

**IMPACTS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE  
ON THE MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF  
ASSOCIATE DEGREE STUDENTS  
IN HONG KONG**

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**Ed. D (UTS)  
2010**

## **CERTIFICATE**

**I certify that this thesis is my original work.  
I have acknowledged all the sources used  
and assistance received in this thesis.**

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# Glossary

<b>CDIEMB</b>	Curriculum Development Institute of Education and Manpower Bureau
<b>DIT</b>	Defining Issues Test
<b>HKCDC</b>	Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council
<b>HKED</b>	Hong Kong Education Department
<b>HKEMBC</b>	Hong Kong Education and Manpower Bureau Committee
<b>HKEMB</b>	Hong Kong Education Manpower Bureau
<b>HKFEWL</b>	Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers Limited (HKFEWL)
<b>HKSARGGIC</b>	Hong Kong SAR Government, Government Information Centre
<b>HKWTO</b>	Hong Kong Women Teachers' Organization
<b>ICAC</b>	Independent Commission against Corruption
<b>NCES</b>	National Center for Education Statistics (USA)
<b><i>chun-tzu</i></b>	An exemplary, independent moral person, (君子)
<b><i>hsiu-shen</i></b>	Self-cultivation, (修身)
<b><i>li</i></b>	Rules of propriety, (禮)
<b>petty man</b>	contrast of chun-tzu, (小人).
<b><i>ren</i></b>	loving others or benevolence, (仁).
<b>Ru School</b>	Chinese thought of Confucianism, (儒家)

***Shih Ching***

Book of Odes, (詩經)

***Tuosi***

Moral Education Periodical; The name “Tuosi (拓思)” literally meant “Thought expanding”.

# Abstract

Owing to the particular background of the Confucian culture in Hong Kong, community services have often been regarded as a kind of virtue or merit (Rock, 2008). Incorporating community service in moral education programs was found to be effective and advocated by Boss (1994) in the United States. The aim of this research is to further Boss's approach by examining the use of community service in moral education programs under the entirely different social context of Chinese culture in Hong Kong. The research question is:

What are the impacts of real-life experiences of community service learning on the students' moral development if it is incorporated in a moral education program?

The investigation is undertaken in three aspects:

- (1). The exploration of the effectiveness of incorporating community service into a moral education program for young adult students;
- (2). The investigation of community service within the context of the Chinese culture of Confucianism; and
- (3) The examination by comparing the learning outcomes of the students between those taking "community service" and those taking "ethical case study" in a moral education program.

The research is conducted in a conceptual context of moral theories and Confucian approaches of becoming an exemplary moral person. The practical context includes the main approaches to moral education in Hong Kong community service learning as incorporated in moral education programs for local young adult students. It is an

exploratory study incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches in the collection of data for a range of analyses. A total of thirty-one students are selected from a community college. Group A (community service) and Group B (ethical case study) participate in two rounds of in-depth interviews and quantitative tests (Defining Issues Test). The mixed methods approach enables collections of richer information and data for deeper analysis. Extra findings are facilitated when results are compared and contrasted between the two methods and two groups.

Eleven constructs showing students' learning experiences through their projects are formulated by interviews. Findings reveal that parental influence is regarded as a powerful factor in the process of moral development compared with other influences from teachers, peers and external professionals. Community service is found more rewarding than case studies because of its variety in nature, activities and purposes. Findings demonstrate that a real-life experience of community service is effective in enhancing students' moral development in the unique social contexts of Hong Kong.

The findings by using Defining Issues Test are unable to prove any differences between the two groups of students over the two rounds of tests. Furthermore, a qualitative approach is regarded as more appropriate in the exploration of students' experiences in moral development in this project.

In conclusion, two suggestions are proposed for professional practice; firstly, integrating community service is an appropriate way of providing moral education to young adult students within a Chinese context. Second, the approach can be remarkably effective when firm parental participation is involved in the moral education program.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

Shortly after the end of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, two catastrophic events connected to morality happened in USA and China. A Washington Post columnist stated in an article regarding the financial tsunami that shocked the whole world, "What has really happened is that Wall Street's business model has collapsed. Greed and fear, which routinely govern financial markets, have seeded this global crisis" (Samuelson, 2008, p. A15).

In China, the milk products of several large dairy firms were found tainted by melamine recently (Wu, 2008). The tainted infant formula caused over 432 babies to develop kidney stones. At least one child died (Wu, 2008). Although the massive damages and losses alarmed the whole world, the global influences of the monetary downfall and the contaminated food continued to grow. "Blood of morality should be flowing in the body of all entrepreneurs", said the Premier of China, Mr. Wen Jiabao, in a conference during his visit to New York in September 2008 (Chung, 2008, p. 38). Studies of food safety in China reflected that the breakdown of morality among the entrepreneurs and businessmen of the society had fallen to a frightening level (Lau, 2008, p. A32).

The researcher of this study, who also serves as a moral program lecturer, felt that these reports were as needles piercing onto his nerves and on all his colleagues. While morality has been considered as one of the major factors that underpinned these tragedies, government authorities, philosophers and sociologists certainly want to comprehend those factors and problems hidden behind the changes of such



important social virtues. The concerns have also alerted moral educators to take actions to review the methodologies, effectiveness and approaches of the existing moral education.

Although the tragedies happened several years after the initiation of this study, the research results could bring about insights for the consideration of new practices for social ethics courses. It would be especially beneficial to the moral educators in Hong Kong as the research findings come to devise innovative means to help the young adult students to become good moral individuals. Moral education is a part of teaching that can never be over emphasized in any part of this world.

## **1.2 Background to the Study**

This study grew out of a number of professional and personal interests that have dovetailed with the concerns of college teachers and parents about providing appropriate moral education to young adult students. A survey conducted by the Hong Kong Women Teachers' Organization (HKWTO, 2008) reported rather weak moral concepts among primary and secondary school students. Although the teaching of social ethics has always been regarded by teachers and parents of Hong Kong as an important subject, it is obvious that there is still a great deal of scope for moral educators to contribute more of their efforts for improvement.

As an educator, my teaching career started by teaching local young adult students in a Catholic community college, and one of my duties was to teach the subject, Social Ethics, which has been always stressed by the Catholic Church. Following the traditional practice, teachers have to lecture on virtues such as honesty, sympathy and patience as the foundations to moral behaviours through examples and direct communication of beliefs. This approach has been widely applied in Hong Kong and

yet was criticized for not providing guiding principles for defining what virtues were worthy of support. In fact, teachers often ended up subjectively emphasizing certain values depending upon their own societal, cultural, and personal beliefs (Lam 1991). Owing to this issue, assignments integrated with some selected community service were designed to provide students with chances to practise these virtues with specific objectives such as “caring for the elderly” and “environmental protection”.

Like other teachers, I found myself drawn into many conversations about students’ moral behaviour and various methods of trying to help students to elevate their levels of morality and virtues. I found these discussions appealing not only because I, too, had a 21-year-old daughter who needed proper ethical education very much, but also because these chats and talks inspired me with a much larger plan. Later, when I was assigned as the course coordinator of Social Ethics, my personal attention turned to a professional one as I found out more about the motivations of learning when community service and parental involvement were incorporated in assignments. Based upon this phenomenon, like other researchers, I sought to understand more about the rationale behind the feasibility of applying these motivations.

### **1.3 Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

There is limited information about what and how social ethics programs could elevate young adult students’ moral levels in Hong Kong. This research helps to rectify this paucity. Owing to the particular background of the local Chinese culture of Confucianism, community service is often regarded as a kind of recommendable virtue or merit (Rock, 2008). Therefore, incorporating such service in moral education programmes could be considered as a workable means to enhance students’ moral development. Such an approach was also advocated by Boss

(1994). This study aimed to apply the findings of Boss (1994) who had proven the effectiveness of applying community service work on moral education programs in the United States. In view of the fact that there was scant research regarding its effectiveness in Hong Kong, an attempt was conceived to examine and analyze its outcomes in an entirely different social context of unique traditional Chinese culture. For that reason, it was worthy testing the concept in Hong Kong before adding it as a new approach to fill in the holes in existing knowledge.

The design of this research aimed to answer the question;

*What are the impacts of real-life experiences of community service learning on the students' moral development if it is incorporated in a moral education program?*

This question can be examined in three ways:

1. To explore the usefulness of integrating community service learning into a moral education program for young adult students;
2. To investigate community service learning within the context of the Chinese culture of Confucianism; and
3. To examine by comparing the learning experiences and outcomes of the students taking community service versus the more traditional ethical case study approach in a moral education program.

These three research aims were further elaborated in the following. Firstly, taking the challenge of Boss's (1994) assertion, this research endeavoured to identify community service learning as a potential useful method in moral education programs to elevate Hong Kong students' moral levels. The exploration of the outcomes of the

approach in Hong Kong with its particular environment constitutes a worthy contribution to the local professional practices of moral education.

Second, the exploration of how community service learning could be applied in Hong Kong with its specific traditional and historical background. As Hong Kong has been a modern city with its unique British colonial history and the deep-rooted Chinese culture of Confucianism, the examination of the adoptability of such an approach could offer an insight into the problem of formulating appropriate moral curriculums to meet the needs of moral education.

Last, the analysis of the outcomes between the two groups of students, taking community service and ethical case studies, could help provide deeper understanding of the efficacy of the two methods being applied. Findings from the examination of the differences and similarities of students' learning experiences could provide useful professional implications for future references.

#### **1.4 Methodology**

This study aimed to explore the impacts of community service learning when it is incorporated in a moral education program for community college students in Hong Kong. It is an exploratory study applying both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate whether such an application of community service could be effective in a social context of the traditional Chinese culture and Confucianism. Moreover, it also aims to investigate the differences between the learning outcomes of the two groups of students, taking community service and ethical case studies. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches helps to obtain a richer source of information for further analyses and examinations.

The collection of qualitative data explored the learning experiences and outcomes of two groups of students taking two separate types of project tasks, (Group A - Community services) and (Group B – Ethical case studies). A total of thirty-one students, Group A -17 students and Group B – 14 students, were selected for two rounds of in-depth interviews for the explorations of their views and opinions in parallel with the two rounds of quantitative tests.

The qualitative data collected from the interviews were transcribed from audio recording and analyzed thematically. The responses reflected the explanations of the respondents' learning in terms of encountering difficulties, changes of attitudes before and after their assigned projects as well as the influences from parents, teachers and other professionals while processing their project tasks. A total of eleven constructs (categories of findings) were developed, and each construct illustrates one essential aspect of the facts revealed. Further analysis categorized the eleven constructs into four groups with different focuses of interpretation about students' learning.

In parallel with the qualitative approach, the same thirty-one students, who took the two rounds of interviews, were also given two rounds of the Defining Issues Test (DIT). DIT is a quantitative based moral level measuring instrument designed by the Center for the Study of Ethical Development at the University of Minnesota. The tests were scored by the specialists of the Center of the University of Minnesota, and the results were further analyzed by t-tests in order to explore the significance of differences between the outcomes of the two groups of students.

By applying these mixed methods, more in-depth in data could be obtained from two groups of students so as to provide a wider range of viewpoints for analysis and

examination, in particular, when the data were processed through cross comparisons and contrasts. More detailed discussion about the analysis of data will be provided in Chapter Four.

### **1.5 Professional and Scholarly Significance of the Study**

This study is significant for three reasons. Firstly, it built on developing the knowledge of moral education curriculum for young Chinese adults based on the culture of Confucianism. Second is the contribution it made to the theoretical understanding for the efficacy of integrating community service in moral education programs. Finally, it contributed to understanding the variations of the learning outcomes of moral education between the students taking community service and those taking traditional ethical case studies, especially when such kind of studies have been scant in the field of moral education in Hong Kong.

This study sets out to contribute to the knowledge advocated by Boss (1994b) who tested the effect of community service work on college ethics students in the United States. Her findings supported Kohlberg's theory of moral development that community service along with discussion of relevant moral issues could be an effective means of moving students into a higher level of principled moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1984). Boss also stressed that community service learning could enhance moral acts and the skills of volunteerism in the learning process.

Moreover, investigations of other theorists such as Haan (1985), Walker (1986), Forman and Kuscher (1983), King and Mayhew (2002) and Narvaez and Bock (2002), also revealed that community service learning could provide students with many chances of handling social tensions, thought-provoking conflicts and social

disequilibrium, and the process turned out to be a helpful method to enhance students' moral concerns and broadening their moral horizons.

The majority of the reviewed research has taken place in the western world and contributed important insights to knowledge. However, the researcher of this study explored the significance of the approach in an entirely different social context. Corresponding to the design and objectives of Boss's (1994b) investigation, this research examined the community service learning approach in a real-life setting in Hong Kong. The investigation sought to explore the learning experiences of young adult students of very dissimilar culture and historical background from the western students in Boss' research. Most notable of all, a contribution can be made to help college administrators, school policy makers and moral education practitioners of Hong Kong to gain a better understanding of the application of community service learning in the design of moral education programs.

Moreover, the findings provide rational explanations regarding the influences and motivations from moral teachers, professionals of service centers and parents on students' moral development. This thesis also drew on the works of Berkowitz and Grych (1998), Mok (1999) and Edmond (2006) on the analysis of prolonged parental influences on children especially in Chinese societies. Such lengthened parental impacts could be remarkably influential on young adults' moral decisions and development, and may differ from Western societies.

## **1.6 Overview of the Thesis**

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter One has introduced the research by outlining its background, the research questions, the methods, the significance of the study, the overview of the thesis and its limitations.

Chapter Two describes the theoretical overview of the study in four aspects underpinning the key issues within the disciplines of moral development and moral education. The first part reviews the principal western philosophical theories of moral development and moral education formulated in the past century. The second part describes several main moral concepts originated from Confucian social philosophy. These moral notions, including the values of *li* (rules of propriety 禮) and *ren* (loving others 仁), were regarded as those among the most significant elements of the traditional Chinese culture that shaped the structures of moral concepts and the major approaches of moral education of Hong Kong (Cheng, 2004). Part three aims at reviewing the framework of moral education in Hong Kong in the past forty years. The reviews include the inclinations of morality changes before and after the transformation of the Hong Kong sovereignty from a British colonial city into a Special Administration Region of China. The last part of the theoretical overview assesses the concepts of applying community service learning and its relevant theories. The final section summarizes the whole literature reviews and formulates the theoretical foundation for the investigation of whether community service learning could be an effective method if it was integrated in a moral education program.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological perspectives and orientations that guided this study. It explains the details of the study design and implementation, and also offers detailed descriptions of the initial settings regarding the two types of projects assigned to the two groups of students involved in the moral education program. This chapter also provides the rationale for adopting the mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, the rationale for sample selection, the underlying principles of using interviews and the Defining Issues Test for data collection, as well as considerations of validity and reliability for the whole thesis.



Chapter Four explores the data collected. It describes the process of qualitative data analyses and interpretations, and the procedure of how the quantitative data were scored and further evaluated. It provides details about the findings from the comparisons of the results of the two groups of students taking community services (Group A) and ethical case studies (Group B). The chapter also reveals the rich findings by cross comparing and contrasting the data obtained from the qualitative and quantitative approaches over the two groups of the students.

Chapter Five reviews the findings arising from this research in order to propose new understandings about the way of employing community service learning in moral education for young adults in Hong Kong. The chapter concludes that although factors such as interactions, communications and discussions among students and teachers had been regarded as noteworthy for some time in moral education programs, parental motivations and involvement were identified as the most significant and influential in elevating students' moral development. Such impact could be prominent especially in Chinese traditional societies, and yet often neglected by western researchers.

Furthermore, Chapter Five also offers two proposals for professional practice; firstly, integrating community service learning in ethics programmes was proved as an effectual method to elevate the moral reasoning levels of the students. Second, such an approach could be remarkably effective when strong parental participation and motivations were also engaged in the moral education program.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The research took groups of young adult students, aged from eighteen to twenty-three, who were taking Associate Degree programmes in a community college of Hong

Kong. In considering the limitations of the investigation, there are three concerns to be noticed.

Firstly, a total of 31 students were selected and completed the entire procedures of the research. Some parts of the findings were generated using a moral development measuring instrument, named the Defining Issues Test (DIT), which was based upon a quantitative perspective. The sample size was considered to be sufficient (Sekaran, 2000) but relatively small, and therefore the findings might lack generalizability. Future studies using the findings of DIT generated from this research should pay attention to this issue.

Second, the conceptual and methodological problems of using Defining Issues Test had been carefully considered especially when the scores were used to yield a single stage score of evaluation. Details of the limitations are discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.1 - Research Perspectives, Approaches and Methods; and also in Chapter Four, section 4.2.4 - Possible causes of the insignificance found by t-test". The small size of the sample was especially relevant here as a limitation.

Finally, as the sample students were selected from a local community college in Hong Kong, the knowledge produced by this research might not be generalized to provide complete explanations for the situations in other Chinese societies in Asia.

# Chapter 2

## Theoretical Overview

Chapter Two has four sections that provide an overview of the theoretical background of the key approaches related to moral development and moral education that underpin this research thesis. The first part focuses on the leading western philosophical theories of morality developed in the past fifty years. The second part reviews the primary Confucian concepts of the Chinese philosophy regarding moral education, the processes of self-cultivation and becoming an exemplary Individual. Part three aims at reviewing the threefold framework of moral education in Hong Kong in the past forty years. What is reviewed includes how moral education policies have changed after the transformation of Hong Kong from a British colonial city into a Special Administration Region of China. The last part concludes the whole theoretical review by integrating theories of community service learning, and also ascertains the effectiveness of moral education program for young adults if the application of community service learning is incorporated. The last issue is formulated into the research question:

*What are the impacts of real-life experiences of community service learning on the students' moral development if it is incorporated in a moral education program?*

### 2.1 Theories of Moral Development and Moral Education

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

This section is an overview of the major moral developmental theories that have been established by western theorists over the past half century. These theories not only

led the later development of new perspectives on morality, but also exerted extensive influence and direction on the theoretical and practical approaches to the application of effective moral education policies.

The importance of moral education has long been regarded as a subject that could not be overemphasized by educators in Hong Kong. However, we can still see that a significant proportion of local primary and secondary school students showed inadequacy in various moral concerns (Hong Kong Women Teachers' Organization, 2008).

Education practitioners such as Cheng, Lee, and Lo (2004) of Hong Kong declared that moral education should be reviewed by putting more effort into teaching the students the importance and meaning of social values and social responsibilities. It is especially necessary when city dwellers are concerned more with materialism than social values and virtues. Owing to the fact that many social values have little moral grounding and many of their origins are dubious in nature, there has been a growing trend among the schools and college to draw a connection to moral education in the most clearly related social problems (Lau, 1992). Lau also stated that the role of community colleges and institutions in taking an active hand in the moral development of young adults is itself under the subject of ongoing controversy. Based on these circumstances, it becomes necessary to take a theoretical overview of the philosophical approaches of the related disciplines of moral development and moral education.

Key theories of moral development and moral education guiding the practical approaches of today's moral educators can be analyzed in terms of five main

concepts. They are:

- (1). Piaget's cognitive-developmental theory of moral development;
- (2). Kohlberg's theory of the stages in moral development;
- (3). Turiel's Domain Theory;
- (4). Eisenberg's model of pro-social reasoning; and
- (5). Gilligan's theory of morality of care.

These theories form parts of the foundation of the professional practices of moral education in Hong Kong today. Each of the theories has been reviewed as below.

#### 2.1.2 Piaget's Theory of Moral Development

Jean Piaget was considered to be one of the first psychologists whose work remained directly relevant to the contemporary theories of moral development. In his early literature, he focused particularly on the moral activities of children and examined the way children played games, in order to learn more about their beliefs about right and wrong. Piaget (1932, 1962) believed that all development emerged from behaviors. Individuals would construct and reconstruct their knowledge of the world as a result of interactions with the environment. Based on his observations of children's application of rules when playing, Piaget determined that morality, too, could be considered a developmental process.

##### *2.1.2a Four Stages of Cognitive-developmental Theory*

The cognitive-developmental theory of Piaget (1952) emphasized that children actively construct their own cognitive worlds as opposed to the belief that information was merely transferred into their minds from the environment. Piaget believed that children adapt their thinking to include new thoughts. He thought that assimilation

(which is an individual's incorporation of new information into their existing knowledge) and accommodation (an individual's adjustment to new information) operated even in very young infants. Newborns would reflexively suck everything that touched their lips (assimilation). Then, after several months of experience, babies would construct their understanding of the world in a different way. They began to understand some objects such as fingers and their mother's breast could be sucked, while other objects such as furry blankets and blocks could not be sucked (accommodation).

Piaget's cognitive-development theory states that people would go through four stages as they develop a deeper understanding of the world. The stages are: the Sensorimotor stage (from birth to 2 years); the Preoperational stage (from 2 years to 7 years); the Concrete operational stage (7 years to 11 years); and the Formal operational stage (11 years +). Every stage is age-related and consists of distinct thought patterns. Piaget (1962) also regarded these stages as the innate determinant of one's stages of moral development.

At the beginning of the sensorimotor stage, infants construct an understanding of the world by coordinating sensory experiences such as seeing, hearing and touching. At the end of the stage, infants possess complex sensorimotor patterns and begin to operate with primitive symbols. A preoperational stage child starts to represent the world in words, images, and drawings. Symbolic thought would go beyond simple connections of sensory information and physical action. According to Piaget (1962), although preschool children could symbolically represent the world, they would still lack the ability to perform operations. "Operations" was the term that Piaget used to identify the internalizations of mental actions.

Piaget (1962) also asserted that this was the heteronomous stage of moral reasoning characterized by strict adherence to rules, duties and obedience to authority. Heteronomous morals typified the moral behaviours of being controlled by others during the preoperational stage, while autonomous morals typified the moral behaviours that would be controlled by oneself which is a characteristic of the formal operational stage. In the concrete operational stage, children can perform operations and logical reasoning, which replaces intuitive thought as long as the reasoning could be applied to specific examples. However, moral rules at this stage cannot be fully understood but only realized as “things”.

The formal operational stage is the final Piagetian stage in which a person is able to think in abstract and more logical terms. Adolescents gain the ability to imagine ideal circumstances and standards. They begin to visualize future scenarios. In the process of solving moral problems, formal operational thinkers become more systematic and rules can be mutually agreed upon and made adaptable as well (Piaget, 1962).

In the cognitive-developmental theory, it is the different ways of understanding the world that makes one stage more or less advanced than the next. Simply acquiring information does not equate the ability to employ more advanced thought processes. Each stage is defined by the kind of thought or cognition used by a person to make moral judgments. Piaget (1962) introduced the concept that moral development can be considered in stages and is related to cognitive maturity. Moreover, Piaget viewed moral development as the result of interpersonal interaction through which individuals can work out a fair resolution as people develop from the heteronomous stage to the autonomous stage. Further review of the concepts of these two stages is shown below.

### *2.1.2.b Concepts of Heteronomous and Autonomous Thoughts*

Piaget (1962) asserted that children begin with heteronomous reasoning (moral thinking) which can be caused by two factors. The first factor is directly related to the cognitive structure of children. The thinking of young children is characterized by egocentrism: the inability to simultaneously take into account their own point of view while considering the perspective of someone else. Egocentrism is also associated with the unidirectional view of rules and power associated with heteronomous moral thought. A child operating with heteronomous moral thought values the rules themselves higher than the purpose of the rules. This is the reason to explain why young children are usually more concerned about the outcomes of actions rather than the intentions behind the act.

According to Piaget (1962), the second factor of heteronomous reasoning (moral thinking) is the relative social relationships between children and adults. Power is handed down from above in the natural relationship of authority between adults and children. Therefore, the comparative powerlessness of young children with their childhood egocentrism ties well with heteronomous moral thinking.

When children enter the concrete operational stage, they begin to find this heteronomous adherence to moral rules sometimes problematic. These children develop towards an "autonomous" stage of moral reasoning, which can be characterized by the aptitude to consider rules analytically. They also selectively apply moral rules to maintain mutual respect and also cooperation with others. This new ability among the children to act from a sense of reciprocity and mutual respect is associated with a shift in the child's cognitive structure from egocentrism to perspective taking. In the formal operational stage of Piaget's



cognitive-developmental theory, people will be able to coordinate their own perspectives with those of others; understanding the best solution needed to meet the requirements of fair reciprocity.

#### *2.1.2c Moral Education in the Piagetian View*

Piaget's cognitive-developmental approach (1965) assumes that moral principles are universal and linked to moral behaviour. He stated that moral education in schools should stress cooperative decision-making and problem solving. Piaget also emphasized that moral development can be elevated by assigning students to work out common rules based on fairness. However, this idea was rejected by the sociologist Emile Durkheim's view of proper moral education. Durkheim (1956, 1973) believed that morality results from social interaction and the experiences of immersion in a group. He asserted moral development is a natural result of attachment to the group, an attachment which can manifest itself through respect for the symbols, rules, and authority of that group.

Piaget (1962) disagreed with the belief that children simply learn and internalize norms from a group. He asserted that individuals define their own morality independently through their struggles to arrive at fair solutions. Thus, he suggested that teachers should provide students with opportunities for personal discovery through problem solving rather than instructing students to accept norms. Kohlberg (1969) elaborated Piaget's theory and extended the scope of moral development theory up to middle age. He attempted to explain moral reasoning rather than behaviour, and modified Piaget's view into more comprehensive stages and stressed progression of moral maturity needed longer time and more effort.

### 2.1.3 Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) furthered Piaget's work and affirmed that children could develop ways of thinking through their experiences which included the understanding of moral concepts such as justice, personal rights, equality and human welfare. Kohlberg elaborated the development of moral judgment beyond the ages studied by Piaget, and declared that the process of achieving moral maturity is a slow gradual increase compared to Piaget's notion.

Kohlberg's (1969) theory of moral development identifies six stages of moral reasoning categorized into three major levels. Each level represents a fundamental change in the social-moral perspective of the individual. At the pre-conventional level, a person's moral judgments are characterized by a concrete, individual viewpoint. Within this level, children operate on the sole directive of punishment avoidance. To a child of stage 1 (age 1-5), actions that are "right" would be those that do not get the child into trouble. To be right, one has to be obedient to the authority figures to avoid punishment.

At stage 2 (age 5-10), there is the early emergence of moral reciprocity. The stage 2 thought pattern focuses on the instrumental, practical value of an action. Reciprocity is in the form, "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." Children of stage 2 follow the rules only when it is to someone's immediate interests. What is considered right is what would be fair in the sense of an equal deal. They think that since everybody works to serve their own interest, "right" is relative in the definite individualist sense.

Kohlberg (1969) asserted that people at the conventional level (second level) of moral development are essentially aware of conventional morality. They regard morality as

behaviour conforming to what society defines as right. Therefore, people at stage 3 (age 8-16) would view the importance of mutual agreement and being a "good person" constitutes maintaining mutual trust and respect with peers. They define what is right in terms of the expectations of others. Stage 3 symbolized a shift from the egocentric views of the earlier stages, to a more externally oriented attitude which aims to please others as parents, teachers, or friends. They seek approval and conform to the expectations of others.

Stage 4 marked the change from defining what is right in terms of local norms and role expectations to defining right in terms of the laws and norms established by the larger social system (Kohlberg, 1969). Within stage 4, what is regarded as moral is no longer defined by norms and the expectations of others, but by the laws. The majority of youngsters aged sixteen and above equates morality to upholding one's social responsibilities. They feel obligated to conform, not only to family and friends, but also to society's laws and customs as a whole. It is of great importance to do one's duty in maintaining social order. However, these people adopt social rules without recognizing the significance of the underlying ethical principles involved. People at this stage believe that anyone breaking the rules deserves punishment and has to "pay their debt to society."

Lastly, the post-conventional level (third level) is differentiated by a higher level of moral reasoning based on principles which underlay rules and norms. The last level of moral judgment involves reasoning rooted in the ethical principles of fairness from which moral laws are developed. People at stage 5 recognize the underlying moral purposes and significance that manifest as laws and social customs. That means, if law ceases to serve a good purpose, they feel that, as functional members of a

democratic system, they should work to change the law. People in Kohlberg's stage 5 recognize that the law itself is subject to ethics, and they question law accordingly.

Stage 6 remains as a theoretical endpoint that rationally follows from the preceding five stages. People of this stage hold an understanding that elements of morality such as regard for life and human welfare transcend any particular cultural or societal precept. Elements of morality are upheld irrespective of other conventions or normative obligations. According to Kohlberg (1981, 1984), only about 20-25% of adults have ever reached stage 6. Stage 6 people carefully choose basic principles to follow, such as caring for and respecting every living thing, feeling that humans all deserve equal opportunities. They are strong enough to act on their values even if others might think they are odd or even if their beliefs are against the law, such as refusing to fight in a war. Despite the fact that two different stages are presented within the third level, only stage 5 has obtained significant evidence and practical support (Power *et al.*, 1989). Nevertheless, the stages (from 1 to 5) are empirically supported by findings from longitudinal and cross-cultural research (Power *et al.*, 1989).

Kohlberg used his theory to reject traditional ethics education practices that emphasized lecturing about virtues and rewarding students who applied them. He advocated that a better method of moral education should focus on stages of moral development. More details about his approach are reviewed as below.

#### *2.1.3a Applications of Kohlberg's Theory in Moral Education*

Kohlberg rejected traditional education practices that highlighted virtues such as honesty, sympathy, patience, etc., as the foundation to moral behaviors. According

to conventional methods, teachers model these virtues through examples and provide students with chances to practise these virtues and reward them accordingly. This approach was also commonly applied in Hong Kong (Lam 1991), and yet there were no guiding principles for defining what virtues would be worthy of support. In fact, teachers often ended up subjectively emphasizing certain values depending upon their societal, cultural, and personal beliefs (Lam, 1991).

Some moral educators adopted the “values clarification” approach to moral education in order to address the issue of moral relativity. Values clarification is a traditional indirect moral education approach where students are confronted with situations of ethical cases. In values clarification, students are asked questions or presented with dilemmas and expected to respond, either individually or in small groups. The intent is to help students to define their own values and to become aware of the values of others (Nucci & Weber, 1991). This teaching practice is based on the idea that there is no single, correct answer to ethical dilemmas, but that there is value in holding clear views and acting accordingly. In addition, these traditional practices of moral education appreciate the toleration of divergent views. The teacher plays the role of a discussion moderator with the goal of teaching that people hold different values. The approach was commonly practised among various moral education classes in Hong Kong (Lee, 1993a).

Kohlberg and Turiel (1971) stated that moral education should aim at elevating students’ level of moral reasoning to the next stage. Kohlberg (1984) asserted that within any stage of moral reasoning, thoughts are structured according to the constraints of that stage, and people interact with the surroundings according to their basic knowledge of that environment. Kohlberg’s moral education approaches

emphasize that moral development should not simply be the result of acquiring more knowledge but rather be a sequence of qualitative changes in the way of one's thinking.

Furthermore, early approaches to moral education sought to present situations to students which required them to consider possibilities which were outside of, or even contradictory to their present level of moral reasoning. The most common method was to present a moral dilemma to students and require them to determine and justify the best course of action for the characters in the dilemma. While stressing the utility of such moral dilemma discussions in classrooms, Kohlberg persisted that moral education requires not only individual reflections but also incorporation of physical experiences for students to serve as moral agents within their society.

Based upon this principle, Kohlberg and his colleagues developed the "just community" schools in order to provide students with the most favourable circumstance for moral growth (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). The essential principles of these schools are to improve students' moral development by offering them more chances to become involved in a democratic community. The fundamental characteristic of a "just community" school is its plans of providing students with a sense of belonging to a group that is responsive to individual needs.

The most significant activity in school are community meetings in which problems connected with life and self-control are discussed and democratically determined with equal emphasis placed on the opinions of students and teachers. The basic goal of these meetings is to set up norms that stress equal opportunity for all members of the community. It is believed that by placing the responsibility of determining and

enforcing rules onto the students themselves, they would take pro-social behaviour more seriously.

