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<td>Author(s)</td>
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A Qualitative Study of Hong Kong Teachers’
Emotional Experiences at Work

by

TSANG Kwok Kuen

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at The University of Hong Kong
Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Signature: __________________________

TSANG Kwok Kuen
Abstract of Thesis entitled

A Qualitative Study of Hong Kong Teachers’ Emotional Experiences at Work

Submitted by

TSANG Kwok Kuen

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at The University of Hong Kong

In recent years, many teachers in Hong Kong are reported as dissatisfied, stressful, and burnt out. The literature has suggested the negative emotions affect both teachers’ well-being and teaching quality. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the phenomenon of teachers’ emotional experiences at work in Hong Kong. Since a large number of teachers in Hong Kong are found to be unhappy, their emotional experiences can be regarded as a social issue more so than a psychological one. Thus, this research studies teachers’ emotional experiences from sociological perspective.

In order to have an in-depth understanding about Hong Kong teachers’ emotional experiences, this study interviewed 21 Hong Kong secondary school teachers who were selected by maximum variation sampling and snowball sampling, investigated the documents of the informants’ schools, and analyzed the
education policy documents and the Hong Kong educational news which were published between 1980 and 2011. The findings show that all the informants were committed to making a difference in students’ lives as their major teaching purpose. When there was a mismatch between how they perceived their work and what in actual the teaching purpose was, they would feel negatively; otherwise, they would feel positively. The study also finds that positive student-matters were the source of teachers’ positive emotions because the positive student-matters signified the informants that they successfully made a difference in students’ lives. On the other hand, workload, especially the administrative or what the informants called “non-instructional work”, tended to signify to the informants that they spent a lot of time on work that was unhelpful in making a difference. Therefore, the teachers were dissatisfied with heavy workload not only because the workload gave them no leisure, but because they perceived their work as purposeless and unworthy.

However, when this study took a closer look at the “non-instructional work”, it found that most of the “non-instructional work” suggested by the informants were “instructional” or had “instructional” values in nature. The phenomenon was a result of the power relation between school administrators and teachers which was embedded in and structured by career stage, school administration, and education reforms. Under this relation, the power of school administrators overpowered the teachers in school when it came to the decision-making process. In other words, the teachers often were unable to access the “instructional” values behind their work, school policies and measures decided by the administrators. Under this situation, they might find it difficult to make a difference in students’
lives by doing their work, resulting in a negative self-concept. Therefore, they were inclined to experience negative emotions at work.

Nevertheless, it is noted that different groups of teachers enjoyed different levels of power in the power relation. For example, the late-career teachers tended to have more power because they were the members of school administrators, but the early- and mid-career teachers were more powerless because most of them were front-line classroom teachers excluded from many school decision-making processes. In addition, some school administrative practices might favour the overpowering relation, but some school administrative practices might not. Accordingly, Hong Kong teachers’ emotional experiences should be differentiated across different groups of teachers, although they generally feel negatively at work.

According to the findings, this study gives different recommendations to school administrators, the government, and teacher education to improve Hong Kong teachers’ emotional experiences at work.
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The 4-year PhD study is really a long journey on which I always experience frustration, bewilderment, anxiety, exhaustion, and stress, because my thoughts and hypotheses kept being challenged, criticized, and negated. To be honest, I thought about quitting my PhD study, because studying for a PhD is really a challenging, tough and difficult job. However, I have overcome it! The major reason why I can overcome all the difficulties in the journey is that I have received many supports and help from many people. So, I am delighted to have this opportunity to say thank you to them.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

The Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers (2011) found that nearly 30% of teachers in Hong Kong were unhappy at work and nearly 60% perceived teaching as a less rewarding occupation than before. According to Cheng (2009), 50% of teachers in Hong Kong felt powerless and stressful at work; over 25% of Hong Kong teachers were depressed and anxious; and between 37% and 56% had considered to resign from the profession. Fung (2012) and Lee, Tsang, and Kwok (2007) noted that the ratio of teachers suffering from anxiety and depression was two to three times higher than the public in Hong Kong. Choi and Tang (2009) found that the level of job commitment amongst Hong Kong teachers had been decreasing since 1997. Many other studies have also reported that teachers in Hong Kong generally have a high degree of stress and burnout and low level of job satisfaction and morale (Chan, 2011; Chiu & Kosinski, 1997; Choi & Tang, 2011; Lau, Chan, Yuen, Myers, & Lee, 2008; Tang & Yeung, 1999; Wong & Li, 1995). Accordingly, teaching in Hong Kong seems to have become a less enjoyable and rewarding occupation, in which teachers experience a lot of negative emotions.

Teachers’ emotional experiences at work are recognized as a significant factor affecting teachers’ well-beings and educational quality (Day & Lee, 2011; Schutz, Aultman, & Williams-Johnson, 2009; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009). On the one hand, research has demonstrated that a chronic experience of negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, depression, and exhaustion may damage teachers’
mental and psychological health (Lau et al., 2008; Tang, Au, Schwarzer, & Schmitz, 2001; Yeung & Liu, 2007). In an extreme case, the negative emotional experiences contribute to teachers’ suicide or self-harm (Leung, 1994). As witnessed between 2005 and 2010, for instance, there were at least eleven Hong Kong teachers who committed suicide because of intense feelings of job stress, exhaustion, and burnout (Ng, 2010). On the other hand, research has suggested that teacher effectiveness is affected by teachers’ emotions (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012; Sutton, 2005; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Research has showed that positive teachers’ emotions tend to positively relate to teachers’ motivation, self-efficacy, and commitment in teaching, while negative teachers’ emotions tend to negatively relate to these sources of teacher effectiveness (Sutton, 2005). Thus, Hargreaves has argued, “good teaching is charged with positive emotion” (1998b, p. 835) which is “absolutely central to maintaining and improving educational quality in our schools” (1998a, p. 315).

Accordingly, it is significant to study teachers’ emotional experiences at work in Hong Kong, because a better understanding of the patterns of teachers’ positive and negative emotions will help improve teachers’ well-beings and educational quality. Therefore, teachers’ emotional experiences have drawn the attention of Hong Kong educational researchers. When the researchers deal with this phenomenon, many of them employ psychological perspective, especially the theory of burnout (Lau et al., 2008). To some extent, the psychological research generally attributes the causes of emotional experiences of teachers to psychological factors like personality trait, emotional intelligence, coping strategies, and the like (Chan, 2011). Nevertheless, the large number of teachers who have been found to be unhappy and dissatisfied suggests that negative
emotional experiences in teaching goes beyond psychological factors and has become a social issue. In other words, the existing psychological explanations which do not take account of the social dimensions of teachers’ emotions are incomplete (Santoro, 2011). In this sense, it is theoretically significant to fill the gap in the existing research by analyzing teachers’ emotional experiences from sociological perspectives.

This introductory chapter will first give an overview of the existing psychological research on Hong Kong teachers’ emotions, especially the research based on the theory of burnout. Then, it will briefly introduce a sociological perspective to investigate teachers’ emotional experiences at work in Hong Kong. Moreover, it will also present the research methodology and the major findings of the present study. At the end of this chapter, the organization of the thesis will also be outlined.

**Psychological perspective**

The psychological theory of burnout sets out to explain why some people are more prone to intense negative emotions or psychological symptoms than others in a similar and even the same working condition (Chan, 2011). As the name depicts, burnout is the key concept of the theory. Burnout is a psychological construct that describes employees’ negative experiences in workplace. This kind of work experiences is emotional and affective, because burnout is a symptom relating to the feelings of frustration, anxiety, exhaustion, and depression (Bakker, Schaufeli, Sixma, & Bosveld, 2001). In a general sense, burnout means the exhaustion of employees to maintain involvement in or commitment to work
(Schaufeli & Leiter, 2009). More specifically, burnout consists of three dimensions, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion refers to the feelings of being emotionally overextended and drained; depersonalization refers to the feelings of being cynical and detached from one’s work or other persons at work; the lack of accomplishment refers to the declined sense of competence, efficacy, and achievement (Bakker et al., 2001; Maslach, 1993; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli & Leiter, 2009).

Burnout has significant impacts on employees’ job performance and health. For example, Maslach et al. (2001) pointed out burnout was associated with employees’ absenteeism, intention to leave the job, actual turnover, and low productivity. They also found that burnout was correlated positively to mental illness like neurasthenia. Moreover, psychologists have demonstrated that the chronic experience of stress is the most important cause of burnout and the relationship between stress and burnout may be mediated or moderated by a variety of personal and psychological variables, such as gender, age, coping strategies, emotional intelligence, job attitudes, and personality traits (Maslach, 1993; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Leiter, 2009).

Since the topic of burnout is of significant importance to employees’ lives and job performance, Hong Kong’s educational psychologists have also applied the theory of burnout to investigate teachers’ emotional experiences and well-beings since the 1990s (Chan, 2011). These studies have identified different independent variables of burnout among Hong Kong teachers. First, the research has identified several stressors that cause Hong Kong teacher to burn out. For example, Tang and Yeung’s study (1999) found six stressors, including students’
misbehavior and undesirable attitudes, supervisors and inspectors, examination demand, nonteaching duties, workload, and lack of recognition for teaching and administrative tasks. Their study also showed that all the stressors significantly predicted teachers’ emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and the lack of accomplishment. Generally, other studies about Hong Kong teacher stress and burnout have repeated Tang and Yeung’s results (Chan, Chen, & Chong, 2010; Yeung & Liu, 2007). Among the stressors, workload has been reported as the strongest determinant of teacher burnout in Hong Kong (Chan et al., 2010; Tang & Yeung, 1999; Yeung & Liu, 2007). This is because Hong Kong teachers have to undertake many teaching (e.g. teaching 5-6 lessons a day and marking students’ work), administrative (e.g. documentation) and pastoral duties (e.g. organizing many extracurricular activities) and thus they need to spend long working hours (12 to 16 hours on average) to finish all the duties everyday (Morris & Adamson, 2010; The Committee on Teachers' Work, 2006). Consequently, the teachers chronically become stressful and exhausted by the workload (Lee et al., 2007).

In addition to the stressors, educational psychologists have also discovered other independent variables of teacher burnout. The first type of the variables is personality trait. Mo (1991) found that Hong Kong secondary school teachers with Type A personality were less burnt out even though the teachers experienced high stress, because Type A personality teachers were hard driven and persistent. Similarly, Chiu and Kosinski (1997) found that positive affectivity personality teachers were more able to cope with work stress and burnout, because teachers with this personality tended to focus on the positive side of the self, events, and environments. More recently, Chan (2003, 2011, 2013) has demonstrated that if the teachers have personality traits like hardiness, gratitude, and forgiveness, it is
easier for them to overcome stress and in turn have less burnout or better subjective well-beings and mental health.

In addition to personality traits, coping strategies are an important variable predicting teacher burnout. Yeung and Liu (2007) mentioned that the stressful and burnt out teachers were generally those who lacked effective strategies or skills to cope with stressful workplaces. In their study, Chan and Hui (1995) systematically examined the relationship between the three dimensions of burnout and different coping strategies among Hong Kong secondary school teachers. They found that the avoidant coping strategies were significantly and positively related to all dimensions of teacher burnout. That means that comparing with the teachers who positively and proactively faced stressors, the teachers who avoided and escaped to deal with stressors were more prone to burnout. Another study showed that if teachers were skillful to analyze problems and then take action to cope with problems creatively, they were less vulnerable to burnout even though they work in a stressful workplace (D. W. Chan, 2007).

Emotional intelligence is recognized as a significant independent variable to teacher burnout and mediator to stress-burnout relationship in Hong Kong. Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 189) defined emotional intelligence as a kind of social intelligence “that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.” According to the definition, emotional intelligence of teachers can be viewed as the ability or competence to understand, express, regulate, and utilize one’s and students’ emotions to facilitate teaching and learning (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012). In his research, Chan (2006) showed that emotional intelligence did not only enhance teachers’ job satisfaction and
commitment, but also reduced the level of burnout amongst teachers in Hong Kong.

Moreover, teachers’ demographic variables are also identified as factors affecting and mediating burnout among Hong Kong teachers. For instance, Mo (1991) found that teachers who were single, of graduate status, and with less than five years of teaching experiences had a higher level of burnout. Similarly, Lau, Yuen, and Chan (2005) identified that young, unmarried, and less experienced teachers without religious beliefs and without finishing professional training were more easy to be burnt out in Hong Kong.

In fact, the studies of teacher burnout in Hong Kong have confirmed the studies of teacher burnout in other countries (e.g. Cassel, 1984; Friedman, 2000; Hosotani & Imai-Matsumura, 2011; Iltaf & Gulzar, 2013; Seidman & Zager, 1991). Moreover, these studies have successfully identified and explained some potential causes of Hong Kong teachers’ negative emotional experiences at work. To some extent, the research findings have also provided us insights to improve the teachers’ capacity to combat stress and burnout. For example, according to the research, we can improve teachers’ capability to cope with stress and burnout by providing training and intervention which aim at changing teachers’ personality, attitude, coping strategies, or emotional intelligence (Chan, 2003, 2011, 2013; Yeung & Liu, 2007).

However, the major problem of these psychological studies is that they have neglected the social causes of burnout. As Schwab (1983) noted, such a neglect may attribute all negative outcomes to individual teachers, making them solely responsible for burning out. Moreover, researchers have recently pointed out that burnout is not only caused by psychological factors, it may also be affected by
social and structural factors, such as the characteristics of occupations and organizations (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Leiter, 2009). In addition, research on education reforms has also suggested that education reforms may also create a stressful working condition in which teachers may be vulnerable and prone to burnout (Dworkin, 2002). In other words, the psychological explanations about teacher burnout are incomplete. The incomplete explanations may distract our attention from identifying the deep social and structural root of teachers’ emotional experiences at work and in turn create unnecessary accusations on teachers about their imperfect personality traits, coping strategies, emotional intelligences, and the like (Santoro, 2011). In this sense, the problem of teachers’ emotional experiences may not be effectively improved if we only pay attention to the psychological factors of individual teachers. In order to patch up the weaknesses of the psychological research, it is suggested to approach teachers’ emotional experiences at work from sociological perspectives (Tsang, 2013, 2014b).

**Sociological perspective**

Emotions are the feelings or inner affective states about selves and objects in social environments social actors consciously experience (Arnold & Gasson, 1968; Damasio, 1999; Denzin, 1984). Although emotional experiences have biological, neurological, and physiological roots, sociologists have pointed out that the arousal of emotional experiences involves social actors’ interpretative process, which is the reflexive interpretation of selves and objects in social environments (Denzin, 1984; Kemper, 1981; Rosenberg, 1990; Stets, 2012; Thoits, 1989;
Turner & Stets, 2005). A positive interpretation will raise positive emotional experiences such as happiness, pride, and peacefulness because the selves and objects mean something good to social actors; on the other hand, a negative interpretation or evaluation will raise negative emotional experiences such as sadness, anger, and fear because the selves and objects mean something bad to social actors (Burke, 2004; Denzin, 1984; MacKinnon, 1994; Stryker, 2004; Turner, 2007). In this sense, emotional experiences also reflect the meanings social actors attach to the selves and objects (Denzin, 1984; MacKinnon, 1994; Rosenberg, 1990; Shott, 1979; Stryker, 2004; Thoits, 1989; Turner, 2011). Thus, some sociologists (e.g. Bu tendr idjk, 1987; Denzin, 1984, 1990; Ellis & Flaherty, 1992) refer emotional experiences to lived experiences in order to highlight the reflexive, conscious, and symbolic features of emotional experiences.

Accordingly, teachers’ emotional experiences at work are the feelings about selves and objects in teaching or school contexts which the teachers consciously experience. The experience is aroused by teachers’ interpretation of their work or work context (Saunders, 2013). If they see the work or work context positively, positive emotional experiences may be aroused; otherwise, they may encounter negatively emotional experiences. Studies have showed that teachers may see their work based on their teaching purpose (Hargreaves, 1998a; Lortie, 1975; Morgan, Ludlow, Kitching, O’Leary, & Clarke, 2010). Teaching purpose here means what people aspire to achieve and fulfill in teaching. Research has shown that many people choose to teach because they commit to the purpose of facilitating children’s academic, social, and moral development and growth (Briggs, 2008; Lasky, 2005; Morgan et al., 2010; Santoro, 2011). To some extent, the teaching purpose may become the framework of behaviors by which teachers
reflexively evaluate and monitor their practices in order to fulfill the purpose (Tsang, 2014b). When the teachers interpret that their work can facilitate them to make progress towards their teaching purpose, they may feel positively; otherwise, they may feel negatively (Morgan et al., 2010; Sutton, 2005).

Sociologically speaking, teachers are not free from any social constraint that conditions their practices in teaching and in turn their emotional experiences at work (Kelchtermans, 2005, 2011). In Hong Kong, workload may be an important constraint. As mentioned in the previous section, workload has been identified as the most significant stressor in teaching in Hong Kong. More importantly, teachers have complained that the workload are less relevant to education but administration, such as documentation, preparation school planning, and school promotion (The Committee on Teachers' Work, 2006). However, they are not able to reject the work, so they are dissatisfied with the work and working condition (Ho, 2005).

In fact, workload does not exist in a vacuum. Teachers’ workload is often created and intensified by education reforms. For instance, Hargreaves (2003) observed that education reforms in many countries increased teachers’ administrative duties because of the emphasis on the managerialist concepts such as quality assurance, accountability, and inspection. A study conducted by OECD (2005) identified that the workload of teachers was intensified and most of the intensified workload was administrative during the period of education reforms in all OECD counties. Scholars have argued that the intensified administrative workload not only creates a stressful working environment to teachers, but also reduce teachers’ time and energy to teach and take care of students’ needs (Hargreaves, 2003; Mahony, Menter, & Hextall, 2004; Santoro, 2011; Smyth,
Dow, Hattam, Reid, & Shacklock, 2000). As a result, as Choi and Tang (2011, p. 67) indicated, teachers may be “caught by a sense of unworthiness” because “they perceived their time was spent on activities that were incongruent with their educational goals,” which were about nurturing students’ development and growth.

In addition to workload and education reforms, another potential social constraint identified in the literature is school administration. Researchers have claimed that school administration can be more or less bureaucratic (Ingersoll, 2003). According to Weber (1946), bureaucracy is a particular type of administrative structure that emphasizes calculative rationality and impersonality. This kind of administrative structure brings negative outcomes to employees’ spirits and mentalities, because of the neglect of employees’ desires and interests at work (Volti, 2008). Sociologists have suggested that the characteristics of bureaucracy, such as division and sub-division of labor, hierarchy and centralization of power and authority, will break a labor process into minute segments and centralize the decision-making power in the top of hierarchy (Braverman, 1974; Erikson, 1990; Mills, 1951). Employees can only be responsible for a piece of work without any understanding of and control over the purposes of their labor which are defined by the organization. The separation of conception from execution is a problem for professionals like teachers, because the organizational goals may be contradictory to the work purpose of the professionals (Apple, 1982, 1986; Derber, 1982b). However, since they are employed in a bureaucratic system, the purposes of the professionals always are subordinate to the organizational goals. For example, Ball (2003) and Hargreaves (2003) have showed that teachers always are forced by the school administrators
to do a lot of administrative work which they perceive as less related or unrelated to teaching and thus they are dissatisfied with the work. Thus, Merton (1968) predicted that professionals, including teachers, may ultimately experience a series of frustration at work, because they are forced to do things that they do not value but they have no choice but to accept the work under the bureaucracy. Marxists refer the series of frustration to the feelings of meaninglessness, powerlessness, self-estrangement, and alienation (Blauner, 1964; Dean, 1961; Erikson, 1990; Seeman, 1959; Swain, 2012).

Accordingly, teachers’ emotional experiences at work are the feelings that teachers consciously experience in workplace. The emotional experiences are aroused by teachers’ interpretation of their work and working conditions. Teachers may interpret their work and working conditions on the basis of their purpose of teaching. When they perceive that their purpose can be achieved in their work, positive emotional experiences will be aroused; otherwise, negative emotional experiences will be aroused. However, there may be different kinds of social constraints on the fulfillment of teaching purpose and in turn their emotional experiences at work.

Although the emotional experiences of primary school teachers are important, this study only focuses on secondary school teachers’ emotional experiences at work in Hong Kong. The reason to focus on secondary school teachers is that, compared with primary school teachers, secondary school teachers are more susceptible to pressure and stress from educational reforms in recent decades (Ho & Tsang, 2008). Thus, studying this population provides opportunities to explore the reasons and patterns of Hong Kong teachers’ emotional experiences at work in depth. As a result, this study will ask research questions as follows.
(1) How do Hong Kong secondary school teachers feel at work?

(2) What is/are the teaching purpose(s) Hong Kong secondary school teachers hold in teaching?

(3) How do(es) the teaching purpose(s) influence Hong Kong secondary school teachers’ practices and emotions in teaching?

(4) What are the social constraints on the fulfillment of the teaching purpose(s) in Hong Kong’s secondary school system?

(5) How do the social constraints affect Hong Kong’s secondary school teachers’ work and emotions?

**Methodology**

Qualitative methodology was used in this study. In particular, this study employed in-depth interview method and analysis of public documents and records. To find information-rich informants to participate in the interviews, this study used two purposeful sampling strategies, including maximum variation sampling and snowball sampling (Patton, 1990). Data collection spanned from February to June 2012. Data collection ended when no new information was found by interviewing more informants. At the end, twenty-one secondary school teachers, who taught different subjects and grades and had different teaching experiences, were interviewed. All the interviews were semi-structured and tape-recorded. Eighteen informants were interviewed once, because they did not have time for a second interview. Therefore, their interview sessions were long (around 2 hours) in order to make sure there was enough time to gain sufficient
information for this study. For the other three informants, they were interviewed twice and each interview session lasted around an hour.

In order to have a comprehensive understanding about the impacts of administration and management of the informants’ schools and education reforms on teachers’ work and emotions, the study collected and analyzed public documents and records. First, the study analyzed the informants’ schools official documents posted on their respective school websites. The documents included annual school plans, annual school reports, school development plans, school profiles, and school organizational charts. These documents offered information about the school administrative structure and practices because they recorded the schools’ planning, management structure, administration policies, rules and procedures, past activities and programs, evaluation and appraisal system, and the like. Analyzing these documents might provide data to triangulate the informants’ narratives about their school administration (Denzin, 1978). Second, education policy documents and newspapers were analyzed because they provided information on the Hong Kong education reforms and the impacts of the reforms on school education and teaching over time (Esterberg, 2002). This study collected exclusively the policy documents and newspapers from 1980 to 2011, because Hong Kong education reforms which were initiated and implemented from 1980s had far-reaching impacts on Hong Kong education system as well as teachers’ work (Cheng, 2002; Sweeting, 2004).

Before data analysis, all interviews were transcribed. Then, I coded the transcripts and the documents and records with NVivo7. During the open and focus coding processes, the constant comparative method were employed in order to improve the credibility of theme development (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). By
using this method, I compared incidents in data with other incidents, incidents with themes, and themes with other themes while coding and recording data into themes in order to search for supporting and contrary evidences about the meaning of themes (Creswell, 2012). At the end, eight themes and twenty-six sub-themes were identified. By using NVivo7, I ran matrix coding in order to compare the similarities and differences between the narratives of informants with different teaching experiences, ages, contract types, subjects, and school types on teaching purpose, teachers’ workload, and teachers’ emotional experiences, and school administrative practices (Edhlund, 2007).

To enhance the research credibility and trustworthiness, different data sources for triangulation, cross-checking technique during interviews, constant comparative method during coding and theme development, and member checking after data analysis were used.

**Major findings**

This study finds that all the informants were committed to making a difference in students’ lives as their major teaching purpose. They derived the teaching purpose from social interactions with their students or with the teachers who taught them in the past. The teaching purpose became their interpretive scheme by which they reflexively interpreted and monitored their work. When they perceived that their work did not match the teaching purpose or they failed to fulfill the teaching purpose, they would feel negatively; otherwise, they would feel positively. This study also notes that positive student-matters (e.g. grateful graduates, students’ appreciation, students’ positive changes in behaviors and
attitudes, good relationships with students, and students’ learning progress) signified the informants that they successfully made a difference in students’ lives. Therefore, the positive student-matters have been regarded as the source of teachers’ positive emotions (Hargreaves, 2000; Lortie, 1975). On the other hand, workload, especially the administrative or what the informants called “non-instructional” work, tended to signify to the informants that they spent a lot of time and energy on doing something unrelated or irrelevant in cultivating students to learn and grow. Therefore, the teachers were dissatisfied with heavy workload not only because it meant there was no time for them to relax, but also because they perceived the work did not help or even prevented them from fulfilling the teaching purpose.

This study also finds that teachers’ emotional experiences were conditioned by different social constraints. At the micro-level, teachers were constrained by career stages. Career stages imply the status and authority of a teacher in a school. The findings imply that teachers may have higher status and authority in a school if they were in a later career stage. If teachers had high status and authority, it may be easier for them to influence the schools’ decision-making processes and in turn have more capability to decide and design their work. More importantly, the status and authority may empower the late-career teachers to have a better understanding about the “instructional value” of teachers’ work, including the administrative work. Therefore, they tended to perceive their work as helpful to making progress toward their conception of teaching purpose and thus felt more positively at work. On the other hand, the early- and mid-careers teachers generally had lower status and authority in a school, so they often were excluded from the schools’ decision-making processes. Then it would be difficult for them
to both have control over their work and also comprehend the “instructional value” of most of the work assigned by the school administrators. Accordingly, it may be easier for them to think that they were forced to do the work handed down, and that it was a mismatch with regards to their own teaching purpose, the worst of all was that they were powerless to reject the work. As a result, these teachers experienced relatively more negative emotions at work. In this sense, teachers’ emotional experiences at work may vary across career stages.

At the institutional level, school administration was a social constraint to teachers. Some of their schools tended to engage in more bureaucratic practices. In this type of schools, the informants encountered stricter external supervision, less power to influence the schools’ decision-making processes, and perceived that the school administrators did not consider their interests and purposes in teaching. They tended to perceive they were forced to do much administrative or “non-instructional work” that was not related to help students to learn and grow. Therefore, these informants were unhappy and dissatisfied at work. On the other hand, other informants’ schools tended to be less bureaucratic in practices. The schools showed concerns about students’ growth, supported teachers to teach, took care of teachers’ interest and purpose in teaching, and listened to teachers’ voices in decision-making process. The informants who worked in this type of schools tended to be more able to perceive the “instructional value” of their work and to achieve the teaching purpose. Therefore, comparatively, these informants were happier. In other words, teachers’ emotional experiences may also vary across schools because of different administrative practices.

At the macro-level, education reforms from the 1980s conditioned what the teachers did in teaching. In particular, the education reforms evoked two
particular processes, including institutionalization of whole-person education and centralized decentralization of school education, which intensified teachers’ administrative work and transformed the nature of teachers’ work to an administrative one from an educational one. Under this condition, teachers may perceive most of their work as “non-instructional work”, even though the work had “instructional values” or involved “instructional” components in nature. Thus, they may think that most of their works were purposeless and unworthy. Since all informants worked in the same context of education reforms, they generally shared similar emotional experiences at work, especially the negative ones.

Accordingly, the underlying reason for teachers’ negative emotional experiences is that they do not identify the “instructional” values of much of their work and thus perceive that they themselves fail to make a difference in students’ lives. The interpretation induces a negative self-concept within them (e.g. immoral or incompetent teacher). An in-depth analysis further indicates how teachers understand the meanings of their work depended on the power they have in teaching. The power relation is embedded in and structured by the social constraints of career stages, school administration, and education reforms. Thus, teachers might feel differently at work between teachers in different career stages and between teachers in different schools, but similarly as a whole.

Chapter arrangement

At the beginning of this chapter, it is noted that teaching in Hong Kong seems to have become a less enjoyable and rewarding occupation in recent years. In Hong Kong, educational researchers have paid attention to this phenomenon,
known as teachers’ emotional experiences at work, from a psychological perspective, especially the theory of burnout. However, the psychological perspective does not recognize the social dimensions of teachers’ emotions. This neglect may not only make the analysis become less comprehensive, but also attribute all the problems to individual teachers, putting the entire blame on the teachers themselves. Therefore, it is suggested to study teachers’ emotional experiences at work from a sociological perspective. As a result, a sociological framework of teachers’ emotional experiences is introduced.

It is noted that the sociological framework is not the only framework to study teachers’ emotional experiences. In Chapter 2, four particular sociological theories related to teachers’ emotions will be reviewed. To some extent, the framework proposed in this chapter absorbs some of the ideas of the theories but goes beyond them. Chapter 3 is about methodology. In that chapter, methodological concerns, research method, and data collection and analysis procedure of this study will be discussed in details. Chapters 4 to 6 are the finding chapters which will deal with different themes and sub-themes. Chapter 4 is about teachers’ workload, teaching purpose, and emotional experiences across career stages. Chapter 5 will analyze how school administration constrains and shapes teachers’ work and emotions. Chapter 6 will look at how recent emotional experiences of teachers have been structured by education reforms in Hong Kong since 1980s. In the concluding chapter, an overall theoretical discussion, implications, and recommendations to further research will be addressed.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

In the mid-1990s, teachers’ emotions emerged as a field of research in the sociology of education and teaching (Tsang, 2014b). One possible reason for this is that more and more teachers all over the world have been reported as feeling stressed, depressive, frustrated, dissatisfied, unhappy, and even alienated (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008). In other words, teachers’ emotional experiences at work should be considered as a social rather than a psychological issue. Thus, sociological perspectives are required to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon.

Sociologists have suggested that emotional experiences are a socially constructed phenomenon (Thoits, 1989; Turner, 2007; Turner & Stets, 2005). That means one’s emotional experiences are aroused by his or her interpretation of selves and objects in environments on the one hand, and conditioned by social, cultural, and institutional forces on the other. In other words, emotional experiences are affected by both agency and structure. To some extent, this social constructionist view is shared by the researchers of teachers’ emotions (Saunders, 2013; Schutz et al., 2009; Tsang, 2013, 2014b). However, most of them often overlooked either the role of agency or the role of structure in teachers’ emotions. The problem is reflected by the following literature about the emotional dimension of social interactions in school settings, emotional labor in teaching, education reforms and labor processes of teaching, and impacts of school administration on teachers’ lives. It is noted that the literature about the emotional
dimension of social interactions in school settings and emotional labor in teaching primarily is concerned with teachers’ emotional experiences, so reviewing its strengths and weaknesses can help build a more sophisticated framework for the present study. Although the literature about education reforms and school administration is less concerned with teachers’ emotions, the investigations of the impacts of education reforms and school bureaucracy on teachers’ work and mentality will provide insights into how teachers’ emotions are socially constructed. This is because teachers’ work and mentality are the interrelated topics of teachers’ emotions. Accordingly, the chapter will first review the four lines of literature respectively. On the basis of the literature review, then, it will propose a theoretical framework and research questions for the present study.

**Emotional dimension of social interactions in school settings**

In the 1990s, collaboration between teachers, parents, and students in teaching and learning was perceived as having many advantages and benefits (Hargreaves, 1994). Therefore, educational researchers, like Andy Hargreaves, have attempted to understand what make the collaboration successful or unsuccessful. They have found that the emotional dimension of social interactions may be a factor. On the basis of the research findings, Hargreaves (1998b, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002) has developed the theory of emotional geographies to explain the relationship between teachers’ emotions and social interactions of teachers with others in school settings.

From the perspectives of symbolic interactionism and phenomenology, Hargreaves has believed that emotions are a relational phenomenon constructed
by the social interactions of teachers with students, parents, and colleagues, and
that in turn the emotions will produce and reproduce the social interactions.
Therefore, he has attempted to investigate the relationship between teachers’
emotions and social interactions in school settings in order to improve the quality
of teaching and learning. More specifically, he develops his theoretical framework
Based on Denzin’s theory, Hargreaves (1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2001a, 2001b) has
conceptualized teaching as emotional practice because teaching will activate,
color and express not only teachers’ feelings and actions, but also the feelings and
actions of those with whom teachers interact. As an emotional practice, teaching
requires extensive degrees of emotional understanding (Hargreaves, 1998a),
which is the capacity to interpret and comprehend subjectively other people’s
emotions from one’s own standpoint (Denzin, 1984). Without emotional
understanding, mistrust and conflicts may permeate social relations between
teachers and other school members, and in turn arouse negative emotions in them,
which then affect social relationships. In order to facilitate social relationships and
interaction, it is important to enhance emotional understanding between the
interacting parties (Denzin, 1984). To enhance emotional understanding,
Hargreaves proposes the concept of emotional geographies of teaching, which
refers to “the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in
human interactions and relationships” (Hargreaves, 2001c, p. 1061). The
emotional geographies of teaching include five dimensions (Hargreaves, 2001c):

- Sociocultural geography: the similarities and differences in cultural and
  social backgrounds between teachers and those with whom they interact;
• Moral geography: the degree to which teachers’ purposes are supported or appreciated by others;
• Professional geography: the degree to which teachers hold the norms of professional interaction that prescribe coolness, reserve and emotional distance among interactants;
• Political geography: the differences in power and status between teachers and those with whom they interact;
• Physical geography: the frequency, intensity and formalization of interactions of teachers with others.

Hargreaves points out that the variation in the degree of each dimension will influence the overall pattern of closeness/distance in social interactions and relations. As a result, emotional understanding will also be affected. Based on this framework, Hargreaves has investigated teachers’ emotions in different kinds of social interactions by conducting large scale ethnographic studies in which he observed 15 varied schools of different levels and sizes and also interviewed more than 60 elementary and secondary teachers in Canada.

With respect to teacher-student interaction, Hargreaves (2000) found that teachers tended to possess professional warmth and interacted frequently with students. According to Hargreaves, this enhanced the physical and professional closeness between teachers and students, and this closeness, to some extent, was the basis for the development of emotional understanding between teachers and students. On the other hand, Hargreaves also argued that the unequal social position between these two groups of people (i.e. teachers are dominant and students are dominated in the classroom) may create conflicts between them.
(political distance). This conflict prevented them from developing shared emotional goals and emotional bonds, so emotional misunderstanding may occur among them (Hargreaves, 2000). However, Hargreaves (2000) thought that this political distance could be minimized if teachers and students could have more activities outside the core process of teaching and learning in classroom. This is because such activities made possible shared positive emotional experiences for both teachers and students, such as exhilaration and enjoyment.

