

Leadership in Higher Education: The Hong Kong Experience

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by

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgment is made, and that it has not been previously submitted to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

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Abstract

This study investigates the perceptions of a cohort of leaders of the higher education institutions in Hong Kong on the leadership styles and competencies that have enabled them to lead effectively, and also their perceptions of the influence of culture, authority/power and gender on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong. The main source of research data is from a series of in-depth individual face-to-face interviews with the 14 respondents, eight males and six females, who consented to participate in the research.

The research indicates that the respondents assessed the competencies of effective leadership from two perspectives: endorsing the traditional view of gender-stereotyping of leadership skills, attributes and characteristics on the one hand when considering the impact of gender, and on the other hand, displaying a mix of gender-stereotyped but perceivably effective competencies in themselves in their recollections of their experiences as higher education leaders in Hong Kong. The great majority felt that gender had no direct impact on their leadership. The findings identify a profile of perceived effective competencies of higher education leadership in Hong Kong, embracing a repertoire of male and female stereotyped skills, attributes, and characteristics, and confirm the concept of androgynous leader.

The research finds that the preferred leadership of this cohort of higher education leaders was collegial, consultative and collaborative, featuring the transformational and distributed approaches to educational leadership. The associated competencies that had enabled most of them to lead effectively included the ability to inspire a shared vision, to lead and manage change, to motivate, stimulate and empower people; interpersonal skills; the focus on team-building and teamwork; and the capacity for staff and personal development. Given that these are mostly female stereotyped skills, abilities and characteristics, the potential of women becoming more efficient and effective leaders and the prospect of increased access by women to higher education leadership positions in Hong Kong are suggested. However, as leaders of higher education worldwide are increasingly compelled to cope with the rapid and unprecedented changes in the sector, the conventional collegial, consultative and collaborative styles of leadership and management are no longer felt to be

appropriate to cope with these changes and challenges. It follows that there is an imperative need for higher education leaders to exhibit a wider range of competencies, such as business and entrepreneurial skills featuring a transactional approach to educational leadership. The concept of a contemporary effective higher education leader emerging from the analysis of the data collected for this study therefore demonstrates a mix of the transformational, distributed and transactional leadership approaches, the conventional collegial versus the new managerial styles, as well as male and female stereotyped competencies.

The findings of the study also reveal the perceived influence/impact of culture, authority/power and gender on the effectiveness of the respondents as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong.

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Table of Contents

Contents	Page
Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	ix
Chapter 1: The Research Problem	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background: Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Leaders in Higher Education	2
1.3 The Hong Kong Context	3
1.3.1 The Expansion of Higher Education Opportunities	3
1.3.2 The Internationalisation of Higher Education in Hong Kong	5
1.3.3 The Reduction of Government Funding for Higher Education	6
1.3.4 Quality Assurance, Accountability and External Inspection	7
1.3.5 Competition, the Marketisation of Higher Education and the New Managerialism	8
1.3.6 Recent Developments: Academic Structural Reform and the Qualifications Framework	9
1.3.7 Summary	9
1.4 Purpose of the Study, Main and Specific Research Questions	10
1.5 The Conceptual Framework	11
1.6 Significance and Outcomes of the Study	13
1.7 Research Methodology	14
1.8 Outline of the Thesis	15
Chapter 2: Literature Review	16
2.1 Introduction	16
2.2 Leadership and Management	17
2.3 Leadership Styles	20
2.6.1 Transactional Leadership	20
2.6.2 Transformational Leadership	21

2.6.3	Distributed Leadership	25
2.4	Competencies Enabling Effective Educational Leadership	26
2.4.1	Corporate Vision and Direction	27
2.4.2	Strategic Focus	30
2.4.3	Achievement of Outcomes	31
2.4.4	Development and Management of Resources	32
2.4.5	Change Leadership	33
2.4.6	Interpersonal Relationships	36
2.4.7	Personal Development and Mastery	38
2.4.8	Business and Entrepreneurial Skills	40
2.4.9	Development and Empowerment of People	42
2.4.10	Summary	44
2.5	Culture and Leadership	45
2.5.1	Definition of Culture	45
2.5.2	The Reciprocal Relationship between Culture and Leadership	47
2.6	Authority/Power and Leadership	49
2.6.1	Definition of Power	49
2.6.2	Definition of Authority	50
2.6.3	Reciprocal Relationship between Authority/Power and Leadership	51
2.7	Gender and Educational Leadership	53
2.7.1	Gender-stereotyped Competencies associated with Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership	53
2.7.2	Correlation between Gender and Competencies of Educational Leadership in Callan's (2001) Management and Leadership Capability Framework	55
2.7.3	Impact of Gender on Effectiveness of Leadership in Education	56
2.8	Review of Conceptual Framework for Data Presentation and Analysis	58
2.9	Summary	58
Chapter 3: Research Methodology		60
3.1	Introduction	60
3.2	Research Approaches and Paradigms	61
3.2.1	Research Approaches	61
3.3	Research Methodology	63
3.3.1	Relation between Research Paradigms and Methods	63

3.3.2	Relevance of Interpretive/Qualitative Approach to the Current Research	65
3.4	Research Design	66
3.4.1	Definition	66
3.4.2	Design Outline for the Study	66
3.4.3	Research Sample	67
3.5	Data Collection	72
3.5.1	The interview	72
3.5.2	Interview Guide	74
3.5.3	Pilot Study	76
3.5.4	Data Collection Procedures	78
3.5.5	The Role/Position of the Researcher	80
3.6	Data Analysis	81
3.7	Trustworthiness of the Research	82
3.7.1	Reliability	82
3.7.2	Validity	83
3.7.3	Generalisability or Transferability	85
3.7.4	Triangulation	86
3.8	Ethical Considerations	86
3.8.1	Informed Consent	86
3.8.2	Confidentiality/ Anonymity	87
3.9	Limitations of the Study	88
3.9.1	Access	88
3.9.2	Sample Size	89
3.9.3	Generalisability	89
3.9.4	Medium of Communication	89
3.9.5	Data Collection	90
3.10	Summary	91
Chapter 4:	Findings	93
4.1	Introduction	93
4.2	Leadership Styles and Competencies Enabling Higher Education Leaders to Lead Effectively	93
4.2.1	Corporate Vision and Direction	95
4.2.2	Strategic Focus	97

4.2.3	Achievement of Outcomes	98
4.2.4	Development and Management of Resources	100
4.2.5	Change Leadership	102
4.2.6	Interpersonal Relationships	106
4.2.7	Personal Development and Mastery	113
4.2.8	Business and Entrepreneurial Skills	123
4.2.9	Development and Empowerment of People	124
4.3	Influence of Culture and Authority/Power on the Ability of Higher Education Leaders to Lead Effectively	127
4.3.1	Culture	128
4.3.2	Authority/Power	131
4.4	Perceived Impact of Gender on the Effectiveness of Higher Education Leaders in Hong Kong	133
4.4.1	Identification of Gender-Stereotyped Competencies Associated with Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership	134
4.4.2	Correlation between Competencies Identified in Callan's (2001) Management and Leadership Capability Framework and Gender	140
4.4.3	Perceived Impact of Gender on the Effectiveness of Leaders of the HKHEIs	141
4.5	Summary	142
Chapter 5	Analysis and Discussion	144
5.1	Introduction	144
5.2	Leadership Styles and Competencies Enabling Higher Education Leaders to Lead Effectively	144
5.2.1	Corporate Vision and Direction	145
5.2.2	Strategic Focus	147
5.2.3	Achievement of Outcomes	149
5.2.4	Development and Management of Resources	151
5.2.5	Change Leadership	153
5.2.6	Interpersonal Relationships	155
5.2.7	Personal Development and Mastery	158
5.2.8	Business and Entrepreneurial Skills	161
5.2.9	Development and Empowerment of People	163
5.3	Influence of Culture and Authority/Power on Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership	165
5.3.1	Culture	166

5.3.2	Authority/Power	168
5.4	Impact of Gender on Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership	170
5.4.1	Gender-Stereotyped Competencies Associated with Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership	170
5.4.2	Gender and Competencies of Educational Leadership in Callan's (2001) Management and Leadership Capability Framework	172
5.4.3	Impact of Gender on Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership	173
5.5	Summary	175
Chapter 6 Conclusions and Recommendations		177
6.1	Introduction	177
6.2	Overview	177
6.3	Implications	180
6.3.1	Implications for Knowledge/Theory and Practice	180
6.3.2	Implications for Practice	181
6.4	Critique of Research Methodology Used	184
6.5	Evaluation of the Research and Limitations of the Study	184
6.6	Recommendations for Further Research	186
6.7	Concluding Remarks	188
References		190
Appendices		203

List of Figures

Contents	Page
Figure 1.1 Conceptual Model	13
Figure 6.1 Model of Effective Leadership Style in Hong Kong Higher Education	179

List of Tables

Contents	Page
Table 2.1 Comparing Leadership and Management in terms of Essential Organisational Processes	19
Table 2.2 Gender Paradigms	54
Table 3.1 Differences between the Normative and Interpretive Approaches	61
Table 3.2 Leadership/Senior Management in the Hong Kong Higher Education Institutions by Institution and Gender (April – May 2007)	69
Table 3.3 Brief/Profile of Research Participants	71

Chapter 1:

The Research Problem

1.1 Introduction

“In order to be a leader in higher education, one must be a ‘dove’ of peace intervening among warring factions that are causing destructive turbulence in the college, a dragon driving away both internal and external forces that threaten the college, and a diplomat guiding, inspiring, and encouraging people who live and work in the college environment” (Gmelch, as cited in Smith & Hughey, 2006, p.161).

The main aim of this study is to investigate the perceived effectiveness of higher education leaders in the changing context of Hong Kong. The purpose of this research is to draw up a profile of the competencies perceived by leaders of the higher education institutions (HEIs) in Hong Kong to be important in helping them to discharge their roles. This, in turn, may contribute to the identification of a possible model of effective leadership style which is appropriate to the Hong Kong context. Another expected outcome is to discover the extent to which gender is perceived to have an impact on the effectiveness of leaders of the HEIs and how culture and authority/power influence their ability to lead effectively.

As HEIs worldwide have been trying to cope with the far-reaching changes which impact significantly on the way they function, the management and leadership of institutions of higher education have accordingly been subjected to uncertainty and change (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2001; Meek & Wood, 1997). Some commentators such as Maddux (2002) have suggested that there is a great leadership crisis in higher education. Accordingly, there is a perceived need for effective leadership and strong management in the hope of achieving operational effectiveness and efficiency.

Over the last two decades, corporate management influences have overtaken the collegial leadership approach of the traditional post-war university (Yielder & Codling, 2004). As observed by Bargh, Boccock, Scott, and Smith (2000), institutional leadership is “now more

clearly based on managerial and entrepreneurial skills and operational competencies rather than collegial or charismatic leadership” (p.152). Leaders of HEIs are now charged with the responsibility “to keep higher education responsive to the needs of business and industry” (Smith & Hughey, 2006, p.157).

In Hong Kong, leaders of HEIs have for some time been operating in an increasingly competitive world where there has been a move away from an elitist to a mass participation in higher education, a scarcity of resources for higher education, and where they are subjected to an unprecedented level of rigorous external inspection and scrutiny (Mok, 1999). These providers of higher education are obliged to meet the increasing demands from the local Hong Kong community and also the changing expectations from the government, governing bodies, parents, students, employers and other stakeholders (Mok, 1999).

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis. It outlines the background and context of the study. A statement of the research problem, main research question and specific research questions and the significance of the research are explained. The research methodology is outlined. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of the remainder of the thesis.

1.2 Background: Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Leaders in Higher Education

In the past, leaders were mainly responsible for academic development and administrative affairs, the latter being confined to staff recruitment and promotion, apportionment and allocation of resources, and others. However, the growth of the fund-raising culture prevalent in the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded HEIs has entailed a drastic change in the role and responsibilities of the presidents or vice-chancellors of these institutions. At present, they are assuming the role of “fund-raising ambassadors”, who are charged with the responsibility of raising funds and resources from, say, the commercial sector, and, for that specific purpose, have become public figures, frequently having to appear in public and liaise closely with business entrepreneurs and enterprisers.

This change in the role and responsibilities of leaders of HEIs in Hong Kong has led to the empowerment of second-tier leaders of the institutions, such as Vice-Presidents, Associate Vice-Presidents and Deans, who have been entrusted with the responsibility of taking a leading role in the development of the institutions. This phenomenon, coupled with the transformation of higher education, has raised the expectations of the Hong Kong society on leaders for them to lead with due diligence and competence. The implication is such that they are expected to exhibit leadership competencies, which should enable them to (i) face the challenges, changes and pressures arising from changing values and also social and economic crises to be able to lead effectively and efficiently, and (ii) meet the various demands from staff, students, parents, other stakeholders of the institutions and society, which may pose a great challenge to their leadership practices and positions.

1.3 The Hong Kong Context

During the last two decades, higher education in Hong Kong has undergone significant changes which have provided challenges for higher education leaders. These include (1) a marked increase in participation rates in higher education and a widening of participation with a move away from an elitist system to mass participation; (2) the internationalisation of higher education; (3) the reduction of government funding for higher education; (4) quality assurance, accountability and external inspection; and (5) competition, the marketisation of higher education and the “new managerialism”.

1.3.1 The Expansion of Higher Education Opportunities

The expansion of higher education opportunities has resulted in increased and widened participation. This has witnessed a “transition from elite to mass higher education” (Yielder & Codling, 2004, p.316), extending higher education to the academically less brilliant who would normally be denied access to it under the previous elitist education system. According to Ramsden (1998a), mass higher education has brought about far-reaching changes, which concern not only wider participation, higher student numbers and larger class sizes, but also the bilateral relationship between government and the HEIs, the public perceptions of higher education and the entire mechanism of professional standards and accountability. In Hong Kong, the rapid expansion of new and existing HEIs in the

1990s has witnessed an increase from two major public universities, which used to take in approximately two percent of the relevant age group, to seven public universities and one Government-established but self-financing university. All seven public universities were funded by the UGC, and were originally catering for the provision of publicly-funded higher education for 18 percent of the relevant age group of young people (Hayhoe, 2004).

The expansion in higher education is a result of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government's decision to increase the provision of post-secondary education opportunities for students of the relevant age group, as first promulgated by the Chief Executive of Hong Kong in his 2000 Policy Address. The target at the time was to increase the participation rate of senior secondary school graduates in further and higher education from 30% to 60% over the next decade, with a view to enabling 60% of the senior secondary school leavers to have access to post-secondary education by 2010-11 (Education and Manpower Bureau [EMB], 2006).

Since 2000, there has been a phenomenal growth in the provision of self-financing places at both degree and sub-degree levels from 2,621 in 2001 to 19,673 in 2007. This has accordingly resulted in a substantial increase in the post-secondary education participation rate, which has doubled in five years from 33% in 2000-01 to 66% in 2005-06. The targeted participation rate of 60% has thus been attained five years ahead of schedule (Steering Committee, EMB, 2008).

The sub-degree programmes have contributed to the development of multiple progression routes into higher education. The opening up of post-secondary education opportunities through the introduction of self-financing sub-degree programmes has therefore served the needs of those students who are less qualified in terms of academic achievement and would normally be deprived of the opportunities to progress to higher education in Hong Kong. However, this expansion has had an adverse impact on the self-financing programme providers, as evidenced by fierce competition and strong pressure to procure and increase the number of student enrolments for individual institutions.

However, the overall expansion in student enrolment signifying an increased and widened participation in higher education has had also a number of consequences which inevitably pose a challenge to leaders and teachers of the Hong Kong higher education institutions

(HKHEIs). These include (i) a broader mix of students participating in higher education; (ii) a rise in the number of overseas students in Hong Kong particularly from Mainland China; and (iii) the Government's injection of additional funds to finance the operation of the higher education system has aroused concerns over the effectiveness of the way in which the funds are expended (Editorial Committee, 2005).

1.3.2 The Internationalisation of Higher Education in Hong Kong

According to Knight (2004), internationalisation can be defined as: "integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p.3). In Hong Kong, the local higher education sector has undergone growing international integration, which is clearly evidenced by the increasing numbers of visiting scholars and students from abroad, and increases in the number of international agreements (French, 1996).

In terms of staffing, some academic staff have typically been recruited from universities in the developed world. However, since the reversion of Hong Kong's sovereignty to China in 1997, there has been a significant change in recruitment policy. This is particularly true in the appointment of senior executive/managerial staff, with the change from the previous practice of recruitment of expatriates from overseas to the current one of recruitment of locals.

In terms of the student body, the HEIs in Hong Kong have found it necessary to increase their student enrolments by means of internationalisation in order to meet the government targets for increased participation in higher education. Hong Kong, unlike other countries in the Asia-Pacific region such as Singapore, which is renowned as a regional higher education centre, has not had a policy of admitting a large proportion of non-local students. Government guidelines for many years have limited undergraduate enrolment from outside Hong Kong to only four percent of the total student enrolment for undergraduate programmes. Hence, the undergraduate student population is very homogeneous indeed, comprising mainly Cantonese-speaking students from Hong Kong.

It was not until early 2005 that the Government, in an attempt to develop Hong Kong as the Education Hub in the region, decided to raise the quota of non-local students to eight

percent with effect from the 2005-06 academic year (Chan, 2006). This relaxation has enabled students from the Mainland to enter Hong Kong for enrolment in locally accredited full-time programmes at bachelor's degree and above levels. On the other hand, those Mainland students admitted for enrolment in locally accredited sub-degree programmes provided by the HKHEIs are allowed to come to Hong Kong for studying purposes on a personal basis.

As an indication of the progress which has been made, in 2005-06, the total non-local student enrolments of the eight UGC-funded institutions had increased from 1,200 in 1995-96 (of whom some 60% came from Mainland China), to 4,777, of whom around 90% (4,327) were from Mainland China. In 2006-07, the total escalated further to 6,217, and the total number of Mainland students also rose to 5,721, which was equivalent to 92% of the total non-local student intake (UGC, 2007).

The motivation and rationale to internationalise higher education in western countries, such as United Kingdom (UK) and Australia, may be contingent upon economic considerations, the most notable being reduction of government funding for the HEIs. As the higher education sector in Hong Kong is still fully funded by the HKSAR Government, Hong Kong has not had any felt need to rely on the export of higher education to generate revenues for the Government. Nevertheless, the trend appears to be changing even in Hong Kong, as demonstrated by the requirement in recent years that sub-degree and taught postgraduate programmes would need to be self-financing and might no longer rely on government funding. Hence both UGC-funded and non-UGC-funded HEIs in Hong Kong tend to rely on the funds generated by their self-financing continuing education arms.

1.3.3 The Reduction of Government Funding for Higher Education

The focus of the Education Reforms implemented in Hong Kong since 1998 has been mainly on primary and secondary education. As the Government has allocated considerable resources to support reforms in these sectors, the HEIs have, since 1997, been confronted with a progressive cut in government funding. The cut in funding was exacerbated by the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, and reached 10% in 2004. Subsequently, Hong Kong was badly hit by an economic recession for over one and a half years.

In view of the stringent financial budget, the HKSAR Government has had to further reduce its funding for higher education, particularly the sub-degree sector. With effect from the 2004-05 academic year, Government subsidy to publicly-funded sub-degree programmes was withdrawn, in order to free up government resources to enable students to benefit from public subsidy in some other forms (EMB, 2006). Consequently, not only have self-financing institutions been expected to rely on the income that they manage to generate, but also UGC-funded institutions have had to depend, to a certain extent, on the surplus income generated by their self-financing continuing education arms to subsidise their own operations.

In line with the Government's policy to progressively cut its funding, the Government launched the Matching Fund Scheme, under which UGC-funded universities are encouraged to raise funds by their own means, while the Government undertakes to "match" the funds raised with compatible amounts. Those HEI leaders who have entrepreneurial and interpersonal skills are arguably better equipped to deal with this challenge.

Hence to address the economic downturn as well as government policy, leaders of the HKHEIs have had to face two major challenges: first, the need to raise funds to finance their operations, and second, to ensure that the funds allocated to them are used more effectively and efficiently.

1.3.4 Quality Assurance, Accountability and External Inspection

In order to cope with the massive expansion in higher education, one of the major developments has been the emergence of "a greatly diversified range of higher education institutions and provisions" (Editorial Committee, 2005, p.4). This has subsequently set the scene for the recent emphasis on quality assurance in higher education. Indeed, the phenomena in many ways can be regarded as a microcosm of the global phenomenon in respect of teaching and learning in higher education, particularly in the UK, Europe, North America and Australia.

To a certain extent, the need to assure the academic quality of the provisions of the HKHEIs results from the increasing demand for rendering the HEIs accountable to the

stakeholders for the expenditure of public funds on higher education (French, as cited in Mok, 1999; Mok, 1999; Tam, 1999). The educational provisions of the HEIs are thus expected to be of an acceptable quality, cost-effective and “providing value for money” (Tam, 1999, p.217). Consequently, the imperative to assure the academic quality of higher education in Hong Kong has led to the emergence of external inspection and assessment. This would normally involve the assessment of performance and the quality of teaching and research outputs by an external inspection agent (Mok, 2000). The purpose of external assessment is two-fold: (i) at the institutional level, to assess whether the particular HKHEI has the institutional competency to effectively manage and provide adequate resources (Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications [HKCAAVQ], 2008) to support the development, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of its academic programmes and educational services, and (ii) at programme level, to enable the academic provision to attain accredited status. In Hong Kong, the external assessment is normally conducted by a Government-approved external agent, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ).

1.3.5 Competition, the Marketisation of Higher Education and the New Managerialism

The progressively dominant concepts of corporate management, together with the strong market forces, have exerted a critical influence over the development and reform of the higher education sector worldwide. This has led to fierce competition among the HEIs engendered by the demand for economy and efficiency (Mok, 1999, 2000; Yelder & Codling, 2004), and the introduction of “stringent regulations and rigorous review exercises” (Mok, 2000, p.158). The HEIs in Hong Kong, similar to their counterparts in western countries, have also been subjected to the influence of the tidal forces of marketisation and have been compelled to become more sensitive to the market needs. Accordingly, the HKHEIs have changed the nature of their curricula from essentially academic to “market oriented”, and have focused their attention on accountability, efficiency, quality and “value-for-money” educational services (Mok, 1999; Pounder, 1999). There is also an increasing trend for the HEIs worldwide to be entrepreneurially-driven and cost-conscious, with a view to becoming more competitive in terms of enhanced staff profiles, extensive research output and impressive graduates’ employability.

In fact, the latter two are regarded as important criteria that govern the allocation of government funding and resources (Mok, 1999, 2000).

1.3.6 Recent Developments: Academic Structural Reform and the Qualifications Framework

There are two emerging policy trends in the Hong Kong higher education context. These are the reform of the academic structure for post-secondary and higher education, and the introduction of a Qualifications Framework (QF). These trends post-date the interviews conducted for the present study, but are nevertheless important challenges which will undoubtedly be facing the leaders of higher education at the present time. The new academic structure will enable Hong Kong to align its education system with a number of significant international systems, particularly those of Mainland China and United States of America (USA), and will consequently allow easier and smoother articulation with such systems (EMB, 2004). Meanwhile, the QF is intended “to facilitate continuing education and lifelong learning” (McBrayer, 2008, p.E4) in order to help upgrade the quality of manpower in Hong Kong (HKCAAVQ, 2008).

1.3.7 Summary

In all, the two main policy trends in Hong Kong, massive expansion of higher education and reduction of government funding for financing the HKHEIs, have posed great challenges to leaders of these institutions in terms of the resultant need for economy and efficiency. These have rendered it imperative for the leaders to adopt a market-oriented approach, leading to fierce competition among the HEIs to boost their student enrolments (Mok, 1999, 2000; Yields & Codling, 2004). To be more competitive, the HKHEIs, like their overseas counterparts, have become more entrepreneurial (Mok, 2000), market-driven (Mok, 1999) and cost-conscious (Mok, 1999, 2000). Leaders of HEIs worldwide have meanwhile exerted their best efforts to ensure that the higher education provided is of an acceptable quality and “value-for-taxpayers’ money” (Briggs, 2001; Mok, 1999).

1.4 Purpose of the Study, Main and Specific Research Questions

The study seeks to investigate the perspectives of a small cohort of 14 leaders, comprising eight males and six females, currently or recently holding senior positions in the HEIs in Hong Kong, mostly at the ranks of Vice-President, Associate Vice-President and Dean, on their educational effectiveness as leaders in the HKHEIs. Their perceptions and experiences are examined in relation to three main issues: (i) leadership styles and the competencies that have enabled leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong to lead effectively; (ii) the influence of culture and authority/power on their ability to lead effectively; and (iii) the impact of gender on their effectiveness as higher education leaders in Hong Kong.

The main research question is: What are the perceptions of effectiveness in higher education leadership as viewed by the cohort of the higher education leaders in Hong Kong?

The question will be addressed through in-depth interviews with eight male and six female leaders engaged in leadership/management at different levels in ten HKHEIs, ranging from Vice-Presidents, Associate Vice-Presidents, Faculty Deans and Heads of non-academic units.

The main research question is split into three specific research questions to facilitate and guide data collection and analysis. They are:

1. What are the perceptions of the leadership styles and competencies which have enabled these higher education leaders to lead effectively?
2. How do these leaders perceive that culture and authority/power have influenced their ability to lead effectively?
3. What impact is gender perceived to have on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong?

1.5 The Conceptual Framework

Extensive research on educational leadership has been conducted in the past decades in both western and Asian countries. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between leadership and management (Bennis, 1989; Harris, 2006; Kotter, 1990; Ramsden, 1998b; West-Burnham, 1997). There is also a significant body of literature on transactional, transformational and distributed leadership styles. Much of this is based on the school sector (Dimmock, 2003; Southworth, 1998) with much less attention paid to further education (Lumby, 2001; Peeke, 2003) and to higher education (Ramsden, 1998a, 1998b; Smith & Hughey, 2006). The notion of leadership as a widely distributed, dispersed and shared process was advocated by various researchers such as Ramsden (1998a, 1998b), Gronn (2002), Dimmock (2003) and Peeke (2003).

Extensive research has also been carried out on the capabilities required for effective leadership. Again, much of this is school-based (Bollington, 1999; Gamage & Pang, 2003) but there are important studies in the further education (Callan, 2001; Peeke, 2003) and higher education (Ramsden, 1998a, 1998b; Smith & Hughey, 2006; Yelder & Codling, 2004) contexts. Many of these capabilities can be applied to all sectors of education, including higher education, and are arguably compatible with the practice of primarily transformational leadership, and, to a certain extent, distributed and transactional leadership as well.

The reciprocal relationship between culture and leadership has also been researched. For some researchers (Dimmock & Walker, 2002a; Reeves, Moss, & Forest, 1998), culture is considered to be an important factor that provides the context for the exercise of educational leadership, influences the thoughts, actions and effective practice of educational leaders, and accordingly, shapes their leadership styles. Asian educational leaders, under the influence of Asian cultures typified by group-oriented and collectivist values, tend to emphasise group relationships, avoid conflicts and preserve harmonious relationships (Dimmock & Walker, 2002b). Lumby (2003), while agreeing that culture has a significant influence on educational leadership and management, nevertheless suggested that leaders should be able to exercise their discretion in responding to change and pressure, instead of succumbing passively to cultural influences. In contrast, it has been argued that educational leaders have the responsibility and skill to create, shape and influence

institutional culture (Busher & Barker, 2003), which could be shared and collaborative culture that connects the entire institutional community.

Authority/Power and leadership are perceived to be reciprocally influencing one another (Gamage & Pang, 2003; Sackney & Mitchell, 2002). Visionary, inspiring and motivating leaders have proven their ability to lead effectively through appropriately wielding the authority/power vested in them by virtue of their hierarchical positions (Busher, 2005). In fact, the notion of “separation of powers” is compatible with the distributed concept of educational leadership, on the assumption that authority/power is no longer vested with only leaders in top positions, but accrues to different people in the organisation possessing the knowledge, skills and expertise to lead particular tasks (Sackney & Mitchell, 2002).

This diffusion and distribution of authority/power leads to the emergence of collective/shared leadership which is assumed by leaders of different strengths at various levels of the organisation to achieve improvement and change (Gronn, 2002). Viewed from a cross-cultural perspective, authority/power is seen to impact distinctly on the effectiveness of educational leadership. This is evidenced in the top-down approach and authoritarian leadership style adopted by educational leaders in the power-focused Asian societies, as contrasted starkly with the bottom-up approach, and collaborative and collegial leadership style more often adopted by educational leaders in the power-diffused, western societies (Dimmock & Walker, 2002b).

Traditionally, researchers interested in leadership and gender (Bem, 1974; Gray, 1993; Hall, 1997; Lambert, 1998) have identified a range of gender-stereotyped competencies typical of male or female leaders. Effective leadership in both corporate and educational sectors has historically been associated with particular characteristics that are most frequently described as “masculine” rather than “feminine” (Blackmore, 1989). However, more recent research findings argued that men and women may lead in similar ways (Coleman, 2004; Grace, 1995), although the experience of being a woman leader is likely to be different from that of being a man and a leader (Coleman, 2004). Some researchers have, on the other hand, suggested an association between effective educational leadership and business, entrepreneurial and financial management skills, together with assertive and competitive behaviour, thereby implying the likely impact of gender on educational effectiveness (Evetts, as cited in Coleman, 2003; Grace, 1995).

The inter-relationship between the various concepts important in this thesis and the direction of influence is illustrated in the conceptual model in Figure 1.1 below:

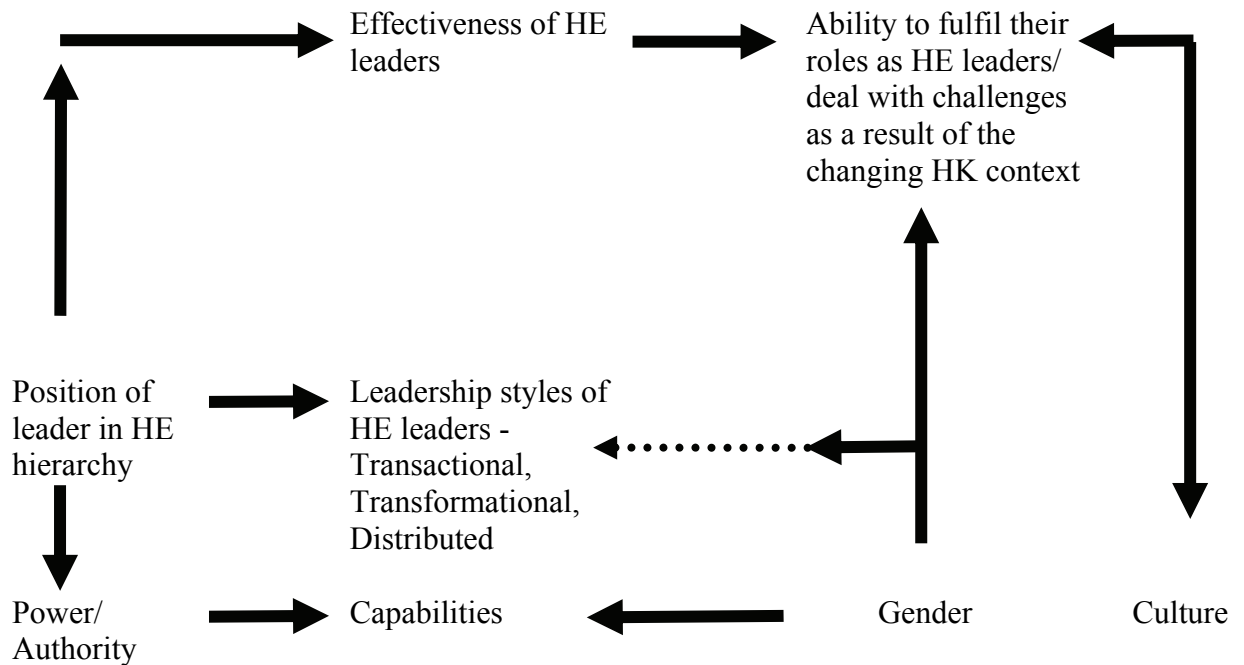


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Model

1.6 Significance and Outcomes of the Study

To date, there has been no research on the perception of effectiveness of higher education leadership in Hong Kong. Only a few researchers such as Liu (1997), Mok (1999, 2000), Pounder (1999, 2001) and Tam (1999) have conducted research on higher education in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, they tend to focus on issues such as quality assurance (Mok, 2000; Tam, 1999), organisational effectiveness (Pounder, 1999), and also new managerialism and marketisation of higher education (Mok, 1999). These are some of the challenges to which higher education leaders have to respond.

The present research aims to fill the gap in the existing scholarly work on higher education in Hong Kong by seeking to contribute to knowledge about leaders in higher education. The intention is to bridge the gap in the current body of scholarly knowledge by research, on leadership competencies and styles contributing to the perceptions of effectiveness of higher education leadership in Hong Kong, and the possible influence of culture,

authority/power and gender on the ability of Hong Kong higher education leaders to lead effectively.

This study owes its significance to its practical value. From the practical perspective, the leaders of the HKHEIs in the present study can serve to inspire not only future generations of higher education leaders in Hong Kong, but also those who aspire to become leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong. Moreover, this study purports to serve as a reference for existing higher education leaders in Hong Kong enabling them to reflect on the effectiveness of their educational leadership in changing times.

The study is also significant in that it seeks to break the traditional view of gender stereotyping in relation to educational leadership, and offers a new perspective on the synergistic relationship between gender and effectiveness of leadership in higher education in the particular context of Hong Kong.

1.7 Research Methodology

This study is based on the interpretive research paradigm and the research methodology used for conducting this study is qualitative. For the purpose of the study, the researcher developed an interview guide on the basis of the literature reviewed. This guide, comprising 25 questions categorised under eight headings for all respondents alike, was intended to explore the perceptions of this particular cohort of higher education leaders in Hong Kong as regards their views on effective leadership styles and competencies and the influence of culture, authority/power and potentially gender.

A special device in the form of a checklist of leadership skills and abilities was incorporated in the 'Leadership Style' section of the interview guide as an interview question (Attachment to Appendix III). It was designed to examine the potentially different leadership competencies of male and female higher education leaders in Hong Kong. The interview guide (Appendix III), on the other hand, was designed to gauge and measure the perceptions of the cohort of higher education leaders, with regard to (i) their perceptions of the leadership styles and competencies which had enabled them to lead effectively in response to the challenges faced by the higher education sector; (ii) their perceptions of the

way in which culture and authority/power had influenced their ability to lead effectively; and (iii) their perceptions of the impact of gender on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education.

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis comprises a total of six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the background and context of the research problem in Hong Kong, the purpose of the study, the main and specific research questions, the significance and outcomes of the research and the research methodology. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature and seeks to explore (i) the differences between leadership and management; (ii) the leadership styles for effective higher education leadership; (iii) the competencies associated with effective higher education leadership; (iv) the relationship between leadership and culture, and that between leadership and authority/power; and (v) gender and effectiveness in higher education leadership. Chapter 3 considers all aspects of the research methodology. Chapter 4 presents the findings obtained from the 14 individual interviews. Chapter 5 discusses the findings in relation to the literature review. Chapter 6 discusses the contribution of this research to knowledge, critically examines the research methodology used, analyses the limitations of the study, and makes recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of a cohort of higher education leaders in Hong Kong on educational effectiveness. The study aims to identify the leadership styles and competencies which the cohort of leaders of the Hong Kong higher education institutions (HKHEIs) perceive to have enabled them to lead effectively. Furthermore, the study seeks to examine the extent to which culture and authority/power impact on their ability to lead, and also to investigate whether gender has had any impact on their effectiveness as higher education leaders.

A preliminary review of the literature on educational leadership reveals that although many studies have been undertaken, particularly in western countries, the majority focus on primary and secondary school leadership. Studies of leadership in further education and universities/higher education are relatively limited, especially in Hong Kong.

This chapter examines relevant studies on educational leadership under five broad headings. First, it clarifies the relationship between leadership and management. Second, it investigates various leadership styles, in particular, the transformational, transactional and distributed approaches. Third, it examines the competencies associated with effective educational leadership on the basis of Callan's (2001) management and leadership capability framework for the vocational/further education sector. Fourth, it examines the influence of culture and authority/power on the effectiveness of higher education leadership. Fifth, it explores the likely impact of gender on the effectiveness of educational leadership.

2.2 Leadership and Management

Of the many attempts to differentiate between leadership and management, Foster (1989) found that “leadership and management are not interchangeable concepts” (p.57). Kotter (1990), however, argued that they are “complementary and equally necessary to a work unit’s or organisation’s success” (Ramsden, 1998b, p.108).

Bollington (1999), on the other hand, observed the distinction between leadership and management from the perspective of operations, suggesting that “management is seen as concerned with getting things done, with operational matters and with issues of implementing policies and procedures” (p.155). Leadership, by contrast, is “often seen as concerned with doing the right things, with strategic matters and providing direction and a sense of purpose” (p.155). Bollington’s observation appears to corroborate the argument put forward by Bennis (1989), that “the manager does things right; the leader does the right thing” (Bollington, 1999, p.156).

West-Burnham, as cited by Bollington (1999), made “a similar attempt to differentiate between leadership and management”, suggesting “that ‘leading’ is concerned with ‘vision’, ‘strategic issues’, ‘transformation’, ‘ends’, ‘people’ and ‘doing the right thing’; whereas ‘managing’ is concerned with ‘implementation’, ‘operational issues’, ‘transaction’, ‘means’, ‘systems’ and ‘doing things right’” (p.156).

In terms of distinguishing a manager from a leader, Gunbayi (2005) appeared to share a similar view as researchers such as Bennis (1989), West-Burnham (1997) and Bollington (1999). As observed by Gunbayi (2005), “a manager is a person who directs the work of employees and who is responsible for results; that is, managers ensure that employees reach goals by controlling their behaviours: monitoring results and noting deviations from plans. A leader, by contrast, inspires employees with a vision and helps them cope with change” (p.685-686). Accordingly, Gunbayi (2005) found that “an effective manager brings a degree of order and consistency to tasks” (p.686), and supported the views of Conger (1991), Kotter (1990) and Sayles (1993) that “an effective leader motivates and inspires teams of employees by tapping into employees’ needs, values and emotions” (Gunbayi, 2005, p.686).

In a similar vein, Harris (2006) conducted a comprehensive study on the distinction between leaders and managers, and drew the following conclusions:

Leaders seek to significantly elevate the performance of the enterprise they are leading and are prepared to take risks to accomplish their goals ... They tend to focus on what should be done to achieve the future they envision. Managers, in contrast, tend to be more concerned with how things get done (p.82).



Apparently, goals and vision appear to be two key areas of interest in the study conducted by Harris (2006), who, in comparing and contrasting leaders and managers, noted that “Both leaders and managers are able to accomplish goals and achieve success, but managers rarely choose the significant undertakings necessary to reach the highest levels. Whereas a manager will methodically check that goals are being met, a leader will continue to raise the bar on growth and development” (p.82). Furthermore, Harris stressed that leaders excel over managers, given that “leaders possess vision and the ability to motivate others to achieve this vision” (p.82) and this constitutes one of the key differences between the two. She concluded that “a manager can ensure that things run smoothly, but only a leader can make an organisation elevate its aspirations” (p.82).

Another attempt to examine the distinction between leadership and management was made by Kotter (1990). His work conceptualises leadership and management in a simple yet comprehensive manner, the former being “a process of directing and mobilising people” and “doing the right thing” (Ramsden, 1998b, p.107), while the latter, being “doing things right” (Ramsden, 1998b, p.108). Kotter’s perception of “doing the right thing” and “doing things right” appear to echo the respective observations of Bennis (1989) and Bollington (1999, p.156), as indicated above.

Kotter (1990) further pointed out that leadership is about movement and change, “foresees and enables, enabling people to adapt to change rather than to resist it” (Ramsden, 1998b, p.108), establishing direction, aligning people and motivating them. In contrast to leadership, management in Kotter’s model is perceived as “a way that brings consistency and conformity to the delivery of products and services” (Ramsden, 1998b, p.108), imposing regulation, keeping companies on time and on budget, planning, organising, staffing and solving problems. Furthermore, in respect of organisational processes, the key differences between leadership and management have been identified by Kotter, as

illustrated in Table 2.1 below. His matrix not only presents the major differences in terms of functions between leadership and management, but also indicates the distinct impact that each function has upon implementation of the four processes deemed by Kotter as essential to the organisation.

Table 2.1: Comparing Leadership and Management in terms of Essential Organisational Processes

Essential Organisational Processes	Leadership	Management
Creating an agenda	Establishing Direction	Planning and Budgeting
Developing a human network	Aligning People and Groups	Organising and Staffing
Executing the agenda	Motivating and Inspiring 	Controlling and Problem-solving 
Impact/Outcome	Producing Change	Producing Predictability and Order

Source: Adapted from Kotter (1990, p.139)

Overall, it can be seen that this section provides the theoretical base for understanding the distinction in styles and competencies associated with leadership and management, and subsequently, the differences between the conventional ‘collegial’ and the new ‘managerial’ leadership approaches. The section thus serves to inform the first specific research question on the leadership styles and competencies which have contributed to effectiveness in higher education leadership.

2.3 Leadership Styles

Of the conceptualisations of leadership approaches in education, three approaches - transactional, transformational and distributed, emerged during the latter half of the twentieth century. The concept of transformational leadership is considered to be diametrically opposed to transactional leadership (Burns, 1978), while distributed leadership shares some common elements with transformational leadership. Pertaining to each of these leadership styles are certain associated competencies, which may have an important bearing on ascertaining the degree of effectiveness of each particular style of leadership.

2.3.1 Transactional Leadership

An important distinction between transactional and transformational leadership was suggested by Burns (1978) in his study of leadership and followership and reiterated by Neumann and Neumann (1999). According to Burns, transactional leadership refers to an approach where leaders offer some kind of reward or incentive in return for the achievement of goals. Similarly, Bass (1999) suggested that “‘transactional’ leaders were those who focused on needs and rewards as sources of motivation” (as cited in Smith & Hughey, 2006, p.158). This idea of the leader-follower relationship was taken up by Bass and Avolio (1994), who viewed transactional leadership as being “a contractual relationship between the leader and follower, where the leader rewards or disciplines the follower depending on the adequacy of the follower’s performance” (p.4).

Transactional leadership was equated with management by Collarbone and Billingham (as cited in Bollington, 1999). Peeke (2003) also saw transactional leadership as being “usually associated with managerial, functional or action-based leadership, which focuses on the skills of leadership and its impact upon others” (p.166).

In the context of higher education, Pounder (2001) was critical of transactional leadership. He cited Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) to reinforce the view that “a transactional leader’s manipulation of followers’ valued outcomes (e.g., wages, promotion) in exchange for followers’ compliance with leadership wishes” (p.283), and the ability to motivate subordinates to perform only as expected, are perceived to be an inferior and a less

effective style of leadership.

The above studies serve to provide the theoretical base for the first specific research question on leadership styles and competencies of effective educational leadership, and inform the present researcher of the different dimensions associated with the predominant styles of leadership. These enable the researcher to ascertain the leadership typology which the cohort of Hong Kong higher education leaders are perceived to represent.

On the basis of the above discussion, the competencies related to transactional leadership are arguably those typically categorised as managerial characteristics, skills and abilities, including aggressiveness, assertiveness, decisiveness, entrepreneurship, competitiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Transactional leaders have the propensity to set and fulfil short-term goals, focus on achieving only the present mission and have no inclination to bring about change and improvement (Collarbone & Billingham, 1998; Pounder, 2001).

2.3.2 Transformational Leadership

The concept of transformational leadership was first developed by Burns (1978), as “a moral process whereby both followers and leaders were raised to higher levels of motivation and virtue” (Ramsden, 1998b, p.110). Collarbone and Billingham (as cited in Bollington, 1999) suggested that transformational leadership is compatible with leadership rather than management in that it:

“... is pre-occupied with purposes, values, morals and ethics; ... is oriented towards long-term goals without compromising human values; ... focuses more on missions and strategies for achieving them; makes full use of human resources; designs and re-designs jobs to make them meaningful and challenging; realises human potential; and aligns internal structures and systems to reinforce over-arching values and goals” (p.170).

Similar to Kotter (1990) who perceived that management and leadership are complementary to each other, and are equally necessary for the success of an organisation or work unit (Ramsden, 1998b), Bass (1985) recognised that “transactional strategies such as rewards for good performance” (Ramsden, 1998b, p.111) were not directly opposed to transformational dimensions like “inspiration, emotional arousal, personal consideration

for followers, and intellectual stimulation” (p.111). Ramsden (1998b) also supported the notion that management and leadership are inextricably linked and are complementary to each other, as he remarked that “effective transformational leaders in educational contexts are good managers as well as inspirational guides” (p.114).

The concept that transformational leadership is a hallmark of strategic leadership style is derived from the scholarly work of Bass (1985). His assumption is based on the conviction that for the purpose of creating a high-performing organisation, leadership would need to move from a traditional, transactional dimension to a transformational construct. According to Neumann and Neumann (1999), transformational leaders emphasise three distinct strategic leadership skills: first, visioning, which is the leader’s ability to envision the organisation’s future; second, focusing, which signifies the leader’s ability to communicate the vision to organisational members; and third, implementing, which refers to the leader’s ability to “inspire and facilitate a higher level of motivation” (p.73), and focus on “the process of bringing about significant changes in the organisation” (p.73).

The importance of vision in leadership, particularly transformational leadership, was upheld by Bollington (1999) who, on the basis of the concept advanced by Burns (1978) and Southworth (1998), asserted that this leadership approach is about engaging followers in a shared vision for the organisation, such that followers devote their concerted efforts towards achieving the long-term goals and vision which are beneficial to the organisation’s future.

Another important dimension of transformational leadership is inspirational motivation. As Starratt has aptly pointed out, “transformational leadership is about building a unified common interest in which motivation is underpinned by ‘attempts to elevate members’ self-centred attitudes, values and beliefs to higher, altruistic attitudes, values and beliefs” (as cited in Gunter, 2001, p.69). This echoes the view of Neumann and Neumann (1999) who emphasised that focusing involves the communication and sharing of the vision to others within the organisation as a distinct strategic leadership skill. Similar assumptions underlie the study by Bass who suggested that “transformational leaders provide: inspirational (charismatic) leadership, and thus increase follower motivation” (as cited in Ryan, 2002, p.992). Peeke (2003) had a similar view of inspirational motivation and elevation of staff performance, observing that “transformational leadership concerns the

leader's ability to transform the function of an organisation in order that staff and learners can function at a higher level" (p.166).

In the higher education context, Pounder (2001) made a similar assumption when citing Bass (1985) to define transformational leadership in terms of four leadership dimensions: idealised influence or charisma, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Pounder, however, was of the view that the general definition of transformational leadership in terms of the four leadership characteristics may not be adequately comprehensive. He cited a number of leadership studies, particularly Kouzes and Posner (1995), who introduced two other dimensions, "challenging the process" and "encouraging the heart" (p.282), to refine the understanding of this leadership approach. "Challenging the process" is effected through 'risk taking, experimentation, encouraging others' ideas, and accepting the mistakes that may be made as opportunities to learn" (p.282), while "encouraging the heart" is implemented through "celebrating followers' achievements and genuine acts of caring directed at subordinates" (p.282).

Recent attempts to explain the concept of transformational leadership by expanding its dimensions to include development, empowerment and change have been made by researchers such as Southworth (1998), Bollington (1999), Ramsden (1998b), Neumann and Neumann (1999), Yukl (as cited in Ryan, 2002) and also Bass and Avolio (as cited in Coleman, 2003). Southworth (1998) argued that transformational leadership is concerned with the development needs and goals of a school and is complementary and supplementary to transactional leadership. In claiming that transformational leadership is related to "empowerment, team leadership, development, learning and vision", (as cited in Bollington, 1999, p.172), Southworth saw this leadership approach as "having the potential to change a school's culture and create the conditions for improvement" (p.172).

This emphasis on development as a dimension of transformational leadership is expressed in terms of individualised attention, on the premise that "the leader encourages the development of each person and acts as a coach or mentor" (Coleman, 2003, p.36). Of the three fundamental goals which transformational education leaders seek to pursue, two of them are development-related and include helping people to develop and maintain a collaborative and professional culture, and also fostering staff development. The third goal involves helping people to solve problems together more effectively (Leithwood, 1992).

Leadership was viewed by Southworth as “a collaborative and corporate act” (as cited in Bollington, 1999, p.178), whereby staff each plays a part in leading aspects of the school (Sergiovanni, as cited in Bollington, 1999, p.178). Transformational leadership is thus perceived to be related to developing interdependent leaders.

It can be seen that much has been said in the literature about the positive aspects of transformational leadership. On the contrary, Ryan (2002) and Peeke (2003) pointed out that this leadership approach is not without its weaknesses and problems. Ryan, in the first instance, criticised proponents of transformational leadership as conceptualising leadership in terms of individual talents of a “stand-alone, solo performer leader” (2002, p.992) to elevate the performances of every organisational member, but which does not allow for collective leadership practices, which can be very effective. Peeke, on the other hand, criticised this leadership approach from the perspective of teaching and learning: the approach, which places emphasis on continuous improvement, is presumed to ignore “the important need to concentrate on the quality of teaching and learning” (2003, p.166).

From a higher education perspective, Pounder’s (2001) work can be regarded as the most important study reported in the literature review. Pounder sought to examine the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership and university organisational effectiveness. He suggested possible modifications to the original conceptualisation of transformational leadership by including additional elements such as integrity and innovation as essential dimensions to reflect more recent thinking (Gardner & Cleavenger, 1989; Simons, 1999) on the nature of transformational leadership (Pounder, 2001), and supported the notion that university leadership should be self-reflective and capable of exercising the multitude of competencies associated with the transformational and transactional approaches to leadership. Pounder (2001) argued that contemporary university leadership would need to draw on “dimensions of both transformational and transactional leadership” (p.286). This is because the challenges confronting the higher education sector in contemporary times are extremely complex. Leaders of the HEIs therefore have found it necessary to “avail themselves of a wide range of leadership characteristics” (p.286) in order to deal with the complexities and challenges which have been confronting them over the past two decades or so.

From the above research evidence, a number of competencies associated with transformational leadership have been identified. These arguably include the ability to envision the organisation's future and to communicate and share the vision to the entire organisation (Neumann & Neumann, 1999); collaborative engagement of followers to fulfil the shared vision (Bollington, 1999); the capability to inspire and motivate staff members to elevate their performances to a higher level (Bass, 1985, Neumann & Neumann, 1999; Peeke, 2003); interpersonal and communication skills and focus on teamwork; emphasis on self-development, development and empowerment of others and also change (Coleman, 2003; Leithwood, 1992; Southworth, 1998).

2.3.3 Distributed Leadership

In the context of schools, distributed leadership “is shared amongst a number of colleagues or peers, rather than leadership that is focused on one organisational role or at one level, or which is monopolised by only one individual” (Gronn, 2002, p.655). Distributed leadership consists of three patterns: spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations and institutionalised practices. Overall, this perspective reflects the concepts of division of labour, shared roles, leaders as change agents, and the transfer from individual to collective (Gronn, 2002). In short, Gronn's interpretation of distributed leadership revolves around the notions of collaborative engagement, interpersonal synergies resulting from the development of close working relations among colleagues, and the likelihood for any organisational member to influence, lead or persuade his or her peers.

The idea of contemporary leadership as a distributed concept was put forward by Dimmock (2003), who claimed that leadership, which used to be perceived in terms of individual and heroic performance, is currently viewed as “a permeable process that is widely distributed throughout the school ... an empowering process enabling others in the school to exercise leadership” (p.7). From a school perspective, Dimmock (2003) argued that a high-performing organisation can only be achieved under distributed leadership, through the latter's capability to motivate, inspire and apply pressure successfully throughout the entire organisation.

From a further education perspective, Peeke (2003) observed the link between distributed leadership and teaching and learning, arguing that those with designated leadership roles

may not have as strong an impact on teaching, learning and curriculum development as others within the institution, most likely curriculum and course team leaders and even teachers. On this basis, leadership is thus distributed and shared, such that “each staff member can act as change agent” and that “colleagues throughout the college have considerable influence on how things work out in practice” (p.172).

An earlier attempt was made by Ramsden (1998b) to examine the distributed leadership approach in the context of higher education, in particular, the university arena. Ramsden (1998b) observed that the requirement for universities to respond and adapt to external changes and challenges that have been confronting them over the past decades, including, among others, global competition, increasing demands from stakeholders and reduction in available resources, has called for effective leadership at multiple levels. This view was supported by Pounder (2001) who claimed that university leadership is dispersed and distributed across multiple levels of the institutions.

Furthermore, a review of the above work has suggested a number of related competencies or skills that may be expected of leaders adopting this particular leadership style. These include the collaborative engagement of followers, interpersonal skills, teamwork, empowerment, motivation, and the ability to influence others (Dimmock, 2003; Gronn, 2002).

2.4 Competencies Enabling Effective Educational Leadership

A review of the existing literature on effective educational leadership indicates that a diverse range of competencies have been identified. Given that relevant scholarly work on competencies associated with effective higher education leadership is relatively scarce, the researcher has selected the management and leadership capability framework for the vocational education and training (VET) sector in Australia developed by Callan (2001) as the basis for examining the core competencies for effective educational leadership in Hong Kong at a time of unprecedented and rapid changes.

To arrive at each capability, Callan drew on an extensive literature review of leadership and management on the characteristics, skills, qualities, capabilities and behaviours of

senior managers and leaders. He also drew on the findings of interviews and focus group meetings with a total of 30 senior and other VET managers. What Callan perceived as important competencies are shared by other researchers such as Ramsden (1998a, 1998b), Bollington (1999), Briggs (2001), Peeke (2003), Gamage and Pang (2003), Yelder and Codling (2004), Smith and Hughey (2006), and others. Callan's management and leadership capability framework identifies nine core capabilities and 73 associated elements. The capabilities include:

- corporate vision and direction
- strategic focus
- achievement of outcomes
- development and management of resources
- change leadership
- interpersonal relationships
- personal development and mastery
- business and entrepreneurial skills
- development and empowerment of people

In conducting the literature review on the effectiveness of educational leadership, the researcher noted that the core capabilities are actually applicable to all sectors of education. Arguably, the nine core capabilities are essential for the application of primarily transformational leadership and, to a certain extent, distributed and transactional leadership.

2.4.1 Corporate Vision and Direction

Callan (2001) focused only on corporate vision and made no mention at all of individual/personal vision. In contrast, Bennis and Nanus, as cited in Bollington (1999), defined vision as “a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organisation” (p.89). Cox (2002) also observed that leaders who wish to turn their vision into a reality will be required to successfully attain many goals, which, in turn, ought to be set in alignment with the overall vision of the organisation.

The importance of selecting and communicating the right vision for the organisation, developing a shared vision, and inspiring collective commitment to achieving the shared

vision in educational leadership was advanced by Callan (2001) as essential elements associated with corporate vision and direction. These notions have been acknowledged in previous research as crucially important in effective educational leadership. Cox (2002) suggested that a vision must be developed if leaders want their organisations to excel over others, to attain the top-most position. Nanus (1992) considered that “selecting and articulating the right vision... is the toughest task and the truest test of great leadership” (p.16). He suggested that “the right vision attracts commitment and energises people” (p.16) and “creates meaning in workers’ lives” (p.17).

Similar findings were reported by Murgatroyd and Morgan (as cited in Bollington, 1999, p.175), who suggested that “vision is the primary vehicle for creating alignment of energies within an organisation” to support the view that “to have this impact, a vision needs to be compelling, to be communicated and to be lived” (p.175). The above view was further supported by Kouzes and Posner, as cited in Smith and Hughey (2006), claiming that one of the fundamental practices that features effective leadership is the proficiency of leaders to “inspire a shared vision” (p.159), thus confirming the importance of engendering “a collective commitment to the future of the organisation” (p.159).

While researchers such as Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach showed that one of the dimensions in setting direction by transformational leaders is “building a shared vision” (as cited in Gunter, 2001, p.70), shared vision has been found to be closely associated with transformation and change, to the extent that “when a personal vision is shared by others, it can become a catalyst for transformation” (Hallinger & Heck, 2002, p.10). The correlation between vision on the one hand, and change, organisational learning and improvement on the other, was further explored by Hallinger and Heck (2002) in their review of the role of vision, mission and goals in school leadership and improvement. In this context, vision is taken to be of crucial importance in school leadership because it can assist a leader to become a “more effective problem-solver” (p.12), and “... can identify the critical paths for change and organisational learning” (p.12).

According to Callan (2001), other important elements relating to corporate vision and direction include “building a successful corporate team and establishing clear expectations about the level of performance required of team members to achieve the vision” (p.47). Similar findings were reported in an earlier research by Nanus (1992), who concluded that

“with a shared vision, individuals can see themselves... as part of a first-rate team growing in its ability to provide a valuable human product or service” (p.17).

