



**Leadership for Civic Learning in Hong Kong:
The Role of School and Community ¹**

LI Lijuan and Kerry John KENNEDY
The Education University of Hong Kong

¹ The research reported here is part of a Hong Kong Research Grants Council General Research Fund project, *Asian Students' Conceptions of Citizenship: Constructing Indigenous Views of Citizens, Citizenship Education and the State* [GRF HKIEd 842211]. The views expressed here are those of the authors.



Abstract

This study examined two main effects on student civic learning. First, conceptualized in a leading for learning framework, the effects of teacher and principal perceptions of parent, teacher and student engagement in school governance on student civic learning were explored. Second, drawing on a situated learning framework, the study also explored the effect of teacher and principal perceptions of the community and community engagement on civic learning. Secondary survey data, collected as part of the 2009 International Civics and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), was used and a multi-level model was developed to test the effects of these multiple influences on civic learning. Surprisingly, distributed leadership as conceptualized in this study, exerted non-significant effects on civic learning while resources available in the community was the only community oriented influence that exerted a moderate and significant effect.

Statement

This is to declare that the paper submitted hereby has not been published elsewhere and that it has not been submitted simultaneously for publication elsewhere. We as authors are responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce copyrighted material from other sources and will sign an agreement for the transfer of copyright to the publisher in due time.

Theoretical Perspective

School leadership and civic learning

In the past few decades, Hong Kong schools have faced increased pressure under waves of education reform and, correspondingly, greater demands on school leadership. To increase school accountability and education quality, the Education Bureau (EDB) put forward a series of “top-down initiatives”, among which school based management (SBM) proposed in the 1990s was the most influential



(Cheng & Walker, 2008, p. 512). The SBM proposal aimed to involve the community and stakeholders in strengthening the structure and governance of schools (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2002, 2004, 2005; Education Commission, 1997). The SBM initiatives were implemented at the school level starting in 2000.

At the school level, Hong Kong principals are held accountable for meeting education quality standards, implementing school-based management, and promoting teaching effectiveness and student learning (Cheng, 2003, 2009, 2011). In addition to aligning system goals with the school's vision and providing strategic direction, principals are requested to share or distribute school leadership, e.g., on school management and external communications. The distribution of school leadership practices emerges over time through the "interrelationship among context, policy initiatives and other educational innovations" (Bryant, 2011, abstract, para. 5).

Due to such distribution, leadership emerges simultaneously from sources within the school other than principals. The sources include school sponsoring bodies, school management teams, and mid-level leaders such as vice-principals and heads of department (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013; Ng & Chan, 2014; Spillane, 2006; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). At the same time, teachers are also found influential sources of school leadership (e.g., Ho, 2010; Law, Galton, & Wan, 2007; Shouse & Lin, 2010). On the front line of education, teachers are the ones who have to translate these accountability demands into student achievement, be it academic or non-academic. When it comes to non-academic oriented achievement, such as civic and moral education (CME), there is very little research on the ways leadership can influence such achievement in what is becoming a key component of the school curriculum.

In Hong Kong, CME exists as a cross curriculum theme at the primary level and is included in school subjects such as Life and Society at the junior secondary level and in Liberal Studies at the senior secondary level. There were attempts in 2012 to introduce a more coherent approach to CME in the form of a school subject re-formed as Moral and National Education (MNE) (Wong, Lee, Kennedy, & Chan, 2015) but the political elements in the national education component led to considerable community upheaval and the eventual 'shelving' of the proposal.



Nevertheless schools have continued with CME, although not in any standard. The lack of community consensus on the key elements of CME, the insistence by Beijing authorities on the importance of national education and the generally unstable global context constantly undermined by non-state actors such as ISIS mean that CME has become an important focus area for schools. Even though traditionally it is most often seen as a non-academic area with a focus on personal development rather than social development, it now takes on a new status within Hong Kong schools. In Western contexts CME (or its equivalent) is seen as the means through which schools fulfill their civic mission for the development of active democratic citizens who will have the capacity to transform civic knowledge into proper civic engagement (Galston, 2001, 2004; Ross, 2007; Sherrod, Torney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010). Whether CME in the Hong Kong context can take on this role remains to be seen. Yet its contested nature within the community, and even amongst teachers (Wong, 2015), means that school leaders need to take it into consideration so that civic learning becomes a priority alongside more traditional academic learning outcomes.

School governance and community involvement

The principal-dominate leadership style has been questioned as part of the development of ideas concerning SBM. SBM is in fact a “major avenue of school decentralization”, aiming at “inviting wider participation and devolving decision making on school-based policies” to better meet the needs for student development (Ho, 2014, p. 168; also see Cranston, 2002; Ng, 2012). Decentralization does not simply stop at teachers, the main actors in schools. Leadership power can be further distributed to a range of stakeholders in the education enterprise, basically in the form of participatory decision making.

Indeed, SBM typically involves the establishment of a school governance body, made up by the principal, teachers, students, parents, or community members, etc., people who are empowered to make decisions (Ho, 2014). In practice, the decisions can be made on a variety of school governance issues, such as mission and vision, resources allocation, staffing, curriculum development and instruction. In a broad sense, school governance embraces “all aspects of the way a school is led, managed and run (including school rules, procedures, decision-making structures), and the behavior of its personal and how they relate to each other”



(Huddleston, 2007, p. 5). In line with the overarching concept of school leadership, school governance is more of practical matters on school operation and management.

