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Editorial

Learning from Diversified Practices

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The quest for improving education quality, which is an enduring endeavour of educational researchers, has been fuelled further by the evidence reported in international student achievement assessments such as PISA recently. Numerous educational reform initiatives have been introduced by various school systems to improve student outcomes, amongst which are school governance, teacher development, curriculum design, and parental involvement, to name a few. Despite the diversity found in the different initiatives, a common feature exists. That is, their successful implementation rests upon the capacity of effective school leaders to develop an environment conducive to changes with collaborative effort and commitment.

It is widely recognized in the literature that school leadership is the second only to classroom teaching in its impact on student learning, and evidences in support of this claim are drawn on both conceptual deliberations and empirical investigations. Although the literature supports the impact of school leadership to student outcomes in general, there is a lack of agreement on its conceptualization and

operationalization. Found in the literature are many alternative, if not competing, models of school leadership, such as instructional leadership advocated by Hallinger, transformational leadership by Leithwood and colleagues, and distributed leadership by Gronn and Spillane.

Considering that the ultimate objective of research is to suggest ways of improving practice that have been verified with many applications and by diverse types of people, the diversity found in various leadership models is an asset, instead of a liability, to the development of knowledge in the field of educational leadership and management. School leadership is both contextual and contingent. Leadership is practiced differently in various schools, contingent on both macro- and micro- factors; and as such, no one prescribed practice is applicable to all school contexts. The complexity and multiplicity of leadership practices lead to manifestations in research methodology and the level of analysis.

The development of a body of knowledge for understanding school leadership and management is a challenge to school systems in Asia. Although these school systems have been following the international policy trends in the past decades, they cannot capitalise on the conceptual and empirical base offered in the literature, which has been primarily built and validated in Anglo-American academic contexts, for knowledge and practice, given their unique societal and cultural contexts.

This special issue aims to provide readers with an update on the development in the field of educational leadership and management in five Asian countries/cities that have achieved high scores in PISA. We believe that seeing the differences between practices that are similar and the similarities of practices that are different can inform our knowledge base. It is our hope that the knowledge accumulated in this part of the world can supplement the ongoing discussions that are based on Anglo-American contexts in the international literature

for informing theory, policy and practice. There are five articles in this special issue.

Hairon's conceptual deliberation is situated in the Singaporean context in which a teaching track for teacher has been recently introduced. He offers both theoretical and practical implications on the enactment of this initiative to school leadership, they are bounded empowerment, developing leadership, shared decision and collection engagement. He further delineates the ways that schools can capitalise on this new system, that is through the practice of distributed leadership.

Wong addresses the issue of teacher professional development in Macao in which over 95% of teachers are working in private schools. Drawing on qualitative interviews, she maintains that the privatized system has undermined teacher professionalism in Macao schools in which see an imbalance of power between the principal and teachers, which in turn, has put teachers at a vulnerable position. She further argues for governmental intervention for improving the system.

Chow argues for a reconsideration of the purposes of administering stakeholder's survey, maintaining that surveys aimed to fulfil accountability purpose may not provide valid and relevant information for quality improvement purpose. He supports his argument by analysing an alumni survey data set and highlights the challenges in interpreting the aggregated data for decision-making at the programme level. Implications for theory and practice of educational data usage are discussed.

Kagawa, Aizawa and Kodama discuss the changes in upper secondary education in Japan along its economic development. They trace the historical development of the public-private school partnership in Japan, highlighting its contribution to Japan's industrialisation and economy in the past decades. The authors further discuss the current challenges that Japan policy makers must face in the post-industrialisation and globalisation era to reform the upper secondary education.

Zhang draws on a national data set to discuss the possibility of balancing two apparently divergent goals in education - advancing educational excellence and maintaining equality in China's compulsory education system. She argues that school-family cooperation appears to be an effective means to bridge the two, leading to multiple benefits to the schools, parents, and students. The implications for policy maker are also discussed.

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How can Student Learning Data at Institutional Level Support Decision-Making for Educational Improvement for Academic Programme? A Case Study in A Hong Kong University

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Abstract

Student surveys have been commonly used by university administrators for assessment of student learning outcomes in higher education. The information collected from such stakeholders' surveys has only been to use as supporting documents for the effectiveness of university education. More recently, there have been calls for utilizing student feedback information to improve quality of education at the programme level and guide educational leaders and teachers about implementing data-based decision-making. This study aimed to explore the learning gains in the undergraduate education perceived by its alumni in one of Hong Kong universities. The study reported the procedures in examining the assessment scores and discussed the interpretation of assessment results at the programme level. The findings showed that interpretation of the student ratings of perceived learning gains could not be appropriately aggregated at the programme level. Implications for theory and practice of educational data use and for educational administration are discussed.

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Assessment of Student Learning for Multiple Purposes

In accountability era, student learning outcomes are of important focus in demonstrating effectiveness of higher education. Universities are encouraged to demonstrate their graduates acquired certain level of proficiency of learning outcomes through measurement, assessment and evaluation efforts (Coates, 2016; Melguizo & Coates, 2017; Secolsky & Denison, 2012). In particular, information obtained from student learning assessment serves three major purposes: accountability use and improvement use, and instruction use (Ebbeler, Poortman, Schildkamp, & Pieters, 2016), which are briefly described as follows.

The first purpose of using student assessment data is for providing indicators for documenting the effectiveness in various learning outcomes and experience. In particular, assessment data of the student perceived learning gains in terms of graduate attributes is an emphasis in higher education in Hong Kong. Universities are held accountable to make data-informed review of the student learning outcomes and effectiveness of programme of study. Higher education administrators are faced with accountability pressure on demonstrating learning gains by the students. The second purpose of using student assessment data is for educational improvement use. Such improvement that involves use of data includes reviewing and revising the existing curriculum, setting and adjusting the key performance indicators (KPIs) for units, and formulating improvement goals in specific areas. The third purpose of using student assessment data is for instructional use. Examples of using data to support instructional use include making data-driven adjustment to classroom instruction, identifying student learning needs, monitoring student mastery upon completion of a course.

Completing the Assessment Cycle

In higher education settings, student learning data from multiple sources including student surveys are often used for institutional research and evaluation of accountability (Chatman, 2007; Douglass, Thomson & Zhao, 2012) and expected to support planning for improvements at various levels. In terms of guiding educational improvement efforts in higher education institutions, the resulting data-based activities are often framed as going through iterative steps in completing assessment cycles. For example, Liu (2017) mentioned the recent trend on using assessment data for internal improvement beyond traditional accountability purposes in higher education institutions. Musekamp and Pearce (2015) have also discussed a case study using low-stake assessment results to inform and make evidence-based decisions to realize educational improvement in engineering higher education.

Rationale of This Study

Previous studies have been reported from a perspective of using the assessment results for quality assurance purposes at the institutional level. This study has a particular focus on examining whether using assessment results can support educational improvement at the programme level, and in particular how educational administrators should promote internal improvements via appropriate data-based decision-making and data use. In school settings, there has been growing studies of appropriate data use in school guiding for school improvement (e.g., Marsh, 2012). For example, Thompson, Adie and Klenowski (2017) questioned the legitimacy of using the NAPLAN results for making valid comparisons between schools, and bring the discussion to educational policy and administration. However, relatively less studies were reported on using data for improvement in higher education institutions. Some of the existing studies are on comparison of institutional effectiveness against the international

benchmark or comparison with other higher education institutions that are of similar contexts (e.g., Kuh, Jankowski, Ikenberry, & Kinzie, 2014).

McKenow and Ercikan (2017) investigated the multi-level validity for documenting student learning at the programme level based on the National Survey of Student Engagement, also known as NSSE, a well-known instrument used internationally for quality assurance of university education. For local instruments that collect student data for local use at higher education institutions, there is relatively less coverage in the literature. This study will investigate how such instruments as alumni survey is developed and used locally by the university.

This study will explore results of the alumni survey from views of recent graduates of the university. This adds values to the conventional studies on university student learning which focused on perception of the current students, for example, either freshmen or seniors, who are still studying in the university. The alumni, in contrast, feature themselves by perceiving relatively lower gains in the graduate attributes then current students who have not graduated. Common reasons reported showed that while graduating students feel quite prepared for entry level employment, employers have concerns about graduates' preparedness for work (Hart Research Associates, 2015) and that students downplay the value of their degree in preparing them for their future careers when asked about this six or more months post-graduation (Rayner & Pakakonstantinou, 2015).

While it is recognized the three purposes of collecting assessment data of student learning (i.e., accountability, improvement, and instruction) are inter-related, this study will mainly focus on the relationship between using data for accountability and using data for improvement purposes. It is common to see due to policy and accountability pressure that stakeholders, especially university leaders, who expect student learning data such as alumni survey data

is useful for multiple purposes, including educational accountability purposes as well as for educational improvement purposes. For accountability purposes, the focus is often on using the data to provide evidence to external stakeholders for documenting the institutional effectiveness. For educational improvement purposes, the focus is often on using the data to support decision making for policy and implementation at the local programme level.

Despite the common assumption of wide applicability of student survey data, the validity of interpretation and use of assessment results at the programme level, however, is seldom examined prior making conclusions at the programme level. This study will illustrate the importance of investigating the legitimacy of making inferences for planning and implementing educational improvement initiatives based on assessment results. It aims to contribute to the understanding of theory and practice of data use for quality assurance and improvement in higher education.

Alumni Perception of Educational Experience

Student surveys are administered to students or graduates for two major purposes. First, it serves as a stakeholder survey to enable universities to collect views from the students or graduates as one of the university stakeholders about their study. Second, it also allows the university to collect information to document the achievement of the student learning outcomes and experience.

The alumni survey in this study is designed and administered with the assessment goals of collecting alumni's views about their overall learning experience of the university education over their study period. In particular, such information collected will provide the basis for assessment data interpretation and use to support making evidence-based decisions and practice in quality assurance and improvement in both the institutional (i.e. the university level) and unit levels (e.g., programme level). The ratings from the alumni are expected to be used to continuously improve university's

programmes as the faculties and departments review the group-level data to revise their approaches. This study will focus on the usefulness of the assessment data for informing decision-making and planning improvement efforts at the programme level. The compatibility of the assessment goals valued by stakeholders at different levels of the institution will also be examined and discussed.

Variation Across Programme of Study

Using assessment results to guide educational improvement decision and efforts might be more complex to be done than it is intended. There are multiple issues to consider, such as representativeness of the sample, the criterion, and the measures for driving improvement (Judd & Keith, 2012). In particular, the issues of appropriate level of aggregation and analysis are important for making score-based decision regarding programme review and educational improvement (Griffith, 2000). Previous research showed that appropriateness of aggregation could be variable dependent. For example, McKeown and Ercikan (2017) reported perceived general learning outcomes are reliable at the programme level for some variables but not the others.

Previous research have been focusing on the perspective the students who are currently enrolled in the university. For example, McKeown and Ercikan (2017) focus on the first-year student and the fourth-year students' response on NSSE. Similar in the more well-known international survey such as NSSE, this requirement of validity of assessment data is also applicable to local student learning surveys such as the alumni survey under investigation in this study.

Data-Use Theory of Action

Data-use theory of action framework was introduced and applied using data to collect and use evidence to support improvement in educational organizations (Coburn & Turner, 2011; Marsh, 2012). Such a framework (Figure 1) has several features: 1) it is embedded in

the organizational context in which data use takes place; 2) it involves interaction of characteristics and perception of multiple layers of stakeholders or components (e.g., educational leader, middle-managers, and the data itself); 3) it is an iterative process of using data to support improving educational outcomes (Ebbeler et al., 2016).

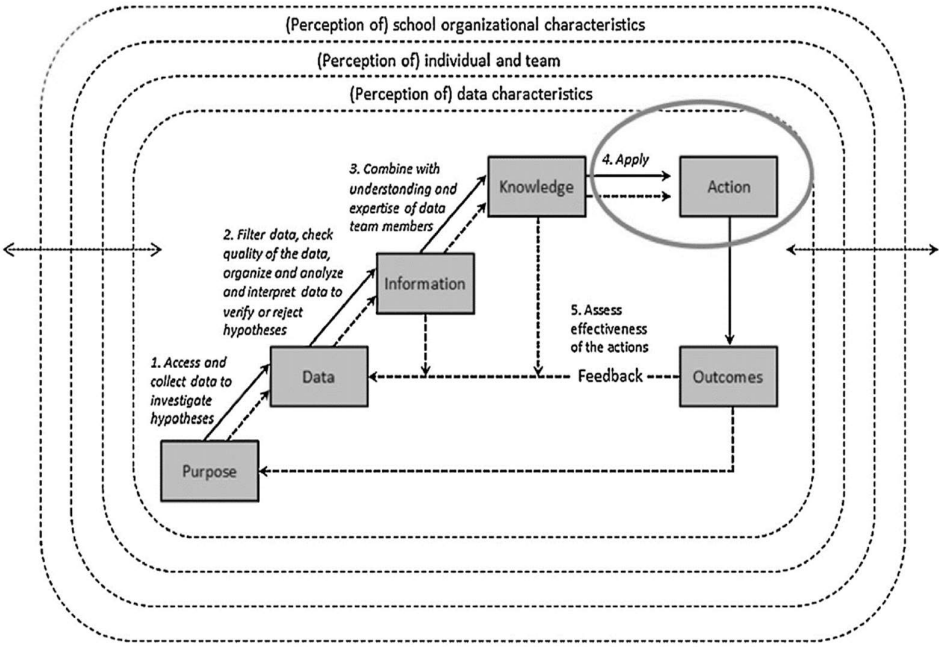
The data use process involves several components. It starts with asking the purpose of collecting data, then the data collected should go through quality check and be analyzed to produce meaningful information and knowledge for guiding action for educational improvement to achieve desired outcomes (Schildkamp & Poortman, 2015).

This study focuses on how the quality of data may be a limit to realize the educational leaders' aspiration of using same data for multiple purposes. In particular, the variation of student learning across programmes of study as shown in the alumni survey in this study will be used to illustrate the importance of checking the appropriate level of aggregation when there are multiple assessment goals motivated by different plausible purposes of educational data use.

It is argued in this study that unclear purposes of data use may lead to conflicting theories of action on data use at different levels within the educational institution that results in ineffective decision and planning for improvement. Using a case study with the alumni survey, this study will illustrate the importance of careful and informed application of data use theory of action for internal educational improvement.

Figure 1

Data Use Theory of Action, and Factors Influencing Data Use (Ebbeler et al., 2016; based on Coburn & Turner, 2011a, 2011b; Ikemoto &Marsh, 2007; Lai & Schildkamp, 2013; Mandinach, Honey, Light, & Brunner, 2008; Marsh, 2012, p. 4; Schildkamp & Kuiper, 2010; Schildkamp & Lai, 2013; Schildkamp & Poortman, 2015; Supovitz, 2010).



Method

Instrument

The alumni survey has a total of 67 items to collect student views on their learning gains, learning experience, and how study at the university has prepared their post-university life. It was administered to recent graduates within 18 to 24 months after graduation. In particular, alumni's perceived gains in learning outcomes were assessed in terms of the six areas of generic skills.

Measures

The university undergraduate programmes normally take four academic years to complete. It is the university's strategic initiatives to nurture the development of all-round students with competent levels of generic skills. In particular, it is expected that a typical graduate (or alumni) from undergraduate programme should possess and be able to demonstrate competence of generic skills in the six broad areas: competent professional, critical thinker, effective communicator, innovative problem solver, lifelong learner, and ethical leader (See Table 1). These attributes are usually called graduate attributes on which students were assessed with the assessment results helping the university to monitor student learning progress and the effectiveness of the university education.

In terms of student learning outcomes, the graduate attributes are considered as an important learning outcome of undergraduate students. Alumni's perception of their learning gains in these areas as completion of university education was collected in the alumni survey. Scales were constructed based on the items making up of the six graduate attributes separately.

The present study was based on the student perception of the learning gains as captured in the alumni survey. These measures are selected because these are deemed to be important learning outcomes of completing undergraduate studies in the university. After 18 to 24 months since graduation, most of the students are able to report

retrospectively their learning outcomes with reference to their lives beyond completion of university education.

Table 1

Six Areas of Generic Skills

Generic skills	**Description**
Competent Professional	Graduates should be able to integrate and apply in practice the fundamental knowledge and skills required for functioning effectively as an entry-level professional
Critical Thinker	Graduates should be able to examine and critique the validity of information, arguments, and different viewpoints, and reach a sound judgment on the basis of credible evidence and logical reasoning
Effective Communicator	Graduates should be able to comprehend and communicate effectively in English and Chinese, orally and in writing, in professional and daily contexts
Innovative Problem Solver	Graduates should be able to identify and define problems in professional and daily contexts, and produce creative and workable solutions to the problems
Lifelong Learner	Graduates should recognize the need for continual learning and self-development, and be able to plan, manage and improve their own learning in pursuit of self-determined development goals
Ethical Leader	Graduates should have an understanding of leadership and be prepared to lead a team, and should acknowledge their responsibilities as professionals and citizens to the society and their own nation, and be able to demonstrate ethical reasoning in professional and daily contexts

Samples

All the 2015 cohort of graduates of undergraduate programmes, including both the bachelor's degree and higher diploma degree, of the university were mailed a hard copy of the alumni survey in February 2017, a time point falling on between 18 and 24 months

from their graduation time. A souvenir was provided for respondents. In this study, only the responses of the bachelor's degree graduates were analyzed.

Programmes of Study

Alumni were grouped into their programme of study before invitation was sent for their participation in filling out the survey. Table 2 showed the distribution of the respondents by their programme of study and compositions of the sample which showed a considerable variation in sample sizes across programmes. Only programmes of study with at least five respondents were included.

Table 2

Sample of Alumni Survey Respondents and Their Programme of Study.

Programme Name	Respondent	%
Applied Psychology	20	1.8
Art and Design In Education	7	0.6
Chinese and Bilingual Studies	7	0.6
English for Business and Professional Communication	19	1.7
English Studies	14	1.3
Interactive Media	10	0.9
Accounting and Finance	14	1.3
Accountancy	60	5.4
Applied Biology with Biotechnology	13	1.2
Applied Ageing Studies	12	1.1
Bilingual Studies	20	1.8
Biomedical Engineering	6	0.5
Building Engineering and Management	13	1.2
Building Services Engineering	52	4.7
Chemical Technology	11	1.0
Civil Engineering	34	3.1
Computing	23	2.1
Convention and Event Management	11	1.0
Design	25	2.3
Electrical Engineering	17	1.5
Electronic and Information Engineering	11	1.0
Enterprise Engineering with Management	8	0.7

Enterprise Information Systems	15	1.4
Environment and Sustainable Development	25	2.3
Food Safety and Technology	7	0.6
Fashion and Textile Studies	60	5.4
Geomatics (Land Surveying)	13	1.2
Hotel Management	41	3.7
Industrial and Systems Engineering	9	0.8
Industrial Quality Management	6	0.5
Investment Science	7	0.6
Logistics Engineering and Management	10	0.9
Engineering Physics	20	1.8
Financial Services	7	0.6
Global Supply Chain Management	19	1.7
International Shipping and Transport Logistics	20	1.8
Management	8	0.7
Marketing	14	1.3
Mechanical Engineering	38	3.4
Medical Laboratory Science	15	1.4
Mental Health Nursing	8	0.7
Nursing	72	6.5
Occupational Therapy	24	2.2
Optometry	9	0.8
Physiotherapy	21	1.9
Product Analysis and Engineering Design	17	1.5
Product Engineering with Marketing	24	2.2
Property Management	11	1.0
Radiography	23	2.1
Social Policy and Administration	22	2.0
Social Work	40	3.6
Statistics and Computing	17	1.5
Surveying	43	3.9
Tourism Management	25	2.3
Transportation Systems Engineering	7	0.6
Total	1104	100.0

Analysis

Three Steps ANOVA

The variability of the student scores across programmes of study was investigated using ANOVA. A three-step ANOVA approach was used to examine the variability of the student ratings across programmes of study of the respondents. According to Griffith (2002), there are three indicators of the variability of the scores in the survey, namely, non-independence, reliability of group means, and within-group agreement.

Non-independence refers to the degree to which the variable of concern is dependable on the other variable. In this example, if the rating of perceived learning gains are influenced by the programme of study of the respondents, the mean ratings at the programme level should differ. The level of such dependability can be empirically examined by calculating the intra-class correlation (ICC) (1) values. The ICC (1) values indicated how much the variance of the perceived learning gains can be explained by the variable of programme of study. As mentioned, the sample size varied considerably across the students' programme of study in this study. In reducing the effect of extreme sample sizes across groups, the harmonic means were used (McKeown & Ercikan, 2017).

