

Direct and Indirect Effects of Secondary Students' Religious Engagement on  
Civic and Social Values: A Comparison of Hong Kong and Taiwanese Students

CHEUNG, HIN WAH

PhD

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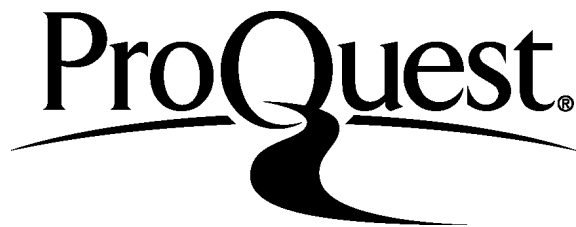
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**Direct and Indirect Effects of Secondary Students' Religious Engagement on  
Civic and Social Values: A Comparison of Hong Kong and Taiwanese Students**

by

CHEUNG, Hin Wah

A Thesis Submitted to

The Hong Kong Institute of Education

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for

the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August, 2015



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August, 2015



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## **ABSTRACT**

Direct and Indirect Effects of Secondary Students' Religious Engagement on Civic  
and Social Values: A Comparison of Hong Kong and Taiwanese Students

By CHEUNG, Hin Wah

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The Hong Kong Institute of Education

### **Abstract**

In Asia the impact of religion on secondary students' civic and social values has received little attention; although in the West, there is a considerable literature on the topic. Grundel and Maliepaard (2012), Pike (2008), Vermeer (2010) and Gates (2006), as representatives of that literature, have shown that religion appears to have a significant influence on students' citizenship development. Thus, one purpose of the current study was to explore the impact of religion on students' civic and social values in Asian contexts.

Hong Kong and Taiwan, as two Asian societies with similar cultural values but different histories and political orientations, were chosen as the foci for the study. Importantly, religious bodies in each of these societies have played different roles in the provision of education services. It was assumed, therefore, that religion might exert a different effect on students in each society.



This study, drawing on secondary data from the International Civics and Citizenship Study (ICCS), defined religion in terms of religious behaviour and the attitudes towards the role of religion in society. Its aim was to investigate both the direct effect of religious engagement on secondary students' civic and social values and the indirect effect through their attitudes towards the influence of religion on society in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In addition, students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on their society were studied for better understanding of the perception of students on the role of religion in society in relation to individual behaviour and civic and political life.

A sequential mixed methods research design was adopted. The ICCS survey data were supplemented with data from samples of students who participated in focus group interviews to seek possible explanations for the quantitative results and generate new insights. The results were similar in Hong Kong and Taiwan. At the student level, both the direct effect of religious engagement and its indirect effect through the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society on students' civic and social values were significant. It was different at the school level where both the direct and indirect effects of religious engagement were not significant. It was suggested that personal factors such as family life and religious life in church might be the explanation of differences among students and school religious engagement concentrating on personal and spiritual life development. Moreover, Hong Kong and Taiwanese students were only marginally positive to the influence of religion on society with Taiwanese students more positively than Hong Kong students. Hong





Kong and Taiwanese students thought that the influence of religion concentrated on the provision of services to promote their religious doctrines rather than political life. This finding was different from Western literature suggesting that religious behaviors and attitudes in Asian societies require further study. This study has provided insights into the way Asian students' civic and social values are influenced by religious behaviour and attitudes and its findings can contribute to both the policy and practice of citizenship education in Asia.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### From Associate Degree to Doctor of Philosophy: No students are second-rate.

Nowadays, Associate Degree holders in Hong Kong are often treated as “second-rate students”. Many people think that these students perform poorly at school and are not likely to have a chance to achieve academic advancement, such as completing a Bachelor’s Degree or even Doctoral Degree. Completing doctoral education, for an Associate Degree holder, is a dream that can hardly be achieved.

Due to my poor academic performance in public examinations, I had to pursue my associate degree in college after my secondary education, rather than studying a bachelor’s degree in university directly. At that time, nobody believed that I was capable of obtaining a doctoral degree and some people around me even suggested that I give up my education. But, I believed that associate degree students are not academically inferior to anybody else and I was competent to strive for a doctoral degree. I always share my story with my students who have a similar background as mine in order to encourage them to carry on pursuing their dream.

Here I want to make an apology to my family. In the last three years, my primary relatives have experienced tremendous challenges on both their health and finances. But my parents never asked me to give up my dream and give them a hand. Because of the stressful school work, shamefully, I even did not have much time to spend with them. Thank you my parents, brothers and sister for your tolerance and support.

Indeed, without the generous and strong support from family, friends, students and



supervisors, I would have had to give up my doctoral study. Without them, I was not likely to stay on the path to actualize my dream. I want to take this opportunity to express my greatest appreciation for their selfless devotion helping me to overcome all of the difficulties on the road.

First of all, I appreciate my three supervisors, Prof. Kennedy, Dr. Hue and Dr. Leung Chi Hung, who offered me outstanding support and tolerance in the last three years. They sacrificed uncountable hours of time to coach my academic development. I learnt a lot from their persistent encouragement and the process was definitely a meaningful and unforgettable experience. Thanks a lot! I would also like to ask for their forgiveness for all the inconvenience I brought to them due to my health and family issues. In addition, the valuable opinions from three examiners (Prof. Chan, Prof. Ho & Prof. Lam) and Chairman (Prof. Lo) inspired me a lot. Thank you.

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I believe the best way to reward everyone who provided me selfless support in my harsh time is to keep devoting my effort to the sake of youngsters. This study is only the beginning. Education and research are the means to help youngsters to achieve their dreams. Nobody should be abandoned in this field. We should instill hope and dreams in them. I promised my students, younger brother and sister I would never give up my dream and wish them to do the same. I hope my struggling experience, from Associate Degree to Doctor of Philosophy, can become an encouraging model to youngsters. No students are second-rate. I also wish society, universities and governments to provide more support and chances to youngsters. It will help students develop their potential and subsequently empower their contribution to society. Finally, I would like to share this thesis and celebrate my achievement with everyone mentioned above – all my students, friends and the one I love.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CV	Civic Values
HKEAA	Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority
HKFS	Hong Kong Federation of Students
ICCS	International Civic and Citizenship Education Studies
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham
RA	Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society
RELACT	Religious Activities Participation
RELIG	Religious Background of Students
RELPART	Religious Service Attendance
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SV	Social Values
TLI	Tucker-Lewis index



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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to the research and highlight key research issues. This chapter will outline the main features of the study. There are six sections in this chapter including this Introduction. The remaining sections are Research Focus, Research Background, Research Significance, Thesis Structure and Conclusion. The second section describes the Research Focus. In this section, the research aim, objects, research questions, research participants, research methods and major concepts are reviewed. The third section describes the background to the research highlighting the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan. In this section, the reasons for selecting Hong Kong and Taiwan for the research are explained. In addition, civic and citizenship education in the two societies are reviewed. Different aspects of each society are discussed such as the demographic and social development of the two societies. The fourth section describes the significance of this research. The fifth section outlines the thesis structure. The final section provides a conclusion to this chapter.

### **2. Research Focus**

This section discusses the research focus including the aims, research questions and major concepts. The research method is also highlighted here but fuller details are discussed in Chapter 3 (Methodology).

#### **2.1. Research Aims**

There were two major aims of this research. The first aim of this was to investigate Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. The direct effect of students' religious behavior (religious engagement) on



these attitudes and on their civic and social values will also be studied, as well as the mediating role of these attitudes between religious behavior and civic and social values. The second aim was to make comparisons about these relations between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students where these societies share common cultural values and similar religious environments but have different histories, politics and colonial experience including the role of religious groups in provision of education services. The influence from school will also be highlighted since schools themselves can encourage religious engagement and religious values. For example, religious schools offer religious education to students which make it different from schools without religious affiliation (Cheung, 2010). Education is also an important way for values transmission which is often be treated as a way for religious bodies to promote their religious values to students (Cheung, 2010). This is also an aspect to be covered. The religious background of schools, however, is not available in the ICCS data. The school level effect can only be identified through statistical techniques and the focus group interview. This study was framed in Asian contexts using data from two Chinese societies, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Moreover, the hypothesized conceptual model was generated from Western literature which assumed religious engagement affecting the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society that may also affect the civic and social values of students. This research also helped to show whether the Western framework was suitable for Chinese Eastern societies.

## 2.2. Research Questions

Based on the two objectives referred to above, there were two research questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and how can these similarities and differences be explained?
2. What are the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students concerning the influence of religious engagement on their attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and how do these attitudes (attitudes towards the influence of religion on society) affect their civic values and social



values at individual level and school level? How can the similarities and differences be explained?

Answers to these questions using a mixed methods approach will help to achieve the aim of this research as well as facilitating a better understanding of how context influences religious and civic understanding in two Chinese societies.

### 2.3. Research Participants<sup>1</sup>

The research participants were adolescents enrolled in eighth grade (approximately: Form 3-4 in Hong Kong and Junior High Form Year 2-3 in Taiwan) with an average age of 13 to 14 years old.

### 2.4. Research Methods

This research adopted a mixed methods approach drawing on both quantitative and qualitative methods. The following paragraphs provide a rationale for such an approach.

Mixed methods research plays an important role in conducting educational research (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Yin, 2006). Such research is defined as using a mixture or combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, approaches or concepts in a single research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 51). The adoption of this research method is able to enhance the quality of research methods (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). This research project made use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods to explore the relationship between students' religious engagement, their attitudes to the role of religion in society, and their civic values. The quantitative research was based on data from the International Civic and Citizenship Study 2009 (ICCS 2009) (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon & Losito, 2010). Multi-level analysis was adopted because schools are nested in countries, classes within schools and students within classes. Multi-level analyses help to identify influences on learning outcomes at different levels and in particular whether there are



effects in addition to individual-level effects. The qualitative research involved interviews with students in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Comparison of both quantitative and qualitative results helps to improve the quality of research (Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2007). Comparison is a means for inquiry (Bray & Thomas, 1995; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014). Studying the similarities and differences of research participants helps to explain why they are alike and different (Rust, 2002). Studying of other education systems during the comparison process helps to obtain a better understanding the own education system (Bray, 2007). In other words, the adoption of comparison as a research approach was an important analytical technique in the study reported here.

## 2.5. Major Concepts

There are some major concepts of this research including, religious engagement, attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values and social values. This section gives a brief explanation of these concepts before moving further. Detailed explanation is stated in next chapter.

Religious engagement is about the religious behavior of students and may be treated as a kind of civic engagement (Putnam, 2000; Schulz et al., 2010; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995). In the ICCS 2009 assessment framework, three forms of religious behaviors are included. They are “religious background of student”, “religious service attendance” and “religious activities participation” (Schulz et al., 2010, p. 107). Students were asked whether they had experienced such behaviors.

“Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society” is defined as students’ perception towards the role of religion in their affiliated society. Religion is one of the civic institutions and the assessment towards the influence of religion on society is also a way to study the civic and citizenship values of students (Schulz et al., 2008). In the ICCS 2009 framework (the quantitative research), two major aspects were included in studying the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society including “the influence of civic and political life” and “the influence of individual



behaviors” (Schulz et al., 2008). In the qualitative research, students were asked about their perception towards the influence of religion on society and the civic and political aspects were also highlighted during the interviews with students.

“Civic values” are defined as students’ values towards the people more than family as well as the state (Schulz et al., 2008). In the ICCS 2009 framework, the measurement of civic values includes two important aspects including, “importance of conventional citizenship” and “importance of social-movement related citizenship” (Schulz et al., 2008). In the qualitative study, the operation definition of civic values is “the way to make judgment on political issues” such as the perception towards government policy, election and social movement in their own society. This definition was reference from the questions in the ICCS questionnaire in relation to the measurement of civic values (Schulz et al., 2008)

“Social values” are defined as student’s perception of equity in their society which is one of shared ethical foundation of civic societies (Schulz et al., 2008). In the ICCS 2009 framework, the assessment of it focuses on the principle of all people receiving equal and fair right and treatment which is derived from an important civic principle—“that all people are born equal in terms of dignity and rights”(Schulz et al., p. 19). The assessment of it covers three major groups in societies including, women, ethnic and new immigrants. In the qualitative study, the operational definition of social values was “the way to make judgment on social and moral issues”. It was focused on the ethical side in order to be consistent with the quantitative study.

### 3. Research Background

This section will review the background issues relating to Hong Kong and Taiwan. The focus is on the similarities and differences between the two societies.

#### 3.1. Reasons for selecting Hong Kong and Taiwan

Hong Kong and Taiwan were selected as the foci of this research. As two key

societies in Asia, the investigation can also contribute to a better understanding of the Asian region and in particular Chinese societies within the region. The following will examine the two societies from the perspectives of their geography and religion.

The influence of Asia in the international community is acknowledged as being significant especially in relation to the economic and political development in countries such as China, Japan, India, Singapore and South Korea (Acharya, 2011). Among various Asian societies, China is now recognized as one of the major powers (Acharya, 2011). China also plays a major role across the region seeking friendships and alliances as a result of its “rise” in power and status (Zhang, 2006). This makes studies about Greater China (which includes Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Mainland) attractive and significant.

Hong Kong and Taiwan are two parallel societies with similar characteristics. Each is culturally Chinese, ideologically Confucian and a symbol of geostrategic significance (Soper & Fetzer, 2014). Hong Kong and Taiwan are linked in different ways to Mainland China (Shih & Jones, 2014). As East Asian societies they share a common set of values and moral codes (Cho & Kim, 2013; Karsten, Cogan, Grossman, Liu & Pitiyanuwat, 2002). The culture of the two societies is affected by both Eastern and Western religions such as Buddhism, Catholicism, and Protestantism.

A comparison of students’ religious and civic values in these two Chinese societies can lead to a better understanding of them and provide a valuable perspective on Asian views of citizenship. This represents a departure from an over reliance on Western views of citizenship and contributes to the work that has started to investigate the distinctiveness of Asian perspectives (Kennedy, Kuang & Chow, 2013). The uniqueness of the current study, however, is that it provides a cross-case analysis within the Greater China area (Kaeding, 2011).

A somewhat neglected area of study within both societies is the contribution that religious bodies make to social development including the provision of social and educational services such as operating schools for both adherents and non-adherents.



Schools operated by religious bodies such as the Catholic Church may have certain similarities around the world not limited by geographic boundaries (Bray & Kai, 2007; Daun & Arjmand, 2005; Grace, 2002). In Hong Kong and Taiwan, many students study at primary and secondary levels in religious schools and it might be assumed that religion would have a significant effect on students' values and behavior. Yet, little is known about the effect of the education provided in these schools in either Hong Kong or Taiwan. This is an area where this study can make a contribution.

### 3.2. Civic and Citizenship Education in Hong Kong and Taiwan

The control of curriculum is often regarded as a way for governments to maintain and enhance the legitimacy of their political power (Morris & Sweeting, 1991). Hong Kong and Taiwan have taken different directions in teaching citizenship and identity (Law, 2004). Hong Kong officially aims to develop students as Chinese citizens loyal to the nation, whereas, Taiwan aims to create future citizens with their own identity at a distance from Mainland China (Law, 2004).

#### 3.2.1. Civic and Citizenship Education in Hong Kong

Civic and citizenship education is called “moral and civic education” and adopts school-based approach in Hong Kong SAR. The main goal of it is to facilitate the moral development of students, which can also be considered as the overall aim of school curricula. The coverage of Moral and Civic Education is about the daily lives of students and values formation which infuses into different subjects of twelve years of schooling.

(Lee & Kennedy, 2013, p. 188)

Other than spanning other subjects in the curriculum, the implementation is also related to other daily activities such as participation in school operations and serving other students. Morning assemblies and community service activities launched by schools are also seen as citizenship education (Lee et al., 2013). More than that,



schools provide experiences for students so they can better understand key elements of citizenship such as democracy.

Students have opportunity to be involved in civic and citizenship education-related activities as part of their extracurricular activities (e.g., school newspapers, interest groups, connections with community organizations, and debating groups). Although students can express their views to school management through their teachers or students councils (assuming these have been established), they are not formally involved in school governance.

(Lee et al., 2013, p. 189)

This shows that students are engaged in both formal and informal learning when it comes to civics and moral education.

#### 3.2.1.1. Political Development and Civic and Citizenship Education

Any shift in political environment potentially has a strong influence on the development of its civic and citizenship education. Before its return to China in 1997, Hong Kong was a British colony. Civic education in the colonial period can be divided into the colonial period and late colonial period. Civic education also changed after 1997 due to the shift in political environments.

In the colonial period the aim of civic education was promoting the importance of social order and civic awareness and responsibility (Curriculum Development Council (Hong Kong), 1985). It was believed that this aim of civic education would facilitate the Hong Kong government in administering Hong Kong (Morris & Morris, 2000). In the late colonial period, the aim of civic education also shifted in order to meet the change in political environment. The aim of civic education in 1996 was “To prepare students to become rational, active and responsible citizens in facing challenges arising from the change of sovereignty” (Morris & Morris, 2000 p. 40). Such an aim of civic education was believed to help students to prepare for the change of sovereignty and becoming an SAR and part of China (Morris & Morris,



2000). After 1997, the aim of civic and citizenship was to help students develop their sense of being Chinese citizens (Law, 2004) as stated above. These examples indicate that civic and citizenship education was also driven by Hong Kong's political development as well as the change in political environment.

### 3.2.1.2. Religion, Schools and Civic Values Development

In Hong Kong, most schools are operated by various religious bodies such as the Christian churches (for example, the Catholic Diocese and the Anglican Church). As mentioned above, over 50 % of schools (secondary and primary levels) were operated by various religious bodies in the academic year 2008-2009 (Hong Kong SAR Government Education Bureau, Public Service Enquiry Mail, 10 February, 2010).

Thus most students in Hong Kong pursue their primary education in schools with a religious affiliation. The vision and mission of schools are designed by the affiliated religious bodies and the daily operation of these schools is also influenced by them. The transmission of religious values is not limited to religious education classes. It may also affect the ways students make judgements about social and political issues as well as become leaders in student movements. For example, some university students such as Joshua Wong and Lester Shum, the major student leaders who participated in the recent protests known as the "Umbrella Movement in 2014" received their secondary education in schools with religious affiliation (Ming Pao Daily, 2014; Yam, 2014). They are the new generation of political figures who came to prominence in the Umbrella Movement. This raises the question of whether religious background affects civic values and civic engagement. This is an issue that was investigated in this research.

### 3.2.1.3. Education Reform and Citizenship Education in Hong Kong

It has been argued that the recent education reform at secondary level triggered the participation of students in the 2014 "Umbrella Movement", the large-scale student social movement for democratization in Hong Kong (Makinen & Law, 2014).

Well-known student leaders such as Joshua Wong of Scholarism and Tommy Cheung, the President of the Chinese University Student Union, received their education under the new secondary education curriculum. Although this link has not been established in any scientific sense it is important to understand this Hong Kong context, since it is a central issue for the research reported in this thesis.

One aspect of the reform of senior secondary education was the move towards six years of secondary education for all students rather than five for all and seven for some (Hong Kong Education & Manpower Bureau, 2005). One of the major changes of the senior secondary education curriculum was making “Liberal Studies” a compulsory subject for all students. The syllabus of Liberal Studies covers six major aspects including, “Personal Development and Interpersonal Relationship”, “Hong Kong Today”, “Modern China”, “Globalization” and “Public Health and Energy Technology and Environment” (HKEAA, 2014, p. 11). “It is pluralist in nature and the aim of this subject is to offer students opportunities to explore issues about the human condition in different context” (HKEAA, 2014, p. 2). It is believed that “this subject helps students to make connections among different disciplines, examine issues from a variety of perspectives, and construct personal knowledge of immediate relevance to themselves in today’s world so as to develop students’ independent learning capabilities and cross-curricula thinking” (HKEAA, 2014, p. 2). “Students are expected to be equipped with skills, knowledge and values from this subject and becoming informed and responsible citizens” (HKEAA, 2014, p. 5).

During the Umbrella Movement protests, accusations were made by the pro-establishment camp that this school subject Liberal Studies motivated students to participate in the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, 2014 (Ho, 2014). The pro-establishment camp also criticized that it may have led students to have a misunderstanding of the current development of the Mainland, as well as affecting their attitudes to the Mainland and Mainland government (Oriental Daily, 2014). Also, some government officials argued that the Liberal Studies curriculum contributed to the students’ participation in the movement (Lau, 2014). Despite the controversy, the status and curriculum of Liberal Studies was unchanged during the research period.





If the argument made by the pro-establishment camp is correct, then it does not account for why students pursuing the old curriculum also participated in the Umbrella Movement. The fact, however, is that many students who pursued the old curriculum, the curriculum before Education Reform, have been the major force of this movement as well as becoming student leaders. For example, Alex Chow, the General Secretary of the Hong Kong Federation of Students and his Deputy, Lester Shum, were the student leaders in this movement. Participation in student social movements, therefore, is not just about the school curriculum. What it is about, however, is an important area of investigation in this study.

While all secondary school students are now exposed to Liberal Studies as part of the core new curriculum, many also received their education in schools operated by various religious groups including both Christianity and Buddhism. An interesting question is whether the religious values of these schools may also affect their civic values. Do such schools offer students a strong values foundation for dealing with political and social issues such as democracy? The change of curriculum in secondary schools has provided most students with more chances to observe various social and political issues surrounding them. Does religion affect the new generation of students post the curriculum reform? This is an important question to address.

### 3.2.2. Civic and Citizenship Education in Taiwan

This section discusses the implementation of citizenship education in Taiwan including its historical development and the current scenario.

In the authoritarian era, a core mission of Taiwan's education was to serve the function of nation-building under the ideology of Chinese nationalism. With the replacement of nationalistic education with democratic education, students of civic education are expected to hold a strong commitment to democratic values and principles of equality, even if they may also show a strong adherence to traditional values.



(Lien, 2013, p. 3)

More than this, the values of citizenship education have been changed. As a result of the end of martial law in 1987 and the democratization that followed, the importance of liberalism and pluralism has been promoted thereby affecting the curriculum design of citizenship education (Hung, 2014, p. 1):

The traditional Chinese philosophy has faded away and the new citizenship education therefore attempts to counter the emphasis of fostering “obedient citizens” under monolithic Confucian doctrines and envisions a resilient civil society open to pluralistic voices.

“In new period, civic education concentrates more on the essence of democracy, such as participation in the democratic decision-making” (Lee, 2007, p. 110). “The focus is helping students to become participatory and responsible citizens” (Liu, Lin & Tsai, 2013, p. 73).

Social Studies as a newly created field is one element of the ‘Integrated Nine-year General Curricula’ implemented since 2001 for secondary school students. It was considered a significant change in the teaching and learning of civic and citizenship education (Doong, 2008). There are nine major aspects covered by Social Studies including, “People and Space”, “People and Time”, “Change and Continuity”, “Meaning and Values”, “Individual, Interpersonal Relations and Group”, “Power, Rules and Human Rights”, “Production, Distribution and Consumption”, “Science, Technology and Society” and “Global Connection” (Ministry of Education (Taiwan), 2008, pp. 3-10). Students are also encouraged to participate in related activities based on the principle of “global thinking, local practice” (Liu et al., 2013).

Other than classroom learning, every junior secondary school forms a student council enabling students to express their ideas regarding school matters to school management (Liu et al., 2013). This council also aims to develop students’ abilities to self-govern, working skills and nature of democracy (Liu et al., 2013, p. 73).



### 3.2.2.1 Political Development and Civic and Citizenship Education

In Taiwan, political development also plays a significant role affecting civic and citizenship education. It can be categorized into three periods including, Authoritarian Period (1949-1987), Transitional Period (1998-2003) and Current Period (from 2004 ) (Ho, Lam & Yeh, 2013).

After the Nationalists retreated from Mainland to Taiwan as their base the authoritarian period began. The aim of citizenship education was to teach students to become “human beings and good students as well as good Chinese who love their country and fellows (Ho et al., 2013, p. 364) The rationale behind this aim was to resist the Communists in Mainland China (Doong 2008; Ho et al., 2013; Lee, 2004). After the authoritarian period and the end of martial law in 1987, “the movement towards democracy, social pluralism, social equality, capitalism and technology were underway that heavily influence the education system” (Ho et al., 2013, p. 394). The concepts about democratic process and legal concepts were introduced to students (Ho et al., 2013; Lee, 2004). Nowadays, the focus of civic education has also changed. The aim as stated above is to encourage students to become a responsible and active participating citizen (Liu et al., 2013). These changes indicate that political development also played an influential role in the development of citizenship education.

### 3.2.2.2. Reforms of Citizenship Education and its Arguments

One of the controversial issues about the curriculum guidelines of Social Studies issued in 2008 is national identity, especially the change from a China-centred national identity to a Taiwan-centred identity in the curriculum (Liu et al., 2013). National identity issues are always controversial issues due to the island’s historical development and special relations with the Mainland (Liu, 2004). On this issue, there is no clear answer among Taiwanese people and even among the major political parties (Liu, Hung & Vickers, 2005).



Another controversial issue in citizenship education in Taiwan has been making *Civics and Society* (also translated as *Citizens and Society*), a subject for high school students to learn about citizenship, an examination subject for secondary school graduates (Liu et al., 2013). Civics and Society contains two major components: Compulsory and Elective. The compulsory component is used for high school students (Year 1 & Year 2) to build up their foundation for this subject and the elective (Year 3) is based on the foundation of the compulsory one for helping students with in-depth study (Ministry of Education (Taiwan), 2010). The goals of this subject are “Equipping students with social knowledge”, “Developing students’ various values and sense of being citizens” and “Enhancing their participation in democratic society” (Ministry of Education (Taiwan), 2010, p. 155). There are four major domains covered by this curriculum including, “Self, Society and Culture”, “Politics and Democracy”, “Morality and Law” and “Economics and Sustainable Development” (Ministry of Education (Taiwan), 2010, pp. 155-179). “The aim of the elective curriculum of Civics and Society is to have further development of students’ potential in exercising citizenship” (Ministry of Education (Taiwan), 2010, p. 181). There are two major domains of this curriculum issued in 2010 as well as the key examination syllabus for the university entrance exam for secondary school graduates including, “Modern Society and Law” and “Democracy, Politics and Economics” (Ministry of Education (Taiwan), 2010, pp. 181-193).

Even though there were some opposing views from stakeholders such as the workload of students and the way of teaching citizenship education, the policy has been in effect since July 2009 (Liu et al., 2013).

#### 3.2.2.3. Religion, Schools and Civic Values Development

The proportion of religious schools in Taiwan is not as significant as in Hong Kong. In the academic year, 2010-2011, less than 2% of primary schools were private and managed by non-government bodies including religious bodies and charities in Taiwan. At the secondary level, around 19% were private and not managed by the



government (Taiwan Government Ministry of Education, Public Service Enquiry Mail, 24 November, 2010). In other words, most students in Taiwan attend schools that do not have any direct religious affiliation. Such public schools do not use specific religious values to nurture students. On this issue there is a significant difference between Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Yet similar to Hong Kong, Taiwan has also produced the “Sun Flower Movement”,<sup>3</sup> a large-scale student social movement, and a new generation of political leaders. It is similar to the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong and preceded it. For example, student leaders, Lin Fei-fan and Chen Wei-ting obtained their secondary education in public schools (Apple Daily (Taiwan), 2014; Wong, 2014b). Yet, these schools do not have any religious affiliation and in this, there is a difference from Hong Kong as explained above. With the different contexts in Hong Kong and Taiwan, what is the role of the religious background of schools and the development of civic values? This was a question addressed by this research.

### 3.3. Similarities between Hong Kong and Taiwan

Taiwan and Hong Kong both have relatively small populations (Soper & Fetzer, 2014, p. 158). The population structure is similar in both societies. About 94% of the population in Hong Kong is Chinese and the remainder is composed of different ethnic minorities and in Taiwan about 97% are Chinese and the rest is composed of indigenous Austronesian people in Taiwan (Census and Statistics Department (Hong Kong), 2011; Office of the President (Taiwan Government), 2011). This population structure provides the basis for similar cultural foundations across the two societies (Kaeding, 2011; Liao, Fu & Yi, 2005). Confucian influences are also strong (Yi, 2013). Yet modern Chinese culture is not purely traditional (Liao et al., 2005; Lu, 2001) although it still retains some core Chinese cultural values (Liao et al., 2005; Yang, 1986). For example, filial piety is still strongly emphasized and affects interpersonal relations in both Hong Kong and Taiwan (Liao et al., 2005; Salaff, 1986; Yeh, 2003). Moreover, both societies more or less adopt the traditional Chinese division of work between males and females in the family (Chien & Yi, 2003; Liao et



al., 2005). Thus, Hong Kong and Taiwan are culturally Chinese and ideologically Confucian (Soper & Fetzer, 2014, p. 157). This means that young citizens in the two societies are socialized with similar cultural and ideology values.

Regarding social, economic and human development levels, the societies are similar. In 2007, the Human Development Indexes of both societies were categorized as a “very high” level, i.e., 0.943 in Taiwan and 0.944 in Hong Kong. The Gross Domestic Product per capita of both societies is close, i.e., US\$29,912 in Hong Kong and US\$29,800 in Taiwan (Schulz et al., 2010, p. 40). Also, economic success in Taiwan and Hong Kong commencing in the 1960s and lasting until the 1990s made people in both societies generate a sense of pride in being “Taiwan people” and “Hong Kong people” (Kaeding, 2011). Similar social, economic and human development levels indicate that the students from Hong Kong and Taiwan are nurtured in a similar environment. This provides a good basis for comparison.

Regarding religious diversity, Hong Kong and Taiwan societies can be characterized as multi-religious. There is no state or dominant religion in either society. Taiwan and Hong Kong have Buddhists and ancestor-worshippers with small but influential Christian minorities (Soper & Fetzer, 2014, p. 157). In Taiwan, there are about 24 religious denominations such as Buddhism, Christianity, Taoism and Folk Religion (Department of Civil Affairs (Taiwan Government), 2011). There are six major religions in Hong Kong including, Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Taoism, Islam and Confucianism (Cheung, 2010).

Church-state relations are governed by the administration of religious policy in the two societies. Both Hong Kong and Taiwan governments have adopted more-or-less benign religion-state separatism (Soper & Fetzer, 2014, p. 157). The Hong Kong government adopts such a principle to deal with the various religious groups (Cheung, 2010; Soper & Fetzer, 2014; Tan, 1997). The relations between the two sides are contractual relations in the provision of education and social services (Cheung, 2010). The Taiwan government also makes use of such a principle to handle its relations with religious groups (Jochim, 2003; Kuo, 2008; Kuo & Kuan, 2008; Soper & Fetzer,



2014). Religious bodies are free to operate and provide any education and social services. For example, it is possible to find private religious schools at various levels. In other words, the religious bodies in the two societies are not affiliated with any government departments and enjoy autonomy in operation. Religious bodies in both Hong Kong and Taiwan can allocate their resources and make any appointment without the consent of their governments.