Another important element associated with corporate vision and direction as identified by Callan (2001) is the development of an effective strategy for achieving the vision. Apparently, Callan (2001) did not explain this element. Lumby (2002), on the other hand, proposed that such a strategy can be developed through strategic management. This entails choosing a direction, achieving commitment from staff and other stakeholders, as well as “the process of selecting the means to move in the desired direction, perhaps involving staff, and then translating the choices into specific goals and actions to achieve them” (p.90).

Another dimension of vision perceived by a number of researchers to be of importance in educational leadership relates to its role in bridging the present and the future. Nanus (1992) was of the view that the right vision “provides the all-important link between what is now taking place and what the organisation aspires to build in the future” (p.18). On this subject, Hallinger and Heck (2002) suggested that visionary leaders must be able to serve as the interface between the present and the future, but studied vision in the context of organisational learning whereby school leaders must have the foresight and vision to “discern emerging trends in the environment and link these future possibilities with past traditions within their organisations” (p.11), and also encourage organisational learning especially during turbulent times of rapid change.

Moreover, the personal vision serves as a guiding vision, which, when communicated to others within the organisation, will evolve into a shared vision of what the organisation may become in the future, and will therefore involve collective commitment to move towards attaining the common organisational goal through learning, change, development and improvement (Bollington, 1999). A quotation from Senge (1990) illustrates and summarises the above:

In a learning organisation, leaders may start by pursuing their own vision, but as they listen carefully to others’ visions, they begin to see that their own personal vision is part of something larger. This does not diminish any leader’s sense of responsibility for the vision – if anything it deepens it (p.352).

2.4.2 Strategic Focus

In relation to strategic focus, Callan (2001) considered it vital for managers and leaders not only to “envisage future trends and their impact on the organisation” (p.26), but also to “undertake effective strategic analysis and reviews; evaluate information quickly, critically and strategically; assess a range of solutions rather than the easiest option; advocate strategic initiatives that keep the organisation ahead of its competitors; and make a decision about the strategy and move matters forward without delay” (p.26).

In this respect, Callan (2001) aligned strategic leadership with transformational leadership, and indicated that the main focus of transforming leaders, who guide and lead an organisation through a strategic planning process, is on “the promotion of strategic thinking at a day-to-day level throughout the organisation” (p.24) instead of on the strategic planning exercise itself. According to Callan, transformational leaders who seek to transform the organisation through systematic searches for change observe the environment to detect and identify issues and trends that may affect the organisation.

The importance of strategic thinking was highlighted by Garratt, who described it as:

the process by which an organisation’s direction-givers can rise above the daily managerial processes and crises to gain different perspectives of the internal and external dynamics causing change in their environment and thereby giving more effective direction to their organisation. Such perspectives should be both future-oriented and historically understood. Strategic thinkers must have the skills of looking both forwards and backwards while knowing where their organisation is now... (as cited in Davies, 2003, p.296).

This interpretation of strategic thinking, with particular reference to the contemplation of future scenarios, was supported by Callan (2001) and was reflected in the element of “envisaging future trends and their impact on the organisation”. This emphasis on the “future” is in line with the notion of “strategy” as proposed by Earley (1998) as “responding to external trends and being concerned with the long-term future of an organisation with planning for a successful future” (p.148).

In broad terms, Middlewood's research into the work of Caldwell and Spinks (1992) confirmed his view of the need for strategic learners to scan and analyse the internal and external environment in which the organisation operates, to keep abreast of "trends and issues, threats and opportunities and discerning the mega trends" (as cited in Middlewood, 1998, p.11). Unlike Callan's (2001) capability framework, in which no mention was made of the objective of undergoing strategic analysis, Middlewood (1998) clearly indicated that the basis for making strategic decisions regarding possible ways ahead is precisely strategic analysis of the organisation's current and future position. According to Middlewood, strategic analysis furnishes the essential and requisite data to inform strategic decision-making.

Johnson and Scholes (1993) were of the view that strategic choice embraces identifying and evaluating the strategic options, and selecting the appropriate strategy to follow. These two dimensions are implicitly reflected in Callan's (2001) capability framework in connection with the following elements: strategic evaluation of available information and assessment of a range of possible solutions, in line with the former dimension, while making a decision about the appropriate strategy, in line with the latter.

2.4.3 Achievement of Outcomes

Callan (2001) attempted to examine this capability from the perspective of the qualities required of successful entrepreneurs, and concluded that a "high need for achievement" (p.29) can be regarded as one of the many qualities required of successful leaders of change. The achievement of outcomes was considered to be one dimension of business and entrepreneurial skills. In the first instance, he saw the imperative need for managers and leaders in general to motivate, direct and lead their staff to achieve extraordinary outcomes. Callan proposed that the ability to achieve invaluable results and bringing ideas and projects to fruition is at the heart of effective entrepreneurship, and cited Kurato and Hodgetts (2001) and Allen (1999) as clear evidence to support his views.

One important element which Callan (2001) included was "inspiring others to achieve the highest levels of quality" (p.30). This idea supports Ramsden (1998a) who suggested that to make a university effective in times of change, what is required is "its vision and its genius for inspiring students and staff to achieve things which they never thought they

were capable of doing” (p.369).

In Callan’s (2001) framework, the achievement of outcomes incorporated two other associated elements: first, “achieving results that lead to long-term value for stakeholders, creating a culture of achievement by ensuring that new initiatives actually produce expected outcomes”; and second “applying a commercial orientation in the organisation by focusing on efficient and effective use of resources” (Callan, 2001, p.30). The emphasis has shifted to the impact of change on the higher education sector, as witnessed by “enhanced quality and greater responsiveness in the educational experiences, higher standards in the outcomes which are produced and greater efficiency in the ways in which resources are used” (Simkins, 1998, p.64).

Callan (2001) suggested that achievement of outcomes involves setting and monitoring clear performance standards, and also developing and implementing ongoing evaluation processes “to monitor the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of outcomes” (p.30). Callan also concluded that competent managers and leaders need to hold people accountable for the outcomes. This supports the view of Packwood (1977), who explained the significance of the hierarchical model in terms of its explicit location of accountability for work “through a series of manager-subordinate relationships” (as cited in Bush, 1995, p.39). It follows that the leader/manager in the hierarchy is accountable to external agencies not only for his or her performance, but also for the work of subordinates and the activities of the organisation. Hence, accountability for the performance of work passes from the subordinate to the superior, and contrasts with authority which dictates the prescription of work in a reverse direction, that is, from the superior to the subordinate.

2.4.4 Development and Management of Resources

In this capability, the strategic issue of allocating and managing resources to achieve agreed outcomes is treated as an associated element. This idea was supported by Dimmock (2003), who suggested that leaders’ recognition of the need to agree on goals coupled with appropriate allocation of resources to support the achievement of goals and concerted efforts of the entire school working consistently and collaboratively towards the same goals, should enable schools to excel in their performance. Similar findings were advanced by Levacic (1995) who argued that the strategic allocation and management of resources

would lead to the most beneficial outcomes. Lumby (2001) examined the management of resources in the UK further education sector, and viewed the “effective use of resources” in terms of cost reduction and cost efficiency (p.41). This has accordingly led to the emergence of an international trend to focus on the development of a more cost-efficient means of delivering the curriculum to larger numbers of students from a wider range of backgrounds (Gray & Warrender, 1993; King, as cited in Lumby, 2001).

Simkins (1998) focused on the strategic management of resources, which, when viewed from the “rational” perspective, strongly emphasised “concepts such as ‘efficiency’, ‘effectiveness’ and ‘value for money’” (p.66). Hence Simkins went one step further than Callan (2001) in forging a sequential link between the allocation and employment of resources, efficiency, achievement of outcomes and value for money.

In addition, Callan (2001) perceived the need to “use new technology well to increase organisational performance, implement continuous improvement driven by information available from the institution’s performance management processes and systems” and “overcome ‘road blocks’ that reduce the effective use of resources” (p.26). The above views on cost-efficiency are analogous to the definition of efficiency provided by the Audit Commission as “the achievement of given outcomes at least cost” (as cited in Simkins, 1998, p.66).

Simkins (1998), however, did not elaborate extensively on innovation and technology in his study. Instead, he cited Thomas and Martin (1996) to support the view that strategic leaders would need to have “the ability to think creatively and innovatively about the ways in which resources may be deployed in pursuit of an organisation’s objectives” (p.66). Callan also highlighted the importance of the management of human resources, which, as Gamage and Pang (2003) pointed out, are “the most expensive and crucial resources to sustain the economic viability and effectiveness of an organisation” (p.273-274).

2.4.5 Change Leadership

Callan (2001) was of the view that change leadership involves the capability to manage and lead change. In the first instance, he considered it important for leaders and managers to demonstrate “a willingness to seek others’ views about new initiatives or changes for the

organisation” and to communicate “the need for change to staff using a wide range of communication channels and opportunities” (p.20). This view was informed by Kotter’s (1996) framework for the purpose of understanding the capabilities required to transform an organisation. Kotter’s suggestions that managers and leaders of change would need to be capable of establishing a sense of urgency through identifying and considering crises or major opportunities, and also communicating the new vision and strategies through every possible channel, appeared to propose capabilities similar to those observed by Callan, but with a different focus.

Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) also explored the significance of managing change in leadership, and considered change in conjunction with foresight as one of the core competencies of effective leaders. According to Day et al., “Good leaders look ahead, anticipate change and prepare people for it, so that it doesn’t surprise or disempower them” (p.53). On the other hand, Callan (2001) did not spell out precisely the preparation of people for change, but implied this idea in the two associated elements which entail seeking others’ views about changes for the organisation and communicating the need for change to staff.

Cox (2002) saw change leadership as a sequence of events, and concluded that six fundamental phases are required to achieve successful change management. Relevant to the context of change leadership, particularly the two elements indicated above as suggested by Callan (2001) are the participation phase and communication phase. While the former phase involves encouraging “input from all employees on planning and implementation” (p.220), the latter phase focuses on “the final presentation on how the change is about to be implemented” (p.220). Cox thus echoed the view of Callan in seeking others’ views regarding changes and communicating the need for change to staff. In addition, Cox extended his arguments from the fundamental phases to the basic steps required to successfully launch a new idea or change, and aligned the two aforesaid elements, solicitation of others’ views and communication of the need for change, as proposed by Callan respectively to the second and third basic steps, “Explain the change and ask for feedback” (p.221) and “explain all the reasons for change” (p.221).

Callan (2001) further cited Parry (1996) and Sarros and Butchatsky (as cited in Callan, 2001) to suggest that change leaders and managers work with people at all steps of

implementation of new ideas and programmes. One important feature that characterises Callan's work is the constant contacts that leaders and managers of change maintain with people during which "they listen well and with empathy" (p.18).

Meanwhile, Callan (2001) advocated that the effectiveness of change leadership hinges on the capability of change leaders and managers to "gain the commitment of staff to the adoption of new practices in the delivery of education and training" (p. 20). This view was supported by Glatter and Kydd (2003), who cited Fullan (2001) to iterate that change takes time, hence the need for leaders and managers to "... secure internal commitment to solve complex problems" (p. 233).

Two other elements that Callan (2001) incorporated into the capability of change leadership are "facilitating individuals to work together to identify and achieve common goals" (p.21) and "galvanising others to act on required changes" (p.20). With regard to the former element, Callan's view was echoed by Cox (2002), who suggested that leaders and managers should be capable of demonstrating how the new idea for change will help the organisation meet its goals.

Callan (2001) suggested that subsequent to the critical change in the nature of education, from a non-business to a business orientation, individual staff members of the educational organisations are thus "expected to perform better in all aspects of academic work, and to complete more work with fewer resources" (p.19). In addition, he asserted that another change capability required of successful managers and leaders is the ability to use "a range of strategies to change the organisation's culture and value systems" (p.20). Callan's claim can be said to corroborate the view of Kotter (1996), who proposed that managers and leaders of change need to have the capability to eradicate all obstacles to change, that is, to change systems, structures and policies that are incompatible with and may seriously undermine or override the corporate vision and to "institutionalise new approaches or new cultural values" (as cited in Callan, 2001, p.18).

In all, Callan (2001) drew on considerable previous research and concluded that change leadership requires a wide range of capabilities. These embrace the ability to motivate, energise and empower people; to establish a clear direction; to inspire a shared vision; and to lead and manage change. Included also are communication, social and interpersonal

skills, together with self-awareness and motivational skills to associate change with gratifying the sense of achievement through instilling in others “a sense of belonging, recognition, self-esteem and the ability to be in control of one’s life” (p.21).

2.4.6 Interpersonal Relationships

Callan (2001) found that strong interpersonal skills, excellent communication skills and a focus on team-building and teamwork are core capabilities required of transformational leaders and are essential to the success of their leadership. Callan also noted the leadership model developed by Kouzes and Posner, who argued that leaders exhibiting interpersonal behaviours “when they inspire, enable and encourage” (as cited in Callan, 2001, p.27) are deemed to make the best contribution to their organisation and their followers.

Furthermore, Callan (2001) concluded that researchers and industry leaders alike perceive the need for future leaders to be highly competent in people, social and team-building skills. People and social skills are found to characterise leaders high in emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998), who were perceived to be “socially skilled; proficient in managing relationships and building networks” (as cited in Callan, 2001, p.28) and, more importantly, are capable of building rapport.

Callan (2001) incorporated these interpersonal skills into one category to become “interpersonal relationships”. Leaders and managers who apply this capability tend to consult and facilitate the sharing of opinions in deciding on appropriate actions, negotiate persuasively as well as liaise and communicate effectively. While appreciating the value of diverse views and opinions, leaders and managers are keen to encourage debate which may ultimately result in the adoption of others’ opinions instead of their own. Lastly, two other associated elements include adequate trust in staff to allow them to work and act independently, and sensitivity to divergences in the personalities and motivations of staff.

Callan’s perspective can be said to advance the views of Cherniss (1998), who promulgated the need for educational leaders to be emotionally intelligent and develop the social competencies required to achieve institutional goals, and identified people skills and also cultivating positive relationships as a critical competency for effective leadership. To Cherniss, the abilities of effective educational leaders to skilfully build consensus and rely

on it more than formal authority, to co-ordinate team efforts, to appreciate multiple perspectives and to avoid meaningless and destructive conflicts, should enable effective leaders to cultivate positive relationships required for attaining complex goals.

The emphasis in Callan's (2001) capability framework on communication skills as an associated element of interpersonal relationships was reflected in the allusion to the ability of managers and leaders to negotiate persuasively and also liaise and communicate effectively. This appears to support what Cherniss (1998) suggested, that educational leaders need to be "negotiators and networkers" (p.26), and "tend to be unusually persuasive" (p.27).

Generally speaking, explaining interpersonal/social skills as an independent competency allows room for a more thorough analysis. Day et al. (2001), for instance, reported that in the school context, "the most important aspect of leadership for all the principals was working successfully with people" (p.45). Accordingly, one of the attributes expected of effective leaders, in this case, school principals, is the capability to build rapport with the school community, including teachers, staff, students, parents and governors (Cassavant & Cherkowski, 2001), and to sustain relationships (Riley & MacBeath, 1998).

In a subsequent attempt to investigate the importance of interpersonal skills as a competency of effective leadership, Sackney and Mitchell (2002) suggested that leadership capacity should be developed and built on three main levels, the personal, the interpersonal and the organisational. However, given that the inherent nature of leadership is "concerned with the working with and through other people", there is the implied need "to build interpersonal capacity for leadership", which entails reciprocal influence "through expertise, reason, reputation, personality and interpersonal skills" (p.907).

According to Goleman (1998), social skill, which concerns "a person's ability to manage relationships with others" (p.101), is one of the five components of emotional intelligence that characterises effective leadership. Social skill is thus taken as being equivalent to interpersonal skills, and is defined by Goleman (1998) as "friendliness with a purpose: moving people in the direction you desire" (p.101). Goleman concluded from his research that social skill makes it possible for a leader "to get work done through other people" (p.102), and is considered as a key leadership capability.

Callan's (2001) framework included team-building as an element associated with interpersonal relationships, and asserted that high levels of trust among members are manifested in highly-developed teams who "trust people enough to "let go" (p.28). Similarly, the findings of Avolio (1996) and Parry (1996) testify to the importance of teamwork and team development for institutional success, while at the same time revealing the willingness of team members to sacrifice short-term gains for long-term potential benefits as a result of the high levels of trust nurtured among members of highly-developed teams. In this scenario, team members share the collective vision and identify themselves as integral to the team. According to Callan (1993b), "the goal is to orchestrate each individual's potential in the organisation" (p.27), such that the common interests of the team take precedence over individual interests. Callan further iterated the need for leaders to be team-focused, and build more cohesive teams with high-performing followers as is the case with transformational leaders (Carless, Mann & Wearing, 1996; Jackson, 2000). Likewise, Day et al. (2001) also found that in the ideal scenario, "people were: trusted to work as autonomous, accountable professionals; there was a strong emphasis upon teamwork' ..." (p.54).

Cox (2002) spelt out the importance of team-building based on the conviction that "building the best team possible is the very foundation of effective leadership" (p.48). Cox suggested that team-building could help to identify and develop the strengths in individual staff members of the organisation, and suggested that "establishing effective communication, focusing the organisation, and laying the foundation for motivation" (p.48) are the strategies required for effective team-building. Cox was of the view that assembling a quality team of well-functioning staff can help to reduce pressure which leaders often experience from both above and below.

2.4.7 Personal Development and Mastery

Callan (2001) linked personal development with personal mastery, which he described as "being aware, as managers and leaders, of one's own weaknesses as well as strengths" (p.24), and which necessitates a continuous review on the part of managers and leaders of their skills and abilities. In his framework, a number of competencies, particularly self-development, emotional intelligence, passion to lead, selflessness and integrity, are grouped and presented within the capability "personal development and mastery".

The studies reviewed by Callan, such as Leithwood, Chapman, Corson, Hallinger and Hart (1996), highlighted the need for managers and leaders in the VET sector to commit to pursuing self-development and also to know, understand and regularly review their own strengths and weaknesses. Callan also argued for the importance of self-development and continuous learning, which enable managers and leaders to improve in their weak areas and compensate for their deficiencies.

According to Callan (2001), given the general understanding that people with high levels of personal mastery “are acutely aware of their ignorance, their incompetence and their growth areas” (p.24), and that self-awareness is regarded as an integral component of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998), the perceived link between the two is evident.

Similar findings on the link between personal development and emotional intelligence have emerged from the study by Cherniss (1998), who saw the need to strengthen and develop the crucial competencies of effective leadership associated with emotional intelligence, namely, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Goleman, 1998), through well-designed training and development activities. Cherniss concluded that the enhanced competencies can in turn lead to improved performance.

While Callan (2001) highlighted the identification, understanding and personal mastery of weaknesses as well as areas requiring improvement as essential elements associated with personal development and mastery, West-Burnham (1997) reported similar findings but focused on the notion of “the leader as learner” (p.123), who “monitors/reviews her/his performance, is critically reflective of her/his practice” (p.123) and can improve her/his capability through habitual learning. The significance of personal development was reinforced by the study of Peeke (2003) on leadership in further education. Peeke appeared to share Callan’s (2001) findings in observing that “a major capability required of today’s leaders is a willingness to engage in personal development and acquire a sense of personal mastery of one’s own weaknesses and strengths, as well as those of others” (p.176).

Another element that Callan (2001) included within personal development and mastery is the demonstration of self-confidence as a leader. Central to the concept of emotional intelligence as propounded by Goleman (1998) are five core elements, the first being self-awareness, which both Callan and Goleman associated with self-confidence. Callan

upheld Goleman's claim that people with high levels of emotional intelligence, particularly those who are self-aware, reveal high levels of self-confidence. Goleman claimed that self-confident people play according to their strengths. They will not ask for any challenges which they recognise to be beyond their ability to cope with, and are "less likely to set themselves up for failing" (p.85).

Callan (2001) also studied the role of emotional intelligence in effective educational leadership, and concurred with writers on educational leadership such as Watson (2000) regarding the value of Goleman's concept of emotional intelligence in defining the skills, abilities, behaviours and actions required of educational leaders. He supported Goleman's views on the importance of self-awareness, self-regulation and empathy, defining self-awareness as "the ability to recognise and understand one's own moods, emotions and drives" (p.21) recognisable by self-confidence, while describing self-regulation as "the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods" (p.21), manifested through trustworthiness and integrity. Callan further advanced this latter idea when he incorporated the ability to demonstrate personal integrity and apply ethical practices as an associated element of the capability profile. Callan also acknowledged the importance of Goleman's notion of empathy, referring it as "an ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people, and show skills in treating people according to their emotional reactions" (Callan, 2001, p.21).

A more recent attempt to spell out the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership was undertaken by Davis and Harden (2002), who claimed that "it is the emotional intelligence that creates the difference between the average practitioner and the star performer or leader" (p.582). However, Davis and Harden appeared to over-emphasise the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership. Callan (2001), on the contrary, stressed only the need for managers and leaders to show "appropriate emotional responses in a variety of situations" (p.24).

2.4.8 Business and Entrepreneurial Skills

To Callan (2001), entrepreneurship denotes business skills, which include "an ability to recognise business opportunities, and a desire to manage appropriate risk-taking activities to bring such opportunities to their full potential" (p.29). Callan further cited Kurato and

Hodgetts (2001) and Allen (1999) to support the view that at the core of effective entrepreneurship is “the ability to mobilise and manage people and financial resources, to bring ideas and projects to fruition” (p.29). In like manner, Ramsden (1998a) argued that an effective university hinges on “its capacity to manage both resources and people firmly, fairly and equitably” (p.368).

Furthermore, Callan (2001) attempted to draw a link between entrepreneurship and change leadership when observing that both successful leaders of change and successful entrepreneurs share more or less the same qualities and capabilities, which include “vision driven, a tolerance for ambiguity, high need for achievement, ability to deal with success” (p.29).

In general terms, the associated elements which Callan included such as the ability to use marketing skills to identify product mixes for potential customers, to encourage a sharing of ideas about the sources of new business, to view business processes from the customer’s perspectives, etc. (Callan, 2001), represent the competencies which managers of successful businesses are required to possess. Armed with such competencies, they should be able to execute their duties “in planning, marketing, people management and in understanding the commercial and financial side of doing business” (p.30). This capability of business and entrepreneurial skills can be said to advance the claim made by Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) when referring to the “new management which is oriented towards a discourse of cost, income, efficiency, financial planning, image presentation and enterprise and modelled on the practices of business” (as cited in Ribbins, 1997, p.194).

Besides, Callan’s (2001) reference to the use of marketing skills to identify different product mixes for potential customers appears to corroborate what Ramsden (1998a) proposed for “the university of the future”, if it were to gain prosperity. According to Ramsden, prosperity for the future university will depend on a number of factors which include “identifying more focussed, particular features which they can exploit to their marketing advantage” (p.367).

Nevertheless, Callan (2001) merely indicated the skill of operating as an educational entrepreneur, but did not explain and clarify the means to appropriately apply such a skill. In contrast, Ramsden (1998a) and Coaldrake (2000) suggested the strategic measures and

principles that universities should consider adopting for the purpose of achieving effectiveness in managing the “enterprise” university of the present and the future. Both seem to support the implementation of the managerial approach and processes to manage change and transform the mode of working.

Ramsden (1998a) concluded from his study that prosperity for universities will be contingent upon a number of factors, in addition to the one indicated above regarding the exploitation of more focused features to their marketing advantage. These include “changing their way of doing business; structures of authority that fuse managerial and academic values; new sources of funding; an integrated administrative core to connect component units to the university’s objectives; and a more outward-looking vision from the academic heartlands of the school or department” (Clark, as cited in Ramsden, 1998a, p.367). On the other hand, Coaldrake (2000) advocated the adoption of financial and management principles, which stress “a role for the market and attention to outputs”, and “accountability, efficiency, performance” (p.9).

2.4.9 Development and Empowerment of People

Development and empowerment of people is included as a core capability in Callan’s (2001) framework. However, an examination of the associated elements reveals that apparently, almost all elements revolve around the development of staff, and practically none of them relates to the empowerment of people as is understood in the traditional sense. To understand Callan’s underlying rationale in advancing the associated elements, it is worthwhile reviewing the commonly accepted definition of empowerment and the findings of other researchers.

An official definition of empowerment is given in *The Oxford Dictionary*, as “giving authority or power to others” (as cited in Gamage & Pang, 2003, p.254). Hooper and Potter (2000) shared a similar view of empowerment, which, according to them, “involves a sharing of power” (p.66). On the basis of this notion, Gamage and Pang (2003) concluded that the extent of effectiveness to which this power is used to produce desirable results “determines the efficacy of those empowered” (p.254). The above definition suggests that empowerment presumes a lack of power to act on the part of the staff member, who therefore would need to be given the authority to act.

In Callan's (2001) capability framework, the empowerment and development of people as a core capability and the associated elements can be examined in terms of performance, encouragement and trust, as well as development. In connection with performance, Callan proposed that managers and leaders should make an effort to "deal effectively with poor performers by delivering appropriate forms of feedback; and manage external expectations about the performance of staff" (p.28). Under such circumstances, the monitoring, review and assessment of staff performance is primarily developmental and formative, with a view to bringing about improvement in their performance. A review of the literature on empowerment indicates that very few writers saw a similar link between empowerment and performance, except Gamage and Pang (2003), who found that within an empowering organisation or institution, it can be assumed that teachers, once empowered, "will have the authority and autonomy, with concomitant responsibility, for competent performance" (p.256).

Gamage and Pang (2003) further iterated the association between empowerment and performance, by suggesting that motivating staff to improve their practice and performance is the source of authority for particularly transforming leaders in empowering organisations. Viewed in terms of encouragement and trust, empowerment, according to Callan (2001), involves "seeking opportunities to give advice, coaching or mentoring; promoting trust relationships that make staff feel valued; making a point of acknowledging good performance; and actively seeking out, encouraging and developing talent" (p.28).

In so far as trust is concerned, Goldring and Greenfield held a similar view and suggested that "successful leaders develop trusting and participatory relationships which inherently involve and value everyone in the organisation" (as cited in Smith & Hughey, 2006, p.159). Hooper and Potter (2000) made a similar observation and argued that empowerment, featuring openness and accountability, "provides for effective leadership at all levels and it is based on trust" (p.66).

One category of associated elements in Callan's (2001) capability framework focuses exclusively on staff development, and addresses the need to "ask staff what they need in order to do their work better, create a learning environment for staff as well as identify and implement programmes and activities which meet staff developmental needs" (p.28). Callan (2001) apparently supported the idea that leaders should be committed to and have

the drive for developing the potential of others with a view to “developing leaders at all levels of the organisation” (p.27). Callan was thus convinced that leaders’ commitment to staff development enables staff at different hierarchical levels of the organisation to become leaders themselves, and subsequently succeed in empowering staff members to work things out for themselves and play the leading role.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) supported the same viewpoint when suggesting that leaders should “enable others to act ... empowering followers in order to nurture true collaborations” (as cited in Smith & Hughey, 2006, p.159). Likewise, the empowerment in professional growth espoused by Gamage and Pang (2003) provides teachers with adequate opportunities to pursue continuous learning. In confirming the description of empowerment by Bennis as “the collective effect of leadership” (as cited in Gamage & Pang, 2003, p.254), Callan sought to magnify the positive effect of empowerment by virtue of leadership, which “moves people towards the mission and energises them to act individually, in the pursuit of organisational goals” (Bennis, as cited in Gamage & Pang, 2003, p.254).

2.4.10 Summary

On the whole, the management and leadership capability framework developed by Callan (2001), given its inclusion of a broad range of competencies and elements, is wide-encompassing in coverage and rich in content. In reviewing Callan’s framework, the line of thought of the present researcher has been enlightened by the whole range of capabilities and skills required of managers and leaders, and these have, in turn, informed the first specific research question on leadership styles and competencies required for effective educational leadership. The researcher has never anticipated the kind of grouping, association and linkages as suggested by Callan for the nine core capabilities comprising the framework, such as the association of interpersonal skills with teamwork and communication, personal development and mastery with self-confidence and emotional intelligence. Callan’s capability framework is thus found to be of great value, not only in refining and informing the key research question of this study, but also the study itself.

Nevertheless, Callan’s (2001) framework is not without its shortcomings. Overall, Callan arguably attempted to include too diverse a range and too many elements into each

capability. Some elements appear to be stand-alone and disconnected, with no coherence and logical link among them. These include “works with ambiguity and uncertainty” (p.20) as incorporated under the capability of ‘change leadership’, has “the technical knowledge needed to succeed in tomorrow’s world” (p.24) as in ‘personal development and mastery’, “demonstrates a willingness to look for original solutions which are inside the square” (p.26) as in ‘focuses strategically’. This is particularly the case with the inclusion of a number of abilities and skills into one capability, which renders it difficult to draw the link between the respective core capabilities and their associated elements. Moreover, some skills and abilities such as personal relationship, teamwork, communication skills, have been repeatedly included in the various capabilities.

Lastly, the elements were not duly explained and were expressed in a concise yet compressed and ambiguous manner, thereby inviting differing interpretations. As there was no indication of the corresponding leadership contexts and circumstances in which each of the nine core capabilities would be important, the researcher found it necessary to construe meaning into the associated component elements.

2.5 Culture and Leadership

Effective educational leadership is perceived to be shaped by a number of determinant factors, the most significant being culture which tends to affect leadership in practice (Dimmock & Walker, 2002b; Reeves, Moss & Forest, 1998). This present study attempts to examine the relationship between culture and leadership, with a view to ascertaining the impact of culture on the effectiveness of leadership in higher education and the role of higher education leaders in influencing or changing the institutional culture..

2.5.1 Definition of Culture

Lumby (2003) has drawn on published evidence to suggest that there is a multitude of definitions of culture. These range from the classic definition provided by Deal and Kennedy as “the way we do things around here” (as cited in Lumby, 2003, p.160) to the more complex attempt made by Schein (1997), who defined culture as “the accumulated

shared learning of a given group, covering behavioural, emotional and cognitive elements of the group members' total psychological functioning" (as cited in Lumby, 2003, p.160). Schein (1997) further contended that although culture has been defined in a myriad of terms, it comprises three crucial constituents: "First, culture reflects shared learning. Second, the manifestations of that learning are stable, and third, culture is a force that integrates disparate elements into a whole" (as cited in Lumby, 2003, p.160).

This distinctive composition of culture results in the emergence of "patterns of thinking and acting which are formed and enacted through everyday activity and which consciously and unconsciously guide development" and ultimately becomes "a significant shaper of both the abstract (thinking, values, processes) and the concrete (buildings, artefacts)" (Schein, 1997, as cited in Lumby, 2003, p.160). The definition provided by Schein (1997) thus provides a comprehensive description of culture, and furnishes a sound conceptual base to facilitate theoretical understanding of the term.

One other definition that is worth examining was suggested by Walker and Dimmock (2002), who saw culture as "the enduring sets of beliefs, values and ideologies underpinning structures, processes and practices which distinguishes one group of people from another" (p.169). Furthermore, as viewed by Dimmock and Walker (2002b), "the group of people in question can be conceptualised at a number of inter-related levels, from the micro-school or organisational level, through local and regional levels to the macro-national or societal level" (p.71). Walker and Dimmock (2002) further perceived that there are two types of culture: organisational culture under which "the group of people may be at school level" and "societal or national culture at national/regional level" (p.169). Hofstede, as cited in Dimmock and Walker (2002b), identified the fundamental differences between the two: while societal cultures vary largely at the level of basic values, organisational cultures "differ mostly at the level of more superficial practices, as reflected in the recognition of particular symbols, heroes and rituals" (p.71). In view of such fundamental differences, Dimmock and Walker (2002b) concluded that organisational cultures can thus be managed and changed, whereas societal cultures are relatively more durable, and change only slowly and progressively over longer periods of time (p.71).

2.5.2 The Reciprocal Relationship between Culture and Leadership

The study conducted by Reeves, Moss and Forest (1998) indicated that culture is one of the important factors that has long influenced the effective practice of a school leader. Reeves et al. (1998) also concluded that culture contributes to the shaping of leadership styles and skills. Dimmock and Walker (2002b) had a similar view and suggested that culture constitutes the context where school leadership is exercised, and has thus a considerable impact on the thoughts and actions of school leaders. In fact, although Dimmock and Walker recognised that other factors such as politics, economics, religion and demography may play a critical part in influencing educational leadership, they nevertheless cited Hofstede (1991), who argued that culture ultimately exerts a significant influence on all “other” factors.

In the school context, in relation to the work of middle leaders such as school subject teachers, Busher (2005) concluded that the cultures that are facilitated and developed by them are shared cultures, which appear to have student-centred shared norms and values which focus largely on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Nevertheless, Busher (2005), citing Gronn (2002), viewed the development of these shared cultures as being partly associated with the emergence of the distributed concept of leadership, featured by collective responsibility for operational effectiveness and a consultative and transformational leadership style. Hence, according to Busher and Gronn, cultures, particularly shared ones, and leadership impact one on the other reciprocally.

The specific culture of an educational institution, according to Bush and Qiang (2002), is represented by the combination of values, beliefs, rituals, symbols and heroes, which enhance the uniqueness of that particular institution to distinguish it from other institutions. Given that the context of their study is China, Bush and Qiang concluded that the predominant elements of the Chinese culture will continue to impact considerably on school leadership, which is essentially male dominant. One of the emphases of the traditional Chinese culture is inextricably linked to the focus on collectivist values, encouraging reciprocal co-operation and prioritising interpersonal relationships. As has been discussed in 2.4.6 above, being collaborative and possessing interpersonal skills to foster harmonious interpersonal relationships are key competencies for effective educational leadership.

The reciprocal influence exerted by leaders and cultures one on the other as observed by Busher (2005) citing Gronn (2002) was echoed by Dimmock and Walker (2002b) and also Busher and Barker (2003), who suggested that the building and maintenance of organisational culture is the responsibility and major role of leaders, while organisational culture is in turn manifested through a number of avenues, among which are the words and actions of leaders in pursuing their daily activities. The association of culture with collectivist values was also reported by Dimmock (2000), who described culture as “a constructed reality”, which “demands considerable thought, skill, integrity and consistency on the part of the leader to build and maintain in a way that connects all members of the school community” (as cited in Dimmock & Walker, 2002b, p.78).

The influence of culture on leadership was further examined by Dimmock and Walker (2002a, 2002b), in terms of societal culture with international dimensions and from a cross-cultural perspective. Dimmock and Walker cited Cheng (1998) to support their view that East Asian societies, including Japan, Hong Kong, China and Singapore, are typified by collectivist cultures, which emphasise group relationships, interests and loyalty over individual interests and benefits. These values are in stark contrast to the self-oriented and individualist cultures typical of western societies like Australia, France, Germany, USA and UK (Hofstede, 1991; McAdams, 1993). Accordingly, such a polarised difference in culture impacts on the characteristics of leadership, which in collectivist societies are characterised by “the primacy of relationships above tasks, and awareness of group loyalties and motivational tendencies” (Dimmock & Walker, 2002a, p.397). Hence leaders operating under such cultures tend to resort to avoidance of conflict and preservation of harmonious relationships, by means of authoritarian decision-making (Dimmock & Walker, 2002b).

While Lumby (2003) acknowledged the significance of cultural influence on educational leadership and management, she, nevertheless, was of the view that leaders should be able to rise above cultural influences, and have the discretion and choice to decide on the way to respond to newly-introduced government policies and pressure, as well as the extent and limit of cultural change. This assertion, however, carries controversial overtones, and may not convince readers in Asian, especially Chinese societies, where harmonious relationships are treasured and nurtured, and any move against the organisational culture in

face of change may evoke strong resistance on the part of the members of the organisation, thereby jeopardising the much valued harmony and collectivism.

In summary, most of the studies examined above, like the ones conducted respectively by Busher (2005), Gronn (2002), Dimmock and Walker (2002b), suggested the reciprocal influence of leadership and culture. However, while these writers did give attention to the influence of culture on leadership in their work, they seemed to acknowledge more the ways in which leaders shape the organisational culture.

2.6 Authority/Power and Leadership

Another critical factor which affects the effectiveness of educational leadership in practice is authority/power. This study seeks to examine the correlation between authority/power and leadership, with a view to assessing the extent to which authority/power impacts on the effectiveness of leadership in higher education in Hong Kong.

2.6.1 Definition of Power

The most influential study on the sources and effects of power in educational leadership was conducted by French and Raven (1968). They described power as “the capacity to influence others”, and suggested five distinct bases or sources of power, including reward power, coercive power, expert power, legitimate power and referent power of which a leader can avail himself in motivating his/her followers. Reward power is based on the belief that “the power wielder has the ability to mediate rewards” (as cited in Watkins, 1989, p.20), and signifies the “the ability to persuade others to comply with the leader’s wishes by controlling the rewards” (as cited in Gamage & Pang, 2003, p.206). The wielding of reward power by an educational leader via the control of rewards should enable the leader to persuade staff to comply with his/her wishes. Expert power “is based on the perception that the power wielder has superior knowledge and information” (as cited in Watkins, 1989, p.20). This implies that the leader possesses the expertise in the key operations of the institution to enable him or her to provide advice and guidance to staff. While coercive power “is based on the perception that the power wielder has the ability to mediate punishments” (as cited in Watkins, 1989, p.20), it denotes “the ability to exercise

authority to impose sanctions on staff” (as cited in Gamage & Pang, 2003, p.206). The exercise of coercive power on the part of the leader should render staff eager to comply with the leader’s direction in the hope of avoiding those sanctions. Legitimate power, as suggested by French and Raven (1968), “is based on the belief that the power wielder has the right to prescribe certain behaviours and opinions” (as cited in Watkins, 1989, p.20). It follows that an educational leader, by virtue of his legitimate position in the institutional hierarchy as acknowledged by the staff, should have the legal authority and right to exert his/her potential influence and stipulate certain behaviours and views expected of staff. The fifth source is referent power, which “is based on a feeling of identification or a feeling of ‘oneness’ with the power wielder” (as cited in Watkins, 1989, p.20). Referent power is normally wielded by educational leaders with the charisma, foresight and a clear vision for the future. They are thus able to motivate and engage staff to work arduously towards achieving the institutional goal.

When viewed from the traditional perspective, power is considered a positive force, and is associated with control, which is believed to emanate from power. This concept was confirmed by Dunham in defining power as “the need to control others, to influence their behaviours and to be responsible for others” (as cited in Gamage & Pang, 2003, p.253-254). Dunham shared the same view as French and Raven (1968) in that they both made reference to the influence over others’ behaviours, except that French and Raven highlighted the “capacity” to influence whereas Dunham (1984) emphasised the “need” to influence.

2.6.2 Definition of Authority

According to French and Raven, “authority is seen in terms of legitimate power” (as cited in Watkins, 1989, p.20), which bestows upon the person exercising power the right to stipulate certain opinions and behaviours and, by virtue of his/her particular position in the organisation, to impose them on others.

The definition of authority in terms of a “right” was provided by McKenna (2006), who viewed authority as “the right to give orders and the power to exact compliance” and “is related to bearing responsibility for one’s actions” (p.461). In fact, the exercise of authority is believed to entail an equal amount of responsibility. Furthermore, the sort of authority

exercised by every manager can be referred to as line authority, which “flows through the chain of command” (p.461). The concept that authority is associated with a right was supported by Gamage and Pang (2003), who observed that “official positions in the hierarchy of organisations are vested with authority, and it is believed that those who occupy such positions have a legitimate right to command” (p.206).

Gamage and Pang (2003) outlined the major distinction between power and authority as follows: authority is vested in an official position, whereas power, in terms of the capacity to influence others, is subject to acceptance by followers, who may entrust the power to the leader and/or manager, and voluntarily consent to follow directives by collective consensus with a view to achieving the shared vision and goals.

Ramsden (1998a), on the other hand, viewed authority from the perspective of the effective “enterprise” university, and in envisaging the university of the future, suggested that authority will emanate from successful performance.

2.6.3 Reciprocal Relationship between Authority/Power and Leadership

The reciprocal influence of power and leadership was iterated by Gamage and Pang (2003), who observed that “the exercise of power is a reciprocal relationship between the power holder and others” (p.207). As educational leaders such as school principals can no longer rely on coercive power to control their staff members, they must win the respect and admiration of their subordinates as well as inspire and motivate them by the vision they set for the future, and also through involvement of the entire school community. Through exhibiting such charisma, enthusiasm and drive, which staff usually admire and accept, leaders are gradually building referent power, and are thus able to lead others effectively.

As viewed by Dimmock and Walker (2002b) from a cross-cultural perspective, the impact of power on educational leadership is relatively distinct. Typically, many Asian countries are distinguished by the power-concentrated nature of their societies, and educational leaders, such as school principals, tend to adopt a top-down approach, and their leadership style is known to be authoritarian or autocratic. In contrast, in most western countries, where power distribution is prevalent, the leadership style of school principals is generally found to be collaborative and collegial.

Sackney and Mitchell (2002) concurred with the post-modern concept of diffused power in educational leadership, suggesting that teachers should take a proactive role to participate in creating the school culture and enacting leadership. This implies that the school community participates in the decision-making process, and it is in the relationships among members of the school and the teaching staff that power can be located. Mitchell and Sackney (2001) further perceived that power and leadership reciprocally influence each other, highlighting that “power, leadership, followership, leading, learning and teaching are all mutually influencing and deeply embedded constructs that, together, constitute a community of leaders who can move schools forward to become communities of learners” (as cited in Sackney & Mitchell, 2002, p.907).

Such a perspective assumes that power is diffused and distributed, and accrues to different people within the institution who have the knowledge, skills or areas of influence to lead particular tasks. This view is in stark contrast to the traditional view of educational leadership, which claims that power is vested only with those taking up top positions in the school organisation, that is, school leaders, who dictate the ways of thinking and acting within the school.

The notion of diffusion and distribution of power was also reported by Gronn (2002), who referred to it as “separation of powers”, resulting in power balances between the different constituencies of a university structure, such as departments, faculties, schools, colleges, senates, councils, etc. One likely impact of such distribution of power on educational leadership is the emergence of collective leadership assumed by leaders as role-players of varied combinations and strengths, leading to the achievement of sudden, unexpected and unpredictable change (Gronn, 2002) and also improvement.

On the other hand, Busher (2005) argued that despite collective participation by the entire school community in the formulation and development of school policies, teaching and learning practices, as well as school cultures and sub-cultures, those with greater access to power can have their say and influence over the shaping of the policies, practices, cultures and sub-cultures. These refer to officially designated leaders at all levels of the institution. Hence, according to Busher, the appropriate wielding of power by leaders to construct the various policies, practices and processes, on the basis of established moral and ethical norms of the school community, appears to be pivotal to effective school leadership.

In summary, most of the literature reviewed above is of value in helping to inform the second specific research question which sets out to investigate the way in which authority/power can influence the ability of higher education leaders to lead effectively. This is especially true of the works of Gamage and Pang (2003), Sackney and Mitchell (2002) and Gronn (2002). Gamage and Pang (2003) highlighted the importance of referent power as opposed to coercive power, and the extent to which it enables leaders in senior positions to lead more effectively. Mitchell and Sackney (2000) discussed distributed leadership which enables educational leaders to lead effectively. This was followed by Gronn (2002) who reported on separation of powers leading to the emergence of collective leadership which brings about change and improvement that effective educational leaders aspire to achieve.

2.7 Gender and Educational Leadership

The discussion in this section explores the extent to which gender impacts on the effectiveness of educational leadership. To this end, the section examines in the first instance those competencies which are traditionally regarded as gender-related and associated with effective educational leadership. It then seeks to explore whether any of the competencies identified in Callan's (2001) management and leadership capability framework relate to gender, and investigates the possible impact of gender on the effectiveness of educational leadership.

2.7.1 Gender-stereotyped Competencies associated with Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership

The categorisation of certain competencies associated with effective educational leadership as gender-related, some as masculine and others as feminine, has resulted from the stereotyping of men as taking up leadership or senior managerial positions, as opposed to women who were assumed to occupy less senior and significant positions. The studies undertaken by Schein (1973, 1994), as cited in Coleman (2003), have demonstrated that the abilities and skills identified as competencies typical of leaders or managers are those possessed by men. Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington and Weindling (1993), however, associated those competencies normally perceived as feminine, such as being collegial,

open, consultative and team-oriented, as being related to effective educational leadership.

The masculine and feminine stereotyped competencies have been identified respectively by researchers such as Bem (1974) and Gray (1993), the latter having used a similar yet briefer range of masculine and feminine traits and presented them in gender paradigms. An examination of Gray's (1993) work regarding the training of male and female headteachers as cited in Coleman (2003) and presented in the form of gender paradigms shown below (Table 2.2) supports the traditional view that being caring, nurturing, collaborative and people-oriented are identified as feminine characteristics, while being authoritarian, aggressive, assertive, decisive, dominating and task/target-oriented are typically categorised as masculine characteristics.

Table 2.2: Gender Paradigms

The nurturing/ feminine paradigm	The defensive/ aggressive masculine paradigm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caring ▪ Creative ▪ Intuitive ▪ Aware of individual differences ▪ Non-competitive ▪ Tolerant ▪ Subjective ▪ Informal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highly regulated ▪ Conformist ▪ Normative ▪ Competitive ▪ Evaluative ▪ Disciplined ▪ Objective ▪ Formal

(Gray, 1993, p.111)

The findings obtained from the data collected through a survey with male and female secondary school principals in England conducted by Coleman in 2004 reveal gender-related characteristics generally associated with female leadership, such as social skills and empathy. They also suggest that “women are thought of as caring, thoughtful, collaborative and men as decisive and dominant” (Coleman, 2004, p.17).

Findings from the same survey pointed to two other positive feminine stereotyped qualities, viz, demonstrating greater emotional intelligence and the ability to take up multi tasks. There was also evidence of some negative female stereotyping of women leaders, such as being soft and indecisive, in contrast to the “masculine qualities of decisiveness, assertiveness and dominance” (Coleman, 2004, p.19) generally required of a leadership

role. Coleman (2003, 2004) opined that in spite of the essentialised gender stereotypes, there is a tendency for men and women leaders to lead in certain ways. This corroborates the view of Schmuck (1986) who suggested that “‘all women are not all one way’ and neither are all men’”. In fact, Coleman’s view that being collaborative and caring is generally taken as characterising effective female leadership supports similar findings obtained by Blackmore (1999), who, while suggesting that women are collaborative and caring, also considered that being more communicative and consensual are two other characteristics that relate to the feminine gender. Similar assumptions about “qualities such as caring, nurturing, loyalty and co-operation” (Evetts, 1990, p.183) and “interpersonal skills” being competencies associated with female leadership underlie the observations made by Hall (1997) in her study on women in educational management.

Whilst corroborating Blackmore’s (1999) findings that women leaders are more communicative, Barker (2005) also observed that characteristics such as “authoritarian, charismatic, entrepreneurial and exhibiting competitive behaviour” (p.27) appear to be distinctly associated with male leaders. Furthermore, an analysis of the study by Bem (1974) reveals the contrast between “the analytical, assertive behaviour associated with males” and the “female traits like affection and sympathy” (as cited in Barker, 2005, p.27).

In conclusion, the discussion in this section introduces the traditional gender-stereotyping of leadership competencies in education into masculine and feminine abilities, skills and characteristics. This is of pivotal importance for ascertaining whether gender has any impact on the effectiveness of leaders in education, and in the present study, with particular reference to higher education.

2.7.2 Correlation between Gender and Competencies of Educational Leadership in Callan’s (2001) Management and Leadership Capability Framework

An examination of the competencies included in Callan’s (2001) framework reveals that a number of them apparently relate to gender, as they correspond to those gender-related competencies identified and suggested by other researchers. It is interesting to note that the majority of the competencies perceived to be gender-related are those commonly displayed by female leaders/managers. Of particular importance are communication skills (Barker, 2005; Blackmore, 1999), the ability to empower others (Blackmore, 1999; Bolam et al.,

1993; Gray, 1993; MacBeath, 1998), promotion of teamwork (Bolam et al., 1993; Lambert, as cited in Grace, 1995), greater emotional intelligence as manifested in the demonstrated ability to empathise with others (Coleman, 2004; Lambert, 1998), interpersonal skills (Coleman, 2004; Evetts, 1990; Hall, 1997), and concern for relationships (Coleman, 2004; Grace, 1995; Gray, 1993).

Conversely, the competencies conventionally perceived as being exhibited by male leaders/managers are fewer in number, and cover mostly the characteristics, skills and abilities grouped under the broad themes of business and entrepreneurial skills and strategic thinking and alliances in Callan's (2001) framework. Among these are the ability to understand the nature of competition, the practice of relationship marketing on a customer-oriented basis, the capability of motivating, directing and mobilising employees to achieve desired outcomes and the ability to make strategic analyses and decisions. These, in fact, echoed the findings in the early study by Bem (1974), that the "analytical" and "assertive behaviour was associated with males" (as cited in Barker, 2005, p.27), and were reiterated by Barker (2005) as "entrepreneurial and competitive behaviour" (p.27).

2.7.3 Impact of Gender on Effectiveness of Leadership in Education

The issue of whether gender has any impact on effectiveness of leadership in education has been examined by a number of researchers. Evetts (1994), for instance, conducted a research with 10 female and 10 male heads and arrived at the conclusion that "leadership and management behaviour were not necessarily gender based" (as cited in Coleman, 2003, p.43). Similar findings were reported in Gleeson's (2001) study of the British further education sector, that leadership competencies such as "adaptability, teamwork and communication skills" are largely attributive to "strategy and pragmatism" than to "apparent feminine attributes" (p.190). Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) were of a similar view when they suggested as an "emerging generalisation" (p.28) that "acknowledges the importance of both 'masculine' and 'feminine' stereotype qualities in leadership", "regardless of the gender of the leader" (p.35).

The above findings are seen to echo the claim advanced by Grace (1995), who in his study of headteachers as educational leaders, found that the majority of the 24 women headteachers respondents were of the view that "gender was not of itself a simple predictor

of these differentiating features in leadership styles between power focused and power sharing, and between line executive and team consultative modes” (p.181). Grace concluded that the critical factor in this connection was actually “a principled commitment by a headteacher and not simply the gender of a headteacher” (p.181). Therefore, notwithstanding that the above research findings did not convey a definitive statement about the possible impact of gender on the effectiveness of educational leadership, they did discuss the relationship between gender and the different competencies mainly in terms of the non-impact of gender, and have therefore addressed this issue indirectly.

The emergence of another major trend in leadership culture and practice in the 1990s, which, according to Grace (1995), could be termed “the masculine-strong leadership model” and is characterised by “hierarchy, line-management and executive action”, has been growing in importance. This new trend is in essence representative of the wave of new managerialism, which emphasises technical and financial management skills and also budgetary controls. As viewed by Riley (1994), there has been growing evidence to suggest that in the UK, characteristics associated with successful management of the education service are becoming much more associated with male instead of female traits, skills and abilities. Riley thus concluded that “leaders are tough, abrasive financial entrepreneurs managing the new competitive education markets”, and that “managing education organisations is increasingly seen as men’s business” (as cited in Grace, 1995, p.187). This model is in stark contrast to the other trend, “the sharing-consultative model of educational leadership”, which emphasised the attributes of “consultative, non-hierarchical and participative decision-making” (Grace, 1995, p.186). These qualities are conventionally regarded as typical female traits, and leadership and management styles developed by women “demonstrating the humane and effective outcomes of sharing/collaborative school cultures” (Grace, 1995, p.187), used to be taken as models of effective leadership.

It can be seen from the above that Grace (1995) examined the issue of gender impact on educational leadership from two perspectives, as necessitated by the emergence of what he termed the “sharing-consultative model” in the 1970s, followed by the “masculine-strong leadership model” in the 1990s. In citing Riley (1994), Grace implied that gender is likely to have an impact on the effectiveness of educational leadership, and this view is in opposition to the one discussed previously.

2.8 Review of Conceptual Framework for Data Presentation and Analysis

It can be seen from the above literature review that Callan's (2001) framework, incorporating nine core capabilities and 73 associated elements compatible with the perceived competencies identified by the respondents, has justifiably provided a comprehensive and key base for data presentation and analysis. Moreover, a separate review of the scholarly works by Gronn (2002), Dimmock and Walker (2002b) and Busher (2005) suggested the reciprocal influence of culture and effectiveness of educational leadership. Meanwhile, the above studies, together with those conducted by Mitchell and Sackney (2001) and also Gamage and Pang (2003), indicated the reciprocal influence of power and effective leadership in education. In both connections, the effectiveness of educational leadership was manifested and examined in Callan's (2001) framework. The present researcher therefore anticipates drawing on predominant types (transformational, distributed and transactional) and different dimensions of educational leadership when presenting and analysing the data, to show the inter-relationship between the various concepts suggested in the literature and the effectiveness of leadership in higher education. Those dimensions would embrace key competencies associated with the transformational and distributed dimensions, in particular, corporate/shared vision, inspirational motivation, empowerment, interpersonal skills, self and staff development, teamwork and communication skills, as well as the transactional leadership approach in connection with achievement of outcomes, business and entrepreneurial skills, plus development and management of resources.

2.9 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature relating to the main research question which explores the degree of effectiveness of leadership in higher education in Hong Kong as perceived by the cohort of the respondents. The literature review has focused specifically on the themes that relate to the three specific research questions: the leadership styles and competencies which have enabled the leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong to lead effectively; the influence of culture and authority/power on the ability of the leaders of the HKHEIs to lead effectively; and the likely impact of gender on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong.

In reviewing the relevant literature, it has been found that although considerable research has been conducted in those areas, particularly in English-speaking countries, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, UK, and USA, significant research on higher education leadership in Hong Kong has been relatively limited, with the notable exception of respective works by Liu (1997), Mok (1999, 2000), Pounder (1999, 2001), and Tam (1999). Furthermore, the majority of the literature reviewed in this study appears to focus on primary and secondary school leadership (Blackmore & Sachs, 2000; Bollington, 1999; Coleman, 2003, 2004; Davies, 2003; Dimmock & Walker, 2002a, 2002b; Ryan, 2002; etc.). This is in contrast to the scarcity of literature on further and vocational education (Briggs, 2001; Callan, 2001; Gleeson, 2001; Simkins & Lumby, 2002), and on higher education (Bargh, Boccock, Scott & Smith, 2000; Ramsden, 1998a, 1998b; Smith & Hughey, 2006; Sommerlad, Duke & McDonald, 1998; Yelder & Codling, 2004). Of the scarce research on higher education leadership in Hong Kong, the respective scholarly works of Liu (1997) and Tam (1999) are not even relevant to this study and have therefore not been referred to in the literature review.

Moreover, the review of relevant literature suggests that in order to acquire a thorough understanding of higher education leadership in the Hong Kong context, it is necessary to examine the issues within specific political, economic and cultural contexts, and adapt a cross-cultural perspective, drawing on the concepts, ideas and opinions reported in the literature of developed countries. This understanding is believed to build on careful consideration of the leadership styles and competencies associated with effective educational leadership, and also crucial factors like culture and authority/power which are perceived to have a certain degree of influence on the effectiveness of educational leadership.

The chapter has discussed the concepts of leadership and management, leadership styles and competencies for effective leadership, which are of fundamental importance to ascertaining what constitutes effective educational leadership. When synchronised with the research findings of this study, the discussion of the leadership styles and competencies associated with effective educational leadership on the basis of Callan's (2001) management and leadership capability framework is expected to constitute the theoretical base for proposing a profile of leadership applicable to the Hong Kong higher education sector.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this study, the main research question is: What are the perceptions of effectiveness in higher education leadership as viewed by the cohort of the higher education leaders in Hong Kong?

The specific research questions are:

1. What are the perceptions of the leadership styles and competencies which have enabled these higher education leaders to lead effectively?
2. How do these leaders perceive that culture and authority/power have influenced their ability to lead effectively?
3. What impact is gender perceived to have on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong?

In order to answer these questions, the study investigated the perceptions of eight male and six female leaders occupying senior positions in eight UGC-funded, one government-established but self-financing and one other privately-funded HEIs in Hong Kong.

This chapter describes in detail the methodology employed for the study and also the methods of data collection and analysis.

The chapter is presented under eleven main headings:

- Choice of research paradigm;
- Development of the research questions;
- Research design;
- Research instrument - the interview;
- Research sample;
- Data collection;

- Data analysis;
- Trustworthiness of the research;
- Ethical considerations;
- Limitations of the study; and
- Summary

The study adopted an interpretive approach and attempted to address the research questions through developing a structured interview guide to facilitate the collection of data and the data were subsequently organised, analysed and synthesised.

