance. This system is described as the 'popularized' system. In 1976, the enrollment rate of the year group 12-16 was 79%, and the rate in 1998 was 99% (Department of Education, 1998).

Traditionally, the injection of major educational policies and changes would stem from recommendations made by experts from overseas, mainly from Britain. Overseas experts were also appointed by the Government to investigate particular problems or to carry out reviews of the system (Chan, 1994). In December, 1982, the International Panel of Experts who were invited by the Government to carry out a comprehensive review on the education system published their first report. The report had become the government's guideline for future improvement in the quality of education. One major outcome which directly influenced the educational management system was the creation of the Education Commission in 1984 which became a permanent body advising the Government on education policies and strategies (Tai, 1990). The Commission has been publishing a report every two years since 1984 to recommend future improvement on school education.

The government's main achievement in education over the past 20 years is the tremendous growth in school places to match with the nine year free and compulsory education. The growth was achieved almost entirely by expanding the aided sectors (see Section 1.4.3) in school sponsoring. The authority admitted that in quantitative terms this expansion of opportunity has been a great success but there are difficulties, under the present education framework, in ensuring the quality of output and the evaluation of results. Educational management was first time purposely and seriously mentioned in 1990 by the fourth Education Commission's Report. The Report made proposals on several important quality-related issues, including the medium of instruction, attainment testing, and curriculum development. It stressed that the success of individual quality improvement measures will be limited if schools are not able to draw effectively on the skills, energy and commitment of every member of the school community (Education Commission's Report No.4, ECR4). Since the Report, quality improvements in

education becomes one of the major strategies for the 1990s (The SMI report, Education & Manpower Branch & Education Department, 1991).

1.4.2 The Legislative Framework of Education

All education and training policies are in-charged by the Education and Manpower Branch (EMB) of the Government Secretariat. EMB is organized into four Division, covering School Education, Higher Education, the Education Commission, and Employment and Technical Education. The Education Department (ED) is one of the divisions responsible for education and training (see Appendix 2). It implements and administers school education policies at kindergarten, primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. The department's main activities relate to planning and providing school places; allocating places to pupils entering the primary, secondary and sixth form levels; supporting curriculum development, monitoring teaching standards; providing advice to schools; and administering grants to public sector schools as well as private schools which are eligible for funding.

1.4.3 Types of schools

The main feature of the Hong Kong education system which differs from that of the other countries is that the majority of the schools are not run by the government but by public sectors. The government invited public sectors such as religious bodies or charity groups to operate schools because there was a lack of manpower in the ED to cope with the increasing demand in education mainly due to the rapid growth of the population in the 70s. There are three main types of schools in Hong Kong: government schools, aided schools and private schools. Government schools are solely operated by the government but the number is less than 9% in total (see Table 1.1). Most of the provision of primary, secondary and tertiary levels and in vocational education (almost 77% in total) are in the public sectors but they are directly subsidized by the government and are called aided schools. Schools owned by the public sectors without the support of governmental subsidies are called private schools (less than 13 % in total).

TABLE (1.1) Number of pupils enrollment of day school in year 1993-94

DAY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Type of school	Number of pupils	
	Secondary 1-5	Secondary 6-7
Government	34588 (8.5%)	4658 (9.1%)
Aided	321108 (79.3%)	37321 (73.5%)
Private	49487 (12.2%)	8773 (17.3%)
Total	405183	50752

(Source : 'Hong Kong : The Facts, 1994', Hong Kong Government)

Any person or group may set up a school on a private basis, provided that it meets the registration requirements set out in the Education Ordinance. Most of these public sectors are voluntary agencies, such as religious and charity organizations. Some of them, especially religious bodies, have a long history in operating schools in Hong Kong. They act as agents for the government to provide sufficient education establishments. The ultimate motive behind some of the organizations is to preach their religious beliefs and political views or to repay society. Hence, a few secondary schools are sponsored by political groups from the government of Mainland China and Taiwan; religious groups from the Catholics, Protestants, Islamic, Buddhist, etc. or townsmen groups from different province of China. (Over 50% of the secondary schools in Hong Kong are church-run.) Despite their backgrounds, these groups are all required to run their schools under a Code of Aid (please see Appendix 3).

Although Hong Kong is now ruled by the Basic Law which was passed by the Seventh National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China in 1990, religious groups can carry on operating schools, hospitals and social welfare units

with their existing policies. They can carry on providing education and religious education can still be maintained (Ng, 1989).

There are also many private schools offering kindergarten and commercial education. Some primary and secondary schools offering local curriculum are also privately run; and equally, there are as many private international schools. The private primary and secondary schools have always been regarded as a last choice by people because most of the government schools and aided schools provide a better standard of education with the proper equipment and suitable environment. All schools, whether private or public, are free to set their own curricula as long as they reach a standard of education (Hong Kong: The Facts, 1994, Hong Kong Government). In practice, most public sector schools follow curriculum guides issued by the Curriculum Development Council. Courses at Secondary 4 and above usually follow the syllabus of public examinations.

Based on school curriculum there are three main types of secondary schools in Hong Kong - grammar, technical and prevocational. They all offer the minimum of a five-year course leading to the HKCEE (equivalent to GCSE in England). HKCEE candidates may enter a two-year course in sixth form (Secondary 6 & 7) leading to the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination from which admission to local institutions like universities is based (see Appendix 4). The number of secondary school enrollment in the school year 1993-94 is showed in Table (1-1).

The demand for prevocational secondary schools is very low in Hong Kong due to the cultural influence. Many people believe that only grammar school can allow students chances to climb up the social ladder, therefore, many students with poor exam results would still prefer going into grammar schools which recruit mainly Band 4-5 students rather than to learn some practical skills at prevocational schools. Several prevocation secondary schools were forced to turn into grammar schools due to the shortage of students.

1.4.4 Funding

Aided primary, secondary and special schools are funded according to rules and conditions laid down in the Codes of Aid. These are non-statutory documents which form an integral part of the agreement between the sponsor and the government. Starting from 1975, sponsoring bodies are responsible for 20% of the capital cost of building, equipping a school, and managing the building project. A revised arrangement was then agreed by the Finance Committee whereby the government would pay the full construction cost and the sponsor would pay the full initial cost of the furniture and equipment, which at the time represented roughly 9% of the total capital cost for a secondary school (see Appendix 5).

The recurrent costs of schooling are met by the government and to a small extent by parents. Parents must meet the cost of textbooks, writing materials, lunches, and etc. Some schools are permitted to charge “Tong Fai” (miscellaneous charges) from children of the compulsory school age in order to meet the cost of some above-standard items in school (e.g. air conditioning or swimming pool). The average Tong Fai level is about £16 per pupil per year for junior secondary school (SMI Report, 1991, Hong Kong Government, p.18-19).

The policy at post-secondary 3 level is set out to ensure that parents meet a reasonable share of the cost of their children’s education. According to the government’s figure, the highest share paid by parents has been about 15% of the average recurrent cost. Government grants are allocated in proportion to the earning capacity of each individual secondary schools. Though some sponsors provide their schools with additional funds or above-standard items or extra subjects, most aided schools operate entirely within the budget of government grant.

Aided schools are prevented from appealing for contribution in anyway without written permission from the Director of Education. The overall effect is that aided schools are inhibited from seeking ways to raise additional funds for any above-standard items. The government realizes that this may have contributed to the generally low level of family and community involvement in the life of the school.

1.4.5 The aim of school education in Hong Kong

The fundamental aim of school education in Hong Kong is defined by the government as to develop the potential of every individual child, so that our students become independent-minded and socially-aware adults, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which help them to lead a full life as individuals and play a private role in the life of the community (A Guide to Education and Training in Hong Kong, 1994, Hong Kong Government). Each school should have their own goals in education derived from the government's aim of education. However, due to the competitiveness in seats for further education, this aim of education is carried out by an exam-oriented curriculum at all levels. Practitioners do not have real autonomy in setting up their goal in education, their choices have to be made upon the goals of the society, the parents and the students. As noted by Choo (1987) many of the practitioners in Hong Kong are not sure if they should follow the main stream by placing all the emphasize on preparing students for their exams or to cultivate students' free mind to develop their potential in different area.

1.5 The Features of Secondary Education System

1.5.1 A 'stuffed-duck' System

ED's recommendation on curriculum design which is closely followed by most of the schools is moduled on the syllabus of the public exams. Traditionally, teachers give lessons strictly from text books. The majority of academic lessons in secondary education are teacher-centered in which teachers try to cover as much of the syllabus as possible. The usual teacher and students ratio is 1:40. Under these busy schedules, teachers and pupils are left with very little opportunity to communicate so learning simply becomes the pupils' own responsibility.

A race against time to cover the modules is a problem faced by most teachers. They can not afford, in terms of time, to use more creative teaching methods which are usually time consuming. They become dependent on using the text books which

has discouraged them having the initiative to pursue and implement changes in classroom teaching. At the other side, students have a heavy schedule at school and they still need to bring home a huge amount of homework and revision every day. Students find it hard to spare time to develop their interests in other area. Their potential in academic learning is being maximized but their potential in other areas is unavoidably suppressed. This is why the education system of Hong Kong is mocked as a 'stuffed ducks' system i.e. to deliver students with as many academic facts and theories included in the syllabus of public exams as possible disregard how much they could absorb.

1.5.2 A 'pyramid' system

The present allocation method for subsidized school places for senior secondary education (Secondary 4-5) is known as the Secondary Four Places Allocation Method. The performance of students in the school internal assessments and parental choices formed the basis for selection and allocation of Secondary three students to subsidized Secondary four places. As most families have a strong desire to see their children succeed in education, few students drop out before the end of compulsory education. In 1997/98, the drop out rate was as small as 1% which included students who have emigrated to other countries. However, the places available in the Sixth Form is scare. In average, less than 22% of students are accepted or able to carry on their study to the advance level. Places in further education are even more limited.

The University of Hong Kong, the first university to provide degree courses, was formed in 1963. The second institution to provide degree courses, the Chinese University, was not established until 1970. Up till 1991, while the population was already above 5 million, these two universities were the only degree course providers in Hong Kong. In 1980, only 2.2% of the Sixth Form graduates could obtain a place on a local first degree programme. This is why the secondary education system of Hong Kong has always been described as a 'pyramid' system. As places were so limited and competitive, students who have reached the level of tertiary education in Hong Kong are therefore, highly regarded in society.

Due to an increase in the number of young people needing to be trained beyond secondary school level to match with the pace of development in the economy of Hong Kong, the colonial government finally took action to expand the number of provisions for tertiary education. The third university, University of Science and Technology was formed in 1991. Following, the only two polytechnics and a few colleges were all respectively upgraded to become universities. In 1995, seven institutions were providing degree and non-degree courses. According to the figure of 1995, provisions for candidates taking first degree places in their first year had risen to over 18% which is over nine times the figure in the 80's and the future figures should be even more promising. Despite the huge percentage increase, entrance at tertiary level of education is still very competitive. Parents are desperate to get their children into one of the best secondary schools with a high university entry rate. Secondary schools themselves have strong concern on 'producing' a good university entry record.

1.5.3 The use of 'mixed-code'

Being an ex-British colony, even though 97% of the people in Hong Kong are Cantonese speakers, English language has always been the more important language in post-primary education and in the commercial world. A good English standard is always an advantage for further education and job seeking. Most of the parents and students therefore, opt for English medium secondary education. In the school year of 1997/98, over 95% of secondary schools were English medium schools.

In English medium schools, most of the all the subjects are taught in English. Text books and exam papers of these subjects are all in English. Many problems have arisen from this phenomena of the growing use of 'mixed code' (mixing of Cantonese and English) amongst teachers and students; standard in Chinese language is falling and students' performance in other subjects is being affected by their standard in English language.

The authority had increased concern of these problems as time was getting close to 1997. Policies to tackle this language problem in education were proposed in the Education Commission's Report No. 4 (1990). All the English medium schools were persuaded by the authority to switch their medium of teaching from English to Chinese. However, this language problem, a 'by-product' of colonial rule, was not successfully dealt with by the persuasion made by the government.

At the end of 1997, the government issued a new regulation to enforce the switch of teaching medium in secondary education from English to Chinese. Commencing in the school year of 1998-99, only 114 secondary schools in Hong Kong (27% of the total) can still operate as a English college and the rest must switch to become Chinese colleges, i.e. to teach all the subjects except English language and literature in Chinese. The 114 English schools are selected according to their students' high standard in English language. These schools are mostly the Grand schools with excellent exam result. (Schools which were founded over 70 years ago are classified as grand schools). This new regulation has caused huge criticism from the stakeholders of the rest 73% of secondary schools. ED's selection strategies was criticized as unfair. People worry that this new regulation would create a two tier system in secondary education and students in Chinese college will be classified as second class students.

1.6 The Chronology of Educational Management in Hong Kong

In the past, school principals were expected to learn their school management techniques from experience and the need for management training for school managers was not widely recognized. Furthermore, due to the shortage of places in schools in the last thirty years, people have concentrated on matters related to the increase of seats in schools, the management system inside school and the cooperation of people involved in the system were neglected by the government (Chan, 1991, p.1).

The significance of effective school management had not been acknowledged in Hong Kong until the crisis of Jubilee Secondary School in 1977. Jubilee Secondary

School was almost forced to close down due to its heavy financial debt resulted by its principal's mismanagement in the school's finance. The experienced principal (a Sister) carried out a dual role in school management, i.e. she was at the same time the school's supervisor (see Section 1.8.5). (A school principal taking a dual role used to be very common in Hong Kong). She managed her school single-handedly like most of the school principals during that period. Due to her mismanagement of the school's finance and the mistake not being recognized by the governing body soon enough, the school went bankrupt.

The investigation report later confirmed that the incident occurred due to a lack of communication between school's stakeholders which included the ED, school sponsoring body, SMC (governing body), the principal and teachers. It also revealed the potential danger of over-powering the principals and the lack of means for the evaluation of their performance in school management. Chan (1991), the chief investigator of the incident, brought out an important message in the report to education practitioners in Hong Kong that an effective school cannot be created simply by the effort of one school principal, it depends on the cooperation from all other parties. Suggestions were made on the improvement of all the schools' internal communication system and the establishment of management training courses for schools principals. The availability of management training courses for school principals organized by the ED, school sponsoring groups and universities have consequently started emerging in the early 80s.

Twenty years after the incident of Jubilee Secondary School, the trend of school heads pursuing professional development in school management has not had any substantial increase since. Apart from the forbidden of newly appointed heads to take on the dual role, problems like school governors' inactive involvement in school management and over empowerment of school principals are still existing. Incidents caused by school principals' misjudgment still happen in the 90s and the number is increasing. These incidents include accusations of unfair dismissals of staff and expulsion of students without consulting the SMC, teachers and parents. Eighteen years after the production of the investigation report of the Jubilee Secondary School incident and taking into account of the latest principals' mismanagement

related incidents, Chan (1994) believes that the number of similar incidents should be even higher but only a fraction of them were disclosed by the victims due to their ignorance and ideologically believe that school principals' decisions can/should not be challenged. He stresses the point that school management can no longer rely purely on following the government's instructions and education should no longer be delivered in the same form as it was in the 50s and 60s.

There was no other major evaluation or research on school management being carried out by the government until the launch of SMI in 1991. The report for the launch of SMI describes that, in brief, the existing school management system of Hong Kong is out of date and being a hindrance to the quality improvement of education. Many principals still refuse to share their power in school management with the others and dominate every decision making process (The School Management Initiative, setting the framework for quality in Hong Kong, 1991). The nature of the scheme itself also causes serious argument. In the following sections, the need for SMI and the process of its launch will be looked at. People's acceptance of the scheme and its implementation will also be explored.

1.7 The Need for School Improvement in Hong Kong

A fall of students' academic standard along with the rise of their troublesome behaviour at school are the main problems faced by education practitioners in Hong Kong. The government and practitioners have already had long debates over the possible ways of tackling these problems in the long run. Many practitioners believe that these quality problems originated from the introduction of the nine years compulsory education which has changed the education system from the 'elite' system to the 'popularized' system (Ho 1988, Wong 1987a). The popularized system, which allows students of all standards mixing in the same class, are criticized as the main cause for the fall of students' academic standard.

Cheung (1991) holds different views on these quality problems. He believes that in the previous 'elite' system, public exams were used by the authority in primary and secondary education to select 'elite' students to go into further

education. Evaluation of the performance of schools, teachers and students were all based on the result of public exams. The education system, as well as curriculum design, were manipulated by the mission of 'selecting elite candidates'. Before the year of 1971, primary school students who failed in the Secondary Entrance Examination would be rejected from secondary education. Those who got through would meet another assessment when they reached the age of 15-16 which was the Junior Secondary Examination. Successful students would then face the Ordinary Level Examination and Advanced Level Examination before they could apply for a place in the only two universities. This elite system catered only for a small number of bright and well behaved students. Less capable or troublesome students would be exploited naturally in the elite system and teachers would not need to worry about coping with these students' poor performance. Cheung (1991) claimed that practitioners, in this system, were in control of their students' future.

In today's popularized system, free and compulsory education is no longer for the selection of elite students, it is for all the children in Hong Kong. In other words, education in the 'popularized' system is to 'serve' every individual student's need and right. Practitioners can no longer expect the problems caused by poor performance or badly behaved students to have disappeared by 'next year' (Cheung, 1991, p.120). They now have to face and deal with their students' problems.

Cheung (1991) argues that education practitioners who blame the popularized system for the cause of the fall of education standard are those who still miss the 'elite' system. They are using the standard of the 'elite' system to judge the present situation. In explaining the causative factors behind students' troublesome behaviour, Cheung (1991) points out that this problem is not caused particularly by the 'popularized' system, it happens in almost any system. In the 'elite' system, the number of disruptive students is smaller because they tend to be filtered out by failing to get through the examinations process or be expelled. Their existence is only short term. Thus, not many educators would care to study the causes of students' troublesome behaviour or to explore remedial methods. Today, the

‘popularized’ system allows the troublesome students to stay until they finish the nine year free education, hence, educators have to cope.

Cheung (1991) suggests practitioners re-define their objectives of education and attitudes in teaching. They should stop comparing the two systems but to search for better methods of coping with the ‘popularized’ system instead. Wong (1987a) also points out that the ‘popularized’ system should not be blamed for the falling of students’ standard because the system did not cause the problems. The system only brought these long existed problems to the surface. Many practitioners still believe that the problems in their job can be solved by the government’s rectification of the current education system such as by reducing the average class size and number of lessons teachers need to do, improving the working environment, changing the curriculum and seeking ways to raise teachers’ status and etc. However, instead of making any of the changes expected by practitioners, the government launched SMI to reform the school management system which is seen as having no direct relation to students’ academic quality and teachers’ problems at work.

1.7.1 Reasons for SMI

The government claims that the improvement of the school management system is the foundation for any schemes and reforms in education (SMI Report, 1991). The success of the latest quality measures in the system including the medium of instruction, attainment testing, and curriculum development will be limited if schools are not able to draw effectively on the skills, energy and commitment of every member of the school community (The SMI Report, 1991). The launch of SMI is aiming to clarify roles, relocate responsibilities, and strengthen management throughout the system. The main aims of SMI are summarized as :

1. to give schools more flexibility to use their resources to meet their own defined needs;
2. to clarify the functions and responsibilities of those involved in the delivery of education in schools, particularly school sponsors, managers and principals;

3. to provide for greater participation by teachers, parents and former students in the school activities.

It is also pointed out in the report that the current school management system is in need of reform and the government's effort in school education is less effective than it might be as a result of :

- an emphasis on detailed controls, rather than frameworks of responsibility and accountability;
- poorly defined roles and responsibilities;
- the absence or inadequacy of performance measures;
- inadequate control over aided sectors; and
- an emphasis on cost control at the margins, rather than cost effectiveness and value for money.

(The SMI Report, 1991. p.9, Hong Kong Government.)

1.7.2 The legal framework

The present legal framework for school management has set up long before the aided sectors have substantial increase of their involvement in school operation. (Appendix 3 sets out all authorities and responsibilities specified in the Education Ordinance, Regulations and the Codes of Aid.) The expansion of the aided sector is not accompanied by changes in the structures and processes of management which would be more appropriate for the present environment.

'The crux of the problem with school management in the aided sector is that, having not developed a framework of responsibility and accountability which would ensure that these bodies could do their job properly with minimal of detailed controls, the Director of Education has to exercise detailed control over all aspects of school management. As a result, the public will always hold the ED, rather than the school authorities responsible for every action taken by the

schools' (The SMI, setting the framework for quality in Hong Kong schools, 1991, p.10).

1.7.3 Roles and responsibilities in school management

Roles and responsibilities have been criticized as insufficiently defined at all levels within the aided sectors which include the level of the sponsoring body, the SMC, the Supervisor, the Principal, and the Teacher.

The Sponsoring Body

As mentioned earlier, the sponsoring body of a school is the person(s) or group that provides the financial support to set up an aided school and be responsible for its running. 'Although sponsoring bodies must be corporate non-profit making bodies so that they can receive the land and buildings of the aided schools, no requirement exists for their role in the management of the schools to be based on a formal legal document' (SMI Report, 1991, p.11).

Each aided school operates under a Letter of Agreement between the Director of Education and the school's sponsoring body and under a Code of Aid (please see Appendix 3). The sponsoring body nominates the first supervisor, and has a say in the subsequent changes of management committee membership.

Appendix (6) shows that sponsoring bodies range from large organizations each operating dozens of schools, to almost one hundred bodies each operating just one school. Some larger organizations even employ their own central administrative staff. They operate in some respects as 'mini EDs', setting management and educational policies and procedures for their schools within the limits of the aided sector control framework. In the case of other sponsoring bodies, both large and small, it is sometimes not clear as to what (apart from the initial capital contribution) they bring to the aided sector (SMI Report, 1991). The government admits the need to bring a balance between welcoming help from the community groups in the

provision of education and ensuring that such groups are able to provide continuous effective management of the schools with which they are entrusted.

1.7.4 The School Management Committee (SMC)

Under the Education Ordinance, each school (other than government schools which are all directly managed by ED) is managed by its own management committee, SMC. Apart from employing the staff and being responsible to the Director of education for the proper education of the pupils and the operation of the school, responsibilities of a SMC set out in the Educational Ordinance is summarized as:

1. to run the school properly,
2. to implement students' education effectively, and
3. to ensure that the school is running according to the Educational Law.

The responsibilities of the SMC are set out in these general terms, no further stipulations are made for aided schools except to require compliance with the terms of the Code of Aid. The government admits that the generality of the requirements makes it difficult to assess whether any SMC is performing effectively, as opposed to simply remaining within the letter of the law and the Code of Aid controls (The SMI Report, 1991). As a result the Director (of ED) can only take a view of the level of performance he is prepared to accept as "satisfactory", bearing in mind on the one hand the voluntary goodwill on which management of the aided sector depends, and on the other the interests of pupils or of education generally (SMI Report, 1991, p.12).

The composition of a SMC is not clearly specified in the Ordinance either. Members of a SMC must be registered with the ED. The number of members cannot be less than three or more than five. One of these registered members must be the supervisor of the school. SMC does not have a maximum size and can have as many non-registered member, i.e. governors, as they like. There is no specification for the requirement of qualification to becoming a governor. It is very common that, in some large groups, one person is a governor of several schools at the same time.

SMCs, unlike sponsoring bodies, are not required to have a corporate identity. They are allowed to set up their own constitution in accordance with which the school will be managed. There is no regulation which determines the degree of involvement in school management by these committee members, nor is there a limit to the length of time that they should serve.

1.7.5 The Supervisor

The supervisor is a manager nominated by the SMC and is responsible for corresponding with the ED and keeping the school accounts. Factors which often determine or favour the choice of supervisors includes those who are honored members and/or have contributed large donations to the group or those of senior rank of a religious body. Many of the supervisors are from another background without immediate knowledge in the field of education. They can seldom spare time to attend to their school duties because of being busy with their own business. It is openly accepted that the role of a supervisor is merely seen as a formality for the signing of cheques and letters. In some sponsoring groups, the principal of one school may at the same time be the supervisor of another school under the same group and vice versa. They would seldom exercise their supervision power on each other's school due to mutual respect.

This marginal involvement in school management from the supervisor is widely accepted by both the government and the school. Both parties believe that a more active role of the supervisor may lead, in the absence of proper management structures and processes, to the interference with the proper running of the school, and in extreme cases the need for the Director to intervene and withdraw the approval power from the supervisor (SMI Report, 1991).

1.7.6 The Principal

The principal is described by the ED as the keystone of the school system, someone who acts as the chief executive of the school and is empowered with the

legal authority and responsibility over pupils and teachers in educational and disciplinary matters (see Appendix 7). The ED admits that there is a widespread problem with many principals who are inexperienced and inadequately trained to fulfill their duties.

The government has blamed poor school performance on the lack of proper management structures and processes which have provided a convenient excuse for some principals to use to mask their own incompetence; some principals may be so ignorant of any problems that they run their schools dictatorially, while some others show minimal interest in the running of their schools (see Appendix 8). These principals are described as a 'dictator' or 'king of the castle' in school management system

In the SMI Report, 1991, the Singapore model has been referred by the government to illustrate the criteria of being a principal, a person who can demonstrate the ability to lead through his/her :

- professional knowledge;
- organizational and administrative competence;
- ability to work out a good policy and put it into effect;
- skill in the delegation of authority;
- ability to understand the professional problems of teachers, especially the young and inexperienced teachers, and to give professional guidance; and
- ability to establish good working relationships with staff and parents.

(SMI Report, 1991, p.14, Hong Kong Government)

The government commented in the report that it might take sometime for some of the existing heads in Hong Kong to adjust their performance in order to meet the requirement of this Singapore model. In other words, the standard of some principals in Hong Kong in school management is still below the satisfactory standard.

1.7.7 The Teacher

Concern over the low level of professional commitment amongst teachers was expressed in the early 1980s and certain measures were introduced as a result. However, according to official reports, teachers are still often excluded from the decision-making process in the school. Typically, orders are issued from above, often based on no clear process of decision-making, and teachers are expected to carry them out. New teachers are often left to sink or swim with little help from more experienced colleagues. In some schools teachers are simply left to do their own thing with little accountability to the management and minimal communication with other members of staff.

Many schools have no formal staff reporting procedures. The government agrees that this is a serious management black spot which puts the school in a weak position especially in the case of promoting a teacher which it has no other means of doing other than by relying on strict seniority (The SMI Report, 1991).

1.7.8 Performance Measures

Performance measures in aided secondary schools are almost non-existent (SMI Report, 1991). The main external indicator is provided by the HKCEE at the end of Secondary 5 but the publication of the performance of each individual school is not compulsory. As a result secondary schools are usually judged on their success in attracting the brightest students (band one students), rather than on the quality of education provided to children of any ability.

The public may judge the performance of a principal by looking at the average examination result of the school but this result can be directly affected by the intake of bright students. Some school principals therefore, put a great deal of pressure on teachers and students to produce better academic results. The importance of school management development and other kind of innovation in education has therefore been neglected (The SMI Report, 1991).

1.7.9. Control of the aided sector

The government realizes that deficiencies in the management of structures and processes, the ill defined roles and responsibilities and the lack of performance measures will lead to a system in which detailed control from outside becomes, by default, a substitute for effective management within the school. The present framework of controls in school administration in Hong Kong will neither ensure that schools operate effectively, nor in any case provide the Director with the power to impose policy changes on school management. On the other hand, the ED needs to devote much effort to persuading schools to cooperate in matters where schools claim autonomy (The SMI Report, 1991, p.17, Hong Kong Government).

The government sees that there is a need to examine in detail and to decide what functions should be subject to firm central control, and what functions should properly be the responsibility of school management. An amended control framework with well defined responsibilities and accountabilities, i.e. SMI is believed to be able to reduce the disputes which has now arisen between ED and school authorities.

1.7.10 The monitoring system

The process of education at secondary levels is monitored by means of inspections, carried out by four separate Divisions of the Education Department, Schools, Finance, Service, and Advisory & Inspectorate. Inspections of a school's management are conducted by Schools Division. Amongst the routine visits of management inspection (usually twice a year) are procedures which include the scrutiny of documentation and files, interviews with the school principal and administrative staff, and informal discussions with members of the teaching staff who happened to be free during the visits. Though, in theory, a management inspection should follow up points arising from a subject inspection by the Advisory Inspectorate, in fact, coordination between management inspections and other inspections does not exist.

Schools are not given copies of inspection guidelines and a written report is not provided following an inspection unless it is specially requested. Theoretically, through these inspections, inspectors who are experts in the field are expected to be able to identify weaknesses or problems with schools managers' leadership, individual teachers' performance and etc. They should also be able to advise on ways to overcome the problems found or shortcomings. However, the fact remains that the present inspection system simply does not encourage inspectors to serve these possibilities.

The Working Group Report (1994), a report of a project operated by a group of professional educators appointed by the ED to investigate and look for solutions of the low demand of SMI, made criticism on the present monitoring system as being outdated and no longer adequate for the complexity of today's education system. The main aim of the present system allows the Director of Education to have a view of an overall picture through gathered information in areas of control, support and advisory services. It was never intended to be designed for the purposes of quality assurance, or for public or professional accountability. The Report indicates that the potential for the inspection process to provide useful information for school managers, the government and other parties who have interests in education is neither recognized nor made well used. Schools are inspected at different times for different purposes, by different Divisions in the Department and there is no communication between these Departments.

Other areas such as teacher education, staff development, curriculum development and etc. are however not subject to regular external evaluation under the present approach. The Working Group Report (1994) highlighted a basic problem within the present system which allows a school, i.e. its management board or principal to get away with operating just to the minimum standard required by the Director of Education. Schools which are found to have performed poorly need only to undergo a follow-up inspection which will not be known to the public. We can see that there is no real incentive or pressure, other than professional pride and self-

motivation, for a school principal and its management board to strive for constant improvements.

The government believes that the success of any reforms in education are directly related to the efficiency and appropriateness of the management framework, therefore, SMI which was expected to achieve this goal was launched in 1991. The main changes brought by the scheme to the school management system of Hong Kong are listed as follows:

- . The emphasis in ED's relations with the aided sector will change from detailed control to support and advice.
- . The roles of those responsible for delivering education in schools will be defined more clearly.
- . The role and responsibilities of the principal are set out in a Principal's Manual.
- . School management frameworks need to allow for participation in decision making, according to formal procedures, by all concerned parties including: all teaching staff; the principal; the SMC and (to an appropriate degree) parents and students.
- . Each school need to produce an annual school plan to guide its activities during the year.
- . Each school should prepare an annual school profile covering its activities in the previous year and detailing school performance in a number of key areas.

(The SMI, Setting the framework for quality in Hong Kong schools, 1991,
Hong Kong Government, p.33-42)

Schools volunteer to join SMI. Those who join the scheme will be provided with a block grant for recurrent expenditure which excludes teachers' salaries but they are free to deploy the grant to meet their defined needs. In return, SMI schools need to fulfill the demand by the ED such as setting annual plans, submitting annual reports, staff appraisal and etc.

1.8 The Process of the Launch of SMI

SMI was put in action in September 1991, only five months since the scheme was first proposed to schools in Hong Kong. Many educators welcome the idea of SMI and agree that it is time to clarify all the confusion and duplication of the current school management system. However, the scheme was criticized by many of them for its hasty introduction, leaving them with little time to adjust or a chance to thoroughly understand its significance.

For instance, the SMI Manual on School Administration was not made ready for principals to use until the end of 1992, one year after the launch of the scheme. The Advisory Committee on SMI was only set up in September 1992 to advise the Director of Education on matters relating to the implementation of the SMI scheme and to assist schools to adapt to the new management framework.

The ED, at the beginning of the launch of the scheme, claimed that they were optimistic that SMI would be welcomed by most of the practitioners and all the schools would begin to adapt to the new framework within three to four years. However, the appreciation of the value of SMI was drowned by criticisms from practitioners towards the relevance of the scheme to quality improvement and complaints about the difficulties involved with its implementation. Only 21 aided secondary schools joined the first phase of the SMI scheme in 1991 and none of the government school were involved. The government then started to make more effort to promote the scheme and also made adjustment to compromise with some schools in order to encourage more participation, by persuasion rather than legislation. A series of plans to promote the scheme was subsequently started by ED.

The first of SMI Quarterly report was published in March 1992, with the objective of disseminating the message from the Advisory Committee of the SMI, promoting the exchange of views amongst schools that are participating in the scheme, and at the same time enabling other schools to be better informed thus, enhancing their awareness of the scheme (SMI Quarterly, March 1992). Later in 1993, a report, 'Education in Hong Kong: A statement of Aims', was published by

the government to increase people's understanding of the scheme. This was the first time that a concise and comprehensive description of what school education should strive to achieve, and a framework for planning, implementing and evaluating activities had been presented.

Up till 1993-94, three years after the introduction of SMI and a series of promotion done by the ED, only 25 government and 32 aided secondary schools in total had joined the scheme (the total number of government and aided secondary schools in Hong Kong at this time was 87 and 1,115 respectively) which was less than 3% of the total. This result was far below the government's expectation. Keeping to the promise of not enforcing schools to join SMI and to meet the target of turning all the schools into SMI system became a dilemma for the government. A Quality Assurance Unit was later proposed to be set up in 1994 to remove this hurdle.

1.8.1 Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)

A Working Group was appointed by the government in 1994 to investigate and look for remedial solutions of the low participation of SMI. The Working Group's report indicates that there seems to be wide support for the principles of SMI, but only limited support for the scheme is given as it now stands. It is because SMI at present is based on appeals to professional pride, and partly on material that is provided by ED, with advice from a committee comprising mainly modest reference incentives in the form of changed funding procedures.

The Report points out that SMI scheme is more attractive to schools which are already concerned about their quality. Schools which are less willing to tackle quality issue, or are constrained by their traditional management structure, have no reason to adopt SMI goals or procedures at this stage (Report of the Working Group at Education Standard, 1994).

The Working Group suggests that improvement in school management should follow by providing guideline to schools to help them raise their standard and by

promoting SMI. Subsequently, a quality assurance (QA) framework is suggested and expected to be adopted by all schools. The implementation of the quality assurance framework is believed to help schools to improve their standard and therefore help to support the extension of SMI. The QA framework is expected to ensure educational reforms devised centrally lead to genuine quality improvement in schools.

The first goal of the QA framework is to foster the commitment and competence of all school educators in striving continually for the highest possible quality. The second goal is to monitor quality in school education, including the quality of both schools and their support services. The third goal is to provide all those responsible for school education with information on which to base decisions aimed at steadily improving the quality of education. The fourth goal is to provide the users of the school education services with accurate and impartial assessment of current achievements and what is being done to improve these achievements.

A QAU is proposed to be set up to implement these new quality assurance strategies. The Working Group believed that if a school is to tackle quality assurance issues systematically and be well prepared for an eventual external inspection, it must have sound management procedures. SMI principles are seen as the most suitable management strategies to be turned into practice in ways which best support the new QA approach. As only a small number of schools have joined the SMI scheme and many are still against the idea, QA strategy is applied to lead all schools to undergo a reform in their school's management framework. The Working Group claims that schools will naturally join SMI by the time they have gone through the process of QA framework.

1.8.2. Summary

From this initial study we found that the need in quality improvement in the school management system is recognized by ED which has resulted the launch of SMI. However, seven years after the launch of the scheme, SMI is still not widely accepted by the practitioners. Remedial issues to promote the acceptance of the

scheme and improve its implementation are on their way but, so far, no substantial results can be seen.

There is no concern on school principals' performance in the implementation of SMI. Professional development in school management for school principals is rarely regarded by both the government and the practitioners in their suggestions on the issues for quality improvement.

The need for professional development for school principals is discussed next. The provision of professionals development training programmes in Hong Kong is also examined with aims to explore if practitioners' need in development training is sufficiently and appropriately met and if the importance of professional development is neglected.

1.9 Professional Development in Hong Kong

1.9.1 The need for professional development in Hong Kong

Inappropriate management is one of the most significant elements that becomes a barrier during a change. A leader can block the process of change as well as promote it (Fullan, 1990). Professional development is needed whenever the demand for a person's professional contribution is changing or when his/her capacity to cope with new challenges is limited. Professional development for school managers is not only important to the development of an individual institution but also to the whole education system and it is particularly essential when changes are made to school either voluntarily or compulsorily.

Regarding the situation of Hong Kong, the education system empowers the principals to run their schools single-handedly. The accountability of the principals' performance often go unnoticed due to the lack of an effective monitoring system. Quality improvement schemes such as SMI can be implemented appropriately or genuinely only if the school principal recognizes the need for quality improvement and is capable in handling the new duties. Therefore, as well as setting up a QAU to

ensure the implementation of SMI, professional development is equally important in enhancing practitioners' vision and knowledge in quality improvement.

The choices on the purpose of education take on a wider significance as an expression of social and political purpose (Schein,1985). Hong Kong is now a SAR of China and changes are foreseeable. Although the SAR Government insists that traditional autonomous and freedom of education will be maintained, it is unlikely for schools to remain unchanged in the ever changing environment of society (Ng, 1985). It is understandable that the new government would start to rectify the colonial influenced education system gradually, if not rapidly, in order to narrow the gap in the education system and value between China and Hong Kong. School principals' duties would inevitably be affected by these changes. The call for professional development for school principals at present is particularly significant.

1.9.2 The provision of professional development training

More changes introduced into the education system, more burden and difficulties are put on to senior managers and teachers alike in the process of adjustment. Education Commission Report No.5 (1992) first stresses the importance of revitalizing the teacher education programme and improving opportunities for career-long professional development of teachers. ED has since started to strengthen its emphasis on professional training for teaching staff. However, the importance of management training for school managers in particular is still not seen as being vital to the improvement of the whole system. There is not a comprehensive or systematic process available to provide professional development training for managers of schools.

At present, professional development training is provided by four main bodies, Training Section of Education Department, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Institute of Language, and universities in Hong Kong. Management training courses are provided mainly by the ED's training section and universities in Hong Kong.

. In-service training provided by ED

In-service training courses and seminars in different fields of educational study are organized by the ED for teaching staff and school managers. Courses are either run solely by ED itself or jointly with institutions such as universities and institutes of education. Information on these courses, published on the Schools Training Circulars, are circulated by ED to every school. Among these training courses, some are run regularly, some are run specially to coincide with the government's new policies and some are designed to cope with recent crises.

School Training Circulars for secondary education in Hong Kong for the academic year of 1994-95 are summarized and shown in Appendix (9). In 1994, two one-day seminars on specific language medium for teaching in secondary schools were run. They were designed to fit in with the government's policy on language following the recommendations of the Education Commission's Report No.4 (1990) which was further emphasized in Report No. 5 (1992). The first seminar was run as a consultative conference to help them make the right choice of medium of instruction. The second seminar was an introductory section to an 8-week in-service training course on 'Secondary School Teachers Using Chinese as Medium of Instruction' which commenced in February 1995.

A 9 & 1/2 days 'Secondary School Administration Course' is being run annually for the purpose of providing basic management training for senior teachers who might step into the role of headship. This is the only management training course that is continuously made available and the majority of school heads would have already gone through this training before their headship. Contents of the course in 1994 which was the same as those in 1995 and 1996 include: management concepts, management skills, professional knowledge, procedural knowledge, finance, and law.

Courses for Principal Graduate Master/Mistresses (PGM) and courses for Principal Assistant Master/Mistresses (PAM) in secondary schools have been conducted since the 1991-92 academic year in accordance with the recommendation

of the standing Commission on Civil Services and Conditions of Service in its report No.26 to enhance professionalism (PGM - teachers with a university degree, PAM - teachers with a diploma in education). Similar courses for PGM, including School Administration, Curriculum Development, Remedial Teaching, Pastoral Care and Extra-curricular Activities, and for PAM, including Pastoral Care and Guidance/Counseling and Extra-curricular Activities, were held in the school year 1994 and 1995. All these courses were operated by the Chinese University and Hong Kong University. These courses have been specified as part of the training requirements for the promotion of certain specified posts. The contents of the course have remained unchanged until the school year of 1995-96.

A 1 1/2 day workshop on 'Self-esteem Enhancement' for guidance teachers and class teachers first started in 1994 and was repeated in 1995. A one day seminar on 'Guidance in Congruence with Mutual Respect' was conducted in 1995 with the intention to incorporate congruent communication on student guidance. These seminars and workshops are responding to recommendations made by Education Commission Report No. 5 in 1992 relating to the issue of raising the quality of teaching by providing a more supportive working environment in schools. Simultaneously, the increasing number of suicide committed by students and teachers gave the government little choice but to take immediate actions. A special seminar on 'Grow with Guidance' was organized by the ED and took place in the Hong Kong University in 1995. The speaker was Dr. Tommie R. Radd from the United States.

Only one seminar related to school management was held in 1995. The 1/2 day seminar on 'Leadership for School Change and Restructuring' was given by Dr. Philip Hallinger. The aims of the seminar, were described as firstly, to enable the participants (headteachers and principals) to learn and master the key concepts and principles of managing the transition and changing images of principals' leadership. The other aim was to facilitate the participants to acquire a new-style of leadership skills so as to achieve major breakthroughs in their work and careers. Heads of non-SMI schools have the priority to obtain a seat as it was assumed that SMI schools had already been provided with similar training by the SMI Section.

. In-service Teacher Education Programme

A programme called In-service Teacher Education Programme (INSTEP) was funded by ED and set up in 1986 by the University of Hong Kong to provide more chances for teachers to pursue in-service development. School administration is one of the subjects included in the content of the programme, the rest are applied computing technology, science, language, physical education, library management and etc. The three main aims of this programme are claimed as:

1. to assist teaching staff to improve their professional performance,
2. to encourage teaching staff to pursue creativity in teaching, and
3. to train teaching staff to become change agents.

(Modern Educational Bulletin, p.10, June, 1992)

INSTEP targets at teachers and senior teachers with managerial duties. According to the review of the programme, even though it does not lead to any award of diploma or title, the majority of the attendants appreciate the programme especially the group discussion sessions. The main feature of the INSTEP programme is that many lectures are given by experienced school principals to share their experience with the attendants. Many attendants comment that they are learning something practical and useful from this course.

. Management Training Courses Run by Sponsors

Some of the big school sponsoring bodies had established their own management training programs to provide training for their own schools' managers and teachers. The internal training system of Tung Wah Group Hospitals, one of the largest and oldest charity group in Hong Kong that runs a number of primary and secondary schools as well as hospitals, is studied here to illustrate how training courses are run internally by sponsoring bodies.

The group has set up a special department to administer its schools. All its school principals form an association to help planing for the development of the

group's secondary school education. A variety of training courses are operated by the group for its principals, deputy heads, and teachers. All the newly appointed heads are required to attend a special management training course which is different from the management foundation course provided by the ED. The course is specially designed to introduce the doctrine of the group's mission in education, structure of the group's management framework, its financial policies, internal communication system and the direction of the group's development in secondary education. The main aim of the course is to ensure that potential heads can familiarize themselves with the operation of the group's school management system and have full understanding of the group's mission in education before they are fully in-charge of the running of a school.

The group also provides training that complements as well as conforms to the ED's new policies and schemes which at the same time will satisfy the scrutiny of demanding parents. During the process of designing the training courses, heads and teachers were consulted and given chances to express their needs. Special funds are also provided by the governing body annually for development training costs. This scheme helps to encourage active participation from the staff in professional development. However, not many of other sponsoring bodies can afford to provide training programme for its staff as that of the Tung Wah Group.

. MA course in Education

As mentioned earlier that until 1995, there were only two universities in Hong Kong, University of Hong Kong (HKU) and Chinese University (CU) which provide Degree and post -graduate Degree courses in education. They also run courses in management both independently and conjointly with the government. These two universities are seen as the most compact and superior institutions in teacher training. MA Educational Management course run by CU is chosen as a study sample to understand the provision of post-graduate professional development training in educational management in Hong Kong.

CU was founded in 1963 and is situated in the New Territories whereas HKU is located in Hong Kong Island, the other side of Hong Kong (see Appendix 1). Similar courses in education are provided by both universities; people's choice of university for professional development courses usually depends on the geographical location. CU first started running courses for education in 1965 and the variety of courses have expanded continuously but degree courses have only been running since 1973. The four main fields of study in its education department are: curriculum and teaching, educational management and strategy, educational psychology, and physical education. Master degree courses in educational studies that included management first started in 1990, attendants were mainly school principals, deputy heads or senior teachers who were soon to take on management posts. Research degrees in education leading to Doctorship also began in 1990 at CU.

According to the course prospectus of 1996, the main target of the MA degree course in educational management is to provide professional training on educational administration and policy-making for educators to help them develop and adapt modern educational management knowledge and techniques. Through the course, attendants are expected to obtain skills and knowledge in solving problems related to school management, planning and resource management and to become analytical to the present educational strategies and improvement in schooling. It is stressed that the design of the course will emphasize the balance between theories and practice.

The number of educators who have joined the course from the period of 1973 to 1995 is shown below in Table (1.2) (the figure comes from the number of final dissertations being submitted at the end of each course). Data of the other two MA courses, Educational Psychology and Curriculum Studies are also listed for comparison. We can see from the Table that, in total, 234 people have attended the three Master Degree courses in education in the last 13 years and the number of educators who chose to study educational management was 75 (the lowest was zero and the highest was only ten) which was comparatively smaller than the other two courses.

The management option was particularly less popular than the other two between the period of 1974 to 1984 and since, it has started to catch up slowly. The total number of educators doing the three MA courses began to increase gradually in the early 80's and reached its peak in the year 1987-88. This was about the time when quality issues in education became the main concern by both the government and educationalists after the Education Commission was established in 1984. From the forth report in 1990 onwards, quality improvements in education have become one of the foci of each report which explains the reason why the number of educators who studied management in education reached its peak in 1990-91.

Table (1.2) The List of the Title of Dissertations in the period of 1974-95

Year	Total no. of dissertations in related institution	No. of dissertations related to school management	No. of dissertations to writer's own
1974-80	4	1	0
1981-85	14	3	0
1986-90	25	4	0
1991-95	32	6	0
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Total	75	14	0

(Source of data: Chinese University, 1996)

Among the 75 educators who finished the management course and submitted their final dissertations in the period of 1974-95, by studying the titles of all the dissertations (see Appendix 10), only 14 of them relate to school management. From the period of 1974-80, 1 out of the total 3 dissertations is about educational management, 3 out of 14 in the period of 1981-85, 4 out of 25 in 1986-90 and 6 out of 32 in 1991-95. These figures show a disproportional growth in the number of people interested in using the dissertation as an opportunity to explore the area of

educational management. Among the rest of the dissertations completed by attendants of the management course, in the period of 1975-95, 18 are about curriculum studies, 9 about history of education in Hong Kong and China, 8 about educational policy, 8 about teachers and teaching and the rest are on other subjects.

Another interesting feature is that all the total 14 dissertations regarding school management are mainly theoretical analysis in leadership of school management or decision making process. None of them is a case study base on the attendant's own school or personal experience and no dissertation discusses the recent issues of SMI or the QAU scheme.

The problem of brain drain in the 80's can be identified through these figures too. Among the 14 educators who have done their Master Degree in educational management in the period of 1981-85, 11 of them are no longer in the same career. Among the 25 educators who finished the Master Degree course in school management in the period of 1986-90, 12 have left the career. The situation has improved later, only one person left the job in the period of 1991-95 when total of 32 educators had completed the course. Though there could be many different reasons for people leaving their jobs such as retiring, changing career or emigrating, we can not deny that the uncertainty of Hong Kong's future had strongly influenced and caused instability in people's confidence, especially in the period of mid 80's when the issue of Hong Kong's future was first announced officially. The massacre in Tiananmen Square in China later in 1989 also created another wave of emigration. The number of emigrants in the early 80s was about 20,000 but the figure rose to 80,000 in 1992 (Hong Kong Government Statistic Department, 1995).

Looking at the background of the lecturers in the department of educational management at CU, it is found that among the total of 15 lectures and readers, only one earned his Ph.D. title locally. Among the rest, 11 lecturers/readers gained their Doctorship from either America or Canada, 2 from Britain and 1 from Japan. Less than half of them did their first degree in Hong Kong.

SMI Training Courses

In order to promote the acceptance of SMI and support on its application, a range of training seminars have been operating after the launch of the scheme in 1991. Seminars and workshops specially for SMI schools first conducted in 1991/92 include:

1. School Management Committee constitution
2. Effective Schools
3. Procedures for participation in decision making
4. Procedures for school administration
5. School Plan
6. Performance Appraisal
7. Financial Management
8. Schools Renewal Programme - Experience in Australia
9. Local Management of Schools - UK Experience
10. Self-Managing School
11. Experience-sharing of SMI schools

Similar seminars are still being run for new members of SMI schools. There are also seminars and talks for non-SMI schools conducted at the same time with the aim to persuade more participation, they include:

1. School Management Initiative
2. Schools Renewal Programme - Experience in Australia
3. Local Management of Schools - UK Experience
4. Self-managing School

In addition to these courses and seminars for SMI and non-SMI schools, the SMI team of ED has been inviting overseas professionals to conduct special talks for educators in Hong Kong. In February, 1993, Dr. Brian Caldwell and Mr. Jim Spinks, both Australian, were invited by ED to conduct a series of workshops and seminars in respect of the SMI scheme for both SMI and Non-SMI schools. Mr. Brian Knight

from the UK was invited to conduct a workshop on 'A New Look at the Budgetary Process' for school heads and senior teachers of SMI schools in November, 1993. Mr. Bill Clark, Deputy Director, in charge of the Audit Unit of the Scottish Office Education Department, gave a talk on 'Performance Indicator for School Self-Evaluation' for SMI school heads and teachers in February 1995.

1.9.3 Comments on Professional Development Training Programme

By looking at the in-service training courses provided by the ED's training section in 1994 & 1995, only one of them is specially run for school managers on the subject of school management. This course has been running annually with the aim to encourage more participation in SMI. The priority therefore, is given to principals of non-SMI schools. Apart from this course, no other continuous management training courses are available for school managers to pursue further development. It shows the provision of management training programme for school managers or senior staff is very limited.