Religious bodies in the two societies play significant roles in the provision of education services. They have offered different levels of education services for a long time and serve thousands of students every year. Such bodies not only provide students with knowledge but also potentially shape their values through affiliated religious bodies which deeply influence the value of both societies and young citizens in the two places. The schools operated by religious bodies serve both adherents and non-adherents. The mission and vision of these schools contain religious values such as Buddhist and Christian values and guide the development and ways of teaching young citizens such as emphasizing love, justice and mercy.<sup>4</sup> Christian schools always use the doctrines highlighted in the Bible such as the Gospel to nurture students to deal with their interpersonal relations such as “Love of One’s Neighbor”. The Buddhist schools adopt the spirit of Buddha and God of Mercy (Guanyin) to shape their students. These schools also organize different kinds of religious activities such as celebration of religious important dates and visits. Christian schools like to organize the celebration of Christmas and Easter and Buddhist schools like to celebrate Buddha as well as promoting vegetarian diets.<sup>4</sup>

The history of Christianity in Taiwan started around the mid-1840s and it became a Christian mission field after the signing of the Tianjin and Beijing Treaties with the Qing Dynasty (Rubinstein, 2003). One of most prominent Christian missionaries to Taiwan was the Presbyterian cleric and medical doctor, George Leslie Mackay in 1871 (Rubinstein, 2003; Soper & Fetzer, 2014). In Taiwan, the Christian Churches have played an important role in modern history. Churches helped to build schools and hospitals, advocated civil and social welfare services as well as helping to introduce Western ideas and institutions (Zhai & Woodberry, 2011, p. 308). They



established the earliest universities and a women's college in Taiwan. These Protestant-funded colleges began before the government colleges (Zhai & Woodberry, 2011, p. 311). Nowadays, the Taiwan Catholic Church operates 30 high schools and 11 primary schools (The Taiwan Catholic Church, 2009). The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan manages three high schools (The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, 2011). The Buddhist organizations operate five outstanding high schools for Taiwan people (Department of Civil Affairs (Taiwan Government), 2011).

Hong Kong became a British colony with a special socio-political cultural system. Protestants and Catholic Christians were invited by the government to participate in the provision of education services during the early colonial age (Leung & Chan, 2003). Currently, there are more religious schools than government schools and they play a dominant role in the provision of primary and secondary education services. The Hong Kong Catholic Church is the major Catholic school sponsoring body and the leader of Catholic schools in Hong Kong (Cheung, 2010). Also, there are many Christian denominations providing education services such as The Anglican Church (Sheng Kung Hui) and The Hong Kong Methodist Church. Besides, both Buddhist and Taoist religious bodies are school sponsoring bodies which provide secular curriculum education services to adherents and non-adherents (Cheung, 2010, p. 94).

### 3.4. Differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan

The socio-political development of the two societies has been quite different. Both Hong Kong and Taiwan were part of China in the Qing Dynasty. In 1842 Hong Kong commenced a period of colonial rule under Great Britain (Endacott & Hinton, 1977) and in 1895 due to China's loss in the Sino-Japanese War, Taiwan came under Japanese colonial rule (Li, 2009).

Throughout much of the twentieth century, therefore, each society experienced different colonial administrations. By the end of the Second World War, Taiwan was freed from colonial rule but came under the influence of Chinese Nationalists fleeing from the success of the Communist Party on the Mainland (Tien & Shiau, 1992). This





resulted in a direct split with Mainland authorities with Taiwan declaring its independence. Hong Kong, on the other hand was under British rule for about 150 years. These have been very different historical and political pathways for these two Chinese societies.

Hong Kong and Taiwan's political development reflects their historical development. In Taiwan, the Nationalists led by Chiang Kai Shek withdrew their base from the Mainland to Taiwan in 1949. Taiwan then became the Republic of China claiming to represent the whole country and not just Taiwan (Vickers, 2010). The Nationalist government initially enjoyed full control without any challenge (Tien & Shiau, 1992). The Chungli Incident in 1977 was a turning point in the democratization of Taiwan. In the local election that year, opposition candidates won one quarter of the magistrates' and mayors' posts as well as 30 percent of the seats in the provincial assembly (Tien & Shiau, 1992, p. 60).

From 1987, the Nationalist regime undertook two major steps to liberalize society and to implement democratic reform including the lifting of Martial Law in July 1987 which had operated since May 1949 and the removal of the restriction on public affairs especially with the relaxation for forming political parties (Tien & Shiau, 1992). For example, the opposition political party, the Democratic Progressive Party, was formed in 1986 (Tien & Shiau, 1992). It also acted as a strong challenge to the Nationalists and the two-party system began to take shape at the same time (Yu, 2005). Since the amendment of the constitution in the 1990s, Taiwan citizens can choose their President through fair and open elections (Office of the President (Taiwan Government), 2011). Until the Presidential election in 2000, the Nationalists had not been defeated by the other political party, the Democratic Progressive Party. The Democratic Progress Party won the Presidential election in 2000 under the leadership of Chen Shui-bian who was the President of Taiwan from 2000 to 2008 (Sutter, 2011). The transition of ruling power from one political party to another indicated the end of the hegemonic age of rule in Taiwan and represented a significant milestone of Taiwan democratization (Yu, 2005, p. 109). The Nationalists led by Ma Ying-jeou won the presidential election in 2008 (Roy, 2012). The two rotations of



ruling parties clearly reflects the power of citizens in choosing the government they preferred as well as reflecting a democratic story similar to mature Western democracies (Ho, Clarke, Chen & Weng, 2013).

Compared with Taiwan, the political development of Hong Kong is another story. During the colonial era, Hong Kong was not a democracy. Hong Kong people were not able to decide their way of life. The Governor of Hong Kong, the representative of the British Crown, had the supreme power to rule the colony during the British colonial period. The Governor could make all the decisions without considering the willingness of Hong Kong people (King, 1975). “The colonial government co-opted the elites into the government bodies, *administrative absorption of politics*” (King, 1975, p. 242). “The government co-opts the political forces, often represented by elite groups, into an administrative decision-making body, thus achieving some level of elite integration; as a consequence, the government authority is made legitimate, a loosely integrated political community is established” (King, 1975, p. 242). The pattern of *administrative absorption of politics* lasted until the end of the colonial age (Cheung & Wong, 2004, p. 880).

Under colonial rule, the future of Hong Kong was not decided by the Hong Kong people and simply decided by the British and China governments. One of the most critical examples was the absence of any kind of formal Hong Kong people’s participation due to the insistence of the Beijing government in the Sino-British negotiation about the life for millions of Hong Kong people after 1997 (Yahuda, 1993). In the late colonial age, the influence from China gradually increased especially in regard to issues related to the return of sovereignty such as the preparation of the Basic Law (Cheung & Wong, 2004).

After the return of sovereignty to the Chinese government in 1997, Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region. Hong Kong was to become ruled under the principle of “One country, Two systems” (stated in the Preamble), “High degree of



autonomy” (stated in Article 2) and the composition of executive authorities and legislature of the Hong Kong SAR (stated in Article 3) and independent judicial power with final adjudication (stated in Article 2) as stipulated in the Hong Kong Basic Law (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2012). China, as the sovereign authority, has the final say over Hong Kong’s important affairs such as the appointment of the major government officials of the Hong Kong Government, such as heads of Ministries, the police force and the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) as well as the Head of the Hong Kong government, the Chief Executive Officer (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2012). The Chief Executive Officer is not elected by universal suffrage currently and only selected by the Electoral Committee (a group of 1,200 members with so-called ‘broad representative’-like business leaders, professional and influential people loyal to the Beijing Central Government) (Fiss, 1998).

In the Chief Executive Officer election 2012, two of the three candidates came from the pro-establishment camp and obtained majority votes from the election committee. The pro-establishment camp obtained 974 votes out of the total 1,193 votes and the opposition candidate only received 76 votes (Kan, 2012). In other words, the future and way of life in Hong Kong is decided by the visible hand of the Beijing government and a small group of people with close relations with the Beijing government rather than ordinary Hong Kong people through democracy.

The relationship between religion and education in both Hong Kong and Taiwan support the provision of secular education services to both adherents and non-adherents at primary and secondary levels. Yet, the ratio of the total number of religious schools compared with the total number schools in the two societies is different as mentioned in the previous section. This helps to identify the differences in the environment affecting students in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

### 3.5. Summary

Based on the above characteristics, Hong Kong and Taiwan provide a good basis for a comparison of the influence of religion on students' civic values and social values. They have a similar population structure, cultural, social and economic development, and multi-religious environment but differ in historical and political development as well as the proportion of schools offered by religious bodies. Other than similarities, Hong Kong and Taiwan are different in historical and political development as well as the level of religious participation in education which makes them different from each other. The existence of both similarities and differences between the societies provide a platform for conducting comparative study (Bray & Thomas, 1995).

The research output of this project will provide a picture of the characteristics of students in the two societies and the influence of religious attitudes and civic values. It will develop a model that can account for the religious and civic attitudes and values of Hong Kong and Taiwanese students. By focusing on these two Asian societies, this study will extend the theoretical work on Asian conceptions of citizenship and make possible further comparisons with Western ideas about civic and social values.

#### 4. Research Significance

This section discusses the significance of this research, how it contributes to and extends existing knowledge, what can be learnt about citizenship and religious education and how this might be useful to both policy makers and practitioners in both Hong Kong and Taiwan.

First, this research project is about citizenship which is an important topic for societies, governments and the academic world. Citizenship has attracted a lot of attention in the academic world in the past ten years due to its importance related to nation building, social cohesion and democracy (Arnot & Swartz, 2012). This project helps to develop a deeper understanding of the development of citizenship in Hong



Kong and Taiwan.

Second, the role of religion in citizenship is highlighted in this project. Religion is an important factor affecting students (Gates, 2006; Grundel & Maliepaard, 2012). The review of this important relation is valuable for understanding how this factor affects students' civic life. The influence of students' religious engagement will be examined in this project. It will help to open up the discussion of religion as a possible significant factor of shaping young people's values and behavior as can be seen in the case of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Sim, 2014). Terrorism itself is often related to religion, Islam (Hoffman, 2002). Although these issues are not prevalent in the societies to be studied here, they are now matters of global concern (Willsher, Mason, Black & Chulov, 2014) so that the more that is known about the role of religion and civic values the better that these significant global issues can be addressed.

Third, students may become the frontline of social movements in the future. The understanding of the influence from religion on the development of students' civic values and social values helps to generate some insights about why students are participating in some political activities now and in the future like studying in university. Reviewing the explanation from Joshua Wong about how Christian values encouraged him to become an activist reflects the influence of religion on students' civic values (Wong, 2014). The findings here may help to generate some insights about the students' attitudes towards participation in some recent social movements in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Fourth, the findings generated from this research can help to give a better understanding about Asian social and civic values in general and Chinese values in particular.

Fifth, this research also offers insights for the further development of a model for measuring the influence of religious engagement on student's civic and social values development in Asia Chinese societies. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter,



this research also tries to apply the framework generated from the Western literature on studying Hong Kong and Taiwanese students. It helps to know whether the western framework is suitable for Eastern Chinese societies as well as facilitating the development of model on studying this topic.

Sixth, religious schools play a significant role in both Hong Kong and Taiwan as mentioned. The study of the influence of schools and religious education on citizenship is an important perspective for both Hong Kong and Taiwan societies, government and schools itself to reflect on thinking how to nurture their students. At school level, it helps the management of religious schools to know about the outcome of their education on their students in taking up the citizen's role in society. Also, societies and parents can also learn more about the variance between schools with and without a religious background. For the government, this research output is important for formulating policy about citizenship education, values education and so on.

## 5. Thesis Structure

In this section, I shall describe the structure of this thesis. There are altogether six chapters including this Introduction chapter.

Chapter 2 provides a Literature Review. The major function of this chapter is to provide a strong theoretical foundation for this research and offer insights into the development of research questions as well as the model to be proposed.

Chapter 3 deals with the Methodology and Methods used in the research. The key function here is to explain how the research was conducted and how the results were analyzed. It outlines the research methods used in this project and the rationale for them. It refers to the data sources and how the data were collected. In particular, it focuses on how the research questions proposed in Chapter 1 were answered.

Chapter 4 provides the Results. The role of this chapter is to present the results of the data analysis in relation to the research questions. The conceptual model produced in



Chapter 2 will be tested here with the data used for the study. Because this was a mixed methods design, the interview data were triangulated with the quantitative results to see how the same age students respond to similar issues to those raised in the quantitative survey.

Chapter 5 focuses on the Discussion of the results. In this chapter, the analytical results in Chapter 4 will be discussed in relation to the two research questions. After that, major implications generated from the findings are also discussed.

Chapter 6 will draw the thesis to a Conclusion. The function of this chapter is to review this thesis, highlight research contributions, acknowledge research limitations and look forward to possible future research directions.

## 6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed the basic structure of this research including the research focus, research background, research gap, research significance and thesis structure. The research background helps to provide a better understanding of Hong Kong and Taiwan, especially the active participation of students in relation to political issues, to act as a platform on which to conduct this comparative study. The next chapter offers a review of the literature. It helps to provide a better understanding of the theoretical development and empirical studies related to this research topic.

## Notes

1. The selection of research participants is primarily based on the design of the International Civics and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) (Schulz et al., 2010).
2. The name “Umbrella movement” was generated from Hong Kong students and citizens using umbrellas to protect themselves from police pepper spray and tear gas and the umbrellas, the nickname, became the symbol of this civil-disobedience movement (Lyengar, 2014).
3. Since the democratization of Taiwan in the 1990s, the names of student social



movements are usually the name of a plant such as the Wild Lilies movement in the 1990s right after the Beijing Tiananmen Square student movement in 1989 and the Wild Strawberries movement in 2009. The reason for this way of naming is to reflect certain kinds of meanings like Wild Lilies imply toughness and purity (Wasserstrom, 2014). The “Sunflower movement” was named by Taiwan students based on the tradition to reflect ‘transparency’ (Wasserstrom, 2014).

4. Reference from three religious schools in Taiwan and Hong Kong respectively. (Taiwan: Saint Francis High School (Catholic), Chang Jung Senior High School (Christian), Tzu Chi Senior High School (Buddhism) (Hong Kong: Newman Catholic College (Catholic), SKH All Saints Middle School (Christian), Buddhist Tai Hung College (Buddhism) (7 October, 2014)





## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1. Introduction**

This chapter focuses on reviewing the literature related to the current research. It provides the theoretical support for studying the influence of Hong Kong and Taiwan students' religious engagement in their civic values, social values, and attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. This chapter consists of five sections including this Introduction. Section 2 deals with the basic concepts that inform this thesis: (2.1) Citizenship, (2.2) Religion, and (2.3) Education. Section 3 examines the linkage among religion, education and citizenship, and highlights the interrelationship among these three concepts. Section 4 highlights the empirical literature related to this study. Section 5 discusses about the hypothesized conceptual model. Section 6 provides a summary and conclusion to this chapter and introduces the next chapter.

#### **2. The Basic Concepts**

This section reviews the basic theoretical understanding of the major concepts used in the research. These include citizenship, religion and education. The exploration of these concepts is in relation to the research aims and questions. Citizenship, religion and education are interrelated. Each of them will be discussed below individually first and followed by the discussion about the relations among these concepts.

##### **2.1. Citizenship**

In the ancient Greek, Aristotle defined “citizens as the one who rules and is ruled in turn, making “citizenship” conceptually inseparable for political governance (Smith, 2002, p.106). This ancient Greek idea about citizenship, however, may be treated as a threat by many rulers such as King Alexander who disappeared for political reasons (Smith, 2002). In addition, citizenship may be simply regarded as “the activity of fulfilling one’s obligation towards one’s fellow citizens” (Burchell, 2002, p.



89). It may not be consistent with the modern citizenship in most societies around the world. The concept of modern citizenship is different. It focuses on the rights and obligations of citizens rather than only the obligation of following the rulers such as the king (Burchell, 2002; Isin & Turner, 2002). “Modern citizenship itself was born of the nation-state in which certain rights and obligations were allocated to individuals under its authority” (Isin & Turner, 2002, p. 3).

Citizenship has attracted a lot of attention in the academic world in the past ten years because of its relevance to nation building, social cohesion and democratic citizenship (Arnot & Swartz, 2012). “Effective citizenship and political participation are the prerequisites of a functioning society” (Mycock & Tonge, 2012, p. 155). Therefore, citizenship is an important research topic.

Citizenship is not only related to the right and obligations of individuals in society but also to the preferred way for them to perform in society. “The citizen is a person who has rights and duties in a democratic society” (Audigier, 2000, p. 17). Citizenship can be defined as the collection of rights and obligations of an individual as a formal legal entity. These rights and obligations are linked to political communities such as government, courts, administrative bodies and councils of the state (Parker & Hoon, 2013; Stokes, 2008; Turner, 1997). Walzer (1994) refers to both “thin” and “thick” concepts of citizenship. Walzer’s categorization has helped develop a better understanding of the political role of citizens (Kennedy, Hahn & Lee, 2008). A “thin” concept of citizenship concerns the passive role of citizens such as being obedient and participation in voting. A “thick” concept focuses on the higher expectation about citizens’ performance such as their virtues and contributions to the community (Walzer, 1994). These concepts reflect the duties of citizens in society, the power they enjoy and the expected role they should perform.

Rokeach (1973) defined values as a particular belief or conduct that is personally and socially preferred. Schwartz (1994) pointed out that values can be defined as a set of guiding principles in life with broad and trans-situational goals. Print (2000) also agrees that values can strongly affect an individual’s behavior. Citizenship is a set of



values about morality and behavior related to political participation and activity at local, national and global levels (Crook, Freathy & Wright, 2011). This set of values underlying an individual's beliefs is at the core of citizenship. "In both its more passive and more participatory forms these values are expressions of deeply felt assumptions and convictions about the nature of human beings and of social and political belonging" (Gates, 2006, p. 573). There is general agreement that citizenship is about rights, privileges and responsibilities related to an affiliated political community (Mycock & Tonge, 2012).

Citizenship has not only underpinned the reconfiguration of relationships between individual, groups, communities and the state but also civic and civil values (Mycock & Tonge, 2012, p. 140). Audigier (2000, p. 17) has commented:

Democratic citizenship thus implies the authority of the individual as the primary value, with all the risks that this entails for the powers that be; furthermore, much discourse and corresponding actions try to achieve a sort of moderation of this freedom-autonomy by appealing to the sense of responsibility and knowledge of the legal and even moral obligations implied by living together and respecting the other person, other groups.

This definition shows clearly that democratic citizenship does not only include the rights and obligations of individuals but also reflects the importance of the spirit of democracy and the power of supervising the government. "The practice of democratic citizenship refers to participation in decision-making processes, based on awareness and commitment to shared fundamental values, such as human rights and freedoms, equality of difference and the rule of law" (Grundel & Maliepaard, 2012, p. 2076). The practice of democracy means exercising the rights and obligations of being citizens. This does not only ask for a positive attitude towards these responsibilities but also requires having social and cognitive competences such as the ability to think critically, to change perspective and to understand the democratic system (Grundel & Maliepaard, 2012; Ten Dam & Volman, 2004). In this system, citizens are needed to



participate in various political and social decision-making processes such as voting, policy development as well as law establishment. No matter the standpoints that citizens choose such as supporting a candidate, opposing a policy or asking for a law amendment, they all need to face the challenges from other citizens with different values, ideas and backgrounds in society (Grundel & Maliepaard, 2012).

The above reviews various literature related to citizenship. Citizenship is about the role of individuals to perform in society in relation to political and social life such as political participation. Citizens enjoy both rights and obligations such as religious freedom and obedience of law and regulation. Citizenship itself may also contain a set of values driving the political behaviors of individuals which socially and personally preferred as Rokeach (1973) proposed.

Young people in different societies have different socialization experiences that shape their values and attitudes towards political life (Kennedy, Hahn & Lee, 2008). Also, young people are not yet citizens and they learn from their families, schools and communities to become citizens in the future (Kennedy, 2007). The different citizenship treatments of young people may develop different values and attitudes towards political life. The values citizens uphold come not only from formal institutions like family and schools' associational environments but also from other less formal institutions that play a significant role in affecting the values of citizens (Grundel & Malieppard, 2012).

## 2.2. Religion

Religion is one of the oldest institutions of human society and all races in the world practice religion (Cheung, 1992). Religion is not simply a matter of personal belief but also a powerful force throughout history which can work for both good and destroy (Hinnells, 2010; Phenix, 1971).

Religion contains a set of values and doctrines which make the influence of religion significant and explicit. It influences what people do, and often provides meaning in



people's lives, including moral and political judgement, as well as their sense of the world (Nord, 2011). Religion influences people every day. It has a set of ideas that affect human behavior in various aspects such as eating habits, marriage and rules of conduct. Religion may be thought of as “a set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence” (Bellah, 1964, p. 359).

Religion can also be defined as a system of beliefs and practices by which a group of people interpret and respond to what they feel sacred, and usually supernatural as well (Johnstone, 2004, p. 13). Emile Durkheim's definition of religion is also helpful:

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unites into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them.  
(Durkheim, 1912/1995, p. 44)

Durkheim's definition, suggests that “religion is about a group of people who declare they have a common belief and have common practice in certain rituals with any amount of frequency or regularly” (Hargrove, 1989, p. 25). As mentioned by Durkheim, religion is not only a system of beliefs and conceptions but also a system of actions involving rituals and people who can sense their religion's moral power from participation in religious activities (Hamilton, 2001). Religion provides certain guidelines for individuals to act as well as providing them a strong foundation for making judgements.

The above concepts reflect various perspectives about religion and show that people often label themselves as a group with certain religious beliefs (for example those related to Buddhism and Catholicism). In other words, religion provides a kind of identity for individuals affecting their life, behavior and values. Based on this, Hemming and Madge (2011) proposed a four-fold definition of religion and religious identity including, “affiliation and belonging”, “behaviors and practice”, “beliefs and values” and “religious and spiritual experiences”. By studying these different aspects,

it helps to provide a better understanding of the role of religion and its potential influences on young people (Hemming & Madge, 2011).

Religion acting as a unified system of beliefs offering a set of values and codes guiding behavior affects both individuals and society. Religious values are often linked to the morality of society and the individual. As Hargrove, (1989, p. 25) has noted, “religious institutions may provide particularly strong sanctions against behavior that threatens not only social unity but species survival”. In other words, religion provides a standard for guiding human behavior, what people should do and should not do as well as what is right and wrong. Our moral treatment of others is largely what we believe is good and ultimately beneficial for them and that in turn will depend upon our view of the nature of human beings, e.g., are they my “brothers and sisters”, sharing the same “father” in a “family”, or just a random collection of atoms and molecules? It seems, then, that “morality and religion are in certain respects independent of each other but in other respects are closely inter-locked” (Straughan, 1989, p. 105). The teaching of religion also assists young people to have a standard for making judgments about what is “right” and “wrong” in both political and social issues (Nord, 2011).

It is always argued that people with religious beliefs are different from people without such beliefs due to the different interpretation of issues in life. Religion can also serve as a framework for explaining the meaning of life (Molnar & Tomka, 1989). For example, people without religious beliefs may simply treat freedom as a way to pursue their interests and desires. Yet, people with strong religious commitment like Christians think that freedom can only be found in following God’s way and living according to God’s will (Pike, 2008). Although different denominations and religions have different practices and attitudes towards life and rituals, the religious values always offer their adherents a particular perspective. People with various religious affiliations develop their own living styles and mindsets as the standard for making judgments.

It is important to recognize that religion is not only a private matter but can also



involve social issues as well as matters of social development. Religious institutions often hold particular power even when their messages are applied not only to individuals but also to other institutions or to society at large (Hargrove, 1989, p. 25). Also, religion is a significant social and political force in the world (Parker & Hoon, 2013). In other words, the values and behavioral guidelines provided by the religious bodies based on their religious doctrines have great impact for both individuals and society. Religion may also affect the formation of social standards towards political and social issues. Such impact is not limited by geographic boundaries. The influence can be cross-national. For example, the impact of Catholic values is not limited to the Vatican but is international. At the end of 2011, there were about 1.2 billion members of the Roman Catholic Church across all countries; about 17.5% of the total number of people on the Earth (Vatican Radio, 2013).

This broader concern means that religion as well as religious bodies can exert great influence at both social and global levels. Religious values also guide religious bodies to serve society and people such as the provision of social services, care for the sick and weak as well as children and upholding justice, fairness, and morality, and promoting participation in political development. For example, for Christians, the Gospel of Matthew highlights that people should act as both salt and light in the world (Matthew: 5:13-16, New International Version). In other words, people should be part of the secular world and provide help for others. Because of these messages that urge their adherents to participate in serving society, many religious bodies work hard to provide various kinds of social services to the world. Education service is also a major area where religious bodies operate schools at various levels including primary, secondary and tertiary. Many religious groups seek to socialize youth into their faith and institutions (Hoge & Petrillo, 1978).

The social orders will work well when people believe in a common thought and moral standard coming from religion (Riesebrodt & Konieczny, 2010). Some religions like Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism are also concerned with a supernatural-like God or life after death. They make use of such ideas to motivate people to behave in a good way as well as prevent people from doing bad things. For



example, “Karma (Sanskrit for “deed” or “action”), as typically understood within Hinduism and Buddhism, is a concept of cause and effect in which all actions are shaping past, present and future events. It is, in effect, the idea that one reaps the good and bad consequence of her or his actions, either in this life or in another” (Meister, 2010. p. 121). In other words, people will be rewarded in the next life if they do something good in the present life. Also, people will be punished. For example, people will go to hell if they do something bad (Harvey, 2000). Making use of the supernatural helps to encourage people to do something good and avoid doing something bad, as well as making judgments about various social and political issues.

Religion is able to offer a values system for youngsters transmitted to them through different ways such as family life, school, peers and the community (Kerestes, Youniss & Metz, 2004). Regnerus (2003, p. 394) has argued that “a higher level of religious involvement is generally associated with positive outcomes during adolescence”. It seems that a higher level of religious engagement could have a positive impact on the development of young people. Nevertheless, what are the factors affecting people viewing religion? Hepburn (1971, p. 172) argued that the measurement of the development of religious attitude has a lack of consensus resulting from conflicting legal philosophical positions and lacking of reliable information on the phenomenon. Other than how religion itself affects people, it is also important to know the views of people toward the role of religion in society. It helps to draw a clearer picture with different perspectives on studying religion and young people. This research helps to generate insights about how students are affected by religion in Asian and a multi-religious society and contributes the theoretical development in this topic.

### 2.2.1 Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society

Regarding the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, it is also a way for understanding the citizenship values of students (Schulz et al., 2008). Religion maybe regarded as a civic institution and facilitating the connection between citizens and state as well as offering a platform for citizens to perform their roles in societies



(Schulz et al., 2008). The study of attitudes towards the influence of religion on society also implies students' perception towards the civic society and system (Schulz et al., 2008). Religion also plays significant role on contributing the civic participation (Schulz et al., 2008; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995) as mentioned above. The attitudes towards the influence of religion on society also reflect students' perception about the role of religion in their political and social life such as the influence of religious values on them like religion and politics.

Moreover, the study about influence of religious engagement on attitudes towards the influence of religion on society helps to identify whether it makes students and how they are related. The study of attitudes towards the influence of religion on society also helps to have better understanding about both indirect effect of religious engagement pass through the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and direct effect of religious engagement on civic and social values through comparison. Therefore, it is important to investigate students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society.

### 2.3. Education

Education is often treated as a process of socialization (Shimahara, 1972). Socialization is a way to transmit and internalize social values and norms traditionally and can be treated as a process for transmitting major social and cultural values so as to develop the social identity of individuals as well as a kind of cultural-normative integration (Vermeer, 2010). Thus, education does not simply mean academic learning in classrooms but is also concerned with shaping values. The following paragraphs will attempt to frame education by theoretically looking particularly at functionalist theory and conflict theory. The purpose is to provide some insight concerning the role of education in society.

“Functionalist sociologists begin with a picture of society that stresses the interdependence of the social system” (Sadovnik, 2007, p. 3). The major functions of education include equipping students with knowledge and skills and maintaining



social order (Thio, 2005). Vermeer (2010, p.4) highlighted Durkheim's view that education is the means by which individuals adapt to society. For Durkheim, socialization is the main function of education both as an individual and as a social being. Although education takes different forms in different societies, Durkheim believed that education was important for the creation of moral values in society, such values being seen as the foundation of society (Sadovnik, 2007). Durkheim also believed that education was the way to transmit and internalize societal norms (Vermeer, 2010).

In addition, the functionalist believes that the purpose of school is to shape students based on the needs of society so as to facilitate their social development such as values, knowledge and skills (Marshall, 2010; Shimahara, 1972; Wilson, 1961). This process of values formation often involves a set of expected values so as to maintain social order in society (Sadovnik, 2007). Thus, education is not only a matter of academic learning but also a matter of making society work well through values shaping and skills training. Ballantine (2001, p. 9) summarized the functionalist position when he indicated that "a primary function of schools is the passing on of the knowledge and behaviors necessary to maintain order in society" (Ballantine, 2001) that often involves transmitting a common set of ideas to the new generation. Thus, education shapes students according to the expectation of society by transmitting values and skills so as to ensure that society works well.

Functionalist theory supports stability and the status quo or as Sadovnik (2007, p. 6) put it "functionalists emphasize cohesion in explaining social order" while "conflict sociologists emphasize struggle". Conflict theory assumes a tension in society created by the competing interests of individuals and groups (Ballantine, 2001, p. 10) so that education reinforces social inequality (Thio, 2005).

Weber argued that the role of education is to secure the power and interest of the dominant group by providing the younger generation determined attitudes and skills (Ballantine, 2001). In this sense, the aim of education is not for the sake of individuals but for the benefits of the dominant group so that social inequality is



maintained through schools emphasizing the knowledge and values that benefit the dominant group. Moreover, contemporary conflict theory argues that “education is increasingly used by dominant groups to secure more advantageous places in the occupational and social structure for themselves and their children” (Sadovnik, 2007, p.7). Thus, education is seen as a tool for a small group of people to maintain their own interests as well as the interests of the next generation.

Functionalists and conflict theorists agree that education plays a central role in society. Functionalists assume a fixed social order that it is education’s role to perpetuate in order to ensure stability and development. Conflict theorists, on the other hand, see this fixed social order as oppressive and since education’s role is to preserve it then education itself becomes a means to perpetuate not just stability but inequality. It is education’s role in the reproduction of inequality that most concerns conflict theorists. In this sense, education is not neutral: it serves larger purposes and the nature of those purposes depends on the perspective that is held. Education’s interaction with religion and citizenship is an issue to be reviewed later in this chapter and the way that perspectives on education influence how this interaction takes place will then be the subject of further discussion

Irrespective of perspective, education across societies shares some common features. Ballantine (2001) has made the point that around the world, education has a close relationship with individuals from cradle to grave. It is not limited to a period in school. In the past, only a small group of people received education but now education is often treated as a basic human right (Marshall, 2010). In many societies, free and compulsory basic education is provided for all citizens. Public education, funded by taxation, is not only a kind of social welfare in societies but also reflects the spirit of democratic society and equal citizens (Satz, 2007; Zambeta, 2008). An important outcome of universal education is the strong influence it is able to exert.

This influence is most strongly felt in values transmission. Individuals are exposed to society’s values and are expected to apply these values in their lives and the regulation of society (Cheng, 1997; Vermeer, 2010). Education, therefore, helps to



promote and maintain social cohesion and unity by equipping children with the expected values and skills of society (Banks, 1968; Leighton, 2012). As described above, this is the functionalist role of schools.