Regarding teacher-parent relationships, Hargreaves (2001c) showed that teachers and parents were emotionally distant. This emotional distance was to some extent the result of (1) the difference in socio-cultural backgrounds between teachers and parents (sociocultural distance), and (2) the norm of teacher-parent interaction that prescribed coolness, reserve and emotional distance (professional distance). Sociocultural and professional distance prevented teachers and parents from developing shared understanding cognitively and emotionally. This may further foster moral distance between them, which meant that parents did not understand, support, appreciate and respect how teachers carried out their classroom teaching. Consequently, teachers may feel that they had lost their professional status and power/authority (political distance). In such a situation, teachers may experience negative feelings such as anger, resignation, depression, and anxiety. In this case, it was possible that they either avoided interactions with parents or display emotions like hostility, anger and dissatisfaction towards parents. As a result, the conflicts and emotional distance between teachers and parents became deeper, and the emotional understanding between them also became weaker (Hargreaves, 2001c; Hargreaves & Lasky, 2004).
Finally, Hargreaves (2001b, 2002) found that teachers tended to value peaceful working environments in which they received and enjoyed rewards such as more social support and acceptance, so they tried to maintain harmonious relationships and avoid conflicts with colleagues. To achieve this, many teachers tried to respect or value what their colleagues did in order to shorten moral distance (Hargreaves, 2001b). In addition, they also tried not to criticize their colleagues because this act may downplay colleagues’ professional status and power/authority (Hargreaves, 2001b). In other words, they tried to maintain political closeness. As a result, emotional understanding and positive social relationship among them may be developed. Hargreaves (2002) pointed out that if such emotional understanding and relationship could be fostered, it was possible for mistrust and betrayal to occur.

As we have seen, Hargreaves has illustrated in detail the emotional lives of teachers in face-to-face interactions. From his studies, we understand that teachers’ emotions may be determined by the intersubjectivity between teachers, students, parents and colleagues. The intersubjectivity may be influenced by the sociocultural, moral, professional, political, and physical distance between the social actors. On the other hand, teachers’ emotions may also affect further social interactions between teachers and those they interact with. Therefore, emotions can be viewed as a mediator in social processes at a micro-level (Thoits, 1989).

Nevertheless, this theory has a critical limitation. The theory emphasizes the patterns of social interactions affecting how teachers feel at work, but overlooks macro-social structures upon both social interactions and emotions. To some extent, the quality of social interactions (e.g. harmony or conflict) between social actors not only depends on the distances of sociocultural, moral, professional,
political, and physical backgrounds between them as described by Hargreaves, but also on social structures in which the social actors interact. For example, every social setting has preexisting social norms and rules that define and govern the behaviors of different actors in the situation (Goffman, 1959; Stryker, 1980). People with different social backgrounds may have different capabilities to read the rules and norms and behave in expected ways (Bourdieu, 1990). For example, research has showed that there are social rules and norms in school settings that require parents to involve in schooling and education such as encouraging children to learn at home, assisting school affairs, and joining parent-teacher association, but the upper-class and white parents are more readily able to conform to the rules and norms rather than working-class and black parents in United States (Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). This is because the upper-class and white parents can understand the importance of their involvement in schooling and education to their students’ academic achievement and have much more resources to help children to learn at home and join school activities due to high educational level, professional occupation, and high income (Ho, 1995). Therefore, their interactions with teachers tend to be happier and more harmonious than working-class parents’ (Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). In other words, the quality of social interactions and emotional experiences between teachers and other social actors in school settings may be predetermined by social rules and norms of the settings. However, the research on the emotional dimension of social interactions in school settings overlooks this deep-rooted social course. Since this neglect, this literature tends to give a description rather than in-depth analysis of how teachers’ emotional experiences are socially constructed.
Emotional labor in teaching

One of the prevalent research interests concerning teachers’ emotions is emotional labor in teaching (Tsang, 2011). To some extent, this kind of research aims to explore the nature of teaching and its impact on teachers’ psychological and emotional well-being. Research on emotional labor in teaching is inspired by Hochschild’s (1979, 1983) work, which is influenced by dramaturgical theory and alienation theory. On the basis of the dramaturgical theory, Hochschild has noted that there are feeling and expression rules specifying how we should feel and display our feelings in every social setting. For example, feeling and expression rules specify that people should be sad and should not smile at funerals, but that people should be happy and should not cry at weddings (Denzin, 1984). If social actors cannot adjust their feelings and displays according to feeling and expression rules, they will be perceived as emotional deviants by others (Thoits, 1990). To avoid becoming emotional deviants, people need to manage their emotions and displays appropriately. Hochschild has referred emotion management to emotion work and identifies two strategies of emotion work: surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting involves modifying one’s emotional display in accordance with what is expected in a particular situation regardless of one’s actual feelings, whereas deep acting involves trying to change one’s feelings to match the appropriate emotional display (Hochschild, 1979).

To some extent, emotion work is a normal act occurring in social actors’ private lives. However, from the perspective of alienation theory, Hochschild has indicated that emotion management is not only an act occurring in one’s private
life, but also the labor done for a wage in post-industrial societies. In post-industrial societies, more and more enterprises, especially service-related, tend to sell employees’ emotional activities for profit making (Wharton, 2009). In such a situation, employees are no longer able to exercise control over their feelings and displays. For example, Hochschild (1983) illustrated how flight attendants were required by their employers to keep smiling and show warmth towards consumers because smiling and warmth were the selling points of airlines. Other studies have also had similar findings among other frontline service workers (e.g. waitresses and insurance sales), caregiving workers (e.g. retail clerks and child care workers), professionals (e.g. physicians and lawyers), and public service workers (e.g. social workers and corrections officials) (Guy, Newman, & Mastracci, 2008; Wharton, 2009). In other words, many people in post-industrial societies have to manage their emotions under supervision. Hochschild refers to this kind of act as emotional labor: emotion management done for a wage. One possible consequence of emotional labor is emotional dissonance, which is the separation of feelings from displays (Hochschild, 1983). The higher the degree of emotional dissonance, the higher the degree of the feelings of dehumanization, self-alienation, depersonalization, depression, and burnout (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000; Diefendorff, Richard, & Yang, 2008; Hochschild, 1983; Hopfl & Linstead, 1993; Lewig & Dollard, 2003).

Generally, sociological studies on emotional labor has suggested that it is more likely that workers who are required to engage in face-to-face interactions with the public with love and care perform emotional labor (Wharton, 2009). Accordingly, educational researchers have argued that teachers are required to perform emotional labor because they need to interact face-to-face with students
with love and care (Hargreaves, 1998a; Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006; Winograd, 2003). On the basis of the theory of emotional labor, the first task for educational researchers is to illustrate how teachers lose their control over their emotions in teaching. Tsang (2011) noted that while there may not be explicit supervision over teachers’ emotions in teaching, teachers’ emotions are prescribed by different feeling and expression rules of teaching. According to Zembylas (2005), the general rule requires teachers to avoid expressing too strong and too weak emotions. More specifically, Winograd (2003, p. 1652) revealed five feeling and expression rules for teachers:

- to love and to show enthusiasm for students;
- to be enthusiastic and passionate about subject matter;
- to avoid the display of extreme emotions like anger, joy and sadness;
- to love their work; and
- to have a sense of humor and laugh at their own mistakes and the peccadilloes of students.

The rules may also be related to teacher professionalism. This means that if teachers do not manage their emotions appropriately according to the rules, they will be treated as unprofessional (Zembylas, 2002, 2005). Consequently, teachers have to perform emotional labor. Basically, this argument is accepted by most of educational researchers. Since they agree that teachers need to perform emotional labor, they investigate the outcomes of the emotional labor in teaching with respect to teachers’ psychological well-being and mentality.
According to the alienation theory, emotional labor is alienating (Scott, 1998). In other words, emotional labor creates emotional dissonance resulting in job stress, emotional exhaustion, burnout, or other negative outcomes to teachers. Many empirically studies have provided support for this proposition. For example, the survey studies conducted by Hulsheger, et al. (2010), Iltaf and Gulzar (2013), and Na¨ring, Brie¨t and Brouwers (2006) showed that emotional labor caused teacher stress and burnout, a sense of depersonalization, and turnover. In addition, the ethnographic studies conducted by Zembylas (2004a, 2004b, 2005) showed similar findings. These studies demonstrated that emotional labor in teaching may result in teachers’ feelings of frustration, guilt, and shame, which in turn damage teachers’ identity, confidence and self-esteem. For example, a teacher may dislike or even hate a student whose academic performance is bad or whose misconduct is serious. However, the teacher needs not only to suppress his or her negative emotions, but also to show love and care to the students because of the feeling rules. The suppression of negative emotions may create further negative emotions for the teacher, such as guilt, regret, and shame, because he or she may think that it is inappropriate or even immoral for them as a teacher to dislike or hate students (Hebson, Earnshaw, & Marchington, 2007; O'Connor, 2008). In addition, the teacher may also feel emotionally uncomfortable or self-estranged, because his or her displayed emotions do not correspond to his or her true feelings (Hu¨lsheger et al., 2010; Philipp & Schu¨pbach, 2010). Both conditions may affect his or her professional identity and self-esteem, which in turn creates other intense negative emotions like frustration and depression (O'Connor, 2008).

The theory of emotional labor suggests that the nature of teaching is an interactive work between teachers and students and the interactive work is
governed by feeling and expression rules in teaching. According to the rules, teachers need to manage their feelings and displays at work. Consequently, teachers may experience emotional dissonance which in turn results in negative emotional experiences. In this sense, the theory acknowledges that teachers’ emotional experiences at work are influenced by both social structure (feeling and expression rules) and teacher agency (emotion management). The acknowledgement is important, because sociology of emotions has claimed that every analysis of emotions cannot ignore neither agency nor structure (Collins, 2004; J. H. Turner, 2009). Therefore, theoretically speaking, the research on emotional labor in teaching may provide us with a comprehensive framework to understand teachers’ emotional experiences at work. Nevertheless, it may not be the true story because of two complications in the research on emotional labor in teaching.

First, although the research has recognized that teachers are able to construct their emotions through emotion management, it tends to regard emotion management as normative or a less reflexive behavior: emotion management is a behavior reacting or conforming to feeling and expression rules in teaching. In other words, the research still pays less attention to teacher agency than structure, even though teacher agency is recognized. Therefore, researchers recently has questioned to what extent emotional labor theory precisely explains emotional phenomena in teaching (Tsang, 2011, 2012). For instance, more and more studies have provided evidences to reject that preforming emotional labor will lead to negative emotional outcomes in teaching. The studies have found that emotion management may make teachers feel satisfaction, excitement, and even self-fulfillment, because the teachers may interpret that successful emotion
management is able to help them to teach and to foster students’ growth (Chen & Hsu, 2011; Gallant, 2013; Hebson et al., 2007; O'Connor, 2008; Oplatka, 2009; Trentini, 2012). The findings also reflect that another assumption of the emotional labor theory, which is emotion management in teaching as forced labor, may be inaccurate. As Oplatka (2007) argued, emotion management in teaching was a voluntary practice because teachers initiatively choose to manage their feelings and displays in order to facilitate students to learn and grow. For example, his study (2007) on Israeli teachers’ emotional experiences suggested that teachers unconditionally expressed and showed their love and care to students because the emotional displays were meaningful and valuable for them in developing relationships with students and in fostering students’ growth. His more recent research suggested that if teachers did not manage their emotions in order to facilitate students’ learning and growth, they may perceive themselves as immoral and unethical, resulting in negative emotions such as guilt and shame (Oplatka, 2009).

The second problem is a misconception of emotional labor. Although the research on emotional labor in teaching is based on Hochschild’s work, the research ignores the central characteristic of the Hochschild’s conception of emotional labor: “emotions ‘preformed’ by employees were exploited for profit as a vital part of the capitalist labor process” (Hebson et al., 2007, p. 681). This implies that emotion management is emotional labor only if “emotional control represents a condition of employment for an institution or company” (Yuu, 2010, p. 64). Therefore, if teachers’ emotion management is only prescribed by emotional rules, it may not be necessarily emotional labor (Yuu, 2010). In this sense, the previous research have only demonstrated the effects of prescriptive
emotion management of teaching rather than emotional labor of teaching (Hebson et al., 2007), because the research has not successfully indicated how teachers’ emotions are constrained by the schools or school administrators, in addition to the emotional rules. Some researchers may disagree with the viewpoint, because they think that emotional labor has use-value, which is the labor of love (e.g. Hargreaves, 1998a). However, it is argued that this understanding of emotional labor is still a misconception. Actually, Hochschild has clearly distinguished emotional labor from emotion work. The former is the exchange-value of emotion management, while the latter is the use-value. She stated: “emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value … emotion work … refer[s] to these same acts in a private context where they have use value” (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7). In this sense, the researchers who argue the emotional labor in teaching is the practice of love may confuse the two concepts, i.e., using the concept of emotional labor to describe the concept of emotion work. In fact, it is difficult operationally to separate emotional labor and emotion work in teaching. As Oplatka (2007) demonstrated, the emotion management of teaching may happen in both the public life (e.g. emotion management in classroom teaching for a wage) and the private life (e.g. emotion management in the friendship between teachers and students outside classroom) of teachers. Since teachers may build friendships with students, for example, the distinction between public life and private life in teaching may become blurred. Thus, Tsang argued

teacher emotions may be governed not only by emotional rules of teaching, but also by more general emotional rules in private life, such as, for example: ‘we should love and care our friends’, ‘we should be nice to our friends’, ‘we
should not hate our friends’ and the like. Therefore, it is difficult for researchers to judge whether it is emotion work or emotional labor, for instance, when teachers say they try to manage their expression of anger and show care to students (Tsang, 2011, pp. 1314-1315).

Accordingly, the two problems, the neglect of teacher agency and the misconception of emotional labor, may affect the validity of the theory and research on emotional labor in teaching. In other words, it may not be suitable to explain and investigate teachers’ emotional experiences at work.

**Education reforms and labor process of teaching**

Since the 1980s, sociologists of education have criticized education reforms all over the world for its tendency to transform the labor process of teachers in such as a way that they resemble those of industrial workers, resulting in poor working conditions and lives for teachers, such as heavy workload and the lack of leisure time (Apple, 1982; Ball, 1994; Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994; Harris, 1994; Robertson, 2000). In order to improve the situation, sociologists of education have investigated how education reforms transform the labor process in teaching. This kind of research is generally called the labor process theory (Smyth et al., 2000). Although the labor process theory does not directly deal with teachers’ emotions, its concern about the labor process in teaching offers insights into how teachers feel is conditioned by education reforms.
According to the labor process theory, many states in the world have attempted to increase external control over teachers’ work in order to promote high quality of education, which in turn supports the development of the state (Smyth et al., 2000). The studies have found that states may increase external control through two transformation processes of labor: deskilling and work intensification (Smyth et al., 2000). Deskilling is the process of devaluing and deprofessionalizing teachers’ work, which in turn results in teachers being unable to define and design what they do at work.

According to Apple (1982, 1986), deskilling often starts from governmental criticism of the education system. Studies have showed that governments in many countries and states attempted to legitimize the education reform initiatives by blaming their education system as insufficient to sustain the social and economic development of societies (Ball, 1994; Berliner & Biddle, 1995). When they get the legitimacy, they tend to implement education reforms to solve the “problems” of the education system with managerial and market-oriented approach (Hargreaves, 2003), which is commonly referred to managerialism (Mok & Welch, 2002; Simkins, 2000). Researchers have argued that managerialist education reforms may reinforce the process of deskilling because this kind of reforms tends to make teachers subject to external supervisions and controls from the government and the community by using the market logics for the operation of state education like accountability and competition (Ball, 1994; Bowe et al., 1992; Mok & Welch, 2002). One notable example is Hong Kong. Since the late-1990s, the Hong Kong government has intensified its inspection and supervision of schools and teachers by implementing several initiatives such as: School Self Evaluation (SSE) and the External School Review (ESR) in 2003, the
Quality Assurance Inspection (QAI) in 1997, and Language Benchmarks Tests for teachers in 2000 (Tse, 2005). Since teachers are subject to external control, they may become less able to control and design their teaching process in the classroom (Kelchtermans, 2011). For example, in western countries like the US, the UK and Australia, teachers may be forced to train students’ academic skills rather than to foster their intellectual, social and moral development, because the education reforms may narrowly define educational quality and effectiveness by students’ results in public examinations (Connell, 1995; Helsby, 1999; Valli & Buese, 2007). In order to ensure students’ examination result, the teachers may not be allowed to teach something outside curriculum and syllabus designed by the government and education experts (Ball, 1994). As a result, they may experience negative feelings like frustration, powerlessness and meaninglessness at work because they may disagree with the narrow conception of teaching and education (Smyth et al., 2000).

When teachers are deskilled, it becomes difficult for them to reject the extra duties and workload imposed upon them (Apple, 1986). Thus, the labor process theory claims that the intensification of work is inevitable for the teaching profession during managerialist education reforms (Apple, 1986; Smyth et al., 2000). For example, a study conducted by the OECD (2005) reported that teachers in the OECD countries were required to take on many responsibilities in addition to classroom teaching, such as guidance and discipline, organization of extracurricular activities, preparation of school-based teaching and learning materials, management of the school’s public image, documentation, and writing reports for school internal and external inspection, and other administrative duties. As a result of so many duties and responsibilities, teachers may face excessive
workload, lack leisure time, and feel stressed, and burnt out (Dworkin, 2002; Harris, 1994; Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Penrice, 2011). Moreover, studies have suggested that intensification also causes teachers to experience certain negative emotions at work, such as guilty, frustration, anxiety, and meaninglessness, because they are forced to do many tasks and duties (e.g. paperwork and documentation) that are less related to teaching and education or have less educational value (Ball, 2003; Hargreaves, 2003; Nias, 1999; Woods, 1999). As a result, teachers may feel they are alienated from the work (Brooks, Hughes, & Brooks, 2008; Kesson, 2003).

In sum, the labor process theory suggests that education reforms may deskill teachers and intensify teachers’ work. Deskilling and work intensification may create poor working conditions for teachers. Thus, the teachers may become dissatisfied, stressed and burnt out at work. Moreover, the two processes together may lead to teachers being unable to define and design what they do in schools and therefore being forced to do a lot of work and duties that they think are irrelevant to teaching and that they dislike. In such a condition, the teachers may experience the negative feelings of meaninglessness, powerlessness and even alienation.

Nevertheless, the research on teachers’ emotions from the labor process theory has two limitations. The first is that the theory implies that teachers’ emotional experiences at work are purely a product of education reforms and disregard the agential effects. As mentioned before, emotional experiences are constructed by both agency and structure so that any analysis ignoring either one dimension may be inaccurate. The second limitation is that it overemphasizes the direct effects of education reforms on teachers’ work and emotions. Sociologists
of education illustrate that education system can be a decoupling system (Meyer, 1992; Oplatka, 2004). In the system, schools may superficially conform to the requirements and policies initiated by the central government, but the school administration and management may mediate the effects of the governmental requirements and policies to teachers. For example, Crocco and Costigan (2007) discovered that teachers might be less frustrated and stressed at work if the school administrators supported them to do the best for students’ interests and mitigated their workload and pressure caused by education reforms. Leithwood and Beatty (2008) also indicated that transformational practices of school administration (e.g. distributed leadership, shared vision, support to teachers and participatory decision-making) were able to promote teacher job satisfaction, morale, and commitment significantly in a context of education reforms. On the other hand, they also identified that bureaucratic and managerial practices of school administration (e.g. hierarchy of administrative office, top-down decision-making, centralization of authority and power) tended to create teacher stress, anxiety, and burnout in the same context of education reforms. In other words, a research should also consider the effects of school administration and management to teachers’ emotional experiences at work in addition to those of education reforms.

**School administration**

Bureaucracy has been described as the most efficient and rational structure of administration and management to achieve organizational goals (Scott, 1998; Weber, 1946). Bureaucracy has the following characteristics: division of labor and specialization, hierarchy and centralization of authority and power,
enforcement of formal rules and regulations, and goal consensus. On the basis of these criteria, researchers have argued school administration as bureaucratic (Bidwell, 1965; Tyler, 1988). Indeed, a number of studies has showed that school organizations can more or less exhibit the characteristics of bureaucracy (Firestone & Herriott, 1982; Herriott & Firestone, 1984; Ingersoll, 1994, 2003; Wong, 1997). If schools are bureaucratically administrated and managed, what are the potential consequences for teachers? According to the literature, bureaucracy tends to bring negative outcomes to employees’ spirits and mentalities, because of the neglect of individuals’ desires and interests at work (Volti, 2008). Studies have suggested that the characteristics of bureaucracy, such as hierarchy and centralization of power and authority, will break a work process into minute segments and centralize the decision-making power in the top of hierarchy (Braverman, 1974; Collins, 1975; Mills, 1951). Employees can only be responsible for a piece of work without any understanding of and control over the goals of the work defined by the organization. The separation of conception from execution may be a problem for professionals like teachers, because the organizational goals may be contradictory to the work purposes of the professionals (Apple, 1982; Braverman, 1974; Derber, 1982a). However, since they are employed by bureaucracy, their purposes always are subordinate to the organizational goals. As Merton (1968) illustrated, they may ultimately experience a series of frustration at work, because they may be forced to do some things that they disvalued but they could not reject to do. Marxist theorists refer the series of frustration to the feelings of meaninglessness, powerlessness, self-estrangement (Blauner, 1964; Erikson, 1990; Seeman, 1959; Swain, 2012).
Recently, researchers have identified different types of school bureaucracy (Hoy & Miskel, 2012), which may have different impacts on teachers’ emotions. For example, Hoy and Miskel (2012) illustrates that school administration is consisted of bureaucratic pattern and professional pattern. The bureaucratic pattern focuses on the coordination of school administrative work while the professional pattern focuses on the technical and instructional work of a school. The variation of the combinations of the two patterns forms different bureaucratic structures of a school. If the bureaucratic pattern is high and the professional pattern is low, authoritarian bureaucracy occurs. Authoritarian bureaucracy is similar to the traditional image of bureaucracy described above, i.e. bureaucratic authority is emphasized, power is centralized, rules and procedures are impersonally applied, teachers’ interests and purposes are subordinate to administrative one. Accordingly, this type of administrative structure may relate to teachers’ negative emotional experiences at work, as described above. Chaotic structure of school bureaucracy occurs when both bureaucratic and professional patterns are low. In the chaotic structure, teachers enjoy high autonomy in schools because there is little bureaucratic control over them. However, it does not mean the teachers will be happy. This is because the school may be full of inconsistency, contradiction, confusion, and conflict in day-to-day operations caused by the lack of effective means of bureaucratic and professional patterns of administration and management (Hoy & Miskel, 2012). The inconsistency, contradiction, confusion, and conflict may render teachers hard to fulfill their professional aspiration so that they may feel negatively at work even though they may have a high degree of autonomy (Hargreaves, 2002). On the other hand, professional structure of school bureaucracy is another type of school administration. This type of school
bureaucracy occurs when the bureaucratic pattern is low and the professional pattern is high. It does not mean this type of administrative structure lacks bureaucratic means to coordinate and manage teachers’ work. Instead, it tends to establish bureaucratic mechanisms to support teachers to exercise their expertise and competence in teaching in order to maximize the quality education (Hoy & Miskel, 2012). Leithwood and Beatty’s (2008) study implied that this kind of school administration and management may relate to positive emotions of teachers because this kind of administration tends to support teachers to achieve their professional interest, which is facilitating students to learn better.

Accordingly, the impacts of school administration on teachers’ emotional experiences at work are complex. Different types of school administration may raise different emotional experiences of teachers. Since schools may adopt different types of administration, studies on the effects of school administration may empower us to get a more complicated picture about why Hong Kong teachers in recent years tend to feel unhappy at work. However, the theory of bureaucracy has been less interested in how school administration affects teachers’ emotions. Even though some studies have examined the relationship between school administration and teachers’ emotions, these studies generally are quantitative (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008). These studies have successfully demonstrated the statistical relationship between variables, but they cannot help us understand how teachers’ emotions are shaped and conditioned by school administration. Although the literature offers some explanations about the “how” questions, such as impersonality of school administration, similar to labor process theory the explanations are strong on structure but weak on agency. This may be a weaknesses to understanding teaches’ emotional experiences at work.
Theoretical framework and research questions

The sociologists of emotions have illustrated that human emotions are jointly constructed by agency and structure, so they have argued that a sophisticated examination of human emotions needs to consider both agential and structural dimensions of emotions (Thoits, 1989; Turner, 2007, 2011; Turner & Stets, 2005). Nevertheless, most of the existing research on teachers’ emotions fails to capture the duality of structure of emotions. It does not mean we can simply dismiss them. Instead, a synthesis of the literature will provide a more sophisticated framework which can take both agency and structure into account. This is because the literature has already suggested the independent effects of either agency or structure on teachers’ emotional experiences.

The effort at the synthesis in the present study is grounded in the perspective of symbolic interactionism. This is because symbolic interactionism does not only acknowledge the role of agency in social lives, but also the impacts of structure on agency (Charon, 2010). For example, symbolic interactionists, such as Stryker (1980, 2001, 2008), have illustrated that social actors produce social structures through social interactions and in turn the social structures shape the interpretative scheme. Through this, the social actors reflexively monitor their thought and behaviors to reproduce the social structures. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, two concepts can be extracted from the reviewed literature: (1) teaching purpose representing the agential dimension of teachers’ emotions and (2) social constraints representing the structural dimension of teachers’ emotions.
Teaching purpose

To some extent, the reviewed literature intentionally or unintentionally, explicitly or implicitly indicates the relationship between teachers’ emotional experiences and teaching purpose of teachers. For example, the research on emotional labor in teaching illustrates that teachers will feel positively about managing their emotions at work if they think performing emotion management is conducive to teaching and learning. Otherwise, they may feel unhappy having to manage their emotions in such a way that do not correspond to their true feelings. In addition, the studies on education reforms and school administration respectively note that teachers feel negatively at work because they interpret that they are forced to do a lot of work unrelated to education. Moreover, the research on the emotional dimensions of social interactions in schools implicitly acknowledges the importance of teaching purpose in the arousal of teachers’ emotions through the concept of moral geography, which is defined as the degree to which teachers’ purposes of making a difference are supported by others (Hargreaves, 1998b, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c). In other words, the existing literature has seemed to suggest that teachers hold the teaching purpose of nurturing students’ moral, social, civic, emotional, and academic growth and development. To some extent, the concept of teaching purpose and the relationship of teaching purpose to teachers’ emotional experiences have a root in symbolic interactionism.

Symbolic interactionism rests on the premise that social actors act towards selves and objects on the basis of meanings they give to the selves and objects (Blumer, 1969). Accordingly, it is believed that teachers choose to teach because
teaching has special meanings to them (Lortie, 1975; Nias, 1999; Woods, 1999). Some researchers have operationalized the meanings teachers give to their work by using the concepts of purpose, goal, and aspiration in teaching (Cross & Hong, 2009; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Lortie, 1975; van Veen, Sleegers, & van de Ven, 2005). This is because the concepts empower the researchers to access the meanings the teachers give to their work by asking them why they choose to teach or what they want to achieve from teaching. It is noted that the concepts like goal and aspiration often are used by social scientists to describe human beings as non-reflexive agents who are motivated by goals and aspirations as stimulus (Schultz & Schultz, 2007). On the contrary, the concept of purpose indicates human beings as reflexive agents who can think and act with reasons in social sciences literature (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004). Thus, the present study prefers the concept of teaching purpose rather than teaching goal or aspiration to indicate that teachers are reflexive agents in teaching.

Some researchers have recognized teaching purpose has agential effects on teachers’ emotions in the literature. For example, in his classical study of schoolteachers, Lortie (1975) pointed out that understanding the pattern of teachers’ emotions needed a detail investigation of teachers’ perspectives on purposes. In the study, he found that many teachers chose to teach because they aspired to have positive influences on students’ learning and growth. When the teachers perceived they attained the teaching purpose, they felt intrinsically rewarding. In addition, Nias (1999) and Woods (1999) reported that teachers generally were committed to the teaching purpose of fostering students to learn and grow. The two authors respectively demonstrated that teachers tried hard to achieve the teaching purpose. The teachers felt stressful, guilty, and shameful
when they perceived they failed to achieve the teaching purpose. Similar findings was also reported by Hargreaves (1999), Mahony et al.(2004), Morgan et al. (2010), and Santoro (2011). According to these studies, teachers can reflexively monitor their behaviors based on the teaching purpose and then evaluate to what extent their behaviors can carry out the purpose in teaching (Tsang, 2014b). When they perceive they can achieve the teaching purpose, they will feel positively at work because they may perceive themselves as good and competent resulting in positive emotional experiences; on the contrary, when they think they failed to fulfill the propose, they will feel negatively at work because they may perceive themselves as bad and incompetent (Kelchtermans, 1996; Sutton, 2005; Zembylas, 2003a). From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, therefore, teaching purpose can also be viewed as a part of teacher self-concept, which is the meaning the teacher gives to themselves.

However, people who decide to teach may not aspire or only aspire to foster students’ learning and growth. Teachers can have multi-purposes in teaching (Lee, Huang, Law, & Wang, 2013; Lortie, 1975; Schiefele, Streblow, & Retelsdorf, 2013). Different teaching purposes can be divided into intrinsic or extrinsic types. According to the literature (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Hargreaves, 1999; Lam, 2011), the intrinsic type is as follows:

- making a difference in students’ lives;
- interest in the relationship and interaction with children;
- love for children;
- interest in subject-matter field; and
- making contribution to society;
while the extrinsic type includes

- salary;
- stable working condition;
- no better choices;
- social reputation; and
- social mobility.

In Hong Kong, people who choose to teach may be due to intrinsic proposes, extrinsic proposes, or a mix of both. For example, Lai, Chan, Ko, and So’s survey (2005) showed that Hong Kong secondary students wanted to become teachers because they thought teaching as an occupation came with good working hours, good job security, and longer holidays. On the other hand, Lam (2011) discovered that many Hong Kong people who chose to teach had mixed types of purposes, even though some committed to either the intrinsic type or extrinsic type of teaching purpose.

Although teachers can have multi-purposes in teaching, some purposes should be more salient than others (Dinham & Scott, 2000). The more salient or major purpose should be more powerful in shaping teachers’ emotional experiences, because the major purpose indicates the most important meanings and values to the self (Haybron, 2013; Nelissen, Dijker, & de Vries, 2007; Turner, 2011). Therefore, the first step to understanding the pattern of teachers’ emotional experiences at work is to explore the major teaching purposes of the teachers.
Social constraints

Although symbolic interactionism emphasizes agency, it does not overlook the effects of social structure. The sociologists who stand for the symbolic interactionist tradition such as Goffman (1959), Turner (1978, 2001), and Stryker (1980, 2001, 2008) have demonstrated how social structures like roles, norms, and cultures condition human agency by influencing their mind and behavioral choices. Accordingly, it is believed that teachers can attempt to achieve their teaching purpose by reflexive monitoring in behaviors (Grant & Sleeter, 1985, 1987; Helsby, 1999), but their capability to achieve the teaching purpose is conditioned by different social structures (Kelchtermans, 1996, 2005, 2011).

It is noted that in the sociological literature social structure is an umbrella concept representing different objectively existing entireties like social relations, roles, social norms, cultures, organizations, institutions, class, stratification and the like. However, it is sometimes confusing to say some of the entireties as a social structure. For example, if we take a micro-perspective, social relations and roles can be a social structure because they can formalize or ritualize social interactions. However, if we take a macro-perspective, we may loss our confidence to say social relations and roles as social structures comparing with culture, class, stratification, organization, and other social systems. In order to avoid the confusion, the present study refers social structure to social constraint. The term of social means something is outside social actors but relating to them. The term of constraint means something that conditions and shapes social actors’ mind or behaviors in social situations.
From the reviewed literature, it is identified that there are some social constraints that limit teacher capability to do their work in order to make them difficult to fulfill their teaching purposes. For example, education reforms as a social constraint may create a lot of administrative work for teachers to do resulting in the lack of time and energy to take care of students’ needs and growth (Hargreaves, 2003; Ho & Tsang, 2008; Saunders, 2013). School administration may also define what and how teachers should do in schools and the defined work may not necessarily match teachers’ purposes of teaching (Ingersoll, 2003). In addition, social relations, interactions and emotional cultures may also shape how teachers act and think in approaching their teaching purpose, resulting in positive or negative emotions (Hargreaves, 2001a; Zembylas, 2002). Moreover, other possible social constraints include micro-politics (Blase, 2005), occupational culture of teaching (Lortie, 1975), and curriculum (Connell, 1985). Therefore, sociological research on teachers’ emotions should also pay attention to what the social constraints on teachers’ work and emotions are and how they shape and condition teachers’ work and emotions in teaching.

Accordingly, the present research will consider both agential and structural influences to teachers’ emotional experiences at work. First, this study will focus on what is/are the purpose(s) teachers hold in teaching and how the purpose(s) affect teachers’ teaching practices and interpretation of their work. Then, the study will also explore what social constraints the teachers encounter on the fulfillment of their purpose(s) and what is/are the emotional outcomes of the success and failure on the fulfillment caused by the social constraints. Accordingly, the research asks the following research questions:
(1) How do Hong Kong secondary school teachers feel at work?

(2) What is/are teaching purpose(s) Hong Kong secondary school teachers hold in teaching?

(3) How do(es) the teaching purpose(s) influence Hong Kong secondary school teachers’ practices and emotions in teaching?

(4) What are the social constraints on the fulfillment of teaching purpose(s) under the Hong Kong secondary school system?

(5) How do the social constraints affect Hong Kong secondary school teachers’ work and emotions?
Chapter 3
Methodology

From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, teachers’ emotional experiences are lived experiences in teaching. This kind of experiences has the following features that signify the research methodology of the present study. First, lived experience is consciously felt, interpreted and expressed by social actors (Denzin, 1984). Second, it is aroused by social actors’ interpretation of situations, so it contains and reflects the meanings that social actors make to the situations (Gadamer, 2004). Third, the meanings of lived experience made by social actors always connect to the important and significant events in the past (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Thus, it is difficult to directly observe in its immediate manifestation (van Manen, 1997). Therefore, fourth we need to grasp teachers’ emotional experiences indirectly through one’s reflexive and retrospective descriptions and narratives (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992). According to the features one and two, a research on teachers’ emotional experiences at work needs in-depth explorations of teachers’ perspectives and understandings about their work and working condition. The features three and four imply that studying teachers’ emotional experiences at work should take account of teachers’ reflexive narrative accounts about their work. Therefore, studying teachers’ emotional experiences at work need qualitative and hermeneutic methodology. This chapter is going to describe how the present study researched teachers’ emotional experiences at work qualitatively and hermeneutically.
Data collection

This study used in-depth interview, public documents, and records as the methods for data collection.

In-depth interview

In-depth interview was the major data collection method in this study. Indeed, many researchers employed in-depth interview to explore teachers’ emotional experiences (e.g. Day & Leitch, 2001; Hargreaves, 1998b; Oplatka, 2007; Yin & Lee, 2011). This is because in-depth interview is a research method to study lived experiences, including emotional experiences, in social sciences (Seidman, 2006; van Manen, 1997). By in-depth interview, researchers can gather rich narrative accounts of informants’ actions, thoughts, and feelings in particular social settings (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1995). The narratives also generally contain descriptions about the social context or structure that affects informants’ behaviors, attitudes, thoughts, and feelings (Elliott, 2005). Moreover, when informants give a narrative about themselves, they probably reflect on their past experiences and give meanings to those experiences (van Manen, 1997). Thus, in-depth interview can allow researchers to get access to informants’ subjective perspectives, feelings, and interpretations with reference to social contexts (Seidman, 2006). In this sense, it was an appropriate method for this study, because it allowed me to explore what teachers did at work, how they interpreted and felt about their work, why they chose to teach, and what social constraints affected them.
Sampling

In qualitative research, the aim of sampling is to select information-rich individuals who can potentially provide informative information and knowledge on the issues under studied (Patton, 1990). Purposeful sampling is a useful sampling method to achieve this goal (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 1990). In order to identify the information-rich cases for this study, two specific strategies were employed for purposeful sampling, including maximum variation sampling and snowballing sampling (Patton, 1990). Before describing how the informants were selected, it is necessary to provide a brief introduction on the Hong Kong secondary school system. This is because the secondary school system provided the study with sampling criteria.