Reliability of programme-level means refers to the degree to which the rating of a single respondent within a programme would be precise estimate of the programme-level mean. The ICC (2) values indicated the level of which how many students are required to provide a reliable estimate of the programme-level mean.

Within-programme agreement refers the extent to which the respondents within a programme of study showed agreement in their ratings. For example, an individual respondent gave ratings of 1, 2, and 3 on three items on a 5-point scale, and another individual respondent gave ratings of 3, 4, and 5. As Griffith (2002) commented, a high reliability can be observed in this situation because the ratings

between respondents will be balanced. However, the within-programme agreement would be low because, for example, the rating of 1 by the first respondent corresponds to the rating of 3 by the second respondent. The r_{wg} indicates the extent to which respondents within a group gave similar ratings. This is why within-programme provides another perspective on how valid it is to interpret the survey findings at the programme level.

Results

Scale Statistics

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the scales and respondents.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of The Scale and Respondents

Scale	Item	n	Mean values	Standard error	Cronbach's alpha
Competent professional	2	1091	3.43	0.79	0.81
Critical thinker	4	1086	3.47	0.61	0.81
Effective communicator	2	1090	3.39	0.76	0.62
Innovative problem-solver	3	1088	3.49	0.65	0.79
Lifelong learning	4	1086	3.45	0.68	0.79
Ethical leader	4	1089	3.34	0.71	0.77

ANOVA Results

Table 4 showed the results of ANOVA of the variability of the responses in the programme of study. All F values were statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level for all graduate attributes. The ICC (1) values ranged 0.03-0.08, across programmes of study, indicating a small variance between programmes of study. The graduate attribute that showed the largest variance in the response was professional competence, with an ICC (1) value of 0.08. For other graduate attributes, the ICC (1) values were around 0.03-0.06, indicating a low

dependence of rating on which programme of the respondent belongs.

The reliability measures, ICC (2) ranged from 0.11 to 0.62, which are considered very low (Griffith, 2002). The results indicated that the programme means were not reliable measures of the programme-level performance.

The within-programme agreement was reported by the statistics r_{wg}, which ranged from 0.29 to 0.49 for the six graduate attributes. The low values indicated a low level of agreement among the respondents under the programme of study.

Table 4

ANOVA Statistics of the Six Scales

Scale	*F* value	*p* value	ICC(1)	ICC(2)	r_{wg}
Competent professional	1.70	.002	.08	.62	.49
Critical thinker	1.54	.005	.04	.32	.32
Effective communicator	1.62	.004	.05	.28	.38
Innovative problem-solver	1.60	.004	.06	.19	.45
Lifelong learning	1.49	.006	.05	.25	.37
Ethical leader	1.44	.012	.03	.11	.29

Discussion

Using data to review education quality based on stakeholder surveys, including student survey, was widely practiced in universities. Assessment data of student learning outcomes in the form of self-reported learn gains in the alumni survey, was investigated in this study. More recently the focus of student survey as tool for assuring educational quality is shifting towards supporting planning and implementing educational improvement efforts.

The validity evidence for using assessment results regarding educational improvement is not commonly examined. The analyses above provided some validity evidence about the extent to which the

inference about programme-level performance is justified. The ANOVA results suggested that the assessment results were not useful for summarizing the student performance and thus making justified conclusion about the effectiveness at the programme level.

This raised the awareness of the possibility that data collected from student survey designed for informing the effectiveness of learning outcomes at the institutional level were not applicable for productive use for educational improvement purposes, such as at the programme level in university education.

While it is recognized that using data for accountability actions does not translate directly into educational improvement effects (Ebbeler et al., 2016), it does not rule out the possibility of using data for accountability purposes may also be used for educational improvement. However, when the assessment data is collected for accountability purposes, it should not be presumed that the data would be equally applicable for improvement purposes. In regards to completing the assessment cycle (Liu, 2017), this study examined and reported whether the data for educational accountability has adequate technical quality that allows interpretation and use of student assessment data for educational improvement at the programme level.

These results have shown that justification for interpretation of assessment data is important to examine because, as the results above showed, assessment results are not necessarily directly useful for interpretation and use beyond its primary purpose. Consequently, lack of validity evidence, or ignorance of collecting validity evidence, might lead to conclusions that are not well supported by evidence (O'Leary, Hattie & Griffin, 2017).

Implications for Educational Leadership and Administration

As mentioned earlier, Ebbeler and researchers (2016) mentioned that the data-based action that educational leaders can take can be categorized into three areas: accountability, instruction, and school

[educational] development, and added that 'although the data use actions are presented as three distinct categories, in reality they are intertwined' (p. 21).

Despite the desire of using the data to its full potential (e.g., Schildkamp et al., 2017), educational leaders should also be aware of the limitations regarding the nature of the educational data collected and its use. The results of the study suggested to university administrators that validity of interpretation of the assessment results has to be examined systematically prior any meaningful use of the assessment scores. University leaders should understand that accountability pressure for using data support improvement itself at the institutional level does not legitimize action for directly using assessment results at the programme level.

As mentioned, educational data use are promoted and practiced in universities for accountability reasons and improvement reasons. Educational leaders should also understand the importance of technical quality of the assessment data despite the policy and accountability pressure for data use for multiple purposes, especially when there are inadequate sources of evidence for which interpretation and use of assessment scores are made.

This study has highlighted the importance of validating the data when using it for educational improvement purposes. When assessment results are aggregated in attempt to inform evaluation of programme effectiveness, it should be cautioned that there should be adequate level of variability and across programmes before making claims about programme-level effectiveness. Implications for educational administrators include explicit examination of the technical quality of data available in drawing conclusions at appropriate levels, and leadership in building the organizational capacity for data use.

Appropriate data use depends on the organizational capacity to use data to enhance student learning. From the assessment data of the alumni survey, this study provided an example examining validity

evidence and its plausibility that it may prevent the administrators from making erroneous assumptions and unnecessary inferences. (Thompson et al., 2017). The implication for educational administration is that it suggested the need to maintain an adequate organizational capacity in understanding the score reports and its meaning to promote use of data for educational improvement. As Moss (2016, p. 248) mentioned, 'Of course, no collection of evidence at the organizational level can ensure the validity of any particular interpretation, decision or action, but evidence of capacity to use data well increases confidence in the likelihood of well-warranted decisions, including the likelihood that problematic decisions will be illuminated for further inquiry and revision.'

The results of the study highlighted the importance to build in higher education institutions capacity for data use, and to provide professional development for teachers and administrators on data literacy skills to make justified decisions in relation to educational improvements. University administrators should encourage middle-managers to access valid and reliable data and make inferences at appropriate levels to back the decisions. Leaders should also encourage more collaborative involvement within school about data use (Schildkamp et al., 2017), and recognize the collective responsibility in realizing data-based educational improvement initiatives.

Leading and planning for improvement would involve processes for engaging faculty and providing sufficient professional training and resources to faculty (Hutchings, 2010) to build assessment and data capacity at both individual and organizational levels. Marsh and Farrell (2015) suggested that leaders check the current status of the institutional assessment and data capacity, and target in data-use processes where more support is needed.

At the institutional level, the assessment strategies could be better addressed by explicitly recognizing the degree of 'incompatibility of assessment goals valued by stakeholders at different levels'

(Chatteriji, 2013, p. 303). A more informed data-based decision making process can be promoted by defining, recognizing and communicating well the purposes of the use assessment results and limitations of assessment data.

Other examples of possible efforts by university administrators include collaboration with academic development professionals to offer advice in using assessment results. The support offered by the expertise of academic developer should be included in the conversation between policy and practice of data-based decision making in higher education institutions. University leaders should build internal channels and systems that will facilitate the advice of assessment experts to be taken in actual planning and implementation of educational improvement initiatives. These include work of devising plans and channels for communicating assessments data internally for appropriate use at different levels, such as programme level, faculty level, or department level. Across the university, university leaders can also cultivate an assessment culture (Liu, 2017). In particular, Liu (2017) suggested faculty members work actively with assessment specialists, who can offer advice on the theory and practice on validity and validation (Brennan, 2006; Crooks, Kane & Cohen, 1996).

Implications for Application of Data-Use Theory of Action

The results of this study have implications for applying the data use theories of action under the framework of data-based decision making: in addition to the reliability and validity of the assessment instrument itself, it is important to check the data quality for interpretation and use at the aggregated level.

It should be noted that data-use theory of action should be examined carefully before taking actions for particular purposes. As mentioned, data use process involves multiple components and steps, including purpose, data, and knowledge. In particular, the linear relation of steps between different components, especially steps

between the components of *purpose*, *data*, and *action*, should be carefully examined. For example, using data with reference to educational improvement in student learning could be different from using data with reference to assurance of quality in education. While aspirations for using assessment data for multiple purposes—accountability, improvement, and instruction (Schildkamp et al., 2017)—should be encouraged; this study has shown that the one particular dataset might not be effective for multiple purposes, and these purposes may require some different quality of data. Failure in fulfilling the requirement of data quality may affect the validity of conclusion made based on the assessment data.

It is important to keep accountability and improvement efforts coherent, as Earl and Katz (2006) stated, 'Accountability without improvement is empty rhetoric, and improvement without accountability is whimsical action without direction' (p. 12). However, it is also important for educational institutions to recognize the challenges in realizing both accountability efforts and improvement efforts in the lack of quality data, or when the data that are available are more useful for one purpose than the others.

Conflicting theories of actions have been reported (Chatterji, 2013, p. 303) and such conflicts, particularly regarding educational data use, could be resulted from uses of student assessment results in multiple areas (some might not be the primary intended purposes) by different stakeholders. In the case shown in this study, the conflict of theories of action in data use lies on action of data use for quality assurance at the institutional level and action of data use for quality improvement at the programme level. Educational institutions should be aware of possible conflicting expectation of data use actions, and try to minimize the conflict, for example, when there are concurrent demands of data use for accountability purposes and improvement purposes.

Operationally, to complete the multiple phases of assessment cycles, including assessment development, validation work, and use

of assessment results, efforts should be aligned to function as an integrated whole, or 'a connected series of process' (Chatterji, 2013, p. 299). The link between assessment development, and use of assessment results by stakeholders via incorporating the use of validation of assessment results should be clearly recognized and strengthened.

The current study suggested *data characteristics*, one of crucial properties in data use theory of action (e.g., Schildkamp & Lai, 2013), should be understood and checked in advance for data use purposes beyond it is original design and intent; otherwise it could become a factor hindering the process of data-based decision making (Schildkamp et al., 2017).

This study has questioned that the perception that purposes of data use can be defined independently of particular sets of educational data and associated improvement actions. In applying the data use theory of action within educational institutions, it should be cautioned that one assessment dataset might not fit all purposes. As Moss (2013, 2016) mentioned, assessment information should be used together with other information to guide data use and data-based decision making in educational institutions. This is especially useful in local decision-making at universities. For example, the assessment data collected from student-reported surveys, such as alumni survey, should not be the only source of evidence of student learning. In this connection, the data of student learning outcome assessment is not the only source of evidence, there are possibly a wide range of sources of evidence including interview and discussion with students regarding their learning experience. This study has shown that that rely on one source of information could be risky, especially when the technical quality of evidence is not evaluated.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated the validation of using student learning survey results for educational improvement based on assessment data obtained from alumni perception of learning gains in graduate attributes based on the instrument designed locally for informing effectiveness of university education. The results suggested that valid interpretation of assessment results is not supported at the programme level. Data use for educational accountability purposes at one level is a necessary condition but not sufficient for data use for educational improvement purposes at another level.

This study also revealed the need for carefully examining the scope of the data use theory of action when taking associated action for educational improvement. This paper has argued that educational leaders should consider the legitimacy of making inferences for planning and implementing educational improvement initiatives based on assessment results that are intended to be reported at the institutional level. Despite the policy pressure from external stakeholders requesting to make most out of the data in decision making, institutions should be aware of the limitation of datasets available for specific purposes; otherwise, it may lead to erroneous decisions and thus ineffective improvement efforts. Recommendations to educational administrators and leaders include careful tackling possible conflicting theories of actions in data use, collaboration with academic development professionals, exploring multiple sources of evidences, as well as cultivating an assessment culture among administrators and teachers with support of assessment specialists.

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Teacher Leadership in Singapore:

The Next Wave of Effective Leadership

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Abstract

This article provides the practical and theoretical justifications for the growth of teacher leadership, in the Singapore education context. It argues that since 2001, the importance of teacher leadership has been growing, and more significantly in the last five years, which is due to several factors. First, the race towards attaining 21st century competencies in students, yet maintaining academic rigour in terms of outcomes. Second, the growing complexity of education contexts. These conditions had caused schools to invest their resources in strengthening classroom instruction through building teacher capacity and competency, and the leadership that support it. However, for the latter, what is becoming evident in schools and education systems is the distribution of instructional leadership. This article provides the practical and theoretical discussions on the growing importance of teacher leadership using the Singapore education context as an illustrative case, and discusses implications for school leaders.

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Introduction

The birth of teacher leadership has its roots at the turn of the 21st century when the then education minister made known the revision to the education career structure with the creation of three career tracks: Leadership, Teaching and Senior Specialist (Teo, 2001). This new career structure seeks to enhance career choice and advancement within the education profession. This would then enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Educators who joined the teaching force have the choice to specialize as teachers, leaders or senior specialists. Within each track, an educator can then attain progressive positions which commensurate with appropriate salary grades. In the Leadership track, an educator in a school context can progressively advance to become Subject Head, Head of Department, Vice-Principal, and Principal. An educator can also choose to become a specialist in specific fields of education (e.g., curriculum, psychology, testing, research) with similar progressive positions in the Senior Specialist track but residing at the Headquarters. In the Teaching track, an educator in the school context can progressively advance to become Senior Teachers (STs) and Lead Teachers (LTs). The primary core roles of STs and LTs are to develop teachers in their respective schools through deepening of their pedagogical knowledge impacting on classroom teaching and learning. The importance of teacher leaders received renewed emphasis in the establishment of the Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST) in 2010, especially with the call for professionalizing the teaching profession through teacher-led collaborative professional development (Ho, 2009). Since then, the Teaching track has been gradually strengthened. Teacher leaders can now progress from ST to LT positions within the school context, and then to become Master Teachers (MTTs) and then Principal Master Teachers (PMTTs), which is the pinnacle position of a teacher leader that is considered on par with school principals in terms of salary grade.

This article centrally argues that teacher leadership is the next step forward towards building the capacity of schools to improve, albeit using the Singapore education context. It first provides the justification for the growing importance of teacher leadership in the practice realm. It then provides the theoretical support to the growing importance of teacher leadership using relevant literature. Finally, the article discusses the practical implications for school leaders in terms of supporting teacher leadership in schools.

Growing Importance of Teacher Leadership in Singapore

The introduction of a major policy initiative in the Singapore education system coined as 'Teach Less, Learn More' (TLLM) (Tharman, 2005) in 2005 marks a significant shift in emphasis from academic achievement to holistic student outcomes (e.g., 21st century competencies). This, however, does not imply the dilution of the former. Rather, schools now have to invest in the pursuit of holistic outcomes of education without diluting the longstanding academic rigour that schools in Singapore have consistently maintained (Hairon & Dimmock, 2012). The TLLM policy initiative also marks the growing recognition that schools need to be given increasing autonomy to craft its school curriculum in order to fulfill the broad education policies stipulated by the education ministry. This is understandable bearing in mind that schools are to work within their unique contextual affordances in order to implement education initiatives and policies. Furthermore, schools are expected to focus on specific holistic student outcomes which are consistent with its vision, mission, and objectives in view of limited resources. In fact, schools in Singapore are strongly encouraged to adopt two forms of school niches - Learning for Life Programme (LLP) and Applied Learning Programme (ALP). This serves to help schools provide curricula that support students to learn beyond the pursuit of academic achievements. The autonomy to craft emerging and innovative curricula is thus a necessity in order to attain the vision of the TLLM. However, autonomy within the school context needs to reach down

to the level of teachers teaching in classroom. They are the ones who will be the final implementers of education policies. The success of education policies thus lies in the hands of classroom teachers, and they must therefore be accorded the autonomy, albeit within the scope of the school's overall school curriculum framework. The importance of teachers being the final link between education policies and students was explicitly expressed by the then education minister (Tharman, 2005).

The need for greater autonomy at the school level - including that of teachers in matters of teaching and learning, is also increasingly perceived as important because of the growing complexity in the education contexts. Education contexts are getting increasingly complex insofar as the changes taking place within these contexts are characterized by growing intensity, rapidity, fluidity and uncertainty. Concomitantly, schools are expected to satisfy the needs of multiple school stakeholders which are increasingly getting more demanding and complex - outside school (e.g., social media, parental groups, private and government organizations) and within school (e.g., teachers, students). School leaders thus have to mobilize and optimize physical and human resources towards shared organizational goals in increasingly complex educational contexts. In an increasingly complex environment, it is no surprise that much of the decision-making power is devolved to school leaders and teachers who are able to respond to day-to-day demands and issues in a quick and appropriate manner and sensitive to schools' contextual uniqueness. Policy implementation must truly indeed be left to schools to operationalize, and hence the need to give greater autonomy to schools. The increasing complexity in the education contexts is consistent with the broader and more universal phenomenon of globalisation, which is now becoming more volatile, disruptive and even treacherous (e.g., computer hacking, or terror threats). This explains why the term VUCA has been used to describe the current state of world affairs - as being volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous.

There are two possible reasons for the rising complexity in education contexts. First, the general weakening of classifications in social relationships and boundaries, and the second, the departure from organized social structure to network culture (Hartley, 2007). An example of the former is the general rise in parental demands, expectations and intrusions into teachers' professional practice. Another example is parents using social media platforms to assert their voice and influence, instead of the formal communication channels. An example of the latter is the general rise in partnerships between schools and external organizations - having the common belief that synergistic collaborations would bring about greater output in contrast to the sum of individual work. For example, there are increasing opportunities for school leaders and teachers in Singapore to collaborate with others outside their own schools whom they can connect and collaborate. It has been observed that contemporary reforms in the public service demand greater 'joined-up' or 'network' regime of governance – a societal culture wherein all categories and classifications are weakened and rendered increasingly permeable (a flexible 'liquid modern' view of space and time), and the new work order consistent with the knowledge economy (where individuals work and learn beyond bureaucratic enclosures using their loose spatial and temporal codes) (Hartley, 2007). Technological advances in communication have also aided significantly in the weakening of classifications in social structure and growth of the network culture (Castells, 1996). The idea of the rising complexity in society is not new, but has been a focus of study by complexity theorists (e.g., Bar-Yam, 1997). It has been observed that the history of human civilization reflects a progressive increase in complexity. Bar-Yam (1997) postulates that when complexity of collective behaviours increases beyond that of an individual human being then hierarchical controls become ineffective, and must then yield to networked systems. It is also argued that the magnitude of networked systems will grow to become large scale network systems due to human societies having increasing resources to support large

scale complexities in order to satisfy ever growing needs of societies in globalised nation states. The movement towards complexity in human societies is therefore expected.

It is therefore understandable that contemporary school leaders expend more time and energy in managing increasingly complex cross-boundary relationships. It is also therefore not surprising that school leaders resort to distributed forms of leadership where decisions are delegated and shared to other staff members beyond the purview of school principals. In the Singapore context, delegation or sharing of leadership decisions to middle managers such as department heads (HODs) or subject heads (SHs) has been a common place for more than two decades, especially that pertaining to instruction. In this sense, distributed leadership is closely tied to instructional leadership insofar as distributed leadership affords instructional leadership practices to be delegated, dispersed, shared or distributed to other staff members beyond the school principals or vice-principals. The link between instructional leadership and distributed leadership has in fact been well observed (Lieberman & Miller, 2011; Spillane & Louis, 2002; Timperley, 2005; Lee, Hallinger, & Walker, 2012). In this sense, instructional leadership practices become more dispersed across the school organization, making it more effective to bring about enhancements in teaching and learning.

