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Creating Democratic Class Rooms in Asian Contexts: The Influences of Individual and School Level Factors on Open Classroom Climate

- Student perceptions of OCC differed across societies.
- Good student-teacher relationships and students' participation experiences predicted OCC.
- Civic knowledge and self-efficacy were positively related to OCC in four societies.
- The influence of school level predictors on OCC differed from society to society.

Purpose: Literature indicates that open classroom climate (OCC) is a positive influence on civic outcomes. Few studies have explored factors that appear to facilitate OCC. Most research on OCC has focused on Western countries. The emphasis has been on individual student characteristics related to OCC with little attention made to school level effects. The purpose of the present study was to investigate both individual and school level influences on OCC using Asian student samples.

Methodology: Data were drawn from the five Asian societies that participated in the 2009 International Civics and Citizenship Education Study. Multilevel regression analysis was used to test individual and school level relationships in the data.

Findings: There were significant differences among the five societies with regard to student perceptions of OCC. At the individual level, results showed the importance of good student-teacher relationships, students' discussion experiences outside school, and civic participating at school for promoting OCC. Civic knowledge and self-efficacy were positively related to OCC in four Asian societies. The roles of school level predictors differed from society to society, some predictors even working in the opposite direction. Different cultural contexts, local policies, and school system characteristics might account for these differences.

Keywords:

Open classroom climate, Asian students, teachers, civic participation, multilevel analysis

1 Introduction

Schools and classrooms play a pivotal role for adolescents in developing their cognition and social emotion (Eccles & Roeser, 2011) and forming positive experiences

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and attitudes towards learning and preparing them to participate in different aspects of civic and political life (Al Kharusi & Atweh, 2012; Flanagan & Faison, 2001; Sherrod, 2003). Gibson and Levine (2003) have pointed out classrooms are usually the contexts where students and children are introduced to democratic processes and it is one place that provides the opportunity for students to learn to interact, discuss various issues, and cooperate with others, thereby developing the basis for their civic skills. Godfrey and Grayman (2014) pointed out that classroom climate is important for fostering students' critical consciousness.

Some empirical support has been provided for the importance of classroom teaching and learning processes in enhancing civic knowledge and civic engagement. Alivernini and Manganelli (2011), for example, showed with a sample of Italian students that OCC was a significant factor influencing both civic knowledge and school participation. Knowles and McCafferty-Wright (2015) conducted a similar study with more diverse European samples to show the broader influence of open classroom climate across these samples. Persson (2015), using Swedish panel data, showed that a 10% increase in open classroom climate accounted for an increase of 5% in students' civic knowledge. Hooghe and Dassoneville (2011) also conducted a panel study but with Belgian students showing that those who worked on group projects, a form of cooperative learning, had higher levels of civic knowledge. What these studies suggest is



that classroom processes matter. What they do not indicate, however, is how OCC can be facilitated.

For this reason, the present paper will focus on the role of individual and school level factors that potentially can contribute to the development of student experiences with OCC. In terms of construct validity, Campbell (2005) argued that OCC is a measure of students' perceptions concerning "the discussion of contemporary social and political issues by teachers and students alike". (p. 8). He further argued that "some students are going to perceive a different level of openness than others which is expected to affect their preparation for political engagement". (Campbell, 2005, p. 9). In a similar, although more focused analysis, Barber, Sweetwood, and King (2015, p. 200) argued that "one could anticipate that demographically homogenous students with similar levels of civic engagement would provide more consistent ratings of their climates than would more heterogeneous classrooms of students". To demonstrate this point, they examined the in-class variability of student reports of OCC. The classroom level reliability of OCC was low ($\lambda = 0.574$) and they concluded that "this analysis suggests that students have individual experiences and attitudes that shape their perceptions of their classrooms (Barber et al., 2015, p. 201). The current study will address this issue by identifying individual and school level variables that can enhance or sharpen students' experiences with OCC.

