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**IMPACT OF A POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM ON ADOLESCENTS WITH  
ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE IN HONG KONG**

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**Impact of a Positive Youth Development Program on  
Adolescents with Economic Disadvantage in Hong Kong**

**Chak Lai Yan Yammy**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**August 2018**

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CHAK Lai Yan Yammy

## **Abstract**

Since 2005, the Project P.A.T.H.S., a large-scale youth enhancement program, was implemented for 14 years in over 300 secondary schools in Hong Kong. While systematic evaluation findings have demonstrated that the program could promote holistic youth development and reduce risk behaviors amongst adolescents, it is important to ask what impact the program would have on adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage. This question is particularly meaningful in view of the worsening poverty situation in Hong Kong. Against this background, this study explored the perceptions of adolescents experiencing poverty on the program's effectiveness and their personal changes over time after participating in the 3-year positive youth development (PYD) program.

This is a pioneering research study in Hong Kong adopting a post-positivistic research paradigm for evaluating the impact of the PYD program on this neglected population. In this mixed methods study, an integrated evaluation model, combining Stufflebeam's CIPP model and Kirkpatrick's 4-level evaluation model, was used as a framework. First, individual interviews were conducted with 31 Secondary 5 students who had previously engaged in the Project P.A.T.H.S. from Secondary 1 to 3. Second, repertory grid methodology was subsequently conducted to examine respondents' perceptions of their self-identity after joining the program. Third, for the purpose of triangulation, subjective outcome evaluation questionnaires were used to capture not only the economically disadvantaged participants' views of the program, implementers and benefits (N=31), but also the students who participated in the program for 3 years (N=541).

Several key observations were drawn from the findings. First, triangulation based on integration of the quantitative and qualitative evaluation strategies revealed

that the subjective outcome evaluation of the economically disadvantaged participants on the program and instructors of the Project P.A.T.H.S. was generally positive at a delayed time point in the project. Constructive feedback was received from most respondents. Second, while economically disadvantaged youth did not strongly mention that the Project P.A.T.H.S. could help them deal with poverty, most had a positive perception of the Project and found a number of perceived benefits for their psychosocial development after completion of the project. Besides, there was tentative support that the subjective outcome evaluation findings were more positive amongst the poor than the non-poor students. Third, many economically disadvantaged participants agreed that the knowledge and skills learned during Project P.A.T.H.S. were helpful and practical. They explicitly shared how they applied what they had learned in real life contexts. Fourth, with reference to the 6Cs: Character, Competence, Confidence, Connection, Contribution and Compassion, the findings revealed that the perceived effectiveness brought positive personal changes for economically disadvantaged youth. Fifth, the three factors: **Program, People and Process**, are critical for the positive personal changes of the economically disadvantaged participants.

The present study has several theoretical implications regarding the role of the local PYD program and its impact on the economically disadvantaged adolescents' psychosocial development. These findings also provide practical insight into the implementation strategies of local school-based programs in the context of poverty. The limitations and recommendations of this study, together with suggestions for future research are also identified.

(500 words)

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# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.1. Background and Context of the Study**

Many adolescents in the transition from childhood to adulthood face challenges. As such, there is global concern on adolescent developmental issues and related maladaptive behaviors (World Health Organization, 2018). These behaviors include problematic alcohol and tobacco use, substance abuse, internet addiction, risky sexual behaviors, and bullying and violence (Hodder et al., 2017; Morioka et al., 2017; Tsitsika et al., 2014; Zych, Ortega-Ruiz, & Del Rey, 2015). This worrying situation also applies to Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, there is also a distressing trend of increasing youth developmental problems. For instance, teenage self-harm and suicide (Cheung, Wong, Lee, Lam, Fan, & Yip, 2012; Lam, Stewart, Yip, Leung, Ho, Ho, & Lee, 2004; Tang, Ma, Guo, Ahmed, Yu, & Wang, 2013; Yip, Law, & Law, 2003), mental health problems (Ho, Louie, Chow, Wong, & Ip, 2015; Lam et al., 2004; Shek, 1996; Shek & Siu, 2019a), abuse of tobacco and psychotropic substances (Cheung & Cheung, 2018; Lau, Kim, & Tsui, 2005), school bullying or violence (Lin & Lai, 2016; Wong, 2004; Wong, Stewart, Ho, & Lam, 2007), risk-taking sexual behaviors (Abdullah, Fielding, & Hedley, 2003), juvenile gangs and delinquency (Chan & Chui, 2017; Wong, 2000) and internet addiction (Fu, Chan, Wong, & Yip, 2010; Shek, 2007; Shek, Tang, & Lo, 2009; Shek & Yu, 2016; Shek & Zhu, 2018). Other than these youth problems, Shek and Siu (2019b) described the “UNHAPPY” development context of youth development, in which the word “UNHAPPY” represents the seven ecological risk factors which adversely affect the healthy development of young people in Hong Kong. These risk factors include: Unhealthy values, Neglect of

adolescent holistic development, Hopelessness and dissatisfaction with life, Academic excellence orientation but negative views about schooling; Poverty and social disadvantage, Parenting problems, and Yawing family development.

These problems and phenomenon have gained increasing attention and there is a current demand for adolescent development programs to improve the likelihood that high-risk adolescents, particularly those living in social deprivation, can have a more positive growth and development. Against this background, a positive youth development (PYD) program would be helpful.

Based on the adolescent development issues observed in the specific local context, with the aim of promoting positive and holistic development of adolescents in Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust provided a grant to initiate and support the development, implementation and evaluation of a PYD program titled “P.A.T.H.S. to Adulthood: A Jockey Club Youth Enhancement Scheme” for junior secondary school students. The Project P.A.T.H.S. is an indigenously developed PYD program in the Chinese context. Between 2005 and 2018, there were several phases of the Project, including the initial phase (with the experimental implementation phase and full implementation phase launched between 2005 and 2012), school-based extension phase (2009-2016), and the community-based extension phase (2013-2018).

There are two tiers in the program, with the aim of promoting holistic development of adolescents by providing opportunities and recognition for them to develop competence and skills that are conducive to PYD, promoting bonding with others, and fostering healthy beliefs and clear values. Tier 1 Program is a multi-year universal program designed for all Secondary 1 to Secondary 3 students based on 15 PYD constructs identified from existing successful PYD programs (Shek, 2006a,



2006b), while Tier 2 Program is designed for students with greater psychosocial needs. With the support of the education and social welfare sectors, almost half of secondary schools in Hong Kong joined the first two cycles of the initial phase and school-based extension phase of the Project P.A.T.H.S. from 2005 to 2016 (Social Welfare Department, 2009; Shek & Wu, 2016).

However, the accomplishment of PYD depends greatly on the quality of the program itself and its implementation. Hence, Shek and colleagues conducted a number of systematic evaluation studies to demonstrate the outcomes and effectiveness of the Project. The findings in the initial phase and the school-based extension phase revealed that the program was able to promote holistic youth development and reduce risk taking behavior among participants on the program (Shek & Ma, 2011a, 2012a; Shek, Ma, & Merrick, 2012; Shek & Yu, 2012b). The multi-method evaluation included subjective outcome evaluation (Ma & Shek, 2010; Shek, 2009c, 2012d; Shek & Lee, 2008a, 2012; Shek, Lee, Sun, & Lung, 2008; Shek & Ma, 2007; Shek & Ma, 2012d; Shek, Ma, & Tang, 2011; Shek, Siu, & Lee, 2007; Shek & Sun, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2010, 2014; Shek & Yu, 2010; Tsang, Hui, Shek, & Law, 2010), objective outcome evaluation (Shek, 2006b, 2009b, 2009c, 2010a; Shek, et al., 2008; Shek & Ma, 2011a, 2012a; Shek, Siu, & Lee, 2008; Shek & Yu, 2012b), process evaluation in terms of observations (Shek, Ma, Lui, & Lung, 2006; Shek et al., 2008; Shek, Lee, & Sun, 2008; Shek, et al., 2009; Shek & Ma, 2012b), interim evaluation (Ma & Sun, 2008; Shek & Ma, 2008a; Shek & Sun, 2006; Shek, Sun, & Siu, 2008; Shek, Sun, & Tam, 2009; Shek & Yu, 2012a; Shek, Yu, & Chan, 2012), case studies of different schools (Lam, 2008a, 2008b; Lee, 2008a, 2008b; Shek, Chak, & Chan, 2008, 2009; Shek & Sun, 2008b, 2008c; Shek & Sun, 2009c; Shek, Lung, & Chak, 2012; Shek, Ng, & Chak, 2011) and qualitative evaluation

(Shek, 2008d, 2010b, 2012a, 2012b; Shek, Lee, Siu, & Lam, 2006; Shek et al., 2008; Shek & Sun, 2009c; Shek & Sun, 2012a, 2012b). All these available evaluation findings have consistently supported the effectiveness and usefulness of Project P.A.T.H.S. (Shek, 2008c, 2017; Shek, Lee, Siu, & Ma, 2007; Shek, Ma, & Merrick, 2012; Shek & Wu, 2016).

While many studies have shown the outcomes and the effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in the initial phase and the extension phase, focus has seldom been on understanding the effects of the program on adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage in Hong Kong, where poverty (and its effects on adolescent development) is an intensely concerned problem. While the Project P.A.T.H.S. is a generic youth enhancement program, it could be regarded as a response to the worsening situation of poverty. Indeed, there is a need to understand whether it would help adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage. It would be significant to ask what impact the Project would have on this neglected population.

Although Hong Kong is one of the wealthiest and economically developed cities in the world, more than one million people live in poverty. In 2016, the local poor population was about 14.6%, which means that one in seven people could be defined as deprived and living below the poverty line (Census and Statistics Department, 2017b). Seen as having a very high global Gini coefficient 0.539 (Census and Statistics Department, 2017), Hong Kong is facing the threats of income inequalities and relative poverty. In 2013, the official poverty line was set up by the Hong Kong Government. Poor families living below a monthly revenue less than or equal to 50% of the median household revenue are regarded as the benchmark of poverty. Receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) is another indicator of poverty. By the end of 2017, there were 336,681 CSSA recipients.

Among all CSSA recipients, 50,816 (15.1%) were under 15 years of age, 10.3% of the total child population in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, n.d.). In addition, there were a total of 261,242 students (aged 12-18 years) enrolled in around 400 secondary schools in 2016 (Census and Statistics Department, 2017a). The number of secondary school students receiving financial assistance has been consistently rising in recent years (Student Finance Office, n.d.). Given this social trend of rising youth poverty, investigating youth development would provide insight into helping young people cope with economic disadvantage and achieve better psychosocial development.

Furthermore, in view of the worsening poverty situation in Hong Kong, such deprived economic situations and inferior levels of human and social capital among poor families may negatively influence the development of young people. Numerous studies have indicated and/or documented that poverty negatively affects the well-being of adolescents (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Evans, 2004). This includes their physical health or growth (Aber, Bennett, Conley, & Li, 1997), cognitive functioning (McLoyd, 1998; Repetti, Taylor, & Seeman, 2002; Smith, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1997) and particularly their psychological development (Conger & Conger, 2008; Conger et al., 1994; Repetti, Taylor, & Seeman, 2002). Alarming, poverty may erode the tangible and perceived quality of life of adolescents. All these issues mentioned above regarding poverty and its effect on the development of children and adolescents deserve the attention of policy makers, educators and helping professionals. While there is no simple fix to the problems, different initiatives and strategies using the asset-building approach were formulated by the Hong Kong SAR Government (e.g., Child Development Fund and Community Care Fund) and NGOs (school-based poverty alleviation projects such as “Change Your

Future Project”) to help economically disadvantaged children and youth in the past decades. In effect, poverty alleviation should not solely focus on physical capital (one’s wealth), social and human capital are also essential. Therefore, it would be worthwhile exploring what sort of youth prevention and treatment programs poor adolescents require. In order to improve the likelihood that economically disadvantaged adolescents can have more positive growth and personal development, the implementation of a holistic developmental program may serve as one of the initiatives to address adolescent poverty.

In the vein of the asset-building approach, Project P.A.T.H.S. consistently demonstrates that it is able to promote holistic youth development and reduce adolescent risk behavior in participants. With such promising outcomes and very little known about the impact of the program on those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, it would also be worthwhile exploring if and how adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage benefit from the program. For example, how may the program help them in real life? Does this specific group find the program useful in their lives? How do they look at the program and its effect upon program completion? Are there any positive changes in self-identity after they joined the program? Intrinsically, there is a need to examine and evaluate the long-term effects and impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S. based on the real-life experience of poor participants.

Indeed, follow-up or delayed evaluation of interventions is important as it can investigate the effects of the initial treatment experience and identify significant factors that could maintain positive treatment effects. In Western literature, follow-up studies were commonly conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of different youth prevention programs (Botvin, Baker, Filazzola, & Botvin, 1990; Meltzer et al., 2006;

Villarruel, Zhou, Gallegos, & Ronis, 2010). Among the published studies of Project P.A.T.H.S., although there was follow-up evaluation of the program, for example a two-year follow-up study for objective outcome evaluation (Shek & Ma, 2012a; Shek & Yu, 2012b), these studies solely adopted quantitative research methods, which in turn may not fully investigate the perceptions and inner voices of participants, after they have completed the program.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problems**

First, an effective PYD program should examine immediate, short-term and long-term effects on its participants. It is therefore valuable to explore the perceptions of participants on the perceived program effects of Project P.A.T.H.S. over time and any changes after joining the program (in terms of generalization, the sustainability across program effects should be focused). Second, since Project P.A.T.H.S. is a generic PYD program, it is important to understand how the program may help specific populations in real life contexts, such as adolescents experiencing poverty. It is also important to examine the perceived program effects of Project P.A.T.H.S. on the neglected population of economically disadvantaged adolescents in order to understand the generalizability across different populations. Third, regarding poverty-related research, there are numerous studies documenting the impact of poverty on adolescent development in Western literature. However, there are only a few studies available in the Chinese context, especially in Hong Kong. Thus, it is important to address the issue of generalization of program effects across both Western and Chinese contexts. At the same time, many related studies on poverty adopt a pathological view or a problem-oriented approach to study the situation of poverty or focus on the difficulties experienced by these adolescents. There is an obvious

research gap here and further investigation is required to understand the psychosocial well-being of poor adolescents.

Consequently, the principal problem that triggered this current study is the lack of delayed evaluation research concerning Project P.A.T.H.S. and what impact the program would have on adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage. In order to gain a more comprehensive picture, this evaluation research also aimed to explore how the program can contribute to the development of program participants with economic disadvantage, with data collection some time after the program completion.

### **1.3. Objectives of this Study**

This current study evaluates and examines the perceptions of participants (with economic disadvantage) on the P.A.T.H.S. Project. The objectives of this study were guided by the following general research question:

*What are the perceived program effectiveness and personal changes that take place in adolescents with economic disadvantage who have participated in the 3-year PYD program in Hong Kong?*

Other than the above question, this current study also addressed the issues of generalization across the program effects in terms of time (investigated the perceived effects at a delayed time point), contexts (recruited Chinese adolescents as research participants and focused on the extent to which the learned materials could be applied in their real-life contexts), populations (placed the emphasis on economically disadvantaged adolescents and examine their perceptions), methods (made use of

different evaluation strategies and mixed-methods research methods in the study) and data (collected and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data through different research methods).

#### **1.4. Significance of the Current Study**

##### **1.4.1. Academic significance**

Concerning knowledge accumulation, this study helps improve the understanding of the perceived impact of the PYD program on adolescent development in the Chinese context. This study also enriches our understanding of the importance and impact of the PYD program on adolescents experiencing poverty. In addition, the findings of this current study demonstrate the effectiveness of the PYD program in the non-Western context, which also enhances the generalizability of the value of the implementation of PYD programs.

From an academic standpoint, this study looked at subjective outcome evaluation at a delayed time point. It is a pioneering and original research adopting PYD paradigm to examine the perceived continuing impact of PYD program on adolescents experiencing poverty. In addition, the findings of the current study demonstrate the effectiveness of the PYD program in the non-Western context, which also enhances the generalizability of the value of the implementation of PYD programs.

##### **1.4.2. Practical significance**

This study provides valuable data concerning the positive aspects and development of adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage, particularly in the Chinese context. Findings on their perceived benefits from the program, personal changes and the program's applicability over time could provide youth programs with

the means to cultivate positive and holistic development in the long run. Since one of the focuses of this evaluation study was to explore how economically disadvantaged participants connected their program experiences to their real-life situations, the findings demonstrate the relevance of Project P.A.T.H.S. to poor adolescents. It is argued here that the Project can facilitate the psychosocial development of this special group in the population. Furthermore, findings from this study also provide insights into the program implementers and can help frontline teachers and social workers to enhance their understanding of the effectiveness of P.A.T.H.S. Project. The findings provide evidence in supporting the significance of implementing PYD programs in school settings. This can also facilitate them with in-depth understanding concerning the perceptions of adolescents in poverty.

In addition, this study has supplied important information and evidence regarding the perceived effects and continuing impact of P.A.T.H.S. Project at a delayed time point. The findings of the current study could therefore serve as a reference and provide feedback for the research team to facilitate improvement in future development of the Project or similar educational programs. In a broader context, this study also provides great implications for program developers in the field concerning planning and implementation of PYD programs and school-based youth programs in the Chinese context for evidence-based practice.

#### **1.4.3. Methodological significance**

This study purposefully recruited Chinese adolescents who are experiencing poverty to facilitate investigation of the effectiveness of local PYD programs, in order to enrich the database of indigenous evaluations and literature in the Chinese context. Since most previous evaluation studies concerning local youth programs in the social



work field have primarily used quantitative evaluation methods (except the Project P.A.T.H.S., which had adopted different evaluation strategies to systematically evaluate the program), that only provide general investigation into the phenomena (Shek et al., 2004). This current subjective outcome evaluation study adopted a mixed-methods research approach using different evaluation strategies to gain more comprehensive and in-depth understandings of the perceptions of adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage. It is believed here that evaluations applying multiple perspectives can further promote the accumulation of knowledge at academic, practical and research levels. This could contribute to the growing literature and to enrich the database with respect to the implementation of school-based youth programs for poor adolescents and PYD programs within school and social work contexts in Hong Kong.

### **1.5. Structure of this Thesis**

There are ten chapters in this thesis. Apart from this introductory chapter, Chapter Two presents a comprehensive review on adolescent development issues. In particular, the conceptions of PYD are reviewed. Major models of the Positive Youth Development Approach are discussed here. Chapter Three portrays school-based youth programs in Hong Kong. Specifically, the development of the local PYD program Project P.A.T.H.S. is systematically reviewed. Chapter Four provides discussion on children and adolescent poverty. Besides discussion on its definition, it also presents the impact of poverty on the psychological development of children and adolescents. In addition, the role and impact of PYD programs in helping poor youth are discussed. Chapter Five covers the approaches and models of program evaluation, as well as setting out the conceptual framework of the current research. Based on the

reviews from previous chapters, Chapter Six discusses conceptual and methodological issues and presents the research questions of this study. Chapter Seven presents the methodology, covering the research paradigm and research design. Chapter Eight presents the findings based on different evaluation methods. The integration of the findings based on data triangulation is also discussed. Chapter Nine addresses the research questions by discussing the findings. Chapter Ten is the concluding chapter, where summary, research implications, unique features and limitations of this study are discussed.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review on Adolescent Developmental Issues and the PYD Approach**

In this chapter, two major areas of literature are examined. First, are the main approaches to understanding and explaining adolescent developmental problems followed by a conceptual review of the PYD approach in terms of its development, concepts and models.

### **2.1 Adolescent Developmental Issues in Hong Kong**

The stage of adolescence is a period full of dramatic physical and psychological changes and challenges. Psychologist Stanley Hall (1904) described the stage of adolescence as “storm and stress”. In this stage, young people are required to make adjustment to those changes within themselves and between different groups of people in their lives, such as their families and peers. For those who can successfully manage these developmental tasks in this stage, positive growth and development could be seen. However, for those who do not, negative consequences and related maladaptive behaviors could be found. Currently, there is global concern surrounding adolescent developmental issues and associated youth problems and maladaptive behaviors (World Health Organization, 2018), which have gained increasing attention from researchers, scholars and helping professionals. These behaviors include problematic alcohol and tobacco use (Gámez-Guadix et al., 2015; Hodder et al., 2017; McCabe, West, Veliz, & Boyd, 2017; Morioka et al., 2017), substance abuse (Heradstveit, Skogen, Hetland, & Hysing, 2017; Hodder et al., 2017; Ritchwood, Ford, DeCoster, Sutton, & Lochman, 2015; Rücker, Akre, Berchtold, & Suris, 2015), internet addiction (Morioka et al., 2017; Rücker et al.,

2015), risky sexual behaviors (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.; Fergus, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2007; Harris & Cheney, 2018; Ritchwood et al., 2015), bullying and violence (Tsitsika et al., 2014; Zych, Ortega-Ruiz, & Del Rey, 2015). Most importantly, it was found that these problems tend to cluster and co-occur (Catalano et al., 2012; Heradstveit et al., 2017; Kipping et al., 2012). For example, Rücker et al. (2015) indicated that problematic internet use is associated with substance use in young adolescents. In a meta-analysis conducted by Ritchwood et al. (2015), the association between substance use and risky sexual behavior among adolescents was reviewed and reported. Furthermore, in a large-scale nationwide cross-sectional study of adolescents, Morioka et al. (2017) also indicated that there are significant associations between alcohol use and problematic internet use. In addition, the “prolonged engagement in risk behaviors is associated with increased mental health difficulties, decreased educational attainment, poorer physical health and reduced employment outcomes in adulthood” (Waid & Urich, 2019, p.2). This situation is worrying because it also applies to the local Hong Kong context.

Indeed, in Hong Kong, extant empirical reports and research have indicated that there is also a worrying trend of increasing youth developmental problems. For instance, teenage self-harm and suicide (Cheung, Wong, Lee, Lam, Fan, & Yip, 2012; Lam, Stewart, Yip, Leung, Ho, Ho, & Lee, 2004; Tang, Ma, Guo, Ahmed, Yu, & Wang, 2013; Yip, Law, & Law, 2003), mental health problems (Ho, Louie, Chow, Wong, & Ip, 2015; Lam et al., 2004; Shek, 1996), abuse of tobacco and psychotropic substances (Cheung & Cheung, 2018; Lau, Kim, & Tsui, 2005), school bullying or violence (Lin & Lai, 2016; Wong, 2004; Wong, Stewart, Ho, & Lam, 2007), risk-taking sexual behavior (Abdullah, Fielding, & Hedley, 2003), juvenile gangs and delinquency (Chan & Chui, 2017; Wong, 2000) and internet addiction (Fu, Chan,

Wong, & Yip, 2010; Shek, 2007; Shek, Tang, & Lo, 2009; Shek & Yu, 2016) are growing. Before discussing how to manage and address these adolescent development issues effectively, how researchers and practitioners in the field understand the pathways to these problematic behaviors are identified below.

## **2.2 Approaches to Adolescent Development Issues**

Chibucos, Leite and Weis (2005) stated that “theorizing is the process of systematically developing and organizing ideas to explain phenomena, and a theory is the total set of empirically testable, interconnected ideas formulated to explain those phenomena” (p.1). When further understanding the issues of adolescent development, conceptually, some classic and conventional perspectives have been widely adopted by researchers and practitioners across disciplines in the twentieth century. These are the biological perspective, Freudian and neo-Freudian perspectives, cognitive perspective, behavioural/cognitive-behavioural perspectives, sociocultural perspective, humanistic and existential perspectives and ecological perspective. In the following, these seven major perspectives are introduced, summarized and evaluated based on the 13 criteria developed by White and Klein (2008). Summarizing, discussing and evaluating these approaches and perspectives allows us to identify which is better for understanding adolescent development. Thus, enhancing comprehension of the diverse roots contributing to the PYD approach and its research.

### **2.2.1 Major perspectives of adolescent development**

For the **biological perspective**, those biological causes, such as genetic or neurological defects, brain development, health-related issues and rapid changes of physical appearance are the crucial factors for explaining youth problems. As Hall

(1904) indicated in his work, adolescents are expected to experience the biological and evolutionary process of storm and stress during their stage of development. In other words, adolescents' impulsivity, emotional instability or risk-taking behaviours are biologically driven. For example, due to varied brain development affecting the maturation of the prefrontal cortex, some teenagers may encounter poor decision-making, recklessness, emotional fluctuation, stress and addiction problems (Galvan et al., 2006; Hare et al., 2008; Killgore & Yurgelun-Todd, 2007; Van Leijenhorst et al., 2009). In addition, hormonal differences between boys and girls in the stage of adolescence are commonly used to describe boy's aggressive behaviours as all men are naturally aggressive (Dabbs, Frady, Carr, & Besch, 1987). Although there is solid evidence showing that "storm and stress" happened in the stage of adolescence, the argument that youth's problem behaviours are purely due to biological reasons is not well-developed since they have individual differences and not all young people demonstrate the same level of "storm and stress".

**Freudian and neo-Freudian perspectives** are based on Freud's and his followers' psychoanalytic theory. The psychoanalytic perspective reiterated some major concepts such as instincts, id, ego and superego, unconscious mind and defense mechanisms as sources of human behaviours. Taking instinct as an example to explain youth's violent behaviours, the psychoanalytic perspective regards human aggression as an inborn instinctual drive innate in humans, which originated from the death instinct (Freud, 1915; Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Risky behaviours are initiated from our unconscious, instinctual death wishes and the self-destructive instinct of the id. In addition, Freudian psychologists proposed that feelings, impulses, desires and motives are stored in the unconscious, which are greatly influenced by past (childhood) experiences.

However, since Freud developed his theory from his own life experience, not all people may have the same experience. Some Freudian concepts, such as the unconscious and instinctual drive are highly abstract, which are not easily operationalized. Also, this perspective did not consider social and historical contexts, which may overlook some possible reasons for certain problematic issues. Yet, Freudian theories 'kick-started' the field and thus later, Neo-Freudian psychologists, such as Alfred Adler and Erik Erikson, extended Freud's work by giving greater attention to interpersonal, social and cultural influences on human behaviours. For example, Erikson (1968) stated the importance of the search and development of the ego identity of adolescents, which had great influence on the positive and negative aspects of adolescents' well-being. In addition, identity formation is only possible through the interaction between the person and society. In the adolescence stage (the fifth stage), all adolescents are expected to further integrate their experiences to achieve a sense of identity regarding who they are (i.e., identity achievement). Those who cannot construct their stable ego identity in this stage would encounter developmental crisis and the problem of identity confusion. Later, as cited by Berzonsky (2000), Marcia extended the theory of Erikson by proposing two dimensions, namely, exploration and commitment, which could influence and contribute to identity formation. The four identity statuses are identity achievement (an individual has experienced a decision-making period and explored their identity fruitfully and is committed to a particular occupation), foreclosure (denotes the status when commitment is made without extensive and adequate self-exploration), moratorium (denotes the status of active exploration of identity but with weak commitment), and identity diffusion (an individual who has neither exploration nor strong commitment). Among these statuses, diffusion is considered as the least

adaptive status. Neo-Freudian psychologists stated that having achieved identity could give adolescents a strong sense of self, better self-monitoring, life satisfaction and environmental mastery (Berzonsky, 2000, 2006; Erikson, 1968; Kumru & Thompson, 2003; Schultz & Schultz, 2016). These positive influences would also affect their long-term development into adulthood and future stages in their life span (Berzonsky, 2000, 2006; Erikson, 1968). However, adolescents who cannot resolve conflict in this period may remain insecure, confused about themselves, having internalized pathology like depression and anxiety, or may suffer from externalized pathological behaviours such as aggression, disruptive behaviour, self-destructive activities (Berzonsky, 2000, 2006; Erikson, 1968; Schultz & Schultz, 2016; Sharma & Sharma, 2010). Overall, the concepts of the neo-Freudian perspective are more positive and easier to understand and apply, however there are only a few concepts that explain human behaviours.

**The cognitive perspective** focuses on the cognitive processes of individuals' development and how mental processes influence human behaviour. For example, the information processing model explains the mediational process of individuals' decoding, retrieving and enacting of responses to different social situations (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). This process appears after the stimulus and before the ultimate response. Similarly, personal construct theory proposed by George Kelly also explains how individuals' personal construction of meanings affect their perceptions towards people and things around them (Kelly, 1955; Schultz & Schultz, 2016). It is suggested here that all human beings are scientists and theorists who could develop their own theories for organizing and managing their life experiences (Fransella, 1981; Kelly, 1955). The way in which people look at life is called a "construct". It is an intellectual hypothesis used to interpret things. Taking school bullying or violence as



an example for considering adolescents' behaviour, when children and adolescents witnessed their parents' violent behaviours or experienced physical violence, these experiences could be a stimulus, in which the cognitive scripts of aggressive behaviour are retrieved and encoded by them. When they encounter similar cues in life, such as conflicts with schoolmates in school, they recall the stored violent scripts and then enact the bullying or violent behaviours as a response. In this case, the violent scripts are used as reference for their behaviour and problem solving. During the process, they developed their constructs on bullying or violence and keep testing the hypotheses against reality (Huesmann, 1987). Although this perspective provides clear concepts and a logical flow of explanation, it lacks discussion on individual differences, social and cultural contexts.

**Behavioural/cognitive-behavioural** perspectives place emphasis on the learning processes of human behaviour. Unlike the cognitive perspective, the major focus in understanding human behaviour is placed on external behaviour rather than internal mental processes. It is believed here that all problematic and deviant behaviour is acquired through learning. Furthermore, based on Thorndike's principle of "law of effect", if an action brings satisfying and positive effects, then that action is more likely to occur again and become repetitive (Cole & Cole, 1989). Similarly, Skinner's theory stated that reinforcement is the decisive basis of behaviours as constructive consequences that could lead to an increase of behaviour and undesirable consequences could lead to a decrease (Cole & Cole, 1989; Schultz & Schultz, 2016). For example, some youngsters experienced negative reinforcement when their anxiety and stress levels were released when playing online games, these positive experiences served as reinforcement in which they were highly motivated to continue and repeat their addictive behaviours when using the internet. In other words, the

presence of satisfying consequences changed and promoted adolescents' behaviours, even when the behaviours are problematic and destructive in nature.