In Hong Kong, there have been three major types of secondary schools: government schools, aided schools, and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools. Government schools are directly financed and managed by the Education Bureau. Aided schools are financed by public funding, but operated by religious bodies, charitable organizations, fraternity associations or voluntary agencies. On the other hand, DSS schools are private schools which are subsidized or assisted by the government in the form of capital grants and bought places. Aided secondary schools have accounted for around 80% of the school population, DSS secondary schools have accounted for around 10%, and government secondary schools have accounted for less than 10%. All secondary schools have also been divided into three Bands, with Band 1 schools being the best and most prestigious schools, and Band 3 schools being the worst and underperforming schools. Moreover, every
Hong Kong secondary school is comprised of junior forms which consists of forms 1, 2 and 3 (grades 7, 8 and 9), and senior forms, which consists of forms 4, 5 and 6 (grades 10, 11 and 12). This change came about with the New Senior Secondary curriculum reform (NSS reform) in 2009, leading to an academic structure of 3-3-4 (3 years junior secondary education + 3 years senior secondary education + 4 years university education) from 3-2-2-3 (3 junior secondary education + 2 senior secondary education + 2 sixth form education + 3 years university education).

In addition, Hong Kong secondary school system categorizes teachers into Graduate Master (GM) and Certificate Master (CM) teachers. Conceptually, GM teachers are university graduates, while CM teachers are not. Nevertheless, since the teacher professionalization movement in the 1990s, almost all secondary teachers have completed university education nowadays (Sweeting, 2008). Thus, the educational level of GM and CM teachers are similar, and the only difference between them is the salary. The salary of GM teachers is higher than that of CM teachers (Education Bureau, 2010). In addition to GM and CM teachers, there is a type of teaching position called a Senior Graduate Master (SGM) teacher. Basically, SGMs are experienced teachers who are responsible for performing administrative and managerial roles in schools. Finally, some teachers in Hong Kong are temporary and contract-based, while other teachers are permanent.

Accordingly, there is a variety of secondary teachers in Hong Kong: teachers in government, aided, and DSS schools; CM, GM, and SGM teachers; contract and permanent teachers; teachers teaching different subjects and forms. It is believed that different types of teachers might have different emotional experiences at work (Tsang, 2014a). Therefore, this study employed the strategy
of maximum variation sampling to select a variety of secondary teachers in order to understand the phenomenon of teachers’ emotional experiences at work more comprehensively. In addition to maximum variation sampling, the strategy of snowballing sampling was also used. Since I had worked in a secondary school for two years and I had friends who taught in other secondary schools, I first invited my ex-colleagues and friends to participate in the in-depth interviews. Second, I asked them to introduce other secondary school teachers to me through their social networks.

Data collection lasted from February to June 2012. In the first two months of data collection, I interviewed six secondary school teachers, all of which had less than six years of teaching experiences. After a brief analysis of the interview data, I wondered whether the findings were applicable to the more experienced secondary school teachers, because life history research on teacher career suggests that teachers with different teaching experiences or in different career stages may have different teaching purposes and understandings about their work (e.g. Sikes, 1985). As a result, I further interviewed an additional of seven teachers whose teaching experiences would have been more than 6 years in May 2012. After a brief analysis of the interview data, I noted that most of the interviewed teachers taught language and art subjects, such as English, Chinese, Chinese History and Liberal Studies, and most of them taught in Band 2 and Band 3 aided secondary schools. Therefore, I further invited teachers who taught science subjects such as Biology, Chemistry and Integrated Sciences and other kinds of subjects like Mathematics, Business, Accounting, Financial Studies, Tourism and Hospitality Studies to take part in in-depth interviews. At the same time, I also searched for teachers from Band 1 schools, government schools and
DSS schools. Throughout the sampling process, I kept doing initial and preliminary data analysis in order to keep track of emerging themes, concepts and propositions that might inform me whether additional data was needed (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). At the end of June 2012, sampling and interviews ended because the data was saturated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Finally, 21 secondary teachers from 10 schools were interviewed. The characteristics of the informants are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Informants’ profile*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career states</th>
<th>Teaching experience (age)</th>
<th>Contract type</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>School type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early-career</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>9 months (31)</td>
<td>Contract CM</td>
<td>- Liberal Studies - Chinese History</td>
<td>Band 2 government school (School A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Chinese History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal</td>
<td>6 years (28)</td>
<td>Contract CM</td>
<td>- Chinese History</td>
<td>Band 2 aided school (School C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Chinese History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>2 years (29)</td>
<td>Contract GM</td>
<td>- English</td>
<td>Band 2 DSS school (School D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandy</td>
<td>2 years (26)</td>
<td>Permanent GM</td>
<td>- Liberal Studies - Tourism and Hospitality Studies</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Chinese History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Chinese History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>6 years (31)</td>
<td>Contract CM</td>
<td>- Chinese History</td>
<td>Band 2 government school (School A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Chinese History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td>5 years (27)</td>
<td>Permanent CM</td>
<td>- Chemistry - Integrated Sciences</td>
<td>Band 1 aided school (School I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonny</td>
<td>2 years (30)</td>
<td>Contract CM</td>
<td>- Mathematics - Economics</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age (Years)</td>
<td>Contract Type</td>
<td>Subject(s)</td>
<td>School/Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo</td>
<td>1 year (26)</td>
<td>Contract CM</td>
<td>Liberal Studies, Physics, Integrated Sciences, Mathematics</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>9 months (27)</td>
<td>Contract CM</td>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mid-career</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>11 years (36)</td>
<td>Contract CM</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>9 years (34)</td>
<td>Permanent GM</td>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>15 years (37)</td>
<td>Permanent GM</td>
<td>Biology, Integrated Sciences</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>12 years (34)</td>
<td>Permanent GM</td>
<td>Chinese History, Chinese</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>9 years (39)</td>
<td>Permanent GM</td>
<td>Business, Accounting and Financial Studies, Liberal Studies</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>12 years (35)</td>
<td>Permanent GM</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex</td>
<td>20 years (42)</td>
<td>Permanent GM</td>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>Band 1 aided school (School J)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Late-career</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>40 years (59)</td>
<td>Permanent SGM</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>26 years (46)</td>
<td>Permanent GM</td>
<td>Tourism and Hospitality Studies, Chinese History</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connie</td>
<td>30 years (51)</td>
<td>Permanent SGM</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Band 3 aided school (School G)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are a few things that need to be clarified here. First, since the informants were selected by snowball sampling, it was possible that the teachers interviewed in this study shared some similar characteristics. For example, the informants who felt unhappy at work may refer other unhappy teachers to participate in the study. Moreover, the data collection period (February to June 2012) was a busy period for secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. The academic year of 2011-2012 was a transitional period of NSS reform. During this period, the last public examination class of 3-2-2-3 curriculum and the first public examination class of 3-3-4 curriculum co-existed in secondary schools. Teachers were busy preparing both classes of students for different public examinations organized between March and May 2012. Moreover, many schools arranged the final internal examination in June, so teachers were stressful in preparing for school examination papers at the same period of time. In addition, some schools might do teacher appraisal in February and March, so the teachers might also spend much time and energy on preparing the appraisal. Therefore, the informants might be very busy, exhausted, and stressful during the period of data collection. This condition might make them express more complaints and negative feelings towards their work in interviews. In order to overcome the mentioned problems, I encouraged the informants to talk about something that made them feel happy and
satisfied if they were engaged in an overwhelming rant filled with negative feelings and experiences about their work.

Second, most of the informants in this study were my friends or ex-colleagues. Therefore, it was easy for me to develop relatively close and trustful relationships with the informants. Such a relationship might make the informants feel comfortable to disclose themselves, including their negative experiences at work, to me during interviews (Esterberg, 2002; Minichiello et al., 1995; I. Seidman, 2006). For example, one informant told me that sometimes she destroyed students’ assignments when she did not have enough time to mark them. If her students asked her to return the assignments, she denied she gave them the assignments. To some extent, thus, the relationship may be an advantage for this study to get trustworthy data.

Procedure and structure of interview

First, informants chose a place that they felt conformable to do the interviews. Before starting an interview, I explained to the informant about the research purpose, research procedure, potential risks and benefits of the research, and their right in the research. I also asked for his/her consent to tape-record the interview conversations. Since all informants agreed to tape-recording, all interviews were tape-recorded. When the informant understood and agreed to participate in this research, I asked them to sign consent form (see Appendix B), with a duplicate copy, which stated all the information about the research which I also explained. After he/she signed, I gave a copy of the signed consent form to him/her and I kept another one.
All interviews were semi-structured in an attempt to explore informants’ emotional experiences at work more openly and to allow informants to express their opinions and feelings in their own words (Esterberg, 2002). An interview schedule (see Appendix A) was used to shed light on the phenomenon being studied (Arksey & Knight, 1999). In the interview schedule, questions were designed to explore the six aspects, including self-introduction (Q1), teaching purpose (Q5), interpretation of teachers’ work (Q8), school administration (Q3), teaching condition (Q2 and Q4), and teacher’s emotional experience (Q6 and Q7). During the interviews, the question sequence was flexibly organized. Generally, each interview started from the questions one and two, because these questions simply asked the informants to give straightforward descriptions with minimal recall, judgment and interpretation (Patton, 1990). In many cases, the informants would express their feelings towards their work or teaching condition, especially negative ones, when they were asked question number two. Then, I asked questions number six and eight in order to follow-up on what they felt and how they interpreted their work. If their descriptions were about school administration and management, I would further asked question number three. If they talked too much about negative emotional experiences at work, I would ask them to share some stories about their positive emotional experiences at work (question number seven) in order to get a more balanced and comprehensive picture of their emotional experiences at work.

In addition to designed questions, questions out of the interview schedule and follow-up questions were probed. These questions were used to ask the informants to make clarification or further explanation about some points they had made (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). For example, an informant mentioned that he
thought he taught boring lessons. Then I asked him what he meant by “boring lessons”, why he thought the lessons were “boring”, what made him taught “boring” rather than “interesting” lessons. Through probing, I understood “boring lessons” meant to him a lesson without interactive components or activities between teachers and students. He could not teach “interestingly” because the interactive components or activities were time-consuming and less effective to prepare his students, whose abilities were not high, for public examination.

During each interview, I used a cross-checking technique to improve the credibility of the interview data (Minichiello et al., 1995). First, I often restated what informants said to check whether my understandings about their accounts were correct. Second, I checked the consistency of an informant’s response to a question by asking another similar question or a rephrased question in a different point in time of an interview. When I found his/her answers were different, I asked “Do you mind to explaining something for me that one time you told me this, but what you said another time doesn’t go along with that?” in order to explore his viewpoints in-depth.

I planned each interview session to last around an hour with each informant being interviewed twice, because the arrangement might not exhaust the informant and empower researchers to cover many important issues of the phenomenon being studied (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Seidman, 2006). However, at the end, only three informants were interviewed with two separate interview sessions that each lasted around an hour. Other informants were just interviewed one time and each interview lasted for a little more than two hours. One reason for that was that the informants were very busy. It was difficult for them to arrange another time for a second interview session. Therefore, they preferred one long
interview session rather than two short sessions. Another reason was that most of
the informants were enthusiastic to talk about and share their feelings and
teaching experiences with me. There were time when I told them the interview
time (an hour) was over, they still kept sharing and did not want to stop. Thus, I
chose to continue the interview until they had no further information to provide.
At the end of the interviews, I got their consent to talk to them and ask follow-up
questions via emails if necessary.

Public documents and records

From the interview data, it was identified that school administration and
education reforms were important themes. Thus, I decided to explore how school
administration and education reforms conditioned and shaped the informants’
emotional experiences at work. I was particularly interested to know the
administrative structure of the schools and the impacts of education reforms on
school administration and teachers’ work over time. As a result, I planned to
interview school principals, because I thought they were knowledgeable about
how a school was administrated and structured and how school administration and
teachers’ work responded to education reforms over time. I tried to contact some
secondary schools, told them I would like to interview the principals, and
explained my research purpose to them. However, all I received were rejections.
Then, I tried to invite the principal of the secondary school where I studied before,
but the principal I knew retried recently. The new principal did not want to be
interviewed, because she said it was her first year to take the principal role. She
thought she was not eligible to give me relevant information. Since I did not have
access to school principals, I changed my plan of data collection from interviewing school principals to collecting public documents and records, especially the documents from informants’ schools that were publically posted on the school websites, education policy documents, and newspapers.

School documents

The reason to collect the documents from the informants’ schools was to understand the administrative and management structure and practice of the informants’ schools. In particular, I collected annual school plans, annual school reports, school development plans, school profiles, and school organizational charts from the school websites, because these documents recorded the schools’ planning, administrative and management structure, administration policies, rules and procedures, past activities and programs, evaluation and appraisal systems. I only collected the documents from the informants’ schools rather than other schools in order to triangulate the informants’ accounts about their school administration and management.

Education policy documents and newspapers

Education policy documents and newspapers enable us to access information on education reforms and the impacts of the reforms on Hong Kong education system over time (Sweeting, 2004). Moreover, these documents and records could also be used to triangulate the informants’ accounts about the impacts of education reforms on them in their numerous years of teaching. Only the
education policy documents and newspapers from 1980 to 2011 were collected and analyzed, because the education reforms which were initiated and implemented from 1980s had significant and far-reaching consequences to Hong Kong education system (Cheng, 2002; Sweeting, 2004). It is noted that the consultation documents were not analyzed in this study, because the consultation documents serviced to collect public opinions before policy implementations rather than final policy decisions.

Table 3.2 lists the education policy documents collected and analyzed in the present study.

Table 3.2: Education policy documents collected for analysis in the present study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government agency</th>
<th>Publication year</th>
<th>Document title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Committee on School-based Management</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Transforming schools into dynamic and accountable professional learning communities: School-based management consultation document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Development Council</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Learning to learn: The way forward in curriculum development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>The School management initiative: Setting the framework for quality in Hong Kong schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Manpower Bureau</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Teacher performance management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Bureau</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Action for the future: Career-oriented studies and the new senior secondary academic structure for special schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Bureau</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Performance indicators for Hong Kong schools 2008: With evidence of performance for secondary, primary and special schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2008  The school development and accountability framework: The next phase of continuous school improvement
2011  Recommendations on career guidance for secondary schools under the new academic structure

Education Commission

1984  Education Commission report no. 1
1986  Education Commission report no. 2
1988  Education Commission report no. 3: The structure of tertiary education and the future of private schools
1990  Education Commission report no. 4: The curriculum and behavioural problems in schools
1992  Education Commission report no. 5: The teaching profession
1992  School education in Hong Kong: A statement of aims
1996  Education Commission report no. 6: Enhancing language proficiency: A comprehensive strategy
1997  Education Commission report no. 7: Quality school education
2000  Learning for Life, Learning through Life: Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong
2000  Review of education system: Reform proposals: Consultation document

Education Department

1981  General guidelines on moral education in schools
1985  Guidelines on civic education in schools
1986  Guidance work in secondary schools - a suggested guide for principals and teachers
1986  Guidelines on sex education in secondary schools
1996  Guidelines on civic education in schools
1997  Guidelines on extra-curricular activities in schools
The newspapers on Hong Kong education were explored from two channels. The first was WiseNews. WiseNews was a news clipping database that contained a lot of news about Greater China, including Hong Kong, produced by newspapers, magazines and journals from across Greater China regions. I searched the keywords of education reform, curricular reform, education system, education policy, education, secondary school, schooling, teaching, teacher, and curriculum in the database. In order to make sure the results were about Hong Kong education, I limited the research only to the news clippings produced by newspapers of Hong Kong region. Then, I downloaded and read the news and saved those relevant to my research. However, a limitation of WiseNews was that it only contained news from 1998. In order to find the news before 1998, *Hong Kong Newspaper Clippings Contents* published by the Hong Kong Catholic Social Communications Office was used. This publication collected many Hong Kong news clippings before 2000. It categorized all the news. By using the same keywords mentioned above, I searched news by reading the titles listed in the category of education. Then, I borrowed the microfilm clippings of the news from the library and read the news on a library computer. I scanned the relevant news
and saved them in my hard disk. At the end, I collected a total of 832 news clippings. These news clippings were produced by the following newspapers.

- Apple Daily (蘋果日報)
- Hong Kong Economic Times (香港經濟日報)
- Metropolis Daily (都市日報)
- Ming Pao (明報)
- Oriental Daily (東方日報)
- PUT News (教協報)
- Sing Pao (成報)
- Sing Tao Jih Pao (星島日報)
- South China Morning Post
- Ta Kung Pao (大公報)
- The Standard
- The Sun (太陽報)
- Wah Kiu Yat Pao (華僑日報)
- Wen Wei Pao (文匯報)

**Data analysis**

**Transcription**

Before an in-depth data analysis, all the interviews were fully transcribed. I transcribed 11 interviews. I found transcription was time-consuming. On average, I would spend 20 hours on transcribing one interview. Therefore, I decided to hire
2 transcribers to help me. Each transcriber was responsible for five interviews. In order to improve the consistency of transcriptions between transcribers, I provided them a transcript I did as a sample to follow. In addition, based on my transcription experience, I developed instructions for them to transcribe (Seidman, 2006). The instructions included:

(1) Using the original words by the interviewer and informants. Although the interviews were conducted in Chinese, the spoken Chinese in Hong Kong, i.e., Cantonese, is different from the written Chinese. Sometimes there are no real Chinese characters for a Cantonese word, such as “hea” (mean lazy, sluggish, inactive). In this case, transcribers need to use phonetic alphabet (e.g. hea) to represent the word rather than translating it into an existing Chinese character.

(2) When using the original expressions by the interviewer and informants, the interviewer and informants’ sentence may sometimes be grammatically wrong. However, transcribers should not correct it during transcription. They need transcribe what the interviewer and informants actually said and expressed in the tape-recordings.

(3) All the names appearing in the tape-recordings must to be replaced by a pseudo names in the transcripts. The pseudo names need be consistent throughout the transcript.

(4) If transcribers cannot listen clearly nor are not sure what the interviewer and informants have said, they must highlight it in the transcripts. At the same time, they need provide the time of the part that they were not sure. Then, I would go to the part and check what was being said.
When I received a transcript, I checked the quality. When I found a mistake in the transcript, I corrected it immediately and reminded the transcriber to be careful in the next transcription.

Translation

Although this thesis is presented in English, I did not translate the transcripts into English before or during data analysis. This is because original meanings of some informants’ narratives may be lost in translation from one language to another language (Regmi, Naidoo, & Pilkington, 2010). It may affect the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. In order to overcome this problem, I chose to analyze the transcripts in Cantonese and translated the parts I used as the evidences in the analysis. Moreover, I hired two professional translators to do the translation. One was responsible for forward-translation and another was responsible for the back-translation. The translators asked me to send them the full analysis report rather than the parts I wanted to translate. This is because they wanted to understand the contexts in order to improve the translation accuracy.

Coding

I used NVivo7 to assist my data analysis. I imported all the interview transcripts, school documents, education policy documents, and news clippings to the software. Then, I started open coding followed by focus coding to identify themes. During the coding process, I employed constant comparative method in order to improve the credibility of theme development (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).
By using this method, I compared incidents in data with other incidents, incidents with themes, and themes with other themes while coding and recording data into themes in order to look for supporting and contrary evidences with regards to the meaning of themes (Creswell, 2012). The coding process went back and forth. For example, I developed a theme called teachers’ workload, but I later found that the theme could be divided into two sub-themes by constant comparative method, including instructional work and non-instructional work. I then further noted that the incidents in the sub-theme of instructional work could be recoded into three separated sub-themes, including teaching-related work, educational but non-teaching work, and instructional vs. non-instructional work. Nevertheless, by comparing the sub-themes of teaching-related work and educational but non-teaching work, I found that both types of work were similar and almost the same, so I recoded these two sub-themes into one sub-theme called instructional work again. I stopped the coding process when no additional themes were identified. At the end, the themes and sub-themes listed in Table 3.3 were developed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Second-level sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching purpose</td>
<td>- Intrinsic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Extrinsic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ workload</td>
<td>- Instructional</td>
<td>- Teaching responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher-student interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Non-instructional</td>
<td>- Extracurricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- School teams and committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Special roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Instructional vs.</td>
<td>- Campus patrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-instructional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ emotional experiences</td>
<td>- Positive emotions</td>
<td>- Gratifying graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Students’ appreciations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Positive changes in behaviors and attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Learning processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Positive teacher-student relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Negative emotions</td>
<td>- Workload-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- School administration-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Relationship-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administrative practices</td>
<td>- School supervision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mode of communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Trust and consideration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education reform</td>
<td>- Institutionalization of whole-person education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Centralized decentralization of school education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Banding effect</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>School type effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Current and past teaching conditions</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to identify the themes and sub-themes, I also explored the pattern of teaching purposes, teachers’ workload, and teachers’ emotional experiences, school administrative practices among the informants. To do this, I created a profile for each informant by using NVivo7. The profile contained all the information listed in Table 3.1. Then, I compared the similarities and differences between the narratives of informants with different teaching experiences, ages, contract types, subjects, and school types on teaching purposes, teachers’ workload, teachers’ emotional experiences and school administrative practices by running matrix coding with NVivo7 (Edhlund, 2007).

**The choice of codes**

When presenting a theme or an argument, I selected one or two typical codes of the theme or the argument as evidences in the dissertation. Here, typical codes meant the codes straightforwardly represented the themes or arguments. To select the typical codes, first, I read all the codes of the themes and then identified which codes illustrated the meanings of the themes in a better and more straightforward way. Then, I listed all the typical codes and discussed them with my supervisor or student fellows to see whether the codes were really typical. If they felt the codes were not typical, it had two implications. One was that I misidentified the codes as typical, meaning that I had to search for other codes from the data. Another was that the incidents were inappropriately coded, so I had to recode the incidents. If they felt the codes were typical, then we discussed which one or two of the
typical codes were more suitably used as evidence presented in the report. When we reached a consensus, I used the one or two typical codes as evidence.

**Credibility and trustworthiness**

As mentioned above, I used different data sources to triangulate the findings. I also employed cross-checking technique during interviews in attempts to improve the credibility and trustworthiness of the interview data. In data analysis, I tried to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of theme development by adopting constant comparative method.

In addition to these attempts, I employed the technique of member checking which is a means to improve the credibility and trustworthiness of data analysis (Koelsch, 2013; Mero-Jaffe, 2011). When I finished a small part of analysis, I sent the informants a full analysis and a summary by email. In the email, I invited the informants to read at least the summary, if not the full analysis, and asked them to tell me to what extent the analysis reflected their experiences. In addition, I also invited them to check the accuracy of their narratives cited in the full analysis. Throughout the period of data analysis, I received two informants’ feedbacks. One agreed with my analyses and transcription. Another only endorsed the transcription but did not comment on the analyses.

In addition to member checking, I also communicated with other Hong Kong secondary school teachers who did not particulate in this research about my findings and analyses formally and informally in order to improve the quality of the data analysis (Smaling, 2003). I formally presented my findings twice during the period of data analysis. One was a meeting between my supervisor and other
doctoral students in my faculty. In this meeting, one of my fellow students was a secondary school teacher who had over 15 years of teaching experiences. After my presentation, she said what I presented was very similar to her condition and experience in teaching. Another formal presentation was conducted in a conference. One audience in the conference was a secondary school teacher a year ago. He said he had taught for two years. He also thought my findings and analysis matched his teaching experience and condition in the past. In addition to the formal presentation, I often informally talked to my friends who were teaching in secondary schools about my findings during gatherings. Generally, they thought my analyses truly reflected their situations.

Research ethics

In this study, informants were asked to share their personal emotional experiences and stories at work. To some extent, the informants may become vulnerable in the sense that (1) they may be uncomfortable and distressed to talk about their personal emotional experiences and stories, especially those that are unhappy (Richards & Schwartz, 2002), and (2) they may be harmed if their identity is disclosed to the public (Seidman, 2006). In order to minimize the risk and to protect the informants, I strictly and precisely implemented the following conducts.

The first thing I did was to obtain the informants’ consent. I ensured that the informants agreed voluntarily to participate in this study after they understood the research purpose, procedure, potential risks and benefits, and their right in the study. As mentioned before, I told them all the terms and conditions involved
before each interview session in order to ensure they knew about the research that was being carried out. Moreover, I also asked them to sign a written consent form which contained all of the information about the study.

I made sure all informants participated voluntarily. This means that the informants were not forced to take part in this study and they were allowed to withdraw from this study anytime (Creswell, 2012). In fact, I tried to invite three teachers to be interviewees, but they did not want to be interviewed. Hence, I did not invite them again. Moreover, the informants had the right to stop tape-recording during interviews. In one interview, the informant asked me to stop tape recording one of her teaching stories, because she thought the story might disclose a student’s privacy. Then I stopped tape-recording and simply took notes. When the story was finished, I asked her whether I could tape-record the rest of the interview. She said yes so I turned on the tape-recorder again.

Confidentiality is an important principle within ethical research. To keep the records confidential, I made sure that all the information collected was known to no-one except me and the transcribers. I did not show the information, such as informants’ name and their schools’ name, which may indicate informants’ identity in the transcripts and final reports. I only used pseudo names in order to protect informants’ privacy.

As mentioned, I reserved the right for the informants to review the transcripts and my analysis through member check. Mero-Jaffé (2011) claims this is a necessary step to make qualitative research ethical, because informants can tell the researcher where their identities may be released in the transcripts and the report, which parts of the transcriptions and interpretations may be unfair to them, and what information they may feel anxious about in case it were to be released to
the public. As noted above, no informants told me that the analysis and transcription released their indemnity, were unfair to them, and made them anxious for publication.
Chapter 4
Teaching purpose, Workload, and Emotional Experiences across Career Stages

In general, when the informants were asked to talk about their work experiences, they had loads of complaints. Some of them even felt helpless and discouraged at work. It seems that the informants did not enjoy their work. This could be observed from how they reacted when talking about their working conditions. For example, some of them kept sighing, some had rather trembling voices, and some even had tearful eyes. In terms of appearance, they looked weary and exhausted. For instance, some of them were sleepy and even fell asleep during the interview. Many informants described their conditions as “suffering and painful” (慘).

Some people think that teachers are unhappy because nowadays students do not respect them (Chang, 2009). However, this may not be a critical factor making the informants felt negatively about their work. Most of them said that the students always interacted and talked to them in an impolite way, but they did not think the impoliteness meant disrespectfulness. This is because they interpreted the impoliteness as the students’ usual way of communicating. Therefore, students’ impoliteness may not be the main reason. As Crystal deliberated:

Having heard of students’ braying, you may be under the impression that they are scolding you or they dislike you. But this is not the whole picture. Their braying may simply be their way of communicating with everyone.
That means, braying can be seen as one of the ways they talk to their friends. The more we interact with the students, the more you know how they communicate with each other. With more understanding, you know they are not personally against us. There is no need to be upset. It is not necessary for you to be upset. (可能他們平時說話也是粗聲粗氣，你會以為他罵你，你會以為他很不喜歡你，但其實不是的，只不過可能是他習慣了粗聲粗氣地對待每個人，即他和他的朋友也是這樣說話。當你見小朋友見多了，你就會明白他們的溝通方式，你就會知道他不是 personally 針對你。其實不需要不開心，即沒有不開心的必要。)

[Crystal]

Other people argue that teachers nowadays are constantly criticized by the students’ parents and thus they may feel deprofessionalized, resulting in negative emotions (Hargreaves & Lasky, 2004; Lasky, 2000). Indeed, some informants also mentioned that they felt unhappy because they had to interact with “troublesome parents” who had many complaints or requests. However, they only regarded a few parents as troublesome. Most of the parents they encountered were nice, cooperative, and respectful to them. Generally speaking, they had positive feedbacks towards the interaction with parents.

Some other people believe that schools are full of micro-politics among teachers (Ball, 1987; Blase, 2005; Malen, 1994) and the teachers will feel very uncomfortable under this atmosphere (Hargreaves, 2002; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). In this study, five teachers (Tom, Paul, David, Sally, and Rex) from two schools mentioned the issue of micro-politics. According to them, the
micro-politics made them feel “discouraged” (氣餒), “frustrated” (挫折), “wary” (戰戰兢兢), and “cautious” (步步為營). As Paul explained, the reason was:

You won’t know what may happen to you afterwards. You won’t know how you have offended others. And you won’t know whether others may threaten you or not. If so, you won’t know how others may attack you. All, you can do is to pay careful attention under all circumstances. It’s really a stressful job for teachers!” (你不清楚往後會發生什麼的事件,你不知道你為什麼會得罪其他人,你不知道其他同事會不會對付你,也不知道他們會如何對付你。所以你做事要十分小心。對老師來說，這當然是一種壓力!)

[Paul]

However, only five informants from two schools talked about this issue out of twenty-one informants coming from ten schools. It seems that the micro-politics may not be a common reason resulting in informants feeling negatively about their work.

Accordingly, the findings suggest that the major source of the negative emotional experiences for the informants in this study were neither the teacher-student relationship, teacher-parent relationship nor teacher-teacher relationship, although each of these relationships may have some contributions to negative emotions to the teachers. Instead, this study finds that all the informants seemed to face the same major problem that made them feel negatively at work, namely workload. Thus, this chapter is going to describe what the informants needed to do in teaching and how they felt about doing the work. In addition to the negative emotional experiences, this chapter will also suggest that the
informants may feel positively at work when they encountered positive student-matters. Before showing teachers’ work and emotional experiences in details, it is necessary to show the teaching purpose the informants held because the teaching purpose may influence the informants’ interpretation and definition of their work and in turn their emotional experiences, as illustrated later in this chapter.

**Teaching purpose**

Although there were many intrinsic reasons or motivations for the informants to teach, such as interest in subject-matter and interaction with children, all the informants were basically and ultimately committed to making a difference in students’ lives as their major teaching purpose. That means they would like to foster students’ academic, social, and moral development and growth through teaching. For instance:

I think teaching is a meaningful job. You can teach someone to become a nice person spiritually and mentally. I mean I can help children to pursue their goal and dream … and, sometimes, I can even foster positive changes on bad students. (老師的工作很有意義，你可以在心靈上、思想上教好一個人，意義是…我會覺得我…可以幫助一些小朋友去…可能找到他們自己的目標、找到自己的理想，或有時把一些學壞了的學生教好。)

[Crystal]
The informants may develop the teaching purpose through their interactions with the teachers who taught them in the past. To some extent, these informants may already commit themselves to making a difference when they started their teaching career. For instance, Peter said that he aspired to help students overcome their difficulties and nurture their growth, so he chose to teach because of a secondary school teacher who was enthusiastic in teaching him in the past.

There’s a secondary school teacher who influenced me a lot... He had a genuine heart in teaching. He insisted on teaching the class even when his voice was hoarse... We had no idea why he had to come back to bear such hardship and suffering with us. In a way, he had exchanged his voice... for our growth. I think what he did... was quite a big... if I may say so, implanted a thought into my being. (一位中學老師對我的影響很大 ...你會看到很有 heart，聲都沙了，但他還堅持上學...一個不知道是什麼的原因他會回來和我們一起受苦、陪我拚命，即用他的聲來買...用他的聲來買我們的成長，所以我覺得這是...一個幾大的一個...可以說是思想上的植入。)

[Peter]

Nevertheless, not all informants committed to this teaching purpose at the beginning of their teaching career. Some of them (e.g. Tom, Isabella, Rex, David, and Connie) mentioned that the major reasons why they chose to teach was that they could not find a better job in the market, or that teaching was a stable, reputable, and high income job in Hong Kong. However, when they had experienced more interactions with students, they learnt that teaching meant...
helping students to learn and grow. Consequently, they discovered that teaching was a meaningful occupation and then changed the original purpose of teaching to that of making a difference. For example, David had taught for 40 years. When he was 19, he lost his job. At that time, his friend asked him to teach in a private school. Although he did not want to be a teacher at that time, he still entered the profession. The reason was that he considered teaching a safe haven and a transition during which he could look for other opportunities at that time. However, when he had experienced more interactions with students, he became enthusiastic about teaching.

I have found teaching highly rewarding. Although there’s not much time left for me, I am still eager to devote myself to the students. I really hope I can help them as much as I can. I don’t mind putting the extra effort. Just like... in the private school I was working for, there were some students with difficult financial backgrounds... In order to help them, I tried to arrange different field trips for them. I wished to give them warmth, happiness, and something that their families might not be able to provide them with. At that time, I had a really close relationship with my students, and they were very grateful to me... I was reluctant to leave them. That's why I have stayed in this profession for 40 years. (但我教的時候發覺,其實教書很 rewarding,雖然有幾年,我都有個熱誠,對於學生,盡量希望幫到他們,即會做多很多,即譬如 ... 因我教那間私校,有些家庭背景比較窮那些 ... 我會安排他們去這些地方玩,希望給他們一些家庭不能給的東西給他們,給}
David’s case shows us that teachers may become aware of their responsibility to students through their interaction with students in which they discover the students’ needs and problems. If the students express their appreciation for them, teachers may feel much more positively about the teacher-student relationship. As a result, the teachers may come to aspire to help and facilitate students’ learning and growth.

It is noted that this teaching purpose, i.e., making a difference in students’ lives, may influence how the informants interpreted their work and in turn their emotional experiences at work. To elaborate this point, it is better to start from a discussion about teachers’ negative emotional experiences caused by workload.

**Teachers’ workload and negative emotions**

It’s like we work around the clock each day. Although I don’t go to school on weekends, I still need to mark students’ assignments at home. Of course, I don’t enjoy this kind of practice. The workload is overflowing. Well… it’s like I have lost my time. I’m running out of private time. Since I am occupied with my work all the time, I can never say “yes” to friends who Whatsapp me and ask me to have fun with them in the weekend. (我們就好像日以繼夜地工作，每日都會做到很晚，而星期六、日可能只是換成我不回學校，但我也要留在家中繼續改學生的東西。當然不喜歡，太多了。
The above quotation was a typical expression from the informants when they talked about their working conditions. From the quotations, we can find that the teachers felt negatively at work because of the heavy workload that made them exhausted and lacked time for leisurely activities. Many teachers in this study said that they always went home at or after 6 p.m., although their official working hours were generally between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Of course, going home did not mean finishing their work. They always did work like marking and lesson preparation at home. When they finished their work, it may already be midnight. Therefore, their actual working hours averaged around 10 to 12 hours per day. Even though they worked for many hours per day, they might still be unable to complete all their work. As a result, they may sacrifice their holiday and leisure. Jack’s experience quoted above is an example.