There are also good reasons for focusing on Asian contexts and East Asian contexts in particular. Education systems in societies such as South Korea, Japan, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Taiwan have been labelled "high performing education systems" because of their students' performance on international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Marsh & Lee, 2014). At the same time, there is an extended literature that points to rote learning and memorization as the main learning processes in many of these societies (Aguinis & Roth, 2005; Aoki, 2008; Han & Skull, 2010) to the point where it has become a popular stereotype of learning in East Asian societies. Yet there has also been a reaction to these stereotypes in terms of empirical research that has sought to understand better what happens in Chinese classrooms in particular (Biggs, 1996; Biggs & Watkin, 1996; Chan & Rao, 2009). More recently there has been an attempt to show how learning practices in Chinese classrooms are more likely to be on a continuum rather than clustered at the rote learning end (Kember, 2016). Thus identifying the factors influencing OCC could help Asian educators further develop diverse classroom climates to enrich student experiences. The specific research questions addressed were:

- What are the predictive roles of civic knowledge, civic attitudes, and participation experiences on open classroom climate among samples of Asian students?
- Are there school-level variables that facilitate the development of open classroom climate in selected Asian classrooms?

2 Literature review

Openness in classroom climate or openness in classroom discussion has been defined as students' perception of the atmosphere for openly discussing political and social issues and respect when opinions are different from other (Campbell, 2008; Hoskins, Janmaat & Villalba, 2012; Schulz et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001).

Studies have demonstrated that open classroom climate has a positive effect on adolescents' civic knowledge (Alivernini & Manganelli, 2011; Andersson, 2012; Campbell, 2008; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2011; Persson, 2015; Torney-Purta, 2002), political efficacy (Knowles & McCafferty-Wright, 2015), appreciation of political conflict (Campbell, 2008), democratic values (Hess, 2009), civic participation (Zhang, Torney-Purta, & Barber, 2012), voting intention (Campbell, 2008; Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2013; Maiello, Oser, & Biedermann, 2003; Quintelier & Hooghe, 2013), and expected legal and informal civic participation (Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2013; Manganelli, Lucidi, & Alivernini, 2015; Quintelier & Hooghe, 2013). The variables influenced by OCC were identified in Western contexts but their cultural transfer has not been tested so the current study has focused on Asian contexts.

Previous scholars often focused on the effect of OCC on students' achievement and engagement, while little attention has been given to identify factors that contribute to OCC. Some studies have found that teachers' self-disclosure and verbal behaviors could create an open classroom climate (Goldstein & Benassi, 1994; Mazer, Murphy & Simonds, 2007; McBride & Wahl, 2005), but they have not taken into consideration other school factors such as school social economic status, school climate (school mean student-teacher relationship) as well as school atmosphere about country, good citizenship and participation. There is considerable evidence to suggest that schools as entities account for a considerable amount of variance in student learning (OECD, 2016) but whether school level factors are also important for facilitating teaching learning processes such as OCC remains to be investigated.

The results of such an investigation have the potential to yield important empirical data that can lead to a better understanding of OCC. At the same time there may also be significant implications from such a study for theory building in citizenship education and related areas. There are two broad areas that are of particular importance in this regard: political socialization and cultural influences on the construction of citizenship values. Each of these is discussed below.

2.1 Political socialization

Early political theorists argued that schools were important agents of political socialization and consequent models gave schools a prominent role in the development of young people's political values and political literacy (e.g. Torney-Purta et al., 2001, p. 21). Yet empirical research has often contradicted the value placed on schools as agents of political socialization.



Koskimaa and Rapelli (2015), for example, set out to show that in a society such as Finland with high levels of civic literacy, schools would be shown to play an important role. Yet their results showed that parents and peers rather than schools were much more significant agents that influenced older adolescents' political interests. Similarly, Dostie-Goulet (2009) showed, using a sample of students from the United States, that social networks appeared to be more influential than school when it came to the formation of civic values. After a lengthy review of the literature, Amna (2012) concluded that there is little agreement on the role of schools when it comes to the development of political values.

Lee (2016), researching in an Asian context, offered a slightly different perspective. Using focus groups with small samples of older adolescents he showed that while the formal curriculum and structures did not appear to influence students' political values, certain school subjects did raise the political interest of some young people. At the same time individual teachers were also shown to influence young people's political involvement, although again this occurred informally rather than in any formal manner. Such a view concerning the role of teachers in political socialization had been endorsed earlier by Leung (2006). Despite these results, that appear somewhat to rehabilitate the role of schools as an agent of political socialization, the formal role of schools remained minimal, at least from the perspective of the students who were interviewed. They placed much more emphasis on peers and networks.

Niemi and Hepburn (1995) argued that early theorists and researchers exaggerated the influence of schools on political socialization especially when it came to the unrealistic expectations of students in elementary schools whose political values have been shown to be quite unstable over time. Buckingham (1999) characterized much research in the area as having a functionalist view of socialization and a very narrow conception of political understanding. His own work focused on the role of the media as an influence on civic values — a role that does not necessarily rely on schools at all.