Furthermore, teachers have an essential leadership role to play in the meetings such as promoting rules and norms that uphold justice and community, and insisting on the rules in school. Teachers must also be attentive to students' reasoning in order to help the student development. These require a tactful balance between allowing the students to make decisions, and supporting them in a way which shows them the limits of their reasoning. One of the advantages to Kohlberg's approach is its success in not only enhancing students' progress through the moral stages, but also shaping their behaviours. In spite of the success of the approach, later research of moral reasoning reveal inconsistencies in Kohlberg's model. Thus, criticism of Kohlberg's approaches stimulated further expansion of alternative theories of moral development. In the following section, the assessments of Kohlberg's critics are reviewed.

### *2.1.3b General Criticism of Kohlberg's Theory*

#### *(i) New Concerns of Gender and Care in Moral Reasoning*

Kohlberg's concept of moral development is based upon an individual's thinking and rational judgment, but not upon consideration of the feelings of others. Kohlberg's critics argue that other persons' feelings could not be neglected in the process of moral reasoning (Gilligan & Wiggins, 1987). Moreover, Kohlberg believed that moral development is more closely related to a person's age and the ability to understand justice and fairness than real-life experience and empathic interactions with others. However, Gilligan (1982) argued that children of 3 or 4 were able to empathize with others and would try to help. The ability to care for others does not require education,

but rather feelings. There will be further critiques on Gilligan's approach in the later section.

#### (ii) Differentiation between Morality and Convention

As Kohlberg's theory focused on building individuals' moral principles instead of building a moral community, the issues of balance between self-orientation and group-orientation is questioned. Turiel (1983) argued that morality and convention are two separate, parallel developmental frameworks, rather than one single system as described by Kohlberg. For example, it would be a conventional act if one offers a seat to an elderly passenger on a bus. However, it becomes a moral issue if one cut into a waiting queue because a friend was standing in the line, as it is unfair to the people in the queue. Turiel (1983) introduced domain theory which distinguishes the important difference between moral concepts and the other domains of social understanding, such as social practices and conventions. More of the theory is reviewed in section 2.1.4.

#### (iii) Methods of Assessing Moral Reasoning Stages

Some developmentalists (Boyes, Giordano, & Galperyn, 1993) criticized the quality of Kohlberg's unidimensional approach of assessing moral reasoning stages. Rest (1984) argued that alternative methods should be used to collect information about moral thinking instead of relying on a single method that requires individuals to reason about hypothetical moral dilemmas. Rest (1986) claimed that Kohlberg's story of dilemmas is very difficult to score. Researchers (Walker, de Vries & Trevethan, 1987; Yussen, 1977) found that the hypothetical moral dilemmas posed in Kohlberg's stories did not match with the moral dilemmas that people needed to tackle in their everyday lives. Rest (1986) developed his own method of assessment named the Defining



Issues Test (DIT) which is adopted as the quantitative instrument of measuring the outcomes in this research. Details of the Defining Issues Test are elaborated in Chapter Three.

#### 2.1.4 Domain Theory - Distinguishing Morality and Convention

Longitudinal studies conducted later by the Kohlberg research group began to reveal inconsistencies in the stage sequences (Yussen, 1977). Researchers (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989) attempted to resolve those irregularities through adjustments in the stage descriptions. Turiel's domain theory (1983) was a constructive advancement to the framework. Within domain theory, a distinction is drawn between the child's developing concepts of morality, and other domains of social knowledge, such as social convention.

Turiel (1983) stated that a child's thoughts of morality and social convention come out of the child's attempts to justify contrary forms of social experience linked with these two classes of social events. Acts within the moral domain, for example, a motiveless hurting someone has intrinsic effects, even though the act is unintentional. It is simply because harm was caused. Such intrinsic effects occur regardless of the nature of social rules. Because of this, moral cognition is focused on concepts of harm, welfare, and fairness to a person.

Contrarily, acts that are matters of social convention have no intrinsic interpersonal effects. For example, there is no intrinsic difference from the way students addressing a college teacher as "Mr. Lee" than "sir". What makes one form of address better than another are the social rules. The conventions themselves have no intrinsic effect but are important to the easy operation of any social group.

Conventions provide a way for people to coordinate their social exchanges through a set of expected modes of conduct. Therefore, any concept of convention is structured by the child's understanding of social organization.

According to Turiel (1983), morality and convention are distinct, parallel developmental frameworks, rather than a single system as proposed by Kohlberg. However, all social events including moral ones happen within the context of society as a whole. A person's reasoning about the proper course of behaviour in any given social situation might require the person to go deep into their understanding of input derived from these social cognitive frameworks.

It was Turiel's insight to recognize that what Kohlberg's theory tried to justify within a single developmental framework was, in fact, the set of age-related attempts that people made at different points in growth to match up their social standards from several different domains. Therefore, domain theory is able to assume a lot more inconsistency in the judgments of individuals across contexts. It also postulate much higher possibility of morally based decisions such as on fairness and welfare from young people than is expected from within the traditional Kohlberg paradigm.

#### *2.1.4a Implications of Domain Theory in Moral Education*

The domain theory has several major implications on the education of moral and social values education (Nucci & Weber, 1991). Firstly, this theory recognizes a domain of human social interaction that is attached to the inherent features of moral cognition. This highlights the point that moral education might be rooted in universal concerns for justice and welfare. In other words, it should not be limited to the particular conventions or norms of a given society. By aiming for these universal

features of human moral understanding, public schools could enhance students' morality without being biased towards a particular religion or an ethnic culture. Though it is possible that one's universal view of morality be biased in some way, moral education practitioners should find out the causes and provide assistance in the elimination of such prejudices.

Secondly, education research from the perspective of domain theory has resulted in a set of recommendations for what is termed "domain appropriate" moral education. This approach involves the teacher's analysis and recognition of the moral and conventional implications that are inherent in issues pertaining to social values. Such an analysis contributes to the probability that the issues discussed in moral and social convention lessons are appropriate to the domain that the teacher is attempting to address. For instance, discussion of table etiquette is not a very suitable topic for moral discussion because this is mostly a matter of convention. Similarly, debating of whether it is right to deceive in order to help a person in need is inappropriate with which to generate a lesson intended to enhance students' understandings of social conventions.

Another advantage of the domain theory approach is that it allows a teacher to direct student activity, verbal or written, on the fundamental features appropriate to the domain of the issue. Therefore, students wrestling with a moral issue are directed to focus on the underlying justice or human welfare consideration of the case. Based upon the domain theory, teachers can better facilitate discussion of multifaceted issues that contain components from more than one domain. The domain theory approach encourages teachers to keep in mind the developmental changes that happen in students' understanding of the role of social convention as well as the

meaning of fairness and consideration of others. Using this knowledge, teachers are able to guide discussion of complicated social issues in ways that would maximize student comprehension of the moral and social implications of particular courses of behaviour.

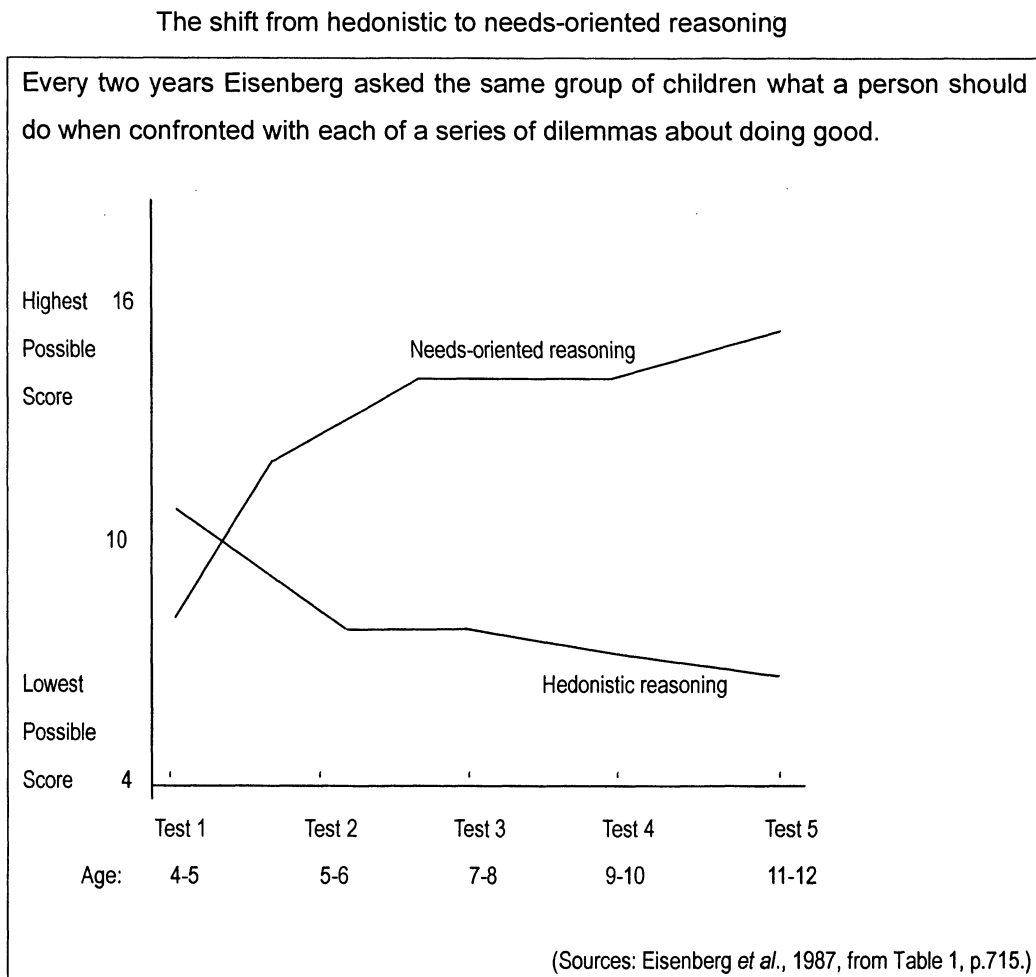
#### 2.1.5 Eisenberg's Model of Prosocial Reasoning

Most of the dilemmas Kohlberg presented to his subjects dealt with wrong doings such as stealing and disobeying laws. Few are involved in the kind of reasoning children use in justifying pro-social behaviour. Nancy Eisenberg and her colleagues (Eisenberg *et al.*, 1987) found altruistic behaviours in children as young as 2 and 3. They explored how these children explain and justify such behaviours. They presented dilemmas to these children in which helping another may not be in the child's best interest. An example of a story was shown as below (Bee, 1995, p.361):

A child was walking to a friend's birthday party. On the way, he met another child who had fallen and hurt himself. If the party-bound child stopped to help, he would probably miss the cake and ice cream. What should he do?

The most primitive response to such dilemmas, characteristic of preschool children, is what Eisenberg calls hedonistic reasoning. These children are concerned with self-oriented consequences rather than moral considerations. They reason that "I'd like help because she'd help me the next time," or "I wouldn't help because I'd miss the party." This approach gradually shifts to one that Eisenberg calls needs-oriented reasoning, in which the child expresses concern for the other person's needs, even if these needs conflict with the child's own wishes or desires.

**Figure 2.1.1: Eisenberg's Model of Prosocial Reasoning**



In older individuals, typically in adolescents, interviewees justify their good deeds by saying that it is expected of them, a pattern very similar to Kohlberg's stage 3. Some sample data from Eisenberg's longitudinal study of a small group of American children is shown in Figure 2.1.1.

The figure reveals the change from hedonistic to needs-oriented reasoning. By early adolescence, hedonistic reasoning has virtually disappeared, while needs-oriented reasoning becomes the dominant way of thinking. Eisenberg and her colleagues (1987) reported that similar patterns were found among children in West Germany, Poland, and Italy.

A number of strong parallels are found between the descriptions of Eisenberg and Kohlberg on the sequence of changes within pro-social reasoning. Both models postulate young children develop from a self-centered orientation to a position where social approval guides their reasoning of justice. Other similar concepts about children such as "one should do good things because others would approve of you if you do" and the development of internalized norms for reasoning are found in both theories as well (Bee, 1995).

In spite of these obvious parallels, researchers found that children's reasoning about pro-social dilemmas of Eisenberg's, and their reasoning about Kohlberg's justice dilemmas, were only moderately correlated (Bee, 1995). The sequences of steps might be similar, but it is true of many developments, children seem to move through these sequences at somewhat different speeds. Nevertheless, Eisenberg's research helped to widen Kohlberg's original opinions without changing the fundamental argument. In contrast, Carol Gilligan questioned some of the basic principles of Kohlberg's theory.

#### 2.1.6 Gilligan and the Morality of Care

Another influential critical analysis of Kohlberg's theories was presented by Carol Gilligan in her book, *"In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development"* (1982a). She argued that Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning are prejudiced against women because only males are used in his studies. By paying close attention to the experiences of women, Gilligan (1982a, 1982b) found reasons to be fundamentally dissatisfied with Kohlberg's focus on justice and fairness as the defining features of moral reasoning. She asserted that a morality of care can serve in the place of the morality of justice and fairness. The morality of justice and

fairness is based on equality while the morality of caring and empathy is based in nonviolence. Gilligan (1982b) presented these moralities as distinct but potentially connected. In her view, there are at least two distinct types of moral orientations: justice and care, and each of them has its own central injunction. Justice aimed at not treating others unfairly while care aimed at not running away from someone in need.

While working as a research assistant with Lawrence Kohlberg, Gilligan became aware that women responded differently than men to moral dilemmas. She examined these differences more thoroughly rather than disregarding women's views as some theorists, including Kohlberg, had done. She also emphasized the moral differences between the sexes are real and important yet not clearly understood by most people. For instance, when using the moral development stages of Kohlberg, women often score low at stage 3, a stage which emphasizes on interpersonal relationships and helping or pleasing others.

Gilligan (1982a, 1982b) asserted that females often remain concern with relationships, maturing as they grow older from pleasing others for personal gain to building close, intimate, selfless and giving relationships. Females obtain pleasure from treating others well in this way. Therefore, many women adopt the basic moral principles of stage 6 and act on those principles by being giving to people in need. Kohlberg, however, believed only a few middle-aged men would do this.

Moreover, Gilligan (1982) also asserted that men generally are more involved than women in intellectually figuring out what is fair and making rules and laws in family and religion. From a man's perspective, differences of opinion can be solved by

means of logical arguments and courts of law. However, from a woman's viewpoint, arguments should be settled by taking into consideration the viewpoints and needs of both sides. Becoming independent and successful is often a man's primary concern. Women tend to be more concerned with fulfilling their responsibilities to others than with asserting their own rights. Gilligan believed that females are more involved with building caring relationships with others than becoming successful in their own right.

However, Bee's (1995) research showed that moral reasoning does not follow the distinct gender lines as firstly asserted by Gilligan. The preponderance of evidence seems to suggest that both men and women can and do reason based on both justice and care. While the gender debate continues, Gilligan's work contributes to increase awareness of care as an integral component of moral reasoning.



## **2.2 Confucian Perspectives of Morality and Moral Education**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

The significance of morality has been regarded as an indispensable topic among almost all Chinese societies in the history. Part two of this theoretical overview provides a brief review of the most influential and dominant Chinese perspective in moral development and moral education, the Confucian approaches. The philosophies of Confucius have guided the practices of both formal and informal moral education in Hong Kong since it was a small fishing village. There were several major themes in Confucian thought such as personality values, social values, political and educational values, etc. In the later hundred years after Confucius, many famous philosophers continued to contribute large amounts of additional materials, accumulated to a much wider body of knowledge, now known as Neo-Confucianism. Nevertheless, the literature review in this part of the chapter pinpoints only the principles of moral development of those schooled in traditional Confucian philosophy. The main discussion is focused on Cua' elaborations of Confucian approaches, particularly in the process of moral education by practising self-cultivation and becoming an exemplary, independent moral person: a *chun-tzu* (君子) (Cua, 1977, 1984, 1992).

### **2.2.2 Confucius and Individual Moral Cultivation**

Confucius was a thinker, political figure, educator, and founder of Confucianism otherwise known as the Ru School (儒家) of Chinese thought. He spent most of his life as a travelling scholar and adviser to the rulers of various countries. In order to restore peace and prosperity, he advocated a re-establishment of the royal government, social and family organizations and "li" (rules of propriety 禮). His

teachings were prescribed in the classical literature of the early Zhou dynasty (around 400 BC). In spite of the wide-ranging approaches of Confucius, the most important element in his philosophy was the individual. He emphasized that each person had to cultivate personal virtues such as honesty, love, and filial piety through study of the paradigms provided in ancient literature, which would bring harmony to the hierarchy of family, society, and country. He also asserted that the most important individuals were the ruler and his advisers, because their standards of virtuous conduct would set an example for the country. Confucius' philosophy of becoming an exemplary and independent moral person was preserved in the *Analects* or the *Lunyu* (論語) that formed the groundwork of much of the later Chinese philosophy in moral education. According to the descriptions in the *Lunyu*, a *chun-tzu* is an ideal person with a high level of morality who is constantly concerned with the practice of self-cultivation (*hsiu-shen* 修身) (Brooks, 1998).

Among the various political and social teachings that Confucius gave to rulers, a characteristic of Confucius' thought was his emphasis on individual moral education and study. He criticized those who concentrated only on practical skills, while ignoring the development of their morality. According to Confucius, one of the most effective methods of self-cultivation is finding a good teacher and imitating his words and deeds. A good teacher should be a well experienced senior person who is well familiar with the ways of the past and the practices of the ancients (*Lunyu* 7.22). Confucius taught his students that there had to be a balance between studying and reflecting on what one had learnt. He said, "He who learns but does not think is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger." (*Lunyu* 2.15)

One of the most eminent concepts developed by Confucius was the idea of universal education – teaching anybody who is willing to learn. He emphasized that everyone could be taught regardless of one's social standing as long as the person was industrious and enthusiastic to learn. His teaching included morality, courteous speech, management of resources and arts. Besides these, he also put emphasis on the "Six Arts" - etiquette, music, archery, chariot-riding, calligraphy, and computation. Nevertheless, it was obvious that he regarded morality as the most important subject.

According to Confucius, one of the most important goals of education was to attain the moral level of a *chun-tzu*. A *chun-tzu* is a person who behaves kindly towards others and demonstrates integrity in all things. There are numerous passages in the *Lunyu* reflecting a strong aversion towards so called "petty man" (小人). A petty man is considered a person with a very low moral level, characterized by their cunning words and pretentious manners. Confucius found himself in an era in which essential moral values were in disorder and confusion, and people's behaviours no longer corresponded to the classifications and values originally ascribed to them. Confucius exclaimed, "Rulers do not rule and subjects do not serve," (*Lunyu* 12.11). Thus, he advocated that individuals should pay attention to moral education because it was the way by which people could rectify this situation and restore meaning and values to society. He also believed that the most important lessons for obtaining such moral learning were to be found in the *Shih Ching* (Book of Odes 詩經).

### 2.2.3 Confucius and his Social Philosophy

Confucius' social philosophy largely revolved around the concept of *ren* (loving others or benevolence 仁). This concept can be interpreted as a higher stage or morality,

where one is genuinely concerned for the well-being of others, and not merely going through the motions to satisfy the rules of *li* (rules of propriety 禮). Cultivating or practicing such concern for others involved humbling oneself. According to Confucius, such concern for others was demonstrated through the practice of forms of the Golden Rule shown in the Analects as the following:

“What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others;” (*Lunyu* 12.2)

“Since you yourself desire standing then help others achieve it, since you yourself desire success then help others attain it.” (*Lunyu* 6.30)

Moreover, he regarded devotion to parents and older siblings as the most basic form of promoting the interests of others before one's own. He taught his students that such altruism could be accomplished only by those who had learnt self-discipline.

According to Confucius, learning self-discipline involved the studying and mastering of *li* – the customary forms and rules of propriety through which people are able to express respect for their superiors and perform their role in society so that they themselves might become worthy of respect and admiration. Moreover, Confucius stressed that concern for propriety should embrace everything that a person says and does. As he said, “Look at nothing in defiance of ritual, listen to nothing in defiance of ritual, speak of nothing in defiance of ritual, never stir hand or foot in defiance of ritual.” (*Lunyu* 12.1)

However, learning self-discipline and mastering *li* did not necessarily involve the suppression of one's desires. Confucius explained that the key was learning how to reconcile one's own desires with the needs of one's family and community. Confucius said that if a person does not possess a keen sensitivity to the well-being

and interests of others, the ritual manners of the person signify nothing (*Lunyu* 3.3). Equally important was Confucius' insistence that the rituals should not be regarded as mere gestures, but that they should be practiced with complete devotion and sincerity.

According to the social philosophy of Confucius, morality starts developing from *li* and gradually matured toward *ren*. He said that ritual forms of *li* should be initially taught to children through interactions with close relatives such as family members and kinfolk. Progressively, *li* is applied to more diverse situations such as friends and neighbours. However, *ren* is not merely the customary forms of expressing respect, it is the practice of loving others regardless of their differences, and comprises all interactions with all people. Attaining such a level of care for others, attaining the level of a *chun-tzu*, requires continuous self-cultivation and life-long learning. Confucius applied these concepts even to rulers, by warning them not to oppress even the lowliest of their subjects. He said, "You may rob the Three Armies of their commander, but you cannot deprive the humblest peasant of his opinion." (*Lunyu* 9.26) Confucius even regarded *ren* as a calling and a mission for which one should be ready to die (*Lunyu* 15.9).

The social philosophy of Confucius by means of *li* and *ren*, in some aspects, aligns with Kohlberg's concept (1969) that children require an extended period of time and engagement with moral concepts in order to reach higher moral levels. Likewise, attaining the moral level of a *chun-tzu* requires a lifetime and careful meditation over moral concepts through self-cultivation. Confucian philosophy also shared some similarities with Turiel's notions. Turiel's domain theory (1966) distinguishes between morality and social convention as discrete approaches. Similarly, Confucian philosophy draws a distinction between *li* and *ren*. The concepts of *li* such as

customary forms and rules of propriety are analogous to Turiel's domain of social convention. *Ren* which deals with genuine care for others can be seen in the same light as Turiel's domain of morality.

#### 2.2.4 Cua's Reflection on the Process of Self-cultivation

Cua (1984) contributed greatly in the elaboration of the ways of applying Confucian approaches in moral education for modern societies. According to Cua's interpretation, a person would need to continuously practise self-cultivation (*hsiu-shen*) in order to develop and become an independent moral person (*chun-tzu*). This process of self-cultivation involved continuous acquisitions and implementations of the Confucian conventions such as the concern for humanity, *ren* (loving others 仁), *li* (the rules of propriety 禮) and the other related cultural virtues. Cua (1984 & 1992) explained that Confucian self-cultivation can be regarded as the process of making oneself receptive to the representative resources of one's own culture and responsive to the sharable values of one's own society. That is, in order to become a *chun-tzu*, one has to behave with a high level of morality, and be able to also do so in the context of social convention. Therefore, moral education, whose aim is the development of a *chun-tzu*, should integrate the thoughts of *li* and *ren* in the teachings and put them into practice (Cua, 1992). Cua proposed that there are three issues to ponder over in moral education: (a) essence of moral competence; (b) inculcation of moral concern; and (c) becoming an exemplary individual.

##### *2.2.4a Essence of Moral Competence*

Moral competence was the term coined by Cua (1992) in his description of an essential element of self-cultivation. Moral competence was conceived as a set of knowledge and proficiency by which people can implement and manifest the

significance of *li*. When moral competence is taught as a practical skill, students can learn a set of practical rules to fulfil the conventional moral rituals. That is, the Confucian value of *li* can be taught in prescribed lessons and put into practice as a set of formal training and directions for proper behaviours. It is intended that by first learning the skill of moral competence, one then begins to understand the Confucian significance and values behind the learning. Cua (1992) claimed moral competence learning requires no special abilities in advance and would suit any person who is willing to learn how to behave in accordance with moral rules.

Moreover, Cua (1992) stated that problems might arise when students encounter conflicting obligations in the process of developing moral competence. Moral educators can help resolve this conflict by teaching students how to prioritize their obligations. Rules of propriety can be categorized into several levels of importance in terms of the complication in meaning and values. For example, conflicts of personal duties might be very important but less complicated, and could be resolved before dealing with more intricate conflicts of interpersonal obligations. In this manner, priorities and even exceptions may be built by moral educators into the formulation and application of rules.

However, Cua's approach in attaining moral competence appears different to the thoughts of Kohlberg. Advocates of Kohlberg's approach argue that Cua's approach is flawed due to the lack of consensus on what virtues should be taught and also because of the complex nature of the practice of such virtues. For example, people would make different decisions under the same basic moral values. Kohlberg proclaimed that a better approach to effecting moral behaviour is focused on the stages of moral development. The approach was influential because it took into

account the way people organize their understanding of virtues and norms, and integrate these into a moral choice (Power, Higgins & Kohlberg, 1989).

#### *2.2.4b Inculcation of Moral Concern*

Another important issue that Cua highlighted was the instillation of moral concern. Cua (1992) asserted that there should be differences between moral training and inculcation of moral concern. He stated that moral training, as an aspect of moral education, should be primarily regarded as a form of teaching of maxims and principles to promote behavioural conformity and acceptance of the social values and morality. *Li* is conceived as a set of formal instructions that can be taught, and students can practise what they had learnt, and in doing so develop proper habits of morality.

Moral educators can apply various methods including rewards and punishments as tools of reinforcement. It is expected that through persistent and forceful urging, students would acquire the desired habit of conformity to rules. However, the notable uncertainty is whether such a form of teaching could really succeed in passing on an understanding of the rationale behind these rules and behavioural conformity.

In the process of self-cultivation, Cua (1984) stressed that people should not merely know the difference between the right and wrong, but also be concern with the consequences of being right and wrong. He emphasized the basic attitude of concern as the significance discrepancy between moral and immoral. Thus, being brought up as a moral person means being inculcated with this concern rather than just being informed with the moral rules and principles. This attitude of concern could



activate a person's reactive feeling and actions toward any situation with moral importance (Cua, 1977). The notion of moral concern was also categorized by Cua in two aspects.

### *Two Aspects of Moral Concern*

Cua (1992) asserted that the attitude of moral concern in terms of *ren* can be reviewed in two directions: the outward concern to other people; and the inward concern to one's confidence and personal values.

The outward concern focuses on caring for one's fellows and respecting others as persons. The attitude takes significant consideration for other people's modes of existence such as their needs, feelings, interests, and aspirations. It signifies an attitude of *ren* with the active sympathy for the well-being of others. This outward moral concern stresses the importance of being a member of a moral community, and not merely inculcating an attitude that blindly adhered to the customary standards. It takes other people's concern and respect for moral practices as an important requirement for their own self-cultivation.

The inward direction of moral concern according to Cua (1992) is the pursuit of one's own moral condition, an attitude of self-regard aimed at developing well-balanced characters. Cua (1992) stated that when people commit to *ren* as an ideal, they often adopt maxims of morality such as those of Confucius as the most significant personal precepts connected to self-cultivation. A self-cultivated person may form a plan of life by getting hold of a sense of confidence and a set of distinct values. This enables a unity and consistency in one's life, and through it, a person can subsequently stay calm and confident and improve even under the most rapidly changing environments.

#### 2.2.4c *Becoming an Exemplary Individual*

As mentioned above, one of the most significant features of Confucian moral principles was its focus on becoming a *chun-tzu*. According to the records stated in the *Lunyu*, Confucius frequently mentioned the contrast between *chun-tzu* and petty man (小人). A *Chun-tzu* is an individual with concrete, exemplary personifications of *ren* and *li*. Confucius stressed that a *chun-tzu* should not merely be a keeper of *ren* and *li*, but also be endowed with action-guiding virtue throughout their life (*Lunyu* 6:30). Confucius believed that only a sage, a perfect person of *ren* and *li*, can establish ethically enduring and harmonious social and political stability for a country.

In the process of moral education, Cua (1992) stated that a *chun-tzu* who is regarded as an admirable person can serve as model of moral competence for people of an inferior moral level. In inculcating *ren* and *li* in society, an exemplary sage is able to provide motivation and a point of orientation rather than specific targets of achievement. This approach can reinvigorate the Confucian cultural tradition with new character in the cultivation of moral autonomy in individuals. Cua asserted again that the process of becoming *chun-tzu* is a progressive task that inculcates *ren* rather than the rote training of moral precepts.

However, the notion of imitation and its functions as described may seem inappropriate in the modern society because it may misleadingly imply an involuntary imitation of the lives and conduct of certain individuals without regard to moral principles. In spite of this, Cua suggested that the use of the notion of imitation may be acceptable in Chinese society with its unique Confucian traditions if the deeds and qualification of an exemplary *chun-tzu* is generally acknowledged.

Cua (1992) emphasized that moral learning of becoming a *chun-tzu* never has a finishing point. Moral education, in both training and inculcation, can provide only a beginning and not an end. The practice always moves forward and never ceases until death. Pursuit of *ren* is a continuous commitment where there is no guarantee of completion, but a person could live with happiness in the course of persistent effort. Having said that, one must not blame anybody if one fails. Confucius once said, "The practice of *ren* depends on oneself, not others." (*Lunyu* 14:36)

*The notion of "stage 6" and "exemplary individual"*

The notion of the continuous efforts that is required in the process of becoming an exemplary individual (*Chun-tzu*) has some common ground with stage 6 of Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

Stage 6 individuals and the *chun-tzu* are correspondingly regarded as those who have reached the highest status of moral development. Both Kohlberg and Cua stressed the continuity and the lengthy efforts required to reach the summit status. People at such high moral level seemed to have the same moral characteristics. They consider the significance of various values and decide on a philosophy of life that can truly guide their lives. They do not automatically conform to tradition or others' beliefs, or blindly follow their own emotions, intuition, or impulsiveness about what is right and wrong. Both stage 6 individuals and *chun-tzu* carefully choose basic principles to follow, such as caring for others and respecting every living thing, feeling that everybody deserves equal opportunity. They act strongly on their values, even if others think they are strange or if their beliefs are against the law, refusing to have an abortion in a place where the pro-life stand is illegal for example.

There are similarities and diversities found in the reviews of the various theories and approaches of moral education in both western and eastern worlds. In the next section, we focus on the policies and approaches of moral education that have been implemented in the educational system of Hong Kong, a contemporary city that has been profoundly and simultaneously affected by two entirely different cultures and traditions for over a hundred years – China and Britain.

## **2.3 Moral Education in Hong Kong**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

This section aims to review the range of moral education policies and approaches that have been applied in Hong Kong over the past 50 years. This review of the Hong Kong moral education framework includes a diverse background: major government policies, approaches applied by most of the schools and involvements from religious parties and Confucian-parental concerns. The former Hong Kong Education Department (HKED), now the Education Bureau (EDB), published “General Guidelines on Moral Education in Schools” in 1981. It was the first and the only official document published specifically for the guidance of moral education in Hong Kong schools. The Guidelines (HKED, 1981, p.1) stated the main reasons for putting more emphasis on moral education:

The introduction of universal and compulsory education in Hong Kong for nine years has given rise to a greater degree of mixed ability classes. The children may also come from very different family backgrounds. Teachers need to pay considerably more personal attention to the pupils' moral as well as intellectual development. With the recent increase in juvenile delinquency, more attention has been focused on the need for the general school curriculum to reflect greater awareness of the importance of moral education ... (p. 1)

The publication of the Guidelines represented a milestone for moral education in Hong Kong schools because it openly declared moral education as an essential component of schooling in Hong Kong. It officially stated that influences from home and community were the two most important sources affecting the levels of moral development of the people of Hong Kong.

According to Cheng's (2004) analysis, a framework with three effects was affirmed in shaping the development of moral education in Hong Kong in the past thirty years (approximately between 1973 and 2003). These effects were: (1) parental concerns in Chinese Confucian families; (2) teachers' concerns in Christian schools; (3) civic organizations' concerns in communities such as the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). Details of the influence from the three contexts, family, school and community for moral education are reviewed below.

