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Is Student Participation in School Governance a "Mission impossible"?*

The civic mission of schools in nurturing political literature, critical thinking and participatory citizens has always been played down in Hong Kong schools. On one hand, teaching civic education has never been ranked high in the education agenda. On the other hand, because of the conservative nature of schools, students are rarely encouraged to participate in school governance for the enhancement of their citizenship development. Funded by the General Research Fund (GRF) in Hong Kong, the authors conducted a quantitative survey on students' participation in school governance and their citizenship development in 2013 to explore 1) students' conception of "good citizens"; 2) the level and scope of student participation in school governance; and 3) the facilitating and hindering factors influencing student participation. This paper is a report on the simple statistical results of the survey findings. With reference to Westheimer and Kahne's typologies, the findings revealed that the students had an eclectic understanding of citizenship, with higher scores for Personally Responsible Citizen and lower scores for Participatory, Justice Oriented and Patriotic Citizen, reflecting a conservative orientation. Concerning the implementation of school civic mission through student participation in school governance, it was found that students were rarely allowed to engage in important school matters, such as formulation of school rules and discussion of the school development plan. Our findings also revealed that schools were more inclined to inform students and consult them rather than confer real participation and powers to them. The paper concludes that the current practice of student participation in school governance does not facilitate the nurturing of active participatory citizens, particularly of a Justice Oriented nature, and this is urgently needed for the democratic development of Hong Kong.

Keywords:
School civic mission, civic education, students' participation, school governance, school-based management

1 Introduction: Citizenship and civic engagement

Citizenship is ideologically framed and is affected by the worldview in which it is embedded (Howard & Patten, 2006). Citizenship of Liberal Individualism orientation emphasizes individual citizens' rights while citizenship of Communitarian orientation stresses citizens' obligation and participation. On the other hand, the Republican notion of citizenship brings to the forefront civic virtues such as patriotism and courage etc. In this paper, an eclectic orientation is adopted and Oldfield's (1990) notion of a citizen as "a member of political communities, with legally conferred rights and responsibilities, associated civic identities, virtues and participation" is followed. Noteworthy is the fact that contemporary discussion of citizenship has transcended the narrow confines of national boundaries as the political communities involving civic engagement should be more broadly defined. This is in line with the realities of a globalized world. Thus, Heater (1990) pointed out that the different civic identities a citizen now confronts comprise different levels: local, national, regional and global.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argued that discussion of citizenship and civic education programmes are about 'what good citizenship is' and 'what good citizens do', with implications for the conceptions of good society, which are controversial. As a corollary, "typologies of citizens" have been developed to help conceptualise the orientations of civic education (Banks, 2008; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). A typology is a classification scheme, which idealizes distinctions, makes boundaries artificially clear and provides analytical power and precision (Parker, 2003). Since these typologies are idealized representations, they rarely exist in pure form and they tend to appear in eclectic presentations in reality. The Westheimer and Kahne's typology is chosen for discussion in this paper because the ideas of Justice Oriented Citizen in the typology is important in Hong Kong given the recent struggles against various forms of

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social and structural injustice. The typologies can indeed help reveal the evolution of civic education in Hong Kong effectively (Leung, Yuen, & Ngai, 2014).

1.1 Westheimer and Kahne's typology

Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) typology of 'citizens' outlines three different conceptions of citizens: the Personally Responsible Citizen, the Participatory Citizen, and the Justice Oriented Citizen. A Personally Responsible Citizen acts responsibly, works and pays taxes, obeys laws, volunteers to lend a hand, and upholds such virtues such as honesty, integrity, self-discipline, responsibility, and obedience. A Participatory Citizen is an active member of the community who helps organize community actions to care for the needy. He knows how the government works, and how to adopt appropriate strategies to accomplish collective tasks. He values trust, solidarity, active participation, leadership, and community collaboration. The difference between a Personally Responsible Citizen and a Participatory Citizen is that the former emphasizes individual and personal work, and tends to stay away from politics; while the latter emphasizes participation and collective work, which would be more political. However, both conceptions may not be critical to the status quo, tend to avoid controversial issues, and tend to stay within the boundaries of laws and regulations. Hence, such citizens can be politically conservative with the former even inclined to being apolitical. In stark contrast with the previous two, a Justice Oriented Citizen critically assesses the status quo and the current social, economic and political structures. He seeks to address structural injustice from a critical perspective and knows how to use political mobilization to achieve systemic change to address the injustice. He may even confront the boundary of law and convention through civil disobedience if necessary. Westheimer (2008) argued that character traits in different conceptions of citizenship may be in conflict with each other. For example, loyalty and obedience, which are valued by a Personally Responsible Citizen can be 'harmful' towards a Justice Oriented Citizen, particularly if they are emphasized out of the right proportion. Leung, Yuen & Ngai (2014) found that most school civic education programmes, even those found in mature democratic nations like the USA (Westheimer, 2008), Canada (Llewellyn, Cook, & Molina, 2010), Australia (Howard & Patten, 2006) and the UK (Kiwan, 2008), tend to avoid politics and not many have reached the level of Justice Oriented Citizen. It seems that the civic education in most educational systems, including those under democratically elected government, tend to avoid con-fronting the status quo and structural injustice. Hence, they would prefer not to cultivate Justice Oriented Citizen and such oriented civic education programmes are generally not encouraged.