Some management training is provided by the sponsoring bodies for their own school principals to provide additional support to the inadequate supply from the ED. These courses are designed to help their managers to adapt the groups' school management mission and policies. School principals' beliefs and ideology in school management would very likely be influenced by the sponsoring group's doctrine and vision in education. Their interpretation and perception of changes such as the introduction of SMI would therefore be affected or even forced upon by the group's policies.

SMI training seminars concentrate solely on encouraging people's acceptance of the scheme and helping them to implement it. Special talks were given to non-SMI schools to promote the good effects of SMI in other countries. Most of these training seminars and talks are one day introductory seminars covering various aspects of school management. None of them are compulsory and school principals can miss out all or only attend the ones they prefer. It is possible for a school principal to implement SMI without attending any of the SMI training courses.

In summary, it is found from this initial study of the provision of professional development training courses that, apart from the Master Degree course provided by universities, most of the courses are intensive and do not tend to cover the relevant subject field in depth. The majority are either foundation courses for people who are in pursuit of a promotion or special courses designed to fit in with the government's policies. The academic background of lecturers/readers in MA courses, on the other hand, suggests and reflects a lack of research being conducted in the field of education locally in Hong Kong. There has been no Ph.D. research carried out in educational management at CU in 1995 and 1996. The launch of SMI had highlighted the importance of school management but it has not stimulated too much educationalists' concern on professional development training. Furthermore, many of the special seminars on SMI were given by foreign experts in which practical illustrations or local examples to help the attendants have a better understanding of the theories are scarce. It is understandable that some attendants might naturally question the practicality of the application of these western thoughts.

Logically, the limited number of training courses available from the ED should turn more people to seek further development at universities, especially after a series of changes introduced to the system and the importance of professional development being highlighted. However, no significant increase has been seen in the figures of the attendants of Master Degree course in educational management at CU. This low demand reflects the possibility of a weak trend for educators in Hong Kong to pursue continuous professional development in school management. Or, they are not confident with the usefulness of the available training programmes.

Another identified feature is that most of the attendants of the MA courses have chosen not to study or explore their own institutions' problems in their dissertations. Three possible explanations could be given to this situation, firstly, it may be due to a cultural conservatism for educators to reveal any of their true weaknesses. Secondly, they may not recognize the possibility of applying these academic theories to real life practice. Finally, they may not realize the problems or

weaknesses their institutions are facing or have no intention to make any changes to their schools.

We have seen so far a brief description of the provision of professional development training in Hong Kong and the identification of some of its features. In summary, the key finding is that the demand for professional development in school management is not rising in proportion to the number of changes to the education system. Of course, the efficiency of a training course should not simply be judged by the number of its attendants. Practitioners' attitude and perceptions towards the value of professional development is also a decisive factor to its demand. To understand the development of professional training course for school principals, we need to analyse different factors which could contribute to its demand and supply.

1.10 Summary

This chapter has considered the background to the development of a self-managing school system in Hong Kong. It has examined in broad terms the main political and ideological, socio-cultural and legislative factors that established the present culture in school management. Government and education practitioners are found holding different beliefs in the causes of the continuous fall of secondary education standards. The two sides have different views over the strategies that should be employed for quality improvement. Though the potential problems caused by school principals' inability in improving their schools are highlighted by both the government and the practitioners, neither of them have stressed the need for school principals to pursue professional development. All this evidence shows that the significance of professional development for school principals has not been seen as one of the remedies to the falling of quality in education.

To improve the quality of education through the implementation of SMI requires school principals' strong leadership. A successful principal can 'make a difference for individual staff and institutions, and ultimately for students' (Hall, 1996). From the studies of a number of specific areas of SMI, including the reason behind its introduction, the process of its launch, the implementation of the scheme and its

latest development, the need for school principals pursuing continuous professional development in order to cope with the newly delegated duties in management is further confirmed.

The research question of this study is formulated thereby: *How can professional development in management for school principals help in quality improvement of education in Hong Kong?* Its aim is: to explore the reason(s) behind school principals' lack of enthusiasm towards professional development and to search for adjustments to encourage their continuous professional development in school management.

A literature review will be carried out in Chapter Two to analysis the existing academic and professional discourse in relation to this research area. From this background, Chapter Three will provide a description and analysis of the methodology of the study in this thesis. A secondary data search will be conducted for the collection of recent published information related to the research focus and its findings will be presented and analyzed in Chapter Four. Direct contact with people is a key way to explore facts, thus, a field work will be carried out in Hong Kong for primary data collection. The findings of the field work will be presented in Chapter Five and analyzed in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven will discuss the broader implications of the study's findings, and provide a summary and conclusion to the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Consideration of professional development in school management for school principals and its impact in quality improvement must begin with a clarification of the key concepts through reviewing the relevant literature. The reading of this review deals with themes covering concepts and models of management, role analysis, research reports and official reviews of educational management, professional development and quality improvement.

The majority of the literary materials used in this review are taken from western educationalists because of shortage of journals and literature on the subject of school management and professional development published by educationalists in Hong Kong. The few available ones from local educators tend to concentrate on either analyzing and defining the western theories or highlighting the problems of the present system. There is a little attempt to address the question of how these western theories can be applied to the system of Hong Kong as a mean of problem solving. Comprehensive studies or research on this field carried out by the government or local educators are still limited although the number is increasing gradually; therefore, insufficient theories or findings can be referred. Equally limited are the number of articles on school management published in local journals and newspaper. Most of the articles are prone to being descriptive with analysis tending to be shallow and inadequate. Ho (1988) comments that although achievement in educational development in Hong Kong is quite substantial comparatively, the development in educational research is rather slow and narrow. The majority of studies on educational management in the last ten years were mainly reviews or feedback on the several Reports published by the government but no comprehensive or systematic study on the main aspects of education was made (Ho, 1988).

This chapter begins with the clarification of the key elements included in the study to justify each of their roles and their interrelations, i.e. school management,

quality improvement and professional development. In school management, considerations of the nature of schools, culture, aim of education and the contexts of educational management are taken. In quality improvement, factors like leadership quality, school effectiveness and school principals' role in change management are all studied. There follows an examination of a range of conceptualizations of the value of professional development, which further attempts to clarify the relationship between professional development training and quality improvement in education.

2.2 Nature of School

As well as a place where students are given education, school is also an organization like the others (Hoyle, 1986; Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993, Everard and Morris, 1990; Ball, 1987). Schools are professionally staffed organizations, although the principals are granted authority to run them solely or jointly with governing bodies like those in the UK and many other countries, the ultimate control still remains in the hands of governmental policies. Schools will always be respected as places for the cultivation and shaping of people to the form society desires. Therefore, there will always be opposition to running schools in a commercial way.

Due to the limitation of resources for educating and increasing the complexity in school management, there is always a dilemma between social and economic values. As explained by Rice (1963) organizations are constituting an inner world existing in an outer world, to survive they must exchange materials with their environment. In other words, schools will inevitably flow with the social and political trend. The summary made by Everard and Morris (1990, p. 11-12) on public perception of schools as organizations is used here to highlight the complexity in today's school management:

1. The *raison d'être* of a school is to promote its pupils' learning, within a curriculum acceptable to its stakeholders.
2. A school organization should meet these ends efficiently and cost-effectively.

3. In school tension will arise between social and economic values, professional autonomy and managerial control, individually and within the hierarchy, structural authority and participative decision-making, the head's dual roles of 'leading professional' and 'chief executives', the educational good of the many and the self-interest of the law, high principle and pragmatic expediency - and many other dilemmas that sometimes require a decision to choose the lesser of the two 'evils', e.g. being cruel in order to be kind.
4. Striking the correct balance in these dilemmas entails difficult judgments, which have to be referred to a set of values outside of and greater than those of the individuals in the organization.
5. At the highest level of abstraction, such values apply to, and often drive, all successful organizations, be they educational or commercial, and they act as bridges between the two.

(Everard and Morris ,1990, p.11-12)

From this summary, we can see that school management now have more choices to make and more dilemmas to face. Under this circumstance, each school, like any organization, needs its own management structure and system. It needs a system for communicating and arranging things as well as a structure for dividing up the work and defining the relationship of people to each other (Handy & Aitkin,1986, p.12). Without prior arrangements problems will become crises and events will become chaos. Handy & Aitkin (1986) see that a school can be managed because it is a pre-arranged organization, it has relationship within which can be relied upon and it has support from parents and the community.

2.3 Educational Management

The terminology of management and leadership need to be clarified before making further study of educational management. Louis and Miles (1990) explain that leadership relates to mission, direction and inspiration. Whilst, management involves designing and carrying out plans, getting things done, and working effectively with people. In terms of change, the leadership aspect involves articulating a vision, getting shared ownership, and evolutionary planning.

Management function concerns negotiating demands and issues related to environmental resources, as well as coordinated and persistent problem-coping.

West-Burnham (1994) has proposed a clarification of the all three terms in a straight forward way. He concludes that leadership, concerns with values, vision and mission and management, concerns with execution, planning, organizing and deploying, lastly, administration concerns with operational details. In this study, the term 'management' will be used to embrace all the activities concerned by both management and administration.

Educational management is a continuous process through which members of an organization seek to co-ordinate their activities and utilize their resources in order to fulfill the various tasks of the organization as efficiently as possible (Hoyle, 1981, p.8). This is only one of the many definitions that delineate the boundaries of educational management. The nature of educational management and the issues included cannot be embraced by one single definition for the development of educational management development, as described by Bush (1995, p.1) who has drawn heavily on several more firmly established disciplines including sociology, political science, economics and general management.

School management is a highly practical activity concerned with creating effective organizational means to ensure that educational values, goals and intentions are put into practice (Glatter, Preedy, Riches & Masterton, 1988, p.xii). The broadest sense of management introduced by Everard and Morris (1990, p.4) is about:

1. setting direction, aims and objectives;
2. planning how progress will be made or a goal achieved;
3. organizing available resources (people, time, materials) so that the goal can be economically achieved in the planned way;
4. controlling the process (i.e. measuring achievement against plan and taking corrective action where appropriate);

5. setting and improving organizational standards.

(Everard and Morris, 1990, p.4)

The elements included in this definition of educational management are explicit. They concern directly in the process of school management which can cause immediate effects to the result. Implicit elements including the aim of education and culture and ideology in education are equally important to the development of educational management. Following are analysis of the nature of these implicit factors and their influence on educational management.

2.3.1 The Aim of School Education

Education aims are described by Westoby (1988, p.x) as vague because 'they include the all-round social and intellectual development of young people, and the institutions' ethos or culture therefore enters directly into the fundamental characteristics of its 'output' in a way that in other types of business it does not.' Education aims, therefore, should be actively managed to ensure not only a clear sense of the direction in which the organization is being steered, but also markers whereby we can assess progress.

Aims according to Harris (1972) are usually prescriptive and evaluative and in general terms that can be accepted by all the schools. They provide a final yardstick by which the appropriateness of individual objectives may be judged, and they define the ultimate values held by an institution (Harris, 1972). Individual schools may set themselves different objectives or goals to achieve the aims. Teachers would accept the goals set by their schools or leaders, but each of them may set themselves different objectives. Different educational and political ideologies may lead education practitioners to approach their tasks in a number of ways (Bell, 1980, p.188), therefore, there is no unique route for goals setting.

Unlike commercial organizations where their primary task is always profit maximization; the primary tasks of schools must be accepted by the society and approved by the policy-making bodies. For secondary schools, the primary task is to

accept pupils, to provide means by which those pupils can develop into educated people, and to pass them on to the society or to other institution. In a period of rapid change, there is always more than one primary task in each school which may be changed at different times or be perceived differently by the environment of the school. For example, the community surrounding a school may see its primary task to be the production of examination success, while the teachers may see it as the development of co-operative members of a community or vice versa at varying times.

In Hong Kong the tasks and objectives of secondary schools developed by their principals are generated from the aims of the government, sponsoring body, SMC and parents in education. These tasks and objectives are then put upon the teachers and pupils. Some teachers may not agree with the aims set to them but sometimes, they have no other alternatives but to satisfy the school stakeholders' expectation in education rather than to follow their own interpretation (Choo, 1987).

The effectiveness of the organization and of all its members is likely to be enhanced when there is a clear understanding and agreement on the purpose of the organization. Thus, the setting of organizational and departmental aims should involve those people in them, together with other stakeholders, but it is ultimately the manager who decides what these should be (Everard and Morris, 1990, p. 149). This is laid down as the first professional duty of headteachers under their conditions of employment (DES 1988): 'formulating the overall aims and objectives of the school.'

2.3.2 Culture in Education

Culture is the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action and the total range and ideas and activities of a group of people with shared traditions which are transmitted and reinforced by members of a group (Chambers Dictionary). Culture has a strong influence on the development of our education system. We need to understand the

impact of culture to the whole system in order to analysis how individual's ideology is affected.

Every country is different. Each country has its own history and culture from which the goals and value of education originated. Schein (1992, p.12) defines culture as 'a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.' Thus, when we observe a culture, whether in an organization or in society at large, we are observing an evolved form of social practice that has been influenced by many complex interactions between people, events, situations, actions, and general circumstance (Morgan, 1993, p.42).

Fielder (1996) remarks that the prevailing culture of a school is very powerful which can actually go further than merely reflecting what is done in school, it also represents the values which reflect what should be done in there. Looking at the culture of the individual school, we understand that each school is different from every other school because organizations are living things, each with its own history, traditions and environment and with its own ability to shape its destiny (Handy, 1988, p.107). The concept of culture of schools is mainly about the idea of value agreed and shared by the people involved.

Culture is classified into four main types by Handy (1988, p.108-112): club culture, role culture, task culture and person culture. The club culture is described as a spider's web which the key to the whole organization sits in the centre, surrounded by ever-widening circles of intimates and influence. The 'organization idea' with club culture is that the organization is there to extend the person of the head or the founders. The club culture therefore, is rich in personality and strongly depends on speedy communication from the centralization of power. The key to the success of this culture is having the right leader and staff.

The underlying 'organizational idea' with role culture is that organizations are sets of roles, joined together in a logical and orderly pattern so that together they discharge the work of the organization. The communications in these cultures are formalized, as are the systems and procedures. The important thing in these cultures is to get the logic of the design right, the flow of work, procedures and people are a less of a critical factor.

The 'organizational idea' of the task culture is that a group or team of talents and resources should be applied to a problem or task. These cultures thrive in situations where problem-solving is the job of the organization. A task culture talks of 'co-ordinators' and 'team leaders' rather than managers.

The 'organizational idea' of the person culture is that the individual talent is all-important and must be serviced by some sort of minimal organization. The individual professionals in these organizations usually have tenure, meaning that the management is not only lower in status but has few if any formal means of control over the professionals.

Handy (1988) believes that in practice, schools have a mixture of these four cultures and it is the choice of the mix that makes schools different. The mixture of cultures depends on four main factors: size of the organization, the work flow in the operation, the environment the organization is in and its history. The cultural mix in any one organization depends on the relative importance of each of those factors.

Schools in Hong Kong, according to the features of its system (see Section 1.7.3 - 1.7.10 in Chapter One), are more alike the club culture in which many schools are centrally managed by the principals. Such a culture cannot be changed easily because organizations are people and people have their own cultural preferences and inclinations (Handy, 1988). Staff accustomed to a club culture with a strong central figure will find it hard to adjust to the more participative task culture even if they all claim that this is what they want (Handy, 1988, p.113). Changing from one culture to other is so difficult that it often requires blood transfusion of

new people. However, in real life, especially in schools, such a dramatic transfusions are impossible.

Concerning SMI, being self-managed is a big change to the culture of school management which is strongly centralized. The introduction of SMI tries to change stakeholders' roles in school management in a sudden and the difficulties and resistance involved are imaginable. Thus, allowances are made to deal with people's ideology and sceptic attitude in accepting changes.

2.3.3 Ideology in Education

Ideology is a manner of thinking, ideas or characteristic of a person or group as forming the basis of an economic or political system (Oxford Dictionary). We live in the society which has its own traditional customs and laws. These existing customs and laws which are followed and obeyed by the majority of us are ideological social orders that is passed on and inherited from generation to generation. However, the importance of ideology in our life is not always recognized. In fact, the ways we adapt new changes, facts we believe or the choices we made are all ideological. Though ideology forms the basis of our character, it is continuously influenced by changes that happen around us with or without our conscious.

Ideology of an individual is generated from the culture of a society which is closely linked to the country's education system as a direct result (Bell, 1980). Education does not only mean the delivery of knowledge, it can also be seen as a process for the government to influence its society. Ranson (1988) sees that the shaping of individuals is at the same time the shaping of a generation. Whereas, choices on the purpose of education take on a wider significance as an expression of social and political purpose. In other words, through the process of learning, education can shape not only the purpose of individuals but also the beliefs on maintaining order in society and politics.

Ranson (1988) also points out that the vehicle for elaboration of educational aims regarding social purpose is found in the structuring of government which

constitutes distinctive values in policies and in its supporting organizational forms. Ranson's theory on education helps to explain how some countries, especially the communist and colonial governments, take advantages of their education system to cultivate and manipulate their people's beliefs and thoughts for so long. It also helps us to understand how the previous colonial government of Hong Kong use the education system as a machine to 'produce' the type of manpower and the kind of economy it desired through components such as the design of the curriculum, minimum level of compulsory education, number of seats in universities, and policies on the delivery of political concepts in school.

. Teaching Ideology

Sharp and Green (1975, p.68-9) define the teaching ideology as a connected set of systematically related beliefs and ideas about what are felt to be the essential features of teaching. They see that the teaching ideology includes general ideas and assumptions about the nature of knowledge and of human nature - the latter entailing beliefs about motivation, learning and educability. It includes also characterization of society and the role and functions of education in the wider social context. In short, a teaching ideology involves a broad definition of the task and a set of prescriptions for performing it, all held at a relatively high level of abstraction.

People's values are conditioned by upbringing and by the group or groups to which they belong (Everard and Morris, 1990, p.195). The most important interrelated factors to the content of ideology of teaching, according to Sharp and Green (1975, p.68-9) are: the image of teaching which the education practitioners formed whilst they themselves were pupils; secondly, the cognitive orientations and ideological commitments built into the course of professional training they receive; and finally, the complexity of experience which educationalists have encountered when faced with the practical exigencies of doing the job. Moreover, the teaching ideology will be embedded in a broader network of social and political world views where determination, in the individual actor, is derived from the socialization experiences undergone.

Different to some non-education sectors, many decisions taken in school are value laden and cannot be reduced to simplicities of a procedural map (Bell, 1980. Everard and Morris, 1990). However, school is an organization too (Hoyle, 1986; Greenfield, 1992; Everard and Morris, 1990; Ball, 1987), its administration involves an act of creation and compulsion where the principal seeks to cause certain actions and events to prevail over others, to fulfill his/her ideological vision. Ball (1987, p.17) explains that these ideological interests are crucially at stake in organizational decision-making and participation in or attempts to influence decision-making are determined and circumscribed by the relevance of their own individual interests, the understanding and control of their situation. Ideological interests refer to matters of value and philosophical commitment - views of practice and organization that are preferred or advanced in debate or discussion. These interests often relate practical issues to fundamental political or philosophical positions (Ball, 1987, p.17).

Ball (1987) believes that though not all decisions faced by school principals or schools are ideological, virtually all matters which relate to the organization and teaching of pupils, the structure of the curriculum, the relationships between teachers and pupils and the pattern of decision-making in the institution have strong ideological underpinnings. Thus, school leader's ideology contains seeds of political and philosophical distortion and partisanship. However, we must recognize that not all the education practitioners have the same high levels of ideological involvement in their work and not all the participants are motivated or influenced by ideological commitments.

The society of Hong Kong is mixed with its own traditional Chinese customs, Western influences and the previous colonial laws. Although these existing customs and laws are ideological social orders that is passed on and inherited from generation to generation, they are subject to modification according to the changes of social value and political environment. However, changes to social order cannot be made rush because it takes time for people to absorb and adjust their ideological beliefs and interests.

2.4 Changes Management

Changes are normal and we cannot resist them as they play an important part in our life. Changes are not necessarily good or bad in their own right, they can be intentional and planned or unintentional, major or comparatively minor. They can also be voluntary or imposed, threatening or non-threatening.

Change on its own, however, does not guarantee improvement. It is the people who are involved in the changing process that can influence its result because their attitude and response to changes do vary in terms of responsibility, capability, beliefs, experience and many other factors. As the outcome of a positive or negative result depends on the adaptability of the people involved in changes, conflicts of personal interest becomes unavoidable. Thus, managing changes can be a difficult task and educational changes are particularly difficult due to the nature of schools.

Today's educational management has become 'the management of change' (Bennett, 1993, p.1). Whether or not the change is voluntary or imposed, individual or universal, the way change is tackled will depend on the situation in the school, the nature of the change being introduced and the preferred style of working of those involved (Dean, 1985). Those in management positions will sense that the change will involve a great deal of conflict, bother and hard work (Everard and Morris, 1990). They need to consistently adapt, adjust and learn. We can see that the reason why educational changes are perceived as being so problematic is not the nature of the change itself but the nature of the knowledge, skills and attitudes of those involved and the way that these are expressed in action (West-Burnham, 1990).

From this study of change management, it is found that to examine the reasons for the slow responses to SMI, we should look at not only the nature of the change, i.e. the scheme, but also the knowledge, skills and workload that are required from those involved and their attitudes and perceptions towards the change. Following

are studies of the difficulties in managing changes and the school principals' role in change management.

2.4.1 Difficulties in managing changes

Due to the nature of schools, many people would agree that schools is naturally adverse to changes and conservatism is a main barrier to change in education. School principals, teachers and parents who were educated by the 'old' system may not easily accept the modern unfamiliar way for their pupils and children (Dean, 1986). Indeed, as Fullan (1990) states that historical stress on individual and institutional autonomy and the legal and contractual status of headteachers generates natural suspicion of external demands of change. Other people such as governors who have direct connection with the school are usually quite sensitive to the performance of the individual teacher, the head and the whole institution. They will inevitably have their own views and ideology on how the school should be run. In Hong Kong, practitioners are also suspicious of changes derived from western countries' examples.

A change sometimes means rejection of certain existing beliefs, rules or customs, therefore, the process of making change without bringing too much negative consequences is always a dilemma. Thus, during the process of making change, schools always take great care in protecting the reputation of their traditional image.

The launch of SMI in Hong Kong imposes changes not only on the job of school principals and teaching staff but also the duties of the governors and the management framework of many school sponsoring bodies. Putting such a drastic change to all these stakeholders' roles will unavoidably cause resistance. Many of them reject the scheme not because they question the value or the necessity of the scheme but they are not willing to make substantial changes to their existing roles. Ching (1991, p.11) explains that, due to conservatism, schools in Hong Kong are serving the aims which have long existed and recognized by the society in

generations that rarely have the enthusiasm to make changes. He sees that it is this traditional conservatism of education that has caused strong resistance to SMI.

There are many other barriers which can prevent schools from cooperating with the new changes. As pointed out by Fullan (1990), the availability of resources, volume of demands for change and appropriateness of management styles can also cause difficulties in managing change. Resources commonly mean money, manpower and time. In change management, manpower which refers to appropriately qualified and experienced staff is becoming more important. The school principal's inappropriate management of human resources can aggravate the staff who already feel that they are being overloaded.

Fear of losing control over power and authority and change of one's status generate yet another barrier in the progress of change management (Dean, 1986). Status may make it difficult for some people to admit that they could be mistaken or that the way they have been doing things for years could be improved. The symbol of status makes it difficult for senior figures to admit the need for improvement especially when the real truth is reflected by their junior colleagues (Dean, 1986).

Furthermore, people tend to dislike the idea of taking on more responsibilities and risks which makes change management more complicated. Dean (1986) notices that it is especially difficult to get people to look objectively at the need to change. There is often a tendency for people to want to discuss all those aspects of the problem which are the responsibility of others and to avoid discussion of those matters where something can actually be done.

Inappropriate management is the most significant element that causes barriers during changes (Fullan, 1990). An efficient leader will ensure a smooth process of change and be able to absorb new initiatives with minimum stress or disruption, thus, using the change to enhance and strengthen the schools. Fullan (1990) believes that schools which are unable to respond effectively are most often due to a lack of leadership with the appropriate management skills. He highlights the fact that

principals are such important figures that they can be the key to blocking as well as promoting changes.

2.4.2 The principal's role in change management

The school principal has often been described as an agent of changes in education. To be a change agent, according to Havelock (1970)'s suggestion, the principals are required to act as:

- a. a *catalyst* who puts pressure on the people involved and makes them start thinking about things which they previously accepted.
- b. a *solution-giver* who helps people involved and makes them start problems to their own answers. Being a good solution-giver means knowing when and how to offer suggestions.
- c. a *process-helper* who has learned to work through other people, helping them with the process of problem-solving and innovating. Good process-helper shows others how to work through the necessary stages of innovation.

A school principal is often required to carry out all these roles in change management, like the principals of SMI schools in Hong Kong. However, these responsibilities are not easy to be fulfilled because of the difficulties involved in managing changes. As Leigh (1993, p.12) states that there is no universal model or framework of organizational changes to help the principals carry out these roles in harmony and each manager must arrive at their own by an amalgam of personal values, hunches, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions.

SMI is the first major change of the school management system of Hong Kong. It affects almost all the school stakeholders' roles in the school management system. The management of such a drastic change requires the school principals to have a strong leadership, to create a vision to be shared by the people involved, to ensure collaborative management and a good learner. Those who have inadequate skills in handling such a change and have no intention to seek professional improvement are more likely to reject the scheme, or fail to provide the appropriate support to the

staff. Working under a principal who lacks the appropriate management skills, the staff are less likely to appreciate the changes brought to them and they would only carry out their new duties as meaningless routines. Next is a study of the importance of school principals' leadership in quality improvement of education followed by an analysis of professional development for school principals.

2.5 School Principal's Leadership

Every school requires someone to set priorities and define responsibilities and duties, i.e. the principal. The principals have to make sure that these responsibilities are carried out and they must apportion praise and disapproval where necessary. They need to be at the centre to accept accountability and referrals from people. They are also needed to arrange all these duties to be carried out by the appropriate people.

Leadership is seen by Dubin (1968, p.385) as 'the exercise of authority and the making of decisions.' Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1993, p.142) believe that according to these definitions, 'principals, headteachers and other senior staff who have formal authority by virtue of their appointments are leaders and may exercise leadership.' They claim that Dubin and Fiedler's views is constrained by the source of power (authority), scope (task-relevant) and function (decision-making, directing coordinating). They illustrate a broader context of definition made by Stogdill (1950, p.4) saying that leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal setting and goal accomplishment. Combining Stogdill's definition with Dubin and Fiedler's, it shows that the source of influence or power may be the persons' experience, or their capacity to bring rewards or benefits, or their capacity to apply sanctions, or their personal qualities which make them liked or respected by people (Beare, Caldwell and Millikan, 1993). Following are analyses of the role of a school principal, his/her source of authority and the importance of leadership to quality improvement.

2.5.1 The role of school principals

A 'role' is defined by John (1983, p.47) as a set of tasks or responsibilities; and the personality of the role-holder is a strongly determining influence upon the way in which these responsibilities are fulfilled. A role is also influenced by 'role expectations' which refers to both the nature and objectives of the responsibilities and how they will be fulfilled, and also to describe a pattern of behavioural characteristics which may be peripheral to the task itself (John, 1983, p.47).

In one hand, a school principal is an educator of teachers who should be recognized as superior to the knowledge possessed, on the other hand, he/she is also playing the role of a manager of the school. A school manager's job is summarized by John (1983) into six main aspects:

1. to maximize resources for the fulfillment of specified objectives, especially the human resources, i.e. teachers by ensuring staff development,
2. to set up a clearly understood consultative machinery to stimulate as widespread as possible a common sense of purpose and commitment to this purpose,
3. to provide the greatest help in staff recruitment,
4. to promote the right staff,
5. to accept responsibility for all policy decisions made by anyone in the school with the intention of furthering its aims and objectives, and
6. to keep in close touch with the world outside the school from which the pupils come and to which they go.

(John, 1983, p.47)

This summary suggests that school managers can no longer concentrate only on pedagogy, they are expected to motivate their colleagues, to provide leadership and support and to encourage the professional development of those who work within their area of responsibility (Bennett, 1993, p.1-2). To fulfill all these tasks, suggested by Everard and Morris (1990), a manager needs to be someone who:

1. knows what he or she wants to happen and causes it to happen;
2. is responsible for controlling resources and ensuring that they are put to good use;
3. promotes effectiveness in work done and searches for continual improvement;
4. sets a climate or tone conducive enabling people to give their best.

(Everard and Morris, 1990, p.xii)

In brief, school principals need to guide people to an agreed destination and organizing the route so that it is possible to get there (Dean, 1993, p.1). They need to stimulate patterning of the behaviour in same group and whose influence may be grounded in any perceived skill, attributed or endowment (Gronn, 1996). Being a leader, a principal should know where one is going and working to achieve a shared vision with colleagues. Being a manager means getting things done which lead to the realization of the vision through other people.

The principals' leadership modes and style constitutes the 'climate' of an institution (John, 1983). When all the people are attracted to the sense of common purpose they will see no cause to question the value of leadership, or to interpret its activities as arbitrary (John, 1983, p.1-3). Leadership is most likely to be effective when it is perceived as pursuing aims approved by the members and using methods that appear to the members to be appropriate. On the contrary, very often organizations are disrupted or gravely handicapped by the different and contradictory assumptions held about the purpose of leadership and the authority of the individual.

A successful school leader is always, in law as well as in fact, responsible for the situations in his or her school. 'Successful heads have interpreted these considered powers and duties wisely. They have not been authoritarian, consultative, or participative as a matter of principle; they have been all three at different times as the conditions seemed to warrant, though most often participative. Their success has

often come from choosing well, from knowing when to take the lead and when to confirm the leadership offered by colleagues' (ILEA 1985, para. 3.25).

The role of a principal stated in the SMI Report, 1991 (p.14), is 'to be accountable for every aspect of the life of the school and for consulting with the governors and the sponsoring body on every important issue' (see Appendix 7). This term is brief but covers every aspect with flexibility. The interpretation of this role varies according to the principals' ideology in school management. The basic qualification requirement for a person to undertake this position, according to official information, is a person who has a university degree, a Diploma of education, with over five years teaching experience and experience of being a head teacher. The knowledge in management is not considered as essential for the headship.

This requirement is criticized by Wong (1987b, p.155-156) as too general and lacks specification on the requirement of knowledge in management. He remarks that school principals should not only have teaching experience but also knowledge in management, consultation, curriculum development and other areas in order to fulfill the managerial duties appropriately.

2.5.2 The source of authority of a principal

According to Adam (1987), under the employment contract the principal is almost invariably responsible to the authority and governors for the internal organization, management and discipline of the school. This is a very brief and makes the principal of a school a person of immense power and authority within his/her own little world. He also points out that Case law supports principals' power to make rules which can only be challenged on the grounds that they are unreasonable; in effect they will have the final say over the curriculum and broad teaching strategies that the school will adopt; and have influence over the appointment , promotion and discipline of staff.

Adam (1987) points out that the authority of principals come from three main sources, firstly legal, secondly bureaucratic and thirdly the role of head itself. Legal authority is granted to heads according to Case law and governmental policies. Bureaucratic authority is delegated by the government to the system in which the authority within the school emanates largely from the head. The role itself of being a head has also created several sources of authority. As the head is often seen as representing the institution itself therefore, he/she is expected to exercise authority in an institutional rather than personal sense. This 'authority by tradition' is expected of every school head.

Weber (1964) and Ranson (1988)'s theories on power and authorities provide good explanations on the level of contribution to the status and authority of school heads in the society. Weber (1964) believes that all social forms exhibit a 'dominant order' of power and organization. Societies reveal a distinctive pattern of power, values and organizations. Power, explained by him, is the capacity to make people comply and it is organized through appropriate forms of administration. People obey typically not because of coercion or custom or material gain but because the organizing and exercising of power is based upon consent and thus acquire authority.

Ranson (1988) sees that it is the legitimate authority of the 'dominant order' of values and beliefs which provides an historical period with its distinctive character and uniqueness. The ruling order results in a distribution of advantage, status and power which favours some groups in society, who in turn strives to perpetuate an order which serves their interests. Furthermore, heads have professional authority - that they are the senior professional in the school and because of their teaching background they have the respect of the staff. Then finally, there is the authority of personality but it very much depends on the personal qualities and behaviour of the incumbent head.

School managers have authority in the simple sense defined above because of the office they hold, but their effectiveness depends a good deal on their personal experience and abilities. A person who is an excellent classroom teacher may not be

an efficient head. Skill in the classroom may at first win the respect of other staff but unless he/she acquires skill in leading a group of adults, this respect will be dissipated all too rapidly (Dean, 1993, p.2). As emphasized by Dean (1992, p.3) that the ability to lead is sometimes seen as 'a quality of personality which a person either does or does not possess'. Some brilliant leaders have succeeded because of personal charisma and the vision that they set before their followers. This is the factor that brings about different leadership and achievement in school management.

Most of the school principals in Hong Kong are powered not only to manage a school but also to take up their governors' school management and supervising duties due to the inactive roles these parties traditionally play in the management system. Under this circumstances, the principals operate their schools single-handedly. The effectiveness of a school is evidently strongly influenced by its principal's ability in school management.

2.5.3 Micropolitics in educational management

Micropolitics always play an important role in school administration, they are often exercised by the leaders without being noticed. Micropolitics is defined by Holy (1982, p.126) as 'strategies by which individuals and groups in organizational contexts seek to use their resources of authority and influence to further their interests.' As this definition makes little difference to that of management, Hoyle (1982) therefore, makes the following explanation: 'The relationship between the two is that of figure and ground. They are interactive domains, one does not function without the other. ... the two domains are symbiotic but the predominant theoretical focus has been on as management as 'figure' and on micropolitics - if at all - as 'ground'. ... Micropolitics is best perceived as a continuum, one end of which it is virtually indistinguishable from conventional management procedures but from which it diverges on a number of dimensions - interests, interest sets, power, strategies and legitimacy - to the point where it constitutes almost a separate organizational world of illegitimate, self-interested manipulation' (Hoyle, 1986, p.126-127).

According to Hoyle's explanation, micropolitics is shaped by formal structures and procedures of an organization. It could well be that the 'real' life of an organization is the micropolitics with structure treated as the determinant of organizational behaviour, it in fact has little real influence, but it is only given its life by the operation of micropolitics. The loosely coupled characteristic of the schools is certainly a factor determining the amount of micropolitics. Heads in schools have a high degree of authority. On the other hand, teachers have a relatively high degree of autonomy supported by professional norms which inhibit the exercise of legal based authority of the principal. Thus, the principals' administrative control, as Ball (1987) suggests, must depend on a considerable degree on the exercise of latent power and influence.

The introduction of SMI in Hong Kong has encouraged more participation by teaching staff and parents into the day-to-day running of schools. Conflicts are more likely to occur whenever more people are involved in negotiations, discussions and decision-making. This movement towards greater teachers and parents participation in school policy without changing the principal's ultimate responsibility to its internal activities, may lead them to have greater recourse to micropolitics in an attempt to fulfill their preference or decision. Principals who are granted authority to exert a considerable degree of control over organizational activities are very likely to deploy micropolitical strategies to pursue their own or group interests when this power is challenged. Thus, the school principal's decision and approach in exercising his/her micro-political influence has strong effect on the institution's implementation and the consequences of SMI.

2.5.4 The importance of vision in leadership

The effectiveness of a leader lies in his/her ability to make activity meaning without changing behaviour but to give others a sense of understanding of what they are doing (Pondy, 1978, p.94). The exercise of leadership by the principal thus involves making clear the meaning of activity in the school by posing and securing answers to questions concerning such as the purpose of the school, the way to

reflect the purposes and the relationship between the school and the community (Beare, Caldwell and Millikan 1993). This is the process of creating a shared vision.

A vision can be seen as a quality of leadership, for to lead is to communicate a vision (Ramsay & Clark, 1990, p.155). A vision is also described as a blueprint of a desired state, for it is an image of a preferred condition that we work to achieve in the future' (Shieve and Schoenheit, 1987, p.94). A vision will remain unfulfilled if it goes no further than the leader because a vision must be 'owned' by the colleagues and other stakeholders of the institution and shared by them in a way that they within the organization adopt the vision for themselves and make it their own (Starratt, 1986). Strategic planning or policy statement on their own do not attract people's enthusiasm. People respond not to statistics or projections but to the values underlying a particular vision. They respond more to the leaders who are articulate, enthusiastic, sincere and feel strongly about what they are doing.

Ramsay and Clark (1986) illustrate four key themes relating to vision and leadership through the findings of a study conducted by a number of educators. The first one is: outstanding leaders direct their attention to and focus others' attention on a vision. Second, they communicate that vision through symbols, myths, legends and actions. Third, outstanding leaders position themselves in their field to maximize their organization's strengths and communicate the vision. And fourth, outstanding leaders reflect in their own person the underlying values and beliefs of the vision.

The importance of reflecting from experience is emphasized also by Starratt (1986). He claims that the vision of the school must be reflected in the day-to-day activities of the organization. 'An effective vision reflects a collaborative consensus, a unification of values which forms the foundation of day-to-day decisions which must be taken in light of an over-arching and shared expectation of where the school is going' (Starratt, 1986, p.155).

Vision helps principals, teachers and parents to see that they can and do make a difference in the lives of their students and in the lives of one another. Thus, effective educational leaders are visionaries and can forge and articulate vision of a

desired educational state. In order to lead with vision, leaders must be active and forward thinking, rather than reactive and absorbed in the past. Leaders must also think more about leadership and make the time to contemplate and envision their future. As Ramsay and Clark (1990) suggest that educational vision is about the need to reflect on, and plan for, the future, rather than merely reacting to, and fretting about, the past.

Many school leaders may tend to absorb in the management of the here and now as to have given comparatively little thought to a vision for the future (Starratt, 1986). Rapidly accelerating change increased complexity, and the move towards self-managing schools like the SMI in Hong Kong which demand leaders who know where they are going and how they are going to get there. Without a vision for the future, a school cannot not grow. A school principal who failed to create a shared vision for the future may find it difficult to gain colleagues' enthusiasm and commitment in pursuing new changes which could slow down the progress of improvement.

2.6 Quality Improvement in Education

Quality improvement can be achieved only if people know why, how where and when to improve. It is no doubt that everyone is in favour of providing high quality education. However, various stakeholders groups ranging from students and staff to employers and the government have their views on quality. The notions of quality and associated concepts of excellence, efficiency and standards have therefore, become arguable. To different people, the definition may be different and so may the indicators used by them or by the authority to describe education quality (Fuller, 1986; Hughes, 1988, Sallis, 1993, and Angus, 1992).

'Quality' is produced by people but they need, firstly a suitable environment in which to work. They need the right 'tools' of the job and they need to work with the systems and procedures which are simple and which aid them in doing their jobs. The environment that surrounds staff has a profound effect on their ability to do their job properly and effectively. Secondly, to do a good job staff need

encouragement and recognition of their successes and achievements. They need leaders who can appreciate their achievements and coach them to greater success. The motivation to do a good job comes from a leadership style and an atmosphere which heightens self-esteem and empowers the individual (Sallis, 1993, p.37).

2.6.1 The importance of quality management

School management system is the main frame of the whole institution. Tribus (1994) states that a school can have the potential to develop or expand only if there is a strong framework supporting and connecting every department and every individual involved. 'A really good system of management will alter the goals and objectives of the educational system, recognizing trends and changes in the environment' (Tribus, 1994, p.85). A good system for the management of education demands a long-range perspective. Long range planning requires consistency of purpose, communicated to all through a vision of what the enterprise ought to be. A quality management system forms a foundation for any quality improvement or long term development plan (Tribus, 1994).

The purpose of SMI is to reform the school management system in order to enhance quality improvement in education. The scheme is a decentralized school management system originated from the theory of Total Quality Management (TQM). The whole basis of TQM is that every member of an organization at whatever level is personally responsible for the quality management of his or her own part of the process which contribute to the delivery of a product or a service (Doherty 1994, Sallis, 1993).

As emphasized by Sallis (1993) the 'management' in TQM means everyone, whatever their status, position or role, is the manager of their own responsibilities. Thus, TQM requires a long-term commitment (Sallis, 1993, p.33), a journey rather than a destination. For this reason, TQM cannot be 'achieved', but it is something to be striven for. TQM programmes must carry two notions; the first is a philosophy of continuous improvement. The second notion is to use the 'tools' and 'techniques' to put quality improvement into action. SMI, a TQM programme, therefore, should be

both a mind-set and a set of practical activities - an attitude of mind as well as a methods of promoting continuous improvement' (Sallis, 1994, p.35). Hence, improvement through SMI requires the individual to be committed to continuous improvement and be willing to take action.

The essence of TQM is a change of culture. Changing of culture requires not only a change of attitudes and working methods but also a change in the way in which institutions are managed and led. A strong leadership from the manager is therefore, essential for TQM. As stressed by Doherty (1994, p.21) the only people with the power to improve processes and so improve quality are the managers themselves. Quality leadership, according to Doherty (1994) is: willingness to make things happen - taking risks; developing trust; clarity of mission, roles and communication; changing the culture by good example. It takes school managers time, experience and continuous learning to develop such quality leadership.

The methodologies of quality management are featured by issues of continuous improvement (Doherty, 1994). The processes of practical methodologies of quality improvement processes which are found in all quality systems in some shape or forms is summarized by Doherty (1994) and shown as follow :

Quality assurance: a system based on 'feedforward' - i.e. a means of ensuring that errors, as far as possible, are designed out. In education quality assurance examines the aims, content, resourcing, levels and projected outcomes of modules, programmes and courses.

Quality management: the complete process set up to ensure that the quality processes actually happen.

Quality audit: internal and/or external audit of the quality management system. Audit checks that the system does what it says it is going to do and has written, documented evidence to prove it.

Quality control: a system based on 'feedback' - i.e. a means of gaining information so that errors can be corrected, in manufacturing by inspection. In education, quality control requires feedback from staff, students and ideally, employers. It requires regular monitoring and review of modules, programmes and courses.

Quality assessment: the judgment of performance against criteria - either internally or externally. A potential source of conflict, precisely because quality criteria for education are so difficult to agree.

Quality enhancement: a system for consciously and consistently improving the quality performance of any process. This implies a sophisticated system for staff development and training as well as conscious methods of addressing and solving systemic problems.

Doherty (1994, p.11)

TQM is a difficult idea to put across if the institution does not have the tradition and system of involving the staff and other school stakeholders into the management process. The staff in institutions need to understand and live the message if the scheme is to make an impact. The quality message must reach people's hearts and minds. In education this will only happen if staff can be convinced that it makes sense for them and benefits their learners (Sallis, 1993). The leadership quality of the managers is therefore, crucial to staff's interpretation and commitment to TQM.

2.6.2 Relationship between leadership and quality improvement

The variation between schools in their effects on pupils' progress and development has been explained by differences in policies and practices, and by certain given characteristics (Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob, 1993, Ramsay Clark, 1986, Ball, 1987). Twelve key factors are identified by Mortimore, Sammons, Lewis and Ecob (1993, p.11) for effective schooling, they are:

1. Purposeful leadership of the staff by the headteacher;
2. The involvement of the deputy head;
3. The involvement of teachers;
4. Consistency amongst teachers;
5. Structured sessions;
6. Intellectually challenging teaching;
7. The work-centred environment;
8. Limited focus within sessions;
9. Maximum communication between teachers and pupils;
10. Record keeping;
11. Parental involvement;
12. Positive climate.

They generalize that effective schools are about friendly, supportive environments, led by heads who are not afraid to assert their views and yet are able to share management and decision-making with the staff. The twelve key factors also provide a framework within which the various partners in the life of the school - principal and staff, parents and pupils, and governors - can operate. Each of these partners has some role to play in fostering the overall success of the school, and when each makes a positive contribution, the result can be an increase in the school's effectiveness (Mortimore, Sammons, Lewis and Ecob 1993, p.20-21).

It is arguable that some schools are advantaged in terms of their size, status, environment and stability of teaching staff to contribute effective schools. Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob (1993, p.10-11) defend that these favorable given characteristics contribute to effectiveness, they do not, by themselves, ensure it. They provide a supporting framework within which the head and teachers can work to promote pupil progress and development. It is the factors within the control of the principal and the teachers that are crucial. These are the factors that can be changed and improved. The principal's leadership quality is influential to the extent of improvement and change these factors can make.

In improving schools the effective principals are found to be those who had the well-being of staff as their central concern, are able to motivate, enthuse and challenge the staff but took ultimate responsibility in a crisis. The effective head is found to be someone who is considered by staff to be well organized and in touch with school events. The head is generally someone who avoid bandwagons but keep abreast of new initiatives and developments which would benefit the whole staff (Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob ,1993, Russ, 1995). Senior managers working collaboratively as a team is also a feature of improving schools (Russ, 1995) but the effectiveness of the team however, is conditional upon a commitment to collaborative working from the top of the organization. All these points show that school principals' performance in school improvement is crucial to quality improvement in education. However, school principal's leadership quality does not only rely on an individual ability but also his/her capability in motivating other people to work collaboratively.

Bolam's (1997) summary of the findings of several researches gives a clear conclusion to the common management features that effective schools are likely to display, they are:

1. strong purposive leadership by teachers;
2. broad agreement and consistency between headteachers and teachers on school goals, value, mission and policy;
3. headteachers and their deputies working as cohesive management teams;
4. involvement of teachers in decisions about school goals, values and missions;
5. a collaborative professional and technical subculture;
6. norms of continuous improvement;
7. norms of continuous improvement for staff and students;
8. a leadership strategy which promotes the maintenance and development of these and related features of the school's culture;
9. an enhanced capacity to engage in problem-solving related to the implementation of the national reforms.

(Bolam R., p.269, 1997)

In summary, effective schools base on quality management which emphasizes on firm leadership, collaborative management, shared vision and continuous improvement. Thus, the starting-point for school improvement is not system change, not change in others around us, but change in ourselves (Fullan, 1992, p.87). The principal - all the more so, since he or she is in a critical leadership position - must take action and help create the conditions for others to take action. The principal's leadership is, therefore crucial to the success of a school and differences in the performance of the principals is identified as a critical variable to school effectiveness (Fullan, 1992, Ramsay and Clark, 1986, Ball 1987).

2.7 Professional Development

Professional development is needed whenever the demand for a person's professional contribution is changing or when his/her capacity to cope with new challenges is limited (Winrow, 1985, p.89). People pursue professional development also when they want to make change or to pursue further improvement. The current social climate in education, the trend of decentralization of managerial responsibilities and a continuous increase of the complexity of the role being a school manager in particular, has caused educators in western countries to re-examine the focus of education and training.

Professional development is regarded by Winrow (1985) as a dynamic process, marshaling the collective energies of the whole school. It can transform each individual to respond energetically and collectively to new ideas, new knowledge and new experiences. It can also generate individual and collective desire to improve their expertise and effectiveness as principals and teachers and also as an educational establishment. It is the discovery of individual and corporate strengths and weaknesses, the recognition and utilization of latent skills which will bring about mutual support, free discussion and commitment to common aims, such as the sharing of knowledge and experience, cooperative research into classroom processes and self evaluation (Winrow, 1985).

Professional development is an integral and necessary part of what Hoyle (1982) terms, the creative school whose characteristic is its capacity as a social system to adapt and sustain change. He believes that professional development can transform existing organizational structures and relationships through making better use of the teaching resource, i.e. closer participation, collaborative learning and the development of objective professional relationships in an open and supportive working environment. Of course, these functions can only happen if people have the right attitude and believe towards professional development and only if the provision of training programme is appropriate and sufficient.

Training courses alone are not the same as professional development but it is the vital means by which the process is supported. Training courses are relevant only if the attendants respond to, and satisfy the identified needs of the professional development. The courses themselves do not give straight answers to managers' problems in school management but they provide guidelines for their actions. Training courses should not only deliver theories but also ensure that people are able and willing to apply the acquired theories into practice. In other words, professional training should enable the course attendants to think reflectively. They need to become aware of the way they practice, think and act in order to touch their own experiences so that they can use them creatively (Jarvinen, 1989).

2.7.1 The importance of reflective learning process

School principals do develop as they carry out their job, they learn from experience, but this will mainly be 'single loop learning' or small improvements to current practice (Fidler, 1996). The driving force behind single loop learning is 'how?', - how can we do this better? Rarely is there time or opportunity to ask the more fundamental and difficult question 'why?' - why are we doing this?

Awareness and reflection are essential for behavioural improvement. Reflective practice is defined as a purpose to enhance awareness of people's own thoughts and actions, as a mean of professional growth. It is viewed as a mean by which

practitioners can develop a greater level of self-awareness about the nature and impact of their performance, an awareness that creates opportunities for professional growth and development (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1994).

To reflect, we must come to an understanding of our own behaviour; we must develop a conscious awareness of our own action and effects and the ideas or theories-in-use that shape our action strategies. Achieving this level of conscious awareness, however, is not an easy task. Osterman and Kottkamp (1994) believe that even experienced administrators are often unable to identify the components of their work that lead to successful outcomes for theory-in-use that are not easily articulated and most of their knowledge-in-practice is tacit. Consequently, people are often unclear about how their own actions prevent them from being more successful.

Osterman and Kottkamp (1994) note that learning is most effective when people become personally engaged in the learning process to learn, and engagement is most likely to take place when there is a need to learn. Situated cognition focuses on both the process and the context of learning which is most effective when the learner is actively involved in the learning process, when it takes place in a context relevant to the learner.

Questions emerge that how to make people step back to assess their performance and find out the need for further improvement. It is also necessary to know how to ensure that people will examine their experience over a particular situation when a problem occurs and cannot be resolved by using standard operating procedures. Osterman and Kottkamp (1994) suggest that school leaders should examine their experience during problem identification by asking: What was the nature of the problem? What were my intentions? What did I do? What happened? They believe unaware problems or potential threats are often identified through this process of observation and analysis of which are the key points for further improvement. Awareness and identification of problems also motivate us to gather facts and moves us further into the reflection cycle.