### 2.3.2 Brief Background of Hong Kong and its Moral Education

The total area of Hong Kong, including Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories, together with 262 outlying islands, is approximately 1,104 square kilometres, and its population is about 6.8 million according to a report published in mid-2003. About 95 percent of Hong Kong citizens are of Chinese ethnicity (Hong Kong SAR Government, Government Information Centre [HKSARGGIC], 2004a). In the past 150 years, Hong Kong has developed from a small fishing village into an international business centre. The status of Hong Kong as a business centre has historical importance. Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain after the Opium War in 1842. After another battle in 1869, Kowloon Peninsula was added to the British colony. As a result of continued disputes between China and Britain, the New Territories were leased to Britain for a period of 99 years in 1898. When the lease expired in 1997, Hong Kong was returned to the sovereignty of China after many years of hard negotiations between the two countries.

In the years of the colonial government, in general, the people of Hong Kong had been accustomed to taking advantage of the material resources from mainland China and staying away from political riots, revolutions and unstable economy. In spite of

living in the British colony, people of Hong Kong upheld their Chinese culture and maintain it with a strong commitment to Confucian family life. However, it was inevitable that their lifestyles were changed due to cultural influences from the west, especially the British and the Americans.

It was obvious that there was a common shared belief in learning and education in the community under the colonial administration. Since 1978, the Hong Kong government started offering nine years of free education, from “primary one” to “secondary three”, for local children aged 6 to 15. Primary and secondary schools are categorized by several funding systems such as the government aided scheme, the government direct subsidy scheme and private schools scheme (Hong Kong SAR Government Information Services Department, 2004).

Moral education was faced with a peculiar circumstance in Hong Kong in the past thirty years. Although Chinese families lived by a strong Confucian cultural heritage, half of them sent their children to schools run by Christian organizations. The growth of moral beliefs and values of the people had been exposed to various influences during childhood, school life and social life. Therefore, theorists such as Cheng (2004), Pang (2004) and Xu (2004) stated that there have been several types of moral sources that had been affecting the Hong Kong moral education. These sources were: (a) Confucian source at home through parents of Chinese ethnicity; (b) Christian source at schools through religious bodies sponsoring the schools; (c) liberal source at community through civic organizations such as Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). Brief examinations on each of these three influential sources of the Hong Kong moral education are reviewed in the following sections.

### 2.3.3 Moral Education at Home – the Confucian source

The Neo-Confucian scholar, Lau (1992, 2004) stated that the Chinese Confucian culture held strong influences on the daily life of Hong Kong and also the principles of moral education applied in most Chinese families. It is known that Chinese culture regarded family and family education highly (Cheng, Lee & Lo, 2004). To almost all Chinese children in Hong Kong, moral education starts at home before formal education began. It is a custom that when a child behaves against moral expectations, the parents should bear the fault for not delivering effective moral teaching at home. They usually punish children for not being adequately diligent when they get poor examination results. Diligence is regarded as a Confucian virtue instilled by most Chinese families (Cheng, Lee & Lo, 2004). Because of this, moral upbringing in the household should be given a heavy weighting in the review of moral education in Hong Kong (Lau, 2004).

According to Cheng (2004), several changes were observable in the last few generations with respect to moral education within the Hong Kong households. Cheng reported that from 1945 to 2003, three distinct generations of the people of Hong Kong could be sorted. The arrivals from 1945 to 1966 (the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in Mainland China) could be regarded as the first generation of refugees, who maintained strong traditional attitudes. Their children, born in Hong Kong from the 1950s to the 1970s as the second generation, had strong commitment to local identity in Hong Kong. The third generation included children born from the 1980s onwards. This age group could be further differentiated into three groupings in terms of their birthplace and early childhood education: (a) Hong Kong; (b) Mainland China, and (c) children who were born overseas (e.g., Canada, USA), when their parents either studied or emigrated there but later returned to Hong Kong.



Since the second generation (aged 35 to 50) bridged the other two generations, having received traditional Confucian upbringing, and then being responsible for the upbringing of the juveniles in this modern city, they held substantial influence over the present moral education standards.

Moreover, Cheng (2003) agreed that parental influence on moral upbringing was an important contributor to moral education in Hong Kong. Parents of the Chinese families served as guardians of Chinese merits in the society. They emphasized Confucian virtues such as diligence, perseverance, self-reliance, benevolence and dutifulness. Cheng (2004) also stressed that mothers of Chinese families often coached their children in traditional moral virtues such as respect for seniority, intrinsic value in studying and the role-modelling of parents. These traditional customs could set formative influences to family moral education.

#### 2.3.4 Learning to Be Moral at School – the Christian Source

Hong Kong Education Department (HKED, 1981) acknowledged through “General Guidelines on Moral Education in Schools” that schools were important places for moral education, and teachers were unquestionably moral educators. Although the Guideline was regarded as one of the most important documents for moral education in Hong Kong, Lam (1991) criticized it as only descriptive and not practical enough. Lam (1991) reported, in a study of the implementation of curriculum change in moral education, that during the period when most schools did not have any form of planned approach to moral education, the Guidelines were a milestone in the history of curriculum development in Hong Kong. Lam’s description revealed not only the problems that moral educators had faced in the last three decades in Hong Kong, but also the demand for formal moral education in the society.

Based on Lam's (1991) report, moral education was established in all schools but most of them did not follow the curriculum recommended by the Hong Kong Education Department (HKED). The curricula put into practice were characterized by matters directed towards students' disciplinary problems. Other traits such as lack of proper evaluations on students' moral development, ineffective audio-visual aids and improper student-centered teaching were found in schools located at remote districts of the city. Such phenomena corresponded with those disapprovals of Kohlberg and his colleagues (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971). They claimed that causes were not only due to the lack of consensus on what virtues were to be taught, but also because of the complex nature of practising such virtues.

Lee (1993a) reported the emergence of new education policies such as student-based education widened the approaches in moral education. New curricula such as the emphasis of values clarification and moral reasoning were recommended in the schools. Lee (1993b) suggested the advantages of connecting the curricula between moral education and religious education because of the similarities among them. Other theorists such as Lee, Ng and Lam (1995) supported the notion, and suggested that more attentiveness should be placed on the needs for reflection, self-regulation and model of moral living. They claimed the importance of nurturing autonomy in the practice of becoming a morally and religiously educated person as they asserted that the efforts of moral and religious education could converge on the same means and on the same goal.

In the realm of notions regarding the extension of approaches in moral education, Lee (1993b) affirmed that both ethical studies and religious studies needed to be adjusted from indoctrinating principles to conducting values by real-life experiences. Such an

approach complied with the attitude of foreign education theorists such as Boss and Rest. According to Rest's investigation (1984), college students were able to memorize the lines of reasoning used by different moral philosophers, but only long enough for the final examination. There was usually little true understanding of what was being presented and little carry-over into their moral reasoning outside the classroom.

Further to the new notions advocated, an investigation conducted by Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers Limited (HKFEWL) (1997, p.84) covering 30.5% of the primary and secondary schools in the city showed that teaching methods for moral education were often on a large scale as below:

- (a) Assemblies or talks ..... (primary 92.0 %, secondary 89.3 %);
- (b) Class teaching ..... (primary 69.3 %, secondary 84.7 %);
- (c) Counselling ..... (primary 88.7 %, secondary 63.8 %);
- (d) Whole-school interaction ... (primary 72.0 %, secondary 65.3 %);
- (e) Religious Education ..... (primary 43.3 %, secondary 55.1 %);
- (f) Special projects ..... (primary 30.0 %, secondary 34.7 %);
- (g) Other methods ..... (primary 4.0 %, secondary 8.7 %).

The findings also revealed that administrators, especially of religious schools, tended to link moral education and religious education closely together. These schools made up more than half of the publicly funded schools of Hong Kong, and were mainly Christian schools. Chinese parents were willing to send their children to religious schools although they were not themselves necessarily religious believers, nor did they wish for their children to be converted to Christianity. Cheng (2004) suggested that the possible reasons can be apparent good academic standing and the effective moral education in these schools.

Moreover, the survey (HKFEWL, 1997) revealed that teaching materials for moral education within these schools emphasized respect for humanity, compassion and justice. Breakthrough Publishers and the fellowship of Evangelical Students were the two sources of published moral education material, currently in use by Christian schools. One of the most structured sets of moral education curriculum materials for Christian secondary schools was written in the mid-1980s by a Catholic priest, Father Xu, when he studied at Oxford under the supervision of John Wilson. In a recent article, Xu (2004) explained that, according to Catholic ecumenicalism, moral teaching in religious schools should aim to help students become a better self, care about people other than oneself, and become a Christian if the person wished.

Cheng (2004) reported that the accomplishment of the government varied between individual schools despite its intention of putting stronger emphasis on moral education in schools since the issue of the Guidelines in 1981. Comparing the efforts from churches with the Hong Kong Education Department (HKED), Cheng (2004) revealed that more than half of the schools in Hong Kong obtained moral resources from religious organizations. The achievements of moral education in these schools were well attached with religious education, and the Christian source was the most significant.

Nevertheless, the accomplishment of the government on civic morality was made known by the efforts of Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). This civil organization contributed extraordinarily on moral education not only for the citizens, but also nourished the morality of the civil servant forces as a whole. More details of the works of ICAC are reviewed below.

### 2.3.5 Learning to Act Morally in the Community – Liberal-civic Source

In the review of the liberal source of civic morality in Hong Kong, it was essential to examine the civic organization, Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). Cheng (2004) stressed that ICAC served successfully as an independent social agency for civic morality. In the year 1973, there was a strong community-wide anti-corruption protest in Hong Kong, and the results of the event led to the establishment of ICAC in Hong Kong. In the Annual Report 2003 of ICAC, three key functions, (1) investigation; (2) prevention; and (3) education; were affirmed. Part of the details of the third function, education, is quoted as below (ICAC, 2003, p.174):

The Community Relations Department of the ICAC is responsible for education in four aspects:-

- (a) Tailor-made corruption prevention packages have been developed and used to train civil servants in various government departments in ethics and integrity.
- (b) The Department promotes business ethics and corruption prevention measures to various trade organizations, by means of conferences, seminars and on-site training, reinforcing the international status of Hong Kong as a competitive business centre.
- (c) ICAC's school-based contribution to moral education is stated in its report as follows:  
Instilling positive values in young people was also a priority area of the Department's work. In addition to school talks and projects organized for young people, the Department made use of multimedia programs and Internet to nurture an ethical culture among the younger generation. (ICAC, 2000, p. 13)
- (d) The Community Relations Department has also produced a series of TV cartoon programs for young children and launched a website for teenagers.

Publications of reading materials in order to promote positive values of attitudes towards acting morally in the community, especially against corruption were also one of the tasks of ICAC. Pang (2004) asserted in an article that promotions of the core social values such as integrity, law abidance and justice through the production of various moral education teaching materials could help shape civic morality. Starting in 1990, ICAC published *Tuosi: Moral Education Periodical*. The name “Tuosi (拓思)” literally meant “Thought expanding”. The magazine is published in Chinese, three times a year, and its targeted readers were primary and secondary school teachers. Each volume was devoted to one key theme. It is still the only such journal in Hong Kong, widely circulated among teachers.

The notion of providing moral education materials to teachers regardless of the subjects involved originated from Dewey's theory of the hidden curriculum (1993). The hidden curriculum was considered as the pervasive atmosphere that characterized a school. This atmosphere included the rules of the school, its attitudes toward academics, the extracurricular activities, the moral orientation of teachers and the teaching materials. Dewey (1993) recognized that schools provided moral education through the hidden curriculum regardless of any ethics subject actually offered or not. Schools, like families, were settings for moral development. Teachers served as models of ethical or unethical behaviours. Classroom rules and peer relations at school transmitted attitudes about cheating, lying, stealing, and consideration of others; and the school administration, through its rules and regulations, represented a value system to its students.

Furthermore, the Community Relations Department of ICAC also produced a series of TV cartoon programs for young children, and launched a website for teenagers. The

schemes were well received and proven as influential (Cheng, 2003). Owing to its function in moral education and its wide-ranging application of mass media in raising public awareness of anti-corruption issues, the contribution of ICAC was conceived as a success of civic education in Hong Kong (Lee, 1999).

Moreover, Lee also identified the services of ICAC and its endeavours to moral education in the past twenty-five years. These contributions can be analysed in terms of three areas. They were:

- (1). ICAC provided strong, good quality and effective support to moral educators in schools;
- (2) Moral education should not merely be the work of schools but required extensive participation of the community as demonstrated by the ICAC; and
- (3) ICAC had proved to be a good model for the prevention of bribery and corruption, and the maintenance of justice and related values.

#### 2.3.6 Development after the Transformation to Special Administration Region

Since Hong Kong was transformed into a Chinese Special Administrative Region from a British colony in 1997, its government launched massive education and curriculum reform (Cheng, 2004). Moral and civic education was listed as the first among the key tasks for reform. The two guidelines on civic education separately issued by the Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council (HKCDC) (1985, 1996) were conjoined with moral education in the education reform. It gave the impression that moral education could not have much autonomous territory of its own. It was integrated into civic education with a strong nationalistic flavour (Morris, 1992). The notion of commitment was mainly interpreted as commitment to a collective, society or nation, with a strong preference towards undermining personal commitments such as living a

modest life. Under this new atmosphere, Cheng (2004) identified the characteristics of the trend of the post-1997 situation of moral education. These characteristics could be analysed in terms of two significant concerns:

- (1). The Government's new role in implementing moral education in schools; and
- (2). New approaches to moral education in schools.

#### *2.3.6a Government's New Role in Implementing Moral Education in Schools*

Cheng (2004) asserted that the liberal tradition of colonial public administration was replaced by a return to Chinese culture in the form of "government officials as moral educators" since 1997. The former Secretary of Hong Kong Education Manpower Bureau (HKEMB), Mrs. Fanny Law, wrote ten monthly public letters for young people on moral and civic education since September 2003 (HKEMBC, 2004). Each letter addressed a specific attitude or value. This represented the collective effort of the Hong Kong Government to advocate the teaching of important values through education reform, reaffirming moral and civic education as one of the key tasks.

Moreover, Cheng (2004) recognized that as the training of teachers was one of the main factors in the success of education, so teacher training should be equally important for moral education. It is important to note that most teacher education programs in Hong Kong have moral education merged with citizenship education as one option, which meant that student teachers could disregard the option. Teacher education programs were reorganized to be more applicable to the professional requirements caused by education reform.

An implementation of a new teacher education programme structure in the Faculty of Education of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2004 could serve as an example to support Cheng's identification. Under the new structure, the original course was



divided into two separate courses. Citizenship Education was expanded and remained as one option. Moral Education was merged with an original core Educational Aims and Educational Perspectives to form a new core option, namely Values and Moral Education. In other words, as the educational reform in schools demanded, the status of Values and Moral Education as a core option in this university confirmed the trend that increasing emphasis was placed on helping teachers to become moral educators.

#### *2.3.6b New Approaches to Moral Education in Schools*

In 2003, the disastrous outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) provided an opportunity to evaluate the progress of moral education. Many schools in Hong Kong made use of students' real-life experiences to reflect on the importance of health, life and death, heroic acts and other values. Students were encouraged to read stories related to SARS, and perhaps to write their own. Writings were compiled into books by Hong Kong Education and Manpower Bureau Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (2003). Such narrative pedagogy underlying these kinds of educational efforts with particular attention on the higher education examples was affirmed by Cheng (2004) as a positive development in moral education. Moreover, Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council (2002) also affirmed that such an approach could be adopted flexibly in moral education, curriculum planning and learning practices.

The Curriculum Development Institute of Education and Manpower Bureau (CDIEMB) (2003) proposed a so-called "Life-Event Approach" which aimed at using life events as entry points to develop moral and civic education curricula and programs. Designed to suit students of different ages, interests and needs, teaching materials of life-events were categorized into six types and organized in four different stages.

This new approach attempted to elevate moral and civic education curricula by means of a learner-focused orientation, authentic learning contexts and multi-perspectives on issues of life events. By increasing the quality of the teaching and learning methods, the Bureau believed that the “Life-Event Approach” could be employed flexibly in the enhancement of the moral and civic education programs (CDIEMB, 2003).

After the revision of the moral education in Hong Kong, the last section of this theoretical overview examines the main issues of the applications of community service learning in terms of effective moral education.

## **2.4 Applications of Community Services in Moral Education Program**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

There has been no formal report regarding the volume of community service learning applied in the field of education in Hong Kong. However, application of the approach spread rapidly over the colleges and universities in United States in the past several years. Campus Compact (2001) reported that 712,000 students participated in some form of community service learning courses in the 1999-2000 academic year. Fiske (2001) revealed that more than 13 million school students had engaged in community service learning in the 2000-2001 academic year based upon the figures from National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Education theorists and moral educators were taking more notice of this increasing tendency in terms of its feasibility and effectiveness.

In this part of the theoretical overview, revisions focus on two issues.

- (1). The definitions of the community service learning approach and its general nature;
- (2). The usefulness of taking the approach in moral education programs based upon the investigations of several eminent moral education theorists such as Boss (1994), Boyd (1976, 1980), Haan (1985), Walker (1986) and Rest (1984, 1988).

Owing to the adoptions of Boss's research design and Rest's moral measuring instrument, Defining Issues Test, reviews of these two theorists' literatures of community service learning are particularly illustrated in this section.

According to Rest's (1988) theories of morality, practical experiences of encountering social problems involved in community services could provide opportunities for students to apply moral thoughts and concerns in real-life situations, and thus,

enhance students' moral sensitivity. Besides Rest, Boss (1994) also proved that community service learning was effective in elevating students' moral reasoning level when it was incorporated in a moral education program. More details about their theories are further discussed in section 2.4.3 as shown below.

#### 2.4.2 Definitions of Community Service Learning

In spite of the increasing popularity of the community service learning approach, it is important to clarify that not every institute used the same definitions of the approach. The notion of community service learning was still evolving, and was yet to have a shared vocabulary or a set of common ideas and a generally accepted approach (Eyler & Giles, 1999). A range of differences in meaning could be found in the various descriptions of the approach suggested by the different theorists in the reviews of the definitions as shown below.

Bentley and Joellison (2005) incorporated community service learning into training projects for nursing students and declared a number of findings. They defined the method as the combination of service and learning in deliberate approaches which differed fundamentally from other methods like volunteer activities, community service, internships, field education, and traditional clinical experiences. They stressed that these methods were not any less important than service learning, but the approaches, objectives and outcomes were different compared with their definition in terms of the combination of service and learning.

Moreover, Bringle and Hatcher (1995) identified the characteristics of the approach which are entirely different to the other theorists. These characteristics can be analysed in terms of three significant concerns.

(1) It is a course-based, credit bearing educational experience for students;

- (2). The approach allows students to participate in organized service activities that can meet identified community needs.
- (3). Students are able to reflect on the service activities in a way as to gain further understanding of the course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

Eyler and Giles (1999) described community service learning as a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection. When students are working with others through a process of applying what they have learnt about the community problems, they reflect upon their experiences as they seek to achieve real goals for the community, deeper understanding and skills for themselves. Community service learning can grow so rapidly because of its noticeably powerful influences on young people and their development.

#### *2.4.2a Community Service Learning in Nursing Education Programs*

Other theorists such as Carpenter (1999) and Mueller and Norton (1998) stated that when integrating community service learning into nursing education, the approach should include structured opportunities that linked service to self-reflection and self-discovery. The method should also maintain a focus on the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content that are critical to service learning. It would be a powerful learning experience as the students could learn more about community assessment and community resources, and knowing how their concerns could be developed in the surrounding community.

Examples of taking the service learning approach in nursing schools can be found without much difficulty. The approach was adopted as a mandatory practice by American Association of Colleges of Nursing in 1998 (Center for the Health

Professions, 1998). The same application was found in the full-time program, Bachelor of Science (Honors) in Nursing, operated by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Within the normal 4-year duration of the program, among which 34 credits out of a total of 87 credits were field credits that must be achieved by participations in community services (Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2007).

The National Commission on Service-Learning of America (National and Community Service Act, 1990, p. 378) approved the approach of service learning by clarifying its essential features. According to the Commission, service-learning was defined as

"a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content."

The significances of the definition as declared by the Commission seemed appropriate and practicable to be adopted as an indication for planning moral education programs in Hong Kong.

#### *2.4.2b Characteristics of Community Service Learning in This Study*

The application of community service learning in this thesis was neither a periodic volunteer program that served as an add-on to the college curriculum, nor logging a set number of community service hours in order to graduate. The distinctive feature of the community service learning adopted the notions of The National Commission on Service-Learning of America as stated above, and aimed at providing forceful

learning experiences for the students through the participations of community services.

Eyler and Giles (1999) distinguished some common characteristics of good community service learning, and that were regarded as the essence in the design of the social ethics projects in this thesis. These characteristics were analysed in terms of four significant concerns.

- (1). The service experiences had to be positive and meaningful to the students;
- (2). The services involved cooperative rather than competitive exercises so that it would promote skills associated with teamwork;
- (3). The services would deal with problems in complex settings rather than easy cases in isolation, so that students could take these problem-solving opportunities to gain knowledge of the specific context of the community challenges; and
- (4). The results of the services had to be immediate and straightforward.

As a consequence of this immediacy of experience, service learning can be more likely to be personally meaningful to students and can generate emotional consequences. It challenges values as well as ideas, and support social, emotional and cognitive learning and development. These four characteristics are highly relevant to the allocation of community service projects to the students in this study.

An example of community service learning for the students is quoted here to illustrate the characteristics as stated above. A group of college students were assigned to take the community service of collecting garbage at a public beach in Hong Kong. The service was regarded as highly valued and important. During the process of collecting garbage, students could learn about seawater quality, developing an

understanding of pollution issues, learn to interpret moral issues of littering in public areas, and practise communication skills by speaking to beach visitors. They might also reflect on their personal and career interests in science, the environment, social responsibilities and other related areas. The students could assess the immediate outcomes of the cleaner beach environment, and so they could share the results with beach visitors along with suggestions for reducing pollution.

#### 2.4.3 Theoretical Reviews about Community Service Learning and Moral Education

Many theorists such Rest (1984, 1988), Boss (1994), Dewey (1939) and Kohlberg (1971) claimed that actual experiences in confronting moral issues would be important for moral development. They also affirmed that learning activities of real-life services outside school could provide students with extra chances of encountering and handling ethical issues. Such experiences could be essential components of moral education.

##### *2.4.3a Rest's Theories*

Rest (1984) stressed that students' moral reasoning level tended to be improved when they were engaged in service learning activities of ethical affairs. Rest (1988) declared that several features of moral behaviour could be distinguished if moral development was to occur through the learning.

Rest and his colleagues (Rest *et al.*, 1999) of the University of Minnesota recognized several features of moral behaviour deed and manner when moral development was to occur. These attributes could be examined in terms of four significant components. They are:

- (1) Moral sensitivity – the sensitive feeling that there was a moral problem when it existed;



- (2) Moral judgment – the ability of judging which action would be most justifiable in a moral sense;
- (3) Moral motivation – the degree of commitment to taking the moral course of action; and
- (4) Moral character – the deed of persisting in a moral task.

By applying Rest's theory in the investigation of students' moral development, increase of attributes among any of these four components serve as evidences to verify the effectiveness of community service learning.

Rest (1988) and other research (Colby *et al.*, 1983) reported that college education as a whole could help students advance to a higher level of moral reasoning. However, Rest (1988) reported that specific ethics programs were relatively ineffective in enhancing students' moral reasoning level. His investigations reported that college students were able to memorize materials presented in lectures on the lines of reasoning used by moral philosophers but only long enough for the final examination. However, there was usually little true understanding of what was being taught, and little carry-over into their moral reasoning outside the classroom (Rest, 1984). Such phenomena complied with Gardner's (1991, p.109) research, as he reported that "school knowledge seems strictly bound to school settings" and "when challenged by moral issues outside of the school environments, students easily reverted back to their earlier forms of moral reasoning."

Owing to the restraints on moral lectures in classroom, Rest (1988) proclaimed the benefits of taking the approach of service learning as one of the means in moral education. The advantages of Rest's approach can be concluded in two ways:

- (1). There are "dilemma discussion interventions" during which students engage in the active problem-solving of controversial moral issues; and
- (2). Those various unforeseen interferences in the service experiences provide extra reflections and discussions for students' moral and personality developments.

#### *2.4.3b Boss's Approaches of Community Services*

Besides Rest, Boss (1994) affirmed the concept of autonomy in moral education, and asserted that community service activities could contribute greater gains than other methods to the college students' moral development when it was integrated in ethics programs. Besides stressing the importance of the autonomy of moral education, Boss (1994) claimed that emphasis should be placed on the habits and the practices of volunteerism in the learning process if community service was incorporated in a moral education program. Her research revealed that the college students engaged in community service gained greater moral development than those who did not (Boss, 1994). She reported that the real-life experiences of community service learning not only could enhance students' sensitivity to moral issues, but also helped recognize and overcome negative stereotypes that had acted as barriers in their social interactions.

Both the design and the findings of Boss's (1994) research are particularly noteworthy to this study because of the similarities of the research objectives and the application of the same moral reasoning level measuring instrument, Defining Issues Test. Moreover, this study also took parallel theoretical standpoint on community service learning, and regarded this approach as an effective method in elevating college students' moral levels even when it was applied in a city with an entirely different social context in traditions and culture.

#### *2.4.3c Reviews from Other Theorists*

Boyd (1976, 1980) designed an introductory psychology course with the objective of raising up students' moral level from conventional moral reasoning to principled moral reasoning level by using two different approaches combined:

- (1). Intensive reading of books related to morality; and
- (2). Intensive discussions of both hypothetical and real-life moral dilemmas.

Boyd found that by the end of the course students progressed almost one-third of a stage in their moral reasoning. Blatt and Kohlberg (1975) noted similar results in a comparative study, and their course did not move students into the principled stage of moral reasoning but to a higher level of Stage 4 reasoning. Yet, research of Haan and Walker offered some explanations for the phenomena.

Haan (1985) and Walker (1986) argued that cognitive disequilibrium caused primarily by discussions of moral dilemmas could not be the main factor in helping students to rise to a higher moral reasoning level. It was the social disequilibrium that was important in facilitating moral development. According to Haan (1985, p. 999), social disequilibrium was considered as a "holistic, emotional and interactive experience wherein participants expose themselves to others' complaints and even to the possibility that they themselves may be found morally wanting or even wrong". Haan (1985 p. 1003) argued that more emphasis should be placed on the effect of "the emotional interactive experience of moral-social conflict on moral development". For this reason, students could probably attain moral development by taking community service learning as it offers numerous chances of handling social disequilibrium.

Forman and Kuscher (1983) recognized three dimensions of development based upon the theories of Piaget: These dimensions were: (1) the social emotional, (2) the cognitive; and (3) the lingual. In their model, children's moral development could be improved through actively interacting with conflicts. They emphasized that the role of conflict could cause children to rethink their habitual approaches to subjects and events, and consequently, led to better moral development. Though Forman and Kuscher's notion of conflicts was rarely applied solely in moral education, Haan's theory of social disequilibrium could help account for the learning outcomes caused from the conflicts that students had encountered in the process of community service learning.

In addition, Dewey (1939) and Kohlberg (1971) proclaimed that actual experiences in confronting moral issues, particularly in the environment outside school, would be important for moral development. Kohlberg claimed that college social ethics programs often stress only ethical principles and thoughts but ignored the factors of moral development by practical conditions. The notion was proven by Heller (1989) and Honig (1990) that the most successful moral education programs in secondary schools were those that promoted community services or community-based experiences. Nucci (1985) also revealed in a study of moral reasoning in elementary school children that discussions of moral issues would be most effective when they were focused on real-life issues that students had encountered and identified with.

#### *2.4.3d Teaching Staff and Community Service Learning*

Theorists like Harrington (1999) and Nativio (2001) affirmed the essence of committed and capable teachers to the effectiveness of the community service approach in moral education. Although students might not be directly supervised by their teachers

during their community services at the various organizations or centres, regular feedback as needed through face-to-face meetings. Teachers were required to read students' journals, manage the reflection sessions and interact with community service providers. Harrington (1999) asserted that such close contacts and communication could be interpreted as a meaningful and practical approach to the students, and an important factor to the achievement of the course objectives to the school.

Zlotkowski (1996) revealed the difficulties that teachers encountered in the application of this approach. Teaching staff might have faith in applying the approach in moral education programs, but lacked the commitment to participate. Teaching morality by this approach would involve tedious workloads which could be time consuming. Harrington (1999) recommended that linking service learning activities to research related to the teaching interests of moral educators could be an excellent way to generate enthusiasm and maximize students' learning from their service experiences. Depending on how policies were set, integration of faculty members' teaching and research roles could be helpful for promotion and increment in many universities. It was suggested by Hamner *et al.*, (2002) that a community college can be more thoughtfully and constructively engaged in its community when its programs are able to unite teaching, research, and service functions with the needs of the community.

#### 2.4.4 Community Service Learning in a Confucian View

The concept of *li* (rules of propriety 禮) and *ren* (loving others 仁) are regarded as essential components of Confucius' social philosophy. Self-cultivation is considered the indispensable moral development method of becoming a chun-tzu (an exemplary

and independent moral person 君子). A major ideal of self-cultivation is to put the concepts of *li* and *ren* into actual practice. One such obvious deed is humbling oneself and showing care for others.

Such an approach of humbling oneself and caring for others can be expressed in the work of community service. These attitude and deed complies with what Confucius once said, "Since you yourself desire standing then help others achieve it; since you yourself desire success then help others attain it." (Lunyu 6.30). Confucius educated his students that deeds of altruism could be accomplished only by those who have learned self-discipline to ritual, which meant the mastering of *li*. Confucius explained that one could not care for others without self-discipline to ritual. It meant that *ren* could be expressed upon the foundation of *li*. In light of this, charity community service can be a way for people to reinforce the foundation of *li*, and then, start caring for others and serving the community with the attitude of *ren*.

Confucius also said, "A person does not hold a keen sense of the welfare of others, the ritual manners of the person signified nothing" (Lunyu 3.3). Such an attitude complied with Rest's notion that a moral person would have high moral sensitivity. Confucius also insisted that the rituals should not be regarded as mere forms, but that they should be practised with complete devotion and sincerity. These thoughts also acted in accordance with those of Eyler and Giles (1999) as state above. They claimed that authentic community service should be positive, meaningful and sincere to all participants. Moreover, service should involve cooperative activities and promote skills associated with teamwork and community involvement.

#### 2.4.5 Conclusion

Community service learning has been accepted as a method of providing students with powerful learning experiences when it was tactfully integrated into various disciplines such as nursing and other programs in colleges and universities. In the reviews of the related literatures, the concept of community service learning was considered influential because of several distinctive factors. In the practice of moral education, these factors could be concluded in four points.

- (1). It enabled students to apply their academic skills and knowledge to address real-life needs in their own communities;
- (2). It provided students with a compelling reason to learn the skills of community participation, and then, to develop an ethic of service and community responsibility;
- (3). It could activate motivation for learning and reinforce retention of academic skills by solving real problems and addressing real moral issues in the services; and
- (4). Specific learning goals such as moral concerns and moral sensitivity development could be tied to various community needs and activities by means of the approach.

The review of the theoretical backgrounds of the various concepts and applications of the approaches regarding the relationships between moral development, moral education and community service learning in the views of distinguished Western and Chinese philosophers, formed the theoretical framework of this study. The objective of this research is to discover the impacts of community service learning to the moral development of the young adult students of Hong Kong if it is incorporated into a moral education program. As the effectiveness of this approach has not been tested in an entirely different social context of traditional Chinese Confucian culture, it will be

constructive to both the local students and moral educators if the result is proven positive.

The next chapter, Chapter Three introduces the design of the study. Rationales of the research designs, the underlying principles of the methodologies applied, the procedures of data collection, the analysis and the findings will be described in detail.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Design of Study**

#### **3.1 Research Perspectives, Approaches and Methods**

Chapter Three states the research perspectives, approaches, methods and the underlying principles which have been applied in this thesis. It explains the structures of the methods of data collection aimed to obtain valid and reliable information for responses to the research questions. There are three sections in this chapter.

Section one justifies the adoption of the mixed methods research by combining two different perspectives and takes the advantage of qualitative and quantitative approaches. It explains the benefit of using in-depth interviews as well as applying a moral level measuring instrument, the Defining Issues Test, in the attainment of the research objectives.