It seems clear from the literature that schools cannot be regarded in isolation from the societies of which they are a part and a more ecological view of schools is required and a better understanding of how different parts of the school ecosystem interact. The current study attempts to do this by examining the multiple influences that construct OCC itself. Methodologically the study also adopts a multiple perspective by examining influences on OCC at both the level of the individual student and the school on the assumption that individual students come to school with dispositions already formed and that under the influence of the school these may be reinforced or challenged. Thus the more that is understood about the way schools and their communities work as an ecosystem the more nuanced will be our theoretical constructions of the role of the school in political socialization.

2.2 Cultural influences on the construction of citizenship

Our research team is part of a larger research effort that for over a decade has been investigating the issue of the influence of culture on the development of citizenship values. Kennedy (2016, p. 415) has called this the "culture thesis" in educational research and practice whereby "culture" is conceptualized almost as an independent variable influencing different aspects of education and social life in general. Halse (in press) has recently reminded us that "culturalism retains a persistent presence across perspectives on schools and schooling both within and beyond Asia".

The conceptual ground work for this cultural research was laid out in Lee, Grossman, Kennedy, and Fairbrother (2004) and follow up work was conducted specifically in relation to citizenship curriculum (Grossman, Lee, & Kennedy, 2008) and citizenship pedagogies (Kennedy, Lee, & Grossman, 2010). Collaborative research teams in the Assessment Research Centre and the Centre for Governance and Citizenship at The education University of Hong Kong then worked together on an empirical research agenda to investigate Asian students civic values such as political trust (Kennedy, Mok, & Wong, 2011), school participation (Kennedy, Kuang, & Chow, 2012), civic engagement (Mok, Kennedy, & Zhu, 2012; Chow & Kennedy, 2015), religious influences (Cheung, Kennedy, Leung, & Hue, 2016) and teachers' civic values (Wong, Lee, Chan & Kennedy, 2017).

To date our work has shown clearly that Asian students' civic values certainly have distinctive characteristics influenced by local cultures — respect for authority, a focus on harmony rather than dissent, support for traditional cultures and for Asia's role in the world and support in particular for family members and membership. At the same time there is also relatively strong support for democracy so that traditional and democratic values sit side by side. Yet there are also significant differences between different national groups of students — there is no homogenous 'Asian cultural citizenship'. The differences between societies on any range of civic values, traditional or democratic, are likely to be significant.

It is against this background that the current study has been developed. By examining a classroom construct such as OCC the purpose is to assess whether the influences on OCC are the same across societies and cultures. Investigating cultural research issues help us to understand better civic values in different contexts, a perspective not without some risk but also benefit as pointed out by Cooper and Denner (1998):

"...bringing concepts of culture into psychological theories is an abstract, disputed, and inherently irresolvable process, yet ... doing so is crucial to both social science and policy in multicultural societies, particularly democracies." (p. 63)

Western understandings about citizenship are undoubtedly important, but they are not the only source of epistemology in a complex global environment. The study reported here, therefore, seeks to expand



understanding about civic learning and the contexts that construct it.

3 Method

3.1 Sample

Data from the International Civic and Citizenship Education study were used (ICCS 2009) (Schulz et al., 2010). ICCS 2009 surveyed a sample of 14-year-olds in 38 participating nations, including five Asian societies (Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand). ICCS not only measured students' learning outcomes (civic knowledge and behaviors) but also collected relevant contextual information related to student attitudes. The total sample included 5167 students and 150 schools in Chinese Taipei; 2902 students from 84 schools in Hong Kong; 5068 students and 142 schools in Indonesia; 5254 students and 150 schools in South Korea, and 5263 students and 149 schools in Thailand. Further details concerning these samples can be found in Schulz et al. (2010).

3.2 Measures

Open classroom climate (OCC) was measured with six items. Students were asked to report the frequency they thought political and social issues were discussed during regular lessons, for example, teachers encourage students to make up their own minds, express their opinions, discuss the issues with people having different opinions, present several sides of the issues when explaining them in class, students bring up current political events for discussion in class, express opinions in class even when their opinions are different from most of the other students (Schulz, Ainley, & Fraillon, 2011, p. 168). The weighted likelihood estimates (WLE) with an average of 50 and standard deviation of 10 were used in this study.