Later, Albert Bandura integrated behaviourist and cognitive theories to propose social learning theory (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). This underscores the importance of both internal mental processes and the observation and modelling of behaviour, in which youth deviant behaviours are learned outcomes in social interactions (Bandura, 1986; Cole & Cole, 1989). Taking alcohol abuse as an example, it is believed that such behaviour is first learned by conditioning and through imitation of others' addictive behaviours (e.g., an adolescent learned to use alcohol via their addicted family members or peers). Then, the satisfying experience (e.g., received certain recognition from peers) promoted self-reinforcement. At the same time, they tried to redefine and construe the meaning of alcohol use. The interpretation of their world and self-regulation, along with social reinforcement effects, will lead them to continue to drink. Unfortunately, these cognitive definitions can also act as discriminative stimuli for other problematic behaviours, such as smoking, substance abuse, internet addiction or aggressive acts (Cole & Cole, 1989). A plethora of research has evidently showed that there is a relationship between association with conforming or deviant peers and delinquent behaviours (Harrell et al., 1998; Krohn, Skinner, Massey, & Akers, 1985; Schultz & Schultz, 2016). However, the behaviourist perspective oversimplifies human behaviours, which should not be too programmed in the stimulus-response process. It also ignores the complex person-in-the-environment processes, which involves the effects of other intervening factors between stimulus and response.

The **socio-cultural perspective** focuses on extra-personal elements and processes, such as social values and norms, social interaction, cultural and social

structures. Human behaviours are perceived as the indicators of attitudes and standards recognized by groups of people who share the same social context and cultural framework. In Kohlberg's model of moral development, individual's reasoning ability and moral maturity are significantly affected by social norms. In his model, Kohlberg (1958) identified three different but ordered levels of moral reasoning (pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional) each with two stages. This theory claimed that most young people are trying to reason in a conventional way (i.e., level 2). That is to judge the morality of actions by comparing them to the views and anticipations of a social group or society (Kohlberg, 1958). People in this level tend to consider morality based on social norms, laws, authority and social order, which are generally accepted by the given society. In these processes, adolescents learn and develop socio-cultural definitions of adulthood through social processes under the guidance of significant figures (e.g., parents, teachers or idols) and institutions (e.g., schools, churches or social media) and the transmission of knowledge about socio-cultural modes of maturity from an external social source to an internal psychological state. However, negative effects of sociocultural norms and social structures are witnessed and influence adolescents' behaviour. The problems of alcohol, tobacco or substance abuse of college students in the USA are good examples. Peer influences and normative beliefs are especially important when addressing these problems. Berkowitz (2003) and Perkins (2003) developed social norms theory and stated that students' misbehaviour is greatly influenced by the exaggerated beliefs that they conform to and improper perceptions of how other members of their social group think and act. Misconceptions of the perceived norms such as pluralistic ignorance, false consensus and false uniqueness could lead to overestimation of problem behaviours in peers but underestimation of

healthy behaviours, thus increasing undesirable behaviours. Another concern is that misperceptions affected by social norms have evidently been found to inhibit individuals from engaging in healthy behaviour, which are significantly correlated with problematic and health-risk behaviours in adolescents (Berkowitz, 2003; Perkins, 2003). Other than social norms, the social structure, such as socio-economic class is also a crucial factor related to youth problems. For example, McLoyd et al. (2009) stated that for many adolescents who occupy a low socio-economic class are more at risk in their development. Their families also generally lack access to various resources and skills to deal with family life stressors.

With reference to the above perspectives of adolescent development and issues, there are several overall observations: (1) Based on their nature, these perspectives can be further synthesized into two major domains, micro (intra-personal) and macro (inter-personal). Micro perspectives attempt to explain youth issues and problems from the individual's psychological state and behaviours, such as biological, Freudian and neo-Freudian and cognitive/cognitive-behavioural theories. Macro perspectives try to expand the discussion from individual to social levels, such as the socio-cultural perspective; (2) Through the systematic theoretical frameworks, micro perspectives offer good explanatory and/or predictive influences for understanding and explaining adolescents' development and related issues. However, these perspectives mainly focus on the intrapersonal level and seldom consider environmental and contextual factors concerning adolescents' problems. At the same time, the theories have dominantly adopted a pathological view or deficit models to understand human development; (3) The macro perspective tries to illustrate the interaction between people and the environment and expands the discussion from individual to social-cultural levels. However, it focuses less on individual factors.

Furthermore, it fails to explain why youth problems happen among all social classes, not only those living in disadvantaged social conditions.

To respond to the limitation of the micro perspective that adopts a pathological view and deficit model of adolescence, the **humanistic and existential perspectives** arose to prominence of psychology, which provide an alternative psychological understanding of adolescent development. Humanistic and existential psychologists proposed to study human strengths and virtues and adopted a more positive and optimistic perspective to perceive human behavior (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). They aim to understand human experience and emphasize the strengths of the individual instead of their problems and symptoms. The work of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers are representative theories for the humanistic approach. Their theories emphasize human strength and aspirations and the fulfillment of an individual's potential. All individuals are described as active and creative beings concerned with their own development and self-actualization. The processes of exploring and developing one's self and competences are indeed important (Brown & Prinstein, 2011; Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Regarding client-centered therapy proposed by Carl Rogers (1951), he believed that humans have a basically positive goal towards their development. The process of good life is that involves "the stretching and growing of becoming more and more of one's potentialities" (p.196). He also emphasized that psychopathology was not about psychiatric illness, limitations and liabilities rather it was about satisfaction with esteem and self-actualization needs (Rogers, 1951; Schultz & Schultz, 2016). In addition, to understand adolescents' developmental problems, Maslow also argued that those undesirable behaviors can be explained through non-satisfaction of belongingness and needs for love and by a lack of esteem as well as self-actualization needs. On the

other hand, the existential approach highlights the adaptive nature of human beings and focuses on the search of the life meaning and purposes. The theory and application of “logotherapy” proposed by Victor Frankl (1969, 1979) has stressed the importance of searching and sources contributing to one’s meaning of life. It is argued that having meaninglessness in life (i.e., the existential vacuum) is the central reason of problem behaviors. Hence, if adolescents do not find their lives meaningful and functional, they would try to escape from their emptiness, loneliness and psychological conflicts by using improper ways like having addictions on the use of drugs or internet (Caplan, 2007; DiClemente, 2003; Du Plessis, 2012; Hansen, 1992).

Indeed, the underscoring of “potentialities”, “positive direction”, “positive values”, “aspiration”, “meaning of life”, “spirituality” and “self-actualization” by the humanistic and existential psychologists sheds the light on the development of positive psychology and positive youth development approach, which focus more on the competences and strengths of adolescents, instead of their problems and deficits (Benson, 1997; Lerner, 2005; Lerner & Benson, 2003; Seligman, 1998). It is argued that this kind of developmental processes can bring adolescents to a healthier personality functioning.

To respond to the limitation of the intra- and inter-personal perspectives, it is important to consider the interaction processes between micro and macro levels, as most adolescent developmental issues are caused by multiple factors at individual, familial, environmental, social and cultural levels. As a result, a more comprehensive perspective, which combines both micro and macro levels of explanation should be used to understand the developmental issues of young people. Among the different perspectives, the **ecological perspective** proposed that human behaviour is a:

...progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in

which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.21)

In other words, our behaviour is a function of the interplay between the person's traits and abilities and the environment, i.e.,  $B = f(PE)$ , in which B refers to behaviours, P stands for person, and E means environment.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the person and the environment actively influence each another. This perspective is a “person-process-context-time” model that explores the impacts of the environment on the development of individuals. Also, it stresses the importance of the reciprocity and interdependence of the individual with every other species in the environment. In other words, people are both products and producers of their environments. In this perspective, there are five levels of systems that influence the interaction between human behaviours, including the microsystem (individual interactions with the immediate environment, e.g., individual's relationships with parents, peers, teachers), the mesosystem (it interlocks two or more microsystems in which an individual lives, e.g., the linkage between home and school, family and peer group), the exosystem (larger systems that indirectly influence an individual's experiences and development, e.g., parents' workplaces, parents' social networks), the macrosystem (refers to the ideological values, dominant beliefs, cultural norms and institutional patterns of a particular culture) and the chronosystem (the dimension of time that influences the changes of the person and the environment, e.g., change of family structure across time) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cole & Cole, 1989). Each system interacts with and influences each other, i.e., within and between each system are bi-directional influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Every individual is naturally embedded in this five-level ecosystem. In the interaction process, the individual is striving for a better

balance between themselves and the environment to achieve goodness-of-fit equilibrium. If an individual can adapt to the environment successfully, positive development and growth is achieved. However, some adolescents may encounter different difficulties and barriers in the interaction process and thus stress is created and consequently their development as well as adaptive functioning may be hindered. For example, some studies in USA examined multiple levels of individual psychological issues (negative thinking style, low self-image and self-esteem), family (low parental support and parent-child conflicts), school (poor academic performance and teacher-student relationship) and peer factors (lack of friends and peer support) in the prediction of adolescent suicidal ideation (Hater, Marold, & Whitesell, 1992; Hong, Espelage, & Kral, 2011; Perkins & Hartless, 2002). In Hong Kong, Shek and Siu (2019b) discussed several ecological risk factors and they were described with the acronym UNHAPPY, which stands for “Unhealthy values”, “Neglect of adolescent holistic development”, “Hopelessness and dissatisfaction with life”, “Academic excellence orientation but negative views about schooling”, “Poverty and social disadvantage”, “Parenting problems, and Yawing family development”. It is argued that these factors at different ecological levels significantly influence the adolescent development in Hong Kong.

The ecological perspective provides rich contextual consideration through multi-level systems and cross-systems analysis. It serves as a reminder that there are complex causes for human behaviour and also fosters the adoption of a multidimensional approach in order to fully understand the complexity of developmental and behavioural problems. In particular, this perspective (specifically the person-in-environment orientation) provides researchers and practitioners in the field with a boarder lens to understand and investigate protective and risk factors of



young people, as well as how the results of a combination of these factors exert influence on adolescent development issues (Hawkins et al., 1999; Hong, Espelage, & Kral, 2011; Lau, 2003; Lee, Shek, & Kong, 2007; Lerner et al., 2002; Shek, 2007; Shek & Siu, 2019b).

To summarize the preceding views of adolescent development, several key points have been identified: (1) Each perspective provides only a partial explanation of adolescent development issues and problems. There is no single theory that can provide a full understanding of adolescent psychology to explain all the issues of adolescent development; (2) the notion of “storm and stress” is still used to conceptualize the discussion surrounding adolescent development (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). The conventional approaches to understanding adolescent development adopted a pathological view or orientation for a long time, which focuses on biological deficits or psychological problems and renders a pathological view of adolescence; (3) “positivity” flourished in the past five decades. Many developmental scientists have started formulating alternative perspectives and theories by adopting a new perspective to respond to the dominant emphasis on risk, pathology and problematic outcomes; (4) the ecological perspective places emphasis on the interaction between people and the environment at different levels. Also, a strength-based focus is integrated in the theoretical framework, in which youth can develop positively when their strengths and competences are aligned with the resources in their environment and ecology; and 5) Those transformed theoretical perspectives provided a new direction to understand the development of adolescents and their behaviours. In addition, they help create the underpinnings of positive youth development approach.

### 2.2.2 Evaluation of different theoretical perspectives

In the previous section, seven perspectives useful for understanding adolescent developmental issues were briefly introduced and discussed. To evaluate a range of theories, White and Klein (2008) proposed 13 most frequently endorsed criteria based on a survey of a diverse group of over 100 family scientists. These evaluation criteria can also be characterized into four categories. They are 1) Structure and consistency; 2) Empirical support; 3) Heuristic value and sensitivity; and 4) Usefulness. Details of these 13 criteria are described in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Criteria for Evaluating Theories Proposed by White and Klein (2008, p.28)

| Categories                      | Criteria                 | Definition  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Structure and consistency       | Internal consistency     | The theory does not contain logically contradictory assertions  |
|                                 | Clarity or explicitness  | The ideas in a theory are expressed unambiguously and are defined and explicated where necessary                    |
|                                 | Understanding            | The theory provides a comprehensive sense of the whole phenomenon being examined                                    |
|                                 | Coherence                | The key ideas in a theory are integrated or interconnected  |
| Empirical support               | Empirical fit            | Most tests of a theory have been confirmatory, or at least have not been interpreted as disconfirming               |
|                                 | Groundedness             | The theory has been built up from detailed information about events and processes observable in the world           |
|                                 | Testability              | It is possible for a theory to be empirically supported or refuted  |
| Heuristic value and sensitivity | Heuristic value          | The theory has generated or can generate considerable research and intellectual curiosity                           |
|                                 | Contextualization        | The theory gives serious consideration to the social and historical contexts affecting or affected by its key ideas |
|                                 | Interpretive sensitivity | The theory reflects the experiences practiced and felt by the social units to which it is applied                   |
| Usefulness                      | Predictive power         | The theory can successfully predict phenomena that has occurred since it was formulated                             |
|                                 | Practical utility        | The theory can be readily applied to social problems, policies, and programs of actions.                            |
|                                 | Explanatory power        | The theory explains well what it is intended to explain   |

In the following Tables 2.2-2.8, the seven perspectives are evaluated according to

four categories based on the 13 criteria proposed by White and Klein (2008).

**Table 2.2: Evaluating the Biological Perspective**

| Categories                      | Criteria                 | Comments  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Structure and consistency       | Internal consistency     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It can provide a clear and coherent framework for understanding adolescent behaviours (i.e., attributes adolescent behaviours to genetic, hormonal, and/or physiological factors)</li> <li>The theory is simple and applies few concepts in explaining human behavior</li> <li>It basically contains clearly defined concepts and the ideas could be easily understood</li> <li>Focus solely on individual analysis, in which there is restricted understanding of social phenomena</li> <li>Contradictions are presented. This is because not all adolescents experience the same problem behaviours under the suggested biological conditions</li> </ul> |
|                                 | Clarity or explicitness  |   |
|                                 | Understanding            |   |
|                                 | Coherence                |   |
| Empirical support               | Empirical fit            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positivist orientation and emphasis on empirical support</li> <li>Good groundedness with observed and measured variables</li> <li>Good testability</li> <li>With advances in neuroscience, biochemistry and medical science, there are now huge amounts of empirical data available. These data support the perspective in explaining adolescent behaviors</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Groundedness             |   |
|                                 | Testability              |   |
| Heuristic value and sensitivity | Heuristic value          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weak contextualization as it does not take psychological, socio-cultural and environmental context into consideration</li> <li>Fair heuristic value. It can stimulate the debate about the role of nature and nurture in human behaviour</li> <li>Weak interpretive sensitivity as it presumes the behavioural outcomes</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Contextualization        |   |
|                                 | Interpretive sensitivity |   |
| Usefulness                      | Predictive power         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It somehow cannot generate precise and accurate predictions as contradictions are presented</li> <li>Fair practical utility as it solely focuses on biological correlates</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Practical utility        |   |
|                                 | Explanatory power        |   |

**Table 2.3: Evaluating Freudian and neo-Freudian Perspectives**

| Categories                      | Criteria                 | Comments   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Structure and consistency       | Internal consistency     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts like instinctive drives, conflicts resolution, conscious and unconscious are abstract. The concepts are not clearly defined</li> <li>• The assumption and hypotheses of these perspectives are difficult to examine scientifically</li> <li>• Freudian perspective is a theory of conflicts, e.g., it is possible that “I love but I hate my mother”. Therefore, the internal consistency is redundant</li> <li>• Contradictions are presented. The explanation of adolescent behaviour is a circular explanation</li> </ul> |
|                                 | Clarity or explicitness  |  |
|                                 | Understanding            |  |
|                                 | Coherence                |  |
| Empirical support               | Empirical fit            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of operational definitions of the theoretical concepts, making these concepts untestable</li> <li>• Many concepts have never been tested empirically as they are submerged in the unconscious</li> <li>• Weak groundedness. Freud devised his theory from his own life experience. However, other people may not have the same experience</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Groundedness             |  |
|                                 | Testability              |  |
| Heuristic value and sensitivity | Heuristic value          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak contextualization as it does not take social, contextual factors cultural and other environmental context into consideration, except neo-Freudian</li> <li>• Fair heuristic value. The perspectives merely associate instinctual drives to human behaviour</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Contextualization        |  |
|                                 | Interpretive sensitivity |  |
| Usefulness                      | Predictive power         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It cannot generate precise and accurate predictions as contradictions are presented</li> <li>• Weak explanative and predictive power</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Practical utility        |  |
|                                 | Explanatory power        |  |

**Table 2.4: Evaluating the Cognitive Perspective**

| Categories                      | Criteria                 | Comments  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Structure and consistency       | Internal consistency     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The internal consistency of the theory is good</li> <li>The theory is simple and applies few concepts in explaining human behaviour (e.g., attributes adolescent behaviours solely to cognitive factors)</li> <li>Some concepts are vague, such as the different collection of personal constructs</li> <li>The cognitive variables cannot be observed in reality. These unobservable variables make the perspectives less well-defined</li> </ul> |
|                                 | Clarity or explicitness  |   |
|                                 | Understanding            |   |
|                                 | Coherence                |   |
| Empirical support               | Empirical fit            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good groundedness with measured variables</li> <li>Receive relatively more empirical support. A significant amount of studies suggesting that cognitive factors are predictors of adolescent development</li> <li>Good testability as concepts can be measured and tested empirically</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Groundedness             |   |
|                                 | Testability              |   |
| Heuristic value and sensitivity | Heuristic value          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weak contextualization as it does not take psychological, socio-cultural and environmental context into consideration as it basically focuses on individuals' internal cognitive processes</li> <li>Good heuristic value. Many phenomena concerning adolescent development are being subjected to interpretation by the cognitive perspective</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Contextualization        |   |
|                                 | Interpretive sensitivity |   |
| Usefulness                      | Predictive power         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong theoretical implications as it can generate research and intellectual curiosity</li> <li>It can generate precise and accurate predictions. Yet stronger support is needed based on longitudinal research</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Practical utility        |   |
|                                 | Explanatory power        |   |

**Table 2.5: Evaluating Behavioural/Cognitive-Behavioural Perspectives**

| Categories                | Criteria                | Comments   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Structure and consistency | Internal consistency    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It explains adolescent behaviours in a broad sense by signifying the importance of learning in human behaviours</li> <li>The key concepts are clearly defined and operationalized</li> <li>The theory is simple and applies few concepts in explaining adolescent behaviours, with their systematic theoretical frameworks</li> <li>Strong internal consistency, with the consistent use of human behaviour and observations</li> </ul> |
|                           | Clarity or explicitness |  |
|                           | Understanding           |  |
|                           | Coherence               |  |
| Empirical                 | Empirical fit           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concepts can be measured and tested empirically</li> </ul>  |

|                                 |                          |   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| support                         | Groundedness             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on empirical support</li> <li>• Good groundedness with observed and measured variables</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Testability              |   |
| Heuristic value and sensitivity | Heuristic value          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak contextualization as the theories do not seriously consider psychological, socio-cultural and environmental context as these perspectives basically focuses on individuals' learning</li> <li>• Fair heuristic value as the perspectives do not seriously study unobservable behaviours and cognitive processes</li> <li>• Weak interpretive sensitivity as the perspectives solely presume the behavioural outcomes</li> </ul> |
|                                 | Contextualization        |   |
|                                 | Interpretive sensitivity |   |
| Usefulness                      | Predictive power         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having good explanatory and predictive power for studying adolescent development</li> <li>• Strong facilitation of statistical inferential analyses. It can generate precise and accurate predictions</li> <li>• Moderate practical utility as the perspectives solely focus on cognitive and behavioural changes, but these perspectives have been or can still generate research and intellectual curiosity</li> </ul>             |
|                                 | Practical utility        |   |
|                                 | Explanatory power        |   |

**Table 2.6: Evaluating the Socio-Cultural Perspective**

| Categories                      | Criteria                 | Comments   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Structure and consistency       | Internal consistency     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vague concepts and variables</li> <li>• The key concepts are difficult to be operationalized</li> <li>• Unclear theoretical framework</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Clarity or explicitness  |  |
|                                 | Understanding            |  |
|                                 | Coherence                |  |
| Empirical support               | Empirical fit            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak empirical support</li> <li>• Difficult to be tested</li> <li>• Good groundedness of the data with qualitative research design, particularly in ethnographic research</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Groundedness             |  |
|                                 | Testability              |  |
| Heuristic value and sensitivity | Heuristic value          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong contextualization. It takes socio-cultural background into account, with the consideration of human behaviours and different contextual factors</li> <li>• Good heuristic value with consideration of culture</li> <li>• Moderate interpretative sensitivity, as it solely focuses on sociocultural aspects</li> </ul> |
|                                 | Contextualization        |  |
|                                 | Interpretive sensitivity |  |
| Usefulness                      | Predictive power         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak explanatory power because of limited</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Practical utility        |  |

|  |                   |  |
|--|-------------------|--|
|  | Explanatory power | <p>empirical support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak predictive power as there are variations in cultural norms, patterns and beliefs.</li> <li>• It cannot generate precise and accurate predictions as counterevidence are found</li> <li>• Fair practical utility for service provision and policy formulation</li> </ul> |
|--|-------------------|--|

**Table 2.7: Evaluating Humanistic and Existential Perspectives**

| Categories                      | Criteria                 | Comments   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Structure and consistency       | Internal consistency     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some concepts (e.g., human needs, inner world and spirituality) are difficult to be operationalized. A number of key terms need further refinement</li> <li>• Conceptual ambiguities are observed</li> <li>• The internal consistency is problematic</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Clarity or explicitness  |  |
|                                 | Understanding            |  |
|                                 | Coherence                |  |
| Empirical support               | Empirical fit            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak empirical support</li> <li>• Difficult to be tested with empirical research. There are inherent problems drawing inferential conclusions</li> <li>• Moderate groundedness of the data with qualitative research design</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Groundedness             |  |
|                                 | Testability              |  |
| Heuristic value and sensitivity | Heuristic value          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair contextualization as the contextual dimension is not strong</li> <li>• Fair heuristic value</li> <li>• Moderate interpretative sensitivity</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Contextualization        |  |
|                                 | Interpretive sensitivity |  |
| Usefulness                      | Predictive power         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak explanatory power because of limited empirical support</li> <li>• Weak predictive power as there are variations in individuals' patterns and beliefs</li> <li>• It cannot generate precise and accurate prediction</li> <li>• Fair practical utility for service provision and policy formulation</li> </ul> |
|                                 | Practical utility        |  |
|                                 | Explanatory power        |  |

**Table 2.8: Evaluating the Ecological Perspective**

| Categories                      | Criteria                 | Comments   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Structure and consistency       | Internal consistency     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and well-defined concepts and principles</li> <li>• Systematic and coherent concepts as well as theoretical framework for understanding micro and macro factors of adolescent development</li> <li>• Concepts are easily understood. The theory reveals that there are multiple causes for human behaviour and social phenomena</li> <li>• Strong internal consistency as it does not have explicit contradictions</li> </ul> |
|                                 | Clarity or explicitness  |  |
|                                 | Understanding            |  |
|                                 | Coherence                |  |
| Empirical support               | Empirical fit            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory and concepts can be tested empirically</li> <li>• Rich empirical support</li> <li>• Good groundedness with clear and observable concepts of human behaviour in real life</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Groundedness             |  |
|                                 | Testability              |  |
| Heuristic value and sensitivity | Heuristic value          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good heuristic value with strong empirical support, can generate research and intellectual curiosity</li> <li>• Rich contextualization with clear and systematic description on different levels of systems and multi-system analyses</li> </ul>  |
|                                 | Contextualization        |  |
|                                 | Interpretive sensitivity |  |
| Usefulness                      | Predictive power         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good explanatory and predictive power with systematic analytical framework and statistical inferential studies</li> <li>• Great practical utility, which provides clear guidelines for service intervention and policy formulation. It can address all the related factors in individual, social, and cultural context</li> </ul>   |
|                                 | Practical utility        |  |
|                                 | Explanatory power        |  |

### 2.2.3 Concluding remarks

Although the literature review demonstrates that the above perspectives and approaches can help us to understand adolescent developmental issues, some of the approaches and their scope were quite narrow and limited. With reference to White and Klein's (2008) four major categories for theory evaluation (i.e., structure and consistency, empirical support, heuristic value and sensitivity, and usefulness), the ecological perspective (among the seven perspectives) can be regarded as the best approach to consider adolescent development.



Indeed, the ecological perspective demonstrates good structure and strong consistency. Coming from the positivist paradigm of science, the ecological perspective has clear ontological and epistemological positions. Its concepts and principles of human development are comprehensive and well-defined and it provides a cohesive and inclusive theoretical framework for understanding human behaviour. It thus moves away from the focus on a single individualistic explanation of adolescent behaviours and explains them in terms of the interaction of different variables of “systems”.

Employing the positivist or post-positivist orientation, the ecological perspective generates rich empirical support for theories on adolescent development. One of its core themes is the interplay between personal and environmental attributes. The compatibility levels can be clearly observed and are important predictors in empirical research.

As this perspective takes serious account of social, cultural and environmental contexts (different levels of systems) and the environmental process, it enables good contextualization of values. In addition, the usefulness of the ecological perspectives rests on its good explanative and predictive power. It is also noted for its wide application in social work practice, which can provide a more comprehensive and all-rounded perspective for better understanding adolescent development.

However, while the ecological perspective has been well-received, it has also been criticized as a sensitizing metaphor, without identifying the processes by which changes occur (White & Klein, 2008). In addition, White and Klein (2008) also stated the problem of unclear specification of ontogenetic and sociogenic causation. Indeed, the shift from ontogenetic to sociogenic is not clearly identified.

Yet, it should be noted that this perspective provides a good foundation for

development of the PYD approach in which PYD theory focuses on the strengths of adolescence instead of problems and deficits (Benson, 1997; Lerner, 2005; Lerner & Benson, 2003). For example, in his book “All kids are our kids”, Peter Benson (1997) indicated that all segments of the community, including families, schools, neighbors, youth organizations and local governments should have the responsibility to nurture and develop healthy, successful and caring youth. In addition, he proposed forty developmental assets to foster the development of adolescents’ strengths and competences in order to face their developmental and environmental risks. Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas and Lerner (2005) suggested that “if young people have mutually beneficial relations with the people and institutions of their social world, they will be on the way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self, family, community, and civil society” (p.12). Hence, it can be concluded that the theory of PYD partly originated from the ecological perspective, which highlights the importance of social and environmental factors and has the positive orientation that all youth are assets to be nurtured.

## **2.3 Positive Youth Development Approach: Theories and Concepts**

### **2.3.1 What is the PYD approach?**

Positive youth development (PYD) is a broad approach that places strong emphasis on promoting holistic youth development (Catalano et al., 2004). Other than the ecological perspective (which focuses more on the influence of environmental processes and the bidirectional influence between individual and different context), its roots can be traced back to several theoretical approaches, such as developmental systems theory, the humanistic perspective and positive psychology (Brown & Prinstein, 2011), which focus more on the influence of individual processes.

With reference to the discussion in the previous section, many conventional approaches adopted a pathological view to understand adolescent development. While different developmental scientists have started articulating alternative perspectives in the past few decades, by adopting positive and strength-based perspectives to respond to the deficits or psychological problems of adolescents, researchers and scholars argued for developmental plasticity and diversity in adolescent development (Shek et al., 2019). These transformed theoretical perspectives provided new direction for adolescent development and developed the theoretical foundations of the PYD approach. For example, Lerner et al. (2005) noted that the PYD perspective derived from developmental systems theory. According to this theory, “inherent plasticity” is crucial in the process of human development. The “plasticity emphasized within the PYD perspective indicates as well that the developmental system can be directed to the promotion of desired outcomes, and not only to the prevention of undesirable behaviors” (Lerner et al., 2005, p.12). The humanistic perspective provides an alternative psychological understanding of adolescent development in which human interests and values are of primary importance (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Similarly, the existential perspective focuses on human possibilities within facticity and emphasized the significance of one’s meaning of life. The increased emphasis on individual capability, strengths and diversity provides a theoretical base for the PYD approach, which adopts humanistic and existential views towards human capacity, competence, transcendence and aspirations.

The individual processes of exploring and developing one’s growth are indeed important (Brown & Prinstein, 2011). Adolescents are not broken but they are assets to be developed instead of problems to be controlled (Roth & Brooks-Gunn,

2003). All individuals have full potential for self-development and possess strengths that can be discovered, nurtured and utilized for PYD (Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner et al., 2013). In addition, as stated in their recent review, Shek et al. (2019) highlighted that:

...the emphasis on human potentials in humanistic and existential psychology contributed to the development of positive psychology...The increased emphasis on individual capability, diversity and agency provides a theoretical basis of the perspective that all adolescents possess strengths and potentials that can be discovered, nurtured and utilized for PYD (p.132).

Along with the growth of positive psychology, the PYD approach has evolved from elimination or prevention of such problematic or risky issues (adolescence as the “stormy period”) to the use of strength-based perspectives, which focus on the promotion of positive development of young people (Seligman, 1998). Damon (2004) conceptualized PYD approach as “grew out of dissatisfaction with a predominant view that underestimated the true capacities of young people by focusing on their deficits rather than their developmental potentials” (p. 13). In other words, there is a paradigm shift from “victimology” to “positive youth development”. It is aimed at focusing on the positive attributes of young people and facilitating holistic youth development in order to guide them through a smooth and successful transition to adulthood in a supportive environment. These components are regarded as protective factors, which is different from the conventional pathological perspectives emphasizing developmental risks and negative predictors of young people.

As previously mentioned, Benson (1997) suggested that young people are resources to be developed instead of problems with deficiencies. Therefore, it is essential to enable adolescents to develop their internal and external assets, through the promotion of intrapersonal competencies (positive values, social competencies, positive identity, and commitment to learning), interpersonal relationship skills

(family support, empowerment, and positive peer influence) and civic responsibilities.

In addition, the PYD approach is:

...implicitly or explicitly regarded as the absence of negative or undesirable behaviors. A youth who was seen as manifesting behavior indicative of positive development was depicted as someone who was not taking drugs or using alcohol, not engaging in unsafe sex, and not participating in crime or violence (Lerner, 2005, para. 4).

Actually, a lot of problem behaviors, though manifested differently have some shared etiologies like low EQ, deprived self-esteem, poor moral competence etc. Take addiction as an example, Shaffer and colleagues (2009) proposed a Syndrome Model of Addiction, arguing that multiple expressions of addiction may have shared neurobiological, psychosocial antecedents (e.g., poor coping mechanisms, low emotional intelligence, etc.) and experiences. In other words, problematic behaviors of adolescents could be more efficiently prevented by promoting PYD as many adolescent developmental problems have common origins. In contrast to the traditional prevention models, the approach of PYD perceives youth as “assets” rather than focusing on their negative behaviors, deficits, failures and problems (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006). In addition, “interventions that are grounded in the PYD framework, therefore, must move beyond a problem-oriented focus and address protective and risk factors across family, peer, school, and community environments that affect the successful completion of youths’ developmental tasks” (Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017, p.1156). In other words, PYD emphasizes the ecological position based on the ecological system theory. With reference to the ecological perspective, Lerner and his colleagues (2005; 2018) discussed that relative plasticity in human development. It refers to the attributes of behaviour and development present at one point in life are malleable; as such, if young people could be placed into mutually influential interaction and relationship

promoting positive development, then, through their coactions within the developmental system, they would have the capacity to change the attributes and foster the development of positive qualities.