In addition to values, schools also transmit knowledge and shape students' behavior so as to maintain social order (Ballantine, 2001) – another functionalist purpose of schooling. Yet, Banks (1968) has argued that the transmission role of education may trigger great concern from both religious bodies and the State where schools highlight knowledge and values that are not consistent with the values systems of these groups. This is how conflict theorists view education – not as a stool for social cohesion but as a tool for social liberation. Thus, the way schools view their role influences not their individual students but society as a whole.

Moreover, education facilitates the development of democratic society. Education is treated as the entry point for social change (Lall, 2009) – at least from a conflict theory perspective. It is also viewed as an important precondition for the realization of contemporary democracy (Marshall, 2010; Zambeta, 2008).

The modern project aims to help individuals to prepare for being the members of democratic societies (Green, 1997) like equipping students with skills and knowledge to exercise citizenship (Satz, 2007). “The education also system helps to train up citizens to make wise civic choices so as to sustain the democratic society” (Noddings, 2005, p. 6).

Education, therefore, is linked to individual development as well as affecting society. The more people who have access to education, the greater its influence. Education not only develops the potential of individuals but also equips them with knowledge, skills and a set of values – these may or may not be supportive of existing social values depending on the perspective one has on the role of education in society. Education also enables individuals to prepare for exercising citizenship in democratic societies. This influence makes education an important aspect of citizenship.



Concepts relating to citizenship, religion and education have been reviewed and their distinctive influences on young people have been noted. The following section will review the relationship among these concepts.

### 3. Citizenship, Religion & Education: interrelated relations

This section will examine the relationship between the three major concepts of religion, education and citizenship. First, there will be a discussion of the relationship between citizenship and religion. Second, there will be an in-depth conceptual discussion about the relationship of citizenship and religion as well as education from different perspectives.

#### 3.1. Citizenship and Religion

“Religion is one of the civic institutions which plays a mediating role on citizen’s contact with their state institutions and allow citizens to actively pursue many of their roles in their societies” (Schulz et al., 2008). Religion also facilitates the civic participation of students (Schulz et al., 2008; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995) It has been argued that people with and without religious beliefs are different in the development and practice of democratic citizenship (Grundel & Maliepaard, 2012) and that the practice of religion has a strong impact on citizenship (Gates, 2006; Kunzman, 2005; Pike, 2008; Smidt, 1999; Vermeer, 2010; Weithman, 2002). Grundel and Maliepaard (2012, p. 2078) argued that “young people who adhere to religion may have more opportunities than non-religious people to develop the skills necessary to practice democratic citizenship and to experience the affective component of believing that increases the internalization of civil virtues”. Gates (2006) suggested that religion can be a strong foundation for citizenship in offering beliefs and values, a philosophy of life, a faith to live by as well as facilitating civic engagement. Nevertheless, Weithman (2002) insisted that religious bodies as part of civil society can also help people to develop their sense of citizenship. Weithman (2002, p. 3) also argued that “religious values offer guidelines and arguments for citizens in voting and political debates so as to express *prima facie* obligations of



being of liberal democratic citizen”.

Moreover, it has been argued that religion plays a significant role in promoting civic society and democracy (Bader, 1999; Kunzman, 2005; Minkenberg, 2007; Smidt, 1999). Theoretically, “priority for democracy can go hand-in-hand with public recognition of religion, including non-Christian religions” (Minkenberg, 2007, p. 904). Many studies have shown that religious bodies and structures facilitate the development of civic society as well as the social and political participation of people (Smidt, 1999; Uslander, 2002; Weithman, 2002). Smidt (1999) identified several ways that religious life facilitates the development of civil society and individual political participation including increasing social connections through church, enhancing social contacts, developing organization skills for understanding political action and launching political activities, and generating social capital through participation of civic behaviour outside the church.

Weithman (2002, p. 34) also showed that religious bodies like churches in the United States may convey political information to their adherents thus helping them to “develop their sense of citizenship and participation in political activities”. The participation in various religious activities like volunteer services offers chances for people to expand their network outside the church and religious bodies. It helps to generate social capital such as support from various bodies. Religious life, therefore, is not only about sacred activities but also about secular life.

It is argued that religion can enhance the civic engagement of young people through religious engagement. Young people can acquire skills, opportunities and social capital for further civic engagement. Learning in religious contexts is also an opportunity for students to think about political choices, policies and actions like human rights (Pike, 2008). More than that, religion contains a set of values often transmitted to students through two major ways, schools and families. “Schools and families also play a significant role in political socialization facilitating the civic engagement of young people” (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin & Keeter, 2003, p. 275).



First, school is a place not only for knowledge and skill training but also for values transmission. Religious bodies like to make use of the provision of education as an opportunity to promote religious values (Cheung, 2010; Tan, 1997). Schools with a religious background always adopt religious values as their school mission and vision as well as set up school rules to teach students what is different from schools without a religious background such as government schools. Therefore, the management of religious schools plays a significant role in promoting religious values rather than secular values (Banks, 1968). In most religious schools, management bodies come from and are appointed by the religious bodies and some clergy may also act as teachers in schools.

Second, family plays a significant role in affecting both the religious values (Hoge & Petrillo, 1978; Hoge, Petrillo & Smith, 1982) and civic values (Andolina et al., 2003) of young people (Acock & Bengtson, 1978; Bengtson, 1975). Families with a religious background often take their children to participate in various religious activities such as Sunday schools, visiting temples and praying to God(s). Such behavior enhances the connection between young people and the church. Parents with a religious background are also likely to make use of religious values to nurture their sons and daughters. “Parents, guardians and family members can provide important lessons about civic engagement such as the discussion about politics” (Andolina et al., 2003, p. 277).

### 3.2. Citizenship, Education and Religion

The relationship between citizenship and religion in education is complex and has long been contested (Crook, Freathy & Wright, 2011). It is argued that citizenship, religion, and education are interrelated and the learning of religion helps the citizenship development of young people. The following section will examine the relationship among citizenship, religion as well as education based on the theoretical consideration and categorized into several perspectives including, Religion supporting citizenship, Secular View and The Middle.



### 3.2.1. Religion supporting citizenship

Arthur (2008) has argued that the contribution of religion to promoting active citizenship through upholding faith and justice has not been recognized. Religion has a strong influence on values transmission offering students strong support in the practice of citizenship. “The influence of religion on human character, morality, ideas of duty as well as the sense of national identity is in no doubt and always treated as a significant factor” (Arthur, 2008, p. 306). It has also been argued that religious conviction provides strong support in upholding democracy and social conscience and dealing with difficulties and temptation (Crook, Freathy & Wright, 2011). Religion and its religious doctrines may help students to know what they should do and have a stronger motivation for enforcing civic virtues (Wright, 2008). These arguments suggest that religion is not only limited to religious knowledge but also offers students values and support in the practice of citizenship. Miedema & Bertram-Troost (2008), for example, suggest that religious education and democratic citizenship can be complementary if religious education is properly combined with political views.

This suggests that religious education is much more than religious socialization but also influences identity formation although not necessarily only religious identity (Miedema, 2009; Vermeer, 2010). Religious education can also influence “personal and social identity” (Vermeer, 2010, p.110). Gearon (2010) also argued that the place of religion in citizenship education helps students to have better preparation to face the challenges of social and political change. Religious education shapes students with some basic democratic values such as equality, tolerance and non-discrimination from religious education (Vermeer, 2010). Religious conviction provides strong support for upholding democracy and social conscience and dealing with difficulties and temptation (Crook et al., 2011). Religion and its religious doctrines help students to know what they should do and have a stronger motivation for enforcing civic virtues (Wright, 2008). Besides, religious education may contribute to the development of students’ sense of citizenship by providing religious support (Miedema, 2009). Religious education, as well as adopting religious values, provides guidelines and standards for nurturing youngsters and also helps them to make





judgments on various political and social issues as well as identity formation. In the teaching process of religious education, students acquire some basic values from schools and teachers which are consistent with democratic values as well as offering a foundation for practicing such values like upholding justice (Gearon, 2010; Miedema, 2009; Vermeer, 2010; Wright, 1993).

### 3.2.2. Secular View

The link between religion and citizenship is not endorsed universally. It is argued that religious neutrality helps to make consistent judgments on controversial issues. Audi (2012) argues that the importance of religious neutrality in liberal democracy is that secular reasoning is more consistent for making justified decisions in dealing with different issues. This is because religious values vary from religion to religion and individuals will make decisions consistent with their religious values. A secular standard, as advocated by Habermas (2006), is better able to provide a set of common values for all citizens. In addition, he argued that religious doctrines contain limitations and are not able to cope with change or challenges from scientific criticism. He was a strong advocate of a secular standard rather than religious standards. Thus, religious neutrality on secular issues frees society from the biases of religious doctrines. This also avoids conflict on account of the different religious affiliations.

### 3.2.3. The Middle Ground

Hudson (2003) and Habermas (2006) have suggested that citizens may be better to have a self-reflexive attitude toward both religious values and secular rationality in performing their duties as citizens. This involves a more reflective attitude to citizenship issues so that they are not dominated by either religious or secular values. A more open-minded approach toward both religious values and secular values broadens the way in which citizenship issues can be addressed and this may be more beneficial to the development of liberal democracy.

For this reason, Kunzman (2005, p. 1) suggested a “middle ground” approach in nurturing individuals rather than relying exclusively on religion to inform citizenship. He suggested that “engaging thoughtfully with a wide range of moral perspectives, religious and otherwise, while promoting a civic virtue that still honours a commitment to public reason”.

As the above discussion shows, the relationship among religion, citizenship and education can be seen in different ways. On the one hand, they might be seen as mutually reinforcing with education systems supporting religious values that in turn support citizenship. Yet, it is also argued that religious values can be divisive and it is better to link education and citizenship to secular values. Thus, conceptually the relationship between religious values and citizenship is contentious.

#### 4. Empirical Literature

The above review has pointed to the conceptual underpinnings of the assumed relationship among citizenship, religion and education. The following section will review empirical literature that has investigated the influence of religion on young citizens’ citizenship. These studies provide further support for the theoretical background of this study. The division of this section is based on the study context of these studies so as to reflect the low attention of this research topic in the eastern societies as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan. Initially, the focus is on research conducted in the West. This will be followed by examining work done in Asian contexts, with special reference to Hong Kong and Taiwan.

##### 4.1. Western Research: Received high level of attention

Grundel and Mailiepaard (2012) studied the influence of religion on Dutch students’ understanding, and practice of democratic citizenship and whether there were differences between students with different religious beliefs including Islam, Christianity, and atheism. They found that “young Muslims are very well capable of practicing democratic right and obligations and religious group membership has



positive effects on democratic citizenship values, regardless of the content of that religion. Unlike popular belief, religious people (both Christians and Muslims) are more ready to tolerate and recognize differences than non-religious people, not less so” (p. 2092). This study also highlighted the importance of a comparative research about the influence of religion on students from various religions and between students with and without religious beliefs.

Kerestes, Youniss and Metz (2004) conducted research with students (14-18 years old) in Boston with a focus on how religion affected students’ religious perspectives and civic integration. They showed that religion played a significant role in the lives of young people and acted as a medium for youths to integrate into civic activities. They identified that gender did not have a significant influence on religious service attendance and the attitudes to the importance of religion. This study also provided a framework concerning the relationship between religion and civic integration.

Smidt (1999) studied the relationship between religion and civic engagement in the United States of America (USA) and Canada. The study showed how religious life affects adherents’ development in social and political participation such as offering skills, opportunities and social capital. It identified that even when controls were introduced for education, age and gender, church attendance, and religious affiliation had an independent and positive influence on civic engagement.

Perks and Haan (2010) conducted a study of Canadian youth about the relationship between involvement in religious organizations and voluntary community participation. They made use of data from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participation that used a telephone survey of about 14,000 Canadians aged 15 or above. This studied showed the positive relationship between participation in religious organizations and community participation. The finding here showed that religious group participation affected the civic participation of youth.

Hill and Dulk (2013) studied the relationship of educational setting on civic engagement such as youth volunteering in the USA. The types of secondary schools

they studied were public, Catholic, Protestant, private nonreligious and home-school. They made use of the data collected by the National Study of Youth and Religion in three periods (July 2002-April 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008) through a telephone survey of about 3,000 teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17 (English and Spanish speaking) (Hill & Dulk, 2013, p. 185). This study identified that students educated in Protestant schools were more likely to participate in the provision of volunteer services than other school types. The implication here is that a school's religious education may influence different kinds of civic engagement.

The above review shows that religious background, religious service attendance and activities have a significant influence on civic engagement (Hill & Dulk, 2013; Perks & Haan, 2010) even when gender and age are controlled (Grundel & Maliepaard, 2012; Kerestes et al., 2004; Smidt, 1999). Yet, these studies were focused on Western countries and Western religions. None of them explored the relationship between religion, religious education and citizenship values in Asian contexts. The following section focuses on such contexts.

#### 4.2. The East and West: Importance of Asian studies

Print (2000) studied six Asia-Pacific Societies (USA, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand) and identified similarities and differences in the transmission of civics and values. Different emphases within Asian and Pacific societies lead to different focuses on civic education. A strong religious dimension to civics and values was evident amongst the more traditional well-established Asian societies (Print, 2000, p. 15). Taiwan and Hong Kong showed a weaker linkage between religion (Confucian, Taoist or Buddhist) and civics than Thailand and Japan (Print, 2000). Thailand and Japan had stronger relations between religion (Confucian, Taoist or Buddhist) and civics than Hong Kong (Print, 2000). This link between religion and civics is rarely found in the USA and Australia (Print, 2000) suggesting that Asian contexts seem to provide special cases for the study of the relationship between religion and citizenship.



#### 4.3. The East: Received low attention

Cho and Kim (2013) studied Asian civic values of three East Asian societies including Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea using the Asian Regional Module data of ICCS 2009. They showed that the three societies have similar civic values such as negative attitudes to undemocratic government. At the same time they identified that East Asian students were also committed to Confucian values although the level of endorsement of these values varied by society with Korean students least influenced by Confucian values and Taiwanese students the most influenced.

Kennedy (2010) explored the relations between students' attitudes to citizenship issues and civic knowledge of Hong Kong and Thai students by making use of the ICCS 2009 data. He was also concerned about the relations between students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and civic knowledge. He found that "for both Hong Kong and Thai students, the relationship between their attitudes to religious influence on society and civic knowledge was negative and significant" (Kennedy, 2010, p. 283). Yet, the direction was different: Hong Kong students had high civic knowledge scores and low scores for attitudes to the influence of religion on society while Thai students had low civic knowledge scores and high scores on attitudes to the influence of religion on society. This suggests that the relationship between civics and religion is complex and may be context dependent so that there is no simple relationship that characterizes all societies. Also, this thesis supports the usage of the ICCS for making comparison between societies.

#### 4.4. Hong Kong & Taiwan: Interrelations among citizenship, religion and education

Cheng (2004) studied the impact of Confucian-parental, Christian-religious and liberal-civic influence on moral education in Hong Kong which is closely related to civic education in Hong Kong. Cheng (2004) showed that religious bodies, acting as the sponsoring bodies of schools, are one of the major parties in moral education in Hong Kong (other parties are family and civic organizations like the Independent Commission Against Corruption). This shows that religion and the religious bodies



like Christian Churches play significant roles in education with the potential to shape the values of Hong Kong students. Yet, little is known about whether this role is fulfilled and what its impact might be.

Lee (2007) explored Taipei High School students' conceptions and experiences of citizenship. It showed that schools are also important agents of youth citizenship development. In Taiwan, some schools are operated by Christian and Buddhist religious bodies, so there remains a question whether these religious bodies also have an impact on students' understanding of citizenship.

Zhai and Woodberry (2011) studied the relation between religion and educational ideals in Taiwan by making use of the Taiwan Social Change survey (1990, 1995, 2000 and 2005). They showed that religion has a significant impact on nurturing students and different religions have different education ideals. They identified that different religious affiliations have different levels of education ideals so that Taiwanese Protestants have higher educational ideals than non-religious groups. They also pointed out that different religious affiliations affect individuals' attitudes towards education. Protestantism and Judaism for example, enhanced the demand for education. They proposed that further research was needed in the Taiwan context. In addition, Zhai and Woodberry (2011) also pointed out that the influence of religious values on the civic and social values of young people have not received a great deal of attention in Chinese societies.

#### 4.5. Literature Summary

The research importance in this aspect is highlighted. This research is able to enrich current literature and facilitates model development in relation to study the influence of religious engagement on students' civic and social values e.g. "Religion seems to be more influential in some societies than others. Yet the research in Asian contexts is limited and there are questions that have been raised that need to be addressed.. Therefore, it is needed to develop a model for further assessment in relations to the influence of religious engagement on students' civic and social values for the eastern societies. It does not only enrich the current literature but also provides new insights



for further studies.

In Hong Kong and Taiwan, students receive their education from schools with various religious backgrounds and are also affected by religions in the community. There are also new influences on civic engagement such as social media that have the potential to influence students (Valenzuela, Arriagada & Scherman, 2012). Therefore, in these particular contexts, both school and community, it is important to know more about values formation and how different sets of values – religious and civic – interact. Given the previous discussions in Chapter 1 concerning Taiwan and Hong Kong, it is clear they make good cases for comparison. As societies, they are both similar and different so that key variables can be subjected to analyses and compared within these different contexts. As Alexander, Broadfoot and Phillips (1999) highlighted, “learning from comparing” is an invaluable process for better understanding educational phenomena.

Thus, the purposes of this research are to understand the students’ attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and both the direct effect of religious engagement and its indirect effect through the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society on students’ civic and social values. The influence of religious engagement is also studied in relation to the religious engagement students received from schools such as religious education. Therefore, education in relation to both citizenship and religion is also an important aspect to be studied this research. These questions are needed to be addressed in terms of both theoretical development and public understanding. This comparative research will offer new insights into students’ values in Asian contexts and, in particular, will highlight the relationship between religious and civic values in these contexts. It will extend existing work on Asian students’ conceptions of citizenship and how those conceptions are influenced by individual and social factors such as family.

## 5. Hypothesized conceptual model

After reviewing both theoretical and empirical literature, this section will discuss the



development of the hypothesized conceptual model for this study. This theoretical framework is concerned with the impact of religious behavior (religious engagement) on students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and their civic and social values (see Figure 1 below). The develop of this framework is based on various western literature (Gates, 2006; Grundel & Maliepaard, 2012; Keretes, Youniss & Metz, 2004; Kunzman, 2005; Maio & Olson, 1994; Pike, 2008; Schulz, Fraillon, Ainley, Losito & Kerr, 2008; Rohan, 2000; Smidt, 1999; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995; Vermeer, 2010).

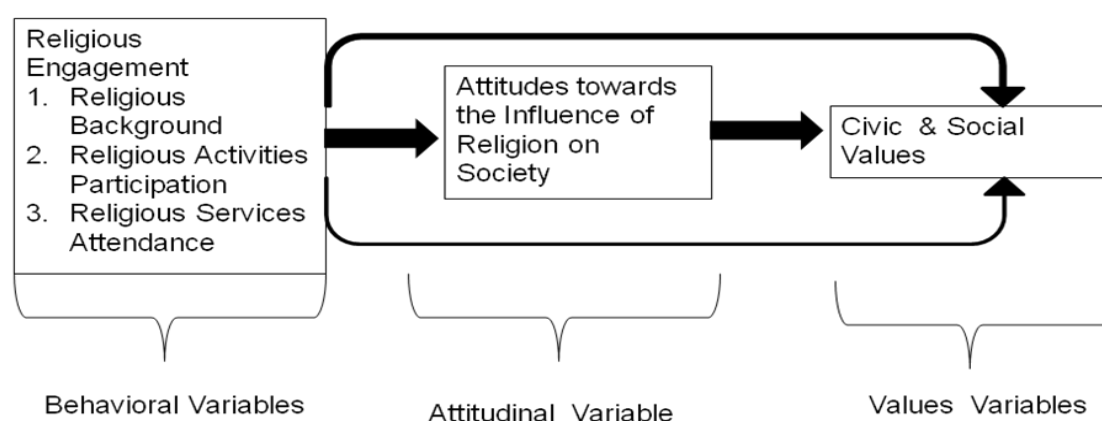


Figure 1 Hypothesized conceptual model

Individual's behavior is suggested to relate to attitudes and also the values (Maio & Olson, 1994; Rohan, 2000). Maio and Olson (1994) indicate that behavior, attitudes and values have significant relations (values-attitudes-behavior). Rohan (2000) also argues that the behavior would change individuals' attitudes as well as their values. In the hypothesized conceptual model, it is assumed that the religious engagement acting as religious behavior affecting students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and civic and social values (Gates, 2006; Grundel & Maliepaard, 2012; Keretes, Youniss & Metz, 2004; Kunzman, 2005; Pike, 2008; Schulz et al., 2008; Smidt, 1999; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995; Vermeer, 2010).

The religious engagement is a kind of religious behavior which can be regarded as a



kind of civic engagement (Putnam, 2000; Schulz et al., 2008; Smidt, 1999; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995). The ICCS 2009 framework concerned about three forms of religious engagement including student's religious background, religious service attendance and religious activities participation (Schulz et al., 2008). The result of it indicated whether students had performed those religious behaviors. In the qualitative study, same questions were asked for studying students' religious engagement.

Regarding students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, it is the attitudinal variable which investigated students' perception towards the role of religion in society. There are two aspects in understanding the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society including "influence on individual behaviors" and "influence on civic and political life". As mentioned above, attitudes towards the influence of religion on society may have mediating effect on students' civic and social values. It also helps to study the indirect effect of religious engagement on civic and social values. The result of it also helps to identify how the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society on affecting students' civic and social values.

Civic values are defined as "individuals' central ethical and moral beliefs about their civic communities and their roles as citizens within their communities" (Schulz et al., 2008, p. 22). In the ICCS 2009 framework, the study of civic values focuses on students' belief in citizenship which containing the importance of conventional citizenship and importance of social-movement related citizenship which is about students' attitudes towards civic society and systems. The study of civic values is able to reflect the citizenship values of students such as their belief in the role of citizens in voting and participation in social-movements (Schulz et al., 2008). Social values are defined as students' perception towards the "civic principles which is about the shared ethical foundations of civic societies such as equity" (Schulz et al., 2008, p. 19). In this study, students' perception towards the equity of three social groups is measured including, gender, ethnic and new immigrants. The study of students' social values helps to understand their attitudes towards the civic principles in relation to equity in society.



## 6. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of the literature and highlighted the important theoretical issues to be dealt with in this thesis. The literature review above indicated the relations among religion, education and citizenship. Two research questions emerged from this review. The first research question concerns students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society for understanding students' citizenship values in relation to the religion acting as an important civic institution. The second question rests on studying the hypothesized theoretical model formed by the western literature so as to know whether this model can be easily applied in eastern context like Hong Kong and Taiwan. The result of it helps to identify the impact of religious engagement on affecting students' civic and social values through direct way and indirect way passing through the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society which assumed to have a mediating effect at the individual level and the school level. It also helps to identify the influence from school in relations to religion and the individual influence such as family. The following are the two research questions.

### Research Question 1 (RQ1)

What are the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society? How can the similarities and differences be explained?

### Research Question 2 (RQ2)

What are the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students concerning the influence of religious engagement on their attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and how do these attitudes affect their civic values and social values at individual level and school level? How can the similarities and differences be explained?



The next chapter will discuss the methodology and methods used to address these questions.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **1. Introduction**

This chapter describes the research methodology of this study. There are five sections in this chapter including this Introduction, Research Design, Data Collection, Data Analysis and Conclusion. After this section, the research process is described in different aspects such as the data source and analytical method. Finally, it presents a brief summary and introduces the next chapter.

#### **2. Research Design**

Methodology refers to the methods and steps for the devising and implementation of a research activity. In this study, mixed methods research was selected based on the research objective and questions stated in the previous chapter (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 2000). As Johnson and Christensen (2008, p. 441) explain, “mixed methods research is the class of research studies in which a researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches and techniques into a single research study”. Quantitative research is a deductive and predilection approach by collecting and using numerical data to study the relationship between theory and research which helps to give an objective conception of the social world (Bryman, 2004). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research focuses on words rather than numbers. It is an inductivist, constructionist and interpretivist approach to answering research questions (Bryman, 2004). Therefore, the usage of both quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis promote better understanding of realities (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2003).

Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) proposed that mixed methods research had a complementary purpose to provide elaboration and clarification of the results from one method with the results from another method. The results of the quantitative



analysis of this study were explained using the qualitative analysis. The statistical data were analyzed first, the result of which was then explained using the qualitative data, wherever appropriate and applicable. Therefore, the usage of mixed methods research provides a greater diversity of different views so as to generate an integrated result (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2003).

There were two major reasons for selecting mixed result methods research including, different levels of analysis and integrated result. First, mixed methods research helps to generate different levels of results including, both “macro” and “micro” level of analysis (Bryman, 2004). The results of “macro” and “micro” level implied the society level and individual level in this study. The quantitative research in this study contained a large number of samples. The International Civic Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2009 provided data for secondary analysis. The large sample size of ICCS 2009 helped us to generate a general picture, the “macro” level result, about the characteristics of students in each participated society like Hong Kong and Taiwanese students.

Qualitative research refers to interview study to obtain students’ feedback. It was the “micro” level result such as the explanation of Taiwanese students’ perception about the attitudes that influence society. Therefore, the usage of mixed methods research was appropriate for this study to answer the two research questions. The quantitative research showed the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students and the qualitative one provided an explanation of the similarities and differences.

Second, the usage of mixed methods research helps to provide an integrated result. Johnson and Christensen (2008) suggested that this method would enhance the meaning of numbers by words and narratives. The quantitative data of this study were a set of secondary data collected in 2009. Although this data set helped to provide a basic understanding about the students in Hong Kong and Taiwan, it did not contain an in-depth explanation from students about the rationale behind their choices in the questionnaire such as their endorsement of the influence of religion in society. This

has also been the problem of many quantitative researchers (Bryman, 2004). The follow-up qualitative research helped to provide an explanation about students' endorsement of the influence of religion in society through in-depth interviews with students. Therefore, the adoption of mixed methods provided a more integrated result than using a single method in this study.

### 3. Data Collection

#### 3.1. Quantitative Data

##### 3.1.1. Instrument

The quantitative study made use of secondary data analysis to answer the two research questions. In this study, data generated in the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2009 were used. ICCS 2009 was a survey conducted by The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). There were 38 countries participating in it (including Hong Kong and Taiwan). This study collected data from more than 140,000 Grade 8 students in more than 5,300 schools (Schulz et al., 2010). It was a large-scale international assessment which helped to study the commonality and differences concerning civic and citizenship education among various societies (Kennedy, 2010; Kennedy, Huang & Chow, 2013). The development of it involved a huge number of revised and produced quality data and tools for further study. It was also the third major international civic study since 1971 (Kennedy, 2010). Moreover, the ICCS 2009 provided reliable indicators for measuring students' political and social attitudes which helped to understand the development of students into citizens in the future (Chow, 2013). The ICCS 2009 data collected were able to be obtained online freely. Also, the data screening, cleaning and validation were conducted by the IEA (ICCS 2009 organizer) so as to ensure the quality of the dataset to be used for cross-national comparison such as normally distributed (Schulz et al., 2011).

##### 3.1.2. Samples

The ICCS national centers were formed for data collection in each participating society. All centers adopted the stratified two-stage probability sampling for school sampling and systematic random sampling for student sampling, so as to ensure the sampling quality (Schulz et al., 2011). In ICCS 2009, there were 2,902 young Hong Kong students from 76 schools and 5,167 young Taiwan students from 150 schools studying Grade 8 (or equivalent) participating in this survey (Schulz et al., 2010).

The mean age of Taiwan students was 14.2 ( $SD = .31$ ). The mean age of Hong Kong students was the same as Taiwanese students ( $M_{age} = 14.2$ ,  $SD = .76$ ). With regard to gender, there was also a similar proportion. In Taiwan, 52% of participants were boys and 48% participants were girls. In Hong Kong, 51% of participants were boys and 49% of participants were girls. In terms of religion, most students in Hong Kong did not have religious belief (about 58.7%) and the rest (41.3%) believed in various religions (Protestant: 27.1%; Buddhism: 6.8%; Catholic: 5.5%; Islam: 0.1%). In Taiwan, most students believed in various religions (Folk religion: 32.9%; Buddhism: 16.5%; Daoism: 9.2%; Catholic/Christianity: 8.1%) and the rest of the students (31.6%) did not have any religious belief (see Appendix A).

### 3.1.3. Variables

The selection of variables was based on the research questions and theoretical support mentioned in Chapter 2 (Literature Review). The following were the variables examined in the study.

- Students' religious background
- Students' religious services attendance
- Students' religious activities participation
- Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society
- Civic values
- Social values



With regard to students' religious background, the student respondents were asked to indicate their own religious belief. Different societies have different contexts such as different religions. Hong Kong and Taiwan have different religions. In order to make the questionnaire suitable for different societies, the ICCS national centre in Hong Kong and Taiwan amended this question based on the societal context. Therefore, the choices of religions in the Hong Kong questionnaire and Taiwan questionnaire were different in this question such as the folk religion being only available for Taiwanese students. Therefore, students were categorized into two groups, "with religious affiliation" and "without religious affiliation" (see Appendix B).

About religious service attendance, the student respondents were asked to indicate their frequency of attendance, including "Never", "Less than once a year", "At least once a year", "At least once a month" and "At least once a week". The responses of students were grouped into two groups, "with religious service attendance" and "without religious service attendance". Students with no religious service attendance were categorized into "without religious service attendance" and the rest were grouped into "with religion service attendance". Also, students were invited to show their frequency of religious activities participation. There were three options ("Never", "Yes, I have but more than a year ago" and "Yes I have and within the last twelve months"). Students' responses were grouped into two groups. Students selecting "Never" were categorized into a group "without religious activities participation" and the rest were "with religious activities participation" (see Appendix B).

The scales related to the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic and social values were borrowed also from the ICCS 2009 so as to answer the research questions of this study. These scales were also what the research focused on. A Likert-type scaling procedure was adopted in the questionnaire (Schulz et al., 2011). Against each of the statements under the scales, students were asked to rate their opinions based on four choices ("strongly agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree"). The items of each scale are shown in Appendix B. Regression was adopted for the measurement in this research.



Regarding attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, five items were used for measurement. The assessment of this contained two aspects including, the “influence of civic and political life” and the “influence of individual behaviors”. It concerned the role of religion in society affecting an individual in these two aspects. Concerning civic values, ten items were used for measurement. This measurement focused on students values towards the people more than family (including the state) which contained two aspects including, the importance of conventional citizenship and the importance of social movement related citizenship (Schulz et al., 2008). Social values contained three aspects about human equality in society about civic and political life including, gender, ethnicity and immigration. The measurement had 16 items (see Appendix B).

However, the ICCS did not have variables in relation to the both school and family religious background. It was not possible to make use of such variables to conduct analysis in the quantitative study. In the quantitative research, it could only generate insights about school in relation to religious engagement through multi-level analysis. The influence from family could only be left to the qualitative study.