Identification of problems is not easy and identification of personal problems is even more difficult. Osterman & Kottkamp (1994) believe that people, especially educators, desire to view things positively and to be optimistic. Therefore, in case of school problems, discussion may turn quickly to solutions while problem identification and analysis are cut short. In case of individual's problems, people always find it hard to disclose them and admit them because problems inside or outside work are often seen as an indicator of incompetence and failure. As a result, people always have effective defenses for preventing problem recognition. The effectiveness of reflective learning process therefore, depends on people's willingness to uncover and discover their problems.

Conclusively, the importance of the learning process is to encourage people to seek information from all sorts, to make connections between theory and practice and to integrate new information and ideas into practice. The success of a training programme is also decided by its course attendants' reflective practice. The design of a training programme therefore, needs to consider not only its content but also the strategies to stimulate attendants' reflective learning process.

2.8 Summary

Initial insights from Chapter One suggested that the importance of professional development in school management for school principals is neglected by both the government and practitioners in Hong Kong. This literature review has considered the implicit and explicit elements which can affect the formation of a school management system and has examined the significance of the role and responsibilities of a principal as a manager to the effectiveness of a school and its process of quality improvement. Specially, it has addressed how quality improvement can be enhanced by continuous professional development training for school principals.

The key concepts generated from this review are: first, school principals' leadership is crucial to the effectiveness of a school. Second, the quality of education

can be improved only if the people involved, especially the leaders, are continuously developing themselves. Third, professional development is effective only if people are reflective. The focus of this research is to identify school principals' need for professional development in school management with the aim to encourage collaborative professional development in schools in Hong Kong. Research methodology is discussed in next Chapter to design the framework for this research.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research is a process for collecting, analyzing and interpreting information to answer questions. It must be controlled, rigorous, systematic, valid and verifiable, empirical and critical (Kumar, 1996, p.7). A methodology which consists of the systematic procedures from the initial identification of the problem to the final conclusions is designed in this chapter. Its role is to complete this research study in a scientific, applicable and valid manner (Wiersma, 1969, Kumar, 1996).

The task of this Chapter is to set up a detailed plan, i.e. research design for how this study should be operated in order to carry out the complex research job. A research design explained by Yin (1994) is a logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions. It is about organizing research activity, including the collection of data, which are most likely to achieve the research aims. It works as an action plan for getting from the initial set of questions to be answered to some set of conclusions on these questions. It also helps to avoid the situation in which the evidence does not address the initial research questions.

The two main developments of the research design in this study are firstly, identification and development of the procedures and logistical arrangements required to undertake this study and secondly, emphasis of the reasons and appropriateness of these procedures to ensure their **validity, reliability, objectivity** and **accuracy**. Validity ensures the application of correct procedures in a research study to find answers to a question. Reliability refers to the quality of a measurement procedure. Accuracy and objectivity mean that we have taken each step and drawn each conclusion to the best of our ability and without introducing our own vested interest (Kumar, 1995, p.4).

Details of the construction of the research design for this study and the progress of its application is the centre of this Chapter. Philosophical and ethical issues involved in this study are first discussed. Following by this is the design of methodological framework and decisions of the research methods. A pilot research is operated to test try the research design and the findings are concluded in the final section of this chapter.

3.2 Philosophical Issues

The methods adapted for research study differ from one academic principle to another. For example, the expectations of the research process are markedly different between the scientific and the social sciences. As Kumar (1995, p.6) explains that in the scientific sciences a research endeavor is expected to be strictly controlled at each step, whereas in the social sciences rigid control cannot be enforced and sometimes is not even demanded. Thus, a thorough understanding of philosophical issues is required to help clarify an overall configuration, i.e. what and where the kind of evidence is gathered from, and how such evidence is interpreted in order to provide good answers to the research questions. The understanding of different philosophical issues would help to recognize the strength and weaknesses of different designs which is very important when adapting designs according to the constraints of different subject or knowledge structures (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 1994).

3.2.1 Positivism and non-positivism

There is a long-standing debate in the social sciences about the most appropriate philosophical position from which methods should be derived. The two main traditional philosophical positions are positivism and non-positivism. Cohen & Manion (1992) explain that research methods traditionally associate with the positivistic model are eliciting responses to predetermined questions, recording measurements, describing phenomena and performing experiments. The methods associate with non-positivistic paradigm are participant observation, role-playing, non-directive interviewing, episodes and accounts. The key idea of positivism is that

the social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition (Easterby-Smith, Thope and Lowe, 1994). Cohen & Manion (1992, p.8) see that ‘positivists treat the social world as the world of natural phenomena as being hard, real and external to the researcher.’ Positivists, according to Huges (1990, p.36), emphasize the basic of science which lies in a theoretically neutral observation language which is both ontologically and epistemological primary. In other words, statements made in this privileged language are directly verifiable as true or false by simply looking at ‘the facts’ of the world. Thus, it is believed that if the statement did respond with the facts then it was true; if not, then false. The principle of verification became a criterion for deciding whether a statement was meaningful or not, and depended heavily on it being possible to devise a ‘protocol’ or ‘basic’ language consisting of a terminal class of propositions that directly described the world of brute fact.

Human beings, however, are not simply external shells of shape, size and motion: we have an inner life not assessable to observation in the normal way (Huges,1990). It was therefore, argued by some that this inaccessibility implied that such phenomena could not be dealt with objectively, that is, scientifically. An argument was later developed by positive social scientists that mental states could be observed, for all intents and purposes, by studying the corresponding outward behavioural display, the later being an index of the former. However, this argument could be objected by claiming that human beings experience more sophisticated states of consciousness than anger, pleasure or pain (Huges, 1990). Positive social scientists defends that the beliefs that people hold, their tastes and preferences, are all publicly verifiable. They believe that values are objective in the sense that they are held by persons who can report their ‘inner feeling’ or ‘states of consciousness’. By using carefully constructed questionnaires, attitude scales, interviews and the like, subjects could be expressed their beliefs and in this way objective access to important aspects of mental life could be secured (Huges, 1990, p.40).

Some non-positivistic-social scientists argue that social science view of man is ‘...biased in that it is conservative and must inevitably lead to the social scientist

taking an equally conservative view of human being and having ignore other important qualities' (Cohen & Manion, 1992, p.26). The positivists are often criticized as restricting the image of man by concentrating only on the repetitive, predictable and invariant aspects of persons; on visible externalizes and excluding the subjective world. The psychological part of the persons are neglected. Cohen & Manion (1992, p.26) raise two criticisms which are commonly leveled at positivistic social science from within its own ranks. The first is that positivistic social science fails to take account of man's unique ability to interpret his/her experiences and represent them to himself. Secondly, the findings of positivistic social science are often said to be so banal and trivial that they are of little consequence to those for whom they are intended, namely, teachers, counselors and the like.

Many social scientists who are opponents of positivism sharing a common rejection of the belief that human behaviour is governed by general laws and characterized by underlying regularities. They believe that the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated; and that the sample population is an autonomous one, not plastic version favoured by positivist researchers (Cohen & Manion, 1992, p.27).

Two further differences between positivist and non-positivist viewpoints are normative and interpretive. Cohen & Manion (1992, p.38) explain that normative paradigm which tends to be positivist contains two major orienting ideas: first, that human behaviour is essentially rule-governed; and second, that it should be investigated by the methods of natural science. The interpretive paradigm, which tends to be non-positivist, is characterized by a concern for the individual, its central endeavour is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within. Furthermore, normative paradigm believes that behaviour refers to responses either to external environmental stimuli or to internal stimuli but in either cases, the cause of the behaviour lies in the past.

Interpretive approaches, on the other hand, focus on action and believes that actions are meaningful and intentional and therefore, we are able to ascertain the

intentions of the actors, to share his/her experience. As regards theory, Cohen & Manion (1992, p.38) describe that the normative researcher tries to devise general theories of human behaviour and to validate them through the use of increasingly complex research methodologies which, some believe, push him/her further and further from the experience and understanding of the everyday world and into a world of abstraction. On the other hand, interpretive researcher begins with the individual and sets out to understand his/her interpretations of the surrounding world. Theory is believed to be able to be emergent and must arise from particular situations; it should be 'grounded' on data generated by the research act. There are many more distinctions between these two approaches and in summary, all these distinctions share a common point which is that both the positive and non-positive paradigms have their strength and weaknesses. Our adoption of philosophical issues should depend on the research context and the availability of resources.

Positivist scientific research is not an appropriate approach for this research; as the study of the relationship between professional development for school principals in management and quality improvement in education includes different variables that would bring on different levels of influences to the result. These variables include ideology, culture, socio-economic background, leadership quality and etc. which cannot be randomly assigned and manipulated in an experiment (Wiersma, 1969, p.257). These variables can neither be controlled nor measured simply through observation. They can be collected only through flexible data collection procedures which could get inside the persons and investigate from within. Thus this study is more suited to the non-positivist approaches. Non-positivist research approaches are studied next to decide the most suitable one to be adopted for this research.

3.2.2 Phenomenology and grounded theory

Phenomenology and grounded theory are two main approaches of non-positivist research for the exploration of human experience. 'Both approaches share a number of characteristics. Both focus on the richness of human experience, seek to understand a situation from the subject's own frame of reference, and use

flexible data collection procedures' (Baker and Wuest, 1992, p.1355). Cohen & Manion, (1992, p.30) see that a common thread running through the two schools is a concern with phenomena, that is, the things we directly apprehend through our senses as we go about our daily lives, together with a consequent emphasis on qualitative as opposed to quantitative methodology'. They both are based on different intellectual assumptions and, have clear differences in purpose and methodological prescriptions.

Phenomenology items from the view that the world and reality are not objective and exterior, but that they are socially constructed and given meaning by people. In its broadest meaning, phenomenology is a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value; and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality (Cohen & Manion, 1992, p.31).

Instead of focusing on the individual or on how the social structure or social situation causes individual behaviour, grounded theory approach direct the attention at the nature of interaction, the dynamic activities taking place between persons. It is believed that individual interact societies are made up of interacting individuals. People are constantly under-going change in interaction and society is changing through interaction (Cohen & Manion, 1992, p.36). Symbolic interactionists' school of sociology, the root of grounded theory, focuses on the meanings of events to people and the symbols they use to convey that meaning (Baker and Wuest, 1992). It is believed that meanings are developed through experience or interaction. The meanings that people assign to events determine their response. Baker and Wuest (1992) see that to study behaviour from the symbolic and interaction level, the researcher of grounded theory approach needs to understand behaviour as the participants understand it, learn about their world, learn their interpretation of self in the interaction, and share their definitions.

Phenomenology is the study of phenomena. The appearance of things and the discovery of their essence is the ultimate purpose of phenomenological research (Cohen,1987). The goal of empirical phenomenological research flows from

explanation and is to describe the world-as-experienced by the participants of the inquiry in order to discover the common meanings underlying empirical variations of a given phenomenon (Baker and Wuest, 1992). Grounded theory allows us to discover what is going on. Researchers' purpose in using the grounded theory method is therefore, to explain a given social situation by identifying the core and subsidiary processes operating in it (Glaser, 1978). The core process of the guiding principles underlying what is occurring in the situation and dominates the analysis because it links most of the other processes involved in an explanatory network (Barker & Wuest, 1992).

Phenomenology comes from a philosophical tradition and is designed to describe psychological realities by uncovering the essential meaning of lived experience. In the contrast, grounded theory, derived from a sociological perspective, explains social or social psychological realities by identifying processes at work in the situation being investigated (Baker & Wuest, 1992). In brief, one seeks to describe psychological structures and the other to explain social processes. Baker and Wuest (1992, p.1357) point out that phenomenological methods require the researcher to identify and suspend what he/she already knows about the experience being studied and must approach the data without preconceptions. In grounded theory study, the researcher is a social being who also create and recreates social processes. Therefore, previous experience is data.

Regarding sources of data, phenomenological inquiry, being concerned with the psychological phenomena of lived experience, has only one legitimate source of data: informants who have lived the reality being investigated (Baker & Wuest, 1992). Their verbal descriptions, written reports and artistic expression of the phenomenon provide the researcher with access to it (Ray, 1985). Van Manen (1984) observes that the point of phenomenological research is to borrow other people's experiences in order to understand the deeper meaning of it in the context of the whole of human experience. On the other hand, the dynamic psychological and social processes that are the focus of the grounded theory method may be inferred from observing social interactions. In other words, everything to the grounded theorist is data (Baker and Wuest, 1992).

In terms of validity, in a phenomenological study, 'this depends on the extent that they truly reflect the essence of a phenomena as experienced by the informants of the study' (Baker & Wuest, 1992, p. 1359). In the case of grounded theory study, the important question is the usefulness of the theory that has been generated. 'To be credible, the core variables, or theory, must be well integrated, easy to understand, relevant to the empirical world, and must explain the major variation in the process or phenomenon studied (Stern & Pyles, 1986, p.1-23).

From the above study, phenomenological approach is found more suitable to be adapted for this study. To identify and conceptualize the relationship of the two main objects of this study, professional development in school management and quality improvement needs is the key issue of this study. We therefore, need to understand not only their meaning and relationship in between but also to investigate the possible causation. This study is a non-experimental investigation for the phenomena has already existed and cannot be assigned or manipulated. It requires the researcher with a clear and free mind to explore and make sense of what had happened and is happening to the people involved in the two objects. We need to 'borrow' the involved people's experience to identify and give meaning to the situation. We need to obtain the information expressed by these people from their thoughts in order to make sense of their behaviour.

Among the various phenomenologists, Husserl and Schutz's definitions and explanations, quoted by Cohen & Manion (1992, p.31), are most suitable to describe the motive of this study which is 'to look beyond the daily practice in school management and to rationalize people's experience'. Husserl stresses that it is important to investigate the source of the foundation of science and with questioning the commonsense, 'taken-for-granted' assumptions of everyday life. We need to look beyond the details of everyday life to the essences underlying them by freeing ourselves from our usual ways of perceiving the world. The aims of doing this, according to Husserl, is to dismember the constitution of objects in such a way as to free us from all preconceptions about the world.

Schutz, on the other side, concerns most the problem of understanding the meaning and structure of the world of everyday life because an unbroken stream of lived experiences have no meaning themselves. We can impute meaning to our experience by the process of turning back on ourselves and looking at what has been going on. Meaning can be accounted for in this way by the concept of reflexivity and this concept is dependent on our identifying the purpose or goal we seek. The way we understand the behaviour of others is dependent on a process of typification by means of which the observer makes use of concepts resembling 'ideal types' to make sense of what people do. These concepts are derived from our experience of everyday life, they are handed to us according to our social context.

Conclusively, the philosophy of phenomenological model and the associated qualitative research methods have the strengths in their ability to look at change processes over time and to understand people's meanings. They also provide a way of gathering data which is seen as natural rather than artificial. Based on these reasons, qualitative research methods are adopted in this research. However, qualitative research methods are time and resources consuming and therefore, the coverage of research area is usually smaller than quantity methods could cover. As Easterby-Smith (1994) describes that qualitative studies often feel rather untidy because it is harder to control their pace, progress and end-point. A comprehensive design and adopting the right research approaches are essential to compensate and avoid the possible drawbacks of qualitative methods. Following is the discussion of the ethical issues of this study and the process of the design of a research plan.

3.3 Ethical Issues

Different stakeholders are involved in this research study and there are ethical issues in relation to each of them. The involved stakeholders are the participants of this research, i.e. myself as a researcher and the parties who will be interested with the findings. To maintain the objectivity and ethicality, it is important to ensure that the research is not affected by the self-interest of any party and is not carried out in a way that harms any party. The ethical issues concerning them are as follow:

1. Collecting information - the participants are frankly told the title of the study and how and where it will be published.
2. Seeking consent - participants are made adequately aware of the type of information being sought, the purpose it will serve, and how it will directly or indirectly affect them. .
3. Seeking sensitive information - some information needed in this research may be regarded as sensitive and participants are explained why these questions are asked and how important they are to the whole study to encourage participants' cooperation.
4. Maintaining confidentiality - it is unethical to identify an individual respondent or sharing information about a respondent with others without the person's consent. In this study, participants will be asked to comment on issues which may concern other parties. They will be assured that confidentiality is maintained, not only their identity but also the institutions they serve.

Ethical issues which concern the researcher, is mainly to avoid being bias. Biasness is a deliberate attempt either to hide what have been found in the study, or highlight something disproportionately to its true existence. Being an independent researcher that is not financed by any organization, I am under no pressure or influence from any other party during the conduction of this research study and the publishing of its findings. Whatever the outcomes are, they will still fulfill my initial target of conducting this research which is to obtain a full understanding of the system in professional development for school managers and to investigate practitioners' perceptions toward professional development.

The second ethical issue for a researcher is the use of appropriate research methodology. Every researcher has the obligation to use appropriate methodology in conducting a study, i.e. avoid selecting a highly biased sample or drawing wrong

conclusions. The methodological framework is explained in next section discussing the procedures of sampling and methods for data collection.

3.4 Methodological Framework

Methodological framework is a distinct way of approaching research with particular understandings of purpose, foci, data, analysis and more fundamentally, the relationship between data and what they refer to. Developing a methodological framework involves making choices and the right decisions can ensure that the different elements of the design are consistent with each other. Following Easterby-Smith (1994)'s suggestion, five key choices that ought to be made for this research design which are: involvement of researcher, sampling, theory and data, experimental design and fieldwork and verification and falsification.

3.4.1. Theory or data

The first choice is about which should come first: the theory or the data. Starting with a hypothesis and following with data collection will confirm that theory is one of the main approach. The main practical advantage of this 'hypothesis testing' approach is that there is initial clarity about what is to be investigated, and hence information can be quite trivial, confirming what is already known. But if the results are inclusive or negative, the approach can give little guidance on why this is so (Easterby-Smith, 1994).

Regarding this study, there is no hypothesis right from the beginning to work with, instead, it is the question on why professional development is seldom suggested for quality improvement in education that brought up the whole process of facts exploration. Thus, data will be collected through phenomenological approaches to discover the essence of the situation from the participants inside before a conclusion can be made and/or a theory can be established.

3.4.2. Involvement of the researcher

There is always a choice between keeping a distance from or getting involved with the material that is being researched. This choice is based on one's philosophical view on whether or not it is possible for the observer to remain independent from the phenomena being observed. In the case of non-positivistic research such as action research, it is almost impossible for the researcher to remain independent because changes are brought into an organization by the researcher and he/she would always be seen as part of the change process itself. In positivistic research, traditionally, most of the researchers need to remain independence in order to ensure the validity of the result produced.

This phenomenological research study is more like an investigation of the hidden problems or concepts behind an existing phenomena and therefore, requires the researcher with free mind and independent status to impute meaning to people's experience. The drawback of being an independent researcher is not being able to experience the actual process that people have gone through in an organization or a system which has contributed to their specific ways of thinking and performance. However, this drawback is also an advantage because my interpretation of people's opinions and perceptions of the situation they are into are free from any work-connected influence.

Being an independent researcher, an ex-teacher in Hong Kong and a foreign student with experience of pursuing professional development in educational management in the UK, I believe that I am in a better position to carry out this research. I have good understanding of the education system of Hong Kong and its historical and cultural background. The experience of undergoing professional development myself broadens my views and thoughts to the value of professional development training. The knowledge I have in business and educational management enables me with objective views in analyzing the phenomena and interpreting and reflecting from people's opinions.

Although foreign educationalists would have the advantage in producing non-bias views and fair conclusion to a phenomena, too. It is not easy for them to interpret and capture as rich as I could during a phenomenological research which involves direct contacts with local practitioners. Furthermore, people are tend to behave more reserve in front of an overseas expert but on the other hand, they might not be too open to a local researcher appointed or funded by the authority, worrying that their performance or problems would be assessed or exposed. My identity would cause less pressure and cautious to all the parties involved and therefore, I am in a better position to explore more truthful and comprehensive information to identify and give meaning to the situation.

3.4.3. Sampling

The third design choice is to decide the sample population. Sampling is the way to design the population upon which the research is to focus. The key point of sampling is to decide whether to sample across a large number of organizations or situations, or whether to focus on a small number of situations and attempt to investigate them in depth (Easterby-Smith, 1994). Due to the factors of expense, time and accessibility, it is always not possible to obtain measures from a whole population. It is therefore, necessary to collect information from a smaller group in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study. This small group or 'subset' is a 'sample'. Kumar (1996, p.152) stresses that in selecting a sample, we always need to try to firstly, achieve maximum precision in our estimates within a given sample size and secondly, to avoid bias in the selection of a sample. In this study, the key informants are school principals of Hong Kong. As it is not feasible to measure all the school principals, a sample group will be selected to represent the whole population. Choices are required to be made in the process of sampling and the first one is made between probability and non-probability sampling approaches.

Cohen & Manion (1994, p.101-102) explain that probability yields probability samples in which, as the term implies, the probability of selection of each respondent is known. Methods of probability samplings include systematic, simple random,

stratified, cluster and stage. Kumar (1995, p.154) explains that each element in the population of probability sample must have an equal and independent chance of selection in the sample. Equal implies that the probability of selection of each element in the population is the same, that is, the choice of an element in the sample is not influenced by other considerations such as personal preference. The concept of independence means that the choice of another element in the sampling: the selection or rejection of one element does not affect the inclusion or exclusion of another.

Non-probability yields non-probability samples, in which the probability of selection is unknown (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.101-102). Its sampling methods include convenience, quota, purposive, dimensional and snowball. Representatives in qualitative research concerns the data and not the sampling units, or the size of the sample. Hence, qualitative research approaches like phenomenology and grounded theory use non-probability sampling procedures (Baker and Wuset, 1992).

Phenomenological studies are designed to describe the essence of a given phenomenon and the informants are chosen because they have lived the experience being investigated. Sampling of phenomenological studies are, therefore, purposive. As this is a phenomenological study, the sampling is **non-probability** so as to ensure that each major category of school principal, in terms of school background, gender, qualification, experience and etc. is included in the sample. The key disadvantages of non-probability sampling are its non-representativeness and the possible manipulation of the sample by the researcher through the process of sample selection. These drawbacks are considered and compensated by carrying out a documentary search to triangulate the findings generated from the sample.

. The sampling process

In this study, only principals of secondary schools in Hong Kong are selected to be the research target because management of secondary schools is getting more complex due to the continuous changes in educational policies and social value. Children at this level can be both rebellious and enthusiastic therefore, unexpected

crisis or trouble are more likely to occur. Due to these factors, it is believed that the findings obtained from secondary schools can be applicable to other level of education.

One of the key steps of sampling is to decide who to include in the sample. A confident sample must include the various elements of the total population in the proportions in which they occur so as to ensure that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study. In this research, secondary school principals are selected according to the background of the schools they serve as well as their personal factors i.e. their gender, experience and qualification. Repeated reference between personal and institutional factors are unavoidable and therefore it is allowed. For example, a female school principal can be put into the gender group but at the same time she is the principal of a church run band one school, therefore, her status is fitted into three categories.

Geographical location of schools is not a major concern in this study because Hong Kong is only a small city. Furthermore, most of the prestigious schools are located in 'expensive' residential area while Band 4-5 schools are usually found in public housing estates in new developed towns. It is not wise to only consider one particular area where it may not include all types of schools. The geographical location of the sample schools of this study which cover various area, from expensive residential area to public housing estates is shown in Table (3.1).

Table 3.1 Geographical location of sample population

Area	No. of sample
Upper-middle	2
Middle-class	2
Lower-middle class	3
Public housing estates	4
Total	11

Table 3.2 Research Sample

	<u>Heads</u>	<u>Deputy Heads</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Governors</u>	<u>Course Providers</u>	<u>ED</u>
<u>Officers</u>						
Total no. of sample	9	1	1	1	1	
1						
Government schools			1			
Aided schools	9	1				
Sponsored by:						
Religious Group	7					
Charity Group	1	1				
Band 1-2 schools	5	1	1			
Band 2-4 schools	3					
Band 5 schools	1					
SMI schools	2	1	1			
Non SMI schools	7					

Table 3.3 Qualification and experience of sample practitioners

Total no. of sample practitioners: 11

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Categories</u>		
Qualification	Ph.D.	Master degree	Bachelor degree
	3	4	4
Years of experience	over 15 years	over 5 years	less than 5 years
	4	4	3
Gender	Male	Female	
	8	3	

The proportion or quota for each type of school principals in the sample is proportionate to its representation in the total population (see Table 3-2). According to official figures, over 70 % of the total number of secondary schools in Hong Kong are sponsored by religious groups while roughly 22.5% is under charity groups' sponsorship. Only less than 10% of the total number is government schools. Regarding the ratio of gender, it is based on the proportion of male and female heads in Tuen Mun, one of the main town in Hong Kong which is also my home town.

Among the total of 34 principals of secondary schools in Tuen Mun, only 7 are female which is about 20% (source: School List for 1995/96, Tuen Mun, Education Department, September, 1995). All these figures become the basis from which decisions of each type of school included in the sample are categorised.

In order to obtain the fullness of detail of individual experience, the sample size of phenomenological research is often kept deliberately small. The correct sample size depends upon the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under scrutiny. The minimum size of a sample must be able to accurately represent the population under study in order to examine relationships within subgroups (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The sample size of this study is kept to its minimal to ensure that each participant is given adequate time to maximize their contribution. The other reason for having a small sample is because I had limited time to complete the fieldwork in Hong Kong. Although the size of this sample is small, it is considered large enough for the exploration of relationships within subgroups because various elements of the total population has been included. The sample also reflects the distribution of the heterogeneity of the variables in the population.

A total of eleven school practitioners are consequently included in the sample, nine of them are school principals, 1 deputy-head, and 1 teacher. The sample is first selected opportunistically through a list of all the secondary schools in Hong Kong provided by the ED. The school list, however, does not provide a satisfactory number of participants to form a representative size of sample because many principals have refused to be interviewed with the reason of 'being too busy'. Such an outcome has been anticipated due to my previous research experience in Hong Kong. A list of secondary school principals referred by friends, ex-work colleagues including a vicar also form another source for sampling. Some interviewees also identify others who qualify for inclusion in the sample. Sampling through 'networking' is also opportunistic because none of the people referred is known to me before. Opportunistic sampling brings the sample size to the target but it does not ensure the coverage of all the key elements of the total population. Strategies of 'purposive sampling' (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.132) are therefore, applied to

finalize the formation of the sample on the basis of typicality in order to balance the distribution of the sample population to match with the real situation.

The eleven practitioners which formed the sample are all from different institutions, their background is differentiated as (i) aided schools or government schools; (ii) sponsored by religious group or charity group; (iii) students from top band, middle band or bottom band; and (iv) SMI or non SMI schools (see Table 3.2). Amongst them, eight are sponsored by religious groups (72%), two by charity groups (18%) and one is a government school (9%). Three of the principals are woman (about 27%).

The sample practitioners are differentiated also according to their professional qualification and experience. Table (3.3) shows that among the eleven practitioners, two have gained their doctorship, four have master degree and the rest are bachelor degree holders. One of the principal is due to retire soon, one deputy-head will take on the headship in the following year, four of the principals have over fifteen years of experience in headship and four have just over five years of experience while the rest have less than five years of headship.

4. Experimental designs or fieldwork

Classic experimental method involves assigning subjects at random to either an experimental or a control group. Conditions for the experimental group are then manipulated by the experimenter in order to assess their effect in comparison with members of the control group who are subjected to no unusual conditions (Easterby-Smith, 1994). Such experiments are quite popular amongst psychologists in studies of social and human life. However, they are very much harder to conduct within real organizations or where there is no voluntary population from which to draw volunteers. The reliability of the result of these experiment can also be affected by the performance of the sample population.

Considering the practical difficulties of producing pure experimental designs, the idea of ‘quasi-experimental’ design was later developed. One of the most

common methods is the 'pre-test/pro-test comparison design' but Easterby-Smith (1994) criticizes it as 'naive' to assume 'nothing' to happen to the control group during the period that the experiment is taking place among the experimental group. Experiment is not possible for this study as the main purpose here is to investigate the phenomena which is naturally taking place. Artificial setting will likely affect people's performance which would then affect the reliability of the findings. The alternative to experimental and quasi-experimental design is fieldwork, which is the study of real experimental or social settings.

Ethnography is one of the distinctive research styles where the researcher tries to immerse himself/herself in a setting and to become part of the group under study in order to understand the meanings and significance that people put upon their own behaviour and that of others. Ethnography is not ideal for the purpose of this study because the findings of ethnographical research depend on observation of the interaction between people carried by the researcher's direct participation. It is more suitable for the use of investigation within one institution. The data of this study, however, depends mainly on the interpretation of opinions provided by the informants from different types of institutions and they can only be contacted through formal arrangement.

The key way for data collection in phenomenology is by non-structured or semi-structured interviews as phenomenological researches are from 'the informants who have lived the reality being investigated' (Baker & Wuest, 1992, p.1357). Phenomenology requires intense reflection, looking at the experience with wide open eyes, with knowledge, facts and theories held at bay (Oiler, 1982). The data collection issue in phenomenological studies is to ensure that it is free from preconceived notions, expectations and frameworks (Field & Morse, 1985). The source of data of this study is therefore, decided to be obtained solely from semi-structured interviews. The interview questions are broad, open-ended and designed to avoid influencing the respondents' answers in any way (Baker & Wuest, 1992).

5. Verification or falsification

The distinction between verification and falsification made by Karl Popper (1959) as a way of dealing with ‘what has become known as problem of induction’ which implies that, however, much data one obtains in support of a scientific theory or law, it is not possible to reach a conclusive proof of the truth of that law. Popper (1959)’s solution to this problem is to search for evidence that will disprove one’s hypothesis or existing views instead of looking for confirmatory evidence (Easterby-Smith, 1994). This means that theories should be formulated in a way that will make them most easily exposed to possible refutation. The advantage then is that only one instance of refutation is needed to falsify a theory, whereas however many confirmations of the theory there are it will still not be conclusively proven (Easterby-Smith, 1994).

The idea of falsification is essential to this research because the size of the sample is small and the conduction of semi-structured interviews is the only mean for data collection in the fieldwork. Under this circumstance, the reliability of the findings from the fieldwork could be dominated by participants’ biased view (see Section 3.4) and/or restrained by the weaknesses of interviewing (see Section 3.6.1). To support the reliability of the findings, falsification is necessary to be applied along with verification to prevent any overwhelming biases or domination of myself as a researcher and respondents’ personal views and experience. Thus, evidence that might confirm or contradict what is currently believed to be true should be looked for.

For the purpose of falsification, opinions from parties other than school principals are gathered during the fieldwork, they are teacher, deputy-head, governor, ED officer and training courses provider. Opinions from these parties are obtained for comparison with the views of the prime respondents, i.e. school principals and better understanding of the phenomena through different angles. For the purpose of verification, a documentary search is carried out to collect secondary data to triangulate the primary data obtained from the fieldwork (Robson, 1994, p.237). The process of the documentary search is detailed in Chapter Four.

A research design based on all the five key choices is formed and summarized in Table(3.4). The research context drawn upon the research design is discussed next.

Table 3.4 Research Design

<i>Elements of Resign Design</i>	<i>Choice</i>
Involvement of researcher	Independent
Sample	Practitioners who have connections with secondary school management in Hong Kong.
Theories	Phenomenological approach
Research methods	Qualitative research methods, i.e. interview
Assertion	Verification and Falsification

3.5 The Research Context

The context of a research can be descriptive, correlational or explanatory or a mix of all three. A descriptive research defined by Kumar (1995, p.9) as an attempt to describe systematically a situation, problem, phenomenon, service or programme, or provides information or describes attitudes towards an issue. Correlational research study is effective in examining whether there is a relationship among varies aspects of a situation or phenomenon. Explanatory research attempts to clarify why and how there is a relationship among aspects of a phenomenon (Kumar,1995).

According to the perspectives of the objectives, this study is a mix of descriptive, correlational and explanatory. At the initial stage of this study, the problems faced by school principals in school management is described, the SMI programme is studied, and the provision of professional development is examined.

This is a fact finding process and therefore, the result is presented in descriptive ways.

The next stage of the study becomes correlational because it attempts to establish the existence of a relationship between quality improvement in education and professional development. The study later turns to explanatory when it goes to further stages and starts explaining and summarizing the findings and presenting recommendations.

3.5.1 Identification of variables

In the process of formulating a research problem, the consideration of the use of concepts is important. Concepts are mental images or perception which are highly subjective as their understanding varies from person to person, and therefore, may not be measurable (Kumar, 1996, Wiersma, 1969). In a research study it is important that the concepts used should be operationalised in measurable terms so that the extent of variation in respondents' understanding is reduced if not eliminated' (Kumar, 1996, p.47).

A concept can not be measured whereas a variable can be subjected to measurement. A variable is the varying degrees of accuracy in a concept. Concepts are people's subjective impressions and cannot be measured because people are unique. It is therefore important for the concepts to be converted into variables as they can be subjected to measurement so that the formulation of the concepts can be explained.

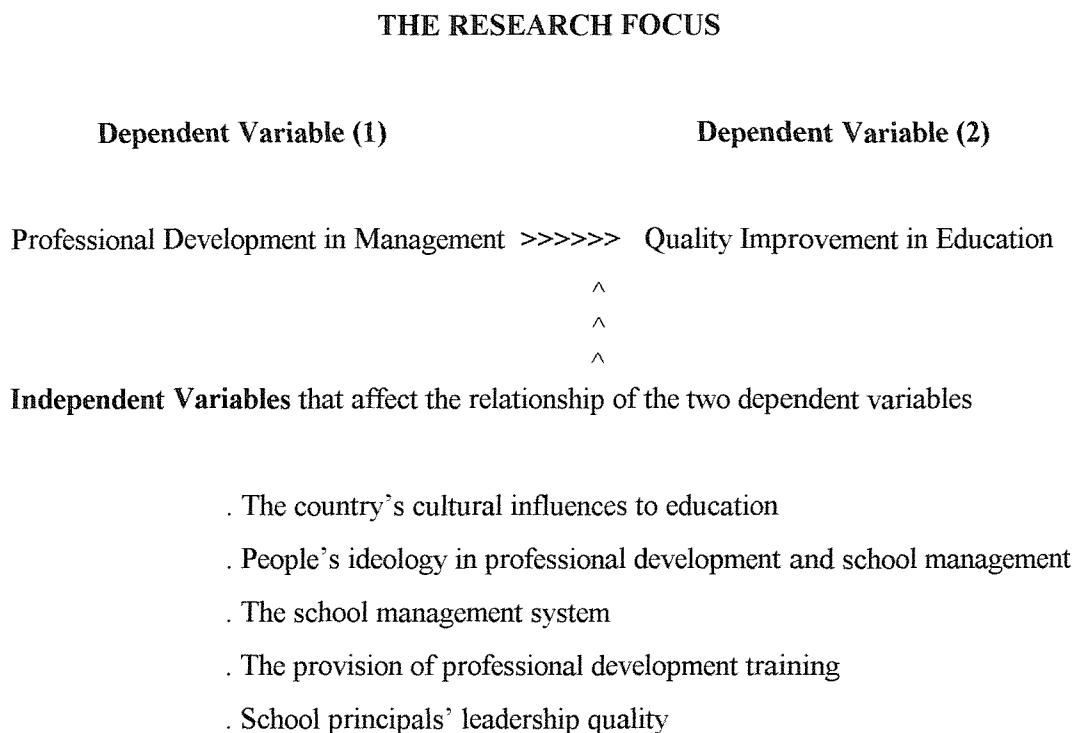
Variables are divided into independent and dependent. Independent variables exist in the situation and are not placed there or manipulated by the researcher. A dependent variable is the consequent of the independent variables. In a general sense, the values of dependent variables are dependent upon the independent variables (Wiersma, 1969).

In this study, the two main objects, professional development training programmes and quality improvement in school management are the constants, i.e. dependent variables. The independent variables are factors that would affect the functions of the two main objects. These independent variables can be used for the measurement of the relationship between the two main objects. Of course, the outcome of the measurement by the independent variables, however, are not necessary only to confirm the positiveness of the focus, they might reveal the negative relationship as well. Other factors that would also affect the strength of the relationship between professional development and quality improvement but are beyond the focus of this study will not be included.

Originate from the initial study, the most concerned problem in education now in Hong Kong is the falling of students' academic standard and teachers' job morale. Though there is no direct relationship between professional development and pupils' performance and teachers' morale, an efficient leader is always seen as the key factor to a successful school (Dean, 1993, Schein, 1985, Russ, 1995). Professional development is a main issue to ensure continuous improvement of school principals' leadership (Winrow, 1985, Fielder, 1996). The relationship between professional development and quality improvement in education is therefore, connected. However, the positive result of professional development to quality improvement appears only if professional development training is provided and being applied into practice appropriately. Thus, we need to identify the variables that could affect the value and effectiveness of professional development towards quality improvement in education in order to prove their relationship.

According to the findings from the chapter of literature review, independent variables which can contribute positive and/or negative effects to the two main objects, professional development and quality improvement, are (see Table 3.5): the country's culture and people's ideology, its school management system, people's ideology, the provision of professional development training programmes and the quality of school managers' leadership. The research methods applied for the investigation of these variables are discussed next.

Table 3.4 Variables Included in the Research Focus



3.6 Research Methods

Research methods are the range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction (Cohen & Manion, 1987, p.41). The selection among the research methods according to Hammersley (1992) should depend on the purpose and circumstances of the research, rather than being derived from methodological or philosophical commitments. He believes that trade-off should be involved. To seek greater precision, researchers are likely to sacrifice some breadth of description; and vice versa because each of the method has its strength and weaknesses.

This research study slurs of ex post facto research strategies. Ex post facto research refers to a study which investigate possible cause-and-effect relationships by observing an existing condition and searching back for causal factors. Wiersma

(1969, p.258) has put forth the definition by Kerlinger (1964, p.360) in his discussion of ex post facto research:

...research in which the independent variable(s) have already occurred and in which the researcher starts with the observation of a dependent variable(s). H/she then studies the independent variables in retrospect for their possible relations to, and effects on, the dependent variable(s).

This definition forcefully implies a lack of control over the independent variables. The independent variables exist in the situation and are not placed there or manipulated by the researcher (Wiersma, 1969). Thus, ex post facto research strategies are methods of teasing out possible antecedents of events that have happened and cannot, because of this fact, be engineered or manipulated by the investigator. The researcher takes the effect (dependent variable) and examines the data retrospectively to establish causes, relationship or associations, and their meanings (Cohen & Manion, 1992, p.176-179).

In real life, a phenomenon is always caused by more than one factor (independent variable) but the phenomenon has already occurred and we do not have control of other possible independent variable(s) which may also be responsible for the effect, thus, the basic weakness of ex post facto research design is criticized as the lack of control of the independent variable(s) (Cohen & Manion, 1992, p.176-179). Wiersma (1969, p.259) also says that the researcher of ex post facto research runs a relatively high risk of misinterpreting the results if he/she begins concluding cause and effect relationships due to the lack of control over independent variables. Despite this disadvantage, ex post facto research is particularly suitable in educational context where independent and dependent variable lie outside the researcher's control. It meets an important need of the researcher where more rigorous experimental approach is not possible (Cohen & Manion, 1992, p.181).

The research strategy of this study is to develop a cause-and-effect relationship between the two dependent variables. The existing conditions the two objects are into will be studied and the causal factors (independent variables) which have



affected their relations and their development will be searched back. These factual data will be collected through the means of a desk research and a fieldwork.

The plan of this research is drawn and shown in Appendix (11) which specifies each main step of this study. The data collection process is commenced after a pilot study had been conducted. A pilot study is needed for the investigation of the possibilities of this research study and to develop, refine and test the findings from the literature review. It is also expected to help to finalize the required data and the types of research tools would be adopted. The conduction of pilot studies and their findings is discussed in section (3.7).

The first stage of data collection after the completion of pilot studies is a documentary search which is discussed in Chapter Four. Following the completion of the documentary search is the fieldwork which takes place in Hong Kong. The key way of data collection in the fieldwork is semi-structured interview which is discussed next. The process of the fieldwork is discussed in Chapter Five.

3.6.1 Interviews

Interview is the major tool for data collection in the fieldwork. In essence an interview relies on the fact that people are able to offer accounts of their behaviour, practice and actions to those who ask them questions. It includes a wide range of techniques, from the structured questionnaires through to the unstructured conversation. Interviews can be conceived as data-collection devices which attempts to capture the responses of people to questions that are carefully standardized and intended to be minimally interventive (Walker, 1986, p.117). However, respondents often give an answer which is more public relations for their own group than an accurate response. The exercise of interviewing for data collection requires careful question plan to which answers are sought, and decision on data-gathering technique.

All the interviews in this study are decided to be semi-constructed and in-depth one-to-one interaction. Semi-structured approach is useful in generating in-depth

information and allows flexibility in different circumstances. It allows respondents to express themselves at some length, but offers enough shape to prevent aimless rambling (Wragg, 1994, p.272-273). As suggested by Tripp (1983) an interview ought to provide more coherent for the subject. It should attempt to understand, take on board and explore what the interviewee's questions are as well as pursuing only the interview agenda.

In this study, during each interview, the main frame of the questions is drawn but the wording and the sequence of all the questions are subject to change. This is a way to allow the interviewee joint the responsibility for structuring the interview in terms of the progress of questions, in content, kind, sequence and number (Tripp, 1983, p.4-5). The flexibility enables the interviewee to have the sense of equally sharing the power of questions with the interviewer. In-depth interaction will appear only when the interviewee has developed the confidence and trust with the researcher on the value of the research and the relevance of the questions. It is therefore, important to learn what questions are important to the interviewee by discovering how the questions and the relevant features are placed in the 'world-view' of the interviewee (Tripp, 1983).

One of the disadvantages of semi-constructed interviews is the researcher to be affected by the gained experience during interviews and therefore, interview questions asked of whom are interviews at the beginning may be markedly different from that obtained from those interviewed towards the end. Furthermore, the flexibility of semi-constructed interviews can easily introduce researcher bias into the study. To avoid bias and misinterpretation, all the interviewees in this study are allowed the opportunity for reflection by pausing at intervals, asking them to recapitulate and to summarize, and asking for an assessment of my own understanding at the end of each interview.

The validity of the findings from interviews depends on the accuracy they measure or describe what it purports to measure or describe. To strengthen the validity, the findings collected through interviews, is triangulated with another source of evidence i.e. a documentary search. Questionnaires are not used here

because, according to my previous experience of conducting a smaller scale research in Hong Kong, the responses tend to be low and the factual information is superficial. My experience is shared by two separate questionnaires issued by two key educational associations (see Chapter Four, Section 4.7.2). Although both of the questionnaires concern teachers' welfare and benefit the responses are still less than 25%. People who are not even keen on answering questionnaires concerning their own benefit cannot be expected to give good responses to my questionnaire. Furthermore, responses from questionnaires tend to be more superficial because people are not keen to reveal their opinions in writing. Instead of carrying out questionnaires which bring no certain responses in terms of quality and quantity, a documentary analysis is conducted for the collection of supplementary data to triangulate the findings from fieldwork.

3.6.2 Questions design

The main questions that secondary and primary data collections will be finding answers for are decided according to the variables identified earlier (see Table 3-5 in Section 3.4.2). To establish the relationship between the two main objects, professional development and quality improvement, it is necessary to study the possible affection brought by the five key independent variables to each of the object's development. How the two main objects (dependent variables) are affected by the five variables would become the foundation of the research questions. Five key questions regarding the relationship between the five variables and 'professional development in school management' are formed as follow:-

1. What is the cultural effect on the demand and provision of professional development training for school principals in Hong Kong?
2. What is the extent of influence to the growth of professional development caused by the education system of Hong Kong?
3. Are school principals coping with the latest changes to the school management system?
4. What implication is brought to the importance of professional development in

school management by school principals' performance?

5. Does the provision of professional development training courses meet practitioners' expectation?

The five key questions regarding the relationship between the independent variables and 'quality improvement' are formed as follow:-

1. What are people's perceptions and opinions to quality improvement in education?
2. How is the progress of quality improvement affected by the existing management system?
3. How is practitioners' ideology in the pursuit of quality improvement in education?
4. How can professional development training help to improve quality in education?
5. How important is school principals' leadership quality to quality improvement in education?

These two sets of questions are then combined to form five key questions which are used as the framework for the design of questionnaires, they are:

1. What is people's interpretation on the value of professional development towards quality improvement.
2. Is the development of professional development in Hong Kong suppressed by the education system and resulted stagnation in quality improvement?
3. Is people's demand in professional development affected by their ideology in school management and quality improvement?
4. Can people's performance in quality improvement or SMI reflect their need in professional development?
5. Are the current professional development training programmes effective in leading people towards quality improvement?

Questionnaires for data collection in the fieldwork are drafted upon these key questions and they are tested out in pilot studies before being finalized. The process of the pilot studies and the findings are discussed next.

3.7 Pilot Studies

Pilot study is one kind of research instrument which is used for trying out of the research schedule. Bell (1987) insists that all data gathering instruments should be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear and to enable us to remove any items which do not yield unusable data.

The purpose of a pilot exercise is to get the bugs out of the instrument so that subjects in our main study will experience no difficulties in completing it and so that we can carry out a preliminary analysis to see whether the wording and format of questions will present any difficulties when the main data are analyzed (Bell, 1987, p.65). Pilot studies also help to reveal inadequacies in the initial design of research. However, we must bear in mind that the key aim of piloting is to allow flexibility of interview questions designs by selecting the questions different from those initially identified but not in changing the purpose or objectives of the study.

The first of the three main aims of conducting pilot studies in this research is to test out the research questions which will be used for primary data collection. The second target is to explore further factors which are relevant to the research area but are missed out by the initial plan. Another important aim of conducting pilot studies is to obtain up-to-date information as recording information extracted from files or journals may be changed without prior knowledge especially that I am not directly involved in any school duties. From the beginning of the research to the stage of data collection, a range of changes may have already occurred in schools or in the education system and have not been noticed. Thus, after finishing the pilot studies, some partial adjustment to the initial research schedule are always unavoidable.

3.7.1 Informal interviews

Due to geographical reasons, all the pilot studies were conducted in this country. The process of pilot studying is divided into two stages, informal interviews and formal interviews. The first stage is the conduction of informal interviews with aims to gain an initial understanding to the practical side of school management and professional development training courses by talking to the people who are in the “business”. The features of these interviews are causal, brief and with no prior arrangement. The findings of these informal interviews are used for the preparation of the formal interview question plans.

Total of eight informal interviews were carried out and all the respondents are attendants of two separate MA educational management courses at Southampton University in the year 1995-6. The selection of respondents is by random, i.e. whoever is available during the particular period. Among the eight respondents, only one is a school principal and the rest are three department heads, three teaching staff and one school governor. (According to the tutor of the two courses, the majority of the course attendants are department heads or teachers. The number of principals or deputy heads doing these courses is always small because most of them would have already done the similar training before their headship.) They are all working full time in primary or secondary schools in Hampshire area. These interviews took place during break time or before/after lectures. Four key questions were raised in each interview which took about ten minutes to finish. The four questions and the reasons of asking the questions are shown in Appendix (12.I). Interpretation of the findings from informal interviews are summarized and shown in Appendix (12.II).

3.7.2 Formal interviews

A data collection plan for the use in the fieldwork was drawn after the completion of this informal pilot interviews (see Appendix 13). Questionnaire for each group in the sample population is drafted according to this data collection plan. The second stage of the pilot study is the conduction of formal interview to one principal, one teacher and one school governor with aim of testing the

appropriateness of the questions included in questionnaires, revising items, eliminating ambiguities and refining the procedures of data collection. Respondents will be asked to give the following feedback after the completion of the mock questions:

1. Were any of the questions unclear or ambiguous to you?
2. Was the sequence of the questions flowing properly?
3. What other question(s) you wanted to be asked but was missed out?
4. Is there any question(s) that you feel sensitive with or find it difficult to answer?
5. Any other comments?

. Interview One

The questionnaire of the first interview contained thirteen questions and was expected to be completed within one hour. The interviewee is a principal of a secondary school in Hampshire (a self-managing school) who has finished her master degree in management in education at Southampton University not long ago. The interview appointment was pre-arranged and took place in the interviewee's office.

Knowing that this was a pilot study and I am an overseas student with no practical experience in school management in this country, the interviewee was very patient and helpful throughout the interview. All the questions were answered comprehensively. Apart from the answer of the scheduled questions, valuable information was also obtained from her feedback such as what other areas should be looked into and where else to obtain further information.

A much better understanding to the management process of a self-managing school is obtained as well as the working relationship between a principal and the governors. The importance of the efficiency of a governing body to the result of self-managing school is outlined. The need for schools to learn from the commercial world is also raised in this study. The interpretation of the collected information is summarized and shown in Appendix (14).

. Interview Two

The interviewee of the second pilot interview is a secondary school teacher from Hong Kong who took one year off for the study of MA degree course in school management. Since most of the information regarding the school management system in Hong Kong was obtained from official reports, there is a shortage of knowledge regarding the actual situation of school management in Hong Kong and this pilot study fills the gap just well. As well as obtaining more up-to-date information about the latest development of school management and professional development in Hong Kong, this pilot interview also enables a chance to hear another side of opinion towards the research focus from a teacher.

The interview was conducted in a more casual situation and the media of communication was Cantonese, our mother-tongue. As well as answering all the questions, the interviewee also expressed her opinions towards the recent development in professional development and the worry over the uncertain political future. Some of the problems raised by her were not mentioned in any of the official reports or journals. As well as confirming the findings from the initial research, this interview also enhanced my understanding of the internal management process of school in Hong Kong and the working relationship between the principal, the teachers and school governors. The findings of this interview is summarized in Appendix (15).

. Interview Three

The third interview was carried out with an ex-school governor from Hong Kong who has recently retired from all her duties and is now living in this country. This retired missionary explained clearly how the church establish schools in Hong Kong and what strategies are adopted for their operation. She also explained the agreement and relationship between a sponsoring group and the government in school operation.

Through this interview, internal information about the structure of a sponsoring body and its policies in education is obtained. The interviewee admitted that the church, i.e. the sponsoring body of over twenty schools in Hong Kong has very little involvement in their schools' day-to-day management and very often, they are not even sure how well the principals are performing. The church group has recently been pressurized by the government to change its school operation policies and to join SMI. To join SMI, the group will need to make substantial changes to its long existed policies in education which they may not be able to cope and cannot be done within a short period. The interpretation of the interview is shown in Appendix (16).