A possible underlying reason of the heavy workload is that teachers in Hong Kong shouldered multiple responsibilities at schools and each responsibility entailed a set of work. According to the informants, these responsibilities included teaching, teacher-student interaction, extracurricular activities (ECAs), school teams and committees, special roles, and other duties. The informants would categorize these responsibilities and related workload into two types: “instructional work” and “non-instructional work”. Generally, they perceived “instructional work” as the work related to students’ growth, including academic
performance and personal development, whilst “non-instructional work” as the work related to school administration.

I see any tasks related to students’ learning and their personal growth as instructional work and the rest as non-instructional work. In my mind, non-instructional work, such as form filling tasks, is mainly for administrative purpose. (和學生的學業和個人成長有直接關係，我也判斷是教學工作。其餘的非教學，我想主要是行政為主，可能是填表格這類的工作。)

[Peter]

Accordingly, many informants tended to view the responsibilities of teaching and teacher-student interaction as “instructional work”, while the rest as “non-instructional work”. This is because they focused on the administrative components of ECAs, school teams and committees, special roles, and other duties. It is noted that, as we shall see later, the categorization of “instructional” and “non-instructional” was not fixed. Different informants had different understandings about “instructional” and “non-instructional work”.

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Table 4.1: Workload related to teaching responsibility, extracurricular activities, school teams, and special roles among the informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career stage</th>
<th>No. of lesson (per day)*</th>
<th>No. of class</th>
<th>No. of form</th>
<th>No. of ECA club</th>
<th>No. of team and committee</th>
<th>No. of role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All (n = 21)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early (n = 9)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid (n = 7)</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late (n = 5)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The number of homeroom teacher lessons is excluded.

“Instructional work”

Teaching responsibility

The first and foremost responsibility for the informants was teaching. The schools in which the informants worked generally had 8 lessons per day, but the informants, as Table 4.1 shows, had nearly 5 lessons everyday on average. Although they might have 3 free lessons (around 105 minutes in total), they could not take any rest during the free lessons. One reason is that they needed to do lesson preparation. Table 4.1 suggests that the informants on average had to teach 4 different classes in 3 forms. In addition, some of them needed to teach more than one subject. Thus, they had to prepare different materials and contents for different classes. The informants said they generally spent around 15-30 minutes
on preparing a lesson (around 35-40 minutes). Although the informants did not teach 4 classes in different forms every day, it was still common for them to teach 2-3 classes in different forms. In this sense, they needed to spend 30-90 minutes on lesson preparation every day. Even though they taught different classes in the same form, the students’ needs and abilities between classes could be very different. Consequently, they also needed to prepare different sets of materials for the classes in order to cater to the diversity of needs and abilities.

We have to prepare more activities and exercises for smarter classes. That is to say, we have to search for extra materials on our own so as to teach them wider and deeper contents. Like teaching past perfect tense, aside from the compulsory worksheets assigned by the school, we have to prepare more advanced information for smarter classes. As for the students from weaker classes, they are generally… not capable of doing the worksheets in the curriculum. That’s why we have to spend time on preparing another set of materials in a rather basic level, or even easier level for weaker students.

Sometimes, the materials can be as easy as those for primary school students. (好班你要找多些東西給他們做，即要教他多一些，extra 的東西全部都要你自己找，因為你要教他們深一些，如果你教 past perfect，除了學校指定的工作紙是班班都要做之外，因為他是好班，你更加要找多些在這方面的給他。弱班的，他做了…其實那些一般的東西他其實是…一般的課程或一般的 worksheet 他亦做不一樣。於乎我們要做一批 basic，即他…即我們又要做過一批，最 basic 的 basic level 要他達到，甚至乎有些弱的學生，要找一些小學的給他們做，真的很淺的給他們做。)
In addition to lesson preparations, the number of classes implies the workload of marking. The class size in Hong Kong secondary schools is around 30-40 students. For example, if a teacher teaches 4 different classes and assigns one assignment for each student per week, he or she needs to mark 120-160 assignments per week. Actually, this number is huge for the teachers. One informant illustrated how time-consuming marking tasks burdened the teachers who taught “language subjects” like English, Chinese, Liberal Studies, and History.

Every day, we ask students to hand in assignments, which need further marking and become our heavy workload in return. Marking work is particularly time consuming for some subjects, like language, Liberal Studies or History. These subjects require texts and essays as answer format, but there is no model answer. We have to read every little word written by our students carefully for error, comment writing or feedback giving on each assignment. I can say that marking one student’s assignment takes me at least 15 minutes. So, 30 students will take me at least 7-8 hours.
Accordingly, teachers may spend a lot of time on marking, because they needed to read and check students’ writings carefully and then gave comments and feedbacks to each student. Nevertheless, it does not mean that marking was easier for those who teach “numerical subjects” like Sciences, Mathematics and Accounting. To some extent, the teachers who taught this kind of subjects could check the students’ answer with model answers, but the informants who taught these subjects pointed out that marking was also very time-consuming. One of the reasons is that they needed to check the calculation step-by-step carefully rather than simply giving a tick or cross.

In Mathematics, the difficulty of marking lies in quantity. Even one single assignment takes me a lot of time to check because it consists of many different exercises. In fact, marking Mathematics assignments is more than simply placing a tick or cross. We have to check each calculation step which carries different marks correspondingly. A correct answer doesn’t mean it comes with correct calculation steps. On the contrary, even a wrong answer can generate marks with correct calculation steps. This marking process involves a lot of time.
Moreover, as John who taught Business, Accounting and Financial Studies as a numerical subject and Liberal Studies as a language subject, commented that the teachers who taught numerical subjects would like to give students assignments more frequently than those who taught language subjects, “because it is all about calculation, and students need to do more exercises for consolidation. The main difference between numerical subjects and language subjects for a teacher is the quantity of assignment marking work.” (因為是一些數字、計數的東西要給他操很多，他才會懂，所以改的量是很大。數字多…它和文字的科不同，數字科相對問題是它的量相對是多。)

In addition, many informants said they would arrange supplementary lessons for students after schools, because the official lesson time was insufficient for them to cover the curriculum and syllabus or because they wanted to improve the academic or examination performance of students, especially the underperforming students.

First of all, we don’t really have enough time to go through all the details in the curriculum due to the increase in content. We have to pick a few days and ask the class to stay behind after school for supplementary lessons, in order to go through all the materials covered in the exams. As for the ability of the students…, if they are capable, they might be able to catch up with the course during routine lessons, and supplementary class would therefore not
be necessary. However, most of the time, they don’t really learn what they should learn in the routine lessons, so we have to help them out with more dictations, tests, assignments in order to secure their performance in public exams. (首先是課程的內容是多了，真的沒有時間教完，所以要找某幾天叫全班同學放學留下來補課，把要教的、考試要考的都教完為此。然後是學生的能力是... 如果學生的能力夠好，可能他們平時上一堂就能明，就不用補課，但問題是他們很多時上堂學來學去都不明，你就要幫他做更多的默書、小測、功課，這才可以確保他去考公開試時，有一個保險的成績。)

[Mandy]

The number of classes and subjects that teachers are responsible for also relates to another workload, that is, the attendance of form meetings or collective preparations. According to the informants, almost all of them needed to attend meetings every week. During the meetings, the teachers who taught the same subject and form would sit together and then share and discuss their teaching progress and experience. As a result, if they taught more than one form or one subject, they needed to attend more than one such meeting. The meetings generally were held during teachers’ free lessons. Thus, some teachers may be dissatisfied because they may have less time to concentrate on their own lesson preparation.

In general, collective lesson preparations take place in teachers’ free lessons … If we teach one form, we need to attend one session of collective lesson preparation. Accordingly, four forms equal to four sessions … Free
lessons are supposed to be spent on our own lesson preparation or assignment marking. But now we probably need to go to the library for presentation about teaching procedures ... or evaluations on past experience... (通常那些集備是老師的空堂 ... 你教 1 級有 1 個集備，你教 4 級就會有 4 個集備。...所以，那些明明是老師的空堂，可以用來做一些備課或批改作業，但現在就需要可能去圖書館聽同事說一次那個流程或可能就...呃...檢討之前的...) [Mandy]

Some teachers may also be dissatisfied with the practice of meetings because they may think those meetings were a waste of time.

Ideally, we really want to discuss and exchange the ideas of teaching. However, the reality is quite the opposite. Each of us needs to share our ideas in the meeting, but honestly ...what can we share? Share my teaching life? Maybe I can just share some useful websites. That’s it. Why do we bother to spend half an hour on the meeting? ... I’m not saying that we don’t want to do more for our students. If what we do can bring better teaching to our students, we are more than willing to do it. But what we see now is a waste of our time. We don’t think we can come up with something useful during the collective preparations. (我們最理想的當然是商量大家怎樣教，但實際上是做不到的，因為老實講 ... 若要分享，分享條命，還不是這樣？要分享，我最多介紹幾個網站給你，幾好用，就這樣，需不需要講半小時？...不是說我們不想做多些，做多些對學生好的話，我們當然想，但
Accordingly, the major concern among the informants about the form meetings or collective preparations was the effectiveness. If the meetings could be beneficial to teaching and learning, they were willing to join the meetings even though the meetings would have otherwise occupied their free time or free lessons by which they could do their own lesson preparation and assignment marking. For example:

In my eyes, meetings are very important to us. During meetings, we can discuss the learning progress of our students. Collective preparation is really vital… it’s a channel in which we can honestly report the situation of our teaching according to the ability of our students. We can share our experiences and solutions to common problems at class. In the end, this helps us understand the whole curriculum and the teaching progress better. The rooms for improvement and the corresponding solutions can also be discovered clearly. (我認為大家好重要的應該是開會，開會時會講大家的班的進度如何…共同備課這是很重要的 …大家都是按著自己班的能力，按著自己教學的情況去匯報，去互相分享經驗，或者睇下怎樣加強我們大家共同見到的問題 … 有什麼方法可以解決這個問題 … 師到的地方是大家了解個課程，知道大家的進程，大家知道要什麼有問題的地方，大家應該怎樣改善，諸如此類。)

[Leo]

[Tom]
During form meetings or collective preparations, the informants sometimes needed to review and discuss the teaching materials prepared by other teachers who taught the same subject and form. Although the teachers may prepare materials for one another, it may not significantly reduce their workload of lesson preparation. The reason is that they needed to carefully read the prepared materials. If they found the materials did not fit their teaching needs or students’ standard, they needed to adjust or redesign the materials on their own.

Interviewer: Another teacher has already prepared a set of materials for you to teach. Don’t you just use it directly for teaching? Why do you need to prepare again? (其實有一位老師準備了一 set material，不是拿到這 set material 就可以教嗎？為什麼還需要自己再作備課？)

Interviewee: Oh, yup, but we can’t just rely on it. We have to digest the context before using it. Sometimes, different teaching methods should be applied based on different classes. That is to say, the reactions to different teaching methods may vary from class to class. If the class feels bored with a particular teaching method, we will then have to make adjustments accordingly. That means even the teacher, who prepared the teaching materials, thinks that a particular video is useful for teaching a particular class, but I may not have the same thought and may need to spend some more time to find a more compatible video, or in some cases, more supplementary information. Because those teaching materials may not provide sufficient information and this becomes our work to replenish the material set. Anyway, we have to modulate the teaching methods based on
Teacher-student interaction

All informants pointed out that teacher-student interaction outside classroom was part of a teacher’s responsibility. For them, this reasonability was an “instructional work”. This is because they generally believed that the interaction could help them have a better understanding of the students’ needs in order to enable them to facilitate students’ study and growth.

In addition to teaching, I think building good relationships with students is important. This is because a good teacher-student relationship can … bring you many benefits. First, it is beneficial to your teaching. The better the relationship with them, the better they tend to behave. The less emotional they are during your lessons, the smoother your lessons will be. Second, they may encounter some problems but have no one to turn to. Then, we can become their listeners. I think this may help them solve some problems, particularly emotional ones.
In order to have good interaction or relationship with students, the teachers being interviewed would initiatively approach their students during recess time, lunch time and after school. Many informants also said that when they noticed students who had behavioral or emotional problems, they would talk and counsel the students in their private time in order to help them overcome the problems. Some of them, like Olivia and Isabella, opened a special facebook account for their students. They would talk to the students, answer students’ questions, and encourage students to study through facebook after school.

“Non-instructional work”

Extracurricular activities

Although ECAs may benefit students’ personal growth, most of the informants perceived the responsibility to organize the activities as “non-instructional work”. The reason is that organizing ECAs involved heavy administrative workload, including designing activities, booking venue for the activities, monitoring students in the activities, contacting service providers if necessary, making notices about the activities to parents, evaluating and reporting
the effectiveness of the activities. According to the informants, they had to organize a lot of ECAs throughout a school year. First, Table 4.1 indicates that the informants needed to take charge of one extracurricular activity club on average in their schools, such as Drama Club, Physics Club, Dance Club, Community Youth Club (CYC), Table-Tennis Club and the like. In addition to the recreational activities, every subject department and school team and committees, especially the Guidance Team and the Moral and Civic education team, would also arrange ECAs or what they called cross-curricular activities with different purposes. Subject departments may organize activities to motivate or foster students to learn. For example, “Take Chinese History Department as an example. We will take the students to visit museums, leadership exhibitions, and heritage trails. We will also organize study tours in order to help them understand Chinese history” (好像中史科會參觀博物館，參觀leadership展覽，參觀文物徑，甚至帶他們到境外參觀，去所謂其他地方，去了解中國歷史的東西。) [Tom]. The school teams may organize activities aimed at facilitating students’ personal growth, such as voluntary work, camping, sex education program, and more. Consequently, according to the informants, teachers needed to design and arrange various activities for students. If the activities were outdoor activities like voluntary work, camping and visiting, first, they needed to identify a suitable site; second, they needed to inform students’ parents; third, they needed to be present at the sites and look after the students.
School teams and committees

Table 4.1 also identifies that the informants attached themselves to 2 school teams and committees in their schools on average in addition to their subject departments. In Hong Kong, secondary schools had many school teams and committees. Since the informants mentioned a lot of teams and committees in their schools, it was impossible to list all of them here. Therefore, I have summarized the five major school teams and three major committees among the informants’ schools and their functions in Table 4.2. Although the list is incomplete here, the point I want to make is not about how many teams and committees a school has. Instead, I would like to point out that the teachers as the team and committee members need to be responsible for the work assigned by the teams and committees. In other words, the more teams and committees they take part in, the more workload they have. As Sam stated:

On top of teaching, a teacher probably needs to follow a few teams. So, it is natural that we need to handle a series of duties for our teams. A school is detail-structured. I mean it is composed of many different teams. That is to say, I don’t only teach Maths, but also have to follow Guidance Team and School Magazine Team. Thus, I need to organize guidance activities with Wong sir and publish school magazines with other language teachers. The more teams we follow, the more duties we have to take up. (一個老師除了教書以外，大概有幾個組別要跟，那麼那些組自然就會有你要處理工作。學校真的分得十分仔細的，有很多不同的組別。意思是，你除了教數學之外，你是輔導組，所以請你和黃 sir 合作搞活動，原來你還是刊物組，
那麼你要和語文老師一起出校刊等。即是說多一個組，代表你須要負責多一樣工作。）

Table 4.2: The major school teams and committees and their functions in the secondary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School teams/ committees</th>
<th>Major functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School management committee (SMC)/ incorporated management committee (IMC)</td>
<td>To set the strategic mission and policies of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To provide leadership to put these missions and policies into effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To supervise the management of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To report to stakeholders on its stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School executive committee (SEC)</td>
<td>To devise the school’s major concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To prepare school annual plan and school report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To formulate long-term development plans of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School general/ affairs/ administrative committee</td>
<td>To deliberate upon school policies and measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To review and evaluate the school’s present conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To oversee and coordinate all school teams of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic/ curricular committee</td>
<td>To enhance curriculum development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To formulate strategies to improve teaching and learning effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To oversee and coordinate all subject departments of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance team</td>
<td>To foster students’ moral development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To cater to students’ psychological well-being and social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To help students develop a positive outlook on life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career guidance team</td>
<td>To prepare students for further studies and career development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Sam]
To provide guidance for students on further studies and careers

Discipline team

To monitor students’ behaviors in order to maintain a disciplined environment in the school
To ensure students to conform to school rules and regulations
To teach students to exercise self-discipline

Moral and civic education team

To promote students’ ethics, morality, civic rights and responsibilities
To foster students’ sense of belonging to school and community
To encourage students to be aware of and be interested in current social issues

Extracurricular activities (ECA) team

To formulate and review school extracurricular activities
To provide students with a wide range of extracurricular activities
To oversee and coordinate all the extracurricular activities in the school

Source: The information about the teams and committees summarized here have been extracted from the school annual plans, school annual reports, and school websites of the informants’ schools.

As the informants indicated, they were asked to join some of the teams or committees in addition to subject departments in schools. As team members, they had to be responsible for the work assigned by the teams. Since the nature and function of each team were different, it is hard to list all the work of each team. Nevertheless, we can still identify some of the common workloads of the teams and committees based on the interview data and the documents of the schools such as school annual plans and reports. First, all the teams and committees had many meetings for the team members to discuss the team and committees affairs.
Second, all the teams and committees required their members to do a lot of paper work, documentation, and reports for the preparation of school annual plans, annual reports, and evaluation. Third, many teams and committees needed members to organize activities or programs. The guidance team, moral and civic education team, discipline team, career guidance team, and ECA team would arrange a lot of ECAs or cross-curricular activities related to moral, civic, sex, or career education for students. Some other teams and committees, such as PTA, may also need to arrange events to foster parent-school relationships, such as dinner parties and picnics.

Special roles

Actually, the informants had to perform some special roles in addition to that of teachers. Many of them took on the role of homeroom teacher, some of them preformed the role of form coordinator, and some took on the role of subject panel or team leader. According to the informants, each of the roles implied many subtle but annoying duties. For example, homeroom teachers had to deal with many class affairs, contacts with parents, and students’ disciplinary problems. Form coordinators needed to hold the collective lesson preparation, evaluate the teaching and learning difficulties in that form, and provide support for other teachers such as helping teachers to find worksheets. Subject panels needed to write the plans of teaching progress for each form, organize subject-related activities for students, be responsible for book inspection, observe teachers’ lessons, and prepare reports for the subject department. Team leaders had to write proposals or year plans for the team, set the team’s aims and policies, design
programs to meet the aims, and evaluate all the programs organized and prepare reports.

Campus patrol

According to the informants, the schools asked them to patrol the campuses during recess and lunch time and some of them may also be asked to guard the places nearby after school. The informants called the campus patrol as on duty.

We need to go on duty during every recess and lunch time. Teachers need to patrol every area where students can access. On duty means… for example, one teacher is responsible for one floor, like there’s a teacher responsible for the first floor. When it is lunch time, each teacher needs to stay there for half an hour. However, even though teachers are on duty, there’re still many unforeseen possibilities at classrooms such as students fighting or throwing objects from the windows. So the school requires us to closely monitor the students when we are on duty. (我們現在每逢小息或吃飯的時間，老師是需要當值，所有學生能去到的地方都有老師在當值。但當值的意思是，例如一個樓層…如一樓就有一位老師負責，如一個 lunch 一個小時，每個老師要當半個小時。可是，很多時候就算老師在當值，課室也會有很多事情在發生，例如他們會在課室內打架或從窗口掉東西落街，所以校方會…會在開會時要求老師看緊些。)

[Mandy]
From the above quotation, it can be seen that the purpose of on duty was to monitor the students. If the students misbehaved during recess and lunch time and after school, the teachers on duty needed to stop and punish them. It is noted that on duty was basically in shifts, so teachers needed not go on duty every day. Some informants said that they went on duty once every one to two weeks.

**Summary**

The teachers interviewed in this study had to handle different kinds of “instructional” and “non-instructional work”. This situation made them difficult to complete all the work within the official working hours. As a result, they needed to extend their working hours and sacrifice their leisure time. This was one of the reasons they feel negatively at work. To some extent, the working condition described above may be common for other teachers in Hong Kong (Choi & Tang, 2009; Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers, 2008; Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, 2010b; Lee et al., 2007), but this study identifies that the teachers’ negative emotional experiences toward the working condition may vary in degree across their career stages.

**Negative emotions across career stages**

To illustrate this point, the informants are categorized into three groups in terms of their teaching experiences: the early-career stage (≤6 years of teaching experience), the mid-career stage (9 to 20 years of teaching experience), and the late-career stage (25 to 40 years of teaching experience).
Teachers in the early-career stage

Nine informants were in this career stage. During the interviews, these informants expressed many complaints and exhibited negative feelings such as dissatisfaction toward the working conditions described above. One possible reason for their negative emotional experiences is that they tended to perceive most of their work as purposeless.

As mentioned above, the informants in this study wanted to make a difference in students’ lives through teaching. To some extent, the purpose of teaching may make the teachers value “instructional work” rather than “non-instructional work”. For the informants in this career stage, “instructional work” was referred to the work directly related to students’ learning and growth, especially the classroom teaching, lesson preparation, marking, teacher-student interaction. However, as witnessed in the previous sections, teachers needed to handle a lot of work that was not necessarily “instructional”. To some extent, the “non-instructional work” may occupy most of the teachers’ time. As a result, the teachers may feel negatively when they perceived that they had spent a lot of time on “non-instructional work”. Mandy illustrated this:

I feel the current working condition makes me … kind of frustrated. I doubt whether I have done a good job. This is because I expect that teachers’ work includes lesson preparation, classroom teaching, students’ problems solving and extracurricular activities organizing, but now I need to do far more than these, in a way that I can hardly handle. Sometimes I can’t even spare time to
prepare my lesson and check students’ assignments … let alone spending
time to meet my students. Sometimes I don’t feel like I am devoting myself
to my students … It seems that I’m not a competent teacher. （我覺得現在的
環境會令你很…呃…很沮喪，你會覺得為什麼你做不好，因為我預期老
師的工作是備課、上堂、會遇到一些學生問題、要負責課外活動等，但
現在要做很多其他的事，多到你應付不來，有時連備課和改學生功課的
時間都沒有 …呃 … 見學生的時間又少，有時你會覺得自己好像…沒有
為學生…好像不是一位稱職的老師。）

[Emma]

Although the teachers in this career stage may perceive most of their work as
meaningless, they were unable to refuse the work.

Generally, when we are hired by a school, we have to expect that … the
school must require its teachers to … pick up an extracurricular activity and a
post … what we call … a school administrative function. We may make our
own choice on taking up which extracurricular activity, but not the
administrative post, which must be assigned by the school. We cannot say no
to this. You pretty much expect the school to have already assigned a post
for you. （通常你入一間學校工作，你預了一定要… 他規定老師…其實所
有學校都是這樣，老師一定要有一個課外活動，同時要有一樣 …即那個…
叫什麼…學校…的…行政的 function，所以你可以決定帶什麼課外活動，
但你另外一個的行政 post 一定是由學校 offer 給你，這個你應該沒可能
say no，你人去做其實已經預了他會安排給你。）

[Emma]
The quotation suggests there may be a presumption in teachers’ mind that they did not have the right to say no to any work assigned by the school, no matter whether they valued it or not. In addition to this presumption, another possible reason leaving the teachers vulnerable to the “non-instructional work” is that the teachers in this career stage were generally working under temporary contracts. As Crystal stated, “as a novice, we’re afraid of expressing opinions. This is because our jobs are contract-based. We’re afraid of being fired. We’re afraid of saying something offensive to others resulting in the loss of our job.” (作為新人通常都不敢發言，因為怕被人開除，怕說錯話得罪人而被人開除，因為新人都是 contract。) This may make them feel powerless at work.

Accordingly, the emotional experiences at work among the teachers interviewed in their early-career stage were quite negative, because they felt they did a lot of meaningless work but they were powerless to refuse to do so. Moreover, as mentioned previously, these teachers were also dissatisfied and exhausted because of their heavy workload and long working hours.

**Teachers in the mid-career stage**

Seven informants were in this career stage. The informants in this stage were permanent teachers, except Jack. Four of them were subject panel heads. Like the early-career informants, the mid-career informants also committed to the purpose of teaching so as to make a difference and preferred to do “instructional work” than “non-instructional work”. Similarly, they also complained that the “non-instructional work” occupied most of their time. For example, Eva said, “I
feel as if I have only spent 1/3 of my working hours on instructional work whilst 2/3 is spent on non-instructional work. Even if it’s not as much as 2/3, it should be around 3/5, Even though it does not occupy so much time, I guess it at least occupies 3/5.” (哇！我覺得真正用來教書的時間基本上是 1/3，非教學工作我覺得佔了 2/3，就算沒有那麼多，也有 3/5). When they were asked how they felt about the situation, their answers were similar to Eva’s as follows.

Sometimes I feel helpless … The most tragic thing is that I have to make the non-instructional work a top priority. This makes me feel uncomfortable. Like when we organize a big event, I wonder if its purpose is meaningful for the students or just possibly related to the reputation of the school. It seems to me that the event which requires strenuous effort is not targeting the students. As a teacher, we always ponder over our work… Well… We really want to transfer our academic knowledge or life experience to the students, but does our work link up with our wants? I feel particularly uncomfortable because I have no idea whether the students can learn through the big show from which we have spent tons of effort. What I really want to work on is something the students can truly learn and grow. (有時是無奈…最慘的是什麼？就是很多時候要先做的不一定是和教學掛鉤，那個時候就會感到十分不舒服…例如有大型活動要搞，你會覺得搞這個東西到底有沒有為？可能只是和學校的…的…什麼…的名譽有關。但對我來說是…那麼費勁地搞一些東西，但真正能夠 service 到的好像不都是學生。其實我覺得老師經常會想…呃…我們很想教學生學術或教他們做人，但我們所做的工作能不能直接和這些掛鉤？心最不舒服的是，覺得搞完這一場大龍鳳
後，學生是不是真的能學到東西？學生是不是真的可以學到一些東西呢？
我總是想做一些東西是...學生可以真正學到的。

[Eva]

In these expressions, it can be identified that the emotional experiences of the working condition were “helpless” (無奈), “uncomfortable” (心不舒服), and “tragic” (慘), because teachers felt meaningless to do so much work unrelated to students’ learning and moral growth. Moreover, we may also identify that the mid-career teachers may also feel powerless in rejecting the “non-instructional work”, even though they were permanent teachers and subject panel heads. This is because they did not involve in the decision-making process as Tom explained.

I feel quite helpless. I can neither change nor control the reality. We are the passive ones. It’s a great mission for every teacher who has a good heart to teach well. But the biggest problem is … I’m neither the one to make decisions nor the administrator. (其實都幾無奈，你無辦法去改變這現實，對現實不可以掌握的，我們都是被動者，每一個有心的老師做得這行，天職便要做好教學的工作，但最大問題 … 我不是那些決策層或行政方面的人。)

[Tom]

It is noted that the nature of the feeling of powerlessness had a little bit difference between the mid-career teachers and the early-career teachers. As we have seen, the interviewed early-career teachers felt powerless because they perceived that they did not have the right to say no. Although the interviewed
mid-career teachers might also have the same perception, they attempted to express their opinions directly to the school administrators if they were dissatisfied with their working condition. However, the administrators may not necessarily accept their opinions. Thus, their feeling of powerlessness to some extent was also aroused by the administrators’ negligence. Five informants in this stage, including Jack, Flora, Tom, Eva, and Rex, mentioned such an experience and one of the examples is as follows.

Interviewer: Whenever you don’t want to do something, will you say no to the school? (其實當你不想去做的時候，可不可以在學校裡 say no 的？)

Interviewee: I tried but failed. Actually, most of us including me have failed in doing so. (企圖過，但係大部份人都係失敗的。包括我也是失敗過的。)

Interviewer: How did the school respond to you? (學校是怎樣回應你們的？)

Interviewee: As told, it’s all about a lack of manpower. The school even asked me to provide further suggestions on workload sharing. However, when I recommended someone else to take the work, the principal would say this person was overwhelmed by other tasks. This’s it. (冇其他人手，你有冇第二 d 人諗到？… 有冇第二 d 好 d 的建議呀？跟著我 suggest 一 d 人手，校長便會話果個又要負責咩，果個又要負責咩。就是這樣。)

[Flora]
Nevertheless, the mid-career teachers may be more able to cope with the negative emotional experiences than the early-career teachers. From the data collected, I note that some of the teachers may be more able to manage their emotions by redefining the "non-instructional work". For examples:

At the beginning, I really didn’t like to do non-instructional work because I questioned what I was doing. However, later I found that I should learn to understand the meaning behind the non-instructional work and discover the possible positive outcome brought to the students. Even though these are not really frontline work, or more precisely, these are not really related to students’ academic performance, we need to figure out whether there are any components that are beneficial to the students. If we find any, we will feel more comfortable. (開始時很不喜歡，自己會覺得自己在做什麼，但慢慢地要...我覺得要學會發現那些非教學工作背後的意義，即其實會不會是...做這一樣東西其實是真的可以幫到學生，雖然這些行政一些的就是沒那麼前線的東西...應該說是沒有那麼直接和學生的成績掛鉤，那就看看背後有沒有一些其實對學生也是好的東西，就是這樣。這樣可能可以令自己的心舒服些。)

[Eva]

Accordingly, they may try to redefine the “non-instructional” work as partially “instructional”. If they successfully redefine the work, they may feel more comfortable to do the work.
Teachers in the late-career stage

Five informants were in this career stage. All of them were permanent teachers. Four of them were senior teachers and three out of these four were team leaders. The remaining informant was a subject panel head. Similar to other informants described above, these informants had to handle many different kinds of work and work for long hours every day. Again, these informants also disliked such a working condition, especially when they compared the current condition with that of twenty or thirty years ago. They said the working condition in those days was much favorable for teachers to teach and take care of students.

Despite preferring the working conditions of the past, these teachers did not have felt very negatively toward the current conditions, because of their definition of teachers’ work. Similar to other informants, they distinguished teachers’ work into “instructional” and “non-instructional”. However they viewed “instructional work” and “non-instructional work” as closely related, or all of their work as having an “instructional” purpose, which was to help students learn and grow. For example:

Instructional work and non-instructional work are not unrelated. Of course, if you need me to distinguish between them, as an English teacher, I will say anything about teaching English is instructional and the rest is non-instructional. However, education emphasizes on whole personal development nowadays. Despite academic knowledge, we need to facilitate students’ personal growth. So, organizing activities, preparing OLE and building up SLP are not really non-instructional although these are not
related to the subject I teach, i.e., English. All I want to say is that there is no clear-cut answer on the difference between instructional and non-instructional work. (教學和非教學其實又不是沒有關係的，當然如果你這樣分… 我教英文的，凡我做的事和英文沒有關係，那便是非教學，但現在教育來說，是全人教育，除了 academic 方面，就是其他方面的發展，所以搞活動、其他學習經歷、student learning profile 等，都不是沒有關係的，只不過是未必是英文，即分不到很清楚。)

[David]

In addition, the informants in this career stage generally expressed teaching as a rewarding occupation. This is because they witnessed many students who they taught have grown up throughout their teaching career and thus they perceived that they really made a difference to their students.

Throughout these years, I feel quite enjoyable and happy, because I bore witness to my students’ growth. Some of my students may even bring their girlfriends to visit me. I feel especially happy for their genuine heart. (在這麼多年裡面，我自己也很 enjoy，很開心，真的見到很多學生的成長，有些男學生會帶個女孩子來給我見，這很開心的，因他有這種心，所以開心。)

[David]

Teaching is a mighty job… well…we can witness how a child grows. It’s great to see some of them eventually finding their way and some of them gradually become very well-behaved. And after they graduated, all of them
have entered professions that suit them. (其實教書很開心…呃...看到小朋友慢慢長大。因為你看著他從小長大，他又能找到自己的路向；有些真的是越來越乖；當他畢業後...呃...都找到些合適他自己的行業。)  

[Connie]

**Unequal distribution of workload?**

Some people may think that the differentiation of negative emotional experiences may also be caused by an unequal distribution of workload among teachers. As we have seen, the teachers may feel negatively at work because the heavy workload meant they lacked time to relax and enjoy their leisure, resulting in exhaustion and stress. Therefore, it is possible that the late-career teachers may have less negative emotional experiences at work than the other groups of teachers, because their workload was lighter. In order to see whether this argument is applicable to explain the findings, this study attempted to compare the workload between the informants in the three career stages.

According to the findings described above, teachers’ workload was distinguished into “instructional” and “non-instructional”. Since some of the work was difficult to be quantified based on the interview data, such as the teacher-student interaction, the analysis did not include all items of work mentioned in the previous sections as the indicators. Moreover, as we have seen, the teachers in different career stages may have different interpretations on defining “instructional” and “non-instructional work”. Thus, the analysis just used the items of work that were commonly agreed as “instructional work” and
“non-instructional work” respectively among the interviewed teachers as the indicators.

First, “instructional workload” was measured by the numbers of lessons (per day), classes and forms the teachers taught. As the above discussion shows, a teacher may have higher “instructional workload” if he or she taught more lessons, classes and forms. Second, “non-instructional workload” was measured by the number of extracurricular activity clubs the teachers took charge of, how many teams they belonged to, and how many roles (homeroom teacher, form coordinator, subject panel head and team leader) they took. The above discussion suggests that a teacher, who took charge of more extracurricular activity clubs, took parts in more teams and takes more roles, may have higher “non-instructional” workload.

Table 4.1 indicates that the informants in each career stage had similar number of lessons per day. When comparing the number of classes between groups, it is found that the early-career informants had to teach 0.9-1.3 more classes than other groups of informants on average. Besides, the mid-career informants had to work for more forms (M = 3.4) than the early-career (M = 3.1) and the late-career (M = 2.8) informants. To some extent, the findings suggest that the late-career informants may have less “instructional workload” than the early- and mid-career informants. However, the difference was not really huge.

Table 4.1 identifies that the late-career informants may be responsible for less extracurricular activity clubs (M = 0.6) than the early-career (M = 1.0) and the mid-career (M = 1.1) informants. However, the late-career informants may be attached to more teams than other groups of informants. According to Table 4.1, the late-career informants on average were attached to nearly 3 teams, but the
early- and mid-career informants were only attached to nearly 2 teams. In addition, the mid-career (M = 1.7) and the late-career (M = 1.6) informants took similar number of roles in their schools, both took more roles than the early-career informants (M = 1.3). The reason why the first two groups of informants took more roles is that, as we have seen in the above sections, these informants generally took multiple roles such as subject panel heads, team leaders, homeroom teachers or form coordinators due to their seniority. On the basis of these findings, the “non-instructional workload” between the three groups of informants may not have large differences.

In other words, the differentiation of the interviewed teachers’ negative emotional experiences at work may not be caused by the unequal distribution of workload between career stages.

**Positive emotional experiences: positive student-matters**

The above discussions imply that the interviewed teachers in general experienced different kinds of negative emotions at work, such as dissatisfaction, meaninglessness, powerlessness, and discouragement. The teachers in the early- and mid-career stages may feel more negatively than the teachers in the late-career stage. Although the above discussions seem to suggest that only the teachers in the late-career possess positive emotional experiences at work, it may not be true. Actually, all the informants experienced more or less positive emotions at work. Nevertheless, most of the teachers in the early- and mid-career stages did not mention or talked less about their positive experiences until they were asked to do so. When they were asked whether they had positive emotional
experiences at work or how they felt happy at work, they were able to express the experiences of happiness, satisfaction, and even self-fulfillment. Basically, these positive emotional experiences were related to their students.