3.3 Student variables

The national index of students' socioeconomic background (NISB) was a continuous indicator of students' family socio-economic status and had a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. It was derived from three indices: highest occupational status of parent's, highest educational level of parents in approximate years of education according to the ISCED classification and the approximate number of books at home (Schulz et al., 2011, p.193).

Students' gender was coded as male: 0; female: 1.

Civic knowledge was an IRT continuous scale containing five plausible values formed by 79 items covering content related to civic society and systems, civic principles, civic participation, and civic identities with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100 for all the participated countries (Schulz et al., 2011, p. 18).

Student-teacher relationship (STUTREL) was a continuous WLE scale derived from six items about students' perceptions of student-teacher relations at school. The scale assessed the degree to which students agreed or disagreed with statements about relationships in their school.

Political and social discussion (POLDISC) was a continuous WLE scale derived from four items which asked students how often they took part in discussion of political and social issues outside of school with their parents and friend.

Students' civic participation in the wider community (PARTCOM) was a continuous WLE scale that asked students to report whether they had participated in eight different organizations, clubs, or groups in the wider community.

Students' civic participation at school (PARTSCHL) was a continuous WLE scale that asked students to state if they had participated in six different civic-related activities at school.

Students' interest in politics and social issues (INTPOLS) was a continuous WLE scale that asked students indicate their interest in a series of issues.

Students' internal political efficacy (INPOLEF) was a continuous WLE scale that asked students to state their degree of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about their confidence in different kinds of political actions.

Students' citizenship self-efficacy efficacy (CITEFF) was a continuous WLE scale that asked students how confident they felt about performing a number of civic related activities.

Student's attitudes toward country (ATTCNT) was a continuous WLE scale that asked students to state their degree of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about their attitudes towards their country.

Students' perceptions of the importance of social-movement related citizenship (CITSOC) was a continuous WLE scale that asked students to rate the importance of a series of possible citizenship behaviors.

Students' perception of the importance of conventional citizenship (CITCON) was a continuous WLE scale that asked students to rate the importance of a series of possible citizenship behaviors.

3.4 School level effect

Krull and MacKinnon (2001, p. 255) demonstrated that for multilevel models "any individual level measure can be aggregated to the group level, simply by taking the mean for each group. Effects involving the variable may operate at either or both levels". Therefore school means of the student variables were created to examine whether school level factors were linked to OCC

School mean for socioeconomic background (MSES);

School mean for student-teacher relations (MSTUTREL);

School mean for political and social discussion (MPOLDISC);

School mean for civic participation at school (MPARTSCHL);

School mean for civic participation in the wider community (MPARTCOM);

School mean for attitudes toward country (MATTCNT);

School mean for perceptions of the importance of social-movement citizenship (MCITSOC);

School mean for perceptions of the importance of conventional citizenship (MCITCON);

3.5 Analytic procedures

The major constructs of this study were combined through the ICCS dataset using a Rasch model that transforms the individual measures into major latent constructs (Rasch, 1960). The major variables were standardized with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10, except for social economic background and civic knowledge ($M = 500, SD = 100$).

Firstly, levels of student reported open classroom climate were compared among the five societies using ANOVA. Secondly, as the data is nested (students within schools), correlations among unexplained components (residuals) at each level may lead to biased results (Chiu, Chow, McBride, & Mol, 2016). Thus the study used a multilevel analysis to separate the residuals into student (Level 1) and school (Level 2), to remove the bias. Multilevel regression models were developed to gain an understanding of the relationship between predictors and open classroom climate separately for the five societies of Asia. Two-level models were built for the five societies' separately. Level 1 variables were students' gender, social economic status, students' efficacy, participation experiences and attitudes; Level 2 variables included school factors by averaging student level variables listed in the *Measures* section. The intra class correlation (ICC) for the baseline model without any predictors on each level and final model with statistical significant predictor is reported. ICC represents the portion of variance in the dependent variable that is explained at school level in this study.

4 Results

The results found statistically significant differences on student perceptions of open classroom climate. An ANOVA compared the mean differences of students' perceptions of OCC across the five societies, as shown in Table 1. The main effect for students' perceptions of open classroom climate was statistically significant indicating there were differences across societies ($F(4,633) = 560.95, p < .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .78$). Korean students' scores were higher than those in the other four societies. Indonesian students' reported the lowest level of open classroom climate. There were significant differences among all societies except Chinese Taipei and Thailand.