The key to PYD is to adopt a strength-based conception of adolescence, which focuses on capacities, strengths, well-being and future potential (Damon, 2004; Shek, Dou, Zhu, & Chai, 2019). This promotes healthy and holistic development of young people, instead of merely considering those youths with high risk or at risk. Healthy and holistic development is not regarded as the absence of problem behavior but as the presence of positive psychosocial competencies (i.e., the promotion of social, emotional, spiritual and mental well-being) that facilitate young people to maximize their full potential. PYD also upholds the belief that “problem-free is not fully prepared” (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2003, p. 6). This quote means that all adolescents needed to be fully prepared to thrive across the lifespan. Therefore, we need to pay attention to all adolescents, instead of just focusing on those at-risk. Damon (2004) suggested that PYD is an approach “with strong defining assumptions about what is important to look at if we are to accurately capture the full potential of all young people to learn and thrive in the diverse settings where they live” (p.13). It also focuses on developmental models concerning how young people grow, learn and change, with an emphasis on the person-in-environment perspective (Catalano et al., 2004; Damon, 2004; Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005).

Besides, with reference to a systematic review, Benson et al. (2006) articulated six core PYD principles:

- (1) All youth have the inherent capacity for positive growth and development;
- (2) A positive developmental trajectory is enabled when youth are embedded in relationships, contexts, and ecologies that nurture their development;
- (3) The promotion of positive development is further enabled when youth participate in multiple, nutrient rich relationships, contexts, and ecologies;
- (4) All youth benefit from these

relationships, contexts, and ecologies. Support, empowerment, and engagement are, for example, important developmental assets for all youth, generalizing across race, ethnicity, gender, and family income. However, the strategies and tactics for promoting these developmental assets can vary considerably as a function of social location.; (5) Community is a viable and critical “delivery system” for positive youth development; and (6) Youth are major actors in their own development and are significant (and underutilized) resources for creating the kinds of relationships, contexts, ecologies, and communities that enable positive youth development (Benson et al., 2006, p. 896)

Most importantly, it is believed that when these principles are followed through, this leads to benefits for all young people through experiencing actual positive development; allowing them to feel more positive and comfortable with their own identity, have hope and choices about their future, share a sense of connection with others and contribute to society.

To sum up, PYD approach has moved from the traditional focus on individual mental illness and problematic behaviors to an emphasis on the importance of promoting protective factors at both individual and environmental levels. It is believed that the strong acquisition of the PYD constructs have positive impact on different domains of children and adolescent development. The emphases and key features of the PYD approach include: (1) A paradigm shift from victimology to the positive development of youth; (2) Developmental contexts (i.e., places, ecologies, and relationships with the potential to generate support, opportunities and resources); (3) An ecological emphasis, which reveals the bidirectional relationship between context and person (Benson et al., 2006); (4) Emphasis on developmental assets (psychosocial competencies) of adolescents; and (5) Adopts a strength-based perspective.

### 2.3.2 Models of the PYD approach

Over the past 20 years, various PYD models were proposed by different scholars, each with particular emphasis on fostering the potential of young people and the implications for practice, for example, Damon (2004), Masten (2014) and Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003). In the following, five of the most cited frameworks or models in the PYD literature are discussed.

#### Developmental assets

With reference to the developmental systems approach, the theory-based developmental assets model emphasizes the strengths and talents that all youth possess (Damon, 2004). This model focuses on how individual strengths and skills need to align with an optimal environment for youth, in order to promote their development in a positive way. Benson's (1997; 2007) developmental assets framework is the most widely used approach. His framework included five different developmental nutrients:

(a) have been demonstrated to prevent high-risk behavior (e.g., substance use, violence, dropping out of school), enhance thriving, or build resilience; (b) have evidence of generalizability across social location; (c) contribute balance to the overall framework (i.e., of ecological and individual-level factors); (d) are within the capacity of communities to affect their acquisition; and (e) are within the capacity of youth to proactively procure (Benson, 2007, p. 40)

Benson (1997) and colleagues at the Search Institute in Minnesota identified 40 developmental assets with two main categories. Each category is further sub-divided into four types, including a total of 20 internal qualities (grouped into four categories): (a) commitment to learning, (b) positive values, (c) social competencies, and (d) positive identity) as well as 20 external assets (also grouped into four domains): (a) support, (b) empowerment, (c) boundaries and expectations and (d) constructive use



of time for youth behavior. All these developmental assets are understood as important skills, opportunities, relationships and values that could serve as the “building blocks” of human development that contribute to reduced risks and increased thriving among young people. Benson (2007) also stated that all youth would still have needs but it is important to use their own strengths to facilitate and empower them to move forward and become active participants in their own development. Support for the developmental assets framework is evidenced in diverse research and studies demonstrating that youth reporting more assets are more likely to engage in positive behaviors and less likely to engage in problem behaviors (Benson, 2007; Scales, Benson, & Roehlkepartain, 2011; Shek et al., 2019).

### *Social Emotional Learning (SEL)*

Graczyk et al. (2000) suggested the social emotional learning (SEL) model to evaluate the quality of school-based SEL programs. This approach is the:

...process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, n.d.)

SEL interventions promote personal strengths in youth and asset development by enhancing five core interrelated cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies considered important for success in school and life (CASEL, n.d., Weissberg & O'Brien, 2004). They include: (1) self-awareness (the ability to accurately understand and evaluate one's own thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs, strengths and weaknesses); (2) social awareness (the ability to comprehend others feelings, consider others' perspectives and show empathy toward them); (3) self-management (the

ability to effectively manage one's own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in different circumstances as well as to delay gratification and demonstrate perseverance); (4) relationship skills (the capability to build and maintain positive relationships and manage interpersonal conflicts); and (5) responsible decision making (the ability to take responsibility and make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions that are in line with moral standards, safety principles, and social norms.

School-based SEL interventions focus on cultivating youth with social and emotional assets by directly nurturing their competencies and skills or indirectly improving their learning environments (Taylor et al., 2017). Indeed, SEL interventions are somehow similar to other PYD programs in that there might be some substantial overlap.

### 5Cs model of PYD

Third, the five “Cs” that adolescents need to obtain are specifically highlighted. This model focuses on developmental assets core constructs. These are cognitive and behavioral Competence (cognitive, behavioral, emotional, moral, and social), Confidence (self-efficacy, self-determination, belief in the future, and clear and positive identity), social Connections (bonding), Character (prosocial norms, spirituality) and Caring (empathy and sympathy for others) (Lerner, 2004; Lerner & Benson, 2003). From the PYD perspective, successful youth outcomes include the development of these competences and attributes. In addition, Weissberg and O'Brien (2004) worked out a set of five core social-emotional competencies for effective development of the social and emotional competencies of adolescents. The five competencies include self-awareness, social awareness, self-management,

relationship skills and responsible decision making (p.89). Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) shared a similar idea and suggested that competency building should be the crucial component for a youth development model.

Since 2002, the five “Cs” model was adopted in the 4-H Study of PYD. This study was a large scale longitudinal study which was led by Richard Lerner. It had been repeated yearly for 8 years, surveying more than 7,000 young people in USA from diverse backgrounds across 42 states. This study had generated big data to validate the five “Cs” approach and had yielded rich research findings. It showed that adolescents who involved in high-quality and structured PYD programs, are more likely to experience positive development (Lerner et al., 2013).

#### Thriving, character formation and spirituality

Thriving, character formation and spirituality are also major advocacies in PYD. As discussed in Section 2.3.1, the developmental systems theory stresses the “inherent plasticity” of human development (Lerner et al., 2005). It refers to the potential of an individual for systematic changes fostered by the mutually beneficial relationship between individual and the surrounding contexts, represented as individual  $\Leftrightarrow$  context relations (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005; Lerner et al., 2017). With reference to PYD, such mutually constructive relationship would nurture the development of positive qualities and competences in youth. In addition, the process will ultimately lead to adolescent thriving (Lerner et al., 2005; Shek et al., 2019).

Lerner et al. (2002) suggested that the thriving process involves the growth of functionally valued behaviors across development (i.e., the 5Cs). Benson and Scales (2009) defined thriving in adolescence with three interconnected parts:

Thriving “(1) represents a dynamic and bi-directional interplay over time of a young person intrinsically animated and energized by discovering his/her specialness, and the developmental contexts; (2) is a process of experiencing a balance between continuity and discontinuity of development over time that is optimal for a given individual's fused relations with her or his contexts; and (3) reflects both where a young person is currently in their journey to idealized personhood, and whether they are on the kind of path to get there that could rightly be called one of exemplary adaptive developmental regulations” (p.90). They argued that thriving hints beyond developmental competence exhibiting more than being happy or successful in accomplishing basic developmental tasks.

The nurturing of character strengths is important to adolescent thriving. PYD posits that character strengths enable individuals to simultaneously contribute positively to themselves, others, and their contexts. To operationalize characters, Park and Peterson (2006) proposed a framework with six core virtues for PYD which cover 24 character strengths, including (1) wisdom and knowledge; (2) courage; (3) humanity; (4) justice; (5) temperance; and (6) transcendence. Park and Peterson (2006) stated that all the mentioned character strengths contribute to fulfillment, with certain character strengths having closer relationship with PYD. Besides, the virtue of transcendence includes five character strengths: appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, and religiousness, which greatly related to another important indicator of PYD, spirituality.

Transpersonal psychology provides a theoretical foundation for embedding spiritual development in the conception of PYD, in which spirituality is also highly associated with adolescent thriving (Roehlkepartain, 2012). Lerner et al. (2005) defined spirituality as new views of life which are related to the transcendence of

oneself. Similarly, Benson, Scales, Syvertsen and Roehlkepartain (2012) defined spirituality as personal exploration of goal, life meaning, purpose and connectedness as well as the capacity for self-transcendence. Benson and Scales (2009) identified spirituality is one of the indicators of thriving. Lerner (2004) also stated that spirituality can serve as resources for PYD and mediate the moral development of adolescents. Benson et al. (2012) have also emphasized the prominent role that spirituality plays in character formation and PYD.

### 15 PYD constructs

Catalano and colleagues (2004) suggested a complete and comprehensive model, which includes a wide variety of competencies by appraising the effectiveness of 77 programs, in which 25 successful programs were identified with 15 PYD constructs. These are:

1. Promotion of Bonding
2. Promotion of Social Competence
3. Promotion of Emotional Competence
4. Promotion of Cognitive Competence
5. Promotion of Behavioral Competence
6. Promotion of Moral Competence
7. Promotion of Spirituality
8. Promotion of Beliefs in the Future
9. Cultivation of Resilience
10. Cultivation of Self-Determination
11. Development of Self-Efficacy

12. Development of Clear and Positive Identity
13. Fostering Prosocial Norms
14. Providing Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement
15. Providing Recognition for Positive Behavior

It is suggested that these 15 constructs:

...refer to how individuals' internal and external resources help them deal with challenges, they can be regarded as protective factors alleviating the development of problem behavior, as proposed in the resilience literature on risk and protective factors...This concept and related theories of protective factors suggest a predictive relationship of positive youth development to problem behavior (Sun & Shek, 2010, p.456)

Comparing with the previous approaches, the 15 PYD constructs approach is more comprehensive by including more developmental qualities that have been recognized by other PYD scholars.

To summarize, there are different models help contribute to shape PYD. It is argued here that the above-mentioned models of PYD can be characterized with several features: (1) Developmental assets; (2) Personal strengths and competencies building; (3) PYD constructs; and (4) Character strengths, thriving and spirituality. These observations also consistent with the opinions of Shek and Wu (2016). With the emergence of these PYD models, different PYD programs were increasingly developed and implemented over the past few decades, with the aim to help enhance the developmental progress of young people.

### **2.3.3 Strengths and limitations of the PYD approach**

#### *Strengths of PYD approach:*

1. Lerner et al. (2005) stated clearly that the ultimate intention of the PYD perspective is to promote positive outcomes. This idea is in contrast to

other psychological perspectives that focus solely on problems, deficits and deficiencies of adolescents. The transformed theoretical perspective guides and changes the practice of PYD programs (the details of PYD programs, the program implementation and its effectiveness will be discussed in Chapter Three). In both Western and Chinese contexts, PYD programs do not neglect the presence of risk or problem behaviors, but purposefully focus on the promotion of adolescents' strengths and competencies (Catalano et al., 1998, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Shek, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c).

2. PYD is for all youth. Hamilton, Hamilton and Pittman (2004) emphasized the importance of universality of PYD. They stated that “if all youth need support in their development, then participating in a program is no longer stigmatizing” (p.8). PYD approach focuses on the unique competences, strengths and future potential of every adolescent. Although adolescents are the resources to be developed, their development still requires nurturing. Promotion of youth development is to help all adolescents in both problem-free and fully developed (Catalano et al., 2002).
3. PYD approach emphasizes on the integrated youth development rather than dealing with a single adolescent issue. It is argued that different problem behaviors and developmental issues in youth share common roots and antecedents. Programs only focusing on a particular problem behavior may underestimate the impact of programs that modify these common antecedents. Different PYD models work towards to the same direction, i.e., by focusing on a wide range of youth developmental possibilities and strengthening their psychosocial competencies,

adolescent risk behavior could be prevented and would not be easily developed. In their systematic review, Catalano et al (2002) revealed that more than 95% of the 25 well-evaluated Western PYD programs reduced problem behaviors. In the Chinese context, there is evidence showing that PYD negatively predicted adolescent problem behavior over time (Sun & Shek, 2010). As such, implementing PYD programs may help tackle different types of adolescents' tasks and needs.

4. The comprehensiveness of PYD approach is shown, including its contents, contexts and the range of disciplines and serving targets. This approach offers comprehensive and systematic models containing a wide variety of competencies and assets of youth. The focus on competence and assets building for adolescents are carried out through comprehensive programs, in the different context covers the individuals, families, schools and communities. Although the PYD approach and its related models do not cover contextual factors, the contextualization of PYD approach considers the historical and social contexts of human behavior.

#### Limitations of PYD approach

1. While the PYD approach tends to address the positive ways of developing young people, the conceptualization of PYD is varied and not yet well defined (Catalano et al., 2002; Shek, Siu & Lee, 2007b). Over the past 30 years, researchers and scholars are committed to define what constitutes PYD and coming up with a variety of PYD constructs. For instance, Lerner's group (Lerner et al., 2005, Lerner et al., 2006, Lerner et al., 2010, Lerner et al., 2017, Lerner et al., 2018), Benson's group (Benson, 1997,



2007; Benson & Scales, 2009; Benson et al., 2012) and Catalano's group (Catalano et al., 1998; Catalano et al., 2004). As discussed previously, there are several substantive models and themes within the PYD field. However, different scholars also indicated similar problems that there are wide variations in PYD definitions and the essence of PYD programs (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 1998) and in the ideas framing efforts to promote such development (Lerner et al., 2018). Lerner, Phelps, Forman, and Bowers (2009) indicated that "one challenge to reviewing and understanding the body of research on PYD is the lack of a common definition of the term within and across fields of study. Readers of the extant literature will encounter a variety of theoretical origins of the concept with resulting variability in operational definitions and substantive implications" (p. 525). There is a call to establish shared definitions of the key PYD constructs.

2. Another limitation is related to the assessment of the PYD constructs. Shek, Siu and Lee (2007b) stated that there are only few available PYD measures have been applied in monitoring individual differences between youth groups with different ecological assets. At the same time, not many studies that have examined PYD in adolescents in different cultures. Catalano et al. (2002) also stated the importance of developing more standardized assessments of strengths for PYD programs.
3. Although there is research evidence showing the power of developmental assets, competence building and PYD constructs, all these positive components cannot disregard risky and problem behaviors. For some adolescents, although they may be equipped with some developmental

assets, competencies and PYD attributes, they still engage in problem behaviors, such as drug abuse, internet addiction, mental health problems, self-harm or even commit suicide. This shows that there may be some restrictions in the interplaying effects among their ecology. Shek (2006b) suggested that researchers and practitioners should place more emphasis on personal competences to nurture adolescents to meet challenges in life and have a comprehensive scope of development.

## **2.4 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, other than providing a brief overview of adolescent developmental issues in Hong Kong, different theoretical approaches for understanding and explaining youth problem behaviors were presented. In addition, the PYD approach, especially its development, concepts and models were outlined and discussed. The next chapter provides a discussion on service for young people in Hong Kong. Recent approaches in conducting school-based youth programs would be explored based on the theoretical discussion in this chapter. In particular, following the increasing popularity of the PYD approach, there is a rapid increase in PYD programs. In the next chapter, the development of the local PYD program, the Project P.A.T.H.S., is also systematically reviewed.

## **Chapter Three: School-based Youth Enhancement Programs in Hong Kong**

In this chapter, the contextual historical background of youth services in Hong Kong are portrayed along with discussion on the growth of school-based youth programs in Hong Kong, making reference to different approaches. Then the major school-based youth enhancement programs in Hong Kong are introduced. Specifically, the development of the local PYD program, Project P.A.T.H.S., is systematically reviewed.

### **3.1 School-based Youth Enhancement Programs in Hong Kong**

#### **3.1.1 Contextual historical background of services for young people in Hong Kong**

As discussed in Chapter Two, adolescence is an important period of transition from childhood to adulthood, full of developmental changes, difficulties and challenges. This is also a critical period for young people to develop their lifetime beliefs, values, principles, perceptions and practices. In particular, Hong Kong has shown rapid change in its social, economic and political environment over the past decades. As such, timely support services for young people that foster their positive and healthy development to promote a smooth transition are much-needed.

Historically, youth services in Hong Kong began over a century ago, having become reformed and more institutionalized since the 1970s. Noticeably, the occurrence of “1967 riots” was an important watershed in services for young people. Before the riots, social conditions in Hong Kong were quite difficult and resources scarce. At that time, in conjunction with the rapid influx of new immigrants from mainland China, many children and adolescents at the grassroots level did not have

enough opportunities to receive formal education. Therefore, some local religious organizations and non-profit or voluntary welfare organizations, such as the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association and the Salvation Army provided temporary accommodation, food, basic education, skills training and other entertainment activities for disadvantaged youth and their families. It can be concluded here that most of the youth services provided at that time were remedial in nature.

After the 1967 riots, civil disturbances revealed public anger and disappointment with the colonial government, this worrying situation also endangered social stability. At the same time, the destructive power of youth (mostly from low socioeconomic strata) and their alarming delinquent behaviors caught the public's attention. The Hong Kong government was forced to "realize that the socio-political landscape of Hong Kong had been changed with the rising young generations entering into the political arena.....They had higher expectation of government and society than did their parents" (Lam & Chan, 2003, p.107). As a result, the government began different policy reforms that paid special attention to young people, especially "troubled youth". Different strategies and measures were carried out, with the aims of lessening adolescents' antisocial behavior and promoting positive prosocial norms (Government Secretariat, 1977). For example, with the intention of ventilating the excess energy of young people, many leisure or recreational programs and activities were conducted by the government.

In the 1970s, the Hong Kong government continued to place much emphasis on handling the issues of juvenile delinquency. With the intention to use education and social services to convey positive societal values and norms to shape the younger generation, the government provided them with universal education and various

youth services (Au, Holosko, & Lo, 2009; Goodstadt, 2013; Government Secretariat, 1977, 1981; Ng, 1975). In 1971, the government began to implement free primary education and then the nine-year universal basic education system was implemented from 1974. Simultaneously, in the 1970s the government also put youth services on a more official track. Since then, the funding of non-government organizations (NGOs) was legitimately supported and subsidized (Lam & Chan, 2003). Social workers delivered services mainly through the provision of Children and Youth Center Services, School Social Work Services and Outreach Social Work Services (Government Secretariat, 1977; Ng, 1975). At that time, by implementing developmental work, the goal of youth work was not only to reduce or prevent problems of adolescents, but also focus on how to help them grow up positively, so that they can be ready to become contributing adults. Yet, while having carried out different youth activities, the provision of youth services at that time was mainly based on personal counselling services (Ngai & To, 2010), such as outreaching services for youth-at-risk (Ng & Man, 1985), with the aim of solving youth problems with individuals, families, schools and society and thus reducing their illegal and anti-social behavior. As observed, the deficit model was used to study interventions in this problem group and their related issues. In their study, Lai et al. (1979) indicated that most school administrators perceived the major function of school social work services was to handle and manage students' maladjustment, misconduct, emotional and psychological problems. With reference to "problem-oriented" ideology, having the philosophy to create stronger social stability, most actions taken by the government and NGOs were still remedial and correctional. Although some developmental youth work was existed, the focus is more on tertiary prevention strategies.

In the local development of youth service, it is regrettable that there is no centralized youth policy in Hong Kong all along. In 1986, the Central Committee on Youth (CCY) was set up to examine the need for a youth policy in Hong Kong. This committee suggested setting up a centralized and comprehensive youth policy in Hong Kong, however the proposal was rejected in the Governor's address in 1989. Afterwards, the Commission on Youth (CoY) was officially established in 1990. This is a non-statutory body with the objective to advise the Governor on issues and matters pertaining to youth, formed by professionals, academics and youth workers. Later, the CoY published the Charter for Youth, which articulated the principles, as well as the ideals and the long-term goals for youth development. However, this Charter was not legally binding, it revealed that the government seriously lacked a clear youth development perspective but nevertheless focused on preventing juvenile delinquency and related issues. Until now, different government bureaus (such as Labour and Welfare Bureau, Home Affairs Bureau, Security Bureau and Education Bureau) and departments (Department of Health, Social Welfare Department, Action Committee Against Narcotics and Hong Kong Police Force) still have their own policies and strategies to take care of youth matters and manage youth issues. In other words, while there is an obvious leap in providing institutionalized youth services and the positioning of youth policies involved both remedial and preventive measures, the intervention focus still emphasized on the sides of tertiary prevention strategies. Comparatively, less effort was spent on secondary prevention and primary prevention; this "problem-oriented" ideology was still dominant in the 1980s and early 1990s.

In the mid-1990s, as service segmentation and duplication were observed and there was a lack of flexibility in different youth service units, the Hong Kong

government underwent a major review on Children and Youth Center Services (Working Party on Review of Children and Youth Center Services, 1994). The Working Group then published a report recommending the restructuring of the Children and Youth Centre, the School Social Work Team and the Outreach Social Work Team into an “Integrated Youth Service Centre” in order to provide more holistic care and services to service users. By adopting the multi-intervention approach, all service providers could allocate their resources in a more flexible way, to fulfill the needs of young people. After that, youth services in Hong Kong continued to develop steadily. For example, the worker-student ratio of the School Social Work Services took a great leap. It changed from 1 to 4,000 in 1978, 1 to 3,000 in 1987, and then 1 to 2,000 in 1994. In addition, the policy of “one school social worker for each secondary school” was fully implemented in 2000 (Social Welfare Department, 2018). Regarding the nature of School Social Work Services, the following principles were stated in their guidelines. Other than handling students’ behavioral or emotional problems, the service further promoted:

(1) to help students develop their potentials to the fullest, achieve personal growth, establish a harmonious family/interpersonal relationship and elicit their concern for community; (2) to help students build up positive social values and prevent them from falling astray under undesirable environment influences; and (3) to observe the education system, to be alert of its impact on the students and be ready to contribute in the promotion and provision of adequate and proper education opportunities for them (Social Welfare Department, 1994)

In other words, instead of doing remedial and preventive work, the School Social Work Services (as well as other youth services) changed to a more positive and developmental manner. In particular, focusing more on “youth development” and “empowerment” have become crucial concepts for the development of youth policies (To, 2007). Helping adolescents solve problems does not mean that they are capable

of nurturing their own positive development. “Problem free is not fully prepared” was indicated by Pittman in 1992 (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2003), which captured the new movement towards positive youth development in the late 1990s. To enable young people to contribute to positive, healthy and sustainable development, the youth service expanded from an individual problem orientation to a holistic youth development orientation. Although youth problems such as school bullying, self-harm and suicide, unsafe sexual behaviors, drug addiction, internet addiction, or young gangsters still called for the public’s attention, there are other ways of perceiving youth as pillars, assets and future leaders of society.

Currently, to address the multifarious and changing needs of adolescents, the government adopts a holistic and integrated mode in both social services and school guidance (Hui, 2000; Social Welfare Department, 2018). A wide range of remedial (offering interventions and therapies to youth experiencing psychological or behavioral difficulties), preventive (focusing on the anticipation of problem behaviors and enhancing the awareness of young people to those issues) and developmental (facilitating young people to have positive and holistic development) services and school programs for young people aimed to help them become mature, responsible and contributing members of society (Hui, 2000; Social Welfare Department, 2018). It is worth noting that each mode of intervention is an indispensable part of youth services in Hong Kong and these three different modes of intervention should work in progressive manner. Yet, it is observed that the current focus of intervention is still more on tertiary prevention (i.e., a lot of measures on treatment, rehabilitation and palliation on different youth problems, in order to prevent further problem deterioration and restore effective functioning of youth). Comparatively, less efforts are spent on secondary prevention (limited strategies on “early detection and early



intervention” of high-risk groups) and primary prevention (limited universal preventive and developmental programs for all youth with the aims to reduce and eliminate risky behaviors).

On the other hand, as most adolescents spend more than a third of their waking hours at school, it is believed that their learning in schools has strong academic, social and emotional components. As such, school administrators, teachers and school social workers play an important role in fostering not only students’ cognitive development but also their emotional and social development. At the same time, school policy and practice should be part of the comprehensive strategies of youth policy to assist and nurture adolescents to have positive and healthy growth and development. In this aspect, in order to change and remedy misbehaviors and difficulties among adolescents, relevant local school-based youth enhancement programs, targeting specific adolescent developmental problems have been developed over the past 30 decades.

During the past decades in Hong Kong, most mainstream schools have placed a great deal of emphasis on students’ academic performance. Since 1999, Hong Kong has launched comprehensive education reforms (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004, 2005). In the latest round of education reforms in Hong Kong starting from 2009, the new 3-year senior secondary education (“334” new academic structure or NSS, which comprises a new 3-year school curriculum at senior secondary level and a 4-year undergraduate program at university) and the subject of Liberal Studies were introduced, in which the provision of a 9-year compulsory education structure was replaced by a 12-year basic education structure (Education Bureau, 2011). Similar to other reform trends in most Western and Asian systems, it is expected that a better learning environment and a more suitable curriculum will be developed, which can

allow students to enhance their self-efficacy, pursue subjects of interest, demonstrate their potential as well as realize their life goals, and ultimately, to broaden their horizons for whole-person development, to pave their way to success (Education Bureau, 2011). Simultaneously, the proposed change in this educational approach aims to place greater emphasis and attention on interactive learning, holistic development and the personal growth of adolescents.

Correspondingly, after the implementation of a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program for all secondary schools in the 1990s, for the past two decades, the approach and model of student counseling services in Hong Kong has shifted from a problem-based or remedial approach to a whole school approach (Hui, 2000), in which “whole-person development” or “all-round development” of all students are emphasized in education. Schools and NGOs started to merge to provide school-based developmental programs to facilitate students’ personal growth and social development, not just focusing on preventing students’ problems. In response to the education reforms and the need to help students achieve the goals of whole-person development, increasingly “developmental” school-based youth programs have been implemented in secondary schools in Hong Kong in the past fifteen years through inter-disciplinary collaboration. It is suggested that school-based programs employing inter-disciplinary collaboration to deliver services could enrich the learning experience of students and positively affect the development, growth and achievement of adolescents.

With such transformation and as important collaborators of the education sector, the climate and work focus of NGOs, School Social Work Services and Integrated Children and Youth Services Centers (ICYSCs) have also changed accordingly. At the same time, since the Quality Education Fund was established and

launched in 1997, new projects could be funded for promoting quality education. In light of this, school social workers and colleagues of ICYSCs have taken the initiative to join with both primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong to organize and implement various tailor-made school-based plans and programs to enhance the quality of education (focus more on students' capacities, potentials and competences). Collaborative school-based programs such as talks, workshops, seminars, groups, in-class programs and whole school mass programs were highly welcomed by schools. At the same time, a number of resource kits with different themes and domains were developed and implemented by different NGOs providing school social work and ICYSC services, such as the Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, The Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service, the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals. Among these school-based programs, other than the usual preventive programs, (e.g., anti-drugs, internet addiction prevention, gambling awareness), the developmental programs were also emphasized (e.g., promoting stronger self-esteem and resilience building, mental health and emotion management).

In sum, the development of school-based programs underwent changes. In the early 1990s, among the thematic programs, the focus was on identifying risk and protective factors in adolescent risk behaviors, by adopting the prevention science perspective (refer to Section 3.1.2). In addition, most program participants were students at risk or those with greater psychosocial needs, which sometimes imposed a negative labeling effect. Apparently, these observations are the features of the "deficit-based approach of youth development" summarized by Benson (1997). Later, with reference to the adoption of the humanistic and ecological perspectives in the field of social work and education and along with the growth of positive psychology,

the direction of school-based programs had also changed accordingly. Some more school-based programs encouraged the promotion of are conducted in order to generate positive changes in adolescents (Hui, 2000; Shek, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c). Nevertheless, it is observed that the concept of primary prevention is still not prevalent in the field of education and social work. Shek and Yu (2011a) suggested that researchers and practitioners should reconsider about the importance of primary prevention programs because the current effort in different Asian communities is still focusing on the secondary and tertiary prevention initiatives. To further examine the school-based programs in Hong Kong, the two major approaches guiding the implementation of school-based youth enhancement programs will be discussed in the next section.

### **3.1.2 Recent approaches in conducting school-based youth programs**

With reference to the discussion in Chapter Two and the previous section, it is observed that adolescent development is a complex interaction of biological, psychological and social-relational transitions. These different dimensions provide significant insights and attentions for the development of youth programs and services.

Since the 1990s, conceptually speaking, two approaches are generally adopted for minimizing adolescent developmental problems. They are the “prevention science perspective” and “positive youth development (PYD) approach”. In the prevention science perspective, different prevention programs targeting “adolescents’ problem behavior” have been designed and developed. In the PYD approach, different developmental and enhancement programs targeting the “promotion of psychosocial competencies and constructive development of adolescents” have been designed and

developed. Indeed, these two approaches (as set out below) can be understood as coexisting, rather than as competing ideas (Catalano et al., 2002; Lerner et al., 2013).

