

## DOCTORAL THESIS

# Examining Moral Orientation, Moral Development, Moral Identity and Moral Courage of Senior Secondary School Students in Hong Kong: the Impacts of Different Ethics and Religious Studies Curriculums

YIP, Cheong Man

*Date of Award:*  
2022

[Link to publication](#)

### General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

## ABSTRACT

This research evaluates the impacts of different ethics curriculum provisions by examining pretest and posttest scores in moral judgment, moral identity, helping tendency and moral courage of 715 Senior Secondary students. It was found that students who studied systemic Ethics and Religious Studies programs of Diploma of Secondary Education (DSE ERS) had higher helping tendencies than participants receiving ordinary moral education in blended-in mode without independent ethics curriculum. Helping tendency of Christian DSE ERS group was higher than the non-faith group. Students who studied Buddhist DSE ERS program scored significantly higher than non-faith groups in situations where helping cost is high, regardless of the presence of by-standers or not, while there was no significant difference between various ethics program groups at situations where enemies were at risk. However, there was no increase in helping tendency at posttest compared with pretest, therefore no causal effect of DSE ERS program on helping tendency was supported. Girls had higher helping tendency and stronger moral identity than boys. Yet, there was no significant difference between genders in terms of moral judgment. Mediation analysis suggested that moral judgment mediated the positive correlation between moral orientation and moral courage in the boys (but not girls). Cross-decade comparison revealed that Hong Kong students scored higher in helping tendency in 2020 than in 1990s and the early

millennium. Findings of this research suggested that it was more effective to nurture morality through immersion in faith schools than merely acquiring values from various subjects in non-faith schools.