In the context of Hong Kong, programmes inclined towards Personally Responsible Citizen stress the attributes of a "good person", including obeying law and order, school rules and discipline, as well as doing the best in one's role and caring and providing voluntary service for people in need. Programmes inclined towards Participatory Citizen emphasize leadership training, cultivating student leaders to organize, plan, lead and serve. Usually these two types of civic education programme come togehter. Whilst programmes relating to Personally Responsible Citizen and Participatory Citizen are well established, those relating to the Justice Oriented Citizen that asks students to examine critically the status quo to correct possible injustice are underdeveloped (Leung, Yuen & Ngai, 2014). Similar to civic education found in many Asian countries, Hong Kong's civic education is also charged heavily with the responsibility of instilling a sense of national identity, loyalty to the nation state and patriotism (Leung & Print, 2002). Hence, the conception of Patriotic Citizen is added to this study as the fourth conception in addition to Westheimer and Kahne's typology. Putman (1998) defines patriotism as the quality of loving one's country. Pullen (1971) distinguishes between the meaning of patriotism in a democracy and patriotism in a totalitarian state. In a democracy, the individual is loyal to several groups (church, clubs and schools etc.) and idea systems that enrich his way of life, which add up to loyalty to the nation that respects all these institutions and the allegiance they command. On the other hand, in a totalitarian system, the government attempts to destroy all intermediate forms of loyalties so that the individual loyalty is in the hands of the state. The idea of a "critical patriot" as one who loves his nation with an open and critical mind and is willing to work for the betterment of his nation critically is adopted (Fairbrother, 2003; Leung, 2007). This typology of the four conceptions of citizens will guide the present study.

1.2 Education for civic engagement

It can be seen that civic participation or engagement is emphasized in all four types of citizenship. It follows that it is important for civic education to provide opportunities for students to learn and master such civic qualities as attitudes, skills and knowledge so that they can be active participators. Transforming civic knowledge into civic action is then a key aspect of citizenship education (Dudley & Gitelson, 2002; Galston, 2001, 2003, 2004; Westheimer & Kahne, 1998). Hence, liberal democratic societies generally perceive that the ultimate goal of citizenship education is to prepare students for active citizenship which is deemed beneficial to society (Kennedy, 2006, quoted in Nelson & Kerr, 2006; Ross, 2007; Ross & Dooly, 2010; Sherrod, 2007; Sherrod, Torney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

2 Civic mission and student participation in school governance

Although citizenship education for active citizenship can be implemented through different means, schools remain critical vehicles. Schools have plenty of opportunities to make an impact on students' civic learning. In

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fact, democratic countries consider it a school obligation to develop among young people the democratic spirit, preparing them as politically literate, participatory, and critically thinking citizenry a school obligation. This is sometimes called the 'civic mission of schools' (Dürr, 2004; Leung et al., 2014). In order to achieve this mission, a whole-school approach, composed of both teaching and practicing aspects, has been recommended. This includes teaching and learning within and outside the classroom and involves both the formal and informal curricula. Assor, Kaplan and Roth (2002) and Reeve et al. (2004) reported that when student autonomy within the classroom is encouraged, there are higher levels of student engagement. Research has also revealed that civic education programmes adopting active pedagogies, particularly those involving open classroom culture which facilitates discussion of controversial issues, expression of tolerance, mutual respect for differences of opinion and support of social justice, often correlate with attitudes and competence that have the potential to foster active citizenship (Blankenship, 1990; Ehman, 1980; Hess, 2001; Nemerow, 1996; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Porter, 1983; Print, 1999; Print, Ørnstrøm, & Nielsen, 2002; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). Experiential learning and service learning, especially those emphasizing political dimensions and social justice, have also been reported as effective in fostering active citizenship development (Leung, 2003; Mooney & Edwards, 2001; Robinson, 2000).

As for the practical aspects, schools can be considered as a miniature political community. Accordingly, the civic learning of students is achieved through participation in school governance, particularly decision-making in the perceived meaningful issues in schools (Leung & Yuen, 2009; McQuillan, 2005; Taylor & Percy-Smith, 2008). In this paper, 'school governance' is broadly defined as encompassing "all aspects of the way a school is led, managed and run (including school rules, procedures, decision-making structures), and the behaviour of its personnel and how they relate to each other" (Huddleston, 2007, p. 5). The idea is that what is taught about citizenship, particularly active participation, must be practised and experienced in schools. If not, the perceived contradiction may lead to cynicism, alienation, and apathy. Indeed such contradictions contribute to the failure of many civic education programmes (Osler & Starkey, 2005; Raby, 2008; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; Schimmel, 2003; Tse, 2000). That is, in order to ensure the teaching and learning of citizenship is successful, students should be encouraged to engage actively in the governance within the school communities. Students are empowered through their participation in decision making in important school matters. In this conception, schools have been described as 'laboratories of democratic freedom' (Bäckman & Trafford, 2006) and 'crucibles of democracy' (McQuillan, 2005).

2.1 The rationales for student participation in school governance

The involvement of students in school governance, which may be termed as "democratic school governance" or "participatory school governance" (Huddleston, 2007, p. 5), has well-supported ethical, educational and instrumental justifications. From an ethical point of view, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), especially Articles 12 and 15, have explicitly laid down the rights of a child to express his or her views freely and to be heard on all matters that affect him or her, and the rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly. It calls for treating students as 'here and now citizens' in the school communities, and endorsing their rights and responsibilities in influencing the matters that affect them (Leung & Yuen, 2009; Roche, 1999). In terms of education, participation is positively related to impact on the students such as in general attainment, heightened self-esteem, sense of belonging, self efficacy, and responsibility (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2009). From an instrumental perspective, the participation of students is positively related to improving school discipline, teacher–student relationships, attitudes towards school, and making the school more competitive (Bäckman & Trafford, 2006; Dürr, 2004). All these educational and instrumental benefits may have direct or indirect positive impacts on students' citizenship development. Literature has also revealed that the different styles of student participation in school governance may result in different modes of citizenship, such as becoming passive or Justice Oriented Citizen (Ho, Sim, & Alviar-Martin, 2011; Rubin, 2007; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