This study hypothesized a measurement model in relation to the related variables available in the ICCS 2009 and literature review in the previous chapter for answering the two research questions. Religious engagement variables (religious background of students, religious service attendance and religious activities participation) were independent variables. The attitude towards the influence of religion on society of students was the mediating variable and located between religious engagement variables and civic values and social values. Both civic values and social values were treated as dependent variables in the study (see Figure 2 below). This model was also a non-recursive mediation model. This model was also a non-recursive mediation model. This model is used for studying the causal relations between the independent variables and dependent variables while involving both direct and indirect relationships (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). Moreover, this measurement model contained a mediating variable (attitudes towards the influence of religion on society). This model was the non-recursive mediation

model and studied the indirect effect generated from the three religious engagement variables on civic and social values. In all, the usage of this non-recursive mediation model helped to understand both direct and indirect influences from religious engagement on attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and how these attitudes affected civic and social values of students.

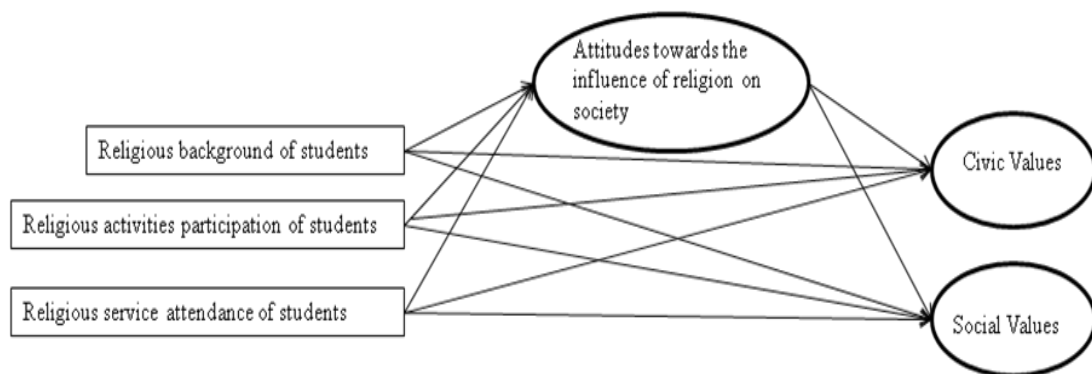


Figure 2 Hypothesized measurement model for quantitative analysis

Having reviewed the variables and the hypothesized measurement model, two research hypotheses were examined. First, “Hong Kong and Taiwanese students show no differences in attitudes towards the influence of religion on society”. Second, “Hong Kong and Taiwanese students show no differences regarding the influence of religious engagement on affecting their attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and the influence of it on civic values and social values at student level and school level”. By testing the two hypotheses, the differences and similarities between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students were indicated.

### 3.2. Qualitative Data

This section explains the collection of qualitative data. It includes the parts of Interview study, Focus Group Interview, Samples of Student Participants, Interview Procedure, and Reliability, Validity, and Ethical Considerations.

### 3.2.1. Interview Study

Interviews with Hong Kong and Taiwanese students were conducted. They came from schools with and without religious affiliation. Interviewing, as a method for qualitative data collection, is a widely used research approach in different disciplines and generates data on what people think such as attitudes, feelings, and understanding which reflect the distinctive features regarding the beliefs of individuals (Arskey & Knight, 1999). It also was a major source for generating data for understanding the phenomenon of study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012) and was adopted as part of the multiple research methods such as following the large-scale questionnaire survey for better understanding of the meanings of the questionnaire responses (Arskey & Knight, 1999). Therefore, interviews were a suitable way for following up and providing explanation for the analysis of the ICCS 2009 data.

### 3.2.2. Focus Group Interview

Focus group interviews were used to collect data from students for analysis. A focus group interview is a group discussion concentrating on a single theme (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Krueger & Casey, 2000). Bloor, Frankland, Thomas and Robson (2008) suggested that focus group interviews are also suitable for interpreting the result of a survey like providing meaning for the attitudes of research participants. The key function of qualitative study here was providing in-depth interpretation for the quantitative analysis of the ICCS 2009 data. Also, the usage of focus group interviews provided new insights for the research topic through the interaction among group participants (Marvasti, 2004). Bryman (2004) believed that group interviews also facilitated participants to qualify or modify their responses after listening to others' feedback compared with one-to-one interviews. Furthermore, the adoption of a group format with a homogenous background such as a group of students with the same religious background helped to validate the data, generate some unexpected findings and provide more information for the researcher on interpreting the research assumption as well as answering the research questions (Arskey & Knight, 1999). In addition, the research participants were junior-form secondary students. They may not



have had any interview and academic research participation experience. It was important to make the students feel comfortable and relieve their pressure from participation. Therefore, the researcher selected group interviews to collect data from the students. The use of group interviews definitely facilitated the participants to express their feelings with peer support.

#### 3.2.2.1. Semi-structured interview

The approach of this group interview was semi-structured. A semi-structured approach was adopted for a specified topic by having some fixed questions and the interviewer was also allowed to clarify the questions of interest (Arskey & Knight, 1999). The adoption of semi-structured interviews enjoyed the benefits of both structured and unstructured interviews like planned questions and freedom for students to express something new such as comfortable atmosphere (Arksey & Knight, 1999). The interviewees were junior-form students and religion may be an abstract concept for them. Therefore, students were able to have clear guidelines at the beginning of the interviews and flexibility for expressing new insights after the structured questions. It also helped the researcher to collect data for analysis in relation to the two research questions.

In terms of the role of interviewer, the semi-structured approach was led by both the students and interviewer. The interviewer asked questions and offered some guidelines for the students. The students also enjoyed the freedom to express their ideas on the topic of interest as well as offering something new for discussion. As a result, the interviewer was able to collect rich data for analysis.

#### 3.2.2.2. Interview Questions

Interview questions were constructed in relation to the two research questions. There were some fixed questions to be asked at the initial part of the interview. These questions were, “What do you think about the influence of religion in society?”, “What do you think about the influence of religious background, religious services

and religious activities on you?” and “What do you think about the influence from your school and family on making judgments on social and political issues?”. After these questions, the students were free to share their ideas about the interview topic.

Nevertheless, the wording of some questions was amended for students to have a better sense of the meanings behind the questions and concrete ideas about the questions. They were also able to share their feelings without pressure. For example, “values” was an abstract concept for the students. It was modified to “the way of making judgments”. And “social values” and “civic values” were modified to “moral values” and “the way to make judgments on political issues” respectively.

During the interview operation, the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society were defined as “the influence of religion on your society” and highlighted the impact on social and political issues. About civic values and social values, they were defined as “the way to make judgments on social and political issues”. It helped students to understand these questions easily.

### 3.2.3. Samples of Student Participants

Schools and student participants were selected in relation to the research objective and research questions. The researcher contacted a group of potential schools and tried to seek approval to conduct interviews with students through different ways such as direct invitations, and referrals from other scholars and religious bodies in Hong Kong and Taiwan respectively. Some schools rejected the invitation due to their busy teaching schedule. After the selection and recruitment process, eight schools participated in this study from the two societies (four schools from Hong Kong and four schools from Taiwan and 38 students were involved). In Hong Kong, four interviews and 18 students were involved. Also, four interviews were conducted in Taiwan and 20 students participated in them. In Hong Kong, schools were located on Kowloon side. In Taiwan, schools came from North, East and South Taiwan. The following were the criteria for selecting schools and student participants (see Appendix C).



In terms of school selection, there were some reasons for selecting these schools for this study. The selected schools had different religious backgrounds including both schools with and without religious affiliation. The schools with religious affiliation had missions and vision related to religious values such as love and mercy. Both mission and vision were the basic principles of schools' operation. The vision and mission may help to ensure that students are nurtured in an environment with religious values. Moreover, the religious schools were operated by the recognized religious bodies in their societies. For example, a school operated by the Catholic Diocese in Hong Kong was invited as both its missions and visions were religious related and the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese is recognized by both society and government as a religious body. In addition, the religious schools offered religious activities to their students. For example, the Buddhist school offered a set of Buddhist-related activities to their students. It may assume that students are influenced by at least one form of religious engagement like religious activities launched in schools.

After obtaining schools' permission, the researcher sent the criteria for recruiting students to school principals and the coordinating teachers. First, the age group of student participants was the same as the ICCS 2009 one, enrolled in the eighth grade and at least 13.5 years old (Schulz et al., 2010). As the qualitative research aimed to follow up ICCS 2009, the age group of students was the same in the interview study to ensure consistency. Second, the studied religions were the same as ICCS 2009. They were Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism and Atheism (no religious belief). It aimed to ensure that the religious backgrounds of student participants of the qualitative study and quantitative research were the same. Third, the school backgrounds of students were Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Atheism (no religious belief). It helped to make sure that the students were from different religious backgrounds so as to enhance the validity of this study. Fourth, student participants were suggested to have the same religious belief as their affiliated schools to ensure that the students received only one set of religious doctrines in both schools and outside schools. For example, student participants from Buddhist schools were



suggested to believe in Buddhism.

The student participants were nominated by school teachers based on religious background and convenience. Due to the privacy matter stated in the education ordinance, students are allowed to not disclose their religious belief to schools. Therefore, it was not possible to guarantee the religious background proportion, gender proportion and number of students in each school due to the research limitation as mentioned before. It was only able to guarantee that students came from Catholic, Protestant, and Buddhist schools and schools without religious affiliation.

#### 3.2.4. Interview Procedure

This section describes the procedure of the implementation of the interviews including, interview period and location, group size, group category, interview location, and interview process (see Appendix D).

First, the selection of the interview period and locations were based on the convenience of the students and schools. All the interviews with students were conducted from February to July 2014 in Hong Kong and Taiwan respectively. Each interview lasted for around 1 hour. The locations for conducting interviews were students' schools for their convenience and in a familiar environment. Students also did not need to spend extra time for travel, which ensured their safety.

Second, the group size of all interviews was around four to six each time. The decision to use a group design was based on the literature (Howard et al., 1989; Kitzinger, 1995; McLafferty, 2004; Twinn, 1998). Students were able to have enough time to express their ideas and also obtained peer support during the interviews. The interviewer was also able to maintain the operation of each interview smoothly with this group size.

Third, the group was categorized by the religious background of the schools. Four religions were included in this research namely Buddhism, Catholicism, Christianity



and students without religion. Students were grouped based on their school's religious background. For example, students studying at Catholic Schools were put into the same group for conducting the interviews. It helped the students to express their ideas in a comfortable environment.

Fourth, the researcher started by giving a brief introduction about himself and the aims of the research as well as expressing appreciation for their participation. The students were also free to ask for clarification about the interview process, confidentiality, use of data, aim of the research project and the researcher's background. The researcher also highlighted that students were free to ask for clarification about the interview questions. Then each student was invited to introduce their pseudonyms. It helped the students to have a basic understanding about other members participating in the interviews together so as to make them feel comfortable.

Fifth, the students were invited to express their ideas regarding each interview question after the brief introduction by the interviewer of the aim of this study and interviews. Clarifications were provided if the students asked for them. The students were also encouraged to share any ideas related to the interview questions as well as interview topic. The format of each interview was almost exactly the same in Hong Kong and Taiwan. At the end of each interview, the researcher expressed his appreciation to the students for offering help. The researcher hoped that these actions would help the students to feel positive and respected for their participation.

### 3.2.5. Reliability and Validity

In conducting the interview study, the issue of reliability and validity was particularly dealt with, as it was assured in the quantitative part of this study. Anne-Marie and Patricia (1995) stated that the concern of reliability and validity is equally important in qualitative research. According to Wiersma and Jurs' (2005, p. 264) definition, "reliability was concerned with replicability of both procedures and findings. Validity referred to the interpretation and generalizability of results". There are two aspects of reliability: internal and external reliability. Internal reliability concerns the





consistency of research and external reliability focused on replicability (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005).

This study did not adopt multiple methods for handling internal reliability due to limited resources. The researcher tried to make use of sound recording devices during the interviews so as to review the analysis and make the argument strong. Dealing with external reliability, it was not possible to conduct interviews twice due to the busy schedule of schools. The researcher tried to handle this by preparing well before the interviews like studying the background of the schools. The researcher also conducted interview practice before going to the schools.

A clear description of the process of data collection and data analysis are provided in this thesis. It will help other researchers to reproduce similar research in the future which also has the purpose of ensuring reliability.

Moreover, there were two aspects of validity including, internal and external validity which concerns logical reasoning and generalizability (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). In terms of internal validity, the consistency throughout the thesis was ensured even though the thesis contains different chapters. The connection among various chapters is also emphasized such as chapters about Methodology, Analysis and Discussion. They are interrelated. There were also numerous amendments made before thesis submission. It helped to ensure that the thesis was well-organized and easy for readers to understand the intention of the researcher.

Regarding external validity, this study included more than one school and the religious backgrounds of schools were various including Christianity and Buddhism in both societies. Different religions have different religious doctrines and ways to practice religious worship. Also, Hong Kong and Taiwan are multi-religion societies and none play a dominant role as mentioned in Chapter 1. The scope of religion had to be more than one so as to reflect the realities as well as offering valuable explanations. The researcher believed that it helped to avoid the bias due to using a single religious background as the research scope and enhanced the validity of this

study.

### 3.2.6. Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were emphasized in this study, as the adolescents, as young members of society were involved (Flewitt, 2005). As Denzin emphasized (Denzin, 1989, p.83), “our primary obligation is always to the people we study, not to our project or to a target discipline. The lives and stories that we hear and study given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those who have share them with us”.

To apply Denzin’s suggestion, during the research process, as the researcher, I kept on reminding myself that the student participants were much more than research subjects, but were human beings and the future owners of the world. All the research had to be ethical in order to avoid any negative influence on them. I also became aware that my research behaviour would affect these students’ perception of academic research also. For example, for many students it might be their first time to be interviewed for research purposes. Such experience and the interview setting would affect their perceptions of the topics being explored and my “act” of academic research, such as the meaning of conducting academic research, decision on future participation in other research as well as choosing to pursue a research programme at university or becoming a researcher in the future.

Therefore, I tried to behave ethically. It not only ensured that the rights of the student participants were considered and protected but also that a positive experience was had from this participation. There were various measures implemented by me to pay respect to students and schools and ensure that the students were protected.

Anonymity was used to protect both students and respect the participation of schools. Both pseudonyms and codes were adopted. The data were also kept and locked in a secure place so as to avoid leakage of the raw data. In addition, some school teachers also highlighted that they did not prefer to disclose the attitude of their students to



schools to outsiders such as negative comments about teaching quality which may harm the school's reputation. In order to make both schools and students to feel respected and comfortable about their participation and support for this study, some more ways were adopted.

Before interviewing the students, as the researcher, I reassured them that all data would be kept confidential and guaranteed that all the background information would not be disclosed to any third party such as the name of the school and students to school teachers. It helped to make the schools feel respected and comfortable about letting their students participate in the study. Then, I emphasized to the students about the issue of confidentiality and privacy and guaranteed before the interview that all their information would not be disclosed to others such as their names. Their individual feedback would also not be disclosed to the teachers. The researcher would only offer the schools the results of analysis and suggestions for improvement. It helped the students to make critical comments without pressure. For example, some students criticized the teaching materials offered by schools as being outdated. Therefore, the students were invited to create their own names, the pseudonyms, during the interviews for recording. The pseudonyms of the students and the school names also were renamed as a code such as student HK-1-01 and TW-1-01. I believed that these ways could protect the privacy of students and show respect to the schools.

Moreover, Anne-Marie and Patricia (1995) emphasized the importance of the feeling of research participants after data collection like interviews. Anne-Marie and Patricia (1995) explained that some researchers would leave the research site and research participants forever once having completed the data collection and such behavior would make the research participants feel betrayed. I believe that it is the responsibility of the researcher to help to promote the importance of academic research in social development and remove the negative perception of the community about supporting academic research such as it being a waste of time and the output of research only benefitting the researcher. For example, some teachers expressed that participation in academic research was a waste of time and only helped researchers themselves such as obtaining a degree and resources for journal publication. In order

to build up a positive perception of both schools and students about academic research and supporting other studies, I decided to return to the interviewed schools in both Hong Kong and Taiwan once the research and school reports were completed. Other than expressing the appreciation for the great support from the schools and explaining the results of the research, I also wished to discuss with teachers and school principals the improvement of school practice for the sake of students such as the development of citizenship education and a religious education curriculum. I also believe that it helped to encourage both schools and students to provide further support to other researchers such as other research students. It also helped the schools to benefit from this study.

As a responsible researcher, I hoped that all these ethical measures were able to show appreciation to the students and schools and also protected the rights of students. I also believed that such measures, especially returning to the interviewed schools for sharing and showing appreciation would help to encourage schools and students to keep on supporting academic research. During the recruiting process of student participants for interviews, the researcher found that the support from schools and students was definitely important for academic development, especially for research students without a strong social network. It was very difficult to obtain support from schools. Without the support from them, it would not be possible to draw any research findings even though the researcher had a very good research proposal and data analysis techniques.

#### 4. Data Analysis

This part describes the data analysis of two sets of data, respectively from the survey and the interview study. Three major aspects will be explained including, Quantitative Analysis, Qualitative Analysis and Mixed Data Analysis. This study adopted “the *monodata-monoanalysis* (quantitative (i.e., statistical) analysis of quantitative data and qualitative analysis of qualitative data)” (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 553).

##### 4.1. Quantitative Analysis

In relation to the research objectives and research design, there were two major steps for Data Analysis including ensuring the validity and reliability of variables and testing the Multi-group invariance before measurement. The Mplus statistical package and SPSS 16.0 were adopted for conducting the analysis.

Before the analysis, both reliability and validity of various variables were considered. The used variables were borrowed from the ICCS 2009 in the conceptual model as mentioned above. The organizer of the ICCS 2009, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), selected different items to create different constructs based on their psychometric and statistical properties for further measurement including both cross-national validity and reliability testing (Schulz, 2008; Schulz et al., 2010). It offers a platform for making international comparisons (Schulz et al., 2011) and is widely adopted in various studies (Alivernini & Manganelli, 2011; Chow, 2012; Chow & Kennedy, 2012; Cosgrove & Gilleece, 2012; Kennedy, 2010; Kennedy, Huang & Oser & Hooghe, 2013). Cronbach's alpha was used for reliability testing. George and Mallery (2003) suggested that a Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7 was acceptable. The variables of pool samples (including Hong Kong and Taiwan) had reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) ranging from 0.83 to 0.89. The reliabilities ranged from 0.77 to 0.91 in Hong Kong (Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society: 0.88; Civic Values: 0.84; Social Values: 0.89) and 0.76 to 0.88 in Taiwan (Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society: 0.83; Civic Values: 0.83; Social Values: 0.89) (Schulz et al., 2010). The results of Goodness-of-fit statistics of pool samples (including Hong Kong and Taiwan) for the used variables in CFA had a relatively good fit and were suitable for comparison between the societies (Schulz et al., 2011). And, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) ranged from 0.91 to 0.99 (Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society: 0.99; Civic values: 0.91 Social values: 0.93) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) ranged from 0.046 to 0.059 (Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society: 0.059; Civic values: 0.052; Social values: 0.046) (Schulz et al., 2010). These results were suggested to be a good fit (Chen, 2014; Hooper & Coughlan & Mullen, 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schulz et al., 2010; Steiger, 2007).



The analytical methods for data analysis were path analysis, multi-group (multi-sample) analysis and multi-level analysis. Hox, Leeuw, Brikhuis and Ooms (2012) and Bou and Satorra (2010) proposed that multi-group analysis is better to be conducted first when the number (e.g., number of countries) is small and multi-level analysis is more suitable to come after when the number is large when studying group variance. In this research, there were only two sample groups, Hong Kong and Taiwan. And, there were many sub-groups (schools) of each group (society). Seventy-six schools from Hong Kong and 150 schools from Taiwan participated in the ICCS 2009 (Schulz et al., 2010). Therefore, this research used the multi-group analysis first and multi-level analysis followed.

This research adopted path analysis to study the invariance between Hong Kong and Taiwan regarding the influence of religion on students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values, and social values. There were several reasons for adopting path analysis based on the research objective and questions. Path analysis, an extension of multiple regression, is able to study the causal pathway of both dependent and independent variables and test the proposed model (Kardag, 2012; Lleras, 2005; Kline, 1998; Mapp, 2006). For example, both direct and indirect impact can be examined through path analysis (Honjo, Tsutsumi, Kawachi & Kawakami, 2006). Also, path analysis is able to test the causal ordering among different variables (Honjo, Tsutsumi, Kawachi & Kawakami, 2006; Klem, 1995).

In the hypothesized measurement model, religious engagement was assumed to influence students' attitude to the influence of religion in society as well as the civic values and social values in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Both direct and indirect influences of religious engagement on civic values and social values were analyzed at both the school and the student level. By making use of path analysis, it helped to identify the causal relations among the variables in the hypothesized model of Hong Kong and Taiwanese students for comparison. Therefore, the usage of path analysis was able to reflect the relations among variables clearly as well as offering a platform for comparison which was suitable for the research objective and answering the

research questions.

Byrne (2004, 2008) highlighted that multi-group analysis allows a model with the same theoretical background across groups at the same time and the variance across different groups under the same framework to be identified within a parallel framework. It suited the aim of the research, identifying the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan. Furthermore, the multi-level comparison was able to offer comparison about the influence from higher levels such as type of education (Bray & Thomas, 1995). In this project, the influence from school was of concern like religious affiliation. The religious affiliation of schools affects the way students are nurtured like value shaping. Therefore, the usage of multi-level comparison also helped to show the influence from school on students in this project. It made the study contain both individual-level and school-level analysis. Even though the quantitative data did not contain variables in relation to school religious background, the multi-level analysis was still able to generate insights about the impact from school.

The measurement in Mplus contained correlations about various variables at two levels. The influence of religious engagement on students' civic values, social values and attitudes to the influence of religion on society was measured at student level (Within-level) and school level (Between-level). "School" was used as a cluster for working on it. The type of analysis was "Two-level Random". Standardized coefficients (Beta) were generated with reference effect size for comparison.

#### 4.2. Qualitative Analysis

Regarding the qualitative analysis, context analysis was adopted. It was used to confirm or test a preexisting theory and provide explanations for similarities and differences identified by the comparison. As the qualitative analysis involved the interpretation of data collected from schools with different religious backgrounds, religious neutrality also had to be highlighted. The researcher received his primary and secondary education in Catholic schools which might affect his religious

preference. It was definitely important to be free from religious preference and be neutral in the qualitative study. In order to avoid such bias, all religions and schools with different religious affiliations were treated equally and none of them were considered superior to the rest during the analytical process. Students' feedback was analyzed in relation to the two research questions and research objectives. During the analytical process, the researcher kept on reminding himself to be open-minded for all the possibilities and treated all religious affiliations equally.

The analysis of the qualitative data was based on the approach proposed by Johnson and Christensen (2008). The key process involved segmenting and coding (p. 534). Segmenting breaks down raw data into meaningful analytical units, while coding marks segments of data with a category name. In addition, this analysis adopted the constant comparative method proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). In the adoption of the two methods, "segmenting and coding" and "constant comparative method", mentioned above, three major steps of data analysis were undertaken. These steps would generate the analysis containing school level and society level as well as answering the two research questions including, "segmenting and coding", "comparison at school level", and "comparison between societies". In addition, the theme analysis was also adopted based on thematic network analysis proposed by Attride-Stirling (2001). This included generating the "Basic Theme", "Organization Theme" to "Global Theme". The individual student's responses were treated as Basic Theme, school level results were treated as the Organization Theme and the society level results were treated as the Global theme.

First, the collected data underwent the process of segmenting and coding. The audio record of each interview was considered as a unit of analysis in this research. Feedback from each interview was analyzed individually in relation to the two research questions. The meaning of the data analyzed was also coded and categorized into themes in relation to the three major aspects, i.e., attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, influence from religious engagement and influence from family and school. Each interview was analyzed individually about the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. After that, the characteristics of each school for each



aspect as mentioned above were identified. All schools in Hong Kong and Taiwan were analyzed individually. For example, School HK-1 and School TW-4 were analyzed about attitudes towards the influence of religion on society individually. One student from school HK-1 thought that religion had positive influence in society (Basic Theme). After the analysis, school-level results were generated for the next step.

Second, the comparison was conducted at the school level before moving on. At this stage, the comparison was conducted within each society respectively. The school-level results generated in the previous step were used for comparison so as to generate themes about each society (Organization Theme). At this stage, the schools were treated as a corpus within each society and compared within the same category. For example, School TW-1 was compared with school TW-2, TW-3 and TW-4 (the total number of participating schools was four) so as to identify the themes of students in Taiwan about attitudes towards the influence of religion on society (Global Theme). The same comparison was also conducted in Hong Kong such as school HK-1 was compared with school HK-2, HK-3 and HK-4 (the total number of participating schools in Hong Kong was four) about their attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. After that, the overall perceptions about Taiwanese and Hong Kong students were also generated respectively. In this process, the researcher also intended to describe the themes in each society in relation to the three major aspects as mentioned above in relation to the two research questions, attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, influence of religious engagement, and influence of school and family. After analysis, society-level results were generated for further comparison.

Third, comparison between societies was conducted in order to know the similarities and differences between the themes generated from the interviews with Hong Kong and Taiwanese students so as to answer the two research questions as posed in this study. At this stage, society was treated as a corpus for making comparison. As a whole, the results about Hong Kong students, under all categories and themes, were compared with the results about Taiwanese students (Hong Kong Global Theme was

used to compare with the Global Theme generated from Taiwan data). At this stage, the researcher aimed to identify both similarities and differences between students in the two societies and provided explanations for these similarities and differences. For example, the influence of religious engagement on civic values of students was compared between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students. The results here were not only limited to the qualitative study but also prepared for the discussion in the next chapter together with the quantitative study.

The above three steps were the way to conduct the qualitative analysis. During the process, one important aspect had to be highlighted. The raw data were in Chinese Language (Cantonese and Mandarin). The data were translated into English. This translation process focused on the original meaning that students intended to express. There were two technical issues that were important when translating Chinese script into English when conducting qualitative study, including, assurance of integrity and transferring the meaning of pronouns and tenses (Hue, 2001).

The assurance of integrity implied that the usage of idioms, slang and cultural signs may mislead readers. It would affect the integrity of the meaning. Therefore, the researcher preferred to ignore those idioms and slang as well as religious jargon. The researcher preferred to express the accurate meaning behind the wordings. For example, Hong Kong and Taiwanese students used different idioms and religious jargon to describe different religious worship, such as the way of describing Buddhism and Christianity were different. When describing the religious worship of Christianity and Buddhism, students preferred to say “to pray” and “to make a salute” respectively. The researcher translated all these wordings into “religious worship”. Furthermore, students had different expressions when describing Christian churches and Buddhist temples. Therefore, the researcher used “religious bodies” when students did not specify which religion they were referring to. It also helped to maintain the religious neutrality in the research process. The selection of wording in English for translating the original meaning was also conducted carefully. Translation of each quotation was conducted several times for creating the most suitable one. It ensured that the meaning of English expressions was the same as the original Chinese

script.

In addition, the translation of pronouns and tenses from Chinese into English was conducted carefully. During the translation, the researcher interpreted pronouns and tenses carefully so as to ensure that the actual intended meaning of the students was expressed. For example, the gender of the pronoun implied and the tenses such as future, present and past were identified carefully. The translation process was not conducted only once. It was also a repeating process. It helped to create the most suitable version for analysis to be easy for readers to understand the message of students. All these ways helped to ensure interpretation of good quality.

#### 4.3. Mixed Data Analysis

Having collected and analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data, mixed data analysis was conducted. In doing this, data comparison and data integration were the major ways for handling the two sets of data (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). As Johnson and Christensen (2008, p. 454) suggested, “some integration or comparison occurs during data interpretation—called meta-inferences—because this type of mixing can help the researcher identify convergence, inconsistency, and contradiction in the data”. As they explained, data comparison implies the comparison of findings from the qualitative and quantitative analyses and data integration implies that the qualitative and quantitative findings were integrated into an integrated result. For example, the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students about the influence of religious engagement on civic values and social values identified by the quantitative research were compared with the qualitative research and also explained by the qualitative research. The qualitative research was also used to response the results generated by the quantitative research. In the quantitative analysis, the multi-level analysis was used for better understanding the individual and school level effect. For example, the quantitative analysis may identify the strong individual effect about the influence of religious engagement on students’ attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values and social values. This result would be explained by the



qualitative analysis through understanding the impact of various religious engagements on students individually and their perceptions towards the impact of religious engagement in schools. The in-depth discussion would be made in Chapter 5.

In all, the comparison and integration the data collected from the ICCS and interviews, provided solid and integrated findings to answer the two research questions.

## 5. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the research methodology. In order to answer the two research questions, this study adopted mixed methods research which contains both qualitative and quantitative elements. For example, the quantitative research identified the differences and similarities between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students at both school level and individual level about their attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and influence of religious engagement on attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and how those values affect civic values and social values. The qualitative research analyzed the perceptions of students in relation to the two research questions. Both data comparison and data integration were used for handling the findings generated from the two research methods so as to provide integrated findings with strong foundation and some new insights for further studies. The next chapter presents the analysis. It provides the results of analyzing the quantitative data and qualitative data in relation to the two research questions.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of this study generated from both the qualitative and quantitative data and used for answering the two research questions. It includes an Introduction, Quantitative Analysis, Qualitative Analysis and Conclusion. The analysis about the relations between religious engagement and students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values, and social values in different perspectives will be given.

#### 2. Quantitative Analysis

There are four parts in this section including, Descriptive Statistics, Path Analysis, Multi-group Analysis and Multi-level Path Analysis.

##### 2.1. Descriptive Statistics

This part shows the descriptive statistics of three variables (attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic value and social values) about Hong Kong and Taiwanese students.

##### 2.1.1. Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society

Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society of Hong Kong and Taiwanese students are highlighted here for research question 1. There are two aspects in the following about the students' attitudes to the influence of religion including, "comparison between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students" and "comparison between male and female in each society".