3.2 Research Approaches and Paradigms

3.2.1 Research Approaches

There are two main research approaches, the normative, objective approach and the interpretive, subjective approach which, according to Cohen and Manion (1994), are two opposing conceptions of social reality. The key features of these two approaches indicating the broad differences between them are summarised in the following table:

Table 3.1: Differences between the Normative and Interpretive Approaches

Normative	Interpretive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society and the social system • Medium/ large-scale research • Impersonal, anonymous forces regulating behaviour • Model of natural sciences • “Objectivity” • Research conducted “from the outside” • Generalising from the specific • Explaining behaviour/ seeking causes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual • Small-scale research • Human actions continuously re-creating social life • Non-statistical • “Subjectivity” • Personal involvement of the researcher • Interpreting the specific • Understanding actions/ meanings rather than causes

(Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.39)

In the normative model, human behaviour is seen to be essentially regulated and governed by rules, and must be investigated by means of scientific methods. In contrast, the interpretive approach is largely concerned with the individual, and attempts mainly “to understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.36), and every effort is made “to get inside the person and to understand from within” (p.36). The normative, objective approach is generally associated with the positivist paradigm, while the interpretive, subjective approach is largely linked with the interpretive paradigm.

3.2.1.1 *Research Paradigms*

According to Morrison (2002), a paradigm is a set of beliefs about how research information is transformed into data by the analysis process, upon which researchers draw implicitly or explicitly to ascertain “how that analysis might be patterned, reasoned, and compiled” (p.12). In her attempt to describe the term “paradigm”, Morrison cites Bassey who defined a paradigm as: “a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and the function of researchers which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions” (as cited in Morrison, 2002, p.12). Kuhn (1970), in his critique of positivist/ empiricist epistemology as cited by Usher (1996), described a paradigm as “first, ‘the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques shared by members of a given scientific community’ and second, it is an exemplar or exemplary way of working that functions as a model for what and how to do research, what problems to focus on and work on” (Usher, 1996, p.15). Overall, it can be argued that a paradigm signifies the philosophy that underlies a particular research approach.

The two broad paradigms, interpretivism and positivism, are different in their philosophical assumptions concerning the concepts of behaviour, action, and social reality. Interpretivism focuses on action, which may be taken as “behaviour with meaning; it is intentional behaviour and as such, is future-oriented” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.36). On the contrary, positivism rests on the assumption that the cause of the behaviour, which refers to “responses either to external environmental stimuli or internal stimuli ... lies in the past” (p.36).

Interpretivism assumes that social reality is subjective and emphasises “the importance of the subjective experience of individuals in the creation of the social world” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.8). In this paradigm, “the principal concern is with an understanding of the way in which the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which he or she finds himself or herself” (p.8). Hence, interpretive researchers conduct their research with people in recognition that “they are part of, rather than separate from, the research topics they investigate” (Morrison, 2002, p.18).

In contrast, positivism assumes the existence of a social reality, and that people, education or schooling, despite their uniqueness, are taken as the objects, phenomena or delivery systems for study, examination and investigation. From this perspective, “knowledge gained through scientific and experimental research is objective and quantifiable”, and “reality” is therefore “stable, observable and measurable” (Merriam, 2001, p.4). Hence positivist researchers set out to obtain scientific knowledge through collecting verified facts which are observable “out there” in the world where the research is to be conducted, say, the educational world, which is distinct and detached from the researcher (Morrison, 2002).

In conclusion, positivism versus interpretivism was perceived by House (1994) as “dichotomies of objectivity versus subjectivity, fixed versus emergent categories, outsider versus insider perspective, facts versus values, explanation versus understanding, and simple versus multiple realities” (p.16).

3.3 Research Methodology

3.3.1 Relation between Research Paradigms and Methods

Over the years, many writers have tried to link research and the philosophy underlying the philosophical traditions, on the belief that this link should help to highlight the unique characteristics that feature in different research paradigms. Accordingly, qualitative research is commonly associated with the interpretive paradigm or approach which exemplifies, in the words of Merriam (2001), “an inductive, hypothesis- or theory-generating rather than a deductive or testing mode of inquiry” (p.4), through which knowledge can be gained in terms of “understanding the meaning of the process or

experience” (p.4). Quantitative research, on the other hand, is often linked with the positivist paradigm or approach, which is typically deductive and theory-testing.

Researchers who adopt the interpretive, subjective approach, as exemplified by phenomenologists, are of the conviction that the subjective experience of the individual is of crucial importance, given that individual perception is taken to bestow meaning, and, as indicated by Schutz (1962), it is the meanings that human beings attach to social reality that constitutes the only means to understand that reality. This belief suggested that “reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 1994, p.78), and that “the world and ‘reality’... are socially constructed and given meaning by people” (p.78). The construction of social reality is rendered possible by means of diverse qualitative methods, such as participant observation, case study, personal constructs, field study and others. All types of qualitative research are based on the key philosophy which assumes that “reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (Merriam, 2001, p.6).

In contrast, researchers who adopt a positivist approach are, according to Easterby-Smith et al. (1994), “independent of what is being observed” (p.77) and value-free, as values “may impair their objectivity and undermine the validity of the research” (Morrison, 2002, p.15). They are likely to employ scientific, quantitative methods such as survey research, structured interviewing, experiments and the like, and at the most extreme, also seek to “discover” general laws to explain the nature of the reality which is being observed by the researcher. Unlike qualitative research which focuses on process, meaning and understanding, quantitative research aims “to identify causal explanations and fundamental laws that explain regularities in human social behaviour” (Easterby-Smith et al., 1994, p.77), and “emphasises the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.8). The above evidently points to the link of qualitative methodologies with the interpretive approach and the association of quantitative methodologies with the positivist approach.

In connection with the above discussion, a detailed examination of the purpose of the present study as stated in 1.4 of Chapter 1 indicates that it is natural for this study to resort to the use of the interpretive approach and qualitative methodology.

3.3.2 Relevance of Interpretive/Qualitative Approach to the Current Research

The researcher has chosen to adopt the interpretive and qualitative approach to investigate the perceptions of a cohort of leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong. Such perceptions depend largely on certain socially agreed and accepted understandings of leadership in the context of higher education in Hong Kong. These understandings may have been manifested in relevant literature, the researcher's own experiences, and, most importantly, the experiences of the higher education leaders who participated in this research. Given that qualitative research assumes that "meaning is embedded in people's experiences" (Merriam, 2001, p.6) as the particular experience "is 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone'" (Sherman & Webb, 1988, p.7), the meaning socially constructed by the group of higher education leaders is what the researcher is interested in understanding and interpreting. For such reasons, this study is located in the interpretive paradigm and adopts the qualitative approach.

Moreover, concepts such as "perceptions", "experiences" and "attributes/skills" are unquantifiable, and can best be examined from the participants' perspectives, sometimes referred to as the insider's perspective, and not the researcher's or outsider's perspective. This also justifies the use of the interpretive/qualitative approach.

Another reason for choosing the interpretive/qualitative approach is that qualitative methods such as in-depth interviewing, observation and analysis of relevant documents enable the researcher to get closer to and capture the perceptions and perspectives of the research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Further, as pointed out by some writers, the use of qualitative methods helps to secure "rich descriptions of the social world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.10) which qualitative researchers consider to be valuable in helping them to understand "the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 2001, p.6), hence the complexity and subjectivity of reality and human experiences.

In all, the researcher chose to conduct this study on the basis of the interpretive paradigm and adopted the qualitative approach. The aim was to probe into the minds and thoughts of the particular cohort of higher education leaders in Hong Kong in an attempt to understand how these leaders presented and interpreted their perspectives, perceptions and experiences.

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 Definition

In the words of Bogdan and Biklen (1998), the term “design” in research refers to “the researcher’s plan of how to proceed” (p.49), and the design of a study, as described by traditional researchers, is “the product of the planning stage of research” (p.49). Punch (1998) shared the same view and described research design as “the overall plan for a piece of research”, but elaborated it as including four main ideas, namely, “the strategy, the conceptual framework, the question of who or what will be studied, and the tools to be used for collecting and analysing empirical materials” (p.149-150). Similarly, Merriam (2001) defined research design as the plan or map that helps one get “from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions about these questions” (Yin, 1994, p.19). Easterby-Smith et al. (1994) were of the view that “research designs are about organising research activity, including the collection of data in ways that are most likely to achieve the research aims” (p.84). The above descriptions of design represent the traditional conception of design, in short, “a pre-established plan for carrying out the study or as a sequence of steps in conducting the study” (Maxwell, 1996, p.4).

3.4.2 Design Outline for the Study

To achieve the aims and purposes of the present study as stated in 1.4 of chapter 1 (paragraph 1) and 3.3.2. of this chapter (last paragraph) and to draw up the conceptual framework for the present study, the researcher conducted a preliminary review of existing literature on the themes of challenges facing the higher education sector worldwide and particularly Hong Kong, leadership styles and competencies associated with effectiveness of educational leadership, the influence of culture and authority/power and the impact of gender on educational effectiveness. On the basis of the conceptual framework, the researcher formulated three specific research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the leadership styles and competencies which have enabled these higher education leaders to lead effectively?
2. How do these leaders perceive that culture and authority/power have influenced their ability to lead effectively?

3. What impact is gender perceived to have on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong?

The researcher considered it appropriate to use primarily qualitative research methodology in the form of individual in-depth interview to collect the required qualitative data for this study. Based on the literature review, the conceptual framework and the three specific research questions, the researcher developed the interview guide which comprised mainly open-ended questions to allow the interviewees more freedom when attempting to answer the interview questions. Acting on the advice from a number of supervisors of the researcher for this study, the researcher identified a small sample of 14 leaders of ten HKHEIs. Initially, the researcher obtained their verbal consent to take part in the research by phone, and subsequently sent them invitation letters to confirm the arrangements for the interview. To test and ascertain the clarity and feasibility of the research questions, the researcher conducted a pilot study which took the form of four individual face-to-face interviews with two male and two female higher education leaders in Hong Kong. On the basis of the comments and suggestions received from the participants in the pilot study, the interview questions were subsequently improved and fine-tuned, and ultimately used as the main research tool for collecting detailed qualitative data. The latter stage of the research was also conducted through individual face-to-face in-depth interviews, which were both taped and recorded manually in the form of detailed field notes to facilitate the transcribing process. For data analysis purposes, the researcher employed coding, developed coding categories and affixed them to different sections of the interview transcripts to categorise recurring messages or words which might be grouped into themes relating to the specific research questions.

3.4.3 Research Sample

3.4.3.1 *Purposive or Purposeful Sampling*

It was necessary for the researcher to select an informative sample, and purposive sampling was considered the most appropriate sampling strategy for this research. In the words of Merriam (2001), purposive or purposeful sampling “is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p.61). Patton (1990), as cited by Merriam, argued that the strength of purposive sampling “lies in selecting information-rich

cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling” (p.169). According to LeCompte and Preissle (as cited in Maxwell, 1996, p.69), this was called criterion-based selection, a strategy which involves selecting particular settings, times, persons or events that can provide the researcher with important and requisite information to address the research questions. Maxwell (1996, p.70) viewed this to be “the most important consideration in qualitative sampling decisions”.

3.4.3.2 *Size of Sample*

The sample of the present study was of a small size, comprising 14 leaders including eight males and six females from ten different HEIs in Hong Kong. This was compatible with what Easterby-Smith et al. (1994) identified as a small sample, and provided an in-depth study of a small group of research participants. The advice and guidance from supervisors of the researcher for this study suggested that a reasonable number of research participants for in-depth interviewing would be 12 to 15. There is, however, no literature on qualitative research that supports this suggested sample size. As Merriam (2001) pointed out, there is no answer to “the question of how many people to interview ... What is needed is an adequate number of participants, sites, or activities to answer the question posed at the beginning of the study” (p.64). On the other hand, a minimum sample size, as recommended by Patton (1990), could be specified “based on expected reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of the study” (p.186).

In the present study, the sample size of 12 to 15 as suggested by the researcher’s supervisors represents approximately 14% of the total population of leaders and senior managers at the level of Vice-President, Associate Vice-President and Head of Administrative Unit as shown on the websites of the eight UGC-funded institutions in the period April to May 2007 and presented in Table 3.2 below. This may be regarded as an adequate number for addressing the research problem of effectiveness of leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong viewed from the perspectives of a small cohort of higher education leaders as stated in 1.4.

The researcher initially managed to attain a sample size of 15, which included a female leader of a HKHEI from the pilot study, resulting in a mix of eight males and seven females. Nevertheless, this female leader was subsequently reluctant to take part in the actual research. The sample size was eventually set at 14.

Table 3.2: Leadership/Senior Management in the Hong Kong Higher Education Institutions by Institution and Gender (April – May 2007)

Institution	Leadership/ Senior Management (Vice-President/ Associate Vice-President/ Admin Unit Heads)					
	Number (Approximate)			Percentage % (Approximate)		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
City U Δ	6	2	8	75%	25%	100%
CUHK Δ	15	0	15	100%	0%	100%
HKBU Δ	15	5	20	75%	25%	100%
HKIED Δ	10	5	15	66.7%	33.3%	100%
HKU Δ	11	0	11	100%	0%	100%
HKUST Δ	4	0	4	100%	0%	100%
Lingnan Δ	10	4	14	71.4%	28.6%	100%
Poly U Δ	10	2	12	83.3%	16.7%	100%
Total	81	18	99	81.8%	18.2%	100%

Remarks:

City U Δ: City University of Hong Kong

CUHK Δ: The Chinese University of Hong Kong

HKBU Δ: Hong Kong Baptist University

HKIED Δ: The Hong Kong Institute of Education

HKU Δ: The University of Hong Kong

HKUST Δ: The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Lingnan Δ: Lingnan University

Poly U Δ: The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Source: Hong Kong Higher Education Institutions Websites, Internet Search, May 2007

3.4.3.3 *Criteria for Selecting Sample Research Participants*

In choosing the research participants to be studied, it was necessary for the researcher to first determine a number of selection criteria and ascertain why they were regarded as important. Such criteria included rank/status, institutional diversity, nature of work, tertiary experience and background, and willingness to participate.

Rank/status was taken to refer to the level of leadership in the light of academic, administrative or managerial headship attained in an institution, for instance, Vice-President, Associate Vice-President, Administrative Unit Head, Faculty Dean or Academic Department Head. These ranks would carry with them considerable responsibilities such as supervision, development of organisational strategies or formulation of policies. Initially, the researcher intended to select second-tier leaders occupying the posts of Vice-President, Associate Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor. However, in view of the paucity of female leaders occupying positions in those ranks, it was not possible to restrict the female respondents to incumbents of these positions. Hence, the level of seniority of female participants was extended to include a more diversified stratum of female leaders, with one respondent in a first-tier President-equivalent post of Director, and another one in a third-tier position of Dean. In so far as institutional diversity was concerned, the researcher attempted to ensure and maintain a spread of respondents across all eight UGC-funded HEIs, through selecting and procuring at least one respondent from each of them. Again, the difficulty in locating and securing respondents, especially female leaders, rendered it impossible to confine the choice of respondents to those leaders serving in the UGC-funded tertiary institutions. The restriction on the choice of research site or setting was thus relaxed to include one self-financing university and a private university.

One distinctive selection criterion was the nature of work. In the case of the sample respondents, their positions required them to execute duties of a primarily managerial and administrative nature, in contrast to academics whose job focus was on teaching and research. This particular cohort of higher education leaders in Hong Kong could have been academics previously, and their promotion to leadership/senior management positions might have been based on their academic prowess, largely associated with their research capability (Yielder & Codling, 2004).

In terms of tertiary experience and background, the selected respondents were from a range of diverse tertiary backgrounds, work experiences, positions held and institutions. The range of positions in the various institutions of higher education held by the male and female leaders who participated in this study included Director of Institute, Vice-President/Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Associate Vice-President, Faculty Dean and Head of Administrative Unit. They also came from different backgrounds, ranging from education, medical science, engineering, business, chemistry, law, language studies, etc, and had acquired their academic credentials from renowned universities in Hong Kong and overseas.

Another decisive criterion was the willingness and readiness of the respondents to take part in the individual in-depth interviews, which lasted for a minimum of one and a half to two hours and entailed not only a time commitment, but also a strenuous refreshment of their memories to reflect upon their tertiary experiences.

A brief/profile of the respondents of this study is shown in Table 3.3 below

Table 3.3: Brief/Profile of Research Participants

Respondent	Post Held/ Job Title	Gender
R1	Director (equivalent to President/ Vice-Chancellor of University)	Female
R2	Associate Vice-President	Female
R3	Pro-Vice-Chancellor	Female
R4	Director (Community College)	Female
R5	Dean	Female
R6	Dean (equivalent to Director, Community College)	Female
R7	Vice-President	Male
R8	Vice-President	Male
R9	Vice-President	Male
R10	Pro-Vice-Chancellor	Male
R11	Associate Vice-President	Male
R12	Associate Vice-President	Male
R13	Vice-President	Male
R14	Dean	Male

The main research instrument employed to collect data for this study was largely the interview. All the interviews conducted were semi-structured.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 The interview

3.5.1.1 Definition

In-depth interviewing was employed in the present study as the main means to collect the research data. This type of research interview was defined by Cannell and Kahn, cited by Cohen and Manion (1994), as “a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation” (p.271). This notion was iterated by Dexter, cited by Merriam (2001), explaining that both individual and group interviews can be defined as a conversation – but a “conversation with a purpose” (p.71).

A more precise and apt definition was provided by Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1990) in associating the in-depth interviewing with “a conversation with a specific purpose – a conversation between researcher and informant focusing on the informant’s perception of self, life and experience, and expressed in his or her own words” (p.87). Minichiello et al. (1990) further iterated that this is the means through which the researcher can access and understand the informants’ individual perceptions and interpretations of social reality.

3.5.1.2 Purpose

In the words of Kvale (1996), the main purpose of the interview is to obtain “an understanding by means of conversations with the human beings to be understood” (p.11). In-depth interviews enable a researcher to find out, as explained by Patton (1990), what is “in and on someone else’s mind” (p.278), that is, those things which the researcher cannot directly observe, such as feelings, thoughts and intentions. According to Patton (1990), “the purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective” (p.196).

3.5.1.3 *Uses*

Qualitative interviews are therefore appropriate instruments for probing into the thoughts, perceptions, feelings, intentions, construed meanings and experiences of the respondents. All these are abstract and intangible items of which the researcher cannot acquire knowledge and understanding through only external and direct observation and experimental manipulation of human subjects (Kvale, 1996). As described by Tuckman, the research interview, “by providing access to what is ‘inside a person’s head’, makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs)” (as cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p.268). Qualitative interviews thus provide researchers with the opportunities to obtain “an understanding by means of a conversation with the human beings to be understood” (Kvale, 1996, p.11).

3.5.1.4 *Advantages and Limitations*

As a research tool and technique, the interview has a number of advantages. In the first instance, “it allows for greater depth” than is the case with other methods of data collection” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.272). The advantage of the use of interview as a research tool was also observed by Best and Kahn (1998) as “getting beneath-the-surface reactions” (p.321) rendered feasible by probing and penetration. Similarly, Wiersma (2000) viewed that the use of an interview has the advantage of providing an opportunity “for in-depth probing, and elaborating and clarification of terms, if necessary” (p.185).

Furthermore, subsequent to the establishment of rapport with the interviewees by skilful interviewers, certain confidential information which respondents might be reluctant to disclose in writing may then be obtained. Finally, two-way communication in the course of the interview enables the interviewer to clarify any queries which the respondents may have in regard to the research questions, to explain more lucidly the information required as well as the purpose of the research and investigation. Lastly, the interviewer may “evaluate the sincerity and insight of the interviewee” (Best & Kahn, 1998, p.320).

However, the interview as a research instrument is not without its limitations. The interviewees may be known personally to the interviewer, or their identities must be disclosed to the interviewer. This may result in the interviewer consciously or sub-consciously exerting unnecessary influence on the interviewees in regard to the way in which the questions are to be answered (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Moreover, in view of the above factors, one other inherent disadvantage of the use of interview as a research tool is that “it is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer” (Cohen et al., 2000, p.269). Finally, according to Wiersma (2000), interviews are considered costly in terms of time and effort.

In general, unstructured and semi-structured or focused interviewing are two modes of conducting in-depth interviews. Semi-structured interviewing was employed in the present study because it provided some form of structure or framework for the researcher to follow when attempting to address the broad topics of interest to guide the interviews and answer the research questions. This type of interviewing enabled the researcher to collect equivalent or comparable data from across the interviewees. At the same time, it allowed the researcher more flexibility to respond to the emerging views and thoughts of the respondents and to new concepts or ideas on related topics, and also to explore issues of interest or concern to the respondents. Moreover, the flexible and free style of interviewing was adapted to the personality and circumstances of the interviewees (Johnson, 1994, p.45).

3.5.1.5 Interview Guide

According to Patton (2002), the interview guide serves “to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed” (p.343) and to provide “topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject” (p.343).

3.5.2 Interview Guide

An interview guide or schedule listing out all the questions or issues to be explored during the interview was developed for the purposes of setting a preliminary framework or structure for the interview process and also, more importantly, to ensure that individual

interviews for data collection adopted a standardised and uniform process. In the interview, all questions were asked according to the order they were posed in the interview guide.

The interview guide was developed on the basis of a comprehensive review of literature and the specific research questions. First of all, with a view to facilitating discussion and helping the respondents to reflect on and assess their leadership attributes and skills, a checklist of twenty commonly accepted leadership attributes/competencies drawn from the literature review was devised. These attributes included the following:

- Caring and nurturing
- Relations-oriented and socially skilful
- Supportive and considerate
- Open, candid, honest and self-aware
- Consultative and collaborative
- Empathetic
- Intuitive and sensitive to others' feelings
- Decisive and determined
- Far-sighted with a vision
- Highly motivated/ able to motivate others
- Self-regulatory and able to exercise self-control
- Fair, just and unbiased
- Sympathetic, warm and humane
- Communicative
- Intelligent and efficient
- Well-principled
- Passionate about one's work and beliefs
- Self-confident and able to exercise self-initiative
- Assertive and perseverant
- Able to lead and influence people

These were chosen on the grounds that they are the most frequently cited attributes by various researchers, who suggested that they are of great value and significance in their respective scholarly works (Nanus, 1992; Dimmock, 2003; Callan, 2001; Horne and Stedman-Jones, 2001; Cherniss, 1998; Adair, 1998, in Bollington, 1999; TTA's, 1998, in Bollington, 1999). As these are mostly drawn from the literature of western countries, the

researcher wanted to test these concepts from existing literature against the perceptions of the sample respondents, through requesting them to identify from the above list no more than ten attributes/competencies which they felt to be applicable to them.

This checklist/device was intended as a framework to help stimulate and guide the respondents to reflect upon and think about issues that were of particular concern to them, such as challenges, leadership competencies and the possible impact of gender on their effectiveness as higher education leaders, with particular reference to the context in which the respondents found themselves.

In addition to the above checklist, seven areas of potential research interest associated with effectiveness of higher education leadership in Hong Kong, ranging from leadership competencies and styles, authority/power, emotional intelligence, self-development, culture, general effectiveness and gender stereotyping, were subsequently identified for examination and study. Under each area, questions were designed with a view to obtaining information from the group of respondents (14 in total) regarding their perceptions of the competencies that had enabled them to lead effectively, the influence of culture and authority/power on their ability to lead, and the possible impact that gender may have had on their effectiveness as higher education leaders in Hong Kong. The researcher intended, through analysis of the individual interviews, to identify the enabling competencies associated with the effectiveness of higher education leadership and the likelihood that gender might have an impact on the effectiveness of higher education leaders in Hong Kong.

The interview guide developed for the individual interviews is attached in Appendix III.

3.5.3 Pilot Study

As a preliminary step to the investigation, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of four leaders, two males and two females, holding leadership positions in the HKHEIs, ranging from Academic Dean, Head of community college to Head of administrative unit.

The pilot study set out to achieve two main purposes: the first was to test and ascertain the lucidity, validity and feasibility of the research questions in order to prepare for the later

stage of extensive research intended for this study; the second was to test out and explore in greater detail the areas and themes highlighted in the literature review; and the third, to provide an opportunity to improve and fine-tune the research questions so as to prepare for the later stage of the research.

The pilot study was undertaken through individual interviews, which were considered an appropriate research instrument for collecting research data in an efficient and timely manner. A relatively long interview guide was mapped out with a view to covering most, if not all, themes covered in the research questions and identified in the literature review. One face-to-face interview only was carried out with each of the four respondents individually. The researcher had clearly informed the participants that the interviews would be in-depth and were anticipated to last for approximately one and a half to two hours. As a matter of fact, the interviews did turn out to be of that duration.

As all four respondents were known to the researcher through prior contacts and liaison at work, the researcher decided to approach them by telephone to secure their verbal consent to participate in the pilot research. A follow-up invitation letter outlining all necessary details regarding the research including the nature, theme, areas of interest and estimated duration of the pilot study, was forwarded to the four participants via email. The researcher did not find it necessary to provide them with the interview guide before or during the interview, given the prior knowledge conveyed to them both verbally and in writing. In any event, the researcher did assure the respondents that their identities would be kept anonymous and the information they provided would be kept strictly confidential.

The four interviews were conducted at the participants' offices to suit their convenience and were audio-taped and recorded. In addition, the researcher took detailed field notes/records of the answers provided by the interviewees. Of the four participants, one of them did not provide any answers to the research questions, but commented on the way the questions should be re-phrased or improved.

At the end of each interview, the participants were asked to provide their feedback and comments on the interview as a whole, inclusive of the interview guide, and also the process and manner of conducting the interview. They were also requested, as far as possible, to suggest ways for improving each and every aspect of the interview with a view

to facilitating the conduct of the later stage of the research, also primarily via interviews. The researcher took the comments and suggestions of the participants in the pilot study into consideration and made some changes to the interview questions as and when deemed appropriate. The pilot interview questions are attached as Appendix I.

3.5.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data on the respondents' perceptions, thoughts and feelings were collected mainly through individual face-to-face in-depth interviews. As all respondents had an extremely busy and hectic work schedule, the researcher managed to arrange only one face-to-face interview with each one of them individually.

In accordance with the advice of her supervisor at the time, that eight respondents would constitute a reasonable sample for qualitative research of this nature and scale, the researcher identified eight potential participants, four men and four women leaders of various UGC-funded HEIs in Hong Kong. All four male leaders held positions at the rank of Vice-President and Associate Vice-President, while only three of the four female leaders held or had held positions at the presidential rank/ level, and the remaining female leader was heading the community college set up by one of the eight UGC-funded institutions. The researcher was aware of the need to obtain comparable data across the sample of leaders, who, ideally speaking, should be occupying positions at the same level of seniority. Unfortunately, owing to the under-representation of females in leadership positions in higher education in Hong Kong, the researcher could not locate the fourth female leader at the Vice-President or Associate Vice-President level.

At a later stage, upon the advice of a temporary supervisor who stressed that a sample size of only eight respondents was too small for conducting an adequate research, the sample size was subsequently expanded to include four more male leaders, three at the Vice-President/Associate Vice-President level and one at the rank of Faculty Dean, and also two more female leaders, one holding the post of Dean of a Learning Support Unit, and the other, that of Head of Community College, of two UGC-funded HEIs respectively. The majority of the respondents were known to the researcher through contacts at work, while a small number of them were recommended to the researcher as likely candidates who might be interested in participating in the research.

To arrange for individual interviews, the researcher approached the potential participants first by phone to secure their verbal consent to take part in the interviews. Soon after, invitation letters (Appendix II) were sent to the potential respondents, mostly via email, recapitulating the details of the study, requesting their participation and confirming the arrangements for interviews. However, initial contact and subsequent liaisons with one female respondent who is currently staying abroad had to be made through email communication only.

Subsequently, individual face to face in-depth interviews were conducted with 14 leaders from different HEIs in Hong Kong. All interviews were conducted on site, that is, at the campuses of the HEIs, or offices of the respondents. The interviews were scheduled to last for one and a half hours. In general, the duration of the interviews varied from one and a half to two hours. These were supplemented by email dialogues, as deemed appropriate for this study. The data collection process commenced in April/May 2004, continued through to 2006, and was completed by November 2006.

At the start of the interview, the researcher explained once again the purpose/objective of the study, and sought permission from the respondents to tape record the interviews. Audio-recording served the purpose of enhancing the accuracy of the transcriptions and mitigating possible misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the handwritten field notes taken during each interview. The researcher followed the interview guide most of the time, but agreed with the respondents that when deemed appropriate, it might be possible to deviate from the interview guide (Appendix III) and converse freely in any areas or share any information which they believed to be of relevance to the study. The researcher also reassured the respondents that all data gathered would be treated with the strictest confidence and that their identities be kept anonymous in the final reporting.

On the whole, the researcher managed to establish and maintain rapport with the respondents. As Johnson (1994) remarked, “The onus is on the researcher as interviewer...to establish and maintain a socially acceptable interview relationship with the interviewee, while still fulfilling the aims of the interview to acquire individualised information relevant to the research” (pp.48-49). According to Patton (2002), “rapport is built on the ability to convey empathy and understanding without judgment” (p.366), and must be established in such a manner that the neutrality of the researcher will not be

undermined. A good rapport was necessary and important, particularly when most of the respondents were occupying senior positions, had an extremely hectic and busy work schedule and could not afford to spend too much time on the interviews. As a matter of fact, four of the interviews had to be split into two sessions, for the reason that the respondents were suddenly caught up with some other urgent commitments. Their seniority in the institutional hierarchy, in conjunction with a lack of time and an imperative to meet contingent work commitments and demands, had a two-fold impact on the nature of the data collected: on the one hand, the researcher could expect to collect sensitive, confidential and otherwise normally inaccessible data; on the other hand, as the respondents could ill afford to devote more time to the interviews, the data collected might be restricted and lacking in depth, thoroughness and comprehensiveness required to warrant their credibility.

Overall, the interviews were conducted smoothly with minimal disruptions and interruptions. The interviewees tried their best to respond to the questions posed, pausing occasionally to recall and reflect upon areas or issues that related closely to their past experiences, and which could be of significant relevance to the study. Generally speaking, most of the respondents participating in this study were quite thorough and articulate in their responses.

3.5.5 The Role/Position of the Researcher

According to Easterby-Smith et al. (1994), the involvement of the researcher in the interpretive research approach, as opposed to the independence of the researcher characterising positivist approach, represents the basic dichotomy between the two research approaches. The issue of the involvement of the researcher was explored further in an approach known as co-operative inquiry (Reason, 1988). As observed by Easterby-Smith et al. (1994), this approach “focuses on the experiences and explanations of the individuals concerned” (p.85) resulting in the research participants becoming partners in the research process (Reason, 1988). Besides, as remarked by Hall (1996), the characteristics of the researcher tend to influence the willingness of the interviewees to spare their time to take part in the research. Indeed, the potential influence of the researcher is believed to be much greater in forging rapport in face-to-face interviews.

The researcher in the present study has accumulated ample experience as a lecturer and subsequently a senior manager/administrator in one of the self-financing HEIs in Hong Kong. She was able to draw on such experience, together with her knowledge of the bureaucracy of the higher education sector in Hong Kong, to establish rapport and credibility with the respondents participating in the study. Through attentive listening and probing skills, the researcher was also able to instil trust in the respondents, thereby inviting, encouraging and stimulating them to reflect upon and talk about their past and/or current experiences, as well as share their perceptions, thoughts and feelings.

3.6 Data Analysis

The term ‘data analysis’ was defined by Minichiello et al. (1990) as “the process of systematically arranging and presenting information in order to research for ideas” (p.285), aiming “to find meaning in the information collected” (p.285).

In this study, data were collected mainly through in-depth interviews, which were taped for subsequent detailed analysis. Detailed field notes were taken during the interviews for data cross-checking and verifying with the audio tapes. The taped interviews were then transcribed for analysis purposes. This process of “transcribing the interviews from an oral to a written mode structures the interview conversations in a form which is amenable for closer analysis” (Kvale, 1996, p.168). The audio recording was transcribed verbatim to reflect and portray as realistic and accurate a picture as possible. As recommended by Powney and Watts (1987), the transcription should, in the first place, “represent the whole contribution from the interview, be verbatim as far as possible, including hesitations, phases, laughs, sighs, coughs and so on. The second is to replay the conversation whilst entering emphasis, annotation and comment” (p.148).

The researcher read through the transcribed interviews carefully and meticulously, line by line, in order to “obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning” (Creswell, 2003, p.191) and ascertain the clues to be extracted from them for data interpretation and construction of meaning. In order to achieve these objectives, the researcher made and noted remarks or reflections in the margins, and also started to write

down and record ideas or general thoughts about the data as they came to mind. Four sample interview transcripts are included in Appendix IV.

To organise the large volume of data collected and conduct the detailed data analysis, the researcher made use of coding, which in the words of Rossman and Rallis (1998), “is the process of organising the material into ‘chunks’ before bringing meaning to those ‘chunks’ ” (p.171). According to Basit (2003), coding or categorising the data plays an important role in data analysis. Besides helping “to organise and make sense of textual data” (p.143), coding was also viewed by Seidel and Kelle as assuming the crucial role of “noticing relevant phenomena; collecting examples of those phenomena; and analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures” (as cited in Basit, 2003, p.144). As suggested by Dey (1993), coding “involves sub-dividing the data as well as assigning categories”, through using codes or categories, which are “tags or labels for allocating units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (p.144). The study of Gough and Scott (2000) identified two distinct yet linked phases to coding: the one emphasising “meanings inside the research context”, while the other focusing on “what may be meaningful to outside audiences” (p.144). In the present study, as and when appropriate, coding categories were developed and affixed to different sections of the interview transcripts to classify and categorise diverse groupings of words relating to the specific research questions and themes.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Research

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness relates to determining the extent to which the research result can be taken as authentic and credible. In the present study, trustworthiness was established and warranted through applying the criteria of reliability, validity, transferability or generalisability.

3.7.1 Reliability

Despite the claim made by Hammersley as cited by Bush (2002) “that there is no widely accepted definition of reliability or validity, ... the view that reliability relates to the probability that repeating a research procedure or method would produce identical or

similar results” (p.60) still receives wide support. In simple terms, “reliability is the extent to which a measurement procedure yields the same answer however and whenever it is carried out” (Kirk & Miller, 1990, p.19). Such notion engenders the conviction that consistency can be ensured through replicating the due process and the findings. Reliability, however, hinges largely on a highly structured research instrument, which should desirably be fit for purpose.

In this study, the adoption of a semi-structured approach and the modification of the interview guide so as to probe or prompt the respondents resulted in the decrease in reliability. Nevertheless, this was found to be inevitable as the need to probe or prompt the respondents for reflecting, revealing and unfolding more of their perceptions, views and feelings surpassed the desire to increase the reliability of the interview findings. The experiences, feelings, perceptions and opinions of each respondent were unique and distinctive, and were bound to vary from those of other respondents. The respondents could not be expected to give consistent or identical answers to the standard set of questions comprising the interview guide and posed during the individual interviews. However, the fact that the researcher also played the role of the interviewer rendered it unnecessary to involve multiple field-workers, and to have comparable data collection protocols. Furthermore, the collection of data from eight male and six female leaders in leadership/management positions at different levels and eras across all eight UGC-funded HEIs as well as two other self-financing private HEIs, served to cover a comprehensive range of appropriate settings, times and respondents to address the issues suggested in the specific research questions. Hence although reliability for qualitative research of this nature was undermined by the apparent lack of consistency in the data collected, it could be ascertained by means of the above two measures, and might be balanced by a need for ascertaining validity.

3.7.2 Validity

Validity refers to “the extent to which an indicator is a measure of what the researcher wishes to measure” (Sapsford & Evans, as cited in Bush, 2002, p.65), and reveals “whether an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe” (Bell, as cited in Bush, 2002, p.65). While the concept of reliability is concerned with the research instrument, the concept of validity in fact relates to the data. As described by Robson

(1993), “validity is concerned with whether the findings are ‘really’ about what they appear to be about” (p.66). In the words of Maxwell (1996), validity refers to “the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (p.87). According to Kirk and Miller (1990), however, validity is simply “the extent to which a measurement procedure gives the correct answer” (p.19).

In the present study, the prolonged period of data collection (from July 2004 to November 2006) with the respondents from across ten HEIs in Hong Kong embracing one government-established but self-financing, one privately-funded and eight UGC-funded institutions, allowed ample time for the researcher to gather detailed, relevant and rich data, and also to cross-check the data for accuracy and clarity. The data were cross-checked against the detailed field notes taken during the interviews, as well as the feedback provided by the respondents on the draft transcripts forwarded to them via email. In addition, the interviews were recorded, transcribed and stored to serve as a benchmark against which subsequent data analyses and interpretations could be referred to and compared to ensure accuracy (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.313). It is hoped that such measures can help to enhance the credibility of the data.

In regard to qualitative research, increased reliability of the interview is believed to entail decreased validity. In the words of Kitwood (as cited in Cohen & Manion, 1994):

In proportion to the extent to which “reliability” is enhanced by rationalisation, [meaning control] “validity” would decrease. For the main purpose of using an interview in research is that it is believed that in an interpersonal encounter people are more likely to disclose aspects of themselves, their thoughts, their feelings and values, than they would in a less human situation ... In other words, the distinctively human element in the interview is necessary to its “validity” (p.282).

It is evident that the human element is identifiable in the person of the researcher interviewer, who in this context, is an integral part of the research instrument, the in-depth interview, as suggested by Seidman (1991), “in in-depth interviewing we recognise and affirm the role of the instrument, the human interviewer” (p.16).

The researcher in the present study was able to draw on her experience as a senior manager/administrator in the higher education sector in Hong Kong to develop rapport

with the respondents and establish credibility. These were enhanced by the researcher's knowledge of the hierarchy and bureaucracy of higher education in Hong Kong, her previous teaching experience in Hong Kong schools and HEIs, as well as her knowledge of the working conditions and environment in local HEIs. Moreover, through vigorous listening and appropriate attention, concentration and observation, the researcher was able to cultivate a positive atmosphere of trust and candidness which encouraged and motivated the respondents participating in the study to reflect on past events, talk freely about their personal experiences, and share their feelings, attitudes, views and perceptions.

In another instance, validity can be achieved through minimising bias, which may be engendered through the respective characteristics of the interviewer and the respondent, together with the content of the questions posed during the interview. The researcher in the present study exerted great efforts to make the respondents feel at ease through engaging them in free and relaxing conversations, to ensure that the interviews conducted would be perceived as friendly transactions. At times, some of the respondents misunderstood the questions being asked and deviated from giving appropriate and relevant answers. On such occasions, the researcher initially allowed the respondents to talk freely for a while without interrupting them, in the hope that they would gradually switch back to the scope and area relating to the questions and prompting them only when they were deemed to be too much off the right track. In this way, the researcher aimed to ensure that the data collected were relevant, accurate and credible.

3.7.3 Generalisability or Transferability

The concept of generalisability or transferability relates to the likely ability to transfer current findings to other contexts or to generalise from the findings of one research project to other wider circumstances. The extent to which current findings are transferable to other contexts is generally acknowledged to hinge on the degree of similarity between the contexts.

In this study, generalisability or transferability was improved through employing purposive sampling which embraces respondents of different backgrounds and experiences. Furthermore, the use of audio-taped interview recordings and field notes, together with

data analysis of the interview transcripts, served to enhance the value of “thick description” referred to by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.316). The present study, however, did not aim to generate generalisations which can be transferred to other contexts. Instead, its main purpose was to test the concepts identified from existing literature against the samples of research participants chosen and studied, interpret their perceptions, views and experiences, and ultimately identify the leadership styles and competencies contributing to what they perceived as effectiveness of leadership in higher education, investigate the influence of culture and power/authority on the ability of the respondents to lead effectively, and explore the likely impact of gender on the effectiveness of the respondents as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong.

Nevertheless, given the depth of the investigation, there might be the possibility for a small degree of generalisation to other contexts, for example, those where similar changes in the nature of higher education are taking place.

3.7.4 Triangulation

Since this research aimed at studying the perceptions, views and experiences of the respondents as reflected in the data collected, the need to cross-check and triangulate the data collected to ascertain and confirm its validity and reliability was therefore precluded. Hence the researcher was satisfied with collecting the required data through the only means of conducting individual in-depth interviews.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In the present study, two major and important ethical principles pertaining to human research, namely, informed consent and confidentiality/ anonymity, were being observed.

3.8.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent, in the words of Kvale (1996) “entails informing the research subjects about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design” (p.112). On the same issue, Anderson and Arsenault (1998) remarked that “the involved

participants must be informed of the nature and purpose of the research and must consent to participate without coercion” (p.18). Berger and Patchner (1994), on the other hand, pointed out that individuals must be explicitly provided with the option as regards whether or not they wish to participate voluntarily in the research.

In the present study, initial informed consent of the cohort of male and female higher education leaders chosen for participating in the research had been obtained verbally by phone. A formal invitation letter was subsequently mailed to each potential participant explaining the purpose and nature of the study and seeking the consent of each one of them to take part in the research interview. As a matter of fact, prior to the actual conduct of the interviews, the potential interviewees had the right to decide whether or not they wished to be interviewed, and might even withdraw from the study at any time. During the interviews, they could refrain from providing answers to any questions which they felt uneasy and uncomfortable to answer.

3.8.2 Confidentiality/Anonymity

According to Kvale (1996), “confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the subjects will not be reported” (p.114). Anderson and Arsenault (1998) took this further and explained that “confidential information implies that the identity of the individual will remain anonymous” (p.20).

In the official invitation letters, the participants were assured that confidentiality and anonymity would be guaranteed and maintained. Before conducting the interviews, for the purpose of safeguarding confidentiality and privacy, the respondents were assured once again that their identities would not be disclosed, and that each of them was addressed under a pseudonym or reference code in the reporting of findings and data analysis. To ensure anonymity, all relevant information that might lead to easy identification, such as the names of the institutions in which they were currently or previously working or any related persons, was not disclosed, and was deleted, changed or known under reference codes.

However, in view of the small size of the sample, readers could easily identify a fair number of the respondents despite the utmost effort of the researcher to preserve

anonymity. The respondents appeared to be fully aware of and concurred to the possibility that readers would have no difficulty in guessing and recognising their identities as leaders of the HKHEIs. Furthermore, any events and incidents that might easily lead to a disclosure of the identity of the respondents and the institutions were either being described very briefly, or else not being disclosed or ever deleted.

Besides, given that the imposition on the interviewees' time is a common ethical issue of interviewing, only one in-depth interview was conducted with each respondent so as to impose as little as possible on the time of the respondents.

3.9 Limitations of the Study

The research design, data collection and analysis are limited in certain aspects, which are summarised as follows:-

3.9.1 Access

The major problem confronting the researcher in conducting this study was how to access potential and suitable respondents. As women are still under-represented in leadership positions in the HKHEIs, the researcher found it extremely difficult to select a suitable sample of female leaders from a relatively restricted and small population. This explains why the samples of female leaders selected for this study were of different ethnic origins, cultures and ranks. In fact, the paucity of female senior managers/administrators at the rank of Vice-President and Associate Vice-President in the HEIs in Hong Kong rendered it difficult to confine the sample to solely female leaders at that particular rank and level. In view of this phenomenon, the sample included also recently retired females who had been incumbents of posts at that rank.

The researcher made several attempts to enlarge the sample size particularly of female leaders, first by phone to sound out their interests to participate in their research, then by written invitation usually forwarded by email. Some female leaders, in particular a few currently in post, declined the invitation and refused to take part, generally on the pretext of pre-occupation with work and accordingly shortage of time.

3.9.2 Sample Size

In view of the difficulties in gaining access spelt out and depicted above, the present study was thus confined to examining, analysing and interpreting the perceptions, views and experiences of a relatively small cohort of eight male and six female higher education leaders in Hong Kong, who consented to participate in the research. However, the information they provided in the interviews in terms of their feelings, views and perceptions could not be regarded as representative of leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong.

3.9.3 Generalisability

The small sample size inevitably limits the likelihood and extent to which the research findings can be transferred or generalised to all higher education leaders in Hong Kong or further afield. Nevertheless, this limitation cannot be taken to undermine the significance and value of the present research, since the main objective of the study as indicated above was to examine, analyse and interpret the perceptions, views and experiences of the small group of respondents in the context of the study. Despite the possibility that a certain degree of generalisation to similar settings and contexts may be contemplated, any attempt in actual practice to generalise the findings to other contexts should be made with extreme cautiousness and prudence.

3.9.4 Medium of Communication

Almost all the interviews, with the exception of one, were conducted in English. This was because the researcher wanted to minimise, as far as possible, inappropriate, inaccurate and inept translations from Chinese into English, which might lead to misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the data collected that constituted the research findings. Before the start of the interviews, the researcher informed the respondents of the intention to conduct the interviews in English, and all except one, consented to using English as the medium of communication. Throughout the interviews, the researcher observed that the participants, especially those whose mother tongues are English, and given their academic backgrounds and experiences, had no difficulty in expressing themselves in English. The researcher translated the interview conducted in Cantonese based on the detailed field notes taken in English during the interview. In general, the researcher checked the transcripts against the

detailed field notes for accuracy, and also forwarded the transcripts to the respondents to seek verification and invite comments as well as feedback for factual accuracy.

3.9.5 Data Collection

In the first instance, as one respondent suggested, the validity of the data could be greatly enhanced if the views, perceptions and feelings of the subordinates working under the immediate supervision of the leaders could be sought and obtained. However, in view of constant personnel changes within the units or departments of which the respondents were responsible, the study was thus confined to collecting and investigating only the views and perceptions of the small group of leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong. The conduct of an 180° collection of data through interviewing subordinates and peers could be a salient feature and important focus for future research undertaken on the same area of interest.

Insufficient time to conduct the interviews could also pose a problem and restriction to this study. Most of the participants had very busy work schedules, and kept watch scrupulously over their time expended on the interviews. As a matter of fact, most of them explicitly requested and insisted that the duration of the individual interviews could not exceed one and a half hours. For a few of them, the researcher even had to split the interviews into two parts, and had to conduct the second part after a short lapse of time. Consequently, this shortage of time might have restricted the respondents from undertaking thorough and extensive self-reflections and recollections.

Furthermore, there might be a discrepancy between what was unfolded to the researcher during the interview by the respondents and their real opinions and perceptions. The usual problem with interviewees/respondents was that they might be inclined to give responses which they thought could meet the expectation of the interviewer/researcher, and might therefore tell the interviewer what they thought or believed the interviewer/researcher wanted to hear. In the present study, since the majority of the respondents were known to the researcher through contacts at work, the respondents might not be fully objective in providing answers to the questions posed during the interviews. However, the fact that the interviewer was known and trusted by them would have improved the validity of the research data so collected.

Last but not least was the difficulty experienced in trying to obtain statistical data on the number and job ranks of male and female leaders of the Hong Kong HEIs for comparative study purposes. The researcher approached the human resources offices of the various institutions, as well as relevant government offices such as the Education Bureau (previously known as the Education and Manpower Bureau) and the UGC, but neither of them was in a position to provide such statistical data for comparison. The researcher thus conducted an internet search browsed through the website of each institution to access the profiles of principal officers and officers, as well as the heads of various administrative units and also academic faculties and departments of each institution, and counted the approximate numbers of males and females to be included under the different job ranks categorised as “leadership” ranks. Nevertheless, the websites of some institutions, either deliberately or for want of updating, did not reveal the complete staff lists of all their constituent offices/units/departments. Moreover, it was difficult at times to distinguish and ascertain the gender of individuals just from the names, especially when only Chinese first names instead of English Christian names were provided. For these reasons, the above means provided at best only an approximation.

On the whole, in spite of the problems, difficulties and limitations indicated above, it is hoped that the primary research instrument chosen and used in this study, in-depth interviewing, has proven appropriate for the purpose of this study, and could be seen to be effective and useful in generating relevant findings in spite of apparent limits on generalisations. The interpretations of the perceptions and experiences of the group of leaders participating in the research are the source of the researcher’s interest in the study and can be said to represent her contribution to the knowledge.

3.10 Summary

This chapter has considered and presented aspects of the research methodology adopted in the present study. Firstly, the justifications for adopting the interpretive and qualitative approach in this study were explained. Secondly, an account was given of the research design, highlighting the issue of research sampling. Thirdly, the data collection procedures, detailing the use of in-depth interviewing in the form of semi-structured interviews as the primary research instrument to gain insight into the perceptions, views and experiences of

the respondents and to address the research questions, were described in details. Fourthly, the details regarding data analysis were indicated. Fifthly, the trustworthiness of the research, in terms of reliability, validity and generalisability/transferability, was reviewed and discussed. Sixthly, the issue of ethical considerations was addressed. Lastly, an overview of some major limitations of the study was presented and discussed.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the present study, which are based on the data collected from the interviews with the cohort of 14 (eight male and six female) leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong.

The chapter covers three main sections, each of which sets out to address one of the three specific research questions of the study:

1. What are the perceptions of the leadership styles and competencies which have enabled these higher education leaders to lead effectively?
2. How do these leaders perceive that culture and authority/power have influenced their ability to lead effectively?
3. What impact is gender perceived to have on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong?

The interviews focused primarily on the perceptions and views of the small group of higher education leaders in Hong Kong on the leadership styles and competencies facilitating effective higher education leadership, and also the influence of culture, authority/power and the impact of gender on effectiveness of leadership in higher education. For the purpose of identification, the six female leaders were known under the pseudonyms of R1, R2, R3, R4, R5 and R6, while the eight male leaders were identified as R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13 and R14.

4.2 Leadership Styles and Competencies Enabling Higher Education Leaders to Lead Effectively

The present study set out to investigate the leadership styles and competencies perceived by the respondents to have enabled them to lead effectively. Most of the respondents

provided rich and substantial data when reflecting upon the skills, abilities and characteristics considered as essential competencies contributing to their effectiveness as higher education leaders.

However, the researcher found that the respondents did not specially refer to any of the three predominant leadership styles in the current literature, namely, transactional, transformational and distributed. Rather, the respondents focused on addressing a wide array of competencies which they shared in common and pertained mostly to transformational and distributed leadership styles. The competencies identified by the respondents as being associated with transformational dimensions included vision/shared vision, inspirational motivation to elevate staff performance, change leadership, empowerment, self and staff development, interpersonal skills, communication skills, strategic focus, teamwork and collective leadership. The respondents further identified a number of competencies that might be expected of educational leaders adopting the distributed approach to leadership. Most of these coincided with the dimensions associated with transformational leadership, including interpersonal skills, teamwork, empowerment, motivation with the implied ability to influence followers, and shared/collective leadership. There were relatively fewer allusions to competencies pertaining to the transactional approach to leadership, which included dimensions and elements associated with achievement of outcomes, business and entrepreneurial skills and also development and management of resources. Overall, the competencies perceived by the respondents as contributing to effectiveness of leadership in higher education were compatible with those included in Callan's (2001) management and leadership capability framework developed specifically for the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

The following sections present the competencies identified by the respondents in the same order as those incorporated in Callan's (2001) capability framework. This order is consistent with that presented in the literature review in chapter 2. It confirms the importance and usefulness of Callan's (2001) framework as a comprehensive and justifiable basis for presenting the competencies perceived by the respondents as having enabled them to lead effectively. It can therefore be said to also represent the elements that appeared most important in the data on competencies.

4.2.1 Corporate Vision and Direction

Many of the respondents shared the view that corporate vision and direction is a crucial competency that had enabled them to lead effectively as higher education leaders. In the first instance, the vision so developed would need to be for the common good and not for self-interest. The following comments from R3 reflect this view:

... Leaders must have a vision for the common good and benefit of the university ... the university as a whole can benefit from it. Also they must not be short-sighted. They have to think ahead of what should be done, must be more visionary and forward-looking. (R3)

Both R1 and R10 talked about the importance for leaders of the HKHEIs to have a corporate vision and direction, and how this had helped them to lead with a high degree of effectiveness. R1 succeeded in setting a future direction and developing a corporate vision for the institution through involving and working with staff of the institution to give them a sense of ownership of the vision. She believed that this had a significant bearing on the effectiveness of her leadership, as “the genuine excitement and passion about the vision should have been motivating the faculty staff”.

R10 perceived vision as instrumental to resolving difficulties and problems, as well as energising others to achieve the organisational goal.

I wish to start things off with a vision and design the means according to the ends, putting output before feasibility ... If you have a vision, and you work carefully and correctly, difficulties can be resolved, hurdles can be jumped over and things can happen.

The importance for educational leaders to align their personal vision with the corporate vision of the institution to ensure that the two are compatible with each other was highlighted by R5, who stressed that “awareness of the ultimate goal of the organisation one’s working in and how one can add value to the organisation” through aligning the personal vision with the corporate vision was pivotal to effective leadership.

Two of the respondents, R7 and R11, considered that team-building leading to achievement of corporate vision is one of the most crucial competencies that had enabled them to lead effectively, particularly when facing “external competition, increasing scarcity of resources and politicisation of the external environment”. They reported on what they had experienced as leaders of the HKHEIs in building a staff team and inspiring team members to commit their concerted and dedicated efforts to achieving the vision and the organisational goal. They recounted their perceptions and experiences in the following remarks:

What I think I’ve been able to contribute is really to build up this team. Everybody would try to work together for the common goal. (R7)

I’m trying to get into partnerships with the staff. This seems the right way to go. Even with minor junior staff, they feel at ease if they are in partnership with you ... (R11)

The importance of vision as a source of inspiration was again highlighted by R6, R7, R8 and R11 respectively. While R6 suggested that leaders of the HKHEIs should be able to make use of the corporate vision to lead and inspire staff to commit to achieving the vision, R7, on the other hand, believed that inspiring staff “to commit themselves to achieve the vision together”, through complementing the narrow perspective of his colleagues at the operational level with a broader perspective at the institutional level, had enabled him to lead effectively. R8, nevertheless, emphasised the importance of establishing and steering the direction of the institution, whereas R11 described his ability to set a clear direction for staff to follow and inspire them to achieve the vision as being pivotal to enhancing the effectiveness of his leadership. They described their experiences in the following terms:

The role of a leader is to give guidance, formulate plans and set rules and regulations. He/She must be far-sighted, forward-looking, and capable of setting a direction and building a vision, and using it to inspire his/her subordinates to commit to achieving the vision and goals. (R6)

In this institution, the leader is believed to be a person who tries to steer the direction of the organisation. I try to look at things which I believe we’re all facing, so that I can set the direction ahead, and my colleagues are then able to steer their work along that direction. (R8)

A leader's job is to set a clear direction and goals which staff would agree to follow and pursue, and are encouraged and trained to achieve those goals. (R11)

R10 saw the link between vision and strategy, and adopted coherent strategic planning as an effective measure to facilitate the achievement of vision. He explained his perception in the following terms:

If you have a vision, you'll have to translate and realise your vision ...But in order for the vision to become reality, we need to have a plan. We need to know how to translate the vision into a tangible plan ... (R10)

4.2.2 Strategic Focus

Four of the respondents, R1, R10, R12 and R13, believed that their ability to focus strategically was one of the core competencies that had enabled them to lead effectively. Although they each recounted their experiences from a different perspective, they nevertheless shared some common areas of concerns which coincided with some of the elements that Callan (2001) conceptually associated with strategic focus, including an emphasis on the future, strategic analysis, strategic thinking, strategic planning, strategic assessment of possible solutions, strategic alliances and establishment of a network of relationships.

The above respondents recalled their experiences in thinking and analysing strategically as well as emphasising and anticipating the future, and each had a different story to tell. Inevitably, their individual strategic focus varied one from the other, contingent upon the diverse nature of their scope of work. Notwithstanding such diversity in strategic focus, each respondent was able to analyse the environment, as well as think, plan and assess possible solutions strategically.

R1, given her knowledge of China and of the Chinese language, had contributed to the development of higher education in Mainland China. She achieved this through focussing strategically on organising and leading a doctoral training project which she recalled "required a lot of leadership", and had taken her "actually 2 years to obtain a major grant of about half a million dollars, to plan for the whole programme for joint training of doctoral students of a university in Southern China ...".

R10, however, focused strategically on looking and planning ahead for the future:

My training is fundamentally as a planner, so I try to plan. Maybe the advantage is I would not stay with ... what is basically at this moment. I want to see what's next ... I try to see what we can do next after something's been done.

Meanwhile, R12 had as his strategic focus the academic provision of sub-degree programmes in response to the HKSAR Government's policy. Like R10, R12 sought to achieve this also through planning "a lot of activities well ahead", and allowing ample time for contingency plans. He commented on his strategy as follows:

I am a thinker; I always think along different dimensions well ahead of time ... so I always start with when I need the final outcomes to be materialised and work backwards and give myself sufficient time.

R13, in turn, focused on upholding Hong Kong's international standing and standard, and also maintaining its connections with overseas countries and Mainland China. In his words,

In the Hong Kong context, it should be understood that Hong Kong is an international city, so it must maintain its links with overseas countries and the Mainland, and must also uphold its international standard and status. It is necessary to assess various plans and achievements and try to see whether any extra work would need to be completed in order to achieve all set goals.