2.2 Forms, scopes, factors and results of student participation

Student participation in school governance can take different forms (Hart, 1992; Tsang, 1986). Similar to the idea of forms, Dürr (2004) suggests seven levels, moving from the bottom towards the top: "basic information and passive reception of decisions", "contribution of some sort, either resources or materials", "contribution through attendance at meetings and through labour", "involvement in designing strategies or planning programmes", "co-operation with others in carrying out programmes", "consultation on the definition of problems and preparation of decision making processes", and "participation in decision making, initiation of action, implementation of solutions, and evaluation of outcomes".

Concerning the scope of student participation, UNCRC Article 12 emphasizes that all matters affecting the child are relevant in the consideration. Scholars have argued that scope should go beyond student-related issues and extend to the wider aspects of school life, and the community (Fielding, 1997; Hannam, 2001; Tsang, 1986). For example, Durr (2004) outlined the following classifications: "Participative Structures", "Participative Learning", "Participation in the Social Life of the School";

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and "Participation Beyond the School." However, in reality, schools tend to narrow the scope of participation, giving an impression of tokenism (Tse, 2000).

Facilitating factors for students' involvement in school governance have also been identified. They comprise, *inter alia*, the level of confidence of students in the values of participation, a sense of empowerment in their school, the existence of student representative structures, opportunities for students to be respected for their contribution to solving school problems, the extent to which the school environment models democratic principles or fosters participation practices, an open classroom climate for discussion, and a link with the wider community and participatory organisations beyond the school (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). The idea of a 'democratic ethos' shared among members of the communities, comprising mutual trust and respect, is another crucial factor (Radz, 1984; Trafford, 2008). Leadership, including student leadership, and in particular, the principal's leadership, in encouraging participatory governance (civic leadership), is another important factor (Dimmock & Walker, 2002; Hannam, 2001). Inman and Burke (2002) have identified as important the willingness of the school authority to take risks, to facilitate others in taking leadership, its commitment to the good of children, and to involve the school in the wider community.

3 The civic mission and civic education in schools in the Hong Kong context

Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city where liberty is cherished and where historically Eastern culture has encountered Western culture. After being a British colony for over a century, it was returned to China in 1997 as Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), in accordance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration (1984). Since Hong Kong's capitalist economic system contrasts starkly with the socialist system upheld in Mainland China, the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems' has been applied with the effect that the social and political system of China, including that of a planned economy and democratic centralism etc., will not be implemented in Hong Kong. This allows Hong Kong to retain its structure and the existing way of life with a high degree of autonomy. To prepare for self-rule, a representative form of government has been developed in Hong Kong.

In order to prepare youths to face the new political landscape, the *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools* (The Curriculum Development Council CDC, 1985) and the *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools* (The Curriculum Development Council CDC, 1996) were published in 1985 and 1996 respectively. After the handover in 1997, several official documents relating to moral and civic education have been published. The *Learning to Learn* (The Curriculum Development Council CDC, 2001) is an important example in this case. The most drastic event relating to civic education after the handover was that from mid-July to September 2012, where mass gatherings and street demonstrations took place in response to the decision by the government to replace moral and civic education by a compulsory subject entitled Moral and National Education. The popular movement, sometimes involving more than 100,000 people at a time, forced the HKSAR to shelve the mandatory Moral and National Education and revert to a school-based civic education in October 2012.

Notwithstanding these developments, civic education in Hong Kong is in reality not much more than a "lip service" (Leung & Yuen, 2012b). It is moralized and depoliticized, where the teaching content is maintained as politically conservative as possible and, whenever convenient, the political content can be replaced by moral education at will. There is indeed a tug of war between the urgent need of cultivating a democratic culture for Hong Kong's democratic development and the wish to keep Hong Kong as a depoliticized financial and business centre by the Chinese Central Government (Leung & Yuen, 2012a, 2012b). However, it can be discerned that the need of cultivating a democratic culture for Hong Kong's democratic development has never been paid much more than just lip service. The civic mission of nurturing politically literate, participatory, and critically thinking citizens with civic qualities is seriously marginalized. It is against this backdrop that the present paper is written. Although implementing civic mission in schools involves both teaching and practising, this paper focuses solely on the practical aspects, particularly student participation in school governance.

4 Student participation in school governance in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, schools in general tend to be conservative, authoritarian, paternalistic and not encouraging of student participation in school governance (Tse, 2000). In order to pave a path leading to decentralizing the administrative power to schools, the Hong Kong Government introduced the School Management Initiative (SMI) in 1991, which was designed to encourage management reforms in Hong Kong aided schools (EMB & ED, 1991). The SMI was premised on a school-based management model, which gave schools greater control over their finance and administration, and made them more accountable to the public. In 1997, the SMI was modified and became a non-mandatory School Based Management (SBM). In order to encourage more schools to participate, the former Education Department made further changes to the policy in September 2000, providing extra grants and more flexibility. The school management boards and principals can make a difference through their values, beliefs, and vision, to meet the needs of their students. Thus with the launch of SBM, school governance can in principle be more flexible, and introducing the participatory element into school governance has become possible.