Table 1 *Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society*

Questions		Hong Kong <i>n</i> =2783		Taiwan <i>n</i> =5100				<i>Cohen's</i>  <i>d</i>
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>		
For each of these statements, tick one box to show how much you agree.  (4 points scale – 'Strongly agree' – 'strongly disagree')								
a)	Religion is more important to me than what is happening in national politics.	2.00	0.76	2.24	0.78	-13.06	***	-0.31
b)	Religion helps me to decide what is right and wrong	2.32	0.88	2.40	0.82	-3.80	***	-0.09
c)	Religion leaders should have more power in society	1.96	0.75	2.04	0.76	-4.53	***	-0.11
d)	Religion should influence people's behavior towards others.	2.41	0.91	2.71	0.85	-14.25	***	-0.34
e)	Rules of life based on religion are more important than civil laws.	2.05	0.79	2.06	0.77	-0.10		0.00
<b>Scale Scores</b>		2.15	0.67	2.29	0.62	-9.11	***	-0.22

4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree

Cronbach's Alpha (HK: 0.88; Taiwan: 0.83) \**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001

Regarding Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, Taiwanese students had a higher level of endorsement on the influence of religion in society than Hong Kong students with different mean scale scores (Hong Kong: *M* = 2.15, *SD* = 0.67; Taiwan: *M* = 2.29, *SD* = 0.62) with small effect size (see Table 1). The difference between them was statistically significant (*t* = -9.11, *p* < .001) with a small effect size (*d* = -0.22). The mean scores of Hong Kong students ranged from 1.96 to 2.41 and standard deviations ranged from 0.75 to 0.91. The mean scores of Taiwanese students ranged from 2.04 to 2.71 and standard deviations ranged from 0.76 to 0.85. All the items were statistically significant except "Rules of life based on religion are more important than civil laws" (Hong Kong: *M* = 2.05, *SD* = 0.79; Taiwan: *M* = 2.06, *SD* = 0.77). The difference was not statistically significant with a very small effect size (*t* = -0.10, *d* = 0.00). For the remaining items, the effect size ranged from small to moderate. Among five items, Hong Kong and Taiwanese students had the greatest difference in "Religion should influence people's

behavior towards others” ( $t = -14.25$ ,  $d = -0.34$ ) with statistical significance. The effect size was also the largest one ( $d = -0.34$ ) among the five items. “Religion is more important to me than what is happening in national politics” ranked second in the effect size ( $d = -0.31$ ) which was statistically significant between the two groups ( $t = -13.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Overall, both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students held only marginally positive views regarding the influence of religion in society as indicated by the various item scores.

**Table 2** *Hong Kong students’ attitudes towards the influence of religion on society*

Questions		Male <i>n</i> =1393		Female <i>n</i> =1359					
For each of these statements, tick one box to show how much you agree.								<i>Cohen’s</i>	
<i>(4 points scale – ‘Strongly agree’ – ‘strongly disagree’)</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>		<i>D</i>	
a)	Religion is more important to me than what is happening in national politics.	1.96	0.83	2.05	0.67	-3.23	***	-0.12	
b)	Religion helps me to decide what is right and wrong	2.25	0.92	2.41	0.84	-4.92	***	-0.18	
c)	Religion leaders should have more power in society	1.92	0.80	2.00	0.70	-2.98	***	-0.11	
d)	Religion should influence people’s behavior towards others.	2.34	0.95	2.49	0.85	-4.48	***	-0.17	
e)	Rules of life based on religion are more important than civil laws.	2.03	0.85	2.09	0.73	-2.12	***	-0.08	
<b>Scale Scores</b>		2.10	0.72	2.21	0.61	-4.41	***	-0.17	

*4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree*

*Cronbach’s Alpha (HK: 0.88)    \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$*

Table 3 Taiwanese students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society

Questions		Male <i>n</i> =2641		Female <i>n</i> =2448					Cohen's
For each of these statements, tick one box to show how much you agree.									
(4 points scale – 'Strongly agree' – 'strongly disagree')		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>			<i>d</i>
a)	Religion is more important to me than what is happening in national politics.	2.21	0.82	2.26	0.74	-2.12	***		-0.06
b)	Religion helps me to decide what is right and wrong	2.40	0.86	2.40	0.78	-0.11	***		0.00
c)	Religion leaders should have more power in society	2.04	0.79	2.04	0.72	-0.19	***		0.00
d)	Religion should influence people's behavior towards others.	2.65	0.89	2.77	0.81	-4.97	***		-0.14
e)	Rules of life based on religion are more important than civil laws.	2.07	0.81	2.04	0.73	1.26	***		0.04
<b>Scale Scores</b>		2.27	0.66	2.30	0.57	-1.68	***		-0.05

4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree

Cronbach's Alpha (Taiwan: 0.83) \**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001

Regarding the impact of gender, the difference between male and female groups of students in the two societies was small (see Tables 2 & 3). The difference between male and female groups in each society was small as reflected by Cohen's *d*. Both Cohen's *d* of scale scores in the two societies were very small (Hong Kong: -0.17; Taiwan: -0.05). With regard to the individual items, all items did not have small or moderate effect sizes in both societies and Cohen's *d* ranged from 0.00 to -0.18. Comparing the results in the two societies, Taiwanese female students were likely to have the most positive level of endorsement of the influence of religion in society (*M* = 2.30, *SD* = 0.57) even though not very strongly positive. Hong Kong male students were likely to have the lowest level of endorsement of the influence of religion in society (*M* = 2.10, *SD* = 0.72).



Table 4 *Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' civic values*

Questions		Hong Kong <i>n</i> =2783		Taiwan <i>n</i> =5100		<i>Cohen's</i>		
For each of these statements, tick one box to show how much you agree.		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>D</i>	
<i>(4 points scale – ‘Strongly agree’ – ‘strongly disagree’)</i>								
a)	Voting in every national election	3.19	0.72	3.04	0.80	8.26	**	0.20
b)	Joining a political party	2.14	0.63	2.06	0.66	5.36	**	0.12
c)	Learning about the country's history	3.04	0.80	3.11	0.81	-3.65	***	-0.09
d)	Following political issues in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV or on the internet	3.23	0.69	3.29	0.73	-3.08	***	-0.08
e)	Showing respect for government representatives	3.24	0.69	2.89	0.76	19.70	***	0.48
f)	Engaging in political discussions	2.65	0.76	2.57	0.81	4.67	***	0.10
g)	Participating in peaceful protests against laws believed to be unjust	2.78	0.81	2.82	0.87	-1.66	***	-0.05
h)	Participating in activities to benefit people in the <local community>	3.14	0.74	3.32	0.71	-10.63	***	-0.25
i)	Taking part in activities promoting human rights	3.01	0.74	3.38	0.70	-22.05	***	-0.51
j)	Taking part in activities to protect the environment	3.31	0.73	3.35	0.73	-2.47		-0.05
Scale Scores		2.97	0.46	2.98	0.48	-0.70	***	0.02

4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree

Cronbach's Alpha (HK: 0.84, Taiwan: 0.83) \**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001

### 2.1.2. Civic Values

Regarding civic values, Taiwanese students had a higher level of endorsement in various civic value items than Hong Kong students. The scale scores of Hong Kong and Taiwanese students in civic values were statistically significant ( $t = -0.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with very small effect size ( $d = 0.02$ ). The mean scale scores of Hong Kong students was 2.97 ( $SD = 0.46$ ) and scores of Taiwanese students was 2.98 ( $SD = 0.48$ ) (see Table 4). The mean scores of Hong Kong students ranged from 2.14 to 3.31 and standard deviations ranged from 0.63 to 0.81. And, the mean scores of Taiwanese students ranged from 2.06 to 3.38 and standard deviations ranged from 0.70 to 0.87. Among 10 items of civic values measurement, "Taking part in activities promoting humans" had the greatest difference ( $t = -22.05$ ,  $p < .001$ ) between Hong Kong and

Taiwanese students with a medium effect size ( $d = -0.51$ ). Overall, Taiwanese students had a higher level of endorsement of civic values than Hong Kong students from both societies and tended to be quite positive regarding this aspect.

Table 5 *Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' social values*

Questions		Hong Kong <i>n</i> =2783		Taiwan <i>n</i> =5100				Cohen's <i>d</i>
For each of these statements, tick one box to show how much you agree. (4 points scale – 'Strongly agree' – 'strongly disagree')		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>		
a)	Men and women should have equal opportunities to take part in government	3.65	0.56	3.76	0.48	-8.95	***	-0.21
b)	Men and women should have the same rights in every way	3.62	0.59	3.75	0.51	-10.12	***	-0.24
c)	Women should stay out of politics <sup>^</sup>	1.44	0.67	1.31	0.59	8.79	***	0.21
d)	When there are not many jobs available, men should have more right to a job than women <sup>^</sup>	1.75	0.83	1.52	0.82	12.26		0.28
e)	Men and women should get equal pay when they are doing the same jobs	3.53	0.68	3.70	0.61	-11.63	***	-0.26
f)	Men are better qualified to be political leaders than women <sup>^</sup>	1.88	0.88	1.56	0.81	16.48		0.38
g)	All ethnics should have an equal chance to get a good education in their society	3.43	0.65	3.74	0.51	-24.17	***	-0.53
h)	All ethnics should have an equal chance to get good jobs in their society	3.38	0.66	3.72	0.52	-25.27	***	-0.57
i)	Schools should teach students to respect members of all ethnics	3.48	0.63	3.70	0.56	-16.36	***	-0.37
j)	Members of all ethnics should be encouraged to run in elections for political office	3.15	0.74	3.25	0.81	-5.33	***	-0.13
k)	Members of all ethnics should have the same rights and responsibilities	3.42	0.65	3.69	0.55	-19.45	***	-0.45
l)	Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue speaking their own language	3.23	0.67	3.36	0.64	-8.46	**	-0.20
m)	Immigrants' children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have	3.43	0.63	3.60	0.57	-12.41	***	-0.28
n)	Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections	3.29	0.66	3.40	0.67	-7.00	***	-0.17
o)	Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle	3.28	0.67	3.33	0.67	-3.32	***	-0.07
p)	Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has	3.40	0.65	3.54	0.61	-9.60	***	-0.22
Scale Scores		3.39	0.42	3.58	0.38	-19.72	***	-0.47

4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree, <sup>^</sup> reversed items

Cronbach's Alpha (HK: 0.89, Taiwan: 0.83)\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

### 2.1.3. Social Values

Regarding social values, Taiwanese students had a higher level of endorsement than Hong Kong students in social values items. The scales scores of Hong Kong and Taiwanese students were  $M = 3.39$  ( $SD = 0.42$ ) and  $M = 3.58$  ( $SD = 0.38$ ) and the difference between them was statistically significant ( $t = -19.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with a marginally medium effect size ( $d = -0.47$ ) (see Table 5). Among 16 items, “All ethnics should have an equal chance to get good jobs in society” had the largest difference between Hong Kong ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ) and Taiwanese ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ) students ( $t = -25.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with a medium effect size ( $d = -0.57$ ). Overall, both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students were quite positive regarding social values.

After reviewing the above descriptive statistics, it helps to have a basic understanding of students from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Further discussion will be presented in the next chapter regarding the implications. The following concerns the Path Analysis.

### 2.2. Path Analysis

The hypothesized measurement model was a non-recursive mediation model. The usage of indices helped to make judgments about the model fit. The acceptable level of CFI and TLI are 0.90 or above and RMSEA was lower than 0.08 (Chen, 2014; Cohen, 1998; Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen, 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Morgan, Griego & Gloeckner, 2001; OECD, 2003; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr & Losito, 2010; Standage, Duda & Ntoumanis, 2005; Steiger, 2007). The hypothesized measurement model as shown in Chapter 3 (see Figure 2) was used here. The baseline model was a good fit with both Hong Kong and Taiwan data (CFI = .97, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .03).

### 2.3. Multi-group Analysis

This part adopted multi-group analysis to answer the two research questions. In the following parts, various model-fit-indices were adopted to study the model fit

including, CFT, TLI and RMSEA.

Table 6 *Summary of Model Fitness*

Model Result	N	$\chi^2$	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	<i>p</i>
Baseline Model	7683	2933.99	48	0.97	0.94	0.03	$p < .001$
Hong Kong	2728	1257.67	24	0.97	0.94	0.03	$p < .001$
Taiwan	4955	1683.06	24	0.97	0.94	0.03	$p < .001$

This also supported that the proposed conceptual model was able to be used to study Hong Kong and Taiwanese students. This model was a good fit with the data in both Hong Kong and Taiwan (Hong Kong: CFI = .97, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .03; Taiwan: CFI = .97, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .03) (see Table 6). Both CFIs were above the acceptable fit ( $>.09$ ) and RMSEAs were lower than .08 (Chen, 2014; Cohen, 1998; Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen, 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Morgan, Griego & Gloechner, 2008; OECD, 2003; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr & Losito, 2010; Standage, Duda & Ntoumanis, 2005; Steiger, 2007). The above (see Table 6) showed that CFI, TLI and RMSEA were the same in both Hong Kong and Taiwan. It reflected that the model had a similar level of good fit in the two societies. In addition, the CFI results of for both Hong Kong and Taiwan were  $0.97-0.97=0.00$  which indicated invariance between the two societies (Chan & Leung, 2014; Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

As the result above indicated the invariance between Hong Kong and Taiwan, the following examined the difference in each society by adopting Multi-level analysis. It made use of the hypothesized measurement model mentioned in Chapter 3 for analysis so as to identify the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students.

#### 2.4. Multi-level Path Analysis

This part made use of the Multi-level Path Analysis to identify the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan. There were three sub-parts including,

Hong Kong, Taiwan and Comparison between Hong Kong and Taiwan. Various statistical indicators were adopted for analysis in the following.

Both  $z$  values and standardized Beta were adopted for studying the correlations among variables. The  $z$  values  $>1.96$  implied significance (Ellis, 2010; Zoffness, Garland & Brookman-Frazee, 2009). “Predictors with  $z$ -scores  $>1.96$  or  $<-1.96$  were considered significant at  $p<.05$ ” (Zoffness, Garland & Brookman-Frazee, 2009, p. 195). And, the standardized Beta (Beta) was used as predictors to make judgements about the order of importance among the independent variables and the dependent variables (Nardi, 2006). The usage of standardized Beta also helped to make the comparison among variables in the multilevel analysis (Hox, 2010). Standard error was also considered as the reliability of predictors and low standard error implies high reliability (Harvill, 1991). In addition, the Intra-class correlation (ICC) helped to identify the influence from schools as a cluster in measurement compared with individual effect. “The degree of dependence was often measured by the intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC). An ICC of zero indicates that observations are independent of cluster membership. The larger the ICC, the more individual differences are due to differences between cluster” (Geiser, 2013, pp. 198-200).

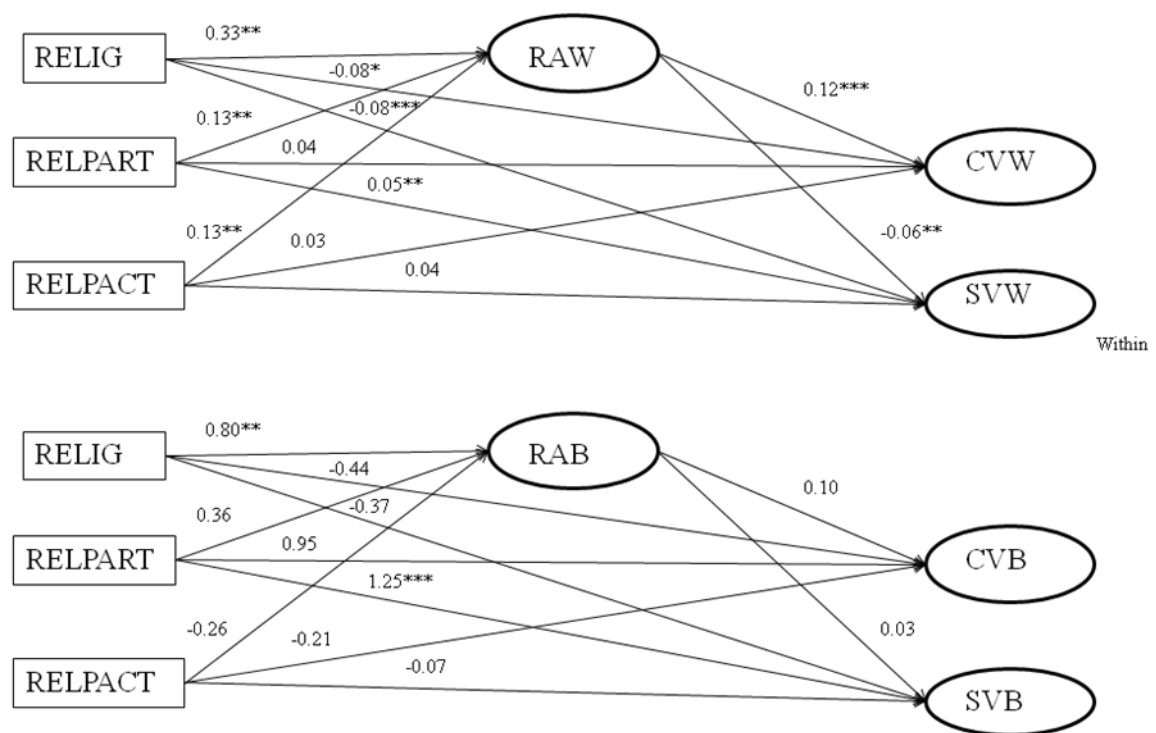
#### 2.4.1. Hong Kong

This part considers Hong Kong students at both the student level (Within-level) and the school level (Between-level) (see Table 7 and Figure 3 below).

Table 7 Hong Kong hypothesized measurement model result

Parameters	Estimate (Standardized $\beta$ )	Std. error	Wald Z	95% confidence interval	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
<u>Within Level (Student Level)</u>					
RAW->SVW	-0.06	0.02	-2.85**	-0.12	-0.01
RELIG->SVW	-0.08	0.02	-3.58***	-0.13	-0.02
RELPART->SVW	0.05	0.02	2.24**	-0.01	0.11
REACT->SVW	0.04	0.02	1.89	-0.01	0.09
RAW->CVW	0.12	0.02	4.84***	0.06	0.18
RELIG->CVW	-0.08	0.03	-2.70*	-0.16	0.00
RELPART->CVW	0.04	0.02	1.42	-0.03	0.10
REACT->CVW	0.03	0.02	1.30	-0.03	0.08
RELIG->RAW	0.33	0.02	14.27***	0.27	0.39
RELPART->RAW	0.13	0.02	6.17***	0.07	0.18
REACT->RAW	0.13	0.02	7.49***	0.09	0.18
<u>Between Level (School Level)</u>					
RAB->SVB	0.03	0.22	0.16	-0.52	0.59
RELIG->SVB	-0.37	0.46	-0.79	-1.56	0.83
RELPART->SVB	1.25	0.35	3.53***	0.34	2.16
REACT->SVB	-0.07	0.47	-0.16	-1.28	1.13
RAB->CVB	-0.10	0.22	-0.45	-0.68	0.48
RELIG->CVB	-0.44	0.63	-0.70	-2.06	1.18
RELPART->CVB	0.95	0.59	1.62	-0.56	2.46
REACT->CVB	-0.21	0.74	-0.28	-2.12	1.71
RELIG->RAB	0.80	0.27	2.95**	0.10	1.50
RELPART->RAB	0.36	0.33	1.08	-0.50	1.22
REACT->RAB	-0.26	0.44	-0.61	-1.38	0.86

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$



\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

Figure 3 Hong Kong hypothesized measurement model result

At the student level, the variables about religious engagement including religious background, attendance of religious services and participation in religious activities have similar relations with students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. However, the relations among civic values, social values and attitudes towards the influence of religion on society are different.

First, students' religious background was significant and positively related with attitudes towards the influence of religion on society (Beta = .33,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 14.27$ ,  $se = .02$ ) at the student level. The attendance at religious services by students was significant and positively related to attitudes towards the influence of religion on society also (Beta = .13,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 6.17$ ,  $se = .02$ ) at the student level. And the participation in religious activities was significant and positively related with attitudes towards the influence of religion on society (Beta = .13,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 7.49$ ,  $se = .02$ ). Second, the attitude to the influence of religion in society had positive and significant

relations with civic values ( $\text{Beta} = .12, p < .001, z = 4.84, \text{se} = .02$ ) at the student level. Third, attitudes towards the influence of religion on society had significant negative relations with social values ( $\text{Beta} = -.06, p < .01, z = -2.85, \text{se} = .02$ ) at the student level.

The student level result also indicated some ideas about the influence of religious engagement on attitudes towards the influence of religion on society in Hong Kong. The three standardized coefficients were positive and statistically significant. Comparing the standardized coefficient of the three religious engagement variables, it showed that the order of importance was: Religious background of students (.33), Religious activities participation (.13) and Religious service attendance (.13). Because all of them were positive coefficients, higher values for each of these measures were assumed to have greater influence on the students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society.

At the school level, the religious engagement variables (religious background, attendance of religious services and participation in religious activities) had different relations with attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. And the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society had the same relations with civic values and social values.

First, the various variables of religious engagement had different relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. The religious background of students was significant and positively related to attitudes towards the influence of religion on society ( $\text{Beta} = .80, p < .01, z = 2.95, \text{se} = .27$ ). Second, religious service attendance ( $p > .05, z < 1.96$ ) and participation of religious activities ( $p > .05, z < 1.96$ ) did not have significant relations with attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. Third, the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society of students did not have significant relations ( $p > .05, z < 1.96$ ) with both civic values and social values.

Moreover, the direct effect between religious engagement variables and social values



and civic values at the school and student levels were measured for further discussion in the next chapter.

Regarding civic values, they had quite similar results at both the student and school levels. Except for religious background of students having negative significant relations at student level ( $Beta = -.08, p < .05, z = -2.70, se = .03$ ), the other religious engagement variables did not have significant relations with civic values at both the student and school levels.

Regarding social values, there were different results at the school and student levels. In terms of the student level, the three religious engagement variables had different relations with social values. The religious background of students ( $Beta = -.08, p < .001, z = -3.58, se = .02$ ) had negative significant relations with social values. Religious service attendance ( $Beta = .05, p < .01, z = 2.24, se = .02$ ) had positive significant relations with social values. The religious activities did not have any significant relations with social values. In terms of the school level, religious service attendance had significant positive relations with social values ( $Beta = 1.25, p < .001, z = 3.53, se = .35$ ).

Furthermore, the ICC was adopted in studying Hong Kong samples for multi-level analysis. The result of analysis was also similar to the above about the impact of school. The ICCs of three latent variables ranged from 0.05 to 0.078 (attitudes towards the influence of religion on society: 0.05; social values: 0.078; civic values 0.034). The effect of causing variance due to school was low. Social Values had the largest ICC among three variables but this suggested that about 7.8% of the variance existing between schools. Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society ranked second ( $ICC = 0.05$ ) and suggested that about 5% of the variance existing between schools. Civic values ranked third ( $ICC = 0.034$ ) and suggested that about 3.4% of the variance existing between schools.

Table 8 Hong Kong hypothesized measurement model result (Indirect effect)

Parameters	Estimate (Standardized β)	Std. error	Wald Z	95% confidence interval		
				Lower bound	Upper bound	
<u>Indirect Effect</u>						
<u>Within Level (Student Level)</u>						
RELIG->SVW	-0.02	0.01	-2.73	**	-0.04	0.00
RELPART->SVW	-0.01	0.00	-2.59	**	-0.02	0.00
RELACTION->SVW	-0.01	0.00	-2.71	**	-0.02	0.00
RELIG->CVW	0.04	0.01	4.97	***	0.02	0.06
RELPART->CVW	0.02	0.00	3.59	***	0.00	0.03
RELACTION->CVW	0.02	0.00	4.04	***	0.01	0.03
<u>Between Level (School Level)</u>						
RELIG->SVB	0.03	0.17	0.16		-0.40	0.46
RELPART->SVB	0.01	0.08	0.15		-0.20	0.22
RELACTION->SVB	-0.01	0.06	-0.16		-0.16	0.14
RELIG->CVB	-0.08	0.19	-0.42		-0.58	0.42
RELPART->CVB	-0.04	0.07	-0.50		-0.22	0.15
RELACTION->CVB	0.03	0.07	0.36		-0.16	0.21

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

In addition, the indirect effect of religious engagement on civic values and social values was similar at the student level (Civic Values: (Religious background of students: Beta = 0.04\*\*\*, Religious service attendance: Beta = 0.02\*\*\*, Religious activities participation: Beta= 0.02\*\*); Social Values: (Religious background of students: Beta = -0.02\*\*, Religious service attendance: Beta = -0.01\*\*, Religious activities participation: Beta= -0.01\*\*)) (see Table 8). In all cases the effects are small and significant. The difference is the positive effects on civic values and the negative effects on social values. These small but significant relations between three religious engagement variables and civic values and social values were identified at student level but not at school level ( $p > .05$ ,  $z < 1.96$ ).

Regarding civic values at the student level, the three religious engagement variables had a positive and significant effect on them (Religious background of students: Beta = 0.04\*\*\*, Religious service attendance: Beta = 0.02\*\*\*, Religious activities participation: Beta= 0.02\*\*\*). Comparing with the standardized coefficient of three religious engagement variables, the order of importance was Religious background of students (.04\*\*\*), Religious service attendance (.02\*\*\*) and Religious activities participation (.02\*\*\*).

Regarding the social values at student level, the three religious engagement variables had similar relations with it (Religious background of students: Beta = -0.02\*\*, Religious service attendance: Beta = -0.01\*\*, Religious activities participation: Beta= -0.01\*\*). The effect of each of the religious engagement on social values was small, significant and negative: Religious background of students (-.02\*\*), Religious service attendance (-.01\*\*) and Religious activities participation (-.01\*\*).

Reviewing the above results, the school student level results were different in Hong Kong. It was clear that the religious engagement had positive relations with students' attitude to the influence of religion in society at the student level. The higher level of religious engagement enhanced the level of endorsement of attitude to the influence of religion in society. Unlike the student level result, the school level result was quite different. Among the three religious engagement variables, only the students' religious background had significant relations with the students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. The other two variables, religious service attendance and religious activities participation, did not have significant relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. The differences were not able to be explained by these two variables at the school level.

Moreover, the influence of students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society on civic values and social values between the school and student levels was different. The attitude to the influence of religion in society created a significant positive impact on students' civic values. Social values had negative relations with the attitude to the influence of religion in society which was different from the civic

values. But, the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society did not have significant relations with both civic values and social values at the school level like the student level.

In addition, the order of importance of the three religious engagement variables were different at the student and school levels with regard to the hypothesized measurement model. At the student level, the religious background of students had a greater level of influence on students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society than the religious activities participation and service attendance. And these two variables had the same level of influence. Unlike the student level, only the religious background of students had significant relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. For the remainder, the religious services and activities even did not have a significant relation with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society.

The ICCs also results provided strong support for the influence at the school level on attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values and social values of students which was relatively smaller than at the individual level. The direct and indirect effect of religious engagement variables on civic values and social values also indicated that the significant relations mostly existed at the student level. It may also be assumed that the differences were able to be explained at the student level in relation to religion rather than at the school level.

#### 2.4.2. Taiwan

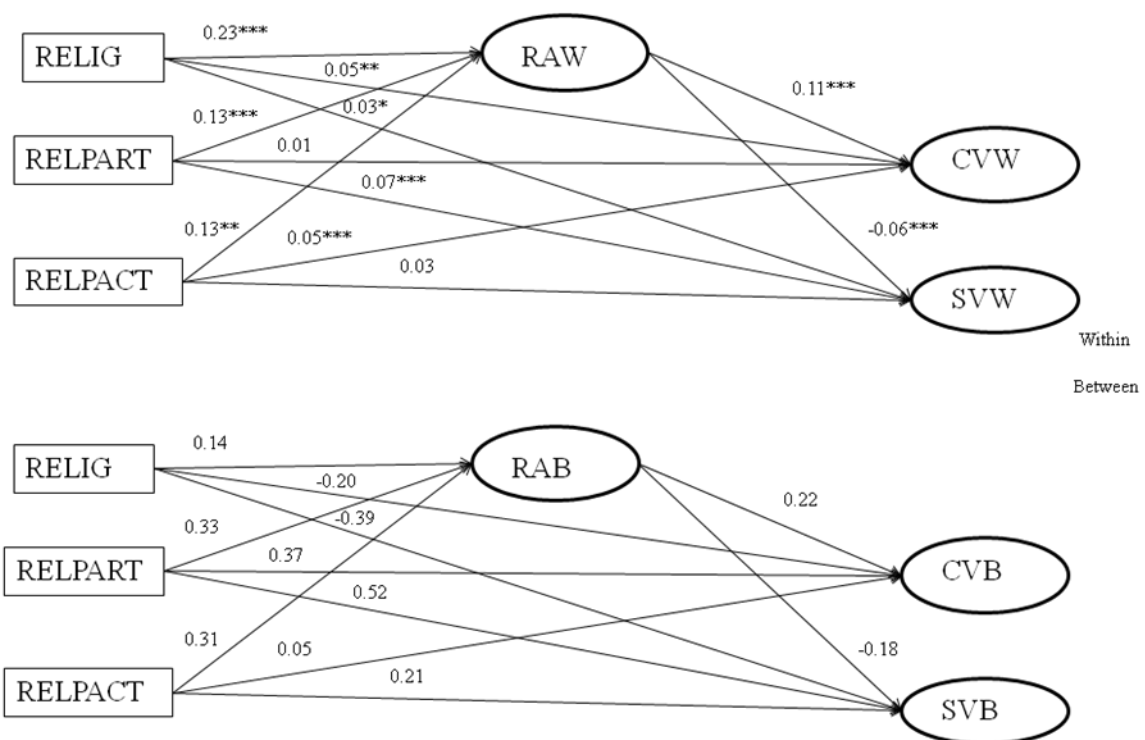
This part focuses on studying Taiwanese students by the model at both the student level (Within-level) and the school level (Between-level) (see Table 9 and Figure 4). Also, the ICCs of three latent variables are explained here for studying the multi-level differences.



Table 9 *Taiwan hypothesized measurement model result*

Parameters	Estimate	Std. error	Wald Z		95%	
	(Standardized $\beta$ )				confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
<u>Within Level (Student Level)</u>						
RAW->SVW	-0.06	0.02	-3.36	***	-0.11	-0.02
RELIG->SVW	0.03	0.02	2.23	*	-0.01	0.07
RELPART->SVW	0.07	0.02	3.96	***	0.02	0.11
REACT->SVW	0.03	0.02	1.85		-0.01	0.07
RAW->CVW	0.11	0.02	6.36	***	0.07	0.15
RELIG->CVW	0.05	0.02	3.13	**	0.01	0.09
RELPART->CVW	0.01	0.02	0.87		-0.03	0.05
REACT->CVW	0.05	0.01	3.39	***	0.01	0.09
RELIG->RAW	0.23	0.02	15.00	***	0.18	0.26
RELPART->RAW	0.13	0.02	8.45	***	0.09	0.17
REACT->RAW	0.13	0.01	9.63	***	0.10	0.17
<u>Between Level (School Level)</u>						
RAB->SVB	-0.18	0.16	-1.10		-0.59	0.24
RELIG->SVB	-0.39	0.28	-1.39		-1.11	0.33
RELPART->SVB	0.52	0.57	0.90		-0.95	1.98
REACT->SVB	0.21	0.45	0.46		-0.94	1.36
RAB->CVB	0.22	0.15	1.42		-0.18	0.61
RELIG->CVB	-0.20	0.28	-0.72		-0.92	0.52
RELPART->CVB	0.37	0.53	0.71		-0.98	1.73
REACT->CVB	0.05	0.40	0.11		-0.99	1.08
RELIG->RAB	0.14	0.22	0.64		-0.42	0.70
RELPART->RAB	0.33	0.35	0.94		-0.57	1.23
REACT->RAB	0.31	0.29	1.08		-0.43	1.06

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$



\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

Figure 4 Taiwan hypothesized measurement model result

At the student level, religious engagement variables (religious background, attendance of religious services and participation in religious activities) had significant and positive relations with the students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society ( $p < .001$ ). Religious background (Beta = .23,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 15.00$ ,  $se = .02$ ), Religious service attendance (Beta = .13,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 8.45$ ,  $se = .02$ ) and Religious activities participation (Beta = .13,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 9.63$ ,  $se = .01$ ) were positively related to students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. And, the social values of students was negatively related to the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society with statistical significance (Beta = -.06,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = -3.36$ ,  $se = .02$ ). Civic values of students was positively and significantly related to students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society (Beta = .11,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = .6.36$ ,  $se = .02$ ).