### *3.1.2.1 Prevention science perspective: programs and effectiveness*

Prevention science perspective emerged in the 1990s (France & Utting, 2005). It adopts an approach to prevention from the field of public health, accompanied by “apparently ambitious claims concerning its capacity to address a range of social problems, including educational underachievement, poor mental health, criminality and drug misuse” (p. 79). According to Ward and Linke (2011), the prevention science perspective provides a framework for conceptualizing and developing universal, particular or targeted interventions that seek to promote adaptive functioning, resilience among youth and their competencies across cognitive, emotional, behavioral and social domains. Two approaches are often employed in governing prevention strategies (Shek, 2006c), with the aim of preventing the aforementioned youth problems or high-risk behavior (see Chapter Two, Section 2.1).

The two approaches include:

...the traditional conception, which includes tertiary prevention (prevention of further deterioration of the problem), secondary prevention (early identification of high-risk groups and early intervention), and primary prevention (elimination of the occurrence of problems). The second approach can be termed the changing conception, which includes indicated prevention (targeting adolescents with noticeable signs and markers of a behavioral problem even though they are not diagnosable), selective prevention (targeting adolescents who have above-average risk but there is no indication that their participation in risky behavior is a problem) and universal prevention (targeting all adolescents regardless of their risk status) (Shek, 2006c, p.299)

All these approaches highlight the importance of identifying risk and protective factors in adolescent problem behaviors, which is one of the major attributes of the prevention science perspective (Catalano et al., 2002). Besides, Catalano and

colleagues also identified three more attributes of prevention science perspective, including (1) the incorporation and adoption of developmental perspective; (2) the assertion that problem behaviors of youth share many common antecedents; and (3) the assertion that risk and protective factors change youth outcomes. Prevention of problem behavior programs were designed to target the reduction of risk factors and the development of protective factors to buffer the effects of risk factors.

In Western literature on the prevention science perspective, evidence indicates that many school-based programs are effective in reducing adolescents' risks for problem behavior (e.g. smoking, substance use and delinquency behavior) and producing positive effects (e.g. having better life skills and resilience) (Bond, Toumbourou, Lyndal, Catalano, & Patton, 2005; Botvin, 1990, 2000; Catalano, Arthur, Hawkins, Berglund, & Olson, 1998; Chapman, Buckley, Sheehan, & Shochet, 2013; DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Durlak & Weisberg, 2007; Durlak & Wells, 1998; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Czeh, Cantor, Crosse, & Hantman, 2000; Moote & Wodarski, 1997; Stallard, Taylor, Anderson, Daniels, Simpson, Phillips, & Skryabina, 2012). Other than the mentioned effects, Catalano et al. (2012) stated that the school-based prevention programs "have shown increase in secondary school completion, educational attainment, and income" (p.1658).

However, there are three major concerns that should be taken into consideration. First, academics and practitioners are dissatisfied with the prevention-focused programs (Damon, 2004). Benson (1997) stated that under this approach, programs may be geared toward a pathological view of adolescents. "Deficit" and "pathological" language are always used, and young people are viewed as vulnerable problems to be solved. Hence, this deficit-based approach is criticized as too pathological and problem-oriented. Another problem is that parents generally do not

welcome the prevention approach because it is negatively connoted. They have hesitations that their children will be negatively labeled or stigmatized. Such impression becomes their psychological barrier for their children to join the related programs. Second, given the wide spectrum of youth developmental problems, practitioners have to design and implement various distinct programs. However, problem behaviors share many common antecedents. In addition, it is difficult to implement all types of prevention programs in light of the limited resources in practice (Shek, Han, Lee, & Yu, 2013). It is suggested to focus on a range of youth developmental possibilities, rather than dealing with only single issue. Third, Pittman and colleagues (2003) pointed out that prevention alone is not enough for youth holistic development. Catalano et al. (2004) also echoed that the prevention science perspective cannot fully engage the motivations and capacities of adolescents. In response to the dominant focus on pathology, deficits, risks and problematic outcomes, contrary to the prevention science perspective, the PYD approach evolved. Yet, as stated earlier, these two approaches can be understood as complementary, instead of competing (Catalano et al., 2002; Lerner et al., 2013).

#### *3.1.2.2 PYD approach: programs and effectiveness*

As discussed in Chapter Two, Section 2.3, PYD theory perceives adolescents as resources to be developed rather than deficits and focuses on their strengths instead of their problems (Benson, 1997; Lerner, 2005; Lerner & Benson, 2003). The word “positive” stresses on developing one’s assets and searching for the essential strengths of the individual (Pittman et al., 2003). “An asset-based approach is being championed by the field of child and youth care work, focusing on strengths as opposed to weaknesses, assets as opposed to deficit” (Rose, 2006, p.236). This new

approach evolved from prevention of youth problematic or risky issues to the use of strength-based perspectives, which focus on the promotion of the positive development of adolescents (Lerner & Benson, 2003; Seligman, 1998).

PYD is a promising strategy for promoting psychosocial competencies and constructive development of adolescents. In Chapter Two, Section 2.3.2, five major PYD models or frameworks were outlined, each with particular emphasis on fostering the potential of young people and implications for practice. With the emergence of these PYD models, PYD programs were developed and implemented accordingly from the increasing awareness that working on deficits, weaknesses and problems with young people could not create positive outcomes. Furthermore, there was a shift from prevention and remedial programs to programs designed to help enhance the developmental progress of young people (Catalano et al., 2004). Various PYD programs were implemented in the West (especially in United States) with well-sustained program effects, as detailed below.

#### *Effectiveness of PYD programs*

There is a substantial increase in evidence showing that the implementation of PYD programs in the Western context is well developed and appears to be effective in preventing and improving adolescent problem behaviors such as bullying, substance use, sexual and reproductive health and school dropout (Catalano et al., 2004; Gavin, Catalano, David-Ferdon, Gloppen, & Markham, 2010; Haegerich & Tolan, 2008; Hawkins, Catalano, & Arthur, 2002). For example, in some early reviews of PYD programs, Flay (2002) reasoned that comprehensive promotion programs for youth can “effectively prevent multiple problem behaviors and increase multiple positive behaviors and outcomes at the same time” (p.418). In the study



supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and National Institute for Child Health and Human Development grant, Catalano et al. (2002) identified 25 effective programs out of 77 programs, in which 76% increased positive behaviors of youth and about 96% reduced their problem behaviors. One thing may deserve our attention here is that in that systematic review, Catalano et al. (2002) found that only 25 PYD programs were successful (out of 77 programs), with the success of these programs defined in terms of significant improvements in positive development and reductions in problem behaviors in the objective outcome indicators based on strong research designs (i.e., either experimental or quasi-experimental designs). In other words, 52 reviewed programs could not be regarded as successful or they did not work. Yet, while not many evaluation studies include long-term follow-ups and effects of only a few interventions have been replicated, PYD approach is still appealing as the effects of the successful programs are inspiring (Lerner et al, 2018).

There is also evidence that PYD programs are significantly associated with constructive outcomes, like reducing delinquent behaviors and substance use (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010). Wilson and Lipsey (2000), through meta-analysis of 28 studies regarding wilderness challenge programs for delinquent youth, argued that these PYD programs were effective in reducing antisocial and delinquent behavior. Similarly, Durlak et al. (2011) stated that the participation of SEL programs could significantly help the program participants diminish their internalization of symptoms and risky behaviors. In some recent reviews, Taylor, Oberle, Durlak and Weissberg (2017) concluded that SEL interventions were associated with reductions in drug use and conduct problems. Through a review of 25 published studies regarding PYD interventions using the wilderness and adventure approaches, Harper (2017) also

supported the notion of effectiveness in treatment of a broad range of socio-emotional, behavioral, mental health and substance abuse issues.

In addition, PYD programs can also facilitate better behavioral and emotional functioning of adolescents and promote positive outcomes among young people (Catalano et al., 2004; Durlak & Weissberg, 2002; 2005; Kegler, Young, & Lerner, 2003; Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005; Lerner, Boyd, & Du, 2010; Marshall, Bui, & Rodine, 2005; Masten, 2014; Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017). For instance, with reference to the 5Cs model, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) investigated 48 community-based programs and found that all programs enhanced the competency goals, i.e., participants' social, academic, cognitive and vocational competencies. Similarly, Durlak, Weissberg and Pachan (2010) reported that PYD programs could strengthen adolescents' positive social and emotional development. At the same time, after joining these programs, they helped increase the academic achievement of participants.

Moreover, in recent reviews of PYD programs, Adams et al. (2018) found that higher levels of internal assets, such as social competencies and positive identity, were associated with greater academic performance among adolescents. It is also reported that PYD-focused interventions could positively influence a range of health behaviors, including sexual health behaviors of adolescents (Harris & Cheney, 2018).

In a more recent review, Waid and Uhrich (2019) identified seven common but effective PYD program formats that can be tailored to a range of adolescent needs across geographic and cultural contexts including camp, wilderness-adventure and outdoor programs, sports, art, music, mentoring and school-based programs. For school-based programs, in a systematic review conducted by Curran and Wexler (2017), PYD programs in school settings can be categorized into three domains:

curriculum-based, leadership development and student-based mentorship programs. Positive results were observed in these school-based programs. In a meta-analysis of 213 school-based and universal SEL programs, Durlak et al. (2011) evaluated 200 school-based SEL programs and concluded that significant changes in social and emotional skills, attitudes and academic performance were observed in program participants. In another meta-analysis of 82 school-based PYD programs, Taylor et al. (2017) also concluded that school-based social emotional learning programs are effective in improving social-emotional skills, emotional distress and academic achievement. These PYD programs are also associated with a decrease in conduct problems and drug use.

To summarize, there are ample examples in the West showing the effectiveness and benefits of implementing PYD programs for the general adolescent population (Catalano et al., 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Taylor et al., 2017). At the same time, the available evidence also show the positive impact on groups at high risk, as PYD programs can be the intervention for a broad range of adolescent risks (Harper, 2017, Waid & Urich, 2019; Wilson & Lipsey, 2000). However, there is only limited evidence showing the effectiveness of youth programs in handling youth development problems in the Chinese context, especially regarding school-based programs. In view of increasing adolescent developmental problems in Hong Kong, the question remains as to what is the status in implementing school-based youth programs, either under the prevention science perspective or PYD approach?

### *3.1.2.3 “General” versus “specific” youth enhancement programs*

With reference to the primary, secondary, and tertiary forms of prevention, correspondingly, universal, targeted and treatment services for adolescents are

proposed. Based on the discussion in Chapter Two, to address youth development issues, both universal (general) and targeted (specific) youth enhancement programs are commonly implemented in both Western and Eastern societies, either under the prevention science perspective or PYD approach. Yet, the debate of whether to offer targeted services to specific high-risk groups or to provide generic and universal intervention to all eligible program participants remains unresolved. Indeed, there are proponents of both approaches and it is difficult to state which approach is better.

First of all, Skocpol (1991) indicated that targeting is an inferior approach. Under the approach of targeting, eligibility to social benefits or services involves some kind of selection criteria (e.g. means-testing) to determine the “truly deserving” or “at-risk” (Mkandawire, 2005). The implementation of specific and targeted programs aims to alleviate particular adolescent problems in a focused manner, such as drug abuse, mental health problems, internet addiction, violence and aggression, and poverty. However, problems of stigmatization and victimization are the main criticism of this approach. On the other hand, the universal approach avoids stigmatization and diminishes the possibility of labeling service recipients because it is applicable to all program participants at the same dosage level, which can achieve the goals of primary prevention. In addition, the generic programs are mostly implemented on a school-wide basis to address the needs of all students and promote their positive functioning.

Indeed, it is argued that universal programs could also benefit service recipients with specific problems. For example, there is strong evidence that universal school-based programs can effectively prevent violent and aggressive behavior (Hahn et al., 2007). In their study, Botvin, Griffin and Nichols (2006) indicated that universal school-based programs are potential interventions for preventing multiple

problem behaviors, including those not directly targeted. Through specific discussion on disadvantaged youth, Wilson (2012) argued that to address poverty, universal programs are far more effective than stigmatized targeted programs, which are limited to the weak and poor. In relation to poor youth, the youth program using a universal approach may reach actual economically disadvantaged targets, as no one is required to meet specific eligibility requirements. At the same time, universal school-based programs were found to be effective at all school levels and across different populations, including the low SES (Hahn et al., 2007). In contrast, Mkandawire (2005) mentioned that welfare program can tend to lie somewhere between the two extremes (purely universal and purely targeting) and on a continuum. Based on the above discussion, it draws the researcher's attention to examine whether universal or generic programs could help adolescents with specific problems (i.e., local adolescents experiencing poverty).

### **3.1.3 School-based youth enhancement programs in Hong Kong**

Similar to the Western context, while there are different programs under the prevention science perspective, there has been a notable shift to the PYD approach over the past 20 years, which fits the local reformed education approach. Simultaneously, the format of the programs has also started to shift from piecemeal school-based activities to curricula-based and universal programs. It is believed that a comprehensive, progressive and classroom-focused approach can effectively prevent multiple problematic and delinquent behaviors and increase positive behaviors and consequences concurrently (Flay, 2002; Taylor et al., 2017). In search of these local school-based development programs, a few examples are outlined below.

### *3.1.3.1 Emotion and Value Education Program (EVEP)*

The Emotion and Value Education Program (EVEP) was a universal program for junior secondary school students (S2 and S3) supported by the Quality Education Fund (Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service, n.d.). The program was launched by the Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service in 1998, aimed at enhancing adolescents character development. It covered topics on emotion management, self-understanding, interpersonal interactions and positive values. Under each theme, there were six sessions. Two teaching kits were published to facilitate teachers to conduct the program. To facilitate the school teachers implementing the programs, a tailor-made training program for teachers was provided to each participating school. More than 40 secondary schools (as well as more than five primary schools in the second cycle) joined the EVEP from 1998 to 2003.

To evaluate the project, program evaluation (using a pre-post test experiment) was carried out in four pilot schools between 1998 and 2000 by Hong Kong Baptist University. The results showed that the program was well received by the students. Particularly, the students from the lower banding benefited most from the program (Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service, n.d.). In addition, the findings showed that the participants displayed changes in their emotions and values after joining the program. Due to the rejection of the project proposal for additional funding (Quality Education Fund) for its continuation, the delivery mode of the project has been changed since 2003. The EVEP team co-worked with the Department of Health to design the program content of another youth program for primary school students. With reference to similar programs in different NGOs, an organized evaluation framework and empirical evidence were found in this program, which was pioneering and comprehensive to a certain extent. However, following a thorough electronic

database and print resources search there does not appear to be any detailed reports on its evaluation.

#### *3.1.3.2 Understanding the Adolescent Project (UAP)*

The Understanding the Adolescent Project (UAP) was a comprehensive support program for personal growth (Social Welfare Department, 2003). It was implemented in more than 300 secondary schools and has been implemented in more than 400 primary schools since 2004. Concerning the program for secondary schools, as one of the government's initiatives in 2000 in strengthening services and support for the youth-at-risk, it aimed to enhance junior secondary schools students' resilience to cope with challenges they have faced as they grow up. The program was mainly targeted at identifying Secondary One students with developmental needs (early identification) through the use of a specially designed and validated screening tool (Hong Kong Student Information Form-HKSIF) and assisting them by providing a tailor-made primary preventive program. A 3-year pilot project was commissioned by the Social Welfare Department to the Breakthrough Limited, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong between 2001/02 and 2003/04.

The UAP (Secondary) was implemented in more than 300 schools for early identification of developmental needs of students and early intervention. UAP served Secondary One students identified with greater developmental needs. A preventive program that focused on resilience was provided to enhance students' competence, sense of belonging towards their families and schools, optimism and resilience culture (Lau, 2003).

Longitudinal studies were also conducted, which revealed encouraging results

(Centre for Epidemiology and Biostatistic, 2006). Evaluation findings from the students' evaluation questionnaires indicated that those who participated in the program generally made significant improvement in several aspects, including anger management, conflict resolution, cooperation with others, goal setting and interpersonal relationships. However, due to a lack of funding support, UAP in all secondary schools was terminated and phased out from the 2005/06 school year.

On the other hand, the UAP was extended to primary schools. It has been commissioned by the Education Bureau (former Education and Manpower Bureau) since the 2004/05 school year. The aim of the UAP (Primary) is to help students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop their resilience in coping with adversities. The UAP (Primary) is more comprehensive, including both the Universal Program and Intensive Program. The Universal Program is guidance curriculum on resilience for all Primary Four to Six students, whereas the Intensive Program is a series of small groups and activities, targeting Primary Four students with greater needs for guidance.

The implementation of UAP is an example of promoting the concept of “early detection, early intervention”. It also demonstrated the delivery of preventive health services for adolescents at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels (Choi, 2006).

#### *3.1.3.3 Adolescent Health Program (AHP)*

The Student Health Service of the Department of Health (2004) has provided an outreach service for secondary schools since 2001 titled the Adolescent Health Program (AHP). The program aims to provide quality health promotion services for secondary school students in order to promote their psychosocial health, emotions and stress management, as well as harmonious interpersonal and problem-solving



skills. More than 350 schools have joined the program since its launch. One of the unique features of the AHP is that it uses a multi-disciplinary team approach to carry out the program in the form of outreach services to schools. The team comprises doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, dietitians and health promotion officers. The program content consists of two main components: The Basic Life Skills Training Program (BLST) and the Topical Programs. The BLST is a universal program to help Secondary 1 to Secondary 3 students understand and accept themselves. It covers topics on sex and love, physical health, self-awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationship skills, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision-making, problem solving, coping with stress and coping with emotions. There are 14 sessions in the Secondary 1 (S1) program, 8 sessions in the Secondary 2 (S2) program and 6 sessions in the Secondary 3 (S3) program, respectively. Other than programs for students, there are Topical Programs for both teachers and parents, with the purpose of improving their understanding of adolescents psychosocial health and equipping them with better and effective skills to deal with adolescent problems.

An outcome program evaluation was carried out in 18 pilot schools by The University of Hong Kong in 2001. The results showed that students who participated in the program performed better in terms of health knowledge, attitudes, psychosocial health status and behavior when compared with those who did not join the program. In addition, it showed that long term combined effects of the BLST were positive in terms of alcohol and drug use and behavioral related problems (Department of Health, n.d.). However, again, a detailed report on its evaluation was not evident in electronic databases and print resources.

#### *3.1.3.4 Life and Ethics Education Program for Primary and Junior Secondary School Students (LEEP)*

The Life and Ethics Education Program (LEEP) was an all-round education program for both primary school (P1-P3) and junior secondary school students (S1-S3) supported by the Quality Education Fund (Hong Kong Baptist University, n.d.). The program was designed and launched by Hong Kong Baptist University in 1998, aiming to develop a comprehensive curriculum package on life and ethics education for primary and secondary school students, fostering the development of a culture of altruism, caring and justice in students. The program also placed emphasis on effective development outcomes and positive developmental process. Two sets of education packages of the life and moral education program were developed and sent to all primary schools and secondary schools in Hong Kong. A total of 29 secondary schools and 31 primary schools officially joined the program. The education packages of the life and moral education program (curriculum) attempted to foster social, moral and emotional development of children and adolescents. From Primary 1 to Secondary 3, a series of 20 lessons were designed and developed for classroom use in each form (a total of 120 lessons). In addition, seminars and sharing sessions for both teachers and parents were provided. According to the program evaluation, the series of education packages were well received by the users in schools (Hong Kong Baptist University, n.d.). However, due to the rejection of the project proposal for additional funding (QEF) for its continuation, the project ended in 2001. Surprisingly, no documentation was found through electronic databases and print resources on its program outcomes and effectiveness.

### *3.1.3.5 Project Astro MIND (MIND)*

Project Astro MIND (Maturity, Intelligence and No Drugs) was a psychosocial primary prevention program for high-risk youth focusing on peer and other influences on youth to use drugs and on the development of skills to resist those pressures. This project was also the first systematic, evidence-based and indigenous drug prevention program designed for high-risk youth in Hong Kong (Lam, Shek, Ng, Yeung, & Lam, 2005; Shek, Ng, Lam, Lam, & Yeung, 2003). The objectives of this project were: “(1) to increase the participants’ knowledge of drugs; (2) to help them develop attitudes towards substance abuse; (3) to strengthen their ability to refuse drugs; and, finally, to reduce the participants’ usage of drugs” (p.343). This project consisted of three sequential and psychosocial primary prevention programs conducted in structured group sessions for adolescents, namely the Astro Kids, Astro Teens and Astro Leaders. There were 10 sessions in the Astro Kids program and 10-12 sessions in the Astro Teens program. Different topics were covered in these two programs, including knowledge on gateway drugs, psychotropic drugs and sex, self-understanding, stress and coping, decision making, peer pressure and friendships. For the Astro Leaders program, it was a peer-leader (booster) program especially designed for the Astro Teen graduates, with the aim of strengthening the skills participants had learnt and encouraging them to become positive role models. In the three-year longitudinal evaluation study of the project, Shek et al. (2003) and Lam et al. (2005) concluded that the project was successful with positive and encouraging results. Compared with other school-based programs, documentation on its evaluation is relatively comprehensive.

*3.1.3.6 P.A.T.H.S. to Adulthood: A Jockey Club Youth Enhancement Scheme (Project P.A.T.H.S.)*

This is the pioneering PYD program in Hong Kong. Since this project is the focus of the current study, detailed information will be discussed in the next section.

**3.2 P.A.T.H.S. to Adulthood: A Jockey Club Youth Enhancement Scheme (Project P.A.T.H.S.).**

**3.2.1 Background of the Project P.A.T.H.S.**

To promote holistic development among adolescents in our rapidly changing society, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (the Trust) approved an earmarked grant to support the development, implementation and evaluation of a large-scale PYD project in Hong Kong – Project P.A.T.H.S. (Shek & Sun, 2009c). It is an indigenously developed and multi-year PYD program in Hong Kong. The word “P.A.T.H.S.” represents Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programs. It is developed for junior secondary school students, aiming to help them explore their potential, establish self-identity, foster closer ties with others and develop healthy beliefs and clear values. Since its launch in 2005, the project has already undergone several phases, including the initial phase (2005-2012), school-based extension phase (2009-2016) and community-based extension phase (2013-2017) (Shek & Wu, 2016). In this current study, attention is placed on the initial and extension phases.

In the initial phase, the Trust invited academics of five universities in Hong Kong to form a Research Team with The Hong Kong Polytechnic University as the lead institution to develop the program. In addition, the Research Team also regularly provided training for program implementers and carried out comprehensive

evaluation of the project. With the support of the education and welfare sectors, over half of all the secondary schools in Hong Kong joined the project. The total number of beneficiaries in the Project P.A.T.H.S. was over 213,000, with more than 280 participating schools (Shek, Ma, & Sun, 2011).

In the first cycle of the initial phase (December 2005 to August 2009), there were two implementation phases, i.e., the Experimental Implementation Phase (December 2005 to August 2008) and Full Implementation Phase (September 2006 to August 2009). For the Experimental Implementation Phase, 52 secondary schools participated in the Secondary 1 Program, with the aim of accumulating experience in program implementation and familiarizing front-line workers with the philosophy and design of the new program. For the Full Implementation Phase, the program was implemented in full in more than 250 participating schools. With reference to the positive evaluation of the project and in the hope of further facilitating the participating schools to consolidate the program, as well as enhancing the sustainability of the program in the long run, the Trust approved to implement the school-based extension phase from 2009/2010 to 2011/2012 (PATHS II). For the extension phase, all the programs were still delivered in the school context for the participating schools. Later, the community-based phase (PATHS III) was implemented between 2013 and 2018. This phase was delivered either in the school or community context(s).

### **3.2.2 Conceptual framework of the Project P.A.T.H.S.**

According to Shek (2006), several groups of theories and concepts were considered when designing the P.A.T.H.S. Project. These include: i) risk factors, protective factors and adolescent resilience; ii) adolescent developmental assets; iii)

deficits-based and assets-based models on adolescent development; iv) models on PYD programs; and v) ecological models. Accordingly, 10 assertions were maintained and upheld in the conceptual model. These include: i) ecological assertion; ii) change assertion; iii) holistic assertion; iv) developmental assets assertion; v) risk factors assertion; vi) protective factors assertion; vii) PYD assertion; viii) positive youth constructs development constructs assertion; ix) integration assertion and x) evidence-based assertion. In addition, with reference to a systematic review conducted by Catalano et al. (2004) on PYD programs in North America, Shek and colleagues (2006) referred to the 15 identified constructs, and developed and contextualized them as the core components in the Project P.A.T.H.S. These constructs included:

1. Promotion of Bonding: Development of young people's relationship with healthy adults and positive peers
2. Cultivation of Resilience: Promotion of young people's ability for adapting to change and stressful events in adaptive ways
3. Promotion of Social Competence: Training the young people's interpersonal skills and providing opportunities for them to exercise such skills
4. Promotion of Emotional Competence: Training the young people to have skills to recognize feelings in one self and others, skills to express feelings, and emotional self-management strategies
5. Promotion of Cognitive Competence: Developing young people's cognitive capabilities, processes or outcomes, training their critical thinking, problem-solving, decision making, planning and goal setting

skills

6. Promotion of Behavioral Competence: Cultivation of verbal and non-verbal communication and taking action skills and providing reinforcement for effective behavior choices
7. Promotion of Moral Competence: Development of a sense of right and wrong and respect for rules and standards as well as social justice
8. Cultivation of Self-Determination: Promoting young people's sense of autonomy, independent thinking, or self-advocacy
9. Promotion of Spirituality: Facilitating the young people to develop purpose and meaning in life, hope, or beliefs in a higher power.
10. Development of Self-Efficacy: Promoting coping and mastery skills among young people
11. Development of Clear and Positive Identity: Promotion of healthy identity formation and achievement in the adolescents
12. Promotion of Beliefs in the Future: Helping adolescents to set future goals and develop future potential options or choices
13. Providing Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement: Designing activities and events for young people to make positive contribution to groups
14. Fostering Prosocial Norms: Encouraging adolescents to develop clear standards for prosocial engagement
15. Providing Recognition for Positive Behavior: Developing systems for rewarding positive behavior.

By covering these specific PYD qualities, the project aimed to strengthen and nurture youths' potentials as a means to eliminate the likelihood of problematic behaviors and

to promote healthy wellbeing. In addition to these 15 constructs, with reference to the related PYD models, Shek and Siu (2007) regarded the following “7Cs”, the seven socio-emotional competencies, as terminal indicators. They are: (1) Confidence, refers to self-worth (have a positive and clear perceived self-identity and social identity) and good mastery of the future (future-driven orientation, with the awareness of one’s progress in life); (2) Character, refers to individuals’ disposition, responsibility, autonomy and spirituality; (3) Connection, such as building positive relationships with healthy adults and positive peers, having a sense of belonging in a social network; (4) Competence, refers to knowledge and skills in social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and moral domains, which can be applied and practiced; (5) Compassion, refers to the growth of sympathy and love for others); (6) Caring, refers to the enrichment in prosocial involvement and prosocial norms); and (7) Contribution, refers to community participation and having positive influence. In this current study, the concepts of the 7Cs are applied in the conceptual framework.

### **3.2.3 Program structure and implementation of the Project P.A.T.H.S.**

Besides having an extensive and thorough literature review, the rich program construction experiences of the inter-disciplinary Research Team also contributed to the design of the Project. In the initial and extension phases, there are two tiers of programs in the P.A.T.H.S. Project, namely the Tier 1 Program and the Tier 2 Program. The Tier 1 Program is a universal school-based PYD program for all Secondary 1 to Secondary 3 (i.e., grades 7–9) students in Hong Kong. It was based on 15 PYD constructs, which have been discussed in the previous section. In addition, the ecological perspective was also adopted in designing the curriculum. The program aimed at cultivating the development of young people in five different domains,



namely individual, family, peer, school and societal (Shek, 2006a). The Tier 1 Program is a structured, comprehensive and all-round teaching package (Table 3.1 shows the secondary one level Tier 1 Program course content for reference).

To ensure the practicality of the teaching materials developed, pilot and trial teaching were carried out. In each grade, there was a total of 20 teaching hours each academic year, with forty 30-minute (Full Program) curriculum units, which were developed with reference to the first 14 constructs. Therefore, there were a total of 120 units for three junior secondary school years. In addition, there are core units of 10 hours, with 20 units (Core Program). All the participating schools had to implement either the Core Program or the Full Program. They could select one of the four standard implementation modes proposed by the Project and exercise the flexibility to integrate the Tier 1 Program into their school curriculum or implement the program outside class period. In addition, the participating schools were given the autonomy to choose either teachers or social workers, or both, as the program implementers to conduct the Tier 1 Program. In addition, in the extension phase of the Project P.A.T.H.S., the curriculum development team incorporated the construction of a new teaching package with reference to a number of common adolescent developmental problems. Many of the prevailing issues that adolescents are facing, especially those in Hong Kong (mentioned in the introduction section in Chapter One), are addressed in different units of the revamped Tier 1 Program. They included: (i) drug abuse, (ii) sex and love issues, (iii) bullying, (iv) problematic Internet use, and (v) concept of money. There are units that specifically discuss the issue of problem behavior (e.g. bullying) and how adolescents may make use of their competencies to prevent the problem. For each aspect of the PYD construct and each developmental issue, a number of program units were constructed based on

psychological theories and PYD literature (e.g., Catalano et al., 2002). Table 3.2 shows the details of the Secondary One level special teaching units, demonstrating the areas and spectrums of developmental concern and which PYD construct can address them. In addition, the curriculum development team updated the Tier 1 Program with common scenarios that contemporary adolescents find themselves in, so that it is close to the real-life situations of adolescents in Hong Kong.

Since the Tier 1 Program is a school-based program focusing on interactive and participatory teaching methods, systematic and progressive training were designed and provided for the program implementers (including teachers and social workers) to enhance the implementation quality and effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S.. For each of the Secondary 1, Secondary 2 and Secondary 3 programs, teachers and social workers implementing the program were required to attend a 20-hour training workshop (a 3-day program) before the implementation of the program. Topics covered in the training program include: i) an introduction to adolescent theories, PYD and its philosophy, curriculum content as well as program implementation issues and evaluation strategies; ii) teaching and learning theories and classroom management strategies; and iii) teaching demonstrations of the specific units (Shek & Chak, 2010a, b).