On the school site, apart from the principal and empowered teachers, students are encouraged to exert their influence, often through the student council, school governance and decision making. As claimed, one fundamental approach for students to achieve in civic learning is to enable them to make decisions, through formal channels such as students' council, on meaningful school governance issues (Leung & Yuen, 2009; Taylor & Percy-Smith, 2008). In this sense, schools can become laboratories for students to practice civic engagement during the process of citizenship education. Leung, Yuen, Cheng, and Chow (2014) made it explicit that, "what is taught about citizenship, particularly active participation, must be practiced and experienced in schools" (p. 21). The practices and experience can be linked to school governance.

Further, the current school management mechanism in Hong Kong advocates community members such as parents and alumni playing their roles in participatory governance (i.e., civic leadership). Parents' role is recognized and much emphasized (Ng, 2004; Pang, 2008, 2011). Since 1991, a number of measures have been proposed to include parents in school education (Ng, 2003, 2013; Pang, 2011). In July 2014, an Education Ordinance was passed by the legislative Council including parents and alumni as community members in school governance bodies (Ng, 2013).

It is noteworthy that if students and community members are marginalized, or only included to make decisions on school operational issues within the already set school policy framework, participatory governance becomes tokenism. (Hart, 1992; Tse, 2000) or mere cosmetic empowerment that will not lead to real change (Hargreaves, 1995). For students, exclusion from the formulation of school policies deprives them of opportunities to participate and influence what happens in their schools.

Community effects on civic development

Communities, in which schools are situated, create the proximal environment that inevitably impacts on all aspects of school education and student



development (Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Wilkenfeld, 2009). Given the “multifaceted nature of civic engagement”, youth engagement in community activities is a highly valued aspect (Wilkenfeld, 2009, p. 100). In this sense, compared to academic subjects, civic learning is more situated learning, for which contextual factors in and out of schools influence individual students to a larger extent (Lave & Wenger, 2002).

Resources in the community is a key component of the neighborhood context, hence the direct connection between such resources and student civic learning (Wilkenfeld, 2009). In the ICCS 2009 school survey, resources in local community was operationalized as cultural and social resources for citizenship learning in the local area, e.g., public library, language school, sports facility, and religious centers. It is believed that, during the process of political socialization, students are often exposed to cultural and social resources and stimuli in the wider community (Jennings, Stoker, & Bowers, 2001; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). While developing interpersonal relationships through using these resources, students acquire civic knowledge and skills from communities outside of schools and homes. This proposition was also supported by Wilkenfeld’s (2009) study that showed the influence of resources in the school neighborhood on students’ civic learning. Furthermore, it is claimed that communities characterized by abundant resources provide not only students but also teachers and schools with better opportunities for civic engagement and partnerships (Schulz et al., 2010; Wilkenfeld, 2009).

Apart from being influenced by the context, civic development requires students to act and interact. Jencks and Mayer (1990) examined mechanisms of community effects on students’ civic learning. These operate largely through interpersonal influences and active involvement. This suggests that, the affective, cognitive, and behavioral nurturing of students’ civic qualities can be achieved through active participation in schools as well as in community activities.

The surge of community effects research in recent years has reported both direct and indirect effects of community characteristics and interactions on youth educational and civic outcomes (Wilkenfeld, 2009). The circumstances and occurrences in communities bring students out of schools to experience civic life in complicated social systems (Oxley, 2000). These civic experiences in the wider



community are also found to be influential in adult life. Reinders and Youniss' (2006) longitudinal study also showed that youth participation in community service showed higher intentions to vote and join political campaigns (Wilkenfeld, 2009).

Meanwhile, teachers' engagement in the community is also found important affecting students' civic learning and participation (Kennedy, Li, & Can, 2014). Engagement in community directly influences the way individual teachers perceive their classrooms. Teachers from schools with high levels of teacher engagement describe their classrooms as participative leading to better civic teaching and learning.

Civic learning in schools and community: A Hong Kong model

Spillane's (2006) conception of distributed leadership was discussed above, against the backdrop of SBM implementation in Hong Kong schools. Student academic development has been viewed as a distal outcome of school leadership in an overwhelming majority of studies (Cheng, 2000; Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Harris, Leithwood, Gu, Brown, Ahtaridou, & Kington, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 1998, 2008; Kyriakides, Creemers, Antonious, & Demetriou, 2009; Leithwood & Day, 2007). Student civic development, a form of non-academic outcome, has rarely appeared in the school leadership literature. Further incorporated with Lave & Wenger's (2002) situated learning theory, we examined the effects of school leadership, in the form of distributed governance on school matters by multiple stakeholders, and community participation of both teachers and students, on students' civic learning. Two Research Questions (RQs) guided the study:

RQ 1: How did teachers differ from principals regarding their perceptions of school governance effects on students' civic learning?

RQ 2: How did teachers differ from principals regarding their perceptions of the effects of community participation on students' civic learning?