**Gratifying graduate**

First, all the informants in all career stages felt happy and proud when they mentioned their former students who returned to the school to see them or kept in touch with them.

The connection with graduates is encouraging. One feels very warm. It’s like I have made many friends. Moreover, I can see their achievement. I do not only mean the achievement at work, but also the stable life they have built up. They can sustain their family with their efforts and this is their real achievement. (畢業舊生的聯繫是一個很大的鼓舞，你會覺得很溫暖，好像多了很多朋友，另外又見到他們有所成就，我不單單指工作的成就，起码有一個穩定的生活，我意思是可以養妻活兒、有穩定的生活，就是這樣。)

[Connie]

If their former students got certain achievements in their work or the education field, the positive emotions may be even more intense. Connie, for example enjoyed sharing the success of her former students. Another example is Tom. He was glad when he mentioned that one of his students who was studying Chinese
History in a top university in Taiwan always asked for his help when he encountered difficulties in his studies.

**Students’ appreciations**

In addition to the former students, the teachers also were happy and pleasant when they received appreciations and thanks from their former and current students. For instance, Leo said, “In this school, you teach students who turn from insensible kids to responsible people, they sometimes write me thank you cards for my teaching. When I receive their appreciations, I am very happy.” (在這間學校，你將學生由不懂教到懂，他們時會…寫張 thank you card 給你，當下是很開心的。) Rex also said, “In the graduation ceremony this year, one student came and said thank you to me. This is indeed the happiest moment in school.” (今年畢業時，有個學生走過來對我說多謝，其實學生和你說多謝是最開心的。) Ken felt amazing when a former student thanked Ken’s teaching that made him interested in Chemistry and thus decided to take a degree course in a related subject in the U.K.

**Positive changes in behavior and attitude**

Witnessing students’ positive changes in behavior and attitude also was very happy, encouraging, and rewarding for the teachers. “It’s very meaningful for me to see students making changes in their lives. Money or other things cannot give you this feeling” (我看到一個生命在轉變的時候，給我很多的… 即不是 in terms of 錢或 in terms of 一些其他的 appreciation 可以取得的一種意義感。),
John said. If the teachers put a lot of efforts into helping the students, the positive emotions may be more intense.

I had a student who was a teddy boy. He always fought, caused troubles, and so on. Actually, his family was quite … complicated. He felt no one cared about him. He didn’t know how to express his emotions in school. He was very aggressive, explosive and violent. As his homeroom teacher, I noted his problem and spent a lot of time talking with him. As time went by, he built up trust in me and was willing to pour his heart out to me. In turn, I shared my ideas with him on how to face his problems in appropriate ways. Later, he started to join some school activities and gradually developed his interest as well as religion. Eventually, he changed and put his triad background behind. Although he was not good at studying, he turned to be a good and upright person. I felt very grateful for his big change. (我曾經有一個男生，他本身有黑社會背景，他經常會打架、鬧事等等等等，覺得家人不關心他，其實他的家庭環境都……都頗複雜的，……呃……後來……即他經常……呃……在學校時，他不懂如果表達自己的不開心，於是表現出來的就是很暴躁……很喜歡行使暴力……之類。由於他經常生事，所以我會經常見他，我本身是他的班主任，他會……呃……慢慢地開始信任我，之後和我說了很多心事，而我就會教他如何處理這樣事。後來……慢慢地……由於他也參加了學校的一些活動，從中找到了自己喜歡的東西，同時找到喜歡的宗教。於是他離開了黑社會的背景，雖然不算讀書很叻，但算是正正當當地做回一個正經人家。我現在一直也有和他聯絡。看到他有這樣的改善，都真的十分恩惠。)
Despite a spectacular case like this, teachers may also find satisfaction and encouragement from students’ changes in behaviors or attitudes.

I had a F.5 class last year. The students didn’t pay attention in class. I then spent a lot of time encouraging them and trying to present the facts and reason with them. Although they didn’t respond at that time, I could feel that they gradually changed. First, they tried their best to concentrate during lessons. Second, they handed in their homework on time. Their learning attitude became more positive. All these made me feel happy and encouraging. (我上年中 5 那班，他們當時是沒心機上課，之後我我花了 很多時間跟他們講解…sort of 道理。當時他們聽完也沒有什麼反應，但 之後感覺他們慢慢地改變。首先，他們在上課時清醒了一點；另一樣是 會準時交功課上；而另外...呃...我覺得他們的學習態度正面了。這些事 都是很開心。）

[Olivia]

Learning progress

In addition, students’ learning progress also makes teachers feel happy, as the following quotation shows.

Satisfaction comes from students’ understanding and willingness to learn what I have taught. Of course, it will be a great return if they can perform well in tests and examinations. In my first year of teaching F.5 public exam
class in Biology, my students got a stunning result of 3As in The Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). I was very, very, very happy. During that summary holiday, I always went to school to work on the teaching materials for next school year. I didn’t feel tired at all. Oh! That motivation was so strong. I was really happy... My students got 3As while most got C. (成功感是教完學生之後，他們明白、肯學...呃...最好當然是讀完後可以在他的測、考中看到，有一點回報。我第一年在這裡教會考時，我在這裡才開始教會考，同學的成績已經不錯。在我們學校，我第一年已經有 3 個 A，會考，哇！開心到我整個暑假都回學校工作，一點累也沒有。哇！那種動力是多麼的強，我開心到...真的是...我教的學生有 3 個 A，有好多人拿多少個 C。)

[Eva]

Positive teacher-student relationship

Finally, the teachers enjoyed the relationship with students. For instances, the informants stated that “I get a lot of satisfaction from the interaction with students” (我的滿足感是來自於我和我的學生的關係) [Eva]; “if there is a group of kids who have built up a close relationship with us, we will feel a sense of belonging, and we will feel someone getting along with us in this school… I love this sense of interaction” (有一班小朋友和你 close 一些，你就會有一個歸屬感。你會覺得…在這個學校有一班人跟你在一起，我…我會喜歡這種互動的關係) [Crystal]. The teachers would like to describe their relationship with students as friendship, brotherhood, sisterhood, or parent-children relation.
One reason why the positive student-matters are the possible sources of teachers’ positive emotional experiences is that the student-matters are the symbols of success in the fulfillment of teaching purpose, i.e. making a difference. This means that the teachers may have interpreted the positive student-matters as representing their success in making a difference to students. For examples:

- Tom explained that he was happy about his student who was pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Chinese history because “I can help him achieve his goal, fulfill what he wants to do and increase his motivation to accomplish.” (我能夠成就到他的理想，幫助一個學生去成就他將來想做的事、提升他自己的成就動機。)

- David stated, “The students would return to school and say thank you to us after graduation. Even when they were still students, they cooked food or would buy a tie for us. Whenever they see us, they are so happy. They always come find us in the staffroom during recess time. Having encountered all these, we just know that we did help the students or else they won’t love us that much.” (很多學生走了之後會回來找你和你說多謝，還在讀緊書的時候會做東西給你吃，甚至乎買條 tie 給你，看到你的時間會很開心，經常在小息的時候去 staffroom 找你等。當你見到這些，你知道因為你幫了他們，否則他們是不會喜歡你)

- Bonny said when she saw her students had some improvement in their learning or attitudes, she would be happy because “I think I can make some contributions.” (我都覺得自己能夠做點事出來。)
Discussion

Similar to other studies (e.g. Lee et al., 2007), heavy workload is found to be a reason why the interviewed teachers had negative feelings about their work in this chapter. The interviewed teachers commented that they always had to sacrifice their leisure time after school and during the holidays in order to finish their work. Consequently, the heavy workload made them feel stressed and exhausted and thus they disliked the working conditions. On the other hand, similar to other studies (e.g. Hargreaves, 1999; Lortie, 1975), the teachers may have had positive feelings when they experienced positive student-matters, including grateful graduates, students’ appreciation, students’ positive changes in behaviors and attitudes, good relationships with students, and students’ learning progress. In addition, this chapter identifies that teachers at different career stages may have had different emotional experiences. To some extent, the early-career teachers may have had the most negative feelings about their work, while the late-career teachers may had the least negative feelings about their work.

Emotions and teaching purpose

However, workload and positive student-matters may have been just the explicit factors influencing the teachers’ emotional experiences at work. The implicit factor may have been the fulfillment of teaching purpose. In this study, the informants generally committed to teaching because they wanted to make a difference in students’ lives. The teaching purpose may become the object for them to monitor and evaluate their practices in order to fulfill the purpose. Thus,
the informants preferred to do “instructional work” like teaching and interaction with students rather than “non-instructional work” like organization of ECAs and school teams. This is because they thought the former was related to students’ academic and personal growth, but the latter was not. The findings also identify that if teachers interpret what they do as helping to achieve the purpose, they may experience emotions of satisfaction, self-fulfillment or other positive emotions; otherwise, they may encounter emotions of dissatisfaction, depression or other negative emotions.

In this sense, the reason why the positive student-matters are the major source of the informants’ positive emotional experiences may be that teachers interpret the positive student-matters as representing their success in making a difference in students’ lives. The research findings indicate that all the informants experienced these student-matters. Logically, teachers with more teaching experiences may experience more the positive student-matters because they have more interactions with more students inside and outside classroom throughout their teaching careers. Thus the late-career informants in the present study shared many stories about the positive student-matters and reported positive emotional experiences resulting from the student-matters. On the other hand, although the early- and mid-career teachers experienced student-matters, they talked less about their positive emotional experiences, and some of them, such as Mandy, may even have blamed themselves for not being able to take care of their students. In this sense, they may have considered that they failed to meet their teaching purpose. This evaluation may relate to their definition of teachers’ work.

If positive student-matters are the symbol that signifies to teachers they are successfully making a difference in students’ lives, workload may make teachers
think that they are failing to fulfill the purpose of teaching. We observed that the informants tended to value and prefer to do the work that benefits students’ learning and growth, because this kind of work matches their purpose of teaching. Thus, if teachers’ workload is dominated by “non-instructional work”, teachers may experience negative emotions. This is because they may think that they are doing something that deviates from their teaching purpose. The feeling of meaninglessness may then be aroused in this situation.

**Emotions and definitions of “instructional” and “non-instructional work”**

However, the definitions of “instructional work” and “non-instructional work” differed among the informants. For the early-career informants, “instructional work” basically referred to the work related to teaching responsibilities, such as lesson preparation and marking, whereas work related to the responsibility for organizing ECAs, school teams, and special roles was “non-instructional”. In the case of the mid-career informants, although they had similar definitions of “instructional” and “non-instructional work”, they attempted to redefine “non-instructional work” as having some “instructional” components. In contrast to the other two groups, the interviewed late-career informants tended to view “instructional” and “non-instructional work” as closely related and all their work as more or less “instructional”.

The different definitions of “instructional” and “non-instructional work” may have affected the teachers’ interpretation of the extent to which their teaching purpose is fulfilled as well as their emotional experiences. According to the informants, the workload related to the organization of ECAs, school teams, the
special roles and on duty occupied most of their time. Under these working conditions, the early-career teachers may have felt their work meaningless because they may just pay attention to the “non-instructional” work rather than helping students to learn and grow. On the other hand, the late-career teachers may have felt that whatever they do in the schools as meaningful, because they tend to view all their work as directly or indirectly benefiting students’ learning and personal growth. The mid-career teachers may have been experiencing feelings of both meaninglessness and meaningfulness, because they may view the “non-instructional work” as only partially “instructional”.

To some extent, the different definitions between the groups of teachers imply that teachers’ interpretation of their work may change throughout their careers. Some studies suggest that when teachers are still young in terms of teaching experience, they may prefer to pay much attention to classroom teaching and the related work (Choi & Tang, 2011). This may be because they consider that only this kind of work can facilitate students’ learning and growth. However, after they have been in the teaching profession longer, they may realize that they cannot only focus on this kind of work. Moreover, they may realize that most of the time that they give to “non-instructional work” is due to their responsibility in organizing ECAs, school teams, and other roles in the school. As a result, feelings of meaninglessness and other negative emotions may be aroused. If they choose to stay in this profession, they may need to overcome these negative emotional experiences. One approach they may use is to redefine “non-instructional” work as “instructional”, which is what the mid-career teachers in this study did. Moreover, as their teaching experience increases, some of them may be promoted to being subject panel or team leader. These roles may empower them to discover
the “instructional” values behind “non-instructional work”, because the “non-instructional work” related to the subject department (e.g. form coordinator) or the teams (e.g. team events and reports) is decided by the subject panel and team leader. As a result, they may successfully identify the “instructional” values of all of their work, including “non-instructional work”, when they are in the late-career stage, as the interviewed late-career teachers did.

**Emotions and contract types**

In addition to feelings of meaninglessness, the teachers may also have felt powerless when they perceive that they cannot fulfill the teaching purpose due to their inability to refuse “non-instructional work”. In other words, teachers’ negative emotional experiences also relate to their inability to control the labor process, resulting in failure to fulfill the teaching purpose. The research findings imply that the type of contract may shape teachers’ feeling of powerlessness. First, compared with the permanent teachers, the temporary teachers interviewed in this study tended to be afraid of being fired, so they chose to accept any work assigned by the school unconditionally, even though they did not value it. This may have been one source of their feeling of powerlessness. However, it is interesting to note the case of Jack, who was a temporary teacher, but still tried to negotiate the workload with the school administrators. The difference between Jack and the other temporary teachers is that Jack was in the mid-career stage while the others were in the early-career stage. To some extent, this implies that teaching experience may mediate the effect of temporality. One possible reason for the mediating effect is that teaching experience is a symbol of reputation or authority.
for teachers. Therefore, if a teacher has taught for a longer period of time, he or she may have more power to negotiate their workload in order to fulfill their teaching purpose.

**Emotions and positions**

Nevertheless, the position of the teachers in the school may further mediate the effects of teaching experience. The structure of school organizations is more or less bureaucratic (Ingersoll, 2003). The characteristics of the structure, such as hierarchy and centralization of power and authority, may legitimatize the people positioned at the top. Thus, we can see that the early-career informants tended to assume that they did not have the right to say no to the school administrators. Moreover, even though the mid-career informants attempted to negotiate with the school administrators, it seems that they could not appeal against the decisions made by the administrators. This is because all the informants did not have the means of administration. As a result, both groups of the informants experienced the feeling of powerlessness at work.

If all teachers are subordinate to the school administrative offices, to some extent, all of them more or less feel powerless. However, it is interesting that the late-career informants did not suffer so much from this kind of negative emotions. A possible explanation is that these teachers were positioned in administrative positions of the schools. In fact, many late-career informants were senior teachers, implying that they performed school administrative and managerial roles, i.e., the leadership of school teams such as the moral and civic education team and the guidance team. Moreover, some of them were also members of the SEC in which
they participated in the decision-making process of the school. In this sense, this group of teachers may have been more able to control the labor process than the other two groups, resulting in them feeling less powerless.
Chapter 5
School Administration and Teachers’ Emotional Experiences

In addition to career stages, it is found that the emotional experiences of the informants also varied across schools. The informants in schools B, E, F, G, and J were generally unhappier than the informants in schools A, C, D, H, and I. Thus, the first group of schools is labeled as “unhappy schools” and the second group of schools is labeled as “happy schools” in this chapter. It is noted that the informants in present study generally felt negatively at work, as mentioned in Chapter 4. Therefore, the label of “happy schools” does not mean the informants in the schools were really happy at work. They were considered as happy only when they were compared with the informants from the “unhappy schools”. In other words, “happy schools” and “unhappy schools” are relative rather than absolute labels. According to the findings, the “unhappy schools” (B, E, F, G, and J) were unhappy, because their school administrative practices were more bureaucratic than those of “happy schools” (A, C, D, H, I, and K). In order to better illustrate this point, this chapter will first present two cases, School E and School I, in the following section. These two cases are chosen, because the two schools exhibited the distinct features of the “unhappy” and “happy schools”. Then, this chapter will abstract the school administrative practices which may affect teachers’ emotional experiences at work from the cases with references to other schools.
Two cases

School E

Mandy, Bonny, Leo, and Isabella worked in School E, which was a band 3 aided school. The power in this school was centralized in the hands of the principal and the SEC, which consisted of the principal, vice principals, and all senior teachers. The principal and the SEC made most of the decisions which affected every aspect of teachers’ work and the operation of the school, but there were still a few consultations with teachers in the decision-making processes.

What you asked is about our ability to influence decision-making process. As you know, our school has different teams and the SEC is the team responsible for making decisions. How was this committee formed? It is made up of teachers with more teaching experience. Senior teachers as well as the vice principals and the principal are all included in the committee. They discuss the policies which affect all students and teachers within the team. We have no consultation. Of course, the team will inform us of the changes in policies. If we have any dissatisfaction, we can share it with the principal. However, this is already a decision. There is no room for further discussion.
Since the teachers were not able to participate in the decision-making process, the informants tended to dislike and be dissatisfied with the decisions. This is because they thought most of the decisions made by the principal and the SEC did not really benefit teaching and learning. One example is the policy called the Ninth Lesson. Two years ago, the principal and the SEC decided to add a lesson every day after the eighth lesson as the last lesson. The ninth lesson was not about any particular subject but all about doing homework. In this lesson, the students had to do their homework under homeroom teacher’s supervision. If the students had any difficulty doing the homework, they could immediately ask their homeroom teacher. Although the intention of the policy was good, the informants were dissatisfied with it. It is because they did not see the policy generating any positive effects. For instances,

There’s no survey or any other means or tools to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ninth Lesson, like whether the homeroom teachers regard it as effective or whether students has consequently submitted all their homework. Assumed the set-up of the ninth lesson is aimed at improving student’s performance with their homework or increase their motivation in learning; is there any way to know whether these aims can be achieved or not?

According to the teachers from the SEC, the Ninth Lesson is effective in its two years of implementation, but I have no idea where this result or data
I think the Ninth Lesson is not that beneficial to learning because both students and teachers feel tired. Students don’t regard this as a formal lesson and just want to play around in this lesson. For me, I just found these policies unnecessary once I came to this school. (我覺得在那堂是學不到什麼的，因為其實學生都很疲倦，老師也很疲倦，他們都當是一個…我玩埋這堂就算，橫惦都不是正式上堂，即例如這些政策，我覺得，我來到之後覺得很多餘。)

[Bonny]

Although the teachers perceived the policy as useless and thus disliked it, they chose to accept rather than reject it. The reason is they believed that the principal and the SEC would not listen to their opinions.

They consider this policy as constantly effective. When the senior teachers consider this as constantly effective, they won’t accept our opinions even though we talk to them. It’s useless telling them. (他們都覺得這是恒持有
Some teachers might also be afraid of expressing opposite opinions to the administrators. As Leo said, “Maybe we dare not disobey the intention of the administrators” (可能大家不敢…不敢五逆聖意)”. As a result, the teachers in the school tended to feel powerless to influence the school decisions and policies that affected their work. “We…seem to lack … power. I guess teachers are all like this” (我們…似乎並沒有…影響力，我想一般的老師都是這樣), Mandy said. For the teachers, the feeling of powerlessness may also arouse unhappiness.

What made us upset and unpleasant is to make a futile effort. But, it’s required by the system of the school. If someone thinks it is constantly effective, we have to do it anyway. I think this is the most troublesome part. (最不開心最不喜歡的，是覺得有些事，做了都沒有用的，但學校的制度要這樣，有些人會覺得會恒持有效，你便必須去做，這會覺得最麻煩。)

To some extent, the centralization of power implied the strong supervision and regulation over teachers’ work. Indeed, according to the informants, School E even tightly controlled many aspects of teachers’ school lives. First, the school pressurized the teachers to make sure that their students had good academic performance. For example, the school needed every teacher to submit evaluation report after each school examination. In the report, the teachers had to analyze the
strength and weakness of each student, explain the reasons why the students got the corresponding results, and give recommendations to improve the students’ performance. Moreover, the school assigned the teachers certain time slots and classrooms to lead supplementary lessons after school. As a result, if the teachers led fewer supplementary lessons than other teachers did, they would worry the school administrators perceived them as lazy.

It has already been arranged for us that we hold supplementary lessons for a particular subject on a particular day, but this leads to a phenomenon where every subject is competing for time for supplementary lessons. The schedule is tight… It’s like if you have led one supplementary lesson, I would have to lead one more than you. All of us are having a competition… Yes, a competition in supplementary lesson. Every teacher has to lead supplementary lesson. Oh, if you don’t lead one… it’s like you haven’t completed your work. This is happening… Therefore if we hold fewer supplementary lessons, we will feel anxious that the school will have a bad impression on us. (他幫我們安排了那一天那些科目可以去補課，但是有一個現象…就是…每一科都在爭補課的時間，即很緊張…你補一節我就要比你多補一節，大家有一點在鬥多那樣 … 是，補課鬥多。就好像人人都補，唔！你不補…呃…你…好像你沒有去完成你自己的工作那般，都會有這樣的情況 … 如果你少做了補課 …很慌張，會害怕學校知道我沒有補課，會印象不好。)

[Mandy]
Second, the school valued students’ conduct. For example, the school strongly requested teachers to monitor students every area in the school during recess and lunch time. If students engaged in deviant behaviors or misconducts during those times, the school required the teachers to explain why they did not discover and immediately stop the students. Thus, the teachers were stressed and anxious during recess and lunch times because no one could guarantee that students would be obedient when they were patrolling the school. The following conversation may illustrate this point.

Interviewee: When it comes to recess or lunch time, teachers need to be on duty for patrolling around the places where students are accessible… However, for most of the time, even when the teachers are on duty, there can be a lot of things happening inside the classroom. For example, students may fight in the classroom or throw something out of the window. That’s why… during the meeting, our school requests the teachers to keep a close eye on the students. … Um… our school always thinks, ‘If you let the students feel you are everywhere and hold tight to the rigid disciplines, they won’t misbehave.’ This actually makes me feel stressful. If any students misbehave when I am on duty, does that mean I haven’t made a full patrol or fulfilled my obligation? All co-workers are anxious that we may forget to be on duty. It’s a big deal in our school. We have to be on time and bear it in mind. (我們現在每逢小息或吃飯的時間，老師是需要當值，所有學生能去到的地方都有老師在當值 … 可是，很多時候就算老師在當值，課室也會有很
Interviewer: If the students made some troubles when you are on duty, how will your school react? (如果在你當值的時候，有學生發生了事時，學校會有什麼反應？)

Interviewee: The school may ask whether the teacher saw what had happened or not. If the teacher didn’t see what had happened, the school may ask where the teacher was and how the teacher would handle it if they had been on the spot. In fact, all they want to ask is what had happened. (可能他會問老師當時的情況，問你看不看到，如果你看不到的話，你當時在哪；如果你看到，你當時是怎樣處理。其實也是問一些...事情發生的經過。)

Interviewer: So what is your pressure? (那麼對你的壓力是什麼？)

Interviewee: My pressure comes from the moment when... something happened out of the area I was present... Um... I am afraid that I can’t properly explain why I was not in that particular area. (壓力是我怕在我自
Third, the school would like to quantify teachers’ work. The informants perceived that the school emphasized the quantity rather than the quality of teachers’ work. For example, the school administrators expected the teachers to organize a lot of activities for the students each year and the administrators marked down the expected number of activities in the school annual plan. As a result, the teachers had to meet the quantity, resulting in the lack of time and energy to consider the quality of the activities. Thus, the informants felt meaningless, discouraged, and disappointed, because they wanted to organize good activities to facilitate students’ growth rather than meet the school requirement.

This is not a humane school. It quantifies most of our work rather than appreciate our devotion… I don’t want to quantify my work according to a piece rate. Instead, I want to pursue the goal of quality (a slight quiver in her voice). However, for most of the time, the school just looks at the piece rate. That’s it. Sometimes, I feel so discouraged… to meet the certain quantity… I don’t know how to say… Um… That feeling is like… For instance, when we organize an activity, the school administrator may say, ‘Okay, you will manage four of them and I will hold two of them.’ You know, sometimes we can’t just organize an activity at once. Maybe I have my own claims. I think that the activity should be related to what the students are learning. There’s
no reason to take them to the suburban area for a walk if it is irrelevant to their learning. I just think that... other subjects can also go for a walk like that. It’s not necessary for my subject class to do so, right? Anyway… I am disappointed that the school needs me to organize four activities. The school does not show an understanding for my opinion. (這一間學校不算太人性化，很多事件都是安量計，其實有時候不會真的…看…其實你付出的…我不是想計件數，我想追求質素 (聲音有點抖)。可能…又是很多時候會覺得…其實他可能只計件數，就是這樣。有時候會很灰心，是…呃…做足一定的量…我不知怎樣去說…呃…那種感覺是，我舉個例，例如搞一個活動，可能他會和你說：「喂，你負責 4 個，我負責 2 個。」那麼…但是，有時候不是說要搞就可以搞，可能我有要求，就是要跟他學的東西要有關才可以搞，如果沒有關的話，無原無故帶他們去山野走一圈，我覺得…不是的，如果只是走一圈就不一定要我的科，其他科也可以，是不是？即會…但他們要搞 4 個活動出來，那麼你會很灰心的，即為什麼你不會體諒我所說的話。)

[Isabella]

To some extent, the quantification of teachers’ work may be caused by education reforms since the 1990s. For example, the reform initiatives like school-based management, school self-evaluation and external evaluation tended to require schools and teachers to set and meet different targets in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the schools. The detail analysis about the effects of education reforms in Hong Kong will be presented in the next chapter.

Some of the informants interpreted the centralization of power and strong level of control as the sign of the school’s misunderstanding of and distrust on the
teachers. Since they thought the school did not sympathize with and trust in them, they felt meaningless to put much effort to work in their schools.

I think it is because of a lack of trust, I will somehow feel…Ummm…where is the understanding? Sometimes I am willing to contribute a lot and this is because I think that the school knows we are putting in a hard effort and will give us certain flexibility in some conditions. The fact is, if I knew the school has such an understanding, I would be willing to contribute more. But if the understanding is not there, I will probably think, uh…it is not worth it. I always ask myself a question, ‘What’s the difference in fulfilling full marks, 80 marks and 50 marks?’ Actually, sometimes I just feel there’s no room for us to perform. (我覺得可能因為缺少了一份信任，你會覺得…呃…沒有了體諒。有時你願意付出很多東西，這是因為你覺得他知道你做得是辛苦的、某些位他會鬆給你的，如果我明白他有一份體諒時，我會願意付出更多。但當缺少了這份信任時，我可能會…呃…想…即會覺得自己做的事是不值得的，你會經常問自己一個問題：「你做 100 分、做 80 分或 50 分的分別在哪？」其實…有時覺得好像沒有一個空間去做。)

[Mandy]

School I

School I was a band one aided school and Ken worked there. According to Ken, the school decisions were ultimately made by the principal and the SEC, but the school offered different channels for the teachers to express their opinions and communicate with the school administrators. For example, first, the school
principal welcomed the teachers to talk with him anytime. Ken said the principal always opened his door and walked around the campus, so it was easy for the teachers to access and talk to him formally and informally. Second, the SEC would propose some school-wide measures or policies to all teachers before making any decisions. The teachers would be divided into several groups and then discuss their opinions about the measures or policies. The school would collect all the opinions and then make the final decision based on the opinions. The SEC would also explain to the teachers why they chose some of the opinions but not others and why the final decision was made like that.

To make a decision on an administrative level, the principal, vice-principals and SGMs usually propose a framework after internal discussion. If the measure is about major concerns like 3-year planning, they often propose the framework on the staff development day after which the teachers would further handle and discuss the matter according to different subject teams and panels. All opinions are recorded, collected and organized for further discussion… after discussion, they follow up with emails… as I remember, they did reply for one or two times before. (一些校政上的事務，通常都會是校長、副校長等高層在開會時先討論出一個 framework，之後會 propose 出來，或者如果是一些 major concern，例如三年 planning 等等，那些會在他們有了 framework 之後，在 staff development day 的時候交出來，之後他們會分不同的科組，自己 panel 裡面再去處理和商量，有什麼意見，可以寫下來，之後，他們會收集，收集完之後會整理一個出來。其實都
Moreover, the school would assign duties to teachers according to teachers’ interests. The principal, team leaders, and subject panel heads would ask about teachers’ work preferences. They would assign the work to teachers according to their preferences. If the teachers disagreed with the assigned work, they could talk to the principal. The principal would take it into consideration. He would attempt to reassign the work. If the reassignment was impossible, he would explain the reasons to the teachers.

Interviewer: I would like to ask, when you came to this school, did you choose your guidance work or did the school assign it to you? (我想問，你入來這間學校做的時候，是你自己決定要做 guidance 那部分，或是由學校 assign 給你的？)

Interviewee: The school did ask about my preference at that time and told me that there was a lack of manpower in the guidance team and discipline team. I was asked to choose according to my interest, and so I decided to join the guidance team. (那時他有問的，他有問 guidance 和 discipline 都比較缺人，問我有興趣做哪一個，那我便選擇了 guidance。)

Interviewer: What if you didn’t want to do so… (如果你不喜歡做的時候可以…)
Interviewee: We can probably address it but have to take the administrative arrangements into account. It doesn’t mean that we can just say I don’t want to do this and I want to do that next year. It doesn’t mean that it can be arranged at once. But after you have addressed it, the school may consider it. Maybe two years later, it can be arranged by shifting human resources. If it might not be possible to arrange you to another team, the school must explain the reasons why. Usually it’s a matter of staffing arrangement. (你可以提出，但都要顧及行政的安排，未必說我明年不想做這個了，我想做那個，是未必一定得的，但可能你提出了後，他可能會 concern，可能兩年之後，人手調配 OK 了，便可以調得到。如未必可以安排調你去另一組別的時候，一定會解釋的，但通常都是人手安排的問題。)

[Ken]

In this school, the teachers enjoyed their freedom and autonomy in teaching.

In fact, it can be said that the degree of our freedom is considerably high. As a teacher, we are pretty free to manage our time in the classroom teaching.

(其實可以說，我們的自由度都算大的，對於老師，譬如在教室裡面的教學，那個時節和自由度都大的。)

[Ken]

It does not mean the school did not supervise and regulate teachers’ work. However, the supervision and regulation were acceptable by the teachers. For example, the school required each teacher to meet a target about students’
academic performance. The target was collaboratively set by the principal and individual teachers.

Realistically, we have to be concerned about academic performance; especially when there are some public exam classes. There’s no strict supervision over the teachers in our school policy, but our school hopes that we can keep the academic performance on a certain level. For those public exam classes, our principal helps us set a target during appraisal. That target may be 1% of pass rate and a certain percentage above a certain grade. No matter what the percentages are, they are all discussed by the principal and us. However, when we talk with the principal, we know that he has a projected indicator in his mind. He often set a bit higher than the actual rate. As he said, our aim should be set higher than the actual rate and everything can be handled and rearranged later. (但很現實地，都要很顧及一些成績，譬如有些是公開班。我們學校的政策上，不會處處監察著老師，但希望成績等等，要有的，要 keep 到水準 … 那些公開考試班，校長在做 appraisal 的時候，會幫你 set target，那 target 可能是 1%合格，多少%在這個 grade 以上，會訂了的 … 在訂這個 target 的時候，校長都會和我們商量的，但和他討論的時候，他都有一個預計的指標，但校長通常都會 set 高少少，他說個 aim 要比實際的高一些，之後再去處理，再去做。) [Ken]

According to Ken, the target was not difficult to meet. If some teachers did not meet the target, they did not get any punishment from the school administrators.
Thus, they did not have much pressure to meet the targets and thus they could pay attention to planning their lessons to help students learn better. As Ken said,

Interviewee: I don’t really focus on the target but on the methods that can help my students learn better. This is my main focus at work. (當中實際上在工作的時候，我不會常常看著這指標來做，只不過是看看用什麼方法，能夠盡量去幫他們學習得更好，主要是這樣看的。)

Interviewer: I want to ask if you fail to meet those targets, would you get into any trouble, or have you heard of such cases? (我想問，你會不會見過，或者可能試過 meet 不到這些 target 的時候，會不會有些什麼麻煩呢？)

Interviewee: I can’t think of any trouble at the moment and haven’t heard of any similar case from other subject teams. It is because… maybe I should say it in this way… there is no big difference in our target for each year. I heard from my colleague that we would be asked to find out the source of the problem and the solution for next year during appraisal if we fall behind our target. (麻煩，我想暫時又沒有，甚至乎其他科組都好像沒有，因為其實…應該這樣說，每一年都不會偏差太遠的，就算可能低了少少都好，聽我同事說，做 appraisal 的時候，他會問，可能要你 find out 到底問題出在哪裡，和明年會怎樣。實際上有後果的，暫時沒有聽過。)

[Ken]

Moreover, the principal expected all teachers to use a particular teaching approach, which was called knowledge building. The teacher appraisal was a
means to check whether the teachers used the approach to teach or not. Teacher appraisal in this school had two parts. The first part was implemented to set goals at the beginning of the school year.

In the first meeting at the beginning of the school year, the school helps us set our target, like which areas we plan to focus on our teaching strategy. Usually we set two targets. If we have public exam classes, one of the targets must be focused on public exam. The other one may be set by us according to the needs of our classes. A discussion about how to implement the preliminary plan is then followed. Besides, the principal clearly clarifies three major concerns and the school’s teaching style in the first meeting. Since our school uses knowledge building as the framework of teaching strategy, the principal often brings up the components of knowledge building in the appraisal at the beginning of each school year.

(第一次會在開學頭的時候, 幫你訂立那一年的 target, 譬如那一年你打算你的教學策略會 focus 在哪些 area, 通常會 set 兩個的, 其實都差不多, 因為如果你有公開考試班, 其中一個一定是公開考試, 另外那些, 可能是你再看看自己的班, 然後再自己訂。之後便會談一談初步計劃, 怎樣去做到這些。另外, 校長亦會 clarify 到底那一年的三個 major concerns 是什麼, 和學校所用的教學, 因為我們學校的教學策略, 是用一個 knowledge building 的 background 去做的, 所以他每年都會提一提, 要用那個 knowledge building, 它的 component 是些什麼, 他會說一說這些, 主要在開學頭時的 appraisal 會做這些。)

[Ken]
Another part was implemented at the end of the school year. This part was to evaluate to what extent the teachers met the goals.

By the end of the school year, we have an appraisal. We have to tell the school whether those two targets set at the beginning of the school year are fulfilled or not and what strategies we adopted to implement the targets. The school may probably ask us what methods of knowledge building we applied in teaching and what have we done throughout the whole school year. If we have a public exam class, the school may ask us the performance of our students in the public exam. Generally, these are the main areas they want to know. (在学期完結的時候，appraisal 在學期末的時候，會檢討你那兩個target 有沒有實行到？當中做過些什麼策略去實行這兩個target？你要和他說這些，之後，他可能會問你在這一年裡，你運用了knowledge building裡的什麼方法去教學？做過些什麼？他會問的。如果有公開考試班，他會問你公開考試的情況，等等，基本上主要是這些。)

[Ken]

Basically, the appraisal was interview-based. This means the principal might ask the teachers what they did in that year, whether they met the goals, how they applied the knowledge building approach, and the like. The teachers did not need to give any evidence to prove what they had said. Therefore, Ken was satisfied with this appraisal because he felt he was trusted by the school.