Table 1
Analysis of Variance for OCC

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2
Chinese Taipei	50.46	3.21	560.95***	0.78
Hong Kong	52.86	3.47		
Korea	54.54	3.86		
Indonesia	38.12	2.76		
Thailand	51.16	3.04		

4.1 What are the predictive effects of student level factors on open classroom climate among Asian samples?

The results of the multilevel regression models are presented in Table 2. The intra class correlation for the baseline model without any predictors on each level and final model with statistical significant predictor is reported at the bottom of Table 2. The school-level context, with no explanatory variables, was responsible for 7.3% of the variance in students' perceptions of OCC for Chinese Taipei, 10.2% for Hong Kong, 3.8% for South Korea, 13.5% for Indonesia, and 10.4% for Thailand. After adding the school level predictors, the variance was reduced to 4.5% for Chinese Taipei, 3.5% for Hong Kong, 1.6% for South Korea, 6.0% for Indonesia, and 2.6% for Thailand. The residual variances were large for all societies. They were larger for the South Asian societies than the South East Asian societies. It could be hypothesized that differences across the region would be even greater than within society differences although that was not tested with this model.

Demographic variables were used to estimate their effects on OCC. Social economic status showed no significant relation with OCC among the five Asian societies.

Gender exerted significant and positive associations in all societies in favor of girls except in South Korea where there was no gender effect. In the four societies in which girls reported higher scores on OCC than boys there were positive and significant relationships with OCC (Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Thailand). It seems the effect of gender was greater in South East Asian societies than South Asian societies.

A number of civic related variables were regressed on OCC to determine their influence as facilitating factors. Students' interest in political and social issues showed no significant relation with OCC among the five Asian societies. Student-teacher relationships, students' discussion experiences outside school, and school civic participating at school were positively related to OCC among the five societies. Yet the values of the coefficients differed from society to society with some other predictors only statistically significant on OCC in particular countries.

Students' civic efficacy was positively related to OCC in four Asian societies (Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Korea, and Thailand) but not Indonesia. Students' civic knowledge was also positively associated with OCC in four Asian societies (Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Thailand) except in Korea where the correlation was negative. Students' attitude toward country was also positively associated with OCC in Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Students' perceptions of the importance of social-movement related citizenship (CITSOC) were positively related to OCC in Indonesia and Thailand. Students' perceptions of the importance of conventional citizenship (CITCON) were positively related to OCC in Chinese Taipei, Korea, and Indonesia.

These results showed that civic knowledge, attitudes, and participation experiences are positively associated with OCC.

Table 2
Significant student level and school level predictors for OCC

	Chinese Taipei	Hong Kong	Korea	Indonesia	Thailand
Gender	0.079*** (0.013)	0.043* (0.02)		0.118*** (0.014)	0.107*** (0.014)
Civic knowledge	0.106*** (0.017)	0.122*** (0.027)	-0.072*** (0.018)	0.178*** (0.019)	0.267*** (0.019)
STUTREL	0.243*** (0.018)	0.323*** (0.03)	0.19*** (0.018)	0.067*** (0.016)	0.161*** (0.015)
CITEFF	0.057** (0.018)	0.072* (0.031)	0.052* (0.016)		0.075*** (0.017)
CITCON	0.065** (0.02)		0.071*** (0.017)	0.071*** (0.018)	
CITSOC				0.083*** (0.017)	0.068*** (0.014)
ATTCNT			0.052** (0.016)	0.057** (0.016)	0.048** (0.015)
POLDISC	0.129*** (0.015)	0.141*** (0.03)	0.173*** (0.015)	0.178*** (0.015)	0.210*** (0.015)
PARTCOM					0.055** (0.017)
PARTSCHL	0.132*** (0.018)	0.087*** (0.023)	0.138*** (0.015)	0.12*** (0.017)	0.064*** (0.018)
Variance	76.879	74.474	92.418	64.527	45.808
MSES		-0.365* (0.185)		0.215* (0.095)	
MCITEFF		0.474** (0.14)			
MATTCNT	-0.368*** (0.1)			0.395*** (0.088)	
MCITSOC					0.397** (0.117)
MSTUTREL	0.473*** (0.101)				
MPARTSCL				0.25* (0.103)	
MPARTCOM				-0.188* (0.091)	
Variance	3.650	2.689	1.472	4.118	1.199
ICC-baseline model	0.073	0.102	0.038	0.135	0.104
Variance explained by final model	0.045	0.035	0.016	0.060	0.026

Note. Gender: 0-boys, 1-girls; STUTREL: student-teacher relation; CITEFF: citizenship efficacy; ATT CNT: attitude towards country; POLDISC: political discussion outside school; PARTSCL: school participation; PARTCOM: community participation; CITSOC: students' perceptions of the importance of social-movement related citizenship; CITCON: students' perceptions of the importance of conventional citizenship; MSES: school mean for socioeconomic background; MSTUTREL: school mean for student-teacher relations; MPOLDISC: school mean for political and social discussion; MPARTSCHL: school mean for civic participation at school; MPARTCOM: school mean for civic participation in the wider community; MATT CNT: school mean for attitudes toward country; MCITSOC: school mean for perceptions of the importance of social-movement; MCITCON: school mean for perceptions of the importance of social-movement.