The Tier 2 Program of the Project P.A.T.H.S. takes a selective prevention approach and is provided for students who have greater psychosocial needs (e.g., students with special needs in intrapersonal, interpersonal, family or social domains). Social workers and teachers might identify the students' needs in the Tier 1 Program and/or via other sources. The program content of the Tier 2 Program is entirely designed by the NGOs or schools, with reference to the PYD constructs and objectives covered in the P.A.T.H.S. Project. It could be implemented consecutively

to or concurrently with the Tier 1 Program. As a rule, about one-fifth of the Tier 1 Program participants and/or the parents at the schools participating in the Full Program (i.e., 20-hour program) needed to participate in the Tier 2 Program. According to Lee and Shek (2010), there are several commonly-used prototypes of the Tier 2 Program. They include: i) mentorship programs involving alumni of the schools, ii) mental health promotion programs, iii) adventure-based counseling programs, iv) parenting programs, v) service learning programs, and vi) resilience enhancement programs (p.262).

#### **3.2.4 Documentation and evaluation studies of the Project P.A.T.H.S.**

To evaluate the outcomes and the effectiveness of the Project (both cycles), as well as maintaining the principles of triangulation (Rubin & Bobbie, 2008), Shek and colleagues adopted multiple strategies to conduct a number of evaluation studies in different phases of the Project P.A.T.H.S.. For the initial phase (2005-2012), the following multi-method evaluations were used.

##### *A. Objective Outcome Evaluation*

In the Full Implementation Phase of the first cycle, by utilizing a randomized group trial design to evaluate the effectiveness of the Tier 1 Program, 24 experimental schools and 24 control schools were recruited to examine whether students' growth in the experimental schools would differ from students in the control schools (Shek, 2006b). Using the Chinese Positive Youth Development Scale (CPYDS), eight waves of data were successfully collected from the subjects. The longitudinal data and results between 2006 and 2011 consistently showed that participants in the experimental schools had significantly higher and better PYD levels (e.g.,

psychosocial competencies) than the control participants (Shek, 2006b, 2009b, 2009c; Shek et al., 2008; Shek, 2009b; Shek & Ma, 2011a, 2012a; Shek & Ma, 2012c; Shek, Siu, & Lee, 2008; Shek & Yu, 2011b). Analyses of the eight waves of data also showed that students in the experimental schools who found the program to be helpful had better development than those in the control schools. At the same time, students in the experimental schools also displayed lower levels of “adolescent risk behavior”, such as substance abuse, antisocial behavior, delinquency and behavioral intention to engage in risk behavior in the future (Shek & Ma, 2012c; Shek & Yu, 2012b).

*B. Subjective Outcome Evaluation*

To examine the perceived program effectiveness, both students and program implementers participating in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs were invited to complete subjective outcome evaluation forms upon completion of the program (Shek & Ma, 2007; Shek, Siu, & Lee, 2007). The evaluations conducted were based on the program participants (Form A and Form C data) and program implementers (Form B data). All data were separately assessed either with quantitative or qualitative methods. The subjective outcome evaluation questionnaires are reliable and valid assessment tools and the existing findings showed that different stakeholders had positive views about the program and perceived the program as beneficial to young people (Ma & Shek, 2010; Shek, 2009c, 2012d; Shek & Lee, 2008a; Shek, Lee, Sun, & Lung, 2008; Shek & Ma, 2007; Shek, Ma, & Tang, 2011; Shek, Siu, & Lee, 2007; Shek & Sun, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a; Shek, 2009c; Shek & Sun, 2010).

In the current study, two of the questionnaires are employed to examine the perceptions of economically disadvantaged youth.

*C. Process Evaluation*

Process evaluation was carried out from 2005 to 2009 (including the Experimental Implementation Phase). Systematic observations of actual classroom program delivery were carried out by the Research Team in randomly selected schools to understand the program implementation details. The evaluation results consistently revealed that the quality of the program implementation and the program adherence was high (Law & Shek, 2011; Shek et al., 2006, 2008, 2009; Shek, Lee, & Sun, 2008; Shek, Ma, Lui, & Lung, 2006; Shek & Ma, 2012; Shek & Ma, 2012b).

*D. Interim Evaluation*

To understand the implementation process and quality, interim evaluation was conducted between 2006 and 2008. Roughly half the participating schools at different time points were invited and selected to participate in telephone interviews. Results showed that most interviewees (the program implementers) had positive global evaluation of the project, although difficulties in the program implementation and recommendations for improvements were documented. They also perceived the Tier 1 Program to be beneficial to most students, with a number of strengths and merits (Shek & Ma, 2008a; Shek, Ma, & Sun, 2008; Shek & Sun, 2006; Shek, Sun, & Siu, 2008; Shek, Sun, & Tam, 2009; Shek & Yu, 2012a; Shek, Yu, & Chan, 2012).

*E. Qualitative Evaluation (Focus Groups and Repertory Grid Tests Based on Students)*

Students were randomly selected from the participating schools to participate in the focus groups to generate qualitative and evaluative data. During the interviews, the participants were encouraged to express their observations and share the perceived benefits of the program. The results showed that participants had positive perceptions of the program on the whole. They also regarded the program as beneficial (Shek & Chan, 2010; Shek & Lee, 2008b; Shek, Lee, Siu, & Lam, 2006). Additionally, evaluation based on the repertory grid tests was conducted. Students were randomly selected to complete repertory grid tests that assessed their self-identity systems before and after joining the program and perceived changes across the years. According to Shek (2012a), respondents of the test perceived that they understood themselves better and became stronger in different psychosocial domains after joining the P.A.T.H.S. Project.

*F. Qualitative Evaluation (Focus Groups Based on Program Implementers)*

Program Implementers were randomly selected from the participating schools to join the focus groups in order to generate qualitative data to evaluate the program. The findings showed that the program implementers regarded the program as helpful to students in different psychosocial domains, particularly at intra- and interpersonal levels. They also used positive metaphors to represent the program. In other words, they perceived the program positively. Simultaneously, recommendations for improvements were also recorded (Shek, 2012c; Shek & Shik, 2010; Shek & Sun, 2009c; Shek, Sun, & Tang, 2009).

*G. Qualitative Evaluation (In-depth Interviews with Program Implementers)*

Program Implementers were randomly selected from the participating schools to join in in-depth interviews to understand their perceptions of the program. Consistent with the previous research findings, preliminary analyses showed that teachers generally had positive responses towards the program. They also identified strengths and positive features of the Tier 1 Program (Shek & Ma, 2010a).

*H. Qualitative Evaluation (Case Studies Based on Focus Groups)*

Case studies on purposively selected school samples were conducted in order to examine the factors that influence the program implementation and quality of the Tier 1 Program. Based on multiple studies, results showed that several factors related to **P**olicy, **P**eople, **P**rogram, **P**rocess and **P**lace (5 “**P**”s) were conducive to the successful implementation of the program in the schools. In addition, it was feasible to incorporate the Tier 1 Program into the formal curriculum in different schools (Lam, 2008a, 2008b; Lee, 2008a, 2008b; Shek, Chak, & Chan, 2008, 2009; Shek, Lung, & Chak, 2012; Shek, Ng, & Chak, 2011; Shek & Sun, 2008b, 2008c; Sun, Shek, & Siu, 2008).

*I. Qualitative Evaluation (Student Weekly Diaries)*

Student participants were invited to write reflective journals in the form of weekly diaries after attending P.A.T.H.S. lessons. They were invited to express their perceptions and feelings regarding the program and how they applied what they had learned to their real lives. Results of qualitative data analyses showed that participants generally had positive responses towards the program and the instructors. They also revealed the perceived benefits of

the program (Shek, 2010b; Shek & Lam, 2009; Shek, Sun, Lam, Lung, & Lo, 2008; Shek & Sun, 2012b).

*J. Qualitative Evaluation (Student Products)*

Students' drawings were collected after the completion of the Tier 1 Program to reflect their actual experiences. The student products revealed that most participants had positive views of the program and reflected that psychological competencies at the familial, societal, intrapersonal and interpersonal levels were acquired after joining the program (Shek & Ma, 2010a).

*K. Management Information Based on the Co-Walker Scheme*

Classroom observations in the participating schools were conducted in an anonymous manner under the Co-Walker Scheme. Such information gave an overall picture about the implementation details in different schools. Analyses of the data provided support and evidence that the implementation process of the Tier 1 Program was generally positive and effective (Shek & Tam, 2009; Shek, Sun, & Kan, 2009; Shek, Sun, Hang, & Tang, 2009).

*L. Subjective Outcome Evaluation (Tier 2 Program)*

To examine the perceived program effectiveness of the Tier 2 Program, participating students were invited to complete the subjective outcome evaluation forms (Form C) upon completion of the Tier 2 Program. The evaluations based on the program participants were assessed through both quantitative and qualitative means. The findings revealed that the participants had positive views about the program and perceived the program as beneficial to their development (Lee & Shek, 2010; Shek & Lee, 2012; Shek & Ma, 2010b; Shek, Yu, & Ho, 2011).



For the school-based extension phase (2009-2016), the subjective outcome evaluation was primarily used to evaluate both Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs. Consistent with the findings of the initial phase, many participants and program implementers had favorable views of the program, implementers, and benefits of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs (Shek & Law, 2014; Shek & Sun, 2014; Shek & Yu, 2014). They also agreed that the project was able to promote holistic development of adolescents.

To summarize, as compared to other school-based programs, it is perceived that there has been great progress in the Project P.A.T.H.S., especially in the area of conducting comprehensive evaluation and documentation. For the initial phase, numerous articles in internationally refereed journals have been published to document the positive evaluation findings of Project P.A.T.H.S. (Shek, 2008e; Shek & Ma, 2008b, 2010; Shek, Ma, & Merrick, 2008, 2012; Shek & Merrick, 2009; Shek & Sun, 2012). In addition, all the evaluation findings and results consistently showed that different stakeholders had positive views about the P.A.T.H.S. Project. The participants, program implementers and school personnel all perceived Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs as beneficial to the holistic development of the program participants. In addition, based on the results of the randomized group trial, there is evidence that it is definitely related to positive behavior (e.g. better school adjustment), but negatively related to problem behavior (e.g. a lower level of delinquency) (Shek, 2009a; Shek & Ma, 2012a; Shek & Yu, 2011c, 2012b, 2016). Although the current study focuses on the evaluation of the initial and extension phase of the project, promising and positive evaluation findings were also documented and reported in the community-based extension phase (Ma & Shek, 2017; Ma, Shek, & Chen, 2018; Shek, Ma, & Xie, 2017; Shek, Zhu, & Wu, 2017).

### **3.2.5 “General” versus “specific” impact of Project P.A.T.H.S.**

In Section 3.1.1.2, the PYD program’s effectiveness in the West was discussed. PYD is seen as a perspective and approach aimed to strengthen and nurture youths’ potential as a means to eliminate the likelihood of problematic behaviors and to promote healthy wellbeing. By utilizing a wide range of PYD constructs (developmental attributes) that have been identified previously in Western effective programs, the Project P.A.T.H.S. was developed as a generic and universal program. As discussed in the previous section, numerous studies have been published evidencing the effectiveness and impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S., which indicated the project is able to strengthen the psychosocial competences of adolescents and foster their positive development in Hong Kong (e.g., Shek, Ma, & Merrick, 2007, 2008, 2012; Shek & Sun, 2013b). These “general” impacts are well-documented. For example, the results from a longitudinal randomized controlled trial showed that the experimental group exhibited greater improvements in different PYD constructs at posttest than the control group of students (Shek, 2010; Shek & Ma, 2012; Shek & Yu, 2011). In addition, experimental subjects exhibited faster growth rates and slower decline rates in PYD measures.

Although the Project P.A.T.H.S. was not developed as a “targeted program” to alleviate particular adolescent problems, both adolescent developmental assets and developmental problems (e.g., problems related to drugs use, violence, delinquency, problematic concepts of money, sexual activity and mental health issues) are considered in the program development process (Shek & Sun, 2013b). As such, with reference to the objective outcome evaluation, different longitudinal data also demonstrated that adolescents receiving the program displayed some specific impacts.

For instance, there are significantly lower levels of risk behavior (Shek & Ma, 2012; Shek & Yu, 2011) and slower increases in delinquent behaviors and substance use (Shek & Yu, 2012b, 2013) as compared to the control participants.

Clearly, both general and specific impacts of the Project P.A.T.H.S. benefited adolescents in Hong Kong by promoting holistic youth development and reducing risk behaviors amongst general populations. It is also meaningful to examine if the universal PYD program can help adolescents with specific problems. For instance, in the case of economic disadvantage, some Western evaluation studies showed that PYD programs could effectively foster both internal and external developmental assets of low-income youth (Forrest-Bank, Nicotera, Bassett, & Ferrarone, 2016; Lewis et al., 2016; Norton & Watt, 2014; Taylor et al., 2017; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Hence, it is also meaningful to understand what impact the Project P.A.T.H.S. would have on specific populations.

### **3.3 Concluding Remarks**

#### **3.3.1 Observed strengths and limitations regarding the local school-based programs (excluding the Project P.A.T.H.S.)**

There are several observations with regard to the local school-based programs (mostly under the prevention science perspective). Firstly, relative comprehensiveness was shown in the content of the abovementioned programs, as compared to other “piecemeal” school-based programs run by NGOs. At the time of program implementation, not many schools had a clear concept of the “whole-school approach”. Second, all the mentioned programs provided timely interventions, in order to address the needs of students. The focus of the program is clearly spelt out. These programs were well received by both students, school teachers and school

administrators. Third, most are universal programs that aid all youth. This showed good progression as a more comprehensive and holistic view in helping youth had evolved.

However, there are also observed limitations of these programs. First, it has been shown that the government and many NGOs are in the business of providing school-based youth programs in Hong Kong. Although some interventions are school-wide and include curriculum development, most programs were implemented on a relatively small scale, short-term or in a scattered manner. Clearly, except for the Project P.A.T.H.S., there is a lack of large scale multi-year programs.

Second, many local NGOs may have provided different youth programs in the past twenty years. However, there is obviously a lack of a sound conceptual framework. Comparatively, Project P.A.T.H.S. is the program based on an extensive and thorough literature review, whereas the other programs discussed were simply based on workers' experiences and professional judgment (Shek & Yu, 2011). These programs were also called “home-baked” adolescent programs. Third, subjective outcome evaluations conducted on most local school-based programs are either brief, informal or small scale. Systematic evaluation and documentation of these school-based programs were rarely seen. The lack of solid evidence on the impact of school-based programs could not demonstrate the positive outcomes achieved. In addition to Hong Kong, Shek and Yu (2011a) also identified that there were only a few well-documented preventive or PYD programs in the Chinese context. Clearly, there is a lack of comprehensive documentation and solid research findings that address queries concerning program implementation and effectiveness in the Chinese context. Therefore, more evaluation research is needed in order to enrich the database on program evaluation as well as youth enhancement programs in the Chinese context.

Fourth, concerning program evaluation, it is observed here that only a few systematic program evaluations and evidence were found concerning the local school-based programs, especially those “home-baked” adolescent programs. Clearly, most of the existing evaluation studies and findings of youth enhancement programs are based on Western populations. Comparatively, there are fewer evaluative studies conducted in Hong Kong as well as in the Chinese context. There is a lack of indigenous evaluation that could enhance understanding of the effectiveness of local youth enhancement programs. Shek, Chan, Sun and Merrick (2011) recommended that it is essential to carry out more research on Chinese adolescents as the “Chinese adolescent psychology and related issues are under-researched” (p.171). The population of Chinese adolescents was around one fifth of the world’s youth population in 2010. As such, there is a call to facilitate investigation into the effectiveness of local psychosocial intervention programs for adolescents to enrich the database of literature in the Chinese context. Thus, an evaluative study is suggested to examine the generalizability of program effects of the school-based youth enhancement program across Western and Chinese contexts.

Fifth, although all local school-based youth programs have experienced some types of evaluation components, single-method evaluation relying on quantitative data was used in most evaluation studies. Alongside quantitative methodologies, Skara and Sussman (2003) suggested including qualitative methodologies in program evaluation, with the aim of further identifying factors that are related to intervention effectiveness or ineffectiveness. For instance, qualitative information can enhance understanding of the characteristics of the program content and help implementers identify the factors influencing the fidelity of program implementation and participation. This exploration is certainly needed in order to

understand the interaction between different individual and contextual factors. Besides, those evaluations are often administered during, immediately after the programs or upon completion of a program (i.e., one-time or “snapshot” assessments). Indeed, an effective program should examine immediate, short-term and long-term effects on its participants as it is important to know if the programs implemented are beneficial to them in the long run. It is also significant to understand participants’ perceptions after they have completed the program for a period of time. Regrettably, nearly all of the programs overlooked the consequences of delayed effects and the long-term impact of the program. There is a call for the use of multiple or mixed-methods in evaluations to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and expand the scope and extensiveness of the studies (the discussion regarding mixed-methods research will be presented in Chapter Seven). Thus, it draws the researcher’s attention to using delayed evaluation of the school-based programs, using different evaluation methods.

### **3.3.2 Research recommendations regarding the evaluation of Project**

#### **P.A.T.H.S.**

With specific reference to the Project P.A.T.H.S. and its published studies related to program implementation and evaluation in the initial phase and the extension phase, it is observed that while previous studies of the Project have demonstrated encouraging and positive program effects, there is a need to further understand whether the programs have long-term positive outcomes. Therefore, it is essential to know if the implemented programs are beneficial to participants in the long run. Pollard and Rosenberg (2003) suggested that programs based on the strength-based perspective require a longer period of time from program start to the

measurement of results, because the optimal effectiveness of the programs and the development of participants' strengths would not happen overnight. To this end, the objective outcome evaluation of the Project P.A.T.H.S. provided solid evidence to demonstrate the longitudinal impact of the Project. As mentioned in the previous sections, by using a longitudinal randomized controlled design, the evaluation findings consistently demonstrated that program participants displayed higher levels of positive development and slower increases in delinquent behaviors as compared to the control participants. Therefore, the long-term effect was recognized.

Although there is firm longitudinal quantitative evidence for the Project P.A.T.H.S.'s program effectiveness, the subjective views of program participants were under examined after the completion of the 3-year program. It is observed here that the perceived impact after the completion of the whole program over a long period is not yet fully investigated. For example, how do participants perceive the program and its effects upon program completion and after a period of time? Are there any sustained positive changes in participants after they joined and completed the program? What are the perceived changes? It seems that these kinds of questions cannot be fully answered by the objective outcome evaluation. As such, subjective outcome evaluation after the completion of the program is essential.

Furthermore, additional reasons are observed as to why such evaluation is crucial. First, it is significant to examine if the perceived program effects are sustained, or disappear after the completion of the program. Specifically, the voices and views of participants concerning how they apply their learned skills after the completion of the project and how the project has changed them are under researched. Therefore, it is argued here that more subjective outcome evaluation studies at a

delayed point in time are needed. It is believed that additional evaluation could complement and extend existing longitudinal research of the Project.

Second, numerous studies have already been published over the last decade with firm evidence on the effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S. for participants, which is not limited to those in Hong Kong, but also in Mainland China and Macau. While systematic evaluation findings of the Project P.A.T.H.S. have demonstrated that the program could promote holistic youth development and reduce risk behaviors amongst the general population, it is meaningful to understand what impact the program would have on specific populations. With reference to the available publications of the Project P.A.T.H.S., the adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage seem to be the understudied group. This kind of exploration is particularly meaningful in view of the worsening poverty situation in Hong Kong. As discussed in Chapter Two, Section 2.3, theoretically, the PYD approach emphasizes nurturing and building one's strengths and competence. Through joining the PYD program, disadvantaged youth could be provided with opportunities for growth and to build protective factors, which in turn promotes their resilience and capability, neutralizing the stigma of labeling, and facilitating them to cope with life stressors. Yet, among the program evaluations conducted by the Project, there is no specific focus on adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage. With such promising outcomes of the Project P.A.T.H.S., do the adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage benefit from the program as well? Does this specific group of participants find the program useful and helpful in their lives? Are there any positive changes in self-identity after they joined the program? These questions remain unanswered. Padgett (1998) argued that the variability and complexity of living with disadvantages could only be discovered through the voices and detailed experiences



of adolescents who live in those circumstances. Therefore, it is significant to understand poor participants' perceptions and their inner voices. To address these issues, it is suggested here that an evaluation of the sustainability or long-term perceived effects of the program and its outcomes is vital. The aforementioned gaps in research will be further discussed in Chapter Six. To understand more about the economically disadvantaged adolescents in Hong Kong, the next chapter will provide a discussion on child and adolescent poverty.

Table 3.1: Secondary One Level Tier 1 Program Course Content

| Core Program<br>(30 minutes per session and 20 sessions in total) |  |          | Full Program<br>(30 minutes per session and 40 sessions in total) |  |          |  |
|---|--|----------|---|--|----------|--|
| No.   | Unit Name                              | Unit No. | No.   | Unit Name                              | Unit No. | No. Unit Name Unit No.                               |
| 1.  | Be Both Friend and Tutor               | BO1.1    | 1.  | Be Both Friend and Tutor               | BO1.1    | 21. Those Were the Days RE1.1                        |
| 2.  | The Power of Personality               | BO1.2    | 2.  | The Power of Personality               | BO1.2    | 22. The Missing Wallet RE1.2                         |
| 3.  | Looking for Friends at the Crossroads  | BO1.3    | 3.  | Looking for Friends at the Crossroads  | BO1.3    | 23. Shaolin Kung Fu RE1.3                            |
| 4.  | Sail on Together                       | BO1.4    | 4.  | Sail on Together                       | BO1.4    | 24. Classroom Conflicts RE1.4                        |
| 5.  | China and Me                           | SC1.1A   | 5.  | China and Me                           | SC1.1A   | 25. Autonomy License SD1.1                           |
|   | My Nation and I                        | SC1.1B   |   | My Nation and I                        | SC1.1B   | 26. A Wise Move SD1.2                                |
| 6.  | Brighten Up Hong Kong                  | SC1.2A   | 6.  | Brighten Up Hong Kong                  | SC1.2A   | 27. The Dream Train SD1.3                            |
|   | We Love Hong Kong                      | SC1.2B   |   | We Love Hong Kong                      | SC1.2B   | 28. The MQ Bakery SD1.4                              |
| 7.  | Emotion Dictionary                     | EC1.1    | 7.  | Emotion Dictionary                     | EC1.1    | 29. My Favorite? SP1.1                               |
| 8.  | True Feeling                           | EC1.2    | 8.  | True Feeling                           | EC1.2    | 30. Under the Same Roof SP1.2                        |
| 9.  | The Brain: Human Software              | CC1.1    | 9.  | The Brain: Human Software              | CC1.1    | 31. If I Were the Boss ID1.1                         |
| 10.   | Cyber Love?                            | CC1.2    | 10.   | Cyber Love?                            | CC1.2    | 32. Know Yourself, Know Others ID1.2                 |
| 11.   | Good for Me?                           | BC1.1    | 11.   | Good for Me?                           | BC1.1    | 33. Proud of Myself ID1.3                            |
| 12.   | How to Say?                            | BC1.2    | 12.   | How to Say?                            | BC1.2    | 34. Share with You ID1.4                             |
| 13.   | Who Should Board First?                | MC1.1    | 13.   | Who Should Board First?                | MC1.1    | 35. Good or Bad? BF1.1                               |
| 14.   | On the Same Bus                        | MC1.2    | 14.   | On the Same Bus                        | MC1.2    | 36. Life Compass BF1.2                               |
| 15.   | Born with Talents                      | SE1.1    | 15.   | Born with Talents                      | SE1.1    | 37. What Are Community Activities? PI1.1             |
| 16.   | Yes, I Can!                            | SE1.2    | 16.   | Yes, I Can!                            | SE1.2    | 38. Avoid It Like the Plague: Say No to Wrongs PI1.2 |
| 17.   | A Big Hand for ME!                     | SE1.3    | 17.   | A Big Hand for ME!                     | SE1.3    | 39. Community Activities in School PI1.3             |
| 18.   | Doing It the SMART Way                 | SE1.4    | 18.   | Doing It the SMART Way                 | SE1.4    | 40. Community Activities for the Society PI1.4       |
| 19.   | Rules Rule: Everyone Has to Get a Clue | PN1.1    | 19.   | Rules Rule: Everyone Has to Get a Clue | PN1.1    |  |
| 20.   | When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do      | PN1.2    | 20.   | When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do      | PN1.2    |  |

Table 3.2: Details of the Special Teaching Units

| Adolescent Developmental Issues | Special Teaching Unit Code | Special Teaching Unit Name             | Substitute Unit |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--|-----------------|
| <b>Bullying</b>                 | AB1.1                      | Incidents of Bullying                  | RE1.4           |
|                                 | AB1.2                      | Behind the Mask of Bullying            | PI1.2           |
|                                 | AB1.3                      | A Secret Book of Bullying Prevention   | RE1.3           |
| <b>Substance Abuse</b>          | AD1.1                      | Choosing a Better Way                  | EC1.1           |
|                                 | AD1.2                      | Emotion, Your Name Is...               | EC1.2           |
|                                 | AD1.3                      | Emotional Survival Guide               | RE1.2           |
|                                 | AD1.4                      | Facts Are Facts                        | CC1.1           |
|                                 | AD1.5                      | At Sixes and Sevens                    | CC1.2           |
|                                 | AD1.6                      | Find a Good Friend                     | BO1.2           |
|                                 | AD1.7                      | Say No to Undesirable Friends          | BO1.3           |
|                                 | AD1.8                      | What Should I Do?                      | SD1.2           |
| <b>Internet Use</b>             | IT1.1                      | Lying or Not                           | MC1.2           |
|                                 | IT1.2                      | Smart User                             | SD1.3           |
| <b>Money and Success</b>        | MS1.1                      | I Believe I Can                        | SE1.1           |
|                                 | MS1.2                      | The Value of Life                      | SP1.1           |
| <b>Sexuality Issue</b>          | SX1.1                      | Golden Youth                           | ID1.3           |
|                                 | SX1.2                      | Close Relationships?                   | BC1.1           |
|                                 | SX1.3                      | Sex and Love                           | PN1.1           |
|                                 | SX1.4                      | Sex and Peer Pressure                  | ID1.2           |
|                                 | SX1.5                      | Gender Differences in Attitudes to Sex | SD1.1           |

## **Chapter Four: Literature Review on Child and Adolescent Poverty**

There are three sections in this chapter, which provide background information to assist the researcher in answering the research questions in this current study. First, definitions of child poverty and economically disadvantaged adolescents in Hong Kong will be discussed. Second, a review on how poverty impacts on adolescent development is presented. Lastly, approaches to poverty alleviation and related youth programs in Hong Kong are reviewed.

### **4.1 Child and Adolescent Poverty**

As mentioned in Chapter One, it is clear that the problem of poverty has increasingly worsened over the past 20 years. At the same time, in the rapid changing societal and economic conditions of Hong Kong, there are alarming proportions of adolescents living with economic disadvantage, which merits attention as to what poverty means for children.

#### **4.1.1 Defining child poverty**

The definition of children in most countries is people under the age of 19 years (UNICEF, 2005). Based on the literature and information search, child poverty in developed countries is mostly considered a situation in terms of income and the poverty line (Atkinson, 1998; Marshall, 2003; Masters, 2002). For governments, such as United States, defines the poverty line as “*the ability to purchase a defined quantity of goods and services*” (UNICEF, 2005, p.6). In Hong Kong, similar to the overall definition of poverty, the poverty line set by the Government (i.e., those poor families living under a monthly revenue less than or equal to 50% of the median household revenue, as the benchmark of poverty) is used here to define and measure

child poverty. This definition is based on widely used concepts of monetary terms and material deprivation for identifying and measuring child poverty, termed here as the monetary poverty approach. The monetary poverty approach theorizes child poverty as children and adolescents living in low-income families, in which they are dependent on their direct environment (e.g. their parents and household) for the provision of basic needs and resources (Paterson & Gregory, 2019; Redmond, 2008; Roelen & Gassmann, 2008):

The concept of monetary poverty is the most widely used measurement around the world with almost every country identifying its own national poverty line for the identification of poor households. The monetary poverty approach is used all over the world for poverty assessments, both nationally as well as internationally (Roelen & Gassmann, 2008, p.11)

In other words, although this approach is perceived as a uni-dimensional concept, it provides a standardized and conventional way to measure child poverty. It is also the most dominant in influencing policy within the area of poverty research, for example, different studies have made use of this approach to compare levels of poverty across different countries and places (Paterson & Gregory, 2019). Therefore, the researcher in this study used this approach to define child poverty.

In addition, in an official document from the Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Center (CHIP), a joint project between Save the Children UK and the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Marshall (2003) defined child poverty as:

...the poverty experienced during childhood by children and young people...children and young people growing up without access to different types of resources that are vital for their wellbeing and for them to fulfil their potential. By resources we mean economic, social, cultural, physical, environmental and political resources (p.1)

Marshall extended CHIP's definition of child poverty with several interrelated statements. These statements showed that growing up without any of the features

listed below would constitute child poverty (the material is shown in original bullet points and emphasis):

- ***Growing up without opportunities for human development*** – *opportunities to develop as a healthy person who will fulfil their potential in life. Opportunities include access to quality education and life skills, health and water/sanitation (social, cultural and physical resources).*
- ***Growing up without family and community structures that nurture and protect them*** - *without having parents/guardians with time (or ability/desire) to care for them; without an extended family/community that can cope if parents and guardians are not able (or not there); or without a community that cares for and protects its younger generation (social and cultural resources).*
- ***Growing up without opportunities for voice*** - *For both adults and children, powerlessness and lack of voice (political resources) often underpins other aspects of poverty (Marshall, 2003, p.1)*

Furthermore UNICEF, a United Nations program, acknowledged that children experiencing poverty are at risk of deprivation, which can negatively influence their long-term development. It is suggested that children experience poverty as an environment that is damaging to their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual development. Therefore, expanding the definition of child poverty beyond traditional conceptualizations, such as low household income or low levels of consumption, is particularly important. And yet, child poverty is rarely differentiated from poverty in general and its special dimensions are seldom recognized (UNICEF, 2005).

From the above definitions and statements, it is observed here that child poverty cannot be understood and explained using simple measures (e.g., restricted to the assessment of household income). The World Bank used other social indicators (e.g., risk, vulnerability, social exclusion) to measure different dimensions of poverty (Paterson & Gregory, 2019). Indeed, the focus of poverty literature and research has shifted from traditional or unidimensional aspects to more comprehensive or multidimensional aspects. Multidimensional measures aim to integrate and incorporate a range of indicators to capture the complexity of poverty (Paterson &

Gregory, 2019; Redmond, 2008). In particular, the social exclusion approach (Levitas, 1998, 2000; Lister, 2004) and capability approach (Sen, 1999) are two major multidimensional approaches used to understand and measure poverty.