3.8 Summary

These three pilot studies help to test and refine the three sets of interview questions for the fieldwork (see Appendix 17, 18, 19 & 20). Questions included in the questionnaires were test-proved to be able to serve the purpose but most of them required some adjustments. For example, few questions were combined; more accurate wordings were used and the sequence of some questions were changed. These pilot studies also generate valuable information which helps to nourish the coverage of this research.

Following these pilot studies is the commencement of the process for data collection. The first stage of data collection is a documentary search which is discussed in Chapter Four. Chapter Five concerns the second stage of data collection, the fieldwork. The findings from both searches are compared and analyzed in Chapter Six. Finally, recommendations regarding the result of this study is presented in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER FOUR DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

A secondary data search through documentary analysis is carried out in this chapter to explore published comments related to the focus of this research study. The source of data for this desk research is solely from newspapers. Newspaper articles concerning the two main areas, quality improvement in education and professional development and the five key elements: (i) school principals' leadership, (ii) cultural and ideological influences to practitioners' perception to quality improvement and professional development, (iii) the school management system and the latest changes, (iv) the demand of professional development training and (v) the provision of professional development (see Chapter Three, Section 3.4.2 and Table 3.5) are selected and studied.

Newspapers are used as the sole source of this secondary data search because the number of other publications such as bulletins or journals of education in Hong Kong is very limited. The few available ones are published either six-monthly or annually and they do not have extensive coverage on the subject of school management. Newspapers are the only source that provides continuous coverage on the recent development in the school management system.

The advantages of this newspaper search are its wide coverage and its ability to capture people's immediate response upon special incidents. Newspaper articles cover not only the stories of special incidents but also official reports released by the government or educational organizations. There are also personal comments given by people from different background, news for the most recent researches, etc. First hand information or feedback from the related parties of the special incidents captured by journalists are valuable in revealing people's immediate response or reaction. Newspapers are also a channel for organizations such as unions of education practitioners or school sponsoring bodies to voice themselves.

The government also uses newspapers as a channel to reply to criticisms from the public.

We can see that each newspaper article contributes a piece of fact to the situation and some are even representing the voice of hundreds of members of a union. The validity of the findings obtained from this source is, therefore strong. This newspaper search is a supplementary research method to help to compensate the otherwise possible limitation of this study caused by searching evidence from a small sample. The findings from this documentary search is compared with the result of the fieldwork to triangulate both sources of data.

The strategies for the selection of newspaper and articles are firstly explained in this chapter. The collected data and information will then be categorized and analyzed. There follows a study of the findings and interpretation. The implication from the findings are discussed in the final session.

4.2 Selection of materials

Eight newspapers are sampled in this search, they are Fai Po, Sing Tao Daily, Wah Kau Daily, Wan Wei Po, Tai Kung Po, Sung Po, The United Newspaper and South China Morning Post. They are selected because they are all quality newspapers and each has a special column for the discussion of educational matters. All the articles concerning the matters raised in this research study were published in 1994 and 1995.

There were about 85-100 articles concerning educational issues published in these eight newspapers each month within these two years. Unless there were special announcements from the government, special incidents or other issues brought up by unions relating school management, the number of articles on school management was comparatively small. In general, the average number of articles concerning school management by the eight selected papers was only about 3-4 each month.

The number of articles highlighting school management increased substantially in two special occasions in these two years. The first one was in January 1995, following a request made by the government asking educators to comment on the newly issued Report of Education Quality Assurance which was first published in December 1994. Thirteen out of the total 123 educational articles in the eight newspapers discussed the issues of SMI and QAU. The second occasion happened in March, the same year, which was the deadline of the consultation period of the proposal of QAU. The number of articles stating matters regarding school management reached a peak of 23 out of the total 129 articles.

Over one hundred articles concerning school management published in 1994 & 95 are studied. Eighty-four of them discussing the two main areas i.e. quality improvement in education and professional development are selected for further analysis. Among the selected articles, thirty-five are written by newspaper journalists (see Table 4.1). Twenty-eight out of the thirty-five reports written by newspaper journalists are records of interviews with school principals, spokespersons of unions or school sponsoring groups.

Table 4.1 Authors of newspaper articles

Total no. of articles selected and analyzed: 84

Written by - *journalists* - as a news report: 7

- as a report of an interview: 28

- *members of unions or sponsoring groups*: 8

- *individual educators* - using real name: 26

- remain anonymous: 12

- *members of Working Group appointed by the government* -3

Thirty-two articles are written by leading members or spokespersons of educational unions, organizations or school sponsoring bodies and each of these unions or organizations represents a large number of educational practitioners (see

Table 4.1). Twenty-six articles are written by eight individual educationalists under their real names (one of the eight authors wrote a total of ten articles) and twelve articles are written by seven anonymous educators (one of them wrote a total of 5 articles). Among the eight writers who published their articles under real names, five are leading members of separate education unions. Three articles are written by members of the Working Group who are appointed by the government to draft the QAU Report which was published in December 1994 (see Table 4.1). We can see that over 80% of the articles analyzed in this search are information and opinions given by the major educational organizations and unions, the reliability and representatives of the findings from the analysis are therefore, reassured.

4.3 Information Collection Plan

Data collection plan is based on four key questions regarding the research focus:

Question One: What are education practitioners' opinions and suggestions towards decentralization and quality improvement?

Question Two: How well are school principals coping with their school management duties and the implementation of SMI?

Question Three: How much are the government and school managers aware of the importance of professional development in school management for quality improvement in education?

Question Four: How can professional development in school management help to improve quality in education in Hong Kong?

According to these four questions, this newspaper search will look at information from four directions, they are: people's comments on SMI and QAU, their opinions on issues of quality improvement, government's responses to people's need and criticism and other problems which might cause influence to the

two independent variables of the research phenomena. All the collected messages or opinions are gathered and presented in descriptive and summary form.

4.4 Education Practitioners' Opinions towards SMI

1. The idea of SMI is widely accepted by most of the educators (C.K.Yip and Y.C.Au-Yeung in Sing Tao Daily, 15.6.1994; S.W.Yip in Wan Wei Newspaper, 15.3.1994) but the launch of the scheme is criticized by many of them as being too rush and too soon. The purpose of the scheme and its potential advantages for education practitioners and students are criticized as ambiguous (Y.H.Yau in Fai Po Newspaper, 13.9.1995 and W.K.Tsang in Wah Kau Daily, 9.1.1995).

2. Many educators believe that only schemes that benefit teachers and students will be supported by the people whole-heartedly (H.L.Tai in Fai Po Newspaper, 5.1.1994; K.P.Mak in Fai Po Newspaper, 13.9.1995; C.K.Yip and J.C.Fong of Tung Wah Hospital Group in Sing Tao Daily, 15.6.1994). Many teachers are still not sure how they can be benefited by SMI but are already put off by the daunting extra workload (W.K.Tsang and S.K.Ng in Wah Kau Daily in 9.1.1995; S.T. Leung in Wan Wei Po Newspaper, 12.1.2.1994). In average, a secondary school teacher is giving 30 lessons a week and some senior teachers needed to handle managerial duties as well. Many of them are so busy that they could hardly have space to run extra-curricular activities or implement changes into classroom teaching. Joining SMI would bring to them tremendous amount of paper work on top of their already heavy duties (W.K.Wong of Association of Teaching Professionals in Fai Po Newspaper in 4.1.1995).

W.K.Tsang, a lecturer of University of Chinese, commented that 'SMI had brought heavy workload to the teachers before the appearance of any positive result. Teachers, under such a busy schedule, can hardly have space to seriously analysis and appreciate the scheme' (Wah Kau Daily, 9.1.1995). Thus, many of them refused joining SMI simply because they do not see the value of the scheme.

Staff of some SMI schools are criticized as behaving passively to the scheme and not implementing it seriously. (H.L.Tai in Fai Po Newspaper, 5.1.1995; M.B.Cheung of Hong Kong Association of Adult Education in Fai Po Newspaper in 13.9.1995; H.L. Wong in Sing Tao Daily, 22.9.1995 and H.K.Lau in Sing Tao, 6.1.1995). As commented by H.L.Wong that 'no matter how excellent the scheme is, it would not be a success if the people involved are not enthusiastic with its implementation' (H.L.Wong in Sing Tao Daily, 22.9.1995).

3. Some educators feel that ED has over concerned with the process of the implementation of the scheme than its actual results. In other words ED cares more about getting the schools to join the scheme than the result of the implementation of the scheme. Practitioners also have worry over who would be responsible for ensuring appropriate implementation of SMI (H.K.Tai in Sing Tao Daily, 5.1.1994; H.L.Wong in Sing Tao Daily, 22.9.1995; Anonymous author in Shung Po Newspaper, 22.3.1995).

4. The government is criticized for launching a series of new changes in school management in a short period without thorough consideration of their appropriateness for the system of Hong Kong. It is also blamed for not setting up a long term plan in support of the introduction of these new schemes (K.Y.Wong of The Association of Assessment in Education in Ming Po Newspaper, 30.3.1995 and K.K.Choi in Wan Wei Newspaper, 10.2.1995). The context of SMI needed several adjustments as a result of the lack of a comprehensive plan after its launch which had shaken many educators' confidence to the scheme (Y.C.Yeung of The Association of Educators of Hong Kong in Fai Po Newspaper, 8.12.1994; Y.C.Yeung of Association of Educators of Hong Kong in Fai Po Newspaper, 8.12.1995).

5. A reform would be possible only if it is practical, a claim made by many educators (H.K.Wong of Teachers Association of Hong Kong in United Newspaper, 25.1.1995, Anonymous author in Tai Kung Newspaper, 11.1.1995). Regret is expressed by one principal whose school joined SMI in the first slot (total of 21 schools joined SMI when it was first launched in 1991). A principal of a SMI

school complained that ‘the scheme is not as efficient as expected because there is so much paper work involved in its operation and we could hardly have time to evaluate its progress or assess its outcome. Consequently, the scheme is carried out hastily without giving us a chance to appreciate its value’ (S.K.Ng in Wah Kau Daily, 9.1.1995).

6. The introduction of SMI was criticized by one university lecturer as “exploiting educators’ autonomy in delivering education” because of the extra demand caused by assessments and supervision on schools and teachers’ (W.K. Tsang in Fai Po Newspaper, 4.1.1995). He remarked that ‘texts books in Hong Kong are well designed and always integrated with comprehensive workbooks which are widely used and highly depended upon by the majority of the teachers. Teachers therefore, do not need to be a producer to produce teaching materials and could concentrate on delivering knowledge straight from the texts books. However, the introduction of SMI requires teachers to produce a series of plans and reports which means that they have to be producers as well as knowledge deliverers’ (W.K. Tsang in Fai Po Newspaper, 4.1.1995).

7. According to the SMI manual, schools need to publish their performance of each academic year to ED and the public. As suggested by the manual, school’s performance should be measured by its achievement on three bases: pupils’ internal exam results; improvement of pupils’ learning ability and the progress of teachers in their teaching. Many heads worry about the consequence of disclosing their students’ academic results. They claimed that most likely parents would use this figure as a yardstick to judge the standard of a school which would be very unfair to schools that have taken on students of lower banding (Y.C. Yeung in Sing Tao Daily, 7.2.1994).

8. As producing annual report is a new duty to many principals in Hong Kong, each of the SMI school is given by ED a sample annual report of an overseas school as reference. According to official data, only 3 out of the 21 SMI schools who joined the scheme in the first slot in 1991 managed to submit their first annual reports on time. None of the three schools had followed the ED’s instruction to publish their

students' academic result in their submitted reports (Sing Tao Daily, 7.2.1994). Although many of them understood the purpose of this openness, they are reluctant to comply with recommendation because they fear that people would judge their performance according to the exam result (Y.C.Au-Yeung in Sing Tao Daily, 7.1.1994).

9. Some educators suggested ED to make SMI compulsory and to allow schools to join the scheme gradually, i.e. stage by stage (K.K.Choi in Sing Tao Daily, 23.1.1995 ; P.T.Lee of The Association of School Principals of Chinese Christian Church Schools in Wan Wei Newspaper, 9.3.1995).

4.5 Comments on Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)

A report published by the Working Group of Education Standard in December 1994 proposed the establishment of a QAU which has stirred up strong reaction amongst educators. All the education practitioners in Hong Kong are given three months consultation time to express their comments and suggestions regarding the proposal in writing to the ED.

The number of comments received by the Working Group at the end of the three months consultation period is only 16. Among the 16 responses, 9 of them are from educational groups, unions and schools sponsoring bodies, 3 from the members of the Working Group itself, 3 from other social organizations and only 1 from an individual educationalist. (Source of data: Wen Wei Newspaper, 16.3.95)

During the consultation period, 23 related articles were published in the eight sample newspapers, 9 of them record comments given by nine separate educational groups (the same nine groups which had submitted a written response to the ED on the proposal of QAU), 1 is written by an anonymous secondary school principal, 1 by an educator who is an alumni of the Institute of Education of London, 1 is a report of an interview with an experienced secondary school principal and the rest are newsreports and comments made by journalists. The comments and suggestions given on these 23 articles are summarized as follow:

1. The QAU report has been strongly criticized by education groups as being a disappointment. They expected the report to be a comprehensive assessment of the current education system, identification of the existing problems and provision of solutions for the problems. Instead, the report concentrated on promoting quality assurance through the reform of the school management system and proposed the establishment of QAU to push forward the implementation of SMI. The QAU report is criticized as placing the wrong priority to the urgency of the situation (Association of Educators of Hong Kong in Tai Kung Newspaper, 12.3.1995; H.K.Wong of Teachers Association in The United Newspaper, 25.1.1995; Association of School Principals of Chinese Christian Church Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 3.17.1995).

The report was also criticized by several other unions and sponsoring bodies as lacking foundation because no suggestion was made to deal with the existing problems of the system (The Association of Educators in Tai Kung Newspaper, 12.3.1995 and The Association of Assessment of Education in Ming Po Newspaper, 30.3.1995). Almost all the educators who made comments on this report remarked that schools' quality assurance can not be done simply by having more school inspection made by the QAU; producing more plans or joining SMI. They believed it was the problematic system that needed to be improved first. They had all made some suggestions on specific areas that needed to be tackled by the government. The most common areas of the education system which are suggested for rectification are:

(I). the exam system : the two public exams, HECKLE and HKHLE (same as GCSE & 'A' Level exam in England respectively) are criticized as bringing huge pressure to both the students and teachers; and manipulating the whole curriculum of secondary level education. The Aptitude Test for all the primary six students (final year of primary level) in which the test result is used as one of the indicator for the allocation of students into secondary schools is criticized as not being an appropriate tool to evaluate students' academic level.

(ii). the working environment : many teachers complain about not having a satisfactory working environment compared with many commercial organizations. Due to the limitation of space, many schools in Hong Kong are built in highly populated residential estates and hence the situation of classroom shortage is very common. In many cases, there is absolutely no space for more classroom even though the fund is available. Many of the secondary schools therefore, need to conduct a 'floating- class system', i.e. one or several class(es) of students do not have their own classrooms but to use other classrooms which were available. Teachers need to help their classes cope with this situation and at the same time, they themselves also need to bear with the crowded working environment.

(iii). the promotion system : Teachers are promoted in order of seniority instead of excellence, only senior teachers who have the experience of taking up managerial duties could have the chance for further promotion. This system is criticized as discriminating to other less experienced teachers who are enthusiastic in school management. In most cases senior teachers would stay in the managerial posts until their retirement or being promoted to the headship; less experienced teachers who have performed well in the same school would need to wait for a long time for a vacancy before their promotion. Not only are these teachers demoralized by the old fashioned promotion system but also having to cope with the poor performance of some senior teachers who are not handling their managerial duties effectively.

(iv). teachers' workload : teaching staff already suffer from heavy workload and could hardly stretch their time for extra clerical duties brought on by SMI. The scheme could meet the expected result only if teacher's work load could be lightened.

(v). teacher training : the design of the basic teacher training courses should be up-graded to match the implementation of SMI and the pace of the fast moving economy.

3. One principal predicted that the proposal of the set up of QAU would not be successful simply because it is not practical. ED expects all the schools to establish their own standard of quality assurance when many principals are not even sure about their schools' strength and weaknesses. Without the set up of a minimum standard of quality by the government, some schools may not try to achieve as much as they can. The principal mocked whether the government would tolerate if some schools use, for example, the reduction of truancy rate in one month as their quality assurance standard' (S.W.Yip in Wan Wei Newspaper, 15.3.1995).

4. Two key questions are raised in a conference attended by school principals in Hong Kong for the discussion of the proposal of QAU (Sing Tao Daily, 22.3.1995) and these questions are also brought up by other educators in other occasions (The Association of Aided Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 22.3.1995, The Association of Educators of Hong Kong in Tai Kung Newspaper, in 12.3.1995; The Association Primary School Principals of Chinese Christian Church in Sing Tao Daily, 17.3.1995).

- i. Why is not ED's role in the proposed school quality assurance scheme specified?
- ii. Why the importance of teachers' qualification and training are highlighted in the report but the methods of maintaining and improving teachers' standard are not suggested?

5. Many practitioners, education groups and school sponsoring bodies expressed their concerns over the frequent QAU school visits suggested by the Report. They worried that these visits would duplicate the inspection performed by ED's School Inspectorate and would bring extra pressure to practitioners' job (W.Y.To of The Association of Heads of Secondary School in South China Morning Post, 11.6.1994 and Fai Po Newspaper, 21.6.1994; The Association Aided Primary Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 22.3.1995; The Association of Aided Schools in Sing Tao, 22.3.1995).

To avoid duplication, QAU is suggested to target on the provision of help for schools to explore their strengths and weaknesses, to solve their managerial

problems and to rationalize their experience. Instead of being a mechanism to ensure the implementation of SMI, the QAU should also play a consulting role to help schools to formulate schedule and time table for schools who are ready to join SMI. (Anonymous author in Tai Kung Newspaper, 11.1.1995 ; M.S.Tang of Association of Aided Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 9.3.1995; Association of Aided Primary Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 22.3.1995; The Association of Educators of Hong Kong in Tai Kung Po Newspaper, 12.3.1995, The Association of Assessment of Education in Wan Wei Newspaper, 3.10.1995 and The Association of Principals of Chinese Christian Church Schools in Wan Wei Newspaper, 16.3.1995; H.L.Tai in Sing Tao Daily, 5.1.1994; C.Y.Tak of Education Committee in Fai Po Newspaper, 8.12.1994; The Association of School Principals of Chinese Christian Church Schools in Sing Daily, 17.3.1995).

6. The need for keeping close communication with parents and the community and publishing internal records such as students' exam results, attendance rate and achievement progress for the public are generally accepted by the educators. However, the report is criticized for not specifying the detail of how to achieve these targets (The Association of Educators of Hong Kong in Tai Kung Po Newspaper, 12.3.1995).

7. Several educators pointed out that encouragement and supports are not available from the government for the parents who wanted to get together and share their opinions on their children's schools' operation. In Hong Kong, many of the parents do not even know who the school supervisor is, not to mention having discussion together with the governors over school matters. They are neither encouraged by schools to come forward to express their opinions nor invited to take part in the discussion of the school's long term plan (Anonymous author in Tai Kung Newspaper, 20.1.1995; S.T.Yu in Sung Po Newspaper, 14.1.1995; Anonymous author in Wah Kau Daily, 7.1.1994).

8. The newsreport in Wah Kau Daily on 8.8.1994 revealed the findings of a recent research conducted by a university, that parents and teachers have communication only on the grounds of students' academic performance. The majority of parents are

not keen to take part in their children's schools activities. They are quite satisfied with the present situation i.e. to be kept informed with the schools' major policies and any special changes which would affect their children. Most of them are unwilling to be involved into the school management and decision making process. School managers, on the other hand, are happy with parents' low level of participation in the school's operation and do not wish to encourage further of their involvement. Most of the principals do not see the setting up of a parents association as a priority because they claimed that there are far more other important matters awaiting to be handled first. In brief, both sides, the schools and the parents are happy with the current relationship and are not keen to increase the degree of their co-operation.

The research suggests that schools should establish their own 'parents policy' to encourage more parental contribution to school management. But it is important to ensure that parents do not participate more than they were expected to. The ED is suggested to act as a mediator to encourage better co-operation between both parties. It is also suggested that schools should develop in-school training for their staff and parents to ensure that both parties could communicate and work together effectively. It is also necessary for schools to help parents set up a network of their own so that they themselves can have more frequent contacts.

9. The existing school inspectors from the Division of School Inspectorate are criticized as not up to the job. They do not have the appropriate experience and qualification to provide helpful advice or support to the schools during their regular visits (Wah Kau Daily, 15.6.1994; H.L.Tai in Fai Po Newspaper, 5.1.1994, The Association of Secondary School Principals of Chinese Christian Church Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 22.3.1995 and K.K.Choi in Sing Tao Daily, 30.3.1995). One education group suggests that a separate unit should be set up to replace both the existing ED's Inspecting section and the proposed QAU's school visiting team (The Association of Aided Primary Schools, 9.3.1995).

10. School inspectors are criticized by the teachers as lacking practical experience but on the other hand, teachers are criticized by the inspectors as being too

conservative and unwilling to accept new ideas and changes (Anonymous author in Fai Po Newspaper, 21.6.1994).

11. Some educators worry about the availability of expertise in Hong Kong to carry out the job of quality assurance (H.L.Tai in Fai Po Newspaper, 5.1.1994; Anonymous author in Sung Po Newspaper, 22.3.95).

4.6 Summary of Comments on Approaches for Quality Improvement

1. The Association of Educators of Hong Kong (Tai Kung Po Newspaper, 12.3.1995) criticized the QAU report for failing to reveal the primary problem in the current system, mainly the decline of students' academic standard. SMI and QAU could possibly work only such a fundamental problem is resolved. The reasons behind the decline of the students' academic standard identified by the group are:

(i). mixed ability in classroom - unlike the past, schools do not have total autonomy over the selection of students nor the power to keep students down a year repeatedly if they have performed poorly (each student is allowed to repeat the same year only once in the whole period of the nine year free education). Therefore, the chance of finding students of mixed ability in the same class is high and this is blamed as the main reason for the falling of standard.

(ii). unreasonable educational policies- The strong emphasis on English as a teaching medium has created an additional barrier to the students' learning ability; this also undermines the importance of Chinese language which is the mother-tongue for most in Hong Kong. (This message was expressed before the compulsory switch of teaching media from English to Chinese in 1998. Today, many educationalists complains about not being able to stay in English schools instead.)

(iii). poor design of syllabus of HKCEE (similar to GCSE in England)- There is criticism that too much of the exam syllabus is based on factual learning, so students tend to regurgitate knowledge parrot fashion rather than becoming individual thinkers.

(iv). teachers' heavy workload- Heavy workload has dampened many teachers' enthusiasm in seeking more creative approach to their work.

(v). teaching career becomes less attractive- teachers are less respected by their students and parents than before and their job has got more complex. Many people are discouraged to join the profession because of its unattractive working environment and heavy workload. It is believed that, due to these reasons, the standard of qualification amongst new recruits has fallen but no adjustment is made to the teacher training foundation courses to cope with this scenario. It is commented that the decline of the average standard of teachers' performance has resulted in the decline of students' learning process.

2. Suggestions for improvement made by several education groups (The Association of Teachers in Sing Tao Daily, 16.3.1995, The Association of Assessment of Education in Wan Wei Newspaper, The Association Educators of Hong Kong in Sing Tao Daily, 12.3.1995 and K.K.Choi in Sing Tao, 23.3.1995) towards these problems are to:

- i. support the use of mother-tongue as the sole teaching media,
- ii. reform the exam system,
- iii. reduce teacher's workload,
- iv. improve the working environment, and
- v. encourage better communication among schools, parents and the community.

3. Many educators criticize that though the importance for quality and standard improvement is addressed by the QAU Report, the definitions of 'quality' or 'standard' are not made. Without a yardstick, it is difficult for schools to be certain

whether their present standard and quality are up to a satisfactory level. Furthermore, the process of operating an 'effective' school is mentioned in the report but the standard of a 'good' school is not specified (S.W. Yip in Wan Wei Newspaper, 15.3.1995; The Association of Primary Aided Schools in Sing Tao , 22.3.1995; K.H.Wong of the Association of Teachers in United Newspaper, 25.1.1995). Thus, many schools may not be able to find the right direction for improvement (The Association of Educators of Hong Kong in Tai Kung Po Newspaper, 12.3.1995 and The Association of Aided Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 22.3.1995). The general public always tend to see good schools as those that produce good exam results and high university entrants. Without a clear guideline given from the government, many schools would look to the achievement of higher grades in exam as a direction for improvement and this might not be what the government meant by quality improvement (C.Chau in Tai Kung Newspaper, 25.3.1995 and H.K.Wong of The Association of Teachers in United Newspaper, 25.1.1995).

4. Teachers' heavy workload is not only used as a reason to reject SMI, it is also seen as one of the causes for the continuous decline of students' academic performance (The Association of Educators of Hong Kong in Tai Kung Po Newspaper, 12,3,1995).

5. Due to the lack of expertise in quality control in ED, schools are delegated with the managerial duties without the provision of appropriate professional support. Although many school managers are alerted of the need of quality improvement in their schools, not many of them are familiar with the concept of total quality control (H.L.Tai, Wan Wei Newspaper, 22.8.1994) or willing to implement changes for quality improvement (Anonymous author in Shung Po Newspaper, 22.3.1995). As doubted by an educator that 'to be frank, how many school principals in Hong Kong really have the knowledge of total quality management and how many of them would really put the knowledge into practice.' The introduction of SMI and QAU, is therefore condemned to be ill timed and planed (Anonymous author in Tai Kung Po Newspaper, 21.3.1995).

6. A sponsoring body claimed that the proposal of QAU cares only for the assessment of school management process and make no mention of the improvement of educators' professional performance and morale (The Association of Principals of Chinese Christian Church Schools in Wan Wei Newspaper, 16.3.1995, The Committee of Assessment of Education in Tai Kung Po Newspaper, 12.3.1995 and M.S.Tang of The Association of Aided Primary Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 9.3.1995). Some principals criticized the report for not providing more clear instruction on the methods of maintaining and improving teaching staff's professional standard (Association of Aided Primary Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 22.3.1995; Association of Educators of Hong Kong in Tai Kung Po Newspaper, 12.3.1995; Association of Heads of Chinese Christian Church Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 17.3.1995 and The Association of Assessment of Education in Wan Wei Po Newspaper, 10.3.1995).

7. An education group suggested that if schools really need to set up an internal accountable system as suggested by the QAU report in order to improve quality they would need the following supports (The Association of Aided Primary Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 9.3.1995):

i. governmental support : schools should be provided with a detailed framework and guideline to follow.

ii. professional support : the proposed QAU should provide professional support to help schools recognize their strength and weaknesses, solve their problems and rationalize their experience.

iii. professional training : to help all the persons involved to understand their roles and duties in SMI.

8. An educator pointed out that some parts of the Inspector's Report for each individual school should be published to encourage improvement and raise people's awareness to the similar problems (K.K.Choi in Sing Tao Daily, 30.3.1995).

9. Two education groups suggested that professional development training should be provided for all teaching staff to help them cope with the recent changes in education. (Committee Assessment of Education in Ming Po Newspaper, 30.3.1995; Association of Aided Schools in Sing Tao Daily, 22.3.1995;). Only one educator, a school principal of a SMI school, suggested that both the school heads, school governors and teachers need to be seriously introduced with the knowledge of SMI (Y.C.Au-Yeung in Sing Tao Daily, 20.6.1995).

10. One teacher expressed the need for an appraisal system to become mutually accountable between teachers and managers as suggested in the SMI manual. SMI only requires appraisals of staff to be conducted by the principals. He suggested that 'staff should also be given the chance to express opinions on their managers' leadership (W.W.Lau in Sing Tao Daily, 20.3.1995)'.

4.7 Other Problems

4.7.1 Uncertain future

A special report of a survey on the future uncertainty of church run schools is made by the South China Morning Post Newspaper on 6.8.96. While only 8% of the population in Hong Kong were Christians, a quarter of all kindergartens, one-third of primary schools and over 50% of secondary schools were church-run. The influence of churches over education is clear and people worry that the SAR government may want to gradually reduce the power of religious bodies over this sector, simply because of their perceived link with the colonial past. Church schools which have trained many of the territory's elite have been seen as helping to shore up the colonialist structure. According to Reverend Wendell Karsen of the Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC) (South China Morning Post, 6.8.1995), they have done this by 'producing generations of socialized and domesticated Hong Kong bananas (yellow on the outside, white on the inside)'.

The report revealed that churches has a diverse attitude towards political changes. Many of them claimed to be optimistic while other were nervous, but all

of them feel that they must continue to provide education as best as they could. Changes in the education system made by the new government are seen as inevitable. The spokesman of the Salvation Army which operates six primary and secondary schools and seven kindergartens forecasts that the education system would be changed but slowly. The majority of church-run schools are 100% subsidised by the government but a hostile government after 1997 could pull the financial plug. Most of the church groups admitted that they could not carry on if the government stopped the subsidies or took over (South China Morning Post, 6.8.1995).

4.7.2 Job pressure on teachers

Twelve teachers committed suicide in the period between 1991 to 1993. Later in October 94 to March 95, five secondary school teachers committed suicide within six months. They are all male senior teachers, aged between 31-46 (Shaun Po Newspaper, 21.3.1995). Though the motives behind these tragedies can not be proved to be directly job related, the awareness of teachers' job pressure has been high-lighted. Two separate research projects regarding teachers' stress at work are carried out by two educators' associations and a hot line is set up at a later time by one of the association.

. Research One

In the first research project, conducted by the Educators Union in December 1994 (Sing Tao Daily, 13.1.1995), two thousand questionnaires were sent out to teachers in Hong Kong and 438 replies were received. According to the result, over 90% of the responds are related to having pressure from their teaching jobs and only 32% of them feel that their jobs are respected by the community (see Table 4-2). The two main sources of their job pressure (see Table 4-3) are from school management duties (69%) and students' behaviour (62%). 52% of the teachers feel bored of their job while 48% of them have considered changing career.

Table 4-2 Teachers Opinions on Job Pressure

Questions	Yes	No	Not sure
Having pressure from job?	93%	6%	1%
Like the job?	67%	21%	9%
Feel being respected?	32%	54%	14%
Teaching job is boring?	52%	42%	6%
Any chance for promotion?	26%	59%	15%
Thinking of changing job?	48%	52%	0%

Source of Data: Sing Tao Daily, 13.1.1995

Only 30% of the teachers felt that their jobs are respected. The chief analysts of the research notes that the falling of teachers morale has been evidently shown which should be dealt with urgently. Furthermore, almost 60% of the respondents are pessimistic with future promotion opportunities, a modification of the promotion system is therefore, suggested. To reduce teachers' job pressure, the chairman of the Association which sponsored this research, suggests that the government should increase the number of executive workers, clerks and supporting staff in secondary schools.

In response to this report, one educator pointed out in an article that senior teachers are likely to face more job pressure than other staff because firstly, they are very often appointed with managerial duties on top of their already busy teaching time table. Secondly, making adjustment to new changes may be hindered by the fact that they accustomed to the old system from where they gained their education and training. Furthermore, a gradual change of social value has altered people's attitude towards the status of teachers in terms of respect. Indeed some senior teachers have found it difficult to accept this fact. They might also face the difficulties of catching up with new technology of modern day education. However, they often are less willing to discuss their problems with junior colleagues These are

all subtle problems amongst senior teachers that have gone unnoticed by school managers because their attentions are usually on newly appointed staff.

Table 4-3 Source of Teachers' Job Pressure (I)

Source of pressure	%
School management	69
Teaching duty	66
Students	62
Parents	43
Society	29

Source of Data: Sing Tao Daily, 13.1.1995

. Research Two

The second research was carried out by The Association of Teaching Professionals in March 1995 (Shaun Po Newspaper, 10.3.1995). One thousand one hundred questionnaires were sent to teachers and only 491 of them were answered and returned. According to the results, teachers' main source of pressure is a result of students' troublesome behaviour (82.5%) (see Table 4-4) and the teaching job itself ranked second (76.4%). A difference to the result of the previous research, pressure from school management duties is ranked third (70.5%) by teachers in this survey.

In summary, seven recommendations to relieve teachers' job pressure are made by the respondents of this second research:

1. reduce the size of classes (85%),
2. increase the number of clerks and release teachers from non-teaching duties (78%),
3. strengthen students' consulting service by appointing experts to do the job (67%),
4. reform the whole system (40%),

5. change the curriculum (40%),
6. justify the promotion system (39%), and
7. revise each subject's syllabus (33%).

Table 4-4 Source of Teachers' Job Pressure (II)

Source of pressure	%
Students	82.5
Teaching	76.4
Executive duties	70.5
Colleague	38.5
Personal ability & character	23.6

Source of Data: Shaun Po Newspaper, 10.3.1995

. The Hot Line

The hot line which was set up specially to help teachers voice their concern over pressure received 26 phone calls in the first month (January, 1995) of its operation. According to the record, almost all the callers have over ten years' of teaching experience and most of them complained of heavy executive duties and difficult human relations inside their schools. The key recommendation made by the Association who set up the hot line is that all the schools should run their own supporting team to deal with stress amongst colleagues through mutual discussion and counseling (Ming Po Newspaper, 9.1.1995).

4.8 Summary of Comments Made by the Government:

1. Many educators' comments on the lack of a unified definition for 'standard' and 'quality' of education and a direction for quality improvement. The Chairman of the Working Group, a sub-group of Education Commission, which drafted the QAU proposal argued that people should have their own interpretation on the meaning of

the two terms (Wah Kau Daily, 12.8.1994). He stressed that 'it is impossible for the government to give a precise definition on "standard" and "quality" because each school is unique and should have its own strength and weaknesses in different aspects. It would be unfair for the government to use only one single standard to measure school's quality and it is neither possible for the government to give a specific target for all the schools to achieve or follow' (Wah Kau Daily, 12.8.1994).

Schools should try to improve themselves to the target level that they possibly can and this level is always different from one school to another. Every school should perform at least to the minimum level of standard (the meaning of minimum requirement was not specified). A successful school is the one that has made well use of its resources and maximize its strengths. Schools should not aim to be good at every aspect because this would only suppress the development of their strong parts (K.N.Ching in Shun Po Newspaper, 14.12.1994).

The Chairman also raised the point that 'the pursuit of standard and quality improvement is the professional duty of education practitioners and therefore should be carried out by them voluntarily and enthusiastically. In other words, school's quality improvement is not ED's responsibility but the schools themselves' (Wah Kau Daily, 12.8.1994). What the government can do is to provide the schools with better environment and resources but the government should not be expected helping every single school to design their quality improvement plan or procedure. However, the centralized school management system would discourage schools to become independent and many school managers have under performed and are unwilling to pursue improvement. Due to these reasons, the delegation of managerial duties is prioritized by the government.

2. Twenty-one schools joined SMI in the first slot in 1991 and were due to submit their first annual report to the ED in 1993, however, only three schools had done so. In response to this situation, an officer of ED claimed that they appreciate 'the difficulties involved in the production of their first annual report and therefore, a sample of an annual report of a foreign school was provided to each of these schools to help them to solve their problems (Sing Tao Daily, 7,2,1994).

3. ED has admitted that they are aware of the lack of enthusiasm of some heads who have made little effort in fulfilling the aims of SMI. Some schools with poor performance records have taken advantage of joining SMI in order to benefit from receiving a block grant and gaining the subsidy for an extra clerk. Some have never attended any of the SMI seminars. Instead of asking for advice from the staff of the ED's SMI Team or attending training seminars, some heads simply copy other SMI schools' annual plans. Teachers of these schools have shown passive reaction to the scheme and claimed that they will only do what they are told by their school managers.

4. In response to people's criticism over the possible duplication of the duties between the proposed QAU and ED's School Inspectorate, an office of ED explained that QAU is to provide an objective assessment to the quality of schooling and this job cannot be fulfilled by school inspectors during school inspection (M.K.Leung in Wah Kau Daily, 10.12.1994). K.M.Ching, the Chairman of the QAU Working Group stated that 'QAU is independent from the ED with the aim to assess and report to the public each school's performance. The role of School Inspectorate is to ensure schools to follow and implement ED's regulation and guidance. The role of the two units therefore, is different (Fai Po Newspaper, 8.12.1994)'.

4.9 Information Analysis:

Comments from the educators show that the main cause of the existing problems in secondary school education is due to the out-dated education system. They do not believe that, without reforming the system, new schemes such as SMI or the set up of a QAU would solve these problems. In other words, in practitioners' point of view, to solve the existing problems in secondary school education, the priority is for the government to modernize the system of education. However, the government argues that a reform to the school management system by the introduction of SMI and QAU is to form a foundation for quality

improvement. The current problems in education can be solved only the quality of education is raised.

To understand why both sides are holding different views on the issues for quality improvement, we need to consider not only the ideology behind the practitioners' messages but also availability of resources or political dilemma for the government to meet the suggestions made by the educators. To be reflective and remain neutral, the interpretation of each piece of collected comments and suggestions will include asking the following questions:

1. Is there any other possible causes that may attribute to the problem?
2. Who else should be responsible for the problems?
3. Can the problems be solved by other alternative methods?
4. Why would people think/act in this way?

Collected information of this documentary search is summarized in Appendix (21) and questions arising from each remark are also listed. Following is the presentation of the findings generated from the summary.

4.9.1 Findings and Implications

To ensure the reliability and representative of the findings, only the points raised by educational associations or more than one educators are extracted to be used as evidence. Individual educators' view is considered as reference which contributes better understanding of the situation and support to the findings. Out of the eighty-four newspaper articles, only four key findings are generalized from this documentary, they are:

Finding One: *School principals are having difficulties in handling the delegated managerial duties and the blame has been laid on the out-dated education system.*

The difficulties with the implementation of SMI expressed by practitioners are :

- a. getting staff's cooperation with the implementation of SMI,
- b. producing annual reports,
- c. conducting staff appraisal,
- d. working together with parents and alumni,
- f. assessment of the implementation of the scheme,
- g. identifying the school's weaknesses and problems,
- h. setting the direction for further improvement.
- i. coordinating a joint vision on the school's future,
- j. a lack of experience and knowledge in total quality control,
- k. reflecting from experience, and
- l. maintaining staff's professional standard and morale.

Educators link these problems and difficulties to the out-dated education system which is the main cause of students' academic standard decline and damage to teachers' morale and job satisfaction. They believe the government is the party who should be responsible for solving the quality problem in education. No concern is made by any of the articles in this newspaper search to the responsibilities school principals should bear.

Looking at the difficulties illustrated, the first five are technical difficulties brought on by SMI and the rest are long existing managerial problems, brought to the surface by this changing phenomena. Technical difficulties regarding the implementation of the scheme can be solved by gaining the relevant knowledge or techniques. Pre-existed managerial problems, however, reflect the weaknesses of the leaders' leadership which can only be solved by the person's own adjustment. A reformed system such as better working environment, smaller class size or revised curriculum may put school principals in a better spirit and more comfortable situation to manage their schools but these changes do not solve the managerial problems caused by personal incapability.

Changing a system is not an easy task for the government and it takes time for the result to appear. Realistically, there is no such thing as a perfect system because resources are always scarce and people's expectation continuously grow/change.

We must accept the fact that when the government refuse to adjust the education system, people involved in the operation are the only factor that can make a difference, the leader in particular. Instead of waiting for a change to the system, education practitioners should take an active role in finding their own ways to cope with the situation they are in.

A school principal's leadership is under challenge when they want to make changes themselves to cope with the out-dated system. The quality of their leadership would be assessed by the action they took and the plans they made. The pursuit of improvement costs time, effort and risk. It is therefore understandable if few school principals wants to make changes. To avoid making mistakes, many would rather join the rest to take no action and wait for the system to be changed. They do not realize that, no matter what the system is like they still need to go through the same process of self-development if they wanted to pursuit further improvement to their leadership and/or their school.

Principals' "take-no-action" theory seldom gets challenged by school governors, parents or teaching staff due to these parties' low involvement in the process of school management and the lack of an systematic internal and external school evaluation system. Under performed principals are still able to put the blame of their schools' poor performance to the education system and cover up their need for improvement.

Implication: *Many school principals have under-minded their professional duties in pursuing continuous quality improvement for themselves and their schools.*

Finding Two: *SMI is not functioning because its value and purpose are neither understood nor appreciated and it has not been implemented appropriately.*

The following reasons have been raised by education practitioners for the rejection of SMI:

a. Teachers are already under heavy workload,

- b. The need for further improvement is not recognized,
- c. Teachers resent being asked to handle clerical duties, such as producing annual reports.
- d. School management cannot be improved simply by producing reports and getting a block grant, and
- e. Reform of the process of school management cannot raise the quality of education.

The first interpretation from these points is that the significance of school management to quality improvement in education is not recognized. People do not see the benefits of SMI because it is a reform to the school management system and provides no instant improvement or solutions to the current problems such as teachers' heavy workload, poor working environment and low morale. They do not support the reason behind the launch of SMI which is, according to ED, to improve the standard of education. Due to the lack of understanding to the value of the scheme, processes such as the production of annual reports and conduction of staff appraisals are not appreciated and are seen as routine clerical duties. The value of the two processes which are for the identification of schools' strength and weaknesses and direction for long term development will be recognized only if the practitioners realize the reasons of doing them and are continuously learning throughout these processes.

On the other hand, many educators' ignorant of the meaning of decentralization in which the government delegates school management duties to school principals and other stakeholders is evidently shown by their expectations for the government to provide them with central guidance. In self-managing schools, the school principals are expected to solve their own problems together with the governors and without the government's instructions or commands. Educators' dependency towards the government's central instruction are shown by their following comments:

- a. ED's role on the proposed QAU is not clearly defined,

- b. The QAU Report has not detailed the ways to ensure teachers' professional standard,
- c. ED provides only suggestion on quality improvement, not the actual guidance,
- d. ED or QAU should help schools to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to help them to come to terms with their experience,
- e. ED has not provided sufficient support for schools to carry out SMI,
- f. ED should change the promotion system in order to raise teachers' morale.
- g. The themes 'standard' and 'quality' are not well defined.

Some educators see that it is the government's responsibility to set out a long term plan in education so that they can draw their plans upon. Many blamed the authority for not giving practitioners a clear definition on the terms *standard* and *quality* of school management and therefore, they are not certain if their standard or quality are at a satisfactory level. They needed more actual guidance on the direction of improvement for their schools. Some even required a step-by-step schedule to be set up by the ED for school to follow once they starts joining SMI.

Implications : *The significance of effective management to quality improvement in education is not well recognized by education practitioners. Many school principals still rely on the government's central instructions when dealing with decentralized managerial duties.*

Finding Three: *The need for professional development in school management for quality improvement has seldom been mentioned.*

As discussed before in the chapter of literature review, professional development is a key way to enhance a person's ability and it is also a mean for the government to deliver their message and knowledge to co-ordinate with school leaders into the same vision over a new policy. School principals' need for further

professional development in Hong Kong is revealed by the difficulties they are facing in their job. School principals need to improve themselves before they can help to improve their colleagues or their schools. A new scheme needs to be appreciated by the school leader before it can be appreciated by the others.

However, the need for professional development has seldom been stressed by educators or the government. Neither of them have put forward professional development as a mean of quality improvement in education. Among all the articles in this search, only three have concerned about further professional training. One suggested that school principals and teaching staff of SMI schools should be further trained. The other two mentioned only teaching staff's need for professional development, not school managers. Only one practitioner pointed out that the majority of school principals and senior teachers in Hong Kong do not have adequate knowledge in total quality control, instead of suggesting for professional development, he blamed that SMI should not have been introduced to Hong Kong.

Implications: *Many school principals are not coping with the continuous complexity of school management duties. The significance of professional development in school management for school principals to quality improvement, however, is not recognized.*

Finding Four: *School principals still hold a conservative ideology in school management.*

Education practitioners' conservative ideology in school management is highlighted by their dependency to the government's central instruction; unwillingness to publish students' exam records and invite parents into their SMCs; and the inactivity in pursuing professional development. Regarding the public consultation of the proposal of QAU Report, only 16 responses were received by the Working Group from all the primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong and among them, only one response was from an individual educator when the rest were from different education associations or unions. One research carried out by an

education union to investigate the causes of teachers' stress at work in which 2,000 questionnaires were sent out but only 438 have been answered and returned (less than 25%). Educators were reluctant to answer questions regarding their own benefits, therefore, it is not surprise to know that only one individual educator has given written response to ED's QAU proposal. These incidents are evidence to practitioners' conservative ideology in education. A conservative ideology could obstruct practitioners from accepting new changes to school management system and the pursuit of further development.

Implication: *Educators' conservative ideology has affected their pursuit of changes and further improvement.*

4.10 Summary:

The findings of this search has confirmed what was initially revealed in Chapter One that *school principals' need in professional development is neglected by the government and education practitioners*. School principals' need for professional development in school management is also identified as well as their over dependency towards the governments' central instruction in school management. To justify the reliability of these findings and to explore further possible reasons which might not be disclosed by this documentary data search, the next step is to carry out a field work to collect primary data directly from the people involved in school management.

The process of the fieldwork will be explained in Chapter Five. Chapter Six is the interpretation of the collected data and a comparison of the findings from primary and secondary data searches. Summary and recommendations will be made in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER FIVE FIELD RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

A field work, consisting two parts, is carried out in Hong Kong for primary data collection. The first part is to interview practitioners of secondary school education, including nine school principals, one deputy-head and one senior teacher. The second part is to interview school stakeholders who have influence on the development of school management and quality improvement, they are one professional development training course provider, one school governor and one ED officer. This chapter is begun with an introduction of the background of each interviewed practitioner and the institutions they are serving. This is followed by descriptions of the process of the conduction of the interviews. Collected data from interviews are then categorized and presented.

As described in the methodology chapter, semi-scheduled interview is decided to be the sole research method in this field work. Non-probability method is used for the selection of sample population of the first part of fieldwork (see Chapter Three, Section 3.4, Point 3). The qualification and experience of the eleven educators, all from different secondary schools, are listed in Table 5-1.

5.2 Information of the Sample Schools

Among the eleven sample schools, eight have a religious background, one is sponsored by a clan association, one by a charity group and one by the government (see Table 5-2). Due to the ethical issue of confidentiality, none of the name of these schools or their sponsor will be revealed. Each school is given a number which is decided by the sequence of the interview. To avoid the identity of the interviewees and the schools they serve being traced through other evidence, the exact figures of data such as the year the school was found, the total number of schools each sponsoring body is involved or the years of experience of the interviewees in their present post will not be specified, only a round-up figure will be shown instead.

Table 5-1. Qualification and experience of the interviewees

School	Position of Interviewee	Qualification	Years of Experience in the Post
1	P	MA	10+
2	P	Bsc	20+
3	P	Phd	15+
4	P	Bsc	15+
5	P	Bsc	10+
6	P	MA	3+
7	P	MA	5+
8	P	Phd	20+
9	DH	MA	5+
10	T	Bsc	5+
11	P	MA	5+

P-Principal DH-Deputy Head T-Teacher

Bsc - Bachelor in Social Science MA - Master Degree in Education

Phd - Doctor in Philosophy

In Hong Kong, there are 90 religious bodies (mainly Catholic/Protestant) operating over 400 educational institutions (see Appendix 6). Eighteen of them each runs over ten institutions and seventy-two of them are running less than five. The six sample schools, School 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8 are operated by four church groups and each runs over ten secondary schools in Hong Kong. We can see that these six sample church schools are representing a minimum of forty secondary schools with a similar background.

TABLE 5-2. Information of the sample schools

<i>School</i>	<i>Years of foundation</i>	<i>Sponsoring Body</i>	<i>SMI school?</i>	<i>Students ' Banding</i>
1	30+	Church group A	No	1
2	20+	Church group A	No	1
3	15+	Clan Association	Yes	1&2
4	25+	Church group B	No	4&5
5	70+	Church group C	No	Mostly 1
6	70+	Church group D	No	1
7	30+	Church group A	No	1-3
8	30+	Church group A	Yes	1-3
9	15+	Welfare body	Yes	1-3
10	5+	Government	Yes	1&2
11	25+	Church Group E	Yes	1&2

School 5 and 11 are also church run schools but they are the only school operated by their sponsoring church. There are 96 school sponsors each operating only one school in Hong Kong (see Appendix 6). These two sample schools are therefore, the representatives of the 96 schools with similar background (12% of the total number of secondary schools).

The number of schools run by clan/townsmen associations are increasing in Hong Kong. Fourteen of these associations are in operation of schools but only three of them operate over ten schools. School 3 is operated by one of the biggest clansmen associations in Hong Kong which at the same time is operating ten other schools. School 3, therefore, is an ideal representative of the schools sponsored by clans/townsmen groups.

Twenty-two of the welfare bodies are school sponsors in Hong Kong and eight of them each operates over ten schools. School 9 is a charity group run school whose sponsor is one of the biggest charity group in Hong Kong which sponsors

well over fifteen secondary institutions as well as other level of education institutions and public services.

School 10 is a government school, run directly by the ED. Only 8.5% of the secondary schools in Hong Kong are run by the government (see Table 1-1 in Chapter One). Staff in government schools have the same status as civil servants because their employer is the government. ED runs all the government schools in the same approach and therefore, School 10 is representing all the government schools.

5.3 Data Collection - Stage One

Nine of the interviews were conducted at the interviewees' own offices and each interview lasted an average of one hour and fifteen minutes. Two interviews were conducted over the telephone at the interviewees' request and each lasted about forty-five minutes. Telephone interviews took less time to finish because there was not as much casual conversation before or after the schedule questions. The time of each telephone interview was pre-arranged to avoid unnecessary distractions during the process. The outcome of the telephone interviews is as rich as the other face-to-face interviews. The only thing missing from the telephone interviews is the personal contacts which would add on the body language factors which helps to assess the emotional expression of the respondents.

Amongst the nine face-to-face interviews, seven were taped with the consents of the respondents and two interviewees rejected being taped. Taping of some interviews were stopped earlier than others because some respondents behaved tense and were reluctant to discuss sensitive issues thoroughly. Few questions were raised to them again during the feedback sessions after the recording process was stopped and more comprehensive information and opinions were obtained under a more relaxing atmosphere. Some interviews took longer than the others because the respondents were eager to express more of their views regarding the research topic. Any further discussions would carry on only after the end of all the scheduled questions. Many useful information had been obtained through these after-interview discussion.

