



# The First Decade of Asian Research on School Leadership in a Global Context 拾載以來的全球脈絡亞太學校領導研究

## Professionalism and Neoliberalism?: Two Decades of Effort to Professionalise School Leadership and Governance in Hong Kong

James Ko

Many critics tended to oppose the education reforms in the last two decades in Hong Kong for its neoliberalist and managerialist origins and aim to achieve performativity, accountability and global competitiveness (e.g., Chee, 2012; Choi, 2005; Ho & Tsang, 2008). However, Ko, Cheng and Lee (2016) argued that these reforms also contributed to school autonomy, teacher professionalism, transparent school governance, flexibility in curriculum and resources management and the development of a self-evaluation culture. This paper examines the paradoxical interactions of professionalism and neoliberalism on professionalising school leadership and governance from findings in the interviews with school leaders from the middle to school-sponsoring body level. Unlike the academic critics, different actors (senior teachers, principals, school managers) were less concerned about the anti-neoliberalist issues but stronger expectations on developing their professionalism in changing times like innovative pedagogy, learner diversity, organisational learning, and crisis management.