I don’t feel stressful in this appraisal… so I think this kind of appraisal is somehow a way to show certain trust upon the teachers. This is because we
just have to tell the school what we have done during the conversation. We don’t really have to show the evidence or record of our work. Those are unnecessary in the appraisal. And this shows the school has trust in the teachers. For me, this kind of appraisal is a carefree one because I don’t have to prepare and write a lot of things. It’s simply an oral report on what I have done this year. (我又不覺得有壓力，正正是這，所以…我覺得這個 appraisal 方法，某程度上都是對老師的一種信任，因為只是口講，和他談的時候，他問你做過些什麼，其實你只需說出來，不需要 show 到你曾經做過些什麼，要你交 record 這些，其實是不需要的，所以這都是一種對老師的信任，所以這個 appraisal 的方法，在於我來說，是沒有壓力的，因為不需要準備些什麼，或不需要寫很多什麼，純粹是 report 我今年做過些什麼而已。)

[Ken]

In addition, Ken said the school attempted to arrange more time and space for teachers to teach. For example, the school would assign less “non-instructional work” to the teachers who needed to teach more classes and lessons. On the other hand, the teachers who taught less classes and lessons would be assigned to do more “non-instructional work”. Moreover, the school attempted to simplify the procedure of “non-instructional work” in order to increase the time for instructional work.

We don’t have much administrative work. In my own case, I don’t have to handle a lot of administrative work. This is because our school culture encourages concise and succinct report style. It’s not necessary to report
everything in detail. In short, our school is not demanding in this area, so we have more space to prepare for the instructional work. (我們沒有太多行政工作，以我自己為例不算有太多行政工作要處理，因為我們學校的文化是這樣的…即要求比較簡潔一些，不需要每件事都寫得很詳盡，總之，OK 便可以了。學校在這方面的要求不大，所以有很多空間可以做教學工作。)

[Ken]

**School Administrative practices**

From the above descriptions, three differences in school administrative practices between the “unhappy” and “happy schools” are identified. The school administrative practices included school supervision, mode of communication, trust and consideration.

**Intensity and goal of supervision**

It is found that both schools E and I had different means to supervise and regulate teachers’ work, but the supervision of School E tended to be stronger than that of School I. Indeed, it is found that strong school regulation was common among the “unhappy schools” rather than the “happy schools”.

It is believed that strong school supervision may lead to teachers’ negative emotions, such as dissatisfaction (Ingersoll, 2003). However, the relationship between school supervision and teachers’ emotional experiences may be much more complex than that. In this study, some informants wanted more school
supervision in the “unhappy schools”, especially for “instructional work”, upon them. For example, according to Eva who worked at school F, the school administrators valued “non-instructional work” rather than “instructional work”. Thus, the school tightly supervised and regulated “non-instructional work” but loosely supervised and regulated “instructional work”. This practice made Eva to constantly sacrifice her time and energy for “non-instructional work”, such as organizing school events and ECAs, rather than teaching. For example,

When organizing large-scale events, I won’t arrange any tests. This is because even if I can successfully arrange a test, I wouldn’t have time to mark the test papers… It is necessary for us to put other works before instructional work. (例如要搞大型活動的時候，基本上我不會安排測驗，因為你測了驗，但你又改不到… 但這些就是教學工作，這些必定要停，你不做其他的工作先是不行的。)

She disliked this situation because she wanted to pay more attention to teaching rather than to organize events. Moreover, Eva thought that the school should pay more attention to supervising teachers’ “instructional work” rather than “non-instructional work”, in order to improve the teaching quality of the school. Similarly, Sally, who worked in School G, thought that the school should supervise and regulate teachers’ work more closely. She thought that a weak supervision over “instructional work” might lead to lazy teachers who “are less enthusiastic in preparing lessons” (沒有那麼積極備課或上堂), so she hoped “the school could keep a close eye on instructional work and make sure teachers are
working on the right track” (學校可以監管多些，那些同事真正做他應該做的工作)，in order to maximize the benefits of students.

Accordingly, the teachers may be concerned about the goal of school supervision rather than the supervision per se. That means if the teachers interpret that school supervision is unrelated to or even destructive to teaching and learning quality, they may be dissatisfied with the school administration. This finding can be explained by the teachers’ purposes of teaching. As mentioned before, the informants aspired to make a difference in students’ lives and hence chose to be teachers. Thus, when they interpreted that the school supervision might minimize students’ benefit, they might be dissatisfied. In other words, the effects of school supervision may be influenced by the interpretation of whether the supervision is beneficial to teaching and learning.

Mode of communication

The mode of communication between school administrators and teachers may influence teachers’ interpretations of values of school decisions and measures. It is identified that the mode of communication of the “unhappy schools” tended to be relatively closed. In School E, the decision-making power was centralized at the principal and the SEC. There was limited consultation and communication between the administrators and the teachers during the decision-making process. It also seemed that the teachers in this school had few channels to express their opinions to the administrators. The informants from other “unhappy schools” also commented that they did have insufficient communications with the school administrators when a school decision was made.
Some of them said sometimes the schools might consult them, but the consultation was just about minor issues such as the agreement on arranging certain marks for academic transcript and the vote for exemplary students. Thus, most of them were excluded from the decision-making process of the schools.

To some extent, the closed communication may limit the teachers’ comprehension of the values behind the school decisions and measures. Thus, even though the school decisions and measures may intend to foster students’ academic, social, and moral development, the teachers may not understand or identify with the intention or the positive effects of the measures. For example, the measures, like the Ninth Lesson and supplementary lesson, in School E, may have been decided based on the initiative to facilitate students to do homework and to study, but the informants perceived the measures to be unconducive to students’ learning but only increased their workload to the point that they were dissatisfied with it. This perception occurred because the school administrators might insufficiently share their concerns about the measure with the teachers or discuss with the teachers how to improve the effectiveness of the measures. As a result, the teachers perceived that they were forced into implementing something that was ineffective in teaching and learning. The following quotation extracted from an informant of School F may give supports to the argument.

I think the reason why the teachers don’t want to implement those measures is because they don’t see the concepts. Yup, for example, when we organize some programs or incentive schemes, we really make a bloody effort… Those programs and schemes may generate many benefits to the students, however, we have to buy a lot of materials like art papers and awards; we
have to call for a lot of meetings; we have to do a lot of promotions… blah blah blah… So… seemingly, I can feel that the values behinds those programs and schemes are very important… But the school… may… just state the value in a sentence or two in some of the documents… or somehow briefly mention the purpose during the teacher meeting. Temporarily, we conclude that the school only set these targets mainly for promotion and admission… So, why should we still implement those measures just for promotion and student admission? (我覺得有時老師為什麼會不想做那樣東西，因為他看不到理念。是的，例如你搞 program、什麼獎勵計劃，真的做到隻狗…但其實獎勵計劃背後可能有很多好…對學生很有益處，但因為你單是做這個計劃，可能你要買紙、買獎、開會、什麼什麼什麼什麼，又要宣傳，好多事件的…那麼…呃…於是乎我覺得背後的理念很重要 … 學校會 … 可能會是…呃…理念 … 可能文件上會打兩句目的，…呃…可能是在開老師會議的時候輕輕提過目的 … 但我們暫時…可能是學校整體…呃…set 出來的目標…真實的目標。為什麼我們要做這些東西，就是為了 promotion 和收生。)

This quotation reflects that teachers may simply interpret school decisions and measures as an involvement in administrative values such as school promotion rather than instructional values. However, as the informant expressed, the school decisions and measures may have instructional values, but many teachers may not see those because of an insufficient communication between the administrators and teachers. This is because the closed communication may inefficiently and ineffectively deliver the values to the teachers from the administrators.
On the other hand, the “happy schools” tended to practice an open mode of communication between school administrators and teachers. In School I, although the school decisions and measures were also made by the principal and the SEC, its school administrators would deliberately consult and discuss with the teachers when they made decisions. After discussing with the teachers, the administrators would reply and answer teachers’ questions about the decisions and measures. It seems that School I provided enough opportunities for the administrators and the teachers to equally communicate with each other. In another “happy school”, School C, it was easy for the teachers to access and talk to the school administrators in the school. Moreover, the school administrators welcomed the teachers’ voices towards school decisions and policies. The administrators would respond the teachers’ opinions whether they accepted. The following quotation from an informant of the school shows these.

In fact, we just sit very close to our management team. If we have any questions, we can just knock on their doors and they can give us prompt solutions. To me, the current school culture is… giving us a chance to discuss and speak up. We can freely express our opinion from bottom to top whenever a concept is thrown from top-down. Although they might not be able to offer a 100% change according to the opinion of each colleague, they would at least give each colleague a response or a reason for whether the change can be made or not. I guess they have already tried their best to make the decision-making process more transparent. Sometimes… perhaps… they need to think about the fundamental principles before discussing with us. We might not be able to take part in their series of thinking process, but
afterwards, changes will be brought to the table and we can all get involved in the discussion. (其實我們的管理層和我們…坐很近的，即使有事要問他，他們都能很快地給我們一些方案。現在的學校的文化是 … 給我的感覺是有商有量，是有出聲的權利，是可以商量。通常一個大概念是由上面掉出來，然後當同事知道了後，有意見就會和他們說，未必真的能因應每個同事的意見而 100%地改的，但最少…我覺得他會回應，即回應同事的意見，他做不做到也會給你一個原因。我猜他們已經盡量…盡量做到把透明度提高。當然有時候…可能真的是…有些…basic 的原則他要先想好，這樣才能說你知，但那個想的過程未必可以全民參與，而可能想完後再修改，修改的過程大家就可以參與。)

[Crystal]

The open mode of communication may allow the administrators and teachers to achieve a consensus on the decisions and measures. In addition, the communication may empower teachers to learn about the instructional values, in addition to non-instructional values, behind the decisions and measures. For instance, although School I emphasized students’ examination performance, Ken saw the emphasis was a means to keep the students to study at a high standard rather than to spend time on any “non-instructional” value like school promotion.

Accordingly, the mode of communication may affect the teachers’ understanding or identification of the values of school decisions and measures. It may be easy for the teachers to misunderstand the values or be less able to identify with the “instructional” values, if the communication between them and the school administrators is closed. In other words, even though the school decisions and measures are decided to facilitate students’ academic, social, or
moral development by the school administrators, the teachers may misinterpret
the intention or value to be only servicing administrative purposes, especially
when the positive effects of the decisions and measures to teaching and learning is
not apparent but teachers’ workload is increased.

The misunderstanding or misidentification has an important implication to
teachers’ emotions. In Chapter 4, it is noted that teachers tend to prefer to do
“instructional work” rather than “non-instructional work”, because they generally
view the former as work related to facilitating students’ academic, social and
moral growth but the latter do not. Therefore, if the teachers perceive the
decisions and measures do not have “instructional” values, they may define the
work as “non-instructional work”. When they misunderstand or misidentify the
values of the decisions and measures and define the related work as
“non-instructional”, they may feel meaningless and unworthy to carry them out.
At the same time, if the school administrators supervise and regulate them to do
the work, they may be dissatisfied with the supervision. This is because they may
think the school puts the “non-instructional work” on a higher priority than
“instructional work” and in turn harm teaching and learning. In this sense, the
mode of communication may also affect the teachers’ emotional experiences at
work through influencing their interpretation of school supervision in addition to
their interpretation of the values of school decisions and measures.

**Trust and consideration**

It is also found that the informants in “unhappy schools” rather than those in
“happy schools” tended to think that the school administrators did not trust them
and did not consider their difficulty in teaching. As described by the informants in School E, it is indicated that the administrators of School E may not consider teachers’ difficulties and feelings at work and not trust them, so the teachers felt frustrated and disappointed. On the other hand, as described by the informant in School I, the administrators of School I may show consideration and trust in the teachers, so the teacher felt more positive at work. To some extent, the administrative trust and consideration may relate to the mode of communication and the school’s supervision.

The informants from School E perceived the school to be untrusting and inconsiderate towards the teachers. One reason is that the informants thought the school administrators were not willing to listen to their wishes and difficulties at work. For example, even though the informants were overloaded or they did not have enough time to do “instructional work”, they could not find any room to tell the administrators, as the administrators tended to force the teachers to do more and more. Therefore, the teachers mentioned that they were frustrated and disappointed because they thought the school did not consider and was indifferent to their difficulties and feelings at work. Similar situations were found in another “unhappy school”, School J as a band one aided school in which Rex worked. The school also set high target on students’ academic performance for teachers to meet. In order to ensure the teachers met the target, the school implemented a strong inspection. If the school noted that the students’ academic performance did not match the target, the school would investigate who the students were and who taught the students. Moreover, Rex said the school administrators always inspected teachers’ marking and observed teachers’ lessons. Rex said many teachers in the school were discontented with the situations and some teachers
tried to talk to the school administrators, but the school administrators did not listen to the teachers’ voice and did not make any changes without any explanations. Therefore, Rex also perceived that the school did not trust and consider the teachers and he did not really enjoy teaching there.

On the contrary, in the case of School I, the informant perceived that the school administrators trusted the teachers, because he said the school provided them with autonomy and did not supervise and regulate their work too strictly. One example is the interview-based teacher appraisal used by the school. Ken interpreted that the interview-based teacher appraisal showed the administrators’ trust in the teachers, because the administrators appraised the teachers only based on what the teachers said during the interview. To some extent, the trust also was reflected by the freedom and autonomy of teachers at the school. Moreover, the school administrators might also be willing to listen to the teachers. The teachers might be able to talk to them about their difficulties at work. The administrators might attempt to help the teachers solve any difficulties as much as possible. If the administrators were unable to help the teachers, they would tell them the reasons. Thus, the teachers might feel more positively because they might know that the school administrators understood their problems and attempted to help them solve the problems. Therefore, Ken was satisfied and glad to work there. Similar to School I, School H, a band three aided school, would assign work to teachers in terms of their interests. The school welcomed the teachers to find and talk to the administrators. An informant of this school said, “As long as the principal is in his room, we are welcomed to knock at his door and talk to him anytime” (隨時都可以拍門找校長談。只要校長在，拍拍門就可以和他談) [Peter]. Moreover, the principal was also considerate about teachers’ workload. If
the teachers had to teach more lessons and classes, the teachers would have less “non-instructional work” and vice versa. Therefore, the school administration’s method of operation did not lead to too much negative emotional experiences within the informant.

To some extent, perceived mistrust may also create pressure on teachers. This is reflected by the case of School E. We saw that although the informants said there might not be real consequences to the teachers if the teachers did not arrange supplementary lessons and did not monitor students to behave well at recess and lunch times, some of the informants were still afraid of handling the duties. This is because they were afraid of being perceived as lazy or incompetent by the administrators. The bad impression may affect how the administrators evaluate their overall performances. For the informants who were contract teachers, it was really a pressure because they may get fired if the administrators thought they were lazy or incompetent. Nevertheless, why did the informants have this thought? A possible reason is that they might think that the administrators did not trust the teachers so that they would blame the teachers who did not meet the requirements. Although the blame may be imagined by the teachers, this imagination may create stress and anxiety to the teachers.

**Banding effect**

Hong Kong secondary schools have been divided into three bandings. Band one is the best and most prestigious schools, while band three is the underperforming schools. Some people believe school banding is a factor affecting teachers’ emotions (Tsang, 2014a). For instance, Pang (2004) found that
banding was a significant predictor of teachers’ job satisfaction and commitment in Hong Kong, because a school with a better banding tended to have students whose academic and non-academic performances were good and disciplinary problems were less serious. Teaching these students may give a higher sense of achievement to the teachers, because it may be easier for the teachers to teach (Dinham & Scott, 2000). Nevertheless, the findings in this study provide an alternative explanation to the banding effect to teachers’ emotions.

It is suggested that schools with a good banding may have looser supervisions over teachers’ work which may give the teachers a sense of being trusted by the school administrators. The reason is that the students of the schools may be already motivated to learn and are obedient to teachers so the school administrators may not demand the teachers to have a constant watch over the students so much. The following quotation extracted from the interview with Emma, who had worked in schools with different bandings, may help illustrate this point. In the following quotation, Emma compared her work experience in a band three school with a band two school.

I finally understand the huge difference among school bandings because I have previous teaching experience in a school with lower banding. Now I am teaching at a school in the top rank of band two… actually I think that… the main concern for a school to be lenient lies in its students-oriented policy. In my previous teaching environment, their academic foundation of the students was low. When I asked them to read the textbook aloud, one of the students mixed up the colour pale yellow with pale red. Therefore I asked the student, ‘Have you ever used a dictation before?’ He answered a ‘No’ immediately.
In contrast, the students in my current school have extensive extracurricular reading… they also have better autonomy and discipline in learning, so the school is not demanding when it comes to checking homework. I think the students can hand in all their work in less than a week. And this is impossible in my previous school. (我終於明白教過程度差的學校…那個大分別，雖然這間也不是很好，但也是叫 band 2 頭 … 我其實也覺得…呃…學校之所以寬鬆了是因為學生的原因，這是很大的原因。以前那些學生入來的時間，他們的底是很差，叫他朗讀課文是…淺黃色，他居然讀淺紅色，我問他：「你小學有沒有默過書？」「沒有。」他是會這樣答我。但現在的同學仔他們的課外閱讀量是很多 … 他們的自學性和自律性都會好些，所以學校對於 check 簿或…都不強求，覺得他們是…想不到一個星期就可以把全有東西都交出來 …但以前是不可能。)

[Emma]

On the contrary, schools with a low banding may regulate teachers to do more, because the schools may want to encourage the teachers to push the students, who tend to be lacking in motivation to study and learn. Nevertheless, the teachers may think the measures as too demanding or unrealistic for them and the students. Therefore, they may think they are forced to do a lot but the result may not be as good as it should be. As Jack illustrated as follows,

What I think is, the increase in homework doesn’t really matter, but the school… has to be considerate… Does the school really know that? I believe if we don’t assign any homework to the students, they might probably become lazy. However, if we assign this and that homework for every single
subject, they would actually have tons of homework. Once there’s only increase but no decrease in homework, the students would not have spare time for what they want to do or develop. For example, the students need to complete six newspaper cuttings, five book reports and countless dictations in one school term… they need to learn some new vocabularies and at the same time revise some old ones… in every lesson, they need to have one particular dictation and one unseen dictation. Do they really need to have four dictations on each chapter? Even though marking one dictation doesn’t take me long, four dictations would then cost me some extra time. Do I need to spare some time in each lesson just for dictation and seriously put this into my lesson plan? And the curriculum is so tight… Should English lessons just focus on… non-stop grammar teaching and exercise practice? As a result, the students would become very familiar with those grammar exercises, but without oral skills. It’s debatable that… even there are oral lessons, are those enough? Can they really learn? Can they really remember the things that are useful to them? (我覺得你加東西是不緊要，但你…你要體諒…你明不明?我都相信你不給東西學生做，他們會懶惰，但你個個…即每一科你都給他少少東西做的時候，加起來其實他有很多東西要做，你要再加上去的時候，如果你只有加而沒有減的時候，學生完全沒有時間可以做自己的事或去發展其他方面的才能。例如英文…你叫他一個 term 做 6 份 newspaper cutting，每個學生做 5 個 book reports，但你又要默好多次 dictation…你要他識一些生字、溫一些生字，每課你是給他一次 dictation 加一編 unseen，但要不要每課都要默 4 次那麼多？雖然說改一次 dictation 好像很快，但我要和他默 4 次，我是不是要預一些上課的時間、每一課書我要預一些堂數來做這些事件？課程又趕… 但是不是所有的英文堂
Here we touch on a complicated issue. Low banding schools may attempt to facilitate students to learn by stronger supervision and regulation over teachers’ work, but the teachers may disagree with the measures although they may also want to improve students’ academic performance. To some extent, the conflict tended to exist in the “unhappy schools” in this study. As mentioned in the above sections, the mode of communication in the “unhappy schools” tends to be closed. This mode of communication might become a blockade to build consensus between the administrators and teachers and to make the teachers difficult to appreciate the values and intentions behind the supervision and measure. As a result, the teachers may misunderstand or misidentify the “instructional” values or benefits of the measures so that they may not be willing to carry out the measures.

Accordingly, is it correct to say that band one schools must be “happy schools” while band three schools must be “unhappy schools” because the students of band one schools tended to be much better than those of band three schools? I think the answer is no. This is because a band one school in this study, School J, exhibited the characteristics of administrative practices of “unhappy schools”. If we further investigate this case, we will find that this band one school was “unhappy” not because the students were not clever but because the school wanted to maintain its reputation. As a result, the school administrators demanded
and forced the teachers to meet different targets about students’ academic performance and inspected many aspects of teachers’ work, as mentioned in the previous section. In other words, the relationship between school banding, administrative practices, student quality, and teachers’ emotions may also be moderated by the ambition to improve or maintain school reputations.

**School type effect**

In Hong Kong, there have been three major types of secondary schools, including government, aided, and DSS. The main difference between the types of schools is the school governance. The government schools are directly managed by the Education Bureau; aided schools are financed by public funding, but are operated by religious or charitable bodies; DSS schools are the private schools that are not only financed by sponsoring bodies, but also subsidized or assisted by the government in the form of capital and premise grants. Some people think the difference may affect the administrative practices of the schools and thus the teachers’ emotional experiences at work (Lam & Yan, 2011). To some extent, this study may give some evidence to this argument.

Crystal and Olivia were two informants who respectively worked in government, aided, and DSS schools in the past few years. According to their experiences, the DSS schools may give the teachers more autonomy and power to influence school decision-making process than the government and aided schools.

The freedom in a DSS school is rather high because it doesn’t rely on government subsidy… that’s why it can be more flexible. Teachers working
in a DSS school can be more assertive. Sometimes … Um… teachers have
the right to speak up more. They are more assertive to fight for… something
like resources and policy making. (直資的自由度大很多。因為直資本身不
需要依靠政府很多的撥款 … 因此基本上它會靈活很多。老師...呃...可
以說的是...所謂的聲會大點。因為有時候...呃...老師...怎麼說...有多些
出聲的權利, 即他們敢於發聲 …例如在爭取資源方面、對於校政方面。)

Crystal

The freedom for teaching a subject is quite high in the DSS school I am
currently working at. Teachers have more flexibility to decide the lesson plan
according to their own progress. The school would like the teachers to meet
the targeted schedule but the teachers can freely tell the school they lag
behind the targeted schedule. However, the aided school in which I worked
before strictly complies with the targeted schedule. If our classes are not
smarter than others, we would be frequently asked, “Can we catch up with
the targeted schedule?” and received comments like, “Why can’t we catch up?
We have to speed up.” by the panel. Teachers may hear certain grumblings
from the school. (現在那間的 (a DSS school)...怎麼說...那個...科的自由
度是大的, 它會給你空間來跟你自己的進度來決定你的課程, 即會有多
一些空間。當然它會期望你能跟上，但你跟不上可以反映給上面知你跟不上。但之前那間 (an aided school)會嚴格些，即會...除了我教的中 5
那班脫離了其他 4 班之外, 那個 panel 會經常問我們：「能不能跟上進
度？」、「為什麼跟不上？要快點追上來。」會給你一些說話聲。)

Olivia
Similar findings were also found by Lam and Yan (2011). In their study, Lam and Yan found that the teachers working in DSS schools were more satisfied with their work than the teachers working in government schools and aided schools. The authors interpreted that the results may be related to the differences in school administrative practices. They commented that favorable school administration for teaching was more often present in DSS schools than government and aided schools.

They [DSS schools] have supportive teacher-related measures, such as having separate manpower for teaching and administrative duties, a special department for curriculum development, and minimal out-of-field teaching. Without the need to respond to changing policy direction from the education department, DSS usually give teachers more freedom and independence to use different teaching methods. Teachers can use methods which they believe are most suitable for students (Lam & Yan, 2011, p. 343).

The above quotations imply that DSS schools tend to be “happy schools” rather than government and aided schools, because the DSS schools tend to practice open mode of communication and loose school supervision. According to the quotations, a significant factor that shaped the school administrative practices may be the independence on the government subsidies. Since DSS schools do not receive many subsidies from the government, they tend to enjoy more freedom in school management and curriculum design in order to fit the students’ needs (Yung, 2006). In order to enhance the fitness of the operation of the school and curriculum to the students’ needs, the schools may distribute the power and
authority to teachers in making school decisions and measures, because teachers are the frontline workers who know the students best (Cheng, 1996). As a result, the teachers may understand the school decisions and measures much better and will not feel that they are being forced to do unnecessary work, because they may participate in decision-making process and even initiate the measures. Under this situation, they may feel positively at work.

On the contrary, when the schools receive government subsidy, the schools become more accountable to the government (Bray, 1999). The school administrators may be pressurized to operate the schools and design curriculum under the government guidance or framework. The administrators may also need to show the effectiveness of school management in order to convince the government to subsidize continuously. Therefore, the literature shows that school administrators in Hong Kong, especially those of aided schools, have to bureaucratically manage and monitor the school and the teachers to complete different tasks and duties in order to fulfill the requirements set by the government (Tse, 2005). As a result, the teachers may feel negatively to do the work, because they may interpret their work as just servicing the fulfillment of government requirement rather than helping students to learn and grow.

However, it is noted that the relationship between school type, administrative practices, and teachers’ emotions may not be necessarily like that. First, this study had insufficient cases from different types of schools to investigate and compare the difference on the administrative practices between the schools. Thus, it is possible that DSS schools may also employ closed mode of communication and strong supervision over teachers’ work which may lead to teachers’ developing negative emotions. For instance, one of interviewed teachers in the study
conducted by Choi and Tang (2009) expressed that when his secondary school changed from an aided to being a DSS school, the school administration changed. He said that the school forced and monitored the teachers to do more “non-instructional work” to promote the school than before. He said this condition dampened his commitment to the school and teaching. Similarly to the banding effect, in other words, the relationship between school type, administrative practices, and teachers’ emotions may be moderated by the ambition to promote or maintain school reputation in addition to the dependence or independence to the government.

Discussion

It is found that some schools’ informants were unhappier than other schools’ informants. This chapter finds that the possible reason is the different practices of school administration between the schools. To some extent, the findings presented here suggest if the school administration involves inappropriate school supervision (e.g. too strong; destructive to teaching and learning), closed communication between school administrators and teachers, and mistrust and indifference on teachers, it is possible for teachers to experience negative emotions at work. On the other hand, teachers may feel more positively if the school administration practices appropriate school supervision (e.g. constructive to teaching and learning), open mode of communication, and trust and consideration.

To some extent, the former set of administrative practices represents Weberian type of bureaucracy or what Hoy and Miskel (2012) call authoritarian
bureaucracy rather than the latter set. The administrative practices of closed mode of communication, mistrust and indifference, and appropriate supervision are inclined to echo to the characteristics of Weberian or authoritarian bureaucracy like centralization of authority and power, impersonality, and enforcement of rules and regulations. The centralization of authority and power may exclude many teachers from decision-making resulting in a closed mode of communication. Thus, the teachers may be asked to simply implement the decisions with limited understandings about the purposes or values behind each decision. According to the Marxist perspective (Apple, 1982, 1986; Braverman, 1974; Derber, 1982a; Harris, 1982; Mills, 1951), this separation of conception from execution may contribute to negative emotions, such as meaninglessness, powerlessness, and self-estrangement, because the teachers are forced to do work that is contradictory to their teaching purpose. However, the research findings imply that the work decided and designed by the school administrators might not be necessarily contradictory to the teaching purpose of the informants. In Chapter 4, we observed that the major teaching purpose of the informants was to facilitate students’ academic, social, and moral development. In this chapter, we noted that the school administrators may assign and regulate teachers to help implement some measures, like the Ninth Lesson in School E, which may be beneficial to students’ learning and development. Similarly, we also found in Chapter 4 that some informants disliked organizing ECAs, programs, and events for students, even though the ECAs, programs, and events may help to foster all-round development for students. These informants disliked implementing the measures and work because they perceived the measures and work as “non-instructional work” that may be destructive to teaching and learning. A possible reason why
they had this perception is that they misunderstood or misidentified the values of the measures and work due to the administrative practice of closed communication. Such closed communication is undesirable for the administrators to deliver the “instructional” values or intentions behind the measures and work to the teachers. Thus, it is possible for the teachers to only notice the “non-instructional” value behind the measures and work, especially when the measures and work increase their workload. Therefore, they may feel negatively at work. The research findings also imply that the negative emotions may be intensified, if the schools strongly supervises and regulates teachers’ work or if there are no rooms for the teachers to express their opinions and feelings to the school administrators. This is because the teachers may interpret this situation as the school being inconsiderate about their desire and interest in teaching or does not trust their ability to carry out the work.

On the contrary, the school administration practicing open mode of communication, trust and consideration, and appropriate supervision share the characteristics of what the literature calls “professional bureaucracy” (Hoy & Miskel, 2012), “distributed leadership” (Gronn, 2002), “transformational leadership” (Leithwood, 1992), “moral leadership” (Sergiovanni, 1992), and “sustainable leadership” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). In general, the characteristics of these practices emphasize the administrative practices of participatory decision-making, school democracy, teacher empowerment, and respect for and awareness of teachers’ values in teaching. In other words, this kind of school administration moves the school beyond bureaucracy and in turn promotes teachers’ positive emotional experiences at work. As discovered in this study, this kind of school administration tends to enhance the informants’ comprehension of
the purposes and values behind their work and school decision by encouraging teachers’ participation in decision-making and communication with school administrators. These measures tend to make teachers think that they are empowered, trusted and considered by the school administrators. As a result, they may feel satisfied, meaningful, self-worth, and other positive emotions at work.

To some extent, the findings correspond to Leithwood and Beatty’s (2008) study. They found that school administrative practices of development of shared visions and goals, support to teachers, collaborative process of decision-making, and awareness of teachers’ needs and desires would significantly increase teachers’ job satisfaction, commitment, motivation, morale, and self-efficacy, while decreasing teachers’ stress, anxiety, and burnout.

Accordingly, school administration may condition teachers’ emotional experiences at work by influencing teachers’ interpretation of their work and the school decision and measure. Although each of the administrative practices may have influence to the interpretation, it seems that the mode of communication may be more important than trust and consideration and school supervision. This is because the mode of communication may directly influence whether the teachers understand and identify the values behind their work and school decisions and measures. Moreover, the findings imply that the mode of communication may also influence the teachers’ interpretation of the school supervision and of being trusted and considered by school administrators. Therefore, educational leadership scholars highlight the importance of communication in school administration as follows.
Even though there may be some formal goals and tasks specified by some of the organizational authorities, not all followers or constituencies understand them and accept their meanings. Therefore a leader has to clarify the ambiguity and uncertainty to help constituencies to develop an organizational missions and goals. The process of goal development and clarification can contribute to motivating and influencing the constituencies … transform their needs, beliefs and values, encourage commitment and provide opportunities for them to experience the meaningfulness of the tasks (Cheng, 1996, p. 106)

The analyses on the effects of school banding and type suggest that school banding and school type may be factors affecting school administration and consequently teachers’ emotions. Good banding schools and DSS schools may have administrative practices that favor teachers’ positive emotions. Nevertheless, the relationship may be further mediated and moderated by other factors. The first is student quality. It is found that higher banding schools may be happier schools than lower banding schools because of better student quality. Since the students are clever in general, the school administrators may less frequently supervise teachers to teach or to monitor students’ progress. As a result, the teachers in this kind of schools may enjoy more freedom and autonomy which may give the teachers a sense that they are being trusted by the school administrators. Thus the teachers may feel better at work. The second factor is school dependence/independence. DSS schools may be happier schools because of its lack of dependence from government subsidies. This independence allows the school administrators to have more freedom to design and operate the schools to satisfy
the needs of students. The administrators may share some powers and authorities with the teachers to make decisions because the teachers may know better about the students’ needs in learning in order to promote the effectiveness and quality of schooling. Consequently, the teachers may be more able to understand and agree with values and intentions of their work and the school measures, because they may take part in the decision-making process. They may feel positive at work. The third is ambition to keep or promote school reputation. The findings also show that the ambition to promote or maintain school reputation may affect administrative practices and in turn teachers’ emotions. Whatever the banding and type a school belongs to, if the school administrators want to increase or keep a good school reputation, they may employ a more bureaucratic approach such as having a closed communication and strong supervision to administrate the schools and the teachers. As a result, the teachers may feel negatively at work. Nevertheless, the evidences of this study about relationships between school banding, school type, administrative practices, student quality, school independence, school ambition, and teachers’ emotional experiences are not enough, so it is worthwhile to have further studies on the relationships.
Chapter 6

Educational Reforms and Teachers’ Emotional Experiences

In the previous chapters, we witnessed that teachers’ emotional experiences at work may vary across career stages and schools with different administrative practices. Teachers in different career stages may have different characteristics (e.g. contract types, teaching experiences and social positions in schools) that condition their interpretation of their work resulting in different emotions and feelings. Similarly, variations in school administrative practices (e.g. the mode of communication, strength and goal of supervision, and trust and consideration) may also shape teachers’ interpretation of their work and in turn their emotions and feelings. To some extent, these findings suggest that teachers are heterogeneous groups of teachers; so are their emotional experiences at work. Nevertheless, as mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4, teachers in Hong Kong generally are unhappy and dissatisfied with their work. In other words, they may share similar emotional experiences at work, especially negative ones. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to show how the shared emotional experiences of teachers at work are conditioned by education reforms, which are considered as the most significant macro social force affecting teachers’ emotions (Mahony et al., 2004; Marshak, 1996; Saunders, 2013). The analysis presented in this chapter only focuses on the education reforms in Hong Kong from the 1980s, because the education reforms since that period of time in Hong Kong have been regarded as a “quality turn” in which many aspects of schooling and teaching have changed (Cheng, 2002; Sweeting, 2004). In order to effectively elaborate the analysis, this
chapter will first briefly describe the differences between the current and past teaching conditions. Then, it will illustrate and analyze two processes, including institutionalization of whole-person education and centralized decentralization of school education, which are caused by the educational reforms which affected teachers’ work and in turn emotional experiences.

**Current and past teaching conditions**

In Chapter 4, we saw that the informants were dissatisfied with their heavy workload. They said they had to work for 10 to 12 hours every day on average because of the heavy workload, especially the “non-instructional work”. Therefore, they generally did not have sufficient time to relax so they felt stressful and exhausted at work. One reason for the heavy workload was that they were responsible for many school teams and ECAs, which entailed a set of administrative work and duties (see Chapter 4). However, according to the mid- and late-career informants, this teaching condition was a recent phenomenon, taking place in the recent two to three decades.

Many mid- and late-career informants suggested that teachers’ workload was light in the past. They said that they did not have much “non-instructional work” and thus they could spend much time on “instructional work”. Some of them said that teachers just taught without any additional duties at that time. After school and during holidays, they would enjoy free time and leisure, if they did not need to meet students.