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5 The General Research Fund Project

This paper is an initial report of the first phase of a General Research Fund (GRF) project by the HKSAR government, entitled "The Civic Mission of Schools: Citizenship Education, Democratic School Governance and Students' Participation", which will take place over a period from July 2012 to June 2015. This research study brings together two areas of substantive concern: civic education and school governance. The study focuses on the impact of student participation in school governance on their citizenship development, an area hitherto under-researched in Hong Kong. In the area of civic education, many works have been done on concepts of citizenship, curricula, teaching and learning of citizenship education. However, little research has been conducted on the relationship between citizenship and participation in governance (Leung & Yuen, 2009). The work of Leung & Yuen (2009), Tse (2000) and Yuen & Leung (2010) are a few exceptions. On the other hand, in the area of school governance, researchers have studied the relationships among school leadership, effectiveness, improvement, and the impact of leadership on student achievements (Krüger, 2009). Notwithstanding, little study has been conducted on how governance is related to the civic mission of schools and democratic/participatory citizenship (Bush, 2003; Davies, 2005). This research study attempts to fill the gap and widen the scope of study in both areas.

The overarching research questions of this project are, with the introduction of SBM, (1) to what extent does school governance support a student participatory culture in schools in the Hong Kong context, and (2) whether and how school governance with student participation can contribute to the nurturing of participatory citizenship?

Being a preliminary report of a part of the quantitative study of the GRF research project, this paper addresses the following specific research questions:

RQ1. What are students' understandings of good citizenship?

RQ2. What are students' perceptions of civic mission of their own schools?

RQ3. From the students' perspective, how is the school civic mission implemented through their participation in school governance?

6 Research methodology

A cross-sectional quantitative survey was designed to collect data from Secondary 2 (aged about 13) and Secondary 5 students (aged about 16) from 51 secondary schools in Hong Kong. These students represented junior and senior students in the sample schools. Secondary 1 students were not chosen as they were less familiar with the school. Secondary 6 students were omitted as they were busy preparing for public examinations. There are around 460 Hong Kong secondary schools. A sampling size of 11% (n=51) of the total population of schools (N=460) was drawn up to assist in the selection of schools for the survey of students. Two classes in each school – one secondary 2 class and one secondary 5 class were sampled randomly after negotiation with the schools. Ethical approval was granted by the ethics committee of the Institute. School principals provided informed consent. 3209 students from 51 secondary schools responded to the questionnaire.

Data were collected directly from students by means of a self- administered questionnaire. The questionnaire contained seven sections to measure firstly the students' demographical background and their perceptions on the following:

1. good citizenship (Table 2);

2. school efforts in nurturing good citizenship (civic mission) (Table 3);

3. school policy on their participation in school governance (Table 4);

4. the scope and forms of participation in school governance (Tables 5 & 6);

5. the facilitating and hindering factors for their participation (Table 7); and

6. their participation through Students Council (not detailed in this paper).

In order to develop valid items for the pertinent scales, the researcher conducted a content analysis from various significant international researches, such as, CivEd (Torney-Purta et al., 2001), CivEd - upper secondary (Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt, & Nikolova, 2002), NFER (2010) (Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy, & Lopes, 2010) and ICCS(2009) (Schulz et al., 2009). Taking into account the local context, an instrument of 65 items was developed (See Table 1.)

Table 1. List of scales adopted by the instrument

Scale name	No of scale(s)	No of items
Good citizenship	4	17
School efforts in implementing civic mission	1	5
School policy on students' participation in school governance	1	6
Scopes of participation	2	9
Forms of participation	Not applicable	10
Facilitating and hindering factors for their participation	3	18

Participants indicated their response to the above statements on a four-point Likert scale. Likert scales are commonly used in attitudinal research. The Likert scale assumes that the difference between answering "agree strongly" and "agree" is the same as answering "agree" and "neither agree nor disagree" (Likert, 1932, quoted in Gay, 1992). In this study, "strongly disagree", "disagree",

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"agree", and "strongly agree" were coded as "1", "2", "3" and "4" for calculation.

Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability tests were employed to confirm construct validity and internal consistency of the instrument. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to examine the factor structure of the "students' perception of good citizenship" instrument and to tap into the underlying constructs of the four variables. Factors with eigenvalue >1 will be extracted. Reliability was examined on the basis of quantitative procedures to determine the degree of consistency or inconsistency inherent within this instrument. Principal axis factoring (PAF) analysis with Promax rotation was used to select the items in data reduction by using the SPSS program, while Cronbach's α-reliability measure for internal consistency was utilised to test the reliability of the derived scales. Reliability was examined on the basis of quantitative procedures to determine the degree of consistency or inconsistency that was inherent within this instrument.

7 Findings

As this paper focuses only on three specific research questions (RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3), we will discuss the findings of the items in the questionnaire relating to the specific research questions (expressed as 'Qn') under the following headings: "students' perceptions of good citizenship" (Q1), "students' perceptions of their school efforts in nurturing good citizenship (civic mission)" (Q2), "students' perceptions of general school policy on student participation in school governance" (Q3), "the scope of students' participation in school governance" (Q4), "the forms of students' participation in school governance" (Q5), and "the predictive factors for student participation " (Q10, 11).

7.1 Students' perceptions of good citizenship

In addressing RQ1, Table 2 which displays the data for questionnaire Q1, illustrates the factor structure of students' perception on citizenship. The 17 descriptions of a good citizen are conceptualized into four factors. They are: Personally Responsible (mean = 3.43), Justice Oriented (mean = 3.00), Participatory (mean = 2.97) and Patriotic (mean = 2.75) Citizen. As discussed, the first three factors were based on Westheimer and Kahne's typology, while the fourth factor was developed with reference to the specific situation in Hong Kong. These results reflect that students agreed that these four elements constitute the core characteristics of a good citizen. That is, students had an eclectic understanding of the conception of "good citizenship" (Leung, 2006). Among these four characteristics, Personally Responsible Citizen and Patriotic Citizen stood out as the most important and the least important characteristic of a good citizen respectively.