Social exclusion is a socially constructed concept, it has been widely used for studying poverty over the past decades. However, its exact meaning and definitions are not always unified (Atkinson, 1998; Redmond, 2008). Discussion of social exclusion originated from European social policy debates in the 1970s (Levitas, 1998, 2000). There are diverse definitions of social exclusion in the literature with different focuses. For example, the significant differences in societal norms led to different focuses in defining the characteristics of social exclusion, such as different contexts between socialist and capitalist societies. Although the emphases of the definitions are different, social exclusion is commonly described as a multi-faceted problem and dynamic processes related to the multiple-dimensions of poverty, marginalization and deprivation (e.g., unemployment, family breakdown, low income and poor housing) (Atkinson, 1998; Levitas, 1998, 2000; Lister, 2004; Redmond, 2008). Burchardt et al. (2002) also concluded that social exclusion is multidimensional, that is a person or group can be excluded because of their lack of participation in mainstream social, cultural, economic and political activities within their communities. This derives from exclusionary relationships based on power. Simultaneously, these different definitions share an emphasis on multi-level causes of exclusion (i.e., at the level of individual, household, community and institutions) (Atkinson, 1998; Levitas, 1998, 2000).

For childhood poverty, it is the process in which adolescents lack child necessities and are entirely or partly excluded from full participation in society (Atkinson, 1998; Redmond, 2008). Having understood the nature of social exclusion,

understandings of the multi-faceted causes and effects of child poverty can thus be developed. However, this can be seen as:

...a part of capability deprivation as well as instrumentally a cause of diverse capability failures. The case for seeing social exclusion as an approach to poverty is easy enough to establish within the general perspective of poverty as capability failure (Sen, 2000, p.5)

In the case of Hong Kong, poor youth also lack opportunities to thrive and also suffer from high levels of stress and low levels of family life quality, perceived emotional quality of life and life satisfaction (Leung & Shek, 2011; Shek, 2005c, 2005b; Shek & Lee, 2007).

In the framework of the capability approach, Sen (1999, 2000) rejects the monetary approach and emphasizes the claim that freedom achieves well-being and indicators of freedom specify a valued life. The core concept in this theory focuses on one's freedom to use resources to develop their well-being. With more capabilities and resources, people would have more choices. Sen's framework however, focuses on individuals not households. Poverty is defined as capability deprivation, or failure to achieve certain basic capabilities, which in turn restrain freedom to pursue life goals (Sen, 1999; Tang, 2019). According to Sen, basic capabilities are the abilities to satisfy certain elementary and important "functionings" (such as happiness, having good health, having self-respect, being well-nourished and being literate) up to certain levels and give value to life (Sen, 1999). If human development is the expansion of our capabilities, poverty is the opposite, for example, the deprivation of basic capabilities. In this case, child poverty is perceived as deprivation of capabilities and related "functionings". Children and adolescents living in poverty, are thus a group with limited opportunities and resources for building capacities.

On the other hand, this model provides an alternative paradigm in terms of



poverty reduction because it places particular emphasis on what people are able to do and be. The importance of youth capacity development is recognized here (Nussbaum, 2009; Redmond, 2008; Sen, 1999, 2000). In this regard, the orientation of the capability approach aligns with the conceptual base of PYD, which posits that all young people are resources to be developed (Benson, 1997).

With reference to the above discussion, there are four observations that can be highlighted regarding child poverty. First, in both Western and Eastern societies, the monetary approach is traditionally used to define, identify and measure poverty. However, child poverty is a multi-faceted problem; it is not only about recognizing financial and material deficiency but also about access to resources (e.g., physical, economic and environmental resources needed for survival and development) and opportunities in different aspects of their lives. Therefore, child poverty cannot be defined only in monetary terms, it should be understood as multidimensional issues that require diverse solutions for a wide range of problems. Second, child poverty does not only threaten the physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being of young people but also negatively influences them in terms of fulfilling their life quality, personal potential as well as intra- and inter-capabilities, which in turn affects their long-term development. Third, poor children and adolescents may be socially excluded and feel powerless to act against child poverty, especially when they do not receive enough care and support from significant others and society. Fourth, powerlessness and lack of voice often underpins the emergence of poverty.

#### *The neglected voice of poor youth*

The discussion in this section (on Sen's capability approach in particular) provides insight for the researcher in this current study that the promotion of psychosocial competence and well-being in poor adolescents is important. With

strong and firm capability, the poor population could gain strength to fight poverty. It also provides direction to evaluate how and why the Project P.A.T.H.S. influenced the psychosocial well-being of participants experiencing poverty, as well as changes in different aspects of their lives. Also, Ridge (2007) indicated that the “voices of children who are poor are some of the least likely to be heard in policy and practice; they are doubly silenced both as children and as part of the constituency of the poor” (p.23). In other words, although we think that the voices and concerns of the poor are heard and attended, it is not adequate. Marshall (2003) also indicated that poor youth are those growing up without opportunities for voice. Their powerlessness and lack of voice (political resources) often underpins other aspects of poverty. Thus, echoing the definitions of CHIP, the voices of poor youth should not be neglected. Padgett (1998) stated that the variability and complexity of living in disadvantage could only be discovered through the voices and detailed experiences given by youth who live in those situations. Their perceptions and inner voices should be further understood when evaluating the perceived outcomes and effectiveness of the P.A.T.H.S. Project based on the poor population.

#### **4.1.2 Economically disadvantaged adolescents in Hong Kong**

While Hong Kong, a wealthy and economically developed city, has positioned itself as a world-renowned city in Asia, amidst prosperity, the gap between the rich and the poor/deprived is widening, with more than one million people living in poverty. Comparably, Hong Kong society does not encounter the problem of absolute poverty but instead faces the problem of relative poverty. This is reflected in its very high Gini coefficient 0.539 worldwide (Census and Statistics Department, 2017), nevertheless Hong Kong is facing the threat of income inequality and relative

poverty. A report from Oxfam Hong Kong (2016) indicated that wealthy families in Hong Kong earned 29 times more than the poor. In addition, the poorest decile would need to work 2.4 years to earn as much as the wealthiest earn in one month. At the same time, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported that Hong Kong had the widest rich-poor gap of the 38 “very high human development” economies in the world (South China Morning Post, 2009).

Over the past decades, under the philosophy of “positive non-interventionism”, the colonial government, as well as the Hong Kong SAR Government, did not acknowledge the seriousness of poverty and neglected the fact that some disadvantaged groups could not share local economic development and growth. With increasing pressure from the public, academics and local media, in the year 2000 the former Chief Executive Mr. Tung Chee-hwa, officially proclaimed that poverty was a problem in Hong Kong. To combat poverty and work on poverty alleviation, the Commission on Poverty (the CoP) was established in 2005 and legitimately re-established in 2012. Subsequently, in September 2013, the official poverty line was set by the Hong Kong Government. Poor families living under a monthly revenue less than or equal to 50% of the median household revenue are regarded as the benchmark of poverty. In addition, the CoP annually updates the poverty line benchmark and refines its analytical framework to evaluate the effectiveness of poverty alleviation measures. Regrettably, the number of poor households in Hong Kong has remained at over 400,000, while the number of poor people has remained at around 1 million of the 7.4 million people living in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2017b). In 2016, the local poor population was about 14.6%, which means that one in seven people could be defined as deprived and living under the poverty line. Moreover, it was reported that the population living

in poor working households increased from 435,440 in 2011 to 461,911 in 2015 (Oxfam, Hong Kong, 2016).

Furthermore, receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) is another indicator of poverty. The CSSA is a Hong Kong SAR Government welfare scheme that provides a safety net for people and families whose income is insufficient to satisfy and support their basic needs (e.g., CSSA recipients are entitled to free medical treatment at public hospitals or clinics). As of December 2018, the number of CSSA cases was 226,437. According to a recent report from the Census and Statistics Department (2017b), “analysed by age, the respective sizes of the poor population and the poverty rates of children aged below 18 in 2016 were 0.172 million persons and 17.2%” (p. xi). However, in reality, it is believed that some low-income families do not apply for CSSA, thus the percentage could be higher. Simultaneously, many young people in this age group are new arrivals from China. Under the one-way permit scheme and among the 150 daily quotas, 60 places are allocated to children and adolescents holding the Certificates of Entitlement to enter Hong Kong. Since July 1997, more than 850,000 Mainland residents have settled in Hong Kong. It is estimated that 1.93 million new immigrants will enter Hong Kong through this Scheme in the coming five decades. Although the poverty rate among youth immigrants from Mainland China is unknown, unfortunately, it is a well-observed phenomenon that most new immigrants are comparatively poorer and underprivileged, in terms of their income, family finance, labor market opportunities, living environment and education.

According to the report of the 2016 Population By-census (Census and Statistics Department, 2017a), there were a total of 830,455 children (aged under 15) and 340,907 youths (aged 15-19) in 2016 in Hong Kong. In particular, around

261,242 students (aged 12-18) were enrolled in around 400 secondary schools in 2016, constituting 22.3% of the children and youth population (aged under 19) in Hong Kong. Although the number of children and youth (aged 12-18) decreased over the past 15 years, from 619,859 in 2001 to 413,539 in 2016 (see Table 4.1), the number of secondary school students receiving financial assistance (e.g., Student Travel Subsidy Scheme, School Textbook Assistance Scheme or Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges) has been consistently rising in recent years (Student Finance Office, n.d.).

With reference to the on-going social indicator system (Social Development Index) established by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, the percentage of children aged 0-14 in low-income households remained steady at 23.3% and the percentage of youth aged 15-19 in low-income households remained steady at 24.2% in 2016 (The Hong Kong Council of Social Service, n.d.). Given this social trend of rising youth poverty, investigating youth development and its social and demographic correlates would provide us with insight into helping young people cope with economic disadvantage and achieve better psychosocial development.

In view of the worsening poverty situation in Hong Kong, we can argue here that such deprived economic situations and inferior levels of human and social capital among poor families may negatively influence the development of young people.

## **4.2 The Impact of Poverty on Youth Development**

In Hong Kong, Shek and Siu (2019b) stated that poverty and social disadvantage is one of the ecological risk factors that promote negative adolescent development in Hong Kong. The impact of poverty on youth development has always been an important issue for professionals working with young people. It is believed

that their developmental paths are particularly problematic and difficult (Ngai, Cheung, & Ngai, 2012). On top of material poverty, Tsang (2012) claims that poor children and adolescents in Hong Kong are also challenged by MESS (emotional, social and spiritual poverty) that threatens their psychological well-being and negatively influences their healthy development. At the same time, related problems are not confined to any specific culture. Indeed, to understand the impact of poverty on youth, we have to know about the influences on poor families. For example, in the poverty literature, the family stress model and family investment model are the two mainstream social causation models for studying the impact of poverty on children and adolescent development. These two models assume that financial problems lead to variations in social, psychological, and physical functioning and show “support for the social causation view that socioeconomic status affects families and the development of children in terms of both family stress processes and family investments in children” (Conger & Donnellan, 2007, p.175). Yet, these two models offer different explanations for the situation.

Apart from these two models, a vast amount of research has been conducted by the Government, NGOs and academics to study the negative impact of poverty on children and youth development. For example, children and youth poverty is significantly linked to a number of academic achievements and developmental problems (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Conger et al., 2008; Duncan, 1997; Engle & Black, 2008; Evans, 2004; Glick & White, 2003; Lichter, 1997; Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, Bang, Pakes, O'Connor, & Rhodes, 2010). Clearly, youth poverty affects their physical, cognitive and psychological development.

In the following, the family stress model and family investment model will be firstly discussed. Then, different studies are cited as examples to illustrate how

poverty affects the development of adolescents. Although some studies examined the effects of poverty on children instead of adolescents, it is believed that as childhood precedes adolescence, the experience in adolescence should strongly relate to what occurred in childhood.

#### **4.2.1 The family stress model of economic hardship**

As revealed in the name of the model, the family stress model theoretically proposes that economic pressure and financial difficulties have a negative impact on parents' emotions and behaviors, which in turn negatively influences the family process of inter-partner relationships and their parenting strategies and damages family functioning. In the end, the effects of poverty on adolescent development are mediated (Conger & Conger, 2008; Conger & Donnellan, 2007). This model predicts that the chain effects economic hardship (having indicators such as low income, high debts and work instability) and brings economic pressure for the family. When economic pressure is high, which causes parents to have poor emotional well-being (e.g., anger, anxiety and depression), they are at an increased risk of behavioral problems (e.g., substance use and antisocial behavior). Such negative psychological and behavioral consequences also result in undesirable spousal relationships, which then lead to poor parenting. For example, less affection towards children, less involvement in children's daily activities, insufficient monitoring, inconsistency in disciplinary practices and lack of control over misbehaviors (Conger & Conger, 2008; Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Masarik & Conger, 2017). Such parental nurturance and involvement has a negative influence on children's physical, psychological, behavioral and cognitive well-being, which in turn decreases their positive adjustment (e.g., cognitive ability, social competence, school success and attachment to parents)

but increases their internalized (e.g., depression and anxiety) and externalized (e.g., aggressive and antisocial behavior) problems (Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Masarik & Conger, 2017). Studies provided solid evidence in support of this theoretical model, which showed that stressful experiences from economic hardship, harsh and ineffective parenting styles are often associated with anxiety, depression and aggressive behaviors, due to inability to maintain positive and effective relationships (Conger et al., 1992, 1994).

On the other hand, in a recent review, other than confirming how family stress (risk factors) influences children across their development in physical, social–emotional and cognitive domains, Masarik and Conger (2017) examined different studies and discussed how positive or adaptive parenting practices are linked to child well-being, even when facing economic stress. In addition, they stated the protective factors that positively moderate the family stress process. Parental social support, effective coping strategies, a sense of optimism, effective problem solving were all associated with less parenting stress, more effective parenting and led to positive child outcomes, such as fewer internalizing of problems, depressive symptoms, hostile and aggressive behaviors in children. With reference to the resilience literature, it is argued here that positive familial qualities and processes, such as a stable family environment, family cohesion and warmth, are vital in buffering the destructive threats and risks of poverty for poor youth (Garmezy, 1993; Masarik & Conger, 2017; Masten, 2014). Indeed, in the Chinese community, empirical studies show that the impact of economic disadvantage led to parental stress. Such stress was then translated into harsh parental styles, which in turn affected the parent-child relationship (Shek, 2004). In addition, family functioning and parental influences were associated with psychological well-being, mental health disturbances,



delinquency and problem behaviors of adolescents experiencing poverty (Shek, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2008a; Shek & Lee, 2007). Although the current study will not directly examine the influence of family stress, this model offers a theoretical understanding on how family stresses affect the development of poor youth and explains the negative psychological consequences of child poverty. In addition, the family stress model also provides insight regarding the importance of protective factors. If both parents and children can develop solid internal and external protective factors, these should be a psychological asset for them to moderate the impact of the family stress process.

#### **4.2.2 The family investment model of economic hardship**

The family investment model stems from economic investment theory. It proposes that family income affects family investment and the lives of the children. Parents who are more economically advantaged and with more economic resources, are able to make better investment in the development of children through financial (e.g., salary), social (e.g., working status) and human (e.g., education level) capital, which in turn benefits and promotes the well-being of their offspring (Conger & Donnellan, 2007). There is also a positive correlation between academic, financial and occupational success in adulthood. Conversely, for families in poverty, such investment remains a luxury. Since poor families may only have scarce and inadequate economic resources, parents might be forced to focus on more immediate needs, such as food and clothing. As a result, children from these families would be affected and their cognitive and psychological development greatly restricted.

Conger and Donnellan (2007) presented four different domains of family investment (resources) that foster the competent and positive development of children:

(a) learning materials available in the home, (b) parent stimulation of learning both directly and through support of advanced or specialized tutoring or training, (c) the family's standard of living (adequate food, housing, clothing, medical care, etc.), and (d) residing in a location that fosters a child's competent development (p.181)

In a review conducted by Simons et al. (2016), strong support for the family invest model was reported. Indeed, it was found that those children nurtured with more human capital had enhanced cognitive development and academic achievement. However, children from poor families experienced a number of negative consequences as predicted, such as limited social capital, difficulties building human capital, poor physical and mental health, and high rates of substance use (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Simons et al., 2016). To summarize, although family investment is not the focus of this current study, it offers insight for the researcher to explain how poverty is related to inconsistent, ineffective, unsupportive and uninvolved parenting styles, which would lead to youth behavioral problems and influence their development.

#### **4.2.3 Physical development of economically disadvantaged adolescents**

Concerning physical development, ample research and reviews indicate that low socioeconomic status has an influential impact on health (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Chen, Matthews, & Boyce, 2002; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Evans, 2004; Gallo & Matthews, 2003; Lynch & Kaplan, 2000; McLoyd, 1998). In particular, the differences in receiving diverse resources, for example deprivation in health care, food, clothing, nutrition and residence or living environments may affect the health as well as the physical development of children and youth experiencing poverty (Von Rueden, Gosch, Rajmil, Bisegger, & Ravens-Sieberer, 2006). Indeed, food deprivation may lead to malnutrition or problems

related to being underweight, which may have adverse long-term effects on physical development. These studies indicate that poverty experienced during childhood and adolescence strongly correlates with the indicators of compromised physical health in adulthood.

#### **4.2.4 Psychological development of economically disadvantaged adolescents**

In examining the psychological development literature of young people experiencing economic disadvantage, the undesirable impact on their cognitive development, mental health, self-concept and self-esteem, as well as their socio-emotional development were commonly discussed. In addition, it is proposed here that these components (as set out below) are also inter-related and correlated (Conger et al., 2008; Wadsworth & Berger, 2006; Veselska, Geckova, Gajdosova, Orosova, van Dijk, & Reijneveld, 2010).

##### **1) Cognitive development**

In relation to the cognitive development of young people, a plethora of studies has considered its relationship with economic disadvantage. For example, in their review, Brooks-Gunn and Duncan (1997) stated that there were negative effects from poverty on the cognitive development of children and youth. Similarly, Leung and Shek (2011) indicated that, “children in poverty suffer from the problem of stimulus deprivation that causes deficits to formal and contextual cognitive development of the children” (p.109). They also stated that early poverty experiences and persistent poverty have more unfavorable and long-lasting effects on the lives of young people. This also echoes the notion of Brooks-Gunn and Duncan (1997), in which “the effects of long-term poverty on measures of children’s cognitive ability

were significantly greater than the effects of short-term poverty” (p.61). In addition, several domains regarding cognitive development were commonly discussed, which include the adverse impact on the intelligence or intelligence quotas of children (McLoyd, 1998) and youth (McLoyd et al., 2009; Repetti, Taylor, & Seeman, 2002), verbal and reasoning ability (Smith, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1997), and school achievement or academic performance (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; McLoyd, 1998; McLoyd et al., 2009; Sirin, 2005; White, 1982).

## 2) Mental health or psychological well-being

Research suggests that economic disadvantage links with poor psychological well-being or mental health problems. With reference to the family stress model, Conger et al. (1994) studied a sample of 180 boys and 198 girls and found that economic stress in family life leads to adolescent symptoms of internalizing and externalizing emotions and behaviors. Similarly, Eamon (2002) examined the relationship between poverty and depressive symptoms in young adolescents, results showed that economic disadvantage could negatively distress adolescents in different ways. It particularly predicted youth depressive symptoms. Comparable results were found in another study conducted by Wight, Botticello and Aneshensel (2006). Their research explored a large sample of 18,417 high school students and findings concluded that poverty is positively related to depressive symptoms. In a longitudinal study, Najman, Hayatbakhsh, Clavarino, Bor, O'Callaghan and Williams (2010) stated that family poverty was the strongest predictor of adolescent anxiety and depression. In addition, “repeated experiences of poverty over a child’s early life course are associated with increased levels of poor mental health” (p.1719). It can be argued here then that economically disadvantaged adolescents with emotional and

behavioral problems face greater challenges as they are at an even greater risk of experiencing poor adjustment and poor long-term outcomes (Murray & Malmgren, 2005).

With specific reference to Hong Kong, as compared with adolescents without economic disadvantage, young people experiencing poverty correspondingly displayed inferior psychological well-being, lower levels of happiness and poorer mental health (Shek, 2008a; Shek & Lee, 2007; The Boys' and Girls' Club Association of Hong Kong, 2004; Wong & Chiu, 2006). In a longitudinal study conducted in Hong Kong, Shek (2005b) examined the perceived family functioning and family adjustment of secondary school students experiencing poverty. Results showed that there was a bi-directional relationship between perceived family functioning and adolescent psychological well-being as well as problem behavior. Another local study conducted by Ho, Li and Chan (2015) found that young people from low-income families reported a lower quality of life and higher scores in depressive symptoms than those from high-income families. To sum up, all the above studies from both Western and Chinese contexts reiterate that teenagers experiencing recurrent poverty are more likely to display psychological distress and poor mental health. Additionally, it is argued here that the self-concept or self-identity of adolescents may also be negatively influenced, as self-concept as well as self-esteem was positively related to psychological well-being (Shek, 1998).

### 3) Socio-emotional development

Family has strong effects on behavior, health and psychological development throughout childhood and adolescence. Socio-emotional development of adolescents largely relates to the impact of family. With reference to the family stress

and family investment models, different studies assert that family economic hardship adversely affects the development and adjustment of adolescents (Conger & Conger, 2008; Conger et al., 1992; Conger et al., 1994). For example, if low socioeconomic status (SES) parents bear the burden of economic pressures and face financial difficulties, their emotions and behaviors may also be negatively affected. Furthermore, poverty is a major contributor to social exclusion. For children, the impact of poverty on their social integration is often via their parents. In addition, Leung and Shek (2011) indicated that poverty may spoil the family process, in which the socio-emotional development of young people may be detrimentally affected. In their study, Conger, Conger, Elder, Lorenz, Simons and Whitbeck (1992) proposed a family process model to examine the link between economic stress in family life and problematic adolescent adjustment. Results show that the ability of low SES parents to cope with stress has adverse consequences for their communication and relations within their family. Stress and disturbances will give rise to marital conflict, which in turn leads to poor and incompetent parenting, or having fewer positive communications with family, as well as less involvement in children's daily activities. These may essentially affect adolescents' socio-emotional functioning and development. In the study of Repetti, Taylor and Seeman (2002), it is suggested that the socio-emotional development of low SES offspring are influenced by their family chaos and dissonance, as well as nonresponsive and strict parenting. On the whole, parents who experience economic disadvantage have an amplified risk of emotional and behavioral difficulties and distress, which in turn may lead to unfavorable family relations and family conflict that can adversely affect children's socio-emotional development (Conger & Conger, 2008).

#### 4) Self-concept and self-esteem

Adolescence is an important developmental stage for the construction of individual identity. The formation of self-identity is an interactive process between the internal psychology of the individual and their external background and environment. Self-concept refers to cognitive appraisal of the self's capabilities and weaknesses. Positive self-concept and self-esteem is considered an important indicator of children's mental health. In addition, self-concept is an individual's belief about oneself as the results of how the individual interprets their environment (Bosma et al., 1994). When an adolescent succeeds in achieving a good sense of self-identity, they arrive at a good sense of psychosocial identity and competence. As such, SES has a clear impact on the development of self-esteem. For example, in their study Veselska et al. (2010) explored the mediating role of personality and mental health on established SES and self-worth. The findings indicate that "lower socio-economic status is an indicator of lower feelings of self-worth among adolescents" (p.650). Similarly, Twenge and Campbell (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of 446 samples (N = 312,940), the findings show that SES has a significant relationship with self-esteem, which implies that those with low SES have lower levels of self-esteem as compared to those with high SES. In particular, Phillips and Pittman (2003) explained how poverty influences the identity processes of adolescents: the situation of poverty may direct, inhibit and limit the personal identity choices available to adolescents. Correspondingly, three mechanisms including chronic and excessive stress, social stigma (or marginalization) and inadequate opportunities may boost the inferiority of economically disadvantaged adolescents and circumscribe the process of their identity exploration. Stigmatization and marginalization shape and magnify the perceptions of adolescents with a negative appraisal of their self-worth, self-efficacy

and sense of mastery. As such, poverty may erode the tangible and perceived quality of life of adolescents. To this point, Shek and Tsui (2012) studied 3,328 Chinese secondary school students in Hong Kong. Using two waves of data, the findings show that economically disadvantaged students displayed poorer levels of positive identity when compared with those without economic disadvantage.

In another local study, Ho and her colleagues (2015) conducted a study and found that children in the poor group reported lower scores in self-esteem when compared with the non-poor group. They also concluded that income disparity had a huge impact on the self-esteem of children from poor families.

According to the overall results of the aforementioned studies, it is clear that SES significantly correlated with perceived low self-esteem or self-identity of adolescents. Alarming, in addition to the negative appraisal and scarce life chances, as well as opportunities available to adolescents, McLoyd et al. (2009) indicate that these may weaken the positive views of poor adolescents towards their feelings, plans, and attitudes about their future. In turn, young people may have poor psychosocial adjustment, which can have a stultifying effect on identity exploration and positive development (Phillips & Pittman, 2003).

Theoretically, a number of scholars have conceptualized self-identity as a self-constructed theory of the self (Berzonsky, 2006). Among them, Kelly's personal construct theory (1955) suggests that individuals are not passive learners; instead they actively construct understandings of the social world, in which their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are molded by the ways in which they construe their world. In addition, individuals are theorists who try to develop their own theories for organizing their daily life experiences. Hence, how an individual construes their personal world or reality, and how they interpret life experiences are mainly based on



their past experiences and unique world views. Based on the work of Kelly, Berzonsky (2006) proposed a process model of identity, in which individuals dealing with life events or stressors might force revisions in their own perception. With these ideas in mind, the negative effects can be imagined. For example, Phillips and Pittman (2003) concluded that:

“...identity work among poor adolescents may be circumscribed by disparaging self-relevant information, limited opportunities and chronic exposure to high levels of stress and negative life events. This may lead to premature cessation of identity exploration or the adoption of a negative identity” (p.128).

With reference to the above review, it reiterates a major concern that problem behaviors can share common antecedents. Clearly, living in poverty is a risk factor. Yet, while the above showed that economically disadvantaged adolescents were more likely to develop psychological problems or unhealthy psychosocial development, there are studies on resilience suggesting that this group of adolescents may not display lower levels of psychosocial growth (Buckner, Mezzacappa, & Beardslee, 2003; Cauce, Stewart, Rodriguez, Cochran, & Ginzler, 2003; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Indeed, Garmezy (1993) stated that three types of protective factors can help enhance the coping efforts and positive development of poor adolescents, including (1) individuals' characteristics, such as positive personality, self-esteem, self-efficacy and autonomy; (2) family-based factors like family cohesion and warmth; and (3) the presence of external support systems such as schools, churches and service agencies. Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) also share a similar conclusion in that some protective factors, such as high levels of self-esteem, supportive families, having a good adult mentor or participation in extracurricular activities can serve as development assets or protective factors that help shield poor youth against the adverse effects and negative outcomes associated with poverty. Specifically, Becker and Luthar (2002) indicate

that school teachers' support is a critical social–emotional component that influences the learning and achievement performance among disadvantaged students. This point also mirrors the previously discussed definition of CHIP (see Section 4.1.1).

In Hong Kong, Shek, Lam, Lam, Tang, Tsoi and Tsang (2003) stated in their study that:

...adolescents with higher scores in the Existential Well-Being Scale had better psychological well-being in school adjustment and less problem behavior (including substance abuse and delinquency), and the relationship was stronger in adolescents with economic disadvantage than in adolescents without economic disadvantage (p.167)

In addition, they also noted the positive relationship between life meaning and psychological well-being among poor adolescents. Moreover, Shek (2004) reviewed studies on family processes and developmental outcomes in Chinese adolescents. He asserted that positive adolescent adjustment in poor young people is related to family processes, including positive parenting styles, parent-adolescent communication and parent-child relational qualities. More recently, Leung and Shek (2013) similarly indicated that parenting style, parental control and family functioning are positively related to adolescent psychosocial competence. In another local study, Ngai, Cheung and Ngai (2012) studied 862 secondary school students and examined the relationships between six development indicators (including mental health, positive identity, behavioral adjustment, resilience, academic achievement and overall accomplishment) with three factors, including service use (i.e., the participation in developmental programs offered by schools and NGOs), family social capital (i.e., parenting and family communication) and school social capital (i.e., support from school teachers). They concluded that these three factors are conducive to the positive development of economically disadvantaged youth. In addition, the study stated that, “when young people suffering from economic hardship obtain access to adequate

resources and opportunities, they can desist from failure and social exclusion” (p.143). Consistent with the findings from Western resilience literature, this clearly shows that the role of significant others is an important protective factor for youth experiencing poverty (Cauce et al., 2003; Hauser, 1999; Hjemdal et al., 2006). In particular, Ngai et al. (2012) found that school social capital is a stronger predictor of psychosocial development to foster positive development compared with family social capital.

Based on Western and indigenous literature, the researcher in this current study concludes that other than the “family factor” and its processes, it is suggested that another two factors, including (1) developmental programs promoting better intra- and interpersonal competencies and (2) school social capital (support from school teachers) are also significant protective factors for disadvantaged youth. This sheds light on potential strategies to address how to promote positive psychological well-being in this special group of adolescents.

Having previously discussed in Chapter Two, that PYD is a promising strategy for promoting psychosocial competencies and constructive development of adolescents, it is argued here that a comprehensive and progressive PYD program may effectively prevent multiple problematic and delinquent behaviors and increase positive behaviors and consequences concurrently. By studying the effects of the PYD program on economically disadvantaged youth, it can help identify important implications to inform future program development.

#### **4.3 Poverty alleviation strategies and longer-term programs for youth**

As discussed in the previous section, alarmingly, poverty may erode the tangible and perceived quality of life of adolescents. Adolescents could also become easily trapped in poverty, generation after generation. Given the implications of the

risk factors, finding ways of reducing poverty is essential for the positive and healthy development of children and adolescents. Historically, in Hong Kong, to provide facilities to needy people, international poverty reduction strategies have focused on infrastructure investment and direct intervention. Later, the intervention focus changed to place emphasize on human capital and investment in basic education (Tang, 2019). After that, the international poverty reduction strategy emphasized the establishment of a social safety net and participation empowerment. Currently:

...the international development community has come to realize that poverty is not just a simple problem of economic income, but is a social problem related to health, education, social capital, natural resources, infrastructure, social justice, participation rights, gender equality and dignity of the individual, etc. The World Development Report 2000/2001 proposed to use the new strategic thinking and overall framework for combating poverty beyond the economic sphere to further highlight the role of multi-dimensional social factor inputs in poverty reduction (Tang, 2019, p.161)

In Hong Kong, as educators and helping professionals, teachers and social workers should take a more assertive role. As such, during the past decade different initiatives, strategies and measures (some specifically target children and youth) using the asset-building and strength-based approach were formulated by the Hong Kong SAR Government and NGOs. The concept of using an asset-building approach to address poverty is suggested further by Sherraden (1991). He suggests that the underprivileged should be encouraged to “develop to his or her greatest potential, not only as a matter of humanistic values, but as a matter of long-term economic competitiveness of the nation, social cohesion ...” (p.189). (e.g., This approach emphasized the importance of encouraging individuals to accumulate, hold or develop three important assets. These are (1) internal assets (i.e., personal competencies, self-esteem, positive belief in the future), (2) external assets (i.e., family support, positive peer influence and good neighborhoods; in other words,

social capital) and (3) economic (i.e., monetary accumulation) assets. Building these assets would have constructive effects on one's well-being, including the future aspiration (Sherraden, 1991). On the contrary, for the strength-based approach, Pollard and Rosenberg (2003) proposed youth programs for poverty alleviation should emphasize "on cultivating children's assets, positive relationships, morals, and capacities that give them the resources they need to grow successfully across the life course" (p.15). In fact, these mentioned approaches may be varied in specific goals and ways of program implementation, but they both facilitate the re-thinking of policy for assisting children and their families with the prevention and alleviation of poverty.