Section two states the details of the background of the college students who were selected for the investigations regarding their changes in moral reasoning levels by means of a moral education program. Moreover, details regarding the rationales of the sampling, timing and procedures are clarified, and the objectives of the moral education program named, Social Ethics, are stated accordingly as well. As the research attempts to distinguish the differences between the learning results of two groups of students over two types of learning projects, the divisions of groups and selection of projects are also clarified in the section.

Section three clarifies the research procedures and duration including the schedules of the interviews and the measurements of the students' learning results on the Defining Issues Test. Finally, conditions of validity, reliability and the ethical issues of the whole research design are clarified, and the chapter concludes with a summary of the design of study.

### 3.1.1 Introduction

Section one aims at justifying the application of the mixed methods research which was advocated by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004). They asserted that the approach of using both qualitative and quantitative perspectives could be used to counterbalance the weaknesses of the two approaches and to generate richer information over cross comparisons. In-depth interview with its strong qualitative perspective was adopted as a method to collect comprehensive information from the two groups of students. On the other hand, a moral measuring instrument based on quantitative analysis, the Defining Issues Tests (DIT), was adopted to examine the changes of students' moral levels during and after the moral education program. Despite this quantitative aspect, the research design did not involve the testing of a hypothesis in the design.

### 3.1.2 Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives

Boss (1994) proclaimed that the incorporation of community service learning in moral education program was proved to be an effective approach to enhance students' moral development. Following Boss' design of study, the objective of this study is to verify if the approach could generate the same results among college students in an entirely different social context, Hong Kong.

The design of this thesis aims to answer the question “What are the impacts of real-life experiences of community service learning on the students’ moral development if it is incorporated in a moral education program?” As the design adopted the approach of mixed methods research, the functions of both the quantitative and qualitative perspectives in the study are clarified below:

### 3.1.2a *Quantitative Perspectives*

Quantitative research methods were originally developed in the natural sciences to study natural phenomena. When education researchers took the perspective of treating the social world like the natural world as a hard, tangible and neutral reality, scientific investigations based on quantitative methodologies were adopted to analyze the relationships and regularities between the selected factors. Burrell and Morgan (1979) stated that the concerns would be the identifications and definitions of these factors and with the finding of ways in which these relationships could be expressed. They asserted that the importance of methodological issues would be the concepts themselves, including the rationales of measurements and the identification of the fundamental subject matters. This perspective expressed itself powerfully in searches for universal laws that governed the realities being observed. Based upon such characteristics, quantitative perspectives were well accepted in the social sciences, including research methods such as laboratory experiments and statistical modeling.

However, science has a mechanistic view of nature which, by definition, excludes the notions of choice, freedom, individuality and moral responsibilities (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 17). Kierkegaard (1974), by means of his notion of existentialism, highlighted the concern of individuals and their intrinsic needs to reach the highest level of

development. In Kierkegaard's plea to free people from their illusions, objectivity was stressed. His emphasis of the issue, that the capacity for subjectivity should be recaptured, was clarified by Warnock (1970. p. 197) as "subjectivity and concreteness of truth are together the light. Anyone who is committed to science, or to rule-governed morality, is benighted, and needs to be rescued from his state of darkness".

Moreover, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) identified several weaknesses in quantitative research regarding the community situations and constituencies because of the issues of validity, bias and reliability. These weaknesses were examined in terms of three significant concerns:

- (1). The researcher's samplings and theories that were used may not genuinely reflect the understanding of community constituencies;
- (2). The researcher may fail to observe and interrogate from phenomena occurring because of the focus on theory testing rather than on theory generation (called the confirmation bias); and
- (3). Knowledge produced may be too abstract and general for direct application to specific local situations, contexts, and individuals.

Other theorists such as Hampden-Turner (1970) and Habermas (1972) concluded that the positivist social science view of human beings was prejudiced in that it was conservative and paid no attention to essential qualities. It downgraded human behaviours to technical actions and neglected hermeneutic, aesthetic, critical, moral, creative and other forms of knowledge.

In spite of the inadequacies, the strengths of the quantitative perspective were acknowledged and applied on the foundation of the mixed methods research. In the

design of this study, a mathematical based method, the Defining Issues Test was adopted as an instrument to measure the changes of the students' moral reasoning levels.

### 3.1.2b *Qualitative Perspectives*

Advocates of qualitative research paradigm such as Lincoln and Guba (2000) rejected the notions of positivism, and they argued for the superiority of constructivism, idealism, relativism, humanism, and hermeneutics. They also proclaimed that multiple-constructed realities existed in great numbers, and it would be impossible and undesirable to generalize time-free and context-free conclusions. For these reasons, research should be value-bound, and it was impracticable to differentiate fully causes and effects, and knower and known could not be separated because the subjective knower would not be the only source of reality (Guba, 1990, p. 213).

Beck (1979 p. 175) asserted that the purpose of social science was to understand social reality as different constituencies would perceive it, and to demonstrate how their views would shape the action which they took within that reality. Since social science could not penetrate to what lay behind social reality, it had to work directly with people's definitions of reality and with the rules they devised for dealing with it. Beck (1979, p. 177) also claimed that what social sciences offered, particularly through qualitative perspectives, were explanations, clarifications and demystification of the social forms which the local people had created around themselves. This thesis, adopted Beck's notions, used qualitative data collected by interviews and reports to comprehend the students' learning outcomes through their engagements in the projects of a moral education program.

Nevertheless, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) identified the weaknesses of research designs undertaking qualitative methods. These issues were examined in terms of three noteworthy concerns:

1. The findings may not be generalized to circumstances of other settings because they could be unique to the relatively few people included in the research study;
2. It was difficult to make quantitative predictions and to test theories; and
3. The results were more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies.

The weaknesses as mentioned above were fully acknowledged by the researcher of this thesis. The uniqueness of the finding represented the reality of a small group of students. However, the meaning and significance of the reality could reflect the pragmatism of a particular aspect of a society. The personal biases of researchers would be found in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Thus, placing high attention on to the validity and reliability in the design of studies would be one of the feasible remedies in this aspect. Another helpful solution to this issue would be the application of the mixed methods approach, and the advantages of this approach are illustrated as below.

### *3.1.2c Mixed Methods Research*

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) and Ercikan and Roth (2006) had criticisms of the problems of polarizing research into qualitative and quantitative approaches. They advocated that the third research movement named "mixed methods research" which was the integrative approaches that provided the appropriate forms of knowledge needed by decision makers located differently in society and dealing with different units of analysis including individual, group and community. A polar distinction,

quantitative versus qualitative, has often been applied to produce different kinds of education research. Ercikan and Roth (2006) argued against the polarization of the subjective and objective approaches. They revealed that polarization was not meaningful or productive for education research. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) also stated that the quantitative-qualitative dichotomy not only distorted the conceptions of education research but also was fallacious. Moreover, they stressed that the polar categorization of research in terms of the quantitative-qualitative distinction contributed to promoting research that emphasized a certain type of data collection and certain construction modes rather than focusing on the construction of good research questions and conducting of good research.

Mixed methods research was formally defined as the class of research where the researchers mixed or combined qualitative and quantitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language within a single study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This definition could be considered as an appropriate description of the research methodology that was applied in this thesis. In theory, as illustrated by de Waal (2001), the approach of mixed methods research made use of the pragmatic method and system of philosophy. Its logic of inquiry included the use of induction (discovery of pattern), deduction (testing of theories) and abduction (uncovering and relying on the best of a set of explanations for understanding one's results). It is not a limiting form of research but an expansive and creative form of research. It is inclusive and pluralistic, and it was in favour of researchers taking of a diverse approach to method selection, the thoughts and conduct of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) rejected the notion of dogmatism and emphasized that mixed methods research was an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining research choices. They claimed that the most fundamental part of a study would be the research question, and research methods should follow research questions in a way that offered the best chance to obtain valid and reliable answers.

Most importantly, as noticed by Sechrest and Sidana (1995), the growth in the mixed methods movement has the potential to reduce some of the problems associated with singular methods. By employing qualitative and quantitative techniques within the same framework, mixed methods research could incorporate the strengths of both methodologies. Moreover, researchers who conducted mixed methods research would more likely to select approaches with respect to their underlying research questions, than paying attention to preconceived biases that research paradigm could control in social science investigations (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

### *[i] Triangulation*

The mixed methods research also took the advantages of the triangulation concept in research design. Campbell and Fiske (1959) asserted that triangulation could be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviours. Triangulation techniques in education research attempt to outline and give details of the abundance of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint such as making use of both qualitative and quantitative data. Other theorists (Smith, 1975; Lin, 1976) recognized that such an approach could be a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research.



Smith (1975) and Lin (1976) asserted the advantages of applying the triangulation approach in research into the effectiveness of education programs. Smith reported that some theorists were sharply critical of the limited applications of research methods existing in the social sciences. Although taking a single approach of observation in fields such as medicine and chemistry normally yielded sufficient and unambiguous information, it would be impractical in social science research because it provided only a limited view of the complexity of human behaviour and of situations in which human beings interact.

Smith (1975) argued that as research methods acted as filters through which the environment was selectively experienced, they were theoretical or neutral in representing the world of experience. Similarly, applying one single moral measuring instrument based on quantitative calculations as Boss (1994) did in her research. Her findings could hardly uncover the complicated processes of changes caused by the impacts generated from students' efforts on their projects of community services.

Lin (1976) affirmed that exclusive reliance on one method might bias or distort the examinations of a particular part of reality being investigated. Researchers needed to be assured that the data collected were not instances simply of one condition, and that such assertions could be achieved when the same results were produced by different methods of data collection and examinations.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) claimed that the triangulation concept of mixed methods research would be widely recognized in research of education and other disciplines in the social and behavioural sciences. The mixed methods research would also have a potential to promote shared responsibilities among the qualitative

and quantitative researchers in their mission of accomplishing higher education qualities (Sechrest & Sidana, 1995).

*[ii] No Hypothesis Is to Be Tested*

Quantitative research in the positivist tradition usually involves the testing of a hypothesis. The concept of “hypothesis” was defined by Kerlinger (1970) as a conjectural statement of the relationship between two or more variables. It was simply termed as “an objective academic guess” (p. 139), of the results of objective studies and observations. This is common in much research conducted in the quantitative approach especially where cause-and-effect or concomitant relationships were being investigated (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

Medawar (1981) stated that a good hypothesis must have the character of logical immediacy, by which it must be rather specially an explanation of whatever it was that needed to be explained and not an explanation of a great many other phenomena. The virtue of logical immediacy in a hypothesis was that it could be tested by comparatively direct and practicable means.

This study is aimed to investigate the impacts of real-life experiences of community services to the young adult students who have interacted with wide varieties of persons and circumstances. The investigation was conceptualized with various theoretical issues of moral principles and notions of process regarding moral development as described in Chapter Two. Thus, the objectivity of the linear relationship of cause-and-effect would not be sufficient enough to explain the details of the intricacy and complexity of moral changes.

For example, in the Confucian approach, the notion of *li* (rules of propriety 禮) and *ren* (loving others 仁) would not be necessarily engaged with the character of logical immediacy that is to be hypothesized. And the nature of these moral issues is proximate to the viewpoints of constructivism, idealism, relativism and humanism. It is very difficult to test by direct and practicable means of quantitative mechanism, even if they are formulated as a hypothesis (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Schwandt, 2000).

Moreover, the design of the study also reflects the suggestion by Ercikan and Roth (2006) for an integrated approach instead of a dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative viewpoints. The intention of quantitative based method adopted in this thesis was not to conduct an experiment in order to examine any hypothesis of cause-and-effect relationship, but rather to provide additional data to sustain the findings that were interpreted from the interviews. Thus, strengths of the triangulation approach could be drawn upon, and the weaknesses of taking one single methodology could be minimized.

### 3.1.3 Research Approaches and Methods

Several research approaches and methods were adopted in the design of this study. They were the ethnographic approach, method of interview and the Defining Issues Test (DIT). The strengths and the weaknesses of these approaches were clarified in the processes of data collection. A short assessment of the restraint of the Defining Issues Test was provided to identify the shortcomings of the method in the design.

#### 3.1.3a *Ethnographic Approach*

The notion of ethnographic approach was adopted in the design of data collection from the selected students. LeCompte and Preissle (1993. p.203) proclaimed that the

ethnographic research would be a process involving methods of inquiry, an outcome and a resultant record of the inquiry. Educational research often took up the paradigm of an ethnographic approach because many education issues can be better elucidated by means of constructivism, relativism and humanism (Woods, 1992).

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) identified the characteristics of the paradigm in the design of interview questions. These characteristics can be analyzed in terms of three significant concerns:

- (1). The concern is of human behaviours and their meanings. Meanings arise out of social situations and can be comprehended through interpretive processes. Humans actively construct their own meanings of the circumstances, and they are deliberate, intentional and creative in the constructing of their behaviours. Thus, in order to comprehend the meaning of moral concerns and moral development that arise from community service or ethical case studies, in-depth interviews served as the interpretive procedure;
- (2). The concern is that questions via interviews would be value-bound. In the design of the interview questionnaires, the questions would be affected by the researcher's value which could be expressed in the views of a problem. The questions would also be affected by the theories applied to guide the collection and analysis of data, and in the interpretation of findings; and
- (3). The concern is that the understanding of the process can be as important as the outcomes.

Thus, in the design of the questionnaires, inquiries are set to explore not only the processes including how and why were encountered during their projects, but also the reasons and factors of their learning outcomes and improvements. All reasons and

factors, rather than a small number of variables, have to be taken into account. Data were analyzed inductively so that constructs can be derived from the information collected from the interviews.

### 3.1.3b *Interviews*

According to Kvale (1996, p. 11), interviews could be regarded as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual concern. The method sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data (Kvale, 1996, p. 14).

Kitwood (1977) perceived several important qualities of interview that were closely related to the design of study of this research. These qualities are analyzed in terms of three significant points:

- (1). Interview is a feasible way of pure information transfer and collection;
- (2). Interview is a transaction which inevitably holds bias which has to be recognized and controlled. According to this viewpoint, Kitwood explained that “each participant in an interview will define the situation in a particular way. This fact can be best handled by building controls into the research design, for example, by having a range of interviewers with different biases”; and
- (3). According to Kitwood (1977), interviews enable both interviewer and interviewee to discuss their interpretations of the topic and to express how they regarded the topic from their own point of view. In this sense, the interview should not be simply concerned with collecting data about the topic, it is part of life itself that human partialities are bound to happen. Such partialities might include role-playing, stereotyping, perception and understanding regarding the topic and were often regarded as problematic. For example, the difficulties and

annoyances that students had encountered during their course projects might be exaggerated or expressed in an over-distressing manner purposely in the interviews that might not be detected by the researcher.

#### *[i] Planning the Interview Procedure*

Furthermore, in the process of planning this research, Kvale's (1996, p.88) assertions regarding the seven significant stages of interview were thoroughly examined and adopted as the underlying principles of the design. Details of the significance of each stage are analyzed below.

##### Stage 1 – Thematizing

This stage concerned the formulation of the purposes of a study, and the descriptions of the concepts of the topic to be investigated before the interview was started. The objectives of the research and what needed to be investigated should be clarified before the decision of the method was posed.

##### Stage 2 – Designing

This is the stage of planning the design of the study, and translating the research objectives into questions. Tuckman (1972) claimed that the first step in constructing interview questions was to specify what was to be measured. He identified the major factors that could affect the arrangement of interview questions. These factors were examined by means of nine issues. They were:

1. The objectives of the interview;
2. The nature of the research topic;
3. Whether the interviewer was dealing with facts or opinions;
4. Whether specificity and depth was sought;
5. The respondent's level of education;

6. The kind of information that the subject could be expected to have;
7. Whether or not the subject's thought needed to be structured;
8. The extent of the interviewer's own insight into the subject's situation; and
9. The kind of relationship that the interviewer could expect to develop with the subject.

### Stage 3 – Interviewing

This stage is the implementation of the interviews based on an interview guide and with a reflective approach to the knowledge sought and the interpersonal relation of the interview situation. There is a requirement to deal with the interpersonal, interactive, communicative and emotional expressions in this stage. Even a very slight and short body movement or facial expression could lead to misunderstanding.

Moreover, Kvale (1996) asserted that the ethical issues of interviews had to be noted at this stage. Important notions such as harm, free will and consent are to be considered thoroughly. The design of this thesis was approved and under continuous supervision of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). A copy of the letter of ethics clearance issued by the Human Research Ethics Committee is shown at the Appendix 3.3.4.

Patton (1980) recommended that it would be vital to maintain the interviewee's motivation. Field and Morse (1989) stated that there were several problems in the actual conduct of the interview that could be anticipated and, possibly, prevented. These problems have been analyzed in terms of nine significant concerns. They are:

1. Avoiding interruptions from outside such as telephone calls;
2. Minimizing distractions;

3. Minimizing the risk of “stage anxiety” between interviewer and interviewee;
4. Avoiding asking embarrassing questions;
5. Jumping from one topic to another;
6. Giving advice or opinions instead of active listening;
7. Summarizing too early or closing off an interview too soon;
8. Being too superficial; and
9. Handling sensitive matters such as legal or personal matters.

#### Stage 4 – Transcribing

This is the stage of preparing the interview material for analysis which would include a transcription from oral speech to written text. This could be a critical stage because there is a possibility of considerable loss of data, distortion and decrease of complexity. It could be caused by turning a record of social meeting into solely a record of data. In fact, this problem could be started at the stage of data collection when important contextual factors were filtered and visual and non-verbal aspects are neglected. In this study, without a doubt, it was often the non-verbal communication that provided more information than the verbal communication.

Kvale (1996) affirmed that it was unrealistic to pretend that the data on transcripts were anything but already interpreted data. His concern here was examined as there could be no single piece of “right” transcription, but to what extent a transcription was helpful for the researcher.

#### Stage 5 – Analyzing

This is the stage to decide, on the basis of the purpose and topic of the research and on the nature of the interview material, which methods of analysis would be



appropriate for the interviews. According to Kvale (1996, p. 90), analysis of qualitative data would be mainly interpretive, and could be more of a reflexive and reactive interaction between the researcher and the decontextualized data that were already interpretations of a social encounter.

Kvale (1996) stressed that data analysis would aim to strike a balance between maintaining a sense of the holism of the interview and the tendency for analysis to fragment the data. When separating the whole interview into parts, the synergy of the whole would be lost. Looking into an interview, the whole would be often greater than the sum of the parts. Kvale claimed that the analysis at this stage could be assessed by means of four steps:

1. Creating natural units of meaning;
2. Categorizing and classifying and ordering these units;
3. Structuring narratives to describe the interview contexts; and
4. Interpreting the interview data.

In addition, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 201) suggested a number of methods for creating meaning from transcribed interview data. These methods were examined and summarized in terms of twelve ways;

1. Counting frequencies of occurrence of ideas, themes or words;
2. Noting patterns and themes which may branch from repeated theme;
3. Seeing plausibility – trying to make good sense of data to reach a conclusion;
4. Clustering – setting items into categories, types and classifications;
5. Making metaphors – using figurative language rather than literal language;
6. Splitting variables to elaborate and to differentiate ideas;
7. Subsuming particulars into general notion, a move towards clarifying key concepts;

8. Factoring – bringing a large number of variables;
9. Identifying relationships between variables;
10. Finding intervening variables;
11. Building a logical chain of evidence; and
12. Making conceptual coherence.

#### Stage 6 – Verifying

This is the stage of ascertaining the generalization, reliability, and validity of the interview findings. (Details about the reliability and validity of the research design were discussed in section 3.3 of this chapter.) Kvale (1996) stated that validation must take place at all the stages of an interview-based research as shown below:

In stage 1 – the theoretical foundation of the research had to be firm and the connection between theories and research questions should be rational.

In stage 2 – designing, the research design had to be sensible in terms of methodology, operational definitions, sampling and ethical concern.

In stage 3 – interviewing, interviews had to be conducted to the highest standards with validity and reliability checks being made as it unfolds.

In stage 4 – transcribing, the interpretation from verbal to written had to be faithful to the original form.

In stage 5 – analyzing, the methods of analysis and interpretation of meaning had to be faithful to the original data.

In stage 6 – validating, decisions were reached on the most suitable forms of validity for the study.

In stage 7 – reporting, the report had to impartially reflect the study.

## Stage 7 – Reporting

This is the stage to communicate the findings of the study and the methods applied in a form that live up to scientific criteria, take the ethical aspects of the investigation into consideration, and that results in a readable product. Kvale (1996) suggested several important elements of reporting. They were scrutinized in terms of four concerns:

1. An introduction that included the main themes and contents;
2. A framework of the methodology;
3. The findings and the results; and
4. A discussion.

After the verification of the interview procedures by means of qualitative perspective, a quantitative-based moral measuring instrument, the Defining Issues Test (DIT), is clarified in the section below.

### 3.1.3c *Defining Issues Test (DIT)*

The Defining Issues Test was a moral-level measuring instrument that was used in the design to provide additional data in the assessment of the students' learning outcomes from the course projects. It was a component model of moral development devised by Rest (1979). The University of Minnesota formally established the Center for the Study of Ethical Development as a means for research around this test in 1982 (Rest, 1984). Since the 1970s, the Defining Issues Test has been widely used with samples of undergraduate college students to investigate a broad range of moral issues. Consequently, this instrument played a major role in shaping theorists' understanding of the development of moral judgment among college students (King & Mayhew, 2002).

Rest (1984) assumed that moral judgments were based upon people's concepts of how social cooperation could be organized, and further developed into basic problem-solving strategies. He asserted that a person would use six basic moral orientations to indicate progress in moral judgment. Rest (1984) described moral development as increasing sophistication in the understanding and application of principles for judging fairness. The notion has been named "Neo-Kohlbergian" by its components as it emphasized cognition, personal construction, development and post-conventional moral thinking that were reflections of Kohlberg's work (Narvaez & Bock, 2002).

The purpose of using the Defining Issues Test (DIT) in the design of the study was to explore the moral reasoning levels that students applied in resolving cases of moral dilemmas. The instrument was invented by Rest based upon Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental theory of moral reasoning. It consisted of several moral-dilemma stories each of which described a situation requiring an ethical decision. Associated with each dilemma, there were twelve statements, each representing a particular stage or type of moral judgment. The students were asked to rate each statement according to a scale ranging from great importance to no importance. After rating each item, students were requested to select the four most important issues out of twelve issues, and rank them in the order of importance. The four issues selected were later used to generate eight scores related to the stages of moral development.

Thirty-one students took two rounds of DIT with an interval of ten months. Details of the procedure were clarified in section 3.2 of this chapter. The tests were scored by the Center for the Study of Ethical Development, University of Minnesota. Reliability

checks were built into the scoring procedure. The results of the two rounds of tests reflected by scores were used to examine the changes of moral development among the students. Although the Defining Issues Test (DIT) has been used in many studies to examine various aspects of the lives and experiences of college students, King and Mayhew (2002) claimed researchers should understand that the realm of morality would be much broader than the moral judgment component that DIT was designed to measure. It was essential to discern the definitions of morality concepts required for its purpose.

For example, some researchers described DIT as an instrument of measurement of "morality", "ethics", "values" or "social reasoning". Although these could be concepts of similar areas, they could be theoretically different from moral judgment and arguably inconsistent with the purposes of DIT.

Thoma (1994) also stated the conceptual and methodological problems of using DIT scores to yield a single stage score as a proxy measure for Kohlberg's moral interview. Based upon these shortcomings, the remedy came in the same attitude as Rest (1984) designed DIT. It was suggested that researchers should continue to address theoretical questions, offer conceptual refinements, suggest alternative ways to measure both moral judgment and moral development, and subject them to the scrutiny of sustained scholarly inquiry. For that reason, in-depth interviews of the qualitative perspective with the underlying notions of mixed methods research as stated by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) was taken to balance the shortcomings of the method in the design.

After clarifying the application of research perspectives and methods in the design of the study, more explanation of the sampling selection, procedures and the details of the two types of projects for the students of the moral education program will be provided in the next section.

## **3.2 – Sampling Method, Moral Education Program and Projects**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

Section 3.2 states the rationales of the sampling methods of selecting students, relevant background of the College, moral education program, roles of the researcher in College and the procedure of students' selection of projects. Students were free to choose either the project of Group A (community service) or Group B (ethical case study). The syllabus of the moral education program and the details of the two types of project briefs showing the goals, requirements and tasks to be achieved and assessment criteria were explained with the copies attached in the Appendix.

### **3.2.2 The Community College and its Associate Degree Program**

Caritas Bianchi College of Careers (CBCC), established in 1971, is a community college affiliated with the Caritas Community and Higher Education (CCHE) of the Hong Kong Catholic Church. It is an institution of higher education that offers various programs of vocational training to young adults who are unable to continue their formal university education for various reasons.

One of the main educational philosophies of the Caritas Community and Higher Education is to provide appropriate chances of training and learning for three categories of young adults; the "Lost", the "Least" and the "Last". This was the "3L Approach" that was coined by Father Michael Yeung (2003) who was the President of the CCHE. The "Lost" category referred to those young adults who were unable to position their goals of education and life. The "Least" category referred to those young adults who were being marginalized by the society for various factors and reasons. The "Last" category referred to those who were unable to catch up with the standards and requirements of the current educational system in Hong Kong.

Based upon this educational philosophy, the College attempted to provide the “3L” students with not only the vocational knowledge and skills that would allow them to earn a living after graduation, but also teach them the importance of morality. Therefore, a course named “Social Ethics” was incorporated in all programs regardless of academic levels in order to enhance students’ moral development and their concerns for the problems of the society. The subject was a moral education program that was delivered by selected teachers and specially supervised by specific personnel of the Caritas Community and Higher Education.

As the researcher of this thesis, I served as one of the Program Leaders of the Faculty of Hospitality Management of the College. I was mainly responsible for the supervision of all the courses related to the tourism business, and also served as the coordinator of the course “Social Ethics”. Besides the need to keep the delivery of the course materials aligned with different classes, my other responsibilities as a coordinator included the planning and reviewing of course syllabus documents, monitoring quality assurance, and leading and guiding the teachers. Although I had to teach some courses such as “Tourism Management” to advanced students, I did not teach “Social Ethics” during the period of data collection. Therefore, the students sampled in this research had no relation to me.

The College offered three major types of vocational programs for several professions including; (a) the one-year Certificate programs, (b) two-year Diploma programs, (c) three-year Associate Degree programs. Upon the completion of the lower level programs, students can choose to further their education through promotion to higher level programs.



This research involved four classes of students of the Associate Degree in Hospitality Management program which was a three-year program in which students had to accomplish a total of 108 credits. "Social Ethics" was a course that lasted for two years and involved a total of 4 credits. Students had to pass all courses for graduation. The design of this study is to investigate the impact of community service on the Associate Degree students if it is incorporated in the course "Social Ethics".

### 3.2.3 Sampling - Young Adult Students

Morrison (1993) proclaimed that the quality of a piece of research could be ruined not only by the appropriateness of methodologies and instrumentations, but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that was adopted. In general, there are two main types of sampling according to Schofield (1996); the random sample (also known as statistical sampling) and the non-probability sample which is also known as a purposive sample. In a random sample, the chances of members of the wider population being selected for the sample are known. Whereas in a non-probability sample, the chances of members of the wider population being selected for the sample are unknown.

In spite of the fact that the results and findings from purposive sampling might not be generalized as universal rules, ethnographic methods ruled out statistical sampling and took the advantage of the other sides of the facts. LeCompte and Pressle (1993) pointed out several reasons for this issue. These reasons are examined in terms of five significant concerns:

- (1). The characteristics of the wider population were unknown;

- (2) There were no straightforward boundary markers (categories or strata) in the group;
- (3). Generalizability regarded as a goal of statistical methods, was not necessarily a goal of this ethnography;
- (4). Characteristics of a sample might not be evenly distributed across the sample; and,
- (5). One or two subsets of a characteristic of a total sample might be important.

Therefore, the design of study of this thesis took the methods of both convenience sampling and purposive sampling which were two of the non-probability samples. Convenience sampling involved choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing the process until the required sample size had been obtained (Bailey, 1978). Patton (1980) stated that convenience sampling saved time and money and spared the researcher the effort of finding less amenable participants.

And in purposive sampling, cases were picked by the researcher to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality. In this way, the researchers could build up a sample that was satisfactory to their specific needs (Bailey, 1978). In the design of this thesis, 31 Associate Degree students were selected based upon the convenience sampling method. It could satisfy the needs of this research design because it did not purport to represent the wider population, and even though it was deliberately selective and biased.

In other forms of research, sampling was fixed at the beginning of the study, however, there were often sample attrition by "mortality". It was inevitable that students would leave the investigation for various reasons. Mortality was seen problematic but ethnographic research regarded this as natural rather than a problem (LeCompte &

Pressle, 1993). There were 134 Associate Degree students (of four classes) who took the course, Social Ethics, at the beginning of the moral education program. A high attrition rate was expected because not all the students would complete all the projects or the whole program. Moreover, students were free to take or reject the two rounds of interviews and the Defining Issues Tests. Finally, only thirty-one students were able to finish the in-depth interviews and the Defining Issues Test (DIT).

#### 3.2.4 Moral Education Program – Social Ethics

The course, Social Ethics, was a moral education program for the Associate Degree students of the College. It was designed to enhance students' moral development and also their concerns for social ethics. Two types of projects, either community services or ethical case studies, were offered to the students who could choose freely according to their own interests and preferences. Classroom presentations and discussions of the project reports were required in order to strengthen learning. The details of the course syllabus are shown in Appendix 3.3.1 – Course Syllabus of Social Ethics.

#### 3.2.5 Division of Groups through Selection of Projects

After having clarified the details of the two project briefs, students were free to select either the community service project as of Group A or ethical case study project as of Group B. The purposes of the project briefs were to provide students a written list of instructions of procedures and requirements to be achieved of the project that they had selected. Students were also well informed of the goals of the projects, details of the tasks, assessment criteria for written reports and classroom presentations. Students were not allowed to shift from Group A to Group B or vice versa once their first project report was submitted.

Copies of the project briefs for Group A and Group B are shown at Appendix 3.2.2 – Project Brief for Group A (Community Services), and Appendix 3.2.3 – Project Brief for Group B (Ethical Case Studies).

In this section 3.2, principles of the sampling method employed for the selection of students in the design of the study are clarified. Relevant information about the College, roles of the researcher in College, moral education program and the two types of projects that were applied in the research are moreover described.

More details about the procedure and schedules of interviews and tests will be clarified in section 3.3.

### **3.3 - Research Procedures, Methods and Instruments**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

Section 3.3 aims to clarify the procedures and schedules in the process of data collection by using the approach of mixed methods research. In addition, three issues are also highlighted here. They are:

1. Clarification of the methods, instruments and procedures that enable other researchers to replicate the investigation;
2. The enabling of other potential researchers to determine if the findings can be trusted;
3. The justification of the concerns regarding the validity and reliability of the research design are explained, and the significance of ethical issues is clarified as well.

#### **3.3.2 Procedures and Duration**

The design of the study was to collect data by two different approaches about the impacts of community service on the students' moral development when it was incorporated in a moral education program.

The students were young adults, aged from 18 to 22, taking an Associate Degree program at a community college in Hong Kong. Students were divided into two groups of their own volition, taking either one of the following listed projects:

- Projects of community service to various organizations (Group A);
- Projects of ethical case studies chosen from local newspapers (Group B).

##### **3.3.2a *Number of Students and Attrition Rate***

There were four classes of 134 students registered with the course, Social Ethics, at the beginning of the moral education program. Students' decisions were confirmed

by the submission of their first project report submitted about five weeks after the dispatch of the two project briefs as described in section 3.2. Sixty-five students selected the community service project (Group A), and sixty-nine students selected the ethical case study project (Group B). However, by the end of the program, only 34 students of Group A and 30 students of Group B (a total of 64 students) were able to complete all projects successfully. The overall attrition rate was about 52.2% as shown in Figure 3.3.1 – Attrition rate of Group A and Group B students.