However, over the last decade, leadership decisions pertaining to instruction have been further distributed to teacher leaders - formal and informal, in response to the increasing complexities in education contexts. This is a result of the growing demands placed on schools so much so that administrative decisions have to be passed on from senior to middle leaders, which result to middle leaders distributing their decisions on instructional matters to teacher leaders. In schools, these teacher leaders include formal ones such as STs and LTs, and informal ones such as Subject and Level Representatives/Coordinators, and Professional Learning Community (PLC) Team Leaders – all of which are involved in making leadership decisions on instruction. The primary role of STs

is to mentor beginning teachers and teachers with teaching issues, and support the school's overall effort at developing teachers through professional conversations and role-modeling on teaching and learning. The role of LTs includes that of STs plus leading and supporting teacher development within a school cluster (or district). The STs and LTs usually coordinate their work with the School Staff Developers (SSDs) in their respective schools. The SSDs, however, are subsumed in the Leadership track (i.e., a management position) and is part of the Senior Management Team of the school. The SSDs' primary role is to oversee the overall schools' training and development needs and goals. Outside schools, formal teacher leaders include MTTs and PMTs. The MTT's role focuses on developing the pedagogical development in their respective specific subject areas (such as, Mathematics, Science and English Language) and developing the competency of teachers teaching in their specific subject areas. The PMT's role may include the role of MTs, as well as mentoring and grooming STs, LTs and MTTs to grow as teacher leaders. Both MTTs and PMTTs resides at the headquarters of the education ministry (AST). While formal teacher leaders have designations that are formally given by the education ministry and are pegged to specific substantive salary grades, informal leaders are designations given informally by the respective schools and are not pegged to specific substantive salary grades. The formal teacher leadership positions are also located within the 'Teaching' career track, or Teaching Track for short, whereby a teacher can progress to higher positions – ST, LT, MMT and PMTT. This stands in contrast to the Leadership track (e.g., Subject Heads, Heads of Department, Vice-Principal, Principal) and Senior Specialist track, who are curriculum specialists in the respect subject domains (Refer to *https://www.moe.gov.sg/careers/teach/career-information*).

With regard to informal leadership roles, Subject Representatives or Coordinators focus on planning, coordinating, implementing and reviewing of the curriculum within the specific subject areas in their respective schools. They work directly with the department heads in

their respective subject areas to assist the coordination of the implementation and review of the curriculum. Another group of teachers that may be appointed in the informal leadership role are the Level Representatives or Coordinators. Their primary role is to coordinate the planning, coordinating, implementing and reviewing of the curriculum within the specific grade levels (e.g., Grade 1 or Grade 2), and student development matters (e.g., discipline, counselling) in their respective schools. They work directly with the Year Heads to ensure that the curriculum aimed at the grade level learning activities are planned, coordinated, implemented and reviewed according to the school goals.

The recent boost to strengthen the Teaching track by increasing the pool of teacher leaders (Heng, 2014) only attests to the need to effectively address the growing demands placed on schools to provide more diverse teaching approaches and learning outcomes. STs, LTs, MTTs, and PMTTs have grown to be recognized as pedagogical leaders who can potentially aid in the effective translation of educational policies to classroom teaching and learning. They therefore play a crucial role in supporting the respective department heads in the effective delivery of the curriculum, and the growing demands placed on schools to implement teaching strategies that meet the 21st century learning needs of students. The effectiveness of distributed leadership to enhance instruction is therefore dependent on how well instructional leadership is distributed to middle leaders and teacher leaders.

From Instructional to Distributed to Teacher Leadership

The links between leadership and successful schools, or successful organization or institution, has been well established. For centuries – as demonstrated in the writings of Plato, Caesar and Plutarch (Bass, 1981), it has been assumed that leadership is critical to the success of any human endeavor (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Marzano et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis of 70 empirical studies highlighted that

the average effect size of school leadership (e.g., building a sense of community, establishing school routines, providing teachers with necessary resources, and advocating for school stakeholders) on student achievement is approximately 0.25. Robinson et al.'s (2008) analysis of 12 studies identified five leadership dimensions in which instructional leadership significantly affected student outcomes. These leadership practices include establishing goals and expectations; resourcing strategically; planning and coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. It is therefore no wonder that Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2006) assert that school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on student learning. This conclusion is logically persuasive taking into consideration that teachers and their classroom teaching has the closest and direct impact on student learning within the school context. It is also logically persuasive to consider that school leadership comes in second because school leaders' effects in supporting classroom teaching is all encompassing (e.g., teaching resources, physical spaces and school climate or culture), albeit indirect most of the time. It is therefore understandable that Leithwood et al. (2006) assert that school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. As the main business of schools remain to be on teaching and learning, leadership that supports teaching and learning will remain to be salient. This explains why the importance of instructional leadership for school effectiveness and improvement never had waned over the decades since 1970s (Hallinger, 2005).

Instructional leadership, which has been expounded by many scholars (e.g., Hallinger, 2005, 2010; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1987, 1988), albeit conceptualized primarily within the domain of the school principal. In spite of the absence of an explicit definition of instructional leadership (King, 2002), a generally held view amongst

proponents is that instructional leadership entails school leaders guiding teachers as they engage in activities directly influencing the learning and growth of students (c.f., Davidson, 1992; Duke, 1987; Leithwood & Duke, 1998; Leithwood et al., 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; O'Donnell & White, 2005; Smith & Andrews, 1989). In terms of the scope of its operationalization, Hallinger and his colleagues (e.g., Hallinger & McCary, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) developed a framework consisting of three broad aspects of leadership practices. These include: 1) defining the school mission, 2) managing the instructional program, and 3) promoting the school climate. Building on these ideas, Hallinger and Heck (1998, pp. 162-163) explored the relationship between leadership and student achievement, and developed a three-fold classification of principal effects of instructional leadership:

1. **Direct effects** – where the principal's action influence school outcomes.
2. **Mediated effects** – where principal actions affect outcomes indirectly through other variables (such as teacher commitment, instructional practices or school culture).
3. **Reciprocal effects** – where the principal affects teachers and teachers affect the principal and through these processes outcomes are affected.

Of the three types of effects, Hallinger and Heck (1998) concluded that the mediated effects yielded more consistent findings stating that principals exercise "a measurable, though indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement" (p. 186). This is consistent with Ylimaki's (2007) observation that much of the literature on direct instructional leadership approaches were in the 1980s, but more recent literature advises principals to share instructional leadership in ways that build capacity for school transformation, and ultimately, improvement in student learning.

The indirect instructional leadership practices by school principals suggest that the more direct instructional leadership practices are

transferred to other school staff members such as middle leaders (e.g., department heads) and teacher leaders (e.g., senior teachers). The role of middle leaders' work are now increasingly focused on managing the curriculum (or the instructional programme) such as supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, promoting professional development and maintaining high visibility. They can also be considered as sharing the work of instructional leadership of school principals. However, increasingly over time teacher leaders (i.e., informal or formal non-management positions) are also increasingly roped in to coordinate the curriculum, develop staff members, and monitor teachers' teaching practices. It is thus not surprising that distributed leadership involves four key practices (Hairon & Goh, 2015). First, relinquishing of authority to staff members but within certain bounded limits *(bounded empowerment)*. Second, develop leadership in staff members to make appropriate decisions that positively impact on student learning outcomes *(developing leadership)*. Third, share decisions on instruction and curriculum with staff members *(shared decisions)*. Fourth, promote collective engagement among staff members *(collective engagement)*.

It makes sense therefore to closely tie instructional leadership to distributed leadership whether obliquely or directly - as in using the term 'distributed instructional leadership' (Lieberman & Miller, 2011; Spillane & Louis, 2002; Timperley, 2005; Klar, 2012a, 2012b; Blitze & Modeste, 2015; Halverson & Clifford, 2013; Ng & Ho; 2012; David, 2009; Halverson, Kelley & Shaw, 2014; Brauckmann, Geißler, Feldhoff, & Pashiardis, 2016). Nevertheless, empirical studies supporting this link has still room for further theory building. In this regard, the notion of a 'distributed instructional leadership' needs to be questioned. First and foremost, is there a substantive construct of 'distributed instructional leadership'? Or is it merely a tight association of two substantive constructs? Surely, the path towards another form of 'adjectival' leadership as cautioned by Mulford (2008) , whereby one creates a form of leadership by adding any

adjective to the word 'leadership' and gets away without actually defining and operationalizing the construct, needs to be avoided. Second, although Leithwood et al. (2006) had argued that distributed leadership has been identified as one of the six claims on successful school leadership, they did not draw sufficient empirical studies to tie together the two substantive constructs. While some have empirically attempted to tie these two constructs together (e.g., Lee, Hallinger, & Walker, 2012; Hairon & Gopinathan, 2015; Klar, 2012a, 2012b; Halverson & Clifford, 2013; Halverson, Kelley & Shaw, 2014), more empirical studies are still needed especially in distinguishing the two constructs apart, and in determining if or if not the construct on 'distributed instructional leadership' is a substantive construct that is uniquely different to the two. Notwithstanding ongoing work at combining or integrating these two constructs, what remains to be compelling is the close association between them. The fact that school principals improve teaching and learning indirectly (Leithwood et al., 2006) and that the effects of instructional leadership are indirect suggest that instructional leadership's dependency or inter-dependency with distributed leadership is persuasively credible.

The rise in distributed leadership will inevitably result to a rise in teacher leadership. As discussed earlier, a key operationalization of distributed leadership is the relinquishing of decision-making power to others, albeit within certain boundaries according to the context where leadership operates (Hairon & Goh, 2015). Besides distributing instructional leadership practices to middle leaders (e.g., department heads), there is a further need to distribute instructional leadership practices to teachers who can lead closer to the ground level (e.g., senior teachers). As argued earlier, this is because middle leaders are increasingly taking on more administrative tasks so much so that some key instructional leadership tasks need to be distributed further down to teachers who can lead others in matters of instruction. In the Singapore context, they are known as teacher leaders. Although it can be argued that middle leaders such as department heads can generally be considered as teacher leaders, in the Singapore context,

the identity of middle leaders is predominantly management. They have lesser teaching hours and spend most of their time in administrative and management matters. Furthermore, they are key members of the senior management committee along with the principal and vice-principal in making significant school level decisions. They are also highly involved in the appraisal of teachers across the school. Their primary source of influence and thus their power cannot escape the appraisal factor. These conditions make them to be less of teacher leaders. As defined by York-Barr and Duke (2004), teacher leadership is the "process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement" (pp. 287–288). Hairon et al. (2015) defined teacher leadership as the enactment of influence by teachers, individually or collectively, on school stakeholders but primarily fellow teachers towards shared goals pertaining to improvements in teaching and learning. From these two definitions, one distinct feature of teacher leaders is that they are first and foremost teachers, and secondly, leading fellow teachers. What defines the identity of teachers is not the given job title, rather the day-to-day practices of what teachers are preoccupied with. This explains - at least in the Singapore context, the difficulty in considering middle leaders as teacher leaders.

Moving beyond the question "Who are teacher leaders?" is the question "What do teacher leaders do?". Drawing from key literature and case study findings on teacher leadership, Hairon et al. (2015) highlighted three teacher leadership practice dimensions: (1) building collegial and collaborative culture, (2) promoting teacher development and learning, and (3) enabling change in teachers' teaching practices. They have also highlighted the importance of intentional influence in the enactment of teacher leadership practices. These three teacher leadership practices dimensions clearly serves to impact on teaching practices, albeit with varying directness. The teacher leadership practice which potentially has the most direct

impact on teaching and learning is enabling change in teachers' teaching practices. These could include lesson feedback on lesson observations, providing teaching and learning materials, identification gaps in student learning from analysis of students' test results, and monitoring the completion of specific teaching strategies. The next teacher leadership practice which can potentially impact on teaching and learning is promoting teacher development and learning. This impact is less direct than practices on enabling teachers' teaching practices. This could include discussions between mentor and mentee on how to improve classroom teaching, providing workshops to teachers on using specific teaching strategies and resources, and helping teachers build personal professional development plans. The next teacher leadership practice is building collegial and collaborative culture. This has potentially furthest impact in relation to the first two. Building a culture that is collegial and collaborative provides the social milieu in which teachers can learn from one another and work with one another to improve teaching and learning. The examples on the operations of these three teacher leadership practices obviously indicate that teacher leadership practices are instructional in nature. Hence, it is fair to say that teacher leadership practices are essentially instructional leadership practices. These are outcomes of the distribution of instructional leadership practices which middle leaders used to enact in the past. Drawing from the Hallinger and his colleagues' early conceptions of principal's instructional leadership framework (e.g., Hallinger & McCary, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), principals still do retain the dimension on 'defining the school mission', and middle leaders (e.g., department heads) still retain the primary role of 'managing the instructional program'. However, teacher leaders (e.g., senior teachers) assist in managing the instructional programmes at the different grade levels. They have also taken more instructional leadership practices that are considered 'promoting the school climate'. They now play - at least in the Singapore education context, an increasing role in supporting the building of school

culture, promoting teacher development and learning, and monitoring students' learning. They do these through platforms such as mentoring, professional learning communities (e.g., action research, lesson study), school-based workshops, coordinating and monitoring the usage of teaching and learning materials, and monitoring and resolving student conceptual gaps.

The role of teacher leaders will set to grow as demands on schools in terms of student learning outcomes increase and the complexity of education contexts continues to be on the rise. In such situations, the demands on teachers to increase their teaching capacity will rise, as well as the leadership support for this. In contemporary times, leadership truly cannot be in the hand of solo heroic leaders, but needs to be distributed not only to middle leaders, but all the way to teacher leaders, who are truly working side-by-side with teachers. This reality then attests to Robinson's et al.'s (2008) claim that leadership is most effective when they are closest to the classroom. This, however, do not necessarily suggest that principals are to be closest to the classroom - as argued that most instructional leadership practices of school principals are indirect. Rather than the principal, the practices of instructional leadership can be closest to classroom teaching, but enacted by teacher leaders. This explanation would then resolve the seeming contradiction between proponents of instructional leadership being direct (e.g., Robinson et al., 2008) and indirect (e.g., Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

Implications

The need to extend the distribution of instructional leadership from senior leaders to middle leaders, and finally to teacher leaders have several implications to practitioners, which are closely related to the four dimensions of distributed leadership proposed by Hairon and Goh (2015): *bounded empowerment*, *developing leadership*, *shared decisio*n and *collection engagement*. First and foremost, clarity of roles of teacher leaders. Teacher leaders need to know the scope or

boundary of their influence, and thus the specific tasks that they are to commit and engage. This is closely tied to the dimension on bounded empowerment, whereby school leaders - senior or middle leaders - relinquished specific, but not all, decision-making power to others. Without this clarity of roles, teacher leaders' confidence can potentially be undermined. Without this role clarity, teachers might be uncertain which leadership directions they should follow. As espoused by Hairon et al. (2015), the three dimensions or aspects of teacher leadership are *building collegial and collaborative relations*, *promoting teacher development and learning*, and *enabling change in teachers' teaching practice*. These are consistent with the education ministry's role framework on teacher leadership which includes *professional collaboration, mentoring*, *teaching and learning*, and *professional ethos* (communications with Academy of Singapore Teachers officers, 15 Dec 2016). The aspect on *professional ethos* can be subsumed under the first three teacher leadership dimensions. When teacher leaders enact the first three dimensions, they are inevitably and concomitantly role-modeling the outcomes of *professional ethos*. Even though the term *professional ethos* could be about more specific professional values such as passion, integrity, and excellence, they are manifested in specific enactments which teacher leaders engage, including the three dimensions stated above. Notwithstanding the relevance of the teacher leadership framework provided by the education ministry, four aspects in the framework are still broad. School leaders still need to operationalize each of these aspects or each of the three dimensions (Hairon et al., 2015) in ways that meet the school vision, mission and objectives. School leaders do need to know which specific teacher leadership tasks which can be taken away from middle leaders' work so that middle leaders' instructional leadership tasks do not overlap with teacher leaders' instructional leadership tasks.

The second implication has to do with the capacity and competency of teacher leaders, and hence the development of teacher leaders. Once the roles of teacher leaders have been clearly

operationalized, their capacity and competency in carrying out the roles along with its specific tasks or practices need to be built. In the Singapore school setting, formal teacher leaders such as STs and LTs are required to take part in executive programmes that develop leaders in the Teaching track. While STs are required to complete a 10-week full-time programme as part of building their teacher leadership knowledge, skills and attitude, LTs they are required to complete another 10-week full-time programme. However, school leaders cannot solely rely on these 10-week programmes. In other words, a 10-week, albeit full-time, still cannot completely prepare a teacher leader to function effectively for the next 10 or more years in his or her roles. There need to be continuous professional development opportunities for teacher leaders to continually sharpen their teacher leadership capacity and competency. These could take the form of school-based or district-based learning communities among teacher leaders, mentoring of STs by LTs, and mentoring of LTs by MTTs. The need to develop teacher leadership capacity and competency is consistent with the dimension of *developing leadership* (Hairon & Goh, 2015). However, the developing of leadership capacity and competency should also include developing teachers' knowledge and skills in their respective subject areas. Doing this would strengthen their source of influence while leading others. Without the development of teacher leadership capacity and competency, school senior and middle leaders will not be willing to distribute or delegate their instructional leadership roles and tasks to teacher leaders. Senior and middle leaders would be more willing to relinquish decision-making power to teachers whom they can trust to do the needed roles and tasks.

The third implication has to do with shared decision. School leaders need to establish the code of practice that teacher leaders' decisions on teaching and learning are not theirs alone. As teacher leadership practices are distributed from middle leaders, the decisions that they make on teaching and learning are shared with middle leaders. In other words, while middle leaders have

relinquished certain instructional leadership decision-making power to teacher leaders, they must be in the know to these decisions, and thus are not immune from being accountable to the outcomes of these decisions. In other words, besides sharing the decisions of teacher leaders, middle leaders also have shared accountability with the outcomes resulting from decisions made by teacher leaders. Furthermore, as teacher leaders' source of influence is not based on formal relationship of power to appraise others, rather one of collegial relationships among equals, teacher leaders would tend to make decisions on teaching and learning through consensual means. The decision-making process in such decision-making process would be more shared among their fellow colleagues. This form of decision-making process, which is more shared and consensual, is mutually appropriate for both teacher leaders and their colleagues. Teachers would be comfortable to be led by teacher leaders who do not employ formal, positional, hierarchical and appraisal power. Teacher leaders, likewise, would share the same sentiment. Furthermore, it would not be surprising to see teacher leaders allowing others to take the lead on specific decision-making processes on teaching and learning. This is also another form of shared decision insofar as teacher leaders give away their leadership to other colleagues in the decision-making process on teaching and learning. This has direct implication to the fourth implication.

The fourth implication has to do with collective engagement. This is the fourth dimension of the distributed leadership construct (Hairon & Goh, 2015). In order to promote the effective distribution of instructional leadership practices from middle leaders to teacher leaders, school leaders need to provide time and space for teachers to work collaboratively together. This include any platforms that support teachers coming together to learn and work collaboratively so as to improve teaching and learning (e.g., professional learning communities, mentoring, and online discussions). The creation of time and space for teachers to collectively engage with one another is essential for shared decisions to take place. As discussed earlier, as

teacher leaders' source of influence is not formal, positional and hierarchical, their influence would then depend on the relationship of bond and trust in order to get the commitment and motivation of their fellow teachers. The time and space for teachers to interact with one another would build bonds and trusting relationships. The notion of collective engagement is also consistent with assertion made that distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of enmeshed interactions between leaders and followers (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, 2004; Spillane et al., 2001). The need to promote time and space for teachers to collectively engage with one another to support teaching and learning would also mean that school leaders need to coordinate the flow of decisions pertaining teaching and learning. As argued earlier, the distribution of decisions to others within the school organization does not mean devoid of knowledge nor accountability to these decisions that have been relinquished. School leaders thus need to know how decisions emanating from the various instructional leadership roles are coordinated in terms of alignment and synergy.

Conclusion

The attention given to the development of the Teaching track is a move in the right direction. This is because the expansion of the pool of teacher leaders means the expansion and distribution of instructional leaders to provide the needed leadership support in response to the increasing demands placed on teaching and learning. Leadership is second to teaching in terms of school level effects on student learning outcomes. In the Singapore education system, teacher leaders - specifically, those with formal roles (STs, LTs, MTTs, PMTTs), are considered to be pedagogical leaders who will lead the teaching force towards excellence in their teaching profession. This vision, however, depends to a large extent on how leaders at the system, district and school levels synergize their efforts at providing clarity to the teacher leader role, which would have a range of positive ripple effects such as career choice, recognition and

aspiration, development of competencies, commitment and confidence, and job satisfaction. The attention and investment on these matters would determine the pace of development of teacher leaders in the years ahead.

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Staff Management in Privatized Education Systems and the Professionalism of Teachers: The Case of Macao

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Abstract

It is believed that the effectiveness and efficiency of school administration can be enhanced in a privatized system of education. However, such belief is narrowly based on studies on school choice and such impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The issue of staff management in understanding school administration is essentially overlooked. Using Macao as a case study for illustration and drawing on data from a qualitative study, this paper seeks to argue that school administration against a specific context of privatization can actually contribute to the unprofessionalism of teachers. The study illustrates that staff management should not be merely taken at an individual level as an interpersonal issue about trust or a matter of conflict management, but should be understood against a wider context, and also shows that schools in a privatized system of education are not necessarily effective or efficient in managing their staff.