Note. () Standard errors appear in parentheses, * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

3.2 Are there school-level variables that facilitate the development of OCC in Asian classrooms?

Table 1 indicated that some school-level variables did exert an impact yet not in a consistent way across the region. For example, school averaged social economic background was positively related to OCC in Indonesia while negatively associated with OCC in Hong Kong. School averaged students' attitude towards country was positively related to OCC in Indonesia while negatively associated with in Chinese Taipei. School averaged students' citizenship efficacy was positively related to OCC only in Hong Kong. School averaged students-teacher relationship was positively related to OCC only in Chinese Taipei. School averaged students' perceptions of the

importance of social-movement related citizenship was positively related to OCC only in Thailand. School averaged students' civic participation was positively related to OCC and school averaged students' community participation was negatively related to OCC in Indonesia and not significant elsewhere. As presented above, positive school climate (school mean student-teacher relationship), attitudes towards country, good citizenship, and participation experiences were positively related to OCC at school level in some societies but not all. Student attitudes towards country appeared to negate the influence of OCC for students in Indonesia and Chinese Taipei. These somewhat inconsistent results across Asian societies are discussed below.

4 Discussion

Literature has demonstrated the important role of OCC in promoting students' civic learning outcomes such as civic knowledge, efficacy, participation and willingness to participate in the future (Andersson, 2012; Knowles & McCafferty-Wright, 2015; Manganelli et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2012). The study reported here, however, sought to understand how students' experiences of OCC could be enhanced by identifying both demographic and attitudinal variables that exerted a positive effect on OCC using data from five Asian societies.

This study showed at the student level that a strong positive relationship between student and teachers (STUTREL) is important for providing an atmosphere where OCC can be positively experienced in all five Asian societies. As Hamre and Pianta (2001) pointed out when students have positive bonds with teachers, the classroom would become a supportive space where students could engage academically, socially and productively. Students' political discussion experience outside school (talk with friends and parents) and civic participation at school was also related to OCC. Learning does not only occur between the teachers and students in the classroom, but also among students themselves (Hirschy & Wilson, 2002) as well as between students and their parents at home (Castro, et al., 2015). Yet this result was not repeated at the school level since only in Chinese Taipei did the school averaged measure of student teacher relationship significantly influence students' perceptions of OCC. This is an important result for that particular context since it indicates that school leaders have a role to play in supporting the development of positive student teacher relationships in their classrooms. For the other societies, student teacher relationship remain an important classroom level process that teachers should be encouraged to develop in order to enhance OCC.

A similar pattern can be seen in relation to students' reported experiences of participation in school (PARTSCHL). At the individual level these experiences were positively and significantly related to students' experiences of OCC. Yet at the school level the only significant relationship reported is from Indonesia. Since this result is consistent with similar result for STUTREL, it is worth noting Krull and MacKinnon's (2001) comment that "in general, individual level variables tend to be more psychological in nature than group aggregates, which may be more indicative of organizational or normative aspects of the environment. Aggregate measures may also represent contextual influences, which can operate differently than the individual measures on which they were based" (Krull & MacKinnon, 2001, p. 255). What this suggests is the importance of context that will differ from society to society so that the aggregate levels variables may well take on different meanings across contexts — important in some but not in others. This maybe the case for PARTSCHL — important at the school level only for Indonesia but at the individual level in all Asian societies studied here.

Not unexpectedly, students' experiences of political discussion outside of school (POLDISC) in all societies were positively and significantly related to their positive perceptions and experiences of OCC. This is consistent with Campbell's (2005) view that students who already have a disposition to debate and discuss social and political issues will be more likely to regard their school experiences of OCC as positive. It follows from this that the reverse is probably also true: lack of experience with discussing political issues is likely to inhibit students in classrooms from engaging in and perhaps even failing to recognize the nature of OCC as a pedagogical strategy and the kind of classroom climate it creates. Such a view is consistent with the work of Barber et al. (2015) reported earlier in this paper. It underscores the importance of the research reported here: how can all students be encouraged to take advantage of OCC in order to enhance their civic development and future engagement?