Talking about our workload in early days, our school was purely a place
focused on instructional work. We didn’t have special concern on students’
development. It’s really true. The records show that only the guidance team
existed from the beginning. Many other teams like moral education team and
counselling team did not exist in the past. I think there’s just … guidance
team that meets and punishes students. No other special teams … Nothing
else. (工作量上面，講到好初期，學校真係純教學的。純到真係冇咩需要
特別關顧到學生的發展的。真的不是騙你，你可以去查下，訓導有的，
真的一向都有的，但很多組別過往是沒有，德育組、輔導組以往是沒
有這些組的。我想只有 … 訓導處罰學生、見學生，即係沒有什麼特別
組別的，沒有什麼的。)

[Sam]

Back to the time when I first started my teaching career, I felt much more
comfortable. I could go home early right after school and enjoyed my long
holiday without any worry about work. At that time, we just had guidance
team. We didn’t have other teams like counselling team or other
extra-curricular activities. Guidance team was responsible in monitoring the
students. The structure was much simpler… Well… a lot less activities… a
lot less clubs… a lot less interest groups. (我剛出來教書的時候，真的舒服
很多，放學馬上就可以走，放長假真的是放長假，是不需要回來工作。
我們覺得那時候，我初初出來教的時候只有訓導處，其他的組別是沒有
的，即沒有輔導、沒有課外活動，沒有的。訓導處是用來管學生，架構
就是簡單很多。⋯呃⋯活動沒有那麼多 ⋯ 活動是少很多，學會也有，
不過沒有那麼多學會，即沒有那麼多興趣組。)

[Connie]
These quotations imply that the workload was not heavy at that time because of fewer school teams and committees. In fact, many observers have pointed out that the organizational structure of secondary schools in Hong Kong was much simpler before the mid-1980s. For example, Fung (1985), Ho (2008), Lee (1995), Leung (1999), and Yau-Lai (1982) respectively mentioned that Hong Kong secondary schools loosely organized and provided ECAs, career guidance services, and student counseling services because the schools did not have teams or committees to coordinate the work at that time. However, this condition has gradually changed since the call for the quality of education in the 1980s.

**Educational reforms for the quality of education**

In 1971, the Hong Kong government made compulsory and free education at primary level available for all pupils. In 1974, the government planned to extend compulsory and free education to junior secondary level by 1979. In order to achieve this target, the government had rapidly expanded secondary school places for all primary school graduates since the mid-1970s. In 1977, the government announced that there would be sufficient school places for all pupils at both primary and junior secondary levels by 1978. So nine years compulsory and free education was implemented from September 1978. Since then, the government became enthusiastic in promoting the quality of education from the 1980s (Cheng, 2002; Sweeting, 2004).

In fact, the enthusiasm to promote the quality of education was caused by the public criticism of the government educational planning which underscored
quantity rather than quality. This is clearly stated in a policy document entitled as *The Hong Kong Education System: Overall Review of the Hong Kong Education System* in 1981.

There was a general awareness in the community of the need to protect education standards in a period of rapid expansion, to which the government fully subscribed by taking specific measures to effect qualitative improvements wherever possible. A recurrent theme in the public criticism … was the subordination of quality to quantity in government educational planning (Hong Kong Government Secretariat, 1981, p. 111).

In response, the government had introduced different measures to change the school system to improve the quality of education since the 1980s (e.g. Education Commission, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992a, 1996, 1997). These measures to some extent induced two processes in the school education system, including institutionalization of whole-person education and centralized decentralization of school education, which changed the teaching condition and teachers’ work and in turn shaped teachers’ emotional experiences at work.

**Institutionalization of whole-person education**

Whole-person education means school education does not only center around teaching subject knowledge, but also developing other aspects of students, such as morality, social skills, and civic awareness. Whole-person education had not been emphasized in Hong Kong school education before 1980. As mentioned above,
guidance services, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance might be organized loosely in secondary schools in the past. Nevertheless, the loose organization became more institutionalized in secondary schools by a shared value among the public that it was important for school education to facilitate children’s intellectual, social, physical, psychological, and emotional development (Kennedy, 2005). To some extent, the shared value was progressively developed by many social and political problems and issues arising from the 1980s. The problems and issues motivated the public to require school education to enable children to attain all-round development. In response, the government became interested and enthusiastic in promoting whole-person education. We can see the government’s interest and enthusiasm in several policy documents. For example, the Education Commission (EC), an advisory body to the government on the overall development of education, published *School Education in Hong Kong: A Statement of Aims* in 1992 which stated the fundamental aim of school education as follows.

The fundamental aim of the school education service is to develop the potential of every individual child, so that our students become independent-minded and socially aware adults, equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead a full life and play a positive role in the social and economic development of the community (Education Commission, 1992b, p. 9)

Another document, *Review of Education System: Reform Proposals*, suggested school education should accomplish the following aim.
To enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes so that he/she is capable of life-long learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change; filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of their society, and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large (Education Commission, 2000b, p. 5)

Moreover, the Education Department (ED) and the EC respectively published several guidelines and reports to recommend how schools could facilitate students’ learning skills, vocational skills, ethical qualities, social and civic awareness, physical development, and aesthetic and cultural development through guidance work, moral education, sex education, civic education and ECAs during the 1980s to 1990s. To some extent, the government’s interest and enthusiasm reinforced the shared value on whole-person education and in turn its institutionalization. Nevertheless, I would like to say that the institutionalization of whole-person education is not a single process. It is comprised of different but interdependent sub-processes of institutionalization of guidance work, moral education, sex education, civic education, ECAs, and career guidance.
Guidance work, moral education, and sex education

The institutionalization of guidance work, moral education, and sex education was intended to address the social issues of delinquency and behavioral problems, suicide, and the lack of sex awareness among teenagers in the 1980s.

Student delinquency and behavioral problems inside and outside schools became more and more serious from 1980. According to Education Commission Report No. 4 (ECR4) (Education Commission, 1990), the most serious student problems in secondary schools were physical violence, stealing, and gambling during the 1980s. In addition to these behavioral problems, the press always reported cases that secondary students were involved in gang related activities, committed crime, and abused drug at the same time. Although statistics showed that incidents of student delinquency and behavioral problems had decreased during 1982 to 1989, the public was still very concerned about the issue (Lee, 1993). For example, there were over 40 editorials discussing the problems in the press during that period. After 1990, the numbers of student delinquency and behavioral problems had increased again (Lee, 1993). The student delinquency and behavioral problems raised public concern to the effect that schools needed to educate students with more sufficient guidance work and moral education.

Student suicide was another social issue that drew the public’s attention during the 1980s to the early 1990s. For example, a broadcasting program called Aspects of the 1980s (八十年代面面觀) organized by the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) discussed this issue respectively in 1981 (Ming Pao, 1981) and 1986 (Wen Wei Po, 1986). In fact, student suicide was a serious problem during that period of time. There were fourteen percent of students in Hong Kong who
planned to commit suicide in 1982 when they encountered difficulties (Ming Pao, 1982). In 1985, the press reported that sixty percent of primary and secondary students sought for help from the Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong (Sing Tao Jih Pao, 1985c). In 1992, from September to November, six students took their own lives (South China Morning Post, 1992). As a result, the public required school education to prevent and overcome the problem through implementing moral and life education and strengthening guidance and counseling work in schools.

In addition, many surveys had suggested that secondary students did not have correct outlooks on sex since the mid-1980s. For example, Sing Tao Jih Pao (1985b, 1985d, 1985e) reported three surveys which showed many secondary students held incorrect understandings about sex. For example, many of them agreed on sex before marriage, had tried to pay for sex, enjoyed watching erotic films, and made sex jokes. In 1987, newspapers reported different surveys which respectively suggested forty percent of secondary students had read pornography (Wah Kiu Yat Pao, 1987) and thirty percent of secondary students had sexual experiences (Ta Kung Pao, 1987). Moreover, there had been cases about teenage girls earning money with prostitution, reported in newspapers since 1986. All these news implied that sex education was not enough, so the public had asked for the government to promote sex education in schools.

In response to the social issues and problems, the ED published the *General Guidelines on Moral Education in Schools* (1981), the *Guidelines on Sex Education in Secondary Schools* (1986b), the *Guidelines on Sex Education in Schools* (1997b), and the *Guidance Work in Secondary Schools - a Suggested Guide for Principals and Teachers* (1986a). In the first three documents, the ED
provided guidelines to help schools to develop and implement moral and sex education. Generally, the guidelines encouraged schools to incorporate moral and sex education through formal curriculum such as Social Studies and Integrated Science and informal curriculum such as ECAs, and, more importantly, should foster students’ moral and sexual awareness through guidance work. In fact, the government seemed to believe guidance work as a panacea to solve the mentioned problems at that time. In the Guidance Work in Secondary Schools - a Suggested Guide for Principals and Teachers, the ED stated:

Pupils’ developmental, educational and personal problems become more and more visible, especially among adolescents in secondary schools … the public at large are concerned with the increase of disruptive behavior in the classroom, the lack of motivation towards school work as well as adjustment problems manifested by many pupils … the need to promote guidance work in school since most of pupils’ problems can be overcome, or even prevented, through prompt assistance and appropriate advice … initial intervention can be provided and pupils helped to maximize their own potential, acquire acceptable social skills, discriminate right from wrong, develop appropriate values … be better equipped for real life (Education Department, 1986a, pp. 1-2).

In order to effectively enhance guidance work in schools, the ED (1986a) suggested secondary schools develop a guidance team to coordinate, oversee, and implement programs, activities, policies, and counseling services to facilitate students’ academic, social, moral, and personal development and to prevent and
solve students’ social, behavioral and emotional problems. According to the suggested guide, the guidance team should be consisted of a team leader, a school social worker, and guidance teachers. The suggested guide also recommended other teaching staff, including all subject teachers, homeroom teachers, and discipline teachers, to provide supportive roles to guidance work through mutual referral, consultation, cooperation, and intervention in straightforward students’ problems inside classrooms. This approach was reinforced by the EC (1990), which referred this approach to whole-school approach in ECR4. Then, more and more secondary schools developed a guidance team and adopted the whole-school approach to guidance work on the basis of the suggested guide. It is noted that the ED (1997b) also recommended every secondary school to develop a sex education team, but not many schools did so. A possible reason is that many schools had already incorporated sex education into the guidance work, as the Guidelines on Sex Education in Secondary Schools suggested. Thus, the schools may choose to design and implement sex education programs and activities through the guidance team rather than developing a new team.

Civic education

The institutionalization of civic education in school education started from the mid-1980s. Before that time, civic education was not encouraged by the government and was loosely taught by individual schools in subjects like history and economic and public affairs (Morris, 1992b). Since the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 19 December 1984, the public became more aware of the necessity of civic education which could promote the next generations’ social, political and
civic awareness that may benefit the development of Hong Kong society. For example, an educationalist was quoted by a newspaper that he believed civic education would be contributive to the development of Hong Kong society in the long-run because it could establish students’ sense of civic duties and rights, social and political responsibilities and identities (The Standard, 1985). Therefore, in the mid-1980s, the public wanted the government to implement civic education in schools. This was reflected by a lot of news which addressed or discussed the function of civic education, the way to implement civic education, and the consequence of civic education at that time.

In response to the public concerns, the ED published the *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools* in 1985. In the introductory chapter of the guidelines, the ED admitted that civic education was one of the main goals of school education.

There is widespread agreement among teachers, parents and the public at large that one of the main goals of education is to develop the character of pupils and to foster their capacity for assuming a responsible role in society. It is also generally agreed that in preparing young people for full membership of the adult community, schools have a duty of development their pupil’s understanding of the community in which they live and the forces at work which shape it and which are fundamental to a democratic way of life. There is a special need at this particular time in Hong Kong’s social and political development for schools to renew their commitment to … the promotion of civic awareness and responsibility (Education Department, 1985, p. 1)
In the guidelines, the ED suggested schools implement civic education through formal and informal curriculum. Formal curriculum meant schools and teachers should integrate civic education into the common core of subjects, such as history and geography. Informal curriculum meant schools and teachers should arrange ECAs to socialize students to be citizens. In addition, the guidelines also recommended schools to adopt the whole-school approach of civic education. Accordingly, schools should build a civic education committee or team to coordinate and plan school-based civic education program and curriculum.

Although the government intended to promote civic education through the publication of the *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools*, the public generally was dissatisfied with the guidelines. For instance, *The Standard* (1985) reported that many educators criticized that the guidelines simply suggested civic education as a part of existing subjects rather than an independent subject. The educators thought this practice was ineffective to promote civic education in schools. Indeed, *South China Morning Post* (1986) reported that although 80 percent of secondary schools integrated civic education into existing subjects, it still was difficult for them to effectively teach civic education. Newspapers often reported surveys to show that the implementation of civic education might be ineffective at that period of time in terms of students’ inaccurate social, political, and civic knowledge, attitude, or behavior (e.g. *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, 1985a).

In order to overcome the weakness of civic education, the ED reviewed the guidelines and then published a new one in 1996. One difference of the new guidelines from the old guidelines was that the new one encouraged schools and teachers to design cross-curricular activities and programs for civic education aside 5% of their teaching time and to set specific period for the activities and
programs of civic education. In addition, the new guidelines suggested three implementation approaches for schools to choose, including:

(1) Permeation approach: the elements of civic education permeate every formal curricular and ECAs;

(2) Specific-subject approach: civic education is taught as a specific subject;

(3) Integrated-subject approach: civic education is designed with life education, social studies, moral education, and other similar subjects to form one of the component modules (Education Department, 1996, pp. 45-47).

Whichever the implementation approach listed above the schools chose, the new guidelines strongly encouraged every school to develop a civic education committee or team to plan and coordinate the arrangement and organization of the formal and informal activities and programs of civic education in the schools. It also recommended that civic education should closely collaborate with moral education in practice. In fact, all the informants’ schools incorporated civic education with moral education by forming a moral and civic education team rather than two separate teams (see Chapter 4). In addition, the new guidelines also suggested schools form a large committee to coordinate the work of guidance, moral and civic education, discipline, and ECAs in order to promote whole-person education more effectively. In practice, all the informants’ schools formed a school general/ affairs/ administrative committee to coordinate all the work (see Chapter 4).
ECAs

As we have seen, student problems were serious in the 1980s. In order to tackle the problems, the government encouraged schools to improve not only the provision of guidance service, moral education, sex education, and civic education, but also the provision of ECAs (Chow & Wong, 2006). This is because the government held the following belief about ECAs.

ECAs take care of the students’ different developmental needs such as their sense of moral values and attitudes, skills and creativity. Through their participation in ECA, students can learn to communicate, to cooperate with other people and in addition to enrich their life experiences … gain first-hand experience of programme planning and leadership, thus enabling themselves to discover and develop their potential (Education Department, 1997a, p. 1).

In order to enhance the provision of ECAs in schools, the government gave approval to every secondary school so that they could promote one teacher to be an ECA master, as a coordinator who was responsible for the arrangement and coordination of all ECAs in the school, in 1983. Moreover, the government provided five additional teachers in total to each government and aided secondary school to improve the provisions of ECAs along with remedial teaching and guidance services during 1982 to 1984.

At the early-1980s and before, ECAs were only referred to as recreational activities in schools, such as drama club and football team. Nevertheless, the types of ECAs had become more diverse since the mid-1980s. The reason was
that the government encouraged schools to provide moral education, sex education, guidance service, and civic education through ECAs or cross-curricular activities and programs (Education Department, 1981, 1985, 1986a, 1986b, 1996, 1997b). In 2000, the EC (2000a) also recommended secondary schools to provide different types of learning experiences to facilitate students’ all-round development through sports, ECAs, cross-curricular activities, community services, and work-related activities. The schools were also encouraged to comment and record students’ performance in the learning activities. These two recommendations were later translated into the measures of Other Learning Experience (OLE) and Student Learning Profile (SLP) in the NSS curriculum implemented in 2009.

As a result, schools had to organize different types of ECAs in the forms of recreational, cross-curricular, and learning activities. In order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of ECAs, some secondary schools formed ECA teams or a committee that oversaw ECAs in the late-1980s (Chow & Wong, 2006). According to Chow and Wong (2006), these schools tried to institutionalize the provision of ECAs by categorizing ECAs and then appointing teachers as advisors for each of them. To some extent, the institutionalization of ECAs further was reinforced by the ED in 1997, because of the publication of the *Guidelines on Extra-curricular Activities in Schools*. The guidelines recommended all schools form an ECA committee or team to coordinate the arrangement and coordination of all types of school activities. The guidelines also suggested schools assign teachers to be advisors to plan and take charge of relevant recreational, cross-curricular, or other learning activities in schools.
Career guidance

Comparing with other the described sub-processes of institutionalization, the institutionalization of career guidance had not been emphasized by the government. One possible reason was that career guidance had been regarded as a part of student guidance (Lee, 1995). However, the situation has changed since 2000. From that year, the government noted the importance of career guidance to secondary students. For example, in the *Learning for Life, Learning through Life: Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong*, the EC stated secondary education, specially senior secondary education, needed “to enable students to have a balanced and comprehensive learning experiences … to prepare them for employment, for learning and for life” (2000a, p. 32). The EC further suggested in this document that secondary school education should provide work-related experiences to prepare students for future employment. In 2001, the ED published a document entitled as *School Administration Guide*. In this document, the ED agreed that career guidance was necessary for secondary students’ development and recommended every secondary school to form a career guidance team to provide career guidance services.

Career guidance is an important area in the overall counseling and guidance for secondary students. Each aided secondary school should have a careers master or mistress in charge of a careers guidance team to be responsible for the provision of guidance on careers matters (Education Department, 2001, para. 3.7.4).
More recently, the Education Bureau (EDB) explicitly required secondary schools to offer career guidance to students in order to facilitate students’ whole-person development.

All secondary schools are required to enable students to “understand their own career/academic aspirations and develop positive attitudes towards work and learning” … career guidance has an important and indispensable role to play in the NSS curriculum. Through it students are prepared to make “informed further study and career choices” in their secondary schooling and connect/integrate their career/academic aspirations with/into whole-person development and life-long learning (Education Bureau, 2011, p. 1)

It is noted that although the government seemed not enthusiastic to institutionalize career guidance in secondary schools before 2000, the career guidance was progressively institutionalized among individual secondary schools since the 1980s. Studies showed that many secondary schools in the 1980s appointed a teacher to be career guidance master to help students plan their further study and career (Leung, 1999), although some of the schools put career guidance as a part of guidance and counseling services (Lee, 1995).

Impacts on teachers’ work

The institutionalization of whole-person education was inclined to normalize the provision of guidance and counseling, moral education, sex education, civic education, ECAs, and career guidance in school education. Hence, Hong Kong
secondary schools and teachers had to do extra work to enhance students’ all-round development in addition to classroom teaching. The institutionalization also encouraged schools to form different school teams or committees to coordinate and arrange work related to guidance and counseling, moral education, sex education, civic education, ECAs, and career guidance. As a result, teachers were divided into different teams or committees and shouldered the work and duties assigned by the teams or committees. In other words, this process created additional work for teachers in addition to teaching subject knowledge.

Some observers noted that the increase in the additional work may create work stress for teachers during the 1980s and 1990s (Sweeting, 2004). Nevertheless, the teachers did not feel very bad to do the work at that time, because they thought guidance work, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance were essential to education. For instance, the press often reported that educators and teachers urged the government to improve the curricula and resources of moral, civic, sex, and life education to cater for students’ all-round and whole-person development during that period of time. Another example comes from the interview data in the present study. When the late-career informants were asked why they had been willing to put efforts to arrange and organize programs and activities related to moral, life, sex and civic education, their answers were typically similar to the following expression.

Why am I so motivated to organize so many activities for my students? … Well… it’s not about high sounding, but I feel I need to do more in order to see the result. I regard this as something beneficial to the students and this motivates me a lot. If I do nothing, and every other teams do nothing, our
In other words, the late-career informants tended to view these work as “instructional work” which could facilitate students’ whole-person development, as Chapter 4 suggested. To some extent, the reason why these teachers could understand and identify the “instructional” values of the work may be related to their teaching experience. These teachers taught from the 1980s so they experienced the mentioned issues and problems in the education system and the society. These experiences may make them more aware of and be understanding of the educational values behind student guidance, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance in school education.

On the other hand, as we saw in Chapter 4, some teachers, especially those early- and mid-career teachers, may view the work related to guidance, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance as “non-instructional”. That means
they thought the work tended to relate to school administration rather than students’ growth and development. It seems that many Hong Kong teachers hold a similar or the same view. A significant evidence is that the Hong Kong Professional Teachers’ Union (HKPTU) (2010b, 2012) also categorizes the work related to teaching responsibilities like lesson preparation and classroom teaching as “instructional” but the work related to guidance, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance as “non-instructional”. This reflects that some teachers in Hong Kong nowadays may perceive that guidance, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance were less important than teaching.

Why do teachers nowadays have such an interpretation? A possible explanation is the curriculum’s examination orientation. The school education in Hong Kong is commonly known as examination-oriented (Berry, 2011; Biggs, 1996; Visiting panel, 1982). Under examination orientated education, only the formal curricula and syllabuses with examinations are valued by students, parents, teachers, and schools (Morris, 1992a). However, guidance, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance are organized as informal curricula without any examinations in Hong Kong. As a result, Hong Kong teachers may pay much attention to teaching the formal curricula and syllabuses rather than guidance, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance (Choi, 1999). Examination orientation may also be reinforced by school administration (Anagnostopoulos, 2003). For instance, many informants said their schools had polices or guidelines about teaching progress and homework and marking requirement for them to follow in order to keep the standard of students’ academic performance. Some of the schools may also require the informants to meet targets on students’ academic and examination performance as shown in Chapter 5. Consequently, teachers may
value the teaching responsibilities that are directly linked to examinations rather than other kinds of work. Moreover, the organization of activities and programs for guidance, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance involved much administrative work, such as meeting, planning, evaluation, and reporting, mentioned in Chapter 4. The administrative workload to some extent drained teachers’ time and energy to teach the formal curricula and syllabuses. Thus, they tended to define these work as “non-instructional”.

Accordingly, the institutionalization of whole-person education was inclined to increase Hong Kong teachers’ workload and in turn created some stresses on them from the 1980s. The increase in teachers’ workload may not be the fundamental reason why the teachers recently felt negatively at work. The fundamental reasons may be examination orientation and administrative workload attached to the work of whole-person education. Examination orientation may define and legitimize teaching the examined curricula and syllabuses as the most important duty in teaching while the rest of teachers’ work received less attention. Under such examination orientated approach, teachers may disregard the importance of organizing activities and programs to promote whole-person and all-around development of students since they are informal curricula without examinations. In addition, the administrative workload attached to the work of whole-person education may affect teachers’ time and energy for teaching the formal curricula and syllabuses, so the teachers may further treat the work as “non-instructional”.

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Centralized decentralization of school education

Centralized decentralization of school education is another process that affects teaching conditions and in turn teachers’ emotional experiences at work. This process has two components: school-based management and accountability measures. To some extent, this process has become a global phenomenon since the 1970s when the school-based management was regarded as a panacea to improve school effectiveness and quality under the notion of decentralization (Cheng, 1996). According to the notion of decentralization, the government should release more decision-making power to individual schools for school-based management, because schools will deliver the quality of educational services to students and parents more efficiently and cost-effectively if they can enjoy greater autonomy from the government (Cheng, 1996). On the other hand, school decentralization, and school-based management in particular, may encourage the government to hold schools more accountable because the government may be worried about schools performing poorly if they are free from any control (Ball, 1994). Accordingly, school decentralization may entail centralization through accountability measures. This process or phenomenon of education reforms is referred to as centralized decentralization (Watkins, 1993).

The centralized decentralization of school education in Hong Kong started from the publication of *The School Management Initiative: Setting the Framework for Quality in Hong Kong Schools (SMI document)* by the Education and Manpower Branch (EMB) and the ED in 1991. The aim of the *SMI document* was to decentralize the centralized authority from the government to schools to improve the quality of school education by introducing a school-based
management framework (Chau, 2006). In the policy document, 18 recommendations were given to decentralize authority to individual schools. Leung (2003) points out that these 18 recommendations are centered around two main themes, including financial deployment and school management structure.

- Financial deployment: In order to delegate autonomy to schools, the *SMI document* proposed that schools should have greater financial flexibility and discretion. For examples:
  - Schools were provided a block grant and they had authority and flexibility to use it for their own needs, except spending on teacher salary (recommendation 11).
  - Schools were given the right to use savings from up to 5% of teacher salary for staff and non-staff purpose (recommendation 12).
  - Schools also enjoyed greater flexibility to tap resources off of non-government funding, such as permitting schools to charge *Tong Fai* (tuition fee) to all students up to a reasonable amount (recommendation 13).

- School management structure: The *SMI document* proposed to restructure school management structure because it criticized the existing management structure of schools to be inadequate. This included the lack of clear roles and responsibilities between sponsoring body, school administrators and teachers, the lack of formal decision-making structure and process, and the absence of performance measures. The document expressed its concern over
the inadequate management structure as a disadvantage for school-based management because the management structure did not effectively held schools accountable for their performance, especially the use of the block grant. Therefore, the document recommended measures to formalize school management structure in an attempt to hold schools accountable to the government and the public for their performance. For instance:

- Each school set up a SMC, which should include principal, teachers and parents as the members, to prepare a formal constitution that clearly stated school missions, roles and responsibilities of school administrators, and management practices (recommendations 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10).

- Schools were also required to prepare annual school plan that stated the schools’ periodical goals, the ways for achieving those goals, and the formal means of evaluating the achievement (recommendation 18).

- Schools also needed to publish a school profile to show data on the school’s circumstances and performance to the government and other stakeholders. (recommendation 17)

- School had to develop a staff appraisal system (recommendation 9).

Although the government had planned to have all schools to join the SMI, only one-third of primary and secondary schools did join up until 1999 (Pang, 2002). This is because many schools perceived that joining the SMI meant they enjoyed limited financial authority and autonomy, but they had to do more extra duties, such as preparing school plans and school profile (Wong, 1995b). In order to improve the SMI, the EC (1997) reviewed the SMI document and proposed a new
framework of School Based Management (SBM) in the spirit of SMI in the
*Education Commission Report No. 7 (ECR7).* In the *ECR7*, the EC recognized the
inflexibilities of SMI, so it recommended giving schools greater management and
funding flexibility for schools to practice SBM. For example, the block grant was
extended and the retention of savings was not to be more than one year’s
provision in the block grant for the purposes of school management and
development, staff development, and student activities was allowed.

On the other hand, the EC (1997, p. 24) attempted to hold schools more
accountable because “they were given greater autonomy in the use of resources”. To enhance the accountability, the *ECR7* introduced accountability measures and
the accountability measures were reinforced by latter policy documents as
follows.

- Similar to the *SMI document*, the *ECR7* required schools to form a SMC to
develop formal procedures for setting school goals and monitoring and
evaluating the progress to the goals. The *ECR7* recommended schools
establish a SEC to facilitate effective and efficient school management under
SMC.

- Schools should develop formal procedures for staff appraisal. In order to help
schools to develop the procedures, the EMB proposed a framework of staff
appraisal in 2003. According to the framework, schools should appraise
teachers’ teaching and teaching-related duties, non-teaching duties, and
professional and personal competence through different means, including
teacher self-appraisal, lesson observation, inspection of schemes of work/
lesson planning/ marking of exercise and examination papers, teacher
portfolios (e.g. scholarly writing, action research, logs of professional development activities), stakeholder surveys, record of non-teaching duties, students’ academic achievement and progress, record of students’ award and punishment, daily observation, and formal/informal interviews and discussion.

- Schools should include teachers, parents, and alumni to participate in school decision-making process. The Advisory Committee on School-based Management (ACSBM) (2000) endorsed this recommendation by requiring schools to include parents, teachers, alumni, and representatives from the community as SMC members.

- Schools should produce documents such as school plans, profile, and school reports to outline the long-term goals, priority areas, specific targets for implementation, evaluate progress of work, and improvement and development targets for the coming years. The documents should be published to the public or distributed to parents.

- The ECR7 proposed to develop quality indicators to help schools evaluate and monitor their own performance and improvement through self-evaluation and external quality assurance. These recommendations were supported by the ACSBM (2000). In order to facilitate the implement of self-evaluation and external quality assurance, the government developed performance indicators in 1998 and revised the indicators respectively in 2000 and 2008 (see Figure 6.1) (Education Bureau, 2008a; Education Department, 2002a, 2002b). Since the publication of the performance indicators, the government pushed self-improvement of schools by the introduction of the school development and accountability framework, which asked all schools to
conduct school self-evaluation (SSE) every year complemented by external school review (ESR) every four years, in 2003 (Education Bureau, 2008b).

- All schools in Hong Kong must implement the SBM in 2000.

Accordingly, SMI/ SBM aimed to delegate the autonomy and authority, especially the discretion to use resources; on the one hand, it tended to increase the government’s control over the schools through accountability measures on the other. Therefore, scholars have claimed that SMI/ SBM centralizes school education through decentralization, i.e., centralized decentralization (Leung, 2003).

Figure 6.1: Performance indicators framework

Source: Performance indicators for Hong Kong schools 2008: With evidence of performance for secondary, primary and special schools (Education Bureau, 2008a, p. 3).
Impacts on teachers’ work

The government’s intention of SMI/ SBM was to improve the quality of school education through decentralization of school management, especially the delegation of financial authority. At the same time, the government tried to prevent schools from abusing the delegated authority through the introduction of accountability measures. Despite the good intentions, it seems that the centralized decentralization has the following unintended consequences to teachers’ work and emotions in Hong Kong.

The first is intensification of teachers’ work, especially administrative work. SMI/ SBM requires schools to prepare a lot of documents, such as school annual plans, school annual reports, and school profiles to hold schools accountable to all stakeholders for the quality of education. To some extent, the preparation of these documents is directly linked to a lot of administrative work. For example, when a school prepares a school annual plan, the SMC first needs to set some major concerns for that year. Then, all the subject departments and school teams are asked to decide their specific goals for that year and to plan strategies to meet the goals and in turn the major concerns. They are also required to suggest how to evaluate the strategies and what the evaluation criteria are. Thus, all teachers in the school have to participate in different meetings to design the school annual plan. At the end of the school year, they have to give a written report to the SMC about their effectiveness, strengths, and weaknesses in achieving the goals and major concerns. In the report, they also need to do reflections about their past performance and give recommendations to improve their performance in the next year. Thus, they also need to take part in different meetings for the annual report.
Throughout the year, the subject departments and school teams and committees need arrange formal meetings to review and monitor the progress of their overall performance. They also need to evaluate the programs and events they implement. They have to keep and file the agenda and minutes of the formal meetings and the evaluation results, because all these are the information used to prepare the annual report. According to the informants, doing these tasks is time consuming and drained their energy. For instance:

We need to write reports and plans. In fact, we really spend a lot of time writing these. For instance, an annual report doesn’t just take us a few hours of writing by the end of the school term, but it’s a matter of the whole school term. We have to do evaluation after each activity, such as spreading questionnaires to and collecting the opinion from the students, teachers and parents. All data collected and all evaluation materials should be kept well as supporting documents in the reports. Another example is the parents’ day. We need to record the parents’ opinions, like what they think about the arrangements and how they want to improve them. We can’t just make up a report. It is such a time consuming and tiring work. (你要寫report、寫plan，其實你真的花很多時間去寫的。例如你寫annual report不是到學期尾花幾個小時去寫，是整個學年、是全年中你每次做完一個活動都要先做好檢討，例如派問卷問下學生、老師和家長的意見，覺得好不好，所有收回來的data和做好的檢討都要keep好，因為你寫report時要有證據support，例如家長日，家長的意見是怎樣怎樣怎樣，可能覺得安排不太好，他們想怎樣改善，你自己要寫下來記下，即你不可以憑空。真的花時間，而
To some extent, the schools and teachers have to take the paperwork and documentation seriously, because these kinds of administrative work might provide evidences about the school’s effectiveness and thus might influence the results of SSE and ESR.

Since there’s external school review, we have had a lot more superficial work, namely, documentary and administrative work. Whenever it comes to the review period, the ESR team from the government will come over to our school and check the school performance in recent years. We have to document what we have done, so as to prove the outcomes of our school. We can’t skip these documentary works. We are forced to do these documentary works. (自從有自評和外評後，表面性的工作多了很多，即文件性和行政性的工作多很多。例如一到外評，會有一些 ESR 的隊來學校看，即政府派隊伍來看你學校過去幾年的 performance，所以你做過的東西都要 documented 好，他們來的時候給他們看，從而證明你學校過去做了什麼，有什麼成效，因此文件性的東西你要做足，這逼著你自己做這些文件性的工作。）

Accordingly, centralized decentralization of school education may create much administrative work for the teachers resulting in the reduction of teachers’ time and energy for teaching. Therefore, as Chapter 4 showed, the teachers may be
dissatisfied with the teaching condition.

The second unintended consequence is what Choi (2005) calls goal displacement. It means that the goal of teachers’ work is generally transformed from an educational one to an administrative one by SMI/ SBM and accountability framework measures. As the above discussion implied, after the implementation of SMI/ SBM, most of teachers’ work have linked with performance indicators under the accountability framework. For example, the intensified administrative work by SMI/ SBM, such as preparation of school annual plans and reports, is inclined to relate to the three performance indicators of school management, including planning, implementation, and evaluation. Moreover, some of the “instructional work”, such as guidance work and ECAs, may also be alienated from educational goals, because the work may be regarded as a means to satisfy the performance indicators in the domains of student support and school ethics and student performance. For example,

EBD has four domains in reviewing a school… the fourth domain is about teachers. The categories of teacher performance, guidance, extra-curricular activity and civil education altogether compose the support on students’ growth. That is to say, the more extra-curricular activities we organized, the better we can prove we provide good support for students’ growth. We can make it… because we have set up a lot of huge goals. Organizing just one or two activities is considered to be insufficient in achieving huge goals. (EDB 有 4 個 domains 會評估學校 … 第四 domains 就是我們的範疇，我們的範疇加上訓導、課外活動和公民教育，叫學生成長支援。如果你搞的活
To some extent, the above quotation implies that the organization of the activities and programs to facilitate students’ all-round development might just service to meet the performance indicators in the domain of student support and school ethos (see Figure 6.1). In addition, during ESR periods, teaching may become subordinate to administrative work. For example, Eva expressed:

External school review! I hate it! During that particular period, basically, I don’t have any time to prepare lessons or arrange dictations and tests. I can’t do anything related to my instructional work, and I have to give way to the external school review. (外評!十分痛恨! 那段時間，基本沒時間和精神去備課、安排默書、小測，什麼都不會做，這些都是教學工作，但這些必須要停。)

She had to stop the “instructional work” because first she had to find out all the documents about her department in the past few years for ESR team’s evaluation, including planning, evaluation reports, minutes, students’ homework, and lesson plans; second the ESR team might interview her to understand the situation of the schools which means she had to spend time preparing the answers; third she might prepare a lesson as “a show” for ESR team’s observation.
In addition to fulfill the performance indicators, some schools may treat the implementation of activities and programs for whole-person development and students’ achievements in the activities as the selling point to attract parents and students rather than as opportunities to educate.