Through this fieldwork, information regarding the formation of sample schools' school **governing body** and **PTA** and the school **supervisor's** commitment is collected to describe the working relationship between the principal, governors and the SMC and to see how much influence the unique school sponsoring system can have on the development of school management system. The amount of support a principal can receive from the SMC and the degree of parents and teachers' involvement in school management are then examined in order to find out if school principals are often left to manage their schools single-handedly and how they see about the situation. Possible influences caused by the culture of education and people's ideology to the development of school improvement programmes is gathered through respondents' opinions towards **SMI** and the **school management system**. Respondents are also asked to comment on the need of **professional development** for school principals and on the provision of professional development training programmes. Their confidence towards the **future** of Hong Kong and **other comments** regarding school management and quality improvement are concerned too, so that other possible factors having affection on people's belief and attitude on the issues of quality improvement can be explored. Furthermore, in order to assess school principals' need in further professional development, to verify the opinions provided by school principals, the deputy-head and senior teacher were asked to comment on their **principals' leadership quality**.

5.3.1 Governing Body/School Management Committee (SMC)

The number of governors in each sample school's SMC is shown in Table 5-3. The smallest of the sample SMC consists of seven governors while the largest has thirty. In church sponsored schools, the majority of the governors are members of the church nominated by the religious leader. The governors of schools sponsored by clan association or charity groups are mainly honourable members of the groups. The number of parents and teachers being selected into SMC is still very small even though it is gradually building up following the launch of SMI.

. Church run schools

Eight sample schools are run by church groups. With the exception of School 5, 6 and 11, the other five church run schools (School 1,2,4,7 and 8) are centrally operated by their sponsoring groups' central SMC. These central SMCs are all formed purely by members of the group. These SMC governors are usually well educated professionals who are dedicated and active to their church's business. In Protestant church groups, the Bishop is always the chairman of each school's SMC. In other words, the Bishop is the chairman of the central SMC supervising over forty secondary schools.

Among the eight church-run schools in the sample, only School 8 and 11 have included all other stakeholders, i.e. parents, alumni and teachers into their SMCs (see Table 5.3). Amongst the rest, four have totally rejected the idea of including parents and alumni who are neither members of their belonging churches nor nominated by the church leader into their SMCs. Two have included only parents and alumni but not teachers.

Respondents' reasons for the exclusion of other stakeholders into their SMCs are firstly, to prevent interference or opposite views to be brought into their schools' management policies. They also worry that teachers attending SMC meetings would be counter-productive when discussing matters concerning their benefits such as promotion or pay rise. Another concern is political influence might be brought into schools by other school stakeholders after they become SMC members.

. Grand schools

Five schools in the sample have included alumnus and/parents into their SMC, they are School 5, 6, 8, 10 & 11 (see Table 5-3). School 8, 10 and 11 are SMI schools but School 5 and 6 are not. Thus, the involvement of parents and alumnus in School 5 and 6 are not for joining the scheme. The common background shared by these two schools is that they both are Grand schools in Hong Kong, i.e. the oldest church schools, founded over 70 years ago and are operated by its own SMC.

School 5 is the sponsoring church's only sponsored secondary school but School 6 is sponsored by one of the largest sponsoring groups. School 6 has its own SMC and is not centrally run by the group's central SMC like other schools sponsored by the same group because it was founded long before the group had started increasing the number of sponsoring schools and the establishment of a central SMC. The school has its long tradition of being independently operated by its school governing body, membered by high profile alumnus and parents.

There are total of 22 Grand schools in Hong Kong sharing the many common features. Firstly, most of them were founded by ministers from overseas from countries such as USA. and Great Britain many decades ago. The academic standard of these schools are all high because they used to have very high standard entrance exams to select the highest standard students. Due to their sound foundation and students' excellent achievement record in public exams, these Grand schools which are also described as privilege schools, are seen as some kind of elite education establishments by the society.

Since the launch of the new standardized enrollment system by the government at the end of 80s, all the aided schools, including these Grand schools, had to abolish their individual entrant exams and admit anyone living in the same district. However, they could still choose on the merits of the pupils' academic performance. They are also allowed to reserve a small number of seats for their own selection of students disregarding their geographical location.

Many Grand schools have a tradition of inviting successful professionals or wealthy alumnus to be their governors. It becomes an honour for a person to be invited as a member of the SMC of these grand schools. Members of the SMC have the advantage to secure a place in the school for their own children or relatives. Although these schools are entirely subsidized by the Government, they usually have a special fund set up by alumnus and parents which forms a major source of finance to cater for extra facilities.

TABLE 5-3 The Content of Governing Bodies

<i>No. of schools</i>	<i>No. of governors</i>	<i>No. of SMC meeting (every year)</i>	<i>The supervisor</i>	<i>Background of the members</i>
1	7	2	The principal	Members of the sponsoring church who are nominated by the Bishop. No parents and teachers are includes.
2	12	2	The principal	Same as above
3 included	15	3-4	The chairman of the SMC	Members of the sponsoring association. One teacher is but no parents.
4	7	2-3	The chairman of the SMC, the Bishop	Members of the sponsoring church group, nominated by the Bishop. No parents and teachers are included.
5 also	22	3-4	The chairman of the SMC	Members are alumni who are members of the church. Parents and teachers are not included.
6 parents	17	3	The chairman of the SMC, the Bishop	Members include alumni, teachers and representatives of the sponsoring church.
7 group,	15	2-3	The chairman of the SMC, the Bishop	Members are all representative of the sponsoring church no parents or teachers are included.
8	8	2-3	A school principal of another school in the same group	Five members are from the sponsoring body, one teacher, one alumni and one parent.
9	30	2-3	Member of the SMC	Only members of the sponsoring charity group.
10	12	3	ED	Parents, teachers and alumni.
11	7	4-5	Member of the sponsoring group	Members of the sponsoring group, one parents and one teachers.

. SMI schools

Among the five SMI schools, four are aided school (School 3,8,9 and 11) and one is government school (School 10) (see Table 5-2). School 8 and 11 are the only two SMI aided schools which have fulfilled the requirement of the scheme by including all three groups of stakeholders: parents, teachers and alumnus into their governing bodies. Both schools had their SMC established according to the recommendation of the SMI manual, i.e. each consists five governors nominated by the sponsoring group, one alumni, one teacher and one parent. The representatives of teachers and parents are elected by their Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) which was set up a few years ago to meet the SMI's requirement.

Both schools are located in public housing estates, School 8 joined SMI in the first slot in 1992 while School 11 joined in 1997. The principal of School 11 admitted it should be more easier for his school to include parents and teachers in the SMC at the beginning because it is the only school the sponsoring group is operating. However, it still took the school six years to make up their mind and change their school management system and set up their PTA.

School 3 joined SMI when it was first launched. Although one teacher is included in the SMC, parents and alumnus are still not invited. All the other members of the SMC are members of the sponsoring association. According to the principal, the reason for not including parents in the SMC is because all the SMC members (except the teacher representative) are successful businesspersons who have donated a large sum of money to set up the school and continuously supporting it. Being a governor of the school therefore, is a symbol of social status. Those who had donated most could even chose to name a new school after themselves, their parents or their spouse's name. These members are all friends with one another and usually have their SMC meetings over a lavish meal. They are therefore, unwilling to let parents or alumni who had made no financial contribution towards the schools and who are not members of their associations to sit together with them to discuss the management of their schools.

The SMC of School 9 is formed by members of its sponsoring body, a charity group. Like School 3 all the members of this charity group are wealthy merchants or professionals who have each donated a huge sum of money to the group for charity use as well as to obtain membership. In some cases, those who have donated more are more likely to be selected as governors of the schools under the group. These honourable SMC members would only appear in prize giving ceremonies or special events. They rarely get involve in the practical side of school management. In fact, these governors are not expected to participate in management activities, instead, the group has set up its own education department to operate all the schools centrally.

Only government schools like School 10 would have their SMC formed purely by teachers, parents and alumnus because they are directly operated by the ED and have no sponsors. Government schools therefore, do not have a SMC. To fulfill the SMI requirement, they now need to set up their SMC according to the regulation of the scheme. Government schools are in a much better position to become self-managed schools because they do not have a school sponsoring system that needs to be changed. (None of the government schools voluntarily joined SMI when it was first launched. Eventually, the government needed to ‘persuade’ all the government schools to join the scheme. Now, all the government schools are SMI schools.)

5.3.2 The duties of the SMC and the Supervisor

According to all the principals, SMC meetings are for the principals to go through reports and bring up major matters and proposals for discussion. Governors will only be involved on major decisions regarding key policies of the school or staff promotion and their key role in SMC is to confirm the principals’ proposals.

The ED has made no specification on the frequency of SMC meetings or meetings between the supervisor and the school principal. With exception of School 11 which has SMC meetings 4-5 times per year, none of the remaining sample schools held more than four general meetings every year (see Table 5-3). Apart from the principal of School 6, all the interviewed principals claimed that they cannot have

too many SMC meetings because their governors are all very busy with their own business and should not be bothered too often.

Eight out of the nine interviewed principals claimed that their SMCs are supportive and have rarely objected their decisions or proposals. Concerning the attendance of school governors at SMC meetings, apart from the two grand schools (School 5& 6) and three SMI schools (School 3, 10 & 11) that have better attendance rate, the rest rarely have over 50% attending rate at their SMC meetings (see Table 5.3).

The supervisor is nominated by the members of the SMC to be the representative of all the governors. He/she is responsible for corresponding with ED and keeping the school accounts. To the government, the supervisor is an individual manager on whom notices can be served (see Chapter One, Section 1.7.5). Like most school governors, many of the supervisors are too busy with their own business to spare time for their school supervision duties, and this situation is widely accepted in Hong Kong. The government admits that the role of a supervisor is often seen as a mere formality for the signing of cheques and letters (1991 SMI Report). (I once heard a bursar of one charity-run secondary school said, 'The present supervisor is better than the previous one because she asked what the cheques are for before signing them!')

The school supervisor is supposed to be the governor who keeps more regular contacts with the school principal and be prepared for more involvement into the school's management process. However, with the exception of School 6 and 11, all other schools' supervisors have not really contributed much of their time on the school supervision duties. School supervision duties are very often delegated to the school principals. Respondent's remarks concerning their relations with the governing body and the supervisor are shown as follow:

. School One

The school's SMC consists of seven members. There are normally two SMC meetings every year and the average attendance rate is 50-60% . The principal claimed that she is well respected by all the governors and no challenge or criticism has been made to her leadership. The principal is at the same time the school's supervisor. This was a very common situation in Hong Kong until the 1977 incident happened in Jubilee Secondary School Incident (see Chapter One, Section 1.5). The principal is happy with her dual role and claimed that she is trusted and delegated by the SMC to operate the school solely. Although she has a full degree of autonomy in running the school, she still keeps the SMC well informed with the school's progress.

. School Two

Same as School 1, the principal of School 2 is also carrying the dual role in school management and supervision. He is happy with his dual role because he can operate his school in free hand. The SMC of his school is a central SMC which looks after several schools under the same group at the same time. The principal admits that the attendance of SMC meetings at his school is very poor. SMC meetings are held twice a year for the principal to report the progress of the school and bring up major proposals. Most of the time, the number of attendants are less than half and they have not had a general meeting with all the governors attending together in the last ten years. The principal's proposals or decisions have rarely been rejected by the governors, therefore, confrontation seldom occurs at SMC.

. School Three

Principal of School 3 praised their SMC as possibly the most supportive governing body in Hong Kong, especially in terms of financial support. He claimed that they have SMC meeting 3-4 times a year which is nearly twice more than many other schools. All the governors are very supportive of his leadership, in other words, his decisions are seldom challenged. The school supervisor is one of the

founders of the school and a main donor who has been in the supervising post since the school was founded. Although the supervisor is not an expertise in the field of education, he still has the final say on all decisions and above all, he also has legal responsibility as the manager of the school, claimed the principal.

. School Four

Principal of School 4 is satisfied with the support of his SMC even though they could only meet 2-3 times a year. The principal claimed that the governors seldom interfere with the school's operation directly as their roles are more of a symbolic nature. The sponsoring group has its own central education department to supervise all the schools. Though close contact has been kept with his supervisor (once every three weeks), the major school management responsibilities are still under his control.

. School Five

SMC of School 5, a Grand school, was founded by two ministers sent by a church in America and it has always been operated by two ministers ever since. The school's SMC is membered by them plus twenty alumni, some alumni are also students' parents at the time. Teachers are not invited into SMC. The principal claimed that alumnus are very loyal to their schools and are very keen on taking part in school management. The attending rate of SMC meetings has been very good, major matters including curriculum design, teaching strategies, staff promotion, and etc. are all discussed over the meetings.

The supervisor of School 5 is always one of the two minister in the SMC who comes to the school twice a week to deal with financial matters and carry out supervision duties. The school has its own staff council which is organized by representatives of teaching staff. The supervisor would attend the staff council's meeting as an observer and any opinions will be passed on to the council through the principal. The supervisor is always with good understanding of the progress of the school and acts as a bridge for the SMC to keep track of the school's performance.

. School Six

The SMC of School 6, another Grand school, is formed by members of the founder church and other stakeholders i.e. parents, teachers and alumnus who are also members of the same church. Unlike other sample schools, the principal of School 6 claimed that she is acting as a secretary during SMC meetings. All the discussions and decision makings are made by the governors. She is the first local Chinese to be appointed as the principal of the school. (This new change is due to the handover of the sovereignty of Hong Kong to China. No more foreigners will be appointed to be school principals after the retirement of the existing ones.) All her predecessors were British, members of the founder church in the UK. The school supervisor has been supportive to the principal and that they have a close working relationship even though they could not have meetings very often (every two or three months).

. School Seven

School 7 is another sample school managed by the group's central SMC. The traditional sponsoring body does not provide seats for parents and teachers in the SMC. Only members of the church group nominated by the Bishop could become school governors. None of the group's secondary school has yet joined SMI due to the difficulties involved in reforming the group's traditional school management framework.

To prepare for joining SMI, before setting up a SMC for each school as requested by the scheme, five School Administration Associations (SAA) were officially set up by the central SMC in 1995. All the secondary schools sponsored by the same group are divided into five geographical zones according to their location and are operated by the SAA of the zone. SAA is the first council in the group which allows teachers to be involved in the decision making process, parents however, are still not included. Two teachers from every six schools are appointed to be the representatives of the SAA. The operation of the associations are still on

trial and are still carrying out instruction from the central SMC. In other words, all the schools are still under the central SMC's control.

Regarding SMC meetings, the principal stated that his school has in average no more than three general SMC meetings every year. He cannot consult the governors or call for SMC meetings too often because the governors are all too busy with their own business. SMC meetings are mainly for him to go through reports and to obtain official approval on matters such as staff promotion.

The supervisor is one of the member of the central SMC who is prepared to have more regular contact with the principal. However, as the supervisor is also busy with his own job and being supervisors of several other schools at the same time, only two or three meetings could be arranged each year. The principal admitted that he is left to make most of the decisions on school management by himself with help from his colleagues. All the work he has done would be reported to the SMC and his decisions are seldom challenged.

. School Eight

In average, only two general SMC meetings are held in School 8 every year. The principal has meeting with the supervisor, who is also a school principal, once every two months. The principal used to hold a dual role, i.e. being the supervisor of his school at the same time. He resigned from the supervising post before joining SMI because the scheme does not allow a principal to play a dual role. He stated that as he has managed the school almost single-handedly, it is necessary to have a systematic and transparent management system like SMI for the school's stakeholders to have a clear understanding about the school's progress. A leader should carry out the managing job by some form of approved procedures.

. School Nine

The respondent of School 9 is the deputy-head of an aided school sponsored by one of the charity group. He has no role in any of his school's SMC meetings

because the SMC is formed only with honourable members from the sponsoring group. These governors are not expected to carry out practical managerial duties. Instead, an education department is set up to centrally supervise the operation of all the schools which is described as 'mini ED'.

The key role of the education department is to provide consultative service to schools and to decide future direction for the group's education policies. Each school's performance under the group is assessed by the central education department according to its students' exam result. The central education department seldom interferes with individual school's management, thus all the principals are delegate to manage their schools with a great extent of autonomy. Regarding the frequency of meetings between the principal and the supervisor, as the respondent is a deputy head, the exact figure cannot be provided but he stated that the supervisor rarely gets involved in school management.

. School Ten

School 10, a government school, has no SMC until the joining of SMI few years ago. The school now has one SMC meeting every school term. The respondent, a senior teacher, claimed that ED is still seen as their school's supervisor but it has rarely involved with their school's supervision and this remains unchanged even after joining SMI. Students' exam result is the only indicator for ED to assess a school principal's performance.

. School Eleven

School 11 recently joined SMI and now has SMC meetings four to five times a school year. Parents' representatives in the SMC, mainly from working class, are being supportive of the school and responsible to the delegated duties. The supervisor, a member of the sponsoring group (a Father), keeps in close contact with the principal because he resides inside the school.

5.3.3 Parents and Teachers Association (PTA)

The establishment of PTA is recommended by the ED together with the launch of SMI. Apart from the few Grand schools that already have their PTA long existed, most of the schools in Hong Kong do not have this tradition of involving parents and teachers into school operation process. In this sample population, only four schools have their PTA (School 6,7,8 and 10) and two of them are non-SMI schools (see Table 5-4). School 6 has long tradition in having a PTA. PTA of School 8 and 10 is set up recently to meet the SMI requirement. School 7 sets up its PTA to get ready for joining SMI. School 5, another Grand school does not have its PTA but has an Alumni Association which has played an active part in supporting the school.

. SMI schools (School 3, 8, 9, 10 and 11)

- School 3

Not all the SMI schools have followed the principle to set up their PTA. Respondents are holding different opinions and experience to parents and teachers involvement. After seven years into SMI, School 3 which locates in public housing estate, still refuse to invite parents or alumnus into its SMC. PTA has not been set up because the school has no intention to increase parents and alumnus' involvement.

The principal explained that involving parents into the decision making process is one of the most difficult step for joining SMI. Over 80% of their parents are from working class and living in public housing estates. Their average education standard is low and most of them are too busy earning a living, thus, it is unrealistic to expect them to be devoted and to spare time for participating their children's school activities. The principal further explained that although parental involvement has been encouraged by ED, the school governors do not agree with the need. They believe that keeping parents informed with the school's progress would be adequate.

Table 5-4 School stakeholders' involvement in school management.

School	SMI?	Parents in SMC?	Teachers in SMC?	Alumni in SMC?	PTA?
1	No	No	No	No	No
2	No	No	No	No	No
3	Yes	No	No	No	No
4	No	No	No	No	No
5	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
6	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
7	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	No	No	No	Yes	No
10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- School 8

School 8, also locates in public housing estate and joined SMI when it was first launched. PTA was established in School 8 at the same time of joining the scheme. All the teachers and parents of the school automatically become members of the Association. One teacher and one parent are selected by all the members of the PTA to join the SMC. The principal supported the idea of PTA and urged that all the teachers, parents and alumnus should be given a chance to join the SMC.

The principal criticized the donors who have donated a large sum of money to a school and subsequently become either governors or even the supervisor of the SMC but are unwilling to let parents, teachers or alumnus into their governing board as selfish and narrow-minded. These governors who have little knowledge or experience in school management and can hardly contribute time to fulfill their duties would rather allow the school principal to run the school single-handedly than to open up the SMC for other stakeholders who may have the ability, time and enthusiasms to provide a better support in school management.

- School 9

The sponsoring body of School 9 accepted ED's invitation to join all its schools into SMI when it was first launched but on the condition that the group does not need to change its management framework. Seven years into SMI, School 9 and all other schools under the same group are still allowed to exclude parents and other stakeholders into each school's SMC and are still centrally operated by the group's education department. PTA, does not exist in School 9 and any other schools in the same group. The excuse for the sponsoring group not changing their existing school management system is that they are awaiting for the new government's education policies on SMI to be confirmed.

- School 10

School 10 has established its PTA at the same time of joining SMI. All the members of the PTA have the chance to be elected to become members of the SMC. However, most of the parents are unenthusiastic with matters of school management and those who are in the SMC tended to be bias towards their children's benefit. A conflict of interests often occurs between teachers and parents which results the principal avoiding important and sensitive subjects in SMC meetings. Senior teachers like the respondent are delegated by the principals to handle the communication with parents and also to resolve conflicts during SMC meetings. These duties are all brought to them by joining SMI.

- School 11

The PTA of School 11 was established three years before joining SMI in 1997. The principal admitted that it was quite difficult to start involving parents at the beginning. Parents become more supportive to the school once they understood their roles and have confidence with the function of the association. Two parents representatives are invited to join the SMC and they have been coping well with their duties and getting on well with other stakeholders in the Committee.

. Non-SMI schools (School 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7)

- School 1 and 2

With exception of School 5 and 6, all the respondents of non-SMI schools expressed that it is not easy to work with parents. PTA does not exist in School 1 and 2 and neither do other schools in the same group (over 15 other secondary schools) No alumni and parents are included in their SMCs neither. Both schools are sponsored by the same sponsoring group and locate in good neighborhood. Parents are not encouraged to take part into school activities for the reason of avoiding opposite views and political influences being brought into their schools. The principal of School 1 stressed that teachers are not included in the SMC because they do not have a role in the school management system.

- School 4

The principal of School 4 felt that including parents and alumni into SMC is particularly difficult to Band 4-5 schools located in public housing estates, like his school. The majority of the parents in these schools are from working class and many of them are new immigrants from mainland China with a low education level. Their only interests would be on the benefits of their children. They have no desire to get involve into school activities and would not show much enthusiastic on other matters concerning the school's management or long term development. Parents may become biased when a choice has to be made between pupils' immediate benefits and the school's long term benefit. Even though there are parents who are capable and would be interested in being involved with the school's management, the recruitment is never easy because the trend is simply not there and parents seldom find the initiative or encouragement to take part.

Band 4-5 schools find it more difficult to invite alumnus to join PTA due to the lack of the spirit of loyalty to these schools. Only students with poor exam result would choose to study in a Band five school and therefore, they would not be proud

of being alumnus of these schools. Furthermore, most of them are making living in labouring jobs and can hardly spare time to take part in school activities. Instead of a PTA, a Students and Parents Association (SPA) is established in School 4 in which alumnus are not included. Members of SPA are not invited into SMC to take part in school management in order to avoid different views or problems being brought into the school through this channel.

- School 5 and 6

In the contrary, the spirit of loyalty is strong in these prestigious schools. Alumnus of School 5 and 6 are proud of their schools and are keen to get involve into schools' activities. PTA does not exist in School 5 but the school has its long existed alumni association. School 6 has its PTA long established in which parents and alumni automatically become members of the association. Both Grand schools are receiving strong supports from their parents and alumnus and both the principals expressed no worry of working closely with parents and alumnus.

- School 7

The principal of School 7 also welcome parents and alumni contribution into school management. He believes that PTA is important for school improvement. However, due to the policy of the sponsoring group, he can only encourage parents to take part in school events but not to consult them with any school management matters. The main policy of School 7's PTA is to get parents together in school events so that they can meet each other and have a better understanding of the school's policies and progress. Parents are keen to join the PTA. The principal understands the importance for schools keeping in close contacts with parents but on the other hand, he worries about the possible difficulties and conflicts involved in working too closely with them.

5.3.4 Reasons for joining/not joining SMI

The reasons that schools joined or rejected SMI are summarized and listed at Appendix (22). The most common reason for schools rejecting SMI (six respondents raised this point) is: the funding from the government is sufficient and therefore, schools are not attracted to join SMI by the blockgrant (see Appendix 22.A). The most common reason for schools joining SMI (four respondents of the five SMI schools raised this point) is: their sponsoring groups are invited directly by the Director of Education (see Appendix 22.B).

. Non-SMI schools (School 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7)

The principal of School 1,2,5 and 6 all claimed that their school will not join SMI in the foreseeable future. The first reason is because they are satisfied with the existing school management system. The sponsoring body of School 1 and 2 do not agree to let any of its schools join SMI because according to SMI instruction, each school need to be supervised by the chairman of the SMC who cannot manage more than one school at a time. The SMC of School 1 and 2 is chaired by the Bishop who is also the chairman of many other secondary schools' SMCs at the same time. Joining SMI means that the sponsoring body needs to alter their long established school management framework. Furthermore, the principals of School 1,2,5 and 6 (all Band 1 and 2 schools) do not see the need for joining SMI themselves because their schools are all doing well. The flexibility given by SMI in school management is not really necessary because the autonomy given by the government to aided school is already great.

Financial subsidy from the government in general is sufficient, claimed the four principals. The only inadequate item, in the case of School 1, is for miscellaneous expenses. The principal stated that it is not worth the school to make all the efforts to join SMI in order to obtain the freedom of transferring the use of the fund to meet the miscellaneous costs. Principal of school 2 claimed that his school needs space for extension which cannot be helped by joining SMI. School 5 and 6 have their own ways in fund raising and do not need to join SMI for financial reason.

The four principals all claimed that most of the government and well-performed aided schools like their schools do not have a problem with students recruitment as places at their schools have always been over-subscribed by the local community. Principal of School 1 claimed that she and her colleagues (other principals in the same group) all prefer to receive professional advice from a central source i.e. ED rather than joining SMI.

Respondents of School 1, 2, 4 and 7 worried that the increase of school governors' involvement in school management suggested by SMI would discourage people taking up the school governing post. Many existing governors might not stay long if they really were asked to fulfill the managerial duties as suggested in SMI.

Staff's objection is another common reason for not joining SMI. School 5 and 6 did not join the scheme because the majority of the staff do not think it is necessary as their schools are already doing well. The principals claimed that their staff are put off by the foreseeable clerical work included in the implementation of SMI. Furthermore, the managerial system of their schools are similar to SMI and therefore, they do not see the need to join the scheme. (Both School 5 and 6 should be in a better position in changing the school management system than many other schools because their managerial system are similar to SMI, i.e. they have their individual SMC and other stakeholders are involved in the school management process. However, having the similar system as SMI becomes these schools' excuse for rejecting scheme.)

Both School 4 and 7 are getting ready to join SMI. For School 4, the decision of joining SMI is made by the sponsoring body. The group is persistently invited by ED to join the scheme and eventually, one of the group's school was chosen as a trial last year. School 4 is expected by the group to join the scheme soon once the preparation is completed. The majority of the teachers, however, do not support the decision because they do not see the benefit and need of running SMI. They are also discouraged by other practitioners' bad experience in SMI.

School 7 has not joined SMI because the sponsoring body is not intending to open up its SMC for parents, alumni and teachers. They do not want to change its traditional central education management policies for the sake of joining the scheme. Without compromise being made between the government and the sponsoring group, it is impossible for any school in the group to join SMI.

In response to this problem, ED has made an adjustment recently allowing SMI schools to be run by its School Administration Group (SAG) instead of the SMC. SAG is a sub-committee of the SMC which is expected to carry out the duties of SMC in each school. However, ED requires each school to have its own SAG and each SAG needs to have a supervisor who may not supervise another school simultaneously. Neither School 7 nor any of the schools in the same group has yet joined SMI because the sponsoring group finds it difficult to recruit a number of suitable persons to supervise their schools at a short notice. Instead of setting up one SAG for each school, the group has made an effort to adjust its central school management policy by establishing several SAAs (see Section 5.3.2, p.168). The principal commented that the group cannot be expected to make drastic changes to meet SMI's requirement at once, they should be allowed to plan and adjust gradually.

. SMI schools (School 3, 8,9,10 and 11)

All the SMI schools in this sample are individually invited to join the scheme by ED, in other words, none of them joined voluntarily in the first place. The sponsoring group of School 3 was invited to join the scheme when it was first launched. The group decided to let School 3 to be the first trial school to join the scheme after obtaining teachers' majority consent. (The head claimed that not many schools would give their teachers a chance to vote for joining the scheme.) The sponsors of School 11 decided to join SMI after the ED's persistent persuasion even though the majority of the staff voted against the idea. Principal of School 8 was personally invited to join the scheme by the Director of ED, who he knows very well. The sponsoring body of School 9 accepted ED's invitation to let all its school

joined SMI on the condition that the group will remain its central school management system. School 10 was 'persuaded' to join SMI by its supervisor the ED in 1994.

Both School 8 and 9 are in better positions to start SMI because their school management systems are similar to the scheme. School 8 has a tradition of recruiting some teaching staff from the USA, therefore, a comprehensive report describing the school's management policies and long and short term plans are produced regularly as a prospectus to introduce the school. As the routine of record keeping and plan making already exists, for School 8, joining SMI means only to formalize the usual format and system. Staff therefore, were not struck by the sudden increase of work load and are supportive to the idea.

The central school management system for School 9 and the rest of schools in the same group is similar to the system of SMI in terms of plan making and reports production. Furthermore, the group is still allowed to centrally manage all its schools after turning them into SMI schools. Joining SMI, therefore had not made too drastic changes to the group's school management system and staff's work load, however, teachers are still not enthusiastic with the scheme because they do not see the value of doing so.

School 10 is one of the first lot of government schools that joined SMI in 1994. (None of the government school joined SMI voluntarily when it was first launched in 1992 but were all joined later under the ED's 'persuasion'.) Government schools are not keen on joining the scheme because more restrictions are expected to be brought into their schools' management system. As mentioned before that government schools did not have sponsoring body, therefore there was not existence of SMC at all. The District Officer of ED is the supervisor of all the government schools in the same area who seldom takes part in any of the schools' management. Without the existence of sponsoring body, governors and SMC, government schools did not need to hold any SMC meetings or to communicate with any governor. It is obvious that the management procedures of government schools have been made complicated by turning into SMI schools.

5.3.5 Opinions towards SMI

All the respondents agreed that SMI is a good idea but not all of them think that they are the schools that should join the scheme. Five respondents (School 3,4,7,8 and 11) support the need for their schools to join the scheme, among them two (School 4 and 7) are from non-SMI schools. Principal 4 and 7 claimed that their schools have not yet joined the scheme because their sponsoring bodies need time to adjust the school operation system. At the contrary, two respondents of SMI schools (School 9 and 10) do not support the scheme even though their schools are into the scheme for several years. They both believed that SMI is not suitable to their schools and to the system of Hong Kong. Respondent 9 emphasized that the education system of Hong Kong is not mature enough for SMI.

One principal (Principal 1) urged that SMI would be more suitable for schools which require higher degree of autonomy in financial management, like the government schools. Four principals (Principal 1,2,5 and 6) thought that only under-performed or newly-developed schools should join SMI. One respondent (Deputy head of School 9) criticized SMI as too commercialized, a foreign idea which does not suit the system of Hong Kong. Two respondents (School 9 and 10) believed that many schools joined SMI merely to receive a block grant and give no consideration on the real purpose of the scheme.

One respondent (School 11) commented that the result of SMI is not as good as it was expected by the ED because the education system of Hong Kong is too old and the people are too conservative to new ideas. Another principal (Principal 11) suggested that making SMI compulsory is a good method to avoid conflicts happening in getting staff's agreement and cooperation in the implementation of SMI.

Three principals (School principal 3,4 and 7) remarked that the design of SMI has not taken the structure of school sponsoring bodies and teachers' heavy work load into consideration which has resulted with fierce rejection. One respondent

(principal of School 8) pointed out that many school principals in Hong Kong are used to running their schools single-handedly and do not have the customs of establishing a standardized school development system or to make the management system transparent to other stakeholders. Joining SMI is a good start for schools to standardize and formalize their management system.

Three principals (Principal of school 3,4 and 7) agree with the value of SMI but are not impressed with the way the scheme was launched and implemented. Two of them (principal of School 3 and 4) commented that the idea of SMI is good but it needs better promotion and packaging. Many school principals are offended by the first introductory report of SMI in which they were described as 'kings of the castles'. SMI is a new concept to educators in Hong Kong and therefore, needs a careful introduction to ensure people's acceptance. Instead of criticizing school principals' performance, more promotion and persuasion from the government should be carried out to attract more schools to join. Three principals (School 3, 4 and 7) also criticized that the scheme was launched in a hurry and teachers were not given enough time to understand and adapt. Though the step has now been slow down by the ED, educators have already been put off by the bad experience of other SMI schools.

Two principals (School 3 and 7) noted that due to the lack of appropriately trained and experienced staff in the ED to introduce and promote the scheme, the true meaning and value of the scheme have not been understood or appreciated. Although, recently, a number of ED staff who were sent abroad to study and improve their knowledge on decentralization have returned to run seminars to provide training for SMI schools, there is no obvious improvement to the promotion of SMI or provision of technical supports.

Respondents of School 9 and 11, both are SMI schools, expressed the difficulties in working with the colleagues who rejected the idea of SMI in the first place and are taking non-cooperative attitude on the implementation of SMI. Some of the staff even refuse to take on the clerical duties of the scheme. Many disputes have erupted at the schools. Principal of School 11 blamed ED for not taking a firm

stance to make SMI compulsory for all schools. On the contrary, the deputy head of school 9 argued that SMI should not have been introduced to Hong Kong at all.

Two principals of non-SMI schools (Principal 4 and 7) also have worries over working with colleagues who are against the idea of SMI. They claimed that they have already done so much to meet the requirement of SMI therefore, joining is not difficult, yet the real problem is the shortage of manpower and the lack of staff cooperation. Both schools' teachers are against the idea of joining SMI because they believe that the negative side would outweigh its benefits. Staff are concerned also whether they would be penalized if the standard of the reports they produced and the result of the appraisals are not up to the satisfactory level. Although the two respondents believe that their decision should not be interfered by teachers' non-cooperative attitude, it would certainly be better if the staff joined the scheme voluntarily instead of being made compulsory.

The inadequacy of manpower in ED to assess the performance of SMI schools, hence the result of SMI varies from school to school was pointed out by two principals (Principal 3 and 7). They both viewed that many practitioners reject the idea of SMI because they do not understand its true meaning. School principal 7 raised a question shared by many educators which is whether SMI is aiming for achieving excellence. If it is, how can the change of a school's SMC structure achieve this task?

School principal 3 disagreed with other principals who claimed no need for joining SMI due to their schools' good performance. He doubted how they can be so sure about their standard without going through any formal assessment. They should not be satisfied with their performance until their schools are formally assessed. However, the current monitoring system is not serving this purpose.

The inadequacy of professional support from the ED also poses another difficulty for school principals in the implementation of SMI. Joining SMI has increased both the head and teachers' workload, an inevitable outcome which many principals have reiterated. Three principals (Principal 3, 4 and 7) commented that

leaders of SMI schools have to bear heavy managerial duties and some of the duties are new to them and cannot be managed simply by their accumulated experience in school management. SMI schools are expected to become independent from ED and their managers need to handle the delegated managerial duties together with the governors. However, not many SMCs can function as supportive and helpful to the principal as expected. In most of the cases, after joining SMI, the principals are still left to handle the heavy duties on their own in which the original meaning of SMI has been forfeited.

Two examples were raised by principal of School 7 to explain the neglect of professional support from ED. First, turning into SMI, a senior teacher needs to be appointed to carry out the financial budgeting duty but no formal training on financial management would be provided to the teacher apart from a very brief introductory talk. The ED presumed that any senior teacher should be able to handle this job (budgeting) and it is only a matter of getting use to it. The principal confided that he does not have much confidence with ED's assumption.

The other example is that ED is planning to delegate the grant on teachers' salary, which means that the head will need to decide how much to spend on staff salaries. The principal feared that staff quality may suffer as their choices are invariably linked to their budget allowance. For non-SMI schools, ED play an important role in their staff recruitment process. The head's job is to provide information about the short-listed applicants and the ideal candidate and ED would decide the salary for the new recruited staff. Being a SMI school, the principal, together with the SMC will take over the whole recruitment process, including the decision of staff salary level. In some situations some applicants might be above the required qualification and the principal would find it difficult to decide on a justified salary for them. In the centralized system, the head would be happy to select the best qualified candidates and let the ED to sort out their salaries. In decentralized system, to make their job simpler or to save money, some principals might give up the complicated case and take the straight forward one.

Joining SMI would increase the burden of heads and teachers but it would also bring more flexibility in school finance. Four principals (School 1, 2, 5 and 6) however, does not believe that the benefits of joining SMI would balance with the extra workload. Five principals (Principal of School 1, 2,4,5 and 6) worried that joining SMI would reduce theirs and the colleagues' time spending on academic aspects which would slow down the speed of improvement for the whole school. Principals of School 5 and 6 both argued that good teaching requires good preparation and joining SMI would switch teachers' concerns from pedagogic to clerical duties. Teachers have their preferred ways of making plans and they do not see why they need to follow SMI.

Respondents' opinions towards SMI are summarized and listed in Appendix(23). The frequency of each opinion being mentioned is also specified.

5.3.6 Problems in school management

1. 'No problem !'

Four principals (School 1,2,5 and 6) claimed that they have no problem with their school managerial duties and also do not see any need for further improvement to their schools and themselves. Principal of School 2 specified that he has no serious problem in school management because he is due to retire soon and all the major managerial duties have already been delegated to his deputy. The only problem in his job is the lack of space for the extension of more classrooms.

Another principal (School 5) claimed that not being able to accept all the high standard students' application is the only problem in her leadership. She explained that the school has the potential to accommodate a full intake of only top grade students however, she cannot do so because she always needs to make room for other candidates who have not had the grade but are nominated by some VIP alumnus, donors or governors for students. A big gap therefore appears between students' academic level within classrooms.

2. Follow the Code of Aid

Two principals (Principal 2 and 6) commented that the key point of being a good administrator is to understand and follow the government's Code of Aid for Secondary School which would help the head to make the right decisions. However, four principals (Principal 3, 7, 8 and 11) remarked that the Code of Aid is only a basic guide for school management and would never be enough to support a school principal to cope with the administration of a school.

3. Staff Appraisal

Conducting staff assessment is seen as the most difficult managerial duties by three respondents (Principal 3, 8 and 11). They found it difficult to decide on a standardized guideline which would be accepted and followed by all the staff. Due to staff's conservatism, the principals understood that the key to overcome this problem is to discuss and compromise but these are not an easy task. The actual implementation of appraisals is even more difficult, according to the principals, because the majority of the staff are still not used to have their performance being assessed. At the same time many teachers are not being open with their problems because they cannot face admission to failure or weakness. Teaching staff's hesitation towards appraisals slows down the speed of problem diagnoses in schools and causes more difficulties for their principals to implement SMI properly.

The deputy head of School 9 and the senior teacher of School 10 both expressed that appraisals are not functioning as expected. The deputy-head claimed that most of his colleagues do not take appraisals seriously because they do not support SMI in the first place. According to the experience of the senior teacher, appraisals are carried out by the governors of the SMC and staff would only be notified with the result of the appraisals. They have never been required to take any action after the appraisals. The whole appraisal process is criticized by the staff as a routine and is not taken seriously and fairly.

4. Achieving the same vision

Creating the same vision in the school is judged as the most difficult part in school management by four respondents (principal of School 4, 7 and 11 and the deputy-head of School 9). They found it not easy to persuade teachers to have the same vision over changes or new plans. Many problems have been caused by people's disagreement on the need and value of SMI. As mentioned before that both School 4 and 7 are prepared to join SMI but the majority of the staff are still against the idea.

Although School 9 has joined SMI for several years already, its deputy-head still finds it difficult to cope with the problems brought by the scheme. The most difficult task in his managerial duties is to coordinate all the staff to work with the principal. Many teaching staff do not see the value of the scheme and are demoralized by the daunting extra work-load brought by the scheme. The deputy-head himself does not approve the value of SMI either and therefore finds it difficult to convince colleagues to appreciate the scheme.

For School 7, its principal finds it difficult to ensure that all the teachers treat the students with a reasonable attitude. Some senior teachers are less enthusiastic in providing care and concerns to students. They are experts in their specialized field and have been carrying out their teaching duties at the satisfactory standard but they are reluctant to give special care or concern to individual student who needs extra help. He admitted having difficulty in raising other staff's morale and to cultivate a shared vision within. The principal of School 11 has the same problem and finds it not easy to discipline the colleagues who have been irresponsible over their duties to SMI and to stimulate staff's enthusiasm towards SMI.

5. Inadequate inspection

One respondent (Principal 5) criticized that school inspectors' lack of appropriate knowledge and experience only allow them to give out 'common sense'

advice. Four respondents (School 3, 7, 9 and 10), three of them are from SMI schools, concerned that many school principals can still dominate the decision making process in school management even after joining SMI because there is not an appropriate evaluation system to ensure the implementation of the scheme.

6. Regular contacts with other colleagues

Three principals (Principal 1, 2 and 5) value the regular contacts with other school principals in the same sponsoring group or principals in the same district to share each other's experience and supports.

7. Financial management

None of the respondent raised any difficulties with financial management because the majority claimed that the funding from the government is sufficient in general. Only one principal (Principal 6) complained about the inadequate funding and saw it as the only problem her school has but she has the treasurer of the SMC to take care of this problem. (School 6 is one of the most prestigious school in Hong Kong with many above-standard facilities and extra curriculum.)

The need of financial management training for school managers is foreseen by two respondents (School 4 and 10) who worried that the SAR government might tighten up the amount of financial subsidy to schools in the future. If this is the case, school principals' ability in financial management would become crucial to the whole school's operation. The two respondents frankly expressed that they have serious doubt on some of the school principal's ability in coping with this task.

8. Staff's development

Two principals (School 4 and 7) find it difficult to persuade staff to pursue professional development. They pointed out that senior staff's key argument for refusing professional development in management is that they only see themselves as teachers, not administrators. Some of their department heads are not performing

well with their managerial duties but still disagree with their need for managerial training. They remarked that it is not easy for the principal to implement changes like SMI without the department heads' supports and cooperation.

9. Counseling service

The difficulty in providing a counseling service to staff is raised by only one respondent (Principal 8). He expressed that the demand for a counseling service from the staff has increased substantially but appropriate training course in this area is not available. Teachers' demand for a counseling service from the principal is rising even faster in Band 5 schools as they are facing more pressure and stress from their students' troublesome behaviour and poor academic ability.

All the opinions towards school management raised by the respondents are listed in Appendix 24. Following is analysis of respondents' opinions to the uncertain future.

5.3.7 The Uncertain Future

Two respondents (Principal of School 4 and 6) worried about the adequacy of school funding in the future. The present funding for both SMI or non-SMI schools is sufficient but nobody can be certain if the same policy will be carried on with. Most of the sponsoring groups' independent education fund is sufficient only to subsidize schools' extra activities and it would be impossible for them to meet the full cost of running a school without government funding. Sponsoring groups cannot even cope with a continuous deficit of all their schools if the government freeze the increase on the amount of school funding. Some school sponsoring groups (School 1,2,4,5 and 7) refused to let their schools join SMI worrying that they might be left to cope with their financial shortages once they became self-managing schools. They believe that sticking to ED's central control would ensure that their financial problems are still responsible by the government.

Four respondents (School 5, 9, 10 and 11) worried over the SAR government's policy on SMI. A high degree of autonomy is delegated by the scheme to school principals and governors in the running of their schools which may not be tolerated by the new government and the situation may be put back to where it was. The principal of School 5 claimed that her school will wait until the new government's policy on SMI is certain before joining the scheme or making any drastic changes. Respondent of School 10 believes that most of the SMI schools are only contributing minimum effort on the implementation of the scheme because they are also holding the same 'wait and see' policy. They do not want to waste their energy and resources in doing something which might not have a certain future.

The deputy head of School 9 remarked that the education system in Hong Kong is not mature enough to adapt SMI. He wondered if the intention of the previous colonial government on the introduction of this new idea at such a sensitive time was to create a difficult situation for the new government. This thought, according to the respondent, is shared by many practitioners and therefore, they all refused to join the scheme and decided to wait for instructions from the new government.

Five respondents (School 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8) expressed no particular worry over the political changes because there is nothing they can do about it. The only thing they can do is to follow their sponsoring groups' guidance to move forward. They understand that their sponsoring groups have to co-operate with the new government's education policy in any situation because they cannot afford to sponsor their schools without the governmental funds. They would have to let go of their schools if this was what the government wanted. However, they believe that their sponsoring groups' contribution towards school operation is still highly valued by the new government.

5.3.8 Professional Development

1. The need for professional development

Professional development for school principals in school management is seen as necessary and important by ten respondents. Principal of School 6 is the only one who objects to the need for continuous development. In her opinion, a school principal is the person who is qualified to do the school management job and therefore, does not need any further professional development. She believes that most of the principals in Hong Kong are qualified and experienced administrators and therefore, have no need for further development. They would also find it difficult to spare time for professional development and to obtain support from the school governors.

Although ten respondents support the issue of professional development for school principals, not all of them agreed with their own need for further improvement. Two principals (School 1 and 2) do not see the need for themselves to pursue professional development because their schools are already doing well. Principal of School 1 believes that professional development is mainly for heads of poorly performing or newly established schools, not for experienced heads of well performing schools like herself but she would still attend training seminars that interested her. Principal 2 admitted that his leadership style is old-fashioned or even out-of-date but it is too late for him to be re-trained because he is due to retire soon. He hopes that his successor could inject more new ideas into school management and keeps up with continuous professional development.

2. The perception of professional development training

Attending seminars organized by ED once or twice a year means professional development to five respondents (School 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6). The rest of the respondents (School 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) see professional development as attending comprehensive training courses like the INSTEP or the Master degree courses (see Chapter One, Section 1.9.2). In their opinions, brief courses concerning management

or seminars run by the ED's Training Section are mostly for the purpose of introducing new policies of the education system which are not strongly related to school management or leadership and therefore, should not be judged as professional development training courses.

3. The adequacy of professional development training courses

Apart from the principal of School 3 and 7, the rest of the respondents are all satisfied with the supply of training courses in terms of quantity. Five of them (School 4, 5, 8, 9, and 11) though happy with the number of the training courses, are not satisfied with their contents and quality. Principal 3 and 7 commented that the supply of comprehensive managerial training for school principals is not adequate in Hong Kong.

4. Opinions on the low demand of professional development

Three respondents (School 3, 4 and 7) believed that professional development training courses are not widely demanded because there is not any financial rewards or promotions afterward. The principal of School 3 claimed that not many principals would like doing comprehensive development courses such as Master degree or Ph.D. degrees because they would get the same pay and stay in the same post after year(s) of study and hard work. The difficulty in obtaining grants from ED for professional development is raised by Principal 3. He added that being able to cope with the demanding managerial job and studying at the same time is another problem.

The lack of competition among schools in terms of students' recruitment is brought up by two respondents (School 1 and 2) as the reason for the low demand of professional development. One respondent (School 5) believes that school managers are not keen on pursuing professional development in school management is because they are neither required nor encouraged by the government to do so. She also pointed out that due to the heavy workload, many principals find it hard to spare time for professional development training.

The lack of staff's internal support has been seen as another cause for the low demand of professional development by two respondents (School 4 and 7). Principal of School 7 explained that the available management training courses are useful but school principals will find it difficult to integrate the theories obtained from the training into their daily management process because most of the colleagues do not share the same vision in changes and are still insisting on the 'traditional' ways. Knowing that their new ideas are unlikely to be accepted by the colleagues, many school principals would not bother going for further development training even though they realized the significance.

The principal of School 4 also expressed the difficulties in integrating the theories he learned from training courses with the existing management practice. The changes he tried to implement into his school have seldom been supported by his colleagues and were always criticized as impractical and ineffective in improving students' academic performance and were judged by them as not worth the effort of doing.

Principal of School 8 mentioned that he was discouraged by his school's sponsoring group to go for management training when he was first appointed to lead his school. Members of the sponsoring group saw that running a secondary school did not require specific qualification in management and worried that he might leave the job after obtaining further qualification. Although this happened over 20 years ago in the time that pre-headship management training course was virtually non-existent in Hong Kong, the principal believes that many school governors are still having the same thought and discouraging their principals for professional development.

5. Opinions to the provision of professional development

The existing management training courses are criticized by six respondents (School 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 11) as too academic which can hardly be adapted into real school life. Principal of School 4 claimed that all the theories learned from training courses are useful but are difficult to be integrated with the existing management

practice in his school. Principal of School 5 commented that most of the academic theories delivered by the existing training courses are sourced from foreign countries which are not suitable for the unique situation of Hong Kong. Principal 8 criticized the available management training courses as too intensive with mainly academic theories in which courses attendants would find it hard to apply these theories into practice.

In the opinions of the deputy-head of School 9, almost 1/3 of the total training courses are impractical but he still insisted that professional development for heads are important. He claimed that heads or deputy-heads need to keep on updating their managerial knowledge and techniques and injecting fresh ideas into school management inspired through self development.

Principal 11 remarked that professional training courses such as the Master degree courses in school management provided by university are too academic. According to the experience of the principal of School 3, the Master course in Education Management he did at a university in Hong Kong was very useful and helpful to his job. Other intensive courses on management or seminars run by ED's Training Section are mostly for the government to introduce new policies of education which are not really related to school management or leadership. These seminars therefore, should not be classified as professional development training courses.

Principal of School 4 and 8 criticized that ED does not have a systematic way to provide professional development training courses for school leaders or even for teachers. The government's low input of investment for improvement of the professional development system is brought up by respondent 9. He claimed that most of the tutors of managerial training courses are in lack of practical experience in school management which has affected people's confidence on the quality of these programmes. Inadequate promotion of the training courses is also a cause for the low demand of professional development.

Principal of School 11 noted that professional development are more important to principals of SMI schools because they need to handle the problems created by joining SMI, and new duties, such as curriculum, pastoral care, financial and resources management, external relation and etc. He criticized that the existing professional training courses such as the Master degree courses in school management provided by university are too academic and seminars provide by ED are in lack of in-depth coverage. They are not meeting school principals' needs.

Principal 3 believed that the problem with the provision of management training is its difficulty in recruiting ideal local lecturers. Many of the local tutors who have rich experience in school management but are in lack of theoretical knowledge, are reluctant to pursuit for further improvement. At the other side, foreign tutors with rich theoretical knowledge in management are unaccustomed with the local culture or people's ideology in education. This gap in the manpower of the provision of managerial training for school leaders is waiting to be filled.