Table 2. Students' perceptions of good citizenship (Q1)

Scale		Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Mean
Patriotic	1	loyalty to the country	.820				2.78
	2	identification with the country	.810				2.71
	3	respect of government representatives	.768				2.81
	4	loyalty to the ruling party	.743				2.28
	5	interest in the country's constitution, constitutional structure and legal structure	.723				2.92
	6	interest in the country's current situation and development	.681				3.08
Participatory	7	participate in community activities		.800			2.87
	8	organize voluntary services such as visiting elderly homes		.777			2.93
	9	participate in voluntary work protecting the environment		.680			3.13
	10	vote in elections		.626			2.96
Justice Oriented	11	pursue an understanding of human rights, the rule of law and justice			.790		3.17
	12	analyze social and political issues critically			.710		3.18
	13	voice out for unjust social issues			.631		3.08
	14	willing to use mild physical conflict to fight against law violating human rights			.599		2.57
Personally Responsible	15	obey the law				.801	3.53
	16	possess appropriate moral behaviour and attitude				.781	3.48
	17	hand in valuables found in the street				.663	3.27
Eigenvalue			5.960	2.470	1.418	1.062	
% of Variance Explained			35.056	14.527	8.339	6.246	
Scale Reliability Cronbach's Alphas Coefficient			0.869	0.831	0.743	0.740	
Scale Mean			2.75	2.97	3.00	3.43	
Standard Derivation			0.797	0.733	0.753	0.628	

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7.2 Students' perceptions of their schools' effort in nurturing good citizenship (civic mission)

In addressing RQ2, Table 3 which displays the data for questionnaire Q2, illustrates students' perceptions of the efforts made by their schools in nurturing good citizenship (i.e. the school civic mission). In general, all students agreed that nurturing them to be good citizens is an important school mission (item 1, mean = 3.00). The students tended to agree that their schools put adequate resources in nurturing good citizens (item 3, mean = 2.75) and cultivated an atmosphere that values nurturing students to be good citizens (item 2, mean = 2.91). However, the students only tended to slightly agree that their schools had set up a committee or task force (item 5, mean = 2.66) and organized civic education activities (item 4, mean = 2.66) to nurture good citizens. These findings may reflect that an implementation gap has existed between the civic mission to nurture good citizens and implementation plans for civic education activities of their schools.

Table 3. Students' perceptions of their school efforts in nurturing good citizenship (civic mission) (Q2)

		Mean	SD
1.	Nurture students to be "good citizens" is one of my school's important missions	3.00	0.653
2.	The overall atmosphere of my school values nurturing students to be "good citizens"	2.91	0.674
3.	My school puts adequate resources in nurturing "good citizens"	2.75	0.713
4.	My school always organizes activities related to nurturing "good citizens"	2.66	0.742
5.	My school has a unit specifically for nurturing "good citizens"	2.66	0.738

7.3 Students' perceptions of general school policy on student participation in school governance

Addressing RQ3, Table 4 which displays the data for Q3, illustrates students' perceptions of general school policy on student participation in school governance. In general, all the students agreed that their schools allowed them to express opinions on issues relevant to them (item 1, mean = 3.01). Almost all the students agreed that their schools allowed them to participate in school governance that helps nurture students to be active participatory citizens (item 2, mean = 2.89) and to raise students' sense of belonging to their school (item 3, mean = 2.93). They tended to agree that their schools encouraged them to participate in school governance (item 4, mean = 2.74) and they participated in school governance actively (item 5, mean = 2.71). However, the data indicated that they only slightly agreed that their school provided adequate channels for them to participate in school governance (item 6, mean =2.61). These findings may reflect that a gap has existed between student perception on schools' support for student participation and the actual channels provided by schools to student participation in school governance.

Table 4. Students' perceptions of general school policy on student participation in school governance (Q3)

		Mean	SD
1.	My school thinks that students have the right to express opinions on issues related to them	3.01	0.711
2.	My school thinks that allowing students to participate in school governance helps to nurture students to be active participatory citizens	2.89	0.735
3.	My school thinks that allowing students to participate in school governance helps to raise students' sense of belonging to the school	2.93	0.750
4.	My school encourages students to participate in school governance	2.74	0.812
5.	Students in my school participate actively in school governance	2.71	0.791
6.	My school provides adequate channels for students to participate in school governance	2.61	0.832
	Scale reliability Cronbach's Alphas Coefficient = 0.880		

7.4 The scope of student participation in school governance

Table 5: The scope for student participation (Q4)

Scale		Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Mean
School Management	1	school's development plan	.845		2.29
	2	formulation of school rules	.840		1.98
	3	school's self-assessment	.755		2.43
	4	teaching and learning design	.736		2.39
	5	school facilities	.675		2.50
School Operation	6	class activities		.764	3.08
	7	design of notice board of student clubs		.763	3.34
	8	extracurricular activities		.693	2.97
	9	arrangement of catering		.488	2.62
Eigenvalue			3.944	1.512	
% of Variance Explained			43.819	16.798	
Scale Reliability Cronbach's Alphas Coefficient			0.86	0.67	
Scale Mean			2.32	3.00	
Standard Derivation			0.933	0.847	

In addressing RQ3, Table 5 which displays the data for questionnaire Q4, illustrates the factor structure of the scope of student participation in school governance. The scope of participation is categorized into two domains:

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managerial policies and school operational activities. The level of participation in the operational domain (mean =3.00) is much higher than those in the school managerial domain (mean = 2.32). The above result appears to suggest that student participation is only limited to an operational level on trivial affairs that are related to student activities.