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Introduction

Over the last few decades, the 'choice' rhetoric of privatization/marketization has often been put forward in many educational reforms to address the concerns of the efficiency and effectiveness of school administration. This advocacy could be seen as a response to the inadequacy of centralized education systems, which are usually characterized as bureaucratic where schools are inflexible in administering themselves. Unsurprisingly, such a schooling system is considered inefficient and ineffective in responding to parents' demands or meeting students' needs. Indeed, the last few decades have witnessed a plethora of studies echoing the 'choice' rhetoric examining how privatization/marketization can allow schools to be more efficiently and effectively (e.g. designing more tailor-made, if not innovative, pedagogies) to meet students' individual needs (e.g. Cookson, 1992; Tannenbaum, 1995; Ladd, 2003; Bulkley, et al. 2010). While it remains debatable whether privatization/marketization provides more choices for parents and their children and/or whether privatization/marketization indeed enhances the provision of quality teaching (e.g. Brain and Klein, 1994; Gewirtz et al. 1995; Burch 2009; Orfield and Frankenberg, 2013), the major focus of most studies in the existing literature is on the relationship between school administration and the quality of teaching/learning against the context of privatization. Supposedly, staff management is also a crucial area in understanding the effectiveness and efficiency of school administration (e.g. Brazelay, 1992; Gorton and Alston, 2012). But, most studies seem to take staff management as an interpersonal issue (i.e. the social or person skills of the administrators) or a matter of conflict management (e.g. the style of the school management in handling conflicts), in that the emphasis is essentially placed on an individual level stressing how school management should foster a cooperative working environment that is conducive to conflict resolution or, even better, trust building (e.g. Cormick et al. 1996; Fleming and Amesbury, 2001; Rahim, 2002; Day et al. 2011; cf. Hargreaves, 1994; Hargreaves and

Fink, 2006). Seemingly, the wider context, which makes possible for conflict resolution or trust building, is overlooked, if not completely. Needless to mention, the power imbalance between school administrators and teachers in staff management is rarely addressed. Putting aside power imbalance, we should expect effective and efficient schools to respect highly their teachers' professional judgements and their teachers to enjoy a higher level of professional autonomy. In this way, school administration could, in turn, play a role in enhancing the professionalism of teachers. Despite the prevailing advocacy of privatization, although it remains to be researched whether school administration is indeed more effective or efficient in a privatized educational system, not much scholarly attention has been directed to investigating the link between school administration and the professionalism of teachers in a privatized education system. This paper seeks to explore this area. As any meaningful illustration should be contextualized, Macao, given its education system being essentially privatized, is taken as a special case for discussion.

In this paper, I seek to argue that school administration against a specific context of privatization can actually contribute to the unprofessionalism of teachers by referring to a qualitative study in Macao. In what follows, I shall first provide a general sketch of the social context against which our discussion is set: That is, a brief account on the development of Macao and some major changes in its education system over the last few decades, especially those related to our understanding of staff management. And then, I shall discuss the research design of the qualitative study and the data derived from which are used for specific illustration in this paper (including their limitations). After that, I shall move on to underscore some common practices of schools in Macao concerning their staff management and to argue how the fact that teachers in Macao are hired on a yearly contract basis could undermine their professionalism.

Macao: Colonial Legacy and Recent Development

Macao was a Portuguese colony but was returned to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1999. Basic education for the local Chinese in Macao was ignored under Portuguese rule between 1887 and 1999 (cf. Gunn, 1996; Porter, 1996). Because of this colonial neglect, basic education for the local Chinese was essentially provided by the civil society: i.e. by private schools funded and managed by a variety of organizations, such as individuals, religious institutions, trading associations, neighbourhood associations, lineage associations, and the Federation of Labour Union (Clayton, 2009). Unsurprisingly, this colonial neglect was accompanied by a non-existence of institutionalized teacher training (cf. Vong and Wong 2010). There was essentially no local provision of teacher training before the 1980s; and, after that, the provision still basically relied on the People's Republic of China (PRC) or Taiwan. Even nowadays, many teachers in Macao are trained in the PRC or Taiwan, although some local tertiary institutions – e.g. the University of Macau – have gradually been taking up this task.

This colonial neglect of basic education had implications for the provision of quality teaching during the colonial time. Without support of any kinds from the Portuguese colonial government, private schools had only very limited funding for operation (cf. Yee, 1990). As a result, most private schools, understandably, could not afford to create decent infra-structure for a quality learning environment or to hire qualified teachers to provide a decent quality of basic education. The quality of basic education simply varied tremendously across schools. Besides, there was no coordination amongst schools: A variety of curriculums adopted by different schools types (also see the section on research design and data below) – a Portuguese curriculum for public schools, a Taiwanese curriculum for Catholic schools, a PRC curriculum for most schools run by traditional organizations, and a Hong Kong curriculum for other schools – coexisted; and, no common standardized examinations are set at the end of each level of education (Bray, 1992;

Choi and Koo, 2001; Bray and Koo, 2004). In order to get hired at school, teachers just needed to show that they were capable of teaching a curriculum adopted by their schools. While there were no common entry requirements for teachers, many teachers simply did not receive any teacher training at all; only very few had a bachelor's degree or received teacher training of some kind from the PRC or Taiwan and later on from Hong Kong (cf. Bray, 2002; Wu and Vong, 2016). Indeed, even in the late 1980s, only about 30% of teachers in Macao were qualified to teach (Wong, 1991). In brief, the general quality of education in Macao was in great doubt.

This colonial neglect of basic education also had implications for school administration. Private schools were essentially exempted from governmental regulation but enjoyed autonomy nearly in every aspect of school administration; e.g. private schools have their respective curriculums, examination criteria, and even academic calendars with different numbers of holidays as well as different holidays (Wong and Chan, 2014). What was of relevance in this paper was their autonomy in staff management. Private schools designed their own policies of teacher hiring and promotion, decided their specific wage and benefit packages for their prospective teaching staff, and set their own school ethics and guidelines for allocating job tasks to the teaching staff as well as for monitoring them. Teachers hired by public schools enjoyed a highly privileged tenure position, received a very high salary from the Portuguese colonial government, and taught a relatively small class (e.g. class size was usually smaller than 25) with fewer working hours. In stark contrast, all teachers in private schools were hired on a yearly contract basis, received laughable meagre pays (at the time even lower than many manual workers as well as casino dealers which did not require much qualification), and taught a large class (e.g. class size was usually larger than 60) with very long working hours. Literally, private schools could hire whoever the schools, or more specifically their principals, considered as qualified; meanwhile, principals could also fire whoever they considered as disqualified.

It was common that principals hired their relatives or friends, even when their relatives or friends did not have any teaching qualifications. And, it was also a common practice for principals to hire teachers to teach subjects that did not match the teachers' majors; for example, a teacher who majored in fashion design was hired to teach the English language or a teacher who majored in Physics was asked to teach Chinese History. Besides, teachers were also asked to do job tasks unrelated to teaching or their schools at all. It was not unheard of that teachers were asked to work for their school's sponsoring body on weekends for free; for example, some teachers were asked to call parents of their students on an election day for the Legislative Council so as to persuade them to vote for candidates favoured by the sponsoring body of the school. There was no labour union or any institution that teachers could turn to if they wanted to lodge a complaint of being maltreated or having unreasonable termination of their contracts. According to the Labour Law 7/2008 (see http://bo.io.gov.mo/bo/i/2008/33/lei07_cn.asp) in Macao, as long as private schools as employers provided teachers as employees with a legally required amount of compensation, private schools could terminate their contracts with teachers even without giving the latter any notification in advance. Teachers dared not say 'no' to even unreasonable requests or packages for fear of being fired on the spot or simply failing to get their yearly contract renewed. And, if they were to be fired, they could turn to nowhere to complain about their unreasonable dismissals. Put simply, teachers hired in private schools were put in a very vulnerable position; they were treated by their private schools, or more accurately their principals, not as professionals but dispensable employees. If the lack of governmental support was considered as giving a weak foundation for the professionalism of teachers in Macao, then a lack of governmental intervention could actually be viewed as weakening further teachers' professionalism.

Since the 1999 handover and the setup of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) government, there has been a drastic increase in governmental investment in education. In particular, because of the increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP) resulting from the liberalisation of Macao's gambling laws in 2002 and the growth of the gambling and gaming sector, expenditure on education, including basic education, between 2002 and 2009 in total has nearly tripled; and, the total invested in every student has likewise tripled in absolute terms, increased from MOP$ 13,083 (US$1 is approximately equal to MOP$8) in 2002 to MOP$ 35,794 in 2009 (Wong and Chan, 2014). As a result, the goal of providing a lengthening free and compulsory basic education for all school-age students has gradually been achieved. And the provision of a free basic education has also become very institutionalized within a very short period of time: seven-year (one-year pre-primary and six-year primary education) basic education has become free and compulsory since 1995 and in 1997 this provision of free and compulsory education was extended to ten years (i.e. the previous seven-year basic education and three-year junior secondary education); and, from 2007 onwards, by law all school-age students have enjoyed fifteen years of free compulsory education (i.e. three-year pre-school education and six-year primary education and six-year secondary education). The Macao SAR government has basically achieved this goal by providing subsidies for existing private schools (rather than building new government schools) through inviting private schools to join a free education network. Indeed, more and more private schools have joined the free education network. At present, the majority of school-age children enjoy a free basic education at private schools inside the school network subsidized by the Macao SAR government, although the proportion of students outside the school net remains around 14-16% (Wong and Chan, 2014).

Apart from providing a free basic education for school-age children, more resources have also been invested to improve the pays and benefits of teachers hired in private schools in the hope that the

quality of teachers could be changed for the better. For example, monetary incentives in the form of monthly allowances from the government have been used to encourage in-service teachers to read a certificate/diploma in education. And, the qualifications of teachers have greatly increased over the last two decades. In contrast to the 1980s, when around 70% of teachers were unqualified to teach (Wong 1991), by 2007 about 80% of teachers in Macao were qualified to teach and many of them had a bachelor's degree or a post-graduate degree (the website of Macao Education and Youth Affair Bureau (DSEJ)). In addition, 'The legal frame for regulating teachers hired by private schools' (hereafter referred to as 'The Private Legal Frame') – a teacher law – was passed in March 2012 whereby the entry requirements of teachers at different educational levels (i.e. pre-primary, primary, and secondary teachers), their duties and working hours, and the pays and benefits for teachers of different qualifications and experiences and their promotional prospects were clearly set. In particular, private schools are expected to spend no less than 70% of the governmental subsidies received for their teachers' salaries and benefits. What all these measures suggest is not merely more regulation of teacher hiring but more protection for teachers hired in private schools.

However, all such efforts and thus improvements do not change the fact that most schools in Macao are private schools (rather than public schools). Over 95% of students attend private schools; the majority of them are run by the Catholic Church or traditional organizations (Bray and Koo, 2004). And, the majority of teachers (about 95%) are still hired in private schools. It is suggested that this privatized system has failed to provide high quality schooling in Macao (Tang and Morrison 1998). Indeed, despite such a drastic improvement in teachers' qualifications, the figure above suggests that by 2007 a significant proportion – some 20% – of teachers hired in private schools are still unqualified to teach. Besides, the passing of 'The Private Legal Frame' does not seem to change the fact that teachers hired in private schools remain in a vulnerable position:

legally speaking, private schools are still free to hire teachers to their liking, without reference to accepted qualifications; teachers remain hired on a yearly contract basis; and, private schools can fire them at any time without notifying them in advance, even if it were to be considered as an unreasonable dismissal, as long as they provide them with a legally required amount of compensation. It was true that in 2012 there was an initiative in Macao concerning the possibility for setting up professional ethics for teachers in Macao, and that this led to heat debates amongst teachers themselves. Some teachers even saw this situation as an opportunity of acquiring for teachers in Macao a professional status that had been enjoyed by their counterparts in many developed industrial societies. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers in Macao were not engaged in such a pursuit and some simply did not see teachers as professionals at all.

In sum, despite drastic changes in the Macao education system since the 1999 handover, the system remains a system of private schools whereby much of the Macao SAR government's responsibility lies on funding allocation and very general regulation of school practices aiming at making basic education more freely accessible to all school-age students, rather than enhancing the professional development of teachers and/or promoting a decent quality of teaching/learning. This is a specific context against which the link between school administration and the professionalism of teachers is to be explored. For specific illustrations in the following discussion, I shall draw on some findings from a qualitative study of teachers in Macao that I began in 2010 while teaching at the Faculty of Education, the University of Macau.

Research Design and Data

The research material used for illustrations below is derived from a larger scale qualitative study in Macao conducted between 2010 and 2013 in which teachers from the same school type being interviewed in group constitutes a part. The study seeks to look into how school

practices could be related to a number of hotly debated educational issues in contemporary Macao, such as high rates of grade retention, school dropouts, educational choices of final-year secondary students of different socio-economic background, and the professionalism of teachers. The major study targets include official statistics and documents (including school regulations of all schools and research findings on teachers and schools conducted by DSEJ posted on the DSEJ website), school dropouts, and students (in junior secondary form three and senior secondary form three) and teachers from different school types. Official statistics and documents are analysed and also referred to wherever necessary; school dropouts and senior secondary form-three students are interviewed individually; and, focus-group interviews are arranged for junior secondary form-three students as well as for teachers. In this paper I shall focus on the part of material collected from conducting focus-group interviews with teachers.

Teachers for the above-mentioned study were recruited from different school types. At present, there are four major types of schools in Macao: government schools, schools run by traditional organizations, schools run by the Catholic Church, and the remaining few so-called 'other' schools (e.g. a university-affiliated school, an international school, and few Protestant schools); the first type is public schools and the other three types are private schools run by their respective sponsoring bodies. While schools of the four types have their respective educational missions, schools of the same type share similar, if not the same, missions and practices (including setting similar school regulations for students and similar ethics and guidelines for teachers). In order to solicit teachers' views on school regulations, school practices related to grade retention, the professionalism of teachers, school administration, and the prospect of setting up of teachers' professional ethics in Macao, I recruited teachers from each school type and conducted a number of focus-group interviews for them. During each focus-group interview, each teacher of the group was asked to share freely with other teachers,

with my presence and a research student of mine as moderators, their views, usually with reference to their personal experiences, on the issues related to the above-mentioned topics.

In order to obtain a wider range of different views, I sought to use my social connections in Macao to recruit teachers of different years of experiences and ranking (i.e. frontline teachers or administrators; in Macao there is no further official differentiation in ranking amongst frontline teachers, in that head teacher is just a title rather than an official rank with a different pay and benefits; and, administrators, especially principals, are not necessarily promoted from frontline teachers but usually appointed by the governing board of schools). Despite the research design, given that there are only three government schools in Macao no teachers from government schools were recruited.

In the end, 24 teachers in total – 13 men and 11 women – were recruited from the three types of private schools: Nine from schools run by traditional organizations, eight from Catholic schools, and seven from 'other' schools. Eight teachers recruited are new teachers (teaching less than five years), another eight are experienced teachers teaching more than five years, and the remaining eight are very experienced teachers teaching more than ten years; while the majority are frontline teachers, there are three administrators. Teachers from each school type were divided into two groups for separate focus-group interviews; in total, six focus-group interviews by school type were conducted with the 24 teachers between March and June 2013. Each interview lasted slightly more than two hours; it was then transcribed and translated from Cantonese, a local dialect, to English. For the present purposes, two themes of the transcripts of six focus-group interviews are of relevance: staff management (especially the appraisal system and mechanisms of hiring and firing) and the professionalism of teachers. In particular, I seek to refer to what the teachers in this study say in the interviews (with fictitious names) as specific illustrations to support my argument that teachers are hired on a yearly contract basis, together with the existing administrative

practices in schools, could somehow undermine teachers' professionalism in Macao.

Before I move on to discussion, readers are reminded of the limitations of data reported below and should thus be cautious in interpreting the following specific illustrations. Data were collected from a small sample of self-selected teachers who were asked to recall their relevant experiences in discussing specific topics set in this part of the study, although the data were supplemented by and/or triangulated with information from various sources in the study. And, most of these self-selected teachers are recruited through a friend of mine who is very well-connected in the field of education in Macao. As this friend is self-positioned as more critical and dedicated than most teachers in Macao, it seems logical to expect that his recruits are perhaps somehow inclined to be more committed to the profession of teaching than an average teacher and also more critical on the topics discussed than most teachers. In recalling what happened to them as well as to their colleagues, the teachers may reconstruct their experiences; reliability could be an issue. Their accounts were not cross-referenced with people concerned; validity may be in doubt. And, what the teachers experienced and how they looked at the issues under discussion were not necessarily statistically representative.

Putting aside the issues of reliability and validity, I somehow consider that the ways in which teachers of this study expressed their views and used their personal experiences for illustrations should be analysed further and could very well be used as evidence supporting the criticism that most teachers in Macao are not so professional, although I would not infer this directly or firmly from these interviews. The theme that the teachers in this study were actually not so professional emerged during the focus-group interviews, which shocked me and my research assistant. While it remains to be researched that how typical these teachers are in terms of their professionalism as well as their views on professionalism, I suspect that these teachers offer some teachers' perspectives particular to

each school type and thus represent some specific teacher types. And yet, more work is required to verify this suspicion. Despite this and all these limitations, I argue that the views and experiences of the teachers interviewed are insightful and could be used for specific illustrations for the present exploratory purposes.

Staff Management and Teachers' Professionalism

To reiterate, since the 1999 handover, especially the passing of 'The Private Legal Frame' in 2012, the entry qualification for teachers has been legally set higher, and the work situation of teachers hired in private schools in Macao has also been improved. In principle, teachers hired in private schools in Macao now work considerably shorter hours (or receiving monetary compensation for extra work time) but for a much higher level of pay and benefits than did their predecessors a few decades ago. Private schools are required to pay their teachers according to their qualification, seniority, and also performance annually appraised; and, private schools are also required to assign their teaching staff to teaching duties, as well as non-teaching duties, with a weekly upper time limit. Undoubtedly, the majority of teachers hired in private schools have somehow benefited from these changes.

However, whether such changes have enhanced the professionalism of teachers in Macao remains to be seen for three major reasons. First, it is doubtful if the quality of teachers could be immediately improved right after the required entry qualification is set higher than before without making much governmental effort or without devoting much resource to improve teacher education. Second, in practice, unqualified teachers, old or new, are still around. It is true that the pays of teachers hired in private schools are now quite attractive relative to many other jobs (e.g. the occupation of dealers did not, and still does not, require essentially any qualification but dealers' pays had been much higher than teachers for many years, particularly since 2004). A teaching job was

especially attractive to qualified people when the economy did not do so well over the last few years. But, because of an increasing student population, teachers are in strong demand in Macao. Given this shortage and also a high turnover rate of teachers, it remains plausible for principals, albeit reluctantly, to hire unqualified teachers. Put slightly differently, despite 'The Private Legal Frame,' it is not illegal for private schools to hire unqualified teachers: As long as principals and individuals they want to hire have come to an agreement, the individuals who are even unqualified can still become teachers, albeit at a lower pay. And, the third reason for doubting the enhancement of the professionalism of teachers by 'The Private Legal Frame' is the fact that teachers hired in private schools remain hired on a yearly contract basis. To reiterate, according to the Labour Law 7/2008, as long as employers (i.e. private schools in this case) provide a required amount of compensation, they can fire their employees without being required to give notification in advance or even to provide reasons. Given the Labour Law 7/2008, and the fact that there are still no labour unions that teachers can turn to for lodging a complaint of maltreatment or unreasonable dismissals, teachers remain in a vulnerable position vis-a-vis private schools. I shall argue that school administration operating under these circumstances in Macao could set confining school ethics and guidelines, leaving principals' power unchallenged, and thus undermine the professionalism of teachers.