Principal 3 noted that the lack of communication between Training Section of ED and school inspectors in Inspectorate Section resulted covering up the real need for school management training. School Inspectors do not have the appropriate knowledge and experience for evaluation of school managers' leadership. Furthermore, these inspectors' duties concern only the areas such as achievement of curriculum or teachers' performance during lessons and school management is always neglected. Under this circumstance, there is very little the inspectors can advise on the design of management training courses or professional development training programmes.

6. Recommendations on Professional Development Training

I. Principal of School 1 stressed the urgent needs for the government to operate more management training courses for the principals of under-performed or newly developed schools to encourage further improvement.

II. A standardized management training course for all the heads like the 'HEADLAMP' scheme in the UK is strongly praised by four principals (School 3, 7, 8 and 11).

III. One respondent (Principal 3) remarked that a good training programme should be able to encourage the attendants to carry out further research and become more willing to involve other colleagues to seek collaborative improvement.

IV. The contents of management training courses, suggested by Principal 3, should include skills on communication, evaluation, crisis management and manpower management.

V. One respondent (School principal 11) suggested the government grant every principal a four weeks study leave for attending professional training every year so that their study would not be interfered by busy school duties. He also suggested that the principal should go for training together with one senior staff so that they can support each other during the implementation of any new ideas.

VI. One respondent (School 9) urged the need for the government to increase the funding to improve the standard of training courses.

VII. Principal of School 8 and 11 stressed that to be able to cope with not only today's school management duties but also tomorrow's, all the principals need to prepare themselves for the foreseeable changes to the education system and the increasing demand of counseling service from both the colleagues and students.

VII. Principal of school 8 commented that real management techniques can not be learnt from one single training course. People need to learnt through experience and previous mistakes together with theoretical knowledge obtained from training courses. In other words, school leaders need to continuously pursuit professional development throughout their headship.

7. The perception towards business management strategies

The need of adapting business management techniques such as marketing strategies into school management is rejected by all the principals, including the principal of School 3 who recommended better promotion and packaging for SMI. They all claimed that there is no place for marketing strategies in education at all, especially when competition among schools in terms of students recruitment does not exist. Schools have no need to 'promote' their schools as well performing schools would be noticed by the public through the pupils' excellent achievement in exams.

Principal 3 commented that business management techniques should never be applied into school management because the situational variables in school is not the same as in commercial firms. In his opinions, business management techniques should only be used as a reference.

8. Other comments

Two respondents (Deputy-head of School 9 and Senior staff of School 10) commented that the school principals' inefficiency in school management is due to their personal character. They both believed that a leader's personality cannot be changed by having them to attend more management training courses.

The principal of School 8's leadership and ideology in school management have been greatly affected by the professional development training courses he had attended. He stated that an efficient leader should understand the operation of each department of the school and get involved. Professional development is needed whenever a leader feels incapable of leading further improving his/her school. A school would go no where if the leader did not seek further improvement. In his opinion, school principals in Hong Kong are in great need of professional development in school management because, due to the unique school sponsoring system, most of them are left by their school governors to manage their schools single-handedly and have no where to seek for help.

Also commented by Principal 8 that the school management system of Hong Kong creates allowance of variation in standard amongst school principals' leadership quality. He explained that in most of the cases, a senior teacher was appointed to take the headship by his/her seniority and/or good connection with the sponsoring group. However, a good teacher does not always mean a good administrator, without the compulsory of professional development training, it is not easy to ensure a school principal's leadership quality. Due to the lack of a systematic training programme and expertise provided by ED, heads are left to decide their own professional development plan. However, in the opinions of the principal of School 8, not many principals appreciate the significance of professional development to their job and are not interested in the pursuit of further development.

All the respondents' perceptions and opinions on professional development in school management for school principals are summarized in Appendix (25). Following is the analysis of data collected in the second stage of the fieldwork.

5.3.9 Opinions from the Senior Teacher and Deputy-head

(1) School principals' leadership affects the result of SMI.

The deputy-head of School 9 and senior staff of School 10 both believed that the staff's enthusiasm towards SMI and its result would depend directly on the head's leadership, because ED gives no supervision on its implementation nor performs any evaluation of the scheme. In their opinion, SMI would not work unless the head genuinely shares his/her school management duties with the SMC and implements the scheme seriously. They do not agree that the real enthusiasm for SMI exists in their schools and they believe that many other schools are in similar situation.

(2) School principals' leadership affect staff's performance in SMI

The deputy-head of School 9 understands that SMI encourages school principals to share managerial duties with the staff but he argues that staff would

only benefit if the principal is effective with the sharing. According to experience, his principal is not an efficient manager and he has not handled the delegation process appropriately. Staff are not really sharing the managerial duties with the principal but are instead left to deal with them. As a deputy-head, he needs to cooperate with his colleagues to cope with the delegated duties. He feels frustrated that he is not able to help ease his colleagues' heavy workload brought on by SMI, however he believes that his job is harder than most deputy-heads due to his school principal's incompetence.

The senior teacher of School 10 claimed that his school principal has passed on the accountabilities rather than delegating the authority of school management duties to the staff. At his school, teachers who are members of SMC need to be responsible for organizing SMC meetings, contacting parents and assisting them to carry out their duties. Teaching staff are made accountable to the operation of the SMC and parents' cooperation. Parents can easily resign from their duties if they feel that the workload or pressure is too high, but the staff must stay on and cope under any circumstances. Without the support and sympathy from the principal, staff's morale is dropping and their performance in SMI is at the minimum level only. The senior teacher remarked that it is more difficult for him and his colleagues to handle SMI duties compare with other schools because of their principal's inefficiency as well as being a Band One school. He explained that being a Band 1 government school, teachers are always under pressure in pedagogic preparation. They are now further burdened by school managerial duties along with the heavy workload which is seldom appreciated by their principal. On the contrary, the principal is happy to have teachers in the SMC handle problematic matters. Staff are delegated to do most of the work but when its time for decision making, the principal always has the final say. The morale and enthusiasm among the staff are therefore understandably low.

(3) School principals' leadership cannot be improved by professional development.

Both the deputy-head and senior teacher claimed that the most serious problem in school management is staff's low morale which is caused by poor leadership from the school principal. They find it difficult to work with principals who fail to provide

them with the support they need or create a positive direction for which the school should move. They both implied that school principals' inefficiency in school management cannot be improved simply by asking them to implement SMI.

Both the deputy-head and the senior teacher claimed that if school managers' inefficiency in school management is due to their personal character, their leadership quality cannot be improved by having them attend more training courses. This is because development training can provide these leaders with more academic knowledge but it cannot guarantee the quality of its application in practice. They see that a good leader is somebody who has the ability and enthusiasm to set directions and make plans for the whole school. In their opinions, both of their schools' principals and many other principals in Hong Kong, are not performing as efficient as they should. Yet, under such a unique school management system, school principals are always protected by the governors and their leadership ability is seldom assessed or questioned.

The teacher remarked that he and his colleagues cannot see any improvement on his school principal's leadership after his return from several management training courses. The deputy-head also highlighted the same point even though his school principal had gone through much professional development training. He remarked that the value of professional development training can be seen only if the attendants have the intention to learn, practice and improve continuously, however, not many of the school leaders in Hong Kong are willing to do so.

5.4 Opinions From Other Parties

The second part of the fieldwork involves interviewing school stakeholders who do not have direct involvement in school management but their indirect involvement would still have influence over the principal's demand for professional development and also during the process of quality improvement in education. The respondents were specially selected according to their status or job position, they are: ED officer, professional development training course provider and school governor. Parents are not included in the sample because the majority of them still

have no immediate influence on the school principals in the pursuit of professional development or policies in quality improvement. These respondents' key role is to triangulate the findings generated from the documentary search and the data from the fieldwork.

5.4.1 Head officer of SMI Team

The interview with the chief officer of the SMI Team was arranged by the help of a district officer of ED. The SMI Team was specially established in 1992 to persuade schools to join SMI and to operate the implementation of the scheme. The interviewee, the Team's chief officer, often needs to negotiate with school sponsors and principals on the terms and conditions of having them join the scheme and to arrange the required support and advice. He is the person who is most knowledgeable with the introduction of SMI, its implementation and the reasons for schools accepting or rejecting the scheme.

The interview questions were designed to get the officer's comments on school practitioners' performance in the implementation of SMI and his responses to practitioners' suggestion and criticisms on the policies of quality improvement with the aim to find out if he would raise similar points that we found earlier in the documentary search. These points are: (1) Principals are having difficulties in the operation of SMI, (2) SMI's value and purpose are neither understood nor appreciated by practitioners, (3) The need for professional development in school management is being under-minded, and (4) School principals still hold a conservative ideology in school management. The opinions given by the officer are presented in two parts, the first part is his opinions toward school governors, school principals and teachers' performance and attitude in SMI. The second part presents the officer's response towards criticisms made by educators.

(I) School Governors, Principals and Teachers' performance in SMI

. School governors are reluctant to join SMI

The officer admitted that school practitioners' poor acceptance of SMI is a disappointment to ED. He explained that the first resistant force of SMI is due to school sponsors' worry over losing their privilege and authority in school operation, especially those big sponsoring bodies which each operates many schools at the same time. Big church groups also worry that non-church members in the SMC would bring opposite view to challenge their religious based-principles in school operation. As for business sponsoring groups, they rejected SMI because they are reluctant to share their authority and honour with other people who have not made financial contribution towards the establishment of the school.

Another reason for the rejection of SMI is because of school sponsors' refusal to change their fundamental school management framework. School governors' reluctance to increase their contributions to school governing duties is also a cause for denying the scheme, claimed the officer. They prefer to delegate most of their school management duties onto the school principals.

. School principals are conservative to changes.

'School principals form another resistant force to SMI', claimed the officer. He believes that many school principals in Hong Kong are still conservative with changes which would affect the routine of their job and/or increase their accountability. He explained that many school principals refused joining SMI because they believe that their schools are performing well and need no further changes. Other principals who recognize the value of SMI but reject the scheme because they do not want to take on extra work load. Some worry that joining SMI would increase the working contacts with teachers, parents and governors in the SMC which may generate more conflicts. To avoid going against the staff's rejection to SMI, many school leaders choose to follow their wishes to opt out of SMI.

The officer pointed out that some school principals choose not to join SMI as a whole but they have bargained with ED to take only part of the as a guideline to set up their own management system. For example some schools refuse to set up the SMC as required by the scheme, i.e. including alumni, parents and teachers in the governing board but they agree to make annual plans and conduct appraisals in order to obtain the block grant.

. Teachers' low involvement in SMI

The officer agrees that SMI would bring in extra workload for teachers such as the production of annual reports but he argues that these are the duties that they should have been doing. He stresses that SMI encourages team work which means that teachers are required to spend more of their time on the participation of school management procedures. For schools without an appraisal and evaluation system, joining SMI would bring a great deal of change to their existing management system. For schools which already have similar practice, joining SMI would only mean formalizing their existing system. He criticized that many schools, especially the Grand or so called prestigious schools, tend to over emphasized on their students' academic achievement but they are reluctant to spare more of their human resources for the implementation of SMI.

Staff appraisal is another strong reason for teachers to reject the scheme. The officer explained that many teachers feel uneasy with staff appraisal because this is virtually new to them. They are not used to the fact of being assessed openly and many would even simply reject criticisms made on them. The officer understands that it takes time for them to get use to the idea of appraisal.

(II) Response to Criticisms made by Practitioners

According to the findings of both the documentary search in Chapter Four and the primary data obtained in fieldwork, the five problems most often raised by practitioners regarding SMI are: (i) causing heavy workload, (ii) lack of supportive

training, (3) inadequate human resources, (iii) unfamiliar with the appraisal system and (v) in need of an appropriate evaluation system. The officer's responses to these criticisms are summarized as follows:

. SMI causes heavy workload.

The amount of work load brought on by SMI depends on the goals of the schools and the structure of their existing management framework. If SMI is taken as a way for quality improvement, the workload would not be seen as burden but as a process for achievement. The workload would be lighter for well established schools because similar things suggested by SMI have already been implemented. Staff from less well established schools would bear comparatively heavier workload, but they need to go through this stage sooner or later if they want to seek further improvement or to catch up with others. The workload should lessen gradually once the staff are use to the procedure.

. Inadequacy of supportive training courses.

'Many school principals do not have a true understanding of SMI and have no intention to seek better understanding of the scheme what so ever and yet they openly criticize the scheme', claimed the officer. He does not accept that school principals are having difficulties with the implementation of SMI and he also rejects the need to increase the provision of development training. He argued that many principals of SMI schools are not taking the scheme seriously because they are still over dependent on ED's central support. Training courses for principals to develop their management skills such as Master degree courses in school management are available but the demand has not increased which signals that school principals do not have difficulties in their leadership nor do they have any need of professional development.

Regarding the provision of supportive training courses for SMI, he believes that the quantity and quality of training courses for school principals in the management of SMI schools are sufficient because there is no evidence to show that the provision

of training sections are not matching practitioners' demand. He also explained that school principals' choice on training courses depends not only on the provision side but also on their interests, enthusiasm and availability of time. He admitted that apart from the few introduction courses at the beginning of the SMI launch, no further management training course for SMI has been made for school principals because this the demand is not obvious, hence it is not prioritized.

. Staff appraisal causes pressure.

Regarding practitioners' unfamiliarity with the appraisal system, the officer accepts that there is pressure involved in the conduction of appraisal because it is a completely new issue to the majority of staff and therefore, it has caused most of the dissatisfaction. The appraisal process aims to identify both the staff and the whole school's strength and weaknesses and ultimately to help individual staff to improve so that the quality of the whole school can be improved. He suggests that solution to teaching staff's difficulties with the conduction of appraisal should be re-solved by seeking better understanding or support by attending training courses organized by ED rather than rejecting the scheme.

. Insufficient human resources for the implementation of SMI.

The funding for school is generally sufficient and therefore, the officer does not agree that schools have a shortage in human resources on the implementation of SMI. He pointed out that many schools use joining SMI as an excuse to bargain with ED for more funds. Although it has been made obvious to all the practitioners that the SMI Team is acting only as a consultant for schools on the implementation of the scheme, the officer claimed that his team has more frequent demand for financial supports rather than technical support.

. An evaluation system to ensure effective school management.

In response to the demand for an evaluation system for the assurance of quality improvement in education, the officer explained that evaluation of the

implementation of SMI or the school management system has not been prioritized. He stated that ED's main concern is to maximize the number of schools joining SMI and his Team's main role is to promote SMI and to assist schools through the scheme. Hence, they are not too concern about how the plan is implemented or whether the results are evaluated.

Regarding the difficulties involved in the operation of SMI, the officer argued that it should be the responsibility of every school principal and the SMC to cope with these difficulties in school management. Each individual school should solve their problems in their own way. A systematic evaluation on school management is not necessary because the result of the implementation of the scheme would be reflected eventually by the students' exam result. The ED is confident that all the schools in Hong Kong would join SMI by the year 2000 and this is the Team's primary target.

5.4.2 Training Course Provider in University

A foreign course provider has been selected for interview because the criticism made by practitioners on the practicality of the training courses provided by foreign lecturers who have little knowledge of the real situation of school management. The course provider is a senior lecturer of a university with a long history of providing teacher training and in-job professional development courses for education practitioners in Hong Kong. He delivers management training courses at various levels including Diploma in Education, Bachelor Degree Programme for non-graduate teachers, Master Degree and etc.

The interview with the course provider aims to investigate the situation of training courses provision behind practitioners' complains and dissatisfaction. He is asked to comment on the latest issues concerning SMI, his opinions on the provision of training courses in terms of quality and quantity and the learning attitude of the courses attendance.

(1) The design of training courses

The respondent explained that the variety of the training courses provided by the university are based on the government's education policy. For example, the ED has recently increased its funding on the up-grading courses for non-degree teacher. The faculty office of his university recognized the need of up-grading courses and so the provision has been increased accordingly. However, there is no helpful or comprehensive data available from the government regarding the need of professional development for education practitioners. He claimed that he can only follow the university's existing routines to run the courses. The design of the contents of these courses could only refer to previous courses or other countries' examples due to the lack of references.

He agreed that the variety of development training courses is important to encourage the pursue of professional development. He believed that the demand for management training courses for school principals in Hong Kong does not have too much increase is due to the limited choices of courses. Apart from the Master degree course in school management there is no other courses appropriate for school principals who want to seek continuous development in school management.

(2) The practicality of the training courses

The respondent stated that the role of a training course provider is to get the course attendants to think about different ways of doing things. As long as he thinks he is doing the correct things, he cannot care whether the attendants are dissatisfied with his lectures because there is not a lot he can do about it. Although, he can try to show the attendants the ways to apply new theories and to approach problems, the attendants still have to take the new theories back to their schools and face all sorts of constraints.

Many of the school managers have not tried to apply the acquired theories into their usual practice because they are comfortable with what they have been doing. The respondent admitted that it is difficult to get the course attendants to implement

changes to their usual routine. His university is in the middle of negotiation of running a series of school based self-development projects in SMI schools because this need is recognized.

(3) Course attendants' learning attitude

According to the course providers, most of the attendants of the MA degree course in school management are deputy-heads and principals. Features of their learning attitude during their participation in group discussion shows that they are not very active and they seldom raise matters of their schools for discussion. He also pointed out that course attendants are not keen on giving feedback or comments on the training sections. Therefore, it is difficult to tell from their opinions and performance whether they appreciate what they have learned. Course attendants' tend to be reserve about expressing their opinions concerning the courses. Thus, it is difficult for the course providers to improve the quality of professional development training programmes.

(4) Opinions toward SMI

The course provider agrees with the importance of SMI to the system of Hong Kong but he believes that it will be very difficult to insert this new idea into schools due to people's conservative ideology. He does not agreed with many course attendants' complain about their heavy work-load at school and used it as an excuse for rejecting SMI or not implementing SMI properly. According to his knowledge, the amount of work the practitioners handling is, in fact, the same as many other countries. They are using heavy work load as an excuse to reject SMI because they do not want the extra work that comes with the scheme. Many education practitioners do not see the value in the scheme and those who do not believe the scheme would let it go. He also sees that educators in Hong Kong have not experienced many changes to the education system or to their job and therefore, they become more resistant to the recent changes.

Principals' need for help in the implementation of SMI is recognized by the course provider. He stressed that it is important to help the principals in the correct ways. In his opinions, it is not wise to give school principals direct technical help because this would increase their already strong dependency of the central support. It is important to ensure practitioners' understanding of the meaning of decentralization and that they are willing to start seeking solutions for their own problems.

He commented that the government has not made enough effort to make people understand SMI and the reason why this is the way school should adapt for further improvement. In his opinions, the decentralizing issue is not as radical as people think but, in the Chinese culture, it is a totally different way of school management. This is the main cause for people's reluctance to accept SMI. The role school governors play in school management also creates another barrier to the acceptance of SMI.

5.4.3 Opinions From a School Governor

A school governor of a non-SMI school is interviewed with aims to understand the reasons for a school sponsoring group to reject SMI and the difficulties involved in joining the scheme. It is also necessary to have a clearer view on the working relationship between school governors and the principals. The interviewee is a vicar of a large church group that operates over twenty secondary schools and many other educational institutions at different levels in Hong Kong. He is at the same time a governor and supervisor of several schools.

(1) Opinions toward SMI

The governor claimed that he does not see the value of their schools joining SMI and this view is shared by all the members of the sponsoring group. All their schools have been performing well under the traditional system and therefore, they find it no reason to let their schools go through all the troubles to join a scheme with no identifiable benefit.

Another reason for rejecting SMI, according to the respondent is that his church has no obligation to change their long existed school management framework to join the scheme. He explained that the church initially accepted ED's invitations to operate these schools on the condition that the church can have its own school management system. This is the only system which allows the church group to operate a large number of schools. Due to this initial agreement, the ED cannot force them to join SMI. However, the governor revealed that his group will have to cooperate and compromise eventually because ED would otherwise not invite their church to operate any more new established schools in the future.

The governor also claimed that his church has considered to cooperate with ED but its present school management framework does not allow them to do so easily. He explained that all the group's schools are centrally operated by the central SMC chaired by the Bishop. Each of the governor of the SMC supervises several schools at the same time. Joining SMI means that one SMC needs to be set up for each individual school, in other words, the church needs to recruit many more of their members for school operation and each of them needs to be prepared to contribute a certain amount of time and effort on practical school management duties. The governor doubts if it is possible for the church to recruit such a large number of right persons to carry out the job in short term.

On the other hand, it is very unlikely that the group would allow parents who are not members of the religious group into SMCs, claimed the governor. Involving parents with different religious background into the SMC would cause predictable conflicts to the group's education policies and long term plans. Nevertheless, he believed that all his group's schools would join SMI gradually and eventually. They are now in the middle of negotiation with ED to insist joining SMI without inviting parents into SMCs and to maintain their central SMC's function.

(2) Opinions to schools principals' leadership

The respondent admitted that it is impossible for the governors to keep close supervision on each school's operation under the traditional school operation system because all the central SMC's members have their own professions and are governing several schools at the same time. They therefore, have to place strong trust on to school principals' leadership and delegate them to run their school single-handedly. He expressed that he has strong faith on all the principals' leadership otherwise they would not be appointed to the headship. He agreed that it is possible for a principal to perform only at the minimum level or have a poor relationship with the staff without being realized by the governors because school governors get to know the progress of each school and its staff's performance or morale only through the principal's report. A school principal's performance will eventually be indicated by the students' exam result and the school's reputation to the public.

The governor believes that school principals would be benefited from more professional development training. He notices that the demand of professional development for school principals in his group is not high and believes it is due to the lack of financial reward for better qualification or performance. He is not sure if the supply of management training courses for school managers is sufficient but it is certain that the trend of professional development in Hong Kong for school managers does not exist.

Regarding the political future of Hong Kong, the governors claimed that there is nothing his group can do to prevent any changes brought to their schools by political decisions because they cannot afford to sponsor their schools solely without the government's support. However, he is quite confident that their school sponsoring service will still be needed by the government due to the shortage of human resources in ED but on the condition that they would cooperate with the government's policies. One obvious change to the group is that no more western missionaries will be appointed for the headship after the current ones' have retired.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has presented the eleven school practitioners' opinions to school management, the launch of SMI and the need of professional development for school principals. The comments from an ED officer, a school governor and a training course provider on the management of SMI schools, school principals' leadership, the need of professional development for school principals are also gathered. All these data will be further analyzed in next chapter. The interpreted findings from the fieldwork will then be compared with the findings of the secondary data search. Suggestions will be made upon the final findings in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SIX DATA INTERPRETATION

6.1 Introduction

All the data obtained from the fieldwork presented in the previous chapter is analyzed here to interpret the meaning behind the respondents' opinions and beliefs and to rationalize their experience in school management, decentralization and professional development. An attempt is made to develop the implications of the interpreted findings which are then compared to the results of the documentary search in Chapter Four as a summary of this study.

The data interpretation process is divided into four main sections: (i) Interpretation of Decentralization (Section 6.2); (ii) Ideology in school management (Section 6.3); (iii) Improvement in school management (Section 6.4); and (iv) Professional development training in school management (Section 6.5). Each section is completed with a summary of the implications generated from the findings. The comparison of the implications with the findings from the secondary data search is conducted in the final section (Section 6.6).

6.2. Interpretation of Decentralization

Decentralization of school management is not widely welcomed by practitioners in Hong Kong. Among the eleven respondents in this study, five of them (four non-SMI and one SMI school) claimed that SMI is not useful to their schools. They believed that SMI is useful for quality improvement but it is useful for under-developed schools only, not for well performed schools like them. They therefore, do not see any the point of joining the scheme.

They claimed that the imbalance between the extra clerical duties would outweigh the benefit gained from joining SMI and explained that their teaching staff do not want to shift their focus and resources from pedagogic improvement to clerical duties. Sufficient government funding is another reason for the refusal of SMI. Many

respondents doubt whether joining SMI will really help schools to improve. The appropriateness of applying SMI to the system of Hong Kong is questioned by two respondents, one of them is from a SMI school. The school governor believes that schools should be able to improve in other ways which would involve less drastic changes to the school management system. These comments reflect that the reasons for changing from the centralized management system which have been working well to a decentralized system which is not so well understood by the practitioners. This explains why people are not totally confident with SMI in quality improvement.

SMI is seen by the respondents as a mean to help under-developed schools to establish their own school management system. However, according to official reports, SMI is intended for all the schools to pursue continuous quality improvement. A difference of interpretation between the government and schools on the purpose of SMI is obvious here. Clearly, ED should make more effort to clarify the purpose of SMI and school practitioners, on the other hand, should also try to seek better understanding of the scheme before making their own judgment.

Some practitioners from non-SMI schools with little understanding of SMI simply base their judgment of the scheme according to other people's experience or opinion. This finding is supported by the SMI Team officer who said that many school principals rejected SMI before even reading its introductory guide. It is also found that many respondents value SMI only on the face of the blockgrant it provides. They reject the scheme because funding from the government is sufficient and find no financial initiative to join it. Other potential benefits of the scheme which require certain changes to the usual practice are not appreciated. For example, some schools refused SMI because they do not want to invite parents into their SMCs which may cause the threat of having contradictive views and disharmony in their schools.

The additional workload created by SMI has been raised by many respondents as a reason for its rejection. It shows how much the extra work can deter people from joining and/or appreciate the scheme. We need to understand that when a school wishes to change to a new system, whether it is in Hong Kong or any other

country, extra workload is unavoidable at the initial stages. Thus, extra workload is not an appropriate measurement for the worthwhileness of joining a scheme. The value of a scheme should be judged on its long term contribution to a school.

Interpretation:

Interpretation from these opinions is that many school practitioners are still conservative towards changes. They instinctively look for excuses to reject the change which would affect their usual practice, increase their workload or require them to apply new knowledge or techniques. They are satisfied with their present routine as well as their school's management system, therefore they have no intention to make changes. This interpretation is supported by the ED officer who said that many school sponsors and managers reject SMI simply because they do not want to make changes.

People's conservative ideology in changes is accumulated by factors such as culture, experience and belief which cannot be influenced in short term and certainly not without considerable planning. SMI scheme was 'imported' to Hong Kong in quite a rush and the government was surprised and disappointed by people's resistance. Indeed this reflects the importance of cultural, ideological and experiential factors to the result of a change have been undermined or even neglected by the authority. An implication is therewith developed according to these findings.

Implication (1): The value of SMI is neither well understood nor welcome by the practitioners due to their conservative ideology in adaptation of new changes.

6.3 School Management

ED does not have the manpower and resources to exercise close supervision on each school's operation, therefore public sectors are invited to take over the role. However, not many school sponsoring groups have managed to provide comprehensive school supervision service as expected. School supervision duties are

passed back to the government and school management duties are delegated to the school principals. To avoid school principals dominating the school management process and to reduce school's dependency upon ED's central supervision, SMI is introduced. The aims of SMI are to ensure that school governors' exercise their duties in school management, for ED to delegate the central school supervision duties to the SMC and for school principals to share their authority and responsibilities of school management with the governors. Analysis of SMI's fulfillment of these purposes is followed.

6.3.1 School stakeholders' low involvement in school management

It is found in this study that school governors' involvement in school management is generally low and SMI has done little to this situation. The average frequency of SMC meeting of the eleven sample schools is 3 times per school year (see Table 5-4 in Chapter Five). Only four schools have better attendance rate and the rest barely have more than half of the total members attending the meetings. Although five sample schools joined SMI, the frequency of their SMC meetings do not have any obvious increase. The average frequency of SMC meetings of the five SMI schools is 3.2 and the six non-SMI schools is 2.5.

The school supervisor is the only governor of the SMC that school principals would try to have more contact with when necessary. Four supervisors (School 4, 5, 6 and 11) out of the ten sample aided schools have frequent contact (over five times a school year) with their school principals, among them three are from non-SMI schools. The rest of the schools' supervisors are still hold on to the title as an honorary symbol even though four of them joined SMI. The supervisor of School 9 (a government and SMI school) is the District Education Officer but the involvement of this 'suppose to be' 'model supervisor' in school management is nothing more than any other honorary supervisors. Amongst all the SMI schools' supervisors, only one (School 11) has more meetings with the school principal and this is because he resides within the school's premise.

More than half of the sample schools' principals (School 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10) are left to manage their schools mainly on their own and four of them are SMI schools. As explained in the sampling process in Chapter 5, each sample school represents other schools with the similar background. The finding here shows the number of school principals being delegated by their school governors to manage their schools single-handedly is still large. It also indicates that joining SMI does not ensure the sharing of school principals' authority in school management.

This point is also shared by the training course provider who confirms that though many schools have established their PTA accordingly, not many of the members are invited into the SMCs. He worries that unless the ED could provide close supervision to these schools, the school principals of SMI schools would still be left to run things on their own which really defeats the object of SMI.

None of the respondents, including the principals of SMI schools, made any complaints on the low involvement of their schools' governors or supervisors,. They all share the same opinion that school governors who have their own business to worry about should not be expected to spare much time on school management duties. Neither do they expect school governors to increase their involvement in school management. Instead, over half of the respondents worried that *the school management process would be made complicated if the supervisors or governors really increase their involvement in school management as required by the SMI.*

6.3.2. Collaborative management

Among the five SMI schools (School 3, 8, 9, 10 and 11), only School 8, 10 and 11 have followed the SMI principles to invite parents and teachers into their SMCs. One teacher is invited into the SMC of School 3 and 9 but parents are still excluded. With the exception of the government school (School 10), the number of seats for parents and/or teachers in SMI aided schools is still proportionally small (see Table 5-3 in Chapter 5) while the majority of seats are still occupied by members of the sponsoring body.

None of the SMC of the aided SMI schools has more than one parent and/or teacher representatives (the average number of governors in the sample aided schools is 10) which implicates that the inclusion of other stakeholders in SMC still has no obvious influence on the school management process. ED, however, is satisfied as long as at least one teacher, one parent and/or one alumnus is invited into a school's SMC.

No matter how many school stakeholders are invited into a SMC, its efficiency still depends on its governors' willingness to devote their time and effort into the school's business, but how much they should contribute still depends on the school principal's ideology in delegation. The majority of the principals (except School 5 and 6, the two grand schools) claimed that their school governors are very supportive of their leadership and the word 'supportive' to them means that their decisions are rarely challenged or questioned.

All the principals claimed that they tend to refrain from calling for extra SMC meetings to avoid bothering their governors. Calling for extra meetings may also give the governors a bad impression of the principal's leadership ability. Six sample principals worry that many governors may resign if they forced to increase their commitment in school management to the extent suggested in SMI. One opinion shared by eight respondents (except School 5, 6 and 11) is that *it is the principal's own responsibility to manage a school and a capable principal should therefore, be able to fulfill his/her job duties without help from the governors*. School principals who share this ideology in school management find it difficult to work closely with governors because they are used to handling the duties on their own.

Nine respondents expressed worries over working closely with parents and teachers. Personal interests or benefits of the students are likely to be prioritized by the parents which might cause hindrance to the school's long term plans. On the other hand, the inclusion of teachers in SMC could cause inconvenience during discussions on staff matters such as promotion or benefits. Seven respondents do not believe that involving parents and teachers in their SMCs can help to improve their

schools. On the contrary, they worry that the increase of parents and teachers involvement in school management would further complicate matters.

Ten of the respondents believe that the trend of parents' participation in school management is still lacking, because most parents in Hong Kong are not open-minded enough to devote their time and effort to the operation of a school. Most of the principals in the sample with parents representatives in their SMCs admitted that they would only listen to parent governors' points or suggestions, but the ultimate decisions will still rest with the governors from the sponsoring body. They claimed that in most cases, their parent governors are very cooperative during SMC meetings, i.e. they seldom oppose or challenge the majority's decision.

Some school sponsoring groups still cannot accept sharing their privilege of being school governors with outsiders who are neither members of their groups nor donors. Some of them are against the idea of letting outsiders involve in their school operation system because they do not want opposite views to be brought into their schools. As pointed out by the sample governor, his group does not have the human resources to supervise each school closely. Instead of inviting other stakeholders to help, they prefer delegating the supervision duties to the principals. The governor personally supports the idea of including parents and teachers in the SMC, providing that the number of their seats does not exceed 10-20% of the total.

Regarding the school supervision system, the ED officer makes it clear that ED can no longer cope with the increasing number of schools and the continuous complication of school management. Without the appropriate help from the SMC on school supervision, some principals will continue to dominate the school management process. Some principals may only make a minimal effort to act and they refuse to implement changes in order to avoid making mistakes or extra workload.

The governor does not agree that the increase of governors' involvement in school supervision can improve the quality of education. He urges ED to seek ways

to improve education quality without affecting the sponsoring group's traditional school management practice.

The training course provider agrees with the need to increase school governors' involvement in school management. However, he worries that many governors might be ill-prepared and lack the experience to handle the sudden increase of school management duties. In this case, they would become a hindrance rather than an asset to the principal.

Interpretation:

The introduction of SMI aims at delegating school management duties from the government to school principals and governors. However, there is no evident to suggest that governors or supervisors of aided schools have increased their involvement in school management after joining SMI. The object of decentralization is misrepresented because the majority of the delegated school management duties have been taken up by the principals and staff without the inclusion of other stakeholders. The inclusion of parents and teachers into SMC, in many cases, becomes symbolic or rather to satisfy ED. Both the school principal and the sponsoring group have no intention to change their roles in school management.

Many parents are still not keen to be involved in the school management process because such a concept simply did not exist. Practitioners are not eager to involve parents either because they feel that the government has actually gone against their wishes. Teachers, on the other hand, never has a role in school management before thus, many of them have drawn a line between their teaching professions and school management duties. They question the value of their involvement in school management and find it hard to accept these delegated school managerial duties since they were not something they have asked for and especially when they have more than enough to cope with. According to the deputy-head and senior teacher's opinions, SMI brings extra workload to the teaching staff rather than a share of authority in school management.

From these findings we can deduce that many school principals, teachers and sponsors in Hong Kong do not perceive the true meaning of decentralization. The contribution from parents and/or teachers in school management is not appreciated. Many principals still find it difficult to accept the fact that they need to discuss with other stakeholders, who previously did not have a role in school management, on matters which they used to decide on their own. The interpretation from these points indicate that SMI may bring about the inclusion of school stakeholders into SMC but it cannot guarantee collaborative school management, because people's conservative ideology cannot be changed simply by asking them to join SMI. Improvement would not come about if its principal is not genuinely sharing his/her authority in school management with the governors. Similarly, the school SMC cannot function effectively if the governors are unwilling to increase their involvement in school management.

According to the ED officer, these problems have been recognized by the ED but nothing will be done at this moment because the priority still focus on persuading more schools to join SMI. Compromises have been made by ED to encourage more schools' participation. For example, at present, many schools are not compelled to include parents, alumnus and teachers into their SMCs. We can see from ED's movement that the main purpose of SMI to address the balance of the principal's authority in school management by increasing the involvement of governors has not been enforced out properly. The dominating principals can still exercise total authority within their own 'castle'. Under-performed principals who have not taken SMI seriously, are still sheltered by the out-dated school management system and the absence of an evaluation system. Principals and their staff who have taken the scheme seriously are struggling with the daunting delegated managerial responsibilities with no extra supports from the governors or the government. The implication of these findings is :

Implication (2): SMI is not functioning effectively because people's conservative ideology in school management has not changed.

6.3.3 The evaluation of schools' performance

It is found in this study that a school's performance and its principal's leadership are often judged by students' public exam results. However, according to the banding system, students in Band one school, in general, would have better academic performance than students in Band five school. The principals of prestigious schools should not be judged as better managers than those of Band five schools because there are different circumstantial factors involved in their job.

Managers of Band five schools which have a higher intake of under-performed students, tend to spend a greater proportion of their time dealing with students' behavioural problems and staff's low morale. Teachers of these schools must not only be concerned with the students' academic achievement, they also need to devote considerable time to care for their social behaviour and help them to build up an interest in their study. For example, many teachers of Band 4-5 schools located in public housing estates need to do shifts during their lunch break by walking around the areas surrounding the schools to supervise their students' social activities and behaviour and to prevent them from being bullied or approached by local gangsters.

School stakeholders, like the governors and ED officers, do not have high expectations of students' academic performance in these schools but expect more on the prevention of students dropping out, or crime spreading within their schools. Although Band 4&5 schools will receive extra funding and manpower from ED, the difficulties involved in the management of these schools are not always understood by the public. They will always be judged by the public as 'bad' schools which tend to demoralize both the staff and the students further.

Principals who recruit students from medium academic level face a different kind of pressure from their stakeholders and the public. Stakeholders of these schools often have high expectations of their students' performance in public exams, wishing them to catch up with Grand/prestigious schools one day. However, students of these schools come from all sorts of family background and with mixed

ability. School principals, on one hand, need to concentrate on improving students' academic performance to catch up with the prestigious schools but, on the other hand, they also need to be concern with their students' social behaviour just like Band 4-5 schools.

Prestigious and Grand schools have the advantage in attracting high grade students with good family background due to their good reputation and location in a good neighborhood area. The leaders of these schools would have less to worry over their students' behaviour or academic performance because most of them have good parental support at home. Therefore, staff in these schools are less likely to be distressed or demoralized by their students' behaviour and so they can concentrate on boosting their academic achievement.

6.3.4 The evaluation of school principals' leadership

All the respondents expect their professional performance to be measured by their students' exam results which explains their obsession with the achievement of good public exam results. However, it is found in this study that this kind of pressure does not always come from outside; sometimes, it is generated by the culture and people's own belief and ideology. For example, the principals of the four Grand/prestigious schools (School 1, 2, 5 and 6) measure their schools' standard and their own leadership quality by the students' academic result. They claimed that there is no need to implement further improvement to their schools or their leadership because their students already perform well.

The students' performance in public exams is the only mean for the government as well as the school stakeholders to assess a school's performance. The principal's report is the only channel from which most of governors can understand the progress of the school. There is no other source of information to reveal the principal's leadership quality in school management, his/her relationship with the staff, parents and students. The sample school governor admitted that it is not easy for them to identify a leadership problem if the students' academic results has been maintained. The ED officer confirmed that a school principal's performance is well

represented by the overall result of his/her students in public exams, therefore, there is no need to set up a special monitoring system for the evaluation of school management.

There is evidence to suggest that too much focus on the students' academic performance has caused neglect to the need of improvement in other areas. Two respondents (School 7 and 11) find it difficult to make their colleagues understand that a 'good' school is not only about obtaining good exam results from students but also about cultivating their positive attitude and personality to the society and giving them guidance to identify and develop their potential ability. Four respondents (School 3,4,7 and 11) see that many of their staff still insist on boosting students' exam result as the only way to achieve improvement of a school. These teachers are only concern with matters relating to the subjects they specialize; they are not keen to take part in school management unless there is an incentive such as a promotion or a pay rise.

Although they are happy with their performance being measured by the students' academic results, the principals of School 3 and 11 (both are Band one schools) strongly criticize the leaders of Grand/prestigious schools who objected to the need for further improvement and refused joining SMI because their students have achieved good exam results. These schools should not be satisfied with their performance just yet because no standardized evaluation or comparisons have been used to measure their true achievement.

Four respondents (Principals of School 3, 7, 8 and 11) commented that many leaders of the Grand/prestigious schools manage their schools by only following the basic requirement of the government's Code of Aid. They are reluctant to add changes or new ideas simply because they wish to avoid making mistakes or creating extra work-load. Schools under their reserved style of management are unlikely to go beyond their present status.

Interpretation:

Before determining whether students' exam result is a fair way to judge the performance of a school and its leader, we need to first consider if it really tells us everything. Sample School 9 and 10 are both Band 1-2 schools and they are the most famous schools in the area for achieving excellent result in public exams. Both the respondents (a deputy-head and a senior teacher) are dissatisfied with their school principals' leadership but they claimed that their students' great achievement in public exams is not due to the principal's leadership. It is a positive result of the teaching staff's hard work and the department heads' strong support. The other key reason is the recruitment of only top grade students who are usually hard-workers and fast learners.

The deputy head of School 9 remarked that the principal of his school has delegated excess managerial duties to him and his colleagues, especially after joining SMI. The decision of joining SMI was made by the sponsoring body without the staff's consent. The principal has not set a good example by sharing some of the staff's workload. He also fails to give the staff a clear guideline on the direction of the school's long term development. Staff's morale is badly affected by the sudden increase of workload as well as the principal's poor leadership. All the staff work extremely hard to maintain their students' academic standard even in the absence of a shared and recognized objective within their school. The deputy-head also complained that the school principal have taken credit for the students' achievement instead of being responsible for causing staff's low morale.

According to the senior teacher of School 10 (a government school), after joining SMI, staff are delegated with heavy workload but they are not really sharing the principal's authority in school management. Although the principal gives the governors of the SMC chances to express their opinions, he would eventually convince them and win their support to his way of thinking. Gradually, many governors do not bother to make themselves heard. Furthermore, the principal fails to provide the appropriate guidance and support the staff need for handling parents in the new working relationship. Working closely with parents, without the

appropriate support from the principal puts pressure on the teachers. They are demoralized and feel that their efforts and hard work are not appreciated. The teacher stressed that their students' high academic achievement is not attributed by their principal's leadership.

In another example School principal of School 5 and 6 both take credit for the achievement of good public exam results and hence they do not see any need for further improvement of their leadership. In fact, these principals have only been heads in these schools for less than five years which seem to suggest that the 'good' performance of their schools has long been established before their arrival. Therefore, it is inappropriate for them to judge their leadership quality against the well established schools.

All these cases reflect that students' public exam results on their own are not enough to define/represent the quality of a principal's leadership. In fact, students' excellent academic achievement can sometimes provide a shelter for the principals to resist the need for changes or improvement in their schools. Many school governors are easily satisfied by the students' academic performance, therefore, no pressure is put on to the principal to pursue further improvement. Some governors may even discourage the implementation of changes which do not contribute direct benefit to the students' academic performance. Due to these factors, many school principals would be satisfied with their students' academic achievement and become less willing to implement further changes. Without setting an example by the principal, it is unlikely that the staff will be motivated to conduct changes in their job or to seek further development.

Interpretation from these findings suggest that excess concern over the students' exam results has out weighed the importance of improvement in other areas. School principals are too easily satisfied with the standard of their schools and their leadership quality. This has created a false sense of security for continuous improvement. The implication generated from the interpretation is:

Implication (3): Over-emphasis on students' public exam results has hindered school principals' pursuit of further development.

6.4 Quality Improvement in Education

Stakeholders hold various views on the methods of quality improvement. Many respondents including the sample school governor believes that the problems in school management are caused by the out-dated education system, thus education standard can be raised only by changing the system. The introduction of SMI is criticized as an inappropriate approach which has instead created unnecessary interruption to the sponsoring group's school management system. The ED officer, on the other hand, emphasizes that improvement of the school management system is the key to raise quality in education. He criticizes many school managers for neglecting their own professional responsibilities on the pursuit of continuous improvement for their schools.

The course provider supports the importance of school management to quality improvement but worries that many principals may have problems coping with the new responsibilities. However, it is difficult for training course providers to understand school principals' problems in school management due to the lack of public data or information from the government. Furthermore, training course providers, especially foreign lecturers, find it difficult to obtain information from the attendants of training course. He believes that it is due to the conservative culture that attendants are not keen to disclose their own problems during group discussion. Frequently they are reluctant to give feedback to the training sessions. Under these circumstances, course providers find it hard to obtain helpful data and information to design the right courses to meet people's need. He admits that he and his colleagues have no other alternatives but to follow previous routines and/or examples from other countries to construct their own training programmes.

Regarding the practitioners' problems in school management, principals of the two non-SMI schools who are planning to join the scheme soon claimed difficulty in promoting the same vision among the staff on SMI. They worry that the staff will

take a non-cooperative attitude towards the implementation of the scheme. For the five SMI schools, technical problems in the implementation of SMI are the only difficulties they have in school management, especially the conduction of appraisal and the creation of vision within the school. The rest of respondents do not think they have any problems in school management. These findings show that the problems that school principals face in school management are all caused by joining SMI.

However, from the respondents' opinions on SMI and criticisms on the present management system and professional development training programmes, further problems in school principals' leadership are identified, they are:

- . lack of initiative and confidence in making changes,
- . difficulties in integrating new theories or changes into schools,
- . lack of confidence and experience in collaborative school management,
- . lack of a clear concept on continuous professional development, and
- . uncertainty on long term planning.

School principals are found to have more problems with school management than they realized. However, these problems are not considered by school principals as their problems. They therefore, do not accept the responsibility of re-solving them. They blame SMI for bringing in these problems to their leadership and believe that whoever introduces the scheme should be responsible for solving them.

The interpretation of the respondents' perceptions towards the difficulties involved in school management reflects that the problems identified above have always existed but they have merely been highlighted with the launch of decentralization. SMI exposes the existence of these problems, but there is no evidence to show that the scheme is effective in helping people to solve them. For examples, the principals whose schools joined SMI in the first lot (School 3, 8 & 9) still face the same difficulties in school management and they are still managing their school single-handedly. Those who did not appreciate SMI in the first place still hold hostile views towards it even after several years since its launch. None of the

respondents of the SMI schools can confirm gaining any substantial advantages brought either to their schools or their job by the scheme. The only compliment towards the scheme given by those who support it is that SMI is the trend for the future and should benefit schools in long run.

The ED officer admitted that he has yet to see the positive side of SMI on the improvement of education standard. His explanation is that the scheme simply has not been implemented long enough for a result to appear. He also explained that ED's role is only to introduce and promote the scheme to all the schools in Hong Kong. They are not too with the method or the result of its implementation because these are not scheduled in the SMI programme. ED does not agree with the point raised by the school principals that there is a need for professional support in the process of implementing SMI. ED believes that all the school principals should be able to handle their schools in SMI. The officer also claimed that it is not their duty to provide technical support in school management for school managers.

Interpretation:

The interpretation of these findings indicates that practitioners cannot be expected to improve their leadership simply by joining SMI. Quality improvement requires changing people's ideology and enhancement of their knowledge. In other words, it takes training to prepare people for their job. However, no appropriate actions have been taken by the principals or ED. The significance of these problems are ignored by both parties. They also deny their responsibility to solving them. The lack of action means joining SMI cannot guarantee improvement in education. The following implication is established from this situation:

Implication (4): SMI brings out the existing problems in school management but it is not solving them. Joining SMI does not guarantee improvement in education.

6.5 Professional Development Training in School Management

Among the 11 respondents, one (School 6) claimed that professional development for school principal is not necessary and four (School 1, 2, 5 and 10) believe that professional development ‘should’ be good for school principals. Six respondents (School 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 & 11) see professional development as being very important (see Appendix 20). According to the range of the respondents’ age, we cannot see a strong correlation between the respondents’ age and their opinions upon the need for professional development (see Table 6-1). Neither is there an obvious link between the respondents’ academic qualification and their perception towards professional development.

Table 6.1 Information of interviewees

Interviewee	Position of Interviewee	Qualification	Years of Experience in Headship	Gender	Age
1	P	MA	10+	F	40+
2	P	Bsc	20+	M	60+
3	P	Phd	15+	M	40+
4	P	Bsc	15+	M	50+
5	P	Bsc	10+	F	50+
6	P	MA	3+	F	40+
7	P	MA	4+	M	40+
8	P	Phd	30+	M	60+
9	DH	MA	5+	M	30+
10	T	Bsc	5+	M	30+
11	P	MA	5+	M	30+

P-Principal DH-Deputy Head T-Teacher

6.5.1 The demand of continuous professional development training

Eight of the respondents believe that comprehensive professional development training courses are not in demand in Hong Kong because many school principals do

not see their value. With no progress of promotion or a pay rise, the effort of studying for an extra qualification do not seem to attract the interest of school principals to pursue further development. Only one respondent has confirmed in the interview that it is the next training he has planned to go for. Principal of School 9 wants to learn more about counseling because he foresees the need of this service and realizes his limitation in this area. The rest of the respondents including those who support the need of professional development, cannot specify the area they want to further develop.

Ten out of the eleven practitioners have not considered the pursuit of professional development training as an option to help them to solve their problems. They blamed their problems on the ill-planned SMI and/or the out-dated management system. Their strategy to deal with the difficulties in school management is to wait for the system to change and for more technical supports, to be provided. Many senior teachers who are delegated with managerial duties have refused to seek development in school management. They believe that they can rely on their rich teaching experience and common sense to handle the school management duties. They also argue that they are teachers, not administrators, and therefore, do not have the obligation to go for management training. Furthermore, the need of financial management for school principals is seen to be unnecessary as most of the respondents receive sufficient funding from the government.

Interpretation:

The findings gathered reveal that school principals from Grand/prestigious schools are less willing to pursue professional development or join SMI because of the excellent record of their students performance in public exams. Many heads in Hong Kong prefer following other people's foot steps rather than taking the lead to change. Professional development is not in high demand because the trend of pursuing continuous professional improvement is weak. The low demand is also due to the lack of competition amongst schools in terms of students' number. (The majority of the schools in Hong Kong, except a few in the rural area and the independent schools, have surplus number of applications to the number of seats

they can provide). Although the value and significance of professional development is supported by over half of the respondents in this study, most of them do not have a professional development plan in mind. The value of professional development is not truly appreciated either because most of them have not considered pursuing further training as a way to solving their problems.

Sufficient funding is the reason for practitioners' rejection of the need for financial management training. Having sufficient funding do not mean that school principals are competent in financial management. The incident of Jubilee Secondary School in 1977 has already shown the consequence of school finance mismanagement and yet people still do not take it seriously.

The reason that senior staff object to pursuing managerial training is because they do not consider the improvement of school management as their duty. They are only willing to do what they can and are not prepared to pursue further development to enhance their knowledge and techniques in management. Professional development in school management for school managers is not a major concern by ED either. ED believes that any senior teacher is able to handle a school's account and budget; all the school principals and senior staff should be able to handle the delegated school management duties and all the schools can improve its quality by joining SMI.

Interpretation from these opinions is that most of the practitioners understand the importance of professional development but they fail to recognize their own need. They neglect the value of continuous professional development to their job and prefer other options to solve their problems which require no lengthy training. The implication from people's perception and attitude towards professional development training is:

Implication (5) : The demand for continuous professional development training is low because the significance of professional development towards quality improvement is neglected.