7.5 The forms of student participation in school governance

In addressing RQ3, Table 6 which displays the data for questionnaire Q5, illustrates the forms of student participation in school governance. The students tended to agree that their schools informed them of the decisions of school policies (mean = 2.78) and provided resources to them to implement school decisions (mean = 2.65). However, they tended to disagree that their schools consulted them about the formulation of school policies through any existing channels (i.e., mean score of item 3 to item 10 are less than 2.5), except through the channel of the student council (mean 2.93) These findings reflect that in the students' perception, student council was the only consultation channel for student participation in school governance.

Table 6: The forms of student participation in school governance (Q5)

		Mean	SD
1.	School informs students about decisions on school policies	2.78	0.858
2.	School provides resources for students to implement schools' decisions	2.65	0.831
3.	School consults students about formulation of school policies through the channels below:		
	i) Class Council	2.48	0.996
	ii) Student Council	2.93[1]	0.889
	iii) Prefect	2.44	0.960
	iv) School's opinion box	2.25	0.930
	v) Express opinions directly to the Principal or staff	2.33	0.926
	vi) Democracy Wall	2.07	0.980
	vii) Special Committees, such as Catering Committee	2.06	0.925
4.	School invites student representatives to participate in meetings relating to school governance	2.23	0.903

7.6 Predictive factors for student participation

In addressing RQ3, Table 7 (next page) which displays the data for questionnaire Q10 and Q11, illustrates the factor structure of predictive factors, both facilitating and hindering, for student participation in school governance. The 18 descriptions of factors are categorized into three latent factors. They are: facilitating factor (mean = 2.62), hindering factor (school) (mean = 2.57), and hindering factor (students) (mean = 2.52). It should be noted that all hindering factors are negative statements.

8 Discussion

8.1 The students' understandings of good citizens

To address the first research question "what are the students' understandings of good citizenship?", with reference to Westheimer and Kahne's typologies, the findings revealed that the students had an eclectic understanding of citizenship, with higher scores for Personally Responsible Citizen and lower scores for Participatory, Justice Oriented and Patriotic Citizen, reflecting a conservative orientation.

It is not surprising that being a Personally Responsible Citizen is considered by the students as most important given that there has been a persistent drive by the Hong Kong Government both before and after 1997 to pursue a depoliticized and moralized civic education, which avoided discussing controversial issues (Leung, Yuen & Ngai, 2014). In addition, many civic teachers in Hong Kong treat civic education as moral education in a private sphere (Leung & Ng, 2014). Such oriented civic education may lead to a conservative and apolitical form of "good citizens". By contrast, it is quite surprising to find that Justice Oriented Citizen ranked second, though the mean was just 3.00 compared to the relatively high score in the Personally Responsible Citizen category (3.43). Indeed, as indicated by the literature, civic education programmes aiming at Justice Oriented Citizen are seldom encouraged even in democratic states. This may be the result of many recent social movements attempting to address perceived issues of injustice in different areas like the Anti-national Education Movement and Occupying Central Movement. These social movements were organized against the backdrop of a conservative civic education (Leung, Yuen, & Ngai, 2014). Participatory Citizen (2.97) ranked third, slightly lower than Justice Oriented Citizen and can be traced to the emphasis on social service and voluntary work both by schools and by the education system which consider these as important elements in a student's profile.

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Table 7. Facilitating and Hindering factors for Student Participation (Q6).

Scale		Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Mean
Facilitating factor	1	School has open and liberal attitudes toward student participation in school governance	.853			2.54
	2	School has a transparent and clear procedure for formulating school policies	.824			2.50
	3	School has a tradition for students to participate in school governance	.811			2.43
	4	School has a culture of mutual trust between school and students	.805			2.67
	5	Students believe that school accepts their opinions	.803			2.53
	6	School has formal channels to collect students' opinions, such as Student Council	.724			2.80
	7	Students believe that their participation in school governance is valuable	.604			2.83
Hindering factor (school)	8	Staff worry that the authority of staff will be challenged		.814		2.44
	9	Staff worry that there will be chaos in school policies		.799		2.52
	10	Staff lack enthusiasm		.760		2.28
	11	Staff lack training and professional knowledge		.715		2.24
	12	School worries about the reduction in efficiency of decision making		.715		2.53
	13	School worries about the increase of workload of staff		.712		2.42
	14	School lacks resources		.602		2.59
Hindering factor	15	Students lack interest to participate			.786	2.61
	16	Students' level of maturity and ability are inadequate to participate in school governance			.746	2.34
	17	Has negative impact on students' academic results			.668	2.23
	18	Students think that they do not have the right to influence school governance			.546	2.75
		Eigenvalue	5.022	4.094	1.484	
		% of Variance Explained	27.901	22.742	8.244	
		Scale Reliability Cronbach's Alphas Coefficient	0.895	0.868	0.700	
		Scale Mean	2.62	2.57	2.52	
		Standard Derivation	0.804	0.820	0.802	

What was most puzzling was that scores for Patriotic Citizen ranked the lowest, given that the HKSAR government has worked assiduously to promote patriotism. Degolyer (2001) commented that when Hong Kong was promised self-rule, it was based on the condition that Hongkongers would love both Hong Kong and China. However, while Hongkongers may have a post-modern form of cosmopolitan identity, patriotism, in mainland China's conceptions, is closely related to ethnicity and the defeat of imperialism. Yuen and Byram (2007) argued that the difference had to be addressed for a harmonious co-existence. Regrettably, this consensus building has never been carried out. The unpopular attempt by the HKSAR government to enforce in schools the compulsory subject of Moral and National Education, in which the notion of patriotism only mirrors that as being promoted by the mainland authority and brushing aside beliefs upheld by Hongkongers, only led to massive resentment and protest in 2012. This may be the underlying reason for the low scores achieved in the Patriotic Citizen category in our study (Leung, Yuen, & Ngai, 2014, in press) .