Conceptual Framework



As mentioned above, previous research on school leadership has examined the roles of multiple stakeholders in school governance. Among them, most report the leading role of principals (e.g., Gurr, Drysdale, Swann, Doherty, Ford, & Goode, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006; Day et al., 2009; Mascall, Moore, Jantzi, 2008) and teachers (e.g., Cheng, 1994; Danielson, 2006; Ho, & Tikly, 2012) as school site actors. Some report parents' role as school governors from the community (Barth, 1990; Ng, 2007a, 2007b; Tschannen-Moran, 2000). In contrast, students' role is rarely addressed (Leung et al., 2014). Through decentralized decision making on school-based policies, however, the distribution of school leadership has attempted to facilitate student development (Cranston, 2002; Ng, 2013) with the same year. In practice, decentralized or distributed leadership is achieved through joint decision making of representatives of multiple stakeholders on non-trivial school governance issues. In this sense, the current study is based on a broadly distributed leadership structure that Spillane and associates proposed (Spillane, 2006; Spillane, Camburn, & Pareja, 2007; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004).

Our study further incorporated Lave & Wenger's (2002) situated learning theory and the effects of schools as "miniature political communities" and the neighborhood as a wider community on civic teaching and learning (Leung et al., 2014, p. 21). These 'communities' are the immediate environment in which both teachers and students encounter civic circumstances and, explicitly or implicitly, learn from them. The presence, strength, and significance of the civic experience for both teachers and students, i.e., decision making on school matters and participation in community activities, were examined.

Building on this pre-existing literature (Lave & Wenger, 2002; Leung et al., 2014; Spillane, 2006; Spillane, Camburn, & Pareja, 2007; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004), a conceptual framework was developed to complement our previous study, which examined how students' civic learning might be influenced by multiple agents at home and in school and how student characteristics such as family background, classroom climate, and school context affected their civic learning (Kennedy et al., 2014). To further this previous work, our current study investigated how students' civic learning might be directly influenced by teacher and principal perceptions of the school leadership context and community effects,



operationalized respectively as school governance and community participation of the stakeholders (see the conceptual model in Figure 1). Despite the reciprocal effects in the relationship, we focused on the one-way effects from the agents.

Considering the nested nature of the data, i.e., students in classrooms, we examined both the classroom effects on civic learning (i.e. the effects experienced by all students in a class) as well as the student level effects attributable to individual students. Both levels are shown in Figure 1.

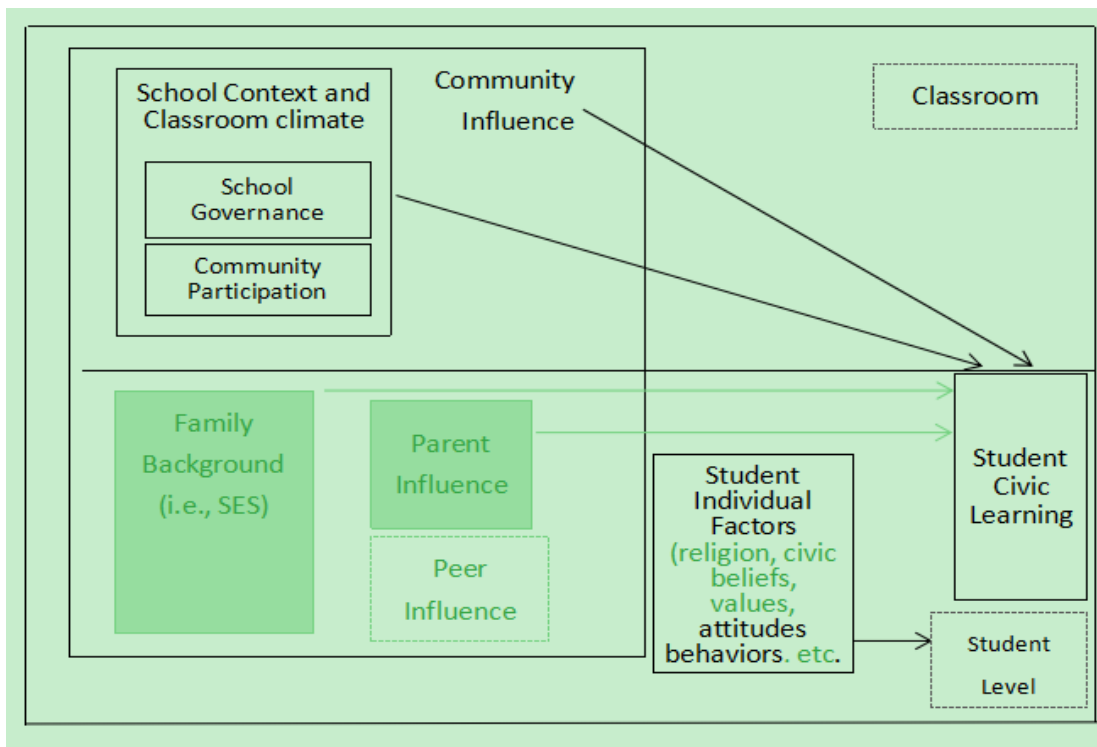


Figure 1. A Two-level Conceptual Model of the Effects of School Leadership and Community Engagement of Multiple Agents on Students' Civic Learning.



Methodology and Methods

This is a cross-sectional quantitative study, using the Hong Kong data drawn from the ICCS 2009 school and teacher surveys (Schulz et al., 2010). In 2009 the IEA conducted two-stage multiple stratified surveys in 38 societies globally and provided the data for public use. With the secondary data we examined multi-layer 'snapshots' of phenomena of CCE in Hong Kong local secondary schools.