School Ethics and Guidelines for Teachers

Each organization has its expectations of its staff of different positions; and, the ethics of the organization is embedded in such expectations. With a view to making sure that its staff live up to its expectations, it seems sensible for an organization to make its expectations explicit to its staff, in the form of staff guidelines for example. Private schools in Macao are no exception: All private schools have designed their own school ethics and guidelines for their teachers; and, private schools of the same type tend to have a

similar, if not the same, set of school ethics and guidelines. However, regardless of school type, most school ethics and guidelines in Macao are basically concerned about administrative procedures (e.g. leave application) and teachers' appearance (e.g. dress code) and behaviours, as all teachers expressed in focus-group interviews. Here are some examples:

> *'There are two major parts in our school guidelines for staff. One is about behavioural norms in every aspect. … The other is like appendices of our contract, such as your rights and duties. … For example, the guidelines state clearly the procedures you should follow in applying for maternity leave.' (Kau, male, from a school run by traditional organizations)*

> *'Each teaching staff is given a booklet when joining our school – guidelines for staff. Just as there are school regulations for students, so there are also school guidelines for teachers. Most of the guidelines are about teachers' behaviours, appearances, and clothing. For example, teachers should be punctual, and you shouldn't smoke. … There are also some guidelines on teachers' qualifications – teachers should have such and such qualification on education. … But, much more attention is directed to teachers' outfits. … For example, it is stated that men teachers have to wear trousers and women teachers have to wear skirts. And there are more requirements for women; for example, the colour, length, and style of the skirt are specifically stated. It's a bit like a uniform. … Some guidelines are about work ethics. For example, teaching staff are not allowed to take up part-time jobs or accept gifts from parents.' (Suet, female, from a Catholic school)*

> *'Most guidelines for staff are about what are the appropriate look, behaviours, and attitudes of teachers. … There are also guidelines on what we should do when a black rainstorm or typhoon number eight is hoisted.' (Wan, female, from an 'other' school)*

It sounds sensible to give staff a sense of what is an appropriate dress code for their organizations. But, instead of stressing the professionalism of teachers, private schools in Macao are essentially concerned about how a teacher should dress himself/herself (e.g. the colour and length of a skirt) and how a teacher should look (e.g. their hair-style and appearance). And, some private schools even have strong views on how teachers should spend their leisure time (i.e.

what leisure activities are appropriate to teachers), as is revealed by a teacher in a case where his colleague is fired because of his private life.

> *Lung: I remember, two years ago, a male teacher in our school had an appalling private life after school – he went to pubs and discos every night. A lot of colleagues reported this to the principal. Well, it's obvious that he is unfit for a teacher. … He wasn't fired immediately simply because the gambling industry was booming and it was very difficult to find a replacement (teaching his subjects) at the time. … Finally, when the principal could find a replacement, he fired that teacher; and that teacher also accepted the fact that he wasn't fit for teaching. …*
>
> *Researcher: Does this kind of life style affect his teaching?*
>
> *Lung: Well, actually his private life didn't affect his teaching. But, as a teacher, he should be a role model for students, I think. Well, this is how we Chinese set higher (moral) expectations of teachers. (Lung, male, from a Catholic school)*

According to these descriptions, such school ethics and guidelines for teachers are not so much different from school regulations for students. In a way, we can say that teachers in Macao are not so much different from students being closely monitored by their schools. But, most teachers in this study openly accept such kind of control; some teachers, while admitting that some expectations on appearance and/or behaviour were perhaps rather strict, suggested their compliance somehow out of fear of having their contract terminated or not renewed. We can perhaps interpret teachers' deference or even compliance to strict, if not unreasonable, expectations as a consequence of teachers being hired on a yearly contract basis, thus of the power imbalance between school administrators and teachers, as a teacher also implies.

> *'I think teachers have to comply with their school ethics and guidelines. … The ethics and guidelines reflect the core values and goals of the school. … Besides, teachers are vulnerable contract worker paid to work for the school. Failing to do what is expected of them, teachers may find it hard to get their contract renewed. … Without clear guidelines, teachers would have made minimal effort. … It's absolutely necessary to have clear guidelines so as to make sure that every*

teacher does all assigned tasks.' (Yuen, female, from a school organized by traditional organizations)

But, what this teacher also suggests in explaining her acceptance of such control is that some teachers are actually not professionals but contract workers who need to be monitored. In other words, some teachers themselves also buy into the external/school standards in judging teachers by referring to their appearances and behaviours; I argue that this somehow suggests that such standards are ingrained in some teachers in Macao. And indeed, all the teachers in this study also see their appearance, behaviours, and life styles as constituting their professional identity, as a teacher makes explicit.

'We teachers are role models for students. … We have to pay attention to our behaviours. … How can we smoke, drink, and speak foul languages? … I think, teachers are a social role, social status, and a professional. Our image is very important. … I find schools' expectations sensible. It's reasonable to expect teachers to dress properly, especially women teachers. After all, we spend so much of our time teaching in classroom. If you don't dress properly, you may be a side-track to students, especially when they are at puberty stage. … It's a matter of impression. We have to be clean and tidy so as to show to people that we are professional.' (Wan, female, from an 'other' school)

In short, the views of the teachers in this study on the professionalism of teachers are at a superficial level, revolving around an appearance and/or behavioural level (e.g. teachers should not swear or smoke or drink; and, teachers should have a clean and tidy appearance in order to look professional). I argue that this observationis rooted in the power imbalance between school administration and teachers shaped by the existing Labour Law 7/2008: This law allows private school to set strict or even unreasonable demands on their teachers (in the form of school ethics and guidelines) and leaves their teachers with no option but compliance and even internalization of schools' demands; and this, in turn, undermines teachers' professionalism.

Monitoring of Teaching

If school ethics and guidelines are taken as an indirect and subtle mechanism of control over teachers, then perhaps principals' monitoring can be seen as a direct and explicit control mechanism. While principals' monitoring of teachers has already been partly incorporated in school ethics and guidelines, it is a rather common, albeit unspoken, practice for principals in Macao to carry out their daily patrolling. Principals patrol around the corridors of each floor of the school building, so that they can see how teachers teach (i.e. doing it outside of each classroom rather than getting into the classroom), and more specifically, they can see if each classroom is in a 'good' shape. At first glance, it seems reasonable that principals are concerned about the teaching quality of their teachers; and, in this way the practice of patrolling can arguably play a role in enhancing the professionalism of teachers in Macao. However, on closer look, without getting inside the classroom to sit in the class, principals are actually not concerned about the teaching quality in doing their daily patrolling; rather, what principals are concerned is whether students of each class are sitting still under very strict control of their teachers. It is not unheard of that teachers get fired simply because their classes are more 'active' than principals' expectations. In short, principals' power is unchallengeable or principals are simply invincible under the existing circumstances in Macao, as is mentioned by all teachers in this study. The following teacher articulates this point:

> *'We teachers in Macao are used to principals' power. Such power imbalance can't be addressed, even with the implementation of "The Private Legal Frame." Schools remain private schools and teachers are still hired on a yearly contract basis. … Yes, we have school ethics and guidelines. But, they don't serve to protect our rights. In practice, our principal is the law; when s/he says "yes," who dare to say "no"? … In theory, there are procedures that the school should follow in firing an incompetent teacher. But, the truth is when the principal does his/her daily patrolling and sees for once that a student of yours leaves his/her seat, your contract won't be renewed for the following year, period, even when you are doing fine throughout the whole year. … Basically, the principal*

can do whatever s/he wants to teachers.' (Jing, male, from a school run by traditional organizations)

Readers should note that students moving a little (even in their seats) or even actively participating in classes is considered to be unacceptable in many schools in Macao. An ideal class should be very quiet without students making any sound; failing to keep their class under control, so to speak, teachers are seen as incapable or incompetent, at least by their principals and administrators. While some teachers may not agree with such teaching practice/philosophy, there is not much room for teachers to negotiate with school administrators in Macao: When they are hired on a yearly contract basis, many teachers dare not try out different teaching strategies, let alone voicing out or defending their educational philosophies. This situation does not seem to change even after the implementation of 'The Private Legal Frame,' when teachers remain hired on a yearly contract basis. It is true that the renewal of teachers' contract is now tinged on the annual appraisal of their teaching performances, making the mechanism of contract renewal more transparent than before. But, when the appraising panel is constituted by eight people including the principal and the majority of teachers appointed by the principal (i.e. only one or two teachers are elected by all teachers to become panel members), and when there are no mechanisms for appeal, teachers remain very vulnerable having to terms with this contract renewal every year, as is expressed by the following two teachers.

'There are countless cases of unreasonable dismissals of teachers. … The common practice is that around January or February the principal would ask each teacher whether they would like to stay for another year. But the principal won't get back to you till very late. … Without giving you any reasons, the principal could just give you a letter before the summer vacation (i.e. July or August) begins telling you that your contract is not renewed for another year. … A colleague of mine was very upset and felt very hurt last year when her contract wasn't renewed. She asked herself if she ever did anything wrong; but then, the school didn't give her any warning. … We were all very sympathetic with this teacher for she was recognized as a good teacher. … But, you can't do anything. (What

you can do is) try your luck to get a position in another school.' (Ling, female, from a Catholic school)

'It is absolutely legal for a principal to fire any teachers that s/he doesn't like as long as s/he provides the teachers with an amount of compensation – usually the teacher's previous month's salary – required by the Labour Law. … Most schools hire teachers in February or March. … Teachers simply can't do anything if their schools let them know that their contracts aren't renewed in July or August. … While principals expect their teachers to let them know before April whether they would like to stay for another year, principals never inform their teachers their final decisions within a reasonable timeframe. … Principals are holding a double standard in treating themselves and their teachers. It's so unfair to teachers. … Given the existing circumstances, teachers are really helpless.' (Suet, female, from a Catholic school)

Teachers need autonomy to assert their professional judgments; and, teachers' professionalism cannot be actualized when their professional autonomy is not protected. Given their vulnerability in Macao, it is not difficult to understand that the majority of teachers are forced to yield to their schools' demands in order to keep their jobs. It even seems demanding to expect teachers to stand up for themselves. Perhaps this is partly a reason for a very high turnover rate of teachers in Macao; and, it is also believed to be a reason for failing to attract quality and/or professional teachers to join the teaching profession. In this way, their vulnerability could arguably be seen as an obstacle for the professional development of teachers in Macao.

Concluding Remark

It is believed that in a privatized education system everything will fall into places in accordance to the principle of supply and demand. With regard to staff recruitment and management, private schools are expected to be able to recruit teaching staff who share their missions and educational philosophy; and, the quality of their teaching staff is supposedly correlated to their employment packages offered. Put simply, compared with centralization or bureaucratization,

privatization/marketization is believed to make school administration more efficient and effective, which supposedly creates an environment more conducive to teachers' enjoying professional autonomy and making professional judgement and thus enhances the professionalism of teachers. This paper seeks to explore this area by referring to Macao as a case study.

Macao is taken as an example of a privatized education system, because the majority of its schools are private schools where over 95% of students study and about 95% of teachers work. In this privatized system, it is unclear how schools are particularly efficient or effective in managing their staff, which is beyond the scope of this paper. But, it is quite clear that because of the power imbalance between school administrators and teachers, resulting from Macao's colonial legacy and the lack of governmental protection of teachers' rights, teachers in Macao are put in a very vulnerable position. This vulnerability lays a very weak foundation for the professionalism of teachers in Macao, in that this vulnerability does not allow teachers to stand up for themselves against unreasonable requests or demands, let alone asserting their professional judgments wherever necessary. Rather, this vulnerability allows private schools to exercise their control, of various kinds, over teachers, some even being unreasonable or even against teachers' professionalism. Meanwhile, this vulnerability also somehow makes teachers rationalize and then internalize their schools' expectations of them. In this way, this vulnerability, fostering teachers' rationalization and internalization of school control, undermines further the professionalism of teachers in Macao. The very fact that the education system is privatized gives the Macao SAR government a justification for not taking any intervention. In this sense, a privatized system per se could be seen as making possible the above-mentioned practices of school administration and thus undermining the professionalism of teachers in Macao. In sum, despite the limitations of the data used for specific illustrations in this paper, I argue that the vulnerability of teachers in Macao, which has not been addressed by recent governmental effort on reforming the

education system, not merely lays a weak foundation for the professionalism of teachers in Macao but also undermines further the development of teachers' professionalism. While this argument remains tentative and more work is required to verify it further, Macao as a case study, however special it may seem, serves to urge us educational administration scholars to rethink the potential gains from the privatization of education.

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Can the Japanese Educational System Design the Future?

The Historical Experience of Universalization in Upper Secondary Education

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Abstract

This paper illustrates the historical process of the prevalence of upper secondary education in Japan focusing on the public and private relationships. After reviewing high school policy at the central administration, actual high school supply at local government levels is examined and the harmonious relationship between public and private sectors is introduced. Japanese private schools must fulfill the same standards of school facilities, teachers' licenses, and curriculum as those of public schools, under the control of school education laws with a few exceptions. The universal upper secondary education in Japan has been managed with diversities between local prefectures. Japanese education succeeded in the wave of industrialization and

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constructed a cooperation between public and private high schools. This educational system has supported Japanese development to achieve competent human resources. However, Japan is now facing a new difficulty of determining what further steps to take in the pursuit of top school education in a post-industrialized global world.

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Introduction

Japan was a leading country in the economic success of East Asia, and the Japanese economy has remained stable over the past twenty-five years. The rate of the global economy has been dramatically shrinking, from 17.6% in 1995 to 5.8% in 2014. However, this does not suggest that there is nothing new to be learned from the Japanese experience and its contemporary situation. In addition to its economy, Japan's education and culture have maintained sufficient performance. For instance, both the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) administered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have achieved very good results (see Figure 1). according to the PISA. Particularly, this success is based upon the fact that Japanese society has achieved the provision of a high level of education for all. The PIAAC clearly illustrates this characteristic as it involves a much smaller variance among Japanese academic achievement compared to other countries. In fact, there are smaller variances even among generations within Japan. The Japanese educational system has been established in the modernization and industrialization process, and its influence is more effective in assisting people to learn basic literacy and skills. Naturally, some individuals criticize such a tendency wherein Asian countries receive higher scores than

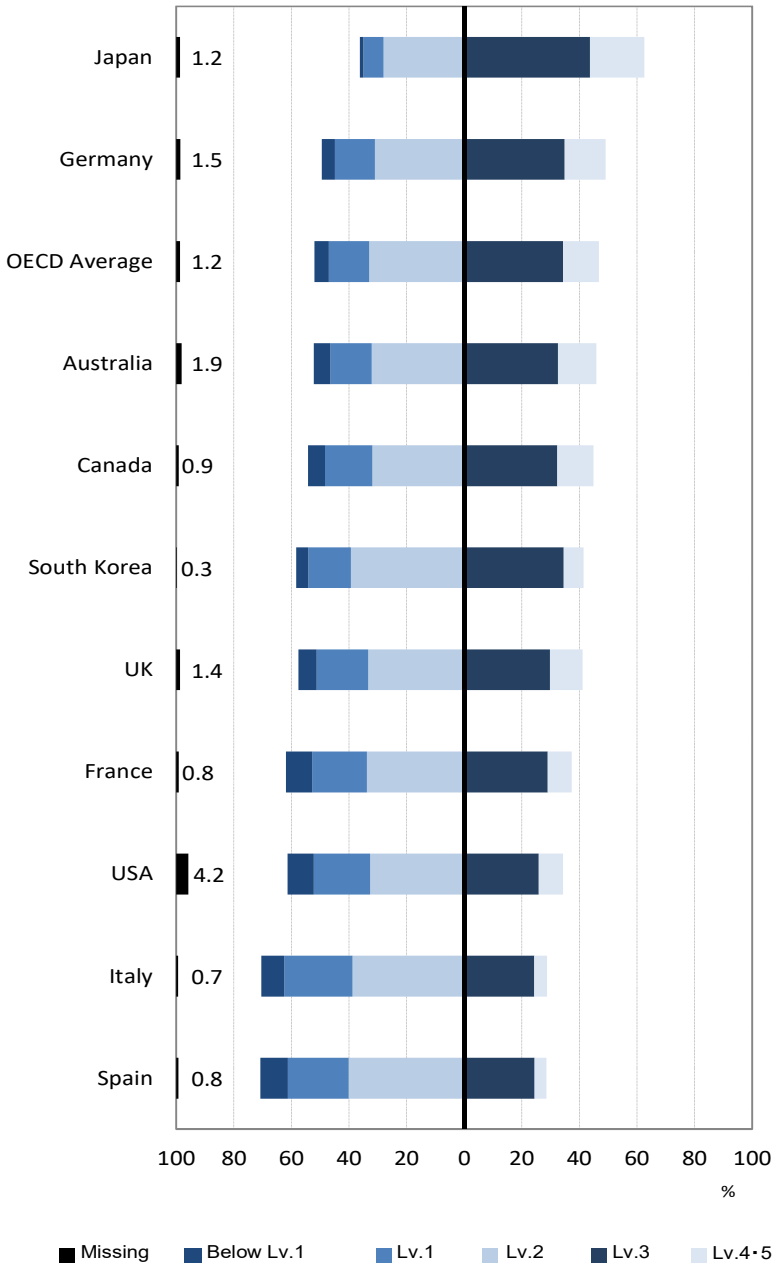
European countries, but such criticism is nonsense according to Dore's (1976) discussion. However, a recent study by Hanushek and Woessmann (2015) entitled The Knowledge Capital of Nations concluded the definitive relationship between quality education and economic growth. They found a direct correlation between a nations' wealth and the labor skills of its population. Based on their analysis and regarding future development, there are apparently more Asian experiences amongst developing countries when compared to developed European countries' examples. From this point of view, this paper seeks to address how Japanese society established such a highly achieved educational system.

This paper first examines literature that includes findings from developmental studies to shed light on the public-private partnership in the school education sector. Refining discussion through literature works, this paper focuses on the historical process of the prevalence of upper secondary education from the supply side at the central administration and local government levels. Then, another typical phenomenon, the harmonious relationship between public schools and private schools in Japan, is introduced. In addition, some voices from the contemporary business world are illustrated through the results of an interview survey. After such analyses, Japan's experience and future will be discussed with a particular focus on what other countries may benefit from its example.

Figure 1

2015 PISA (left) and 2013 PIAAC (right) Results

	Science Mean
OECD average	493
Singapore	556
Japan	538
Estonia	534
Chinese Taipei	532
Finland	531
Macao(China)	529
Canada	528
Viet Nam	525
Hong Kong(China)	523
B-S-J-G(China)	518
	Reading Mean
OECD average	493
Singapore	535
Macao(China)	527
Canada	527
Finland	526
Ireland	521
Estonia	519
Korea	517
Japan	516
Norway	513
New Zealand	509
Germany	509
	Mathematics Mean
OECD average	490
Singapore	564
Hong Kong(China)	548
Macao(China)	544
Chinese Taipei	542
Japan	532
B-S-J-G(China)	531
Korea	524
Switzerland	521
Estonia	520
Canada	516



Literature Review

The Public-Private Relationship in Education and the East Asian Social Development Model

Development studies, especially those conducted in East Asia, have emphasized the concept of the "developmental state" (Greene, 2008; Johnson, 1995; Pirie, 2008; Woo-Cumings, 1999) in late development (Dore, 1976). This developmental state may have justified developmental dictatorship academically. However, other examples illustrate that other developing countries failed to develop with dictatorship (Otsuka, 2014). Otsuka emphasized the maximum utilization of the innate industry for social development. According to his argument, the East Asian case is a successful one in that it took advantage of the innate manufacturing industrial heritage of this region (Otsuka, 2014). This also suggests that the government or public sector must not prevent or inhibit the various developmental activities for social development.

From this perspective, developmental studies and social policy studies in developing countries often focus on the public-private relation (Fosu, 2013b; Kamimura, 2015). Fosu and co-authors explained the successful development from European case studies, including that of Japan (Fosu, 2013a). Fosu divided his findings on successful development into 11 themes. Though not all of these are reiterated or discussed, the following six elements should be particularly focused upon as they relate to the current discussion: (1) market and public-provision harmony; (2) public financing; (3) social-risk minimization under egalitarianism; (4) social and political harmony; (5) complementary human capital; (6) industrial structure. Fosu (2013b) indicated very important points, especially in regards to the relation between the public and private sectors. From this point of view, East Asian development is characterized not only by these macro-perspective views but also by other social components. This study emphasized the importance of a harmonious relationship between the market and the public, or between public and private

entities. Otsuka's argument regarding social development helps to synthesize the relation between social development and education from the viewpoint of public/private relations (Otsuka, 2014).

Apart from these studies and concentrating on educational studies, it is difficult to say that scholars observe these viewpoints. There are, however, studies that distinguish two types of private schools. The first type mainly comes from Anglo-Saxon countries such as the US, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. These works insist that private schools are overwhelmed in the achievement compared to public schools because private schools have held prestigious traditions compared to local public schools (Aldrich, 1996; Chubb and Moe, 1988). Some contemporary scholars insist that the more modern a society is, the more people go to private schools, and this is called "privatization" (Walford, 1990; Whitty et al. 1998). This discussion refers to Hirschman's exit model and offers a clear explanation of private schools (Hirschman, 1970). On the other hand, another study such as that of Srivastava and Walford (2007) may be well-known for readers in developing countries. They have provided other examples of private schools wherein "low-fee" private schools are inevitable for the less economically developed countries to realize education for all. A classical report by Tan and Mingat on Asian educational development is available to provide a view of plural public-private relations and financing, but these reports were not developed to establish a new model for development (Tan and Mingat, 1992).