8.2 Students' perceptions of their school efforts in nurturing good citizenship (civic mission)

To address the second research question "what are the students' understandings of civic mission of schools?", students considered that nurturing them to be good citizens is an important mission of their schools (Table 3, item 1, mean =3). However, a closer look at the results of the survey revealed that students' agreement levels tapered off once the mission translated into implementation. The agreement level to schools putting adequate resources to nurture good citizens dropped to a mean value of 2.75 (Table 3, item 3). When asked whether schools set up specific units (Table 3, item 5) and organized activities for nurturing good citizens (Table 3, item 4), the agreement level dropped further (mean=2.66 respectively). In particular, the effort of schools to establish a specific civic education unit, which is crucial for the implementation of civic mission, had only improved slightly compared to similar findings carried out in 2001, which found only 39% (out of 163 respondents) of secondary schools had established such

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a unit (Ng & Leung, 2004).We can tentatively call this as a perceived implementation dip.

There can be different explanations to the phenomenon and in-depth case studies are required for confirmation. Granted we cannot rule out the possibilities that schools fail to make explicit efforts to achieve the civic mission. However, students may not have sufficient knowledge about their school's structure and plans since the findings are based on students' perceptions alone, distorting the results. It is also plausible that schools are mainly paying 'lip service' (Leung & Yuen, 2012b) to their civic mission. This is indeed understandable given that civic education plays no important role in Hong Kong's education system which by tradition is largely geared towards the preparation of students for public examinations. Further, not many teachers have been trained to work with the civic mission in mind. These, together with the worry that civic education can be politically sensitive, have in fact plagued the development of civic education since the release of the first civic education guidelines in the 1980s.

8.3 The implementation of civic mission through student participation in school governance

Another interesting feature was spotted when we revealed the students' feedback given to the third research question, "from the students' perception, how is the school civic mission implemented through their participation in school governance?" Students showed more agreement about their schools' dedication to allow them participation in school governance. The mean score for "my school thinks that students have the right to express opinions on issues related to them", for instance, has a mean score of 3.01 (Table 4, item 1). The overall mean for all related questions has a mean over 2.6 (Table 4, items 2-6) against 2.5 (the mid score).

However, if we review students' perception about the scope of student participation in their schools (Table 5), all items relating to school management scored below 2.5, with the item "formulation of school rules" as the lowest (item 2, 1.98). The only exception to this is item 5, "school facilities" which scored 2.5, a mere pass. On the other hand, all items relating to school operations had mean scores over 2.5, with "design of notice board of student clubs" and "class activities" being the highest (3.34 (item 7) and 3.08 (item 6) respectively). We can tentatively conclude from these scores that schools tended to provide channels for students' participation in school operations only on a micro level and in implementation within the broad policy framework already made by the school authority. It may not be far from truth to say that schools are not inclined to involve students in decision making of a more political nature. School rules, which define the limits of student freedom and hence the powers of schools, for instance, was rated the lowest in all items (item 2, mean = 1.98). Why schools are less willing to allow students to partake in more major decision making that affects the balance of powers can be considered from perspectives like confidence in student qualities, age and maturity, as well as education traditions. However, these assumptions can only be confirmed with further researches, particularly those of an in-depth and qualitative nature.

Looking at the findings with regard to students' perception about "the forms of student participation in school governance" (Table 6), we can see that those items passing the 2.5 mean score are "student council" (Item 3 ii, 2.93), "school provides resources for students to implement schools' decisions" (Item 2, 2.65), and "school informs students about decisions on school policies" (Item 1, 2.78). Informing students and providing resources for students to implement school decisions certainly do not constitute sharing of powers. Student councils in Hong Kong schools often serve as only a consultative body and work heavily under teachers' supervision. On the other hand, we should note the possibility that schools may not be prepared to adapt to a more bottom-up approach in consultation. "Democracy wall" and "expressing opinions directly to principal or staff" both scored below 2.5 (Item 3, vi. 2.07 and Item 3, v. 2.33). More substantial involvement in decision making was rated low. "School invites student representatives to participate in meetings relating to school governance" was rated at 2.23 (Item 4) while "special committees, such as catering committee" was rated at 2.06 (Item 3 vii). Thus, our findings support the notion that schools are more inclined to inform students and consult them through formal channels, rather than sharing powers with them. Indeed, Durr (2004) argued that participation in school matters is often limited at the bottom level of the participatory ladder such as being informed, delegated with resources to implement decisions made by the schools, etc.