Students' citizenship self-efficacy (CITEFF) exerted a small but significant effect on OCC in four societies but not in Indonesia. The positive results suggest that developing students' confidence to engage civically is an important process that will help them both to understand and participate in OCC. CITEFF is an action oriented civic belief fueled by the psychological construct of self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) pointed out that teachers can help create students' confidence by engaging them in activities that allow them to contribute ideas and insights thereby providing the foundation for taking action on their civic beliefs. Why CITEFF does not exert a positive effect in Indonesia remains an open question. Perhaps the fact that Indonesian students had the lowest scores on OCC (i.e. either they did not experience OCC to any large extent or they did not recognize it when they did) may also mean that they had little experience of confidence building activities in their day to day civic education. This is an important question for future research in the Indonesian context.

The relationship between civic knowledge and the creation of positive experiences of OCC was significant across all societies. Yet the direction of the relationship differed in one of those societies. In four societies the relationship was small to moderate and positive but in Korea the relationship was negative. The positive relationships can be accounted for because engagement in OCC requires a certain level of civic knowledge. Asking and answering questions, evaluating peer comments and views, debating issues that maybe controversial require civic knowledge. This is an important understanding since very often inquiry oriented classrooms are stereotyped as those where there is a lot of exchange between teacher and students and between students but perhaps not very much of substance. The results reported here suggest differently: students with a good level of civic knowledge are likely to view their experiences of OCC more positively than those who do not. It is more difficult, however, to account for the negative relationship between civic knowledge and OCC observed in South Korea. Lin (2014) reported a not dissimilar result



using an aggregated measure of OCC in which South Korea was the only society among thirty eight in which there was a negative, although non-significant relationship, between OCC and civic knowledge ($\beta = -0.01$) (p. 9). It may be that South Korean students perceive OCC differently from their regional peers and in contexts where debate and discussion are divorced from understanding and knowledge. This is another important area for future research.

For all other variables in the model, at both individual and school level, the results are either society specific or at times extend to two or three societies. Some of these results are difficult to explain. For example, school averaged social economic background (MSES) was positively related to OCC in Indonesia while negatively associated with OCC in Hong Kong. This suggests the broad influence of context in seeking an explanation for these results since in the absence of a common pattern it can only be assumed that the specific historical, social and political contexts accounts for these results. A good example of this is the results for school averaged students' attitude towards country (MATTCNT). It was positively related to OCC in Indonesia while negatively associated with OCC in Chinese Taipei and was not significant in the other three societies. Indonesia is a country with very strong national identity education that civic education has been a compulsory courses of the school curriculum from primary to post-secondary school (Setiani, Made Yudhi & MacKinnon, 2015) and schools have had a major responsibility for this. Yet in Chinese Taipei, strong anti-China movements over the same time period coupled with the growth of localist democracy that has often advocated independence from China has meant that 'national identity' remains a contested concept. While the school curriculum has changed with the ideological convictions of different governments, national identity education has rarely found an easy place in the classrooms of Chinese Taipei. Thus will many of the results as shown in Table 1 may appear to be

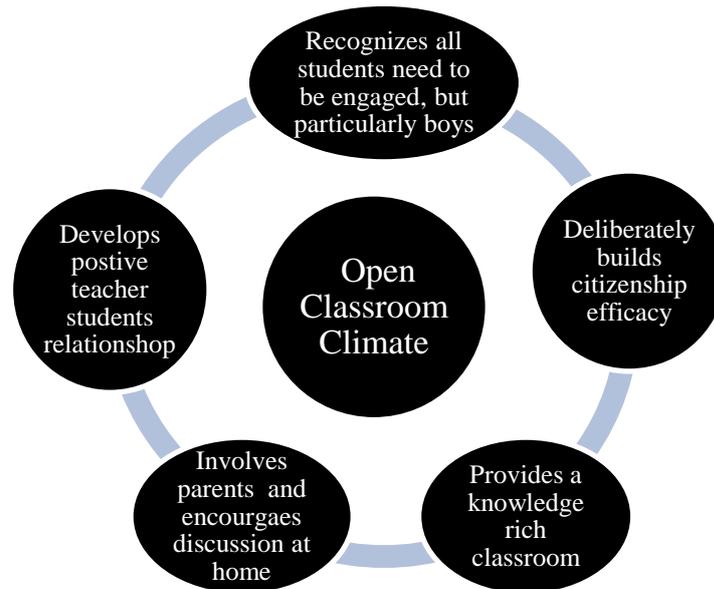
inconsistent, it is likely they simply reflect the diversity for the region and the dominance of local contexts.