One of the considerable works on public-private partnerships in East Asian education that included Japan was written by William Cummings (Cummings, 1997). He attempted to depict the characteristics of private education in East Asia with an emphasis on the fact that central government plays a pivotal role in providing education, but "within the framework of this centrally controlled system, there is a vigorous private sector, whose share has, if anything, expanded in recent decades" (Cummings, 1997, p. 135). The prevalence of private education complementing strong public

education is a phenomenon that can be observed in various countries in East Asia, including Japan. Public high schools in Japan are regarded as elite schools in general[1], and going to a private high school is the second preferred choice for most children. Cummings also focused on the cultural aspects that affect the provision of private schools. According to his perspective, institutional traditions such as indigenous institutional heritage, indigenous entrepreneurs, mission schools, foreign colonial policy, and foreign influences "have had a differential impact on particular East Asian countries" (Cummings, 1997, p. 143). Moreover, Cummings noted, when describing the private education empire, it is natural for private institutions to find their niche wherein the provisions of public schools are limited, and "to take advantage of economies of scale they engage in massive horizontal expansion" as these institutions offer "educational products crafted to the particularities of evolving local needs" (Cummings, 1997, p. 146).

The School System, High Schools, and Private High Schools in Japan

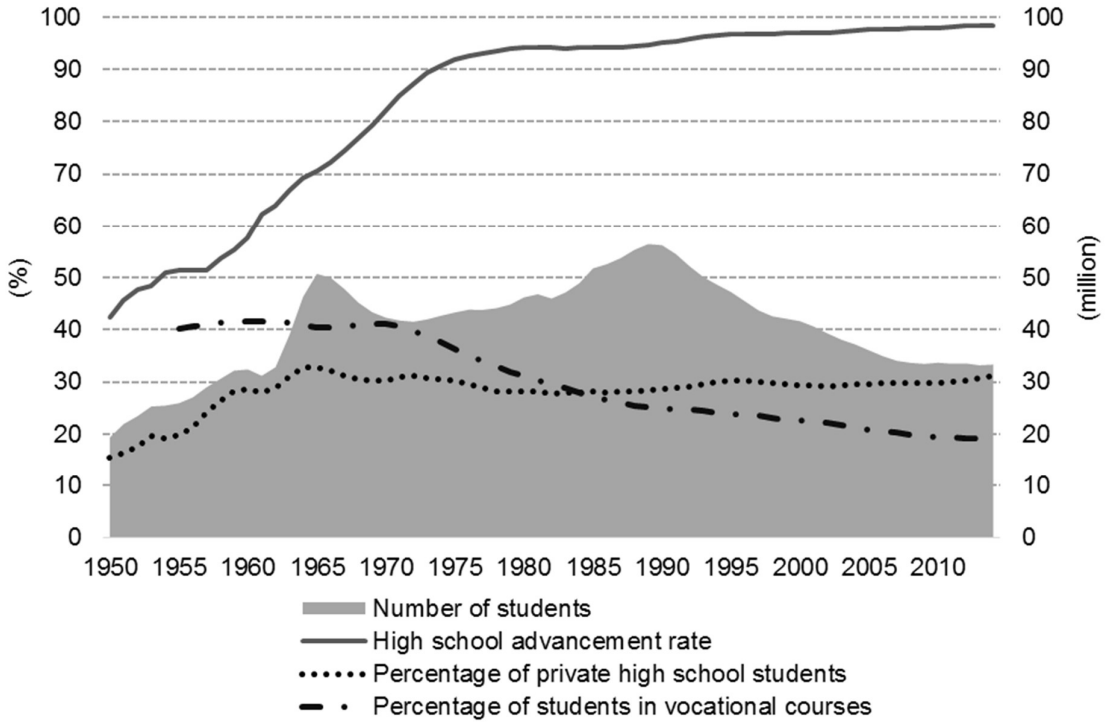
To briefly introduce Japan's school system, its formal schooling system was initially established in 1872. During the nineteenth century, primary education was nominally universalized and was universalized in real number around the 1910s (Hijikata, 1994). This universalized education expanded to the post-primary stage prior to WWII (Kimura, 2015). After WWII, the Japanese school system was reformed and democratized under the influence of US occupation. The Japanese school system continues on in this same form (6-year primary, 3-year lower secondary, 3-year upper secondary, and 2- or 4-year tertiary). These reforms changed the examination system and affected the social stratification and social mobility in Japanese

[1] There are some elite private high schools in Japan especially in urban area. However, in most prefectures, the top-ranked high schools are generally long-established public schools, most of which were junior high schools in the old system.

society. The most important reform was the abolition of the tracking system at the lower secondary level. Kikuchi comprehensively researched the opportunity of secondary education in modern Japan (Kikuchi, 1967), and his analysis showed that the enrollment rate for lower secondary school was around 20% even in 1936, though 60% of other students went to other post primary schools. There were severe divisions between lower secondary schools in examination and other post primary schools in the social class, so that the lowest quantile in the point of economic capital was excluded from the opportunity to receive secondary education throughout the whole society (Kikuchi, 1967). This severe division was removed after WWII. One of the most significant changes of that time was the extension of compulsory education from six years to nine years. This change meant that lower secondary education became compulsory. Naturally, the GHQ, SCAP (General Headquarters of Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) also reformed on the level of upper secondary education (i.e., high school), attempting to invent a public school system similar to that of the US. The GHQ started to change the high school system according to the following three basic principles: gender equality (non-gender divided schools), non-entrance examination, and comprehensive schools. However, this reform has not been perfectly fulfilled compared to primary education and lower secondary education because upper secondary education was reformed using old secondary schools as a model, and this reform was left to the responsibility of local districts and local prefectures. Gender equality is one of the most fulfilled reforms, but some prefectures remain as gender-divided public high schools. Comprehensive education in high school is the least fulfilled reform because this reform is up to local schools, despite the fact that comprehensive schools require greater budgets. Consequently, Japanese high schools have remained as school tracking systems between schools and thus require entrance examinations, though high school is equalized on the point of gender.

Figure 2

High School Expansion in Japan.



Source: The Ministry of Education "School Basic Survey"

After years of confusion, the structure of advancement to upper secondary education had been constructed from the late 1950s to early 1970s in each prefecture. The Japanese advancement rate to upper secondary education, which was around 50% in 1950, reached over 90% in 1972 as Figure 1 illustrates (Aizawa, 2016; Kagawa et al., 2014; Kariya, 1995). This study regards this system to distribute universal upper secondary educational opportunities as the social fundamental institution with higher academic achievement and basic skills in Japanese society. In line with this stance, three points on the

expansion of upper secondary education should be emphasized. First, it is important to point out that private high schools contributed to the expansion as the current study theoretically reviewed. The percentage of private high school students grew along with the expansion, nearly doubling from 1950 to 1965, indicating that it was impossible for high schools to expand if public schools offered only educational opportunities. Private high school students comprise about 30% of all students, and this figure is slightly higher than that of the Western countries[2]. Second, the percentage of students in vocational courses remained at around 40% in the early 1960s, but declined thereafter as people preferred general education to vocational education. High schools in Japan offer both academic/general and vocational/specialized programs; the ratio of students enrolled in academic programs continues to rise, accounting for more than 70% in 2010. Third, there were considerable regional variations in the provision for high school education regarding the first two points previously mentioned. To explain these regional variations, James and Benjamin (1988) point out that prefectural administrations were responsible for determining the structure of high school education, that is, the number and type of school places that can be made available in a particular region. Students do not usually choose to study in a high school outside of a given prefecture.

Referring to this basic information, the following section analyzes the historical experience of Japanese upper secondary education in the post-war era. First, this section focuses on the central administration in the expansion era. Results of analysis showed that central governmental administration fell short of fulfilling its demands. Therefore, the local government with local private schools is focused upon. Supplying huge opportunities by local government and private schools, they faced great difficulties after expansion. An institution that maintains a public-private partnership is then introduced, followed by an illustration of some voices from the

[2] Source: OECD. StatExtracts

business that reveal how many consider Japanese upper secondary education.

Analysis

Expansion Era from the View of Central Administration

Table 1

Quantitative Measures in Basic Policy for Meeting High School Demands (in Thousands)

Year of estimate	Base year	Increase in number of students	Measures						Allocation between public and private	
			By newly built schools		By extending buildings		By increasing class size			
			public	private	public	private	public	private	public	private
1960	1961?	100	15	---	25	---	25	---	65	35
1961	1959	112	15	9	27	18	27	16	67	43
1962	1960	123	20	4	40	26	20	13	80	43

Note: --- not stated.

Sources: 1960 estimate, "Basic Policy for High School Preparation" (draft) (高校対策基本方針案 1960.7.12.). 1961 estimate, "Overall Planning of Measures for Upsurge in High Schooling (Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau)" (急増対策の全体計画　文部省初等中等教育局 1961). 1962 estimate, "Measures and Explanation on Upsurge in Public High School Students" (公立高校生徒急増対策及び解

In 1962, when the first set of baby-boomers came of high school age, a movement known as "High Schooling for All Who Desire It" was organized by parents and union teachers. They held a national conference (高校全員入学問題全国協議会　全入協) and made demands for the creation of new public high schools. Tackling the increasing demand for schools due to the first set of baby-boomers was also a serious social problem. The Ministry of Education (MOE) announced basic policies for meeting the demand for more high schools every year between 1960 and 1962[3]. Table 1 shows the quantitative measures adopted. These numbers were calculated in the

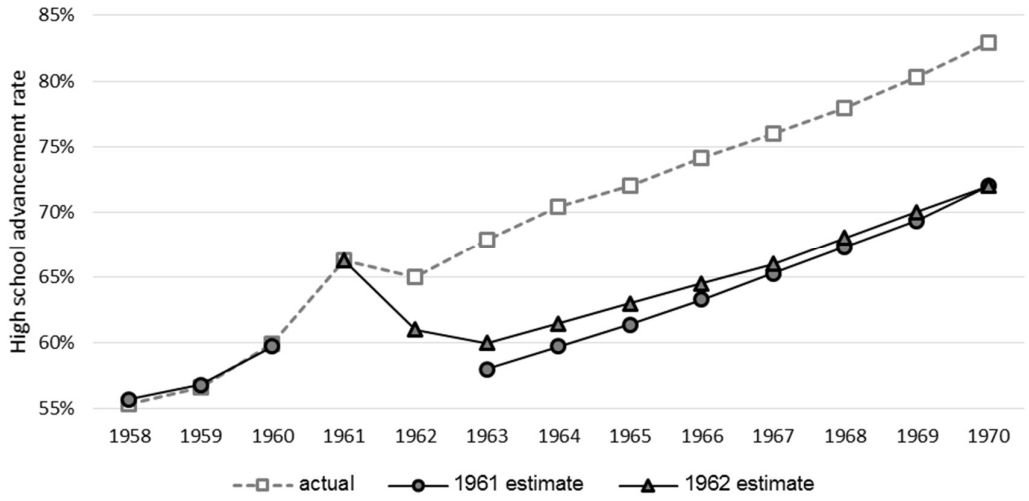
[3] "Basic Policy for High School Preparation" (draft) (高校対策基本方針案 1960.7.12.), "Overall Planning of Measures for Upsurge in High Schooling (Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau)" (急増対策の全体計画　文部省初等中等教育局 1961), "Measures and Explanation on Upsurge in Public High School Students" (公立高校生徒急増対策及び解説 1962.1.26).

following manner: first, an estimate of the increase in the number of students from the base year was calculated; then, this number was apportioned between public and private sectors and also between different methods used for expansion (i.e., by building new schools, extending school buildings, or increasing class sizes). For example, in the 1961 estimate, there would be an additional 1,120 thousand students; 670 thousand of them were accepted by public high schools, and 430 thousand by private schools. Of the 670 thousand students allocated to public schools, 150 thousand were to be accommodated in newly built schools, 270 thousand by increasing the number of classrooms (that is to say, by extending buildings), and 270 thousand by increasing class sizes. Table 1 shows that the estimated increments in each year (which refers to the number of high school entrants) grew to be more than the expected intake, even before the first set of baby-boomers reached high school. As a consequence, the estimations needed an upward adjustment. By comparing the three measures adopted, it is evident that the MOE was hesitant to build new schools, and moreover that the number of students who could be accommodated by the other two measures was much higher. It was also planned that private schools would accommodate the estimated increase in the number of students between 1960 and 1961, and public schools would do so between 1961 and 1962.

What was the MOE's forecast for the rise in advancement rate within this period? In 1961, the advancement rate in 1963 was calculated as 58%, which is equal to 1,540 thousand entrants. This figure was calculated by adding 1% to the advancement rate in 1958 (57%). The MOE planned to accommodate the surging demand by admitting 1,450 thousand entrants every year until 1970. By doing so, it aimed to realize an increase in the advancement rate (Sato, 1961). However, this estimate was far from accurate. The non-negligible disparity already shown in the year of 1963 kept increasing, and this gap was not resolved through the 1960s (Figure 3). The MOE's expected advancement rate was 72.0% in 1970, which in reality was surpassed in 1965. The actual advancement rate in 1970 was 82.9%,

which was more than 10% of the initial estimate. Shimizu Yoshihiro, a prominent sociologist who was a member of the technical subcommittee of the Economic Council at the time of the National Income Doubling Plan by the Prime Minister of the time, Hayato Ikeda, later revealed the reason for this discrepancy.

Figure 3
The MOE Estimates and Actual High School Advancement Rate



Sources:1961 estimate, "Overall Planning of Measures for Upsurge in High Schooling (Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau)" (急増対策の全体計画　文部省初等中等教育局 1961). 1962 estimate, "Measures for Upsurge in High Schools and Pros and Cons of 'High School for All Who Desire It' Movement" (高等学校生徒急増対策と"全入運動"の可否 1962.1.26).

There was a thrust on forecasting the advancement rate among the Economic Planning Agency, the MOE, the Ministry of Labor, and the business world. The Economic Planning Agency estimated the advancement rate to be 84% or 85% in 1970. However, the MOE recognized that it would cause difficulties if the rate had risen to

those figures, which were impossible to accommodate and forecast the rate to be 66% in 1970. Moreover, the Ministry of Labor and the industry were reluctant to expand the number of high schools because they needed young students, especially junior high school graduates, to be part of the workforce[4]. After long negotiations, the rate of increase was settled at 72% (Shimizu, 1977). The MOE's negative attitude was also pronounced in its response to the "High Schooling for All Who Desire It" movement. The MOE distributed a brochure in 1962 entitled "Measures for Upsurge in High Schools and Pros and Cons of 'High School for All Who Desire It' Movement," criticizing the movement harshly and denying admission for all those who wanted to go to high schools.

Therefore, in sum, it has been revealed that the national policy for high school expansion was too slow to keep up with the actual increase, and the MOE's calculation was far from accurate. The MOE did take some measures to meet the growing demand, but they were not sufficient. It is also possible that the real objective of the MOE was to constrain high school growth.

There was, however, one exception wherein the MOE stepped in to meet the necessary demands. This realm was particularly in the fields of science and technical education. Under the manpower policy, the number of technical high school students went up from 306 thousand in 1959 to 624 thousand in 1965, more than doubling over the course of six years. The number of students admitted to the technical courses was 207 thousand in 1965, 104 thousand greater than the number recorded in 1959. Looking at the absolute increase in numbers, it appeared as if things were going according to plan. However, upon observing the ratios, a different picture emerges. Although the ratio of academic/general courses to vocational courses should be ameliorated to 5:5 by the National Income Doubling Plan,

[4] Since wages for young junior high school graduates were low, they needed to retain the cheap labor force. It is said that the strongest opposition for increasing opportunities for higher education came from the business circle.

this ratio remained at 6:4 because students who took up academic/general courses also increased in number at the same pace.

Hence, the national high school policy did not match the actual circumstances according to qualitative growth or in promoting science and technical education. Why were the national high school policies unable to meet the actual circumstances of expansion? Since the actual numbers and rates exceeded the initial national plan, some other entities had to supply the high school education. In other words, the question of who filled the gap between supply and demand remains unanswered. Therefore, to fully understand the process of high school expansion in Japan, one must look at the supply side. A clue to this puzzle may be the fact that the MOE or the Japanese government did not directly build high schools. One should then look at the regional variations in high school expansion that occurred during this period.

The situation faced by each prefecture was quite different before the 1960s. In 1958, enrollment in Tokyo was 70%, twice the rate of Miyazaki (35%). These disparities were eliminated in the process of high school saturation. How did each prefecture play a role in providing high school education? As previously noted, the two main providers of high school education were the municipal government and private institutions. Each prefecture had a choice as to how to combine these two sources of providers, and also as to what particular courses were to be offered in high school education.

Expansion Era from the View of Local Prefectures and Private Schools

This study analyzed and classified results of the analysis of the "School Basic Survey" (学校基本調査) conducted by the MOE each year in all schools. The current study obtained the following three indices of each prefecture[5]: (1) The high school enrollment ratio in

[5] There are 47 prefectures in Japan, but Okinawa is excluded as the authors were unable to obtain the first two indices.

1955; (2) The percentage of entrants in private high schools in 1958; (3) The change in percentage of private high school entrants between 1958 and 1997.

This process has already been written in detail in other previous works (Kagawa, 2016; Kagawa et al., 2014) so the current research concentrates on the classified situation. The clusters are referred to specifically as the "Average" cluster, "Public expanded" cluster, "Private expanded" cluster, and "Urban" cluster (the definitions of which will be explored in further detail later in this paper). The prefectures in each cluster are shown in Table 2, while Figure 4 shows the positions of the prefectures.

Table 2
Names of Prefectures in Each of the Four Clusters

Cluster	Names of prefectures
Average 16 prefectures	Hokkaido, Aomori, Miyagi, Chiba, Shizuoka, Hyogo, Nara, Okayama, Yamaguchi, Kagawa, Ehime, Kochi, Fukuoka, Kumamoto, Oita, Kagoshima
Public expanded 6 prefectures	Iwate, Ishikawa, Aichi, Shiga, Tokushima, Nagasaki
Private expanded 19 prefectures	Akita, Yamagata, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Niigata, Toyama, Fukui, Yamanashi, Nagano, Gifu, Mie, Wakayama, Tottori, Shimane, Saga, Miyazaki
Urban 5 prefectures	Tokyo, Kanagawa, Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima

Characteristics of The Four Clusters

"Average" prefectures. This cluster comprises 16 prefectures and is the second-largest of all four prefectures. The average high school advancement rate in this cluster was 52% in 1955, the share of private high school entrants was 22%, and the average increase in private share during the high school expansion was around 10 percent. All these figures are more or less similar to the national averages. Since all three indices have medium values, it can be interpreted that the percentage of students in these prefectures who went to high school

corresponded with the national average, while the non-negligible percentages were private high school students in the initial years. The additional intake in private institutions remained moderate during the process of expansion.

In the vocational/specialized program, the cluster average increased by 4% during the 1950s and the 1970s, and then decreased by 12% over the next 20 years (from 1970 to 1990).

"Public expanded" prefectures. This cluster was characterized by the relatively small role played by private institutions during the expansion. The initial private advancement rate was 21% on average, but this figure gradually decreased during educational expansion. The peak in private advancement rate was 25% in 1962, which was prior to the full-scale expansion. The rate of this cluster hit its lowest point in 1982 (17%). Since the initial average advancement rate was 45% (below the national average), an active and positive enlargement of supply was imperative for this cluster. The relative absence of private institutions in these prefectures indicates that public institutions were the main providers of high school education. The average student share in vocational/specialized programs increased by about 3% in the period between 1955 and 1970. Over the next 20 years, it decreased by 13 percent. According to the current research's field survey conducted in these prefectures, some disbelief was discovered among local educational government to private schools in this cluster (Kagawa et al., 2014).

"Private expanded" prefectures. In contrast to the previous cluster, the main characteristic of this cluster was the positive contribution of private schools. Similar to the "public expanded" cluster, the average initial advancement rate was low at just over 45 percent. The initial percentage of private entrants was around 10%, the lowest of the four. Thus, high school education was mainly supplied by public high schools before the expansion; however, this situation changed drastically over the course of expansion. Private high schools gained in share not only in the 1960s, when the number of students

burgeoned, but also in the 1980s to 23 percent. Thus, a gradual increase in their share during the expansion may be observed.

This cluster is the extreme opposite of the "public expanded" cluster. Although the initial conditions were alike, the role played by private institutions between the two clusters has been completely different. Prefectures in this cluster owed much to private institutions for ensuring an adequate supply of educational opportunities. Since this is the largest cluster among the four, it represents another "standard" of educational expansion in Japan.