Sample

Details of the sampling procedures and approaches are reported in the ICCS 2009 technical report (Schulz, Ainley, & Fraillon, 2011). The details of the Hong Kong samples we used are summarized in Table 1 (See Appendix A).

Instruments

Both instruments used in the teacher and school surveys are provided in the ICCS 2009 technical report. The testlet for the students' civic knowledge test is kept confidential by the IEA.

The measures

The measures of Civic Knowledge were weighted likelihood estimates (WLE) derived from 79 test items of the ICCS 2009 civic achievement scale (Schulz et al., 2011). The median test reliability across the total of seven booklets, one of which is used randomly at a time, for Hong Kong has a Cronbach's α of 0.84.

For the school and teacher surveys, the IEA also provided WLE with a mean of 50 for equally weighted national samples and a standard deviation of 10. Reliability coefficients for all the latent variables are reported in the Technical Report (Schulz et al., 2011) for individual societies, which for Hong Kong are shown in Table 3.

The teacher survey measures teachers' perceptions of school governance and community participation of students and teachers themselves. The scales measuring decentralized school governance include Teacher Participation in School Governance ($\alpha = .84$), and Student Influence Decisions about School (α



= .87). Those measuring participation in the community are Teachers' Perceptions of Student Activities in the Community ($\alpha = .78$) and Teachers' Participation in Activities outside School ($\alpha = .78$).

The principal survey measures principals' perceptions of school governance and local community context. The scales measuring school governance include School Autonomy ($\alpha = .82$), Teacher Participation in School Governance ($\alpha = .87$), Parents' Participation in the school life ($\alpha = .47$), and Student Influence on Decisions about School ($\alpha = .84$). Those measuring community context are Opportunities for Student Participation in Community Activities ($\alpha = .66$), Resource in Local Community ($\alpha = .52$), and Social Tension in Local Community ($\alpha = .91$).

Both teacher and principal perceptions were tested. The purpose was to explore issues from multiple sources. While overlapping and complementing each other, together the perceptions provide a holistic picture of school leadership and community context for student civic learning. The reliability coefficients indicate satisfactory internal consistency of the measures. The two exceptions are that for Parents' Participation at School in the School Life and Resource in Local Community.

Analytical Method

The software program MPlus 7.1 was used to construct random intercept and fixed slope two-level regression models. This modeling method was recommended to meet the needs of this study (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

For both teachers and principals, the scales were first used as a set of predictors. For example, measuring teachers' perceptions of school governance, Teacher Participation in School Governance and Student Influence at School were first entered as the classroom-level predictors. To check for collinearity, the individual variables were used as single predictors, one at a time, still at the classroom-level. The results are reported in Tables 2 and 3.



Results

This study verified the “multi-level nature” of the data. The intra-class correlations (ICCs) for all the models were around .30, indicating that approximately 30% of the total variance in students’ civic knowledge scores can be attributed to classroom membership. In other words, there is a noticeably large variation in students’ civic learning achievement across classrooms.

RQ 1: How did teachers differ from principals regarding their perceptions of school governance effects on students’ civic learning?

As shown in Appendix B, neither teachers’ Participation in School Governance ($\beta = .142$, $SE = .127$) nor Student Decisions about School ($\beta = -.145$, $SE = .125$) influenced students’ civic learning. This was also true of principals ($\beta = -.082$, $SE = .136$; and $\beta = .024$, $SE = .107$, respectively), who furthermore were not optimistic about the effects of School Autonomy ($\beta = -.016$, $SE = .124$) and Parents’ Participation in the School Life ($\beta = .044$, $SE = .114$). No meaningful differences were identified when these factors were examined separately.

RQ 2: How did teachers differ from principals regarding their perceptions of the effects of community participation on students’ civic learning?

When it comes to the effects of community participation on civic learning, teachers’ perceptions were similar to those of principals’ (see Appendix C). For teachers, neither their own Participation in Activities outside School ($\beta = -.194$, $SE = .117$) nor Student Activities in Community ($\beta = -.115$, $SE = .126$) were influential. Similarly, Opportunities for Student Participation in Community Activities as perceived by Principals was not influential ($\beta = -.177$, $SE = .102$), and it was the same for Social Tension in Local Community ($\beta = -.054$, $SE = .103$). Yet Resources in the Local Community, as perceived by principals, significantly affected student civic learning ($\beta = .248$, $SE = .111$). These results will be discussed in the following section.



Discussion and Implications

This study explored effects of distributed leadership as reflected in teacher and principal perceptions of various civic engagement related activities on student civic learning. The findings revealed that there was considerable variation in students' civic learning outcomes across schools and only one significant effect of a community-related variable on civic learning, Resources in Local Community.

School leadership and governance

The significance of distributed leadership that empowers teachers has been noted (e.g., Hallinger & Heck, 2008; Hargreaves, 1995; Harris, 2001; Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, & Hopkins, 2007; Spillane, 2006). Some other studies, however, have identified meaningless involvement of parents and students on non-decisive school issues (Hart, 1992; Tse, 2000). Leung et al. (2014) claimed that, in fact in Hong Kong "students are rarely encouraged to participate in school governance for the enhancement of their citizenship development" (p. 19). Yet in the current study the perceptions of teachers and principals on activities such as teacher engagement in school governance and students' influence on school decision did not significantly affect students' civic leaning. It may be that these variables are too remote from learning contexts to exert an effect. While these kinds of variables may affect activities, such as civic participation (Kennedy et al., 2014), their influence does not seem to extend to the acquisition of civic knowledge. In addition, the finding may suggest a gap between theory and school practice. There is a great deal of support in the literature for participatory school governance. Yet in practice such participation does not seem to be linked to student learning.