6.5.2 The interpretation of professional development training

It is identified in this study that the worthiness of the pursuit of professional development training is judged by many school principals by pay rise or promotion. The necessity of professional development is decided by the amount of competition between schools in terms of students' recruitment. The supply of professional development training courses in school management is considered adequate by six respondents. To four of them, professional development means attending the seminars operated by the ED. However, according to the officer, the seminars referred by the respondents are introductory talks about the latest issues or problems in education. Most of them are not related to school management and can hardly be counted as professional development training programmes. Both the ED officer and the course provider point out that apart from the Master degree course in educational management run by universities and the few training seminars for the introduction of SMI, there is no other course provided for school managers.

ED's interpretation of the low demand for Master degree training courses in school management is that school principals have little problems with their school management duties. The supply of management training courses is judged by ED as sufficient because the demand of these courses has not had any substantial increase. Due to these factors, apart from a few introductory courses for SMI, no further school management training courses or seminars have been organized.

Interpretation:

Practitioners' perception of professional development shows a lack of understanding of its meaning. Professional development to some respondents means attending the seminars operated by ED. They considered this is to be sufficient because they have attended ED's seminars once or twice a year. In fact, the seminars they referred to are not related to school management and should not be treated as professional development training courses. To encourage quality improvement

through the pursuit of professional development, it is necessary to ensure that practitioners have the right concept and attitude toward professional development.

As discussed in the chapter of literature review, the value of professional development for school principals is to strengthen their capacities in improvement by extending their professional knowledge, developing their professional skills and clarifying their professional values. Thus, professional development requires more than simply practitioners attending seminars, it also includes reflecting from experience, identifying strengths and weaknesses of their schools and themselves, making plan for further improvement and taking action. Attending introductory seminars to receive up-dated information is not all but only part of the professional development process.

Attendance of development training programmes like the master degree course do not guarantee quality improvement. Attending training courses without the intention to apply the knowledge into practice would not lead to improvement. Over looking the importance of the learning cycle (see Chapter Two, Section 2.8.2) in the process of continuous improvement can also reduce the benefit of professional development training. The implication reflected from people's opinions on professional development training courses is:

Implication (6): Both the meaning and value of professional development training are not clearly understood.

6.5.3 Criticisms on professional development training courses

The current available training courses in school management are criticized by seven respondents who recognize the importance of continuous professional development training in management as too academic or too brief. The four principals who see no need for further improvement and describe professional development as attending ED seminars all claimed that the provision of training courses "should" be sufficient and appropriate.

The seminars concerning school management provided by ED are criticized by six respondents as lacking depth. The training courses provided by universities, such as the MA degree courses, are criticized being too academic which can hardly provide the attendants with practical advice and help. Four respondents complained about the lack of experienced and qualified local lecturers in Hong Kong to provide training courses. The shortage of local expertise resulting in a high dependency on foreign lecturers is blamed for causing a gap between the contents of the training courses and the attendants' practical needs. The theories and knowledge delivered by the foreign lecturers may work brilliantly in other countries but they are usually difficult or even unsuitable for the schools in Hong Kong. They also comment that foreign lecturers who do not fully understand the situation of Hong Kong cannot appreciate the school principals' problems and dilemmas in school management. They therefore, are unable to deliver the knowledge which is appropriate for practical use. Three respondents believe that the lack of local lecturers in Hong Kong is due to a low number of researches in educational management being carried out locally.

The reason for the low number of educational research being carried out in Hong Kong is illustrated by principal of School 8. He explained that under ex-colonial government's rule, people were provided with only basic education so that they could meet the society's need and make their own living without depending on the government's support. Further education was neither encouraged nor adequately provided. This was the way the colonial government used to control the intellectual standard of the general public and to build up the supremacy of the local British people. Inside the government, high ranking officers would be employed from Britain even though potential local candidates were available. British officers would be promoted to the top posts speedily while local civil servants needed to prove themselves by being shifted around to various departments before being considered for promotion. The ideal local candidates for administrative posts would always be sent to Britain for training before being promoted. This was the traditional way to train an administrator in Hong Kong and also a way to learn a new technique. New projects or unexpected crises were always handled by foreign experts.

He explained that, due to this traditional learning process and problem solving practice, local research in management was neither encouraged nor sponsored by the government. People would be sent abroad to learn and acquire new ideas and techniques instead of carrying out the research locally. The government therefore, did not have serious long term plan for the training of local experts and preferred to rely on foreign experts' service. Gradually, local practitioners rely on other parties to solve their problems and so they have become very dependent on central support.

The principal also pointed out that due to this dependency, professional development training for school principals is not popular in Hong Kong. Furthermore, professional development is neither made compulsory nor encouraged by the government, the pursuit of continuous self-improvement therefore, is not seen as a kind of professional duty. Many of school managers even claim that they have no obligation to pursue further development because it is not specified in their job descriptions. They prefer waiting for some expertise to provide them with instant solution to their problems rather to have themselves going through lengthy training where solutions are not even guaranteed.

The training course provider is not sure about the sufficiency of the provision of training courses in terms of number and variety. The demand for management training courses in his university is comparatively low considering the amount of changes that school principals have to deal with recently. He is not clear why educators in Hong Kong are not keen to pursue professional development. He believes that school principals, in general, are still not open with their problems and not too aware of the quality of their leadership and their schools.

According to the course provider, the course attendants of the Master degree in school management, mainly school principals or deputy-heads, rarely bring up their problems at work for discussion. A similar point is established through the initial data search in Chapter One which found that none of the dissertations of the MA degree course in school management at Chinese University, in the last three years, were based on real life cases relating to the attendant's own schools. The

course provider believes that many course attendants are more interested in the qualification or title at the end of the course than the knowledge and skills they will receive.

In response to the attendants' complaints of the course content being too academic, the course provider argued that many educators who do not understand the true value of the training courses which aim to enhance them with advance knowledge and techniques. They need to reflect from what they have learnt and then adapt. It is impossible for any training courses to provide a unified solution which can be adopted to meet each school's unique requirement. There is no standard formula which can be applied directly on to the attendants' schools to solve their problems. At the end of the day, the school principals are still the ones who have to decide how to approach their own problems.

The course provider indicated that the number and variety of management training courses provided by his university is inadequate but this shortage has not been acknowledged by the government. He stressed that the greater variety of training courses would allow school managers to have better selection on courses and they are more likely to find the courses they want. This would eventually encourage them pursue professional development. As identified earlier, apart from the available Master degree courses run by universities, there is no other comprehensive course run on the subject of school management. Whether school principals have completed the Master degree courses or not, they would have few alternatives from which to choose.

It is also found that practitioners in Hong Kong are still reserved with commercial management strategies. The application of marketing strategies in school management is denied by all the respondents for the same reasons. Firstly, schools should not be promoted as a commercial commodity. Secondly, schools are facing no competition with the recruitment of students and therefore, business management strategies are not necessary.

Interpretation:

Seminars provided by ED regarding school management are criticized as too brief. On the other hand, the comprehensive courses provided by universities are commented as too academic. Training courses run by foreign lecturers are blamed as inappropriate to the real situation. Many respondents admitted having difficulties in integrating theories learnt from training courses into practice.

To analysis the efficiency of a training programme we should first try to understand the relations between the course providers and the attendants because the success of a training course does not solely depend on the lecturer, it requires the cooperation from the attendants too. In other words, apart from the content of the training courses and the nationality of the lecturers, the course attendants themselves should also be responsible for the result of a course.

Academic theories will make sense only if they are interpreted and generated into action for the application of real life. Applying theories into real life practices requires the appropriate skills. When course attendants find themselves having difficulties to reflect from the academic theories, it could be because of people's lack of the relevant skills to implement changes. Instead of putting the blame on the training courses only, course attendants should also self-assess their performance after professional development training and seek improvement accordingly.

The weaknesses foreign lecturers likely have is their comparative less understanding of the Chinese culture and the peoples' ideology in education. However, we must not deny the fact that the weaknesses are, at the same time, the advantages because they would hold a more neutral views on our situation and problems. Their knowledge and experience gained from other countries can help to broaden our mind and sight and up-date our knowledge.

According to his experience of teaching in other countries, the course provider does not agree that local practitioners' in Hong Kong have more workload than educationalists in other countries and this opinion is shared by almost all the foreign

lecturers in Hong Kong. However, due to the lack of support by reliable figures, it is not wise either to accept or deny this point here. Nevertheless, it is obvious that any foreign lecturer who tries to convince the course attendants that their workload is not any heavier than other countries and that they should be able to do what other educationalists are doing in other countries, he/she will very possibly be cast as not understanding the real situation of Hong Kong. Due to all these reasons, not being able to use local examples to support their theories, the courses conducted by foreign lecturers are more likely to be marked as inappropriate for the system of Hong Kong.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents rejected the possibility of applying business management theories into school management because schools should not be run as commercial units. This opinion shows that educators do not have a clear understanding of the meaning of reflection and do not have an open mind to adopt new techniques or ideas into education. They do not realize that learning from the business world does not necessary mean adapting the theories or techniques of business management directly. We need to adjust, modify and reflect in order to take in only the appropriate parts for our schools.

All these evidences show that school practitioners do not have the right concept of professional development. They have no intention to seek solution for their problems or opportunities for further improvement through professional development training. Instead, they are expected to be given direct and instant answers to their problems. Training courses which require the attendants to rationalize the theories they learnt and reflect and apply them for practical use are often criticized as too academic. Due to practitioners' conservative ideology and inappropriate expectation from the training courses, the positive results of professional development training programmes in quality improvement are likely to be affected. The implication from these interpretations is:

Implication (7) : School principals do not have the right motive in professional development and they are not sure how they will be improved through professional development.

6.5.4 Suggestions on the delivery of professional development training courses

Three principals who do not see the need of professional development for themselves considered that the way of delivery of management training courses for school principals is appropriate and so gave no further suggestion (see Appendix 20). Six respondents who are all in favour of professional development for school principals stress the need for the government to establish a systematic and standardized programme of management training for school managers. Five respondents believe that school management training programme for school principals should be made compulsory. One respondent stated that a successful training programme should enable the attendants to customize their acquired knowledge and theories into practical use. Another respondent feels that a well designed training course should enable the attendants to carry out further research and explore in other directions for continuous improvement. It should also encourage more willingness to involve other colleagues to search for improvement.

Eight respondents suggest that a compulsory management training scheme for school principals, like the HEADLAMP Scheme in England and Wales, should be introduced in Hong Kong to act as a driving force to steer principals into seeking further improvement. The recruitment of more local lecturers to deliver management training courses is suggested by three respondents. Two of them think that more encouragement provided by the government should initiate higher demand for professional development, especially the Master degree course in school management.

Regarding the content of training courses, one respondent suggested that ED should improve its communication with school inspectors so that information regarding school management obtained through regular inspections can be shared. Another suggestion is that more research on school management should be encouraged by the government.

Concerning the structure of training courses, one principal recommends that the ideal length of a training section should be three to four days, which allows the principal more flexibility to arrange for substitution. Another respondent prefers an annual, four weeks training program so that the principal could take a proper study leave for professional development without interrupting school duties. He also suggests that a principal should go for professional training with a senior staff so that any new ideas can be better understood and supported by the teaching staff.

Interpretation:

Although the importance of professional development for school principals was highlighted in the Education Council Report 1993, no practical suggestion was made to improve the situation. Until now, no effort has been made by the government on the promotion of professional development. The advantages of comprehensive training courses like the Master degree course in school management are still not stressed by ED.

ED is not taking serious action to encourage school principals' pursuit of professional development or to increase the provision of training programmes because they do not acknowledge the demand. As discussed before, the government's policy and subsidy on continuous professional development can have strong influence to practitioners' demand for training courses. The value and significance of professional development training can be appreciated and a trend can be formed amongst educators only if ED showed their supports and encouragement.

The dilemma here which is that ED will not increase their support on professional development unless the demand for training courses is seen to be increasing. However, on the other hand, practitioners' demand will not rise without the government's encouragement and support. The course providers find it difficult to improve or increase the provision of training programmes without an increase in demand from the practitioners and the supports from the government. In this situation, the government seems to be the party that should take the first step to create a driving force in the pursuit of professional development in order to increase

practitioners' appreciation and understanding of the value of continuous professional development in school management. The implication from the situation of continuous professional development is:

Implication (8): *There is a lack of stimulation to encourage school principals to pursue professional development.*

6.5.5 School sponsors' influence on principals' decision on professional development

Eight sample schools are operated by the sponsoring groups in which each in turn operates over ten other secondary schools at the same time. Six of them are managed by their sponsoring group's central education department (two schools joined SMI but are still closely operated by the central education department). The principals of these schools are required to be concerned with the sponsoring group's education policies while making their school's development plan. Their decisions are also affected by the actions and opinions of their colleagues, i.e. other principals in the same group. Some principals are found to avoid consulting their governors or asking for extra meetings because their colleagues rarely do so.

Interpretation:

The interpretation from this situation is that school principals' ideology in school management, especially in decentralization, are strongly influenced by its sponsoring group and the colleagues. The confidence in the implementation of changes may be affected by their colleagues who do not see the need of doing so. Some might even avoid identifying their schools' weaknesses or problems when other schools do not seem having any problems. School sponsoring body's influence on the school principals' ideology in school management is indicated by the cases of Principals 3 and 8. Both principals have obtained their Doctorship in education which is quite rare in Hong Kong. They strongly support SMI and their schools joined the scheme in the first lot. The pursuit of professional development in school management for

school principals are highly recommended by them. They believed that professional development should be encouraged not only to school principals but to all the staff.

However, these two principals hold contradictory views over the involvement of parents, alumnus and teachers into SMC. The invitation of parents, alumnus and teachers into SMC is highly supported by Principal 8 but is strongly opposed by Principal 3. Principal 3 ignored the SMI principle and joined the scheme without setting up a PTA nor inviting parents into their SMC. According to his opinion, it is unfair for the governors to be asked to share their privileges and authorities they gained by donating an enormous amount of money for the establishment of the school, with someone who is neither a member of their group nor a donor of the school. Principal 8, however, strongly criticized school governors who are unwilling to take active part in their school governing duties but still dominate the seats in SMC and refuse to let other stakeholders outside their groups help. They are blamed as being selfish by Principal 8. The key factor which causes the difference between the two principals on the sharing of school management duties with parents is their sponsoring bodies' policies in education.

Among the five SMI schools, four of them joined the scheme because their sponsoring group wanted them to do so. The sponsoring group of School 1 and 2 and all other schools in the same group have not joined SMI because their central SMC does not think it is worthwhile. Furthermore, many schools policies on parents and teachers' involvement are also directly decided by their sponsoring body's decision. The implication generated from these findings is:

Implication (9): School principals' ideology in school management and their decision on the need of professional development are strongly influenced by their schools sponsoring body's policies on education.

Summary

The nine implications generated from the data interpretation is listed as follow:

1. SMI is not well understood by school practitioners.
2. SMI is not functioning effectively because people's conservative ideology in school management has not changed.
3. Over-emphasis on students' public exam results has hindered school principals' pursuit of further development.
4. SMI brings out the existing problems in school management but is not solving them. Joining SMI does not guarantee improvement in education.
5. The significance of professional development on quality improvement is neglected.
6. The meaning of professional development training is not understood.
7. School principals do not have the right motive in professional development.
8. A driving force is lacking to encourage school principals to pursue professional development.
9. School principals' ideology in school management and their decision on the need of professional development is strongly influenced by their schools sponsoring body.

These implications obtained from fieldwork are compared with the findings from the documentary data search in the following section.

6.6 Comparison of Findings from Documentary Analysis and Fieldwork

To validate the outcomes of both the secondary data search and the fieldwork and to identify the similarities and differences in between, a comparison is made to the findings of the two searches. The findings from the secondary data search in Chapter Five are summarized as follows:

1. School principals are having difficulties in handling the delegated managerial duties.
2. School principals have under-minded their professional duties to pursue continuous improvement for their schools.

3. The value and purpose of SMI are not understood by education practitioners.
4. Practitioners are still dependent on centralized support.
5. The importance of professional development in school management for school principals has not been acknowledged.
6. Educators' conservative ideology in school management creates a bias towards accepting new changes.

Comparing the findings from both searches, we can see that the outcome of the documentary search have identified general problems of the situation but the fieldwork managed to explore deeper to the center and found not only the problems but also the causes. The findings which are identified by both the documentary search and fieldwork are summarized as follows:

(1) Conservative ideology in school management

It is found in the documentary search that the development of the school management system is affected by educators' conservative ideology in school management and dependency on central support. Practitioners' conservative ideology is further confirmed by the findings from the fieldwork. It is found that SMI is not being implemented as expected. Governors' involvement into school management is still low and many school principals are still managing their school single-handedly after joining SMI. School stakeholders such as teachers and parents are still not keen to be involved in the school management process. Members of school sponsoring bodies and school principals are still reserved with the idea of parental and teachers' contribution.

(2) The meaning of decentralization is not understood

The value and meaning of decentralization are found in documentary search not truly understood by practitioners. ED is blamed by the practitioners for failing to give a precise definition on SMI, decentralization and quality improvement. Therefore, they are not sure how quality can be improved by the implementation of SMI and why they need to join the scheme.

The fieldwork explored that many practitioners have made no effort to get to know the scheme but rejected it before understanding its function and value. They rejected SMI also because of the possible difficulties involved in its implementation. The scheme's potential long term benefit is often disregarded.

(3) School principals have difficulties handling the new managerial duties

The documentary search gathered the fact that many school principals are having difficulties in handling the new managerial duties introduced by SMI. The fieldwork further discovered that some principals have problems in school management other than the technical ones they mentioned. SMI brings out the hidden weaknesses in school management but does not solve them because some of them are a result of individual principals' leadership standard and the unique school sponsoring system. School principals cannot be expected to improve their leadership simply by learning through the experience of implementing SMI.

(4) The significance of professional development is neglected

The low involvement of school governors, the lack of professional supports from the government and the absence of an evaluation system on school management show that school principals are left to cope with problems in school management. However, the significance of professional development training for quality improvement in education is found being neglected by educationalists in the documentary search. The fieldwork later confirmed that there is still no recognition on the importance of professional development in school management for school principals by school practitioners. Many of them under-mind their professional duties to pursue continuous improvement for their schools. Most of them are still dependent on centralized supports even after joining SMI. The fieldwork also discovered that some practitioners have the wrong concept on continuous professional development. They are satisfied with themselves by attending any seminars organized by the ED however, the importance of reflecting from our experience in the learning cycle is neglected.

As well as validating the points developed by the documentary search, the fieldwork identified three other points which were not developed in the documentary search, they are:

- (1) Education practitioners over-emphasis the use of students' academic result as a performance indicator which has hindered the progress of further improvement,
- (2) School principals' decision on the need of professional development is strongly influenced by the school sponsoring bodies' policy in education, and
- (3) There is a lack of stimulation to encourage school principals to pursue professional development.

These three points are not identified by the documentary search because their existence and/or the threats they may cause are not acknowledged by the practitioners. Many school practitioners may be pressured by the over-emphasis of students' exam result but not many of them realize that it has also hindered their pursuit of continuous improvement. School sponsoring groups' contribution to school principals' ideology on school management is not recognized by any education practitioners or even the ED officers which reveals that people inside the 'business' do not realize the extent of their influence.

The point concerning the lack of stimulation on the pursuit of professional development reflects the fact that the significance of professional development for quality improvement in education is not taken seriously. It is obvious that practitioners are less likely to notice the degree of effort the authority is making on the promotion of professional development if they themselves were not interested in the pursuit of further development or do not consider it as importance.

6.7 Summary

This study confirms that the trend of pursuing continuous improvement for schools in Hong Kong is weak. Many school principals are found in need of improvement to cope with their managerial duties. However, the significance of professional development to quality improvement is found to be trivialized by their conservative ideology in school management and continuous professional development. The short supply of management training courses in terms of variety is another reason for the slow trend of the professional development. The inadequate support and encouragement from the government contribute to the low demand in quality improvement training.

Under such circumstances, the process of quality improvement through the implementation of SMI is not making satisfactory progress. The pace of quality improvement is slowed not only by the out-dated education system but also by some school principals resisting attitude towards changes and professional development training.

It is not the aim for this study to debate whether SMI or QAU is the answer for quality improvement. We must not deny that it is possible for an efficient principal to lead his/her school into further improvement without joining SMI or other similar schemes. Quality of education can be improved only by people's involvement, not by the scheme itself. People's ability and cooperation is vital to the success of the scheme. However, if the principals are unwilling or incapable to lead their schools into further improvement, SMI is an ideal way to ensure collective contribution from a school and to ensure that people are making the right moves.

For principals of either SMI or non-SMI schools, the significance of continuous professional development is the same. Professional development is a channel through which people can be prepared to equip themselves to cope with changes. Of course, the value of professional development depends also on the provision of training programme, government's support and the extent that people can reflect from the acquired knowledge. Recommendations will be made on these aspects in the next

chapter with the aim to encourage higher demand and more appropriate supply of professional development training programmes in Hong Kong.

CHAPTER SEVEN CONCLUSIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this research programme has been to describe and analyze the significance of professional development for school principals in school management to quality improvement to the education system of Hong Kong. The education system and the development of professional development training for school principals in educational management in Hong Kong is described in Chapter One. The value of professional development to quality improvement in education is discussed in Chapter Two. Through the two data search processes, newspaper search in Chapter Four and fieldwork in Chapter Five, school principals' needs for further development are confirmed. It is found through the processes of data interpretation in Chapter Six that, the significance of professional development to quality improvement and the need for school principals to seek further improvement are neglected by both the education practitioners and the government.

The focus of this chapter is to recommend ways to rectify this situation. Recommendations will be made on four main areas, (i) how to improve quality in education, (ii) how to achieve effective school management , (iii) how to maintain continuous improvement, and (iv) how to ensure positive result from professional development in school management.

7.2. How to Achieve Quality Improvement?

Quality improvement can be achieved only if people know why, how where and when to improve. It is found in this study that, due to the unclear concept of quality improvement, many education practitioners still hold suspicious views on the need and direction of quality improvement for their schools and themselves. The notions of quality, the need for quality improvement and the ways for its implementation are explained below.

7.2.1 What 'quality'?

It is no doubt that everyone is in favour of providing the quality of education. Traditionally education has its own quality mechanisms in place and many of them have been external to institutions. In Hong Kong, the ED and its school inspectors and the system operated by examination and validating bodies, are all means of pursuing quality. These professional bodies would set the standards, while an institution's quality would depend on how well their students succeeded in meeting them. However, this mechanism has been changed by the launch of SMI. Now the difference is that institutions are required to develop their own quality standard and systems, as well as to demonstrate publicly that they can deliver a quality service. The notions of quality and associated concepts of excellence, efficiency and standards have therefore, become arguable.

According to the findings of this study many education practitioners in Hong Kong blame their slow progress in quality improvement in education on to the lack of a standardized definition of 'quality' given by the government. Being asked to set up a quality standard for the schools is a completely new task to most of the principals. It is understandable that many of them asked such fundamental questions e.g. 'Quality of what?' and 'Quality for whom?' Until these questions are answered, school practitioners will find it hard to decide on the methods and the direction to go about the quality improvement scheme.

The concept of education quality in policy discussion or school practice is criticized by Cheng (1997) in an article concerning his recent government funded research project on the quality of Hong Kong secondary schools as often being vague and simplistic, therefore is not sufficient to direct improvement efforts. He argues that the lack of a clear conception of education quality in schools restricts the approach to management and enhancement of education quality. Cheng's arguments have summarized many practitioners' point of view. However, we must consider that quality can have a variety of contradictory meanings and it is not easy to reach a definition which can be appropriate to every party and to every institution. To different people, the definition may be different and so may the indicators used by

them or by the authority to describe education quality (Fuller, 1986; Hughes, 1988, Sallis, 1993, and Angus, 1992). The concept of quality may also vary with the changes on people's demand and the supply we can provide.

As identified in this study that many education practitioners prefer to wait for a standardized definition of quality from the authority before starting their quality improvement plans. A threshold is resulted in this situation. Some practitioners have even used it as an excuse for rejecting SMI or not having any quality improvement plan for their schools. Is reaching an exact definition on quality a must in the pursuit of improvement?

According to Sallis (1993, p.22) much of quality's vitality may be lost if it is subjected to too much academic analysis because quality is a dynamic idea. Emotional and moral force which quality possesses makes it a difficult idea to tie down. He believes that reaching an exact definition on quality is not particularly helpful in the pursuit of improvement. It is not suggested here that we do not need to have a clear concept of quality for the pursuit of continuous quality improvement. We still need to have a theory to provide us with a framework to understand our experience, to form a foundation and meaning for our actions (Tribus, 1994, p.83).

Theory, according to Tribus (1994), means a connected set of concepts, residing in our heads. The concepts represent our image of 'reality'. We use them to make predictions about how our future depends on our actions. Experience alone teaches nothing, if we do not have a theory to provide a framework to understand our experience, we do not accumulate thirty years experience; we merely repeat one year thirty times (Tribus, 1994). A number of different definitions and approaches to quality have been studied in Chapter Two but as Pollitt (1992, p.3) says: 'a single, generic definition of public service quality is hard to establish' because meeting every party's expectation is not an easy task.

Pollitt (1992, p.3)'s overview of 'what is quality' in public services shows that there are at least two partners to determine what a high quality service is. On the one hand it could be the professionals who provide the service. But equally it could

be those who use the service who can tell whether the quality is high or not. If it meets their wants and needs, it is a quality service, if it does not, it is not. Pollitt (1992)'s pluralistic view is supported by Harvey and Green (1993) who point out that the problem with standards is that (1) they cannot be objective and (2) they are subject to negotiation and change.

Based on these reasons, there is no intention to debate which theory of quality is most suitable for schools in Hong Kong or whether a precise definition of quality should be provided to schools by the authority before the implementation of any quality improvement plans. It is because practitioners have their own interpretation towards quality and it is not wise to manipulate their thought without careful consideration of their circumstances and experience. Instead, they are recommended to conceptualize their own understandings and experiences in quality with considerations of the general concepts provided by the government to form their own standard of quality. Quality standard must be subject to change. The situation of a school, i.e. its strength and weaknesses should be reviewed regularly in order to continuously adjust the quality standard that it is able to achieve.

7.2.2 Why SMI?

It is found in this study that many educators questioned whether SMI is just like any initiative - another new fad designed to add to the workload of the already hard-pressed teachers. They have doubts in the relevance of reforming the management system through the introduction of SMI to quality improvement.

Practitioners' doubts are understandable because there is no shortage of proposals for reform in education and for quality improvement. As pointed out by Sallis (1993, p.13) that initiative fatigue has been a symptom of a hard-pressed education system due to the high rate of change. If SMI is just another of those good ideas, hastily thrown up only to be as quickly forgotten, then educators have the right to be sceptical.

SMI brings in new theories to the routine of school management, a system which has been followed for a very long time without any major changes. Practitioners want to accept change that really brings them benefits and therefore, many of them asked for proof of the relevance and efficiency of the scheme before accepting it and introducing it to their schools. However, the theory and efficiency of SMI is difficult to prove. As explained by Tribus (1994) we cannot prove a theory, even if we point to years and years of social research supporting our contentions, it does not provide proof. We can often point to experiments, conducted in systems which were only partially organized for quality management, but these are capable of many interpretations and do not serve as proof. It will be unrealistic to ask the authority to prove the efficiency of SMI because it has never been applied to schools in Hong Kong. The value of SMI can be supported only by other countries' examples but they cannot be used as proof. What the authority should be asked is to ensure people's confidence towards the scheme. To enhance practitioners' confidence towards SMI, as well as ensuring the appropriateness and feasibility of the scheme, the authority also needs to ensure people's understanding of its basic concept which is an issue of quality improvement, a philosophy and a methodology which assists institutions to manage change, and to set their own agendas for dealing with the plethora of new external pressures.

It is not the purpose of this study to praise or to encourage schools to join SMI, it is to reveal the natural resistance of school practitioners towards changes which involves extra work, risk and accountability. People are found rejecting SMI not entirely because the scheme is inappropriate but because the scheme requires understanding of new concepts, which also involves changes to their job routine. As Sallis (1994) says that fear of the unknown, doing things differently, trusting others, and making mistakes, are powerful defense and resistance mechanisms.

Practitioners are advised not to reject a scheme simply because its result has not been proven or to disapprove its value before gaining a full understanding. Our decisions should be made upon the long term value that the scheme can bring and the availability of the school's resources. If SMI was not introduced, other forms of changes would be needed sooner or later to enforce actions in quality improvement

while practitioners are still passive towards seeking improvement themselves. We should carry on 'criticizing' the efficiency of SMI in order to seek adjustment and improvement to the scheme rather than to find reasons to reject it if its application is an unavoidable trend formed by the authority.

7.2.3 What is quality management?

The significance of school management system for quality improvement in education is found to be neglected by many school practitioners. They have doubts over how a new school management system can raise students' academic standard and teachers' professional standard. This is one of the reasons that SMI has not been taken seriously by many practitioners.

School management system is the main frame of the whole institution. A school can have the potential to develop or expand only if there is a strong framework supporting and connecting every department and every individual involved. 'A really good system of management will alter the goals and objectives of the educational system, recognizing trends and changes in the environment' (Tribus, 1994, p.85). In other words, a quality management system forms a foundation for any quality improvement or long term development plan.

What is a quality management system? Tribus (1994) makes a comparison between quality management and conventional management which indicates that quality management has strong concern on each process of the production of a 'product' and every person's performance and involvement. Continuous improvement of all processes is a key stone to quality management. Dr. W. Edwards Deming's thought in quality management is quoted by Tribus (1994, p.89) to explain that it is not important to identify, at any one moment, the best process someone else has developed. Rather, the institutions and its managers should learn to develop the habit of continuous improvement. Any theory of management which seeks the best process for delivering a service and then organizes itself to keep that process constantly up to date is respected.

A good system for the management of education demands a long-range perspective. Long range planning requires consistency of purpose, communicated to all through a vision of what the enterprise ought to be (Tribus, 1994). The methodologies of quality management are therefore, featured by issues of continuous improvement (Doherty, 1994). The processes of practical methodologies of quality improvement processes which are found in all quality systems in some shape or forms is summarized by Doherty (1994) and shown as follow :

Quality assurance: a system based on ‘feedforward’ - i.e. a means of ensuring that errors, as far as possible, are designed out. In education quality assurance examines the aims, content, resourcing, levels and projected outcomes of modules, programmes and courses.

Quality management: the complete process set up to ensure that the quality processes actually happen.

Quality audit: internal and/or external audit of the quality management system. Audit checks that the system does what it says it is going to do and has written, documented evidence to prove it.

Quality control: a system based on ‘feedback’ - i.e. a means of gaining information so that errors can be corrected, in manufacturing by inspection. In education, quality control requires feedback from staff, students and ideally, employers. It requires regular monitoring and review of modules, programmes and courses.

Quality assessment: the judgment of performance against criteria - either internally or externally. A potential source of conflict, precisely because quality criteria for education are so difficult to agree.

Quality enhancement: a system for consciously and consistently improving the

quality performance of any process. This implies a sophisticated system for staff development and training as well as conscious methods of addressing and solving systemic problems.

Doherty (1994, p.11)

Comparing these methodologies with SMI, three processes: quality audit, control and enhancement suggested by Doherty (1994) are not illustrated in the SMI manual. Without the involvement of these three processes, the scheme's result cannot be regularly or systematically evaluated and the process of continuous improvement cannot persist. The value of a quality management system without these three processes is unavoidably greatly reduced. In other words, SMI is not effective in ensuring quality improvement because it does not contain a complete quality improvement process. Until these loopholes are filled, SMI is still far from a comprehensive quality management system.

The government however, still put its priority on encouraging the implementation of SMI disregarding the weaknesses of the scheme itself. The latest project funded by the government to seek ways to encourage better participation of SMI is conducted by Cheng and Cheung (1997). In their paper, they view that the implementation of school-based management should be based on a multi-level model including school-site level, group level, and individual level. A pattern provided for school managers to proceed with strategies for implementing school-based management, organizing school development programmes, developing individual staff and teams, and practicing quality assurance is suggested to help practitioners with the implementation of SMI. Cheng and Cheung's (1997) suggestions will no doubt help to solve the technical problems faced by many practitioners with the implementation of SMI. However, the improvement of quality in education needs more than re-adjusting the methodologies of SMI. It requires people's commitment and cooperation build upon a shared vision. Other reasons for the slow progress of quality improvement including practitioners' distrust over the relevance of SMI for quality improvement, too much dependency on the government's central support and neglect over the significance of the pursuing of continuous professional development are unlikely to be solved by technical supports. Until practitioners'

conservative ideology in school management and professional development is compatible and SMI is modified to become a comprehensive management system, the effectiveness of the implementation of SMI is in doubt.

7.2.4 Improvement through Total Quality Management (TQM)

As discussed in Chapter Two SMI is originated from the theory of TQM, to answer the question of 'How school's quality can be improved through SMI', we first need to understand the features of TQM and then the methodologies for its implementation. The whole basis of TQM is that every member of an organization at whatever level is personally responsible for the quality management of his or her own part of the process which contribute to the delivery of a product or a service (Doherty 1994, Sallis, 1993). The 'management' in TQM means everyone, whatever their status, position or role, is the manager of their own responsibilities. It requires a long-term commitment (Sallis, 1993, p.33), a journey rather than a destination, thus, it cannot be 'achieved', but is something to be striven for. Being a TQM programme, SMI must carry two notions in order to contribute quality improvement. The first is a philosophy of continuous improvement. The second is to use the right 'tools' and 'techniques' to put quality improvement into action. SMI, therefore, needs to be as Sallis (1994, p.35) said 'both a mind-set and a set of practical activities - an attitude of mind as well as a methods of promoting continuous improvement.'

It is difficult to put across the idea of TQM in schools of Hong Kong because most of the institutions do not have the tradition and system of involving the staff and other school stakeholders into the management process. If it is to work, SMI requires not only a compatible school management system but also compatible school leaders. As described by Doherty (1994, p.21), the only people with the power to improve processes and so improve quality are the managers themselves. Quality leadership of school managers is: willingness to make things happen - taking risks; developing trust; clarity of mission, roles and communication; changing the culture by good example (Doherty 1994). For school managers who do not pose the knowledge and experience in TQM, gaining their acceptance and cooperation to

conduct SMI will not be easy. Having their appropriate implementation of the scheme is equally difficult. 'Years of neglecting to provide managers and supervisors with the necessary skills cannot be amended by sending them on a series of TQM workshops (Atkinson, 1991, p.17)'. The introduction of SMI scheme in schools therefore, should be accompanied by not only the few introductory seminars but also a continuous development programme for not only the teaching staff but also the managers.

7.3 How to Achieve Effective School Management

The design of continuous development programme for school managers requires a clear understanding of the weaknesses in the school management system which may cause restriction to the pursuit of quality improvement. Comparing the problems faced by school principals in Hong Kong (see Chapter Six, Section 6.4) to Bolam's (1997) summary on effective school management (see Chapter Two, Section 2.6), it is found that many school principals still have difficulties in leading their schools into effective schooling. The identified problems are: many school principals are unable to define the direction for further development or improvement for their schools, many of them are still reluctant to share their authority in school management with other stakeholders. Morale amongst the staff is low and professional development is under-minded. A systematic evaluation system of the school management process and the implementation of SMI is absent. With these problems in the system, TQM scheme is unlikely to be effectively implemented and continuous quality improvement will hardly proceed. With reference to the findings of Bolam (1997)'s study, the following recommendations are made to share with practitioners in Hong Kong on the improvement of quality in education:

Suggestion 1 - Increase means of performance indication

School's effectiveness is difficult to evaluate because: first, the technical questions associated with measuring effectiveness are complex; second, the perceptions of effectiveness are unavoidably rooted in values and hence the concept will always be contested; third, many and possibly most teachers and principals do

not have explicit agreed criteria for judging the effectiveness of their own schools; they prefer to use subjective, implicit criteria related to student satisfaction and internal school processes rather than 'hard' outcome data (Bolam 1997, p.267).

In Hong Kong, in practice, the government imposes its own definitions of effectiveness of students' academic performance via examinations, systems testing and other approved performance indicators. There is no systematic or regular comparisons on schools' effectiveness here other than public exam results to provide data and facts for the authority to assess individual school's performance and for the local expertise to make suggestions on further improvement in education. Inspections carried out by ED as criticized by many educators as being too superficial with very little concern over school management and at the same time providing inadequate guidelines to help schools towards quality improvement.

The production of a more precise definition on school effectiveness requires the government's provision of more data generated from different methods and systematic and regular comparisons on schools' effectiveness. More assessments and comparisons on schools' performance can contribute practitioners' better understanding of their strength and weaknesses.

Concerning school inspections, to ensure the credibility of an inspection, the inspection schedule must go into extensive detail about the basis of inspection judgments, the criteria to be used and the main sources of evidence to be collected. Reliable information can be obtained only if the application of the schedule is direct and unambiguous and that the inspection process concerns the current approaches to school improvement and management development (Bolam, 1997).

To increase the transparency of school's performance, the government of Hong Kong needs to increase the means to indicate and compare schools' effectiveness. In England, schools are now regularly and systematically compared and the principal methods for making such comparisons are:

- . the annual publication of 'raw' test and exam scores which are then transformed into school 'league tables' by the local and national media;
- . inspections by teams of 'privatized' inspectors;
- . various measures of the 'value-added' by schools and subject departments;
- . international 'indicators'.

To increase public awareness of individual school's performance and to stimulate improvement through comparisons, schools in Hong Kong should be encouraged to publish their students exam result, like the League Table in England. At the same time, we need to avoid the inevitable strong focus on students' academic results by the public and practitioners, by accompanying the publication of students' exam result with the schools' other achievement.

The government should consider practitioners' opinions to reform its school inspection system by establishing a separate team to carry out inspection on school management. Inspectors' reports should be published to encourage further improvement and to ensure that under-performed schools cannot hide their problems any more. The inspection system must also act as a catalyst on the schools to push forward the process of continuous improvement. An inspection schedule, with reference to OFSTED, are suggested in Appendix (26) for practitioners' information.

Suggestion (2) - Be flexible with the ways of reaching a shared vision.

It is found in this study that many school managers refused to join SMI because their staff did not share the same vision on the scheme. Two questions arise from this situation: Do we have to reach a shared vision before action can be taken? Shall we abandon a change because shared vision cannot be reached?

Concerning the necessity of reaching a shared vision prior taking action, we first need to stress the point that the existence of a shared vision in schools is not always recognisable (Holder, 1996). The view people share should not be identified as a vision if its existence is out of people's awareness and/or is not the outcome of

any conscious agreement and is more appropriate to be called groupthink (Holder, 1996, Janis, 1982). Groupthink is described by Janis (1982) as a situation where a group unknowingly reinforce each other's perceptions and decisions whilst believing themselves to offer objective and challenging views. A groupthink is as important as a shared vision because it is the basis of a join vision (Holder, 1996). The respondents of some of the Band one schools in this study are dissatisfied with their school principals who are unable to provide them with a shared vision in the school's long term direction for quality improvement. Nevertheless the staff of these schools continue to perform and students' academic standard remains at the peak due to the shared groupthink among the staff which is to maximize their students' academic potential and keep up the school's standard. The importance of a positive groupthink in quality assurance is evidenced.

School principals in Hong Kong are advised to be flexible with the necessity of coming to a shared view on quality improvement changes. Striking a balance between firm leadership, healthy teamwork and the cynical projection of personal aims as the common view is not an easy task. Reaching a shared vision usually takes time and in some cases it could only be reached gradually through practice or it may never happen due to some staff's firm resistance. People's appreciation and confidence towards a change can sometimes be increased only if they are practically involved in the implementing process and have experienced positive result. Therefore, as Holder (1996, p.9) points out, sometimes it is 'unwise to regard a single shared vision as a pre-requisite for effective action.'

Instead of rushing for a fragile and superficial consensus which does not guarantee an effective result, school principals who claimed unable to reach a shared vision with the staff on the implementation of SMI or the direction for further improvement for their schools are advised to try to see what other people see and whether there is a groupthink which may form the basis for equally appropriate action. As Holder (1996) believes that a course of action which recognizes variations amongst individuals, going some way to meet people's disparate needs may thereafter be formulated.

Suggestion 3 - Encourage long term development planning

Although SMI is claimed by the authority as a mean to guide schools into long term development, the finding in this study shows that long term planning still does not exist in most of the SMI schools. Without a long term plan, a school can only continue with limited growth and maintaining the original strategies (Pepper, 1997). Two main factors for long term development planning are found neglected by many practitioners in Hong Kong which are believed to be the causes for their lack of long term development direction, they are: (i) reflecting from experience and (ii) self-assessment.

.Reflecting from experience

Long term development is a process, not an event. The identification of the direction for further development is only the first step of a development process and the design of the associated plans is the second. The third step is to ensure quality control of the whole process and the final step which is also the first step of a new learning cycle, is to reflect from the result of the conduction of the plan and look for opportunity for further development (see Chapter Two, Section 2.10). Without a learning cycle or reflection from our experience, learning cannot take place and improvement cannot be made (Kolb, 1984, Osterman & Kottkamp, 1994, Bolam, 1993, Cheng, 1997).

.Self-assessment

To ensure improvement and development, schools need to continuously review their situation and formulate their future chances. With reference to Pepper (1997, p.26-28)'s recommendation, school principals in Hong Kong need to ask themselves the following questions from time to time in order to seek continuous improvement: (1) Where is the school heading? (2) What does it stand for? (3) What facilities are required? (4) What financial resources are available? (5) What are the current curriculum developments? These questions enable us to identify the aim of the future

development; the formulation of the mission statement; and the decision on the objectives and methodologies of the strategic planning process.

7.4 How to Maintain Continuous Improvement

Achieving effective school management is not only about solving the problems in school management, it is a continuous process which should not be neglected after certain targets are achieved. To enhance the effectiveness of schooling, according to Russ (1995), we need to perpetuate the process of quality improvement by turning schools into 'improving schools'. In practice the schools which are improving are those in which the leadership style is found to be primarily collaborative and consultative and those are into continuous collaborative development.

7.4.1. Improvement through collaborative management

Collaborative management ensures accountability in decision making: accountability of school principals and staff to the governing body and accountability of the governing body to parents and the public. However, it is not easy to know how can this be achieved when the role of the governor is to govern, not to manage? Many practitioners in Hong Kong are found not optimistic with school governors' contribution for two reasons. The first is that the majority of governors do not have the experience or expertise of professional managers to act as knowledgeable partners. The second is that some school principals and staff do not know how (and sometimes even where) to begin to involve their governors in decision making or development planning. The unique school sponsoring system in Hong Kong makes it even more difficult to increase school governors' involvement in the process of school management. All these difficulties and uncertainties are cited as a key barrier for school joining SMI. To cope with these difficulties, two approaches are raised as follow:

Approach One: Encourage school governors' appropriate co-operation

The increase of governors' involvement in management and long term development planning will be worthwhile only if they are competent and cooperate with other stakeholders. To ensure this, the process of involving governors should be flexible and responsive to all the stakeholders involved (Martin and Bullock, 1997). School governors in the main cannot be involved in detailed school management process because, unlike heads and teaching staff, governors do not work full-time at the school and do not have their level of detailed knowledge (Bolam, 1997). On the other hand, it is crucial to ensure that the governors do not imagine that they could replace the professionals in making day-by-day decisions about teaching techniques or the management of time, space, equipment, and staff within the school (Sallis, 1993).

Governors' contribution must be well timed to avoid unnecessary conflicts. School principals should use a flexible approach to involve governors at the right level, i.e. to be involved as and when appropriate. In other words, the involvement of some of the governors some of the time - or more precisely the involvement of the 'right' governors at the 'right' time (Martin and Bullock, 1997). Collaborative management of school is a mean for continuous quality improvement, it should not create unnecessary conflicts to the school management process and limitations to the principals' leadership. School principals should therefore, have the autonomy to decide the amount of support and advice they need and from whom when dealing with special or sensitive matters.

Approach Two: Training for governors

The increase in the role and responsibilities of school governors over recent years is warned by the Audit Commission (1995), that unless the governors start learning about the school, they will find it difficult to query the principal's priorities or even setting their own. They may reduce their role to rubber stamping the school development plan. The contribution of governors, who come from different background, will inevitably vary with the constraints of time, experience and

expertise. If governors are to function effectively, they must be provided with relevant training and support. (Martin and Bullock, 1997; Jones, 1997). However, like it in the UK despite the enormous changes in the roles and responsibilities of governors there is still no mandatory requirement that governors undertake training in Hong Kong (Jones, 1997).

Only the governors with the right attitude and knowledge will provide support and help to the principals in school management. To ensure effective performance from the governors, it is vital that they understand what they need to know, what they have to do and how to do it. It is recommended here that the invitation of school stakeholders into governing body should be accompanied by training sessions provided by school principals or senior members internally if external trainings are unavailable. Brief introductory training sessions for all the governors should be provided regularly to refresh their responsibilities and stimulate better cooperation.

7.4.2. Quality improvement through continuous development

As we have discussed before, to ensure continuous quality improvement, it is essential to have practitioners' recognition on the value of continuous professional development and to develop a positive attitude amongst them toward professional development and changes. Continuous improvement of an institution is always pegged with the staff's continuous professional development. However, it is found in this study that many school principals and senior staff in Hong Kong are still neglecting the significance of continuous professional development and are adverse to changes which would affect the normal routine of their job.

The awareness of opportunity for professional development of an individual includes self-assessment and the understanding of changes in education. For a school as a whole, awareness of opportunity includes a detailed analysis of a vision for the school, developed cooperatively with staff; and the ability to see the necessary changes clearly and completely. The first step of professional development is to become aware of the chances and needs for further improvement or changes. This must be viewed positively and identified as an opportunity and not as a weakness.

. Professional development is a self commitment

Many practitioners have been found to pursue professional development solely for the purpose of obtaining promotion or a higher qualification. They believe that they have 'professionally developed' themselves having completed a course or awarded a title. They have no intention to apply their acquired skills or theories into real practice because that was not their objection in the first place. The value of professional development programmes can hardly be appreciated if it is attended by people with self-interest motive.

Professional development is a self commitment (Hall, 1996, p.4), a continuous learning process which requires total commitment to make it worthwhile. We can only benefit from professional development training course if we recognize our own need. We need to know ourselves to know others; empower ourselves to empower others; develop ourselves to support others' development (Hall, 1994, p.4). As Ravey (1996) believes that if schools become successful in improving the quality of their teaching, learning and relationships, it may well be due to the fact that their staffs have become better learners: people who understand and value learning and who have become skilled in learning to learn (Ravey, 1996). To maximize the value of professional development training it is important to ensure people's understanding of the aim of professional development which is individual transformation leading to school transformation and, crucially to school effectiveness.

. Professional development encourages double loop learning

The advantages of professional development training appear slowly. Professional development does not bring straight solution to people's problems but enhance their ability to problem solving. It does not guarantee improvement to a person or an institution but generates a learning culture i.e. 'double loop' learning culture which has emphasis on self-commitment and constant reflection from experience. To turn our school into an effective learning organization we need to find a way of extending

individual reflection on personal practice into wide-ranging and systematic collective and collaborative reflection (Bennett, 1996).

As discussed in Chapter Two the development of a 'learning culture' takes time (Ravey, 1996) and the double loop learning requires colleagues' assistance, opinions and support and reflection on action (Bennett, 1996). To encourage professional development school leaders need to take the lead to adopt the 'double loop' learning process to encourage reflection and to help develop a learning culture in their schools. They need to be good learners themselves first in order to motivate others to develop and adapt the double loop learning culture.

. Well-performed schools also need improvement.

As mentioned before that to seek continuous quality improvement, the pursuit of professional development must be viewed positively as an opportunity not a weakness. However, many well performed schools are found rejecting the need for further development for their schools and themselves due to the students' high standard achievement in public examines. The need for professional development and further improvement for their schools are considered by them as a sign of weakness.

To show how a high standard school can also be benefited by further development through rethinking the direction and way they work, the case of Ratton School in the UK is shared here. Like many grand/prestigious schools in Hong Kong, Ratten School is always oversubscribed because of its sound reputation and reasonable examination results. It was recently the subject of an excellent report from OFSTED (Cockerham, 1997, p.8-9). Despite the school's good performance, the leaders and the staff realized the danger for their schools, that unless they were prepared to change in order to adapt successfully to a changing future context, it would become what Dean Fink (1995) describes as a 'cruising' rather than 'moving' school; a good school 'if this were 1965'. The school principal emphasized that it was important to recognize what Davies (1997) suggested as an already committed staff would not improve the quality of the school by simply working harder: they

would need to work smarter. The smarter course involves not slicker ways of doing the same things but fundamentally different ways of doing things.

After several conferences and meetings with all the stakeholders of the school, the need for a new school management structure was identified. It was agreed that the new structure would be less hierarchical than the existing one and emphasis is on team approaches to development. The message conveyed by this structure would be that the quality of learning must be supported and developed and that there was to be no academic/pastoral divide.

It is understood that the school are essentially hierarchical organizations and breaking away from the culture of dependency endemic in such an organization will take time. They have high hope that their school will be in an even better position to create independent thinkers amongst its students. This speculation, as Cockerham (1997) describes, leads to a challenge of the school.

This case is a good example to show that a well-performed school can be improved if the people really want it to. Two important messages generate from this case are that the search for further improvement is not only to identify weaknesses, it is also for explorations of opportunities. An institution should not remain standstill when the surrounding community is moving. School principals of prestigious/grand schools in Hong Kong who claimed no further need for improvement of their schools should carry out regular assessments to their schools in order to rethink the ways they always work to look for other opportunities for improvement. Further achievement can never be reached if changes are always avoided. Like computing software, we may be happy with the one we are using now but if we do not upgrade our system from time to time, we will miss out on the advanced models which may bring us even higher efficiency and satisfaction.

7.5 Encourage Professional Development

(I) Improve the contexts of professional development training programmes

From people's comments on the professional development training course in management, we found that the context of the available training courses in school management in Hong Kong are not meeting people's expectations and needs. As the success of a training programme depends on its positive influence to the attendants, it is important for the course provider to understand people's need and the most suitable ways to meet these need.