4.2.3 Achievement of Outcomes

Seven of the 14 respondents believed that one of the essential competencies which had enabled them to lead effectively was the aspiration and felt need for achievement. According to them, a leader would need to be outcome-oriented, and capable of inspiring both staff and students to achieve results of long-term value and the highest level of quality. R10, for instance, viewed that his ability to achieve outcomes had enabled him to lead effectively, and explained his view as follows:

I think the achievement of leadership is basically in the eventual outcome. When I was a Dean, the faculty underwent significant development. When I was in charge of fund-raising, the faculty had a remarkable performance and that was the ultimate measurement of leadership.

R2, R4 and R9 opined that the capability to inspire staff to perform and achieve outcomes of long-term value and the highest level of quality was a crucial competency that had contributed to the effectiveness of their leadership. R2 spoke of her ability to achieve results of long-term value in terms of leading the institution to successfully undergo programme validations and achieve self-accrediting status. She elaborated as follows:

Generally, if you consider what performance indicators are for effective leadership, I suppose meeting the objectives of getting the programmes validated and helping the institution to attain self-accrediting status would be the evidence of my capability to lead the staff and particular projects.

R4 explained how she had been capable of inspiring staff to resolve problems, elevate their performance and “achieve the best outcome” through effective verbal communication in face-to-face meetings.

R9 also referred to programme validation to illustrate how he had been able to motivate and energise the staff team to achieve the desired successful outcomes and encourage them to actively participate in the process. He recounted his ability as follows:

I motivate everybody to think of the outcome of the task, and the task counts on joint effort ... all staff members are part of it ... once they do their best, I’m sure things will work out.

R2 was the only respondent who talked about fostering a culture of achievement in the institution, through establishing and putting in place effective systems with due processes and procedures for governance and academic quality assurance to enhance effectiveness in her leadership. She described her perceptions below:

I think what I can do is to set up sound systems for governance and academic quality assurance; that means to get staff accept and develop the culture that is agreeable to them, the collaborative culture that goes well with them.

The impact of change leadership on the achievement of outcomes was highlighted by R5, who headed the administration of student affairs. She perceived the need to identify and evaluate student learning outcomes which the university had set out to achieve and modified the strategic action plan to achieve the desired outcomes. She then examined the current practices, activities and assessment tools for achieving those learning outcomes,

and consulted her colleagues about the best way to proceed. She perceived that adopting such strategic change measures had enabled her to lead effectively.

Three respondents, R4, R5 and R8, considered that competent leaders and managers should be accountable to external agencies for their own performance and that of their subordinates, and for the activities of the organisation. They had positive recollections of their own experiences in this regard, and believed that such a competency had enabled them to lead effectively. R4 tried to be accountable for her own performance through conducting regular reviews of “the previous practices in problem-solving”. R5, nevertheless, was concerned about her obligation as leader of a HKHEI to be accountable to one of the key stakeholders of the institution, the taxpayers, for what she had been held responsible to do. She perceived that this had helped to ensure that students “are developed as whole persons and responsible citizens”. Her perceptions are reflected below:

Quality assurance used to be an exercise in the business sector only. Now quality assurance is also applicable to the education sector. And that is exactly what I am trying to do; we have to be accountable to taxpayers’ money. So I would make sure that we deliver what the taxpayers expected of us.

R8 saw the correlation between accountability and ownership, and believed that the ability of leaders of the HKHEIs to entrust staff with the full responsibility to discharge their duties for work assigned to them would enhance the effectiveness of their leadership. He made the following observation:

I think sometimes ownership is very important. If you give staff at the lower ranks the responsibility, they will have a sense of ownership. They feel they’re responsible for their work ... They will be more effective because they know their contributions are being treasured and they have input into the process as well.

4.2.4 Development and Management of Resources

Nine out of the 14 respondents believed that they had the ability to develop and manage resources, and identified this aptitude as a competency contributing to the effectiveness of their leadership. Most of these respondents, R2, R7, R9 and R12, addressed the issue of limited and stringent resources, and expressed their concern about how they had been obliged to work and achieve outcomes under resource constraints, with particular reference

to financial resources. They acknowledged that they often had to fight and compete with other parties both within and outside the institutions for a share of the scarce resources. R2, for instance, talked about the influence of a tight budget and scarce resources on her approach to work:

Here, the resources, including human and financial, have been very tight. This problem clearly influences the way in which leaders approach their work, and makes me very conscious of the need for teamwork and pooling of resources.

Other respondents like R7, R9 and R12 stressed that they had been facing the same problem of resource constraint, and proudly recalled how they had been able to strategically allocate and manage those limited resources to achieve the desired outcomes at the least cost, and were thus able to lead effectively. R7 reflected on how the HEI where he had been working, which started as a private institution and subsequently joined the public-funding sector, had all the time been working under stringent resources. However, the mutual support and sharing of the limited resources had the positive effect of building up the team and the community within the institution. His positive recollection was as follows:

So we believe that we have to be very thrifty in our operation and we got to learn how to use resources wisely. Funny enough, that difficult situation has actually helped us to build up the team and the community so that mutually we support each other and share the limited resources.

R9 had the following to say about his experience:

We've been constrained by macro factors like government policy, and funding is a good example. From a professional perspective, we consider it necessary to post a certain number of staff to each of the different levels. But the Government is not providing us with money. So we had to work out a solution for this problem.

Given his transfer from a UGC-funded university to a self-financing community college, R12 proudly recalled his experience as a strategic leader through being able to think creatively and flexibly about how to strategically and effectively deploy the limited resources in the following terms:

Because of the limited resources, I do need a lot of creative flexibilities to get the work done. My leadership style could be slightly more adaptive and

accommodating ... These days, we are all required to do more with less. But if we don't streamline or simplify some of the existing work procedures, we have to use extra resources to cope with the tidal wave of new challenges.

In regard to the need for leaders of the HKHEIs to compete or fight for resources, R6 recalled how her unit, operating in a competitive environment, had had "to compete with other units and outsiders" for external resources. Another respondent, R14, observed the contrary, and considered it necessary for the unit experiencing a deficiency of resources to count on the resources of other units to help address its concerns and meet its needs.

The possibility for leaders of the HEIs to make effective use of new technology to enhance institutional effectiveness was talked about briefly by R13 and R14. They both perceived this as a means to facilitate consultation, but viewed differently in regard to the attainment of outcomes. While R13 believed that the employment of new technology in the modern world of contemporary times rendered it feasible to share valuable experiences, expedite completion of work and meet deadlines thereby enhancing effectiveness, R14 saw that "this use of new technology would enable him to practise strategic consultative decision-making."

4.2.5 Change Leadership

R2 indicated the difficulties that she had experienced in attempting to bring about the changes perceived to be instrumental to the development of a particular department and the entire institution, and affirmed her capability to lead change:

At XXX, I had line management responsibility for a number of staff. So clearly, the way in which I led them depended on the nature of the functions that they're responsible for, and also the extent of their particular responsibilities and needs ... I had to deal with individual staff differently if I wanted to influence them and enable them to make the necessary change.

R12 reported that he had initiated change in relation to re-engineering of the work processes of all administrative units to facilitate improvement and help the institution to attain its goals in the following remarks:

Here, about 3 years ago, I was in charge of business process re-engineering to look at all the administrative units, to re-think how they should do their work and provide their services. As long as I make an impact, that impact is on change and improvement ... I initiated change to lead the institution on its road to achieve excellence, and that's how work is done and goals are accomplished ... People got to look at new and better ways of doing their work and there should be a review. A leader should initiate that kind of review from time to time.

Two of the respondents, R1 and R11, observed the need for leaders of change to be willing to solicit and listen to the views of others, and considered this element as pivotal to their ability to lead effectively. R1 recounted how she had provided her staff with the opportunity to express their views through what she believed to be a "fair and open process" channelled through the committee system. According to R1, every staff member was eventually satisfied with the outcome, and she had thus been able to gratify the sense of achievement among the staff members. R1 saw this as an opportunity to prove that she had the demonstrated capability to lead change, as illustrated in the following remarks:

We've been through a lot of changes; we have to go through re-structuring and programme validation process ... In that process, we did go through committees and the final decisions ought to be made by the Academic Board ... I thought it was a fair and open process whereby decisions are mutually understood and people have a chance to express their views. And in the end, everyone is satisfied with the result. I think that's the most important.

Similarly, R11 considered it important to consult other staff members to solicit consensus for plans and proposals, and stressed that collective wisdom was more desirable than individual wisdom.

We can't go out into the university with a blank sheet of paper and ask for input ... But you do have to consult, so you have to be well organised and go out with reasons, plans, proposals and ideas, and then be prepared to adjust them and modify them as best as you can. You don't always get what you want the first time. I think it's probably fair to say that collective wisdom is better than individual wisdom ...

R2 and R3 considered it important for them, as leaders of change, to communicate the need for and sensitise staff to change, and further, according to R3, the way in which change

would be implemented, to staff members of the institution. In R2's case, the envisaged change related to the upgrading of the institution to university status and the provision of bachelor's degree programmes. The main concern for R3, however, was the switch to the one-line budget. The following comments reflect their efforts in communicating and implementing the change:

When you're asking people to change, it's tough; they find it difficult to accept, and I had to spend many hours talking to heads of departments who can't really see the point, can't see why they have to change. But in the end, they can all see that it's for the good of the institution and ultimately for their own sake, if they want to have more students, to have bachelor's degree programmes; it's a compromise that they got to make. (R2)

In the 1990s, the university was trying to move from ... the old budget, which was shared among different departments according to the historical bases, to a one-line budget. A one-line budget is based on a number of factors, such as the number of students, number of teaching staff, research output, etc. I had to go to each department and explain to them what we proposed to do and there were lots of objections ... It took quite a number of years to convince staff that this is cost-effective and is the only way to go. (R3)

Moreover, R9 believed that he had been capable of reducing resistance of staff to change to a minimum through motivating his staff team to face change readily and unresentfully:

Working on the change to the provision of bachelor's degree programmes created a lot of tough work. I found that although it was very hectic at work, staff were happy, motivated, and also proud of being part of the team responsible for the exercise. And I'm glad to see that there has been a boost in staff motivation within the whole institution.

Two other respondents, R2 and R8, considered it important to encourage and assist staff members to actively participate in change, so that they would manage to undergo change easily and successfully. R2 observed that she had all the time been working with institutions in transition and undergoing change, which had in turn created a lot of disturbance and anxiety. She explained her strategy in the following terms:

So one thing in common that I have to develop is a means to encourage staff ... helping them to go through the change process and sensitising them to the fact that feeling threatened and defensive is normal ... helping them to get through that phase until they come to the stage of acceptance ...

As an illustration, R8 quoted the issue of the recommended switch from distance learning to the traditional mode of face-to-face classroom teaching for the delivery of associate degree programmes, and admitted that he had encountered strong resistance among the academic community. He described his strategy to reduce resistance:

So I tried to provide support for those who agreed with me, and encouraged them to develop programmes for that purpose; eventually, those programmes came into existence and have since been in operation. And right now, those who did not agree with me gradually saw that this is the right approach, and are now following the right direction.

In fact, R8 was the only respondent who perceived that he had been capable of leading change through his ability to motivate staff to accept and implement change, and also to lead by setting a good example for staff members to model after. He explained his perception in the following manner:

I would show people that we can do the work by just doing it rather than by talking about it. I want to influence people by example ... I tend to motivate my colleagues through giving them an example of what to follow. If I feel that I myself cannot do it, there's no point to tell other people that 'you should do it'.

The above respondents demonstrated that they had taken the initiative to adopt the good practices at work which pointed to their willingness to introduce change and make improvements, and also stimulate staff of the institution to follow their good model in the hope of encouraging commitment and participation on the part of staff.

It is evident from the above illustrations that the capabilities required for change leadership, such as the ability to motivate, energise and empower people, to communicate the need for and sensitise staff to change, and also to lead by example, are hallmarks of the transformational approach to educational leadership. Nevertheless, motivational skills with which these higher education leaders had been able to energise and stimulate their

colleagues to achieve the desired outcomes thereby gratifying their sense of achievement was also a distinct transactional dimension, in terms of gratifying the needs for recognition and self-esteem. In this particular context, the respondents demonstrated that they had adopted a mix of transformational and transactional leadership styles which had enhanced their ability to lead effectively.

4.2.6 Interpersonal Relationships

4.2.6.1 *Interpersonal Skills*

Two respondents, R12 and R13, considered interpersonal skills as a core competency that had enabled them to lead effectively:

Interpersonal skills ... it's about how you treat people, how you respect people, how you give people ample time and room and don't press them too hard ... So always put oneself in another person's perspective. (R12)

Effective leadership features interpersonal skills. (R13)

4.2.6.1.1 *People and Social Skills*

A number of the respondents, R1, R5, R6, R7 and R9, shared the view that people and social skills, in terms of building rapport, working successfully with people, cultivating harmonious and positive relationships, were of particular significance in enabling them to lead effectively. R1 explained from both external and internal perspectives how social skills had enabled her to establish rapport and play the role of an effective leader of a HKHEI. Externally, as head of the institution, she had to be sociable, tactful and adaptable, while internally, she had to be people-oriented. On the whole, she considered that she had made effective use of people and social skills as illustrated by how she had fulfilled her role as Head of the institution:

Externally, as Head of the institution, I had to try to gain a lot of support of the community for the institution, so that means attending lots of public events, speaking in different kinds of settings, inviting people to visit and showing them around the campus ... So I need to be very sociable, tactful, and try to adapt the occasion or event to others' interests. Internally, as head of the institution, I'm constantly surrounded by students, staff and people at different levels. I believe it's very

important to handle people in the way that they feel it's a pleasant and unforgettable experience to interact with the Head of the institution.

Also talking about the contribution of interpersonal/social skills, R5 stressed that the building of good rapport with staff had facilitated her transition in her role from teacher to administrator:

While I was a teaching staff member, I had already started a lot of student development activities. But at that time, I was working with staff as colleagues, so I have already interacted with them. So whether they look up to me as a leader, I cannot tell, but I know for sure that I have developed very good relations with them. Hence this transition to me has been quite easy. I guess it's because of my social skills in dealing with people. (R5)

Another respondent, R9, recounted how his good relationships with staff of the institution and the unions, through thinking from their perspectives and making collective decisions on the basis of consultation and consensus, had enabled him to work successfully with people. His recollections are reflected in the following comments:

When people work with me, they know I'm thinking on their side ... I always have a good relationship with the unions and have been very good at dealing with them. We can easily work together and we didn't get any confrontation. My concept of leadership is the collective type. It's always good to make decisions with your staff. So decisions are made on the basis of consultation and consensus as far as possible.

R10 stressed that effective leadership hinges on the ability to work successfully with people, with a view to encouraging, inspiring and enabling them to work with a higher degree of enthusiasm, energy and momentum.

I think leadership is about how to make people work together to achieve the desired outcome ... I'm inclined to be people-oriented. I tend to allow people to develop and capitalise on their talents and wisdom to get work done. So I may have better interpersonal relations ... and may be more sensitive to the people working with me.

Three respondents, R6, R7 and R14, reported on how they had applied their people skills to cultivate positive and harmonious relationships. They recounted their experiences in the following terms:

I believe that if you treat others well, they will in return treat you well. So I've been adopting the relations-oriented approach to develop good interpersonal relations which are conducive to internal harmony, stability, good working environment and atmosphere. Also, I've been trying to share the outcomes achieved with my staff. I hope this would strengthen our relationship. (R6)

R7 perceived himself as socially skilful. Such skills enabled him to foster friendly relationships with his staff and colleagues, which in turn facilitated the effective and smooth operation of the institution in which he played a leadership role:

I think I do possess social skills. I'm friendly with people ... I don't offend colleagues.

R14, on the other hand, observed the importance of people skills and the ability to foster positive relationships within the particular HEI under the auspices of his leadership. According to him, the organisational structure of these academic institutions should typically feature the "collegiate community", which is expected to predominate over "bureaucratic hierarchy".

4.2.6.1.2 Collective Views and Decision-Making

Some of the respondents considered it important to consult staff and even students to solicit and share their views with a view to reaching group consensus and making collective decisions. They perceived this way of participative and collective decision-making as an efficacious means of averting confrontations and disagreement with staff and students thereby establishing rapport, developing harmonious relationships and, accordingly, enhancing their ability to lead effectively. Some typical comments are:

I always wanted to have an open door so everyone who wants to see me or talk to me would have the opportunity to do so In the second year of my headship, I started to have meetings with students, inviting them to have breakfast in my residence and to talk around the table, to tell me their experiences, ideas and views, and I learnt a lot from those meetings. (R1)

I used to give lots of credit to the ideas of my colleagues. I've also encouraged them to speak up and tried to resolve problems through discussion. I seldom dictated my views and decisions over others ... (R7)

A leader is believed to be a person who tries to steer the direction of the organisation. So the leadership approach should be ‘bottom-up’ that is, soliciting views from colleagues before forming an opinion and deciding which option to select. I believe I’m using the consensus approach most of the time. I seldom made decisions which I know colleagues would not accept ultimately. (R8)

4.2.6.2 *Team-Building and Teamwork*

A number of the respondents, R4, R12 and R13, were of the view that the ability to promote teamwork and team spirit is an essential competency leading to effectiveness in higher education leadership. They explained their perceptions as follows:

In this knowledge-based society, you can’t make decisions on your own, so you need to rely on teamwork. A leader should have the ability to motivate team spirit. (R4)

I think an effective staff team should be aware of their roles and responsibilities, and should know what they can and should do, without having to come to their leader for every specific detail. That’s teamwork. (R12)

An effective leader should be able to team up with staff, communicate with them and support them in all their endeavours. (R13)

The respondents who indicated that they were able to inculcate team spirit as well as promote teamwork, in particular, R4, R7 and R9, iterated how their focus on team-building and teamwork had resulted in successful accomplishment of tasks, resolution of difficulties and instillation of a sense of ownership of the particular tasks into their respective staff teams. Accordingly, this ability had also provided them with the advantage of serving effectively as leaders of the HKHEIs. They recounted their perceptions in the following remarks:

... When working alone, we cannot find good solutions to problems. But when working as a team, we can support one another. As a leader, I still need to guide and lead the staff to do different tasks. As a team, we discussed about whether a certain way could be the best way of doing the work, and gave our comments. As our society

has changed to knowledge-based, teamwork is more important than individual ability.
(R4)

Most of the time, difficulties and obstacles could be resolved through the effort of the team. (R7)

As leader of the first institution where I had been working previously, I stressed the importance of working together as a team ... I spent a lot of time in building up the staff morale of the team through a number of apparently small, but to me, important gestures, which did help to pull the staff together. Then again, in this second institution, I used the same approach ... We were able to successfully go through many validations over the last ten years, through enhanced confidence, collegial atmosphere and, most importantly, teamwork ... (R9)

4.2.6.2.1 Co-ordination of Team Efforts

Two of the respondents, R7 and R14, recounted their experiences in building up the team through their abilities to co-ordinate the efforts of the staff team, and perceived that they had thus been able to lead effectively. R7, in particular, considered it important to secure the support and engage the concerted efforts of both administrative and academic staff through team-building and teamwork. He described how team-building had enabled him to lead the institution effectively:

I exerted my influence through mainly the administrators, who build the team around me. But it's also important that we support the academics in their work as well. When the academics start to form a collegial community, the two can come together ... and the institution can then grow.

R14, on the other hand, observed that the performance and achievement of the institution had hinged on the concerted efforts of its staff members. He demonstrated his ability to lead effectively through building up a staff team and coordinating their concerted efforts.

4.2.6.2.2 Trust

The element of trust as associated with team-building and teamwork was not directly addressed by any respondent. It was mostly inferred from the remarks and recollections of the respondents on how teamwork had enhanced their effectiveness as leaders of the

HKHEIs. R1, for instance, engaged her staff in developing “a vision and a mission” thus setting a direction for the institution. Similarly, when conducting the programme review, R4 requested her staff to contribute to some of the documents and tried to get them involved in the review exercise. Involvement of this nature might be taken to imply a certain degree of trust in staff members of the institution and anticipation of success through teamwork.

In the case of R12, he perceived it important for a leader to lead effectively through steering staff members along the direction which the team is heading towards, thus nurturing a sense of responsibility and trust among the staff members. All these added together to show that R12 had been able to apply his skills in team-building and teamwork to manage and lead the team.

4.2.6.3 *Communication Skills*

The majority of the respondents spoke of the importance of communication skills as a key competency which leaders of the HKHEIs should develop in order to lead effectively. R2 stressed the importance of communication skills as a prerequisite for effective leadership in terms of how this skill could be applied. The following comments illustrate her views:

I don't think you will be able to lead if you sit in your office and don't communicate well with the people whom you're leading. I think it's important that they recognise what they're doing is not a top-down exercise, that they have their contributions to make, and you do that with good communication. (R2)

Three of the respondents, R1, R6 and R7, stressed that their communication skills had been pivotal to their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs. R1 reported on how she had been visiting and talking to the teaching staff when she first took up the headship of the institution with a view to understanding their concerns and grievances. Moreover, she asserted that she had tried to maintain effective communication with her team of deputy directors and deans. She reflected on her own experiences:

To get to know the staff as well as understand their concerns, I made personal visits to every member of the teaching staff. It took a lot of time and effort, but that can help me understand some of the lecturers' concerns and learn a lot about their grievances and unhappiness ...

Similarly, R6 claimed that she was “keen to talk to people”, and focused on communication as an effective means to lead her staff and unit. She talked about her communication skills, which had helped her to understand staff needs and concerns, and also demonstrated to her staff that she was a caring and nurturing leader.

Being articulate and communicative was perceived by R7 as his main strength. This had provided him with the distinctive advantage of sharing his experiences with his colleagues, who were then able to learn and develop on the basis of his invaluable input:

My main strength is ... having communication skills ... I can communicate very clearly in writing and verbally. I’m very articulate ... Over the years, I have become more communicative, and felt more confident in sharing my experiences with them.

Meanwhile, three other respondents, R3, R4 and R14, explained how they had been able to apply their communication skills to perform their role as leaders of the HKHEIs in connection with persuasion, negotiation, communication and liaison. R3 remarked that she had tried to persuade staff and colleagues individually “as regards what would be the right action to take”, and considered that “the pre-meeting ground work used to be very important”.

R4, in turn, perceived that face-to-face communication like meetings is more effective. She concluded:

To achieve the best outcome, we need to be able to communicate with each other. Through the team meeting, we can come up with more ideas and support, and discuss about how to resolve problems.

R14 reported that it was by means of internal and external liaison that he had been able to play a leading role in arousing staff awareness of the competing demands from the local community, and to discuss with them about the means to respond to the challenges facing them. R14 therefore considered that his competency in communication had also enabled him to facilitate internal communication within the institution.

4.2.7 Personal Development and Mastery

The majority of the respondents regarded personal development and mastery as an essential competency which had contributed significantly to their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs. The views offered by the respondents were in respect of the elements associated with this competency, namely, ability to engage in self-development through continuous learning, personal mastery, self-awareness, self-confidence, empathy, self-regulation and motivation of others.

4.2.7.1 *Self-development and Continuous Learning*

As many as 10 respondents concurred that their self-development by means of continuous learning was of paramount importance, and concluded that they had acquired and developed their leadership skills through different means of learning, ranging from on-the-job training and experience, observation, reading and academic visits to formal study, and had thus been able to lead effectively:

I learnt how to market my ideas and started lobbying people for support before I went to the Senate Board or the like. I learnt more skills of steering things around the organisation. This kind of development rendered my leadership more effective ...
(R8)

I guess perhaps the experience is just a question of more time and learning through doing the same work. There's also the experience of one being drifted gradually up the hierarchy in the university and learning to be effective in those different circles.
(R11)

R10 also claimed that he was “a believer of learning by doing”:

... I do and learn on the job, learn by experience ... This is how I've developed and matured.

R6 talked about how she had learnt from both positive and adverse experiences, and it was such all-rounded learning experience that had rendered her increasingly confident. She gladly recalled that based on “trial and error”, she managed to successfully go through “the leadership journey”, learnt from her mistakes and flaws, and eventually developed and

matured along with the passage of time. R14 also observed that the new challenges and the demands for change had enabled him to learn more through widening his exposures and broadening his perspectives.

Four other respondents, R2, R7, R8 and R12, recounted their experiences in learning from other people and were thus more competent to lead the respective HEIs in Hong Kong. R2 believed that a good leader would need to be “knowledgeable” and would need “to look around and find out how people do their work”. Similarly, R8 claimed that he had learnt a great deal from the ex-colleagues of an established institution where he had taught. R7, on the other hand, perceived that he had developed his portfolio of leadership skills through experience as well as observing and learning from both the strengths and weaknesses in the managers whom he had worked for. In his own words:

Some of the people who I like most as leaders do have their weaknesses. What I do is to model after the strengths of what they’ve achieved, but I wouldn’t fall into the trap of having the same flaws.

R12 described his self-development in this way:

We accept to learn from one another ... Even with terrible leaders, I’m sure they have some good qualities, some special talents and skills that I can learn from them.
(R12)

R5 and R7 iterated the possibility for leaders to learn and develop themselves through paying visits to overseas HEIs to observe and learn from their counterparts in regard to the mode of operation and the way in which they lead and manage the institutions. In this connection, they had the following to say:

If I were on a trip, I would try to visit other universities and learn from units doing student development. To do my work properly, I have to base on past relevant experiences, people who have worked in this area, sound research findings, etc. I take every opportunity to learn from others whom I come across in seminars. (R5)

After the assessment and validation visits, I was able to keep in touch with the panel members. So over the years, whenever there’s an opportunity, I made use of such networks, took leave and went overseas to visit these people. These were all casual

and informal visits, but seeing how other people work in overseas countries, that really helps a lot to develop oneself, and is better than taking formal studies. (R7)

While most respondents maintained that their development in the leadership journey over the years was largely attributable to learning from the practical experience acquired over the years, R7 and R9, on the contrary, suggested that the pursuit of formal studies on the part of higher education leaders like themselves served to provide the theoretical knowledge to substantiate the practical experience acquired at work. Their perceptions in this regard are reflected in the statements below:

In a way, accumulating the practical experience and pursuing a formal programme like the MBA are useful. The literature you read can stimulate your thoughts because you might have gone through similar situations before, while the theories can help you focus your thinking. (R7)

In addition to practical experience, what leaders need is the conceptual framework to back them up. At one stage of my career, I found that practical experience is not enough, so I went for an MBA study. The more I learnt from that study, the more I found that I don't know enough ... (R9)

4.2.7.2 *Personal Mastery and Self-Awareness*

Several respondents, R8, R10 and R13, stressed the importance for leaders of the HKHEIs like themselves to be competent in personal mastery and self-awareness to the extent that they could understand and be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. R8 described his experience as follows:

In terms of self-awareness, I know my shortcomings and I am aware of my abilities. Sometimes I have a tendency to go beyond my limits. For example, I know this cannot be done but I would still go for it, because I feel that I could do better; eventually, I discover this is not the case in reality. So I ought to restrain myself ...

R10, on the other hand, emphasised the need for leaders to exercise critical self-reflection on themselves. He perceived that this would enhance self-awareness and self-understanding, and would ultimately lead to self-improvement. In this regard, R10 had the following comments:

If you are prepared to be criticised by others, you have to reflect on yourself critically ... Practising self-criticism and self-reflection may help a lot. So my approach is: if I want to improve, I must start with improving myself first, and that has become more or less my personal philosophy. (R10)

4.2.7.3 *Self-Confidence*

Self-confidence was perceived by some of the respondents to be crucial to effectiveness in educational leadership. They stressed the utmost importance for leaders to believe in their own capabilities to exercise effective leadership.

R2, for example, was of the view that the ability to exercise self-initiative and self-regulation hinges on self-confidence, without which a leader cannot command the respect and trust of others and is thus unable to lead effectively. She and two other respondents, R5 and R7, considered it necessary and important for them to have self-confidence and also the ability to exercise self-initiative which should enable and help them to serve effectively as leaders of the HKHEIs.

R2 talked about the need for her, as a higher education leader, to have self-confidence in order to put forward her views, as it was undesirable for her to be “always second-guessing” her decisions. She was particularly concerned that being entrusted with the responsibility to lead the institution towards upgrading to a university, she would need to be able to exercise self-initiative, which she equated with self-confidence:

I think that to be a leader, you need to have the confidence to put forward your views ... Self-initiative is quite important, and I think it's very important in the Hong Kong context. I'm trying to move the institution forward and embark on an upgrading exercise. That's why I got to have ideas and got to be able to initiate ideas to get things moving.

Furthermore, R2 believed that she had gained self-confidence through the development she had undergone in research and publications, particularly on quality assurance. Her perception is reflected in the following remarks:

One of the factors that makes me more confident in the job, I guess, is research and publications on quality assurance. This is kind of personal development, giving me

much more confidence to believe that I know how to put my views forward. It gives me a lot of confidence in the academic setting to be able to fight for resources to support my suggestions.

In R5's case, she was very confident in executing her duties in regard to the academic aspect of student learning vis-à-vis their learning experience in the classroom. However, R5 admitted that she lacked the confidence to handle matters concerning the non-academic aspect of student learning that relates to their personal growth. Her great confidence in the one as opposed to her lack of confidence in the other inevitably resulted in a speedy and efficient discharge of responsibilities in areas concerning students' classroom learning, but a slower and less effective fulfilment of her duties concerning students' personal growth.

R7 was of the view that his self-confidence had been built up over the years along with the growth and maturity of the institution. He thus felt "more confident in sharing experiences" with his colleagues, who "worked on" some of his ideas and started to grow in their own areas, and eventually developed into leaders themselves. He made positive recollections of his experience as follows:

In my case, I think I changed a lot with the institution over the years. I built up more confidence. I could see myself playing different roles in helping my colleagues to grow and mature ... When I gained more experience, I shared my experience with my colleagues and saw them growing and developing in their own areas to become leaders themselves.

R13 also demonstrated his confidence in being a leader of one of the HKHEIs, and observed that his experience in leading the institution through "the difficult days" had enabled him to "feel confident" in his effective leadership. He recalled those days when the institution had undergone "very tedious and challenging procedures" for offering bachelor's degree programmes in the early 1980s, and had relied on the CNAA in the UK which had "stringent procedures and requirements" in conducting programme validations.

4.2.7.4 Self-Regulation

Nine of the 14 respondents were of the view that self-regulation was crucial to personal mastery, and was manifested through trustworthiness, integrity, self-control, emotional stability/calmness and self-discipline.

R1, for instance, perceived herself as being trustworthy, on the grounds that she was very honest to herself, realised the mistakes that she had committed in executing her role as a higher education leader, and more importantly, “learnt how to overcome mistakes and get away from them”. Similarly, R10 claimed that he had been able to practise self-regulation through integrity which involves “being true, honest”, and a firm belief in what he thought and acted accordingly. R12, on the other hand, explained his integrity in terms of being “fair, just and unbiased” and also upholding of principles, as reflected in the following remarks:

I operate with certain principles and I don’t deviate or fluctuate from time to time. I guess it has to do with how you balance out different factions or groups with conflict of interest. I guess it’s particularly so in the President’s Office: you always have to be ... impartial, and not be biased towards a certain group.

R3, R6 and R7 spoke of the way in which they had been able to control their emotions, stay calm and level-headed:

The leadership style I adopted was: “never lose your temper, but wait and let people calm down. Even if people object to what you tell them, be patient and try to say it all over again in a different direction.” So, don’t get worked up yourself and don’t get other people worked up as well. (R3)

I always manage to control myself and stay calm ... I must say that I can release my emotions at appropriate moments ... (R6)

Even when some people ... attack me or criticise me ... I can receive them very calmly. I can present the points to those who disagree with me calmly. So I think in terms of self-regulation, I’m pretty good ... I tend to think that emotional stability is a very important attribute which a leader should have. If you want to lead by example, you need to stay calm when facing difficulties. (R7)

Furthermore, R8, R12 and R13 associated self-regulation with self-discipline. While R8 expressed a certain degree of doubt over his ability to exercise self-discipline, R12, on the contrary, was very assured and proud of his capability to discipline himself as manifested in his rigorous time management skills. Their respective views are illustrated in the comments below:

In terms of self-regulation, sometimes I think I have self-discipline. I know what I ought to do and what I ought not. But sometimes I keep going beyond the limit ... To be truly good in self-discipline, one should be self-assured, full of self-confidence, should work within his or her own limit, and should be fully aware of everything. (R8)

I try to be very much on time in whatever work I do ... It's discipline. I adhere to a certain schedule. I also impose informal deadlines on myself. I guess it's talking about time management, how I prioritise my work and activities. I always plan ahead. I try always to allow myself plenty of time. (R12)

The same was true of R13 who also had a high opinion of his competency in self-discipline and time management, and was adamant in honouring punctuality and deadlines.

4.2.7.5 *Empathy*

Several respondents, R2, R5, R8, R10, R12 and R13, perceived that the ability to empathise is essential for leaders of the HKHEIs to excel in their performance and personal development and practise effective leadership. R2, for example, made the following observation on the basis of her own experience:

I think if you're communicative, consultative and collaborative, you have to be empathetic. They go together, don't they? Unless you can empathise with how people feel, you can't possibly motivate.

R13 associated empathy with listening skills. He perceived that one of the key factors leading to effective leadership is empathy, and that "an effective leader should be a good listener and be considerate".

R2 further cited two examples from her work experience to illustrate her exercise of this skill to enhance her ability to lead effectively as a higher education leader: first, the implementation of localisation in Hong Kong in the late 1990s which entailed discontinuation of employment for expatriate staff in the HKHEIs, and second, external inspection and validation of academic programmes. R2 applied her listening skills to

handle the first case, in the hope of making the expatriates “feel better about the decisions made by the institution”. As regards the second case, being empathetic and possessing listening skills had enabled her to share the feelings of staff in the aftermath of an unfavourable programme inspection by an external agency, and to help staff understand that this was by no means traumatic.

On the other hand, R5 listened to the views of staff before setting a strategic direction, without which she could not capitalise on her strength. Moreover, R5 applied her listening skills to handle resistance from staff and to “make things happen”. She also listened to the views of staff before setting a strategic direction and described her experience:

Very often there are resistances. I have to listen to and find out why there're resistances ... After I've listened to those reasons, I would consult with my seniors, and I would then take the necessary actions to make things happen.

R10 perceived that being empathetic, patient and skilful in listening to others' problems were all his strengths, and were conducive to his effectiveness as a higher education leader:

I think I have a good sense of empathy because I was trained to stand in somebody else's shoes and think in his/her stead. I think I'm a very good listener, and this is perhaps one of my strengths. I can listen to people for a very long time without interruption, and am patient enough and able to understand what others are actually thinking about.

Similarly, R8 and R12 considered it advisable for higher education leaders to try to put themselves in others' positions and also think and look from their perspectives. R8 perceived it important to “always think of other people, their difficulties, their frustrations ... the overall interest of the institution ... and look at things from their perspectives”, in order to “appreciate the problems and frustrations that they are encountering”. Moreover, they iterated that leaders of the HKHEIs would need to take a balanced view and attach a higher degree of importance to the interest or benefit of the organisation instead of their self-interest.

4.2.7.6 *Motivation*

Of the 14 respondents, 11 believed that one of the essential competencies that had contributed to their personal development and mastery and also their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs was motivation. According to them, a leader would need to be highly motivated, and in turn, be able to motivate others. R1, for instance, considered it important for a leader to “stimulate and motivate staff to really open up their minds to understand what is expected of them in an academic and professional institution”. R2 observed that the ability to motivate staff to work with and for the leader with a view to accomplishing the tasks was crucial to her development as a higher education leader:

To be a good leader ... your emotional intelligence comes to play where you figure out how to motivate the players whom you have to work with to actually do the tasks.

Another respondent, R6, made similar observations, as reflected in her comment that “it is important to motivate staff, to get them to work for you”. She believed that “effective leadership is concerned with ... making staff feel motivated and committed”.

Many of the respondents proudly acknowledged that as leaders of the HKHEIs, they are highly motivated and are able to motivate others. However, they each assessed their own competency from a different perspective; hence the extent to which this skill contributed to their effectiveness as leaders varied accordingly. R1, for example, reported that she had a unique way of motivating her staff: through generating among them “a strong passion about the value of what the institution is doing” as embodied in the vision of the institution, she believed that “this should have been a motivating factor to staff”.

In the case of R2, she believed that she had motivated others through knowing them and “playing to their strengths”, and in so doing, her effectiveness as a higher education leader was enhanced:

I have a colleague who is very committed to the College and tends to put the College’s interest above everything else. When he was involved in doing a particular task in partnership with me, I know that the way to really motivate him is to appeal to his sense of loyalty and be able to demonstrate to him that what we’re involved in together will be good and beneficial to the College.

Moreover, R2 observed from her experiences in preparing a few HKHEIs for external inspection that an effective leader ought to be able to:

Ensure that staff understand that an unfavourable programme validation is not the end of the world. They got to keep on fighting and keep moving forward. There's a lot more work to do. Again, that concerns being able to motivate people through and after the crisis.

R5 strongly believed that she was adept in motivating staff as well as students. She used to conduct consultative sessions with her staff team and was able to motivate them through giving them feedback and advice as appropriate to meet their needs. Furthermore, she used to constantly talk to students who approached her regularly on their own initiative about the way to deal with their personal growth or about the difficulties they experienced in their learning. She was thus proud of her capability to motivate not only staff, but also students. Her positive recollections are summarised as follows:

So with all these consultation sessions that I had with the staff who are working with me, I think they are motivated. Also, because I am meeting a lot of students, I can see that every time after I finish talking to them, they are somehow motivated to do something about themselves. So I think I'm quite successful in motivating people.

Two other respondents, R7 and R9, talked about how they had tried to motivate staff: R7, through trust and delegation, while R9, through care and concern, together with due support, appreciation and understanding. This leadership skill, as assessed by R7 and R9 themselves, is depicted in these terms:

So I suppose my leadership style is really sort of trying to motivate people through a lot of trust and delegation. (R7)

I find that in leadership, the most important thing is to get staff feeling motivated so that they are willing to work their very best, and that means lots of care, concern, personal support, appreciation, understanding, etc, which are actually not easy to achieve. (R9)

4.2.8 Business and Entrepreneurial Skills

Very few of the 14 respondents addressed business and entrepreneurial skills as a competency that had rendered them effective leaders in higher education. R1 and R4 are the only two respondents who alluded to their reliance on relationship marketing to build trust and communicate effectively with all stakeholders of the institution considered as an integral part of the team, and together with marketing skills, to achieve the desired outcomes and goals. R1 also perceived the link between successful leaders of change and entrepreneurs who shared the capability of being vision-driven and infused with the enthusiasm to achieve outcomes. While R1 demonstrated with real life examples of how this competency had contributed to building and enhancing the overall image of the institution, R4 believed that the increase in student intake, an important concern of all leaders, could be attributed to her marketing skills and efforts. R1 also iterated the need for her institution to procure community support for its quest to acquire self-accrediting status and be upgraded to a university, which should principally be regarded as a desirable outcome shared between the institution and the stakeholders. The statements below represent their views and experiences:

We had to persuade the Government to see the value of us being upgraded to a fully-fledged institution offering bachelor's degree programmes. I certainly used every opportunity to approve the UGC ... government officials ... the Chief Executive or perhaps one of the Council Chairmen ... to put forward our views on meeting the needs of the institute and mapping out a direction that we should follow. (R1)

When we head an institution, we have to try to gain a lot of support from the community for our institution. That means attending lots of public events, speaking in different kinds of settings and inviting people to visit our campus ... We need to be very sociable, tactful and try to adapt the occasion or the event to their interest. (R1)

Last year, we had an intake of 300+ students only. This year, we had an increase of 78%. I believe I've done a good job on marketing to make this a success. I did put myself and this institution in a very high profile and have done a lot of publicity. (R4)

4.2.9 Development and Empowerment of People

Another critical competency which many respondents perceived as facilitating their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs was the capability to develop and empower people. The associated elements of this capability include devolution/sharing of authority, establishment of trusting relationship, development of staff talents, motivating staff to improve and acknowledgement of good performance.

4.2.9.1 Empowerment through Devolution/Sharing of Authority

A few respondents, R1, R6 and R8, associated empowerment of others with devolution/sharing of authority and delegation. According to them, devolution of authority entailed transferring the authority, independence and autonomy in decision-making to staff at a lower level of the hierarchy, while delegation involved entrusting responsibilities to staff at a lower rank/grade to imbue them with a sense of ownership and responsibility through enabling them to input and contribute to their work. They perceived that empowerment of such nature could facilitate identification, encouragement and development of staff with leadership/management potential and talent, and had enabled them to lead effectively. They recounted their experiences and perceptions as follows:

I consider delegation as very important. I appointed three Deputy Directors and four Deans. The Deans took up a lot of responsibilities and had a lot of independence and autonomy in decisions about staffing, programmes and so on. And each Deputy Director was in charge of a different area. I tried to ensure that they all had considerable freedom in decision-making about their respective areas. (R1)

If a leader has to always monitor his or her staff, this may not be effective. So if he or she can practise empowerment of others and devolution of authority, staff can then make their own judgements and decisions, and this can apply to all levels of staff ... (R6)

Staff at the lower levels are more effective if they know that their contributions are being treasured, and they have their input in the process as well. I think ownership is very important. If you give staff the responsibility, they would feel they have the

ownership ... So that's why I like to devolve more authorities and empower staff at all levels ... (R8)

4.2.9.2 *Development through Establishment of Trust Relationships*

Two respondents, R4 and R7, perceived the link between empowerment, development and trust in others, and stressed the importance of trust in enhancing the ability to motivate others and the effectiveness of their leadership. Their observations are illustrated in the following comments:

I think that for a leader, empowerment and giving staff due trust are very important. If a leader delegates his or her work to a staff member, this implies that the leader has trust in the staff. (R4)

R7, on the other hand, did not talk explicitly about this element, but remarked that “to become an effective leader ... the ability to motivate people through trusting them, to delegate the right kind of authority ... these are essential.”

I put a lot of trust in the colleagues who work with me. I usually give them as much free hand as possible in discharging their responsibilities. I try to motivate people by giving them a lot of trust and delegation. And I'm not leaving them alone ... when they need my support, I try to be there always to support them. (R7)

4.2.9.3 *Development of Staff Talents*

Several respondents, R1, R2 and R10, stressed the significance of the capability to nurture staff talents thus empowering staff to develop their leadership potential and facilitating delegation and succession planning. R1 illustrated her perception and experience in connection with this capability with three examples. The first dated back to her first year of appointment with the institution, when she had several difficult staff who, albeit being very intelligent and talented, had created some problems in the workplace. R1 thus perceived that her job as a leader was “to figure out how to re-assign or re-organise staff appointments so that their best abilities and talents could be used and their weaknesses could be neutralised or reduced”, and believed that she was rather effective in this respect.

The second example dated back to her “third year in post”, when she was “very concerned about how to develop the senior staff to ensure that they have the required training and exposure that would help to improve them”. R1 elaborated: “developing people is something that I like and try to do and believe I did that reasonably well”.

As the third example, R1 quoted the incident of developing and motivating two junior staff assigned to assist her in one of her work assignments. Given that they had previously not been entrusted with any responsibility, R1 resolved as follows:

It’s important to take them with me in my trips and involve them in all important and interesting aspects of the work, so that they would not see themselves as simply office assistants doing only the routine aspects, and they would develop and become more responsible. I really did see that change. I found it very rewarding. (R1)

Another respondent, R2, reflected on her experience in staff development in the following comments:

I engage the commitment of the staff whom I’m leading by working with them in the iterative process of preparing for institutional review and programme validation, encouraging them to contribute their good ideas and apply their different talents ... The only way to succeed, it seems to me, is to develop teams of people to work on different aspects of the review process and integrate all of them together through significant personal efforts ... I think this can be regarded as institution-wide leadership development ... (R2)

One other respondent, R10, observed that “in the younger staff, one actually see people grow, develop and mature over time”, and remarked that “those are what I treasure most”. He was thus inclined “to allow staff to develop, to capitalise on their talents and to generate their wisdom to get work done”.

4.2.9.4 Motivating Staff to Improve Performance and Acknowledgement of Good Performance

Four respondents, R2, R9, R12 and R13, maintained that empowerment and improvement can best be achieved through motivating staff to improve and acknowledging their good performance. They recalled how they had been capable of motivating their staff to improve

their performance and acknowledging the remarkable performance of those staff in contributing to operational effectiveness and enabling empowerment:

... the work that I do here ... has now reached the stage when we're heading towards the institutional review for self-accreditation. This will involve all academic departments, and it is very important for everybody to feel that he/she is an important member of the team and that his/her performance would matter in the ultimate outcome of the forthcoming exercise. (R2)

What I've been trying to do is to help my colleagues identify their strengths, that is, what they can capitalise on in the future. Nevertheless, what is most important is that they should be aware of their own weaknesses, so that they can pay special attention to improve in those areas ... (R12)

While R9 emphasised the importance of acknowledging and recognising the performance and contributions of staff to achieve empowerment, R13 believed that giving staff due recognition of their performance and contributions had served as a great incentive to staff in assisting them to further develop and improve in their performance.

The above data answer the first specific research question which addresses the perceived core competencies that had enabled the respondents to lead effectively as leaders of the HKHEIs. It can be seen that the respondents, in terms of their practice of staff development, empowerment, teamwork, collective engagement of staff and interpersonal skills, had largely adopted the transformational leadership approach. The researcher will next examine the data which serve to answer the second specific research question concerning the influence of culture and authority/power on the ability of higher education leaders to lead effectively.

4.3 Influence of Culture and Authority/Power on the Ability of Higher Education Leaders to Lead Effectively

The respondents perceived that culture and authority/power had a significant influence on their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs. The way in which culture and

authority/power had impacted on the effectiveness of higher education leadership as observed by this cohort of respondents is summarised below.

4.3.1 Culture

The respondents examined the impact of culture on the effectiveness of higher education leadership. They considered also the role of higher education leaders in influencing or changing the institutional culture. Moreover, they reported on their perceptions of the impact of ethnic culture on their ability to lead effectively.

4.3.1.1 *Institutional Culture*

Some respondents were quite positive about the contribution of institutional culture to enhancing the effectiveness of their leadership in the HKHEIs. Others, on the contrary, viewed culture from a negative perspective, and were distressed to report that their freedom to lead/manage had been constrained by institutional culture.

4.3.1.1.1 *Impact of Institutional Culture on Higher Education Leadership*

The importance of institutional culture in affecting the effectiveness of leadership in the HKHEIs was highlighted by R2. She pointed out the contrast between the culture of the HKHEI where she had first started her career in Hong Kong, developed on the basis of collaboration, mutual trust and understanding, sympathy, teamwork, collegiality and harmonious relationship, and that of the third HKHEI where she had subsequently been working, described as follows:

Here the culture is deeply entrenched ... and difficult to understand. Obviously, you try and learn to work with the culture. Part of the culture here is ... ultimate decisions have to be taken by the founding proprietor of the institution. So, that's obviously affecting my leadership style because ultimately, they're not my decisions. All I can do is to implement them.

Another respondent, R7, who had been working with the same institution for over 30 years, found the institutional culture "collegial, harmonious" and commendable. He believed that

this had certainly helped to shape his leadership style and, more importantly, to facilitate his development as an effective leader. In this regard, R7 had the following to say:

Over the years, I've been fairly free to apply my own leadership style ... and I also enjoyed a lot of trust from my superior. I, in turn, have put a lot of trust in my colleagues too. The culture here has helped me rather than hindered me in applying my leadership style.

Similar positive remarks were made by R10 on how culture had facilitated him to lead effectively. R10 found positive meaning in the university culture, which, in his own words, "is one of openness and is accommodating controversies". His positive recollections are reflected in the following comments:

I think I can only say in a broad sense that the university is where there is fundamental freedom of thought and communication, and that affects my leadership style ... I've been allowed to develop my more idealistic view of doing things and to have longer-term visions ...

The way in which institutional culture had undermined the ability to lead effectively in the HKHEIs was explained by R8:

I think the freedom I have to lead or to move around in this institution is quite limited: it's been influenced by the culture here to a large extent. The culture here is more of a controlled and regulated environment. In this institution, there is a rigid process to go through for everything ... it's very difficult to make decisions here without the approval of lots of bodies ...

4.3.1.1.2 Role of Higher Education Leaders in Influencing Institutional Culture

The role of higher education leaders in influencing or changing the institutional culture was discussed with reference to the contextual influence associated with individual institutions. R2, for instance, reported that at one HEI where she first started her career in Hong Kong, given that it was a newly established young institution, she was responsible for "building, shaping and developing the institutional culture" in conjunction with her colleagues and the staff team, thus cultivating a brand new institutional culture embracing new sets of behaviours, customs, thoughts, beliefs, values and ideologies. The statement below conveys the excitement and thrill on her part:

We were building up the group, so it was very exciting. We were shaping the culture rather than the culture shaping us. So that was a different atmosphere.

Another respondent, R6, also suggested that a leader ought not be influenced by the institutional culture; instead, he/she would need to play a proactive role in actively shaping or re-shaping the institutional culture.

On the contrary, R2, R3 and R8 had negative recollections of how institutional culture had hindered their ability to lead effectively in the HKHEIs. While R2 spoke of the influence and constraint of the “deeply entrenched” “check and balance” culture that had long prevailed at the institution where she was currently working, R3 recalled the difficulty she had experienced in attempting to change to a more interactive teaching style at the university, as this had accordingly entailed the need to change the deep-rooted university culture. R3 made the following observation on her experience:

The change is a gradual one. You have to convince the staff that is the direction, the way to go. So I think this is effective but not necessarily efficient because it would take quite some time to change the institutional culture. Culture is the most difficult to change. Leaders would need to do a lot of persuasion to make people change and realise that the change is necessary.

4.3.1.2 *Ethnic or Cross Culture*

The influence of culture on the effectiveness of educational leadership is viewed also in terms of ethnic or cross culture. Ethnic culture refers to the specific set of values, beliefs, customs and practices pertaining to a particular ethnic group or society, while cross culture denotes the particular set of values, beliefs and the like that spans across another race or country. The perceptions of the respondents on the impact of ethnic or cross culture are presented below.

4.3.1.2.1 *Impact of Ethnic or Cross Culture on Educational Leadership*

The way in which ethnic or cross culture had impacted on the capability of leaders of the HKHEIs to exercise effective leadership was explained by R1 and R12. R1 recounted her involvement in the Chinese culture and also her perception about becoming a leader of a HKHEI, the latter providing her with “a chance to reflect and learn even more about

Chinese culture, and ... to be sensitive to a culturally different way of handling difficult issues ...”.

R12, on the other hand, believed that his ability to lead effectively had been influenced by his exposure to both western and oriental cultures. He claimed that his experience in teaching in North America had enabled him to understand “the American and Canadian ways of doing things”. He added that he had been working with both Chinese and non-Chinese assuming a supervisory or a subordinating role, and felt more inclined to adopt the Hong Kong perspective which was international and cosmopolitan in outlook. He perceived that he was more influenced by the Hong Kong and Chinese culture, and concluded that generally speaking, “it’s less confrontational here than when I was working in Canada, and that’s the style”.

4.3.2 Authority/Power

4.3.2.1 *Significance of Position of Leader in the HEI in His/Her Ability to Exert Authority*

All the respondents who addressed the influence of authority/power on their ability to lead effectively alluded to the significance of authority vested in their positions as leaders of the HKHEIs in having a perceived impact on their effectiveness. R1, however, seemed to have conflated these two terms when she talked about how she had made use of the various powers bestowed on her by the authority vested in her position to achieve what she had set out to accomplish. She described the powers that she had within the institution and the Hong Kong community, and the way in which these had helped to enhance the effectiveness of her leadership in the following remarks:

I certainly had a lot of powers within the institution. As head, I had to make the final decision, and this may be power over people’s livelihood ... that involves firing somebody ... I felt the pain emanating from the powers I wielded in that type of situation. I also had considerable powers in the Hong Kong community. I had access to all the senior officials in the Government. That was the other kind of power.

Both R3 and R5 had positive recollections of how they had made effective use of the authority vested in them by virtue of their position at the university “to make things

happen”. R3 had applied her authority to grant “long leave without pay” to academics emigrating overseas in the mass exodus of Hong Kong residents to seek overseas residence before the 1997 reversion of sovereignty to Mainland China. R5 made use of her position to gently practise empowerment of staff to make sure that this would have the least impact on their reputation or standing. They recounted their respective experiences:

I had the authority to grant no pay leave and be flexible with that regulation. I had to be very careful in handling these cases, so I tried to find out whether the University really wanted to keep this particular group of staff ... I was glad to see that most of these staff came back to serve the University. So this was the kind of problem that I resolved by using my authority quite well. (R3)

I think empowerment is actually associated with one’s position to make things happen. I’ve tried to practise this in a soft manner, without affecting the reputation or standing of the staff concerned. Often, I can make things happen because of my position. (R5)

R11, on the other hand, observed that the assumption of authority would expedite the completion of work, but regretted to admit that as a second-tier leader, he did not have that kind of authority. The following comment reflects his concern:

I’m surprised at the extent to which an assumption of authority can be helpful, that if the officer with the authority suggests doing something ... people may regard it as an instruction and to some extent, go about understanding the work, but the reality is I don’t have this kind of authority.

In the case of R12 and R14, they found it effective for leaders to exercise their authority to adjudicate over dissenting views or to rectify matters and resolve problems, and made the following observations:

Of course, we have to exercise our authority when there’re different opinions, and we just have to follow the structure of authority vested with certain positions ... (R12)

At times, one may have to use one’s authority to make things work; it’s inevitable. (R14)

Three other respondents, R2, R7 and R8, took a different stand and believed that their ability to lead effectively was not influenced by authority. This was because they considered it undesirable to wield the authority they had by virtue of their positions to dictate their demands or impose their expectations on their colleagues or subordinates, and had seldom, if not never, resorted to this means. Typical comments from these respondents were as follows:

I don't like to work by authority. I don't think that's the best way to get the best out of people ... So, telling people they will have to do it like this because I said so isn't very productive at all ... (R2)

From my experience, I don't think I have ever used authority blatantly ... I think that in my case, authority is more or less equated to implicit persuasion ... I make people realise that I have the authority, and it's better for them, if they agree, to work things out with me ... So by and large, the authority is exerted in an implicit way ... I don't believe in a very direct approach to exert authority because that could backfire. (R7)

I know the kind of authority I have ... I would not be afraid to use it if it is necessary, but, on the other hand ... I do not want to use my authority to get things done and overrule staff ... (R8)

The above data answer the second specific research question relating to the influence of culture and authority/power on the leaders' ability to lead effectively. In the ensuing section 4.4, the researcher will present the data which serve to answer the third specific research question regarding the perceived impact of gender on the respondents' effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong.

4.4 Perceived Impact of Gender on the Effectiveness of Higher Education Leaders in Hong Kong

The majority of the respondents were of the view that gender had not had a significant impact on their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs. Nevertheless, they perceived that some of the competencies associated with effective educational leadership were related to gender, to the extent that they could be related to gender-stereotyped competencies

conventionally classified as masculine or feminine as found in the literature. In discussing the extent to which gender was perceived to impact on their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs, three major areas of interest emerged: first, identification of gender-stereotyped competencies associated with effective leadership; second, investigation into possible correlation between the competencies identified in Callan's (2001) management and leadership capability framework and gender; and third, the perceived impact of gender on the respondents' effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong.

4.4.1 Identification of Gender-Stereotyped Competencies Associated with Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership

When talking about the leadership competencies and providing their views on the possible impact of gender on their ability to lead effectively, the respondents perceived that some of the competencies associated with effective leadership are gender-stereotyped, and identified those skills, abilities and characteristics that could be typically categorised as masculine or feminine.

4.4.1.1 *Masculine Competencies*

Both male and female respondents in the present study identified a range of characteristics which they perceived to be gender-stereotyped. They respectively described a male leader as being:

- Ambitious
- Aggressive
- Competitive
- Assertive
- Direct
- Outspoken
- Decisive
- Task-oriented
- Tough
- Courageous
- Persistent
- Authoritative

The above competencies attributive to a male leader were indicated by both male and female respondents, as reflected in the following remarks:

4.4.1.1.1 Being Ambitious, Aggressive and Competitive

One female respondent, R6, observed that male leaders, when compared with their female counterparts, are relatively ambitious, aggressive and competitive, as reflected in the following remark:

I think that being aggressive, ambitious and competitive fits males.

Nevertheless, another female respondent, R4, perceived that this competency is not exclusive of male leaders:

Well, I don't think that female leaders are not ambitious.

In contrast, apart from R12, none of the male respondents described male leaders including themselves as ambitious, aggressive and competitive. R12 observed that the new generation of scholars/leaders from Mainland China, not only males but also females, are likely to be "very smart and aggressive" and are prepared to "work hard to achieve what they want".

4.4.1.1.2 Being Assertive, Direct, Outspoken and Decisive

Female respondents like R4 thought that male leaders appeared to be assertive and outspoken. They were perceived to be "asserting their opinions" and enjoyed "speaking out during senate meetings".