Unlike the previous two clusters, the share of students in the vocational/specialized program decreased slightly between 1955 and 1970. As previously stated, the contribution of private institutions was greater in this cluster. Moreover, in Japan, most private schools offer general education rather than vocational/specialized programs. These two factors were possible causes of their decline. In addition, after 1970, this rate continued to decline until the 1990s. According to the current study's field survey conducted in these prefectures, some advanced movements to invite private schools by local government were found in this cluster (Kagawa et al., 2014).

"Urban" prefectures. Five prefectures belong to this cluster, and they are all located in relatively large urban areas in Japan. The initial advancement rates and private advancement rates were both remarkably high in these prefectures when compared to the other clusters. The initial average advancement rate was more than 60%, and the initial average private advancement rate was a little less than 50 percent. This suggests that the supply of high school education depended to a great degree on private institutions in the early stage. The private rate peaked in the early 1960s, and then showed a gradual decrease as the overall advancement rate exceeded 90 percent.

Prefectures in this cluster played a central role in the regional and national economies. Population growth did not stop after the first set of baby-boomers due to migration and natural growth. This was

especially prevalent in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the second set of baby-boomers became high school students. Additional providers of high school education were mainly public schools. This resulted in a diminution of the share of private schools. Consequently, high school educational expansion had been fulfilled by these varied forms of public-private cooperation. Japanese upper secondary education is supplied not only by the local governmental provision, but also by private schools under the central regulation on curriculum.

The Public-Private Cooperation Council after Expansion

From the current study's international comparative surveys, some countries have been found to have faced problems on the point of public-private cooperation in schools, especially after the expansion era (Aizawa, 2016). On the contrary, Japanese local government has maintained this cooperation even after expansion. The public-private cooperation council (公私立高等学校協議会) has a role to maintain in many prefectures. An official Japanese historical description in "The 120-year history of the school system (学制 120 年史)" referred to the role of a public-private high school cooperation council (公私立高等学校協議会) in order to solve the second arrival of baby-boomers in the 1980s cooperatively.

The MOE issued two notifications regarding the public-private cooperation council in 1975 and 1982. In the 1975 notification, the ministry indicated the problem of surging demands following the second wave of baby boomers and the need to build new high schools. The notification claimed that both the public and private high schools needed to be cooperative in enhancing high school education. In particular, it was necessary to discuss future public and private school arrangement plans and requested the establishment of the council. In the 1982 notification, the ministry indicated the need for adequate measures considering the fluctuating student number following the second wave of baby boomers. It urged the council to

fully discuss the following from the stance of public and private cooperation: trends in future high school enrollment, appropriate allocation of roles between public and private schools, public and private school arrangement planning, and issues on enrollment limits.

In principle, public and private cooperation means that both sectors help each other in student admission for harmonious development while maintaining their uniqueness. However, in reality, the main agenda of the councils have been the allocation of students permitted in each sector. Setting up and maintaining a public and private student ratio was a specific measure in many prefectures (Takagi, 1986). It is true that the public and private cooperation was a "public restraining/private protecting" (公立抑制/私立保護) measure in the following perspectives. Firstly, private high schools aided the public schools during a period of rapidly increasing students by increasing the number of students admitted. Therefore, the public sector could save on expenditure. Secondly, in return, private high schools received subsidies for the construction and renovation of their buildings, benefits for interest on borrowings, and operational costs. Thirdly, private high schools also received assurance that they would keep a certain quota in the coming age when student numbers would decline sharply (Takagi, 1986).

As Takagi (1986) discussed, these councils are problematic in that they treat private high schools with favoritism. However, it is also true that the pre-determination of entrants mitigated the drastic quantitative change, and not only the public and private schools but also the children who wished to go to high schools benefitted from this. Thus, the ratio itself was determined in advance by the council, which explains the invariance of the private high school ratio.

Three changes can be identified on the change in the public and private balance during these 25 years that saw a sharp decline in student numbers. First, the number of public high schools has declined in almost every prefecture except for Okinawa and Shiga.

Second, on the contrary, the number of private high schools is unchanged or slightly increased in most prefectures. Third, the school size decreased, and the change is more significant in private high schools. Thus, these changes indicate that the function of the public-private cooperation council may have changed during this period.

One of the authors conducted a survey on the "Recent Change in High School Education" from November to December 2014. Prefectural education boards were asked to answer a questionnaire on the existence and functions of the public-private council, and 46 out of 47 prefectures responded. Almost 90% (41 prefectures) of the prefectures affirmed the establishment of a public-private cooperation council. Only five prefectures are without a council. Furthermore, there are no common characteristics such as private ratios among these five prefectures. Among the prefectures with a council, many were established during the two notification periods from the MOE. This possibly promoted "public-private cooperation" when the second set of baby boomers went to high school. Therefore, public-private cooperation councils are prevalent in Japanese society as a whole.

However, when asked to respond to the methods of entrant allocation, 43% (17 prefectures) indicated that they allocate students based on the ratio, and 7% (3 prefectures) responded that they allocate students based on the absolute number. This means that half of the prefectures conduct neither of these allocation methods. Therefore, what Takagi mentioned was partly true: the meaning of "public-private cooperation" should be the allocation of entrants by quota. However, half of the prefectures declared that they use other methods, which in turn leads to the question of the alternative methods that they claimed to employ. Among questionnaire respondents, many sentiments were expressed such as, "Public high schools and private high schools set the number of admitting students separately," "Public and private high schools share information on high school entrants and changes in the junior high school graduates," "Set the enrollment capacity only for public

schools, not for private schools," and "We quit allocating methods from this year and focus on discussing common educational issues." Most of these "other" methods do not determine the concrete number or quota in advance, and thus do not settle matters through negotiation.

In short, regarding the period when the number of students declined, firstly, public school spaces decreased (dramatically in some prefectures), but not those of private schools. Secondly, both public and private schools diminished in size. Thirdly, the public-private cooperation council did exist in most prefectures. Nevertheless, the function of the council might have changed from the allocation of students between public and private. This might be due to a decline in the absolute number of students; the size has decreased significantly, and by allocating based on the ratio, private schools in particular could not maintain the cost of school administration.

In the notifications by the MOE as mentioned earlier, it was requested to discuss the sharing of roles between public and private high schools in the council. However, as previously discussed, the main function of the council was student allocation. Therefore, the question of "sharing roles" was left undefined for this timeframe. Moreover, Japanese high school reforms sought to diversify their curriculum after the achievement of universal attendance (Shimahara, 1997). This led to the diversification of the educational content offered by (public) high schools.

Voices from the Contemporary Business World

The following shall observe two contemporary interview scripts that were provided by two leading Japanese company leaders in food and electronics, with a central office in Tokyo[6]. This interview survey was executed by another project that one the author joined from 2011

[6] This entire interview survey will be published in another book. One of the authors has already presented this paper and wrote a paper in Japanese (Aizawa, 2014).

to 2013. Each interview was executed in a semi-structural form and lasted for at least one hour. These parties have also held roles in economic lobbying organizations in Japan and have experience participating in government policy as members of an advisory board. As they requested anonymity, however, this paper shall refer only to Mitsudo Urano (the former president of NICHIREI) and Takashi Kawamura (the former president of HITACHI). Though they have some differences in opinion, some commonalities will be observed to understand the discourse of Japanese education. They communicated that they were confident that the Japanese education system would meet their standards.

> *We would like for high levels of average school achievement to be maintained among the Japanese middle class. This is a strong point of Japan in comparison with other countries. In foreign countries, we can easily find very low-skilled people but we relatively don't have these people. The Japanese achievement gap is smaller than that in other countries. We must maintain this high average and narrow gap. (Kawamura, July 5, 2013)*

Both leaders admit this direction, particularly regarding basic education. Urano also said that we should memorize a great amount of knowledge up until junior high school (grade 9 in compulsory education, note from the author). He raised the example of memorizing a multiplication table and basic knowledge of the social and natural sciences (Urano, June 10, 2013). Generally, all respondents were satisfied with Japanese skills. In addition, they voiced some opinions for steps toward a better future. These steps were categorized into two groups: middle-class people and Japanese leaders who held the potential to become a global leader. Firstly, Urano discussed innovation among the middle class, as follows:

> *I believe that ordinary people are exclusively representative of national power. The tallest point in the statistical normal distribution in ability should make an innovation. A strong country is one in which people of average ability can innovate.*
>
> *Consequently, I always say to employees that innovation is not difficult. Although more brilliant people made an innovation in the past, they can*

innovate from integrating their own ideas. (…) I believe that people on average can make some innovations in their lifetime. I believe that such a country is wonderful. (Urano, June 10, 2013)

Kawamura touched on this point related to globalization, and he voiced the need for more enterprise and challenges as innovation is necessary to achieve globalization (Kawamura, July 5, 2013). Their claims are related to the Japanese examination system and school curriculum. In addition, Kawamura particularly insisted on the importance of upper-class individuals who show the potential to become a leader.

I'm just saying, we have quite a scarce number of leading people. We have a small number of leading people who have strong ambition and a strong and sufficient persuasiveness in politics, business management, and universities. We don't have such an education for top leaders in Japan. This has damaged Japan. (Kawamura, July 5, 2013)

According to these opinions, respondents are quite satisfied with the standard Japanese education. However, they claim that changing the method of teaching relies on the process of knowledge memorization.

Discussion and Conclusion

As was observed in the previous section, Japanese upper secondary education has expanded and maintained a universal level through public-private partnership. Public-private partnerships led to a new cooperative policy in school education when public subsidies for private schools were introduced in the 1970s (Konyuba, 2013). The Japanese government has subsidized around 100 billion yen (equal to approximately 1 billion US dollars) to private high schools across the country. Compensating for these subsidies, Japanese private schools must be managed under the control of school education laws, and they must fulfill the same standards of school facilities, teachers' licenses, and curriculum as those of public schools, with a few exceptions. The universal upper secondary

education in Japan has been managed with diversities between local prefectures under the general national regulation.

As Kariya and Rosenbaum's research in the 1980s and the 1990s illustrated, Japanese junior high school and high school graduates were tracked by the principle of meritocracy (Kariya and Rosenbaum, 1987; Rosenbaum and Kariya, 1989). After the late 1990s, the situation of transitioning from school to work dramatically changed, and graduates could not manage according to the principle of meritocracy alone (Honda, 2005); Oguro (2014) focused on the transformation of this depopulating era. In sum, the Japanese upper secondary school system had been well-adjusted for a manufacturing society (Brown et al., 2001). Japan's highest peak in the ratio of manufacturing in GDP was around 1990. The Japanese upper secondary education system had been facilitated well to develop into a manufacturing economy, creating mass skilled labor forces until the early 1990s. This has been the institutional necessity to enable the Japanese population to achieve high levels of school accomplishments. However, this system has faced some difficulties, as Sassen's discussion revealed the case of contemporary Japan, and these issues have raised new interest in research on the transition from school to work in Japan (e.g., see Honda, 2005).

On the other hand, the Japanese education system faces yet another difficulty in the post-manufacturing society. As those in the business world reported, human resources showing leadership abilities are scarce. Further, urban elite private high schools and local elitist public high schools developed a measurement of leadership, and the MOE has assisted this wave like as Super Science High schools(SSHs) and Super Global High schools(SGHs). However, this support is completely insufficient on the point of budget and scale compared to other East Asian countries that have invented more elitist education systems.

Japanese education succeeded in the wave of industrialization, and has constructed a harmonious public-private partnership in

school education, at least in the upper secondary level. This educational system has supported Japanese development to achieve good human resources. However, Japan cannot determine what further steps to take in the pursuit of top school education in a post-industrialized global world.

The Japanese educational bureaucracy, both at the central and local level, has managed to provide opportunities from primary school to upper secondary school better than in other stages as they have established a harmonious relationship between state sectors and private sectors. However, this administrative style has limits as, first of all, it is suitable only for legitimized school systems. For example, Japanese preschool education is very stagnated as there is a long-divided tradition between kindergarten by the MOE and nursing schools by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Their interested groups are also divided and have not been able to make new public-private partnerships at this level, despite the rising importance of preschool education, as pointed out by Heckman (2011). The Japanese educational system and public-private partnership could reach success in the era of industrialization. However, we are only now beginning to address the difficulties in designing a new future following a post-manufacturing society.

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School-Family Cooperation, Social Closure, Educational Equality and Excellence: Evidences from China

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Abstract

Excellence and equality is an essential goal of compulsory education in China. This goal, however, is difficult to achieve in practice because of the difficulties in balancing between excellence and equality and in sustaining equality as a result of resource redistribution. This article uses the data of the nationally representative China Education Panel Survey (CEPS) and discusses the possibility of advancing educational excellence and equality in compulsory education based on Coleman's theory of social closure. To be more specific, social capital can be increased by means of school-family cooperation so as to achieve excellence and equality in compulsory education. Our main findings include: first, school-family cooperation system is conducive to the growth of social capital for families; second, it adjusts the direct influence of family background on the social closure production; third, it helps achieve excellent development of compulsory education by increasing family social capital; finally, the school-family cooperation system facilitates even distribution of social capital among different classes and equal development of compulsory education. On such a basis, this paper further discusses the policy implications of these findings.

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Introduction

Excellence and equality is an essential goal of compulsory education for countries in the world. As early as in the 1990s, the USA has put forward the policy of "Excellence and Equality in Education", which aimed at maintaining the quality of American education as well as narrowing the education gap among different classes. The Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (hereunder referred to as the "Outline") has expressed a similar vision. It demands that we should improve the level and quality of compulsory education in an all-round manner, to achieve balanced development among regions.

However, there are many predicaments confronting excellence and equality in compulsory education in China, among which two main ones are as follows: First, it is difficult to strike a balance between excellence and equality. To place too much weight on equality will impair efficiency in education and vice versa; second, the policy mainly focuses on the redistribution of material resources and the development of excellent and equal education lacks sustainability. In consequence, balancing excellence and equality and achieving sustainable development of compulsory education have become an important issue on the table of education policymakers.

Current policies on excellent and equal compulsory education mainly focus on resource redistribution, which perform poorly in boosting excellence and equality in education and sustainable development of education (Fan, 2016). It is imperative to seek a new growth point and solve the problems left in resource redistribution policies by institutional innovation.

Based on sociology of education, school-family cooperation is a potential way to achieve excellence and equality in compulsory education. Evidence from America and Hong Kong shows that school-family cooperation can encourage parents to participate in children's education, increase family social capital and improve children's educational achievements (Epstein & Elmore, 2013; Ho & Willms, 1996; Van Voorhis, et al., 2014). In China, the empirical study

based on Jiangxi province also shows that school-family cooperation plays an important part in encouraging parents to participate in children's education and improving children's academic achievements (Wu, et al., 2016; 2017).

On such a basis and relying on the latest CEPS data obtained by the latest Chinese Educational Panel Survey (hereafter referred to as CEPS), this paper discusses the role of schools in improving the quality and promoting balanced development of compulsory education and provides suggestions for promoting the adjustment of balanced development of compulsory education by empirical study. The main contents are organized as follows: Part 2 sorts out relevant references literature about social closure and puts forward assumptions for study; Part 3 introduces data, variables and analytical methods; Part 4 presents the result of study; Part 5 contains conclusions, discussions and suggestions for reforming China's current policies on balanced development of compulsory education by empirical study.

Literature Review and Assumptions for Study

Concept and Measurement of Social Closure

Social closure is an important concept of social capital, which was put forward by James Coleman, an authority in sociology. In education, it is used to describe a series of closed social networks centered on education. It can also be divided into two categories according to different interactions and scenes among social networks, i.e., the intergenerational relationship inside a family and the communication network between parents, and between parents and schools (Coleman, 1988). The former can be defined as parental involvement, and the latter intergenerational closure (Coleman, 1988). This is how the system works: When social communications between parents and children, parents and other adults in the community turn out to be high social closure, it means social capital, which will affect children's education gain, is increased. And we can improve children's educational achievements from the increase in social closure capital (Zhao & Hong, 2013).

Scholars like Ho further developed Coleman's ideas and specified the measurement of social closure capital in empirical study (Ho & Willms, 1996). In empirical study, parental involvement includes multiple indicators such as mentoring, supervision, parent-child discussion (Pong, et al., 2005). Intergenerational closure is embodied by the extent of communications between schools and parents, which involves the frequency of interactions between parents and schools. Through further analysis of relations between social capital and educational achievements, we can come to the conclusion that parental involvements, parent-child discussion about relevant school affairs in particular, will improve children's academic achievements dramatically (Epstein, 1984; Marjoribanks, 1979; Ho & Willms, 1996). Therefore, increasing families' social capital has become a viable way to improve children's academic and educational achievements.

School and Social Closure Capital

Ogbu (1974) was the first scholar who noticed the part that schools play in the production process of social closure capital. He found out that the discrimination from schools result in less involvements of parents from lower class in children's education and in communications with schools through his empirical study in America. In education, schools are never neutral institutions (Bernstein, 1975). In the process of education, schools strengthen the leading position in education of the upper class by means of languages, courses and educational organizations (Anyon, 1981; Apple, 1979). However, the majority of working class and lower class do not understand the rules of the game in schools and as a result of that, they do not know how to get involved in children's education and interact with schools to form a benign intergenerational closure (Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Lareau, 2015).

These studies discussed the negative part of schools in the production of social closure capital. However, as the Chinese saying goes, "either success or failure boils down to the same person". Since schools are an important medium in the production process of social

closure capital, if we start from schools, urge them to transform and increase the probability of schools interacting with parents, we may encourage parents from lower class to participate in children's education and form a stronger intergenerational closure environment. In other words, those practices can increase parents' social closure capital and thus improve children's academic achievements.

The theory of promoting social closure by efforts of schools to facilitate excellent and equal education has been put into practice quickly. In the 1970s, America first implemented family-school cooperation strategy. At that time, the Congress passed the amendment of primary and secondary educational law, which aims to set up Parent Committee to promote social closure between families and schools and improve the development of children from low-income families (Wu, et al., 2013, pp. 28-29). In the following decades, those strategies were completed by a series of acts and were clearly specified in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act signed by President Clinton. The Act stipulated that every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children (Wu, et al.,2014, pp. 60). The effects of reforms have been testified in the following empirical studies: Support strategies from schools have received remarkable results. Once schools take positive measures, like setting up Parent Committee and inviting parents to sports meetings, the social closure capital of parental involvement and intergenerational closure will increase dramatically (Epstein & Becker, 1982; Becker & Epstein, 1982).

In Chinese community, Hong Kong has taken similar policy since the 1980s. Through acts stipulated by government, they focus on and make use of schools to establish family-school cooperation to increase social capital for families and boost excellent and equal education (Ho, 1999). Ho testified in a subsequent research report *Family-School Cooperation Research Plan: Success Indicators and Probe into Successful Practice*, that these policies enable parents to participate in children's education, at the same time create a closer intergenerational closure network between schools and parents (Ho, 2001).

It is necessary to point out that school-family cooperation can promote social closure, but the production process is also affected by family background. Lareau (1987) argues that class is the mediate factor which affects the production of social closure capital. Parents from different classes have different extent of compliance towards teachers' requirements. The material and cultural characteristics of families will interact with school-family relations. To put it another way, family background is the mediate factor of school-family education and will reduce the direct effect of school-family cooperation on the production of social closure.

Recently in China, some scholars have noticed the relation between schools and social capital during the process of education and focused on the subject to conduct empirical studies. Among the representatives are a series of researches of Zhao Yandong and Hong Yanbi (2012) and Wu Chonghan (2017). Based on the representative data from the national level, Zhao Yandong and Hong Yanbi (2012) found out that the more parental involvement in children's education, the better children's academic achievements, and the more communication between parents and schools, that is to say, the greater intergenerational closure, the better children's academic achievements.

The research of Wu Chonghan and his college (2014), leveraging the first-level data of Jiangxi province, reveals that school-family cooperation weakens the correlation between family capital and child development. Moreover, Wu advises disadvantaged families to promote children's success by strengthening cooperation with schools.

Research Review and Research Hypothesis

Despite enormous research achievements made by scholars on the school and social closure capital production, there are still inadequacies, mainly consisting of the following aspects. Firstly, the researches are not implemented in an overall regional perspective. Most of existing researches are carried out in developed capitalist

countries, while relevant discussion is still lacking in China and other developing countries and does not show the effects of these researches in boosting the education of developing countries. Secondly, there are some limitations on the research topics. Although existing researches fully expound the functions of schools in facilitating social closure capital and improving education achievement through the latter, however, they do not analyze the possibility that school strategies can favor the even distribution of capital and thereby be conducive to educational equality. Therefore, it is necessary to use China's representative national level data to analyze the effect of school-family cooperation system on social capital production at the micro-level. Based on the foregoing, this paper puts forward further research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: School-family cooperation system is positively correlated with social closure. In this way, according to the different types of social closure, we can divide hypothesis 1 into hypothesis 1a and hypothesis 1b. Hypothesis 1a: school-family cooperation system is positively correlated with parental involvement; hypothesis 1b: school-family cooperation system is positively correlated with intergenerational closure.