. Better understanding of people's need

The most efficient way to understand school practitioners' needs on quality improvement is through the conductions of surveys and studies. Referring to Bolam (1997)'s study on school principals' need in development training in the UK, school principals are now required to have strategic leadership, planning, marketing, evaluation and development skills; to focus much more directly than hitherto on student learning and assessment, to operate as a quasi chief executive in relation to school governors, to work collaboratively with parents and the community, to work productively with external inspectors; and to cooperate and compete with colleagues' in neighboring schools. These managerial skills and knowledge are needed not only by the school principals in the UK, but in any countries, by those who also operate self-managing schools. School principals of SMI schools in Hong Kong are in no exception.

. Appropriate context of training programme

If quality improvement through SMI is persisted by ED and reforms to the colonial featured system is on-coming, the accepted notions of headship in Hong Kong would be radically challenged by the changing concept of the overall culture of schooling and by research findings on effective schools, on school improvement strategies or on school management. Designers of training and development

programmes in Hong Kong are recommended to rethink some of the basic questions like: what are the in-service training needs of school headteachers, how should they be determined and what model(s) of leadership should headteachers be trained to adopt (Bolam, 1995)?

Meeting people's need requires close cooperation between training course providers and the government. The challenge to continuous professional development in the new millennium to support teachers and managers is suggested by Hall (1996, p.4) as not only in developing new skills, but in learning how to challenge and possibly change the whole way they understand themselves. In the UK, the launch of new schemes and policies in education always contribute to innovations in the content and methods of school management training, in both award-bearing and non-award-bearing course settings. They have also led to the provision of many types of training courses; for examples, the increased use of the Master Degree Course dissertation as the basis for school-focused management studies and of collaborative school improvement projects as the basis for whole award-bearing programmes (Bolam, 1995). Other innovations have also arisen from research and theory of school management. For example, Kolb's (1975) theory of experiential learning has increasingly been applied to school management training, often within the context of a self-development approach to learning (see Chapter Two).

To ensure quality improvement through professional development training, the context of training courses need to be adaptable to the changing system which requires close cooperation between the government and course providers. To be able to enhance attendants' pursuit of self-understanding and experiential learning, the course providers are recommended to encourage the use of dissertations or projects to carry out school-based researches. Joint ventures or cross schools programmes should also be encouraged to increase communication and cooperation among the attendants which may contribute to the set up of a network or close working relation.

Regarding comments on training courses being too academic, we must bear in mind that the gap between theory and practice of management training courses has been debatable, not only in Hong Kong but in other countries too. Theories can come to life only if they are put into real case and can make sense only if they are applied appropriately. As we have discussed before that effective practitioners are those who can manage a balance between theory and practice and are able to reflect critically and constructively on their practical experience. Thus professional education and training should be designed not only to supply theories but also to help the attendants to apply theories into practice and to reflect on their practice.

According to Joyce and Shower (1988)'s findings in a research that the learning of new teaching (and presumably management) skills and their application in the workplace can only be achieved if five components are included in a training programme:

1. presentation of underlying theory and description of the skill;
2. modeling or demonstration of the skill;
3. practice of the skill in a stimulated course setting;
4. feedback in the stimulated setting;
5. coaching during application of the skill on the job.

We can see from Joyce and Shower's (1988) suggestion that coaching during application of the skill on the job is as important as other components of a training programme. Course providers should consider the use of on-job coaching to provide attendants with practical guidance.

(III) The provision of professional development programme

People's preference in training programmes varies and each type of training course has its strengths and weaknesses. The emphases on short term on-the-job training to meet immediate deficiencies in the balance of staff skills and knowledge within the organization could easily turn into quick-fix short-term solutions to under-diagnosed problems. However, longer term training is always under funded

and is sometimes opposed by the school managers who believe that it gets in the way of solving immediate problems (Bennett, 1996). Thus, it is difficult for the course providers to design one perfect course to meet every body's need

According to the findings of a survey conducted by Peeke (1997, p.23-34) in the UK, the level of flexibility welcomed by attendants includes: modular programmes offering start times three times a year, programmes offered on a mainly afternoon and evening basis leading the employer to think that both employer and employee had contributed something towards the course. The survey also finds that, as well as long term training courses, many respondents would like, first, more tailored in-house short courses, second, accreditation of their in-house management training activity against nationally recognized management awards. To encourage professional learning by meeting people's need, the course providers ought to increase the variety of training courses, in terms of not only context but also length, time and location.

The production of a development plan of a primary school in the UK is shared here to illustrate how one of the many types of training programme help to improve a school. With the feeling that the school clearly needed a focus for all the different strands and in response to the offer of the Investors in People (IIP) Scheme by the local education authority, a primary school principal and her deputy went to a five day course operated and designed by the LEA during the vacation of 1995. The principal recalled that the impact of the training course was considerably enhanced by the beautiful country surroundings even though the schedule was very busy. She praised the course as being stimulating and inspiring - the best possible type of staff development for heads and deputies who are rarely given the time and space to work together away from the pressures of school. Their only regret was that all their staff could not be there to share in the discussion.

At the end of the five days they had been thoroughly briefed on what the IIP standard consisted of and what they needed to do, as a school, to reach it. An action plan was produced as the school agenda for the coming two years, to meet the IIP standard. The creation of the agenda enabled a chance to involve staff and governors

in discussions of the details of the plan. The action plan was accepted and the whole school was officially 'committed' to achieving the standard. The staff worked enthusiastically together towards an agreed vision statement and the result of the plan was very good. She concluded that IIP's emphasis on involving everyone meant that no-one was left out and everyone felt they had a part in the school's future (Button, 1996, p. 11).

This case shows five key points for its success. Firstly, the school principal's action is initiated and supported by the IIP scheme. Secondly, the course attendants have a clear motive for joining the course. Thirdly, the principal attended the training course with the deputy so that they can support each other during the training and during the process of carrying out the action plan to their school. Fourthly, the course is held at a place and time where the attendants can learn in a relaxing environment. Fifthly, the course attendants found encouragement to design and carry out an action plan right after completing the course.

In this case, it took a three days course to encourage a school managers to carry out a reform to her school management system and to create a two year action plan. It shows that the effectiveness of a training programme depends not only on the context but also the ways it is delivered. Training course providers in Hong Kong are recommended to be more innovative with the method and style of training course delivery. Course attendants should be provided with a after-course-consultation service to encourage more action on theories implementation and experiential learning. On the other hand, the government should insert more financial support and encouragement to the investment on people like the IIP in the UK to stimulate professional development.

7.6 Lessons from Business Sectors

Nearly all the respondents in this study rejected the idea of adopting business management strategies into school management for the same reason that education should not be commercialized. Funding for schools in Hong Kong is generally sufficient and the majority of schools are over subscribed with no competition

amongst them in terms of student number. School principals under such circumstances find no reason to adopt business management strategies into school management. It is also found that business management strategies, especially marketing, is a 'no go' area to many practitioners in Hong Kong. They believed that only poor performed or private operated (profit orientated schools) will adopt marketing strategies to 'sell' their schools.

The strategies in school management have had no substantial changes in Hong Kong due to practitioners' conservative ideology. School management training programmes which delivers models and theories 'borrowed' from the business world have often been denounced. As described in Chapter Two, like other organizations in the business world, school is run by a manager and has a standard to maintain and customers (pupils and parents) to satisfy. Due to the scarcity of resources and the trend of self-management, school management can no longer only concentrate on pedagogic development. School principals, like managers in the business world, need to be concerned with financial budgeting, resources management and strategic planning which have already been well developed in the commercial world (Dennison, 1993, p.221). Some commercial sectors do these things extraordinarily well and schools, especially self-managing ones, do have lessons from them.

The individual in education who is confident enough to assert that schools have nothing to learn from business and industry must know little about them (Bottery, 1994). Schools will be missing an opportunity if they failed to look at how these excellent performers go about such tasks. Another reason schools should learn from commercial sectors lies in the constraining of perspectives caused by working within only one kind of organisation. An individual immersed in one culture, whatever strengths derive from this experience, will have his or her concept of possibilities limited by it. 'Long-cherished beliefs are not challenged; things that could be more efficient, effective, and acceptable are not scrutinized out of ignorance of the possibilities' (Bottery, 1994, p.2).

Educationalists in Hong Kong are recommended to keep an open mind to learn from commercial organisations. However, this does not suggest that they are to

adopt an attitude of total acceptance. Any lessons for schools should be critically evaluated before adoption of their principles is considered. Professional development training is a channel for school managers to gain better understanding of the business world.

7.7 Research Futures

This research programme has considered the need of professional development in school management for school principals in Hong Kong. The reasons for school principals' low demand in professional development training courses have been explored. The significance of professional development for quality improvement in education is also examined. Recommendations are made to the problems identified in school management and professional development, but they are only clear enough to point people in the right direction. To improve the whole situation, more studies are required to search for better understanding and more comprehensive information for each particular area. This thesis is therefore, concluded with consideration of future research directions.

Firstly, there is a need to evaluate the result of the implementation of SMI to assess school principals' performance in handling the delegated managerial duties. Improvement through SMI requires strong leadership, total commitment and continuous development. Further researches need to be carried out on each of these aspects to look for ways to help and encourage school principals to accept challenge and changes to themselves and their schools.

Secondly, there is a need to examine the context of the available training courses in school management and course attendants' post-course action to evaluate the result of these training courses on the improvement of practitioners' performance. Any training course will lose its value if the course attendants do not have the intention to reflect from it and make action. Course providers cannot go too far on their own, they need government's support and practitioners' confidence and cooperation in order to raise the standard of professional development training programmes. More local educationalists have turned their attention to the cultural

impact of people's acceptance of changes, however, the concern on the cultural factors affecting people's pursuit of professional development is still weak. To design a training system for school principals which can fit into the unique situation of Hong Kong requires further studies on practitioners' need and ideological factors which could affect their need in professional development.

7.8 Summary

This study has focused on a number of aspects of the relationship between professional development in school management for school principals and quality improvement in education. Overall, the study has developed a picture of professional development in Hong Kong which is still under-developed due to practitioners' conservative ideology, inadequate supply of management training courses in terms of variety and insufficient support from the government. It is suggested by this study that the improvement of quality in education must be accompanied with practitioners' continuous quality improvement. If SMI is the system for school management in the future, further research will be necessary to explore the appropriate procedures and ways to ensure collaborative management and collaborative development. I sincerely hope that this study will rise people's awareness to the importance of continuous professional development and motivate their actions in the search for continuous quality improvement in school management.

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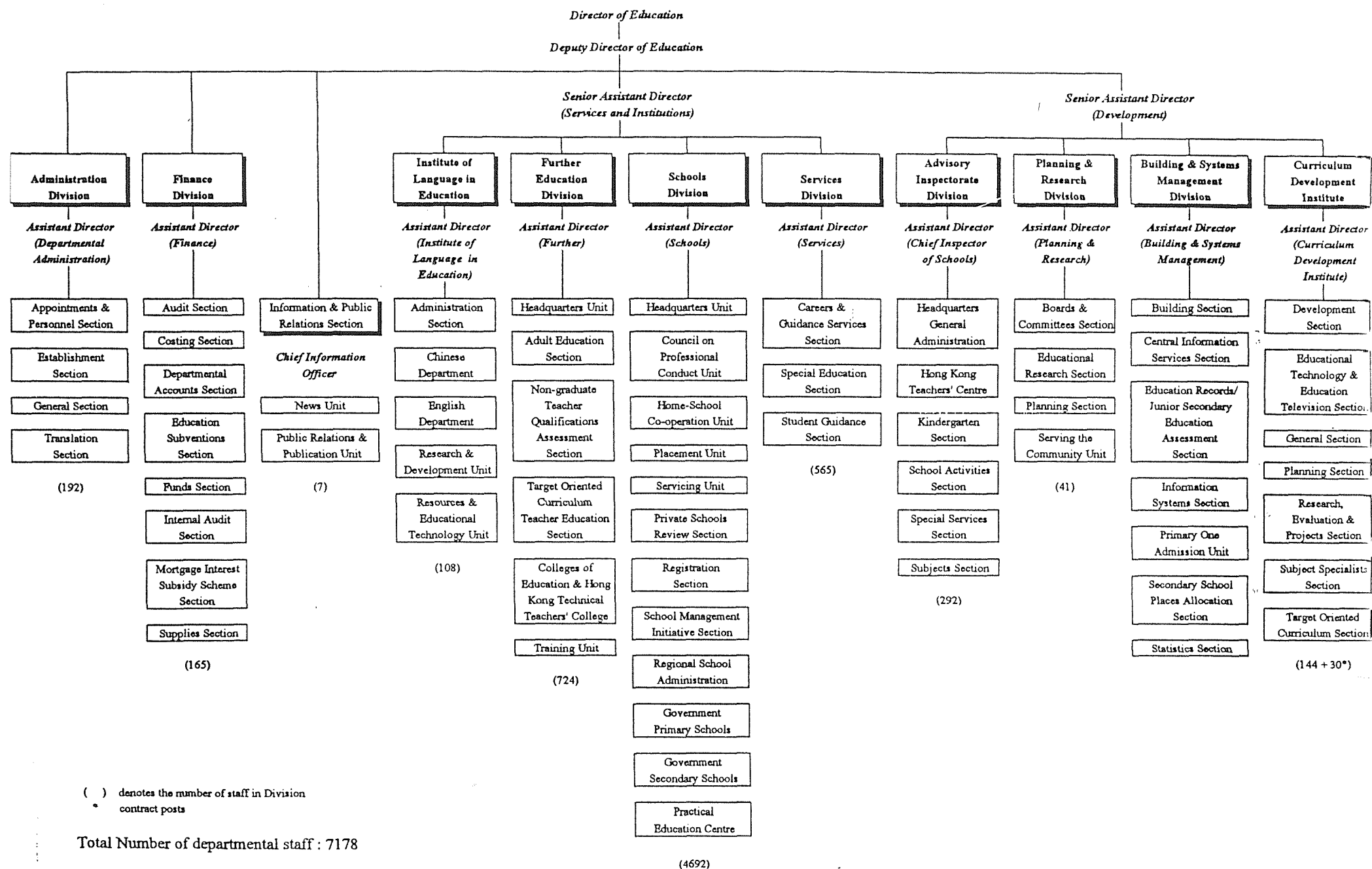
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APPENDIX One

A Map of Hong Kong





APPENDIX Three The Code of Aid

Authorities and responsibilities specified in the Education Ordinance & Regulations and Code of Aid

- NOTE: 1. "Sec" = a Section in the Education Ordinance;
"Reg" = an Education Regulation;
"Para" = a paragraph in Code of Aid for Secondary Schools;
"App" = an Appendix to Code of Aid for Secondary Schools.
" " = a statutory provision repeated or amplified in the
Code of Aid.
" # " = a statutory provision modified by the Code of Aid.

THE SPONSORING BODY

Education Ordinance

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Education Regulations

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Code of Aid

- Para 69 with DE's approval, Sponsor may transfer Tong Fai receipts to a separate central account.
- App 14 Sponsor applies for grants for new buildings, extensions or reprovisioning and signs contracts when DE approves; is responsible for any work done before approval is given; must execute a Deed of Covenant where building is on private land.

THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Education Ordinance

- Sec 22 unsatisfactory management by SMC is grounds for cancelling school registration.
- Sec 30 applicant for registration as manager must be acceptable to majority of SMC.
- Sec 32 every school to be managed by an SMC.
- Sec 33 SMC responsible for satisfactory management; proper promotion of education; compliance with Ordinance.
- Sec 38 SMC to recommend a registered manager as Supervisor (except the first Supervisor of the school).
- Sec 38A SMC to recommend registered manager as acting Supervisor.
- Sec 40 SMC to perform duties of Supervisor when there is no Supervisor.
- Sec 41 * DE may appoint additional managers to SMC.(cf. para 3(b), rev. CofA)

APPENDIX Four

Hong Kong Education System

APPENDIX Five

The main school grant

<u>Grant</u>	<u>Ambit and restrictions</u>
<i>Recurrent grants</i>	
SALARIES	(P)Teachers/clerks/minor staff salaries. (S)Teachers/technicians/instructors salaries. 100% deficiency basis. Establishments fixed by DE.
SUPPLY TEACHER	Fixed daily rates. 100% deficiency basis.
PROVIDENT FUND	Fixed rates. 100% deficiency basis.
SCHOOL & CLASS	Rates fixed according to school size/type. (P)paid monthly (S)paid half-yearly in advance. List of 30+ items chargeable; ceiling on value of any item (P)\$2000 (S)\$8000. Restrictions on: hire of extra teachers; value of "other minor items" bought at SMC's discretion; spending on staff training. (S)any surplus over 6 months provision is clawed back.
RENT & RATES	100% deficiency basis.
ADMINISTRATION	(S)Clerical/janitor staff costs and cleansing contracts. Rates fixed according to school size and type. Any surplus over 3 months provision is clawed back.
PASSAGE GRANT	(S)covers passage costs for teachers on overseas terms. Ceiling on number of such teachers.
TEXTBOOK & STATIONERY	Grants to pupils at fixed rates up to ceiling of 25% of enrolment, at Principal's discretion.
FEE REMISSION	Remission up to ceiling of 45% enrolment (S4-5) or 50% enrolment (S6-7), at Principal's discretion.
<i>Capital grants</i>	
BUILDING	80-100% of approved cost of new school or extension.
MAINTENANCE etc	100% of maintenance, repair or minor improvement costing over (P)\$2000 (S)\$8000. Items bid for from DE's block vote.
FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT	100% of replacement F&E costing over (P)\$2000 (S)\$8000. Items bid for from DE's block vote.

Note: (P) = Primary; (S) = Secondary

Appendix Six Aided School Sponsors

I. Analysis of sponsors by number of school operated

Sponsoring Bodies Operating:	No. of Sponsors	No. of Schools
10 schools or more	15	392 (47%)
5 - 10 schools	17	111 (13%)
2 - 4 schools	93	231 (28%)
1 schools	<u>96</u>	<u>96</u> (12%)
Total number of sponsors	221	
Total number of schools		830

II. Types of sponsoring body

(A). Totally 503 schools (61% of the total) are operated by 32 sponsors who are each operating 5 schools or more.

Types of Sponsoring Bodies	No. of Sponsors	No. of schools
Religious bodies-		
. Catholic/Protestant	18	344
. Buddhist/Taoist	4	44
Welfare bodies	6	88
Clan/Townsmen's associations	3	19
Other	1	8

(B). *Totally 327 schools (39% of the total) are operating by 189 sponsors who are each operating 1-4 schools.*

Types of Sponsoring Bodies	No. of Sponsors	No. of Schools
Religious Bodies-		
. Protestant/Catholic	72	132
. Buddhist/Taoist etc.	15	30
Welfare bodies	16	28
Clan/Townsmen's associations	11	29
Rural schools	15	19
Alumni associations	8	12
Neighbourhood/Trade associations	19	23
Others	32	54

(Source of data: The SMI Report, 1991, p.11, Hong Kong Government)

1. The recommendations made in Chapter 4 would require a far-reaching change in the role and activities of the Principal. While the onus of managing a school would effectively lie with the SMC and the Principal collectively, the Principal would remain responsible for the day-to-day management of the school.

2. The Principal, then, should be an administrator; a professional and a leader within the school:

- As an *administrator*, he would take overall responsibility for the proper education of his pupils and the effective management of his school. He would also assume authority for planning and co-ordinating the school educational programme.
- As a *professional*, he would be able to work with others to institutionalise the vision of the SMC in the structures, policies, priorities, plans, budgets, approaches to teaching and learning and everyday activities in the school. In addition, he would have a capacity to deal successfully with the following "key situations" that may occur within the school -
 - teacher supervision and development
 - teacher evaluation
 - instructional management and support
 - resource management
 - quality control
 - co-ordination
 - trouble-shooting.
- As an effective *leader*, he would provide strong support for school-based management and collaborative decision-making within a framework of the school objectives, and provide the link between the school and the SMC.

3. In order to help the Principal develop in his role and to provide him with information on policies, administrative procedures and day-to-day operational matters, a Principal's Manual will be prepared. The Manual should be sufficiently detailed to cover all important aspects of school administration.

4. The following list shows the range of advice given to Principals in the Singapore Principal's Handbook:

Role and Position of the Principal

Leadership and Authority
The Role of the Principal
Duties and Responsibilities of the Principal
A Suggested School Organisation Structure

Planning, Implementation and Appraisal of School Programmes

The need for Policy, Objectives and Procedure
Basic Needs of Teachers
Staff Participation in Decision-making
The Importance of Knowing the Staff
Action Plans
Planning the School Calendar of Activities
Planning the Timetable
School Appraisal - Concept
School Appraisal - Areas to be Appraised:
- School Objectives
- Management Structure
- School Tone and Morale
- Instructional Programme
- Extra Curricular Programme
- Pupil Welfare/Management
- Community Involvement
Appraisal Procedures
Report Writing
Post-appraisal
Principal's annual School Report

Induction of Teachers Into The School System

Process

Introductions

Documents Useful to the New Teacher

Communication and Feedback

Effective Communication

Feedback

Some Ways of Communicating

- Small Group Discussion
- Staff Meetings
- Committee Meetings
- Handbook for Teachers

Staff Morale

Boosting of Staff Morale

Some Pitfalls to Avoid

School Based Staff Development

Assessment of Teacher Performance

Purpose of Assessment

Criteria for Assessing Teacher Performance

When to Assess a Teacher

Suggested Guidelines for Lesson Observation

Suggested Guidelines for Assessing the Quality of Teachers'

Marking

Human Relationships

The Importance of Good Human Relationships

School-Parent Relations

Relations between Principal and School Management Committee

Relations between Principal and Ministry

School - Community Relations

Hong Kong schools measured against
the key characteristics of an effective school

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOLS IN HONG KONG

1. Clearly stated educational goals

Few schools or sponsoring bodies have a formal, operationally useful statement of their educational goals.

The Government has no clear, widely known statement of what it expects from the education system.

2. A well-planned, balanced and organised programme for meeting the needs of its students

In general, few schools appear to have a well developed system for planning their own programmes to meet student needs. They rely heavily on central advice and direction from ED on curriculum, pastoral services and extra curricular activities.

The school-based curriculum development scheme is intended to encourage schools to adapt the central curriculum to the needs of their students.

3. A systematic and identifiable process for determining educational needs in the school and placing them in order of priority

Some major sponsoring bodies have formal procedures for setting policy for their schools and for planning to meet educational needs, and involve teachers, alumni and others in the policy and planning process.

Most schools appear to have no such process. The roles and responsibilities of school management committees, supervisors and principals are not clearly specified. Many managers and supervisors perform only a nominal role.

Decisions are usually made by one person (often the Principal, sometimes the Supervisor), with no formal guidelines for involving teachers or other interested parties and no separation of policymaking from implementation.

4. A commitment to learning, and an expectation that students will do well

Since the HKCEE is the main performance indicator at present, many schools are unhappy dealing with lower ability students.

5. A high degree of staff involvement in developing school goals and making decisions

In some schools the Principal operates as a dictatorial "Little Emperor". Few schools appear to involve more than their senior teachers in the shaping of school goals.

Many teachers who have undergone retraining complain that they cannot implement new ideas because of lack of support from panel chairs or the Principal.

6. A motivated and cohesive teaching force with good team spirit

Morale is poor in some schools. Some teachers are poorly motivated and have little desire for self improvement. Some Principals are even reluctant to observe classes for fear of offending teachers.

Many Principals are insufficiently prepared and trained for the job. ED spends much time intervening in conflicts between teachers and Principals.

There is some resistance within the profession to in-service training. Targets for graduates to become professionally trained are not being met. Attempts to expand retraining for mid-career primary teachers were hampered because the unions objected to use of teachers' own time.

(Non-graduate teachers are often keen to obtain part-time degrees so they can transfer to the graduate pay scale. ED is concerned at the quality of some such degrees.)

7. Principal is concerned with his own and his staff's professional development, and able to make the best use of his staff's skill and experience

Many Principals are reluctant to release staff for full time training, for fear of unsatisfactory supply teachers to replace them.

Many Principals are reluctant to accept new ideas which staff have acquired from training courses.

There are no training requirements for promotion, or for appointment as a Principal.

Many schools have no formal staff reporting procedures. This leads to problems when promotions are being considered. Many Principals prefer ED to make decisions on promotions, to avoid confrontations with staff.

8. Principal ensures that the school's programmes are regularly reviewed and that progress towards goals is evaluated

Few schools have developed formal statements of their goals.

Even where performance measures exist (e.g. in the form of ED inspection reports, or analysis by a sponsor of its schools' performance) little feedback is given to schools.

In many cases, the only evaluation measure considered by schools is performance in public exams.

APPENDIX Nine

Professional Development Training Courses Provided by ED in 1994 and 95.

Year	Duration	Title	Target Applicants	No. of seats
1994	1 day conference	The meaning of using English as teaching media	Heads, Principals	NM*
	9 1/2 days course	Secondary School Administration course	Principal, Teachers (priority for potential candidates of headship)	NM
	1 day seminar	Seminar for school principal to provide information on Chinese medium of instruction	Heads, Principals	NM
	3 days course	Heads' leadership - Total quality control	Principals (Priority to non- SMI schools)	20
	10 days course	Courses for PGM/PAM in secondary schools	Nominated teachers, (priority to senior teachers who will be promoted to be PGM/PAM)	NM
	1 1/2 days seminar	Self-esteem Enhancement	Teachers	3 from each school
1995	9 1/2 days course	Secondary Administration Course	Principals, Teachers (priority to those who are nominated for promotion to headship)	NM
	9 weeks course	Secondary school Teachers Using Chinese Medium of Instruction	Secondary School Teachers	NM
	10 days course	Courses for PGM/PAM in secondary schools	Nominated teachers (priority to senior teachers who will be promoted to be PGM/PAM)	NM

1 day seminar	Guidance in Congruence with Mutual Respect	Principal, Guidance teacher, Class teacher (preferably the Guidance Teacher)	1 from each school
1 1/2 day seminar	Self-esteem Enhancement	Teachers	3 from each school
1/2 day seminar	Grow with Guidance - A System Approach to Develop Whole School Guidance	Principals, Teachers	4 from each school
1/2 day seminar	Leadership for School Change and Restructuring	Heads	500
9 1/2 days	Secondary School Administration course	Principals, Teachers (priority for those who will be promoted to headship)	NM

* NM - Not mentioned

(Source: School Training Circulars, Education Department, 1994-95)

APPENDIX Ten

The List of the Number of Dissertations Submitted In The Period of 1974-95

Year	Number of dissertations submitted by attendants in the study of			
	Management in Education	Educational Psychology	Curriculum Studies	Total
1974	0	3	1	4
1975	1	1	2	4
1976	0	0	2	2
1977	0	1	0	1
1978	1	0	1	2
1979	1	2	2	5
1980	1	3	0	4
1981	1	6	1	8
1982	2	12	4	18
1983	3	8	6	17
1984	5	5	2	12
1985	3	0	4	7
1986	2	5	1	8
1987	8	4	4	16
1988	6	7	14	27
1989	5	6	4	15
1990	4	3	2	9
1991	10	2	2	14
1992	9	4	8	21
1993	2	5	4	11
1994	8	6	3	17
1995	3	0	9	12

(Source: Chinese University, 1996)

APPENDIX Eleven

Research Plan

1. Initial Desk Research (Chapter 1 Introduction)

- . Define the reasons for this research.
- . Search for information and data related to the latest development of the research area
- . Decide the research focus.

2. Literature Review (Chapter 2 Literature Review)

- . Explore the latest development of the elements included in the research area.
- . Identify the related sub-topics of the research focus.
- . Formulation of research questions.

3. Research Design (Chapter 3 Methodology)

- . Set up the research design.
- . Selection of research methods.
- . Decision of required data.
- . Pilot Study

4. Secondary Data Search (Chapter 4 Data Collection)

- . Search for published information regarding the research question.
- . Organize collected secondary data.
- . Finalize the required primary data from field work.

5. Field Work (Chapter 4 Data Collection)

- . Primary data collection by interviewing:
 - school principals
 - deputy heads
 - senior teachers
 - tutors of training programme
 - officers of education department
 - school governors
- . Organizing the collected data

6. Data Analysis (Chapter 5 Data Analysis)

- . Analysis the collected data.
- . Present the findings from fieldwork.
- . Compare the findings from primary and secondary data searches.

7. Conclusion (Chapter 6)

- . Summarize the finding.
- . Recommendations

APPENDIX Twelve

Questions of Informal Interviews and Data Interpretation

(I) Interview Question Plan

Main interview questions

Reasons

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Reasons of doing the course. | - The initiative of professional development.
- What make them choose this particular course? |
| 2. Opinions towards the course. | - What are expected from this course?
- How much their needs are met? |
| 3. Difficulties in school management. | - Real need in management training.
- Awareness of their own problems. |
| 4. Comments on LMS | - Perceptions to new changes.
- Is the scheme appreciated? |

(II) Data Interpretation

(1). Job security and promotion are the main reasons for teaching staff pursuing professional development. The main reason for the principal to do the course is to up-date his knowledge in school management. The governor did the course because he found it not easy to govern a school and wanted to acquire more knowledge in school management.

(2). Taking professional development training course becomes a trend in schools because people get influence from each other.

(3). The introduction of LMS has increased school managers and senior teachers' awareness of problems in school management. Inadequate funding and increasing diversity of

management duties have, to some extent, contributed to a sudden surge of school managers pursuing management training.

(4). It is very unlikely that principals can run a school efficiently today without professional management training. Professional development is seen as the only workable solution that will lead to improvement. Governors will also be benefited by attending management training courses.

(5.) Financial and manpower management are voted as the most difficult parts in school managers' job.

(6). The availability of management training courses is quite sufficient in England but teachers are having difficulties in getting the sponsorship and nomination.

APPENDIX Thirteen Data Collection Plan

<u>Sample Groups</u>	<u>Questions</u>	<u>Reasons of the Questions</u>
Heads/Deputy heads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - difficulties in school management - plans for further school improvement, - opinions on need of professional development (PD), - opinions on SMI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - needs for management training - awareness of the need for improvement/change. - attitude in pursuing self-development. - confidence in handling changes
Teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opinion on head's leadership - opinion on SMI - opinion on professional development for heads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expectation of heads' leadership - ideology in changes - usefulness of PD in their point of view.
Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comment on the head's leadership - actual/preferable degree of involvement in management - opinion on SMI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - performance of manager. - view on their own roles. - Ideology in school management
Course providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ways to construct courses - features of attendants' attitude in courses - comments on school management in H.K. - difficulties in organizing & delivering courses - future plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compare their believes to head's real need. - heads' performance in training course. - assessment of principal's standard in management. - awareness of weaknesses of existing courses. - further improvement
preparation		
ED officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reasons for low response to SMI - future policy for SMI - comments on heads' performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opinion on heads' acceptances to change - ways to encourage heads to accept change. - their perception of the situation

APPENDIX Fourteen

Data Interpretation - Formal Pilot Interview (1)

- (1). Apart from the gaining of academic knowledge, school management training courses also help school managers to establish a kind of network with other colleagues in the similar position. A supportive network helps to provide a channel through which ideas about school management can be exchanged and solutions to problems can be stimulated between schools.
- (2). Secondary schools often fail to carry out long term plans due to a lack of funding. Although training courses provide the technical knowledge of financial management, the extent of achievement and improvement often depends on the money available.
- (3). The function of governing body in close working relationship with the principal could provide positive effect on the quality of leadership. A strong team of governors is beneficial to the principal even though the work load may increase. However, governors must receive the appropriate training to be of real value to the leadership, especially those who are responsible in financial and personnel management.
- (4). Principals need to live with the mistakes made by the governing body. They also need to pay attentions to each individual governor's contribution towards the working team. It is the principal's job to create a harmony and cooperative atmosphere for the whole team to work together. Governor who has not fulfilled his/her role should be reminded or replaced if necessary.
- (5). Schools will be better off in LMS if there is a strong team of governors working closely with the principal, otherwise, the principal is better off working alone with back up from the LEA.
- (6). Learning from management training courses enable a person to see things more subjectivity and become more aware and adaptable to changes.
- (7). School principals have a great deal to learn from the business world.

APPENDIX Fifteen

Data Interpretation - Formal pilot Interview (2)

- (1). Teaching staff in Hong Kong are often excluded from the process of decision making regarding the school's future and therefore, enthusiasm of new ideas are lost. Being a teacher herself, she is not keen on being involved in the school management process.
- (2). SMI is not favorably accepted by the teaching staff because it seemingly increases their workload without the return of any beneficial factors. The success of SMI would depend on the willingness of the principal to share and delegate management duties amongst the staff or simply to go through the gesture of accommodating the scheme without any real intention to implement it fully.
- (3). The principal is taking a dominant role in school management and he/she is the only bridge that can connect the governors with teaching staff, parents and students. It is possible that teachers and parents' opinion would not be heard by the governors if it is different to the principal's.
- (4). There is not a trend for school principals to pursue continuous professional development because many of them do not see the balance between the hard work and reward. Further qualification or training will not bring them with higher pay or better post and therefore, the need for professional development is not stressed.
- (5). There is a lack of a system to ensure school principals' performance reaching the satisfactory standard.
- (6). Teaching staff's morale and performance can be strongly affected by their principal's leadership.
- (7). Decentralization is less well received in Hong Kong than it is in England and it is principally affected by a difference in culture and education system. Schools in Hong Kong are more adequately funded that most principals are relieved from the burden of keeping a tight budget control. As funding becomes less of an issue, many school

managers and governors are less inclined to join SMI simply for the freedom in budgeting.

- (8). Principals are not so keen to join SMI sometimes because certain management duties such as annual planning, assessment, financial budgeting and etc. are all new to many of them and therefore, they will need to make extra effort to cope with them.

APPENDIX Sixteen

Data Interpretation - Formal Pilot Interview (3)

- (1). Traditionally, governors in Hong Kong are not keen on getting involve in daily school management affairs. They only want to be kept informed with the institution's latest progress and to take part in the decision making of any important matters.
Consequently, the principals have the ultimate power and dominance over the running of their schools which means that many managerial incompetence is seldom spotted by the governors early enough. The governor also revealed that the whole school is down to the principals to manage and they would seldom question or challenge his/her decision.
- (2). School principals are under no pressure to seek professional development. Not too many of them would go for self development because their is no pressure or competition to stimulate them to do so and also they would not get any further promotion or pay rise from having better qualification.
- (3). School principal's performance is judged by students' performance in public exam result.
- (4). SMI is not welcome by many schools because it requires the sponsoring body to reschedule the structure of its school management section. To governors, the advantages of SMI is still not very certain but the disadvantages are already very obvious.
- (5). The financial funding from the government is quite sufficient and therefore, many schools do not see the point of joining SMI for the reason of getting a block grant, i.e. a flexibility in operating the funding..
- (6). The return of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China means that there is a potential change in the system of education. They prefer to hold on to their plan of joining SMI until the last moment.

Appendix Seventeen

Questionnaire for Teachers

(I) Respondent's background:

1. Please tell me your career path?

(II) Working relation with the SMC:

2. What is the formation of the SMC?
3. How often do you have SMC meeting and meeting with the supervisor? How is the attending record?
4. What are the usual contents of these meeting about?
5. How well do you think about the working relation between the principal and the governors?

(III) Opinions and comments toward SMI:

6. Have your school joined SMI yet? Reasons for joining/rejecting.
7. Do you personally support SMI? Why?
8. What difference has joining SMI made/ will joining SMI make to your school and your job?
9. SMI school - Are there adequate supports being provided to you on the implementation of SMI? What other support do you need?

Non SMI school - What kind of support do you think you will need on the implementation of SMI?

10. Do you support the issue of inviting parents, teachers and alumnus into SMC?

(IV) Problems in school management :

11. Are there any management problems faced by your school principals that you notice? What are they?
12. What area of school management you think is most difficult to your principals? How do you see about the political uncertainty?

(V) Experience and opinions on professional development:

13. Have you attended any management training courses before? What are they?
14. What made you take these courses?
15. How useful and applicable are these courses in reality to your work?
16. What in your view are the strength and weaknesses of these courses?
17. Have your school principals attended any management training courses? What are they?
18. Do you notice any changes or improvement on your principal's performance in school management? Please explain the difference?
19. What is your comments on your principal's leadership? Where do you think he/she can improve?
20. Will you consider doing a MBA course or other business management training courses? Why?
21. Do you see that there is enough chances for school principals and teachers to seek improvement in school management?
22. What is your view on a standardized training course for school principals?

APPENDIX Eighteen

Interview Questions for School Governor and ED Officer

(I) Question for School Governor

1. What is your opinion in SMI?
2. Have your schools joined SMI? Why?
3. How SMI affect your group's school management system?
4. What is a governor's normal duty?
5. What is your working relationship with the principles?
6. How do you think about the principals' leadership?
7. How do your assess a school's performance?
8. What is your comment on school principals' pursuit of professional development?

(II) Questions for ED Officer

1. How well is SMI doing in quality improvement? How many schools have joined?
2. What is your opinion to school principals' performance in the implementation of SMI?
3. What is your opinion to school practitioners' criticisms on SMI?
4. Do you agree that school principals are not coping with the newly delegated duties?
5. Is the supply of management training enough for school principals?
6. How do you see the value of professional development to school improvement?

APPENDIX Nineteen

Questions for Course Provider

1. What courses are you delivering in this university?
2. Who are the courses attendants?
3. How popular are these courses?
4. What is the process of organizing these courses? Where do you get the information you need e.g. what do people need in management training?
5. What is your students' knowledge level in school management?
6. Is the provision of management training courses adequate in Hong Kong or in your university?
7. Do you think that school principals are capable in handling the delegated managerial duties?
8. What kind of management training school principals need most?
9. How do you think about school principals' pursuit of professional development comparing with other countries?
10. How understandable and supportive the ED is on the ground of professional development training?
11. Your opinions to school principals' ideology in school management, professional development and implementation of SMI.

Appendix Twenty

Questionnaire for School Principals

(I) Respondent's background:

1. Please tell me your career path and how long have you been the principal of this school?

(II) Working relation with the SMC:

2. Can you tell me the formation of your SMC?
3. How often do you have SMC meeting and meeting with the supervisor? How is the attending record?
4. What are the usual contents of these meeting about?
5. How well have you worked together with your school's governors?
6. Who/where else can you obtain support or help from?

(III) Opinions and comments toward SMI:

7. Have your school joined SMI yet? Reasons for joining/rejecting.
8. Do you personally support SMI? Why?
9. What difference has joining SMI made/ will joining SMI make to your school and your job?
10. SMI school - Are there adequate supports being provided to you on the implementation of SMI? What other support do you need?

Non SMI school - What kind of support do you think you will need on the implementation of SMI?

11. Do you support the issue of inviting parents, teachers and alumnus into SMC?

(IV) Problems in school management :

12. Are there any management duties which you feel uneasy with or have difficulties with at the moment? What are they?
13. What area of school management you think is most difficult? How do you see about the political uncertainty?

(V) Experience and Opinions on professional development:

14. Have you attended any management training courses before? What are they?
15. What made you take these courses?
16. How useful and applicable are these courses in reality to your work?
17. What in your view are the strength and weaknesses of these courses?
18. Have you considered doing a MBA course or other business management training courses? Why?
19. Do you see that there is enough chances for school principals to seek improvement in school management?
20. What is your view on a standardized training course for school principals?

Appendix Twenty-one

Summary of Secondary Data

<i>Comments given by educators</i>	<i>Questions arising from the comments</i>
1.SMI is launched at the wrong time.	When is it the right time? Some schools would always be more ready than others and some might never be!
2.SMI is launched in a rush.	Why has not anybody suggested the 'right' time? Five years after the launch of the scheme, many schools are still not ready for joining the scheme.
3.Lack of definition on <i>quality & standard</i> of school.	Should it be up to the schools themselves to set up their own targets? Many educators still raise this point even after the Working Group had explained that schools should have their own definition on quality & standard.
4.Teachers do not see the benefit of SMI.	A reform to the school management system is not seen to bring any benefit to the teaching staff and students. The significance of school management on quality improvement is not widely appreciated.
5.Teachers do not want to join SMI because of the already	How about the staff of SMI schools? It seems that some schools are more able to cope with the work load than others.What can the principals do to help the staff?
6.SMI brings teachers back to be <i>producers</i> which is against their will.	Teachers are asked to produce reports and plans which have been something that every teacher should have been doing. This request by SMI seems to only affect those who do not make plans or summarize their work systematically.
7.Many teachers are not taking SMI seriously.	SMI schools should have obtained the majority consent from their staff before joining the scheme. Should the principals be responsible for their staff's performance in SMI?
8.Some schools do not see the need to join SMI because they are already doing well.	On what ground should a school be regarded as doing well? Have they ever considered that SMI might help them improve further?
9. ED cares more about the implementation of SMI rather than the result of the scheme.	Does this reflect that many educators are still dependent on the ED to direct and assess?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10. School can hardly spare time to evaluate the progress of SMI. | The term <i>school</i> embraces members such as the principal, head of department, and all the staff. Should all these people be responsible for these evaluation duties? Who should be responsible for this arrangement? |
| 11. The falling of students' academic standard is related to teachers' heavy work load. | Is the reduction of teachers' work load the only solution to raise students' academic standard? |
| 12. Some schools had difficulty in producing their annual report. | Does this imply that some leaders are not coping with the new decentralized duties? |
| 13. Schools are not willing to publish their students' exam result. | This shows the conservative side of most of the educators' ideology. It also shows that many schools are not confident with their performance? |
| 14. The education system needs to be reformed in order to improve its standard. | Can this quality improvement be solved only by the changing of the system? Are there any other alternatives? |
| 15. The process of school management reform alone cannot raise the standard of education. | Does this reflect that people have a lack of understanding of the role and value of school management? |
| 16. Staff promotion system caused low morale to teachers. | Is the promotion system the only reason behind teachers' low morale? Why were other changes such as an increase of staff involvement in the decision making process or the introduction of more refresh training courses not suggested? |
| 17. Students' language standard has fallen as result of the language policy. | The language policy has existed for many years so why should it be blamed now? Why has suggestion not been made on the need to carry out research on language teaching in order to explore remedies for this problem? |
| 18. The teaching career is less attractive than before. | Would this be due to the prosperous economy of Hong Kong that jobs in the commercial market is comparatively better paid with better working condition than a teaching job? |
| 19. Better communication between schools and parents must be encouraged. | Why does the latest research show that many principals are still unwilling to upgrade their present relationship with parents? |
| 20. Teachers' working environment needs to be improved. | Improvement on the working environment have not been specified. Would this improvement be influenced by the comparison of other career in commercial market? |

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 21.ED's role on QAU is not clearly defined. | Why are people so concern about the role of ED in QAU? Do educators still expect the ED to give them centralized guidance and command? |
| 22.Ways to maintain teachers' professional standard are not illustrated by the QAU Report. | The ED are expected to be fully responsible for staff's development and to maintain their professional standard. Education practitioners did not mention their professional duties on this matter. |
| 23.QAU should concentrate on provision of consultation service for school management instead. | This reveals the need of consultation service in school management. Does this show that school leaders lack of confidence in dealing with the decentralized managerial duties? |
| 24.QAU should help schools to identify their strength & weaknesses. | Why couldn't schools themselves identify their own strength and weaknesses? Are they incapable of doing the job? |
| 25.ED provides only the direction for quality control not the actual guidance. | Should it be the leader's professional duty to seek appropriate ways to improve their schools? Why people are still asking for centralized guidance in a decentralized managerial system? |
| 26.Not many heads have experience/ knowledge in quality control. | Why is this point raised as a reason for not joining SMI? Should the pursuit of professional development in management be the answer of this problem? |
| 27.Teacher training courses are kept at a standstill which continue to the fall of standard. | Why has the pursuit of in-job professional development for teachers not been suggested to help raise the standard? |
| 28.Provide appropriate training for people involved in SMI & QAU. | Why is the number of educators taking further management training courses still small? |
| 30.The government should set up a long term plan of education. | Have school leaders themselves thought about their own long term plan? What are they going to do if the government could not produce a long term plan? |
| 31.The government has avoided to identify the real problems of the system. | How are educators going to cope with the government's lack of intention to change the system? |
| 32.Some principals have not attended any of the SMI training courses. | Are they not taking SMI seriously? Or is it because they are coping well with the scheme? Have they had confidence with the quality of the training courses? |

APPENDIX Twenty-two

Reasons for Rejecting/Joining SMI

(A). Reasons for rejecting SMI

Reasons	No. of schools
1. Satisfaction with the institution's performance and cannot see any need to join SMI.	1,2,5 & 6
2. The financial flexibility given by SMI and the block grant are not attractive as funding from the government is sufficient.	1,2,4,5,6 & 7
3. Joining SMI requires a drastic change to the structure of the SMC, thus the sponsoring body decided against it.	1,2,4,6 & 7
4. Refusal from the teaching staff.	5,6 & 7
5. The school have no further space to expand.	2
6. The school is already managed by a system similar to SMI, therefore, there is no reason to join.	6
7. Most of the schools are under no competition of students' recruitment and therefore, the need for joining SMI is even smaller.	1
8. The implementing of SMI requires new knowledge from the principal and some would reject the scheme to avoid these changes.	7

(B). Reasons for joining SMI

Reasons	Schools
1. The sponsoring group or the principal was invited to join the scheme by the Director of Education.	3,8,9,10 & 11
2. The school already operates under a system similar to SMI and therefore, joining the scheme would not create too much change to the current system.	8 & 9
3. It was made compulsory to join the scheme.	10 & 11

Appendix Twenty-three

Opinions towards SMI

Opinions	School	
1. The idea of SMI is good but it is only suitable for newly-developed or under-performed schools.	1,2,5&6	(4)
2. The idea of SMI is good but it is not suitable for schools in Hong Kong.	9	(1)
3. The idea of SMI is good but it has not been promoted effectively.	3,7&11	(3)
4. More schools should join SMI but not us.	1,2,5&6	(4)
5. The benefit of joining SMI does not out weigh the down side of extra clerical duties.	1,2,4,5,6,7&9	(7)
6. ED does not have the manpower to provide adequate and proper advice and guidance to SMI schools.	3,4,7&10	(4)
7. Teaching experience alone is not adequate for the management of the newly delegated duties.	3,4&7	(3)
8. SMI is needed for the future of the education system and all the schools should join.	3,4,7,8&11	(5)
9. Will join SMI only if it becomes compulsory.	1,2,5&6	(4)
10. SMI has been launched too hasty without a good introductory scheme.	3,4&7	(3)
11. Teachers are not keen on the scheme because they already have a heavy workload.	1,2,4,5,7,9,10&11	(8)
12. The design of SMI has taken no account of the complicated school sponsoring system into consideration.	4,7&9	(3)
13. If we are sure that SMI is good for our future, we should go for it, no matter how hard it will be.	8	(1)
14. School principals are left to run their schools single-handedly, they therefore, need to make plans and targets as suggested by SMI.	8	(1)
15. Worry about being accountable for the outcome after joining SMI.	7	(1)

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----|
| 16. SMI is too commercialised which is not suitable for the education system in Hong Kong. | 9 | (1) |
| 17. Joining SMI will reduce teachers' time spent on pedagogic improvement. | 1,2,4,5,6&9 | (6) |
| 18. The result of SMI depends directly on the principal's leadership quality but many school principals are still not up to their job. | 9&10 | (2) |
| 19. There is no system of supervision to ensure a satisfactory performance from the principals in the implementation of SMI. | 9&10 | (2) |
| 20. SMI allows the principals to delegate their duties as well as their accountability. | 9&10 | (2) |

Appendix Twenty-four

Problems of school management

Problems	Schools
1. I do not have any problem with my school management duties.	1,2,5&6 (4)
2. There should not be any problem in school management if the Code of Aid is followed through.	2&6 (2)
3. Staff Appraisal is difficult to implement.	3,8&11 (3)
4. Personnel management is a problem.	4,7,9&11 (4)
5. Counseling.	8 (1)
6. The lack of manpower.	9 (1)
7. Staff's quality control.	9 (1)
8. School inspectors do not give useful advice to schools for improvement.	5 (1)

Appendix Twenty-five

Opinions on Professional Development

Opinions	School
1. Professional development is very important and is necessary.	All, except 6 (10)
2. Professional development means attending the seminars organized by ED.	1,2,4,5, & 6 (5)
3. Not many school principals are keen on pursuing professional development because they will get the same pay and stay in the same position after years of hard work.	3, 4 & 7 (3)
4. There is not a spirit inside the school to implement the principal's new plan generated from development training courses.	4, 7 (2)
5. Senior teaching staff with managerial responsibilities refuse to pursuit development on school management.	4, 7 (2)
6. Professional development on school management is not necessary for school managers because they should be well experienced and trained before the headship.	6 (1)
7. Professional development can not be reached by only one particular training programme, it should be a continuous process.	8 (1)
8. School principals in Hong Kong are in great need of professional development in school management.	3 & 8 (2)
9. Professional development training programmes are useful only if the attendants could make wise use of the obtained knowledge in the schools.	9, 10 (2)
10. A HEADLAMP Scheme like training programme should be introduced to Hong Kong.	4, 7, 8, & 11 (4)
11. Professional development for school principals is not encouraged by school governors.	8 (1)

APPENDIX Twenty-six

Recommended Inspection Schedules

With reference to OFSTED, some main points for an effective inspection schedules are suggested as follow:

For the area of 'Leadership and Management', it should be concerned with the schedule of:

1. how well the governors, principals and staff with management responsibilities contribute to the quality of education provided by the schools and to the standards achieved by all of its pupils and
2. the extent to which the school complies with statutory requirements.

Judgments should be based on the extent to which:

1. strong leadership provides clear educational direction for the work of the school;
2. teaching and curriculum development are monitored, evaluated and supported;
3. the school has aims, values and policies which are reflected through all its work;
4. the school, through its development planning, identifies relevant priorities targets, takes the necessary action, and monitors and evaluates its progress towards them;
5. there is a positive ethos, which reflects the school's commitment to high achievement, an effective learning environment, good relationships and equality of opportunity for all pupils;
6. statutory requirements are met.

(OFSTED, 1995:100)

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