One male respondent, R7, observed that most male leaders, including Heads of academic institutions or Vice-Presidents, "are from science and engineering. For some reasons, they are thought to be people who can be assertive".

4.4.1.1.3 Being Task-Oriented

R10 was the only male respondent who perceived that male leaders are inclined to be task-oriented, as opposed to female leaders, whom he found to be more people-oriented:

Males usually look at the behavioural side of people, according to the tasks in hand.

Females sometimes try to look at things from the person. Even when females are

handling a task, they try to analyse the person's characteristics, and see to what extent these could be capitalised in order to achieve the goal.

4.4.1.1.4 Being Tough, Courageous and Persistent

According to R6, a female respondent, being tough, courageous and persistent are leadership competencies typical of male leaders. She considered:

Because men face failures more often and are able to accept failures, they are stronger in this sense than females. They are willing to take risks, and have the courage to face risks. When facing crises, men are better than women.

Similarly, R9, a male respondent, considered that male leaders, on the whole, "can be tougher than female leaders", and described this as a "generic ... innate characteristic".

4.4.1.1.5 Being Authoritative

Two female respondents, R2 and R6, observed male leaders as being inclined to resort to authority for the purpose of achieving effective leadership. R2 stated that she had seen her male colleagues "using authority to make things happen". She also noted that "the majority of men I know ... are probably more authoritarian".

R6, on the other hand, did not comment directly and explicitly that being power-oriented is a typical characteristic of male leaders, but inferred this from her observation that "only a minority of women are aggressive and power-seeking ..."

4.4.1.2 *Feminine Competencies*

In addition to identifying the range of competencies relating to male leaders, the respondents also identified an array of skills, abilities and characteristics which they perceived to be associated with female leaders. In their views, a female leader is:

- People-oriented
- Communicative
- Attentive to details
- Socially skilful
- Gentle
- Skilful in listening to staff problems

- Tolerant
- Empathetic
- Emotionally stable
- Collaborative
- Patient
- Able to motivate others and caring

The respondents, in identifying the competencies which they perceived to be associated with female leaders, appeared to share similar and consistent views, thus drawing up a positive profile of a female leader who is not much different from the female stereotype.

4.4.1.2.1 Being People-Oriented and Socially Skilful

This competency was given prominence by female and male respondents, R6, R7, R9 and R10, respectively. While R6 affirmed that women leaders are people-oriented, R7 described female leaders as being “able to build better rapport with their colleagues” and believed that “females would be stronger on the human side”.

R9, in turn, observed that his female counterparts possess “social skills” and that “females are better than males in ... social skills and interactions. In terms of human relations and collaboration, female leaders can be better”. This important competency of female leaders as observed by R10 is reflected in the following comment:

Females sometimes try to look at things from the human perspective. Even if they’re facing a task, they try to analyse a person’s characteristics ... Females may be in a better position to handle the personal problems of individual staff members.

4.4.1.2.2 Being Empathetic, Patient and Skilful in Listening to Staff

This competency was described by both male and female respondents including R5 and R7 as a typical quality of female leaders.

R5 drew reference from relevant literature, and concurred with what was said about women leaders, that “in general, women are good listeners”.

On the basis of his observations and experiences, R7 iterated that female leaders excel in their patience in listening to staff complaints, grievances and problems:

... Maybe I'm stereotyping. But generally, one would expect a female person to be more patient in listening. Also, I think that a female can be more empathetic.

4.4.1.2.3 Being Communicative

Several male respondents, particularly R7 and R9, asserted that female leaders had the advantage over male leaders in this regard, and this competency can be taken to characterise female leadership. The following comments from R7 and R9 represent their views:

... Communication skills are important for people who desire and aspire to become good leaders. I think females enjoy an advantage in this skill. If you regard communication skills as an important leadership attribute, we have already seen everywhere that females are rising in every profession that requires communication skills. (R7)

I think females have certain characteristics that could make them better leaders. My observation is that females are better than males in speaking, communication and social skills and interactions, which are important features of a leader. (R9)

4.4.1.2.4 Being Attentive to Details

This competency was considered by several respondents, including male and female, as being associated with female leaders, who were described by R6 as “perfectionists requesting and searching for more details”.

In addition, R4 shared a similar view that “females have an advantage: they are more details-oriented”, particularly when compared with males, many of whom, “are not good in handling small and trivial matters”.

Two other respondents, R7 and R10, examined this capability from the male perspective, as demonstrated in the following remarks:

A female leader may be more attentive ... (R7)

If a female counterpart were put in my position and were to act out my role, I think ... that she might be more dedicated to handling details. (R10)

4.4.1.2.5 Being Caring and Sensitive to Others' Feelings and Problems

R4, R9 and R10 talked about this competency and termed it as “feminine”.

R4 identified herself as being “more sensitive to other people’s feelings, reactions ... and problems”. She perceived that, in general, “females are sensitive to other people’s reactions ... They are sensitive to other people’s feelings too”.

R9, in turn, complimented female leaders as possessing “certain attributes or characteristics that could make them better leaders”. He further remarked that “in terms of motivation and being caring, females could be better leaders”.

In like manner, R10 also praised female leaders as being very caring, and assessed himself as being inferior to them: although he enjoyed talking to people, he did not believe that he could “play the role of a female who has a very caring character”; he could not be “as effective as a female leader”.

4.4.1.2.6 Being Gentle, Tolerant and Emotionally Stable and Strong

Five respondents, inclusive of two females, R3 and R4, and three males, R7, R9 and R10, talked about this competency in both positive and negative terms.

R3 was of the view that the characteristics of women as being “less ambitious, less aggressive and gentler” might hinder women from developing their careers further in this highly competitive world, and might constitute a barrier to their career progression. She observed that this might be attributive to the society’s perspective of gender.

R4, on the other hand, viewed that this gentleness of women on the whole had positive repercussions in rendering a female leader to be “more flexible in using her strategies. She can adopt a hardliner approach this time and a soft approach next time”.

Female leaders were considered by male respondents like R9 and R10 to be emotionally stable and strong, as illustrated in their respective comments as follows:

But as regards the EQ factor, I think that females could be stronger. (R9)

If a female counterpart were to act out my role ... I think she would be emotionally more tolerant. (R10)

In contrast, R7 held a different view from R9 and R10. When talking about his own skills, abilities and characteristics, he made reference to this competency as pertaining to both male and female leaders, but ascribed it with a negative connotation in the context of female leadership. He explained his perception in these terms:

... A female may not be ... emotionally stable ... again we have to be fair; lots of men are very much emotionally disturbed. In my case, one of my strengths is I can remain very cool-headed. A female may not be strong in this particular aspect.

4.4.2 Correlation between Competencies Identified in Callan's (2001) Management and Leadership Capability Framework and Gender

An examination of the competencies identified by the respondents as gender-stereotyped reveals that some of them correspond to a number of the competencies included and referred to in Callan's (2001) management and leadership capability framework. It occurred that most of the competencies perceived by the respondents to be gender-stereotyped and compatible with those identified by Callan (2001) are inclusive of the skills, abilities and characteristics typically demonstrated by female leaders/managers. Among the female-stereotyped competencies are communication skills, interpersonal skills, higher level of emotional intelligence as displayed in greater emotional stability, the ability to empathise with others, skilfulness in listening to staff problems, the ability to motivate and care for others, the disposition to be socially skilful and people-oriented, and also the inclination to be collaborative, consultative and collegial. These are found to echo some of the competencies and their associated elements expounded in Callan's (2001) capability framework, the salient ones being communication skills, social/interpersonal skills, empathy, ability to motivate and care for others, and emotional stability.

The competencies traditionally perceived as typifying the male leaders/managers, in particular, ambition, aggressiveness, competitiveness, assertiveness, toughness, courage, and the disposition to be task-oriented and authoritative, are compatible with the skills, abilities and characteristics commonly exhibited by a corporate manager under the tidal wave of 'new managerialism' which was seen to pervade the educational arena as well. All

these appear to tally with the competencies and their associated elements in Callan's (2001) capability framework, notably business and entrepreneurial skills and strategic focus.

4.4.3 Perceived Impact of Gender on the Effectiveness of Leaders of the HKHEIs

Of the 14 respondents, at least 11 were of the view that gender had had no impact on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong. A few of them went further to explain that effective leadership hinged on their individual attributes, and generalisation was inappropriate and inadvisable. Most of the respondents perceived that gender had not impacted directly on their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs, and recounted their views in the following comments:

I don't think it impacts on me at all whether I am a male or female ... A woman in my post would lead differently from me as well. (R2)

I think that when a person is effective, he/she is effective. I don't see that there are any typical male or female qualities that contribute to effective leadership. (R5)

I don't think that gender has had any impact on me as a leader. If a female has the same qualities that I have, she can do my job well ... it's the qualities that count and not necessarily gender ... I think it's the attributes that determine the effectiveness of leaders, and these are gender-neutral. (R7)

I can't really tell which gender is better because there are positive and negative aspects of both genders and many factors may not be gender-specific ... If my position is taken up by a female, she may act out my role in a different way. I don't think the differences are gender-related, and there is no gender stereotyping. The differences are due to individual personality only. Sometimes, females could exhibit male characteristics too. (R9)

... So my own experience is that gender hasn't made any fundamental bearing on how I lead and manage the institution ... (R11)

I've never thought of gender as affecting my effectiveness as a leader ... (R13)

I don't feel there should be any gender difference in effective leadership ... (R14)

Lastly, R12 believed that:

If a female is picked to do my job ... the outcome may be different. But I'm sure if that lady were selected to step into my shoes, she should be able to do a good job. So I don't think it's really got anything to do with gender.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has presented the data collected during the individual interviews, which were set out to explore the perceptions of this cohort of eight male and six female leaders of the various HEIs in Hong Kong in relation to the issues addressed in the three specific research questions. In this chapter, the issues examined were: (i) the leadership styles and competencies enabling leaders of HKHEIs to lead effectively; (ii) the influence of culture and authority/power on their ability to lead effectively; and (iii) the perceived impact of gender on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong.

The data collected identified the leadership styles and competencies which the respondents believed had enabled them to lead effectively as higher education leaders in Hong Kong. In fact, the respondents shared a number of competencies that might be exhibited by both male and female higher education leaders, such as the ability to establish a clear direction, to inspire a shared vision, to lead and manage change, to motivate, energise and empower people; interpersonal/social skills, communication skills, the focus on team-building and teamwork; and the capacity for development of staff, personal development and self-regulation. The respondents demonstrated apparent similarities in the identification of competencies which they felt had enabled them to lead effectively in the HKHEIs, and also in their largely consultative and collaborative leadership style typifying transformational and distributed approaches to educational leadership which incidentally drew on many qualities which were stereotypically seen as feminine.

Besides, the findings also showed how culture and authority/power had influenced the ability of these higher education leaders to lead the HKHEIs effectively. The respondents viewed that culture specific to a particular institution or ethnic society had more positive than negative influence on their ability to lead effectively, as evidenced in the inclination to adopt a collaborative, consultative and collegial leadership style under the influence of a culture emphasising collectivist values, harmonious rapport, trust, empowerment and collaboration. The influence of authority/power was discussed mainly in terms of how the wielding of authority/power, in particular authority, by some respondents, had enabled them to achieve the desired outcomes, in terms of expediting the work progress, adjudicating over dissenting views and conflicts and also resolving problems. Other respondents, however, in line with their mainly collaborative style, were disinclined to resort to authority/power to dictate or impose their demands or expectations on their subordinates.

Finally, the respondents interviewed provided considerable data on their perceptions of the extent to which the competencies associated with effectiveness in higher education leadership were related to gender, and identified a number of gender-stereotyped skills, abilities and characteristics regarded as specifically “masculine” or “feminine”. In this connection, the impact that gender was perceived to have on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong had also been examined, although that might need to be seen in the context of it being relatively more difficult for women to become higher education leaders in the first place.

Chapter 5

Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 4 of this thesis, the qualitative findings relating to the three specific research questions were grouped under different themes and were presented mostly as a series of enunciations of the perceptions of the 14 respondents focusing primarily on educational effectiveness in the HEIs in Hong Kong.

The present chapter, however, sets out to draw together, analyse and put into context these research findings in a sequence of discussions and to relate them to the specific research questions to which they pertain and also to the findings in the literature reviewed and discussed in chapter 2. The findings are compared and contrasted with the evidence reported in the literature to arrive at some conclusions on the following areas which relate to the three specific research questions and the themes emerging in the literature discussed in chapter 2: (i) the leadership styles and competencies that are perceived to have enabled the higher education leaders in Hong Kong to lead effectively; (ii) the influence of culture and authority/power on their ability to lead effectively; and (iii) the perceived impact of gender on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong. In the ensuing sections of this chapter, the findings are analysed and discussed in details and the associated implications are considered.

5.2 Leadership Styles and Competencies Enabling Higher Education Leaders to Lead Effectively

The data provided by the respondents during the interviews reveal a comprehensive range of essential competencies and leadership styles which they perceived to have enabled them to lead effectively as higher education leaders in Hong Kong. The competencies and leadership styles identified were compatible with the core capabilities and their associated elements

included in Callan's (2001) management and leadership capability framework. The findings on this area were thus presented and discussed in chapter 4 in the order of the capabilities incorporated in the framework. This section addresses specific research question 1 which concerns:

What are the perceptions of the leadership styles and competencies which have enabled these higher education leaders to lead effectively?

The data collected reveal that amongst the respondents, the following competencies were perceived to be the most important: (1) team-building and teamwork, (2) interpersonal/social skills, (3) communication skills, (4) the ability to motivate staff, (5) self-confidence, (6) empowerment and (7) the ability to achieve the desired outcomes. The above competencies (1 to 6) are associated with the transformational and distributed leadership styles, while the last competency (7), with the transactional approach.

5.2.1 Corporate Vision and Direction

Most of the respondents recognised corporate vision and direction as a core competency for effective higher education leadership, and agreed that it had enabled them to lead effectively. They iterated that their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs had been enhanced by their competency to envision the institution's future and develop a corporate vision "for the common good and benefit" of the institution (R3) in alignment with their personal vision (R5), set a clear vision and direction for staff to follow (R8, R11), share the vision with the staff team they built (R7, R11), inspire a shared vision and energise a collective commitment to achieve the corporate vision and institutional goals (R6, R7, R11). Moreover, the respondents saw the link between vision and strategy, and considered it desirable for them as higher education leaders to have the capability of keeping staff conversant with the strategic development of the institution (R7) and planning strategically to achieve the collective vision (R10). As these capabilities are hallmarks of transformational dimensions and team leadership is representative of the distributed concept, the respondents thus showed that they had resorted to the transformational/distributed leadership styles effectively.

The perceptions of these higher education leaders appear to confirm the views in the literature, notably the ability to envision "a possible and desirable future state of the organisation" as suggested by Bennis and Nanus (as cited in Bollington, 1999, p.89), the

alignment and co-existence of personal vision with corporate vision (Cox, 2002) and the leader's proficiency to "inspire a shared vision" and energise a collective commitment to achieve that vision (Callan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, as cited in Smith & Hughey, 2006, p.159; Nanus, 1992, p.16). The findings also support the respective views of Hallinger and Heck (2002) in suggesting the role of vision as a source of inspiration, those of Callan (2001) who identified the need to develop an effective strategy for achieving the vision, and those of Lumby (2002) in proposing strategic management as the means to develop such a strategy.

However, there are areas where the analyses offered by the literature fail to explain the findings. For instance, the need for leaders to develop a vision was suggested by Cox (2002) for the purpose of gratifying the desire for their organisation to excel over others and attain the topmost position. The data of this study found a different purpose, which was "for the common good and benefit" of the institution (R3). Evidently, what is of particular significance in what concerns corporate vision is shared vision, which, according to Nanus (1992), is a self-reflective mirror from where "individuals can see themselves ... as part of a first-rate team that grows in its ability to provide a valuable human product or service" (p.17). The respondents of this study did not make such an analogy, but simply equated shared vision with collective vision. Furthermore, "building a shared vision" has been confirmed by the evidence in existing literature (Leithwood et al, as cited in Gunter, 2001, p.70) as a hallmark of transformational leadership in enabling transformational leaders to set a direction and initiate change and transformation. Accordingly, the shared vision can then become "a catalyst for transformation" (Hallinger and Heck, 2002, p.10). The initiative for organisational learning, change, development and improvement to attain the shared vision and the common organisational goal was suggested by Bollington (1999). Vision, especially shared vision, was also seen to be of great importance in helping educational leaders to identify critical paths for change, organisational learning and improvement (Hallinger & Heck, 2002, p.12). Also inconsistent with the findings of this study is the description of the link between vision and strategy. While the present findings suggest the importance of communicating the institution's anticipated development and strategic planning for achieving the collective vision to its staff, the development of an effective strategy was believed to be of crucial importance for achieving the corporate vision (Callan, 2001). As suggested by Lumby (2002), such a strategy could be developed through strategic management, which involves choosing a direction, procuring collective

commitment from staff and other stakeholders, and selecting the best course of action to achieve institutional goals.

Lastly, the perceived important role of vision (Nanus, 1992) in bridging the present and the future suggested that visionary leaders would need to have the foresight and vision to “discern emerging trends in the environment” and link these future possibilities with past traditions within their organisations” (Hallinger & Heck, 2002, p.11).

It can be seen that the above analyses provided by the literature are unable to explain the findings. This is due mainly to the fact that the literature reviewed in chapter 2 is mostly research and scholarly works of western countries. Although the literature is more comprehensive than the findings in coverage, it cannot explain thoroughly the interview findings obtained in an oriental society like Hong Kong. It is evident that the cultural context of the literature, featuring a western society that typically advocates individualist values of self-centredness and a quest for individual excellence, contrasts sharply with the Hong Kong context of the findings, with Hong Kong being an oriental society which treasures collectivist values emphasising harmonious relationships and group interest and benefit.

The apparent emphasis of the findings of this study on how corporate vision and direction have enabled the respondents to lead the HKHEIs effectively implies that core to their ability to lead effectively is application and practice rather than philosophical views and abstract theories. This may be attributed to the increasing need for leaders of the HKHEIs to adopt a management-oriented approach that calls for pragmatism, speed and efficiency.

5.2.2 Strategic Focus

Several respondents (R1, R10, R12, R13) perceived that their ability to focus strategically had enabled them to lead effectively as leaders of the HKHEIs. The strategic focus of individual leaders was manifested in their experiences at work which testified their capability to envision and anticipate the future, and also to strategically think, analyse, plan and assess possible solutions. The strategic focus of individual leaders varied according to the specific nature of their work: R1, on the future development of education in China through strategic assessment, R10, on anticipating and planning for the future in his role as a

fund-raising ambassador, R12, on rigorous time management through strategically planning and thinking ahead of time, and R13, on maintaining Hong Kong's international standing through strategic planning and assessment. These findings confirm the notion of 'strategy' suggested by Earley (1998), as "responding to external trends and being concerned with the long-term future of an organisation with planning for a successful future" (p.148). They also support the description of strategic thinking provided by Garratt (1995) which pertains to "the skills of looking forwards and backwards while knowing where their organisation is now" (as cited in Davies, 2003, p.296).

There is, however, not much data in the study to support previous research by Caldwell and Spinks (1992), Middlewood (1998) and Johnson and Scholes (1993) on strategic analysis, assessment, choice and decision-making. As Middlewood (1998) suggested, strategic analysis of the organisation's current and future position and the external environment informs strategic choice and decision-making. Strategic decision, according to Johnson and Scholes (as cited in Callan, 2001), is made on the basis of strategic assessment of available options and possible solutions followed by subsequent selection of and decision on appropriate strategy. R1's ultimate decision to accept the offer for leading the project for joint doctoral training indicated that she had strategically analysed and evaluated the external environment which favoured collaboration with China and the potential benefit for Canada and China, before making the strategic decision to accept the challenge. R13, in turn, perceived that the strategic focus on maintaining Hong Kong's international standing and upholding its links with overseas countries and the Mainland could be achieved through strategic assessment. Here, the implication for R13 as leader of a HKHEI is to strategically assess the various plans for meeting one of the challenges facing the Hong Kong higher education sector, internationalisation of higher education, in terms of recruitment of students, academics and even administrators from abroad and organising courses for non-local students.

It can be seen from the above analysis that the capability to focus strategically on key areas of interest and concern was crucial to effective educational leadership. However, not many respondents referred to strategic focus as a core competency enabling them to lead effectively, and those who alluded to it, with the exception of R1, did not demonstrate that they had due regard or pay sufficient attention to the various associated processes of strategic thinking, planning, analysis, assessment, choice and decision-making. Given that

leaders of most sectors in Hong Kong tend to emphasise speed, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, it is understandable that the respondents might not have been mindful of the detailed processes ranging from strategic thinking to strategic decision-making as espoused in the concepts and theories suggested by the different researchers for leaders to follow.

In all, the respondents did perceive that they had the competency to envision and focus on the future, to think, plan, analyse, evaluate and assess strategically. As these are all transformational dimensions, the findings thus reveal that the respondents had adopted the transformational leadership approach which had in turn enabled them to lead effectively. This confirms the view of Callan (2001), who aligns transformational leadership with strategic leadership focusing on strategic thinking.

5.2.3 Achievement of Outcomes

Half of the respondents believed that the ability to achieve the desired outcomes was a crucial competency that had enabled them to lead effectively. R10, for instance, believed that “the achievement of leadership is basically in the eventual outcome”. In particular, the capability to inspire staff to elevate their performance (R4) and motivate and energise staff to achieve the desired outcomes of long-term values and the highest levels of quality was considered vital to effective educational leadership. This was expressed in terms of leading the institution to successfully undergo programme validations and attain self-accrediting university status (R2), and also through encouraging active participation on the part of staff thereby engendering in them a sense of ownership of the validation exercises and related processes (R9).

The above perceptions appear to confirm the findings of Kurato and Hodgetts (2001) and Allen (as cited in Callan, 2001) who suggested that the ability to achieve invaluable outcomes of a long-term value is essential to effective entrepreneurship. The above data also supported the view of Ramsden (1998a), that to render a university effective in terms of change, what is required is its corporate vision and its ability to inspire students and staff to achieve “things which they never thought they were capable of doing” (p.369). Furthermore, the perceptions of the respondents about fostering a culture of achievement in the HEI (R2), the impact of change leadership on the higher education sector in respect of

the achievement of higher standards in the outcomes (R5) agreed with the view of Simkins (1998), who saw the impact of change on the higher education sector as evidenced by “higher standards in the outcomes” (p.64). There is also evidence in this study to suggest that competent educational leaders should be accountable to external agencies or taxpayers for their own performance and that of their subordinates (R4, R5), and should entrust staff with the full responsibility to discharge their duties so as to enable them to have a sense of ownership for their work (R8). Again, this research finding appears to concur with the views in the literature that suggest the need for competent educational leaders to hold staff accountable for the outcomes (Callan, 2001), that accountability exists “through a series of manager-subordinate relationship” (Packwood, 1997, as cited in Bush, 1995, p.39).

However, the respondents of this study made no reference to what Callan (2001) regarded as an associated element of this competency, that is, “applying a commercial orientation ... by focusing on efficient and effective use of resources” (p.30). Furthermore, the findings of the present study on discussing the possible ways of achieving the desired outcomes, through, for example, effective verbal communication (R4), motivating and energising active participation on the part of staff in the work (R9), and adopting strategic change measures (R5), appear to disagree with the evidence in the literature. This is especially true of Callan (2001), who suggested other possible measures to achieve outcomes: through setting and monitoring clear performance standards, and also developing and implementing on-going evaluation processes “to monitor the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of outcomes” (p.30).

At present, providers of higher education in most Anglo-western countries are facing the challenges of scarce resources and fierce competition, as witnessed by the drastic cut in public funding for higher education and a significant reduction in the provision of resources. This phenomenon reflects the need suggested in Callan’s (2001) capability framework for leaders of the HEIs to focus on “efficient and effective use of resources” (p.30). In contrast, although the HKSAR Government has recently changed its policy which requires sub-degree and taught postgraduate programmes to be self-financing, the higher education sector in Hong Kong, especially the eight UGC-funded institutions, is still fully funded by the HKSAR Government. Hence the respondents did not regard the efficient and effective use of resources as an essential element which had contributed to their effectiveness. Nor did they perceive the need for them as higher education leaders to “monitor the efficiency,

effectiveness and equity of outcomes” as advocated by Callan. As is typical of leaders of most sectors in Hong Kong, the main concern and top priority for these leaders may be speed and efficiency in the process leading to achievement, not so much the close monitoring of outcomes.

The findings of this study indicate that the respondents were outcome-oriented, and capable of inspiring staff and students to achieve the desired outcomes, fostering a culture of achievement, being accountable to external agencies for the performance of their subordinates, the institutions/and themselves, and imbuing staff with a sense of ownership through entrusting them with full responsibility for the work assigned to them. These competencies are indicators of transformational dimensions such as inspirational motivation, team-building and empowerment. As suggested by Callan (2001) citing Kurato and Hodgetts (2001) and Allen (1999) to support his view, the ability to achieve invaluable results is a quality of effective and successful entrepreneurship, which represents a dimension of transactional leadership. The respondents had thus adopted a mix of transformational and transactional leadership styles to enhance their ability to lead effectively.

5.2.4 Development and Management of Resources

Nine respondents believed that they had the competency to develop and manage resources in order to achieve the desired outcomes, and were thus able to lead effectively. They discussed their experiences with reference to achievement of outcomes, but in this context focused on strategic allocation and management of the stringent resources, in particular, financial resources. This had indeed enabled them to achieve the desired outcomes at the least cost (R7, R9,,R12). They also perceived that their demonstrated ability to think innovatively and flexibly about how to strategically deploy the limited resources (R12), apply new technology to facilitate experience-sharing, speedy completion of work (R13), and also strategic consultation and decision-making (R14), had contributed to their effectiveness as leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong.

The above findings appear to concur with the research evidence in the literature. These findings include the achievement of the most beneficial outcomes through the strategic allocation and management of resources (Levacic, 1995), the need for strategic leaders to

have “the ability to think creatively and innovatively about the ways in which resources may be deployed in pursuit of an organisation’s objectives” (Thomas & Martin, 1996, as cited in Simkins, 1998, p.66), and the perceived “need to use new technology well to increase organisational performance” (Callan, 2001, p.26).

However, the respondents’ emphasis on the imperative for them to fight and compete internally with other units, or externally with other HEIs, to secure a share of the scarce resources (R2, R6, R7, R9, R14), and the practice of teamwork and pooling and sharing of resources (R2, R7) to enhance their educational effectiveness, has not been given equal prominence in the literature. Rather, the research findings discussed in chapter 2 emphasise “effective use of resources” in terms of cost efficiency (Lumby, 2001, p.41), as well as strategic allocation and management of resources, the latter focusing on the link between strategic allocation and application of resources, achievement of outcomes, efficiency, effectiveness and value for money (Simkins, 1998). It can be seen that the findings focus on the means to strategically allocate and manage resources, whereas the literature reviewed emphasise the effects and outcomes of strategic allocation and application of resources in terms of achievement of outcomes, organisational efficiency and effectiveness and also value for money. This difference in emphasis may be attributive to the pragmatic approach adopted by the group of leaders of higher education in Hong Kong, who are more concerned with how they could make use of effective means to enable them to achieve the desired outcomes, that is, strategic allocation and management of resources. In contrast, the literature reviewed suggests that in theory, the capability to strategically allocate, develop, apply and manage resources would lead to certain ideal and desirable outcomes. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the literature highlights cost-efficiency, effectiveness and value for money, which are all elements of the new managerial approach and also dimensions of the transactional approach to leadership. Given that teamwork, collaboration and harmonious relationships represent dimensions of the transformational approach, the respondents thus demonstrated that they had adopted both transactional and transformational leadership styles to enhance their ability to lead effectively.

However, the respondents’ views that they had to compete internally with other units or externally with other HEIs in their scramble for resources (R6, R14) imply that the potential for them to secure the required resources to meet the needs of their units or institutions is remote and limited. Additionally, their observation that units experiencing a deficiency of

resources would be compelled to rely on the surplus resources of other units suggests the need for leaders of the HEIs to establish good rapport both within and outside the institutions, and this may have negative implications of inequity, bias and greed.

5.2.5 Change Leadership

Half of the respondents believed that they had the capability to lead and manage change, which was perceived as instrumental to the development and improvement of a specific department or the entire institution (R2, R12). They considered that they, as leaders of change, had the compelling need to (i) consult, solicit and listen to the views of others (R1, R11), (ii) communicate the need for change, sensitise staff to contemplate and plan change (R2, R3), (iii) encourage, motivate and assist staff to accept and actively participate in change (R2, R8, R9), (iv) lead by setting a good example for staff to follow (R8), and (iv) initiate change with a view to facilitating improvement and helping the HEIs to achieve the institutional goals (R12).

The findings of this study seem to endorse the evidence reported in the literature, that change leadership requires a wide range of capabilities, which include the capability to lead and manage change, to demonstrate “a willingness to seek others’ views about new initiatives or changes for the organisation”, to communicate “the need for change to staff” (Callan, 2001, p.20) and sensitise staff to change. They also address the ability to motivate, energise and empower, to lead by example and gratify the sense of achievement through successful implementation of change (Callan, 2001, p.21). The data on the capability to motivate, energise and stimulate are also consistent with the findings of Callan (2001), who suggested that change leaders are able to “galvanise others to act on required changes” (p.20).

Nevertheless, in the present findings, there is no evidence suggesting the importance of foresight in change leadership. As Day, Harris & Hadfield (2001) suggested, good leaders possess the foresight to “look ahead, anticipate change and prepare people for it, so that it doesn’t surprise or disempower them” (p.53). Besides, the findings of this study are found to differ in focus from the research evidence in previous studies which argue also for the capability of change leaders to use appropriate strategies “to change the organisation’s culture, and value systems” (Callan, 2001, p.20), and change all systems, structures and

policies that appear to “seriously undermine or override the corporate vision” (Kotter, as cited in Callan, 2001, p.18) and thus constitute obstacles to change.

The findings of the present study reveal the perceptions of the respondents about their capability as leaders of the HKHEIs to consult staff, solicit their views and provide them with the opportunity to express their concerns and views (R1, R11). In this connection, it is interesting to note that ‘collective wisdom’ was mentioned by R11 as he explained his perception of the significance for higher education leaders to consult staff members to solicit their views and, more importantly, procure their consensus for plans, proposals and ideas put forward for their comment and consideration. According to R11, ‘collective wisdom’ was taken to refer to the meeting of the minds of the group of staff to generate intelligent ideas, views and feedback on plans or proposals requiring decision-making, and was therefore considered more desirable than ‘individual wisdom’, which pertains to the ideas and views of the individual, that is, the leader only. Accordingly, collective wisdom should lead to collective decision-making and may thus entail collective responsibility. The practice of ‘collective wisdom’ could also have a far-reaching impact on effectiveness of educational leadership. Effective leadership is no longer the leader’s sole concern, but rather is a collective process involving sharing, consultation, participation, collaboration and collective decision-making.

However, the literature on change leadership reviewed in chapter 2 appears to provide evidence of mainly ‘individual wisdom’, suggesting that educational leaders have the wisdom to demonstrate “a willingness to seek others’ views about new initiatives or changes for the organisation” (Callan, 2001, p.20), and to encourage “input from all employees on planning and implementation” (Cox, 2002, p.220). Obviously, the literature reviewed seems to focus on the solicitation of others’ views and input, but makes no mention of the importance of seeking and procuring consensus. In this regard, the findings of this study may not be explained by the analysis offered in existing scholarly work. This discrepancy may be explained by the cultural difference between the predominantly Chinese-oriented society of Hong Kong, which may regard consultation, lobbying, solicitation and procurement of consensus as a possible means to avoid direct confrontations and conflicts as well as maintain harmonious and collaborative relationships.

Moreover, the respondents in this study, in their attempt to lead change and win staff over the need for change, appeared to have the tendency to adopt a ‘soft’ approach in terms of consulting, soliciting staff views, communicating the need for change to staff, and motivating, energising and stimulating staff to accept, face and implement change. Although the idea of a ‘soft’ approach is advocated by a number of researchers (Callan, 2001; Cox, 2002; Glatter & Kydd, 2003; Parry, 1996; Sarros & Butchatsky, 1996), there is contradicting evidence in Kotter (1996) suggesting a hardliner approach to eradicate all obstacles to change. What accounts for this inconsistency in findings may once again be the cultural distinctiveness of Hong Kong, where the predominant Chinese culture emphasising collectivist values, cooperation and group relationships calls for avoidance of direct confrontation and maintenance of harmonious relationships. In contrast, the evidence in existing literature is indicative of the views of Anglo-western societies characterised by self-oriented and individualist cultures advocating individual wisdom and rights, and an explicitly determined and dauntless approach to preserve individual dignity and integrity. The findings of the present study imply the need for leaders of the HKHEIs to review their approach in handling and leading change and consider modelling after their counterparts in western societies as and when appropriate.

Evidently, the above findings reveal that the capabilities required for change leadership, such as the ability to motivate, energise and empower people, to communicate the need for and sensitise staff to change, and also to lead by example, characterise the transformational approach to educational leadership. Nevertheless, motivational skills with which these higher education leaders had been able to energise and stimulate their colleagues to achieve the desired outcomes thereby gratifying the need for recognition and self-esteem is obviously a transactional dimension. This pointed to the possibility that the respondents might have adopted a hybrid of transformational and transactional leadership styles in leading and managing change.

5.2.6 Interpersonal Relationships

A number of the respondents shared the view that interpersonal skills had enabled them to lead effectively as leaders of the HKHEIs (R12, R13). This was evidenced by their ability to establish rapport (R1, R5), to work successfully with people (R9, R10) and to cultivate positive and harmonious relationships (R6, R7, R14). These views confirm the findings in

the literature suggesting the ability to work successfully with and through people (Day et al., 2001; Goleman, 1998; Sackney & Mitchell, 2002), to cultivate and sustain positive and harmonious relationships (Cassavant & Cherkowski, 2001; Cherniss, 1998; Riley & MacBeath, 1998). Apparently, there is no inconsistency between the present research and the literature findings in this regard.

Some of the respondents considered it important for them as educational leaders to consult, solicit and share views of staff and students, appreciate and accept multiple and divergent views, reach group consensus and also make collective decisions (R1, R7, R8). These perceptions concur with previous research findings emphasising the need for educational leaders to be able to consult and share opinions (Callan, 2001), build consensus and rely on it rather than authority and accept divergent and multiple views (Cherniss, 1998). While there appears to be no apparent disagreement between the present findings and those in the literature in what concerns this area, the respondents' perceptions that they were better disposed to lead effectively as leaders of the HKHEIs through trust in people and sensitivity to the divergences in staff feelings, personalities, needs and the like suggest much more to expect of competent higher education leaders in Hong Kong than the literature findings.

Most of the respondents (R4, R12 and R13) agreed that their ability to promote teamwork, inculcate team spirit and build "the best team possible", "is the very foundation of effective leadership" (Cox, 2002, p.48). The importance they attached to team-building and teamwork had enabled them to successfully accomplish work assignments, resolve problems and difficulties and instil a sense of ownership into their staff teams (R4, R7, R9).

Furthermore, the respondents believed that their experiences in engaging the concerted efforts and procuring the support of their staff team (R7, R14) had enabled them to "orchestrate each individual's potential in the organisation" (Callan, 2001, p.27) to achieve the institutional goals, and testified their ability to lead effectively. Unlike previous research findings in which the element of trust was given due emphasis, the significance of trust as associated with team-building and teamwork was mostly inferred from the respondents' comments on their efforts to engage and involve their staff teams (R1, R4, R12). In the literature, however, there is evidence to suggest the importance of nurturing high levels of trust among members of highly-developed teams resulting in people being "trusted to work as autonomous, accountable professionals" (Day et al., 2001, p.54). This difference in focus

between what is inferred from the present findings and what is suggested in the literature in regard to the significance of trust can again be attributed to the cultural disparity between Hong Kong and the Anglo-western countries. It is not uncommon that Chinese people are disinclined to trust other people. In other words, it is not easy at all to win the trust of the Chinese. This is in stark contrast with people of Anglo-western countries who, in the eyes of the Chinese, are relatively simple-minded and tend to easily and unquestionably trust other people. Nevertheless, the literature reviewed do not appear to explain the evidence of this study which found R1 and R4 implicitly practising empowerment when respectively entrusting their staff with the responsibility to develop “a vision and a mission” and setting a direction for the institution, and also to engage their contribution and involvement in the programme review exercise.

Most of the respondents agreed that communication skills were pivotal to their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs. This competency had enabled them to lead effectively (R2), to maintain effective internal communication with their deputies, colleagues and staff (R1, R14), understand staff needs and concerns (R1, R6), share their experiences with their colleagues to enable the latter to learn and develop based on such inputs (R7), and effectively persuade, negotiate, communicate and liaise both internally and externally (R3, R4, R14). These perceptions appear to corroborate what Cherniss (1998) suggested in his research, and which was subsequently supported by Callan (2001), that educational leaders are expected to be “negotiators and networkers” (p.26) and “to be unusually persuasive” (p.27).

The present study provides evidence that leaders of the HKHEIs, with a view to promoting teamwork and team spirit and achieve effective team-building, emphasised sharing the collective vision with the staff team and providing them with due support as and when necessary. This view appears to be based on a different focus than that in the literature findings, which suggest that promoting effective communication, focusing the organisation and “laying the foundation for motivation” (Cox, 2002, p.48) constitute the strategies required for effective team-building. The difference in focus and views implies that leaders of the HKHEIs are increasingly aware that effective leadership no longer builds on the individual leader, but on concerted team efforts, and is a shared process featuring consultation, participation, collaboration and collective decision-making. This emphasis is therefore on the development and sharing of a shared vision with the staff team.

Given that interpersonal skills, focus on team-building and teamwork and communication skills, as described by Callan (2001), are core capabilities characterising transformational leaders, it is evident that the respondents had adopted the transformational leadership style which contributed to the effectiveness of their leadership.

5.2.7 Personal Development and Mastery

The majority of the respondents (except R3 and R4) were of the opinion that commitment to self-development and continuous learning was important in enabling them to lead effectively. They claimed that they could pursue this through learning from work experience, other people, overseas visits and formal studies. In terms of work experience, most of them believed that they had learnt and acquired their leadership skills from the practical experience of doing the work over the years (R6, R8, R10, R11). One respondent perceived that as a leader of higher education in Hong Kong, he was compelled to respond to the demands for change and challenges facing the higher education sector in Hong Kong, and had thus been able to learn more through widening his perspectives and broadening his exposures (R14). In regard to learning from other people, the respondents stressed the importance of “looking around and finding out how people do their work” (R2), learning from ex-colleagues (R8), and observing and learning from both the leader’s strengths and weaknesses (R7), good qualities, some special talents and skills (R12). In respect of visiting overseas HEIs, the respondents reported that they had taken the opportunity while travelling abroad to observe and learn about the way in which overseas counterparts operate, lead and manage the HEIs (R5, R7). In what concerned formal studies, the substantiation of practical experience acquired at work by the theoretical knowledge acquired through the pursuit of formal studies was considered as worthwhile (R7, R9). Their perceptions appear to confirm the views in the literature, which argue for the importance of self-development and continuous learning in enabling leaders not only to improve in their weak areas (Callan, 2001; Leithwood, Chapman, Corson, Hallinger & Hart, 1996), but also to strengthen their emotional intelligence-related competencies through appropriate training and development activities to improve their performance and enhance their capabilities (Cherniss, 1998; West-Burnham, 1997). The data collected on this area cover a wide range of activities for personal development and continuous learning purposes, and add to the literature findings that provide no detailed coverage of the same.

Two respondents (R8, R10) considered it important for leaders of the HKHEIs to be aware of and understand their personal strengths and weaknesses, and also be able to conduct critical self-reflection. Their perceptions are consistent with previous research evidence reported by Peeke (2003), that "... a willingness to acquire a sense of personal mastery of one's own weaknesses and strengths, as well as those of others" (p.176) is a major capability required of contemporary leaders. Nevertheless, the present finding does not appear to support the idea of "the leader as learner" (p.123), as cited by West-Burnham (1997), who focused on habitual learning as a means for the leader-learner to improve his/her capability. One of the recent developments affecting the higher education sector in Hong Kong, the promotion of lifelong learning since the 1980's, may provide the grounds to explain the discrepancy. Subsequently, the implication or challenge for leaders of higher education in Hong Kong is the need to change the learning culture, from one where learning/education was not easily accessible to all age groups to one which promotes lifelong learning with open access for all ranks and files. Although continuing education and lifelong learning have been largely accepted by the Chinese community in Hong Kong and have been gaining in popularity over the years, they are still relatively not as well-developed and prevalent in the local community as the development of the same in other parts of the world. The present finding does not appear to disagree with or add to the evidence of previous studies.

Several respondents agreed that self-confidence was a major competency contributing to effectiveness of their leadership. Four of them (R2, R5, R7, R13) shared the view that their ability to exercise self-initiative was contingent on self-confidence, which had enabled them to command respect and trust. There is, however, no evidence in the literature suggesting the same view. Rather, self-confidence is perceivably linked with self-awareness, which, as observed by Goleman (1998), regulates the level of self-confidence among leaders, enabling them to "play according to their strengths", such that they are "less likely to set themselves up for failing", and will not seek for any challenges which are understandably beyond their ability to cope with (p.85). This discrepancy in findings may be attributed to the respondents' awareness of the need for them as leaders of the HKHEIs to demonstrate self-confidence and self-initiative, with a view to building a more positive image of Chinese people who used to give the impression of lack of confidence and initiative, as portrayed in their timid, reticent and passive outlook. To a certain extent, the data of this study provide additional dimensions to the literature findings. These include R5's recollection of how

self-confidence had affected speed and efficiency in her discharge of official duties and R7's experience in facilitating the development of his colleagues into leaders on the basis of the ideas and experiences which he had confidently shared with them.

Nine respondents opined that self-regulation was critical to personal mastery, and according to Callan (2001), was manifested through trustworthiness, integrity and application of ethical principles. The respondents, however, perceived that the practice of self-regulation could be demonstrated by a wider array of attributes, which embrace trustworthiness and honesty (R1), integrity in terms of "being true and honest" (R10), and "fair, just and unbiased" as well as upholding of principles (R12), self-control and emotional stability (R3, R6, R7) and self-discipline (R8, R12, R13). In this connection, this study obviously provides data covering a wider range and presented in greater details than previous research discussed in chapter 2. The respondents' reflections on how they had practised self-regulation, as associated with self-discipline (R8, R12, R13), through personal integrity in terms of being true, honest, fair, just, unbiased and upholding one's principles, certainly provide additional dimensions to the literature findings.

The present findings argue for the importance of empathy and motivation, an essential element of personal development and mastery, and associate it with listening skills (R13) to enable leaders to share staff frustrations and unhappy feelings (R2), to handle staff resistance and setting a strategic direction (R5), to put oneself in others' position and think and look from their perspectives (R8, R10, R12). The evidence provided by most respondents appears to suggest motivation as another crucial element of personal development and mastery contributing to their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs. The importance of motivation was highlighted in terms of a leader's capability to stimulate and motivate staff "to open up their minds to understand what is expected of them" (R1), and to commit to work with and for the leader to accomplish the job (R2, R6). The present findings also indicate the way in which the respondents had been able to lead effectively by means of motivation, through inculcating in staff "a strong passion about the value of what the institution is doing as embodied in the corporate vision" (R1), getting to know and understand the concerns and priorities of staff, and "playing to their strengths" accordingly, and also assisting them to go through their emotional crises (R2), providing staff and students with appropriate feedback and advice to cater for their needs (R5), trust

and delegation (R7) as well as demonstrating care and concern, and support, appreciation and understanding (R9).

The respective scholarly work of Goleman (1998), Cherniss (1998) and Callan (2001) have identified empathy and motivation as two integral components of emotional intelligence. Each of these writings has focused on its own area of interest: Goleman, on the conceptual explanation of the five competencies associated with emotional intelligence; Cherniss, on staff training and development, to strengthen those competencies leading to improved performance; and Callan, on self-development, continuous learning and self-awareness. Apparently, the evidence provided in the literature does not appear to explain the findings of this study. On the assumption that previous studies have as their objective the contribution to theories and concepts, the present research sets out to gauge the views and perceptions of the respondents on effectiveness of higher education leadership on the basis of their practical experiences. The discrepancy between what is found in the literature and the findings of this study is therefore inevitable. The respondents' recollections of how their ability to empathise and motivate had enabled them to lead effectively and what they had managed to achieve by virtue of these two capabilities thus provide additional dimensions to previous research findings. Evidently, personal development and mastery, with its above-indicated associated elements, is a competency developed by educational leaders adopting a transformational leadership style.

5.2.8 Business and Entrepreneurial Skills

Only two respondents (R1 and R4) considered business and entrepreneurial skills as a competency leading to effective higher education leadership. They alluded mainly to what Callan (2001) regarded as a major capability, relationship marketing, which, according to Allen (1999), is customer-oriented and pertains to “building trust, satisfying customers ... communicating effectively with customers, and customers being perceived as part of the team” (as cited in Callan, 2001, p.30). R1 and R4 referred to the stakeholders of the HEIs as customers, and believed that the application of relationship marketing in conjunction with marketing skills could enable them to achieve the desired outcomes: in R1's case, for the HEI she was heading to be upgraded to a university and acquire self-accrediting status while for R4, to boost the student intakes for the HEI where she was working. R1 also considered that she was playing the dual role of an effective change leader and a successful educational

entrepreneur, which share more or less the same capabilities and attributes, in particular, being vision-driven and having a felt need for achievement of outcomes (Callan, 2001).

More has been discussed in existing literature about the expedient application of marketing skills, together with financial, management and business principles, to bring about prosperity for the future effective and “enterprise” university. These skills and principles include the identification and exploitation of more focused factors “to their marketing advantage” (Ramsden, 1998a, p.367), the emphasis on “a role for the market and attention to outputs”, and also “accountability, efficiency and performance” (Coaldrake, 2000, p.9), and the reference to the “new management ... oriented towards cost, income, efficiency, financial planning, image presentation and enterprise ...” (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992, as cited in Ribbins, 1997, p.194).

Besides, the capability of vision being a source of drive, inspiration and motivation featuring change leadership and entrepreneurship as perceived by R1, is magnified to “a more outward-looking” (Clark, as cited in Ramsden, 1998b, p.367) dimension. The findings of this study, however, do not add to the suggestion in previous research regarding the pivotal importance of the capability to “firmly, fairly and equitably” (Ramsden, 1998a, p.368) mobilise and manage both resources and people to achieve outcomes. This difference of perception implies that the higher education sector of Hong Kong, despite the recently changing trend that calls for internationalisation, does not as yet see any acute financial need to recruit foreign students, and can still contain its vision within the local bounds. This is in stark contrast to Anglo-western countries, which on primarily economic grounds, have already extended their vision to a more outward-looking dimension that goes beyond the confines of the department or institution. Furthermore, if leaders of the HKHEIs were to lead effectively in a highly competitive world where resources are becoming increasingly scarce, they would need to focus more on effective and equitable mobilisation, management and deployment of resources.

In brief, the respondents did not indicate the level of performance which they had required their staff to attain in order to achieve the desired outcomes: to fulfil only what was expected of their roles, or to excel over and above the expected performance. Nevertheless, the implementation of the managerial and entrepreneurial approach is evidently a transactional

dimension, and the respondents might have resorted to a hybrid of transactional and transformational leadership styles.

5.2.9 Development and Empowerment of People

Five respondents perceived that empowerment was associated with devolution, sharing of authority and delegation. This data concur with the definitions of empowerment identified in the literature, as “giving authority/power to others” (The Oxford Dictionary, as cited in Gamage & Pang, 2003, p.254), and as “a sharing of power” (Hooper & Potter, 2000, p.66). This study also provides evidence that devolution involves the transfer of authority/power and autonomy in decision-making (R6), while delegation entails the entrustment of responsibilities (R1, R7, R8) to staff at a lower rank or level in the institutional hierarchy. The respondents perceived that empowerment had thus enabled them to identify, encourage and develop staff with leadership potential and talent (R1, R8).

The findings of this study reveal that the respondents considered it important for them to empower, develop and trust their staff. They also emphasised the significance of trust relationships in enhancing their ability to motivate people and lead effectively (R7). This agrees with the literature findings of Hooper and Potter (2000), arguing that empowerment “provides for effective leadership at all levels and it is based on trust” (p.66). Evidently, the respondents (R4, R7) were concerned about how trust relationships had enabled them to motivate and develop staff, with a view to delegating work to them ultimately. This is, in fact, not explicitly spelt out in the literature. Several respondents perceived that they had the capability to empower staff at all levels to develop their leadership potential which could facilitate delegation and succession planning. As leaders of the HKHEIs, they undertook to re-deploy staff according to their strengths and weaknesses, and hoped that this would not only enable staff to grow and develop, but also enable the HEIs to capitalise on staff talents and potentials (R1, R2, R10).

The above findings appear to support the view in the literature that leaders should be committed to developing the potential of others with a view to “developing leaders at all levels of the organisation” (Callan, 2001, p.27), and this should include “empowerment in professional growth” (Gamage & Pang, 2003, p.255). Moreover, the idea that the development and empowerment of people is a distinctive dimension of transformational

leadership was endorsed in previous research (Southworth, 1998). It is worth noting that the respondents (R1, R2, R10), in drawing from their experiences in the Hong Kong higher education sector, provided different scenarios for exhibiting this competency. R1, in particular, cited three examples to illustrate her perceived capability to fully explore and make effective use of staff members' best abilities and talents to provide the required training and development for senior staff, and to motivate and develop junior staff through engaging them in all aspects of work and entrusting them with due responsibilities. This finding therefore adds to the research evidence reported in the literature. However, the present findings do not appear to indicate that these higher education leaders have taken any initiative to conduct needs analyses to identify staff development needs in their work areas. This seems to disagree with the literature findings as suggested by Callan (2001), that educational leaders are required to "ask staff what they need in order to do their work better, create a learning environment for staff as well as identify and implement programmes and activities which meet staff development needs" (p.28). This difference in approach between leaders of the HKHEIs and their counterparts in western countries may be explained by the discrepancy in customary practice and culture that distinguishes Hong Kong in the Far East from the West. In most sectors of Hong Kong, speed, efficiency and cost-effectiveness are the main cornerstones that warrant survival and prosperity. Prescribed procedures and systems for work may often be regarded by leaders as cumbersome, unnecessary and inappropriate, and may either be ignored or may not be adhered to. Under such premises, the conduct of needs analysis via questionnaire surveys to identify and gauge staff development needs may not be a popular and prevalent practice among the HKHEIs. It is therefore not surprising to find that there is no mention at all of this survey mechanism in the findings of this study.

The present study also provides evidence that empowerment can be achieved through motivating staff to improve their practice and performance (R2, R12), and also acknowledging their good performance (R4, R13). This finding appears to support the views suggested by Callan (2001) and Gamage and Pang (2003). Callan focused on empowerment in improvement of performance achievable through leaders' commitment to staff development, and staff, once empowered, will be able to transform into leaders themselves at different levels of the organisational hierarchy. Gamage and Pang, in turn, focused on empowerment in professional growth for particularly teachers, who, once

empowered, “will have the authority and autonomy, with concomitant responsibility, for competent performance” (p.256).

The findings also reveal empowerment in improvement of performance, and empowerment in staff development, but go one step further to highlight explicitly the importance of acknowledgement and recognition of staff performance as a great incentive to motivate staff to commit to personal development and improvement in their performance. This discrepancy between the findings of the present study and those in the literature reviewed may be explained by the difference in the mentality of the East and the West. In Hong Kong, the concepts of continuing education and lifelong learning have only been introduced in the 1960s and 1980s respectively and Hong Kong Chinese, especially those of the older generation, are not as receptive to these concepts as people in western countries. For the people of Hong Kong to gather the momentum to actively pursue their personal or even professional development, they would normally require some kind of incentive. Hence an explicit acknowledgement in recognition of their remarkable performance should serve the purpose of motivating them to seek further personal or professional development and also improvement in their performance.

In recounting their experiences as leaders of the HKHEIs, the respondents appeared to focus explicitly on devolution of authority and delegation of responsibilities, and one respondent considered empowerment and devolution as an effective means to motivate staff (R7). This finding differs from what was found in existing literature in which greater emphasis is placed on team and shared leadership. That the evidence in this study cannot confirm that in existing scholarly work may again be attributed to the discrepancy in cultures between Hong Kong, where autocracy and centralisation of power used to be dominant features of educational leadership, and western countries, which have for some years advocated teamwork and shared leadership.

5.3 Influence of Culture and Authority/Power on Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership

A number of determinant factors perceived as shaping the development of effective educational leadership have been identified in previous scholarly studies. This study,

however, examines and discusses only two of these factors, culture and authority/power, which have long been considered as the most significant in affecting the effectiveness of educational leadership in practice. This section therefore addresses specific research question 2 which concerns:

How do these leaders perceive that culture and authority/power have influenced their ability to lead effectively?

5.3.1 Culture

A number of the respondents (R2, R7, R10) were of the view that institutional culture had an important influence on their ability to lead effectively. One respondent, R2, considered that her leadership style and ability to make strategic decisions had been influenced by the institutional culture of the respective institutions where she had been working: a collegial, consultative, collaborative and ‘bottom-up’ culture in the one HKHEI as opposed to an autocratic and ‘top-down’ culture in the other. Another respondent, R7, perceived that institutional culture had shaped and developed his leadership style: the collegial culture prevalent at the institution where he had been working for over 30 years engendered great harmony and collegiality within the university community. This had, in turn, enabled him to focus on collaboration, interpersonal relationships and collegiality in his leadership approach, and helped to iron out all conflicts and confrontations. One other respondent, R10, was also of the view that the predominant university culture was one that encouraged freedom, openness and autonomy, and these had enabled him to develop his ideals and cherish long-term visions. He was convinced that such a congenial institutional culture had a positive impact on the effectiveness of his leadership.

The perceptions of the above respondents appear to concur with the views in the literature, as suggested by Reeves, Moss and Forest (1998) and Dimmock and Walker (2002b). These findings reveal that culture is an important factor which provides the context for the exercise of educational leadership, influences the thoughts, actions and effective practices of educational leaders, and accordingly, shapes their leadership styles.

Furthermore, two respondents, R1 and R12, believed that their ability to lead effectively had been influenced by ethnic or cross culture, in terms of their exposure to both oriental (Chinese) and western (North American) cultures. Both agreed that they had been inclined to

subject themselves to the influence of Chinese culture, and had accordingly prioritised harmonious interpersonal relationships over tasks, collaboration and motivation, and also adopted a people-oriented approach in their leadership of the HEIs in Hong Kong.

The above perceptions of the respondents appear to support the views of Bush and Qiang (2002), who found that Chinese culture, which emphasises collectivist values, encourages reciprocal cooperation and prioritises interpersonal relationships, exerts a critical influence on leadership practices. This view was echoed by Dimmock (2000) and also Dimmock and Walker (2002b), who observed the difference between Asian cultures, with their emphasis on collectivist values, and western cultures which tend to value individualist values/interest, and self-orientation (Hofstede, 1991; McAdams, 1993). The collectivist values stressed in Asian cultures impact on the competencies associated with effective educational leadership, as reflected in the “primacy of relationships above tasks, and awareness of group loyalties and motivational tendencies” (Dimmock & Walker, 2002a, p.397). Educational leaders operating under such cultures are therefore inclined to adopt a people-oriented approach, manifested through competencies such as being collaborative and interpersonally skilful to avoid confrontations and conflicts, and also cultivate and preserve harmonious relationships, through authoritarian decision-making (Dimmock & Walker, 2002b).

On the other hand, the passive role of culture as opposed to the active role of the higher education leaders was explored by two respondents, R2 and R6, who perceived that leaders ought to play a proactive role, and be responsible for building and shaping the institutional culture, working in conjunction with the entire community of the institution. The perceptions of the respondents appear to concur with the findings in previous studies suggested by Dimmock and Walker (2002b) and Busher and Barker (2003). Such evidence found that educational leaders are expected to play a proactive role and are responsible for creating, constructing, shaping and influencing the institutional culture, which could be shared and collaborative culture that connects the entire institutional community.

Emerging from the data collected are also divergent viewpoints from respondents like R2, R3 and R8, who argued that institutional culture had undermined and even hindered their ability to lead effectively. The fact that these respondents had been working in a “deeply entrenched” and “check and balance” culture (R2), and also a “controlled and regulated environment” (R8), suggests that their freedom to lead was somehow restricted. This had

affected their ability to make strategic decisions (R2 and R8), and required higher degree of persuasion and communication skills to implement change within the institution (R3). This phenomenon may be attributed to the ethnic culture that typifies Chinese societies, which emphasise harmonious group relationships (*kuanxi*) and avoidance of conflict through authoritarian decision-making (Dimmock & Walker, 2002b). This was particularly true of the context in which R2 was working as a second-tier higher education leader in an institution where a ‘top-down’ leadership style was adopted and “ultimate decisions are made by the founder of the institution”. Ethnic culture had also impacted on the capability of respondents like R1 and R2 to exercise effective leadership, the former under the influence of Chinese culture and becoming more “sensitive to a culturally different (Chinese) way of handling difficult issues”, the latter being influenced by the exposure of both western (North American) and oriental (Chinese) cultures and implied that he had been selecting and taking the best from the two cultures. However, the above evidence is inconsistent with that suggested by Lumby (2003). She viewed that while culture had a significant influence on educational leadership, leaders ought not succumb passively to the influence of culture, but should be able to exercise their discretion to transcend above the influence of culture and decide on the most appropriate way to respond to cultural change.

