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Title: Primary school principals' multiple identities in SBM decision-making strategies and effective school development: Casual links, ethics paradigms, and

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Abstract : A scrutiny of ethical dimension of principal leadership (involving three females and two males from five religious and secular, private and public primary schools) in Hong Kong is carried out to explore into multiple identities of five primary school principals when exploring possible causal links between their ethical decision-making strategies in school-based management (SBM) [based on shared decision making, organization culture and working expectations of collaborators] and effective school development [in terms of leadership practices, school goals, purpose, and teacher professional development].. Under the interpretative research paradigm through semi-structured interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis, the study provides a thick depiction of principals' perceptions and practices of ethical leadership and its implications for SBM in Hong Kong. Qualitative findings illustrate that the primary principals perceive and practice ethical leadership in terms of an array of values and beliefs, which can be categorized into three main domains, namely personal, intellectual and acting. An ethical perspective of school leadership includes attributing qualities of care, justice, critique and acting (paradigms of ethics). The quality of ethical leadership will depend profoundly on how principals treasure these qualities that inform their behaving and acting on school practices. The distance of practicing ethical leadership by the five Hong Kong school principals and the prominence of literature review in the field of educational administration and principal leadership posits substantial cultural and ideological differences in school settings, when some Western notions of education theory and practice is implanted in a differing local Chinese context.