**Figure 3.3.1 – Attrition Rate of Group A and Group B Students**

	No. of students at the beginning	No. of students who completed all the projects at the end	Attrition rates
Group A – Community service	65	34	46.7%
Group B – Ethical case studies	69	30	56.5%
<b>Summary</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>52.2%</b>

The difference of 9.8% between the attrition rates 46.7% of Group A and 56.5% of Group B was considered acceptable within the design of study due to the notions of convenience sampling and purposive sampling.

**Figure 3.3.2 – Overall Attrition Rate of the Two Groups of Students**

	No. of students at the beginning	No. of students who completed all projects	Students who completed all interviews and DIT	Overall attrition rates
Group A – Community service	65	34	16	75.4%
Group B – Ethical case study	69	30	15	78.2%
<b>Summary</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>76.8%</b>

All 64 students who had successfully completed all the projects were invited to take the two rounds of in-depth interviews and Defining Issues Tests. The Defining Issues Tests were sent to University of Minnesota for scoring. After all these processes, the results of only 31 students were considered as valid and suitable for further analysis.

The phenomena of high attrition rates were examined and the causes were identified in terms of four significant reasons as given below.

1. The average drop-out rate in the faculty in the past 5 years was around 15%. As all the students were young adults, they might suspend their studies for a short period of time, or change their studies to part-time mode for a wide variety of factors including finance and family problems.
2. Incompletion of all the projects would not necessarily lead to failure of the course because only 40 out of 100 marks were required for a "pass". A large number of students were able to pass the course by working well only on a few numbers of projects so that they could save time for other learning and social activities.
3. The course Social Ethics was regarded by some students and a small number of teachers as a minor compared with other heavily credited courses such as Hotel Management and Marketing.
4. Students had the option to take the two rounds of interviews and Defining Issues Tests. Invitations for interviews and tests were declined for various reasons such as being busy and a lack of interest in the test. Some attended only the first round of the Test, and a certain number of test results were void because of improper and unfinished markings.

In order to select students of different abilities, 14 students from the first round interviews, and 17 students (different from those of the first round) from second round interviews were chosen from Group A and Group B with very different levels of performance as shown in Figure 3.3.3. Students' level of performance was reflected by the marking of their reports and classroom presentations. As students had to submit their projects in sequence during the semesters, classroom presentations of their learning were assessed continuously throughout the year. Marks were given by

their lecturers according to their level of performance. In order to interview students of different abilities, the convenience and purposive sampling methods were applied to pick the 31 students from good, average and poor results.

**Figure 3.3.3 – Number of Students Selected for Interviews from Groups.**

<b>Level of performance</b> (Based upon the marks of the reports)	<b>Group A – 34 students</b> (Community services)	<b>Group B – 30 students</b> (Ethical case studies)	<b>Total</b>
Good results - (above 70 marks)	5	4	9
Average results - (40 ~ 69 marks)	6	8	14
Poor results - (below 40 marks)	5	3	8
<b>Total no. of students selected</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Remarks:</b> No. of students selected from different groups in each round:	1 <sup>st</sup> round interview – 5 2 <sup>nd</sup> round interview - 11	1 <sup>st</sup> round interview – 9 2 <sup>nd</sup> round interview - 6	1 <sup>st</sup> Round – 14 2 <sup>nd</sup> round - 17

In the design of the research, concerns regarding the duration of time which would be needed to build up an observable change of moral development was considered. This issue was emphasized by both Kohlberg (1984) and Cua (1992) as reviewed in Chapter Two. Within the period of about 24 months, two measurement points were taken as shown in Figure 3.3.4 and Figure 3.3.5.

**Figure 3.3.4 – Schedules of Interviews and Tests**

March 2005	May 2006	March 2007
Sample population setting	Mid-point measurement	End-point measurement
<b>1<sup>st</sup> round DIT</b> (Both Group A and B were invited)	<b>1<sup>st</sup> round interviews</b> - 5 picked from Group A - 9 picked from Group B  Total: 14 students were interviewed	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> round DIT</b> (Both Group A and B were invited)
Division of students into Group A & Group B.  Project briefs were introduced to the students accordingly.		<b>2<sup>nd</sup> round interviews</b> - 11 picked from Group A - 6 picked from Group B  Total: 17 students were interviewed
Remarks: These 31 students attended one interview only (either 1 <sup>st</sup> round or 2 <sup>nd</sup> round), and their DITs were scored by the Center for the Study of Ethical Development, University of Minnesota.		



**Figure 3.3.5 – Timeline of the Measurements**

<b>March 2005</b> (Start-point measurement)	<b>May 2006</b> (Mid-point measurement)	<b>March 2007</b> (End-point measurement)
1 <sup>st</sup> round DIT		2 <sup>nd</sup> round DIT
	1 <sup>st</sup> round interviews	2 <sup>nd</sup> round interviews

### *3.3.2b Structure of Interview Schedule and Questionnaires*

The interview schedule was designed to elicit information regarding students' feelings and learning during and after their projects. Details about the interview statement and questionnaires were listed in the Appendix 3.3.1 – Interview Statements and Questionnaires. There are four parts in the structure of the interview schedule with different purposes in terms of topics and questions. Details of each part are clarified as below.

#### **Part one – Introduction**

This part was to express gratitude to the student for attending the interview and to clarify the purposes of the interview. It was important to inform the students that the interview had no connection to any course and of the confidentiality of the interview.

#### **Part two – Ethical case studies and community services**

There were 12 open-ended questions with the main aim being to elicit details about students' experience of learning and the difficulties encountered during their projects.

#### **Part three – Other significant influences of moral development**

Two questions were designed to inquire about the most significant source of influence to the students' moral development.

#### Part four - Concluding questions

Students were asked to raise other issues that they thought may be important but were not discussed in the interview regarding their learning over the projects. Finally, gratitude was expressed to the students for their involvements and support in the test and interview.

#### 3.3.2c *Defining Issues Test*

There were two rounds of Defining Issues Test applied in the design of research as shown in Figure 3.3.4. The first round was taken around the time when the students had just started working on their projects. The second round was taken near the end of the course.

The Defining Issues Test (DIT) is a component model of moral development devised by Rest (1979) based upon Kohlberg's (1969) cognitive-developmental theory of moral reasoning. It consists of several moral-dilemma stories each of which described a situation requiring an ethical decision. Connected with each dilemma are 12 statements, each them signifying a particular stage of moral judgment.

Students were asked to rate each statement according to a scale as shown below:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>A</b> – Most important item;       | <b>B</b> – Second most important item; |
| <b>C</b> – Third most important item; | <b>D</b> – Fourth most important item. |

The rankings are used to generate eight scores related to the stages of moral development (Guide for the Defining Issues Test, 1993). Two samples of the stories are shown in Appendix 3.3.2 – Heinz and the Druggist; and Appendix 3.3.3 – The Escaped Prisoner.

### 3.3.3 Validity

Validity and reliability are regarded as the essence of all scientific research. Validity can be defined as the extent to which the information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomenon being studied. Newer definitions of validity, taking more forms such as qualitative data validity, are addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and range of the data collected, and the extent of alertness of the researcher's subjectivity as well.

Cohen, *et al.* (2000) affirmed that invalidity can be lessened by avoiding biased choices by the researcher although studies would be inevitably subjective. Validity can be improved at the design stage by selecting an appropriate methodology for answering the research question, and selecting proper instruments for gathering the type of data required.

Furthermore, it is important to notice the notion of Lave and Kvale (1995) regarding the issue of reactivity effect. The subjects would behave or respond differently when subjected to inquiry or being placed in different situations. For example, students in this project might think of gaining more marks in the future if they responded ethically and decently in the interviews. Other factors such as the attitude, gender, personality, dress, replies, question techniques, style and non-verbal communication concerned by the researcher should be prudently addressed for higher degree of validity. Gronlund (1981) proclaimed that validity should be seen as a matter of degree rather than as an absolute state. Kvale (1996, p.74) asserted that there could be no single standard of validity. It would be rather the notion of fitness for purpose within an ethically defensible framework that should be adopted, giving rise to different kinds of validity for different kinds of interview-based research.

The design of the study of this thesis took the mixed methods research of applying both quantitative and qualitative methods. The verification of an interview-based study should be determined by the researcher's attitude of examining the generalization, reliability, and validity of the interview findings (Kvale, 1996). He asserted that validation must be implemented at all the stages of interview-based research. For example, in the stage of theoretical foundation, validity should be rationally connected between the theories and research questions. Moreover, in the stage of transcribing, the interpretation from verbal and social media to written means have to be faithful to the original form. Methods of analysis and interpretation of meaning are to be truthful to the original data, and the report has to reflect the study impartially. In addition, Kvale (1996) also proclaimed that a research design would only be valid when the research framework is sensible in terms of methodology, operational definitions, sampling and ethical concern.

The transcribing of the 31 interview records from spoken to written means had been one of the most challenging procedures of validity of the thesis. As both the researcher and students spoke the same local dialect, interviews were recorded in Chinese. Verbatim transcription from verbal to written was done first by the researcher. After that, the written Chinese transcripts were translated into written English records. In order to verify the validation of the records, all the students were invited to read both the Chinese and English transcriptions in a meeting for the validation of the records. Adjustments were made instantly on the script papers according to the feedback and clarifications of meaning, and finally endorsed by the student. Nevertheless, it was prudently noted that the translation of interviews could lead to subjectivity, and students may not have fully understood their English language transcripts.

The validity of Defining Issues Test was noticed and proven by the Center of the Study of Ethical Development, University of Minnesota (Guide for the Defining Issues Test, 1993).

#### 3.3.4 Reliability

Reliability can be defined as the replication of the study under similar circumstances (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). It is about precision and accuracy, and is considered essentially a synonym for consistency over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents. A study would be regarded as reliable when it could demonstrate that similar results would be found if it was performed within a similar group of subjects and in a similar context. In qualitative research, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) defined reliability as a fit between what the researcher recorded as data and what actually occurred in the natural setting being researched.

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) put forward that the standards of reliability for quantitative research may be just impracticable for qualitative research. However, Cohen, *et al.* (2000, p. 119) asserted that it is practicable through the possibility of replication, if the same methods are used with the same sample, then the results should be the same. In reality, the foundations of naturalistic studies include the uniqueness, individuality and idiosyncrasy of situations, it would be considered as the strength of the researchers rather than their weakness if the study could not be replicated (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) identified several characteristics of reliability in qualitative research. These characteristics were analyzed in terms of three significant concerns:

1. The concern of the stability of examination, that is to see if the researcher could conduct the same analysis and interpretation as they had examined at a different time;
2. The concern of parallel forms, that is if the researcher could have made the same observations and interpretation of what had been seen if the researcher had pay attention to other phenomena during the observation;
3. Inter-rater reliability concerns, that is if another researcher observed with the same theoretical framework, the same phenomena would have been observed and interpreted in the same way.

#### 3.3.5 Ethical Issues

The proposal of this study was assessed by the Human Research Ethics Committee of University of Technology, Sydney, and it was approved by the Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 (Approval Number: UTS HREC REFNO. 2005-021A). A copy of the letter of ethics clearance issued by the Human Research Ethics Committee is shown at Appendix 3.3.4. Every twelve months following ethics approval date, the ethical conditions have to be reviewed again. Detailed reports regarding the progression of the ethical issues research had to be endorsed by the research supervisor before being submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee for further approval.

In addition, the research proposal was also approved by the College president regarding the implementation of the investigation inside the College. A certified copy of the approval was submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee of University of Technology as well. All other staff of the College including the lecturers of the course, Social Ethics, were notified accordingly.

As the researcher was not one of the lecturers of the course, Social Ethics, all students engaged in the research were clearly notified of three issues before taking any tests or interviews. The following three issues were made clear to the students:

1. Students are free to decide whether to take or decline the tests and interviews regardless of any reasons. No information will be collected from the students without their consent;
2. The tests and interviews are totally independent from any other courses that the students are taking. There is no connection between the assessment of the assignment and projects and the Social Ethics course;
3. Confidentiality is highly regarded. All the students are assured that their identities are strictly preserved at all costs by the research. Their feedback, test results and information will be made public only in the form of a statistical summary that provides no information identifying specific individuals. All records of raw data will be entirely destroyed after the research is completed.

#### 3.3.6 Summary

This chapter clarifies the perspectives, approaches and methods that were applied in the design of the study with the aims of formulating a set of scientific methodologies for data collection. Thus, the findings captured from analyses of the data were used to answer the research question, which was; "What are the impacts of real-life experiences of community service learning on the students' moral development if it is incorporated in a moral education program?"

By adopting the mixed methods approach, both qualitative and quantitative perspectives were applied in the design of study. The approach not only enlarged the scope of exploration, but also enriched the findings by cross comparisons and

contrast of the results generated by the two methods, in-depth interviews and the Defining Issues Tests.

In the application of in-depth interview as one of the main methods of data collection, Kvale's (1996) assertions of the seven significant stages of interview were thoroughly examined and adopted as the underlying principles of the design. In addition, the concerns regarding the validity of interview-based research were clarified according to Kvale's notion of the interview planning stages. The concerns of reliability of qualitative methods were also clarified by notions of Bogdan and Biklen (1992); LeCompte and Preissle (1993) and; Rudestam and Newton, (2001).

The background of the formulation and underlying principles of the quantitative method, the Defining Issues Test, are clarified in section 3.1 of this chapter as well. As the tests were scored by the Center for the Study of Ethical Development, University of Minnesota, the validity and reliability of the method was endorsed by the Center accordingly.

The whole duration and procedure of the design covered a period of two years. It was needed, according to the notions of Kohlberg (1984) and Cua (1992), to build up discernible changes of moral development. As Kaplan (1973) stated: if research methodologies, referred to as the techniques and procedures used in the process of data-gathering, was to help researchers understand their investigated content, what is arguably important then, was not so much the product of scientific inquiry but the process itself.



The importance of validity and reliability was significantly considered for the design of this study. Ethical issues were also viewed as essential to the design. Accordingly, the design of this study was assessed and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of University of Technology, Sydney.

In Chapter Four, Data Analysis and Results Findings, the processes of data analysis and the generation of results and findings are explained.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Data Analysis and Result Findings**

There are three sections in Chapter Four. Section one aims at the analysis of the 31 in-depth interviews by means of a qualitative approach. In the process of categorizing the information, the construct approach of Dumas (1989) was applied. In the process of examining the students' feedback, similar viewpoints as units were sorted out from the records and formed into categories known as constructs. A total of 11 constructs were formulated in the analysis, and were viewed as four different sets of findings in terms of their nature. These constructs describe the essences of the students' experiences of learning through the completion of their Social Ethics projects. Appendix 4.1 shows the list of the names of the 11 constructs.

Section two is the examination of the results of the two rounds of Defining Issues Tests that were given to the same students who took the interviews as described in section one. The tests were scored by the Center of the Study of Ethical Development, University of Minnesota. After that, the results were compared and were further processed by t-tests for statistical significance. A summary of the findings generated from this quantitative approach is provided.

Section three explains the findings produced by further assessments through comparisons of the results generated from the two approaches as described in section one and section two. Cross comparisons between the results found by the two methods from the two groups of students were employed in order to gain a wider range of viewpoints for deeper examination. Charts and tables were used to demonstrate interrelationships between factors and groups. An assessment

concerning the advantages and limitations of two approaches, especially regarding the constraints of the Defining Issues Test, was processed. Finally, a summary of the whole analysis and findings is stated in the conclusion of the chapter.

#### **4.1 Analysis of the Findings Generated from In-depth Interviews**

##### **4.1.1 Introduction**

The transcripts of the 31 in-depth interviews, each about 2.5 hours, were analyzed by the application of the construct approach of Dumas (1989). Similar views such as reasons of selecting community services, difficulties encountered, parental relationships and learning from tutors, etc. were coded into units. For example, students revealed that they gained support from the professionals of the service centres where they took the task of community service. Different types of support were coded, and thus formed units of learning from the centre staff. Scenarios of related units were categorized in a construct. A title was given to each category in attempt to capture the essence of the kind for the units' inclusion in the construct. For example, Construct 6 was titled as "Recognizing community needs and overcoming negative stereotypes". A total of 11 constructs revealed the various types of influences for students regarding their learning from the moral education program. Appendix 4.1 shows the list of the 11 constructs.

In the process of data analysis through a qualitative method such as in-depth interviews, factors and causes were often hidden inside a large volume of complex information. Rudestam and Newton (2001) stressed that careful sorting and categorizing into groups according to the rules of inclusion could make the complexities of each effect noticeable, and the procedure could also indicate how the complexities interacted. Eleven constructs were organized into four groups

according to different focus of interpretations. The first group consisted of three constructs interpreting the influences from parents. The second and third group of constructs focused to clarify the learning experiences of the two groups of students taking different types of projects. The last group of constructs aimed at the interpretations of other miscellaneous factors such as classroom activities, complaints and suggestions.

#### 4.1.2 Coding Method of the Quotations

The coding system used to identify the sources of the quotation as shown in each of the constructs is signified by three sets of numbers separated by a dot and a comma. For example, the code (1.3, p. 5) is represented as such. The first number [1] shows that the quote came from the first round interview; the second number [3] indicates that the third student's feedback was cited; and the figure [p. 5] specifies that the quote was recorded on the fifth page of the transcript of the student.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim in Chinese and then translated into English. Both the Chinese and English transcripts were reviewed by the students face-to-face with the researcher over meetings. After having found no misinterpretations of their ideas and feedbacks, the students confirmed the transcripts with their signatures. Owing to the fact that students may not have fully understood the English language transcripts, the Chinese transcripts were used in the process of analysis. While, in the reporting of the findings and coding system here, the English transcripts were referred.

#### 4.1.3 The Influences from Parents

The first, second and third constructs reveal the intense influences from parents through close relationships, daily communications and encouragements. These three

constructs identified the Chinese culture of emphasizing the relationship between family members in Hong Kong. Such tradition would certainly be one of the essential factors in the students' moral development. This phenomenon complies with Lau's (1992) assertion that Chinese morals in Hong Kong still maintained their powerful influences especially through the interactions between family members. All the 31 students involved in this study lived with family, most with one or more parents although two students noted they lived with their grandparents. Moral education begins at home long before formal education starts. It is regarded as a custom that when children behave against moral expectations, the parents should bear the fault of not giving effective moral teaching at home (Cheng, 2004). As a result of such a tradition, moral upbringing in the family must be given a heavy weighting in the assessment of moral education in Hong Kong (Lau, 2004).

The first construct shows that students regard their parents as the most influential persons in their moral development. The second construct reveals students' learning generated from the sharing with parents or experts, which was one of the tasks required in the project brief. The third construct draws the connection between the involvements of parents and students' self-confidence. Evidence is quoted as follows.

#### *4.1.3a Construct 1 – Parents as the Most Influential Person*

The first construct illustrates that the comparatively smaller living area in Hong Kong could be a factor that enables easier communication and a more intimate parent-child relationship. Many students reported that the person who had the most influence over their moral development was one of their parents who lived with them. Living together in the same small quarters might intensify interactions between family

members. Such congested circumstances might ease consultations and exchange of ideas. Students expressed that living together with parents intensified the mutual relationship. This phenomenon might be more obvious among single-parent families as two students outlined in their interviews:

I live with my mother... Two of us ... live in a small house (1.13, p. 1). It is a little congested. We share the same bed room... and we have endless topics to share with. We support each other. She loves me... So, my mother is the most influential person of my life and my moral development. ...my mother taught me everything about how to be a decent girl. And many important rules... She emphasizes that I have to work hard... and be a well educated lady (1.13, p. 4).

I live only with my father (2.11, p. 1). My father raised me up and taught me everything about morality and values... he is old now, I still like to ask him... share with him before making any important decisions... He still teaches me...handle interpersonal relationships and other people's concerns (2.11, p.4). I guess nobody ... would be as influential as my father...(2.11, p. 5).

This construct corresponds to Lau's (2004) assertion that parents would inevitably bear the duties of being their children's first moral educators. Consequently, parents were regarded as the most influential persons in their children's moral development. There were reports of students who did not live with parents. Two students reported that their grandparents whom they lived with were the most influential persons in their moral development.

I live with my grandparents... My grandparents raised me up (1.3, p.1). They are the dearest persons of my life. I think I love them more than my father

and mother (1.3, p.3). But I think my grandparents... who have been teaching me a lot about morality and social ethics. I usually ask for their point of view if I need some advices. I love them... they are very influential to me (1.3, p.4).

The finding supported the notions of social-cultural theorists such as Bandura (1986), Etzioni (1996) and Shweder (*et al.*, 1987) who emphasized the functions of cultural influences in the transmission of values, moral character and cognitive patterns to society. The parent-child relationship as demonstrated in this construct substantiates the impact of the development of attachment (Bowlby, 1988; Kobak & Sceery, 1988). Bowlby assumed that the root of human personality lays in the earliest childhood relationships. Significant failure in those relationships would permanently shape the child's development. Such phenomena could be more discernible in Hong Kong because of its distinctive social background of Chinese culture and with its inherent strong family ties.

#### 4.1.3b Construct 2 – *Sharing with Parents Reinforces Beliefs*

The second construct revealed that students could strengthen their belief by sharing them with their parents. Fourteen students out of thirty-one reported that they were fond of sharing their learning with their parents, and felt more certain about the moral values and beliefs that they had learnt from the task. They confessed that it was convenient and easy to share with their parents regarding their hardships and difficulties encountered in the community services or case studies. They admitted that they felt happy if their parents showed support and concern for their work as two students outlined in their interviews:

My mother was quite happy... She was supportive to my work of serving some sick people... My mother used to ask me about my experiences of community service. I liked to tell her everything ... She explained to me more about the meaning of the services. I sometimes was touched... mother was so...supportive to my service (2.16, p. 5).

For most of the service I reported, the "expert" was my mother... It was easy to ask my mother...(2.15, p. 3). ...she gave me a lot of advice... When I returned home from the service centre... I ... tell her those funny experiences... She asked me many questions... I felt cheerful when she was supportive... I felt more confident of the righteousness that I did for the people in my services (2.15, p. 3).

Gilligan (1982) affirmed the importance of caring for other people, especially among girls, in the process of moral development. She believed that the morality of being caring and responsible is based on the loving care and attention a person receives. Students in this construct show they were highly motivated by their mother's empathic attitude and gained more confidence in moral activities of caring for other people.

#### *4.1.3c Construct 3 – Gain Confidence from Parents' Approvals*

The third construct illustrates students' reaction to their parents' attitude to their efforts on the projects. Students reported that they were able to strengthen their remembrance of the moral issues that they had encountered in the projects when their parents gave visible approval to their efforts. They also expressed that they gained more self-confidence, as two of the students outlined in their interviews:



I was very happy... when my father agreed with my viewpoints... I usually feel safer and more confident... If I do something without my father's consent, I worry about the consequences ... I certainly would feel more confident if my parents showed their consent... (1.8, p. 3).

I asked my father about his opinion... I like to seek his ideas before making important decisions... when I obtained consent from him... it would increase our confidence... Now, I am over 20, I still like to take advice from him... I feel no tension when he is on my side (1.10, p. 3)

Confucius said that ritual forms of *li* (rules of propriety) and *ren* (loving others) should begin at home among family members and kinfolk (Lunyu 3.3). Confucius also said that if a person did not keenly consider the well-being of others, not even of their family members, the ritual manners of the person signified nothing (Lunyu 3.3). Such traditional concepts could be a significant factor in the parent-child relationships among Chinese families as another student revealed in her interview:

I feel very secure and safe with my parents... For example, I planned for studying hotel business. My parents approved my plan... and therefore, I feel confident in taking the associate degree program in hotel business... (1.12, p. 4)

#### 4.1.4 Learning from Community Services

Another three constructs provide more information about students' attitudes to the community services and their achievements. The fourth construct describes the rationales of their decision of taking on the project of community services. The fifth

construct shows how moral learning occurred when they were involved in the solving of problems and overcoming of difficulties during the service. The sixth construct shows students' achievements in recognizing community needs and overcoming negative stereotypes with the help of the counselling of the service centre staff.

#### *4.1.4a Construct 4 – Reasons for Taking Community Services*

The fourth construct reveals the rationales behind the students' selection of community services. Ten out of the seventeen students expressed that they intended to acquire more knowledge of the services involved in contacting handicapped children and old people who needed some form of some assistance. Other students revealed that they thought that community services would be interesting and meaningful because they could visit some restricted sites such as prisons, and be able to meet with different career specialists and make new friends. Students also admitted that they were happy to be invited by classmates to join large-scale community services such as a bazaar or an annual charity event.

Besides, it is a social consensus that community services represent good deeds to society. Two sets of beliefs were discovered among students' reasons for taking community services. First, community services could enlarge their social network and offer access to careers which they were interested in or even know little about. Second, students regarded analyzing ethical cases as a boring task compared with outdoor community services. One student who chose to serve a group of hyperactive children reported how she sought interesting community services together with her classmates. She said in her interview:

I took community services... because I thought... would be exciting because I could visit some remote places with my classmates and meet new friends of

different careers. And I also thought that working on the ethical cases ...  
would be very boring... (2.14, p. 1).

#### 4.1.4b Construct 5 – *Impressive Service Experiences*

The fifth construct demonstrates students' direct contact with community values and real-life moral dilemmas in the course of their tasks. Almost all the students were able to recall immediately one or two impressive incidents when asked in the interviews. They were able to describe the problems encountered and how these difficulties were solved by themselves or with help from others. Such experiences helped to build their identity in terms of what Rest (1984) described as a moral agent. A moral agent, as Rest describes it, is a person who holds a strong sense of moral concern and is always ready to engage in moral action. For example, one student reported that despite the rather rough weather conditions, he still continued his duties:

There were many problems...the weather was very bad... and people were rushing... We stood under a shelter... selling the flags. The place was very crowded... Most of them were not interested in ... our flags... We were wet and hot and felt very uncomfortable... carrying the heavy money bag... But I knew... keep on my duties (1.4, p. 2).

It would be difficult not to feel any sort of moral concern if a student came face to face with a handicapped child, depressed from being deserted by family. Such emotion behind a sense of moral obligation is aroused through actual contact with people in need. Actually meeting and serving the poor and needy could enhance people's moral sensitivity, and thus, any denial in the care and attention for the less able and less fortunate may be reduced in the eyes of those participants (Rest *et al.*, 1999).

Community service work had several advantages over simulated expressions in a classroom because it puts students in direct contact with community values and real-life moral dilemmas (Boss, 1994). As a student outlined his responsibilities:

The most impressive service was the one that I took a group of children to the park... They all had different kinds of mental illnesses... I was responsible to lead the children to play games there...(2.14, p. 2).

Another student stated her difficulties but stressed that she was happy as she felt she made a real difference with the service:

We were all sweating... Some people came and complained...I was totally exhausted when I was on my way to dinner... but we were happy... because our works were helpful to those people (1.11, p. 2).

Hoffman (1976) also explained that empathy was an essential component in moral sensitivity. The sense is often triggered by the direct perceiving of another person's pain. For example, the experience of visiting a home for the elderly could increase students' empathy for the lives of the residents there, and thus, improve students' moral sensitivity about the needs of these senior citizens.

#### *4.1.4c Construct 6 – Recognizing Community Needs and Overcoming Negative Stereotypes*

The sixth construct reveals the process of recognizing community needs through community work, and overcoming negative stereotypes of certain types of people through the sharing of opinions with professionals at the service centres. Fourteen students reported that they enjoyed taking advices from service organization staff.

Some confessed that they learnt to communicate with those handicapped children who they previously had been afraid to come into contact with.

For example, one student was invited to attend a course on understanding suicidal tendencies before visiting some elderly folks at an old housing estate. She described her fruitful learning:

The purposes of the training course... to be familiar with... elder people, and ... to distinguish those little signs of intentions of suicide... The course was conducted by specialists... it was very fruitful... (2. 3, p. 2).

It was noticeable that community services not only increased students' sensitivity to moral issues, but also helped them to overcome negative stereotypes that often acted as barriers to interpersonal communications. These services confronted students' egocentrism by demanding their attention and concerns about the welfare of those in need (Chickering, 1976). Chickering's notion could be demonstrated by the story of a student and her gradual acceptance of the unpleasantness and environment of her service. She reported in the interview:

I did not prefer serving an old folk's home...at the beginning... I felt quite uncomfortable... the place was dirty and smelly... the washroom. Later...I understood... and began to accept...I found many of these elderly people were very lonesome...they were not happy (2.9, p. 3).

Boss (1994) in her research stated that participation in community service work can provide students with an opportunity to work out moral issues that have been troubling

them. She found out that students often chose a service that was related to personal moral dilemmas with which they were currently struggling.

A student struggled with her self-image after getting punched in the nose by an angry child who was involved in a physical altercation with another child in a tutorial conducted by her. She revealed that the officers of the centre helped her out of her embarrassment. She reported:

The supervisors of the centre... we shared many ideas regarding this incident.

They taught me some skills of handling angry children particularly when they were in quarrel and fighting. It was very rewarding because I learnt a lot (1.12, p.3).

Many other students reported that they were able to learn skills and knowledge that were usually not made available at the College. They reported:

I might not be able to gain knowledge of these types of activities from our teachers in our college... I was able to learn really many things...

I really enjoy the sharing with those proficient people (2.8, p. 4).

I was pleased that I could learn some knowledge about autism and also the syndromes of autistic children... I didn't like these children and even scared by them. Now, I can communicate with them... (2.12, p. 4).

The tutors... helped me to change my mind and not to label certain type of people who I did like to talk to them... This is one of the most useful rewards that I gain... (1.4, p. 3).

#### 4.1.5 Learning from Ethical Case Studies

The seventh, eighth and ninth constructs show the facts about the students who took ethical case studies. The seventh construct depicts their rationales of taking on ethical case studies and picking the ethical cases from newspapers. The eighth construct reveals the process of moral learning from analyzing the cases. The ninth construct shows students' learning from the publicized thoughts and judgments of journalists, columnists and editors who commented on social events in newspapers. The feedback from these students provides some facts accounting for the preferences of using case studies in moral education programs by the moral educators in Hong Kong as raised by Lam (1991).

##### 4.1.5a *Construct 7 – Reasons for Taking Ethical Case Studies*

The construct reveals students' rationales behind choosing case study works over community service for their project. It also shows how students selected the ethical cases from newspapers. Seven out of fourteen students expressed that they would have chosen community services if they had found the right community service that suited them. For example, a student confessed:

I like community service works but I was unable to find those services that suited me... I could not find these ...services easily (2.7, p. 1).

The remaining students revealed that they thought it would be easier and less time-consuming to complete the tasks of case studies. For example, one of the students confessed that she was fully loaded with part-time work.

I do not have any more time to do community services... I think working on the case studies suited me better than community services (1.13, p. 2).

Some other students reported that taking case studies could be more flexible and easier, as one student said:

I think the task of case studies could be more flexible to me. I like...choosing cases from different sources...newspapers, magazines and websites. I selected interesting... challenging ones... (1.14, p. 2).

Furthermore, students revealed that they usually needed to spend more time to read and to sieve through cases before they decided on the one that would be used for their reports. A student reported her procedures of case study work:

I had to read many cases before I could pick one... I would select several cases that I was interested in... I would think about the details... and see if I could understand... I would dump the case if I did not understand...then, I would write...the report. (1.1, p. 2)

#### 4.1.5b Construct 8 – *Learning from Analyses of Ethical Case Studies*

The construct reveals students learning from their examination of the ethical cases that they picked. During the interview, most of the students were able to recall immediately one or two unforgettable tragic cases that they had examined. They were also able to describe their understanding and empathy for the people involved in these tragic cases. Students also mentioned that liked to discuss the cases with their parents because it was both convenient and meaningful to obtain their parents' opinions at home.

Although abstract examinations of ethical cases may not be as effective as having actual contact with the victims, the empathic sensation aroused could help to enhance students' moral sensitivity (Hoffman, 1976), as one student outlined:



I felt... some very sad reasons behind this self-killing behaviour. But, I thought... she was unwise... I learnt that I should be very rational when I faced any serious problem... I will never do...like her (2.6, p. 2).