Given that a key focus of this study was on school level effects on OCC the results may seem somewhat disappointing. There was not a single school level variable (as defined in this study) that had a consistent influence in all societies across the region. One reason for this may have been the influence of context as discussed above – the school level variables may simply work in different ways in different contexts. This result is consistent with our earlier work on cultural influences on civic values – there are no single set 'Asian' civic values across different societies. Or at least there is not a set of civic values that is endorsed in the same way across the region. Another explanation may be that of Krull and MacKinnon (2001) that when individual level variables are transformed to second level variables their meaning may change. The example they give is that individual SES at the school level may be more an issue of family wealth and urbanism. This is an important issue that deserves further study since it has not been well documented in the literature. A third possible reason could be that most of the variables featured in this study were by nature classroom level variables that do not just change their meaning when transformed to the school level but lose their meaning. If this is a correct interpretation it highlights the significant role of the classroom teacher in constructing a conducive classroom environment and it sheds light on political socialization processes.

The results of this study have indicated that teachers should not rely solely on OCC to create democratic classrooms, but draw on the range of significant individual level variables that have been identified in this study. These can support students' experiences of an enhanced pedagogical classroom environment that contains elements all of which are capable of contributing to political socialization. The key components influencing OCC and therefore students are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1
Creating a multi-input pedagogical environment to support OCC



Based on Figure 1, that summarizes the results of this study, complementary and independent pedagogical strategies that can support OCC can be identified: A focus on civic knowledge to create “knowledge rich classrooms” supports OCC so that debate and discussion can be informed;

- Building citizenship efficacy should be part of civic classroom activities;
- All students require support, but strategies that can engage boys in particular will be very important.
- Positive student teacher relationships are need to complement OCC;
- Parents have a pedagogical role in supporting OCC

Thus building democratic classrooms cannot depend on OCC. As mentioned previously the ecology of the classroom needs to be considered. Teachers can make use of complementary strategies and pedagogies that support OCC processes and make them a part of everyday civic education activities. Students experiencing a more integrated classroom with multiple strategies being used to make civic discourse a natural part of their learning experience are more likely to grow and develop civic values and skills informed by civic knowledge. Political socialization therefore does not depend on one single fragile variable but on a holistic experience designed to support civic development. This is not to undermine the value of OCC. Rather an integrated approach will to enhance it to the benefit of individuals, their schools and society.

5 Limitations

The cross-sectional data from ICCS 2009 can only provide evidence of association not causation. Causation can be determined more definitely if the study could be supplemented with longitudinal research. It would be even better if the current study could be complemented

by experimental studies of different approaches to enhancing open classroom climate.

Another caveat is that this study cannot and does not intend to represent the whole Asian area as only five societies in Asia participated in ICCS 2009. If more Asian countries participate, their information could shed more light on the results. Due to the above limitations, the results of the study should be interpreted with caution and may not be easily generalized.

6 Conclusion

In popular discourse, ‘Asian’ education is often essentialized especially in the light of the results of international assessments such as PISA. Yet the study reported here has demonstrated some distinctive regional splits between North and South East Asia and even within these two regional groupings. It seems from these results that education is much more locally and culturally influenced than any essentialized view might suggest. Therefore one of the priorities for the future should be to understand better these local influences and the way they work in schools and classrooms. A good starting point would be to examine the school level influences identified in Table 1 and seek to account for the differences between societies in terms of their histories, politics and cultures.

At the same time, the study has shown that the sampled Asian students were able to identify OCC in their classrooms and that such a classroom climate influences civic learning to a greater or lesser extent across the regions’ schools. Facilitating conditions that support OCC differ across the region but there is a core of individual level influences that do affect OCC and have the potential to enhance it for all students. Yet this study represents a beginning only. It has shown the diversity of pedagogical practices in Asian contexts but further research is needed to understand both the practices

themselves and the contexts that influence them. At the same time the results of this study might also influence research in Western contexts. Are the core influences on OCC identified here invariant in other cultural contexts? Hopefully this study has provided a foundation on which future research in both Asian and non-Asian contexts might be developed.

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