Hypothesis 2: Family background influences the effect of school-family cooperation system and family socioeconomic status weakens the direct effect of school-family cooperation system. Specifically, hypothesis 2 can be divided as follows: hypothesis 2a: family socioeconomic status can adjust the correlation between school-family cooperation system and parental involvement; hypothesis 2b: family socioeconomic status can adjust the correlation between school-family cooperation system and intergenerational closure.

Institutional discrimination theory holds that the lower class parents' less involvement in children's education does not result from their neglect of their children and indifference to children's education, but from the mismatch between the inherent rules of education institutions and the environment in which they live and inadequate knowledge that hold them back from acquiring social capital to get involved in their children's education (Lareau, 1987; Ho & Willms,

1996). Hence, once school attitude changes to set up more supportive strategies and plans for parents, the social capital of these families can be significantly increased, based on which, this paper further puts forward hypothesis 3: school-family cooperation system has different effects on different classes of parents and conduces to the even distribution of social closure capital of families of all classes.

Data, Variables and Analysis Method

Data

This research is conducted using baseline database of Chinese Educational Panel Survey (hereinafter referred to as CEPS). Designed and implemented by National Survey Research Center at Renmin University of China (NSRC), CEPS is a large scale tracking survey project that is nationally representative, aiming at revealing the impact of family, school, community and macro-social structure on individual education and further studying the process: how educational output plays a role in personal life course. The survey takes 2013-2014 academic year as the baseline and randomly draws 19,487 7th grade students and 9th grade students from 438 classes of 112 schools in 28 counties randomly drew around China (CEPS, 2015). This research focuses on the influence of family and school on social capital and discusses the effect of schools on promoting balanced development of education by social capital. Therefore, we deleted the information of 2,145 students who do not live with parents and 5,212 incomplete samples. So there are 12,121 final samples and sample loss rate is 30%.

Variables

This research follows closely the effect of school-family cooperation system on social closure capital which includes two types of social closure: parental involvement and intergenerational closure. The former refers to the process of parental involvement in children's education; the latter refers to the closed communication network

formed between parents and schools. School-family cooperation system means the institutional measures that schools periodically implement to foster parental involvement and intergenerational closure, including parent-teacher conference held by schools, invitation for parents to visit schools and so forth. What's more, the research makes further efforts to analyze the effect of family background on school-family cooperation system. On this basis, in the interest of weakening the influence of confounding variables on estimation results, this study introduces personal demographic background, educational expectation and Hukou (registered permanent residence) as control variables. These variables contain gender, ethnic group, grade, family structure, number of siblings, educational expectation and Hukou. The following are detailed descriptions of variables used in this research.

Social closure. Social closure is the dependent variable of this research and is divided into parental involvement and intergenerational closure based on Coleman's theory. The former refers to the participation of parents in children's education and the latter refers to the communication network established between parents and schools. We apply the method that existing researches used to measure parental involvement in children's education in families. In this research, we take discussion between parents and children, supervision of children and involvement in children's extracurricular activities to stand for parental involvement. Among them, data on supervision of children comes from Question 23 of a student questionnaire. It inquires whether your parents are strict with you on the following things, including homework and exams, performance at school, attendance, time you go home everyday, people you choose to make friends with, dressing, the amount of time spent online and TV viewing time. The three response options are as follows: no control, relaxed control and strict control. Data on discussion with children comes from Question 24 of the student questionnaire. It inquires whether your parents discusses the following questions frequently with you, including things that happen at your school, relationships with your friends, relationships with your teachers, your moods and your worries or troubles. Based

on a 3-point scale, response options are as follows: never, sometimes and often. Data on involvement in children's extracurricular activities comes from Question 28 of the student questionnaire. It inquires how often you and your parents do the following things together, including having dinner, reading, watching TV, exercising, visiting museums, zoos and science and technology museums and going out to movies, shows or for sports. Based on a 6-point scale, the response options range from never to more than once a week. Interactions between parents and schools reflexes intergenerational closure. The variable stem is from Questions 2 and 4 in Section B of the student questionnaire. Question 2 inquires whether children's parents have contacted teachers actively and Question 4 inquires whether teachers have contacted parents actively. Both questions have four response options: never, once, twice to four times and more than five times. By using the method of averaging for dimensionality reduction of the foregoing variables and standardizing them, standardized variables of supervision of children, discussions with children, involvement in children's extracurricular activities and intergenerational closure are generated.

Family-school cooperation system. Family-school cooperation system refers to the family-school cooperation measures established by schools actively, including the series of measures set up by schools in an active manner that aim at facilitating parental involvement. This variable of the research comes from Question 24 in Section E of a principal questionnaire. It inquires how often the schools hold parent-teacher conferences and life guidance lectures for students, report students' performance at school to parents in written form, and invite parents to attend lectures and parent-teacher conferences and to watch shows or participate in extracurricular activities. The four response options range from never to more than five times. The author applies factor analysis for dimensionality reduction of the foregoing variables and generates standardized variables of family-school cooperation system.

Family background. In general, physical capital, occupational status and level of education can represent family socioeconomic

status. CEPS provides categorical family background variables covering a 5-point scale family income status, nine categories of parents' highest level of education and 10 categories of parents' highest position. To meet the requirements of the research, the author divides the highest positions into four big categories, including white collar workers, blue collar workers, farmers and those who run their own businesses and others. On this basis, the author uses dimensionality reduction with factor analysis method to generate new and standardized family socioeconomic status variable.

Control variables. Control variables include individual-level variables, such as gender, ethnic group, grade, family structure, number of siblings, categories of Hukou, registered residence, concentration during study and educational expectation. Among these, CEPS directly provides variables including gender, grade, ethic group, family structure, and sibling numbers as well as school type variable. Data on the variable of concentration during learning comes from Question 9 of Section C of a parents questionnaire. It inquires that generally speaking, how do parents think of the attitude of their children towards learning. The five-point scale response options range from 1 = quite unserious to 5 = very serious. Data on the educational expectation comes from Question 31 of the student questionnaire. It inquires what your parents' educational expectation on you is. The author readjusted the categories of educational expectation into below junior high school, above junior high school but below senior high school and university and above in line with needs of the research. In China, both types of Hukou and registered residence can affect the participation of parents in children's education. CEPS data also provides information of children's Hukou types and registered residence and generates two variables related to Hukou, that are Hukou types (including both rural and urban types) and registered residence (including both local and nonlocal types). Table 1 shows the basic features of all variables.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Variable	Observed value	Mean value	Standard deviation	Minimum value	Maximum value
Dependent variable					
Parental involvement					
Supervise their children	12121	0.024	0.976	-3.395	1.659
Discuss with their children	12121	0.010	0.996	-2.044	1.909
Participate in children's activities	12121	0.034	0.983	-2.532	2.144
Intergenerational closure					
Communication between school and family	12121	0.007	0.999	-1.443	1.980
Independent variable					
School-family cooperation mechanism	12121	0.014	0.993	-1.811	2.575
Family socioeconomic status	12121	0.051	1	-2.896	3.370
Control variable					
Grade (9th grade = 1)	12121	0.489	0.500	0	1
Family structure (parents be around = 0)	12121	0.171	0.376	0	1
Learning attitude	12121	3.370	0.956	1	5
Sex (female = 1)	12121	0.503	0.500	0	1
Ethnic group (Han)	12121	0.077	0.267	0	1
Location of Hukou (Registered permanent residence) (local = 0)	12121	0.174	0.379	0	1
Type of Hukou (urban = 0)	12121	0.513	0.500	0	1

Educational expectation	12121	2.719	0.592	1	3
Number of siblings	12121	1.161	0.486	1	5

Method

A random effects model is usually used for analyzing panel data; however, it is also applicable to cross sectional data obtained from a cluster sample. The education data set from several schools is a typical cluster sample, where each school is a cluster and students in each cluster are correlated. In some cases, key explanatory variables change across groups rather than within one and samples in groups are imbalanced. Therefore, it is more proper to use a random effects model in this study, which is given in the following equation:

$$y_{ij} = + \sum \beta_{ij} x_{ij} + \mu_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Where y_{ij} is the dependent variable, that is, the two types of social closure: parental involvement and intergenerational closure, *i* indicates schools and *j* for individuals; x_{ij} is the independent variable, μ_{0j} is the interschool stochastic error term and e_{ij} the stochastic error term.

Results

School and Social Capital

Table 2 lists the influence of school-family cooperation system on the production of social closure capital based on the analysis involving two random effects models: Model 1 is the school-family cooperation system model that excludes the variable of family background; Model 2 is a complete model that includes the variable of family background. Model 1 shows that school-family cooperation system is significantly positively correlated with parental involvement and two types of social capital of intergenerational closure. Particularly, school-family cooperation system has great influence on parental involvement including discussions with children and involvement in children's activities and

intergenerational closure network for school-family communication. For everyone standard deviation increase in school-family cooperation system, parental involvement in discussions and activities with their children, and contact with schools will increase 0.092, 0.126 and 0.078 standard deviations ($p < 0.001$) in frequency, which proves Hypothesis 1: School-family cooperation system is positively correlated with social closure capital and can improve parental involvement and the two types of social capital of intergenerational closure.

Model 2 is a complete model that includes the family socioeconomic status. It indicates that after family socioeconomic status is taken into account, the influence of school-family cooperation system on social closure capital changes, with declining influence on parental involvement social capital like discussions with children and participation in children's activities. For every one standard deviation increase in school-family cooperation system, the frequency of parents-children discussions and activities will rise by 0.086 and 0.11 standard deviations ($p < 0.001$) respectively. After family socioeconomic status is controlled, school-family cooperation system will show increasingly positive effect on intergenerational closure capital, and for everyone standard deviation it increases, the frequency of school-family communication will rise by 0.070 non-standard deviations ($p < 0.001$). In addition, the result of Model 2 also indicates that family socioeconomic status is positively correlated with the two types of social closure. For every one standard deviation increase in family socioeconomic status, the frequency of parents-children discussions and activities and school-family communication will rise by 0.068, 0.152 and 0.103 standard deviations respectively ($p < 0.001$). Hypothesis 2 is roughly confirmed that the effect of school-family cooperation system is affected by family background. Family socioeconomic status will adjust the direct effect of school-family cooperation system, and negatively regulate the influence of school-family cooperation system on parental involvement capital and positively regulate the influence of school-family cooperation system on intergenerational closures capital.

Table 2

Influence of School-Family Cooperation System on Social Capital

	Parental Involvement						Intergenerational Closure	
Variable	Supervise Their Children		Discuss with Their Children		Participate in Children's Activities		Communication Between School and Family	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
School-family cooperation system	.026 (.017)	.028 (.017)	.096*** (.022)	.086*** (.021)	.126*** (.027)	.110*** (.024)	.078** (.029)	.070*** (0.031)
Family socioeconomic status		-.020 (.012)		.068*** (.010)		.152*** (.010)		.103*** (.012)
Control variable[2]	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
N	12121	12121	12121	12121	12121	12121	12121	12121
Overall R-square	0.045	0.045	0.091	0.097	0.139	0.169	0.041	0.048
Between R-square	0.111	1.124	0.589	0.606	0.620	0.702	0.126	0.131
Within R-square	0.038	0.038	0.056	0.097	0.055	0.169	0.033	0.041

*Notes: 1. Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations; *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05 (two-sided test);*

2. Control variables include sex, ethnic group, grade, family structure, number of siblings, type of Hukou, the effort students put into study in domicile residence, and educational expectation.

Heterogeneity on School-Family Cooperation

Samples can be divided into three groups by family socioeconomic status: the lower class, the middle class and the upper class. The number of samples in each group is 4802, 3169 and 4150 respectively. Table 3 reports the influence of stratified school-family cooperation system on the production of social closure. The result of multilevel linear regression analysis indicates that the school-family cooperation system has a heterogeneous influence on social closure capital. These measures can result in considerable increase of social closure capital in the lower class families. For everyone standard deviation increase in the frequency of school-family cooperation system, the frequency of parental involvement in children's education and activities and school-family communication of lower-class families will rise by 0.108, 0.131 and 0.078 standard deviations respectively. Schools can also affect the social capital production of upper class families although the influence is less than that on lower class families. For every one standard deviation increase in the frequency of school-family cooperation system, the frequency of parents-children discussions and activities of upper-class families will increase by 0.052 and 0.085 standard deviations respectively. In addition, these measures have no significant impact on parental monitoring of children's study and school-family communication. Moreover, the school-family cooperation system has weak influence on middle class families. For every one standard deviation increase in the frequency of school-family cooperation system, the frequency of parents-children discussions and activities of middle class families will increase by 0.049 and 0.093 standard deviations respectively. These measures have no significant impact on the frequency of parental monitoring of children's study and school-family communication. Hypothesis 3 is roughly confirmed that the school-family cooperation system has different influence on parents of different social classes and facilitates even distribution of social closure capital across various families.

Table 3

Impact of Stratified School Supportive Strategy on Social Capital

	The Lower Class				The Middle Class				The Upper Class			
Variable	Supervise Their Children	Discuss with Their Children	Participate in Children's Activities	Communication Between School and Family	Supervise Their Children	Discuss with Their Children	Participate in Children's Activities	Communication Between School and Family	Supervise Their Children	Discuss with Their Children	Participate in Children's Activities	Communication Between School and Family
School-Family Cooperation	.050	.108***	.131***	.078*	.019	.044*	.083**	.063	.022	.052**	.085***	.043
Mechanism	(.022)	(.028)	(.028)	(.036)	(.021)	(.025)	(.029)	(.035)	(.028)	(.026)	(.026)	(.036)
Control Variable	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
N	4802	4802	4802	4802	3169	3169	3169	3169	4150	4150	4150	4150
Overall R-square	0.056	0.089	0.141	0.044	0.051	0.010	0.103	0.034	0.035	0.051	0.082	0.040
Between R-square	0.129	0.343	0.539	0.055	0.067	0.484	0.546	0.091	0.039	0.431	0.296	0.000
Within R-square	0.043	0.055	0.048	0.036	0.041	0.074	0.047	0.029	0.037	0.036	0.068	0.045

Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the theory of social closure put forward by James Coleman, this paper analyzes the effect of schools in the process of the social closure capital production with nationally representative data. Its main research results and conclusions are as follows: firstly, family-school cooperation systems are able to enhance social closure significantly and have a great influence on the two types of social closure, namely parental involvement and intergenerational closure; secondly, family-school cooperation systems can be adjusted by family background factors, among which, family socioeconomic status will reduce the direct positive effect of family-school cooperation systems on parental involvement while increasing the direct positive effect of family-school cooperation systems on intergenerational closure of social closure; thirdly, the effects of family-school cooperation on social closure are heterogeneous as the systems have a greatest effect on the social closure production of lower-class families while having a little effect on the social closure production of other classes of families.

The above conclusions enrich the existing study of social closure from two aspects. On the one hand, the empirical study from China has shown the universality of social closure mechanisms. In the interactive structure established by schools, families and even communities, individual social capital, which can then be transformed into educational advantages, can be boosted by the close communication and relationship chain formed between parents and schools, parents and other parents, as well as parents and children. On the other hand, schools have initiative in the process of forming social closure and are able to improve the distribution of existing social-closure resources in our society with measures set up by schools to stimulate the lower class parents to get involved in their children's education and communicate with schools to promote education equality.

Family-school cooperation is not a merging concept. Since the 1970s, the developed areas like USA and Hong Kong have conducted different trials on family-school cooperation successively and formulated related laws and policies based on these trials' results. Following in the footsteps of developed countries, China also

established corresponding policies and regulations. However, in general, the establishment of Chinese family-school cooperation systems is still in an early stage (Wu Chonghan, 2014, P363), and effective systems have not been set up yet. Based on the conclusions of the foregoing empirical study, we come up with the following policy suggestions: first, in the family-school interaction relationship network, schools should do the best to drive family social capital production and the development of high-quality compulsory education. Second, we should work hard to weaken negative influence of family socioeconomic status (such as social classes and other factors) on schools' efforts, in order to exert schools' best efforts. Third, we should particularly develop the compulsory education equally through family-school cooperation method. The family-school cooperation measures set up by schools are not only good for boosting the social closure capital, but also conducive to the even distribution of such capital in different classes of families. Besides resource redistribution policies, these measures are new mechanisms for achieving the balanced development of compulsory education.

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Book Review
Understanding Education Policy: The 'Four Education Orientations' Framework

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Book Review

Tiffany Jones (2013) attempts to review the previous research related to policy analysis frameworks and examines the educational orientations in order to assert an orientation-based conceptual framework for policy analyses in her book, Understanding Education Policy: The 'Four Education Orientations' Framework. The book draws insights for a variety of audiences including undergraduate and graduate students in the education policy area, educators, educational administrators, policy researchers, and policy makers. Jones contributes to the discussion and debates around education policies by making them more understandable through the use of an implicit language.

The book firstly frames a perspective on education policies. The author then examines the orientations, or approaches to education policy, which serve as the foundation of her framework. They consist of conservative, liberal, critical, and post-modern views. Finally, she explains the four-orientation conceptual framework for education policy analysis along with the usage of these four perspectives in the field. The book is divided into six chapters. In the first three chapters, it explains the need for a broader conceptual framework to examine policies, gives the perceptions in construction of policy, and puts Jones's framework into context among existing frameworks. The

second chapter also covers the methods she adopts in her framework by explaining the perceptions of how policy is taken into account as text, value-laden actions, process and discourse. In the fourth chapter, the four education orientations are defined based on orientation ideals, policy production, processes in practice and examples which include beliefs about education, the roles of teachers and students, desired policy impacts and policy research pursuits for each orientation. Furthermore, the fifth chapter discusses the orientation-based conceptual framework over sample analyses and the sixth chapter gives a brief conclusion.

The neo-liberal orientation is highly promoted and dominates today's education policies; however, there is also a growing amount of policy research criticizing the neo-liberal educational movement. As one of the voices critical to the prevalence of the neo-liberal movement, Jones points out that it is better to view the literature by considering discourses from the viewpoint of all four orientations regardless of the dominant perspectives. Her orientation-based conceptual framework includes three aspects: education orientation (a broad description for the selected education policy area), approach (specific to each orientation), and ideology (explanations or key ideas). To find information to apply the framework to the education policy area, she gives the references for each orientation: conservative is related to transmitting dominant and traditional values, liberal is related to knowledge and skills for individual or market choice, and competitive achievement, critical is related to alternative values and attempts to restructure social justice issues, and post-modern is related to exploring multiple or contextually specific approaches and subject positions. Jones suggests using her conceptual framework before completion of a policy analysis, in the formulation of policy, or when simply taking your role in educational policy debates.

In chapter five, Jones gives exemplars for the application of her framework to sexuality and values education policies in the Australian education system. They are produced as a result of pre-readings of policies, theoretical literature, teaching materials, and

media articles, which are then investigated for the promoted and negated practices within the discourses, and the roles ascribed for the stakeholders (p.62). The author emphasizes that the benefits of using the framework are that it is explicit and therefore stakeholders can develop a better understanding of policy and it creates a common language for conflated policy terms (such as conservative and liberal or critical and post-modern) (p.61). It also allows for monitoring of orientation change in policy discourses over time for various policy types, education sectors, and countries.

One of the most crucial contributions of the book, especially for emerging researchers, is that a conceptual framework with multiple perspectives gives an opportunity to clarify the meaning of policy and educational purposes to understand the remarks on policy discourses. At the end of each chapter, the author provides both keywords and tutorial and field activities in which the reader can conceptualize common terms with meaningful explanations. These materials make the book valuable for students conducting their own educational policy analysis projects (e.g. Can you find an advertisement for a school that uses the students' high achievement as a 'selling point' to parents? [p.39] or Name a particular education issue on which advocacy groups, students, social groups or academic activists are currently calling for change? [p.43]). Thus, it was strongly suggested to be used as a course book for education policy research classes using multiple education perspectives.

The given examples related to the orientations and policies may be culturally different, and would require adaptation for use in different countries' policy contexts. In addition, this orientation-based conceptual framework seems methodologically limited to qualitative approaches concerning policy discourses. Moreover, someone that does not already have a firm foundation in the discourses of education policy within the context of the interpretivist approach, and the orientations within the field, may be best served together with further readings. Despite the book's presentation of a solely conceptual framework based on mapping the discursive composition

of education policies, the book does provide an excellent background on multiple education perspectives.

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