Another student indicated what she learnt from the case analysis after sharing her feelings with family members, she said:

I discussed the case with my parents ... I learnt...about the importance of relations among family members. Honesty between husband and wife is important as my parents emphasized (1.14, p. 4).

One student recalled a tragic case and talked about his learning of the impacts of poverty. He reported:

A man attacked his daughter...with a cook's knife... Then, he attacked his wife..., later the man chopped himself and jumped out of a window and dropped dead... The most important thing I learnt was that I know poverty can destroy a man and his family, poverty...the man...lose face & that brought very much hatred to his family members (1.8, p. 2).

It seemed that the students were able to consider a wider variety of thought-provoking moral problems in the analyses of ethical cases of tragic events. Hoffman (1976) and Narvaez (2006) reported that students could enhance their cognitive development and moral reasoning level through the discussions and examinations of life-threatening cases or serious cases of disasters such as earthquakes. Although abstract considerations of cases may not provide impacts as strong as real-life

experiences, frequent triggering of empathic sensations in case studies could also be a way of enhancing students' moral sensitivity and moral concern (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008).

#### *4.1.5c Construct 9 – Learning from Experts' Opinion from Newspapers*

Construct 9 reveals that students were able to gain insights from reading the professional remarks of journalists and columnists writing about the cases in newspapers. The construct also demonstrates that students could not only comprehend the viewpoints from the judgments of specialists, but also enjoy sharing these opinions with other people such as their peers, classmates, teachers and parents. The findings seemed to support Lam's (1991) report that teachers were inclined to teach virtues through examples, cases and direct communication of beliefs. It was because they could easily get good feedback from the students who were eager to discuss some popular cases in the classroom. Two students outlined their feelings in the interview:

I read the comments of a clinical psychologist regarding the tragedy from the newspapers... The man in the case was very cruel... My father also agreed with what the psychologist said (1.8, p. 3).

I like to take the opinions of the experts from the newspapers, and discuss the views with my friends and teachers (1.9, p. 3).

I took the viewpoints of a psychologist from the newspaper... I share the viewpoints with my teacher and classmates... (2.7, p. 2).

Moral educators in Hong Kong are inclined to adopt the values clarification approach by applying case studies in moral education programs in order to address the moral issues of virtues and vices (Lee 1993a). However, Kohlberg and Turiel (1971) rejected the adoption of values clarification approach for two reasons: first, lack of consensus on what values and virtues were to be taught; second, the complex nature of practising such values and virtues. Even experts and specialists would draw different conclusions under the same moral setting such as euthanasia. Power, Higgins and Kohlberg (1989) asserted that a better approach to effecting moral behaviour should focus on stages of moral development instead of simply taking on board some opinions and comments from newspapers.

#### 4.1.6 Other Comments and Feedback

Two contrasting views were formed from the sorting out of the miscellaneous student comments regarding the classroom activities and the two different projects designed for the two groups.

##### *4.1.6a Construct 10 – Moral Learning from Classroom Activities*

This construct expresses the process of strengthening students' moral standpoints and moral reasoning by means of classroom presentations and discussions of their project reports. Instant feedback and comments from teacher were regarded as a driving force to extend their scope of their moral concerns and moral sensitivity. Twenty-five out of thirty-one students revealed that the classroom activities including presentations and discussions were beneficial. Twelve students showed that they were helped by the instant comments from their teacher. Moreover, students reported that those critical points raised by their classmates were challenging and open to debate which deepened the impact of those points.

Kohlberg (1984) agreed that classroom discussions could be a helpful approach in moral education programs because, within any stage of development, reflections were structured according to the constraints of that stage. The most common tool for doing this would be to present a moral dilemma that required students to determine and justify what course the actors in the dilemma should take. Through intense discussion, students should then be forced to reconcile the contradictions present in any course of action not based on principles of justice or fairness. The finding supported Kohlberg's opinion as three students outlined in the interviews:

Classmates could... comment too. Sometimes we argued and even quarrel ... on some standpoints... that was very challenging (2.6, p. 5).

Feedback from my teacher was interesting and useful... My teacher... brought up innovative questions that irritated our mind for further thinking and consideration (1.4, p. 3).

Presentations in the classroom helped me to reinforce what I learnt because I have to share... with my classmates and teacher... Some classmates were critical and liked to argue with me (2.14, p. 4).

#### *4.1.6b Construct 11 – Comments about the Service Projects and Others*

The last construct shows students' comments regarding the whole design of the program including the projects and their difficulties. Students revealed that they would have chosen community services if more information about the choices of services had been provided. All the students who took community services said they would take community services again in the future. Findings reveal that they were fond of taking services in relation to environmental protection and outdoor activities as

two students outlined in the interview:

More students would like to take community services if our teacher could provide us with more information regarding the nature of the community services (1.8, p. 5).

It would be really great if our teacher could give us more information and choices... of those adventurous community services such as military service (2.17, p. 6).

A list of the 11 constructs is shown in Appendix 4.1 – List of Constructs. Moreover, the names of the organizations and their addresses as mentioned by the students (of Group A) in the interviews can be referred to in Appendix 4.2 - List of Community Service Sites and Centres. Finally, a list of the ethical cases that were revealed by the students (of Group B) in the interviews is listed in Appendix 4.3 – List of Ethical Cases.

#### 4.1.7 Summary

A total of 11 constructs were formulated by categorizing the data collected from the thirty-one in-depth interviews. These 11 constructs are divided into four groups of different focuses. The first group reveals that parental support and consent was most important and influential to this group of students' moral development.

Findings from the second group of constructs show that learning from community services were meaningful, interesting and constructive. No negative feedback about community services was reported. Students gained new knowledge and skills through those distinctive experiences that they were not able to encounter in college.

Students revealed that sharing their learning and viewpoints with professionals from the service centres was particularly fruitful in enhancing their moral concerns.

The third group of constructs reveals the learning of the students who took ethical case studies. These students expressed that they thought it would be easier and less time-consuming to work on the case studies. Half of these students showed that they would have taken community services if they had found services that suited their preferences. Moral cases involving tragic events were mostly picked from newspapers for students' analyses. Comments and opinions published in the newspapers by journalists and specialists on these cases were often captured as views of "experts". Students showed their enthusiasm in sharing these opinions with their parents, teachers and peers.

The last group of constructs concerns itself with the miscellaneous student feedback on classroom activities such as presentations and discussions. These activities were regarded as a way to reinforce their memories of their experiences and learning. Instant comment and advice from the subject teacher served as an underpinning motivation for widening their moral views and perspectives.

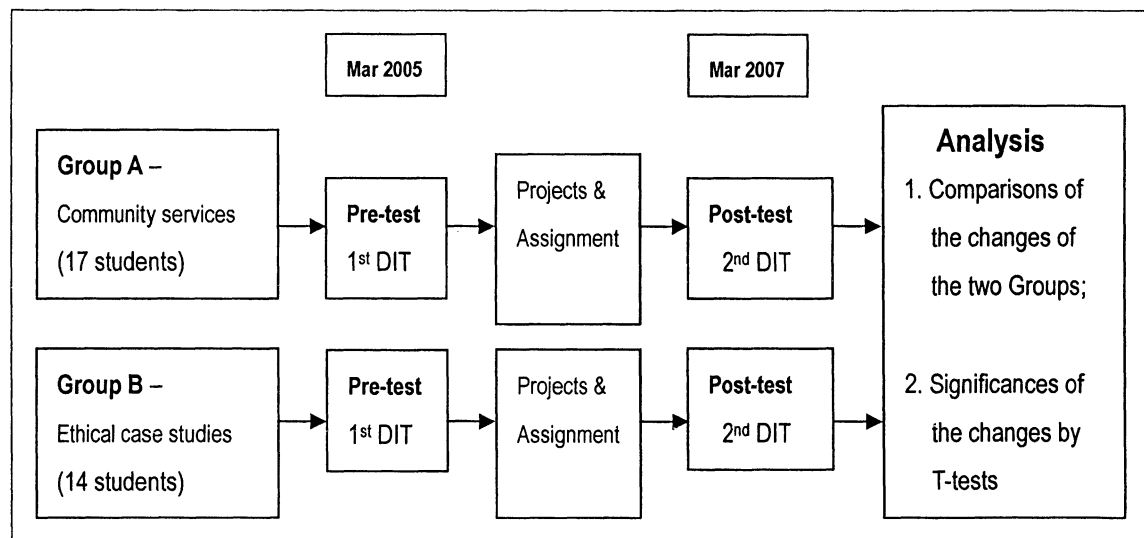
After analyzing the in-depth interviews, section two of the chapter examines the data collected from the quantitative approach and the Defining Issues Tests. By employing the mixed methods approach, data and information from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives can be compared to each other for richer, more substantial findings.

## 4.2 Analysis of the Findings Generated from Defining Issues Tests

### 4.2.1 Introduction

This section outlines the analysis of the results generated by Defining Issues Test (DIT) that were taken by the same students who were interviewed as described in the earlier section of this chapter. A pre-test-post-test design was employed for the two groups of students; Group A – took community service projects, and Group B – took ethical case study projects. The interval between the pre-test (March 2005) and post-test (March 2007) was about 24 months. The two different features of the projects acted as two different types of experiences encountered by the students. The changes in moral reasoning levels of the two groups of students were measured by DIT in terms of post-conventional scores (i.e. P-scores), which were scored by the Center of the Study of Ethical Development of the University of Minnesota. Figure 4.2.1 shows the details and procedures of the pre-test-post-test design for the two groups of students.

**Figure 4.2.1 – Procedure of the pre-test-post-test Design**



The 31 students were presented anonymously by identity numbers (ID) of five digits.

All ID numbers were given an extra foremost digit "1" and "2" for the pre-test and

post-test respectively in order to distinguish the two tasks. The results of the two rounds of Defining Issues Tests were shown by P-scores according to the identity numbers (ID). Appendix 4.4 – Results of the Defining Issues Tests shows the details.

There were two steps in the analysis of the results of the Defining Issues Tests as shown in Figure 4.2.1. Step one was to compare the average P-scores of the pre-test and post-test in order to find out the overall change of the moral reasoning levels of the two groups of students. The finding showed that there was an average decrease of 2.8 P-scores among the Group A students (community service project); and an average improvement of 1.88 P-scores among the Group B students (ethical case study project).

In step two, P-scores were examined again by using a t-test, a statistical technique to check whether the differences found by comparisons at step one were significant. The level of significant difference, revealed by t-test in percentage of probability, served as evidence to prove whether the changes of the moral reasoning levels were valid or not. T-test results showed that the differences found by the comparisons in step one were not significant.

Moreover, the application of the Defining Issues Test (DIT) was considered not effectual in detecting the multifaced changes of moral development among the students in the conditions of this research. Sample size and time for accumulation of measurable change were perceived as the two reasons behind the insignificance.

#### 4.2.2 Analysis of P-scores Generated from Defining Issues Tests

As described in Chapter Three, a total of 31 students (Group A and Group B) who took Social Ethics as a subject were invited to take the Defining Issues Tests. There were



17 students in Group A (community service project) and 14 students in Group B (ethical case study project). Based upon the instructions from the Guide for the Defining Issues Test (1993), the number generally reported in Defining Issues Test research was named Post-conventional scores (i.e. P-score), upon which further analyses were based. The P-score was interpreted as the relative importance that a person gave to principled moral considerations. The Guide (1993, p. 11) showed that a P-score could be comprehended in three ranges based upon the past data in USA. Junior high students' P-scores generally average in the 20s, senior high students in the 30s, college students in the 40s, graduate students in the 50s, and moral philosophers in the 60s.

#### *4.2.2a Comparisons of the Results*

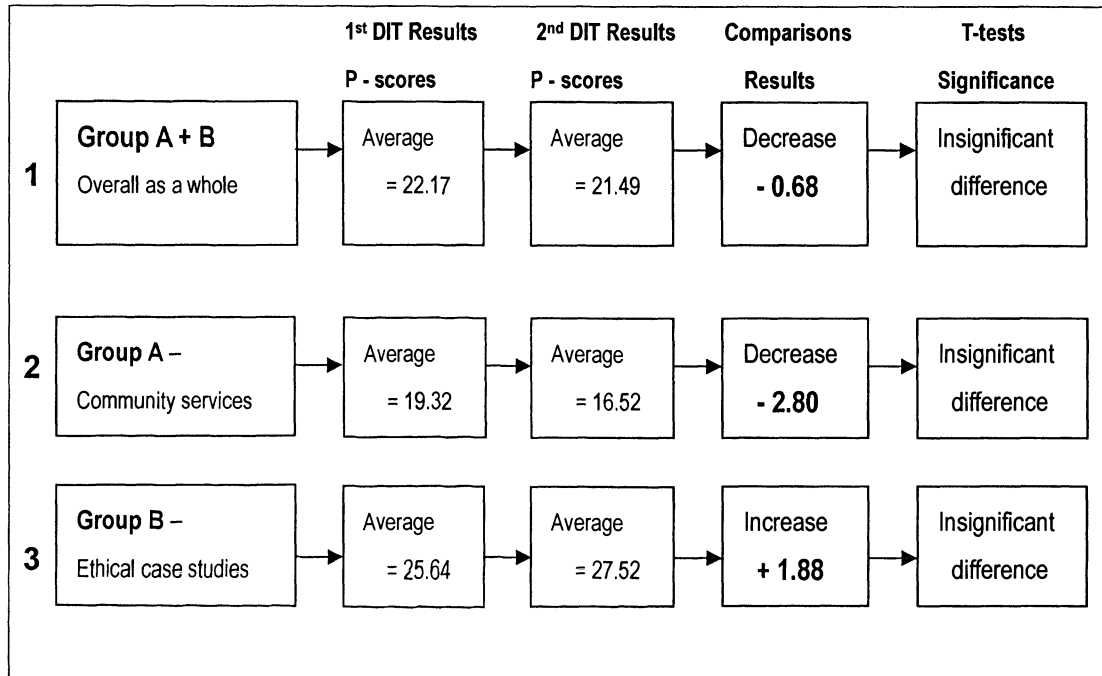
The purpose of comparing the P-scores of the two groups of students was to find out the differences of the moral development by means of two different projects. The average P-scores of the pre-test and post-test of all the students (Group A + Group B) were 22.17 and 21.49 respectively. According to the standard of P-scores in the Guide (1993, p. 11) as stated above, the average P-scores of the Hong Kong students fell within the range of junior high students' range (20s) instead of on the college students' range (40s). The discrepancy of the P-score ranges was perceived and checked in terms of three reasons. (1). Two set of story forms used; (2). Cultural difference; and (3). Narrow scope of definition for morality. More details about these issues are examined in next section 4.3.4 of this chapter.

##### *(i) Overall Comparison (Group A + Group B)*

Comparing the P-scores of the pre-test and post-test of the students, thirteen of them obtained an average increase of 6.71 P-scores. Eleven students received an

average decrease of 9.9 P-scores. Seven students' P-scores remained unchanged. The overall average (Group A + Group B) revealed a mild decrease of 0.68 P-scores. Figure 4.2.2 shows the details about the analysis of the P-scores of the two groups by comparing the averages.

**Figure 4.2.2 – Procedures of P-score analysis**



(ii) Comparisons among the Students of Group A

The results of the analysis showed that students of Group A (community services) got an average decrease of 2.8 P-scores. There were seventeen students in Group A. DIT results showed that only five students obtained an average increase of 5.43 P-scores. Seven students received an average decrease of 10.68 P-scores, and five students remained unchanged on their P-scores. Details of the figures are showed in Appendix 4.4 – Results of the Defining Issues Tests.

(iii) Comparisons among the students of Group B

The results of the analysis showed that students of Group B (ethical case study project) got an average increase of 1.88 P-scores. There were fourteen students in

Group B. DIT results showed that seven students received an average increase of 10.06 P-scores. Five students received an average decrease of 8.16 P-scores, and two students remained unchanged on their P-scores. Details of the figures are showed in Appendix 4.4 – Results of the Defining Issues Tests.

The results of step one signified that students who took ethical case studies were able to gain better improvement than the students who took community services. However, when the figures were further analyzed by t-tests, the results were very different.

#### 4.2.3 T-tests

A t-test is a statistical technique used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the average values of the same subjects under two different conditions. The notion of significance is a common practice of statistical analysis in quantitative approach. A significant difference signifies a result which is unlikely to have happened by chance; in other words, the result was caused with high probability given the parameters of the research design (Veal, 2005, p.254). For example, if a result was found from a sample that 10.1% of women played tennis, and 10.2% of men played tennis, we would be inclined to say that the difference is not significant (Veal, 2005). Usually, the bigger the difference between two sample percentages, the more likely was that the difference would be “real” and not just a statistical chance of happening.

T-tests here aimed to examine if the means and standard deviations of the two groups of average values (p values) were significantly different from 0 (zero), which means zero probability of happening by chance (Sekaran, 2000). Usually, the probability of

the t-test computed was required to be less than 0.05 which was expressed as “significance level of  $p < 0.05$ ”. As a result, it served as the evidence that there was a significant difference between the two groups of average values (p values) being compared (Sekaran, 2000). A significance level of  $p < 0.05$  was adopted for the acceptance of the evidence in this section of analysis. (The letter “p” of “ $p < 0.05$ ” stands for “probability” here, which was different from the “P-score” as explained above which referred to the “Post-conventional score” in the context of the Defining Issues Test.)

In other words, if the significant level of probability resulted from the t-test was greater than 0.05, it would signify that the difference would be insignificant, and the evidence of the change would not be accepted. The results of all the t-tests of the P-scores showed them **not** to be significant because all the figures of probability were found not to be less than 0.05 as demonstrated in Figure 4.2.3 below.

#### 4.2.3a T-test Results of the Overall Comparison (Group A + Group B)

The t-test results of the two rounds of P-scores of the thirty-one students (Group A + Group B) with the means, standard deviations, the probability and significant difference are listed in Figure 4.2.3.

**Figure 4.2.3 – T-test results of Group A and Group B**

Group A + Group B	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1 <sup>st</sup> Round DIT (P-scores)	22.17	31	11.87	.451	30	<b>0.655</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Round DIT (P-scores)	21.48	31	12.18			<b>(insignificant)</b>

The probability computed by t-test was 0.655 (which was **not** less than 0.05). It signified that the significant difference was rejected, i.e. **not** significant in difference. The result demonstrated that, in spite of the average decrease of 0.68 P-scores found

among all the students (Group A + Group B), the statistical evidence was not significant. Thus, the influences of the projects to the students' moral development in the research were not affirmed.

#### 4.2.3b T-test Results of Group A Students (Community Service Project)

Group A students, as a whole, attained an average decrease of 2.79 P-scores. The t-test results of the Group A students with the means, standard deviations, the probability and significant difference are listed in Figure 4.2.4.

**Figure 4.2.4 – T-test results of Group A (Community Service Project)**

Group A	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1 <sup>st</sup> Round DIT P-scores	19.31	17	2.36	1.399	16	<b>0.181</b> (insignificant)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Round DIT P-scores	16.52	17	2.00			

The probability computed was 0.181, and it signified that a significant difference was rejected as well. It implied that the influences of the community services to the Group A students' moral development levels were not affirmed.

#### 4.2.3c T-test Results of Group B Students (Ethical Case Study Project)

Students of Group B attained an average increase of 1.88 P-scores. The t-test results of the Group B students with the means, standard deviations, the probability and significant difference are listed in Figure 4.2.5.

**Figure 4.2.5 – T-test results of Group B (Ethical Case Study Project)**

Group B	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1 <sup>st</sup> Round DIT P-scores	25.64	14	13.59	-.844	13	<b>0.414</b> (insignificant)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Round DIT P-scores	27.52	14	13.68			

The probability computed was 0.414, which signified that the significant difference

was rejected, too. The influences of the ethical case study to the Group B students' moral development levels were not affirmed.

#### 4.2.4 Possible Causes of the Insignificance Found by t-test

T-tests were applied in this research to verify whether the results and outcomes of the comparisons happened by chance or not (Veal, 2005, p.254). The results of the t-tests revealed that all the differences of the three comparisons were **not** significant. Facing the continual insignificant differences, the results were scrutinized in terms of two reasons: (1). Sample size; and (2), time for accumulation of measurable change. Details of the perceived reasons are shown below.

##### 4.2.4a *Sample Size*

Statistical theory enabled researchers to quantify and assess "significance", that is, to express what sizes of differences would be significant for what sizes of sample (Veal, 2005). The sample of this research design was 31 students, which fitted the minimum of what would be acceptable for t-tests (Dallal, 1997). This is comparable with the finding of Boss (1994) who conducted a similar research by using Defining Issues Test (DIT) with a sample size of 71 at a community college, and the results were affirmed by t-tests.

Veal (2005, p. 147) mentioned that there was a popular misconception that the sample size should be decided on the basis of the relationship such as 5 percent or 10 per cent to the size of the population. He stressed that one of the important criteria to determine a sample size is the required confidence interval, which can be another term for "significance level of probability" as mentioned above in section 4.2.3. The confidence interval of the t-test of this thesis was ruled to be less than 0.05, which

was expressed as “significance level of  $p < 0.05$ ” as also shown in section 4.2.3. Veal (2005) further explained that statistical procedures were developed to assess the level of probability that a sample finding lay within a certain tolerance of the true population value. This margin of error was noted as a confidence interval. Its size was related to the sample size, regardless of the size of population. That is the larger the sample, the smaller the confidence interval (margin of statistical error) would be. For example, the change of confidence interval, margined from  $p < 0.05$  to  $p < 0.01$ , will affect the determination of a larger sample size. For this reason, if more students had taken the Defining Issues Test, the significance results of the t-tests, based on the confidence interval  $p < 0.05$ , would have been different.

#### *4.2.4b Time for Accumulation of Measurable Change*

Kohlberg (1984) stressed that a lengthy duration was a very important factor in the process of moral development. According to Kohlberg (1981, 1984), only about 20-25% of the adults had ever reached stage 6. Stage 6 people would carefully choose basic principles to follow, such as caring for and respecting every living thing, feeling that humans should all deserve equal opportunities. Changes in the improvement of moral reasoning stages among young adults might need more time as they enter a more mature and stable stage than those of the young children. The time gap between the pre-test and post-test was 24 months which would be considered short by Cua. The course of practising self-cultivation to become an exemplary moral person (*chun-tzu* 君子) is perceived to be a life time process (Cua, 1992). The time required for accumulating changes which would be measurable by a Defining Issues Test might require a lengthier period than 24 months for the students, especially in a different cultural context. Time of maturation could be rather different in this respect.

#### 4.2.5 Summary

Students (Group A + Group B) attained an average P-score 22.17 at the pre-test, and 21.49 at the post-test. Viewed as a whole, they obtained an average mild decrease of 0.68 P-scores after the completion of their projects. However, the significant difference of the change was rejected by t-tests.

Results of the Defining Issues Tests revealed that Group A students (community service project) attained an average decrease of 2.8 P-scores, and yet the significant difference of the change was rejected as well. Furthermore, Group B students (ethical case project) attained an average increase of 1.88 P-scores, and yet the t-test showed no significant difference.

In general, all the findings, average decrease or increase in P-scores, generated by the Defining Issues Tests were not accepted as significant by t-tests. The characteristics of the findings can be examined in terms of two concerns:

- (1). The impacts of the projects, whether community service or ethical case study, to the students' moral development could not be affirmed by means of the moral measuring instrument, Defining Issues Test; and
- (2) Statistical calculations could not prove without a doubt which project, community service or ethical case study, was more effective in enhancing students' moral reasoning level in the research.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that "insignificance" here does not necessarily mean nothing has happened among the students. The failure of the quantitative



results fortifies the appropriateness of the mixed methods approach applied in this study.

Section 3 of this chapter further examines the findings generated from the two perspectives, qualitative and quantitative, by cross comparisons and contrasts between the two groups of students.

### **4.3 Further Assessments, Comparisons and Contrasts**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

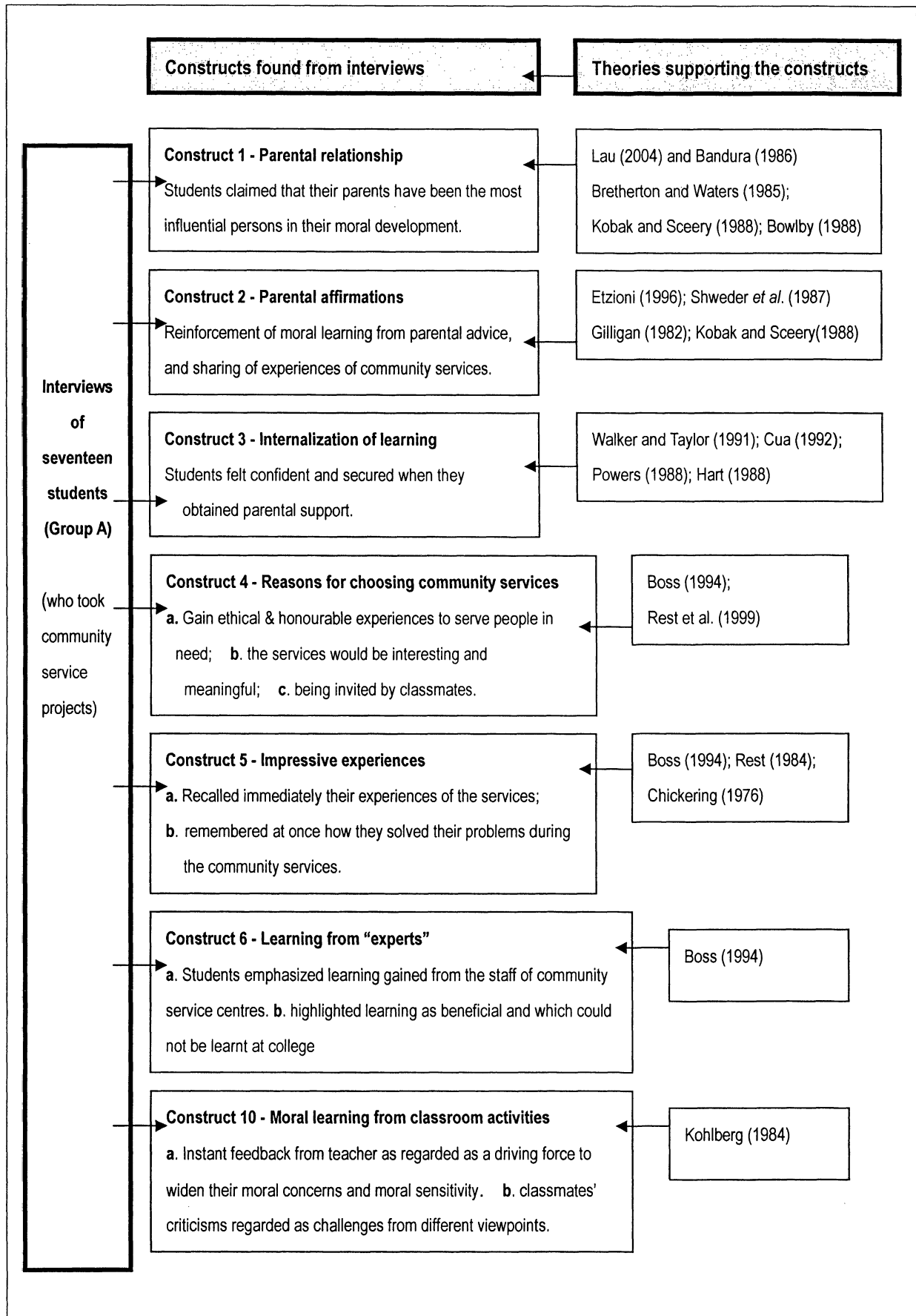
Section 4.3 is an extension of the analysis completed at sections 4.1 and 4.2. Findings generated from the two approaches, in-depth interviews and Defining Issues Tests, were further processed for comparison and contrast. The notions of Miles and Huberman (1994) in the application of context charts were adopted to demonstrate the interrelationships among the factors and the outcomes of the students.

Assessments of the moral measuring instrument, Defining Issues Test (DIT), were reviewed in terms of its effectiveness in the measurement of moral level changes. Moreover, owing to the continuation of insignificant differences resulting from t-tests as stated in section 4.2.3 of this chapter, three limitations of the Defining Issues Test are proposed; first, two sets of story forms; second, cultural factor; and third, narrow scope of definition for morality.

#### **4.3.2 More Assessments of the Eleven Constructs by Context Charts**

The application of constructs was based upon the qualitative dissertation of Dumas (1989). Information was first derived from the 31 interview transcripts and unitized based upon specific kinds of scenario and circumstance, before these units were categorized to form constructs. A title was given to each category in attempt to capture the essence of the kind for the units' inclusion in the construct. According to Dumas (1989, p. 69), titles were identified as "intentions to reveal the effects towards the subjects, and to make the complexities of each effect noticeable, and indicate how these complexities interact".

**Figure 4.3.1 – Impacts to the Students of Group A (Community Service Project)**



#### 4.3.2a *Using of Context Chart*

Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 102) proclaimed that the application of a “context chart” could be a meaningful method for qualitative researchers to describe the subjects’ behaviours interrelated to various factors in various forms. They defined context chart as a “network, mapping in graphic form the interrelationships among the roles, groups or organizations that go to make up the context of individual behaviours”. Two context charts, Figure 4.3.1 and Figure 4.3.2, demonstrate the impacts on the students according to the constructs generated from interviews, and the related theories found in supporting the context of the constructs.

Figure 4.3.1 illustrates the constructs in relation to the types of influences that affected the students of Group A (community service project). It was ascertained that the interrelationship between students and parents served as an essential factor in the improvement of students’ moral knowledge and development. The context chart also displays the impacts to the students by means of various real-life experiences of interactions with different people involved in the community services.

#### 4.3.2b *Impacts to the Students of Group A (Community Service Project)*

Seven constructs are discerned in the context chart to demonstrate the types of interrelations between Group A students’ learning outcomes and the factors. These factors included parental influences, being under professional guidance at service centres and learning from classroom activities. All the constructs are supported by notions of various theorists.