Furthermore, the student level result indicated the relations between religious

engagement and attitudes towards the influence of religion on society for Taiwanese students. A comparison of the three religious engagement variables, reflected the order of importance for them on the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society: religious background (.23), religious activities participation (.13) and religious service attendance (.13). As all of them were positive coefficients and statistically significant, higher values for each of these measures were assumed to equate to a higher level of influence on the students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. Also, the standard errors of these variables were low, indicating that these results had high reliability in explaining the variance among students.

At the school level, religious engagement variables did not have significant impact on students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society ( $p > .05$ ,  $z < 1.96$ ). The attitudes towards the influence of religion on society also did not have significant impact on both civic values and social values ( $p > .05$ ,  $z < 1.96$ ).

The direct effect measurement about the religious engagement variables on civic values and social values were also generated. The results between the school and student levels were different.

Regarding civic values, the results between the school and student levels were different. In terms of the student level, the religious background (Beta = .05,  $p < .05$ ,  $z = 3.13$ ,  $se = .02$ ) and religious activities participation (Beta = .05,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 3.39$ ,  $se = .01$ ) had positive significant relations with civic values. Religious service attendance ( $p > .05$ ,  $z < 1.96$ ) did not have significant relations with civic values. In terms of the school level, all religious engagement did not have significant relations with civic values ( $p > .05$ ,  $z < 1.96$ ).

Regarding social values, the results between the student and social levels were different. In terms of the student level, religious background (Beta = .03,  $p < .05$ ,  $z = 2.23$ ,  $se = .02$ ) and religious service attendance (Beta = .07,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 3.96$ ,  $se = .02$ ) had positive significant relations with social values. The religious activities at the student level did not have significant relations with social values ( $p > .05$ ). In

terms of the school level, no religious engagement variables had significant relations with social values ( $p > .05$ ,  $z < 1.96$ ).

In addition, the ICCs of three latent variables of Taiwan data were used for analysis. The ICCs of three dependent variables ranged from 0.032 to 0.046 (Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society: 0.046; Social values: 0.036; Civic values 0.032). It also indicated the influence from school in explaining that the variance was low. For example, the Attitude towards the influence of religion on Society, the one with the largest ICC among the three, only suggested about 4.6% of the variance laid between schools. Social values ranked second (ICC = 0.036) which only suggested about 3.6% laid between schools. Civic values had the least ICC (ICC = 0.032) which only suggested about 3.2% laid between schools.





Table 10 *Taiwan hypothesized measurement model result (Indirect effect)*

Parameters	Estimate	Std.	Wald		95%	
	(Standardized $\beta$ )	error	Z		confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
<u>Indirect Effect</u>						
<u>Within Level (Student Level)</u>						
RELIG->SVW	-0.01	0.00	-3.34	***	-0.03	0.00
RELPART->SVW	-0.01	0.00	-3.19	***	-0.02	0.00
RELACT->SVW	-0.01	0.00	-3.16	**	-0.02	0.00
RELIG->CVW	0.02	0.00	5.74	***	0.01	0.04
RELPART->CVW	0.01	0.00	5.19	***	0.01	0.02
RELACT->CVW	0.02	0.00	5.14	***	0.01	0.02
<u>Between Level (School Level)</u>						
RELIG->SVB	-0.02	0.05	-0.49		-0.15	0.11
RELPART->SVB	-0.06	0.06	-0.94		-0.22	0.10
RELACT->SVB	-0.06	0.08	-0.68		-0.26	0.15
RELIG->CVB	0.03	0.05	0.62		-0.10	0.16
RELPART->CVB	0.07	0.10	0.72		-0.18	0.33
RELACT->CVB	0.07	0.08	0.89		-0.13	0.26

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

Furthermore, the indirect effect (see Table 10) of religious engagement on civic values and social values were similar to the Hong Kong results above (Civic Values: (Religious background of students: Beta = 0.02\*\*\*, Religious service attendance: Beta = 0.01\*\*\*, Religious activities participation: Beta= 0.02\*\*\*); Social Values: (Religious background of students: Beta = -0.01\*\*\*, Religious service attendance: Beta = -0.01\*\*, Religious activities participation: Beta= -0.01\*\*)). As with the Hong Kong results, the effects on civic values were positive while the effects on social values were negative. These significant relations between three religious engagement variables and civic values and social values were identified at the student level most

but not at the school level ( $p > .05$ ,  $z < 1.96$ ).

Regarding civic values at the student level, the three religious engagement variables had small, positive and significant effects. Religious background (Beta = .02,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 5.74$ ,  $se = .00$ ), religious activities participation (Beta = .02,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 5.14$ ,  $se = .00$ ) and religious service attendance (Beta = .01,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = 5.19$ ,  $se = .00$ ). In each case, these effects were small, significant and positive.

Regarding social values at the student level, the effects were small, significant and negative: Religious background (Beta = -.01,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = -3.34$ ,  $se = .00$ ), religious service attendance (Beta = -.01,  $p < .001$ ,  $z = -3.19$ ,  $se = .00$ ) and religious activities participation (Beta = -.01,  $p < .01$ ,  $z = -3.16$ ,  $se = .00$ )

The results above help to compare the relations among variables in the hypothesized measurement model so as to know the characteristics of Taiwanese students. Based on the above results, the three religious engagement variables had significant relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society at the student level. Concerning the degree of importance of students' attitude to the influence of religion in society, religious background of students plays a more important role than both religious service attendance and religious activities participation at the student level. However, no religious engagement variables had significant relations with the students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. This was different from the results at the student level. Concerning civic values and social values, they had different relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society at the student level. The attitudes towards the influence of religion on society of students had negative relations with social values. And it had positive relations with students in Taiwan at the student level. But, both of them did not have significant relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society at the school level.

Moreover, the order of importance of the three religious engagement variables was different at the student level and the school level. At the student level, the religious

background of students had a greater level of influence on students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society than the religious activities participation and service attendance. And these two variables had the same level of influence. Compared with the student level, all the religious engagement variables did not have significant relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society at the school level. In terms of ICCs, the influence from school was relatively lower than individual effect in explaining the variance of the three dependent variables, attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values and social values. It also offered strong support for the analysis results above. The direct effect and indirect effect measurement at the school student levels were also consistent with the above and showed that the explanation of variance among students relied on the individual level most.

The above shows the analytical results for Hong Kong and Taiwan separately. The next part makes use of the above results to conduct a comparison so as to answer the research questions and generating the results of hypotheses testing.

#### 2.4.3. Comparison between Hong Kong and Taiwan: Result of Hypotheses Testing

This part compares the results above to identify the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan in the relationships regarding religious engagement, attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values and social values of Hong Kong and Taiwan. It also helps to examine the two research hypotheses for the quantitative study (H1: Hong Kong and Taiwanese students show no differences in attitudes towards the influence of religion on society; H2: Hong Kong and Taiwanese students show no differences regarding the influence of religious engagement on affecting their attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and the influence of it on civic values and social values at the student and school levels). The assumptions of both hypotheses were rejected.

Regarding the first hypothesis, Hong Kong and Taiwanese students had different attitudes towards the influence of religion in society as shown above. The scale scores



showed that students from both societies tended to have a low level of endorsement about the influence of religion in society. Comparing with Taiwanese students, Hong Kong students even had more negative perceptions on the influence of religion in society.

Regarding the second hypothesis, Hong Kong and Taiwanese students were different from it. There were both similarities and differences about the influence from religious engagement on students' attitudes towards the influence of religion in society and the impact of these attitudes on civic and social values.

There were some similarities between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students at both student and school levels. First, the religious engagement variables were positively related to the attitudes towards the influence of religion and statistically significant (Religious background of students: Beta= 0.33\*\*\* (Hong Kong), Beta= 0.23\*\*\* (Taiwan); Religious service attendance: Beta= 0.13\*\*\* (Hong Kong), Beta =0.13\*\*\* (Taiwan); Religious activities participation: Beta= 0.13\*\*\* (Hong Kong), Beta= 0.13\*\*\* (Taiwan)) at student level in both Hong Kong and Taiwan. Second, the relationship between civic values and religious service attendance, attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and civic values were positive and statistically significant (Beta= 0.12\*\*\* (Hong Kong), Beta= 0.11\*\*\* (Taiwan)) at student level. Third, the relations between the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and social values at the student level were significant (Hong Kong: Beta = -0.06\*\*\*; Taiwan: Beta = -0.06\*\*\*) and negatively related. Fourth, the religious service attendance had significant positive relations with social values in both Hong Kong and Taiwan at the student level (Hong Kong: Beta = 0.05\*\*\*; Taiwan: Beta = 0.07\*\*\*). Fifth, both attitudes towards the influence of religion in society and religious background of students did not have significant relations with social values at school level. Sixth, the relations between civic values and attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and all religious engagement variables were not significant ( $p > .05$ ,  $z < 1.96$ ) at the school level in both Hong Kong and Taiwan. Seventh, the order of importance of the influence of religious engagement variables on students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society was similar in both Hong Kong

and Taiwan at student level. Among the three variables of religious engagement, the religious background of students was the top priority in regard to the influence on the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society of students. The religious activities participation and religious service attendance played less important roles than the religious background of students in light of the ranking among the three variables.

There were some differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan. First, the religious background of students had significant relations ( $p < .01$ ,  $z > 1.96$ ) with students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society at school level in Hong Kong. It was different from Taiwan. In Taiwan, the religious backgrounds of students did not have significant relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. Second, the religious service attendance did not have significant relations with social values at the school level in Taiwan which was different from Hong Kong having positive and significant relations. Third, the religious activities participation and religious background of students had significant relations with civic values in Taiwan but not in Hong Kong which was not significant and negative significant relations respectively at the student level. Fourth, the religious background of students had positive relations with social values in Taiwan but not in Hong Kong which was negatively related at the student level.

Regarding the individual level result, religious engagement maybe more likely to be used for explaining the differences among Hong Kong and Taiwanese students in relation to the attitudes towards the influence of religion in society, civic values and social values either negative or positive relations between those variables. The high individual effect was also a major similarity between Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Regarding the school level result, religious engagement variables were not likely to be used to explain the differences among students in relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion in society, civic values and social values due to the insignificant relations of most cases. The low school effect was also identified as the similarity between Hong Kong and Taiwan.



Concerning the impact of religious engagement on attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values and social values, it was sometimes different in Hong Kong and Taiwan at the student individual level. Religious engagement variables had positive relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society in both Hong Kong and Taiwan. However, it may not fully the same in cases of civic values and social values. The religious background of students was negative with both civic and social values with statistical significance in Hong Kong. It was different from Taiwan in which both cases were significant and positively related.

The direct and indirect effect of religious engagement on civic values and social values may not always the same. The direct impact of religious engagement in both societies was different. Comparing with the indirect impact which mediated by the attitudes towards the influence of religion in society, the impact of religious engagement on civic values remaining positive and significant and social values turned out to be negative and significant in both societies. These showed that the direct effect of religious engagement on civic values and social values may not necessary the same as the result of indirect effect in all cases. As mentioned in the descriptive statistics results, both Hong Kong and Taiwan were only marginally endorsed with the influence of religion in society. The mediating variables may turn the results to be different. In addition, the school level results indicated that religious engagement may not always have significant relations with civic values and social values. The influence from school may not able to explain the variance among students in relation to the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values and social values.

Moreover, the ICCs results indicated the effects resulting from schools on Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values and social values. The influence of Hong Kong and Taiwan schools were low compared with the individual effect. The effect from schools was not likely to explain much about the variance among students in the two societies. In addition, the indirect

effect and direct effect measurement indicated that individual reasons may be more able to explain the differences between students such as family than schools.

After studying the quantitative data, the next section analyzes the qualitative data collected by the researcher through interviews with students in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

### 3. Qualitative Analysis

This section describes the results of the interview study, showing Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' understanding of the influence of religion in society and how their religious engagement affects their civic values and social values development. The results will be presented under three sections of Hong Kong, Taiwan and Summary of Qualitative Analysis. First, relevant themes as categorized from the interviews of Hong Kong and Taiwanese students are presented, and individual students' feedback is compared in relation to the three research foci, "attitudes towards the influence of religion on society" and "influence from religious engagement" and "influence from school and family".

#### 3.1. Hong Kong

##### 3.1.1. Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society

The Hong Kong student participants thought that religious bodies held a set value guiding the behaviour of human beings and how society should be run. These values are the religious doctrines promoted by the religious bodies such as love and care. Such doctrines may also affect social values. Individual and spiritual life development is also affected by these doctrines. The influence is not necessarily through the church, but quite noticeably through the offering of their social services for people in need in the local community, such as education and child care. This is how their doctrine of peace, love and social harmony is spread and influences individuals; it represents a crucial part of the social values influencing the behaviour of people in society. As the

students explained, *“religion helps to make people become mutually supporting, care for others and not harm others (HK-1-01)”* and *“there are many schools (in Hong Kong) operated by the Christian Church (HK-4-02)”*.

However, the religious doctrines are not the only doctrines in society. Very often, it might not go well with different doctrines of social value as endorsed by the religious bodies. The students realized that religious bodies might cause social conflict due to the religious doctrines. Same-sex marriage was the most commonly chosen as an example to illustrate their view.

As the students recognized, based upon the religious doctrines of Christianity, as disseminated through church services, marriage is designated for the coupling between a man and a woman; and hence their religious bodies impose strong views on same-sex marriage. While some people in society think that same-sex marriage is acceptable, based upon the social value of equality and liberty, this type of doctrine would go against the doctrines that the religious bodies intend to safeguard. As such, social conflict might occur due to the different doctrines underlying the social values. As student HK-2-01 said *“I agree that religion does have an impact in society. The legislation of same-sex marriage is opposed by the Christian Church. It may cause social conflict among people with different perspectives”*.

### 3.1.2. Influence from Religious Engagement

It was shown that religion influences personal and spiritual life development of students not only through their participation in religious bodies but also often the social service offered and the relevant activities in which they engage such as religious education in schools and various forms of religious activities inside and outside schools.

#### 3.1.2.1. Influence from Religious Services and Activities

The Hong Kong students in this study thought that religious services and activities are





related to religious doctrines such as religious lessons at schools. The experience in religious services and activities would affect their personal and spiritual life development. As students explained, *“During the religious lessons, teachers talk about the Bible stories only and seldom mention other aspects of life as well as other kinds of values (HK-2-01)”*, and *“I think the attendance of religious services makes me become more patient and concentrated ...like doing homework. I become more concentrated than before (HK-1-05)”*. These students identified how their learning about the Bible in the classroom was associated with their personal and spiritual development. It happened even when teachers presented the text of the stories without necessarily giving much interpretation of it. It could be seen that religious doctrines are transmitted to students through the formal curriculum in schools. Further, that religion affects individual personal growth was identified to be promoted through informal curriculum on religious activities and social services, which they engaged in beyond the classroom. These religious activities and social services were found to have an influence on the students’ personal life such as facilitating academic life development like learning and doing homework.

#### 3.1.2.2. Influence from Student’s Religious Background

Hong Kong students made sense of religious background as a set of guidelines in their daily lives that people should follow in their way of treating other people and attitudes to God. Such guidelines are rooted in the religious doctrines such as love, care and thanks to God. Students thought that the religious background influenced their personal and spiritual life development such as the way they deal with interpersonal relations like family life and attitude to God. As students explained, *“my religious belief helps me to become an obedient son, loving others and grateful to God (HK-2-01)”* and *“I think the greatest impact to me about my religious belief is not to harm others and be aware of my behaviour (HK-3-02)”*.

#### 3.1.3. Influence from Family and School

It was identified that school and family affect students when making judgments in relation to social and political issues. Regarding the influence from family, daily interaction such as discussion with family members may be the way they are affected when making judgments regarding social and political issues. These interactions such as discussion with family members may provide them knowledge and skills to make judgments on the information obtained from media such as government policy. It may also encourage them to care about social development. As students explained, *“I think that family has a great impact on me. My parents, brother and sisters like discussing social and political issues with me when watching TV like news programmes. (HK-2-01)”* and *“my father has liked to discuss social and political issues with me since I was small. For example, my father explains to me the reasons for the Education Bureau amending the language policy. It makes me know more about this policy and why the government makes such change (HK-1-01)”*.

Regarding the impact from school, it was recognized that the formal curriculum, Liberal Studies, affects their ways of making judgments on social and political issues. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Liberal Studies aim to equip students with political knowledge such as the legal and political system of Hong Kong. The students thought that they were able to acquire knowledge and skills in understanding about social and political issues during the Liberal Studies lessons. Apart from learning political knowledge, the learning process in the classroom also develops students’ attitudes to making judgments about social and political issues like being critical and objective. As students explained, *“Liberal Studies make me know about the political environment in the Mainland. Also, I learn something about the legislation in Hong Kong (HK-4-04)”* and *“Liberal Studies equips me skills to analyze both civic and political issues such as pro and cons analysis as well as multi-perspectives analysis (HK-2-02)”*.

### 3.2. Taiwan

#### 3.2.1. Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society

Taiwanese students thought that religious bodies also hold a set of values and religious doctrines, affecting the behaviour of individuals and have influence on the social values of society like care and kindness through the provision of social and education services, such as helping people to cope with their adversity, and mobilizing people to participate in the voluntary services for serving others in society. Such behaviour also promotes religious doctrines such as mutual help, love and care in Taiwan. As student TW-4-01 said *“some religious bodies are able to make use of their power to gather people to devote themselves in the provision of social services and voluntary work”*.

They believed that some religious values facilitate the change of social values such as gender equality. Many students highlighted the influence of religion on the change of gender equality in Taiwan society. They thought that such influence benefitted Taiwan society, by improving the social status of females to be more equal to males. For example, when explaining the influence of Christianity on gender equality, student TW-2-01 said *“religion has influenced gender equality. For example, Christians are only allowed to have one partner and should be loyal to him/her”*.

In addition to gender equality, people’s attitude to women has changed to be more respectful in the family and workplace, while the religious bodies in Taiwan promote their own doctrine, as a way to initiate the change of social values. They believed that the change at the individual level would finally turn Taiwan into a modern society. As student TW-4-01 said *“religion changes the traditional values about gender equality. It promotes and strengthens the importance of gender equality in modern society like the role of females in the family and workplace”*.

### 3.2.2. Influence from Religious Engagement

It was identified that religious engagement influences students’ personal and spiritual life development. These influence through participation in various forms of religious services and activities inside and outside schools like religious education in schools and also the social services offered by the religious bodies.

### 3.2.2.1 Influence from Religious Services and Activities

It was found that the participation in religious activities and attendance of religious services would influence students' personal and spiritual life development such as making reflection regularly. As students explained, *“participation in religious activities and attendance of religious services do not have a big impact on my way to make judgments on social and civic political issues. During the religious ceremonies, we practise religious worship. The rest of the time, clergies like to make use of Bible stories to teach us the religious doctrines (TW-1-03)”* and *“religious activities help me to have reflection about what to improve in my daily life (TW-1-06)”*.

### 3.2.2.2. Influence from Students' Religious Background

Taiwanese students thought that their religious background gave them a set of religious doctrines which provided them with guidelines on their secular daily lives and how they practised their religious life such as worshiping God. Such experience had an influence on their personal and spiritual life development such as helping them to develop positive attitudes to cope with the challenges in daily lives. Students even specified that religious background empowered their strength of life and recognized it as a force of helping them to overcome challenges. As students explained *“religious belief makes me become more positive in coping with the challenges of daily life (TW-2-04)”* and *“religious belief makes me pray to Jesus Christ when facing difficulties and it offers me power to cope with the challenges (TW-1-05)”*.

### 3.2.3. Influence from Family and School

School and family could affect the ways to make judgments on social and political issues such as attitudes to the performance of government and government officials and their choice in elections in the long run. Regarding the influence from family, Taiwanese students thought that family life experience such as sharing with family members affects their way of making judgments on social and political issues. When

family members share their views on these issues, they also transmit to students their values at the same time and even affect their preference of political parties. As students explained, *“my parents like to share with me their experience dealing with those social and political issues (TW-3-04)”* and *“my parents affect me most. For example, their values even affect my attitudes to the political parties in Taiwan (TW-3-02)”*.

Regarding the impact from school, the students thought that the formal curriculum, Civic Studies, of school did not strongly affect them in making judgments on social and political issues due to no updated teaching materials. Civic Studies as part of the formal curriculum aims to equip students with some political knowledge for handling social and political issues such as the legislation and political system in Taiwan as mentioned in Chapter 1. In addition, the students emphasized the importance of the influence from informal interaction with them as teachers were more willing to share their own ideas such as “causal discussion” during leisure time. As students explained, *“I think the Civic Studies of school cannot help me make judgments about social and political issues. The topic of Civic Studies seems outdated and was discussed in the media a long time ago (TW-4-01)”* and *“I believe that I would learn more from teachers if they were willing to talk with us after class (TW-1-03)”*.

At this stage, the analysis was conducted at the society level. The characteristics of each society in relation to the three major aspects, “attitudes towards the influence of religion on society”, “influence from religious engagement” and “influence from family and schools” were identified.

### 3.3. Summary of Qualitative Analysis

The following is a summary of Hong Kong and Taiwanese students as well as a comparison so as to identify the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students in “Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society”, “Influence of religious engagement” and “Influence from family and school”. It helps

to prepare to answer the two research questions and in-depth discussion in the next chapter.

Regarding the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, Hong Kong and Taiwanese students identified the influence of religion from the promotion of certain religious doctrines to society such as care and love through the provision of social and education services for people in adversity. It may also affect the social values in society and reinforce the values about mutual help and care which facilitate peace and harmony. On the other hand, Hong Kong students pointed out that religious bodies may cause social conflict due to the certain religious doctrines they believe in and tough opposition to some controversial issues such as same-sex marriage. It was different for Taiwanese students. Taiwanese students appreciated the influence of religion in Taiwan society and facilitated it to become a modern society such as the promotion of gender equality.

Regarding the influence of religious engagement (religious activities, religious services and religious affiliation) on students, both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students thought that the influence of religious engagement mainly affected their personal and spiritual life development. They thought that these religious engagements related to the religious doctrines. For example, students thought that these religious engagements offered them religious knowledge and the way to practise religious worship.

Regarding the influence of family and school, Hong Kong and Taiwanese students had similar perceptions of the influence of family but different perceptions regarding the influence from school. In terms of the influence from family, both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students believed that family contributed to development of their ways to make judgments regarding political and social issues. Family life may affect their ways to make judgments on social and political issues. Only slight differences existed between students from the two societies. In Hong Kong, the interaction between family members and students was two-way. Students also expressed their views during discussions. And, the interaction between Taiwanese students and family was



more one-way. Students were more likely to act as learners and receivers and not so likely to express their ideas to their parents. Regarding the influence from schools, Hong Kong students believed that the formal curriculum of schools like Liberal Studies offers them both skills and knowledge to deal with political and social issues such as multi-perspectives analysis, Mainland issues and legislation system. However, Taiwanese students thought that the teaching materials of their Civic Studies were not so up to date and only offered them some basic knowledge. Taiwanese students also emphasized the importance of informal education in schools to help them make judgments on social and political issues.

The above discussion reviews the perceptions of Hong Kong and Taiwanese students in three major aspects, attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, influence of religious engagement, and influence from school and family. It identifies both similarities and differences between students from the two societies. The next chapter makes use of the findings above to generate explanations for the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students identified in the quantitative research.

#### 4. Conclusion

The above shows the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students. By making use of the hypothesized measurement model generated from the literature about the Western world, it helps one to understand the influence of religious engagement on affecting the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values and social values of students as well as the differences and similarities between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students. Further discussion will be conducted in the next chapter so as to have an in-depth explanation of the similarities and differences to produce the findings of this research.

The next chapter will make use of the findings of the qualitative research to give explanations for the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese



students. Also, further discussion in different aspects will be conducted such as implication for school practice and theoretical insights.





## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

#### 1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the results of the study reported in this thesis. This chapter will discuss those results. The chapter contains five sections including this Introduction. Section 2 provides a summary of the research results. Section 3 discusses the results in relation to Research Question 1. Section 4 discusses the results in relation to Research Question 2. Section 5 brings the chapter to a conclusion.

#### 2. Brief Summary of the Research Results

This section will briefly review the research results reported in Chapter 4. The purpose is to provide a reflection on which further discussion can be based. Some major results generated in Chapter 4 are highlighted below. They can be best understood initially by reviewing the quantitative and qualitative results separately before examining the relationship between the two sets of data.

In terms of the religious engagement variables influencing students' Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, Religious Background exerted the most significant effect. For both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students this was an individual level effect ( $\text{Beta} = .33$ ,  $\text{se} = .02$ ;  $\text{Beta} = .23$ ,  $\text{se} = .02$  respectively) and for Hong Kong students there was also a very strong school effect ( $\text{Beta} = .80$ ,  $\text{se} = .27$ ). This result, therefore, needs to be treated cautiously since it suggested there was considerable variation in the independent variable across schools.

Two other religious engagement variables also influenced both groups of students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. Religious services attendance and engagement in religious activities exerted small but significant effects (Hong Kong:  $\text{Beta} = .13$ ,  $\text{se} = .02$ ,  $\text{Beta} = .13$ ,  $\text{se} = .02$ ; Taiwan:  $\text{Beta} = .13$ ,  $\text{se} = .02$ ,  $\text{Beta}$



= .13,  $se = .01$ ) for both groups. There were no school-level effects for either of these variables. Despite these positive effects, and that of religious background, students from both Hong Kong and Taiwan endorsed the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society scale only marginally positively. Taiwanese students endorsed the scale more positively than Hong Kong students ( $M = 2.29$ ,  $SD = .62$  and  $M = 2.15$ ,  $SD = .67$  respectively) and while these differences were statistically significant ( $t = -.911$ ,  $p < .001$ ) the size of the difference was small ( $d = -0.22$ ).

The direct effects of attitudes towards the influence of religion on society on Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' civic and social values were similar. For both societies, there were only individual-level effects indicating that in terms of this model at least schools exerted little effect on the formation of civic and social values.

Regarding the individual effect of attitudes towards the influence of religion on society on civic and social values, the effect on civic values was different from the effect on social values for both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students. For both societies, the individual effect of attitudes towards the influence of religion on society on Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' civic values was positive and significant (Beta = .12,  $se = .02$ ; Beta = .11,  $se = .02$  respectively) and the effect on social values was negative and significant (Beta = -.06,  $se = .02$ ; Beta = -.06  $se = .02$  respectively). At the same time, there were no significant school-level effects of attitudes towards the influence of religion on society on civic and social values.

Some insight into these results can be gained by examining the level of endorsement of the different scales. Both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students endorsed the civic values scale moderately strongly ( $M = 2.97$ ,  $SD = .46$  and  $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = .48$  respectively) and while these differences were statistically significant ( $t = -.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ) the difference was not substantial. ( $d = 0.02$ ). In addition, both groups of students endorsed the social values scale quite strongly ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = .42$  for Hong Kong and  $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = .38$  for Taiwan). The differences between the two groups was statistically significant ( $t = -19.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the size of difference was moderate ( $d = -0.47$ ). On the other hand, the endorsement of attitudes towards the

influence of religion on society scale by both groups was only marginally positive (as indicated above) so in terms of the model, attitudes to the role of religion in society was not a good predictor of social and civic values.

Another interesting feature of the quantitative results that is worth noting here is that 58.7% of the Hong Kong sample indicated they had no religious background while the comparable figure for Taiwan was 31.6%. This may account for the relatively negative attitudes to the role of religion in society, especially on the part of Hong Kong students. It may also account for the relatively strong support for civic and social values by both groups, and why support for social values was so much stronger in Taiwan, where a much larger segment of the sample (68.4%) professed some religious background compared to Hong Kong (41.3%), remained an issue for further discussion.

After reviewing the results of the quantitative study, the following examines the results from the qualitative data. It concentrates on the students' perceptions of the influence of religion in society, influence of religious engagement on them and influence from family and school as mentioned in Chapter 4.

During the interviews, Hong Kong students agreed that religion had a significant influence on Hong Kong society. Students highlighted the influence of religion in the promotion of religious doctrines like love and caring for others and the provision of social and education services by various religious bodies. Students believed that the promotion of these religious doctrines affected the social values of society and people would act according to those values such as helping others. Other than the positive side of religious doctrines, students also highlighted that the promotion of some religious doctrines by religious bodies may cause social conflict over some controversial issues. For example, the strong opposition of religious bodies to same-sex marriage may cause social conflict in societies due to different opinions. Furthermore, Hong Kong students thought the influence of religious engagement concentrated on their personal and spiritual life. Students thought that religious engagement, like religious background, equipped them with Bible knowledge and

offered them guidelines on handling interpersonal relations such as being obedient. They did not think, however, that the religious engagement directly contributed to their judgement on social and civic political issues except issues related to religious doctrines like same-sex marriage as mentioned.

These students thought that school and family affected their understanding of social and political issues but, the influence from religious education in schools and family was not highlighted. Students highlighted the impact from Liberal Studies in school and the daily contact with family members. Students believed that Liberal Studies taught them the way to analyze social and political issues such as multi-perspectives analysis and some basic knowledge about politics such as legislation processes. Students also pointed out the influence from the media influencing them in relation to social and political issues.

Taiwanese students held similar attitudes towards the influence of religion on society as Hong Kong students. They highlighted the promotion of religious doctrines and social services in society. They also highlighted the mobilization of religious bodies that participated in charity services and they saw this motivation coming from their religious doctrines and values such as care and mercy. Taiwanese students highlighted the contribution of religious bodies in facilitating the change of traditional social values such as enhancing gender equality and changing the marriage code in their society. In addition, students thought that religious engagement such as participating in religious services and activities contributed to their personal and spiritual life development. Students thought that religious engagement helped them to understand the knowledge about their affiliated religions and equipped them with positive thinking. Yet, these students indicated that religious engagement did not influence them when dealing with social and political issues.

In terms of the impact from school and family, Taiwanese students saw each differently. Taiwanese students felt that family affected them in making social and political judgments through daily conversation with family members. As for schools, students thought that their influence was low because teaching materials in civic



education were not updated. In addition, they pointed out the impact from media on their ways of understanding social, civic and political issues.

Comparing the feedback from both groups of students there were similarities and differences. Hong Kong and Taiwanese students generally agreed that religion had some influence in their societies, but it was not a pervasive influence. Some social values highlighted in the religious doctrines like being kind and caring towards others were promoted by the religious bodies. It would also encourage people to behave according to these social values. Also, they indicated that religion contributed to the personal and spiritual lives of individuals. There was no big difference between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students concerning the influence of religious engagement. Generally, both groups indicated that religious engagement such as religious services and attendance facilitated their personal and spiritual life-development but did not influence them in making judgments about social and political issues except social issues related to the religious doctrines. Hong Kong and Taiwanese students agreed that the provision of services such as education affected the values of both individuals and society. Neither group felt that religion contributed to the promotion of civic society or to values such as democracy and social justice.