In the vein of asset-building approach, Michael Sherraden (1991) proposed the asset-based welfare policy to people experiencing poverty. It is argued that "each individual should be encouraged to develop to his or her greatest potential, not only as a matter of humanistic values, but as a matter of long-term economic competitiveness of the nation, social cohesion, and vitality of our democratic political institutions" (p.189). With reference to the human capital theory, the investment and accumulation of human capital is also one of the major theory initiatives to alleviate the problem of poverty (Becker, 2009). This theory posits that education and training investments could increase the levels of one's knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and social assets, which in turn leading to greater productivity and result in better jobs and earnings. When the investments of human capital are limited, then the cognitive and psychological development of children and youth is also restricted. The theory also proposed that the primary determinant of our living standard is how well we succeed in developing and utilizing the skills and knowledge we have (Becker, 2009). As discussed in Section 4.2.2, with reference to the family investment model, it

seems that families in poverty would be deficient in providing material resources for building children's human capital (Conger & Donnellan, 2007), especially the developmental programs outside the formal curriculum. In this regard, for children and youth in poverty, through providing them additional learning and training opportunities and teaching them non-academic, daily living and social skills, it is believed that they could develop and accumulate human capital which greatly enhance their self-development capacity and asset building (Piachaud, 2002). Adolescents with more human capital would enhance their cognitive ability, academic achievement, and social-emotional well-being, thus promoting a more holistic and positive development (Yeung, Linver & Brooks-Gunn, 2002). In other words, it is suggested here that passive assistance is not conducive to motivating poor children and youth to plan for their future. Adopting the asset-building approach can also help the poor to develop internal assets, strengthen their capabilities, accumulate human capital and heighten their chances of future success in escaping the poverty trap.

In order to enhance policy coordination and integration, the Government established the Commission on Poverty (CoP) in 2005 and re-established it in 2012. The CoP adopted the asset-building model as a possible option for addressing poverty and for curbing inter-generational poverty. In the past two decades, several relatively large-scale measures were developed in Hong Kong to help children and adolescents. A few examples are outlined below.

#### **4.3.1 Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged (PFD)**

In the 2005 Policy Address, the Government earmarked HK\$200 million for promoting cross-sector collaboration and development of the tripartite social

partnership comprising the Government (SWD), the welfare sector and the business community to help the disadvantaged; the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged (PFD) was set up accordingly. Indeed, this is a matching grant provided by the Government for the welfare sector, through connection with donations made by the business sector. On one hand, it aims to motivate local NGOs to expand their networks and establish sustainable partner relationships. On the other hand, it encourages the business sector to demonstrate social responsibility in running social welfare activities and helping the underprivileged (SWD, 2008, 2012). Under the PFD, the Government provides monetary support to welfare initiatives proposed by NGOs. Since 2005, 125 NGOs have provided more than 450 projects for the disadvantaged. Among them, many of the projects target children and adolescents from low income families. Different school-based and community-based poverty alleviation projects have thus been launched.

#### **4.3.2 Child Development Fund (CDF)**

To encourage economically disadvantaged young people to plan for the future and cultivate positive attitudes with a view to reducing intergenerational poverty, the Hong Kong SAR Government allocated HK\$300 million to set up the Child Development Fund (CDF) in April 2008 (HKSAR, Child Development Fund, n.d.a). Following the SWD's guiding principles of early identification and early intervention, it aims to encourage young people to forge asset-building habits to accumulate both financial and non-financial assets through collaboration with the public, the business sector and the Government. In addition, the project attempts to provide participants with more personal development opportunities to promote development of personal growth assets (non-financial assets), such as adopting

positive attitudes or beliefs towards life, promoting resilience and strengthening their social competence as well as social networks. Young people aged 10 to 16 years from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are eligible to participate in the CDF projects. The CDF allocates funds to NGOs to operate the projects throughout the territory in seven districts with three major components, namely targeted savings (in which to accumulate financial assets to realize their personal development plans), mentorship program and the personal development plan (HKSAR, Child Development Fund, n.d.a). The mentorship program aims to foster good mentor-mentee connections in which mentors serve as role models for the young people. The Guidebook for Mentors of the CDF states that mentors need to support poor participants to widen their horizons and social networks, as well as developing positive attitudes towards life (HKSAR, Child Development Fund, n.d.c). Furthermore, under the guidance of mentors and the operation of NGOs, all participants are asked to prepare personal development plans with specific goals. In addition, training and community services will be provided or recommended by the NGOs to help participants accumulate non-financial assets and develop a more forward-planning perspective. Since December 2008, 156 three-year projects benefiting about 14,000 young people have been successfully launched. Moreover, evaluations on the CDF were conducted by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 2012 and The University of Hong Kong in 2017. Both evaluation studies stated that the CDF could serve as a good foundation for promoting the development of young people by facilitating them to nurture and develop tangible and intangible assets to fight poverty, which is beneficial to their future development (Child Development Fund, n.d.).



#### **4.3.3 The Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund**

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund (LWLF) was established and launched by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and the Education Bureau (formerly the Education and Manpower Bureau) in September 2002 (HKSAR, Education Bureau, 2012). It aims to promote all-round development of young people and support students experiencing economic disadvantage, from P.1 to S.6, to fully participate in life-wide learning activities developed and conducted by their schools, as part of the school's curriculum. The target students are those either in receipt of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance or the School Textbook Assistance Scheme (full grant), or those who meet the school's established "financially needy" criteria (Education Bureau, 2012). Since its inception, more than 100,000 students have benefited annually from the LWLF between 2002 and 2007 (Phase I). In addition, since the 2007/08 school year onwards (Phase II), more than 200,000 students have benefited annually from the LWLF. Up to the 2017/18 school year, the Club's Charities Trust has donated more than \$920 million and more than 930 schools have participated in different phases of the project (HKSAR, Education Bureau, 2017).

#### **4.3.4 School-based After-School Learning and Support Programs**

The School-based After-School Learning and Support Programs is a school-based grant implemented by the Education Bureau since 2005/06, with a view to improving the learning effectiveness of disadvantaged students and facilitate their whole-person development. Eligible students are those in P1 to S6 in receipt of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance and full grant under the Student Financial Assistance Scheme. In addition, similar to the LWLF, schools are provided discretion

to offer activities for other disadvantaged students meeting the school's established “financially needy” criteria. Participating primary and secondary schools should conduct school-based after-school activities for disadvantaged students to improve their learning effectiveness and broaden their learning experiences outside of the classroom (Education Bureau, n.d.). On top of the aforesaid School-based Grant, the Fund also consists of the Community-based Project Grant with a view to encourage meaningful projects in the districts implemented by NGOs, the major collaborator of both primary and secondary schools. Under this fund, a wide spectrum of activities are provided such as languages training, tutorial services, sports activities, visits and outdoor activities, adventure-based counselling activities, personal growth and development training, interpersonal and communication skills training, leadership training, cultural activities and voluntary services.

#### **4.3.5 Concluding remarks**

In Section 4.2, the impact of poverty on the development of economically disadvantaged adolescents was discussed. To complement policy on poverty alleviation, different local programs and funds implemented in the past decade were introduced and discussed in this chapter. As a social worker, it is hoped that poor young people can be assisted to overcome the life challenges they face in their life journey. Yet, it should also be noted that there may be no simple fix for poverty and family problems. Based on the above-mentioned programs and funds, with specific focus on children and youth intervention, it is observed here that there are inadequacies and gaps in current anti-poverty initiatives. Although the Hong Kong Government has tried to coordinate their resources for young people to move forward with anti-poverty agenda, these strategies are not comprehensive and holistic enough.

Since the poor youth in Hong Kong are facing multiple deprivations, so poverty alleviation should not solely focused on physical capital (like one's wealth and materials received or the immediate financial need for school-related expenses and learning support). Social and human capital are also important. However, currently there is no single scheme that contains a specific purpose for developing non-financial or personal and internal growth assets (e.g., intangible assets such as right attitudes and individual competencies) of young people.

The researcher of this study will therefore explore how poor children and adolescents can be helped. Based on the discussions in Chapters Two and Three, youth programs under the PYD approach could be one of the possible ways to take care of the holistic and positive development of adolescents. As such, it is important to examine if there is any existing local PYD program that can provide intervention for adolescents experiencing poverty.

#### **4.4 PYD Program and its Effectiveness on Youth Experiencing Poverty**

In addition to the review on school-based programs in Chapter Three, and consistent with the discussion on the capability approach, it is suggested that we need to recognize the importance of youth capacity development (Nussbaum, 2009; Redmond, 2008; Sen, 1999, 2000). With reference to the discussion on the approaches of poverty alleviation strategies (Section 4.3), it is argued that the promotion of PYD and the implementation of the holistic developmental program can be one of the initiatives to address the “non-financial” problems of youth poverty. Interventions that are grounded in the PYD framework place emphasis on “enhancing young people's strengths, establishing engaging and supportive contexts, and providing opportunities for bidirectional, constructive youth–context interactions”

(Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017. p.1156). There is evidence showing that PYD interventions can be applied in very different contexts, including the low- and middle-income countries. In a recently published article, Catalano et al. (2019) systematically reviewed the impact of PYD programs in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). In their study, 35 PYD programs with at least one experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation in LMICs were identified. Results showed that 60% of the programs demonstrated constructive effects on adolescents' behaviors, including "substance use and risky sexual activity, and/or more distal developmental outcomes, such as employment and health indicators" (p.15). Theoretically, the PYD approach is significant for adolescents experiencing poverty as they may encounter numerous external risk factors, life challenges or even social exclusion. By participating in PYD programs, underprivileged adolescents are provided opportunities for growth and building internal and external protective factors, such as the 5Cs proposed by Lerner and Benson (2003), which in turn can help them moderate the family stress process (Masarik & Conger, 2017) and manage the negative influences from poverty. In addition, Lewin-Bizan, Bowers and Lerner (2010) indicate, "the key hypothesis within the PYD perspective is that, if the strengths of youths are aligned across adolescence with ecological developmental assets, then every young person's development can be enhanced" (p.761). Remarkably, PYD program would help build up developmental assets in adolescents experiencing poverty which greatly contributed to the development of their human capital (rather than academic and technical skills, PYD approach can support the development of transferable competencies, such as socioemotional and problem-solving skills, self-determination and positive values). The strength-based perspective can also neutralize the stigma from labeling poor students as "at-risk", facilitating

them to nurture a more positive identity and self-esteem. In other words, poor adolescents can have their own potential to change the course of their development which would eventually promote better and holistic development.

Based on existing literature in the West, a number of afterschool programs, adventure training programs, and art programs adopt the PYD approach and provide intervention services for children from low-income families (Forrest-Bank, Nicotera, Bassett, & Ferrarone, 2016; Hawkins et al., 1999; Lewis et al., 2016; Norton & Watt, 2014; Taylor et al., 2017; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Evidence from different programs showed that young people from low socioeconomic status did benefit from these PYD interventions. For instance, in an evaluation study conducted by Hawkins and his colleagues (1999), it was found that PYD interventions were effective for students from low-income families, particularly in improving their school achievement, attachment and problem behaviors. A newly published study reported that youth in low-socioeconomic areas benefit more than any other population from after-school PYD programs (Johnston, Marttinen, Frederick, & Bhat, 2019). In addition, some evaluation studies showed that PYD programs could foster both internal and external developmental assets of low-income youth (Forrest-Bank, Nicotera, Bassett, & Ferrarone, 2016; Lewis et al., 2016; Norton & Watt, 2014). For example, Forrest-Bank and colleagues (2016) reported that intervention adopting a PYD approach has been proven to have a positive impact on low-income youth. In their study, expressive art was used as a means to achieve positive academic, behavioral, and social outcomes. The findings here showed that disadvantaged youth involved in the intervention program had statistically significant gains in PYD attributes. Similarly, Ullrich-French and McDonough (2013) conducted an evaluation study on a PYD program for poor youth. They evaluated social relationships, self-

perceptions, motivation, and psychosocial outcomes in physical activity-based PYD summer camps for low-income youth in the Midwestern United States. Participants reported perceived gains in hope and self-esteem. In a more recent study, McDonough, Ullrich-French and McDavid (2018) examined the perceived benefits of a group of youth from low-income families who had participated in a physical activity-based PYD program. They reported that the program contributed to participants' intrapersonal (improved competence and self-esteem, better emotional control) and interpersonal (improved social skills) assets. By providing poor youth with constructive, optimistic and asset-building experiences, it is expected that they would be equipped with competences and strengths to combat their personal and environmental challenges (Taylor et al., 2017).

For some PYD programs, it was found that participants from low SES actually benefit more from the interventions. For instance, Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott, & Hill (1999) reported that students from poor families experience strong intervention effects on school attachment and achievement after participation in the PYD programs. Correspondingly, in another meta-analysis of school-based programs, Durlak et al. (2011) stated that PYD programs could promote social and emotional competencies of youth, which results in enhanced social adjustment and reduced the emotional distress. They also found that stronger intervention effects were reported in the poor population.

This section shows the encouraging and positive impact and effectiveness of PYD programs on youth experiencing poverty. Following constructive influences in the West, it is significant to examine the effectiveness and impact of PYD program implemented in the Chinese context. As discussed in Section 4.3, the notion of capability and asset building from different poverty alleviation strategies is similar to

what Benson (1997, 2007) and Lerner (Lerner, 2005; Lerner et al., 2002) suggested in their models regarding the PYD Approach. In Hong Kong context, the local PYD program, the Project P.A.T.H.S., was developed for junior secondary school students. Through the 2-tier programs, systematic training were provided to the participants, aiming at helping them explore their potential, establish self-identity, foster closer ties with others, and develop healthy beliefs and clear values. To this end, the Project P.A.T.H.S. would help build up developmental assets and accumulate human capital in poor adolescents which would eventually promote holistic development. Although the Project P.A.T.H.S. was not a poverty alleviation program, it draws the researcher's attention to examine if it could help the local adolescents experiencing poverty.

On the other hand, regarding to the interventions addressing youth development issues (including poverty), it is also worthy to discuss how the generic and specific programs could help address the youth issues.

#### **4.5 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, the discussion on the definition and impact of child poverty outlined problems faced by poor young people. It is observed here that more research is required to develop better understanding of the life paths of poor adolescents. The need to further enrich the related databases in Hong Kong, as well as in the Chinese context is timely. In addition to the review on school-based programs in Chapter Three, it is argued that the promotion of strength-based and PYD and the implementation of PYD programs can be one of the initiatives to address the “non-financial” problems of youth poverty. It is thus worthy to examine if there is any existing local PYD program that can provide universal training and promote PYD

among adolescents experiencing poverty.

**Table 4.1: Population by Age between 2001 and 2016**

| <b>Year</b>  | <b>2001</b>       | <b>2006</b>    | <b>2011</b>    | <b>2016</b>    |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Age</b>   | <b>Population</b> |                |                |                |
| 12           | 91,764            | 83,151         | 63,240         | 50,469         |
| 13           | 85,200            | 84,553         | 70,236         | 53,507         |
| 14           | 84,600            | 85,115         | 77,644         | 51,792         |
| 15           | 87,393            | 85,639         | 82,086         | 61,062         |
| 16           | 87,051            | 88,148         | 83,620         | 60,675         |
| 17           | 90,918            | 93,853         | 82,855         | 63,518         |
| 18           | 92,933            | 85,935         | 87,481         | 72,516         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>619,859</b>    | <b>606,394</b> | <b>547,162</b> | <b>413,539</b> |



## **Chapter Five: Literature Review on Program Evaluation**

This chapter contains three major parts: first is the importance of evidence-based practice, second is a comprehensive review of program evaluation to identify appropriate evaluation model(s) for this current study and the conceptualization of program evaluation. In particular, the different approaches and paradigms of evaluation are discussed here. Third is the conceptual framework of this current study. In this part, triangulation is examined. In addition, the arguments for using an integrated framework as the preferred evaluation approach, the factors influencing the perceived program effectiveness and evaluation indicators proposed for the evaluation in this study are discussed.

### **5.1 Evidence-Based Practice**

Currently, performance and outcome assessments are expanding and cover a wide range of different evaluation contexts, such as business and industrial training, personnel evaluation, educational programs, medical efforts, developmental services or therapeutic programs in psychology fields and human services. Evaluation and assessment are vital for continual survival of any type of organization, including social welfare agencies in Hong Kong. In a time of growing demand for accountability, there is increasing pressure for local social work agencies to show concrete evidence that the services provided are appreciated and worthy. Shek (2008b) reflected that:

...in charitable foundations throughout the world, different approaches are used to allocate funding. As many projects with good will (i.e., enthusiasm-based charity) actually fail to help those who really need it, it is argued that the evidence-based approach (i.e., charity guided by scientific evidence)

represents the best strategy to support projects that can really help the needy (p.802)

The call for effective outcomes and liability of social work practice also becomes significant:

Increasingly, government, foundations, and other donors are asking managers of nonprofit, community-based organizations for more information about the evaluation and performance measurement of the public services they provide for a range of purposes, including contract monitoring and reporting, organizational learning, and informing public policy and program practice (Carman, 2007, p.60)

As stated by a social work scholar, Ginsberg (2001), “program evaluation has stood as one of the most complicated and controversial areas of practice and responsibility” (p.ix). For many programs implemented the effectiveness of interventions for different targets must be understood. Clearly, evidence-based programs with empirically tested interventions and effectiveness can highly increase accountability in social work practice.

As a helping profession, social workers need to make responsible decisions for clients and decide what the best intervention and approach is for them. In order to assure good quality of services, the practice of social work and social welfare, the identification and delivery of practices, or even day-to-day service provisions should be evidence-based – and should be evaluated using strong scientific, verifiable and empirical findings, in order to support implementation and sustained use (Drisko & Grady, 2019). Evidence-based practice (EBP) originated in medical settings. As suggested by Sackett et al. (2000), EBP is the integration of best research evidence with clinical expertise and clients’ values. Howard, McMillan and Pollio (2003) stated that it is “a new paradigm that promotes more effective social interventions by encouraging the conscientious, judicious, and explicit use of the best available

scientific evidence in professional decision making” (p.234). EBP has increasingly developed and has been advocated within the context of different human services professions and across a variety of disciplines, such as physical and mental health care, education, clinical psychology and social work (Cournoyer & Powers, 2002; Drisko & Grady, 2019; Kratochwill & Shernoff, 2004; Rosen, 2003). For example, EBP in psychology is defined as the “integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences” (American Psychological Association, 2005, p.1), which shares a similar disposition with the aforementioned definition suggested by Sackett et al. (2000). At the same time, a number of evidence-based program databases have been established. Several examples are outlined here: (1) an online registry of mental health and substance abuse interventions in the United States of America, titled the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP), was created in 1996 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration under the United States Department of Health and Human Service; (2) another database is on the website of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Model Programs (OJJDP). This is an office of the United States Department of Justice; (3) the third database is on the website of What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), which was developed by the United States Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences; and (4) the Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center was newly launched in 2018 by the United States Department of Health & Human Services. As reflected by its name, this resource center provides a collection of scientifically-based information and resources for researchers, clinicians, practitioners, policy-makers as well as communities. Through these websites and databases, practitioners can identify and review scientifically-proven programs and interventions (especially for youth and related

issues, such as substance abuse, delinquency, mental health problems and academic problems) that are well-implemented and systematically evaluated with positive results and effectiveness, as ratings of the programs are listed accordingly.

While we can observe the strengths of EBP, there are some continuing limitations. One is the lack of extensive high-quality research results on many client concerns and for many types of treatments (Drisko & Grady, 2019). With the use of experimental research designs drawing upon large scale quantitative research, another limitation of EBP research is its high cost in money, participation, effort, and time. In addition, there may be concerns that some useful forms of research are devalued, such as small scale qualitative studies, as EBP hierarchies of evidence locate the results of qualitative research at the lowest levels (Drisko & Grady, 2019; Henderson & Rheault, 2004). Indeed, qualitative research and mixed-methods research should not be overlooked. While the strengths of quantitative methods are to discover correlations, explanations, representativeness and predictions of phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), qualitative methods can provide access to lived experience through the eyes of participants (Padgett, 2016). By collecting in-depth data, we could obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of real-life situations, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, experiences and thoughts of research participants, which may not be available from experimental research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Therefore, various researchers proposed to incorporate qualitative research in EBP (Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick, & Robertson, 2013; Henderson & Rheault, 2004). In addition, since both quantitative and qualitative perspectives have unique contributions as well as limitations for EBP, researchers further advocated to include mixed-method research to offer a more comprehensive and thorough understanding of research issues than either approach alone (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Creswell &

Creswell, 2017), which could facilitate effective implementation and sustainment of EBP (Bronstein et al., 2011; Drisko & Grady, 2019; Giddings, 2006). In their study, Aarons, Fettes, Sommerfeld, and Palinkas (2012) emphasized and concluded that:

...the use of mixed method research designs is critical for development of implementation research in order to further a more comprehensive understanding of issues and factors that impact, or result from, the growing dissemination of EBPs...We also demonstrated that using mixed methods can add to and deepen our understanding of the meaning of variability not captured in quantitative confidence intervals (p. 76).

Despite these limitations, EBP has become a major trend within healthcare settings, psychology and social service fields as it can incorporate clinical expertise, the best research evidence and client values into the decision-making process for client intervention and treatment (Cournoyer & Powers, 2002; Drisko & Grady, 2019; Kratochwill & Shernoff, 2004; Sackett et al., 2000).

With specific reference to social work, McNeece and Thyer (2004) suggested that EBP is a “useful perspective for social work practice, across the spectrum of services, micro through macro” (p.21). Drisko and Grady (2019) highlighted that:

EBP offers a method for clinical social workers to include the use of research evidence in treatment planning, in diagnostic determination, and in the understanding of etiology and prognosis. It helps clients and clinicians select among treatments in an informed manner that includes knowledge of comparative outcomes for large samples. EBP provides policy planners with important data for determining the cost-benefit of specific treatments and procedures (p 327).

It is argued here that research can benefit clients (service users) directly through the research process, with reference to the utilization of research findings to improve practice. While EBP is increasingly emphasized in social work practice, it is observed here that a lot of social work students and practitioners find it challenging to translate and incorporate the research evidence into practical work. Farley et al. (2009) stated that one of the challenges faced by social workers is that:

...of having the time and skills necessary to obtain and analyze available data. It is safe to say that, given the recent inclusion of EBP in social work curricula, the majority of licensed social work practitioners have not had formal instruction in the requisite skills and process of using EBP (p.249).

Furthermore, most EBP studies are based on positivist research methodologies. The standardized EBP treatment manuals use a restrictive “cookie cutter” approach in which we observe the failure to consider the client’s unique needs and values (Wike et al., 2014). It is also unclear if the clients’ experience and values could be fully acknowledged through this “objective” approach (Drisko & Grady, 2019), this is somehow inconsistent with some social work values and principles such as client empowerment. It is also noted that it may not be fully practical in the reality of clinical practice with the heterogeneous populations that social workers serve.

Although these could be the challenges of EBP in social work, some clarifications towards these challenges are also available in the related literature. For example, seeking clients’ informed consent and participation is always mentioned and reiterated by different scholars when conducting relevant research (Grinnell, Gabor, & Unrau, 2012; McNeece & Thyer, 2004; Sackett et al., 2000), therefore, the comment on the ignorance of client values and experience is not fully valid. In addition, Plath (2009) stated the justifications for adoption of EBP in social work, including (1) an ethical responsibility to provide the most beneficial services to clients; (2) to enhance the credibility of the profession; (3) to increase the body of practical, reliable information on interventions; (4) to promote a critical approach to practice; and (5) to support the development of a research culture (pp. 229-230). Taking everything into account, it is argued here that EBP is important for social workers to use their professional values, knowledge and skills in maximizing the likelihood of helping clients to achieve the outcomes they value.

In the case of Hong Kong, Shek, Lam and Tsoi (2004) reviewed a number of published books and journal articles on social work intervention and evaluation in Hong Kong. They pointed out that the adoption of EBP grew at a slow pace as only a few action research and participatory research studies were found in social welfare settings in Hong Kong. Indeed, Shek (2008b) stated that evidence-based social work practice was underdeveloped in Hong Kong. There is also a lack of databases describing and evaluating validated social work programs and interventions in both Hong Kong and the Chinese context. Along the same lines, as discussed in Chapter Three (see Section 3.3.1), it was observed that only a few systematic program evaluations and related evidence were found in local school-based programs. Shek and Yu (2011a) also identified that there were only a few well-documented preventive or positive youth development programs in Hong Kong, as well as the Chinese context. Shek, Chan, Sun and Merrick (2011) recommended that it is essential to carry out more research on Chinese adolescents as “Chinese adolescent psychology and related issues are under-researched” (p.171). As such, there is a call to accumulate more evidence-based research findings on the effectiveness of local psychosocial intervention programs. Based on previous discussion regarding the Project P.A.T.H.S. Project in Chapter Three, Section 3.2.4, most studies on the effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S. mainly focus on pre-post changes or the “immediate” outcomes, there is thus a need to consider if the program effects are sustained over time. Simultaneously, it is important to examine its effectiveness in different populations, as research on populations with economic disadvantage is grossly inadequate. Against this background, this study will examine the effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S indexed by the perceptions of economically disadvantaged participants and their perceived changes after undertaking the program

for several years. There are five basic steps and sequences proposed in the EBP process (Sackett et al., 2000). In the current evaluation study, all these steps were taken into consideration. They are:

- (1) Articulate well-structured and answerable question(s) regarding practice needs
- (2) Track down the best evidence to answer each question
- (3) Critically appraise the evidence for its validity, importance and applicability
- (4) Integrate and apply the results of the appraisal to practice and policy decisions
- (5) Evaluate the outcome and effectiveness and strive for improvement.

To summarize, EBP may succeed in promoting empirical practice in social work services. As suggested by Shek, Chan, Sun and Merrick (2011), there are scarce evidence-based youth prevention and positive youth programs in Asia, this means that many existing youth enhancement programs are not validated and documented thoroughly. To help promote evidence-based youth enhancement programs in the Chinese context, it is believed here that by using both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, the proposed study can provide significant information for practitioners in the field.

## **5.2 Program Evaluation**

### **5.2.1 Conceptualization of program evaluation**

In the fields of education and human services, program evaluation is utilized to evaluate the planning, processes and outcomes (including the effectiveness, efficiency, values, merit and worth) of different programs. During the process of program evaluation, data or information is collected for analysis to address what the



researcher wants to know about a program. To further understand the conceptualization of program evaluation, its historical development is briefly mentioned below.

The origins of evaluation can be traced back to the 1800s. Stufflebeam, Madaus and Kellaghan (2000) systematically reviewed the history and development of program evaluation. They identified and portrayed seven significant time periods in the evolution of program evaluation. First, was the period between 1792 and 1900, which the authors called “The Age of Reform”. Second, was the period from 1900 to 1930 called “The Age of Efficiency and Testing”. Third, was the period from 1930 to 1945 called “The Tylerian Age” as many evaluation scholars often noted the work of Ralph Tyler on the “Eight Year Study” of progressive education (Donaldson & Lipsey, 2006). Fourth, was the period from 1946 to 1957 titled “The Age of Innocence” and fifth was the period from 1958 to 1972 called “The Age of Development. In this period, success in the natural sciences facilitated the development of strong faith in scientific and empirical methods when carrying out program evaluation. Sixth, from 1973 to 1983 was titled “The Age of Professionalization” and finally, the seventh time period, from 1983 to date is called “The Age of Expansion and Integration” (pp.6-17). At the same time, Donaldson and Scriven (2003) suggested that currently the “Second Boom in Evaluation” is in place. In this period, various evaluation professional associations were developed. Different scholarly and professional journals in different disciplines were also launched and published. For example, the Evaluation Practice; Evaluation and Program Planning, Evaluation Review; Evaluation Quarterly; Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis and Evaluation Studies Review Annual (Worthen et al., 1997, p.39). It is observed here that increased professionalism has given rise to standards and

principles of practice in different fields of evaluation during this period. For instance, in the field of educational evaluation, the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994) developed and articulated 30 standards with four key principles, namely utility, propriety, feasibility, and accuracy. From its beginnings in the 1800s, program evaluation has been defined in many ways. Its research has also evolved over the past four decades. All these progressive developments and advancements provided authoritative direction and offered a noteworthy contribution for contemporary studies in program evaluation.

Generally, program evaluation has been defined in two major ways and dimensions. On one hand, questions about program operations and results would be addressed and focused on in the evaluation process. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994) described program evaluation as “the systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object” (p.3). Scriven (1991) defined it as, “judging the worth or merit of something or the product of the process” (p.139). According to Patton (2008), program evaluation is, “the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future program development” (p.39). It is important to have such information on actual program activities, as when those data are presented, “in a fair and balanced way, so that information users and decision makers can make their own judgments about goodness or badness, effectiveness or ineffectiveness” (Patton, 2008, p.544). From this point of view, program evaluation is often defined as a kind of systematic assessment, judgment and examination about the effectiveness and efficiency of the characteristics, products and outcomes of the activities, programs, and policies. In addition, it serves as the logical process of determining the value or

worth of an object (Patton, 2008; Sanders, 1994; Wholey, Harty, & Newcomer, 2004; Woody, 1997). Cronbach et al. (1980) defined program evaluation as an examination “conducted to assist in improving a program and other programs having the same general purpose” (p.14). It was also defined as research activities in a managerial process as an aid for decision making or improving social conditions (Royse, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan, 2006; Sanders, 1994). Rubin and Rubin (2005) echoed this idea and stated that, “the purpose of evaluation research and action research is to discover if programs and policies are working, for whom they are working and what could be improved” (p.9).