It is worth noting that while distributed leadership represents a more democratic approach to school governance it has also been found to hinder decision-making efficiency and create other school management concerns at times (Ng & Chan, 2014). In the face of ongoing educational reforms and the pressing accountability environment, most Hong Kong schools have retained a hierarchical structure typified by top-down bureaucracy. This suggests that teachers' perceptions of more democratic management practices may be quite negative and so do not influence learning outcomes. This could be a unique feature of the Hong Kong



context.

The potential for leadership to be further distributed may explain the limited effects of teacher and parent involvement in school governance found in this study. The other potential sources of leadership may include alumni, members of the local educational authorities and school sponsoring bodies. Future studies that take these alternate sources into account may find that the overall effects of leadership increase significantly. Distinguishing and combining the leadership effects arising from a variety of sources may reveal additional factors that contribute to school leadership effects on students' civic learning (Day & Leithwood, 2007; Day et al., 2009). For example, teachers who are involved in the strategic development of their schools are often regarded as middle level heads, heads of department, or curriculum coordinators (Ng, 2013; Ng & Chan, 2014; Tang & Choi, 2009). Vice-principals are also considered mid-level leaders in Australia and Hong Kong (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013; Ng, 2013). Therefore, teacher leadership should be distinguished from leadership from the middle-level managers. Leadership from both teachers and mid-level leaders constitutes a breakthrough in the conventional hierarchical leadership structure of schools.

Community engagement and civic education

Unlike findings from the current study, our previous study suggested the importance of teachers' engagement in community activities (Kennedy & Li, submitted). Schools characterized by high levels of teachers' engagement in this regard witnessed not only higher levels of students' civic participation at school, but also higher levels of students' civic learning achievement (Kennedy, Li, & Can, 2014). One possible explanation of the lack of effects of teachers' engagement in community on students' civic learning is that the effectiveness and quality of teacher participation has yet to reach a level that leads to real changes at the student end. On the other hand, the impartial non-political position that teachers are required to take during their instruction in classrooms and interaction with students may prevent teachers from sharing much of their private community involvement with students.

Likewise, the scope and level of students' participation in civic activities might also be limited, and thus does not lead to any noticeable improvement in their



civic learning. The other possible reason is that the civic knowledge test used by in ICCS 2009 contains mostly cognitive knowledge questions. It does not test “citizenship-as-practice” or “learning by doing” practical civic skills that are connected with civic participation in the community or society (Chow, 2013, p. 206; also see Lawy & Biesta, 2006). Therefore, students’ behavioral engagement in community does not necessarily reflect the effect on their civic knowledge. In other words, the former is not directly associated with the latter.

Opposite to our conception, Chow (2013) pointed out that, “the quality and effectiveness of participation largely depend on the level of civic knowledge proficiency of citizens”. In other words, it is students’ civic knowledge proficiency that has an impact on civic participation, but not the other way around. Chow (2013) further stressed that expected participation also depends on opportunities provided by the community and society. With neither proficient civic knowledge nor good opportunities and adequate guidance from adults, young peoples’ civic lifeline might be problematic. In the case of Hong Kong, social movements in the recent years have shown that the lack of proper civic education may result in political radicalism (Chow, 2013). There has been recourse to illegal activities as part of the more radical environment in Hong Kong in recent times. In these contexts, civic knowledge plays an important role that deserves further consideration.

In Hong Kong there is the urgency for school leaders to pay attention to CME. Chow (2013) suggested that students with insufficient civic knowledge might have “an imagined outlook of society yet have no realistic picture” (p. 210). Also as argued by Hart and Gullan (2010) those who lack proper civic knowledge, such as that of political institutions, are easy to be led by political power to join illegal protest activities. In this sense, it is of educative importance to identify factors that affect students’ civic learning. Inquiries into the nature and strength of these factors can contribute to a deeper understanding of citizenship education in Hong Kong.

In the current study, Resources in the Local Community was found to be the only factor that revealed a significant impact on students’ civic learning. This finding is in line with the ICCS International Report (Schulz et al., 2010) that reported a positive relation between sufficiency and type of community resources and



students' civic knowledge test scores. It was also the case in Wilkenfeld's (2009) study where it was argued that the accessibility of community resources affected young people's interaction with community members and these community interactions led to improved civic knowledge achievement (Wilkenfeld, 2009). This is particularly important for schools situated in less well-resourced communities. Where possible, a wide range of opportunities (e.g., extra-curriculum activities) should be provided, even if these are outside the immediate area of the school, to ensure that students can engage in community-based learning. This is an important finding for school leaders, especially curriculum leaders, who need to ensure that civic learning outside of schools is a feature of the school curriculum and student experiences.