If a school… needs to promote student admission, it usually makes up banners showing how great the academic results and the extra-curricular activities are. It’s important to market the clubs at school, emphasizing what awards are attained by certain clubs and sport teams. If a school emphasizes too much on this, it would probably pay more attention to push its students to get more awards. Yet, how do we get more awards? The answer is to push the students to train endlessly and take part in an overwhelming amount of activities, so as to aim high for good result which is helpful in building school image and promoting student admission. (如果一間學校…除了 show banner 是關於成績之外，要吸引學生入學其實都是…一定會 sell 課外活動、有什麼學會，這一樣是很重要，一定會說你知什麼學會是經常得獎、有什麼體育是經常得獎，如果它越是做多這方面的事，它越要谷學生拿到這些獎。但怎樣才可以拿很多獎？就是要狂參加活動或狂訓練，他們才會有這樣的成績出來，這對於建立學校的形象和招生是有幫助。)

[Emma]

It is suggested that this situation may become worse when the government introduced the policy of school closure that was intended to close the schools that could not recruit enough students due to the decline in student population in 2003. The policy of school closure have since spread to secondary schools in 2009,
because the secondary school student population would decrease nearly 30% in total from that year to 2016 (Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, 2010a). In order to survive, it is only sensible for secondary schools to become pragmatic and forcefully produce good performance in order to attract parents and students (Choi, 2005).

Since all the mentioned work have become more tied to school administrative purposes, such as school evaluation and promotion, rather than educational purposes, many teachers may regard them as “non-instructional work” rather than “instructional work”, as Chapter 4 showed. Leung and Chan (2001) and Cheung and Kan (2009) also respectively showed that many Hong Kong teachers, as a result of SMI/ SBM perceived that most work of teachers have turned in favor of school management and administration rather than students’ learning and personal growth. Moreover, since the work may affect school survival, the school administrators might be more concerned about the work. Thus, they may exercise more supervision and regulation over these “non-instructional work” rather than “instructional work”. Consequently, as seen in Chapter 5, the teachers may perceive that schools did not value “instructional work” and forced them to do “non-instructional work”, so they may feel unhappy, meaningless and powerless to do the work.

Discussion

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, many social and political problems and issues happened in Hong Kong society. These problems and issues to some extent raised the public concerns about the function and quality of school education. In
response to the public concerns, the government implemented many measures and initiatives to enhance students’ intellectual, social, moral, civic, physical, and aesthetic development and growth through formal and informal curriculum. These measures and initiatives may induce the institutionalization of whole-person education. Although this process may create additional work for teachers, this study suggests that the teachers may not feel negatively about it in the 1980s and 1990s. This is because the teachers at that time may have been able to identify the importance and necessity of these works in education. However, it seems that Hong Kong teachers nowadays disvalue this kind of work and regard the work as “non-instructional work”. One explanation is that the work is organized as informal curricula that were subordinate to the formal examined subjects in the Hong Kong education system that is dominated by examination orientation. In other words, an underpinning reason for the teachers’ negative feelings toward the work of guidance, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance may be examination orientation that affected teachers to disvalue the work as the work is less related to examinations. Moreover, the implementations of guidance, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance may involve a lot of administrative work that drains teachers’ time and energy to teach and prepare students for examination. Therefore, the disapproval of the work related to guidance, moral and civic education, ECAs, and career guidance may be reinforced. It is noted that the administrative work may not be purely caused by the institutionalization of whole-person education, but perhaps largely contributed by the centralized decentralization of school education.

Centralized decentralization of school education has been another process that affects and conditions teachers’ work and emotional experiences since the
1990s. This process involves two components: school-based management and accountability measures. In Hong Kong, the initiatives of SMI/ SBM and accountability measures are intended to improve quality education and school effectiveness. However, as Fink (2003) indicated that most education policies may have undesirable unintended consequences, even though the original intention was good. SMI/ SBM and accountability measures in Hong Kong are not an exception (Choi, 2005). This chapter shows that the implementation of SMI/ SBM and accountability measures in Hong Kong at least have two unintended consequences: intensification of teachers’ administrative work and goal displacement. To some extent, the two unintended consequences are closely related. Since the administrative work is intensified, teachers have to spend more time on doing the work that is less related to teaching. As a result, teachers may interpret most of their work as alienated from educational goals, aligned only with administrative goals. Thus, they may view most of their work as “non-instructional”. Moreover, the accountability measures might further transform the educational goal of teachers’ work to an administrative one. For example, organizing ECAs and guidance services may serve to fulfill the performance indicators in order to pass SSE and ESR rather than to facilitate students’ social, moral, and civic development. Consequently, it is possible for them to define the “instructional work” as “non-instructional work”.

The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that the educational reforms in Hong Kong from 1980s created the institutionalization of whole-person education and the centralized decentralization of school education. These two processes are the social forces that intensifies teachers’ work and transforms the educational goal of teaching to administrative goal. In addition, examination
orientated approach may also lead to teachers valuing the teaching responsibilities related to students’ examination performance more so than other areas of development. As a result, all these social forces structurally shape teachers to view most of their work as “non-instructional work”, even when the work have “instructional” value in nature. As such, the social forces may in turn condition teachers’ emotional experiences at work, especially the negative ones, because the teachers perceive what they do as having little or no relevance to students’ learning and growth.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

In recent years, teaching in Hong Kong seems to have become a less rewarding occupation. More and more Hong Kong teachers are reported as stressful, exhausted, dissatisfied, unhappy, and burnt out (Chan, 2011; Choi & Tang, 2009; Lau et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2007; Tang & Yeung, 1999; Yeung & Liu, 2007). It is noted that negative emotions may not only affect teachers’ well-being, but also teaching effectiveness and quality (Day & Qing, 2009; Sutton, 2005). Thus, it is necessary to investigate the phenomenon of teachers’ emotional experiences at work in Hong Kong. Since a large number of teachers in Hong Kong have been found to be unhappy, their emotional experiences should go behind individual and psychological factors and become a social issue. Thus, this research studies Hong Kong teachers’ emotional experiences at work from a sociological perspective.

Similar to what other researchers have indicated (e.g. Lee et al., 2007; Yeung & Liu, 2007), this research identifies that heavy workload is a reason why teachers feel negatively at work, but heavy workload is not the underlying reason. The underlying reason is the teachers’ interpretation of success and failure in fulfilling their major teaching purpose, which attempts to make a difference in students’ lives. The interpretation of success in fulfilling the teaching purpose would arouse positive emotions in them, but the interpretation of failure in fulfilling the teaching purpose would arouse negative emotions in them. The findings further indicate that most of the teachers feel negatively at work because
they perceive most of their work as unhelpful and even prevents them from achieving the teaching purpose. They refer the work as “non-instructional work”. However, a close examination of the “non-instructional work” surprisingly reveals that most of the “non-instructional work” are “instructional” or at least have “instructional” components in nature. In other words, the teachers may not comprehensively understand the meanings of their work. This is because there are social constraints, including career stages, school administration, and education reforms, structurally affecting their interpretation of the work.

It is noted that the above described phenomena indicated by the research involve a sociological mechanism of teachers’ emotions that have not been well documented. In order to identify the mechanism, I will give an overall theoretical discussion about the previous three chapters in the concluding chapter. After re-examining all the chapters simultaneously, I find that teacher self-concept and power relation are two concepts emerged repetitively in the findings. Thus, the theoretical discussion will cover two concepts. After the theoretical discussion, I will respectively address the implications of the research and suggestions for further studies.

**Theoretical discussion**

**Teacher self-concept**

One of the major findings of the present study is that teachers’ emotional experiences at work are affected by the success and failure in fulfilling the major
teaching purpose, i.e., making a difference in students’ lives. The teaching purpose matters because it relates to the teacher self-concept. First, the teaching purpose represents the meaning teachers give to teaching (Lortie, 1975). According to the research findings and those of previous studies (Connell, 1985; Hansen, 1998; Lortie, 1975; Nias, 1999; Tin, Hean, & Leng, 1996; Woods, 1999), teaching means making a difference in students’ lives rather than a labor for social reputation, status, or a wage from teachers’ perspective. Since the commitment to the meaning of teaching, the teachers generally define themselves as the persons who are responsible in maximizing students’ well-beings, foster students’ whole-personal development and growth, or give positive influences to students’ lives (Day, 2011; Lasky, 2005; Maclure, 1993; Zembylas, 2003b). Thus, the research results show that teachers generally commit to students and aspire to nurture students’ academic, social, psychological, and moral growth. This is because successfully facilitating students to growth can verify the positive self-concepts like good, moral, or competent teachers (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Day, 2011; Lasky, 2005; Maclure, 1993).

To some extent, the teacher self-concept comprised of the teaching purpose is like what Higgins (1987) calls ideal self. This is because the teaching purpose suggests a state which the teachers expect to reach. Sociological literature has illustrated that reaching the ideal self will create a positive affective state to social actors (Burke & Stets, 2009; Higgins, 1987; MacKinnon, 1994; Turner, 1999, 2007). Therefore, fulfilling the teaching propose will arouse positive emotions such as unhappiness, satisfaction, and self-fulfillment in teachers, because the fulfillment of the teaching purpose signifies the teachers as good teachers as the
ideal self, as implied by the present study and other existing studies (O’Connor, 2008; Schutz et al., 2009; Sutton, 2005; van Veen et al., 2005).

Although the teachers attempt to fulfill the teaching purpose and in turn verify the positive teacher self-concept (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Maclure, 1993), they may not perceive what they do at work help them to do so. The findings suggest that they categorize their work into “instructional work” and “non-instructional work”. For them, “instructional work” means education, but “non-instructional work” means school administration and management. The study further shows that the teachers tend to view their work as dominated by “non-instructional work” instead of “instructional work”. In other words, they perceive they spend a lot of time and energy on purposeless and unworthy work but they cannot reject doing the work. Two possible consequences may happen to the teachers in this situation. First, they may see themselves as immoral or incompetent teachers who fail to foster students’ development and growth effectively (Farouk, 2012; Kelchtermans, 1996, 2011; Lee et al., 2013; Nias, 1999; Woods, 1999). The negative self-concept will arouse negative emotional experiences like guilt, shame, frustration, and depression (Farouk, 2012; Hargreaves, 1994; Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006; Kelchtermans, 1996, 2011; Nias, 1999; Woods, 1999). Second, they may feel meaninglessness, powerlessness, dissatisfaction, estrangement, and alienation toward the work or working condition, because they may attribute the cause of failure in the fulfillment of the teaching purpose to the nature of their work or working condition rather than to themselves. When the external attribution is made, the cause of the failure is detached from the self. Therefore, Turner (1999, 2006, 2007, 2011) has argued that social actors always use the strategy of protecting their self-concept when
they face threatening conditions to the self. In fact, the data implies that most of the teachers complaint about their work, working condition, school administration, or education reforms which make them difficult to care for students’ learning and growth instead of about themselves. Thus, most of them express the negative feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, self-estrangement, alienation, and the like at work.

However, as we have noted above, most of the “non-instructional work”, such as student guidance and career guidance service, organization of ECAs, and moral and civic education, mentioned by the teachers should be “instructional” or at least have “instructional” components in nature. In addition, if we read the news or research reports produced by the HKPTU (2012), we will discover that the HKPTU sometimes categorize these kinds of work as “non-instructional”. In other words, the teachers may actually do the work related to the teaching purpose, but they misidentify the whole meaning of the work resulting in a negative self-concept which arouses negative emotional experiences at work. Nevertheless, why do the teachers misidentify the meanings of their work? It is believed that there should be a structural force affecting the teachers’ interpretation of their work and then shaping their emotional experiences at work.

Some researchers may suggest the structural force is career or life cycle of teachers (Choi & Tang, 2009, 2011; Huberman, 1989; Sikes, 1985), because career or life cycle structures the challenges in teaching and the maturation of teachers. This further conditions teachers’ perspective on work (Kelchtermans, 2005). First, in different phases of teaching career, teachers will face different challenges, such as the lack of effective skills to educate students for beginning teachers, the difficulty in getting promotion for mid-career teachers, and
retirement for the late-career teachers (Day, 1999; Huberman, 1989, 1993; Sikes, 1985). The challenges may influence how the teachers value their work. For example, lack of effective skills to educate students may make the early-career teachers to pay more attentions to classroom teaching in order to improve the teaching effectiveness, while the difficulty in getting promotion may make the mid-career teachers aspire to take up administrative work because it may increase their chance to get promotions (Lortie, 1975; Sikes, 1985). Nevertheless, the research findings do not totally support the proposition. As Chapter 4 implies, although the Hong Kong teachers in different career stages may have different challenges, they share a major challenge of having heavy administrative workload which erode their time and energy to take care of students. Therefore, the teachers in different career stages tend to value the work directly linked to teaching and learning rather than school administration and management. That implies career stages may not differentiate the challenges for Hong Kong teachers from one career stage to another career stage so much. Nevertheless, the study still finds that the change in the interpretation of their work is related to the change in career stages. For example, the early-career teachers tend to view “instructional work” as the work directly related to teaching responsibilities only, while the late-career teachers tend to view them in all of their work, including the administrative duties, as “instructional work”. An explanation provided by the research on teacher career or life cycle is maturation. That means when teaching experiences increase, teachers do not only develop better skills in teaching but also a more sophisticated pedagogical knowledge and understanding (Sikes, 1985; Zhao, 2009). The pedagogical knowledge and understanding make the teachers in later career stages become more able to appreciate the “instructional” meanings of their work which
are perceived as “non-instructional” by the teachers in earlier career stages (Choi & Tang, 2011; Sikes, 1985). However, the proposition may not totally explain the research findings again. As Chapter 4 notes, in order to create a comfortable affective state to remain in the profession, mid-career teachers may change their definition of “non-instructional work” to reduce the negative emotions aroused by the failure in fulfilling the teaching purpose of making a difference in students’ lives. In other words, the change of the interpretation may not be caused by maturation. In addition, some studies have highlighted that the impacts of career teachers on teachers’ perspective on work are medicated and moderated by different factors like school administration, student composition, student-teacher relationship, teacher-teacher relationship, generation, and gender (Choi & Tang, 2009, 2011; Day, Stobart, Sammons, & Kington, 2006; Hargreaves, 2005; Kelchtermans, 2005). All these seem to say that career stages should not be the fundamental structural force affecting teaches’ interpretation of their work and teachers’ emotional experiences at work.

Power relation

If we take an in-depth analysis of the findings, we will find that the power relation between teachers and school administrators has emerged as the pivotal structural force from the data about the social constraints of career stages, school administration, and education reforms. It is not surprising to find the power relation as a power-over relation. That means the school administrators have power to influence the teaching condition and teachers’ work without any consideration of the desires and wishes of teachers in a school.
The power-over relation first is embodied by career stages. According to the study, the late-career teachers in Hong Kong tend to be the powerful actors in a school, because most of them are the school administrators. Some of the teachers participate in the SMC/IMC and SEC of the school which aim to oversee school operations, supervise the management of the school, formulate school policies, and make school-wide decisions. Some of them are appointed to the leader of guidance team, career guidance team, discipline team, moral and civic education team, or ECA team who can influence teachers’ work outside classrooms. They may also be the members of the general/affairs/administrative committee or the academic/curricular committee to coordinate and supervise teachers’ “instructional work” and “non-instructional work” in the school. On the other hand, the early- and mid-career teachers typically are subordinate to the late-career teachers, because many of them are just the front-line classroom teachers who are excluded from many school management and decision-making processes. Even though some of the mid-career teachers are subject panel heads, their power is only limited to their subject department rather than on school-wide issues. As a result, the late-career teachers as school administrators are more able to affect the work and condition of teachers in the school by deciding and designing school policies and measures. Since they make the school policies and measures, they are easier to realize the “instructional” value behind the work and condition caused by the policies and measures. However, the early- and mid-career teachers may find it harder to recognize the “instructional” value, especially when there are limited channels for them to communicate with the administrators and they do not see the positive impacts of policies and measures.
on students, because the two groups of teachers are excluded from the
decision-making processes.

To some extent, the power-over relation is legitimized by the structure of
school administration. Similar to many existing studies on school administration
(e.g. Bidwell, 1965; Firestone & Herriott, 1982; Herriott & Firestone, 1984;
Ingersoll, 2003; Tyler, 1988), the study also notes that the administrative structure
of the Hong Kong secondary schools can be more or less bureaucratic. The
schools are organized, managed, and administrated hierarchically. On the top of
the hierarchy, there is a SMC/IMC followed by a SEC. To some extent, the
decision-making power and authority of a school are centralized into the
SMC/IMC and SEC (Walker, 2004). As a result, the school administrators,
including the principal and a small number of teachers who are included in the
SMC/IMC and SEC have power over the rest of teachers in the school. Moreover,
Hong Kong secondary schools have a detailed division of labor. As Chapter 4
mentions, the schools are divided into different subject departments, school teams,
and committees in terms of functions. The departments, teams and committees are
further hierarchically ordered. For example, the general/affairs/administrative
committee is generally superior to the school teams of guidance, career guidance,
discipline, moral and civic education, and ECA; the academic/curricular
committee is generally superior to all subject departments. To some extent, the
findings also imply that the school administration may be impersonal, because
some teachers in the study report that their schools disregarded their opinions,
interests and wishes when school policies and measures were made. According to
the literature, such a school administrative structure will subordinate many
teachers to be under the few people regarded as administrators in the school
(Ingersoll, 2003; Tyler, 1988). Thus, the teachers, especially the early- and mid-career teachers, often feel powerless to reject the work they disvalue but are assigned by administrators. In addition, the literature has also illustrated that the power-over relation legitimatized by the bureaucratic structure tends to create distances between administrators and subordinates and in turn the lack of communication between them (Blau & Meyer, 1987; Collins, 1975; Merton, 1968; Scott, 1998; Watson, 2012). The lack of communication may make the subordinates difficult to comprehend the whole purpose and value of the assigned or forced work resulting in the feelings of dissatisfaction, frustration, meaninglessness, self-estrangement, and alienation (Blauner, 1964; Braverman, 1974; Erikson, 1990; Merton, 1968; Mills, 1951; Ollman, 1976; Schacht, 1971; Swain, 2012). The study finds similar results. As Chapter 5 demonstrates, some Hong Kong secondary schools tend to practice the closed mode of communication between the teachers and school administrators. This practice makes the communication become less effective and creates difficulties for the teachers to learn the “instructional” values behind the school policies, measures, and work which may be aimed to contribute to students’ learning and growth. Thus, the teachers typically are unwilling and dissatisfied to carry out the policies, measures, and work. At the same time, they may also feel meaningless, unworthy, powerless, and alienated, because they cannot reject to do the work, measures, and policies.

Finally, education reforms have strengthened the bureaucratic structure of school administration and in turn the power-over relation. As Chapter 6 illustrates, since the 1990s, the education reforms in Hong Kong have emphasized the measures of SMI/ SBM and accountability. To some extent, one of the aims of the measures is to redistribute the power among teachers and school administrators
through restructuring school administration (Tse, 2002). For example, the SMI/ SBM measure attempts to reduce the power of principals and increase the power of teachers in school management by increasing teacher involvement in school decision-making process through the regulation of setting up the SMC/ IMC in each school (Advisory Committee on School-based Management, 2000; Education and Manpower Branch & Education Department, 1991; Education Commission, 1997). Paradoxically, some researchers have indicated that the implication of SMI/ SBM does not lead to a redistribution of power, but it centralizes the power into the principal and a small number of teachers who participate in the SMC/ IMC (Cheung & Kan, 2009; Walker, 2004; Wong, 1995a, 1995b). This is because accountability measures, such as teacher appraisal, performance indicators, and school self-evaluation, force schools to become more bureaucratic oriented and provide means for the school administrators to gain control over teachers’ work (Leung, 2003; J. Y. H. Leung & Chan, 2001; Pang, 1997, 2002; Tse, 2005). Moreover, the accountability measures tend to intensify administrative workload for teachers and replace the educational goals of teachers’ work with the administrative goals (Ball, 2003; P. K. Choi, 2005). All these situations altogether affect teachers’ capability to identify the “instructional” value of the assigned or forced work.

Nevertheless, it is noted that no all of the power relation between teachers and school administrators are the power-over relation. As Chapter 5 shows, some schools tend to be less bureaucratic in practice although they have the bureaucratic outlook. For example, the schools are administrated and managed with the practices of an open mode of communication and trust and consideration instead of impersonality. The administrative practices tend to share the power of
school administrators with teachers in managing the school. For instance, the school administrators are willing to consult and discuss with teachers when they make any school decisions. If the teachers disagree with the decisions, they can freely negotiate with and talk to the administrators. In other words, the power relation existed in the schools are what Berger (2005) calls power-with relation characterized as the pattern of relation with dialogue, inclusion, negotiation, and shared power in decision-making. Therefore, the power-with relation can empower teachers to influence their work rather than passively receive external control over them, and to comprehend the whole meanings of their work since they engage in the decision-making process. Although the findings imply the power-with relation may be related to the administrative practices like open mode of communication and trust and consideration, there is a lack of information to show why some schools employ the administrative practices while other schools do not within the same context of education system. Therefore, further studies are required to explore the reasons.

Summary

Accordingly, the power relation between teachers and school administrators embedded in the social constraints of career stages, school administration, and education reforms is the fundamental structural force shaping teachers’ emotional experiences at work. This is because the power relation first determines the ability of teachers to control their labor process. The power-over relation tends to reduce the ability, but the power-with relation tends to enhance the ability. As the sociological research on education reforms, teachers’ work, and school
administration has showed, teachers who have a lack of control over labor process will suffer from negative emotions, because they often are forced to do many things which are contradictory to their teaching purpose (Apple, 1982, 1986; Ball, 2003; Dworkin, 2002; Hargreaves, 1994; Ingersoll, 2003; Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Kelchtermans, 2005; Smyth et al., 2000). More importantly, as the present study argues, the power relation matters because it conditions teachers’ interpretation of their work in addition to teachers’ ability to maintain control over the labor process. The power-over relation tends to constrain teachers to appreciate the “instructional” value of most of their work, so the teachers will see most of their work as inconsistent with their teaching purpose. In this situation, they may evaluate themselves negatively because they think they are unable to make a difference in students’ lives (negative self-concept), or they may blame the work or working condition resulting in a failure to achieve the teaching purpose. Thus, it is possible for the power-over relation to arouse teachers’ negative emotional experiences at work. On the contrary, the power-with relation tends to empower teachers to comprehend the “instructional” value of their work, including administrative work. As a result, the teachers will see possibilities for them to make a difference in students’ lives by doing their work. In this situation, they may view themselves positively because they think they are capable to make a difference in students’ lives (positive self-concept). In this sense, the power-with relation will arouse teachers’ positive emotional experiences at work.
Implications

Based on the discussions and analyses throughout the dissertation, I would like to make some recommendations to school administrators, the government, and teacher education in an attempt to improve teachers’ emotional experiences at work.

I recommend school administrators to create the power-with relation by adopting less bureaucratic practices of school administration. Firstly, the school administrators should provide more rooms and a safe environment for teachers with different teaching experiences and positions to express their opinions or to participate in decision-making processes of the school. This is because the open mode of communication will empower the school administrators to deliver the “instructional” values of the school policies and the work decided by them. Moreover, the practice will also increase teachers’ engagement in influencing their work and working condition. As a result, it is also possible for the teachers to understand more about the “instructional” values of the work, school policies and measures finally decided by the administrators. Thus, they may be willing to struggle with them. Secondly, school administrators should also treat supervision as a means to support teachers to help students’ learning and growth rather than as a means to keep teachers under surveillance. This is because the administrative practice will make teachers perceive that the school takes care of their aspiration to teach and supports them to make a difference in students’ lives. Altogether, the administrative practices of the open mode of communication and supporting teachers to make a difference are possible to empower teachers to perceive their work as worthy to help students to learn and grow.
The government should help eliminate the power-over relation and promote the power-with relation. First, as the study and some other researchers (Ball, 1987; Leung, 2003; Pang, 2002; Wong, 1995b) have noted, the accountability measures may legitimizes and reinforces the power of the school administrators over teachers through bureaucratization of school administration. Therefore, the government should reduce the accountability measures in order to decrease the bureaucratic procedure of school administration and devolve more power to teachers in school and classroom levels. Second, the government should take actions to release teachers from heavy administrative workload, because heavy administrative workload may replace the educational goal of many teachers’ work like guidance, ECAs, moral and civic education, and career education (Fung, 2012; see Chapter 6). For example, the government can increase budgets for schools to recruit administrative staff to undertake or assist teachers to do administrative duties and tasks in order to relieve teachers from heavy administrative workload. Moreover, the government should clearly deliberate the educational significance of the work increased by education reforms to teachers. Nowadays, the government mainly states the importance of the work in policy documents. Nevertheless, it is questionable how many teachers actually would spend time to learn the importance of these documents. Therefore, the government may need other means to show the importance of the work in the future. For example, the government can arrange seminars or workshops for schools and teachers to understand the reform initiatives. During the seminars or workshops, teachers are allowed to express their opinions and concerns and exchange ideas about the reform initiatives in order to enhance their
understandings about the value and importance of what they will do during the reforms.

The present research shows that some teachers think most of their work like guidance, ECAs, moral and civic education, and career guidance, as “non-instructional work” and feel negatively about doing the work. However, it is believed that these kinds of work are necessary to students’ social, civic, moral, and other aspects of development and growth (Kennedy, 2005). Therefore, teacher education should go beyond training subject content knowledge and teaching skills. It should also equip the skills related student and career guidance and organization ECAs and cross-curricular activities with teachers. Through the training, the teachers may internalize the “instructional” values of the work. In addition, the study also notes that some teachers, especially the early- and mid-career teachers, are fearful of rejecting work, policies or measures, which they consider as detrimental to students’ learning and growth but are decided and assigned by authority or powerful persons. This condition may make them feel powerless, frustrated, dissatisfied, and stressful (Brooks et al., 2008; Dworkin, 2002; Kesson, 2003). To improve the situation, teacher education should prepare teachers to become a reflexive and critical agent. Reflexive and critical agent means that the teachers are not only able to justify what are right and wrong to do in teaching and education, but also willing to insist their pedagogical standpoint when they face injustices in teaching and education. In other words, teacher education should empower teachers to critically engage in education. Consequently, teachers will be able to perceive that they can fulfill the teaching purpose of making a difference in students’ lives and even reach the ideal teacher self.
Limitations and further research

The findings of this study raised some questions that are not fully answered. For example, this study observes that the informants’ schools may employ different patterns of administrative practices. However, this study does not have an in-depth exploration about the reason why the schools had different patterns of administrative practices between schools. Although the study tries to analyze the banding and school type effects to the administrative practices, the findings about the effects are still inconclusive. Therefore, further studies may answer what the relationship between school bandings, school types, and school administrative practices among Hong Kong secondary schools is. They may also further investigate whether the pattern of administrative practices relate to other school demographic variables like school sponsoring body, school mission, school size, school location, student population, and the like.

Moreover, as mentioned above, schools may respond to education reforms differently in terms of the administrative practices. Nevertheless, what caused the difference is still unclear. Therefore, researchers may consider the following research questions in their studies: Does the pattern of administrative practices respond to education reforms? If yes, why do the schools respond differently? How do education reforms affect school administration? What are the concerns of the school administrators in administrating and managing the school? To answer the questions, researchers need to interview school administrators, because they are the persons designing and influencing the school administrative practices directly in response to education reforms. Moreover, the researchers should
interview experienced school administrators, especially those who take the administrative role for at least over 15 years, because they experienced different challenges to run a school caused by different education reforms in the past years. They will be the information-rich cases for researchers to explore what, how, and why education reforms influence the administrative practices of a school over time.

Although this study does not discuss so much about how social interactions in school settings influence teachers’ emotional experiences, it does not mean that teachers’ emotions are not influenced by the social interactions. One possible reason why this study does not find out the impacts of the social interactions on teachers’ emotional experiences at work is due to its research methods. In this study, in-depth interview and document analysis were used. The research methods are in a disadvantage to observe social interactions in social settings. Thus, this study cannot have a comprehensive understanding of how social interactions affect teachers’ emotions. In order to compensate for this limitation, further studies may pay more attention to the relationship between teachers’ emotional experiences and the social interactions in school settings. To explore the relationship, it may be better for the studies to adopt participant observation, because the research method allows researchers to understand insider perspectives, lived experiences, and social interaction in the real social setting (Jorgensen, 1989). In addition, the studies should consider how social structure affects the social interactions that in turn shape teachers’ emotional experiences. How does school administrative structure condition the social interactions? How does the role structure between teachers and others influence their interactions in schools? How are the social interactions affected by education reforms or social changes?
What are the social rules and norms governing the social interactions? Answering these research questions may provide another angle for us to learn about the structural and agential effects to teachers’ emotions.

Since this study only focuses on secondary teachers, we know less about the situation of Hong Kong primary teachers from the research findings. Primary and secondary teachers may encounter different difficulties and challenges in teaching, different school conditions, and education policy contexts. In this sense, the pattern of primary and secondary teachers’ emotional experiences at work may be different. Therefore, it is valuable for further studies to study primary teachers’ emotional experiences at work.

To some extent, the explanation of teachers’ emotional experiences at work or the propitiations emerged from the study may help us to understand teachers’ emotions in other contexts which have not been studied. In spite of this, it is still worthy for further studies to test the validity or explanatory power of the research findings in order to offer a more statistically generalizable framework to improve teachers’ emotional experiences at work. In order to achieve the goal, it is suggested that further studies use survey method. They need to develop measurements to operationalize teaching purpose, teachers’ work, teachers’ interpretations of their work, teachers’ emotional experiences at work, and social constraints or deleterious effects on teachers’ work and interpretation. Then, they need to form hypotheses on the basis of the findings of the present study. For examples, if teachers think they can fulfill their teaching purpose, they will feel positive at work; teaching experiences is positively related to emotional experiences at work; doing more “instructional work”, a higher sense of fulfillment of making a difference in student’s live; the administrative practices of
the open mode of communication, supervision for educational goal, and trust and consideration are positively related to teachers’ emotional experiences at work. After that, the researchers need to sample teachers with a probability sampling method and use statistical approach to test the hypotheses and develop models of teachers’ emotional experiences at work.
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Appendix A

Interview Schedule

(1) Do you mind introducing yourself first, including your age, teaching experience, subjects you are teaching, your title or position in the school, and content of work?

(2) Do you mind describing what you do in teaching?/ What do you do in the school?

(3) Do you think the school gives you enough autonomy?/ Do you think the school takes too much control over your work?/ How do you feel about the school administration?

(4) Do you mind telling me what the differences are between the present teaching condition and that of the time when you started your teaching career? (especially for the teachers whose teaching experiences are more than 10 years)

(5) Do you mind telling me why you chose to teach?/ What do you want to achieve through teaching?

(6) How do you feel about your work/ teaching?/ What makes you feel positive and negative in teaching?/ Why do you feel positive and negative at work or in teaching?

(7) Do you have any happy/ unhappy stories in teaching throughout your career?/ Do you mind sharing some happy/ unhappy stories in your teaching career with me?
(8) How do you understand teaching?/ What do you think about the contents of teachers’ work?/ What kinds of work do you think teachers should pay attention to?

(9) Do you have any questions you want to ask me?
Appendix B

Consent form

TITLE OF THE STUDY
Teachers’ working experience in Hong Kong

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE
You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Mr. Tsang Kwok Kuen, a Ph.D. student who is under the supervision of Dr. Wang Dan and Prof. Gerry A. Postiglione, in the Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This study is aimed at gaining an understanding to teachers’ working experiences and the potential causes.

PROCEDURES
You will be invited to participate into 2 to 3 face-to-face in-depth interview sessions to talk about your school life experiences. Each interview session may take on 60 to 90 minutes. The interview conversions will be voice-recorded. You have to right to withdraw from this study and disagree to voice-recording the interview conversions without any negative consequences.

POTENTIAL RISKS / DISCOMFORTS AND THEIR MINIMIZATION
This procedure has no known risks.
COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

No compensation will be given to participation.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits to you. However, the research project can provide valuable information on teachers’ working experiences. This information in turn could help improve the quality of education.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information obtained in this study will remain very strictly confidential. The information will be known to no-one except the members of the research team. And the information will be used for research purposes only. To protect confidentiality, the information which may identify your identity will not be reported in the final report. For example, pseudo names will be used for you and your school to protect your privacy. All the collected information will be stored in the researcher’s, Tsang Kwok Kuen, research office. You have the right to decide the duration of your data being kept by the investigator (please indicate: ________________). If you do not make any decision, the data will be stored for 5 years. After the 5 years, all the data will be destroyed.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without negative consequences. You may exercise the option of removing
your data from the study. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don’t want to answer and still remain in the study.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator Mr. Tsang Kwok Kuen at Room 102, 1/F, Hui Oi Chow Science Building, HKU. Telephone: 6018 4868; Email: gkk1212@hku.hk. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, HKU (2241-5267).

SIGNATURE

I ____________________ (Name of Participant) understand the procedures described above and agree to participate in this study.

☐ I agree to audio-recording.

Date: ______________________
同意書

研究題目
香港教師的工作經驗

引言
你現被邀請參與由香港大學教育學院博士研究生曾國權先生所負責的一項有關教師的工作體驗的研究。曾國權先生的指導老師是王丹博士及 Gerry A. Postiglione 教授。

研究目的
是次研究希望了解現時香港教師的工作經驗、工作狀況及其原因。

研究程序
你將被邀請參與 2 至 3 次的深入訪談，每一次訪談的時間大約是 60 至 90 分鐘，訪談內容將會被錄音。在整個研究過程中，你有權選擇在任何時候停止或退出是次研究，並不會得到任何不良的後果。

研究過程的潛在風險
是次研究並沒有顯著的或已知的風險。

給予參與者的報酬
沒有任何的報酬送給參與次研究的人。
潛在得益

是次研究不會為你帶來直接的得益，但很可能為我們提供關於教師的工作經驗的資料，這些資料將有助我們改善現時的教學環境和質素。

保密

是次研究所收集的所有資料和數據將盡對保密，並只用作研究用途，除了有關的研究人員外，其他人將不會獲得有關訊息。為了保障參與者的身份不會被泄露，所有可能會顯露參與者身份的訊息將不會出現在研究報告中。例如，參與者的姓名和所屬學校之名稱均會用代號或假名取代。所有數據將會保存在研究人員的研究辦公室，如果參與者沒有特別的要求，所有數據將會保存5年，並在5年後被消毀。如參與者對於有關他/她的數據的保存期限有特別要求，請在此註明：____________________。

參與及退出

你的參與是自願性質的，表示你有權選擇在任何時候停止或退出是次研究，並不會得到任何不良的後果。同時，參與者有權選擇從研究中移除有關他/她的數據；參與者也有權在研究中拒絕回答任何他/她不想回答的問題。

查詢

如你對是次研究有任何問題或查詢，可以直接聯絡主要研究者曾國權先生（地址：香港大學許愛周科學館 1 數 102 室；電話：2219-3022；電郵地址：gkk1212@hku.hk）。如你對有關你在此研究中的權利的問題或查詢，你可以聯絡 Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, HKU (電話：2241-5267)。
簽署

本人 ______________________ (參與者的姓名) 明白上述有關這項研究的程序和內容的描述，並同意參與這項研究。

本人同意把訪談內容錄音。

簽署 (日期):_________________________