It is explicable that parental impacts could last for a lengthy period as Lau (2004) affirmed that the beginning of moral education usually started at home among almost of all Hong Kong Chinese students. Bretherton and Waters (1985) suggested that

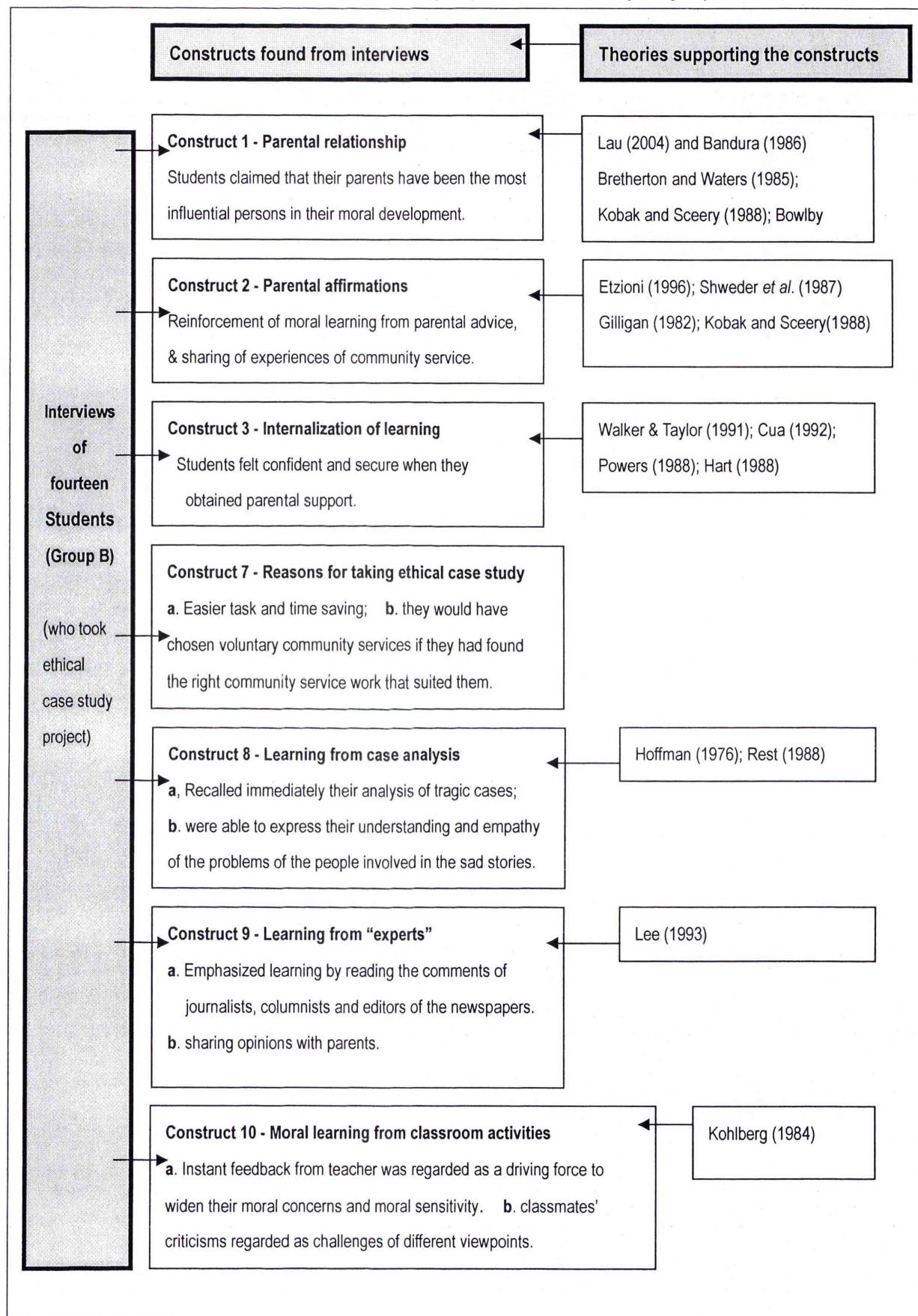
the quality of the parent-child bond and the degree of affection in the parent-child relationship had an impact on many different aspects of children's development. One of the most consistent findings from research examining the family interactions that facilitated Kohlberg's moral reasoning stages were that the affective components of interactions, such as parental warmth, involvement, and support, were related to moral reasoning development (Hart, 1988; Powers, 1988; Walker & Taylor, 1991). It is ascertained that such influences still prevail among the young adult students. Social theorists such as Etzioni (1996) and Shweder et al. (1987) claimed that such influences showed no signs of decline among the higher grade students.

#### *4.3.2c Impacts to the Students of Group B (Ethical Case Study Project)*

Smetana (1995) stated that direct experiences were always the most desirable or effective sources of moral and social development. As opposed to gaining real-life experiences from community services, students of Group B took the ethical case study project. Following the right procedures and project requirements, evidence showed that they were also able to attain moral development by means of the projects. Figure 4.3.2 illustrates the constructs showing students' learning in moral development and the relations to various factors such as parental influences, comments from journalists and classroom activities.

Findings showed that students enjoyed sharing their feelings and learning from the analysis of the ethical cases with their parents. As the cases were often related to current events, parental guidance on the direction of developing social values and norms on the issues could be timely conveyed. Students revealed in the interviews (section 4.1.3c) that they tended to take their parents' opinions as their own viewpoints when sharing opinions with their peers or classmates.

Figure 4.3.2 – Impacts to the Students of Group B (Ethical Case Study Project)



Smetana (1997) declared that interaction with parents is an essential cognitive component to facilitate children's moral development. Research indicated that children may obtain information about offences from various sources, including observations, reading newspapers and direct experiences with moral transgressions.

In the views of social domain as asserted by Tisak (1995), communications between parents and their children were one aspect of children's social experiences that may be used in the construction of moral knowledge. By explaining the reasons for rules and responding appropriately to moral violations, parents could facilitate moral development by stimulating children to think reflectively about their actions. Therefore, in the process behind the ethical case studies, sharing opinions with parents has proven to be effective in enhancing the students' moral development.

Moreover, one of the requirements of the projects was that students needed to seek an "expert" for the sharing of their feelings regarding the case being analyzed. It was discovered that many students tended to take their parents as the "expert" because it was rather convenient for them. Unexpectedly, such a scenario created a way to enhance parental impacts on students' moral learning in the programme.

#### 4.3.3 More Assessment of Defining Issues Test (DIT)

The Defining Issues Test (DIT) was a component model of moral development devised by James Rest in 1979. The University of Minnesota formally established the Center for Study of Ethical Development as a vehicle for research around this test in 1982. Luxenberg (1993) stated that Defining Issues Test (DIT) could not be useful to answer research questions such as, "What moral stage is a person in?" It was simply because a person could have many types of moral motives. Despite the fact that DIT had been used in an impressive array of studies to examine various aspects

of lives of college students (King & Mayhew, 2002), it did not represent a person's score in terms of a single moral stage (Guide for the Defining Issues Test, 1993).

However, researchers of the Center discovered that over time with development, subjects came to use less of the lower stages and more of the higher stages (Luxenberg, 1993). Development was therefore more a matter of increases in stages 5 and 6 and decreases in the lower stages. As a result, the P-score was considered to be a useful general index of moral judgment development. Therefore, DIT was adopted as the instrument of measuring moral development of the students in the research.

Although noticeable differences were found by comparing the average P-scores of the groups, the results were not accepted because the differences were found to be not significant through t-tests. The cause of the insignificance was perceived in terms of two reasons, the sample size and time duration. Nevertheless, more concerns about the limitations of Defining Issues Test were recognized. These limitations were analyzed by means of three concerns as revealed below.

#### 4.3.4 Limitations of Defining Issues Test

One notable issue regarding the attributes of the Defining Issues Test (DIT) is the meaning of P-score. As stated in section 4.2, P-scores were neither measurements of kindness or altruism, nor a dimension of the existential value as persons. It was a measurement set within the scope of moral judgment (Guide for the Defining Issues Test, 1993). In the reviews of the notions and theories of moral development and moral education, moral development was realized to be a very complicated process that could not be truly measurable by means of one single instrument devised for one aspect of morality.



Moreover, moral improvement showed with DIT in other research such as Boss (1994) and Rest (1988) did not provide much theoretical concepts regarding the time required for normal maturation of measurable changes. Lack of statistical significance does not necessarily mean “nothing is happening” but rather that the instrument is unable to measure whatever is happening. Yet, DIT was considered as one of those simple and feasible instruments in the measurement of moral changes with positive theoretical approvals (King & Mayhew, 2002; Narvaez & Bock, 2002).

Owing to the continual statistically insignificant results of the comparisons found in from the research, several limitations were identified. These limitations were examined in terms of three significant concerns: first, two sets of moral stories; second, cultural differences; and third, narrow scope of definition for morality.

#### *4.3.4a Two Sets of Moral Stories*

Based upon the Guide for the Defining Issues Test (1993), two forms of DIT were presented for researchers. Both the six-story form and the three-story form were considered as effective by the Center of the study of Ethical Development if the research is conducted on a sample of 160 subjects. The three-story form of DIT was adopted because the three moral-dilemma stories were thought to be more comprehensible for the Hong Kong students than the additional stories of the six-story form DIT in terms of social backgrounds, cultural values and traditions. For example, the story of “Student Takeover” is about a student group concerning itself with a university’s democratic society in the 1960s. Moral-dilemma stories of such background would not be easily understood by the Hong Kong students. For this reason, adopting the three-story form DIT might also be another factor leading to the insignificant result of the tests.

#### 4.3.4b *Cultural Differences*

As stated in section 4.2.2 of this chapter, cultural differences between the students of Hong Kong and United States may be an important issue in the discrepancy of P-score ranges. Students with different social values and social norms could solve problems of the moral-dilemma cases in very different ways. According to Nucci and Turiel (1993), American 10- to 16-year-olds of diverse religious backgrounds separated moral from non-moral rules in much the same way. However, research comparing the United States with Hindu India, a culture that places much less emphasis on personal autonomy and freedom of choice, revealed that children's notions of morality were more diverse than researchers thought in India (Shweder, Mahapatra & Miller, 1990).

Jones (1991) also emphasized that ethical decisions made by individuals in organizations varied with the variety of cultural backgrounds of the staff. The moral-dilemma stories adopted by DIT are embedded in the American culture. Hong Kong students might interpret differently the significance in terms of social values because of cultural difference. Consequently, the outcomes by means of P-score might vary and cause insignificant results of t-tests.

#### 4.3.4c *Narrow Scope of Definition for Morality*

Rest (1988) asserted that there were at least four major components involved in morality. Besides moral judgment, there were moral sensitivity, moral motivation, execution and follow through. All tests of moral judgment (Piaget's, Kohlberg's and the DIT) give a description of the reasoning process by which a student arrives at a judgment of what is the moral thing to do in a moral dilemma. DIT results served as descriptions of the conceptual tools used by students to make moral judgment only,

while the others major components of morality such as moral sensitivity and moral motivation were not applied.

The DIT did not detect students' sensitivity of being able to notice and identify moral issues round them. DIT scores did not reveal whether students would adequately treasure moral values to an extent that they really would put them above other non-moral values in an actual situation. Moreover, DIT did not identify whether the student would be able to continue and to apply a moral course.

Nevertheless, DIT results provided quantitative information about why some considerations were important and critical to some students and extraneous to some other students. DIT scores revealed why certain students believe certain courses of action were moral when other students may consider they were immoral. This moral judgment investigation brought more understanding about which lines of different opinions may be influential to some students but not so influential to other students.

Besides the neglect of other moral components, in the process of analyzing the outcomes of the DIT, cultural issues and the two forms of stories used in DIT were identified. These issues should be noted in the process of interpreting the implications of the findings. In brief, measuring moral judgment may be a noteworthy part of moral education, but it certainly does not constitute the whole (Guide for the Defining Issues Test, 1993).

#### 4.3.5 Comparison and Contrast

As the design of the study applied mixed research methods by using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in collecting data and information from the two groups of

students who took different projects in their moral education program, the findings were further examined by comparisons and contrasts as shown by Figure 4.3.3.

**Figure 4.3.3 – Four aspects of comparisons and contrasts.**

	<b>Defining Issues Tests</b>	<b>In depth Interviews</b>
<b>Students of Group A</b> who took community service projects	1. Decreased of 2.80 P-scores in average;  2. t-test result proved the change was statistically insignificant.	1. Parents were influential to moral development; 2. Parental opinions were important to be shared; 3. Affirmed plenty of meaningful learning; 4. Gained skills not available from college; 5. Impressive experiences in problem solving; 6. Classroom presentations were beneficial.
<b>Students of Group B</b> who took ethical case study projects	1. Increased of 1.88 P-scores in average;  2. t-test result proved the change was statistically insignificant.	1. Parents were influential to moral development; 2. Parental opinions were important to be shared; 3. Accepted opinions from newspaper experts; 4. Recalled immediately of tragic cases analyzed; 5. Tasks of case studies were considered easier; 6. Classroom presentations were beneficial.

Examination by comparing the feedback of the two groups of students identified some points of similarities, and these similar situations were analyzed in terms of four dimensions:

- (1). Parental opinions were considered as important and influential;
- (2) Both groups reported that their projects could help them to pay more attention to various ethical problems and also widened their thoughts about moral concerns and interpersonal relationships;
- (3). Sharing learning and opinions with “experts” as required by the project were found beneficial; and
- (4). Classroom presentations with discussions and the instant feedbacks from teachers were constructive to their moral learning and helped to reinforce memories.

Moreover, students who took community service projects reported that they were able to gain a wider range of knowledge and skills. The aspects of learning were examined in terms of four areas:

- (1). Short-term pre-requisite training courses offered by some centres in order to facilitate the events was a feature highly appreciated by the students. It was because such knowledge and skills could rarely be learnt from the college;
- (2). Students reflected that they could learn the most from solving problems on the spot by obtaining advice and sharing their viewpoints with professionals;
- (3). Specialists such as consultants, mentors and counsellors of the service centres were willing to coach the students even if they had made careless mistakes; and
- (4). Regardless of being appreciated or complained at the service site, students revealed that they were able to learn something from the service. These reports complied with the notions of many theorists of community service learning such as Bentley and Ellison (2005), Eyler and Giles (1999) and Carpenter (1999).

Contrasting the findings generated by the Defining Issues Test and in-depth interviews, the eleven constructs revealed more information regarding the factors of motivations in the process of enhancing moral concerns and moral sensitivity. While the results of the quantitative analysis were proven statistically insignificant, the constructs clarified the complexity of each of the circumstances where students were involved, and identified the sources of impacts coming from different people around them that resulted in changing their ethical concepts and moral reasoning level. It is noteworthy to discover that parents, who live together with the students as a family, were claimed by most of the students as the most influential persons in their moral development. It is possible for local moral educators to infer meaningful information from this finding.

The constraints of the quantitative approach of using the Defining Issues Test in this thesis reveals that measurement of moral changes would require more sophisticated devices undertaken in specific settings and multifaceted concepts in order to capture accurate and incremental alterations in the process of moral development. For this reason, it is suggested that a qualitative approach could be a more suitable method in the analysis of subtle changes of moral values and behaviours.

#### 4.3.6 Summary

Section 4.3 served as an extension of the examinations by further comparing and contrasting the findings obtained from Defining Issues Test (DIT) and in-depth interviews. Context charts were adopted to demonstrate the contrasts and the related implications. Results of the t-tests implied the limitations of DIT where the two sets of moral stories, cultural differences and the narrow scope of definition for morality accounted for the shortcomings. It is suggested that qualitative approaches would be more suitable in the analysis of subtle moral changes.

Additional clarification regarding the interpretation of the findings, implications of the study for professional practice and suggestions for further research are presented in the next chapter.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Conclusion and Discussions**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This final chapter concludes the analysis of the findings by pointing out that when well-organized community service learning is incorporated in a moral education program with proper support from teachers, parents and the professionals of service centres, it can be a useful professional practice in the enhancement of moral development among young adult students in Hong Kong.

As this thesis adopts the approach of mixed methods by using both quantitative and qualitative methods in the collection of data, results generated from the two approaches brought two aspects of findings. Firstly, quantitative data were obtained through the Defining Issues Tests (DIT) from the students based upon a pre-test-post-test model, and were scored by the Center for the Study of Ethical Development, University of Minnesota. The scores of the two rounds of data were compared and further analysed by t-tests. However, results revealed that all the differences of the comparisons were statistically insignificant. The outcome was scrutinized in terms of two factors: they were the sample size and the time for accumulation of measurable change. Details of the perceived reasons were shown in Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.

Secondly, qualitative data were collected from the same students, who took the DIT, by in-depth interviews. The information obtained from the interview-based method was analysed, and eleven constructs were formulated accordingly. The findings revealed several important factors of moral learning among the students, and

provided essential implications for moral educators and professional practices. Therefore, the conclusions and implications in this final chapter are based on the findings from the qualitative approach. There are three aspects in the interpretation of the findings.

1. The students derived motivation and interest from their task-related service projects in their participation in community services. Motivations aroused through service tasks elevated their concerns of moral development and moral sensitivities. Thus, it is appropriate to apply such projects in moral education.
2. Parents, professionals of service centers and teachers were found to be influential to the students' moral development, and the parental influences were regarded as the most powerful and significant. Such phenomena might not be generally obvious in western cultures.
3. As Rest (1988) asserted that there are different aspects in morality and moral concerns, effective moral education should allow students to gain a wider perspective of moral issues. The incorporation of community service learning in moral education programs could be better in widening students' horizons in their concerns of moral issues than traditional moral education programs that emphasize ethical case studies only.

Moreover, two implications can be inferred for local moral educators from the findings of this study.

1. Despite being under British governance for over one hundred years, the Chinese families of Hong Kong still maintained deep their Confucian cultures and traditions



(Cheng, 2004). Based upon this social tradition of stressing the values of *li* and *ren* of Confucianism, it would be highly effective to incorporate community service learning in moral education programs.

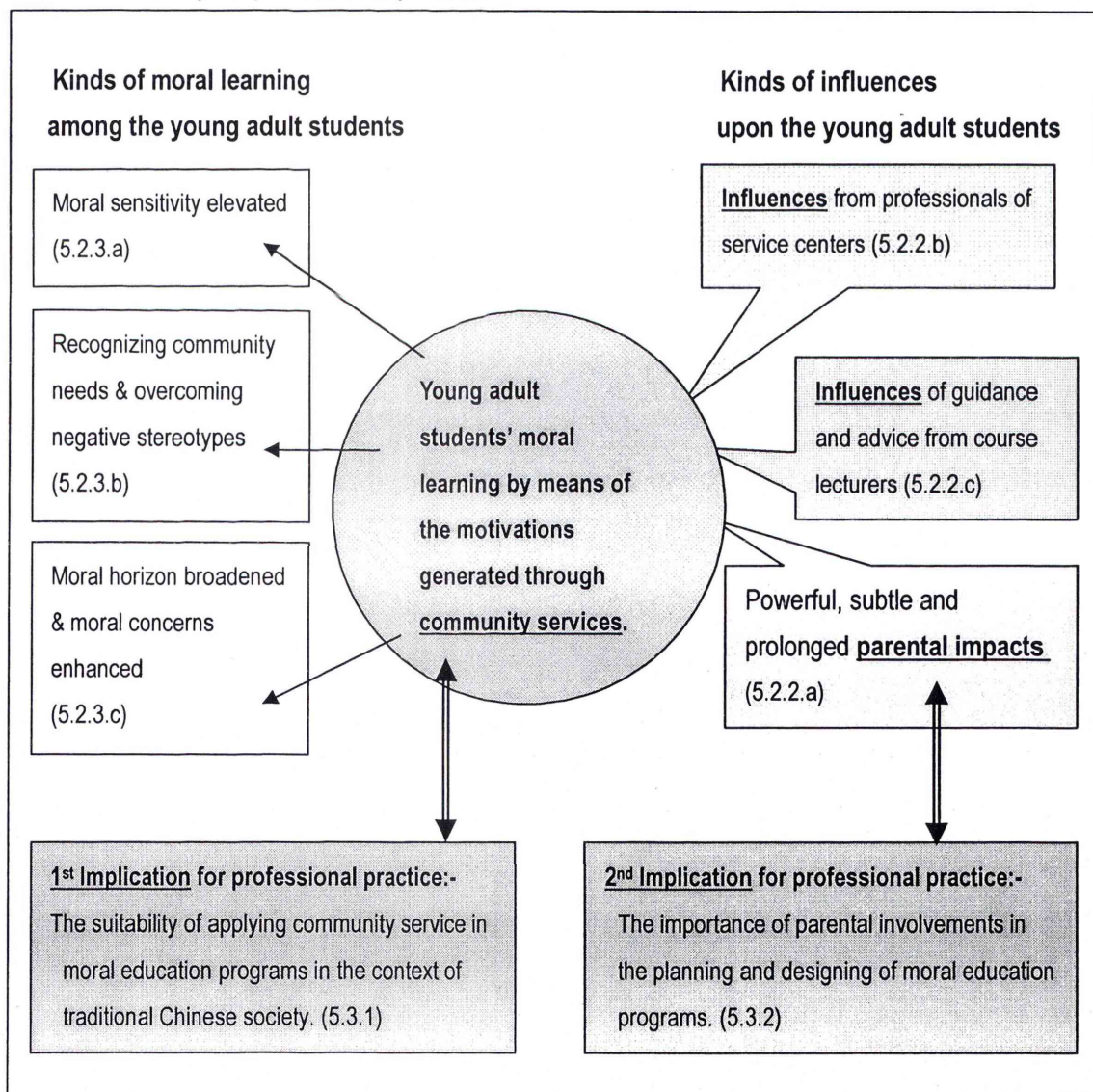
2. Taking the concerns of Confucian values such filial piety and harmony among family members, proper involvement of parental advice and support in moral education programs would achieve better learning results for the students. Such implications comply with the thoughts of Confucius that moral education should start with the family, and parents and elders should always be respected (Cua, 1984; Creel, 1949).

Furthermore, three areas for further investigations are suggested.

1. Research which aimed at identifying the new essential factors affecting the moral development of the young adults in Hong Kong is potentially indispensable because social concerns and values have been changing rapidly since the handover of the city to China in 1997 (Wong, 2007).
2. Berkowitz and Grych (1998) regarded parental influence as the single most powerful factor in children's development especially at the early stages. Findings of this thesis revealed that the influences had no signs of fading away up to young adulthood. Further investigations into the causes of this specific influence upon Hong Kong young adults is a worthwhile plan of action as it might have been underestimated in previous research.
3. The roles of moral educators should go beyond merely knowing how to reason with students well – they should also aim to help students become better moral people (Boss, 1994). It is suggested further investigations should be conducted into the roles of moral educators and their motivations. Interactions in every angle

between moral educators and community agencies in the planning of curricula for community service learning should be taken under significant consideration to improve the effectiveness of moral education programs. More evidential data and information would be needed to provide further proof and indications that any modification of the existing moral education programs of the roles of moral educators is required. Figure 5.1 shows a brief summary of the interpretations of the research findings and the implications of the study for professional practice.

**Figure 5.1 – Brief summary of the interpretations of research findings and the implications of the study for professional practice**



In Figure 5.1, the circle in the middle of the figure reveals how the young adult students' moral learning was elevated by means of the motivations aroused through their real-life experiences of community services. The boxes on the right side illustrate the implications of the impacts from the parents, professionals and lecturers during students' moral learning processes. Moreover, the two implications of the study for professional practice in moral education programming are listed.

They are:

1. The suitability of applying community service in Chinese society; and
2. The importance of stronger parental involvement such as parent-tutor and parent-agent meetings linked to the community services.

## **5.2 Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings from the research analysis could be comprehended in three ways.

1. Students were motivated to learn about moral issues through their involvements in community services. Educators knew that learning would become much easier when students were motivated (Smith & Spurling, 2001). Motivation generated from real-life community service learning would be more encouraging than classroom discussions in the course of moral education.
2. Students felt more confident when their parents showed concern and support for their assignments and projects. Such a finding complies with the concepts of theorists such as Brand (1987) and, Schneider and Lee (1990) that parental influence is regarded as the most important explanation for Asian students achieving high levels in many schools in USA. The extent of parental impact on young adults' moral

development especially among traditional Chinese families might have been underestimated (Zhang & Carrasquillo, 1995).

3. Findings provided evidence that students' moral concerns were widened and their moral sensitivity was enhanced after their participation in various activities of community services. Barrow (2007) asserted that the nature of morality comprised principles of diverse cultures, and its multifaceted in values and concerns among different groups of people can be very distinctive. The application of community service learning in moral education programs could fit well into a wide variety of activities choices that could meet the diverse requirements and needs of students and teachers.

#### 5.2.1 Young Adult Students' Motivations

Findings revealed community service learning were considered as positive and constructive by the students. Some community service activities were regarded as highly motivating, especially when the service tasks were related to outdoor activities coupled with adventures such as hiking with handicapped children and planting of trees for green organizations. As charity community services were regarded as a kind of traditional virtue in Chinese society, taking challenging services for charitable causes would be regarded as an act of chivalry among young adults (ChinaCSR, 2008; Rock, 2008). Owing to this cultural phenomenon, moral education programs incorporated with interesting and adventurous task-related service projects could well be popularly accepted by young adult students.

### *5.2.1a Underlying Theories of Motivation*

As with any other curricula, moral education programs would not be successful without appropriate underpinning theories of engagement and motivation. Engagement occurs when the mind spots something that is important and can help to achieve goals (Goleman, 1996). When students encountered problems in the community services, they might respond well by taking up the challenge and become fully engaged by paying more attention to the methods offered by their tutors (Goleman, 1996). When the problem is consequently solved, they might be more easily influenced and motivated by the tutor in the service. Such a phenomenon reveals the significance of motivation that relates to students' learning in this respect.

The goal-setting theory of Locke and Latham (1990) could be an approach applied to motivate young adult students regarding their involvement in community services.

The theory of goal setting was analysed and concluded in three criteria;

1. objectives should be clearly clarified so that students can focus on the targets;
2. tasks should be challenging so that students would be stimulated;
3. goals should be achievable so that students were not likely to fail.

Locke and Latham (1990) stressed that appropriate timely feedback can enable participants to determine the success of the task. The concept of the goal-setting theory agrees with the findings as students revealed in the interviews that they found the targets given to them were clear, and feedback from tutors encouraging and timely.

Extrinsic motivation (Petri, 1991) happens when students are motivated by external factors and tangible rewards like marks, prizes and awards given by tutors of service

centers. Therefore, the right and proper design of an encouraging marking scheme, with an apt reward system of prizes and awards for community service projects could lead to more positive learning outcomes among the students. As opposed to the external drivers of extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1991) happens when students are motivated by internal factors. Students were keen on joining community services because they recognized such acts as good deeds of charity. Such motivation was especially inspirational among Chinese young adults as completion of charitable community services were often regarded as gallant deeds in the Chinese society (ChinaCSR, 2008; Rock, 2008).

#### 5.2.2 Influences on the Young Adult Students

In their moral learning activities, research findings showed the young adult students are substantially affected by various people around them. Among these people, advice and opinions from their parents were found most influential and significant. The guidance of professionals at the service centers were found as the second most influential. However, opinions and advice from peers and classmates were regarded as not influential. More details about each of these influences are described below.

##### *5.2.2a Subtle Parental Impacts*

As stated in Chapter 4, section 4.1, the concepts of long-lasting parental impacts on children have been well documented by theorists of various disciplines (Bandura, 1986; Etzioni, 1996; Shweder *et al.*, 1987; Bowlby, 1988; Kobak and Sceery, 1988). However, not many researchers recognized the still pervasive and strong parental influence when the child reaches adulthood among Hong Kong Chinese families. Much research was concluded that quality of the parent-child bond could affect many different facets of children's development (Bretherton and Waters, 1985). This study

suggested that the parent-child bond can be important for adult children in their construction of higher moral development stages.

Compared with western cultures, parental authority among Chinese family seemed more important and influential. By taking account of this factor, moral education programs with parental support could gain better and more inspirational learning outcomes than those simply offer classroom lectures and discussions of value clarifications. Consequently, these students are more inclined to involve their parents (due to their nurturing influence) in the development of their moral concerns and social values. For an elaboration of this, refer to Chapter Four, section 4.1.1: 1<sup>st</sup> Construct – Parents as the Most Influential Persons.

#### *5.2.2b Impacts from Professionals*

Furthermore, students revealed that they tended to be more interested in acquiring knowledge and skills from the professionals at service centres because these experts could often provide them with facts and information that were not available from their college teachers or their parents. These professionals can become positive role models and prove to be inspirational for students with regard to their concern of various social values and principles. While they are not able to provide academic advice regarding students' classroom presentations and reporting, these professionals could, however, bond with the students through consultation, meetings and problem-solving exercises. Providing students with numerous opportunities to acquire and comprehend values, skills and knowledge content critical to moral development, self-reflection and self-discovery (Carpenter, 1999; Mueller & Norton, 1998).

Moral education programs incorporated with community services would be more beneficial if the program lecturers can gain support and collaborations with these professionals and community service organizations. Harrington (1999) claimed that these interactions and collaborations can be critical to the integration of community service learning with the course objectives and program. Therefore, further investigation, as suggested in the next section, on the outcomes of closer collaborations between moral lecturers and these professionals could enable moral educators to gain new insight into this particular issue. Chapter Four, section 4.1.3: 6<sup>th</sup> Construct – Learning from Experts and Overcoming Negative Stereotypes, discusses this topic in greater details.

#### *5.2.2c Impacts from the Course Teachers*

Findings of this study regarding the influences from course lecturers comply with the theories of Harrington (1999) and Nativio (2001). They affirmed that feedback from course teachers would be essential to the effectiveness of service learning. Teachers should have regular face-to-face meetings with students regarding their journals and reflections. Students revealed that they found the comments and responses from course teachers in the classroom beneficial and encouraging, though the impacts were not as influential as those of the parents, and not as pivotal as those of the professionals from the service centres.

According to the usual practice of the College (where this study was conducted), the duties of the course teachers involved meeting with the students, reading their weekly reports and meeting the community service agencies. The tasks would bring extra workload upon the already burdensome duties and responsibilities. Although the duties were considered significant and worthwhile, the work could be very time



consuming especially to those teachers who lacked the commitment to participate (Zlotkowski, 1996). Owing to this issue, further research regarding the workloads, influences and significance of the collaborations between moral educators and professionals of community service centres is suggested in section 5.4 of this chapter.

#### *5.2.2d Morality is Culture-dependent*

Both Turiel (1983) and Barrow (2007) emphasized that morality is dependent on convention, social values and culture. As discussed in Chapter four, cultural difference is regarded as a factor of limitation of Defining Issues Test when it is applied in this study. Such a phenomenon raises thoughts regarding the importance of cultural factor to the application of moral measuring instrument. A specific Chinese version of DIT is to be established to cope with the particular social context so as to obtain valid and reliable information.

#### 5.2.3 Kinds of Moral Learning

As proclaimed by Barrow (2007), morality involves values, ethics and principles of widely differing people and cultures. Rest (1984) also claimed that there are at least four major components of morality as mentioned in Chapter Two, section 2.4.3a. The findings revealed that community service activities broadened the possibility of students' encountering different kinds of moral questions, problems, judgements and dilemmas. Besides, students confessed that the service experiences helped them not only to overcome their negative stereotypes of others, but also elevated their thoughts, sentiments and sense of sympathy towards the poor and needy.

#### *5.2.3a Moral Sensitivity Elevated*

Information collected from the in-depth interviews revealed the richness and intensity

of the students' learning through their involvements and encounters with different people and problems at various community services. They were able to highlight and demonstrate their improvement in moral sensitivities, which is an essential sign of moral enhancement according to the theories of Rest (1979). The findings served as further evidence to prove the effectiveness of community services when it is incorporated in moral education program. Refer to Chapter Four, section 4.1.2: 5<sup>th</sup> Construct – Impressive Incidents in the Services for a broader read.

#### *5.2.3b Recognizing Community Needs and Overcoming Negative Stereotypes*

As stated in Chapter Two, when community service learning was integrated with educational programs and designated as a course-based, credit-bearing learning experience, students could recognize community needs and gain further awareness of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995). Information collected from in-depth interviews agreed with the assertion of Bringle and Hatcher as almost all students reported they were paying more attention to the community needs and agreed to join more community services in the future.

In the design of the research, students were notified of their free will in the selection of taking either the ethical case study project or the community service learning project. Students were also well informed of the practice of volunteerism in the service learning process as advocated by Boss (1994). Students' moral development was elevated not only by practicality and reflections from experiences, but also by the means of charity and volunteerism. As charitable deeds could not be evaluated by money or wealth, students reflected that their usual stereotypes of images, ideas and characters of events and people were redirected from money to virtue and values.

They were willing to accept and communicate with very poor and deprived people after undertaking several community service activities.

The findings complied with Boss's (1994) theory that students could recognize and overcome the negative stereotypes that served as barriers to interacting with other people. (Please refer to Chapter Four, section 4.1.3: 6<sup>th</sup> Construct – Learning from Experts and Overcoming Negative Stereotypes sheds more light on this topic.

#### *5.2.3c Moral Horizon Broadened and Moral Concerns Enhanced*

Students reported that they would prefer a more extensive variety of community services to choose from so that the activities could cover a wider scope of people, cultures and social values. For example, moral concerns about prisoners' right of voting may not be covered by the syllabus of a typical moral program. Other restraints such as time and resources also serve as barriers to the requests and expectations of the students and teachers. However, a wider choice of selection for different types of community services could compensate for such restraints. Students can choose what they prefer from numerous types of tasks and services, thus, allowing them to gain insight into how multifaceted morality can be. Restraints of the moral course curricula could be offset by the wide varieties of community services on offer.

Hoffman (1991) stated that witnessing another person in distress could lead to empathic arousal and claimed that a developmental sequence in empathy positively correlates with age. Older people are able to show better understanding and stronger vicarious emotional arousal compared to younger people. Students admitted that they felt sad when they saw the elderly suffering from pain in their

impoverished environments. They also stated that such sensations of distress were never obvious or similarly felt when they were secondary school students.