To sum up, accurate specification of the nature of civic learning and its indirect effects, direct effects, or both) is fundamental to informing stakeholders of the strategies and intermediary targets that are most likely to meaningfully achieve the desired student civic outcomes (Kyriakides et al., 2009). In addition to the top-down change efforts that are rendered effective through institutional structuring (Dalin, 1998), real changes at the school level and individual student level are likely to occur when school leaders take the opportunity to shape student experiences in line with what most affects their learning. Last but not least, the assessment and evaluation of students' civic knowledge should not overstress cognitive knowledge. Instead, it should cover a full range of affective, behavioral and cognitive domains of civic engagement.

School leadership and CME: The gap to fill

Research on CME has been isolated from school leadership research. The scenario is obvious in Hong Kong, where CME is rarely "ranked high in the education agenda" let alone for school leaders (Leung et al., 2014, p. 19). For researchers, however, it is time to fill the gap between the two research fields and provide policy directions. Young people need to be aware of their civic responsibilities and they need to gain experience as students in civic activities both in and out of schools. This requires leadership so that CME is not marginalized as a form of personal development. The community can be an important source of civic learning and both teachers and principals need to recognize this.



The purpose of citizenship education and the civic mission of schools is to nurture “politically literate, participatory, and critically thinking citizens” (Leung et al., 2014, p. 21). Taking regular courses can enhance civic knowledge acquisition (Lay, 2006; Niemi & Junn, 1998). Further, higher civic knowledge is related to more democratic values and active civic participation (Galston, 2001; Wilkenfeld, 2009). This study, however, has shown that formal learning can be supplemented by community based learning where resources are readily available. This blending of formal and informal learning should be an important direction for the future and school leaders can facilitate it in their curriculum planning.

Conclusion

This study employed multi-level regression analysis to estimate the presence, strength, and significance of the effects of distributed school governance and community participation on students’ civic learning. The multi-level modeling also complied with the nested nature of the school education and the data. According to the perceptions from both teachers and principals, neither teachers nor parent engagement in school governance affected students’ civic learning. Student influences on decision making regarding school governance issues also made no difference. In the similar vein, teachers’ participation in community activities had no influences on civic learning. Neither did student participation. It is resources in local community that made a difference. The apparent lack of effects from distributed leadership needs further study in Hong Kong and in particular the extent to which real decentralization has occurred. At the same time school leaders at different levels can regard the community and its resources as a source of civic learning and make better use of it. While previous literature has suggested the importance of formal learning in citizenship education this study has highlighted the potential for community based learning where resources are readily available. This can be an important step forward in supporting the civic learning of Hong Kong adolescents.



References

- Barth, R. S. (1990). *Improving schools from within: Teachers, parents, and principals can make the difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bryant, D. A. (2011). *From origins to sustainability: Native-speaking English teachers as an innovation* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). The University of Hong Kong. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10722/134050>
- Cheng, Y. C. (1994). Teacher leadership style: A classroom-level study. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 32, 54-71.
- Cheng, Y. C. (2000). The characteristics of Hong Kong school principals' leadership: The influence of societal culture. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 20(2), 68-86.
- Cheng, Y. C. (2003). School leadership and three waves of education reforms. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(3), 417-439.
- Cheng, Y. C. (2009). Hong Kong educational reforms in the last decade: Reform syndrome and new developments. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 23(1), 65-86.
- Cheng, Y. C. (2011). Towards the 3rd wave school leadership. *Revista de Investigacion Educativa*, 29(2), 253-275.
- Cheng, Y. C., & Walker, A. (2008). When reform hits reality: The bottleneck effect in Hong Kong primary schools. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(5), 505-521.
- Chow, K. F. (2013). The 'civic potential' of students: An investigation of students' civic knowledge and conceptions of active citizenship in five Asian societies (unpublished doctoral thesis). The Hong Kong Institute of Education.
- Cranston, N. C. (2002). School-based management, leaders and leadership: Change and challenges for principals. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 30(1), 2-12.



- Dalin, P. (1998). *School development: Theories and strategies*. London: Cassell.
- Danielson, C. (2006). *Teacher leadership that strengthens professional practice*. Alexandria, VA: Association for supervision and curriculum development.
- Day, C., Sammons, P., Hopkins, D., Harris, A., Leithwood, K., Gu, Q., Brown, E., Ahtaridou, E., & Kington, A. (2009). The impact of school leadership on pupil outcomes, final report. Research Report N. DCSF-RR108 of Department for Children, Schools and Families. Nottingham: University of Nottingham.
- Education and Manpower Bureau (2002). *Education (Amendment) Bill 2002*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.
- Education and Manpower Bureau. (2004). *Education: Amendment Ordinance*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.
- Education and Manpower Bureau. (2005, 29 July). *School self-evaluation and External School Review: Modification of implementation requirements*. Circular Letter. Hong Kong: Education and Manpower Bureau.
- Education Commission. (1997). *Report no. 7*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.
- Galston, W. A. (2001). Political knowledge, political engagement, and civic education. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4, 217-234.
- Galston, W. A. (2004). Civic education and political participation. *Political Science and Politics*, 37(2), 253-266.
- Gurr, D., & Drysdale, L. (2013). Middle-level secondary school leaders: Potential constraints and implications for leadership preparation and development. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 51(1), 55-71.
- Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., Swann, R., Doherty, J., Ford, P., & Goode, H. (2005 September). *The International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP): Comparison across country case studies*. Paper presented at The Australian Council for Educational Leaders National Conference, Gold Coast, September 20-23, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2005/gur05254.pdf>



- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980-1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 9, 157-191.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (2008). Distributed leadership in schools: Does system policy make a difference?. In A. Harris (Ed.), *Distributed leadership, studies in educational leadership* (pp. 101-120). UK: Springer Science.
- Hargreaves, A. (1995, April). Renewal in the age of paradox. *Educational Leadership*, 52(7), 14-19.
- Harris, A. (2001). Building the capacity for school improvement. *School Leadership & Management*, 21(3), 261-270.
- Harris, A., Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., & Hopkins, D. (2007). Distributed leadership and organizational change: Reviewing the evidence. *Journal of Educational Change*, 8(4), 337-347.
- Hart, D., Gullan, R. (2010). The sources of adolescent activism: Historical and contemporary findings. In L. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta, & C. Flanagan (Eds.), *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth* (pp. 67-90). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Hart, R. A. (1992). *Children's participation: From Tokenism to citizenship*. Florence: United Nations Children's Fund.
- Ho, D. (2010). Leadership for school improvement: Exploring factors and practices in the process of curriculum change. *Early Education and Development*, 21(2), 263-284.
- Ho, D., & Tikly, L. P. (2012). Conceptualizing teacher leadership in a Chinese, policy-driven context: A research agenda. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement: An International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice*, 23(4), 401-416.
- Ho, E. S. C. (2014). Levelling up and sustaining educational achievement: The case of Hong Kong. In Sing Kong Lee, Wing On Lee & Ee Long Low (Eds.). *Educational Policy Innovations - Levelling Up and Sustaining Educational Achievement* (pp. 163-184). Singapore: Springer.



- Huddleston, T. (2007). *From student voice to shared responsibility: Effective practice in democratic school governance in European schools*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Jencks, C., & Mayer, S. E. (1990). The social consequences of growing up in a poor neighborhood. In L. E. Lynn, Jr., & G. H. McGeary (Eds.), *Inner-city poverty in the United States* (pp. 111-186). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Jennings, M. K., Stoker, L., & Bowers, J. (2001). *Politics across the generations: Family transmission reexamined (working paper 2001-15)*. Berkeley, CA: Institute of Governmental Studies.
- Kennedy, K. J., Li, L., & Can, K. C. (2014). Asian students and school participation: Developing citizenship skills for the future. *Politics, Culture and Socialization*, 5(2), 195-214.
- Kyriakides, L., Creemers, B., Antoniou, P., & Demetriou, D. (2009). A synthesis of studies searching for school factors: Implications for theory and research. *British Research Journal*, 36(1), 1-24.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (2002). Legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice. In M. R. Lea & K. Nicoll (Eds.), *Distributed learning: Social and cultural approaches to practice* (pp. 56-63). London: Routledge Falmer.
- Law, E., Galton, M., & Wan, S. (2007) Distributed curriculum leadership in action: A Hong Kong case study. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38, 286-303.
- Lawy, R., & Biesta, G. (2006). Citizenship-as-practice: The educational implications of an inclusive and relational understanding of citizenship. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 54(1), 34-50.
- Lay, J. C. (2006). Learning about politics in low-income communities. *American Politics Research*, 34(3), 319-340.
- Leithwood, K., & Day, C. (2007). Starting with what we know. In C. Day & K. Leithwood (Eds.), *Successful principal leadership in times of change: An international perspective* (pp. 1-15). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.



- Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Hopkins, D., & Harris, A. (2006). *Successful school leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning* (Tech Rep. RR800). Nottingham, UK: University of Nottingham, Department of Education and Skills.
- Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Philadelphia, PA: Laboratory for Student Success, Temple University
- Leung, Y. W., Yuen, T. W. W., Cheng, E. C. K., & Chow, J. K. F. (2014). Is student participation in school governance a “mission impossible”? *Journal of Social Science Education, 13*(4), 19-34.
- Leung, Y. W., & Yuen, W. W. T. (2009). Participatory Citizenship and Student Empowerment: Case Study of a Hong Kong School. *Citizenship Teaching and Learning, 5*(1), 18-34.
- Mascall, B., Moore, S., & Jantzi, D. (2008). *The impact of leadership turnover on school success*. New York: Final report of research to the Wallace Foundation (section 1.5).
- Ng, S. W. (2003). Are parents and teachers psychologically prepared for cooperation? *Pacific Asian Education, 15*(1), 60-76.
- Ng, S. W. (2004). Teacher’s value orientations toward parent involvement in school-based management in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Educational Reform, 13*(4), 28-39.
- Ng, S. W. (2007a). Development of parent-school partnerships in times of educational reform in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Educational Reform, 16*(4), 321-345.
- Ng, S. W. (2007b). The chronological development of parent empowerment in children’s education in Hong Kong. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 8*(3), 487-499.
- Ng, S. W. (2013). Including parents in school governance: Rhetoric or reality. *International Journal of Educational Management, 27*(6), 667 – 680.