On the other hand, there were some differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students. In terms of the influence of religion on society, Hong Kong students identified both “positive” and “negative” influences of religion on society whereas Taiwanese students were more positive. Other than the social values, like caring for others as mentioned above, Hong Kong students highlighted the opposition of the Christian churches to same-sex marriage while Taiwanese students mentioned the promotion of gender equality promoted by religious bodies, changing traditional social values and mobilization of people in voluntary works supported by the religious doctrines. Moreover, Hong Kong and Taiwanese students had different attitudes to the influence of schooling. In Hong Kong, students thought that Liberal Studies offered them knowledge and skills in handling issues such as the legislative process. Yet, Taiwanese students thought that the curriculum was outdated and superficial and did not help them to make judgments. These results will not be



discussed in relation to each research question.

### 3. Discussion in relation to Research Question 1

This section will discuss the results with reference to RQ1: What are the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students concerning their attitudes towards the influence of religion on society? How can the similarities and differences be explained?

There are four major parts in this section. The first part discusses similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students using both the quantitative and qualitative data to inform the discussion. The second part examines the role of mixed methods research in addressing this research question and the third part focuses on theoretical insights generated by this research. The final part assesses the implications of these results for school practice.

#### 3.1. Similarities and Differences

##### 3.1.1. Statistical differences were not substantial

While there were statistically significant differences between the scale scores of Hong Kong and Taiwanese students on the Attitudes towards the influence of religion on Society scale. Table 1 in the previous chapter indicated that the size of the overall difference was small ( $d = -0.22$ ). This result seemed surprising given that Hong Kong students are more likely to be exposed to a religious school environment than Taiwanese students. Yet, as pointed out previously, the result may be more easily understood in terms of the sample, in which 58.7% of Hong Kong students professed to have no religious background. There were more students in the Taiwan sample with a religious background – close to 70% - and this may account for the somewhat more positive attitudes of these students to the influence of religion on society. Despite the differences between groups, the mean scores for both groups suggest that students' attitudes to the role of religion in society were relatively negative, or at most

marginally positive. The negative endorsements were more pronounced for Hong Kong than Taiwanese students.

One way to understand these results better is to examine more closely the individual item differences and similarities in the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society scale as shown in Table 1 in the previous chapter. A second way to understand the results is to review closely the qualitative data. Each will be discussed below.

### 3.1.2. Analyzing item differences

There are two major aspects to be studied here based on the category of items in the scale. One category dealt with the influence of religion on individuals (“influence of religion on individual behaviour” and “influence of religion on civic and political life”). The other category dealt with the influence of religion on civic and political life (“religion is more important to me than what is happening in national politics”, “religious leaders should have more power in society” and “rules of life based on religion are more important than civil laws”). There were distinctive responses to these different categories of items and will be discussed below.

The first point to note about the influence of religion on individuals was that the two items mentioned above were the most strongly endorsed by both groups of students, although Taiwanese students endorsed them both more strongly than Hong Kong students. “Religion should influence people’s behaviour towards others” had the highest level of endorsement among the five items ( $M = 2.71$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ,  $M = 2.41$ ,  $SD = 0.91$  respectively). The difference was statistically significant ( $t = -14.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but the effect size was small to moderate ( $d = -0.34$ ). Even though both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students endorsed these items more strongly than other items on the scale, the endorsement was not strongly positive. Another item measuring the influence of religion on individuals’ behaviour, “Religion helps me to decide what is right and wrong”, was moderately positively endorsed by both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students ( $M = 2.32$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ,  $M = 2.40$ ,  $SD = 0.82$  respectively). The difference between the groups was statistically significant ( $t = -3.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but the



effect size was negligible ( $d = -0.09$ ). Despite the moderate endorsement of this item, it was nevertheless the second strongest endorsement of all items by both groups.

This suggests that for both groups of students the influence of religion is an individual or personal influence and more so for Taiwanese students than Hong Kong students. The differences between the groups might be explained by the composition of the sample as mentioned previously with over 58% of the Hong Kong students indicating that they had no religious background compared to just over 30% of the Taiwanese students. As mentioned in Chapter 1, over 50% of the Hong Kong students attended religiously oriented secondary schools while around 19% of the Taiwanese students attended such schools. It is not possible to tell from the ICCS data how many such schools were included in the sample but if it is assumed that they were well represented, then their influence on students might be questioned. At the same time, Taiwanese students whose probability of attending such schools is much less than that of Hong Kong students appear to see more value in religion in terms of individual and personal development. The theoretical implications of these results will be discussed in sub-section 3.3.

Regarding the influence of religion on civic and political life (see the three items referred to in the first paragraph of the sub-section), there are several points to make about these items. First, overall for both groups of students the endorsement of these items was lower than for the individual/personal items discussed above. Second, the Taiwanese students tended to endorse these items more strongly than the Hong Kong students. Third, based on these results it seems that both groups of students were reluctant to acknowledge the influence of religion in broader society compared to its personal influence. How might this be explained? It is at this point that the qualitative data might shed some light on both the similarities and differences between the two groups.

### 3.1.3. Insights from the qualitative data

A second way to understand better the differences and similarities between students is





through an examination of the qualitative data. The student interviews enabled students to explain their views about the influence of religion in society.

Both groups of students offered similar explanations regarding the personal influence of religion on their lives. They explained that religious doctrines and values helped them to make judgments about personal issues confronting them. For example, Hong Kong student HK-1-04 said “The religious doctrines taught by the clergy at school help me tolerate people with different opinions and forgive others who bullied me before”. Taiwan student TW-2-01 said “I would try to make use of another perspective dealing with the people who bullied me such as making friends with those people”. They also acknowledged that the provision of education and social services by religious bodies was a positive contribution to their respective societies. Hong Kong student HK-3-03 highlighted that “Our school is operated by a religious body. There are many schools operated by various religious bodies helping lower class children to have a chance to receive an education”. Taiwanese student TW-4-01 pointed out “Some religious bodies mobilize others to take part in serving the weak and elderly in society”.

These responses indicate the students’ perception about the positive influence of religion in society resulting from their support in helping people to deal with difficulties in life such as ensuring the equal education opportunities for every youngster and social services for the poor.

In terms of social and political values, the Taiwanese students highlighted the contribution of religion in the promotion of some universal values in Taiwan in relation to issues such as gender equality and changes to the marriage code. They also highlighted that the religious bodies mobilize people to participate in charity based on the religious doctrines such as kindness and mercy. Taiwanese students were able to highlight a number of positive contributions made by religion in the social realm. The Hong Kong students, on the other hand, could only identify what they saw as the negative influence of religion on issues such as same-sex marriage. They saw it as negative not so much because they seemed to be supporters of same-sex marriage but



rather because such an issue was divisive for society where there are different views on the issue. It may be that the more negative experience of Hong Kong students accounts for their relatively negative responses to the quantitative data and, of course, the reverse may apply to Taiwanese students. The theoretical implications of this finding will be explored in sub-section 3.3.

In summary, it appears that student experiences of religion or religious influences help to explain the results of this study. Where religion influences them positively at the individual level, they ranked its influence as relatively strong. Where experiences in terms of social and political influences are positive, as in the case of Taiwanese students, they ranked it more highly than where their experiences appear to be negative, as in the case of Hong Kong students. The next section will examine the implications of these findings for the research methods used in this study.

### 3.2. Implications of research findings for the research methodology and methods used in this study

This section will highlight the methodology and methods used in this study and their contributions to answering RQ 1. In particular, issues related to mixed methods research, the sequential explanatory design and the use of comparison as a research strategy will be discussed.

In seeking to explain the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' attitudes to religion in society this study confirmed the view of Johnson and Christensen (2008) that mixed methods research helps to provide an integrated result with meaningful elaboration. In the current study, the quantitative data allowed for direct comparison of student attitudes drawing on large samples of students. Comparisons at both the scale and item levels enabled several important issues to be identified not yet explained. The interview data from students were helpful in providing explanation as students could more freely articulate their views. An important point to note is the complementary nature of the different data sources – the qualitative interview data were able to inform the quantitative survey data. For

example, the quantitative data reflected the level of endorsement of students on the scale as a whole and on specific items and this provided a good indication of questions that could be asked in the interviews. Thus, integrated and elaborated results were enabled by the use of the mixed methods approach.

A second contribution of the mixed methods used in this study was their incorporation in a “sequential explanatory research design” (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006). Following this model, the quantitative data were collected first as part of the ICCS 2009 and became secondary data for the current study. The qualitative data were collected in 2014 by the researcher through interviews with students in Hong Kong and Taiwan. These were the primary data for the current study. As Johnson and Christensen (2008) have pointed out, these sequential mixed methods help to clarify the initial data set. It can be added for this particular study that without the use of such methods, the original quantitative data left important questions unanswered.

The use of such a design in the current study, however, had a benefit that has rarely been recognized: the application of the design using secondary analysis of large-scale assessment data. The focus of such data is usually at the country level using mean scores to compare student performance (Chow, 2013). Yet, Au (2014) showed using CivEd data (Torney-Purta et al., 2001) that a sequential design could be used with secondary data by interviewing the same age cohort of students on issues related to the original survey. The current study followed the same procedure but expanded the scope of the design by adding a comparative perspective. As a result, this study demonstrated that a “comparative sequential explanatory research design” has significant potential to enhance the understanding of large-scale assessment data.

The importance of comparison as a research strategy cannot be underestimated. As well as informing the research design of the current study, it has also highlighted meaningful issues that would not have been identified if the emphasis had been on a single case. One of the objectives in making use of comparison in education research is to explain similarity and difference (Fairbrother, 2005) and it has been shown in this study that such comparisons have been critical to a fuller understanding of the

results. Looked at on an individual society basis, neither the Hong Kong results nor the Taiwanese results raise many issues. It is only when the results were compared and linked to distinctive contexts that interesting questions emerged. As Collier (1995, p. 105) pointed out:

Comparison is a fundamental tool of analysis. It sharpens our power of description, and plays a central role in concept formation by bringing into focus suggestive similarities and contrasts among cases....it can lead to the inductive discovery of new hypotheses and to theory building.

The influence of religion on Chinese adolescents as analyzed in this thesis can be better understood because of the comparative perspective that has been used. It has helped to reinforce the idea that “being Chinese” is by no means a unitary experience, that religion has diverse influences and that contexts play a central role in mediating those influences.

### 3.3. Theoretical Insights

This section will highlight the theoretical insights generated from the finding of RQ 1. In particular, issues related to the influence of religion on individuals and attitudes towards the influence of religion on society will be discussed.

In terms of the influence of religion on individuals, the findings of this study confirmed the functionalist view of religion. Roberts and Yamane (2012) highlighted that religion has two major individual functions for individuals: meaning and belonging and identity. These functions help people to explain the issues in life such as the meaning behind suffering and provide sense of identity for individuals concerning the group to which they belong to as well as support in their daily lives. The finding of RQ 1 indicated that students highlighted the influence of religion on personal and spiritual life development such as equipping them with positive thinking to face challenges in life and the religious life development helping students to be alert to who they are. In other words, the finding is consistent with a functionalist

theoretical view of the role of religion. Although functionalism is a Western theoretical construct, it is of some interest to note that for the students in this study, at least, it appears to be relevant to adolescents and their Asian contexts.

Given that the Chinese adolescents in this study appeared to conform to a Durkheim view of the role of religion in society, how can the relatively weak endorsement of scale be explained? A common feature of both Hong Kong and Taiwan is that they are secular societies in which there is a separation between church and state (Soper & Fetzer, 2014). While each society is tolerant of religions, in neither does religion play a special role or have a special status. It is interesting to note that the international scales scores (ISS) for Hong Kong (ISS = 46) and Taiwanese (ISS = 48) students on the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society scale were amongst the lowest of all participating countries and interestingly another East Asian country, Korea, also had a relatively low score (ISS = 42) (Schulz et al., 2010, p. 112). It may be, as Bubandt and Van Beek (2012) have argued, that secularism, as practised in Asian contexts, exerts influences that highlight not only the difference between the public and private spheres but also the tensions between different and competing religions. The latter, therefore, may not exert a single influence on society as say Buddhism does in a country like Thailand that scored highly on the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society (ISS = 58). In this sense, therefore, secularism may mediate the impact of religion as reflected in the lower scores of East Asian countries on the scale.

The next section will examine the implications for school practice that arise from the results reported for RQ 1.

### 3.4. Implications for School Practice

This section will highlight the issues and implications for school practice and in particular the development of citizenship education curriculum and religious education curriculum.

During the interviews in the two societies it was clear that students were not aware of the contribution of religion in social development such as democratization. This topic might be better highlighted in citizenship curriculum to expand students' understanding. Including content on the role of religion in society and religion's role in civic society could expand the issues that can be discussed by students. This would allow them to ask questions about an area of life which, based on the results reported here at least, is not as relevant to them as it might be.

The discussion of religion and development of civil society should be an important element in citizenship education in school practice. It not only enhances students understanding of the contribution of religion but also helps them to deal with the issues such as religion and politics and religion and government. The improvement of school practice in this aspect would help to broaden students' horizons and equip them with necessary knowledge about the world in which they live.

In particular, the role of religion in society needs to be addressed. As mentioned, students in both societies agreed that religion had a role at the personal level but were less convinced about religion's role in society. There should be more emphasis in the curriculum on the role of religion and social values. This will provide a better knowledge foundation for acting as citizens and dealing with religious issues. It could also help to handle controversial issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage and gender equity in religious organizations. Future citizens need to understand and address these issues and if they have encountered them in school and they will be better equipped to handle them as future citizens.

It was not possible in this study to identify schools with a religious orientation or students from such schools. Yet, the qualitative results did seem to suggest that students did value the contribution of religion and religious values to their daily living. This may suggest what could be a key role for religious education rather than the transmission of church doctrine and ideas that may have little relevance to the lives of young people. In a sense, this would reinforce the personal influence of religion on young people but it may be that this is a role that needs to be reinforced

rather than abandoned since it is meaningful to students and seems to make a difference in their lives.

#### 4. Discussion in relation to Research Question 2

This section will discuss the results with reference to RQ 2: What are the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students concerning the influence of religious engagement on their attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and how do these attitudes affect their civic values and social values at individual and school level? How can the similarities and differences be explained?

There are seven major parts in this section. The first part discusses the individual level effects of religious engagement on attitudes towards the influence of religion on society as well as the effects influencing social and civic values. The second part examines the effects of schools on students' attitudes to the role of religions and society as well as their civic and social values. The third part discusses the direct and indirect effect. The fourth part focuses on implication of the hypothesized conceptual model. The fifth part discusses about the research methods in addressing the research questions. The sixth part concentrates on theoretical insights generated by this research. The seventh part focuses on the implications of these results for school practice.

##### 4.1. Individual level effects

In the quantitative analysis, the multilevel analysis was adopted for better understanding both the individual level effect and the school level effect. Next, will be a response to the results of multi-level analysis as shown in the previous chapter that indicated that the influence of religious engagement on students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society as well as civic values and social values is similar in Hong Kong and Taiwan (see Tables 7 & 9). The individual effects were small to moderate for both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students but in the case of

social values were small and negative. The size of the Intra Class Correlations (ICCs) for the Mediator Variable and the Dependent Variables suggested there was little variation across schools for both samples and a high degree of homogeneity within schools. What might be the reasons for this?

The influences from school, family and religious bodies on students' religious and civic values were also discussed during the interviews as shown in the previous chapter. It is suggested here that there are two reasons that might help explain the effects at the individual level. The following will make use of the qualitative analysis for discussion.

The influence from family has a significant influence on the civic and social values of students through daily interaction within the family. The family also plays a significant role in the citizenship development of individuals such as values transmission in civic life (Acock & Bengtson, 1978; Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin & Keeter, 2003; Bengtson, 1975; Hoskins, Janmaat & Villalba, 2012). Both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students identified the family as a strong influence on the way to make judgments about social and political issues thus providing them with guidelines.

In terms of the individual influence on civic values and social values, Hong Kong and Taiwanese students highlighted the daily interaction with family affecting their civic life such as discussions with family members and sharing from parents. The political socialization of the family since early childhood has a significant influence on the citizenship development of young people (Hoskins et al., 2012).

Students in Hong Kong explained that the interaction with family members helped them to have a better understanding of the political issues and the way to make judgments on social and political issues. The Taiwanese students explained that their parents taught them the way to make judgements as well as affecting their choice of political parties. Family is a likely explanation of the individual effect on students.

In addition, the religious values of family also have a significant role in affecting the



religious values of students (Hoge & Petrillo, 1978; Hoge, Petrillo & Smith, 1982). Therefore, the differences in religious background of families could affect students' choice of religious belief as well as their attitudes to the influence of religion. It is suggested that the family life of students affects students' civic, social and religious values.

Students may also be affected by religious bodies both directly and indirectly. The direct influences are different kinds of religious engagement. The indirect influence implies the values promoted by the religious bodies and their organizational behavior. Pike (2008) explains that students are able to acquire values and skills from religious bodies through religious engagement. Gates (2006) also explains that students are able to acquire civic virtues from religious beliefs.

Although during the interviews the Hong Kong and Taiwanese students did not think religious belief affected their ways of making judgments on political issues, they thought that religion facilitated their personal development and equipped them with certain values such as care and consideration for others. It is suggested that the religious belief of students may have created the individual differences among them. Students may not be aware of the direct influence from religious belief on their judgments on political issues but the religious belief of students could still contribute to them indirectly.

In addition, students may be affected indirectly by religion in daily life even if they do not have religious beliefs. Weithman (2002) indicated that religious bodies acting as members of civil society help to develop a sense of citizenship as well as offer guidelines for people in civic life. Kerestes, Youniss and Metz (2004) also argued that religion is able to affect youngsters through their community. Religious bodies promote guidelines and operate according to religious doctrines. Students may also be influenced by those values in their society even if they are not directly influenced by the religious bodies themselves. For example, the Taiwanese students explained the contribution of religious bodies in promoting gender equality and marriage code in their societies. Students may also be affected by such religious doctrines at the same

time. It is suggested that the influence from religion in society may also affect students through the religious values they promote. This may explain why the Taiwanese students appeared to be more positive towards the role of religion while the Hong Kong students seemed less so.

So far, the positive influence of family, school and religious bodies on students' attitudes towards religion and civic values have been highlighted and this in general is supported by the literature (Bader, 1999; Kunzman, 2005; Minkenberg, 2007; Smidt, 1999). The promotion of religious values in society like care, peace and fairness and serving people in adversity as well as promoting equal education opportunities in the community and society may affect students' civic life development. Many of them are important elements in civic values like participating in voluntary services as mentioned by the Taiwanese students.

Reviewing the feedback from students, both the Taiwanese and Hong Kong students generally agreed that religion has made a contribution to social values such as gender equality in their societies. On this point, the results from quantitative and qualitative results seem different. In general, students indicated that they felt the promotion of religious doctrines facilitated the promotion of equality in society. It may be that the much smaller sample size of students interviewed accounts for this difference. Yet, there may also be another more indirect influence on the larger sample of students who completed the survey as discussed below.

The issue of gender equality is a good example reflecting the indirect influence of the behaviour of religious bodies on students' social values development. Gender equality is one of the social values that was highlighted in the survey and endorsed strongly by both the Taiwanese and Hong Kong students (see Table 5). Yet, the actual behaviour of religious bodies does not provide convincing evidence of their support for gender equality.

Most religious leaders in both Taiwan and Hong Kong are male rather than female. In Hong Kong, the heads of six major religions including, the Catholic Diocese, the

Christianity Association and the Buddhist Association are males (Hong Kong Economic Journal, 2015). In Taiwan, most religious leaders are male and only one is female (Heads of Catholic Diocese, Fo Guang Shan (a major Buddhist denomination in Taiwan) and the Presbyterian Church leaders in Taiwan are males and the Head of Tzu Chi (a major Buddhist denomination in Taiwan) is female only (Fo Guang Shan, 2015; The Catholic Diocese (Taiwan), 2015; The Presbyterian Church, 2015; Tzu Chi, 2015). Males seem to play a leading role and most females play a supporting role in both societies. That is, the behaviour of religious bodies does not send the community, including students, a strong message about commitment to gender equality. Students' views may be shaped by the practice of religious bodies on the gender issue and this may account for the negative relationship shown in the quantitative results. What this means regarding the way religious bodies "act" may be more influential on students' social values than the way religious bodies "speak".

Compared with the ideas highlighted in the literature, religion is often seen to promote equality and has close relations with morality (Hargrove, 1989; Straughan, 1989). The finding here, however, seems different from the theoretical assumption highlighted in the literature. Although religion and religious bodies may have significant influence on the social values of individuals as indicated in the literature, the results reported here do not support this assumption. Both Hong Kong and Taiwanese are Asian secular societies, as indicated in the previous section, and in this context it may be that social values are so strongly felt that when religious bodies seem to contradict these values this creates a negative perception on the part of students. This cultural issue requires further research.

While there appear to be positive influences on the development of civic values, the results also highlighted the negative relationship between attitudes to the role of religion in society and social values.

As mentioned, the quantitative analysis identified the positive relations between attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and civic values. Students felt that the way religious bodies "act" influenced them. The issue of provision of social

and education services was a good example showing an indirect positive influence from religious bodies on students' civic values.

Reviewing the feedback from the Hong Kong and Taiwanese students, they both agreed that religious bodies had a significant influence on the provision of social and educational services to help people to cope with their adversity and ensure equal opportunities in education. The religious bodies were able to enjoy both a positive image and appreciation from serving. It also created a positive model for students which encouraged them to participate in the provision of voluntary services and enhanced their concern in different parts of society. For example, the Taiwanese students mentioned the influence of religious bodies in motivating people to participate in the social services. On this point, the qualitative and quantitative results were consistent even though the sample sizes were different.

Western literature has highlighted that religion is able to facilitate civic engagement like volunteering (Hill & Dulk 2013; Smidt, 1999). The findings reported by her relating to civic values were consistent with this literature. As mentioned, both Hong Kong and Taiwan are secular societies. When religious bodies act as members of civil society to perform in the same way as other non-government organizations such as charities providing social and welfare services, it seems that students recognize this civic contribution by religious bodies.

This section has attempted to explain the random effects on the social and civic values of students. It has identified families and religious bodies as key influences. It has also highlighted the indirect influences that religious bodies may exert on students and some of these appear to be negative. The next section will seek to explain the school-level effects in the model.

#### 4.2. School-level effects

After making response to the individual level effect of the multi-level model, this part is going to response to the school level effect. The school-level effects in the



multi-level model seem to suggest that schools as organizations do not create environments that result from differential effects on the level of student religious engagement or students' attitudes to the influence of religion on society. This interpretation is supported by the small ICCs for the outcome variables and the lack of significant relationship between the estimates in the school-level model. This is not an unusual finding in the sense that a number of studies (for example, Marks, 2010; Swaim, 2003), have indicated that school-level effects compared to individual-level effects were small. Herzog (2006, p. 10) commented in relation to his study that "results from this investigation largely corroborate cumulative findings in the school effectiveness and production-function literature that show little consistent impact of school factors on student achievement". What might be the reasons for this?

As mentioned previously, the influence from schools and religious activities and services especially those offered by schools to students was discussed during the interviews. It was suggested there that the school practice of religious education as students perceived it might help explain the low school-level effect. The following will make use of the qualitative analysis for further discussion.

The influence from schools in relation to religion is focused on the religious education offered by schools. Wright (1993), Miedema (2009), Gearon (2010), and Vermeer (2010) pointed out that religious education at school often equips students with some basic values related to the civic virtues such as justice. One of the most important characteristics of schools with religious affiliation is the provision of an explicit religious education which marks them as different from schools without religious affiliation. Papastephanou (2008, p.126) explained that "religious education has the potential to assist a cosmopolitan identity and citizenship in respect of unresolved political conflicts by emphasizing international and restorative justice and by cultivating a spirit of forgiveness, forgetting and mutual understanding". The results of the research reported here, however, indicate that schools with and without religious affiliation cannot be differentiated since the small ICCs indicated little difference between schools. This suggests that religious education did not play a major role in those sample schools with religious affiliation.

In terms of the influence of religious education from schools, including religious lessons (e.g., Bible Studies), religious activities and religious services offered by schools, the Hong Kong and Taiwanese students perceived that these influences affected their personal and spiritual development. Of course, this kind of influence is not the same for all students – it is random, affecting different students in different ways as shown in the quantitative model.

Students in Hong Kong explained that religious education helped them with personal development such as maturity and dealing with daily life issues like doing homework and equipping them with Bible knowledge. Taiwanese students expressed similar ideas. They thought that religious activities offered them a chance of personal reflection on religious knowledge of their religions and religious worship. Neither the Hong Kong nor Taiwanese students identified any contribution from their schools' religious education to their understanding and making judgements on political issues. In this context, attitudes to religion were shaped by individual experiences rather than by deliberate actions taken by schools.

In terms of cultural factors, Hong Kong and Taiwan have been influenced by Confucianism and Chinese culture as mentioned in Chapter 1. These factors have also affected schooling in the two societies. One of the goals of schooling in Confucian societies is to help students pass examinations and prepare for their future career development (Joo & Grow-Maienza, 1997; Kyung, 2007). Confucian teaching emphasizes hierarchical relations (Chen & Chung, 1994; Kyung, 2007). As a result, schools in Hong Kong and Taiwan will have strict discipline and expectations of good academic performance such as being obedient to the teachers' order and concentrating on academic success. Some of these values may not be consistent with the religious values such as human equality and democracy. In addition, the meaning of life in religions such as Christianity and Buddhism is not related to academic success. Different values promoted by schools and religions may also account for the lack of impact by schools on valuing religion.

In terms of school life experience, the Hong Kong and Taiwanese students had different perceptions about the influence from schools, especially in relation to the formal curriculum related to social and politic issues. Hong Kong students highlighted that the formal curriculum like Liberal Studies equipped them with both skills and knowledge about civic life such as making judgments about social and civic political issues. Taiwanese students felt that schools had a low influence in helping them make judgments about social and political issues. They also thought that Social Studies, part of the formal curriculum, didn't help them to understand how to act due to the not so updated teaching as citizens.

Students' views indicated that the school life they experienced may account for the explanation of low school effect on them in relation to the influence of religion. The feedback collected from students with religious affiliation in the two societies indicated that their religious education did not influence their views on civic issues. They thought that religious education only helped them with personal and spiritual development. Even though the interview sample sizes were small, they did contain students from schools with religious backgrounds including Catholic, Protestant and Buddhist.

A number of Western scholars (Gearon, 2010; Miedema, 2009; Vermeer, 2010; Wright, 1993) have pointed out that schools' religious education often equips students with basic values related to the civic virtues such as justice. Religious education is also able to provide students support in developing their sense of citizenship (Miedema, 2009). Yet, the findings of this study do not support this literature. Hong Kong and Taiwan are two typical Asian societies influenced by Chinese culture and these contexts may account for the difference in findings compared to the Western literature. There is a lack of literature on Chinese contexts and their impact on students' civic and social values (Zhai & Woodberry, 2011). Therefore, it seems this is a very important area for future research. It would enrich the current literature which is mostly related to Western contexts.

This section has attempted to explain the school-level effects on students' religious



engagement, attitude to the role of religion in society, civic values and social values. It has suggested that culture and school life of students explained the low school effect. The finding is different from the theoretical assumptions of much Western literature. The cultural background of the participants in this study might account for this difference and this suggests the need for more Asian-oriented literature in this area. The next section will examine the implications of these findings for the research methodology and methods, theoretical insights and school-level practice.

#### 4.3. Direct and Indirect Effect

This section will discuss the direct and indirect effect generated from the multi-level analysis. In Chapter 4, both direct and indirect influences of religious engagement variables on students' civic values and social values were assessed. The study of the direct effect and the indirect effect help to know the effect of religious engagement on civic and social values in different perspectives. The following discussion will highlight the student level result in Hong Kong and Taiwan due to the low effect of religious engagement at the school level.

Regarding the impact of religious engagement on social values, the direct effect of religious engagement variables at the student level on social values is meaningful and suggested to have more significant influence than the indirect effect of religious engagement pass through the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. The religious background of students had both negative direct (-0.08\*\*\*) and indirect effect (-0.02\*\*) on the social values of students at the student level in Hong Kong. The indirect effects of religious service attendance (-0.01\*\*) and religious activities participation (-0.01\*\*) were also of less importance than their direct effect on social values (religious service attendance (0.05\*\*) and religious activities participation (0.04)). In Taiwan, the result was also similar. The religious background of students had a positive direct effect (0.03\*) and negative indirect effect (-0.01\*\*\*) on social values of students. The indirect effects of religious service attendance (-0.01\*\*\*) and religious activities participation (-0.01\*\*\*) were also of less importance than their direct effect on social values (religious service attendance (0.07\*\*\*) and religious





activities participation (0.03)). This result suggested that both direct and indirect effect on social values were similar on the measurement of the influence of religious engagement on social values.

Regarding the direct and indirect effect of religious engagement on civic values, the indirect effect was more significant than the direct effect at the student level. In Hong Kong, the indirect effects of those religious engagement variables on civic values were more meaningful than the direct effect of religious engagement through the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. The direct effects of three religious engagement variables (religious background (-0.08\*), religious service attendance (0.04) and religious activities participation (0.03) were less important than the indirect effect (religious background (0.04\*\*\*), religious service attendance (0.02\*\*\*)) and religious activities participation (0.02\*\*\*)) in Hong Kong at the student level. In Taiwan, the direct effect of the three religious engagement variables (religious background (0.05\*\*), religious service attendance (0.01) and religious activities participation (0.05\*\*\*)) were less important than the indirect effect (religious background (0.02\*\*\*), religious service attendance (0.01\*\*\*)) and religious activities participation (0.02\*\*\*)) in Taiwan at the student level.

The more significant indirect effect might be explained by the qualitative research. The religious engagement experience of students might be the reason for explaining the insignificant direct effect. Both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students explained that the religious engagement focuses on helping their personal and spiritual development. Students seldom highlighted the contribution of religious engagement on their civic values and social values. The perception of students about the direct connection between religious engagement and civic values was not explicit. It might also be the reason for the indirect effect of religious engagement through attitudes towards the influence of religion on society to civic values being more significant than the direct effect.

Moreover, the above result indicates the different nature of the direct effect of religious background on student' social values and civic values at the student level in

the two societies. The nature of the relation of religious background and social values and civic values was also different from religious activities participation and religious service attendance. The differences might be explained by the composition of samples. As mentioned before, over 58 % of Hong Kong students pointed out that they did not have religious belief and over 68% of Taiwanese students had religious belief.

Last but not least, both direct effect and indirect effect above indicated the importance of studying both of them on studying the influence of religious engagement on students

#### 4.4. Implications of the hypothesized conceptual model

This part is going to discuss the findings in relations to the hypothesized conceptual model with the reference of both the direct and indirect effect as mentioned above. In the hypothesized conceptual model, it is assumed that religious behavior, religious engagement, affected attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and the impact of these attitudes on civic and social values of students.

The assessment about the direct effect and indirect effect from religious engagement on students' civic and social values help to examine the suitability of using the Western framework in Eastern societies. In the measurement about the influence from religious engagement on social values, the indirect effect also plays a significant role. With regard to the relation between religious engagement and students' civic values, the direct effect was less meaningful than the indirect effect. These results indicated that the mediating effect was also meaningful on assessing the relationships between religious engagement on civic values and social values.