Smetana (1997) supported Hoffman's assertion but argued that it would be only the conceptual knowledge, not emotional responses, that were transformed with age. These declarations imply that college students would recognize more community needs than those junior students because of a higher conceptual knowledge of morality.

### **5.3 Implications of the Study for Professional Practice**

A survey conducted by Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers Limited (1997) showed that traditional teaching methods for moral education among schools were often on a large scale such as assemblies and talks, class teaching and whole-school interactions. In addition, the survey also revealed that contents of moral education often emphasized concepts associated with respect for humanity, compassion and justice. Only a small number of outdoor projects with service learning were applied in the moral education programs. Such projects were criticized by Lee, Ng and Lam (1995), who proposed new approaches of demanding more attention to moral issues such as a fair community, model of moral life, self-regulation and self-reflection through various activities such as community service. In the analysis of the impacts of community service on the students' moral development if it is incorporated in a moral education program, this study concludes with two implications for professional practice: this approach can accomplish better learning results when, [1] it is implemented in a Chinese society; and [2] parents are involved in the learning activities.

### 5.3.1 Appropriateness to Chinese Society

As reviewed in Chapter Two, the approach of community service learning was popularly adopted by the colleges in the United States. Applying the same approach in moral education programs has proven to be effective in this study, especially for the college students of Hong Kong with its unique social context of traditional Confucian culture. The approach has been verified as easily acceptable to students and parents as it is a cultural belief that community services, especially those related to charity can benefit the young as well as society. Community service is regarded as an act of graciousness, where providing assistance, help and care to people in need, is in line with the essence of Confucius' social philosophy: the concepts of *li* (rules of propriety) and *ren* (loving others). Owing to such a common cultural belief, service centre professionals of are often willing to collaborate with schools on developing socially conscience events. Findings showed the variety of choices of service tasks offered by service centers gives students plenty of room to exercise moral development and self-cultivation. These training and exercises are regarded as an indispensable method of becoming an exemplary, independent moral person (Cua, 1984, 1992).

### 5.3.2 Stronger Parental Involvements Required

Filial piety had long been considered the first virtue of Chinese culture (Chiu & Hong, 2006) and regarded as the main duty of every Chinese person to their parents. A very significant part of filial duties would be the attitude of obedience. The idea was shared among the Chinese and taught from generation to generation (Chiu & Hong, 2006). Moreover, students admitted in their interviews that they regarded their parents' moral attitudes and the decisions they make as an important guide. Such authority affects their daily thinking and evaluation of social values. Quite a large proportion of the students said that they have good relationships with their parents

and respected them as one of the most influential persons in their moral development. Based upon this discovery, another implication raised here is how moral education programs can be more effective if parental support and influence are more pronounced.

It is further suggested that teacher-parent meetings can be another important factor in the planning of community service learning activities for students. This suggestion complied with the notion of Berkowitz and Grych (1998) that parents can serve the function of “hidden moral educators” to their children’s moral development. However, Speicher (1994) claimed that intimate relationships among parents and children to a certain extent, roles of moral educator at home could cause other barriers such as partiality and lenience to the individual child.

However, parental involvement in the design of community service activities for moral education programs could be rather different from Speicher’s concerns. Recommendations from parents could be practical in the arrangement of community services for their own children. This can be perceived as the subtle support and induction that came along with the actual implementation of the services which could prove influential to the children’s moral development outcomes (Berkowitz & Grych, 1998).

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Additional Research**

There are three suggestions for further investigations on this new approach to moral education programs in Hong Kong: [1] research aimed at the factors affecting young adults’ moral development; [2] exploring the extent parental influences have on young adults; [3] roles of moral educators and their motivations.

#### 5.4.1 Factors Affecting Young Adults' Moral Development

Research about children's moral development is often focused at youngsters aged 5 to 17 (Bretherton & Waters, 1985). And research focused at exploring the factors of moral development among young adults aged from 18 to 25 have been scant, and therefore, unable to satisfy the needs of the moral educators of community colleges. The deficiency is even more serious in Hong Kong with its unique social background. Jekielek and Brown (2005) stressed that the process of transition from youth to adulthood would be a complex process in which youth start taking important steps to undertake further economic and emotional independence. This change was allied to the period of growth involving ways of behaving and thinking, attitude and morality. There were about 88,000 secondary school graduates in Hong Kong in 2008 (Education Bureau, 2008). Updated research evidence is urgently needed to ensure the effectiveness and suitability of moral education schemes and policies for these young adult students.

Cheng (2004) stated that the paper named "General guidelines on moral education in schools" by the Hong Kong Education Department (1981) was the first and the only specific official document to be published so far. In spite of the inadequate direction from the government, Lam (1991) urged that detailed principles and practical policies should be available regularly in the field of moral education in order to match rapidly changing moral issues and circumstances. Research findings of this nature could provide underlying evidence for the implementation of updated moral education policies and guidelines.

Moreover, further investigation of the extent to which the moral development of young adults may be culture-dependent would be useful. This could possibly even lead to

the development and trial of a Chinese (or more broadly north-east Asian) version of the Defining Issues Test.

#### 5.4.2 Parental Influences on Moral Education Program

Chinese people regard filial piety as an indispensable moral principle, and the essential part of filial duties is the attitude of obedience to parents (Chiu & Hong, 2006). In one recent study, Kim (2005) found that Chinese parents exerted control over their adult children's romantic relationships and conveyed their norms and expectations by setting up rules and restrictions that shaped their adult children's ability to go out on dates. Other studies (Edmond, 2006; Mok, 1999) revealed that parental attitudes and authority could affect adult children's attitudes towards dating and their involvement in romantic relationships. Findings of this study revealed similar opinion about these notions because many students claimed that their parents have been the most influential person in their moral development. Chinese parental influence on adult children's moral deeds is estimated to be longer and more pervasive than what was expected by contemporary theorists of the western world. Therefore, this study suggests that further analysis on the extent of Chinese parental impacts on their adult children's moral education program can be very useful to moral educators and theorists in Hong Kong and China.

#### 5.4.3 Teaching Interest of Teachers and Community Service Learning Activities

In the application of integrating community service learning in moral education programs, moral educators have to put in extra effort in coordinating the preferences of students, requirements from staff of service centres and the college administrators. This coordination involves a large amount of planning, meetings, communication, managing and administration in order to fulfil the conditions and constraints of different



parties. The duties would certainly be rather wearisome without the necessary zeal and passion for moral education.

This third suggestion of further investigation matches well with the claims of Harrington (1999). He recommended that research linking community service learning activities to the teaching interests of moral educators could be an excellent way to generate enthusiasm and maximize students' outcomes from their experiences.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This study affirms the notions of two moral education theorists (Boss, 1994; Rest, 1984, 1988) regarding the advantages and effectiveness of incorporating the approach of community service learning in moral education programs. In addition, the study also confirms that parental influence on children's moral development continues from the expected childhood years to young adulthood and possibly beyond. This phenomenon is particularly obvious in Hong Kong because of its traditional Chinese culture (Edmond, 2006; Mok, 1999).

The importance of moral education has always been regarded by Chinese parents as a subject that can never be overemphasized in Hong Kong. When the city of Hong Kong is confronted with the fallout of rapid changing circumstances in China such as the recent melamine-tainted milk product scandal, local moral educators and the researcher of this study are starkly reminded that their duties to moral civilization are not easy, and will probably grow harder as the world becomes more inclusive and traditional values are marginalized. Today, moral education practitioners, regardless of cultures and nations, are increasingly worried about the moral development of

young adults. Yet, this thesis has proved that formal moral education programs integrated with community service learning and collaborated with parental influences could be a powerful approach to elevate the moral development of young adult students.

Accordingly, professional practitioners in Hong Kong should notice that formal moral education programs would be more fruitful if these two methods could be applied in tandem. As a 22-year-old student tellingly revealed:

When my parents told me that they really appreciated my community service, I was highly motivated... I feel more self-confident when my father agreed with my opinions that I had learnt from the community service (2.10, p.4).

\* \* \* \* \*

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## **List of Appendices**

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### Appendix 3.2.1 – Course Syllabus of Social Ethics

**Course name:** Social Ethics

**Programme:** Associate Degree in hospitality Management

**Credits:** 4

#### **Objectives**

Upon the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. capture the basic knowledge about self-cultivation in terms of the Confucian social philosophy;
2. understand the meaning and importance of Li (禮).and Ren (仁);
3. be well familiar with the meaning of social responsibilities;
4. understand the importance of interpersonal relationship by means of respect, empathy, etc.;
5. the significances of knowing of the social welfare system of Hong Kong;
6. know the significance of communication and understand;
7. be familiar with the Principles and social values including the traditions and customs;
8. know the social problems caused by corruption and bribery;
9. understand human right and obligation;
10. familiar with the social welfare system of Hong Kong.

#### **Deliveries**

The duration of the course takes 60 weeks, and there is one session per week, one hour for each session. The whole course takes totally 60 hours.

Lectures will introduce social ethical concepts through classroom discussions and case studies in accordance with relevant topics and application of social values and virtues. Projects will be introduced to reinforce learning. Students are allowed to select projects of either community services or ethical case studies picked from newspapers for analysis and assessments. Details of the tasks of the two types of projects to be achieved are clarified on the project briefs as attached. Students have to present the reports of their projects and assignments in classroom individually.

#### **Continuous Assessments**

Projects	50%
Written reports and classroom presentations	50%

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Total: 100% (Passing mark: 40 / 100)  
=====

\* Examination is not applied in the continuous assessment procedure.

## **Course Outlines**

### **Topics**

### **Contact Hours**

#### **1. Self-cultivations**

- 1.1 Understand Confucius and his philosophy
- 1.2 The meaning of "Li" (Rules of propriety, 禮).
- 1.3 The meaning of Ren (loving others, 仁):"
- 1.4 Process of becoming an exemplary,  
independent moral person, (chun-tzu 君子)
- 1.5 The meaning of social responsibilities

A total of 20 hours  
for topic one –  
Self-cultivations.

#### **2. Interpersonal Relationships**

- 2.1 Importance of interpersonal relationships
- 2.2 Empathy and considerations
- 2.3 Concept fairness, honesty and freedom
- 2.4 Respects
- 2.5 Communication and understanding

A total of 20 hours  
for topic two –  
Interpersonal  
Relationships

#### **3. Social Values and Virtues**

- 3.1 Respects and concerns of others
- 3.2 Principles and social values
- 3.3 Knowing cultures, traditions and customs
- 3.4 Corruptions and bribes
- 3.5 Human right and obligations
- 3.6 Social welfare system of Hong Kong

A total of 20 hours  
for topic three –  
Social Values and  
Virtues

## **Appendix 3.2.2 – Project Brief for Group A (Community Services)**

### **Project Brief for Group A – Community Services**

#### **Topic: Four participations of Community Services**

#### **Objectives**

This is an individual assignment for the course, Social Ethics, with the objectives to allow students to learn the values and meanings of community services through actual experiences of serving at different organizations. Students are able to learn problem solving skills in their services and obtain feedbacks from the professionals and people they served of the organizations. Students are able to enhance their moral development as they are required to share their experiences and reports regarding each of their participation of community services.

#### **Task**

##### **Part A**

Students have to find two or more local organizations such as elderly homes, hospitals, child care centre and associations of handicapped people, etc. Students can obtain information via various channels such as websites and journals. Each student should join four times of community services before the end of the course. Each service should not be less than four hours. Details of the community services should be proposed in filling a form which is available from your Social Ethics lecturer. Students have to obtain permission from your course teacher at least a week before the service starts.

In the proposal, the following items should be clarified:

- Name and general background of the organization to be served;
- The nature and objectives of the community services;
- The name, post, telephone and e-mail address of the person who is responsible for the service;
- Date, Time and duration, places and main activities that the students will be taking;
- Supporting materials, papers and documents should be attached for clarification;

Subject lecturer may ask for more information about the community services before approval. Your lecturer may reject the community service proposal if the objectives and nature of the service is found not relevant to the learning of social ethics such as commercial campaigns or promotional activities for political parties. Students may start taking the community services according to the arrangement of the organizations as soon as the proposal has been approved. Community service repeated at the same organization requires another separate form for approval.



#### Part B

Students have to discuss their experiences and learning of each community services with an "expert". An "expert" is someone who is good enough and capable to provide the student with more in-depth knowledge about the student's reflections of his/her community services. The "expert" could be the parents of the student, one of the student's lecturers in the college, one of the professional staff of the charity organizations that involved, or one of the student's senior relatives.

#### Part C

Students are required to submit a report for each of the community services as soon as they have completed Part B. The report for each service should include the following points:

- Name and general background of the charity organization involved;
- The nature and objectives of the voluntary social services involved;
- Date, Time and duration, places of the social services participated;
- Detailed descriptions about the actual works and procedures that the students have participated;
- Supporting materials such as photos, brochures as evidences should be attached with the reports;
- State the learning and knowledge gained from the discussions and sharing your reflection with the "expert".

#### Part D

Students are required to give a short presentation in classroom to report the community services that they have completed. PowerPoint slides are required as visual aid during the presentation. Questions and discussions among classmates about the learning and experiences of the community services are strongly encouraged after the classroom presentation.

#### Marking Scheme and Grading

~ Organization of information and materials	-	30%
~ Descriptions of the events, happenings and duties	-	20%
~ Reflections of learning and knowledge gained	-	40%
~ Skills of presentation	-	10 %

---

Total = 100% (Passing marks: 40/100)

=====

#### Remarks:

Please feel free to contact your course teacher for any inquiries and problems regarding this project.

### Appendix 3.2.3 – Project Brief for Group B (Ethical Case Studies)

#### Project Brief for Group B – Ethical Case Studies

#### Topic: Ten Ethical Case Studies

##### Objectives

This is an individual assignment for the course, Social Ethics, with the objectives to allow students to learn the values and meanings through reading and analyzing of ten ethical case studies freely picked from the local newspapers. Students are able to learn through analyzing the relationships of the characters in each of the incidents and evaluate the influences to the other people of the incident. Moreover, students could learn more by bringing up suggested solutions or precautions methods in order to minimize hurts and or further damages or loss according to the incident.

Students are able to enhance their moral development by sharing and reporting on each of their ethical case studies in classroom presentations.

##### Task

###### Part A

Students have to select ten ethical cases of incidents that happened recently in Hong Kong from any local newspapers. Careful analysis of the case including its background, how it had happened according to the description on the newspaper are required. Students will be able to enhance their moral concerns and through the case studies.

###### Part B

Students have to discuss their learning of each ethical case study with an “expert”. An “expert” is someone who is good enough and capable to provide the student with more in-depth knowledge about the student’s reflections from the ethical case. The “expert” could be the parents of the student, one of the student’s lecturers in the college, one of the professional staff of the charity organizations that involved, or one of the student’s senior relatives.

###### Part C

Students are required to submit a brief report for each ethical case study when they have completed the discussions and sharing with as stated in Part B. The report for each service should include the following points:

- A good description of the recent incident chosen from newspaper;
- Attached with a piece of cutting of the incident from the newspaper;
- Detailed of the analysis of the case and each of the characters involved;
- Evaluations of the incident in terms of moral issues involved and clarify the values that concerns;
- Evaluations of the influences and suggested solutions and/or precautions methods to minimize further hurts and losses;
- State the learning and knowledge gained from the discussions and sharing your reflection with an "expert".

#### Part D

Students are required to give a short presentation in the classroom to report each of the case studies that they have completed. PowerPoint slides are required as visual aid during the presentation. Questions and discussions among the classmates about the learning and experiences of the case studies are strongly encouraged after the classroom presentation.

#### Marking Scheme and Grading

~ Organization of information and materials	- 30%
~ Descriptions of the events, happenings and duties	- 20%
~ Reflections of learning and knowledge gained	- 40%
~ Skills of presentation	- 10 %

---

Total = 100% (Passing mark: 40/100)

=====

#### Remarks:

Please feel free to contact your course teacher for any inquiries and problems regarding this project.

### **Appendix 3.3.1 – Interview Statements and Questionnaire**

#### **Interview Statements and Questionnaire**

##### **Part One – Introduction and clarifications**

###### Express thankfulness to the student for taking this interview

"I would like to thank you sincerely for your time to participate this interview. Thank you for your feedbacks and information that you will bring up regarding your learning from the activities in the course – Social Ethics."

###### **Clarification of the objectives of the interview**

"The main objective of this interview is to obtain feedbacks and information about your learning and understanding through the exercises and tasks of your Social Ethics projects."

###### **Clarification of the neutrality of this interview**

###### (a.) No connection with any course, including the project of Social Ethics

"I would like to clarify that this interview has nothing to do with any courses that you are taking including the projects of Social Ethics. No marks or any credits will be affected on any courses of the Associate Degree programme that you are taking, as well."

###### (b.) Interviewee has the free choice of taking the interview

"Furthermore, you have the free choice to take or to refuse this interview."

###### **Clarification of the confidentiality of the interview**

"I would like to emphasize that all the feedbacks and information that you bring up will be treated under very careful and confidential methods of storage. All records will be destroyed after this survey. All names will be anonymous recorded. No names will be mentioned at any reports."

###### **Explanation of the purposes of interview recording and its confidentiality.**

"Our conversation during the interview will be recorded for the purpose of making accurate records for analysis. It will be confidentially handled, and will be destroyed after this survey is completed."

"If you are clear about the points that I have just mentioned, we will start the interview right now."

## **Part Two – Ethical case studies and community services**

(The sign “\*” shows that the interviewer will select either one which is appropriate.)

- Question 1: Could you please tell me your name, age and class?
- Question 2: Where do you live?
- Question 3: Are you living together with your parents?
- Question 4: How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- Question 5: Could you please tell me the reasons why you have chosen \* ethical case studies / community services as the task for your project?
- Question 6: How many \* ethical case studies / community services have you completed already?
- Question 7: Can you recall any one of them which has been very impressive?  
(Help the students to remember one, if the student has difficulties in recalling the \* ethical case / community service, by asking what did the teacher and other classmates thought about your presentation in class.)
- Question 8: Why was the \*ethical case / community service so impressive to you?
- Question 9: Do you think you have learnt something from the \*ethical case studies / community services?
- Question 10: Did you encounter any problems or difficulties during the \*ethical case studies / community services?
- Question 11: How did you overcome the problems or difficulties?
- Question 12: Do you think the requirements of the project beneficial to you? For example, you need to: (a) share the learning from the \*ethical case studies / community services with an expert or senior person, and (b) to present and discussed your learning with your classmates and teacher in the classroom, are beneficial to you.

## **Part Three - Other significant influences of moral development**

- Question 13: You are now a young adult. In your life time, who do you think would be the person who has influenced you the most in terns of moral development?  
How did these people influence you?
- Question 14: Besides the person who your have just mentioned, who do you think would be the second most influential person(s) to your moral development?  
How did these people influence you?

**Part Four - Concluding questions**

Question 15: Would you like to take more community service again in the future?

Question 16: What do you think about the arrangements for the projects of this course - Social Ethics?

Question 17: Do you have any other suggestions or comments regarding all the teaching and learning of this course – Social Ethics?

“This is the end of this interview. Thank you very much for your information and feedback! It has been really a very successful interview.”

### Appendix 3.3.2 – Heinz and the Druggist

#### Class Exercise 1

This is a short class exercise of the subject – Social Ethics II. The main objective of this exercise is to let you think about several issues of values and moral principles. Please study the case below carefully and rank the most important four statements accordingly.

#### Heinz and the Druggist

A woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost to make. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money on it." So Heinz got desperate and began to think about breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife.

**[A] Should Heinz steal the drug?**

- ☐ Should steal      ☐ Cannot decide      ☐ Should not steal

**[B] Now please rank the top four most important statements.**

- A - Most important item      B - Second most important item  
C - Third most important item      D - Fourth most important item

No.	Questions	Rate
1	Whether a community's laws are going to be upheld?	
2	Isn't it only natural for a loving husband to care so much for his wife that he'd steal?	
3	Is Heinz willing to risk going to jail for the chance that stealing the drug might help?	
4	Whether Heinz is a professional wrestler?	
5	Whether Heinz is stealing for himself or doing this solely to help someone else?	
6	Whether the druggist's rights to his invention have to be respected?	
7	Whether the essence of living is more encompassing than the termination of dying, socially and individually?	
8	What values are going to be the basis for governing how people act towards each other?	
9	Whether the druggist is going to be allowed to hide behind a worthless law which only protects the rich anyhow?	
10	Whether the law in the case is getting in the way of the most basic claim of any member of society?	
11	Whether the druggist deserves to be robbed for being so greedy and cruel?	
12	Would stealing in such a case bring about more total good for the whole society or not?	

### Appendix 3.3.3 – The Escaped Prisoner

#### Class Exercise 2

This is a short class exercise of the subject – Social Ethics II. The main objective of this exercise is to let you think about several issues of values and moral principles. Please study the case below carefully and rank the most important four statements accordingly.

#### The Escaped Prisoner

A man had been sentenced to prison for 10 years. After one year, however, he escaped from prison, moved to a new area of the country, and took on the name of Thompson. For eight years he worked hard, and gradually he saved enough money to buy his own business. He was fair to his customers, gave his employees top wages, and gave most of his own profits to charity. Then one day Ms. Jones, an old neighbor, recognized him as the man who had escaped from prison eight years before and for whom the police had been looking.

**[A] Should Ms. Jones report Mr. Thompson to the police and have him sent back to prison?**

☐ Should report him      ☐ Cannot decide      ☐ Should not report him

**[B] Now please rank the top four most important statements. Put the number of the statement in the blank:**

A - Most important item      B - Second most important item  
C - Third most important item      D - Fourth most important item

No.	Questions	Rate
1	Hasn't Mr. Thompson been good enough for such a long time to prove he isn't a bad person?	
2	Every time someone escapes punishment for a crime, doesn't that just encourage more crime?	
3	Wouldn't we be better off without prisons and the oppression of our legal systems?	
4	Has Mr. Thompson really paid his debt to society?	
5	Would society be failing what Mr. Thompson should fairly expect?	
6	What benefit would prison be apart from society, especially for a charitable man?	
7	How could anyone be so cruel and heartless as to send Mr. Thompson to prison?	
8	Would it be fair to prisoners who have to serve out their full sentences if Mr. Thompson is let off?	
9	Was Ms. Jones a good friend of Mr. Thompson?	
10	Wouldn't it be a citizen's duty to report an escaped criminal, regardless of the circumstances?	
11	How would the will of the people and the public good best be served?	
12	Would going to prison do any good for Mr. Thompson or protect anybody?	



### Appendix 3.3.4 – A Copy of the Letter of Ethics Clearance

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18 April 2005



Professor Laurie Brady  
KG02.03.17  
Faculty of Education  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

Dear Laurie,

**UTS HREC REF NO 2005-0021 – BRADY, Professor Laurie, TE RIELE, Dr Kitty, (for HO Mr Wai Hong, PhD) -  
“Impacts of Voluntary Community Services to Students’ Moral Development”**

Thank you for your response to my email dated 16 March 2005. Your response satisfactorily addresses the concerns and questions raised by the Committee, and I am pleased to inform you that ethics clearance is now granted.

Your clearance number is UTS HREC REF NO. 2005-021A

Please note that the ethical conduct of research is an on-going process. The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans requires us to obtain a report about the progress of the research, and in particular about any changes to the research which may have ethical implications. This report form must be completed at least annually, and at the end of the project (if it takes more than a year). The Ethics Secretariat will contact you when it is time to complete your first report.

I also refer you to the AVCC guidelines relating to the storage of data, which require that data be kept for a minimum of 5 years after publication of research. However, in NSW, longer retention requirements are required for research on human subjects with potential long-term effects, research with long-term environmental effects, or research considered of national or international significance, importance, or controversy. If the data from this research project falls into one of these categories, contact University Records for advice on long-term retention.

If you have any queries about your ethics clearance, or require any amendments to your research in the future, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the Research and Commercialisation Office, on 02 9514 9615.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Jane Stein-Parbury  
Chairperson  
UTS Human Research Ethics Committee

## Appendix 4.1 - List of Constructs

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### **List of Constructs**

#### **1. The Influences from Parents**

Construct 1 - Parents as the most influential person

Construct 2 - Sharing with parents reinforces beliefs

Construct 3 - Gain confidence from parents' approvals

#### **2. Learning from Community Services**

Construct 4 - Reasons for taking community services

Construct 5 - Impressive service experiences

Construct 6 - Recognizing community needs and overcoming negative stereotypes

#### **3. Learning from Ethical Case Studies**

Construct 7 - Reasons for taking ethical case studies

Construct 8 - Learning from analyses of ethical case studies

Construct 9 - Learning from experts' opinion from newspapers

#### **4 Other Comments and Feedback**

Construct 10 - Moral learning from classroom activities

Construct 11 - Comments about the service projects and others

## Appendix 4.2 - List of Community Service Sites and Centres

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<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name of Organizations and Addresses</u></b>	<b><u>Telephones</u></b>
1.	<b>The Boys' &amp; Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong</b> 3 Lockhart Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2527 9121 Fax. : 2865 4332
2.	<b>Hong Kong Family Welfare Society</b> Unit 225, Basement, Manly Plaza, 995-997 King's Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2811 5244 Fax. : 2960 0125
3.	<b>St. James' Settlement</b> Shopping Square, Hing Wah (II) Estate, Chai Wan, Hong Kong	Tel. : 3428 5753 Fax. : 3428 5774
4.	<b>Methodist Centre Aldrich Bay Integrated Children and Youth Centre</b> 1/F, Integrated Services Building, 15 Aldrich Bay Road, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2527 3451 Fax. : 2554 9461
5.	<b>Tung Wah Group of Hospitals</b> 9/F, Fong Shu Chuen Soc Ser Bldg, 6 Po Man Street, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2884 0262 Fax. : 2884 3262
6.	<b>Hong Kong Blind Union</b> Unit 13-20, G/F, Tsui Ying House, Tsui Ping (South) Estate, Kwun Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2339 0666 Fax. : 2338 7850
7.	<b>Autism Partnership Hong Kong</b> UG 2 Home World Provident Center, 21-53 Wharf Road, North Point, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2526-3061 Fax: : 2526-3229
8.	<b>Scout Association of Hong Kong</b> The Scout Gallery, 11/F, Hong Kong Scout Centre, Scout Path, Austin Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2377 3300 Fax. : 2302 1001
9.	<b>Hong Kong Society for the Aged</b> G/F, Rooms 11-18 Yue Fung House, Yue Wan Estate, Chaiwan, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2558 0187 Fax. : 2558 6266

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name of Organizations and Addresses</u></b>	<b><u>Telephones</u></b>
10.	<b>The Salvation Army</b> 3/F., 11 Wing Sing Lane, Yaumatei, Kowloon, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2332 0005 Fax. : 2771 6464
11.	<b>Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service Centre</b> 2/F., 180B, Aberdeen Main Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2555 0851 Fax. : 2870 0589
12.	<b>The Society for the Relief of Disabled Children</b> 12 Sandy Bay Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2819 3050 Fax. : 28170322
13.	<b>Hong Kong Paralympic Committee &amp; Sports Association for the Physically Disabled</b> Unit 141-148, G/F., Block B, Mei Fung House, Mei Lam Estate, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong	Tel. : 2602-8232 Fax. : 2603 0106
14.	<b>Hong Kong Red Cross Princess Alexandra</b> 8 Rehab Path, Kwun Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2340 1022 Fax. : 2349 6240
15.	<b>Ebenezer School &amp; Home for the Visually Impaired</b> 131 Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2817 6076
16.	<b>Hong Kong Red Cross John F. Kennedy Centre</b> 15 Sandy Bay Road, Hong Kong	Tel. : 2817- 0131 Fax. : 2817- 3730
17.	<b>Hong Chi Association</b> (formerly The Hong Kong Association for the Mentally Handicapped) Pinehill Village, Chung Nga Road, Nam Hang, Tai Po, N.T., Hong Kong	Tel. : 2689 1105 Fax. : 2661 4620

**Remarks:** The above listed are those service sites and centres that provided assistance to the students of Group A (community service).

### Appendix 4.3 - List of Ethical Cases

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<u>No.</u>	<u>Ethical Cases</u>
1.	A traffic accident that killed two persons during the Chinese New Year holidays.
2.	A Form 5 student attacked his father at home because of stress related to examinations.
3.	A woman killed her two children by burning charcoal inside her room.
4.	Falling objects from the high rise at a public real estate at Ngau Tau Kwok District, Kowloon.
5.	A man attacked his daughter and wife with a cook's knife in the middle of a night.
6.	Two teenaged students were caught by the police for robbing a taxi driver.
7.	A 17-year-old young man raped his girlfriend, and was sentenced to 40 months' imprisonment.
8.	Three 16-year-old girls fought with the gatekeeper of a cinema when being rejected to watch a movie of Grade 3 (for adults only).
9.	A suicide case of a family of 3 members happened in Kowloon.
10.	A 9-year-old boy died because the parents got no money for his medication.
11.	Two 12-year-old girls caught by the police because of cigarette robbery.
12.	A pair of young lovers, aged 18 and 19, committed suicide by jumping from the roof of a high building.
13.	An elderly man, aged 78, was beaten and expelled by his wife aged 48.
14.	A teacher committed suicide at school.

**Remarks:** The above listed are those ethical cases mentioned by the students of Group B (ethical case study) in the interviews.

#### Appendix 4.4 - Results of the Defining Issues Tests (DIT)

**DIT Results (Group A + Group B)**  
(Scored by the University of Minnesota)

Results 1st round DITs		Results 2nd round DITs	
Code No.	P-scores	Code No.	P-scores
100010	10.00	200010	23.33
100020	0.00	200020	13.33
100030	44.83	200030	58.62
100040	10.34	200040	10.34
100050	23.33	200050	13.33
100060	21.43	200060	13.33
100070	20.00	200070	23.33
100080	24.14	200080	20.00
100090	23.33	200090	26.67
100100	36.67	200100	36.67
100110	10.00	200110	10.00
100120	33.33	200120	13.33
100130	40.00	200130	30.00
100140	36.67	200140	26.67
100150	16.67	200150	6.67
100160	16.67	200160	16.67
100170	10.00	200170	20.00
100180	46.67	200180	50.00
100190	10.00	200190	10.00
100200	23.33	200200	30.00
100210	20.00	200210	23.33
100220	30.00	200220	30.00
100230	16.67	200230	3.33
100240	10.00	200240	13.79
100250	3.33	200250	10.00
100260	26.67	200260	26.67
100270	13.33	200270	16.67
100280	20.00	200280	16.67
100290	33.33	200290	16.67
100300	23.33	200300	20.00
100310	33.33	200310	36.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>687.40</b>		<b>666.09</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>22.17</b>		<b>21.49</b>
Difference of the average scores between the two rounds of DITs			
<b>-0.68</b>			

**Comparison (Group A only)**  
between the 2 rounds of DITs

17 Students	Results 1st round DITs	Results 2nd round DITs
Group A	P-scores	P-scores
1	10.34	10.34
2	23.33	13.33
3	21.43	13.33
4	10.00	10.00
5	33.33	13.33
6	10.00	20.00
7	10.00	10.00
8	30.00	30.00
9	16.67	3.33
10	10.00	13.79
11	3.33	10.00
12	26.67	26.67
13	13.33	16.67
14	20.00	16.67
15	33.33	16.67
16	23.33	20.00
17	33.33	36.67
Total	108.43	80.33
Average	6.38	4.73
Difference of the average scores of Group A		-2.80

**Comparison (Group B only)**  
between the 2 rounds of DITs

14 Students	Results 1st round DITs	Results 2nd round DITs
Group B	P-scores	P-scores
1	10.00	23.33
2	0.00	13.33
3	44.83	58.62
4	20.00	23.33
5	24.14	20.00
6	23.33	26.67
7	36.67	36.67
8	40.00	30.00
9	36.67	26.67
10	16.67	6.67
11	16.67	16.67
12	46.67	50.00
13	23.33	30.00
14	20.00	23.33
Total	358.98	385.29
Average	25.64	27.52
Difference of the average scores of Group B		+1.88