- Ng, S. W., & Chan, T. M, K. (2014). Continuing professional development for middle leaders in primary schools in Hong Kong. *Journal of Educational Administration, 52*(6), 869-886.
- Niemi, R. G., & Junn, J. (1998). *Civic education: What makes students learn*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Oxley, D. (2000). The school reform movement: Opportunities for community psychology. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 565-590). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- Pang, I. W. (2008). School-based management in Hong Kong: Centralizing or decentralizing. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 7*(3), 17-33.
- Pang, I. W. (2011). Home-school cooperation in the changing context – an ecological approach. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 20*(1), 1-16.
- Reinders, H., & Youniss, J. (2006). School-based required community service and civic development in adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science, 10*(1), 2-12.
- Ross, A. (2007). Multiple identities and education for active citizenship. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 55*(3), 286-303.
- Ross, A. (2008) *A European education: Citizenship, identities and young people*. Stoke on Trebt: Trentham Books.
- Schulz, W., Ainley, J., & Fraillon, J. (2011). *ICCS 2009 technical report*. Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).
- Schulz, W., Ainley, J., Fraillon, J., Kerr, D., & Losito, B. (2010). *ICCS 2009 International Report: Civic knowledge, attitude and engagement among lower-secondary school students in 38 countries*. New Zealand: IEA.
- Sherrod, L. R., Torney-Purta, J., & Flanagan, C. A. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth*. New York: Wiley.



- Shouse, R., & Lin, K-P. (2010). *Principal leadership in Taiwan schools*. Lanham, MD, US: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Spillane, J. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Spillane, J., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36(1), 3-34.
- Spillane, J. P., Camburn, E. M., & Pareja, A. S. (2007). Taking a distributed perspective to the school principal's workday. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 6(1), 103-125.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using Multivariate Statistics (5th Ed.)*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Tang, Y. F. S., & Choi, P. L. (2009). Teachers' professional lives and continuing professional development in changing times. *Educational Review*, 61(1), 1-18.
- Taylor, M., & Percy-Smith, B. (2008). Children's participation: Learning from community development. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 16(4), 379-394.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2000). Collaboration and the need for trust. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 39(4), 308-331.
- Tse, T. K. C. (2000). Mission impossible: A reconsideration of democratic education in school. *Educational Practice and Theory*, 22(1), 39-55.
- Wilkenfeld, B. (2009). *A multilevel analysis of context effects on adolescent civic engagement: The role of family, peers, school, and neighbourhood (doctoral dissertation)*. Retrieved from http://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/1903/9130/1/Wilkenfeld_umd_0117E_10219.pdf
- Wong, K. L. (2015). Teachers' perceptions of moral, civic and national education in preparing students to be "good citizens": Hong Kong primary schools. (unpublished doctoral thesis). The Hong Kong Institute of Education.



Wong, K. L., Lee, C. K. J., Kennedy, K. J., & Chan, K. S. J. (2015). Hong Kong teachers' receptivity towards civic education. *Citizenship Teaching and Learning, 10*(3), 271-292.



Appendix A

Table 1

Sample Sizes and Weighted Participation Rates in the Surveys
(after School Replacement).

	Total sampled schools	School Type			No. of Participa ting schools	No. of partici- pants	Weighted Participation Rate		
		Gov't	Aided/ Caput	Direct subsidy scheme			School Participation Rate	Individual	Overall
Teacher Survey	150	9	83	9	101	1446	67.3%	95.8%	64.3%
School Survey					84	84			

Note. Based on Schulz *et al.*, 2011, pp. 64-79, and 82.



Appendix B

Table 2

Effects of Teachers' Perceptions of School Governance and Participation in the Community on Students' Civic Learning

Variable	Reliability ¹	Mean	SD	Multi-level Regression (As a cluster of predictors)			Multi-level Regression (As a single predictor)		
				Estimate	SE	ICC	Estimate	SE	ICC
School Governance									
<i>Teacher Participation in School Governance</i>	0.84	42.60	4.33	0.142	0.127	31.02%	0.103	0.118	31.46%
<i>Student Influence Decisions about School</i>	0.87	50.55	3.08	-0.145	0.125		-0.107	0.119	31.44%
Participation in the Community									
<i>Perceptions of Student Activities in Community</i>	0.78	46.50	3.97	-0.115	0.126	30.04%	-0.214	0.111	30.67%
<i>Personal Participation in Activities outside School</i>	0.78	45.99	2.97	-0.194	0.117		-0.253*	0.104	30.28%



Appendix C

Table 3

Effects of Principals' Perceptions of School Governance and Community Effects on Students' Civic Learning

Variable	Reliability	Mean	SD	Multi-level Regression (As a cluster of predictors)			Multi-level Regression (As a single predictor)		
				Estimate	SE	ICC	Estimate	SE	ICC
Principals' Perceptions									
School Governance									
<i>Perception of School Autonomy</i>	0.82	53.92	7.54	-0.016	0.124		-0.043	0.121	32.26%
<i>Teacher Participation at School Governance</i>	0.87	46.29	9.75	-0.082	0.136	33.03%	-0.067	0.118	33.11%
<i>Parents' Participation at School in the School Life</i>	0.47	48.74	6.67	0.044	0.114		0.036	0.107	32.28%
<i>Student Influence on Decisions about School</i>	0.84	50.98	10.75	0.024	0.107		0.024	0.101	32.29%
Local Community									
<i>Opportunities for Student Participation in Community Activities</i>	0.66	49.99	6.95	-0.177	0.102		-0.124	0.106	32.87%
<i>Resource in Local Community</i>	0.52	53.88	6.11	0.248	0.111	31.35%	0.227	0.101	31.17%
<i>Social Tension in Local Community</i>	0.91	56.04	7.05	-0.054	0.103		-0.082	0.103	32.16%