Compared with the assumption and framework generated from the western literature, the hypothesized conceptual framework may not be suitable for studying the eastern societies. This may result from the different culture and students' perception about the relations between religious engagement and civic and social values.



The hypothesized conceptual model is generated from Western literature which has different cultures and religious environments from Eastern societies like Hong Kong and Taiwan. It may be the reason for not being able to easily apply in the East. As mentioned before, secularism has significant influence on affecting Asian societies (Bubandt & Van Beek, 2012). It may cause the findings to be different from the western literature assumed. There are also some different religions in Asia like Buddhism exerting significant influence on society. It may make the scenario more complicated. The framework generated by Western literature may not be easily applied in Eastern societies. It also indicates the importance of generating a framework for studying Eastern societies.

#### 4.5. Implications of the research findings for the research methodology and methods used in this study

This section will highlight the methodology and methods used in this study and their contributions to answering RQ 2. In particular, issues related to multi-level comparison, using mixed methods and the use of comparison as analytic techniques will be discussed.

The findings of RQ 2 generate an insight about multi-level analysis. Bray and Thomas (1995) expressed the view that multi-level analysis helps to generate comprehensive output with multiple perspectives. The results of this thesis support this view. The use of multi-level modelling helped to distinguish between the individual effects on students (as discussed above) and the possible fixed effects of schools (also discussed above). The surprising results were that there were no significant school-level relationships, except one that has already been described as misleading (see Chapter 4). Thus, a major similarity between Hong Kong and Taiwanese schools is that in neither society can schools be differentiated on average levels of religious engagement and these appear to have no significant effect on attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and through these attitudes to social and civic values. Thus, multi-level modelling helped to generate a major finding but it is not just a statistical finding.



The multi-level analysis indicated that the sample schools were very similar and that there were few differences within schools on these variables. In other words, based on the school-level results, schools appeared to be neutral when it came to religion. Without multi-level analysis and its capacity to distinguish between individual and school-level effects, these results would not have been possible. As important as such analysis was, it was not able to answer all the questions and so was supplemented by qualitative research, thus, highlighting the importance of a mixed methods approach.

In this study, following Kennedy (2014) and Au (2014), mixed methods research was used as a complement to the secondary analysis of large-scale assessment data. The quantitative data for this research came from ICCS 2009 (Schulz et al., 2010). The qualitative data aimed to provide in-depth explanations of the issues raised in the quantitative study. As mentioned above, the multi-level analysis identified the causal relationships between the main variables but it could not provide in-depth explanations. The use of mixed methods helped to provide such explanations. In general, this use of mixed methods is relatively rare with major exceptions being Kennedy (2014) and Au (2014). This study has also shown the usefulness of such an approach for illuminating large-scale assessment data.

This study focused on two groups of students and this involved the use of comparison as a research technique. Fairbrother (2005) indicated that the use of comparison helps in explaining similarity and difference. Collier (1993) pointed out that a comparative method is beneficial in theory-building through generating new insights. The use of comparison in this study provided a better understanding about each group. Initially, it was thought there would be differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students because of the influence of religious groups on Hong Kong schools. Yet, both the quantitative and qualitative data suggested that any differences were relatively small and that there were more similarities than differences. Without the comparative perspectives, understandings based on a study of either one of the single groups would be much more limited. Comparisons, both qualitative and quantitative, have enhanced the meaning and understanding in this thesis.



This section has attempted to explain the implications of the use of research methodology and methods in this study. Multi-level analysis, mixed methods research and comparison were used. Together, they helped to provide integrated results that have enabled the research questions to be answered in a convincing manner. The next section will seek to explain the theoretical insights arising from the study.

#### 4.6. Theoretical Insights

This section will focus on the theoretical insights generated from the findings of RQ 2. In particular, issues related to the influence of religious education on social and civic values of students, and the influence of religion on students' social values in Asian contexts will be discussed.

The finding of RQ 2 offered insight about the influence of religious education at school and the civic and social values of students. Various scholars (Crook, Freathy & Wright, 2011; Gearon, 2010; Miedema & Bertram-Troost, 2008; Papastephanou, 2008; Wright, 2008) highlighted the contribution of religious education to citizenship and the importance of religion in citizenship practice such as offering a set of values for dealing with civic and political issues in life. It reflected the aim of religious education as equipping students with different religious values such as the spirit of forgiveness. It was also suggested there would be differences between students from secular schools and religious schools.

The findings here, however, indicate that the religious environment of schools is not strong enough to influence either student's attitudes to the role of religion in society or their social and civic values. Students in Hong Kong and Taiwan pointed out that their experience of religious engagement like religious lessons at school only related to religious knowledge and equipping them with some religious values as well as helping them in their personal development. For example, students did not see any relationship between the spirit of tolerance they learnt from schools and citizenship in their daily lives. The findings in Hong Kong and Taiwan, two Asian societies, were



different from the theoretical assumptions of Western literature as mentioned above. What might be the reason for the differences?

It is suggested that the differences between theoretical assumption and the students' perception of the influence from schools' religious education can be attributed to the school life of students and cultural factors as mentioned above. Hong Kong and Taiwan are two Asian societies with similar cultural backgrounds, influenced by Confucian values and the products of distinctive processes of political development. They are also multi-religious societies that do not promote or endorse one particular religion that is so often the case in many Western contexts. The cultural and political emphases in this study provide the potential for a new line of explanation about attitudes to religion in relation to social and civic values. Culture and politics appear to make a difference and further work is needed to investigate how the complex interactions between religion, culture and politics take place in Asian contexts.

An important similarity between Hong Kong and Taiwan identified by the quantitative results was the negative relationship between students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and social values. The finding was different from theoretical assumptions (Arthur, 2008; Haldane, 1986) about the positive influence of religion on students' social values development. It was also the case that most religious groups, such as Christians and Buddhists, promote equality. Why for the students in this study was there a negative relationship between their attitudes to the role of religion in society and social values?

As mentioned above, Hong Kong and Taiwan have been affected by Confucianism as have other Asian societies such as South Korea and China (Chaves, 2012; Diriik, 1995; Greer & Lim, 1998; Hahm, 2004; Kim & Park, 2003; Kyung, 2007; Martinsons & Martinsons, 1996). It may be that Confucianism is treated more like a religion than a cultural philosophy providing a context in which its values are viewed as religious values, at least from the point of view of the students in this study. This would account to some extent for the negative relationship between students' attitudes to the role of religion in society and social values. This hypothesis could be tested by

surveying samples of students in other Confucian heritage cultures.

Barton and Vaughan (1976), Wilkes et al. (1986), Hertel and Hughes (1987), Peek et al. (1991) and Fam, Waller and Erdogan (2002) have argued in Western contexts that religion may influence people to be more conservative and adopt more traditional values. Although this is Western literature, it also indicates the conservative element of religion. Furthermore, the influence of Confucianism and the multi-religions character of Asia make the influence of religion more complicated and further work is needed to investigate the influence of Asia's multi-religions context.

The finding of RQ 2 also offered insights about the influence religion has on civic values and social values of youngsters in Asian contexts. The impacts of three forms of religious engagement were examined by both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative data identified the significance through large-scale assessment and the qualitative data provided explanations about the quantitative findings, thus, generating new insights through in-depth interviews with students. The result helped to show these relations clearly such as significance of influence and perception of students. It helped to enrich the current literature about Asian and Chinese societies as well as offering support for further studies.

#### 4.7. Implications for School Practice

This section will highlight the implications for school practice, in particular the development of both religious education curriculum and citizenship education curriculum.

The finding of RQ 2 identified the apparently weak linkage between religious education and students' civic and social values. This link appears to exist in Western contexts, at least according to the literature, but not the Asian context studied here. If schools in Hong Kong and Taiwan wish to contribute to citizenship development, they need to reorient their religious education curriculum to make it more relevant and meaningful to achieve broader outcomes. It is clear from this study that students

can see the value of religion in regard to their personal development. Yet, students live in and respond to social contexts so it is important for all their school experiences, including their religious education, to prepare them more adequately to contribute to these contexts.

The construction of such linkages would help students be better prepared to exercise their citizenship. It would provide a broader base of values as well as offering a stronger foundation to deal with various controversial and critical issues in the secular world such as large-scale social movements, conflict about issues and new immigrants as well as democratization. Religious education in this context has the potential to contribute more to students' political socialization.

Moreover, more traditional forms of citizenship education may need to consider how issues related to religion should be handled. When adherents of religion openly oppose a social issue such as marriage equality, this should be debated and discussed in citizenship education classes. Students need to understand the difference between religious and secular values and how a democratic society can cater for both. At the same time, note needs to be taken of the view of the Taiwanese students that teaching materials are often out of date and that this inhibits their learning. Curriculum and teaching materials need to be constantly updated so that the latest social issues can form part of the curriculum and students can understand and deal with such issues.

## 5. Conclusion

This chapter focused on discussing the differences and similarities between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students in relation to the two research questions using the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses in Chapter 4. Implications of the results were discussed in relation to research methods, theoretical development and school practice.

This study also generated a mediation model for investigating the relations between religion and civic values and social values. The model offers a new way to study





complex social and education issues. The qualitative study indicated the role and organizational behavior of religious bodies may also affect the perception of students of them and also their civic values and social values. It showed the importance of indirect influence from religion and religious bodies on students. This area will benefit from further study. The study also indicated that the influence of religion on students was not limited to direct religious engagement like religious affiliation and participation in religious activities. Yet, the types of religious engagement here were limited due to the data availability in ICCS 2009. Additional types of religious engagement may be added in future research such as relations with clergy and the religious background of parents.

The next chapter will draw the thesis to a close.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **1. Introduction**

This chapter provides a brief review of the research reported in this thesis. The purpose is to reflect on the research and also to generate some insights for the further development of studying the influence of students' attitudes to religion and their influence on social and civic values.

This chapter contains seven sections including this Introduction. Section 2 summarizes the research that has been conducted. Section 3 discusses the contributions of the research to the field of citizenship education. Section 4 refers to the limitations of the research. Section 5 proposes suggested topics for future research. Section 6 discusses about the reflection of researcher after conducting this research. Section 7 provides a summary of this chapter.

#### **2. Summary of the research**

Grundel and Maliepaard (2012) argued that religious belief can influence the development and practice of democratic citizenship. Religion itself has a set of values and doctrines to guide individual behaviour and offer strong support for upholding principles such as justice (Nord, 2011; Wright, 2008). Religious bodies as members of civil society can facilitate people to develop their sense of citizenship (Weithman, 2002). The influence of religion can be both positive and negative (Hinnells, 2010; Phenix, 1971). Religion also can be a powerful force for maintaining world peace as well as being a horrible force underpinning terrorism (Hoffman, 2002). Although the above literature has raised different insights about religion and citizenship, their context is largely countries that might be classified as Western societies. The availability of literature relating to the influence of religion on students' attitudes is limited. Therefore, it is important to extend the study of religion's influence beyond



the relatively narrow cultural and social base of the current literature.

Asia, and in particular the area of Greater China (Acharya, 2011), has become more influential in the international community, and Hong Kong and Taiwan, as part of Greater China, play important roles as Chinese societies with international outlooks. These two societies share similarities such as a common cultural heritage and an historic commitment to Confucianism. Yet, the influences of attitudes to religion on civic and social values in Chinese societies have not received great attention (Zhai & Woodberry, 2011). For that reason, they are the focus of attention in this thesis.

Religious bodies in Hong Kong and Taiwan play significant roles in the provision of social and education services. They help people during adversity and seek to ensure equal education opportunities for the next generation. Many thousands of young people are affected by religion every year through schools and other forms of religious engagement such as participation in religious activities in the community and practise religious worship with family members. In schools, religious education can provide support for some important basic democratic values such as equality (Gearon, 2010; Miedema, 2009; Vermeer, 2010; Wright, 1993). Families also play a significant role in the political socialization of students (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin & Keeter, 2003). Family may also affect students' religious values (Hoge & Petrillo, 1978; Hoge, Petrillo & Smith, 1982) as well as the civic values of young people (Acock & Bengtson, 1978; Bengtson, 1975).

Against this background, two research questions were developed to explore the influence of religion on students' civic and social values in two Asian societies:

Research Question 1: What are the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students' attitudes towards the influence of religion on society? How can the similarities and differences be explained?

Research Question 2: What are the similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students concerning the influence of religious engagement on their



attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and how do these attitudes affect their civic values and social values at individual level and school level? How can the similarities and differences be explained?

In order to answer the two research questions, a “sequential explanatory research design” proposed by Ivankova, Creswell and Stick (2006) was adopted. Mixed methods research was used to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of religious engagement on students’ attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, civic values and social values. At the same time, comparison was also used for critical analysis and to generate new insights (Collier, 1995).

The quantitative component of the research used secondary data from ICCS 2009. The conceptual model for analysis was formed from the ICCS variables. This resulted in the development of a model that included the relationship between religious engagement and students’ attitudes to the role of religion in society and the relationship between those attitudes and students’ social and civic values. Multi-level analysis was used to study the individual and school-level effects of variables included in the model.

Focus group interviews were used in the qualitative component of the study. The interviews with Hong Kong and Taiwanese were conducted to explore in depth the three main aspects of the study, including attitudes towards the influence of religion on society, influence of religious engagement on civic values and social values, and influence of school and family on civic values and social values. The feedback from students was analyzed based on the content and used in conjunction with the findings of the quantitative analysis. This helped to produce well supported integrated research findings.

In terms of Research Question 1, this study identified both similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Taiwanese students concerning their attitudes towards the influence of religion on society. Both Hong Kong and Taiwanese students appreciated that the provision of services such as education and welfare services by the religious

bodies reinforced the social values of care and peace. In addition, there were small differences between the Hong Kong and Taiwanese students. This may have been because the Taiwanese students had experienced more positive perceptions of the influence of religion in society such as the way it facilitated gender equality. Hong Kong students' perceptions were different since they felt that religion may trigger social conflict such as opposition to same sex-marriage.

In terms of Research Question 2, the Hong Kong and Taiwanese students were more alike. The quantitative analysis examined both individual and school effects on society through the hypothesized measurement model. The religious engagement variables had significant positive relations with the attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and those attitudes had significant positive relations with civic values and significant negative relations with social values at the individual level. But, religious engagement did not have significant relations with attitudes towards the influence of religion on society and those attitudes to civic and social values also. The school effect was low.

Qualitative research was used for further investigation and exploration of new insights in relation to the quantitative research so as to create integrated results for this study. Some aspects not covered by the quantitative analysis set were added in the qualitative study such as family. The qualitative study suggested that family and religious bodies may be able to explain the significant individual effect as mentioned above. Both the Hong Kong and Taiwanese students felt that their families affected their civic and social values. Hong Kong students thought that the discussion with family members about news reports influenced them and Taiwanese students indicated that teaching from parents could influence their preferences in politics. Religious bodies in society may exert a kind of indirect influence through their organizational behavior such as sending students messages about social values such as gender equality. Moreover, the low school effect in relation to the religious engagement variables identified by the quantitative study might be related to the perception of students about religious education. During the interviews, students expressed that religious education emphasized teaching religious doctrines and

facilitating personal life development.

In addition, the Hong Kong students thought that the formal curriculum, Liberal Studies, was able to equip them with knowledge and skills but the Taiwanese students expressed different opinions. They thought that the influence from school was low in general, including the formal curriculum which was outdated and superficial. They also highlighted the importance of informal education in citizenship.

The next section will discuss the contributions of this research to citizenship education.

### 3. Research Contributions

This section discusses contributions of the research to the field of citizenship education.

This study examined the influence of students' attitudes to the role of religion in society on their civic and social values. The study showed attitudes to religion in different cultural contexts from that in the Western literature which appear to exert a different influence on students. In Asian social and cultural contexts, multi-religious perspectives characterize students' experiences of religion. Yet, Western literature in this particular area writes almost exclusively from a Christian perspective. The results of this study, therefore, open up a new area of research that requires more in-depth studies related to citizenship education, religious education and religious values themselves.

In addition, this study contributed to the growing literature that has focused on understanding Asian students' conceptions of citizenship (Au, 2014; Chow, 2013; Kennedy, 2010; Kennedy, Kuang & Chow, 2013; Kennedy, Huang & Chow 2012; Kuang, 2015; Li, 2015). This study's unique contribution is its concern with the relationship between religious engagement, attitudes to the role of religion in society and students' civic and social values in two Chinese societies. While religious values



and citizenship have been extensively investigated in Western contexts (see Chapter 2), this research represents one attempt to do so in Asian contexts. The results support the emerging view from the studies referred to earlier that Asia's distinctive contexts appear to influence students' citizenship values. Western literature on adolescent citizenship values cannot easily be applied to the East and always needs to be tested against empirical realities as has been done in this study.

This study incorporated “sequential mixed methods research” into the research design. It enabled the exploration of new theoretical insights into major citizenship issues. This study can provide a direction for similar research based on secondary data analysis. By using the same age sample as the original secondary analysis and involving that sample in focus group interviews, it has been possible to enable students to elaborate on the major issues arising from the quantitative data. A similar method was used by Kennedy (2014) and Au (2014). Based on the results of this study, it seems worthwhile to extend the methods to other similar studies and further test its usefulness.

#### 4. Research Limitations

This section discusses some limitations associated with the research.

##### 4.1. Limitation regarding the religious aspect

The range of religions covered in this research was limited. Only four targeted religious backgrounds (Buddhist, Catholic, Protestant and Students without religious belief) were studied. Other religions such as Islam were not able to be covered.

Moreover, different religions have different interpretations about the lives and doctrines that shape their adherents' values and behaviour and also they have different practices for religious worship. Thus, it was not possible to guarantee that students were using the same religious standards to make judgments about their attitudes to the role of religion in society. In order to deal with this problem, the analysis in this

research only categorized students into two major groups, with and without religious affiliation. Such comparison was able to reflect the influence of religion on students' civic values and social values but it could not take into consideration specific differences between religions.

The latest official statistics about the total numbers of religious schools in Hong Kong and Taiwan were not available. The Hong Kong Education Bureau refused to provide the latest record of schools' religious background without reason. Thus, the latest record on hand was for the academic year 2008-2009. No official record about schools' religious background was available in Taiwan. As religious bodies in Taiwan only can run private schools, the number of private schools was taken to identify the proportion of religious schools in Taiwan. It was assumed that the proportion in both societies was stable for this research.

#### 4.2. Limitation of using ICCS 2009 as the data source

The usage of secondary data analysis caused several research limitations. One aspect was that the number of students from various religious backgrounds could not be specified due to the sampling method used in ICCS 2009. This also meant that the number of students from different religious backgrounds in each society was not the same.

Similarly, the study was unable to identify the family religious background of students because the ICCS 2009 questionnaire didn't ask for parents' religious background. Therefore, it was not possible to study the influence of family religion on students in this research. In the same way, school religious background could not be identified from the ICCS dataset. Currently, the measurement of school religious background was based on students' feedback in the focus groups rather than the feedback from the survey.

The ICCS data were collected in 2009 while the interview data were collected from the same age group in 2014. It was not possible to identify the students who





participated in 2009 and who attended the interviews in 2014. This was necessary because it was not possible to obtain the names of schools that participated in the ICCS due to ethical issues. As a result, the researcher could only invite the same age group of students in Hong Kong and Taiwan to attend the interviews. As mentioned earlier, similar sampling processes were used by Kennedy (2014) and Au (2014).

#### 4.3. Limitation regarding the interview participants

The selection of student participants for interview was based on the decision of the schools selected for the qualitative research. The researcher offered the criteria for inviting students but did not control their selection. Yet, the selection may not have always followed the criteria. For example, students have the right to choose whether to disclose their religious background to schools due to the legal protection of privacy in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Schools and teachers may not necessarily know the students' religious backgrounds. In some schools, asking about students' religious backgrounds is not allowed. Students also had the right to choose whether to participate in the research project. This study only ensured the participation of schools with the four religious backgrounds. School teachers also were not included in this study. Resulting from the busy schedule of schools and teachers, no teacher interviews were conducted for data collection.

### 5. Suggested Topics for Future Research

This section proposes some topics for future research in different aspects, including citizenship and religion, religious education and citizenship, and comparative education.

#### 5.1. Citizenship and Religion

This research only concerned four religions (Buddhism, Catholic, Protestantism and Atheism) and categorized them into two groups, with and without religious belief, for analysis only. The scope of religion, however, could include other popular religions



such as Islam and local folk religions. The variance between different religious backgrounds can make an important contribution to how individuals perceive the influence of religion. A broader range of religions can help to have a better understanding about the influence of different religions on students' religious attitudes, civic values and social values.

The role of family in students' civic values and social values development also needs further attention. Based on the interviews with students, there is no doubt that families play a significant role in nurturing students in various aspects such as the choice of religion, political views as well as making judgments on the political and social issues. Understanding about their way to nurture their sons and daughters seems important. Surveys or interviews with parents can potentially provide a better understanding about their ideas and how they influence students' religious attitudes as well as their civic and social values development.

The importance of understanding how students' civic and social values develop cannot be under estimated. Two large student-led social movements were launched coincidentally in Hong Kong (The Umbrella Movement) and Taiwan (The Sunflower Movement) respectively during the research period. These two student-led movements influenced the respective societies in Hong Kong and Taiwan as well as triggering global concern especially from the Chinese government. Although these two student movements were not led by the research participants, they highlight the rising concern about the formation of civic and political values of the new generation, including religion. Hopefully the results reported in this research can start to address these important issues.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, religious bodies in the two societies actively participate in the provision of social and education services. In addition, some religious bodies actively participate in various social movements such as those mentioned above. In Hong Kong, some prominent Christians such as Bishop Zen, the former head of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese and Reverend Chu Yiu-ming, the Minister of Chai Wan Baptist Church in Hong Kong actively participated in the



Umbrella Movement (Occupy Central with Love and Peace, 2014). In Taiwan, the Presbyterian Church showed strong support to students during the Sun Flower Movement and the clergy went to the occupied site to support the students (Taiwan Church News Network, 2014). The religious background of student leaders in Hong Kong and Taiwan may also reflect the influence of religion on students' civic values. In Hong Kong, Joshua Wong is a Christian (Wong, 2014a). He also received his education at a secondary school with a Christian background (Mingpao Daily, 2014). In Taiwan, Lin Fei-fan is a Christian (ETtoday, 2014). Did religious values lead these students to participate in the respective social movements? Joshua Wong has stated publicly that Christian life helped him to find his mission for the betterment of both Hong Kong and Mainland societies as well as improving his skills for planning, organization and communication. This offered him a strong base for launching social movements (Wong, 2014a).

The sharing of Joshua Wong showed the influence of religion on his beliefs and role in society. Lin Fei-fan is also an example of a student with religious affiliation participating in social movements. Although these are only single examples, they offer a direction for further studies concerning the influence of religious values on students' participation in social movements. Both of these students seem to suggest that their Christian values influenced their participation in social movements. Yet, Hong Kong and Taiwan are multi-religions societies. Do all religions have this effect? How about students who believe in Buddhism? Do different religious doctrines and religious education cause different outcomes? The research reported here suggests that this might not be the case but further research is needed to study the effect of attitudes to religion on student leaders to have a better understanding of the participation of students in social movements.

## 5.2. Religious Education and Citizenship

The relationship between school religious education and citizenship in Asian contexts requires further study. Very often in schools, religious education and citizenship education are seen as two separate components of the school curriculum. Yet, more



needs to be known about the way school principals and teachers view their responsibilities for nurturing both the citizenship and spiritual development of students. This could help to enrich the current literature by expanding the understanding of school contexts and their influence on students.

Further investigation of religious education is also suggested so as to have a better understanding of the influence on students. It is suggested to examine the religious education curriculum such as the aims, content and teaching methods. Such research would help to give a better understanding of the nature of religious education and its consequent impact on citizenship development. It is also important to understand the expected difference between religions and their influence on students. Since one of the key differences between religious schools and secular schools is the provision of religious education, the more that is known about religious education the better can its effects on citizenship development be understood.

### 5.3. Comparative Education

Comparative analyses played an important role in the current research. The focus was on two Asian societies but future research should focus on the similarities and differences between Eastern and Western societies. Religion exists in almost every part of the world and religious extremists often threaten global security. Therefore, the attitudes of the new generation to religion and the influence of religion on their civic values and social values is not simply a private matter but also a global issue. Better understanding of the East and the West can be an important way to contribute to the future.

The above topics suggest a new research agenda to facilitate better understanding between religious attitudes and citizenship development. The outcome of this suggested research can deepen the understanding of students in this era as well as help schools and teachers to nurture students in both citizenship education and religious education.



## 6. Reflection of Researcher

The finding of this research also changed the professional viewpoints of the researcher. There were some points to be highlighted. First, it was assumed that religious engagement would make students different from other students without such religious engagement like religious belief and religious activities participation on their civic and social values before the research was conducted. It was also assumed by the Western literature as mentioned in the previous chapter. However, the finding here reflected that students did not think that religious engagement affected their civic and social values. It was quite different before the research was conducted. Second, religious education and different kind of religious activities were often assumed to make students different from students nurturing from secular schools in civic and social values. But the finding from both quantitative and qualitative study indicated that school in relation with religious matter like religious education may not be the reason to explain the differences among students. Third, the importance of Asian values was highlighted by the research findings. Different societies had their own different cultures and social development. Therefore, it was not a proper way to assume the Western framework was also suitable in Eastern societies. And, it was important to develop own research for understanding the Asian value and not simply apply the Western framework in studying Asian societies as well different parts of the world.

## 7. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the main issues related to the research conducted for this thesis; it has suggested the contribution the research has made to the field of citizenship education, outlined the limitations of the research and suggested topics for future research. Both religion and citizenship are eye-catching topics in the academic community and around the world. While the focus of the research has been on Hong Kong and Taiwan, two Asian societies, its implications go beyond these two societies. The groundwork has been laid for a new research agenda that can be international in nature. Religion and citizenship are enduring areas of social concern. Further research



can build on what has been presented here to develop further understandings of students, their cultural contexts, their spiritual development and growth as citizens. Hopefully this thesis has made a good start in supporting this new direction for citizenship research.



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# Appendix A

Table 11 ICCS 2009 students' religious background (%)

Taiwan n=5012			Hong Kong n =2747		
No Religion					
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
32.90	30.20	31.60	61.10	56.2	58.70
Buddhism					
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
16.70	16.30	16.50	7.00	6.60	6.80
Catholic/Christianity			Catholic		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Fem	Total
7.40	8.70	8.10	6.20	4.70	5.50
Daoism			Protestant		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
9.30	9.00	9.20	23.30	31.20	27.10
Folk Religion			Islam		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
32.00	33.90	32.90	0.10	0.10	0.10
Other					
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1.70	1.90	1.80	2.30	1.20	1.90

Appendix B  
 ICCS 2009 Questions (Quantitative Study Instrument)  
 Figure 5 ICCS 2009 related questions  
 Questions about religious engagement

● Question about religious activities participation

*Have you ever been involved in a religious group or organization' activities?*

Yes, I have done this within the last twelve months ☐

Yes, I have done this but more than a year ago ☐

No, I have never done this ☐

● Question about religious service attendance

*How often do you attend <religious services> outside your home with a group of other people?*

Never ☐

Less than once a year ☐

At least once a year ☐

At least once a month ☐

At least once a week ☐

● Question about student' religious background

*What is your <religion>?*

<u>Hong Kong</u>	<u>Taiwan</u>	
No Religion	No Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buddhism	Buddhism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catholic	Catholic/Christianity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protestant	Daoism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Islam	Folk Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Religion	Other Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>





### Questions about Attitudes towards the influence of religion on society

*How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about religion?*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Religion is more important to me than what is happening in national politics				
Religion helps me to decide what is right and what is wrong				
Religious leaders should have more power in society				
Religion should influence people's behaviour towards others				
Rules of life based on religion are more important than civil laws				

### Questions about Civic Values

*How important are the following behaviours for being a good adult citizen?*

	Very Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all
Voting in every national election				
Joining a political party				
Learning about the country's history				
Following political issues in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV or on the internet				
Showing respect for government representatives				
Engaging in political discussions				
Participating in peaceful protests against laws believed to be unjust				
Participating in activities to benefit people in the <local community>				
Taking part in activities promoting human rights				
Taking part in activities to protect the environment				





## Questions about Social Values

*How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Men and women should have equal opportunities to take part in government				
Men and women should have the same rights in every way				
Women should stay out of politics				
When there are not many jobs available, men should have more right to a job than women				
Men and women should get equal pay when they are doing the same jobs				
Men are better qualified to be political leaders than women				
All ethnics should have an equal chance to get a good education in their society				
All ethnics should have an equal chance to get good jobs in their society				
Schools should teach students to respect members of all ethnics				
Members of all ethnics should be encouraged to run in elections for political office				
Members of all ethnics should have the same rights and responsibilities				
Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue speaking their own language				
Immigrants' children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have				
Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections				
Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle				
Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in the country has				



# Appendix C

Table 12 *Interview School Profiles*

Hong Kong				
School Code	HK-3	HK-1	HK-2	HK-4
Religious background of school	Buddhism	Catholic	Christian	No Religion
Interview students	5	5	4	4
Type of Schools	Aided	Aided	Aided	Aided
Location	Kowloon	Kowloon	Kowloon	Kowloon
Gender	Boys and Girls	Boys	Boys and Girls	Boys and Girls
Taiwan				
School Code	TW-3	TW-1	TW-2	TW-4
Religious background of school	Buddhism	Catholic	Christian	No Religion
Interview students	4	6	6	4
Type of School	Private	Private	Private	Public
Location	East Taiwan	North Taiwan	South Taiwan	North Taiwan
Gender	Boys and Girls	Boys and Girls	Boys and Girls	Boys and Girls



# Appendix D

Table 13 *Interview Arrangement Summary*

Group Size	4-6 students (Maximum 7 students)
Age and academic level	13-14 Years old (Grade 8)
Group Category	Religious Background of schools e.g. Catholic School Group, Buddhism Group
Targeted Religions	Buddhism, Catholic, Christian (Protestant) and Atheism(Students without religious belief)
Interview Format	Semi-Structured (First Part: Fixed Questions, Second Part: In-depth discussion on the research topic)
No. of group interview conducted	Total 8 groups (Four groups (Buddhism, Catholic, Protestantism and Atheism) in each society.)
Duration	About 1 hour per interview
Language	Hong Kong: Cantonese, Taiwan: Mandarin
Interview Questions	<p>First Part</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What do you think about the influence of religion in your society?</li> <li>● Does your religious background affect the way you make judgment to political and social issues (e.g. gender/ethnic/Immigrant equality)? Why?</li> <li>● What do you think about the influence of religious activities and religious service attendance to you? Any influence in making judgment to social and political issues?</li> <li>● What do you think about the influence from your religious belief, family, school and teachers the participation of religious activities and service on your view towards political and social issues and make judgment to those issues? Why?</li> </ul> <p>Second Part</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How you make judgment to social and political issues?</li> </ul>
Concern of Privacy	Interviewer ensured it verbally at the beginning and end of interview.
Interview location	Student' Schools
Reward	A small gift (file or pen) was given to students