The implications of the above findings are that leaders of the HKHEIs should play a more proactive role in cultivating and shaping the institutional culture to minimise resistance to their attempt in initiating change for the overall interest and benefit of the institution. In view of the largely homogeneous student population in the HKHEIs comprising mainly Hong Kong Chinese and the inevitable predominance of the Chinese culture, higher education leaders in Hong Kong should also try to develop an institutional culture that accommodates the best mix of western and oriental cultures. This is with the aim to promote intercultural understanding among staff and students, and to enhance the institutional image and the cosmopolitan outlook of Hong Kong.

5.3.2 Authority/Power

Several respondents believed that the powers bestowed on them by the authority vested in their positions as leaders of the HKHEIs had a perceived impact on their effectiveness (R1, R3 and R5), and described how they had wielded such authority to “make things happen” and achieve what they had set out to accomplish. Three other respondents, R11, R12 and

R14, also shared the view that an appropriate use of authority could contribute to effective leadership, in terms of achieving the set target or goal, speeding up the completion of work, handling dissenting views and resolving conflicts, confrontations and grievances. These findings appear to corroborate the evidence provided by Busher (2005), that officially designated leaders at all levels of the institution could easily access and avail themselves of power, and could have significant influence over the shaping of the policies, practices, processes, systems, cultures and sub-cultures as well as achieve set targets and goals. As viewed by Busher, the appropriate wielding of power/authority would enable visionary, inspiring and motivational leaders to construct or shape various policies, practices, processes and cultures and to lead effectively. In this context, educational leaders ought to exhibit charisma to win the respect, admiration and acceptance of their subordinates, and should be wielding referent power which they have gradually built (Gamage and Pang, 2003).

The implication of this finding is that leaders of the HKHEIs should be more proactive in duly using the authority/power appropriate for their positions. They should also try to develop their own leadership styles with a view to balancing between an absolute reliance on authority/power to attain their personal and institutional goals, and an indiscriminate practice of empowerment and delegation of authority. Empowerment as viewed by Gamage and Pang (2003) in terms of motivating staff to inspire their performance can, in turn, become the source of authority for especially leaders of change in empowering organisations.

Three respondents, R2, R7 and R8, expressed their dislike and reluctance to use the authority vested with them by virtue of their positions to impose their demands and expectations on their staff. This finding does not appear to agree with the evidence in previous research which discusses the relationship between authority/power and leadership. In particular, Dimmock and Walker (2002b) found that educational leaders in Asian societies may be inclined to wield coercive power, apply a top-down approach and adopt an authoritarian or autocratic leadership style. Moreover, R2 observed that Hong Kong people tend to subject to authority. What serves to explain the difference between the findings of this study and those found in the literature may possibly be the constant exposure of Hong Kong to the influence of western cultures, and the majority of the contemporary leaders are therefore more inclined to follow the distributed/collective leadership model.

Furthermore, as viewed by Mitchell and Sackney (2001), in the context of diffused power, power and leadership reciprocally influence each other, and in conjunction with other constructs such as “followership, leading, learning and teaching ... together, constitute a community of leaders who can move schools forward to become communities of leaders” (as cited in Sackney & Mitchell, 2002, p.907). This analysis in the literature may explain the practice of distributed/shared leadership which is gaining increasing popularity in the Hong Kong higher education sector. Nevertheless, a similar analysis could not be found in the findings of this study, perhaps because the respondents had been too engrossed in recounting their perceptions and experiences in regard to how they had or had not resorted to the wielding of authority/power to enable them to lead effectively.

5.4 Impact of Gender on Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership

The data collected reveal the impact which gender is perceived to have or have not exerted on the effectiveness of the respondents as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong. The findings appear to focus on three main areas of interest: (i) gender-related competencies; (ii) gender and the competencies promulgated in Callan’s (2001) capability framework; and (iii) the perceived impact of gender on the effectiveness of these respondents as higher education leaders in Hong Kong. This section therefore addresses specific research question 3 which pertains to:

What impact is gender perceived to have on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong?

5.4.1 Gender-Stereotyped Competencies Associated with Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership

Both male and female respondents participating in the present study perceived that a number of the competencies associated with effective educational leadership were gender-related, and could be typically categorised as masculine or feminine. According to the respondents, male educational leaders were observed to exhibit ambitious, aggressive and competitive (R4, R6, R12), assertive and decisive (R4, R7), task-oriented (R10), tough and courageous (R6, R9), and authoritative (R2, R6) behaviours. The respondents also identified a group of skills, abilities and characteristics which exemplify female educational leaders. They

perceived female leaders as being people-oriented and socially skilful (R6, R7, R9, R10), empathetic, patient and skilful in listening to staff (R5, R7), communicative (R7, R9), attentive to details (R4, R6, R7, R10), caring and sensitive to others' feelings and problems (R4, R9, R10) as well as gentle, tolerant and also emotionally stable and strong (R3, R4, R7, R9, R10). The data collected thus appear to support the findings in previous studies reviewed in chapter 2, which suggest a spectrum of leadership competencies including masculine and feminine skills, abilities and characteristics (Bem, 1974; Gray, 1993).

Indeed, underlying the identification of some characteristics as masculine or feminine are the gender stereotypes in regard to the way in which men and women work and operate as leaders. Male leaders are found to be analytical and assertive (Bem, 1974), decisive and dominant (Coleman, 2004), authoritarian, charismatic, entrepreneurial and competitive (Barker, 2005). Female leaders, on the other hand, are considered to be collaborative, caring, communicative, consensual (Blackmore, 1999), caring, nurturing, loyal and cooperative (Evetts, 1990), relations-oriented and socially skilful (Hall, 1997), with "social skills, empathy, greater emotional intelligence and the ability to take up multi-tasks" (Coleman, 2004).

Moreover, the data reported by the respondents in the present study appear to support the findings of Coleman (2004), who found that men and women leaders shared the same attitudes to leadership, broadly, that they both adopted a stereotypically feminine approach of collegial, consultative and collaborative leadership, consistent with the transformational and distributed styles.

One female respondent, R3, raised her concern about the adverse impact of gentleness, traditionally regarded as a feminine characteristic, on the career progression of women to leadership positions in higher education and their ability to lead effectively. R3 opined that this might constitute a stumbling block to the career advancement of women on their journey to higher education leadership. This view is consistent with the literature finding (Coleman, 2004), that female leaders, being seen as soft and indecisive, might be at a disadvantage in a male-dominated environment where their male counterparts exhibit masculine qualities of "decisiveness, assertiveness and dominance" generally expected or required of a leader. It is the stereotypes that disadvantage women, not what they actually do.

However, as indicated in the findings of this study, there was a general feeling among the respondents that they developed and exhibited gender-stereotyped characteristics normally taken to typify their counterparts of the opposite gender. One of the female respondents, R4, considered that her personality was inclined to be more like a male: being straightforward, direct, easy to communicate, and task/target-oriented. Another female leader, R6, observed that the minority of females are aggressive and power-seeking, which are stereotyped male characteristics. One male respondent, R10, assessed himself as people-oriented, which is generally accepted as a female-stereotyped quality. The same male respondent assessed himself as being empathetic, patient and skilful in listening to others, which are also typically associated with females. One other clear dimension of female educational leadership, being consultative and collaborative, which is normally considered in connection with teamwork and empowerment, was claimed by two male respondents, R7 and R11, to be one of their leadership competencies. One of them, R7, strongly believed that being articulate and communicative was his main strength, and that being socially skilful did enhance the effectiveness of his leadership.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that in each instance, there is only one male respondent who claimed that he possessed the particular female leadership competency. Such practical evidence indicates the possibility that educational leaders may exhibit a mix of masculine and feminine competencies, and may thus be classified as androgynous leaders. According to Bem (1977) and Ferrario (1994), an androgynous leader, who possesses many of the masculine and feminine competencies/attributes, is capable of handling a wide range of situations and is likely to be an effective leader. The findings of this study in this respect are thus in line with those of Coleman (2004).

5.4.2 Gender and Competencies of Educational Leadership in Callan's (2001) Management and Leadership Capability Framework

It is interesting to note from the findings of the present study that a number of the competencies perceived by the respondents as gender-related are compatible with those identified by Callan (2001) in his management and leadership capability framework. Most of these competencies include the gender-stereotyped skills, abilities and characteristics typically developed and exhibited by female leaders/managers, in particular, interpersonal skills, communication skills, emotional stability, ability to motivate, care for and empathise

with others and disposition to be people-oriented and team-oriented. However, there is only limited evidence in the present study to show the link between the gender-stereotyped competencies traditionally perceived as characterising male educational leaders and the competencies identified by Callan (2001). Among the commonly known male-stereotyped competencies are aggressiveness, assertiveness, ambition, competitiveness, toughness, courage and the inclination to be task-oriented and authoritative. Most of these correspond with some of the capabilities and their associated elements identified under business and entrepreneurial skills, achievement of outcomes and strategic focus in Callan's (2001) framework.

5.4.3 Impact of Gender on Effectiveness of Higher Education Leadership

The majority of the respondents were unanimous in their views that gender had no impact on their effectiveness as higher education leaders in Hong Kong. A number of them made direct reference to the non-impact of gender on them as leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong, the way in which they led the HEIs and their effectiveness as higher education leaders (R2, R7, R11 and R13). Others suggested that gender difference ought not be promulgated in educational leadership (R14), given that both masculine and feminine genders had their positive and negative aspects (R9), and it was thus difficult to ascertain the particular gender that would be able to lead more effectively and the typical masculine or feminine competencies that would contribute to effective educational leadership (R5).

The above findings seem to agree with the view in previous research discussed by Evetts (1994), that "leadership and management behaviour were not necessarily gender-based" (as cited in Coleman, 2003, p.43). The research data of the present study also support the respective views of Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan, (1997, p.35), that "'masculine' and 'feminine' stereotype qualities in leadership, regardless of the gender of the leader", were recognised as important; and Grace (1995), that effective educational leadership was contingent upon "a principled commitment ... and not simply the gender ..." (p.181).

Four respondents (R5, R7, R9 and R12) shared the same opinion that effectiveness of educational leadership was very much determined, influenced and dependent on the individual leader, with particular regard to the individual personality, leadership/working styles, attributes and competencies. All of them concurred that gender had no significant

impact on their effectiveness as leaders of the HKHEIs. They also agreed that given the distinctiveness, uniqueness and differences of each individual, it might not be advisable and appropriate to generalise the likely impact of gender on effectiveness of educational leadership.

However, the above perceptions and findings do not seem to concur with the views discussed by Riley (1994) and Grace (1995) in their studies on the emerging new trend in educational leadership culture and practice in the 1990s. As suggested by Riley (1994) and cited in Grace (1995), effective and successful leadership of the educational sector, which has been facing unprecedented changes and challenges, has increasingly been associated with masculine competencies and the corresponding hardliner, tough and strong leadership approach, instead of the conventional feminine skills, abilities and characteristics and the related collegial, consultative and collaborative leadership approach.

The implication of the above findings is that in order to be more responsive to the changes, challenges and competing demands in the increasingly competitive world faced by the higher education sector, leaders of the HKHEIs, irrespective of their gender, must try to adopt and develop appropriate leadership styles and competencies that can enable them to provide effective and sustainable educational leadership. It is worth noting that some of the competencies discussed and reviewed by the respondents had enabled them to respond to the changing context of Hong Kong outlined in chapter 1, in light of recent developments affecting the higher education sector in Hong Kong and the associated implications/challenges for higher education leaders. Strategic focus had enabled R1 and R13 to respond to the internationalisation of higher education in Hong Kong, and the associated implications/challenges for higher education leaders to organise courses for non-local students and recruit academics and administrators from abroad. Achievement of outcomes had enabled R4, R5, R8, R10 and R14 to meet the challenges posed by the surging demand for accountability to stakeholders of the institutions for quality assurance and for their own performance, as well as that of their staff and the institutions, and the associated implication for planning and implementing course review via external review and inspection. Team-building and development and management of resources had enabled R2, R7, R9, R11 and R12 to achieve the desired outcomes under financial constraints resulting from a reduction in government funding for higher education. These leaders had to face and overcome the associated challenges for them to manage diminishing budgets,

to resort to external fund-raising, and even attempt to make efficiency gain through internal re-engineering and re-structuring. In actual practice, R4 had relied on trust, R2 and R13, on self-confidence, R2, on empathy, motivation and development of staff, and R2 and R9, on the ability to achieve the desired outcomes and to meet the challenges emerging from external inspection. While R2's self-confidence had promoted quality assurance, the practice of team-building was relevant to R7 and R11 in confronting competition and stringent resources, and in the case of R4, in responding to the increase and widening of participation rates in higher education opportunities. Last but not least, R1 and R4 had applied business and entrepreneurial skills, inclusive of marketing skills, to meet the challenges brought about by the marketisation of higher education. These skills are normally applied through building trust, establishing effective communication with all stakeholders of the HEIs, and also strategically modifying the courses offered to make them more responsive to customers' (students') needs. It is evident that the said competencies are representative of a mix of transformational, distributed and transactional leadership styles.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has analysed, discussed and synthesised the qualitative findings of this study with the concepts, theories and issues discussed and confirmed in the literature. It has critically evaluated the perceptions of effectiveness of the leaders of the HEIs in Hong Kong. This has been achieved through identifying and examining major leadership styles and competencies and also investigating critical factors such as culture, authority/power and gender, which have influenced their ability to lead effectively as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong. This chapter has answered the specific research questions raised in the study.

It is worth noting that the analysis and evidence provided by the literature may not be able to explain the findings on all occasions. This problem may be addressed by drawing on relevant scholarly work of Hong Kong scholars. However, there is currently a scarcity of research in Hong Kong on effectiveness of leadership in education, particularly higher education. The limited studies conducted by Pounder (1999, 2001), Mok (1999, 2000), Tam (1999) and Liu (1997) are found to focus on examining the challenges facing the higher education sector in Hong Kong instead of effectiveness of higher education

leadership. The studies of Pounder (1999, 2001) do have organisational effectiveness in higher education as their main themes, but do not explain and elaborate competencies associated with effectiveness in higher education leadership in sufficient depth and details.

The implication of this study is that a role model of an ideally effective leader in higher education is difficult to draw up. This is because it is impossible for contemporary higher education leaders to fit into a perceivably ideal model envisaged by stakeholders of the HEIs in Hong Kong for those who are capable of meeting their escalating demands and changing expectations in an increasingly competitive environment. The concept of a contemporary effective higher education leader, who witnesses a convergence and balance of the collegial versus the managerial styles, the transformational versus the transactional leadership approaches and the male and female gender-stereotyped competencies, is recommended as a point of reference for existing and potential leaders of the HKHEIs as well as those aspiring for leadership positions in the higher education sector.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter comprises seven main sections which present what it purports to achieve. Following this introduction, Section 6.2 provides an overview of the aims and objectives of the study and indicates the extent to which these and the research questions have been addressed. Section 6.3 presents a summary of the contributions of this study to knowledge/theory and practice. Section 6.4 examines and evaluates the research methodology used in this study. Section 6.5 analyses critically the limitations of the study. Section 6.6 makes recommendations for further research. Section 6.7 presents the overall concluding remarks.

6.2 Overview

The overall aim of this study is to examine the perceptions of effectiveness of higher education leadership in Hong Kong. It follows that the main purpose of this research is to draw up a profile of the competencies perceived by leaders of the HKHEIs to be of crucial importance in helping them to discharge their roles and duties effectively. This could ideally contribute to the identification of a possible model of effective leadership style appropriate for the Hong Kong higher education context. However, it must be noted that the evidence of good practice in higher education leadership in Hong Kong only reflects the perceptions of the cohort of higher education leaders about the ways in which they have been effectively operating and managing the HKHEIs and such perceptions were not triangulated.

Another expected outcome providing impetus for the study is to explore the extent to which gender impacts on the effectiveness of these leaders, and also how culture and authority/power influence their ability to lead effectively. With the above aim, purpose and

expected outcome in mind, an interpretive paradigm and qualitative research methodology were deemed to be the most appropriate means of understanding the perceptions of the higher education leaders in this study. This decision on methodology was made on the basis that perceptions, perspectives, thoughts, feelings and experiences cannot be objectively measured or replicated, as would be expected and required for a quantitative methodology. The use of qualitative methods such as interviews is more likely to yield rich, detailed and descriptive data for understanding the subjective and complex human experiences involved (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975).

The main research question of this study was formulated and expressed in terms of:

What are the perceptions of effectiveness in higher education leadership as viewed by the cohort of the higher education leaders in Hong Kong?

To address this question, three specific research questions were drawn up to guide data collection and analysis:

1. What are the perceptions of the leadership styles and competencies which have enabled these higher education leaders to lead effectively?
2. How do these leaders perceive that culture and authority/power have influenced their ability to lead effectively?
3. What impact is gender perceived to have on their effectiveness as leaders of higher education in Hong Kong?

These questions served as a guide for developing an interview schedule used in conducting a series of in-depth individual interviews with the respondents. Coding or categorising was then employed to analyse the data collected from these interviews. The process involved the development and affixing of coding categories to different sections of the interview transcripts to arrange and categorise various groupings of words relating to the themes emerging from the specific research questions.

To enable the researcher to address the need to select an informative sample, purposive sampling was regarded as the most appropriate sampling strategy for this research. A total of 14 leaders and senior managers across all eight UGC-funded HEIs, one government-established but self-financing HEI and one private university, with a diverse range of academic backgrounds, disciplines and experiences, participated in the study. The

respondents held senior positions, as Vice-President, Associate Vice-President, Dean, and Head of Administrative Unit, in the HEIs in Hong Kong.

This study of the major leadership styles and competencies of the cohort of leaders of the HKHEIs reveals that they shared many desirable skills, abilities and characteristics crucial to effective higher education leadership. These were mostly developed through varied experiences, situations and circumstances which individual respondents had been encountering. However, the degree of importance which they attached to these and the extent to which they had selectively applied them to their work differed one from the other. On the basis of these divergences, a profile of leadership applicable to the Hong Kong higher education sector was identified. Accordingly, the major outcome of the present study was the identification of a possible model of effective educational leadership style appropriate for the Hong Kong higher education context, which had enabled these leaders of the HKHEIs to feel that they lead effectively. The substantive finding of this study is illustrated in the following figure:

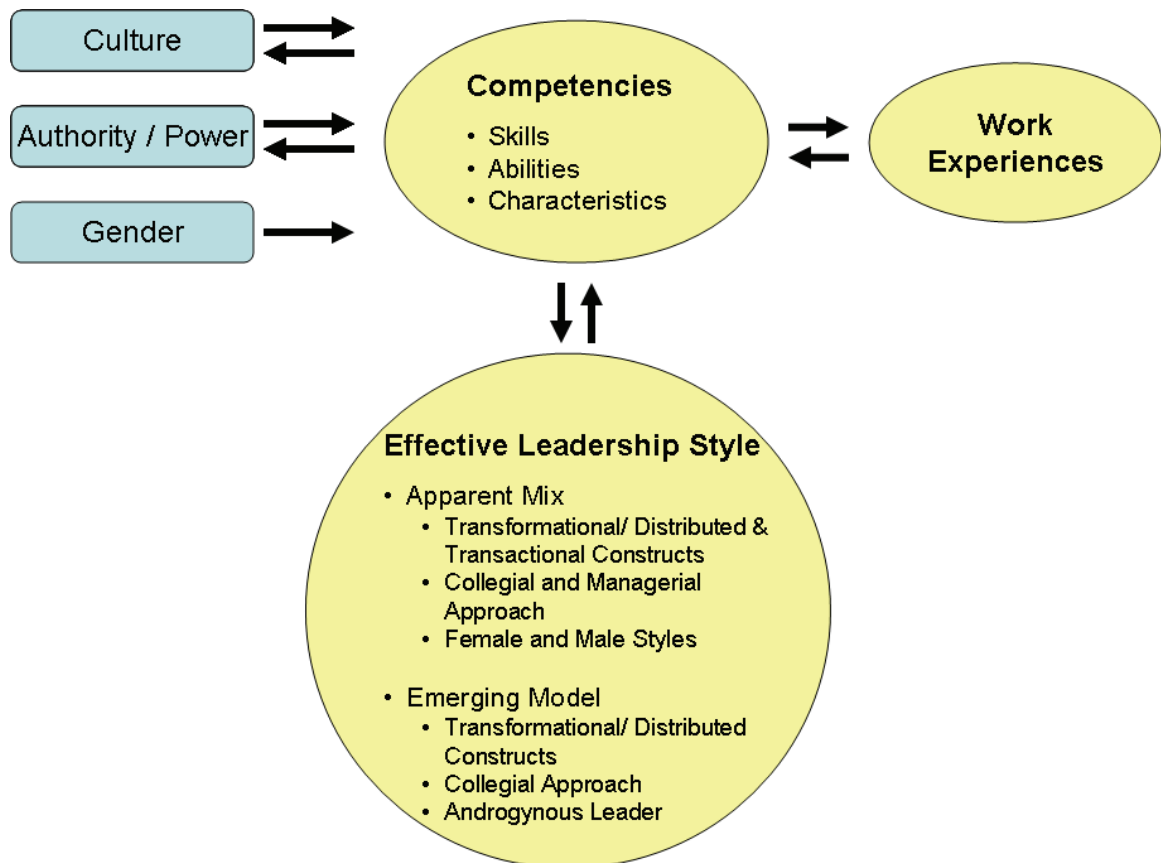


Figure 6.1: Model of Effective Leadership Style in Hong Kong Higher Education

6.3 Implications

6.3.1 Implications for Knowledge/Theory and Practice

The present research has contributed to the understanding of how leaders perceive effectiveness of higher education leadership in Hong Kong and the related issue of the influence of critical factors including culture, authority/power and possibly gender on the ability of these higher education leaders to lead effectively. The researcher acknowledges that the evidence of this study is not necessarily generalisable, although it may be related to the leaders of HEIs in changing situations where there is similarity to aspects of the present research. However, the findings of the present study can be claimed to have relevant contributions to knowledge/theory and practice discussed as follows.

6.3.1.1 Implications for Knowledge/Theory on Effective Educational Leadership

The findings of the present study supplement the existing literature on educational leadership, which has mostly been dominated by research conducted on the primary and secondary education sectors. An extensive literature search reveals that there is as yet no in-depth and comprehensive study of the effectiveness of leadership in higher education, and little has been mentioned in the literature about leaders of higher education in Hong Kong. The present research therefore contributes to addressing such deficit, and achieves its aim to bridge a significant gap in the existing literature on effectiveness of higher education leadership in Hong Kong. It seeks to contribute to knowledge/theory regarding one specific group of educational leaders in Hong Kong, viz, leaders in higher education. The findings of the study contribute particularly to an understanding of the leadership styles and competencies that enable the perceived effectiveness of higher education leadership in Hong Kong and also the possible influence of culture, authority/power and gender on the ability of higher education leaders in Hong Kong to lead effectively. The research findings serve to bridge the gap in the current body of scholarly knowledge, and might provide the impetus for others to conduct further research in these areas. In particular, each respondent, in discussing about his/her leadership style(s) and competencies, has demonstrated that the present study is expected to comply with the theoretical base for suggesting a profile of leadership applicable to the higher education sector in Hong Kong.

6.3.2 Implications for Practice

6.3.2.1 *Implications for Higher Education Leaders in Hong Kong*

In terms of practice, the concept of the “contemporary effective leader” as perceived by the respondents is believed to have the potential of providing the stimulus for change in leadership practice among the leaders of higher education in Hong Kong. It transpires that this change involves the shift to the hybrid/combination of transformational, distributed and transactional styles, the conventional collegial and the new managerial approaches, and also male and female competencies. As observed by Hooper and Potter (2000, p.59), effective leadership cannot be acquired by rote learning, and may not be attained by adhering to simply one specific leadership approach. The distributed concept of leadership should be desirable because no higher education leader can be so versatile and all-rounded as to exhibit the skills, abilities and expertise in all areas for meeting the complexities of contemporary educational leadership.

This is particularly true in times of unprecedented challenges of rapid changes, competing demands and scarce resources. Higher education leaders can meet and overcome these challenges by adopting a flexible mix of competencies, leadership styles and approaches. The implications of the above discussions suggest the importance of continuous development of educational leaders.

In fact, the above-indicated practical change among leaders of higher education in Hong Kong could be achieved if those leaders who did not participate in the present research were able to share and echo certain aspects of the experiences of the respondents. They were hence stimulated to investigate their dominant skills and abilities, and, more importantly, the impact of the reciprocal influence between the competencies and the respondents’ work and personal experiences. Almost all respondents stressed the imperative need for them to overcome the challenges. They even claimed that they had been able to cope with the problems, difficulties and challenges facing them by appropriately and selectively applying their major competencies. Their awareness of the findings of this study suggests that the present study has strong implications for practice among this group of leaders.

The present study, through providing information about the competencies employed by the restricted number of effective higher education leaders, has thus the potential for significant contributions for practice. The study seeks to achieve this through collecting insightful and useful information about the competencies and the leadership styles employed by the small cohort of leaders of the HKHEIs. Apparently, the respondents of this study shared among them many competencies in common which are similar to those suggested by Callan (2001) in his capability framework. Accordingly, the concept/typology that emerged from the findings of the present study on the basis of a number of distinctive competencies has implications for other higher education leaders in Hong Kong. Based on the above, a concept/typology of effective higher education leaders in Hong Kong with different dimensions of effectiveness was identified from the study: favourably disposed to the transformational/distributed leadership constructs, the collegial approach, and the androgynous style, achieving a strategic balance between the ability to sustain the quality of teaching and learning, encourage the conduct of on-going research and engage in the duty to manage the HKHEIs.

6.3.2.2 *Implications for Potential and Aspiring Higher Education Leaders in Hong Kong*

Many of the respondents claimed that they were not born to be effective leaders, and that they had come a long way to develop their ability to lead effectively. They admitted that they had attained effectiveness by observation, experience, perseverance and competent application of their skills and capabilities. Their participation in this study through sharing their experiences and development journeys is believed to be of value and assistance in motivating potential and aspiring leaders of higher education in Hong Kong. Their recollections and reflections on the experiences and strategies which they perceived to have enabled them to lead effectively may provide invaluable insights for those aspiring to access similar leadership positions in higher education in Hong Kong.

Successors of leadership positions in the HKHEIs will inevitably face problems and difficulties of a different nature from those faced by the respondents of the present study. Nevertheless, a message emerging from the interviews with this cohort of higher education leaders that will be true at all times and contexts is that aspiring leaders of higher education should be aware that the best way to achieve effectiveness is to have the flexibility and

versatility to draw on a repertoire of leadership competencies and related leadership dimensions under the transformational/distributed and transactional concepts as appropriate for the particular contexts and situations.

6.3.2.3 *Implications for Higher Education in Hong Kong*

The changing context of higher education in Hong Kong in response to the demands of globalisation and other major challenges like increasing competition and scarcity of resources has called for effective leadership with a view to attaining operational efficiency and effectiveness. The concept/typology of the contemporary effective leader is of potential value and assistance to policy makers of HKHEIs in terms of what possibly makes an effective higher education leader as perceived by the respondents of this study, and the crucial factors that have a significant influence on their effectiveness. This purports to provide relevant information and guidelines to facilitate future recruitment for leadership positions in the Hong Kong higher education sector.

In addition to its contribution to inform policy-makers of the HKHEIs, the present study also has important implications for raising the awareness of the impact of gender on effectiveness and the potential of more females becoming better leaders. It is worth noting that the experience of being a female leader is different from that of being a male leader, because the image of the leader is traditionally associated with the male, and men are usually the preferred choice for leadership positions. Moreover, the demands and pressures exerted by the dual social role which women, but not men, are expected to play in fulfilling family obligations and work responsibilities, may contribute a barrier to women's career progress and render it more difficult for women to attain leadership positions. Nevertheless, none of the respondents referred to difficulties for women in acquiring leadership roles. The implications of this study may hopefully have an important bearing on mitigating the gender gap and increasing the representation of women in leadership of the HEIs in Hong Kong.

6.4 Critique of Research Methodology Used

This qualitative research employed in-depth individual interviews as the main research instrument to collect data for the study.

The individual interviews with the 14 respondents provided a rich insight into the competencies and associated leadership styles perceived as having enabled them to lead effectively. The use of in-depth interviews as a research tool for this study has the advantage of providing the present researcher with an opportunity for in-depth probing, enabling her to better understand the respondents' perceptions, views, thoughts, feelings and experiences, in relation to the areas covered in the research questions.

On the other hand, the use of interviews for this study has a number of limitations. Firstly, subjective interpretation of the research data on the part of the researcher, especially in regard to some peripheral information like backgrounds and reasons that have not been recounted in the respondents' own words, is found necessary. Hence the interview data are prone to the researcher's subjectivity-bias (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Secondly, given the fluidity of qualitative research data in that they are concurrently applicable to a few occasions, they can actually be used to address more than one research question at the same time. It follows that the answers to the research questions may seem ambiguous at times. Thirdly, the researcher was unable to ascertain whether the respondents were telling the truth or were just talking about what they thought the researcher would like to hear. This undoubtedly affects the validity and reliability of the data.

6.5 Evaluation of the Research and Limitations of the Study

Although this study can be said to generate useful results, it is not without its limitations, which are here being acknowledged and investigated critically.

As the research was qualitative, the sample was necessarily small, particularly with reference to the population of female leaders, which means that it is difficult to generalise the results of this study. The small sample size is due partly to the reluctance of the leaders of the HKHEIs, especially female leaders, to participate in the individual interviews.

Consequently, despite many attempts to expand the sample population, the researcher was unable to secure the informed consent of particularly the female leaders to be interviewed.

In view of the above difficulty in obtaining the informed consent of potential interviewees, there is disparity in the rank/grade occupied by the respondents within the hierarchies of the different institutions, ranging from Vice-President, Associate Vice-President to Dean and Head of Administrative Unit, and some of them are no longer in post owing to retirement or change of employment. Obviously, this inconsistency in sampling must be acknowledged.

Besides, the researcher also experienced difficulty in trying to gain due access to data. In spite of the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity given to the respondents prior to the conduct of the individual interviews, some of them were still very anxious about the possible disclosure of their identities and appeared somewhat cautious in recounting their experiences and perceptions.

Obviously, the researcher encountered severe time constraint in conducting the individual interviews, which in average lasted for one and a half to two hours. It is important to note that the findings of this research capture the respondents' perceptions of higher education leadership in Hong Kong at the time when the interviews were conducted. Given that these perceptions are subject to fluctuation and change, extension of the duration of the interviews to cover a longer period of time might have better informed and substantiated the research data. Coupled with this was also the limitation of available resources to facilitate the researcher in conducting the research. These constraints, in turn, determined the scale and scope of the present study and prescribed the sample size. Such limitations imposed the need for the researcher to focus on only addressing the three specific research questions. In fact, these could have been investigated from a wider perspective, through examining the effectiveness of leadership of the HKHEIs particularly in response to the challenges facing the Hong Kong higher education sector. This approach could have presented a more comprehensive picture that could better reflect the reality of the Hong Kong higher education context.

Finally, the use of Callan's (2001) management and leadership capability framework as the basis for examining the competencies pertaining to effective educational leadership poses another limitation to this study. The framework comprises nine capabilities which are in fact functional areas, each of which embraces an overly wide range of associated elements. A cumbersome repetition of major elements including teamwork, trust, motivation, interpersonal skills, empowerment, vision, achievement of outcomes and change leadership across the nine capabilities is not uncommon, and this constitutes a major shortcoming of the framework.

Callan's (2001) framework merely presents the nine core capabilities and the associated elements independently and severally. There is apparently no cohesive link inter and intra the capabilities and elements to warrant integration and synergy within the framework. It appears that Callan's framework could be of greater application to this research if it could draw on determinant factors such as culture, authority/power and gender, in an attempt to demonstrate the inter-relationship and likely impact of each factor and effectiveness of leadership in higher education. Nevertheless, the evidence of this research confirms the usefulness of Callan's framework to the extent that most of the competencies perceived by the respondents as contributing to the effectiveness of their leadership are compatible with those included in the framework.

Finally, the limitation imposed by the prescribed word length, together with the limited scope and focus of this study, appear to have precluded a detailed examination of effectiveness in relation to the challenges confronting the higher education sector in Hong Kong, as well as the issue of gender inequality and under-representation of women in leadership positions of the HEIs in Hong Kong.

6.6 Recommendations for Further Research

The profile of leadership competencies and the concept of contemporary effective educational leadership appropriate for the Hong Kong higher education context that emerged from the present study have implications for further research and development of knowledge/theory in this area. Further research is recommended in the hope that it will add to existing knowledge about one specific group of leaders in Hong Kong, viz, leaders in

higher education and/or increase generalisability through expanding and diversifying the sample population. For instance, one area worthy of further research is an examination of the perceptions of a larger cohort of higher education leaders in Hong Kong, or even extending to those in other parts of the region or the world. It is hoped that purported research of a larger scale, scope and size could confirm the concept of a contemporary effective higher education leader suggested in this study.

Another area worthy of further research is an examination of the competencies of higher education leaders in other areas of the region or other parts of the world, to compare and contrast the ways in which higher education leaders of different ethnic backgrounds apply their dominant skills and abilities to achieve effective leadership. In anticipation of the increasing demands of globalisation and the changing needs of the Hong Kong society, it will be interesting to map future research along the direction of identifying a different mix of leadership competencies and related styles which will see the emergence of a contemporary effective leader being well adapted to the forces of change and challenges and able to lead with enhanced effectiveness.

Besides, further research initiative may be taken in the form of a 180-degree collection of data, through perhaps focus group interviews with the subordinates of leaders of the HKHEIs, to gauge their views on their superiors' ability to lead effectively.

One other important area worthy of further research is a detailed comparative study of male and female leadership in the HEIs in Hong Kong, which is what the researcher has initially intended to study. However, the scarcity in the number of female leaders in the HKHEIs has necessitated a change of research focus to investigate the competencies and styles expected of effective higher education leadership in Hong Kong. Further research is expected to be conducted with a larger cohort of female higher education leaders in Hong Kong, hopefully in the next decade or so. By then, as anticipated and projected by the respondents, the Hong Kong higher education sector should witness a much wider representation of women in leadership positions. Such further research, conducted on the basis of an expanded sample population, may render it possible to generalise the findings of the research.

In addition, further research may be conducted to explore effectiveness of higher education in response to the challenges facing the Hong Kong higher education sector, and also the extent of impact which new government initiatives such as the 3+3+4 reform of the academic structure for the secondary and post-secondary sectors and the Qualifications Framework may have on effectiveness of higher education leadership in Hong Kong.

Finally, one worldwide phenomenon is the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the higher education sector. The findings of this study and those of previous scholarly work reveal that gender does not impact significantly on the ability of leaders of the HKHEIs to lead effectively. However, the reality at the HKHEIs is that there are not many female leaders at all levels of the hierarchy. Over the past two decades or so, women in Hong Kong have had much greater access to leadership positions in sectors other than higher education, particularly the business and public sectors. It is not clear why this is the case. Research on this particular phenomenon is highly recommended.

Last but not least, more extensive research with the first-tier leaders of the HKHEIs, the *de jure* heads of institutions, may be required for understanding higher education leadership in Hong Kong from a different level and perspective.

6.7 Concluding Remarks

The overall picture that has arisen from this small-scale study of how the 14 respondents perceived effectiveness of leadership in higher education in Hong Kong is informative, and reveals significant implications for the Hong Kong higher education sector. In brief, the findings of this study provide an insight into the leadership styles and competencies which, as perceived by the small cohort of male and female leaders of the HKHEIs, have enabled them to lead effectively. The examination of the impact that factors including culture, authority/power and gender may have on their ability to lead effectively signifies the researcher's attempt to arouse the awareness of higher education leaders as regards how they can lead effectively. In spite of the small sample size, a small degree of generalisation of the research findings may still be feasible, but is limited only to male and female leaders in similar situations as the group of leaders of the HKHEIs studied in this research. The study therefore has important and broader implications for leadership in practice.

The results of this study will serve as a useful source of reference for leaders of the HKHEIs and aspiring higher education leaders to reflect on their intrinsic characteristic traits as well as skills and abilities developed through maturity and experience. The researcher hopes that sharing the findings and conclusions of this study with existing and potential leaders will enable them to gain invaluable insights into what perceivably constitutes an effective leader, and reflect upon what they can do to enhance the effectiveness of their leadership. Achieving this will certainly render the research undertaken more significant, meaningful and valuable.

The limitations of this study as acknowledged above entail the need for further investigation, analysis and testing on higher education leadership in Hong Kong in a future study. Hopefully, the preliminary small-scale research can contribute to the development of research practice and policy for executing effective leadership of the HEIs in the course of contemporary education reforms in both the Hong Kong and international contexts.

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Appendix I

Pilot Interview Questions

Leadership Styles

1. What do you consider to be the leadership styles which you have used in leading your unit?
2. Have you ever applied any of the commonly accepted leadership styles drawn from the literature to enable you to lead your institution/unit and how do you think about their appropriateness to your situation at work?
3. Would you outline the external and internal factors, such as The Government's higher education policy, stakeholders of the institution, social demands, competition from other institutions, staff, students, etc., that have shaped your leadership style(s)?

Authority/Power

1. Have you used your position and exercise your authority to make things happen?
2. What are the difficulties and challenges which you have come across in exercising your authority to do what you have planned to achieve?

Emotional Intelligence

1. What do you understand by emotional intelligence (EI)?
2. How would you apply EI to influence the people around you?
3. How would you use EI to handle crises?
4. How does your EI impact on your leadership if you have a strong passion for what you fervently believe in and what you strive to achieve?
5. Do you agree that EI would help you to lead your institution/unit effectively?

Self-Development

1. In what way have you developed your leadership style?
2. Do your personal developments have any bearing on the effectiveness of your leadership?
3. How would you compare your leadership styles say 5 years ago and now?

Culture

1. How free are you to manage, taking into account factors such as context, culture, constraints, change policies, etc.?
2. How does culture affect you in leading your institution or team?

General

1. What are the values that you treasure as a higher education leader in Hong Kong? Do you want to find these values within your team of staff?
2. What is the orientation of your leadership and how would it benefit your institution?
3. What are the key factors that lead to effective leadership?
4. What would you tell your staff if one of them asks you about how to become an effective leader?

Gender Stereotyping

1. How does gender impact on you as a leader of your institution/unit?
2. Can you elaborate on the phenomenon of male dominance in leadership posts in the higher education sector of Hong Kong?
3. How would you comment on a male/female counterpart acting out your role as a higher education leader in Hong Kong?

Appendix II

Sample Invitation Letter to the Participants

Xxx College
Xx Xxx Road
Central
Hong Kong

7 July 2006

Dear Professor XXX

Thank you very much for verbally agreeing to take part in my doctoral studies research. I would like to send you this formal invitation and provide you with more information on my research.

I am currently pursuing a Doctor of Education Programme with the University of Leicester, UK. My research is a qualitative study of higher education leadership in the Hong Kong context as perceived by the leaders themselves, and I am conducting it via individual face-to-face interviews. I wish to assure you that all ethical guidelines will be observed and all information collected will be treated in strict confidence and also guarantee that your identity will be kept anonymous. I believe that your kind participation will have significant bearing and contribution to my study.

To give you an idea of what the interview questions are like, I am pleased to attach a copy of the interview guide for your information and reference.

Thank you once again for your support and assistance, and look forward to meeting you this Friday.

With Best Regards

LI Pak Wan
College Secretary

Appendix III

Interview Guide

Leadership Style

1. Talk about the leadership styles you have used in leading your institution.
2. Here is a list of 20 commonly accepted effective leadership styles drawn from the literature review presented in the form of a mini-questionnaire. Indicate no more than 10 of those attributes/behaviours that you feel describe or are applicable to you at work, and also explain why you chose them.
3. Talk about the external and internal factors that shape your leadership style(s). (Examples of external factors: Government's higher education policy, stakeholders of the institution, societal demands, etc; examples of internal factors: staff, students, etc).
4. Do you find your leadership style(s) effective? *
* (Did not ask this question in the pilot study)

Authority/Power

1. Talk about whether you have used your position and authority to make things happen, and if so, how.
2. Spell out the difficulties and challenges you have come across in using your authority to achieve what you have set out to do.

Emotional Intelligence * *

1. Talk about how you use emotional intelligence (EI) to influence people.
2. Have you ever used EI to handle crises? If so, how?
3. If you are passionate about what you strongly believe in and what you strive to achieve, how does that impact on your leadership?
4. Tell me whether you believe that EI enables you to lead the institution/unit effectively. ***

** Components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skill (Daniel Goleman)

Self-Development

1. Talk about yourself on a leadership journey. How is your developing?
2. Say something about your personal developments which you believe have impacted on the effectiveness of your leadership.
3. Compare the differences between your leadership say 5 years ago and now.

Culture

1. Talk about your freedom to manage having regard to context, culture, constraints (internal and external).
2. Explain how culture affects you in leading your institution/team.

General

1. As a higher education leader in Hong Kong, what are the values you treasure? Do you want to find such values in your team of staff?
2. Talk about the greater interest and orientation in your leadership.
3. Talk about the key factors you perceive as leading to effective leadership.
4. In what ways have you worked and geared up yourself to be a leader?
5. If one of your staff asks you about how to become an effective leader, what would you advise him/her?

Effectiveness

1. Talk about the things you do that can help to make your organization/unit effective in order to achieve the organizational goal.

Gender Stereotyping

1. Talk about the gender impact on you as a leader.
2. Talk about the phenomenon of male dominance in leadership posts in the higher education sector of Hong Kong.
3. How would you imagine that a male/female counterpart will act out your role as a higher education leader in Hong Kong?

Appendix IV

Sample Interview Transcripts

Note:

- Participant's name is replaced by the respondent number and the name of universities and people mentioned in the interview are replaced by *** to ensure confidentiality.
- XXX represent the parts that were unclear and unable to be transcribed.

Interview transcript of R3

Q: R3, can you please talk about your leadership style that you have used in leading the University as a vice president?

A: I think that my leadership style is a combination of active leadership as well as trying to seek the consensus. Active leadership means that I have to do the search, produce some ideas...Before the ideas I put into actions, I used to consult widely and try to obtain consensus before putting the ideas into practice. As a female, which is your main topic, I think we do have the advantage because in the academic situation, other administrators or the heads of other departments, most of them are men. They tend to be gentle even they object you so I think this is an advantage. But of course, you probably have to show more competence to command their respects and also command their obedience to make them listen to you. To take a few examples, when I was the dean of medicine, back to 1985, all the heads of departments with the exception of 1, were men. I was the only woman. So during the meeting, I would probably have to show that I'm very much in the control of the situation but at the same time I should not be dictatorial, I try to seek opinions so on and so forth. But at the end of the day, it remained that that's my conviction my original conviction the homework to have done. What I thought would be right decision was adopted but would take some persuasion. As far as I'm concerned, it isn't very much different between man being the leader or woman being the leader, provided who convinced people that what you think what you feel is right thing. But of course you must prepare to change your mind because during the course of discussion other opinions which are contradictory to yours but which are more convincing than your own and if you yourself are convinced then the opposite is right. You must prepare to change your original decision. Needless to say, you need to do a lot of background work, you don't face the heads of departments, in our meeting we have more than 10 heads, before the meeting you have to collect opinion you try to persuade people individually as to what is the right action to take, so the ground work the pre-meeting work is very important. One criticism is that female leaders tend to be too over-powering in order to overcome any inferiority. But I don't think this is the case. You have to be flexible in your approach even though you have already made up your mind. Certain action is the right one but you still have to be flexible in your approach. But one thing I mentioned earlier is that people don't shout at me. People don't use uncivilized language.

Q: R3, here I got a list of 20 common leadership styles that I've drawn from the literature review. Could you please complete this mini questionnaire indicating no more than 10 attributes that you think most applicable to you?

[R3 filling out the questionnaire]

Q: R3, would you mind telling me why you chose these 10 out of the list?

A: Actually, perhaps I will deal with them...they can be dealt in groups, actually. I put 'Just, fair, and fine' correlated to 'well-principled'. These two are very similar. I think to be a leader you must seem to be fair. Therefore when you're dealing with other people even though what you've done is wrong if you have good motivation behind you're fair people will forgive and accept you. Even though it's a wrong decision, if you're fair, just, fine and well principled. And secondly, despite what I said about trying to seek consensus, you have to be decisive and determined. You don't waiver if what you propose is correct. At the end of the day, you must be decisive and determined. You must not be easily persuaded by other people. You have to be far-sighted and visioned. This is necessary for any leader. In doing so, you have to be highly motivated and able to motivate others. If you look warm with what you propose what you decide you cannot convince other people this is the right thing to do. At the same way, you have to be able to lead and influence people. Obviously, you have to be intelligent and efficient. We don't want a dumb leader. And having said all that, as I said earlier, you must try to consult and collaborate; you have to be open and candid, honest and self-aware when you deal with other people. For your colleagues or subordinates, you have to be supportive and considerate and this is human elements of leadership. You have to combine the brain and the heart. You must not let the heart rule the brain or the brain to compete or ignore the heart. So it's the combination of intellectual and understanding of people.

Q: R3, would you please talk about, are or were there any internal and external factors that have shaped your leadership style? External factors may be government policy on higher education, the stakeholders in the institution, demands of the society and so on...

A: I think I wasn't really born to be a leader in administration. I was not trained to be a leader in administration. I think all came out because of opportunities, because of the demands of the institutions and society. For example, I became the dean of medicine in 1983 and the pro-vice chancellor in 1985 because prior to that I'm purely an academic in research, teaching and clinical work. I was very green in administration. I was even the head of the department and then I became the dean. I think this is because of the circumstances at that time I was felt to be the right person to do it. Other people think that I was the right person to do it and they elected me. That was the deanship that I had held for less than 2 years. And then in 1985, the vice chancellor Dr ***...at that time there're two pro-vice chancellors, one pro-vice chancellor left so he wanted another pro-vice chancellor. Because I suppose I did quite well as the dean so I was the right person to do it. And perhaps at that time the choice of me was coloured by the need of a lady to do it, a Chinese to do it. The pro-vice chancellor was an Englishman and he was a gentleman, so to make a balance he wanted a woman and he wanted a Chinese so I was the best person for the job. I became the pro-vice chancellor for quite a number of years. The other leader position I held...one was the chairman of the medicine council. Again it was elected by other members in the council and they thought I was the

right person to do it. And the chairman of Education Commission came about I think quite an accident...I thought that because the previous chairman suddenly resigned and the government thought that my experience in tertiary institution would help and perhaps my reputation when I was the pro-vice chancellor...I was holding the post of pro-vice chancellor at the same time as being fair and just and unbiased and communicative and then I was chosen one after other. And that was sort of leadership. It all happens by chance. And you talk about internal factors which might influence my leadership style...I was very much influenced by my mentor Prof XXX. When I was student and staff in the *** University, when I was the dean and the pro-vice chancellor, he always inspires me and more or less make me feel that when there is a call for you to take a responsibility you shouldn't XXX the responsibility. So when the call came, I just took it up without considering whether it was good for my career. Because when I'm taking up an initiative work, I have to give up my research. I have to drop my research. And that was quite a pity.

Q: Any other internal factors that have shaped your leadership style like students or staff members?

A: I think those factors which might influence my doing so. I suppose because of my colleagues are medical doctors, always like interacting with people. I feel that interacting with people is most rewarding personally and also a way to help other people. So, my love in human interaction maybe I feel that administration is the right thing for me to do. I don't reading papers all the time. I like come down and talk to people.

Q: For the external factors, maybe I have to go back a bit, it seems that you've been talking about why you came to the leadership...you didn't address the factors that influence your style that why you adopt an active and consultative that type of style...

A: I think the active...being determined, well-principled and so on. I think this came about partly because of my personality and partly due to the personal influence by Prof XXX. He is that type of person, very active, visionary, and being able to lead other people, determined and so on and so forth. All these came from him. I try to consult and get consensus before I do anything. I think it's because of the collegial atmosphere. At that time in the Faculty of Medicine, no people there was very confrontational. They are very reasonable people. And therefore, it wasn't very difficult actually, provided you felt was correct, provided you did some homework beforehand, well researched and trying to talk to people beforehand and so on. It's not difficult to get people to agree with you but as I said earlier you must keep an open mind. At the end of the day, if you felt that what you propose was not as good as other people propose, you must prepare to change and adopt other people's opinions. I think it's because of the collegial atmosphere. If I was the head at that time and members of the faculty who were confrontational, unreasonable, I might not be able to cultivate that sort of attitude. When I became the pro-vice chancellor, the people at the university in those days back in 1980s and 1990s, our university was much smaller and people of the university are more cooperative...we didn't have any radical at that time.

Q: On the whole, do you find your leadership style effective?

A: I think my leadership style was effective. Although some people did criticize me for...when I was the chairman of Education Commission, at the beginning the meeting took too long because I was trying to seek consensus. So, it may be

effective but not very efficient because it takes too long to get people to agree with you.

Q: Let's move on to another group of questions about authority and power. R3, could you talk about whether you have used your authority of being the pro-vice chancellor to make things happen. If so, how?

A: Let me think about it. I won't say it is power or authority...authority is OK because it is expected on you because of your position. Maybe it would be easier to cite an example, in the university, when I was for a long time the chairman of the Appointments Committee. It is a very important position because you try to recruit people into the university or you're dealing with promotion. This sort of position can be very easily abused. And I've never abused my position. I think what I did and what people thought well about it was for example in the late 1980s and very early 1990s, many academics were trying to emigrate overseas but then they want to keep their jobs in the *** University and therefore they apply for long leave without pay. Well, this is not quite the right thing to do in the sense that because you have to keep the job for the person to return. You never know whether he or she wants to return, whether he or she wants to seek residence overseas after returning. I have the authority to grant that. I have the authority to be flexible with that regulation. I have to be very careful to find out that this person is someone that the university really wants to keep. In other words, he's the asset to the university and I have to trust him that he will come back after 3 years. There're a number of cases like this. I'm glad to see most of them did come back to serve the university. Now they now progress from lectureship to professorship etc. So this is sort of thing that I sort by using my authority quite well. In other words, by finding out whether the person is the asset to the university and by trusting the person giving him 3 years of no pay leave so that he can gain the residence in Australia, Canada and then they come back to serve the university.

Q: Anything else you can think of?

A: Others would be very related to...not just actually exercising my authority but that was...when the university wants to change regulations of contract out the staff and so on and so forth. That was not my authority but I had to try to work out terms which will be acceptable by the employees as well as the university. So, that authority was not of me but of the committee that I chair. But granting leave is within my authority.

Q: R3, could you please spell out would there're any difficulties and challenges which you've come across when you used your authority to achieve what you set out to do?

A: I think there were, of course, honestly. When it comes to the conflicts of interest, in 1990s when the university was trying to move from...you know the old budget was shared among different departments according to the historical baseline and then we're trying to move it to a one-line budget, and this is well-known. One-line budget is based on a number of factors, based on the number of students, the number of the teachers, the research output of the teachers, etc. I had to go to each department and explain to them what we proposed to do and there were not many objections because they understand even now when the government wants to give a one-line budget to different NGOs. So, that was a difficult period. And actually that was adopted after I left the pro-vice chancellorship when *** became the pro-vice chancellor. But it took quite a number of years to convince people this is the only way to go. To be cost effective, otherwise, if the money is given to the

department which has to use it, therefore you have to use your XXX and you must not depend on the historical bases every year. People did shout at me at those meetings but some departments there was such problem in that position.

Q: And now we move to another category of questions about emotional intelligence, comprising 5 elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Could you please talk about how you use emotional intelligence to influence people?

A: I don't know how to answer that question except perhaps mentioning a few examples. First of all, my own upbringing as medical doctor helps a lot because as a medical doctor especially in the old days when the medical school is so small and we have to deal with so many patients there, we try to understand people and understand people's feelings and backgrounds and that helps a lot in dealing with people. For example, if you deal with a patient, it's the same kind of illness, the same kind of problems, to understand how the patient feels about life, how he feels about his family, and what are his expectations, etc. I think this is one factor. Secondly, perhaps it's my own nativity. I always believe there are very few exceptions that people are unreasonable. Then you always have to appeal to their better side of the human nature. You assume that people are reasonable. You don't assume that they're unreasonable to start with. So you have to self-regulate. And what I have done, this is my experience of being a doctor, there're patients who are especially very ill they tend to be unreasonable they tend to be very demanding, they don't trust you. Although you are trying to do the best for them, they don't trust you and they don't want you to want them to do. On a couple of occasions, XXX so annoyed myself that I almost have to prepare to shout at my patients. So what I did was, as a doctor, I must not shout at the patients. You must tend to misunderstand that they're suffering etc. So what I did on a couple of occasions I just kept quiet and walked out and took a fresh breath of air outside. And then when I came back, I would restart explaining to the patients and that type of style I adopted was that "never loose your temper, wait and let people calm down even if they object you and try to do it over again in a different direction, be more patient, so on and so forth..." So, don't get work up yourself out and don't get other people work up.

Q: Were there any occasions that you're using emotional intelligence to handle crises? If so, how?

A: Perhaps there's one that might fit...I can't remember the definite example. When the university was trying to contract out the catering service, obviously we face strong objections and oppositions from the employees of our own catering services because when we contract out everything people feel that they would earn less. That was quite difficult decision that I was handling as I was the leader and there was a group of people. Well, it wasn't really using emotional intelligence but trying to tell them that it was necessary because it was not sustainable and secondly trying to tell them the best we could offer in the second term and thirdly trying to tell them that we would get the other contractor to get them reemployed. Not exactly promising them that they would have safe life thereafter but they would be able to get reemployed. But it was not really emotional intelligence.

Q: But that might be empathy, heart and social skills.

A: Right. It would be easier if I talk about dealing with patients. That would be easier, dealing with patients that I could get people influenced with emotional intelligence.

- Q: On the questionnaire, R3 you didn't choose the item "passionate about one's work and beliefs", so I won't be able to push you to the next question because the next question is, "if you are passionate about what you believe and what you're trying to achieve, how does it impact on your leadership?"
- A: I was thinking of motivation. Unfortunately, I was not the sort of person who is very passionate about...that's why I ticked the motivation, instead of passion. I'm rather a dispassionate person, unfortunately.
- Q: Could you please say some words about whether you believe emotional intelligence is able to help you to lead the institution effectively?
- A: I think...as I understand, that is important. As I told you earlier on, we have the heart and the brain. For myself, I have the brain to rule the heart. That may not be the perfect solution to every problem. But one must have the heart. And therefore emotional intelligence is very important. Again, I understand that one must try to understand other people, emotions and backgrounds, reasons for the emotions before one to interact or help other people effectively. I'm sort of the people who are people-centred. Again, that's the background of my training. Being people-centred does not mean that you can be unfair that you can be biased, very different.
- Q: Now, let's move onto personal development. R3, can you please talk about yourself and your leadership journey. How have you been developing your leadership in these years?
- A: I think the development is very gradual. As I said before in 1983, I was the associate dean. At that time, the dean was not quite well physically before his retirement. And I had to take over his job as acting dean that I was always going to the meetings to deal with the things the dean has to deal with. So, I was quite introduced into the leadership. I was thrown into the leadership rather than seeking leadership. And then I became the dean of the faculty and the pro-vice chancellor that I had to deal with other faculties. Gradually...the development is quite gradual that I had plenty of time to develop...the new crisis which actually might be difficult for me to proceed at that time. So the development is very gradual and the background training...even when I was a medical doctor I was working in XXX. It's personality to develop the skills gradually and then you have the chance to exercise your skills and the chance to develop those further when I became the associate dean, the dean, and then pro-vice chancellor and chairman of government bodies. If I'm not trained gradually and the university suddenly thrust me into that position, the chairman of Education Commission, I would be tremendously XXX and I would not even dare to take up the post.
- Q: Would you believe that that had an impact on the effectiveness of your leadership?
- A: I had talked about that.
- Q: Do you find any differences between your leadership in the earlier years and later years?
- A: Not really except that when my leadership role became more and more complex in the faculty, in the university and in the community at large. What I learned in these years was that I have to be tolerant with other people. There are more and more people who are very different from you in their outlook. And there are more and more people who have their own of XXX interest. Then you have to be more tolerant with other people. And you have to do more background work, more

homework before you put up any proposal. So you have to know the complexity of the situation, the complexity of human nature. And there's a wide range of interest. That means I become less naïve. In the faculty you thought that all are working for the common group. But you know that in addition to the common group there're other interested that harbour that you have to understand, to overcome.