In discussing the facilitating and hindering factors (Table 7), it should be noted that all hindering factors are negative statements. From the data, the common factors identified from literature, such as, "school has open and liberal attitudes toward student participation in school governance" (item1), "school has a transparent and clear procedure for formulating school policies" (item 2) and items 3,4,5, are relatively non-conspicuous, with mean scores around 2.5. The most important facilitating factor was "students believe that their participation in school governance is valuable" (Item 7, 2.83). This finding may imply that students would be motivated to participate when they believe that their participation involves meaningful issues in school (Taylor and Percy-Smith 2008). The second highest facilitating factor was "school has formal channels to collect students' opinions, such as Student Council" (item 6, 2.80), implying that students expected schools to provide formal channels for them to actualize their participation. Contrary to the literature (Hannam, 2001) which argued that encouraging and supporting leadership are needed for student participation, "staff lack enthusiasm" (Item 10, 2.28) and "staff lack training and professional knowledge" (Item 11, 2.24) were not considered as important hindering factors

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in the eyes of the students. This is an interesting point which further researches can consider. One quite unexpected finding was that though achieving good academic results is among the most important objectives in Hong Kong's education system, the item "has negative impact on students' academic results" did not show itself as a significant hindering factor comparably (item 17, 2.23). This may reflect the view that participation is positively related to impact on the student such as in general attainment, heightened self-esteem, sense of belonging, self-efficacy, and responsibility (Schulz et al., 2009).

9 Conclusion

The study of this paper is based on a General Research Fund (GRF) project entitled "The Civic Mission of Schools: Citizenship Education, Democratic School Governance and Students' Participation". It adopts a mixed methodology comprising both quantitative and qualitative methods. This paper reports only part of the findings of the survey by questionnaires to students.

In addressing the first research question with reference to Westheimer and Kahne's typology of citizenship, the study reveals an eclectic understanding of the conception of "good citizenship". Personally Responsible Citizen was considered by the students as the most important form of citizenship and this may be related to the persistent drive by the Hong Kong government before and after 1997 to pursue a conservative civic education. Though this kind of citizenship may fit the purposes of governance, to keep Hong Kong as a depoliticized financial and business city, it does not match the urgent need of cultivating a democratic culture for Hong Kong's democratic development (Leung & Yuen, 2012a). It is quite surprising to learn that Justice Oriented Citizen, which is more "radical" than Personally Responsible Citizen, ranked second. This may be the result of many recent social movements attempting to address perceived issues of injustice in Hong Kong society. The cultivation of Justice Oriented citizens has been raised as a pressing agenda in the nurturing of democratic culture, for the democratic development of Hong Kong (Leung et al., 2014). Participatory Citizen ranked third and this can be traced to the emphasis on social service and voluntary work both by schools and by the education system for leadership training. Patriotic Citizen ranked the lowest despite the HKSAR government's tireless efforts to promote patriotism. This may reflect that Hongkongers' idea of patriotism does not correspond to that of the Chinese mainland.

In addressing the second research question, there appears to be an implementation dip in the perception of the students about the civic mission of schools. Agreement level of the students was higher when they were asked whether their schools consider nurturing good citizens as an important mission. The agreement levels fell when it related to resources, specific civic education units being established, and having organized civic education activities. Whether this reflects the failure of schools by paying lip service to civic mission or doing so in an inconspicuous way unnoticed by students, the distorted results based only on students' perceptions remains to be explored.

In addressing the third research question on implementing schools' civic mission through student participation in school governance, our findings revealed that schools were more inclined to inform students and consult them through formal and controlled channels, for example, Students Union strongly led by teachers, rather than real participation and sharing powers with them. As for the scope of participation, far from what the UNCRC Article 12 recommends that all matters affecting the students' school life should be involved, student participation in school governance was limited to mainly trivial operational matters, or implementation within the broad policy framework already made by the school authority. According to students' perceptions, "students believe that their participation in school governance is valuable" and "school has formal channels to collect students' opinions, such as Student Council" were the two most important contributing factors for their participation. It is surprising to find that "having negative impact on students' academic results" did not show up to be a significant hindering factor in the competitive, examination oriented context in Hong Kong education.

The unwillingness of the schools to share power with students was reported by Tse (2000), while Gallagher (2008) explained that schools do not really encourage real student participation. There is at best tokenism, at the bottom of Hart's (1992) ladder, "instead of 'real participation' at all (p. 404)". It seems that the identified practice of student participation in school governance does not facilitate the nurturing of active participatory citizens urgently needed for the democratic development of Hong Kong. Instead, this may result in passive citizens (Ho et al., 2011; Rubin, 2007; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004)). Perhaps the rectification of the unwillingness of schools is the key to student participation in school governance, which is empowering students' citizenship development for the nurturing of a democratic culture.

We would like to stress that the initial findings have portrayed a picture of "limited" student participation in general. This initial conclusion echoes our initial analysis of official policy and curriculum documents on civic education in Hong Kong, which will be detailed in future publication. The official policy and curriculum documents focus on the teaching and learning of civic education and rarely mention student participation. Without policy support, this may imply that the advocacy of student participation in school governance in Hong Kong is long and winding though may not necessary a "mission impossible". (Tse, 2000) In conclusion, we would like to remind the readers that this paper only reports the preliminary results from the questionnaire surveys conducted with students. It is limited by the fact that the findings reveal only the perception of students which may be biased and may not necessarily reflect reality. The findings need to be triangulated with similar views of

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other stakeholders like teachers and school leaders. Besides, the quantitative data generated from the questionnaire survey lead to different tentative explanations which need to be probed further, for example, through in-depth qualitative interviews. These would be covered in later phases of our study. Further, our study also suggests that there needs to be more research efforts in different areas relating to student participation in school governance, such as the role of student councils, attitudes of school staff, as well as the readiness of students to partake in governance etc. However, we would also like to stress that though the preliminary results are only perceptions, which may be distorted and not necessarily reflect reality, they have to be addressed seriously because the perceptions may become students' "constructed reality", shaping their behaviours.

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Endnotes

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[1] Student councils were rated relatively highly by students possibly due to its conspicuous nature and the fact that there are usually formal election processes in the choosing of student councils. It is another question whether student councils in Hong Kong participate in important decision making of the schools. However, this paper will not detail the findings on student council.