Q: Now, let's move onto 'culture'. R3, could you tell me about how the culture of the institution affects you in leading the institution?

A: I think in that sense I have to go back to...for example in the university, as you know, the *** University is a comprehensive university. And we have faculties which are science-based are more humanity. And we have people who are locals and non-locals, etc. And that was quite a heterogeneous sort of culture and you know the students of the *** University are very outspoken. They are very individualistic. That's good. But obviously it became more difficult to get them conformed to everything because they have...not selfish, but individual characteristics. Probably, that's why I said I tried to seek consensus if that is possible. If not, I've never used force but it would take longer time to win them over.

Q: I don't know whether you have come across with this kind of situation, no matter how long you have waited and how hard you have tried, they still...within the small group, you couldn't obtain consensus?

A: The example I mentioned was that the university was trying to convince the departments and faculties to go on the one-line budget and we worked on a new formula for the distribution to instead of the historical bases. As I said, that was not achieved as I was the pro-vice chancellor. That was achieved after...

Q: R3, could you please talk about your freedom to manage, to lead taking account of the context, culture and constraints of the institution or government bodies?

A: Ah...actually when it came to the Education Commission, the freedom to lead was very much influenced by public opinion, like talking about 3 years or 4 or now about language policy, the medium of instruction...it was very much affected by the public opinion but that was definitely a difficult job. You know the medium of instruction policy was very controversial at that time. And secondly, it's not so much the government exercising an iron arm but the government providing the education budget that if you think there're things you want to do, improving language fallacy or improving school management so on and so forth. It's limited by the budget that is available. So the budge limitation and the public opinion. In the university, even when I was the pro-vice chancellor, I had a very understanding of my chancellor, he worked well and I had complete freedom to act XXX constitution of the university and regulations laid down by the university. And also provided that it doesn't against public opinion, like the one-line budget. So any restricted freedom is not ideological, it's practical.

Q: You seem don't think the culture, the university's culture, has any part to play in your freedom to lead?

A: Not when I was in the administration at that time. Because most people tend to less vocal in those days. Nowadays, they are very vocal.

- Q: OK, let's move on to some general questions. R3, as a higher education leader in Hong Kong, what are the values that you treasure and expect to find or want to find in your staff?
- A: I think the values that I treasure are...first of all, openness, in the staff, they must be open, they must be honest, and secondly they must have a vision of common good, not what they benefit, not even their department can benefit from it, but the university as a whole can benefit from it. So, it's loyalty to the university, the loyalty to their profession as a teacher. They have to be open in their interactions with the university, among themselves and the tutors. And thirdly, they must love; it's where the passion comes from. In addition to loyalty, they must be passionate or dedicated about what they are doing. And also they must not be short-sighted. They have to think ahead of what should be done, must be more visionary, and look forward. Being open means that they XXX each other, they are honest, they are open. They must have to prepare for being criticized. They must prepare to be XXX to consider other people's criticism. And this applies to places around.
- Q: So, what is the greatest interest or orientation in your leadership? So what do you like about your leadership?
- A: What do I like about my leadership? Ah...it's difficult to answer. It's easy to XXX on one achievement. I must say that I cannot lose my achievement except that...perhaps I have...what I have said other people should do and that is to be visionary, work for the common good, unselfish and open, and honest to people, and trying to help other people. When occasion arises, provided your assistant does not impinge your principle of being fair and unbiased.
- Q: I think this one you have already answered. But it doesn't matter if you have something more to say about that. In what way did you gear up yourself to be a leader?
- A: Learning curve.
- Q: If one of your staff approaches you and asks you about how to become an effective leader, what would you advice him or her?
- A: I think you must be prepared to do it. In other words, your previous training, in order to command respect to become a leader. You must show that you know more about it...you're knowledgeable. You are good in communication skill. You are decisive and determined...you can motivate other people. You can win over people's respect...obviously, you are properly dressed. You should have a good command of language. Your speaking power is important. You have to be able to grasp any accents of the XXX. You have to be very understanding. You have to listen to other people. You have to emphasize other people. You must not be dictatorial. But at the same time you have to be firm and determined. No leader waivers from one opinion to another. It's never a good leader. No waiver once you have decided this is the right thing to do. You must be honest, of course. So I think your background training is also important to convince people that you are better...you are able to lead them, which implies in many respects that you're better than the majority. And you're interested in the subject, of course.
- Q: OK, just talk about the effectiveness. R3, could you please talk about the things you have done that might help your institution or whatever body you're serving to make it effective in the sense that it would be able to achieve the institutional goal or the organizational goal.

- A: organizational goal...this one is difficult...perhaps examples may...when the faculty wants to break down the barriers among different departments, when the university wants to change the style of teaching, I think what you could do is of course to XXX examples, locally specially overseas, as to the advantage of adopting this change. You might have to invite people from overseas other institutions that have gone through that experience and found out the pros and cons of that experience. You have to get them to meet various people, teachers and students. Again, the change is a gradual one. You have to convince the people this is the direction, this is the way to go. So, I think this is effective but not necessarily efficient because you would take some time to change people's culture. Culture is the most difficult to change. People who are used to doing that year and year up need a lot of persuasion to make them change and the change is necessary. Other empty talks not necessarily big fruit that you have to get people gone through that experience and you know the good and the bad things about the experience...that change is suitable to a certain circumstances, so the local environment.
- Q: But have you done that yourself?
- A: I have done that myself? Yes and no. As I said, the change to the one-line budget so on and so forth we were trying to do that. You know, it took a long time before we go further.
- Q: So that is only one example. Is there any other example you can cite that you have done to achieve that?
- A: Within the faculty, yes, in the small sense. But not in the university context.
- Q: But that is your own experience, if you think about besides changing the culture is there any other things that you as the leader can do to make the institution more effective?
- A: Not for myself. I haven't done that myself. But I think another thing that...people...such a thing shaking people up. For example, at one time, the research output...I didn't do it myself, people were...a lot of people...you know the *** University is one of the...labelled as a teaching university and now we are a research university and that is not done mainly by myself but by vice chancellor so on and so forth. By shaking people up, by showing them, you are very far behind other worldwide universities. You are not the first-class university. You're just a teaching university. How unsatisfactory is the research output. And also by putting more emphases on promotion prospects and more emphases on research instead of just based on teaching itself. So that can change it. Shaking people up. But at the same time now we're going back to the middle. Now we put emphases on both research and teaching and more on research.
- Q: So the last slot of questions concerning gender. R3, do you think gender has any impact on your as a leader? You have mentioned in an earlier that...
- A: I think gender doesn't have any direct impact but indirect impact. As I observe my other colleagues, being a female, I'm exceptional because I'm not married. You should always put your family first. And therefore, I think it is the main reason why there are fewer women at the top in universities in institutions and society unless they are single, or they have no children or even they have children they have a very supportive family. That means you have the money to employ nannies for your children. And you a very understanding husband. Your children have to well behave and they are put into good schools. So I think that is an indirect impact on

women to climb up the professional ladder. For example, in medical profession, many of our senior professors in the university, they tend to raise their family much later in life they tend to finish all their professional qualifications and do research before...they get married but they don't want to have baby. I think this is a natural instinct...so gender is an indirect impact.

Q: Could you please talk about...as you know the leaders in the higher education in Hong Kong it's male dominance. Could you please talk about what your observation and...you have mentioned about the family factor and the social role that woman has been classed.

A: I think in addition to family problem, I think there's something to do with the innate personality of a woman. I think women on the whole tend to be less ambitious and less aggressive. And this highly competitive world and being these two characters may hinder you from developing your profession further. And you may say that is because of the society's perspective on gender. Women are supposed to be less ambitious, less aggressive, gentler, and this may not help. But there are some very outstanding...when you look at the civil service, there're very outstanding women leaders in the civil service. I think women in Hong Kong are fortunate because they can employ domestic helpers to help raise their families.

Q: Last question, how would you imagine a male counterpart may act out your role as a leader in the higher education in Hong Kong?

A: I think a male gender will act very well.

Q: Do you think he will do the same thing as you did, using the same approach?

A: I think male leader would be able to do the same thing except the empathy part. You know meeting people, finding out people's feelings...there may be inclination. They may not be able to do that as well as I do. You know sometimes I talk to the staff...

Interview transcript of R4

Q: R3, can you tell me the leading style you are using in leading your current unit?

A: well, actually, I came to this unit since April. First of all I needed to understand the personality of the staff. Of my staff, one-third are administrative while the rest are teaching staff. So, some of them are senior and some junior. For junior staff, it's necessary to give clear instructions and steps. But there're some exceptional ones who take the initiative and have their own ideas. Training is required for those who are not initiative enough. At the very beginning, once the leader has left, the knowledge and information are not transferred to the successor. I usually forward my colleagues the messages through email so as to let them what is happening. It's like a training process... Those teaching staff were only responsible for teaching duties. They seldom passed on information. So, it ended up that the administrative staff were leading the teachers. When I came in the first time, I carried out the duties as of a program coordinator. My major duties were coordination, writing annual reports. When doing the program review, I asked them to contribute some documents trying to get them involved in the program. Our program is quite special.

The Year One curriculum is taught by our staff. The Year Two curriculum is taught by the faculty staff. As far as I know, our teachers are not clear about the subject objectives. At least they should know the relationship between the subjects and the whole program. Therefore, I summon the program coordinators for a meeting with staff of other departments so as to help them gain a mutual understanding of the aims and objectives of the program. By doing so, they will be able to design the syllabus in accordance to student needs. Well, I think my major style is “open” in terms of transparency. I don’t keep everything under table. I pass the information to those involved.

Q: Is the transparency high?

A: Yes. They said they haven’t received so many emails before. But the problem is we have frequent meetings. Since our college is self-financed, we are short of labour. Verbal communication is obviously more effective than written communication through email. I thought sending them emails to tell them the job was OK. However, I found out later there’s no response after the deadline. Therefore, I asked someone to send out reminder and every week we have team meeting to give them chances to talk about difficulties. The meeting provides us chances to come together to seek solutions. I believe the management style has to echo the situation. At the beginning, I thought sending out emails could pass the message. Later, I found out it could not. To achieve the outcome, communication is the key. Working alone cannot find out a good solution. When working as a team, we can support each other. Now, we rely on teamwork. As a leader, I still need to guide them to do the tasks. Otherwise, they might not be initiative enough to do. They are used to their previous habits that might not be the best. So I query about how they did the work. I keep reviewing the work for improvements. As a team, we discuss about whether it is the best way to do it and give comments. Also, as our society has changed to become knowledge-based, teamwork is more important than individual ability. Certainly, every one should have the capacity for the work. They have been serving the college for over 4 years. At this moment, everything is on the right track. When I first came to here, I spent sometime to learn their system.

Q: In short, your leadership style is open-door, focusing on teamwork and communication with your staff...

A: Yes, right. I keep communicating with my staff to follow up the work...

Q: Are you adopting a top-down approach?

A: well, for urgent matters, it has to be top-down. For example, when we are working on new concentrations... here, we call programs as concentrations... if we don’t go straight ahead, they would not be able to think independently. So, I need to adopt a top-down approach. Well...they have not reached that level. They fail in seeing the program holistically as they have been mainly teaching for a long time. Now, when we come to the meeting, I allow them to talk with each other to understand how to increase the enrolment. In the past, we didn’t invite everyone to the retreat exercise. This year, I invited everyone including the part-time teachers so as to increase their sense of belonging to the college and make them understand they are also involved in the college matters. By doing so, their ownership of the program would be increased. Once they make a suggestion, I get back to them in a week and then tell them to go ahead with their plan. I am trying to encourage them to participate more in college matters. In the past, most of the matters are determined by the senior

staff. This college has been established for 4 years. We're quite mature now. At the beginning, they focused more on the programs and administration.

Q: Have you identified any external factors and internal factors that have shaped your leadership style? External factors may include government policy, social demands, stakeholders of this college, etc.

A: Leadership style...affected by external factors... I don't think so. I don't know. Maybe I put it this way. I am sensitive to the external changes. When I come across with any news articles about the trends and development, I circulate them with my colleagues. That's why they receive so many emails from me. I'm doing that to let them be aware of the external factors that might affect the operation of our college. For example, we might also take students from the mainland China. Since this college is self-financed, the most important thing is to find the financial support. I keep them informed of the social changes to let them be aware of them and then take appropriate actions so as to make the programs more attractive. I'm not sure of this brings any influence to my management style. But I'm sure that I'm flexible to changes. I would not ignore the external factors. Actually, everything here is somehow affected by the university...there're also politics. When we want to deliver a new program, we have to get approvals from different departments. In order to get approval, we need to employ different communication strategies for different departments. For some departments, there's no problem even if I ask my subordinate to contact them. But for some, I need to let them know that I might talk with my supervisor so as to get their responses. For different people who have different personalities and attitudes, I have to change to use different strategies. You know, the programs offered by our college are regarded as the core business development of the university. The university focuses mainly on the UGC-funded programs. When we come to talk with the departments, they might not take us to the top of the list. Therefore, we have difficulties to overcome through communication and even my supervisor. Of course, I prefer solving the problems myself. Well... I try to emphasize the mutual benefits so as to create a win-win situation, telling them we're able to make our programs more marketable and to get good students. There're still some departments which don't want to work with us. So we turn to other 'more willing' departments to develop our programs. The important is continuous communication. Sometimes we find that they don't care about our operation. If they are able to make their staff to understand that, that would provide more opportunities for us to work together.

Q: Are there any internal factors affecting your leadership style? For example, students...

A: Students...it's interesting. They might not want to talk to us even though we play active to approach them. If we want to meet with them, we usually talk to the program coordinators and sponsor some activities to invite students to come to share their views. That might be easier. So we try to understand students' needs to arrange some activities. Our communication is progressively improving, I hope. I understand that students prefer working it out amongst themselves to working with us. So we're trying to seek ways to improve our communication. And we're planning to organize some mix-year competitions for the students to help them get along with each other.

Q: Do you think your leadership style is effective?

- A: Well...right now...it's effective. Our staff are happily working together. They can tell me about their worries etc. The biggest problem is external factors. You know, the salary scale...some of my colleagues left...of course we wanted to retain them. However, our package is not attractive to keep them. So the biggest problem is from the external environment. Internally, we're very happy together. Actually, these colleagues were reluctant to leave. They also thought that I was very efficient. However, the salary package...is not competitive. And that is the biggest problem. This kind of turnover somehow affects the staff morale. I've asked the HR to review our package but I don't know when it will be finished. You know, some things are out of my control. Internally, we're like a family. However, when the job market is getting better, it's very difficult to retain quality staff. We find that we're serving as a stepping stone for them. After we have trained them, once they find better opportunity, they will leave. It's difficult to keep people when other places offer better packages. Without considering the salary package, we're very happily working together. I prefer seeing my colleagues happy to using my power to... and I prefer teamwork that I think most of them have already known. However, for urgent matters, I got to be assertive. If time allows, I prefer adopting a participatory approach. But if time disallows, I got to use a top-down approach. I can't help it.
- Q: Have you ever used your authority to make things happen? Previously, you have mentioned that when the matter is urgent...
- A: Yes right. For urgent matters, I do what I have to do. Usually, I am inclined to collective decision that was made at the meeting. However, for very urgent matters, I make the decision myself. There's no time to consult other people. Otherwise, the deadline can't be reached. So everything depends on the time. For those who are not cooperative, I need to borrow my supervisor's authority to make them move. It's about politics. Also, I consider whether the staff are reasonable or not. Reasonable strategy for reasonable staff, vice versa. Some people might think their work is very good even though it has not reached the standard. So, I need to explain to them very carefully. In order to get familiar with their area of work...for example, for junior staff, they complained about the negative comments on their appraisal, later I assigned a person to be their direct supervisors. It's a learning process to me. This college is self-financed, everyone is responsible for a number of areas. We have to find his direct supervisor for feedback. And this supervisor should be willing to give feedback. In the past, when I asked them for suggestions, they didn't know who their supervisor was. If we got sufficient resources, this would be improved.
- Q: When you're using your authority, did you also come up with any difficulty?
- A: for normal work, there isn't much problem. The only problem is about uneven division of labour. Some of them complained, "why do you ask me to do this? why not him or her?" some of them might complain that other colleagues slowed down the progress. Now I start to realize I have to do everything myself. I always tell them to emphasize teamwork and not just focus on individual. However, many of them only take care of their own work. If I ask them to do other work, they would complain. What I can do is to tell them the urgency. I know they are not very happy about it. You know, there's some conflicts amongst the colleagues so that they rarely communicate with each other. They don't take any action until very late. There's a risk that we might not be able to meet the deadlines. Therefore, I got to talk with them more frequently. It's kind of wasting my time to be a messenger.

When we come to the team meeting, I find out that they haven't passed the work to each other. It's tricky. So, I need to manage the time better. At the same time, I need to identify which colleagues have communication problems so that I come to talk to them to update myself of their progress. Most of the time, they just submit their work at the very end. Those little trivial stuff... now I come to know how complicated the interpersonal relationship is! I was not aware of that at the beginning so I spent some time understanding their personality. Right now, we have regular weekly meeting in order to make them more self-disciplined.

Q: Do your staff resist following the schedule?

A: Well, for those 'tricky' staff, they always have excuses. They always have excuses to avoid doing some work. It's possible that they don't want to work with a particular person. Well, I don't know. However, I did see some tears in his/her eyes. But we need to move on, right? Well, it's hard to make everyone happy. They have excuses not to do things and want to shoulder the responsibility to someone else. Well, to meet deadline, we can't think too much. But we need to complete the task. I know that not everybody is happy but there're no other choices. To manage people is very complicated.

Q: OK, let's move to another issue, emotional intelligence. According to a psychologist called Daniel Goleman, EI is comprising of 5 elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. I would like to know if you have used any of these...to influence your staff?

A: I always use them...depending on the occasions. In different situations, I use different things. For some who are used to soft strategies, then I would focus more on empathy. However, for some who are used to hard strategies, it's different. So, for different styles, I treat them differently. Actually, I work very late every day. My supervisor told me that, "R4, if you don't leave, your colleagues won't leave." But most of the time, even I've left, they are still working. But nowadays with the advance of technology, I can go home on time to continue my work. We keep communicating with each other through emails. Usually, I revised the instructions at home and send them to my colleagues before another day starts... Well I have to admit that some of my staff are not good in English. As we're self-financed unit, we got a lot of paper work so a lot of documents. I usually need to review the documents drafted by my staff. I can say I use the night time to 'correct' their drafts. I would spot out any errors and problems and then give them instructions in the early morning. I want to show them I'm also working hard. You may say this is self-regulation or self-discipline. Actually, I'm sure they know that I'm still working at night as they always got my emails in midnight. So they should have no excuse to do nothing. Anything else...I think I'm using all of them. Motivation...motivate...if they take initiative I send out an email to everybody to acknowledge that. For those routine duties, I usually reply with thank you. I hope to bring out a motivating effect here. The biggest problem here is the salary package. Well, at this moment, I'm doing what I can respond to them. Nobody is afraid of me, even junior staff also give me something to review. I'm quite motivating. You know, some of my colleagues ask me to review their outputs before I leave the office. But this makes life not so easy. So far it's OK because I also want to learn. I think it's necessary to have self-motivation and self-discipline and also the enthusiasm to continue learning. It is very important. If you feel bored, you'd not do it.

- Q: Have you ever used any of these to handle crises?
- A: Crises...I think the biggest crisis is the conflicts amongst the colleagues. I haven't come across any big crisis. The trickiest thing is people.
- Q: As you mentioned earlier, you're passionate about your work, and you believe in your style in leading your staff. Do they have any impact on your leadership?
- A: I would say this helps me to be more persistent. Sometimes, it's not easy to convince your colleagues to take your ideas. I think it's kind of culture creation. I would stick to my ideas unless you are able to convince me to change. I think it's a way to tell them that I'm persistent on it even though they have opposition. For some people, they would easily give up. But for me, if I think it's necessary, I will be very persistent on it. If they realize it is good for the intake, they would usually do it.
- Q: So what you're trying to say is you would try to convince your colleagues first but if at the end it turns out that they don't agree with you you would adopt a hard approach?
- A: Yes. A top-down approach. The most important thing is to achieve the goals. If time allows, I would consult them. If not, I can't do nothing but use a top-down approach. Actually our schedule is very hectic. We've got many new tasks. So I'd prefer giving them a list of instructions through emails. If we got enough them, I'd prefer letting them plan. For instance, we're planning to recruit students from the mainland China. We've formed a working group for that. At this point, teamwork is very important because everyone has his own expertise and most of them are able to give much better ideas. Well it comes to another issue that I need to identify which one is more suitable for a certain job. After understanding them, I know who can do what. Some of them execute better than write. It's all about division of labour.
- Q: So do you think your EI can help you lead this college more effectively?
- A: Yes I think so. I see it improving. When I looked back at the previous system, I have done a lot of work to reform it. And the diversity is getting bigger now. I've been trying to create a culture in which they build an ownership of their programs so they are more intended to improve their own programs. In other words, to provide opportunities for them to think more about what activities to give to their students. Previously, administrative staff only do administrative work while academic staff only teach. But now, we have meetings to involve both of them to let them form a common understanding. It's much better. I think there's still room for us to improve. And that means I still have many things to learn.
- Q: Now, let's talk about your development. How did you develop your leadership?
- A: Previously, I didn't work purely for administration. In the past, I managed academic staff but now I have to manage administrative staff as well. For teachers, they have very high intellectual abilities. However, they are also very argumentative. But for administrative staff, it's quite different. Some of them are very knowledgeable while some are kind of arrogant. To manage them, I get to know about their personality first. So far, I'm happy about this job. In the past, there was no problem to ask the academic staff to write in English. But now I have to spend a lot of time correcting my junior staff's English. I really don't mind doing that because I want to get things done. However, I want them to learn and learn

about my style. But it's difficult to teach them grammar. I do hope they can learn through practices. And I learn that different methods for different kinds of people. Some teacher focus on quality but now we all talk about cost and benefits. Sometimes we have conflicts. So in the team meetings, we adopt the majority's view.

Q: OK. Now, let's move to personal development, how has it influenced your leadership?

A: In the past, it's more academic. And now it's more practical. There're advantages and disadvantages. I can think from the perspective of an academic. But that might not be cost-effective. Now, I got to think from the administrative perspective. If I want to grow and survive, I can't be too idealistic. For example, when thinking about "is it possible to have small class teaching? We need to think about the feasibility. Well...I start to adopt a more neutral attitude. If I take an administrative approach, the academic staff may not accept. I would tell them, I understand your problems and explain to them the concerns of the academic staff and those of the administrative staff. I would say now I can give viewpoints of two different groups. A more holistic view, you may say. To survive, we have to make a balance. We can't just focus on the quality.

Q: Before you become the director of this college, you're a principal lecturer. Did you carry any supervisory role at that time?

A: Well, at that time, I had to write appraisals for 9-10 staff at the end of the academic year.

Q: Any difference in your leadership between 5 years ago and now?

A: It's very different. 5 years ago, I was mainly supervising teaching staff. And now I have to supervise administrative staff as well. We've got intellectual people and also less intellectual people. The focus of the appraisal is very different now. I may say the scope is bigger and the variety is larger. The nature of supervision is different.

Q: I would like to know whether all of the staff in the college are under your supervision?

A: We have delegation, associate registrar...at the senior management level we have a director, associate registrar, 2 assistant directors, plus an administrative officer, who tends to be more operational. For policy making, mainly the three of us. The 2 assistant directors have no teaching experience while the associate registrar has taught before. S/he tends to think more intellectually while the others think in a more operational way. I mainly write the appraisal reports for them directly. For other teaching staff, it depends on the program. I usually have to counter sign. If an administrative staff is going to resign, it requires of my approval. I got to sign a lot of things but most of them are not under my direct supervision. In the past, I found there's a lack of communication. Now, we have a monthly meeting with the program leaders to increase interactions with the teachers. And the program leaders have term meeting with the teaching staff. We have staff-students consultation committee that we seldom took a holistic view in the past. Now we change to look more at the whole program curriculum.

Q: So now, to you lead your staff, you have to make a balance. You supervise more people of a larger variety.

- A: In the past, I had to supervise only a few. Even though some are not directly under my supervision, I still need to counter sign. In addition to my signature, I also write down something more if I find that it's necessary.
- Q: Now let's talk about culture. Although this college is still new, there should be an existing culture. What do you think the culture of this college affects you in leading it?
- A: It is still at the exploration stage. I'm learning the culture and at the same time it's learning my style. At the very beginning, they suspected that I would be a terrible supervisor. Well, I consider their performance and their work attitude. I had worries too. Whether I can adapt to the new environment? For some of them, it's easy to give out instructions. But for some, I need to follow them up closely. In the past, they just did their assigned work. They did not know about each other's work. After I came, it becomes more open... for example, when someone is taking leave, it's easier... I think it becomes a more open. When I came, I emphasized the importance of knowledge transfer. And I encouraged them to raise up any issues for discussion. Well, everything happens only after the understanding of the operation. I think the present situation is more fruitful that people exchange ideas more effectively. Now they know each other's expectations. In the past, everything was under a veil and seemed to be very mysterious. Since people didn't know about what each other was doing, they didn't participate too much. After senior management and senate meetings, I usually circulate around the key information. I also ask them to keep their information updated. Otherwise, we'd feel very difficult to catch up in the summer break. And now we're fast in doing that. You know, we're very busy in the summer. We got to work on the admission, marketing, interviews, etc. So now, I need them to keep work on that on a regular basis. The biggest impact is that I involve the teachers, who also take the role of a coordinator. Before that, they just left it to the administrative staff. At the beginning, they told me they didn't know what and how. So I taught them to pick this up progressively. I find that they enjoy doing it. But you know once it has become formatted, it's easy for them to follow afterwards. So the first time is supposedly the most painful. It's impossible for me to do their work. Fortunately, we worked it out pretty well though I still need to correct their English, etc. Once we've got the format, what we need to do afterwards is modification only. We don't need to start with thinking about the goals again. I have an assistant who can help other colleagues to find needed materials if I'm out of town. I think the present knowledge management is better than before. I was very worried in the first 2 years after I came here. And now they know where to get the right information. In the past, the knowledge system was a closed system and the involvement of the teachers was very little. Now they become more communicative and involve more in the development of the program management. When they get more involved in the departmental matters, they have more chances to communicate with other teachers in order to write the reports, etc. Indirectly, they get more involved in communication with other departments. Interestingly, they are not courageous enough to ask the teachers to perform some duties. And now they are able to get them into...marketing, say for example. For sure, this is an improvement. When the teachers get involved in these tasks, they understand more about the quality of the students coming into the college. They were not used to move the teachers. With me here they get used to it now.
- Q: How about the freedom to management?

- A: Well, there're a lot of policies and committees. There are many rules and regulations to follow. Well...my supervisor is kind of strange. He doesn't talk much in front of me although he has a lot of things for me to learn. However, he can name out a number of points at the meetings. Since then, I know there're many restrictions. Luckily, he has never blamed me and he gives me space to learn. Sometimes, when I come across with some nonsense regulations, if necessary, I talk to him about it. If I think this cannot be fitted into our college, I will definitely go to talk to him in hope to solve the problems. It takes time to learn, you know. There're so many documents. They set up the rules to keep us under control. Well, be honest, we follow the rules if they are reasonable.
- Q: OK, let's talk about some general issues. What values in leadership do you treasure?
- A: Team spirit is the most important. We can't do anything without it. Some of the colleagues are very good in presenting short views. In team, we can assign someone to work on the things that they have strong abilities. Teamwork is very important. Some are rather good in marketing while some in writing. They work on something they are strong. For some colleagues, they are not aware of their strengths so I play a role to help them identify that. I usually give them the tasks and let them try and then I can identify their strengths and discover their talents. Staff development is like this. If I don't give them the chance, I will never know whether they are able to do it or not. It's motivating them to develop themselves. However, it brings up a risk that they may leave after learning this. Well, I won't prohibit them if they find a better opportunity, right? I think empowerment and giving them trust are very important. If I delegate you this task, I have trust in you. So...team spirit and empowerment are very important.
- Q: So, you also expect your staff to have these values?
- A: Yes, I encourage them to share their views. I hope them to become responsive. For junior staff, they are not courageous enough to speak up. But it depends on the personality. For some, they've never approached me even the outputs are already released to the public. So now I try to keep a closer supervision. You know, the accountability. Usually I would give them back their work to let them identify the mistakes in hope to shorten the time to review their work in the next time. Hope they can learn from mistakes. As you know, this is a self-financed unit, it takes extra effort to survive it. If I don't work overtime, it's impossible to complete all the work. Now I'm playing a good model and I hope that this will help them to get everything on track. Then by that time, I can save more time to teach them.
- Q: Can you tell me about your biggest interest or orientation in your leadership?
- A: It's more or less the same as I mentioned earlier.
- Q: OK, about the key factors affecting you in leading...I think you have also answered this already. Communication...teamwork...
- A: And also the ability to understand problems. Responsiveness to everyone even though the staff member is at the junior level. The best is to give prompt response.
- Q: In what ways do you gear up yourself to be a leader?
- A: I didn't intend to be an administrator. In the past, I have been involved in developing a self-financed community college in *** University. I was elected to be a working group member. Therefore, I knew very well the management structure because I was involved in decision making in budgeting. And I knew about the

shortcomings and staff resistance. They told us that the college would be managed by a new company and the salary scale would be changed...At that moment I started to think about leaving the *** University. You know, I hadn't been to any job interview for over 10 years. Coincidentally, there was a voluntary department scheme in *** University, so... and also they said I didn't need to teach the whole semester... I don't know. At this side, they consider my experience and knowledge they think I'm suitable for this post, so... I didn't have a plan to become a director. I think I come to this position by chance. Everything comes in by chance and I learn more new knowledge by getting myself involved in the new tasks.

Q: Did *** University approach you for this post?

A: No, I applied for this post myself.

Q: So, in other words, you didn't intentionally gear up yourself as a leader?

A: No. But I was in the working group so that I knew about the management structure and the budget of setting up a self-financed community college. Before that, I didn't touch any of these you know. But I was elected into the working group. So I couldn't refuse it.

Q: If one of your staff members approaches you to ask you about how to become an effective leader, what would you advise him or her?

A: Well, basically based on the belief. I think it's important to play a role model. Being more open. In this knowledge-based society, you can't make decision on your own so that you need to rely on teamwork. The ability to motivate team spirit. The ability to identify the strengths of different people so as to reach the common goal. So all in all, it's to follow a vision.

Q: What have you done to leading your staff to reach the institutional goals more effectively?

A: Last year, we got 300+ students. This year, we got 78% more. I believe I have added some elements in marketing. It's very important, you see, this is influencing the whole university. Well, the university likes me and hates me at the same time. They like me because I am able to get more income They hate me because we use their space. The marketing strategy this year is quite successful because I gave them some ideas. The biggest problem is the salary package. I'm well prepared that the staff might leave for better opportunities.

Q: The marketing strategy is built up by you and your colleagues?

A: Before I came to take up this post, I had asked them to draft something for me. Later, I pushed them to make it out. Well, I'm not sure if this is the factor... maybe the market is getting better now. Next year we're going to offer 3 new concentrations in hope to attract more students. Also, I have good relationships with the mass media. I think my exposure to the public is bigger than the previous director. But I think my relationship with the mass media is pretty good. I am willing to give them what they want.

Q: OK, here comes the last group of questions on gender. Does gender have any impact on you as a leader?

A: Not much problem, I think. Although I'm a female, my appearance is quite like a male. But you see the supervisors are all males. The department heads are more males than females. I don't know why they employ me. Well, at the senior

management group meeting, all of the others are males. I don't know why. But I don't find any problems so far. I was not aware that there is only one female in the senior management group. There're some female professors...but the majority is still males. Maybe more females can be found at the associate professors...very few chair professors are females.

Q: So, as a female, is there anything affecting your leadership? I don't know...maybe family role, social role, any impact?

A: No, I guess. Well, my husband is very helpful in family matters. I'm usually working very late at night. And they get used to it. I don't have to worry about family matters so that I can concentrate more on my work. I find that some of the males are very concerned about their families while I'm not that much. In our casual conversation, they talk a lot about family while I only talk about office business. Being a female does not bring me any... Maybe I'm very or even over concentrated on my work.

Q: As you can see most of the staff at the senior management level are males, what are your comments about it?

A: Well, I think...traditionally we have been thinking that females should take care of the family. Perhaps I'm a work alcoholic... I'm not saying there're no capable females in the higher education. In *** University, *** is the dean. She is really a career woman while I'm less ambitious at this point. I got this post perhaps because I'm working very hard. I work better with males, actually. Perhaps, my personality tends to like a male. I'm straightforward and easy to communicate... Maybe Hong Kong females have to take care of their families so that they can't devote themselves to their work. Well, I think my style does matter. I enjoy it more if it offers me more learning opportunities. As we still have new things coming up, that keeps me more motivated to work. Those female teachers that I personally know of are very concerned about their families. Well, personality can be a factor. Some people can't work happily with some people. It's OK to me. I appreciate other people's work. Even though you can't really help them, it's good to give them spiritual support.

Q: Do you think most females are not ambitious?

A: Well, I don't think so. Some females think that they are very smart.

Q: Are there any other factors? In commercial sector and government, you see there're many female leaders. But in higher education, there're very few.

A: Well, my female colleagues told me they chose to teach in the university because this would allow them to have more time to take care of their families. Most of them are like that. Back to your query about the small number of female leaders in higher education, it depends how they manage their time. My female colleagues chose to teach because the schedule was flexible so that they can spend more time on their family. Maybe that's the reason.... I don't know whether it's true. Maybe the people in the circle are mostly males so it's easy to recruit males as presidents... those female school principals I know of are very devoted to their work. It's difficult to find a balance on work and family. Maybe females put more emphasis on family than career. The global trend is that there are more and more well educated females while Hong Kong is an Asian society in which male dominance prevails. It takes time to change.

Q: OK, last question, how would you imagine if a male counterpart would act out your role?

A: Although I said I'm working like a male, I look into details. I find that many males are not good in handling small business. Females have an advantage that they are more details-oriented. They are sensitive to other people's reactions. They would shut up when they see the others get angry or start to cry. Females are sensitive to other people's feelings too. I have to handle both of big tasks and small tasks. I value every colleague so I consider everyone's feeling....Relatively, I'm more detailed-oriented than the males and therefore I'm more sensitive to any problems. Females can be very gentle but it's strange for males to be very gentle. So I think a female leader is more flexible in using strategies. She can adopt a hard approach this time and a soft approach the next time.

Q: Do you think a male would make things worse if he acts out your role?

A: It depends...he might not follow up the matters as frequently as I am. I think a male seldom sends so many emails as I do! Males usually communicate verbally. And I work into the details more than a male. But it's hard to tell. It really depends on the person. In our unit, we have only one male colleague.

Interview transcript of R7

Q: R7, can you please talk about your style in leading the institution?

A: I think it is a difficult question to...actually find what is meant by 'leadership style'. But I suppose the way I work with my colleagues is I put a lot of trust in the colleagues who work with me. I usually give my colleagues as much free hand as possible in discharging their responsibility. When they have problems, when they need my support, usually I can be very decisive in giving them my view. In other words, I always try to sort a balance between a lot of delegation and also at the same time giving the right kind of support at my level to my colleagues as far as possible. And my goal is to lead by examples. For example, in chairing meetings, I always invite members and committee to speak up rather than trying to keep a guiding view of the members. And usually it works quite well and I think I command...because I have been in this institution for a long time. I've been here for thirty-something years, and that really helps in the way that to gain respects from my colleagues. And our culture is rather collegial so it does help because my XXX service and what I have done in the past so I am able to command a very good respect from my colleagues. And I think that helps me to lead my staff. So I suppose my leadership style is really to sort of try to motivate people by putting a lot of trust and a lot of delegation. And I'm not leaving them alone entirely...when they need the support, I try to give the support. But in that sense there're difficulties...when I want to give them delegation, if then sometimes there're danger you give your views but then the views are not packed in the right level. Sometimes we may run into danger because we may know some of the things colleagues tend to be interfered in the operational side of matter, that should be handled by colleagues. But I suppose there's no XXX at anytime. You just really have to deep in the colleagues, that is what I'm trying to say. And you really need quite a lot of time you know to XXX away mutually with your colleagues. If any of your colleagues is in charge of any department, to make sure your support is at the right time that your colleagues need. In other words, if you give advice on

operational matters, in a way, we are not doing our job. We should be doing...in our position, for example, we should give our colleagues a much wider view much wider perspective because we are at the institutional...corporate level of seeing things whereas colleagues are at different tiers or different layers...hierarchies in the management. They tend to see things in a narrower perspective. So I see my role in management is really to complement this narrow operational oriented view of my colleagues, complement that sort of view with a broader view at the institutional level.... I don't know whether I have answered your question.

Q: As you have just said, on the one hand, you delegate your responsibility to your colleagues. On the other hand, there may be a risk when you try to give your views at the same time...did you mean that you are aware of the colleagues when they do the work that their work that might be in conflict with your views?

A: No. what I'm trying to say for the latter point is that I give my views to my colleagues which should be in complement...my colleagues, for example, as the head of a certain department, he or she must be very professional in that area, right? I have to respect his or her expertise in that area especially in operational matters. So if I give my view, I mean the ideal situation is a view which is from the corporate management perspective which helps the operation. If I sometimes tend to give views on more of operational matters, then I don't think it's the right thing to do. Although we often do that. Management is, as people say, more arts rather than science. Although you may say this is my goal, your intention is to do that, but the outcome is not always agreeable, right? It doesn't always agree with the intention. So sometimes you tend to give views which are operation-oriented rather than...sort of corporate management. Or I put into other words, sometime we tend to give views on practices rather than policies. We should...at my level in my present job I should be giving colleagues things they should not necessarily know about the development of the whole institution. That is the strategic development. If I give them that kind of view to complement what they do usually, then I'm doing my job properly. So, if they take account of my view, from the institutional strategy perspective, they know how to practice, right? To go along with the strategy. But if I'm not careful, I tend to give advices on smaller things they know better than I do. Then, I'm not exactly doing my job well. That is what I want to get.

Q: R7, can you identify any external factors or internal factors that have shaped your leadership style? For external factors, we could refer to the society, the demands of the society, the environment, and even the government higher education policy. As for internal factors, they could be the stakeholders of the institution, staff and students and so on. Are there any of these factors shaping your leadership style?

A: I tend to think not. I tend to think this is mainly my own sort of personal style. I can't say it is very effective. My personality...I do things in my own way, you see? So I can't think of any obvious, you know, internal or external factors that influence my leadership style. I think I sort of develop myself and over the years, generally speaking, colleagues work well with me so I think it is sort of trial-and-error. It's alright. But I have to say it's about the end of my career. They may not know that I'm retiring very soon. But I do feel that my leadership style perhaps may run into more problems in a sense in the changes I'm seeing, internal and external particularly about consultations with the stakeholders at this stage. The institution expects to consult a lot of staff and colleagues, and we have to consult with our students as well. And I can say I'm not particularly I'm not against

consultation but I do think sometimes that kind of things can go really...can get excessive and it would be very stressful if you happen to have so much consultation and really delays the process. We are always under a lot of pressure and under increasingly XXX situation. Then how to balance those...consultation, for example, to make it efficient, then I think that is really a challenge of the institution at this stage. And I have to say that I have not been too responsive to that kind of style. As I said, I'm not against consultation. But I just don't think we should go out to do all kinds of consultation. So I don't think that those factors influence my style. But I do see there're shortcomings, which would affect the leadership style. Basically, my style is really my personality. And I'm very lucky that I'm not under any pressure to change my style in order to suit the situations.

Q: Then, on the whole, do you find your leadership style effective?

A: I've already touched on that. I think from the way my colleagues work with me, I think I've got lots of opinions so on and so forth, by large I think it is alright. Again, this is not something that...as I've mentioned earlier I don't think my leadership style is something by design. It's something just evolved my personality. I can work with my colleagues over the years, they just evolve. But I think from the way my colleagues work with me, from the way the institution being able to develop, of course it's never one-person strategy. In the way, I work with the corporate management team reasonably well to the extent that the institute has developed...then I think it's effective.

Q: Now we move on to another group of questions on authority. R7, can you please say something about have you ever used your position and the authority given by your position to make things work, to make things happen? If so, how?

A: I think in my experience I don't think I have sort of used authority lathering...you know, I have never said I'm in this position to make this judgment, whether you like it or not, you take it. I don't think I have that experience. I think authority in my case is more or less persuasive implicitly and I'm sort of lucky because...maybe because of my leadership style because of the culture of the institution we seldom have confrontation. Which one is the cause? Which one is the effect? It's always not easy to tell. But ah...over 30 years I've been working here. In the first part, I was not in the administration. I was the academic for about the first 10 years. But 20 years as an administrator, I don't think I have to use authority directly....or submit my authority and get the result. Mostly it's through persuasion. It is implicit...to make people realize I have the authority and therefore it's better for them to work things out with me, if they agree, of course. Normally, I would allow time for them to discuss things with me and you know to make compromises and so on. So by large, the authority is inserted in an implicit way rather than...except of course if I'm the chair of the discipline panel or whatsoever then those cases I have to make decisions as a chairman and I suppose that...I think you can call those incident approach is applying authority directly. But on the whole, I would tend to...I think perhaps not in my own case, because around here probably I insert authority in that way. I don't believe in a very direct approach to insert authority because it could backfire...it would really stray a lot of relations, and that does not really help to build mutual trust. I tend to put a lot of trust in immediate colleagues who work with me and trust that they are competent they can discharge their responsibility with little supervision. I would normally expect that unless it is necessary they don't really come back to me for advice. But when they do come

back to me for advice, I normally give them pretty decisive advice rather than you know some supervisors their decision are very vague. I think people's general comment I'm hearing colleague's comments they normally feel that very decisive advice from me when they need.

Q: Can you spell out any happiness and difficulties you have come across when you're using such authority whether you are using implicitly and persuasively and so on? Did you come across with any difficulties? Any resistance?

A: I suppose yes if you ask me to pinpoint incidents I can think of one that really comes into mind but you know the XXX is being strayed if I.... We fail most of the time and we get frustrated so I think that is the example...I don't know whether it is an example of failure of applying authority. You really insert your authority it's not being effective. But I have problems with colleagues who don't get along with me, you know. But they have to get transferred into other places and so on. And these things do happen. I get frustrated sometimes when my views are received by my seniors. All these things happen. So I would say, yes. If you ask me for an example, I have to think...nothing comes immediately in mind. Over the years, there're a lot of incidents where I'm sort of being my way.

Q: Now, let's move onto another category of questions regarding emotional intelligence. By emotional intelligence, I'm following the definition by Daniel Goleman, he defines emotional intelligence as comprising of 5 components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Can you talk about have you ever used any of these components to influence your staff?

A: I would like to answer in an indirect way. I think most colleagues see me as a very cool...a very calm person. I seldom get very emotionally excited in the meeting. When people have a heated discussion, I'm normally able to come in and I don't speak up at all if...I'm normally able to come in and say and make some remarks with each other, which I appreciate as long as...rather calm, well thought out remarks. I am not...my style is I don't just speak up freely. When I speak up, I want to make sure I have a point to deliver....so I'm generally being received round here as a thinker, so to speak, rather calm...seldom get excited and even some people make...attack on or criticize me and so on, I can receive them...open...I mean open meeting so on. I can receive them very calmly. When I'm presenting, of course I'm very XXX. I can present the points to those who disagree with me. So I think in terms of self-regulation, I'm pretty good. But I suppose my weakness perhaps is that I'm not as a good listener as I should be. So in terms of empathy, perhaps I'm not very good at empathy. I don't really substitute myself into...place myself into the position of my colleagues, who are working with me, trying to appreciate their difficulties. I seldom do that sort of things. But I can give them very calm view, say, if I understand you situation correctly, perhaps this is what I will do, right? If it doesn't work, perhaps the next step is...something like that. I think what colleagues appreciate most is I can think through XXX very well. Not just in mini-steps. Even when I write memos out, I always say, if you agree with me, this is what I expect you to do. But of course if you don't, then... I try to think a bit ahead and analyze a problem, you see, beyond just proposing immediate solution. So my social skills really...of course I'm friendly with people although as I said frankly speaking I am not a good listener. I'm rather assertive when I give my views and advice. I'm not patient in listening someone's problems, you know. Many other leaders of course they are very good listeners. They listen very

patiently before they give a view. But I'm not that kind of style. But when I give my view, I'm normally assertive. Of course I don't offend colleagues and so on. So in terms of being friendly with my colleagues, being supportive and so on...being considerate, I think those skills I have. So in terms of applying the social skills I'm normally the one who probably lose the tempers in any situation. So my colleagues would get very frustrated. But in front of a group of people I normally stay very calm. And of course many of the colleagues appreciate my soft of fair mindedness. I do give them credits although their points I disagree, although they may have been putting across their pens...their points are very confrontationally I still receive them very calmly. I don't know how much it is related to the EQ. but that is normally what I work with people other than those who have directly reporting relationships with me and those immediate colleagues. But in general, colleagues normally see me as a thinker and I think fairly politically and I think the problems as well.

Q: Have you then ever used EI to handle crises? If you have, then how?

A: EI to handle crises?

Q: you know, any significant crises happened over these years?

A: Again, as I said I don't think which one I have...I suppose generally I mean if you want to pinpoint the major event, again nothing comes immediately to mind but I suppose this sort of things are applied very often, say for example, staying calm, of course say for example in our early days when we're private we had to negotiate a lot with the government to become a public funded body. We had to face a lot of external assessments and those things sometimes get very frustrated. And my colleagues get frustrated, you know, because all time they get all kinds of criticisms from external people. My institution is not really well funded, right, because of the panel comes in and they have this authority and they have to make decision to judge you and so on. So often my colleagues, you see, working in this kind of situation some of them feel of course they don't expect over it, right? In our internal meeting they feel they are wrongly judged if the panel are not treating them fairly. And things get rather emotional but again, I have to include this person in the team and I try to have this ability to stay calm. I did not disagree with my colleagues but instead of joining them emotional XXX I'm normally able to say somewhat you know well of course although these people are external members their criticisms are not well founded. I suppose to have a way to deal with it. Then not to be too personal about it or whatever because if he can counter some of these in a tactful way we will be able to gain...you have to recognize most of the people come in having a mandate therefore if you can convince them or above your strengths and so on, you often gain something, right? Whatever it is validation of a course or... So in the early days when we are much smaller I have to involve in a lot of those things. And normally I will be the one who stays very cool. And that's my main contribution to...in those days, even my superior gets frustrated sometimes. And I can sort of calm him down. We have to live with it and sometimes these things are very personal, right? And for the bigger interest of the institution as a whole, sometimes we have to swallow these things, right? But we didn't really agree with that. But we still have to move on. So I think I have used quite a bit of that in doing my work. In the recent years, of course we grow more and more. More people are shouldering their XXX unless being involved in this assessment team. But I still maintain this cool headedness. I think this is very

important, you know, because we all come into with all kinds of frustrations, right? Increasingly, we as administrators have so much stress, right? We have more and more frustrations. So the ability to sometimes we are more alone and dig things less seriously. We have to survive, to say the least. That is actually related to your earlier question—whether there are any external factors affecting my style. Fortunately in my case I think this is fortunate because my own style is always think I just work. Important thing to convince myself that this is the right to do and I will do it. I'm fortunate that I really don't...relatively speaking, I am not that cautious about how other people look at me. I think, well if that's right I try on. If I keep on with my style I would run into a lot of problems, frustrations perhaps, I would stop and I step down. So fortunately because I've been here for that long. You know people still respect me. And then, of course, again I have to ask a question, well, is this style able to benefit the development of the institution? Should my job be taken by other different person, you know, with a different style. I have to ask myself that question. Of course, this question is really for the institution to decide rather than me personally. But I would consider, well I didn't do anything wrong to the institution but nonetheless when the institution is moving into the new stage of development, maybe it's time to bring in another person with a different style, more consultative and so on and so forth, right?

Q: R7, I notice that you didn't tick these attributes: passionate about your work and your beliefs. My next question is about this one. But if you have nothing to say, then we can skip this question. The question is, if you are passionate about you believe in trying to achieve, if so how does it impact on your leadership?

A: I didn't put this down because you limit me to check...But seriously, honestly I don't know how other people judge me but personally I don't think I'm passionate with my work. Not that I don't enjoy it but...passionate about something I don't know how to define...my own definition is if you are really passionate about something and perhaps you change yourself, right, to...that particular comes first, right, and your own personal style, your personal way of thinking, right, that does not agree with then you try to change yourself to suit a particular thing. Then I think that is passion. Say, if you love music so much and probably you skip work and everything to have all kind of time on music alone. As I said earlier, I'm rather cool headed person. So I don't think I'm passionate in the sense I'm 100% committed to that...

Q: You can always maintain a balance, do you think?

A: I mean passion. Even if there are obstacles in front of you you try to do all kinds of things to overcome those and you're committed, you know...I am not that type of person. In a way, I'm lucky, you see, although we have faced a lot of difficulties maybe because I'm cool headed, maybe it's the effect of a team, you see, because I complement the team quite well so most often this kind of obstacles are resolved through the effort of the team. Because I always think my colleagues are more passionate than I am. And normally I stay very cool, very calm, and just do what I can, right. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. So we try all the options. Maybe even though I may not continue this role I may step down. Because over the years, I have all kinds of frustrations and I think, well, maybe I should do a different job or maybe go back to teaching or move to another place and so on. So, that shows I'm not that passionate about the work. But of course, if you ask me do I enjoy my work, I would not take it if it's so boring. Then I would quit much earlier, you

know. I suppose it is the real situation that you have joys, frustrations, it's like a life itself. I don't think I'm passionate to that extent even if there're obstacles I'm confident...I'd think of conscious ways overcoming it. Not that kind of style, I think.

Q: Do you believe that EI is useful in leading the institution effectively?

A: I personally think that is quite important especially at our level, I mean, when we need to spend time on developing strategies, you know, and then to motivate your colleagues to carry out the strategies and so on. I think emotional stability, I don't know whether it's part of the EQ, I tend to think in a laymen way... I think that is part of the EQ. I think emotional stability is most important particularly when you...I try to give an example...if you easily carry the way by success or you easily get frustrated when you're being criticized or running into difficulties, then I don't think you can help to work out a very good strategy for the development of the institution. Particularly nowadays the environment is changing, it's very competitive on the one hand. And particularly in Hong Kong it is a very XXX environment. If you easily lose your tempers if you easily get agitated by all kinds of things, and you can't concentrate on your work. I tend to think that is very important component, an attribute that a leader should have. If you want to lead by examples, then you need to stay calm when facing difficulty. If you're the first one who feels very frustrated and you don't know what to do, you simply cannot lead by examples. All the others working with you would lose the right spirit to overcome difficulties, to face the crises.

Q: Now we move on another category of questions on self development. So R7 you have been in the administrator kind of post for over 20 years, could you please talk about your leadership journey? How do you find yourself developing these skills?

A: you mean the maturity of being a leader? I think...if I look back, I really don't know why I arrive at my present...it's just evolved. But I suppose the culture of the institution...sort of the quality or whatsoever, for the colleagues who work with you I think they also help you to shape yourself, right, as a leader I mean. I don't think a leader works in a regular... but the leader and the people who work with the leader...or you may way a leader being led the people although you do not use that term. Sometimes the colleagues are fairly equal to you, should be that. But I think you probably...I think here in this institution we...I don't know how it comes about...but generally speaking I think it's a very collegial kind of environment. Generally, there is a very good harmony between different departments and so on and we seldom have confrontational things, and I think this also helps, in my case, to develop my own leadership style. But when I look back, of course I started with little experience in administration and the main strength I had at that time in administration is that I can ...again it is my way of expressing my ideas. I can put down things in writing very well. So I can express my ideas in leading and so on. I'm very articulate, and that was my main strength I start with. As things develop and so on, I pick up school experience I learn more about administration work and so on. So I become more communicative and I gain confidence. I become more communicative with colleagues and I feel more confident in sharing experience with them. When you share experience with your colleagues, you see your colleagues XXX. They take some of your ideas, they work on them and they start to develop in their own area and you see your colleagues themselves developing into leaders themselves. So that helps you to pick up the confidence. Of course, one

thing we always feel that we don't have enough time to read other people's experience and so on. I took a formal course myself, I took an MBA course but honestly I don't know how much it can help to shape...to enhance my sort of leadership skills. But the reading that I am able to get through the course is actually rather enjoyable. So I think it really is something that simply grows rather naturally over the years. And I think I'm able to stay in the institution over the years without those changes, stability I think in my case that helps to shape my leadership. Of course the stability in the sense of stability in this institution but I do sort of grow in this institution in the sense that I keep on taking, you know, different jobs over the years. I started with teaching and then I started with a very straightforward portfolio and then things grow and then I get involved more and more... in a way, I grow with the institution. Many people here in this place like to use that expression. And I think it's generally true. We don't stay on one job, you see, for so many years. Although the title may not change but the scope may change. You see the institution developing and growing...I still remember the days we're fighting very hard to join some government committees. We got people who do not welcome us because people say, "you are not government funded institution. This is not for you..." And we tried very hard to fight for that. But then we become public and all of us suddenly...we are invited to join all kinds of committees. We don't have enough people to go into this committee. So you just have to learn you go along but I think in a way in my case I think I change a lot with the institution over the years. And I build up more confidence I can see myself playing sort of different roles in helping my colleagues to... in short, I think it's not just myself developing I think the whole community and the influence of my colleagues on my maturity is also important although if you ask me to describe, it is not that easy to describe. But when I gain more confidence, I share my experience with people and see them grow in their own area, I think it is also a big satisfaction to me. What have I done actually? In order to help them, you know, because you often see your colleagues. When they first come here, they were very shy and non-communicative, and then suddenly they are able to express clearly their ideas...while some of their ideas are so distinct and you are really surprised. So you see that is satisfaction because you are helping people. In that process, you develop yourself as well.

Q: R7. You mentioned just now also about your personal development, something like you go through a full course like MBA maybe to pick up theories and so which you thought might be helpful to you in leadership. Other than this and the growth of the institution and your colleagues, can you talk about your personal development that you believe have impact on your...

A: I think the...going out to conferences, that sort of things. Sometimes it may not be formal but sometimes you go out to other places to see how the people work and so on, that exploits in your network. One thing I was able to do very well actually is...because in the early years when we joined the public funded sector, I was in charge of receiving all kinds of the assessment teams and validation teams. Every time when the people come, I immediately put them on my mailing list and then keep contacting them. Sending cards to them every year. So I've been able to, with my colleagues' help of course, keep up those networks quite well. So...when there's opportunity, I go to visit these people. I took annual leave. It's casual and informal visit but seeing how other people work that really helps you to develop your own ideas. This is not very tangible that you can pinpoint one visit will do. But over the years, getting this network, making use of this network to see how

people do things in their places and that helps. In a way, that really helps more than taking a formal course. But a formal course is necessary, as you said, sometimes you need the theories, right. And those things help. In a way, accumulating the practical experience and a course like MBA is useful. When you read the literature it can stimulate your thought. You did go through similar situations sometimes, right. And the theories can help you to focus on your thinking. But I think being able to learn from other people's experience is really important and I think these days administrators are too busy...they are occupied with their day-to-day business and they miss out a lot. I think we should provide colleagues with more of this kind of opportunities to go out to see how other people work. And particularly with globalization...now we no longer have one distinct system. The experience of other places has a very big impact on local experience, on local way of doing things.

Q: Can you compare the differences between...are there any differences on your leadership 5 years ago and now? Any change at all?

A: I think it's basically the same...again because of my long service here, I do get a very good respect from...I sort of get more confident in motivating people, I suppose. I suppose I can say I can motivate people better so I can achieve more through them instead of myself. But in terms of style, it's supposed to be the same style. Again I put a lot of trust in my...sometimes you run into the situation where you think your colleagues may not be able to lift up to the expectation and then you have to interfere and talk to your colleagues and do some kind of coaching. I think I do more coaching and I'm more confident in my coaching in the recent years. And my leadership style has not changed much.

Q: Now, let's move to culture. You did mention something about the culture of this institution. Can you talk about the freedom to manage in relation to the culture of the institution?

A: Freedom to manage...

Q: Does the culture of the institute restrict your freedom to manage?

A: No. I think I'm really lucky. I'm fairly free to follow my own leadership style...even though you have the best colleagues to work with you don't need the same sort of leadership style...but I have to say over the years I enjoy a lot of freedom. And I also enjoy a lot of trust from my own superior in managing things. And then of course I pass it on to my colleagues and I have put a lot of trust in them as well. The culture has helped me rather than hindered me in exercising my leadership style. Again, perhaps this is something special because I have been here so long. I joined this institution when it was under resource. So I sort of enjoy the respect from the people, who say, "well, this is the guy who has been here since the early days when it is under resource." And they tend to think of me as someone who makes sacrifice for the development of the institution. Out of that concern, they give me sort of more respect, I suppose. Although honestly I don't think I sacrifice anything...and I said my own strength is really communication skill. I can communicate very clearly both in writing and verbal communication. So whenever receiving people in the meetings and so on, I always come out complementing some of my colleagues in adequacy in this regard. And also I deflate that I'm able to give a fair objective view and I give a lot of credits to the ideas of my colleagues and I earn a lot of respects as I said earlier even in sometimes when colleagues have different views from mine. I still give them credits instead of silence them. I also encourage them to speak up. I try to solve things through more discussions rather

than to take my views...so my strength is really...communication skill is really my strength. But back to the freedom, I think because I have been here for that long I am able to enjoy a lot of freedom and my superior gives me a lot of freedom and put a lot of trust in me and my colleagues work with me very well. And some of my subordinates make that kind of hierarchy...my subordinates also respect me because I give them a try to say I give them credits to... So that we are able to build a very collegial kind of atmosphere of culture. So that helps me quite a lot into exercising my leadership style. As for culture, it's not easy to define things, right? It's not a factor you can account for. Culture is an illusive kind of concept. But it's there, no two organizations have the same culture. If you ask any organization how they come up with that kind of culture, nobody can really... You know, it is not something by design. If it's just something developed over the years, because of many factors, because of many people have joined the community there are different leaders and so on. We are fortunate in that culture...we have been very harmonious you know very collegial until very recently we have a new leader and so on things are taking a turn. But still at large, comparing with other institutions around, I think we are least disturbed by the internal politics.

Q: R7, you talk quite a lot about culture. If you think you have nothing to add you can skip my next question. My next question is how culture affects you in leading this institution.

A: I think I've got it pretty well. I think the culture is collegial culture. And I think my position in this...of course, I contribute to building up this culture, right? But certainly I'm not the only one. But my unique position in this culture is...given this cultural setting I do enjoy the advantage of...my long service, my loyalty so to speak, give me an added advantage. If you are in a different culture, let say, if the culture is not collegial, then you see loyalty and long service don't count that much. Because of this is more collegial, therefore my track record tends to give me a lot of respect...it's easier for me to earn respect...of course I need to keep up my work. If I don't do my own work well, I suppose I do my work reasonably well. I think it's fair to say that because of this culture, my long service and work here tend to get more respect in another case I suppose because colleagues these days they look around...some of my colleagues may have long service but they stay less at the same level of job. But I rise through these years and grow through these years. So this culture helps me to gain more respect than in the situation of a different culture. And that helps me in my work, supposing more effectively, supposing less frustrated.

Q: Now, let's move to some general questions. As a higher education leader in Hong Kong, what are the values that you treasure and do you want to find that values in your team of staff?

A: For higher education I suppose the biggest value is pretty universal. It is your belief and your passion in nurturing young talents. And how do you build up their self-esteem and to make sure they contribute to the society. So they are really general values. Anyone working in the higher education should have anywhere in the world. Hong Kong until recently...honestly I think they are general values. People start to survey China. But even before the handover, we were also working with China. Of course more and more replace the national development thing on the agenda of the higher education. But I don't think the higher education then narrows the objectives that we work only for the economic development. I think the main thing is really to

train all-round talents, right? Not just economic development. But I would say they are very general values that should be subscribed by everyone working in higher education institutes.

Q: Could you please talk about your greater interest or orientation in your leadership? I think you have already mentioned that. But if you have anything to add...like what you like in your leadership and what is the direction of your leadership.

A: Yes, I've already covered this.

Q: what do you think is the key factor in effective leadership? And I think you've already covered that.

A: Key factor...yes. Communication and emotional stability...

Q: Next one. In what ways have you worked and geared up yourself as a leader. you said that you it's by evolution, nothing by design...

A: I got this job by chance. Not by design. I know that some people really focus on their career. I didn't start with being an administrator. But I suppose if you remain being an academic you can be an academic leader. But it doesn't seem to fit in your scheme. Then I suppose you're talking about the leader of the institution. I didn't start to do this job. I just got it by chance.

Q: And I think you have said that you did not work deliberately to become an administrative leader. So, you got this job by chance. If you're not being put into this position, would you be happy to be an academic?

A: I suppose I would carry on. But whether I would have stayed in the institution for that long, I think it's probably a question mark. In our private days, there's very little research...if I stay on, I may change institution, I don't know. Even I may leave Hong Kong to do something else. I'm not sure. But as I look back, as you said, I got this administration job by chance. Because of the changes in the external environment, because of the changes in the development of the institution coming into the right sort of time that provides the opportunity. If I stay on academic, I think I would have been reasonably happy. I communicate quite well. When I was a teacher, I got a very good rating from my students especially in earlier years when I focus on teaching. In later years, of course I got administration job as department head and so on, and that strayed me from teaching so my rating got down. In the early years, in the first 3-4 years, students remember me very well. I still see them. Some of my best students are now senior professors and they still remember my teaching. I enjoy teaching, no question about it.

Q: so you mean before you became the vice president, you have been a department head, right?

A: Yes, before I was a VP, I was actually college secretariat. Before that, I was mainly doing teaching job and then I also had headship duty and deanship duty.

Q: If one of your staff members ask you how to become an effective leader, what would you advice him or her?

A: More or less covered. I think more or less covered... if you see those thing I've mentioned are necessary, it may not...there're so many things in management. It's not in exact sound, right? But I think, if you want me to repeat, I think the ability to communicate well with your colleagues is very important and think through the problems. Communicate with them, being able to trust people them, motivate

people through trusting them, the ability to delegate the right amount...those are essential. Things to learn, to pick up. But you need to support them, don't just delegate and forget. That's no good, right? When your colleagues want support from you at your level, then you will be able to give it, to give it decisively. If you can't do that, your colleagues come for advice, you still...they will go away and get nothing. Then, it's not effective.

Q: But you have mentioned early on that all this style is related very closely to your personality. For example, if different staff come to approach you and ask you the same question, would you give them the advice as per the person's particular personality. For instance, if you are aware of certain staff, you know, not communicative at all, would you give them the same advice?

A: I think I would do the same in such a way...this is my experience. It may not work in your case. But I think communication I would consider that would be rather universal. And I happen to be fortunate that I'm a pretty good communicator. But some of these other things I can't say are universal. Of course, delegation, everyone says delegation...but when you come to actually do it the balance is not very easy to find. But I would say communication skill is important and the ability to motivate people is important and how you motivate, whether you discipline them or you trust them, and that are mainly 2 kinds of approaches you would take. But I still think communication skill is very important. When your colleague feels very muddled, right? They come to you and you are as muddled as they are, you can't really help him or her to think through the problems. So communication and clear thinking is important. But to develop this, I suppose that is a bigger question. Can these things be taught? Can these things be picked up from taking a course? I don't know the answer. I still think in a way I'm fortunate. When we came to the school, we never taught that much, it's a secret. All these things are learnt ourselves. But I think if you still really want to consciously develop some leading skills, the first thing you really need to work on is communication skill. If you can't express yourself either in writing or verbally clearly, I think you can't be a very good leader.

Q: As we're talking about effectiveness, could you please talk about what you have done or thought to make you organize the institution effectively in terms of achieving the institutional goal?

A: I would think it's team building. I think you need to build up a team. Of course, the team should start from the colleagues who work immediately with you and then you can motivate them to build their own team in their particular office or department. And through their work, you will be able to build a community. Of course in higher education, broadly speaking, we would have 2 main groups of staff. One is the academic; the other is administrators, right? My influence is through mainly the administrators, build the team around me. But it is also important that we support the academic work as well. Then, when the academic starts to form a very good community, a very collegial community, and then you two can come together and so on. Then you can see that the institution can grow. And I think our experience in the past because of our history. We started from private, of course, we get to the resources, we have to struggle very hard, we have to do things with limited budget and so on. But even after we join the public funding sector, we're still the smallest brother, smallest member in the club, we're still not as well resourced as the bigger brothers. So we still have the mentality that we have to be very XXX in our operation and we have to be able to learn how to use resources

well and so on. Funny enough, that sort of things actually help us to build up the community much better so that mutually we support each other, share resources and so on. We are more used to this sort of things, you know. And what I think I have been able to contribute is really to build up this team. Everybody would try to work together for the common goal. In the process, we may have to...sacrifice in the sense we work and everyone wants to walk an extra mile. And here comes the part I said "lead by example". Those of us at my position are willing to work extra hard...other would see that example, right? So follow the example. And also one area in team building in my case it is very important to give more credits to your colleagues. Take less credits to yourself. And I think that often works very well. If you've been the senior, you have all authority and so on. You take a lot of credits. If you leave your colleagues, you would run into trouble. You can't build up a team. At least that is what I believe in leading by example. So I think team building is most important thing. But with the external competition and all that, team building I think is getting very difficult. Because you know, in the past we relatively well resources...people don't fight for resources. But now with competition and all kinds of things you see and with the external environment is being more politicized and everything can generate into a fight...every tiny thing, you know. Then I think it's really the challenge what the people...that works against effective team building. And to be a fair minded leader gets increasingly difficult. You may have the intention to being one...but with the external environment being so politicized and the communication becomes so diverse you can no longer keep any secret, right? So anything can blow up anytime. So if you want to say, I've been very fair minded, sometimes it's getting increasingly difficult. In the past, you still can reasonably keep something secret. But now, it's not in your control. Because you know you have to...everyone is aware. So we need to do more consultation. Consultation is good, right? Because you want to generate ownership in your colleagues and so on. But consultation means to share more information that means you can't keep everything confidential. People can use information in different ways...to politicize things. Again, it works against team building. But I really think the ability to build a good team is important. And the leader is able to share the vision with the team. And again, this is getting increasingly difficult. The reason as I just said.

Q: OK, let's move to the last group of questions. It's about gender. Do you think gender has any impact on the leaders?

A: I don't think so...I don't think so honestly. I'm a male. Maybe you're a female so you may think it differently. I say we're still a very patriarchal environment. I mean the whole of Hong Kong. Of course you see people, the chairs of all secretaries...I think in general...because I'm a male. But I don't feel that I have sort of the advantage of being a male. I don't feel that...and we have lots of colleagues particularly in administration many of our departments are totally females. To answer your question, I don't feel any impact of gender. But maybe female people think they have to make extra effort to be able to rise to the top. I suppose that is true...if you look around and UGC-funded institutions, there's only ***. Other than her, it's still none. No female XXX actually. At large, I think Hong Kong society is still male dominating but I suppose it's a matter of activity...even in the mainland if you think of the mainland they used to in the communist days, females are half the sky. They have engineers and all of the professions they have females. But in the past 20 years, I don't think they have many female presidents yet. Only very

few. Most of the presidents are still male, I think. We used to have most of the presidents in science and technology...things may change a bit of course but still it's heavily dominated by science and...

Q: Can you express your views on the male dominance in leader post in higher education in Hong Kong.

A: Male dominance...I don't really know the reasons.

Q: In the government, in civil service, we've got lots of females rising to the top, right? How come in the higher education sector in Hong Kong, there are so few female leaders? Not to say president, but even vice president, you know.

A: I don't know. Even vice presidents. I don't know of any female vice president yet. Of course, we have ***. I suppose if you look at the situation even in the western countries, look at Britain, in the recent 10 years they start to have female president. US is known to be more liberal. But the proportion is very small, out of a hundred. I think it's less than 10%. And in terms of discipline, most of the heads of the institutions or vice presidents are from science and engineering. For some reasons, they are thought to be people who can be assertive. You know, science and engineering are structured so management requires that kind of people, you know, very direct very decisive and so on. That no long is true. Management becomes more art and the human side comes in and all that...but I still think in the past, lots of people are from these disciplines. And those disciplines are relatively dominated by male students. And you don't see any humanities people becoming presidents. I suppose that explains. I suppose disciplinary orientation comes in...I think humanities students historically are not interested in management. Maybe I think this is Chinese culture. Arts students may say, "Well, why should get involved in management job?" They probably don't like to do management job to start with, particularly in institution so much headache, you need to mediate all kinds of... They probably like to involve in their own discipline rather than taking a management job, which is so complex. I know things are changing. More female students go into universities and so on. And this is the trend in the last 10 to 15 years. So these people are now graduating and rising to a senior position. I think it certainly takes time to develop female leaders of institutions. There're a lot of academic leaders, right, professors are females. But to get these people interested in managing a complex institution, it's not easy. You need to have a big enough population of female professors...the sort of natural outcomes...some of them would feel interested, you know. US produce a lot of high degree people and now they're reaching the level that they have so many senior professors who are females. And some of them get interested in getting the job as a leader, vice president. But I think most of these come from the academics. Few come from the career as administrators. There're some but not many. But mainly for Asia itself, I think because in the past we don't have many female students going into universities in the first place and not many of these people go into a higher degree. I think that's part of the explanation. And the discipline lining of course in these days the engineer students we have no female students so now we have no female engineers at all, right? Females all go to arts, sciences, you know. And the professional subjects, you see, people usually go into...most females go into professional disciplines, accounting, pharmacy, library science, all these. For all kinds of reasons, they tend to think if I'm the professional even I got married and raised my family I still can carry my profession, right? Most accountants got work at home.

So I think there's a societal kind of influence. But of course you know more females are developing in all kinds of professions. So I think this changing trend would put impact on the future. In short, in the past we don't have female students going into higher degree to become professors joining at that rank, you know. You don't have many females in that... But again, leadership, it doesn't really have to be at the president level or vice president level. Head of the office is a leader, right? At the relatively level of leadership. And if you look around the local institutions, if you talk about human resources management, almost the heads almost everyone is female. If you inspect the future trend, people would value this human resources management...we will put more emphasis on human resources management and bring it up to the strategic level. And then you would see heads of HRM department become the presidents or vice presidents... so you can really see that. And I think the trend in commercial sector is really to bring the human resources management up to the board level, include them into the strategic development of the organization. So the university is following the trend. In Australia, they have quite a lot of many female senior administrators. I think the females working in the institution at one time have started some kind of conscious campaign to upgrade their status or whatsoever. Through those things, I think, to record hearing something. In Hong Kong, people are generally getting very good pay, people are reasonably happy. You don't really see any equal opportunity movement. You see most of seniors in the government offices are females. And they say this is a very good example of equal opportunity already. But I think it's only superficial. If you look deeper in that, I think Hong Kong is still very male dominated. But again, another factor probably, in the past, in the universities it is less complex than the current universities. Some of these presidents and vice presidents, they don't need to do many management work these days. Even the president is having smaller academic leadership rather than having management decision in terms of prioritizing resources, making decision, taking resources from one to another. In the past, we have so few universities. Most of the universities can get resources they want. And the president or vice president is more or less an academic leader than a manager, than a CEO... Things are changing. So in the past you don't really need the same kinds of skills. But now, you need different kinds of skills. If you accept what I said earlier, communication skill is important to become a good leader, then I think female people would enjoy an advantage. I think this is very potential comes in. But if you look at communication skill, we have already seen everywhere females are arising in every profession that requires good communication skills. And communication skill is getting increasingly important. So you see the potential of the female people coming to get the larger share of the leadership positions.

Q: Last question, how would you imagine if a female counterpart will act out your role in higher education in Hong Kong? If a female assuming your role, would you imagine she would act more or less that you have or adopt a more or less leadership style.

A: I don't know. Probably...if that person has good communication skills, I think that's fine. She would probably be different, as I said, I'm not a good listener. But you can't generalize. Some female people are poor in listening as well. Generally I think female the traits of female...maybe I'm stereotyping. But generally one would expect a female person to be able to be more patient in listening. And I think that would be a good thing. It would be an added advantage. On the other hand,

female person may not be...emotional stability...again we have to be fair, lots of male people are very bad, very emotionally disturbed. But in my case, as I said, one of my strengths is I can remain very cool-headed. A female may not be strong in that particular aspect. But on the other side, she may be more attentive... And I think a female can be more empathetic. In my case, as I said, I'm not empathetic. All my colleagues have all kinds of complaints and frustrations.... I think a female is good in that side, being empathetic and able to get rapport from colleagues. So I think the human side female would be stronger. But then you have to look at the concrete side, right? Thinking through solutions, thinking a step ahead. As I said, not every male has that ability. So honestly, I don't think one can...I think if a female has the same quality as I am, she can do...I think it's the quality not necessarily the gender. And if the female has the same strengths and probably strengths in listening and empathy, this person can even do a better job. So, it's actually the attributes and these attributes are gender-neutral. I can't say only males have this kind of things. In the past, we have fewer people going up into higher education. Now you see more opportunities opening up. Actually in our case we have more female students than male students... the ratio is getting bigger and bigger. So we may guess our next president should be a female. We have 60% or 56%...because of our discipline lines. We don't have engineering. And now more female students going into university education, a higher degree. So I think without much difficulty...it's the attributes that determine effectiveness.

Interview transcript of R12

- Q: R12, can you please talk about the leadership style that you used in leading the institution?
- A: I work with people, I try to identify strengths of people whom I work with, and I try to bring on the best in the people, people report to me, right, talking about leadership, people you're leading, I'm talking about superior or your peer group in similar ranking... and I always demonstrate by examples, I'm a very much hands-on person, I get involved and work together with my colleagues, you know. In a nutshell, that's how I operate.
- Q: So, in other words, you value teamwork...
- A: Yes. I use examples because actually we have a new colleague who recently got involved with the senior position in the president office, I mentioned to him that, "you have take your work seriously but when there is a good performance you're not only reason that happened because it all involved other colleagues' participation to make it work. But on the other hand, if things do not work out accordingly, you know you have to take all the blames. And that puts a lot of pressure on any individual but to quality when I prove this how I operate I...my motto to myself is I believe in what I do and I do what I believe in. And it works both too.
- Q: So, of this list, R12, you take nine, can you elaborate a bit on this one or do you have anything you want to add to this?
- A: When different people are looking at this, they come up with similar interpretations. The point that I check obviously "caring and nurturing" it is...you always have to provide sufficient guidance for colleagues and you have to let them...you xxx with

them together, so it's not they're out there to sink or swim, right? You're always there to support them like what I've mentioned earlier, you demonstrate by examples. I welcome colleagues come and talk to me anytime. If they have problems, issues, uncertainties they want to raise up, I'm always there to discuss with them. And xxx them the opportunities to look at how things are done and again there's not perfect way of doing things it's a matter of how you can take advantage of the situation and make the best decision. In a way, it says nurturing I mentioned earlier, you know, demonstration by examples, we all make mistakes, the most important thing is that you don't make the same mistake twice. So, caring and nurturing are always working. I check 'supportive' and 'considerate'. In some ways, it ties in with 'empathetic'. I've been in the university this profession for... this is my 31st year, started from the lowest rank. So I can appreciate how rank structure can be very important to some people. Since I came from a very bottom up, I appreciate how you've been received and like I always go to people instead of asking people to come to me although I'm trying my very best. Some people would say, "come to my office." But I try my best because I try to go to other people's office and their comfort zone...to show that you're willing to come over...along the line you're being supportive and considerate. Certainly, in tolerance of other people's mistakes, right cuz no one is perfect. As I mentioned, it's how you can bring the best of the people. People have strengths and weaknesses. What I'm trying to do is to help my colleagues to really identify the strengths of that they can capitalize it for the future; on the other than, the most important thing is that they are aware of their own weaknesses so that they pay special attention on improving those areas so ... Empathetic...I am, you know, coming from the low end of the spectrum. So I always appreciate those certain... at those points how I would like to be treated by people...how to treat people the same way. XXX sided with vision. Certainly it is easy said than done but... I make time for a lot of contingency plans so a lot of time activities that I would plan way ahead...not like I involve or engage by colleagues immediately at the outset. I tend to...I'm a thinker I always think along different dimensions way ahead of time and that's why I always work with the very straight time table to myself. You may call that well principled. So I always start with when I need the final outcomes to be materialized and I always work back and give myself sufficient time. If something needs to be done, you know, let's say, at the beginning of new academic year, I would always keep myself sufficient time... I would start deliberating and thinking about it the way before X'mas. I can do it very casually and I can put it away. Don't do anything about it for sometimes and by the time I get back I might have updated information or I might have different views of the situations and often time it helps in many ways it takes out the stress in decision making because I always have sufficient time to look in...so far-sighted in that sense not like I know exactly where to go but I give myself sufficient time... I have sufficient opportunity to work with other people, get involved with other people. You give people sufficient duration to complete the task that you would like them to do good job. Fair, just and unbiased... I consider myself fair...I always check out with principles... I operate with certain principles and I don't deviate or fluctuate from time to time. I guess it has to do with how you balance out different fractions of conflicts of interest groups. I guess it's particularly when in the president's office you always have to be at your very best...impartial, and not be biased towards certain group. Otherwise, once it begun you belong to that camp and always take sides...so I call the matter the way should be called. And basically I look it from other people's perspectives

as well. So I try my very best to have a balanced view and I know that you can touch upon the cultural elements...I guess it's my 31st year of teaching in the university. 12 years I taught in North America. The remaining years...in Hong Kong. I consider myself kinda bicultural person and I can look it in different perspectives but I don't know whether...it could have some handicaps in some ways that I can follow up later on. So... communicative is very important. Like I have mentioned... I consider open communication very important and how people feel you are approachable also very important. Maybe I prefer it and that kind of guess out and people at different ranks all address me by my initials. And maybe I sense that people come for me I prefer that...I am closer to the people that I work with instead of addressing me using my title. So even when I say various ranks you know. Passionate about one's work and belief, I have talked about what I believe. I do what I believe in and I believe in what I do. That's very important, otherwise; you're always worrying 'whether I have done my thing'...you got to stand by. We have to be passionate about our work. Obviously I've been with the university for so many years and I've been in the administration for most of the last 16...17 years and although you know many professors prefer to be professors and work on research and teaching and I do believe that in university it needs capable administrators to lead and do all the necessary administrative decisions. And again someone has to do it, why not me? So it's not that I gave up my research. I'm still action researcher. In that regard...although I have mentioned a lot of time good leaders must be able to handle pressure well, but it's also important to try to give yourself some challenges so that you feel some pressure coming. Take an example, I mentioned about research so a lot of administrators got involved into administration and they have to give up research but I guess people that are interested in being professors have interest in teaching and doing researches and some kinds of administration, right? But I want to maintain free and therefore the pressure that I have I like...my job now is still subject to research assessment exercise and I also serve on the research exercise panel so it means I have to assess other people in terms of whether they're active or not active. And so I believe...the reason why I'm willing to do that because I want to give myself pressure. If I'm not active, how can I assess other people, to say they're active or not active. So I welcome that kind of challenges. And I demonstrate to my colleagues that if I can do it, you can do it...not my time doing administrative duties but you have to make time to make something happen so I make time for my research. I don't keep excuses – I'm too busy with administration so I don't have time to do research. To make time even if all the waves and waves of administrative works coming, it's how you manage your time. Able to influence people, again through using yourself as an example you can get your job done and maybe I learn it from my professor when he's talking about being a good teacher that once you receive the assignment once you have to give an exam that you should give a mock, homework or the mock exam to the students within the week, otherwise, you're not helping the students to ease their anxieties. I always follow that and I try to be very responsive and very on time. Responsive and whatever that I do. I try to get out at 630. I advise my colleagues when I turn up the light here. I don't take any work home. I come back at 915...because I watch all the morning news. It's discipline. I have certain schedule. Maybe you need the discipline. Like I walk 10,000 steps a day even though I drive to work and then back home. I have to make sure. If I don't... Normally you go engaging in a meeting, maybe you only get less than 2,000 steps. But I make up in the evening. I also impose informal voluntary deadlines...also I

guess it's talking about time management of how I prioritize my work and activities. Like I said, I always plan ahead. Something I don't wait until...there are routine work and recurrent, right? You know, every year it's gonna come in March, every year that kind of activities is gonna come in May. And I would give myself when I have some free time in October and November I start putting things away and files that activities so I have a 52-week plan for myself and I slot it. Some of the activities are occurring every year. Depending on when I need preparation whether it's routine whether I need to seek addition work or whether I need my colleagues to get me other information. I don't wait until February when it's in March. I would start early. To give myself more time; to give my colleagues more time. Otherwise, everybody is already up to the flow with you...they're always feeling very tired and behind schedule...it's so easy to turn it around. You're always ahead of the schedule because it starts early. And I put it away, I put in at the bottom of my drawer. And monthly I take a look at it I would be surprised how certain things were decided initially on that...because you have more time to think more time to digest and more time to evaluate so it just happens. I don't pressure my colleagues. They would automatically fit into my schedule because I give them advanced notice. Obviously it takes some time if new colleagues join in the team, otherwise, they gradually get into my schedule. And hopefully the ideal thing is they anticipate even earlier than everything works smoothly but I don't have to chase or call out or send reminders or emails. And that affects relationships. So hopefully I touch upon that.

Q: Any external or internal factors impact on your leadership style?

A: Certainly we have to cope with because all of these external forces or factors would affect your schedule despite how well you wanna plan ahead but I have mentioned those recurrent activities they always request and like I took on the chairman of the Joint Quality Review Committee works a little of month ago. There's a lot of things to be done. And I would have to kinda start something that I plan for in February or March. And you have to find time slot, you have to reshuffle the things on your plate, things that are lining up in your priority list, and that affects you know your work life and family life. And again, it's all a matter of balancing; otherwise, problems in family life affects your work life and vice versa. So that's what I've mentioned, try not to take work home because when I go home it's family time. And I'm in the office long enough. So you have to give yourself a break. Otherwise, you work in the office and work at home and there's no way that people can...you get burned out. So, you're not talking about specific...just the process, right?

Q: Yes, in general, for instance, the university being a UGC-funded institution, government policy on education, stakeholders of the institution, the expectations or the demands of the society, any of these influences that you got to...

A: Like as I said, that's why affect the process. Anything that's not anticipated or changed you suddenly that you have to come up with the new approaches to solve the problems. You know, leadership style involves xxx and alliances. To say for an example, maybe in 2001 or 2002 in June we're not interested to do anything. In mid-July I got decided it might be appropriate to do small intakes you know it's government policy to help out the not so successful Form 5 students. Tuen Mun and Yuen Long are supposed to be affected areas for this kind of failed students and it would be difficult if *** University is not engaged so I'm committed to the university in small cohort talking about mid-July...in late September we started it

up with over 400 students. We were thinking about 50 or 60. And that needs a lot of new thinking and new approaches...everything from scratch. And that was the humble beginning of life for *** University. Essential thing is not like Caritas...you have extra classroom all over the place. So we have to identify good partner and a lot of facilities and so happened we worked with the *** Association the Diploma in Management Studies so it's a natural partner. We have a very good partnership for 2 years before *** University took the whole thing over. And we got a good alliance I presume they're still very happy we're still maintaining our DMS... the alliance is not terminated but completed after 2 years. And in that time we had...like I said we started from scratch so obviously the *** Association provided us with space and we had to recruit faculty we had to develop our quality assurance...process...obviously with the kind of program that we cannot duplicate the university's quality assurance mechanism. So we had to adopt a less rigorous process but without compromising the quality because after all Yi-jin is Form 5 level. To show how I demonstrate by example, I...with 2 centers. I insist that every center they have to have a monthly meeting and every subject they have to have biweekly meeting so everybody stays in touch and knows what's happening...open communication and I chair monthly meeting...all faculties...I think I start it at 9 o'clock on Saturday with all administrators and partners we run our meetings. And then from 10 to about 1, we engage all faculties we talk about subject report center report and we talk about problems we find solutions we work together...I invite participators of management so they're directive because they know more in a sense they're closer to the students but...in the first year, I have monthly meeting with them...every fourth Saturday I meet with all people when we start up the community college in the first year. And hopefully that echo how I mentioned demonstrate by example...and we throw ideas and we're not experts. I know something that they don't know but many of my colleagues they know a lot more particularly the students and specific subject areas that I do not know. So it's good sharing, it's a good participation. And I guess apart from Caritas we're also one of the major providers in terms of Yi-Jin programmes.

Q: So I believe on the whole you have talked a lot about your leadership style especially your time management. And I can tell you're working very effectively.

A: I don't know whether it's for your PhD thesis. But I always half jokingly mentioned it's not good for thesis but just for your information. I learned all of these when I wait tables in the US when I put it myself through in the university. In the US you're assigned station with 10 tables. They don't come at your place and they don't come at the time you don't want them to come. Sometimes there're no customers, sometimes it's full, how can you make sure everybody happy at different stage? You have to order drinks and you have to greet them and offer them the menu to order drinks to order appetizers to order main course to go into the kitchen...but every point at time you're doing something you're making people happy. And I guess that formulates a system in me that I don't know how to describe it. Maybe the operation to serve the people to me it's like I don't rush and I'm not worried because I have a blueprint of what's next and what's next. I don't do it scientifically I don't have a book to put it down. I guess it's your mindset and how you're ready for all things to happen and how you're not worried. I guess...you talk about emotional intelligence I don't understand why I become more like my mom and I'm worried about my children. My daughter is 27 and my son 25. My mom is 82 and always worried them. We're approaching that we are all

worrying. But for work, I try not to worry and that seems to settle a lot of the nervousness, the anxiety...

Q: Talking about authority, have you used any authority that comes with your position to make things work?

A: Of course, we have to when sometimes there're different views different opinions and then we just have to follow the structure of power the authority rested in certain position to have them come in and call certain shots...within this room there're unit heads on a monthly basis and sometimes you have to give very explicit kinda direction or implication but I try to do it on a very rare occasion. Because once you do that, your relationship with that colleague would be different. Once you start pulling rank, I'm your superior. It starts the same as people working together. And that's why people come and go. I can't say I can work with all people. I try my very best. And maybe it's just wrong chemistry...wrong style. I'm sure some colleagues prefer...different people prefer different styles. Some they like to be told what to do...they just love orders and they just do...and for other things they don't take responsibility because everything is instructed but that would be very time consuming from the leader's point of view. And that's not my style. We talk about nurturing, we try to have your subordinates understood the directions the team is moving towards so that many important junctions they can make judgments and decisions, and they know when to seek help and advice from you. I think an effective team should be like that. They don't always come to you and everything they ask for 'how to do this' 'should I do this or that'. There're some roles and responsibilities they should know. Or they can do or what they should do without coming to you for every specific detail. That's teamwork. People should be taking care of their own business within their own jurisdiction and their own power and authority. So I won't worry and independent also from my president. I get the sense of directions, you know, what are the targets, I go on and try my very best. I don't go back and ask my president every week about what to do...how to do this...is it ok to do this.... Then, I'm not doing my work. I'm waiting for his orders and fulfilling his orders. And I don't think people are looking for that kind of administrators or managers and I'm certainly not looking for that. So I want to give them opportunities because I want to give them responsibility even though they make mistakes. It's kinda important because it's part of learning process. Otherwise, if they don't learn how to make mistakes and learn how to learn from the mistakes, then they never improve. I make mistake, but I learn from it. If we're talking about difficulties, sometimes with authorities, as I've mentioned, I'm more people person. With authority, that means the organizational structure is clearly spelled out. So you're on top and two people underneath you and twenty people underneath these two and so on and so forth. By that structure, they have certain authorities, they have certain powers.... Once it's clearly spelled out in organizational chart, if I'm not in a very kinda well-aligned working relationship then I'd find it difficult because of the authorities and powers that they have sometimes they come to you without important problem. They have solved important problems but they come to you with minor problems. Which I feel I would prefer they rather do it the other way round. They should come to me with more important problems and they can take care of their less important problems. Sometimes because of the structure I cannot interfere. I don't know that I have the time maybe an important problem that perhaps use some of my thinking, advice, decided, implemented without my knowledge and maybe the result is not very satisfactory. So that's the difficulties

and challenges I try to avoid. So, it's a matter of working with a particular individual so it's not something that you can spell out. "When it's this, you come to me. When it's that, you take care of it." It's not like this, it's like a relationship it's gotta be developed. That's why I did not check relationships, oriented, socially skilful. That's something I gotta learn about and hopefully...I guess so far it is every now and then. That's part of the job. Important thing is all of these are part of the job. I believe if you're a good leader you don't take it personally. Take it too personally affects you. So we're getting into the emotional side of fact. It's part of the job and as long as I try my best I feel I've done my share for the university. People upset me or what I don't mind that. I don't take it personally. It is part of the job. Because I teach marketing. One of the important things that you want to be successful salesperson, you have to be able to take rejection. People simply don't want to buy from you and there's no way to make them buy and you take all of these personally you'd be very though. Because every day you try to sell to many people and most like less 10-15% people successful. So how do you handle the rejection the 85%? You have to have strong characters and take it astride. So I guess it's self awareness.

Q: Do you rely on any of these elements to influence people or handle crisis?

A: I don't consciously do that. I don't know it's emotional intelligence. Obviously they try to conclude how people focus on this...and in some way I'm practising this. Self regulation and motivated because I try to XXX my colleagues, my children because I think every day is a good day except the better days but never bad days. If you think it's a bad day, you think even worse. And you go down to the pit stop basement there you don't see any light. And you're so sad you're so unhappy. But I come in every day bright and shine. I guess it helps. The glass is half full and half empty. Then you think it's half full then you're happy. So why not to make yourself happy? And I guess it's mindset you don't get upset very easily. And empathy is very important thing and that's why I don't do to others what I don't want others to do to me. I started in the *** University...based on your rank...your desk size... when I started it out, I don't have air conditioning in my office. Fortunately, I started it out in 1975. At that time, the temperature was not that warm. But there's no air conditioning in my office. But the next door to my office. It's the general office of another department...the Economics Department. Even though there're only clerical staff sitting in the office, she's got air conditioning because it's the general office. Fortunate for me, there's a door between the two offices. So every day I opened the door to let the air come through. While I'm happy in the ending is that the next year the rule was relaxed so I got a new air conditioner, brand new, quiet and even with an automatic fan, blowing air...I'm talking about 1976. I always use this real case...it's always silver life somewhere. So, it's positive thinking. So empathy... Social skills...again, it's about how you treat people, how you respect people, how you keep other people XXX room and the President not too close. So, know who you are and know other people. You're working with... like I always say in analogy...put in their shoes and look from their point of view. And don't always think...I want this done in this way. No! Why would they think in that way? Why would they...maybe there're some points that they've done in that way so I have to look at both sides. Not that I always allow people to dominate. At the end, it's my responsibility to make decisions. I also trust my instincts, sometimes my experience so I don't know whether it's...EI is high on my list. This is something I guess I do.

- Q: Handling crisis, handling people, leading institution effectively...all these are already supposed that you have to a certain extent. You have high emotional intelligence.
- A: I guess it is important. Know yourself, know your limit, you can march along like those constructions...to get it done in your way but things don't end there. You have to make crises and make situations that you have to handle. So it's a matter of always being yourself and how you want to work with other people. It's not a one shot deal, it's not like I get it done so it's done. It's the people...how do I deal with them. I think it's the marketing training it's always looking at views from people that you're trying to sell it to the marketing but in work life it's the people you work with and always taking them into consideration. So I guess it's about self awareness and empathy. You know, side by side. Hitting the bars and hitting the notes in harmony. Sometimes maybe I'm wrong and they're right for insisting certain things. I do welcome views.
- Q: So talking about development, on this leadership journey, because you said you started in a lower rank and processing all the way to this position. How do you find yourself your development on your leadership journey?
- A: I guess it's through study and we have role models, we have mentors, we look at their styles and how it works. Like I said, even my work life the time that I spend in Hong Kong the time that I spend teaching in North America and Canada. I serve people. Obviously there're different styles. Different leaders...and I kind of what works and what doesn't work, and what that works and why that doesn't work. And I look at certain people. Like I said, they are role models and I try to learn from them. Even though they're my role models and actually I treat my colleagues the same. I believe all people were born with certain talents. Obviously some are more talented than the others. But all human beings have their own talents. We accept to learn from each other. The most successful ones obviously have more for me to learn. I want to like him or her. But I also swap their weaknesses. And I try not to duplicate their weaknesses. I don't think leadership is born with. Maybe it's how you're willing to experience and experiment new ideas that affect leaders. But certainly not something to be born with. Maybe personality you're willing to assume that responsibility. Some people are not happy with doing much and...but you have the willingness to serve, the willingness to work with other people and maybe some leaders work through people, and then you look at 'is it my style?' When I was working in Canada, I have a XXX, very aggressive and has a lot bright ideas but it's not a detailed person so I learn from him. While working with him, I also became a detailed person to implement some of his ideas in plans and that's how I maintain a good balance. So I can be very directional I can be very good in finalizing certain agreements or arrangements. But he's not a detailed person. He needs someone to take care of it and implement it and bring it to formation. In that I see that well to be more complete. I would like to have a bit more than that so...how you're adjusting and obviously get back to your time you have 24 hours every day. The more you want to engage in activities; the less time you have out of the 24 hours. So it's an important point how deep should I involve in this, how trusty I delegate this to someone. Like I said, the people that I work with...you observe people and that's why I educate my kids that I always say, "you have to learn to observe people." I think I see more people than they would see and like I said their strengths and weaknesses. Even though the terrible leaders, I'm sure they have some good things, some special talents and skills that you can learn from them

on that. You don't learn the bad traits and all of the bad habits but learn their good qualities and aspects but obviously the most successful leaders...There may be ten of hundreds of traits that you should learn.

Q: So for this type of development you see the experience entering so that must have shaped your leadership style...effectiveness that make yourself more effective as you're always improving and observing not only the strengths of the others but also the weaknesses...

A: The most important thing is, like I said, I learn other and stop worry. And like you said, something is unavoidable. It happened; it happened. And every situation can have outcome, could have solution. And the solution may not be best solution but what all you need to do is to come up with the most appropriate most suitable solution and giving your best and that's good enough and life goes on. Today's not that bad after all. But you know that might be much better day is to come. But you drill on that negative aspect and then that would have bowel spiral effect to take you down down down. I guess the more you take on major and bigger activities the more you learn not to worry. Because the more complicated the matter there'll be no simple solution to it. Very complicated solution or decision making process. So you never get to like, "oh!" It's like doing the sudoku, the number game. It's an absolute right response, it's number, but in complicated matters you have to take chance you have to take risk. But if you to rhythm and the risk taking would be difficult. But I'm not taking unforeseen not XXX, I try my very best and take calculated risks upon the best of my knowledge. So, you used to worry so much that you're thinking and thinking. You look at that as a learning process. It happened and you turn the page then you go on, rather than let the past haunt on you. That was a bad case. That was a bad decision. That's really bad experience. It's not very helpful to confront the future. I'm talking about my leadership five years ago and now. Five years ago, I was dealing more with UGC funded activities. Now I'm more dealing with the non-UGC funded activities. The good thing is...it's good or bad actually I need a lot of flexibility. It's good because not UGC funded so some flexibilities in the way things can be implemented and carried out. But at the same time because of the limited resources I do need a lot of creative flexibilities to get the job done. Within the university setting normally we require a lot of resources. My leadership style would be a bit more adaptive. So dealing with a lot more new people that I work with. This is my 12 years in *** University so several years I work with mostly UGC people and last 5 years mostly non-UGC people and most of these people were not in the university before so I start a lot of new working relationships and that take a xxx because sometimes you're not that lucky, you might not have the right chemistry, your leadership style may not work. Sometimes it's my problems. Sometimes it's their problems. But manager is hired to solve the problems for the university. So that's why part of the job is daily job. Some people look for smooth days in the office but, I expect it but I don't consider this is a problem. You come to the office you expect something to happen. And that's why you're there to take care of that. And everything gets rationalized in a way you can be more rational and not reacting too emotionally. And that's why you can always read through your leads your principles and work accordingly.

Q: Talking about culture. Because of you've worked in North America and now in Hong Kong. Culture can be the institution itself or the cross culture. Anything got an impact?

- A: if you're talking about organizational culture, then obviously you have to learn. Again, every organization is unique and there's no perfect organization. So again...in human being, every organization has positive aspect and some of the negative aspects of its culture...important thing... if it is positive obviously you appreciate very much, right? You enjoy it, you're highly efficient, not a very bureaucratic, you enjoy it, but it's how we handle the negative components and one thing I always try to do is see if I can impact a change or make a difference. But up to a certain point, if you run into a brick wall and you see no impact then you have to compromise or live with it. But obviously there's something very important and close to your heart and affecting your work, then you'd try, you should not give up. So in fact in *** University obviously about 3 years ago I was in charge of business process reengineering to look at all of the administrative units, to rethink how they should do their things, provide the services. It's all a matter of trying to change the ways things are being done. It doesn't mean that at one side I've done that I expect 100 points on everything, no, continuing to have some units not following through and maybe scoring at 60 points on elements that might need to be like 70 to be classified as satisfactory. But again, I look at it...it's a glass is full and a glass is empty. As long as I make an impact, impact is on change. It's better if improving then I'm happy. Maybe I've indicated I'm willing to do...every 5 years a review of some sort and maybe next time we will address some of the more burning issues. Even though I seem I'm not that much concerned about perfection, it cannot be perfect about everything, but on the other hand I do believe if you strive for perfect then you might be your wheel on your way to excellence. So perfection is a target, but not necessarily an achievable outcome. But only by looking at a perfection that would be moving closer. And then move on to the journey for achieving excellence. So corporate culture, in some ways I have explained I got it XXX and I initiated and how things are done. To find an example, we *** University have to find outside practice...we engage in any sort of activities paid outside of the institution. And every year I guess it could be part of your work at the franchisee the HR office send out a blank form and ask people to fill it out. But because a lot of our outside practice requires prior approval process so that mean the HR office got all the approved projects so talking about the absent mind of the professors...you take the blank form and you ask them to fill out with all the details. One of the important tasks of this business process reengineering is to target for customer satisfaction. So, it requires the HR office very little change and they actually set up the form that all of the approved projects that particular colleagues be engaged in the past year. There're a lot of work for the HR office because they have those xxx. But it's a lot of appreciation from the faculty members. So very simple things and that's how you can change the working relationships between the faculty and the HR office. Because they'd feel the HR office is really helpful. And there'll be more tolerance of other problems or difficulties that they have to deal with the HR office. So everything counts, you have to learn...try to what can I do for you. Then in the future you would say what can you do for me, right? You can't just say, asking people to do this for me and to do that for me. But you don't try to do something for other people, so that's important. In terms of cross culture, I guess Hong Kong is really international now so it's not just one culture the other...I guess my early years of teaching in Hong Kong was more kind of Hong Kong culture dominating but...I guess the last 15- 20 years Hong Kong is internationalized. I guess, my experience in teaching in North America opens up understanding of American and Canadian ways of doing things.

And in some ways when I first came back to Hong Kong I had no problem... I worked with... I supervised Chinese... Now being in Hong Kong for 12 years... Since I'm born and brought up in Hong Kong so I tend to take more kinds of Hong Kong perspective although it's international. But there's less confrontation where when I'm in Canada...that's the style, right? Although basically I can be very confrontational. Whether we're Chinese or not Chinese. Obviously in North America, we do that with people. But then I'm more I guess it's influenced by Hong Kong Chinese culture to some extent. Maybe that's come with age. It's like how you prefer more Chinese food. Or you're young you try everything. I used to finish a big pizza but now I haven't touched a pizza for a long time.

Q: What about your freedom to lead? Your freedom to manage...talking about corporate culture? Does that involve any constraint?

A: I guess I'm kinda...I work with different people, work for different people. Mostly I'm talking about my superiors and maybe my style they give me tremendous freedom to operate. That's why I'm blessed with God. Maybe certain elements of trust. I'm charged to do certain things...I exercise my utmost diligence to come up with the good outcome, do my very best and I always have a lot of freedom. You know, I started pursuing administrative responsibility so we're talking about days in Chinese U, years teaching in Canada, and since I came back to *** University, Dean of Faculty of Business, so, maybe how I relate to people, how I...what they see in that...maybe there is...the conclusion you need a lot of freedom. If people are not free to do, then they become good followers of their superiors, instead of a leader. So there're many cheap leaders and many cold leaders. And leaders need the kind of freedom to operate, otherwise... I'm sure many institutions even receive some excellent followers at high places.

Q: So maybe we move on to some general perspectives. As a leader of one of the higher education institutions in Hong Kong, what other values do you treasure? And what values do you want to find in your team? Most have been mentioned already but is there anything you want to add?

A: I think the important thing is people joining...got to...willing to commit to the team or the activities. And be willing to make some sacrifice...that's why I'm always, like I said, demonstrate by example. I've been on leave since the 29th but I was in the office three days last week and today probably until 4 o'clock. I'm on leave. Maybe I learn it...it's how you get satisfaction from doing it. Like you have passion for...what you're willing to make some sacrifice. And it's for the common good of the team, of the project, of the university. I think that is important. People bind to that. And you really belong to a team. And that's why I mentioned about the outset, the good thing would happen. It's because of the team. And you can get full support from the team then. Everything that work out, the team would share with you the responsibility. The team would learn not to repeat mistake; the team would learn to ensure better outcomes in the next time round. So you don't need to take all of the blame. You won't feel about everything. The team hopefully would be a growing team. And people learn to appreciate each other and enjoy the benefits of satisfaction of doing a good job, whatever the university charges the team to do. The greatest interest or orientation to leadership. I guess my interest in leadership is not like something that I've mentioned. It's not something I work for, I want to be a leader, ... my thinking is as I've mentioned earlier, someone has to do it. If I pick someone who believes that... I would do because I'm picked. Why

not? I'm trying my best to deliver. So it's not like something I aspire, I want that. Some of the people that I work with, they are always helping the other people. And that's why they're happy. So I think if I do a good job I can help other people, it's the satisfaction that I can derive from that. I'm very happy not because I can be a leader that's why I'm happy. That is come afterwards. I'm willing to serve when I'm called upon. Maybe that's the one important attribute of a leader but it should be this way round. Not the people I like want to be them, I want to be that person, I want to be the leader. And then they would be doing...like I say, it happened in many universities that many people try many shortcuts, many different ways to try to get to those leadership positions and that's destructive, right?

Q: You have mentioned you are being called upon, does that mean that you have not worked deliberately to be leader? It so happened because of your ability, your readiness so you're then put in the leadership position.

A: Most cases, I'm not kind aggressively seeking that...I think of administrative position I'm being asked to consider accepting...when I came to *** University, first year I was Assistant Professor in the business faculty. And they have an opening of a new dean. I did not apply. They invited me to apply. They invited me to an interview and I showed up. Then they made an offer and I could not refuse. Honestly, I did not seek for that. It's like people think that I can do that job I will be happy to step in and give it a try. So effective leadership is willing to step in the life of action when you're called upon. I'm sure various ranks of people are always looking out for people step in to do certain jobs. Some are through external recruitment and some are through internal appointment. So because I think it's important not to mix up leadership with senior or high places, although some might tend to think it's important your operational definition. You can be a clerical staff you could be a leader but obviously talking senior management in the university...

Q: anything else to add to your leadership journey?

A: I must admit that I have read a couple of those leadership books, you know, those books are...if people believe everyone can be leaders. It's kinda formative to thinking. I guess it's all through experience if you reflect on...the opportunities to observe other people. And that's less important thing. And leadership is not like taking this course then you're certified leaders, right? No! It's a growing thing, it's living thing, every day you're confronted with different scenarios, different changes and this is how you...how ready. And having a lot...I think it's getting back to your EI, it's how you internally prepare to accept, how you maintain your crew, how you maintain your composure, and not get terribly excited or nervous about doing certain things. That's why we look at the pro golfers, right? So, many people in Hong Kong want to play good in golf. When they're not playing under pressure, they might do pretty good than under pressure. So Hong Kong children cannot function under pressure. So I guess gear up myself is like I mentioned, I take time to relax and I take time to myself. When I was working in Canada, I was sent to time management course but it's not very effective for the university because it's for sales type of selling. But what I learned most from that is I made time to myself to do things that helps me to relax so I can balance work and my own life. So I make sure I take breaks. I take short breaks. I don't know whether it's good to take 40-hour trips at least once every twenty-two months. Just to get away, family time. That's in some way many of my informal deadlines...before I go, I say I take a trip to Bangkok and I have to get all of these done so those are self imposed although it

starts a requirement. But I would clear out a lot of things and I have certain...it's how I help out this because I get to do this before I go. And sometimes business trips I always do that too. It helps me clear it out and helps me to reshuffle my priority. Because things keep coming to the office so I say before I go, "I have to get this, this and this done". And I get it done before I go. So in some way it's kind of reviewing my priority...I always take time off...so it's not like taking 2 weeks off.

Q: So, would that be your advice to the staff if they approach you and ask you...

A: I can't say. I remember one year we had all clerical staff to take all the leaves because they're administrative staff and the university owes them money. But they don't take leave even in summer time. Their work is not that heavy and they all sit around in the office, right? So at that time we ask them to take leaves you have to clear your leaves because of the financial burden, right, for the university. But I said, I don't have any money to go for vacation. That's why I'm coming to work. But that's not the idea, right? Even this time I've no plan,...I'm actually on leave from June the 29th to August the 8th but I'm going to this conference tomorrow and then weekend in Shanghai we have an EMBA program there and the rest of time in Hong Kong. Maybe next time I rethink because in Hong Kong I come back to the office every now and then too often, maybe it's not good. I want to paint one side of my living room. Haven't got the time to buy the paint. I'm not sure whether I will be willing to do that but it's not...Just have this thinking helps me relax. So you have to do something different so to find a hobby, to find something different. I pick up Chinese calligraphy now so I have 1.5 hours every Sunday for practices. One hour I may write 30 characters, so find things to put yourself at least...so taking short trips, spending more time with family...make time for yourself. Time management. A Time is work. B Time is for yourself, what do you want? So I make sure I have sufficient hours of being kind so that helps.

Q: Any other advice?

A: As I mentioned. You learn from people that you think are effective leaders...observe their behaviours, observe their styles. And they might not tell you why they're so successful. But you can certainly figure it out because you are maybe just looking at your relationship with the leader...and why that person has the impact on you, why that person brings up the best in you? And why that person has a good working relationship with you? And then you try to do to other people. Because that's working for you. Presumably you would like to work with that leader, right? If you don't like, he's not a leader, he's a boss, right? So to differentiate a boss from a leader. But an effective leader could be your boss, right? In the real sense. But you don't think of it as such because you think a boss is a good person to work with. If you look at effectiveness, it's important to make people think, otherwise, people get into routine and they get...oh, it's like we've been doing this for the last 15 years, then why change? And they may not keep up with the change. And that's why I initiated the BPR. It's like...because it comes with time. About 5 years ago, a new staff come on board and then they have to fill out a form before they get the email account. And it takes 3 days. And I ask the secretary why...because I get the director's...manager's signature, because I need to get director of the information technology center signature before I can process this. And those were the days when email is a kind of luxury, right? But today, they even don't have to apply for it. So when new colleagues come into the office there

is an envelope in front: this is your password, log in and change it. Go ahead and use it, right? And makes things so much easier, right? There's no form to fill. It's part of the basic requirements that people don't look at it and they just continue to do what they've been doing and you clog up the system. I'm sure in your work people taking sick leave and HR office wants me to sign to approve the leave. That's sick leave, taken already. Can I disapprove? What do you want me to do? Why do you want me to sign? If there are some irregularities or some people taking too many sick leaves under my supervision....For that, I would appreciate to give me a five month or a quarterly report listing those people with abnormal number of sick leaves, right? People should think how things should be done. I talk about the organization is changing when the community college started out. The time tabling is maybe established by junior colleague but at that time this is the best utilization of resources and it works. But it should not become habitual. You got to look at new ways better ways of doing things and there should be a review. And leader should impact that kind of review from time to time so the people always looking out for doing better things. We all are required to do more with less. But if don't streamline or simplify some of the existing work procedure, we have to use extra resources to handle the wave of new challenges. Maybe you start a new activity you need 10 steps. You need 3 signatures to check the balances. And now it's been running for 3 years and everything is running smoothly. So it should be dedicated. You don't need 3 signatures and one will do because it has been tested out 3 years it's been running smoothly. And you should simplify it....

Q: Gender...any impact of gender?

A: Obviously I don't think...obviously we see in the government... it's a...it's a bias against male and what this post is male dominant, right, in university. I guess it's everything to do with the pursuit of higher degree but obviously the people sitting in front of me many senior administrators are female so I don't think... it is no longer that case. But if there's a gender bias is more like, I guess, a Chinese influence, right? Actually I guess you find more female at top positions all over disciplines but I guess in academic arena it is going for the higher degree and maybe for whatever reasons family decisions, people pushing in back, people are taking the degree later. I don't know about your case but obviously for myself I just finished my MBA in 2 years and went for doctor when started my teaching. So it's very short period. But other people maybe venture in other activities and took a longer road to come. But I don't think it's an issue because obviously we have the...

Q: But in leadership position now, like presidents of the universities, vice presidents or even AVPs are males.

A: We had a female AVP before, right?

Q: I mean we can count actually.

A: Like I said, it's also whether they are willing to do this kind of work, right? I guess...obviously it is not very...Hong Kong might need...it lies with the Chinese culture and how should it be handled. In Canada, there's a lot of emphasis on this. So all of the selection panels must have a female member, just to be gender balanced. So even say within a department, you can't have an all-male panel. But whether we will do that, I guess in Hong Kong it's still kind of... Look at the EMB, all of the senior secretaries, permanent secretaries, deputy secretaries all females.

And there're lots of opportunities over there. And that's why they don't come to the university. I think it is sector-biased.

Q: Yes, that's the interesting part....

A: Government officials...I know the EMB, the permanent secretaries and the 2-3 deputy secretaries are all female, right? And maybe there're better opportunities there then why do they have to come to university? Maybe in university life is kind of conducive, right? You have to teach and you have to do research. But if you want to raise your family, you want to have kids and all sorts of these things, right? But in the future it may be different because younger people many of them nowadays they don't want to have kids, right? So they are child-free so they're more ready for this. Obviously we see a lot of career women becoming senior executives everywhere... In IEd we have Ruth Hayhoe, right? In Shue Yan Dr Chung, right? It's how they came about...and maybe you look at the more traditional and maybe now we look at the next generation of educators... because university presidents got to be educators you got to be a professor. Hong Kong is still years away from the US that they could find an ex-politician to come in because to them president is basically external relations expert with a lot of good networks for fundraising. Maybe Hong Kong would follow them in the next 10 years but I don't think so. Still they want scholars. And maybe that is not very conducive to... the females in the last generation but I bet... you look around there're a number of female deans. I'm sure there're aspirations. I'm talking about young, forty-something. So I'm sure there're aspirations. But I might say leaderships at high places go hand in hand. But at some times, you know leaders are not aspired to be at the top, at the very top. Maybe I hope you ask... asking all of the senior administrators ask the female if you have any...why they... Or maybe some senior people they might not presidents and ask them why they do not pursue this. Maybe it's by choice. I'm saying not everyone at this stage wants to become president, male or female, right? So don't look at this as gender bias of discrimination. Or maybe it's a choice. Who knows? It's hard to prove. But I bet in the next generation to come there are a lot of iron-fist leaders. And maybe the soft-spoken leaders they don't necessarily envy. So, what's your definition in terms of... so you're talking about deans, heads of departments? Or got to be presidents...?

Q: President's office. But I don't find enough female actually.

A: Actually the new trend I foresee...gender is one thing that I've mentioned. There will be more aggressive ladies who want to take that punch or take that control. I'm looking at the scholars originally from the mainland. And that's the new trend. Male and female. Because they're brought up their aggressiveness is very different from Hong Kong Chinese. Then you bring in the culture. They're brought up in a different culture. And they're very smart too. If they want it, they know how to get it. They work hard to get what they want. So, it's gonna be a new culture. And we'll see more and more. So they're heads of departments and deans gradually. And if they're in Hong Kong 7 years then permanent residents. It's gonna build a new era.

Q: OK, the last question. If there's a female acting out the role that you're acting now in *** University, any difference do you think?

A: It's hard for me to guess but presuming the reason that the lady being picked I'm sure could do a good job because after all the president takes the VP or AVP, right?

The lady being picked that I'm sure it's just putting someone to this job but the outcomes may be different. Different people have different styles and different ways of doing things. As I mentioned the outset leadership is not a do and don't, you know. You do 10 things then you become a leader, right? So everybody is a leader, right? So we all have our personal individual life styles we all come from different backgrounds and experiences. Some are born leaders maybe some are very humble in the beginning so we're all different. And that would affect the way they handle the situations, and that would affect how they involve people and certainly the outcomes would be different. But I'm sure if they're picked by the president that person should be able to do a good job. So I don't think it's really gender.

Q: From the literature, there're certain characteristic traits for male and female leaders, I'm trying to get out if there's a female...

A: I think that would be to do with the job and duty on hand for that particular individual. Every leader has his expertise, specialty and talents. It's like I said the reason that they're being brought in to do that job and those xxx would come in handy but we cannot generalize unless we know what the job is all about. So I suspect it might be harder you get university president, female or male purer, right? Because you have to raise money. And some people enjoy doing that, right? Others may say it's not my cup of tea.