Taken from different evaluation theorists, Rallis and Bolland (2004) provided a more complete definition in which program evaluation involved three key concepts: (a) systematic inquiry; (b) judgment of merit, worth, value, or significance; and (c) information for decision making (p.7). These three components can represent the motives for conducting this current study. With a special focus on program participants with economic disadvantage, a more systematic and comprehensive investigation on the positive aspects and development of the poor participants was explored, in which to appraise the long-term effects of the Project P.A.T.H.S.. Ultimately, useful findings are generated with respect to the implementation strategy of local school-based programs in the context of poverty.

### **5.2.2 Approaches of program evaluation**

Regardless of the many different definitions, there are clearly numerous evaluative approaches and models in program evaluation. Indeed, there are various classifications to identify different approaches, models or theories of program evaluation. The way in which an individual or a group defines or classifies program

evaluation and its purpose will greatly affect the method selected for an evaluation (Chen, 1996; Ginsberg, 2001). For instance, the most common distinction is the two major categories of program evaluation, namely formative and summative evaluation. This is the most fundamental classification, which was introduced by Scriven in 1967 (Scriven, 1996). The purpose of formative evaluation is to assess initial and ongoing project activities, to ensure fidelity of implementation. It focuses more on illustrating the program processes and feedback to determine the extent to which the program is progressing and meeting its stated goals (Weiss, 1998). The program developer or decision-makers can further improve and renew the program design or content by using the information provided in formative evaluation (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997), such as pilot testing, interim evaluation and process evaluation of the Project P.A.T.H.S.. It is also a common practice to conduct formative evaluation throughout the course of the program to identify obstacles, barriers, and possible opportunities, in order to adjust and guide the evolution of the program to ensure program effectiveness (Grinnell, Gabor, & Unrau, 2012). Formative evaluation can also help shape and refine data collection activities, which can largely contribute to summative evaluation. Summative evaluation, on the other hand, is used to measure, evaluate and determine the overall effectiveness, quality, worth and influence of an implemented project during or immediately after the implementation of the program (Grinnell, Jr., Gabor, & Unrau, 2012), (e.g., cost-benefit analysis, subjective and objective outcome evaluation of the Project P.A.T.H.S.). The information collected in summative evaluation is often used for accountability purposes. Evaluators usually conduct summative evaluation when summing up what has been achieved at the end of the program, or at appropriate times during the implementation of a continuing or multi-year program.

However, some evaluators argue that the dichotomy suggested by Scriven was not broad enough to encompass all forms of evaluation. For instance, Chan (1996) indicated that this formative-summative dichotomy cannot capture all the basic types of evaluation and would “lead to problems in classifying relevant evaluation activities” (p.123). He further suggested a comprehensive typology for program evaluation, which includes evaluation functions and program stages, the two aspects that were overlooked by Scriven. Based on his views, he further suggested 10 types (4 basic and 6 mixed types) of evaluation. Nevertheless, Scriven (1996) argued that the typology of Chan is redundant since the formative-summative dichotomy sufficiently and effectively accommodates all evaluation functions and program stages. Theoretically, the distinction between the two types of evaluations seems to be clear, yet practically, the researcher of this current study noted that the distinction is blurred in many cases. For instance, in some cases, data gathered from summative evaluations may also serve formative purposes, ultimately resulting in positive changes to the program components (Scriven, 1986). Although formative and summative evaluations have enriched the “conceptual seedbed for the sprouting of many proposed refinements and extensions to the (program evaluation) field” (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p.18), it is argued here that program evaluation can also include other functions like developing programs and empowering program participants, in which these functions were not well-recognized.

Other than the fundamental classification, Alkin and Christie (2004) use a metaphor of a tree to classify and illustrate current theoretical perspectives and approaches (with 26 evaluation theorists) in evaluation. The Evaluation Theory Tree has a trunk built on the dual foundation (the root) of accountability and systematic social inquiry and three primary branches, “methods”, “valuing” and “use”. This

theory stated clearly that the first major branch is methods, it intends to offer results that “deal with obtaining generalizability, or knowledge construction” (*ibid*, p.13). The valuing branch “firmly establishes the vital role of the evaluator in valuing. Those on this branch maintain that placing value on data is perhaps the most essential component of the evaluator’s work” (*ibid*, p.13). For the branch of use, it “focused on an orientation toward evaluation and decision making. In essence, work done by theorists on this branch expresses a concern for the way in which evaluation information will be used and focuses on those who will use the information” (*ibid*, pp.13-14).

In a review of literature on evaluation approaches, Coldwell and Simkins (2011) summarized and distinguished three interrelated aspects of the evaluation, namely what (the evaluation focus), how (methodology for investigation) and who (whose views should be collected and who should participate in evaluation and determine the evaluation outcomes). In effect, current evaluation approaches are expanded and become more integrated comparatively. In educational and human services evaluation, 22 program evaluation models were identified and defined (Stufflebeam, 2000). Patton (1987) used the alphabet as the base for categories and stated that there are 100 ways to focus an evaluation. Later, he summarized that there are three basic types of evaluation, including quantitative evaluation, qualitative evaluation, and utilization-focused evaluation. In addition, Fitzpatrick, Sanders and Worthen (2004) suggested that there are five main approaches to evaluation, including: i) objectives-oriented; ii) management-oriented; iii) consumer-oriented; iv) expertise-oriented; and v) participant-oriented. These evaluation approaches are major directions and strategies that are frequently used, either separately or in some combination. These approaches are outlined as follows.

#### *5.2.2.1 Objectives-oriented approach*

The objectives-oriented approach is the most popular strategy used in different fields. It is one of the earliest accepted evaluation models conceptualized by Ralph Tyler in 1932 (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Later, others have expanded and refined it (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). This approach consists of several steps that apply to both formative and summative evaluation approaches. The major defining feature of this approach is that it focuses on determining the extent to which the stated specifying program goals and objectives have been met. Consequently, this approach is highly suited to the Project P.A.T.H.S. as there are clearly defined objectives. The role of the evaluation is to determine to what extent these objectives have been met.

Although this approach is widely used with high acceptability, some major weaknesses are often cited. For example, Worthen & Sanders (1987) pointed out that this approach and strategy may limit the scope of evaluation and over-emphasize the outcomes. Other critics reflected that the selection of appropriate objectives and goals to evaluate is difficult and is sometimes biased for judging its merit and worth. In addition, it is believed that not all objectives could be easily evaluated in a linear way, and evaluators may credit unworthy objectives or identify unintended program outcomes in the evaluation process. At the same time, the terminal information provided may not be timely and applicable for program improvement (Stufflebeam, Madaus, & Kellaghan, 2000; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985).

#### *5.2.2.2 Management-oriented approach*

The management-oriented approach places much emphasis on providing decision makers with data and information to aid their informed decisions (e.g.,

reallocation of funds) about their programs and products. This strategy is meant to serve decision-makers (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). A well-known management-oriented approach is the CIPP model proposed by Stufflebeam (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1995). Different evaluators, such as Cronbach, Stufflebeam and Alkin set out the limitations of the objective-oriented approach. They respectively suggested a framework using management theory and proposed the management-oriented approach (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Stufflebeam, Madaus, & Kellaghan, 2000). Nevertheless, this strategy has a potential weakness in that the evaluation focus tends to reinforce the status quo of management, rather than all the stakeholders. Thus, the evaluation results may be biased.

#### *5.2.2.3 Consumer-oriented approach*

The consumer-oriented approach uses the market-driven strategy to obtain useful evaluation ideas from the consumer to evaluate (normally summative) the product or program. Customer or consumer satisfaction is a term commonly used in business settings (e.g. marketing.). It is based on the premise that consumer satisfaction is a legitimate indicator of important outcome measures as well as service quality (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001). When applied to social welfare and behavioral health, consumer satisfaction is usually “described as a pragmatic or clinically relevant indicator of the success of social welfare and behavioral health programs” (Fraser & Wu, 2016, p.762). Under consumer-oriented approach, the subjective outcome evaluation or client satisfaction evaluation are popular approaches of evaluation, which are frequently utilized by human service professionals in different fields, including medicine, allied health professions, psychology, education and numerous service industries (Lebow, 1982, 1984; Locker & Dunt, 1978; McMurty &



Hudson, 2000; Shek, 2013). In addition, subjective outcome evaluations are also commonly used in the field of social work (Royse, 2007; Weinbach, 2005). In the context of program evaluation, client satisfaction of a service arises from what an individual experiences in the service. The term satisfaction is:

...usually interpreted as the appeal, acceptability, and approval of a service experience. Sometimes satisfaction includes liking or feeling personally involved in elements of service and contentment with outcomes. The core argument for using satisfaction as an outcome in social welfare and behavioral health is simple and logical: If clients feel satisfied with a program, they are more likely to have been engaged in program activities, to have adhered to program recommendations, and to have experienced program-derived benefits (Fraser & Wu, 2016, p.762).

There are various client satisfaction perspectives or theories explaining the nature and the development of subjective outcome evaluation or client satisfaction evaluation.

According to their review, Yüksel and Yüksel (2001) claimed that some theories:

...posit that consumers judge satisfaction in relation to values and desires (the Value-Percept Theory), whereas others suggest that the standard used is the predictive expectations (the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm), or the experience-based norms (the Comparison Level Theory). Some theorize that satisfaction results from the comparison between consumer inputs and outputs (the Equity Theory), whereas others suggest that satisfaction is the result of the discrepancy between expectations and perceived performance (p.107).

Yet, many of these theories are under the umbrella of the Expectation Disconfirmation Paradigm (Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2013; Isac & Rusu, 2014; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001), and its dominance is undeniable. In the following, the Expectation Disconfirmation Theory is discussed.

### Expectation Disconfirmation Theory

Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) was first advocated by Richard Oliver in 1980 (Oliver, 1997). The major purpose of EDT is to predict clients' satisfaction with a service by comparing service performance to the client's

expectations of the services before accessing it. Four major constructs are used to describe this theory. They are expectations, performance, disconfirmation and satisfaction. According to Oliver (1997), EDT assumes that every consumer or client should have certain expectations before evaluating a service or performance (either being confirmed or disconfirmed). These expectation levels then become a standard against which the product or service is judged. EDT attempts to explain the process through which service users determine their level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction based upon their expectations. Disconfirmation occurs when their satisfaction is below expectation. Specifically, the expectations of the service users are confirmed when a product or service performs as expected. Satisfaction (positive disconfirmation) is known to occur when product or service is better than expected. Conversely, a performance worse than the expected results is dissatisfaction (negative disconfirmation) (Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2013; Erevelles & Leavitt, 1992; Oliver, 1997; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001).

While EDT is the most generally acknowledged conceptualization of the consumer satisfaction concept, there are some observed limitations. One of the major weaknesses of this theory concerns the use of expectation as a standard for measuring satisfaction (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001). For example, it is believed that not every consumer and client would have the same expectations (e.g. unrealistic expectations versus low expectations) when joining a service. In addition, satisfactions varied because of the situational factor (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001). For instance, some clients with high tolerance may be satisfied with the service experience even when the performance falls short of their predicted expectations. Furthermore, every consumer or client is unique. It is believed that each case presented might be different, so that

what worked for client M, might not work for client N. As such, it does not reflect whether the service providers are over- or under-performing.

Although limitations are observed, the conceptualization of consumer satisfaction is still dominated by the paradigm of expectation disconfirmation (Isac & Rusu, 2014). This paradigm has also become the dominant framework employed in the assessment of customer satisfaction (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001). EDT has been used by many researchers in different fields (e.g. health care settings, psychology, social work, hospitality and tourism industry, business and banking sectors) to explain customer or client satisfaction, loyalty and post behavior (Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2013; Oliver, 1997; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001). For example, the theory was frequently used to examine perceived service quality in health care settings to explain patient satisfaction (Gill & White, 2009; Isac & Rusu, 2014).

#### *Client satisfaction assessments*

Existing literature on using client satisfaction assessments (or subjective outcome evaluations) shows that this method has a long history. According to LeVois, Nguyen and Attkisson (1981) and Royse (1985), subjective outcome evaluations or client satisfaction assessments are the consumers' views (by providing firsthand impressions) on the utility of the program structure, quality of service and program, the relevance of the service delivery process and the importance or value of the service outcomes.

Evaluators can use both quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain evaluative information or data and to solicit ideas from clients/consumers, and thus help them identify the merits and worth of the programs, services, or products (Stufflebeam, 2001; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1995). In addition, it can also address

the need for service accountability and quality assurance for funding bodies. Several methodologies such as cross sectional subjective outcome evaluations questionnaires, client satisfaction assessments or longitudinal surveys, focus group and individual interviews are typical and widely used in different evaluation studies, including the context of social work and education programs.

There are three purposes for using client satisfaction surveys (Locker & Dunt, 1978): (1) used as evaluations of quality and effectiveness of services or programs; (2) used as outcome variables; and (3) used as indicators of the aspects of the service that need to be improved. One approach used to conduct subjective outcome evaluations or client satisfaction surveys is structured rating scales. There are a number of well-tested questionnaires and well-validated measures of client satisfaction that can be used in evaluation research to measure the effective outcomes of the program and client satisfaction, especially in the context of medical, health services and psychiatric care (Biering, 2009; Shek, 2013). For instances, the Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire (Holcomb, Adams, Ponder, & Reitz, 1989); the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (Attkisson & Zwick, 1982; Walsh & Lord, 2004); the Client Satisfaction Inventory (McMurtry & Hudson, 2000) and Medical Interview Satisfaction Scale (Lettie et al., 2001). These questionnaires are suitable for collecting large quantities of structured and standardized data, which are largely fixed with standardized and uniform procedures (Royse et al., 2006). They can generate objective and systematic profiles on clients' views and perceptions of the program or the service received. They can also reflect program effectiveness, using the level of client satisfaction. On the other hand, the subjective outcome evaluation is appropriate for when the program has been completed (with the aims to measure immediate impact of training in terms of reaction, learning and satisfaction) or has

been implemented for a substantial period (with the aims to search for evidence that ratifies or confirms the learning experience and impact).

While subjective outcome evaluation is a popular evaluation approach, it has several criticisms (Weinbach, 2005). First, although there are some validated measures of client satisfaction that can be used, there is still a lack of standardized measures of client satisfaction in the evaluation literature (Royse, 2004). Second, satisfaction is the client's judgment and response, thus the assessment is subjective in nature and the evaluation may be biased. Clients or program participants can also draw direct evaluative conclusions about the program, thus the subjective outcome evaluation results may also be biased. Third, this kind of survey is usually carried out at the end of the program. Those who are unhappy with the services may drop out before the completion of the program and it is argued here that those who are willing to stay until the end tend to have higher acceptance and satisfaction of the program. Therefore, this approach tends to yield high levels of client satisfaction or positive bias (Royse, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan, 2006). Fourth, it is argued that the objectivity of the results of client satisfaction evaluation is doubtful as this kind of evaluation easily generates more positive than negative responses (Weinbach, 2005). Fifth, there is a typical misinterpretation that positive client satisfaction refers to effective interventions and quality services (Weinbach, 2005). Indeed, "satisfaction with services and successful intervention are not the same" (Weinbach, 2005, p.38).

While having mentioned potential problems and limitations, many scholars still support the use of an subjective outcome evaluation approach in evaluation because of its low cost and efficiency in obtaining data on service delivery and quality. Regarding the limitation of using validated tools, it is commonly argued that this approach can still yield objective perceptions about program evaluation as long

as valid instruments or scales with high reliability are used and this has been used successfully in other related studies (Royse, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan, 2006). Most importantly, there are studies (as detailed below) showing evidence that subjective outcome evaluation or client satisfaction scores appear to be predictive of behavioral outcomes.

For example, in a study conducted in Australia, Trotter (2008) examined the relationship between caretaker reports of satisfaction, worker ratings of client (caretaker) progress and reports of subsequent maltreatment events. It was concluded that client satisfaction correlates with other outcome measures in child protection (i.e., satisfaction can have concurrent and predictive validity) and its studies may have value beyond simply measuring client satisfaction. In a local experimental study, Shek (2010a) examined the relationship between subjective and objective outcome evaluation. Scales assessing objective outcome (CPYDS) and subjective outcome (CSOS) were used. By examining the views of around 3,300 secondary school students, the results showed that the CSOS total and subscale scores were significantly correlated with posttest CPYDS scores. They also predicted changes in CPYDS scores across time. Shek (2010a) concluded that the findings “clearly refute the common criticism against subjective outcome evaluation that subjective outcome evaluation findings are unrelated to objective outcome evaluation findings. In fact, the present study showed that there is an intimate relationship between these two domains” (p.299). In a replication study examining longitudinal data in Chinese students (N=2,784), Shek (2014) further asserted the close relationship between subjective outcome and objective outcome data. Consistent with his previous study, subjective outcome evaluation measures could significantly predict changes in the objective outcome evaluation measure scores across time. Based on the findings from

different studies, there is enough evidence to support and demonstrate the credibility and trustworthiness of the utilization of subjective outcome evaluation. To diminish the response distortions and biased results, Lebow (1984) suggested using an independent evaluator, reassuring respondents that the subjective outcome evaluation is conducted to evaluate the program not the respondents. In addition, to avoid the limitations concerning the subjective responses, it is suggested to have delayed assessment. Since most client satisfaction evaluation was conducted straight after the completion of the program or service delivery, it is easy to have biased, distorted responses. Delayed assessment could provide a more objective evaluation on the actual perception and satisfaction of the program and service. Although Royse (1985) questioned that “there may be less interest in participating in an evaluation and memories fade over time” (p.5), it is argued here that it is one of the ways to overcome the limitations of subjective outcome evaluation. Concerning the misinterpretation of the results, this limitation reveals the importance of using multiple measures and observations in a single study to gain a clearer picture on both client satisfaction and intervention effectiveness.

With reference to the purposes of using client satisfaction surveys stated earlier (Locker & Dunt, 1978), in order to examine the subjective views and perceptions of poor participants concerning the effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S (as a legitimate indicator of important outcome measures as well as service quality), it seems appropriate to use the subjective outcome evaluation approach in the present study. Royse (2004) stated clearly that “there is much to recommend client satisfaction studies as one means of evaluating a program. Because professionals do not experience the agency in the same way as the clients, it is important to ask clients to share their experiences” (p.265). To play as role as independent evaluator (Lebow,

1984), by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, more comprehensive understanding can be gained by the researcher of this study on the program's effectiveness from the perspective of program participants. Broadly speaking, one advantage is that the researcher of this study can collect an abundance of data within a short time. In addition, evidence shows that the client satisfaction approach can yield useful findings if valid and reliable measures are used (Shek, 2010a, 2014). Several studies using the subjective outcome evaluation approach as stated in the previous chapter, have clearly documented the positive views of the stakeholders of the Project P.A.T.H.S. and the perceived benefits towards the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, which provides support for the effectiveness of the P.A.T.H.S. Project. On the other hand, there are strong evidence that show subjective outcome measures were correlated with objective outcome measures in the Project P.A.T.H.S. (Shek, 2009c, 2010a, 2014; Shek, Lee, Siu, & Ma, 2007), which demonstrated that satisfaction scores appear to be predictive of behavioral outcomes. Furthermore, Shek (2014) stated that the use of subjective outcome evaluation application has wide application in both clinical and non-clinical fields of youth service settings. All these advocate the credibility of using subjective outcome measures in this current study.

#### *5.2.2.4 Expertise-oriented approach*

The expertise-oriented approach depends primarily on using professional expertise to judge the program. The worth of a program is evaluated by experts' judgments (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). For example, a school-based program evaluation might rely on the expertise of school administrators and teachers to judge the program's effectiveness. However, a possible weakness in this approach is that different experts may not make the same judgments and recommendations regarding



the program. At the same time, it can be very expensive to administer. Moreover, the voices of the program users tend to be ignored.

#### *5.2.2.5 Participant-oriented approach*

The participant-oriented approach suggests that all program stakeholders (i.e., participants) should be included in the evaluation process, with an open-ended inquiry. Hence, stakeholders' perspectives become the primary focus in evaluation. With the portrait and analysis of the perception, values, and perspectives of the program participants, evaluators can make judgments about the value or worth of the program (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). A well-known participant-oriented approach is Utilization Focused Evaluation proposed by Michael Patton (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). However, a weakness of this evaluation is that different participants are likely to have diverse standards regarding program worth and effectiveness. It may thus be difficult for evaluators to find common ground and norms.

#### *5.2.2.6 Concluding remarks*

The aforementioned revealed that diverse attempts have been made to classify different approaches of program evaluation, with variations on focus and underpinning rationales. These approaches can therefore be deemed as taking different tracks to the same goals. In addition, Coldwell and Simkins (2011) suggested all evaluators should ask three questions before choosing methods of evaluation: (1) What should be the major attention of the evaluation? (2) How to investigate these features? and (3) Whose opinions and perceptions should count in the process of evaluation? These three questions can guide the researcher to discuss the implications for the current study. For the question relating to “what”, with

reference to the aims and purposes of the present evaluation study in mind, to understand the perceptions of adolescents experiencing poverty on the program effectiveness and their personal changes over time after participating in the Project P.A.T.H.S., the use of a consumer-oriented evaluation approach (adopting subjective outcome evaluation) is appropriate for this study. This kind of evaluation is also appropriate once the program has been completed or implemented for a substantial period.

### **5.2.3 Paradigms (philosophical orientation) of program evaluation**

According to Rubin and Babbie (2008), a paradigm is “a fundamental model or scheme that organizes our view of something” (Rubin & Babbie, 2008, p.43). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggested that a paradigm is a set of basic beliefs or a worldview that guides action. To conduct an evaluation or research, a clearly defined research paradigm is very important as it can help clarify researchers’ own worldviews and positions. In other words, paradigms are lenses for viewing and interpreting significant issues in the evaluation process. A paradigm includes three elements, ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Basically, these three elements are interconnected but constitute different orientations to conceptualizing and conducting research. However, most debate in the field of evaluation concerns the ontology and epistemology of different paradigms as they place different emphasis on different philosophical assumptions. Methodology can only be decided once ontology and epistemology are clearly clarified, as they are the lenses for viewing and interpreting things. At the same time, paradigms frame different evaluation approaches, which in turn can provide frameworks for determining the purposes of evaluation and guiding work. Four paradigms commonly adopted for evaluation

research are positivism, constructivism, pragmatism and transformative (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). To identify the conceptual framework for this current study, trends in program evaluation and three philosophical assumptions in program evaluation were reviewed as follows. Additionally, each paradigm is discussed with respective evaluation approach(es) or model(s). These philosophical orientations can provide structure for examining different worldviews and evaluation theories or models that are functioning in current evaluation fields.

#### *5.2.3.1 Positivism*

The positivist paradigm arose from philosophy known as logical positivism, with the original formulation from Auguste Comte. Positivists hold the ontological belief that the world is deterministic and reality is objective, simple and static, exists out there waiting to be discovered. Positivists place emphasis on empiricism and believe that universal and causal laws can be discovered (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). In addition, these laws can govern and explain the outcomes of human action and behavior, which is based on rigid rules of logic, truth, absolute principles and prediction (Guba, 1990). Under this paradigm, science is seen as a tool of knowledge extraction, which is based on strict rules and procedures. It is deductive and nomothetic in nature. In addition, social research can be regarded as the search for universal laws through empirical observations and scientifically based study using quantitative research methods. Statistical analyses are conducted to test hypotheses or theories about the laws applied to human behavior.

For epistemological belief, positivists perceive that the world is deterministic and operated by causal laws that are discernible. Hence, science itself is largely a mechanical affair under this paradigm. In addition, positivists recognize that

objectivity contributes to avoiding bias; they strive to be objective by limiting their distance or involvement with study targets. According to positivist methodology, positivists believe in empiricism thus, they employ the quantitative approach and deductive reasoning is always used. The key approach of the scientific method is the use of experiments (especially the use of randomized experimental designs) or quasi-experiments in research. The strength of empirical evidence-based data, rigorous procedures and design for value-free and bias-free precise measurements, as well as replication, provides access to a probabilistic pattern so the “universal law of human behavior” can be discovered and confirmed through observing behaviors in external reality (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). An example of this approach is objectives-based evaluation, covered in the previous section.

However, it is impossible to fully perceive “reality” through human being’s finite ability. Indeed, what positivists believe can also be perceived as only “probabilistic” when representing the population or predicting typical patterns of behavior that will happen in certain circumstances. Moreover, the use of quantitative-experimental approaches for evaluation is criticized as methodologically inadequate. For instance, Patton stated that it: “(1) oversimplifies the complexities of real-world experiences; (2) misses major factors of importance that are not easily quantified, and (3) fails to portray a sense of the program and its impact as a ‘whole’ ” (pp.50-51). Therefore, there is a modified adaptation of positivism - post-positivism (Guba, 1990).

Post-positivism can be defined as a compromise between the traditional positivist form of inquiry and the more recent alternative form of inquiry i.e., constructivist approaches (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Ontologically, this paradigm advocates that the world subscribes only to an objective reality, which is imperfectly known but nevertheless measurable. This paradigm assumes that social phenomena,

such as actions and institutions exist in the objective world (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Based on this assumption, researchers can discover lawful and stable relationships between different parts or components of the social world. Post-positivism adopts critical realism (the ontology) for viewing reality. In addition, although post-positivists believe in the existence of reality, it cannot be fully understood. Methodologically, this paradigm is in contrast to positivism because post-positivists realize and accept the limits of positivism and propose conducting research in more natural settings using multiple research methods, as there is more than one way of knowing and conducting research. In addition, they suggest that objective knowledge is sought through replication. The importance of multiple measures and observations are emphasized, with the need to use triangulation to gain a clear picture of what is happening in reality (the basic assumption is that each research method has its biases and limitations). Within the post-positivistic paradigm, the use of quantitative methods prioritizes statistical measures and inferential empirical material, e.g., pre-set questionnaires. Although quantitative methods are typically the dominant research method, qualitative methods are also adopted, which helps to provide supplementary research data, as researchers may find it difficult to capture the subject's whole perspective. It is believed here that qualitative methods can provide access to lived experience through research participants' lens (Padgett, 1998). This not only allows participants to reveal their inner feelings in a more in-depth manner, it also provides additional information that researchers may not have considered. In short, under the post-positivist paradigm, other than relying on deductive logic and generalization of objective data, subjective views or understandings of the empirical world and inter-subjectivity are also accepted (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). This is also a building block to "edifice of knowledge"

that facilitates evaluators to get closer to social reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003).

When discussing the post-positivist paradigm, Alkin and Christie (2004) stated that the first major branch (i.e., methods branch) of the “evaluation tree” is largely based on the assumptions of positivism and post-positivism, which attempts to provide information that can deal with obtaining generalizability or knowledge construction. Evaluation based on this branch is therefore goal-driven. Alkin and Christie (2004) also identified several evaluation theorists in the methods branch, such as Ralph Tyler (well known for his contribution to educational evaluation, proposed the need for specific objectives and good measurements), Donald Campbell (well known for his contribution to the use of experiments and quasi-experiments in determining causal relationships in social research) and William Shadish (well known for his contribution to the use of experimental approaches in evaluation). In addition, Mertens and Wilson (2012) added Donald Kirkpatrick as another contributor to this branch. His four-level training evaluation model is suggested to be situated in the methods branch. It also falls in with the paradigm of positivism and post-positivism, since its application can be thought of as a theory-based approach (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011).

#### *Kirkpatrick's Four-level Evaluation Model*

For more than 60 years, the most popular four-level training evaluation model proposed by Kirkpatrick (1959; 1976; 1996) has been commonly denoted in the literature of organizational training evaluation and effectiveness, especially in business and industry settings (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The four levels of evaluation criteria are reaction (Level I), learning (Level II), behavior (Level III), and

results (Level IV). Kirkpatrick (1959) stated that Level I evaluation can be used for any type of program (i.e., examining client's satisfaction and how people react to a program). Learning criteria (Level II) are measures of learning (i.e., the evaluators want to know what trainees learned during the training process and what new knowledge and skills trainees obtained from the training) and are typically indexed by objective and quantifiable learning outcome measures or indicators. Behavior criteria (Level III) are measures of the extent to which participants change their behavior because of the training or program. It also refers to the transfer of training, which measures how knowledge and skills gained in the training program are applied on the job or in their lives. Results criteria (Level IV) are measures of the final outcome developed from the contribution of training, which can also enhance trainees' productivity and organizational values. This model suggests causal relationships between all four levels, each successive evaluation level is built on information provided in the lower level. It becomes more difficult and complicated as it emphasizes the continuous progress from Level I to Level IV. In other words, if participants like the program (Level 1), then they are more likely to learn (Level 2). When they learn more through training, they are more likely to change their perceptions and behaviors (Level 3). Then, if they change their behaviors, they are more likely to enhance their productivity.

Kirkpatrick's model reveals the importance of training evaluation or development interventions and how to conduct outcome evaluation in a relative systemic way (Shelton & Alliger, 1993). In addition, this model provides straightforward guidelines and reduces the measurement demands for training evaluation, which has made valuable contributions to evaluation. Russ-Eft and Preskill (2001) stated that Kirkpatrick's model offers a concrete starting point as the

first attempt to formalize the notion of various outcomes that should be evaluated for a training program.

However, there are a number of criticisms and limitations observed. For instance, the model is often criticized for being too simple (Holton, 1996; Kaufman & Keller, 1994; Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). It does not consider individual or contextual influences in the evaluation. It also fails to provide information on how the underlying mechanisms facilitate or hinder the achievement of program processes and outcomes (Hamblin, 1974; Holton, 1996; Kaufman, Keller, & Watkin, 1995). In addition, it is argued that the four proposed levels are not arranged in ascending order. For example the model suggests that positive reactions lead to better learning, which would bring greater transfer and subsequently more constructive results. Yet, there are debates that the levels are not totally causally linked but only positively inter-correlated (Brinkerhoff, 1987; Hamblin, 1974; Holton, 1996; Kaufman & Keller, 1994; Kaufman, Keller, & Watkin, 1995). Although limitations are observed, Kirkpatrick's four level model of training evaluation continues to be the most prominent model for outcome evaluation (Arthur et al., 2003; Botek, 2018; Passmore & Velez, 2014).

While Kirkpatrick's model is a standard and classical model in training for business and industry (Brewer, 2010; Kaufman, Keller, & Watkins, 1995), this framework for training evaluation has also been identified as applicable to education evaluations (Boyle & Crosby, 1997, Brewer, 2010) and social work training programs (Carpenter, 2011; Lam, To & Chan, 2018). Indeed, the process involved in this model is quite similar to that of other evaluation approaches. While the four levels could be comprehended as a hierarchical model, Kirkpatrick (1996) notes that his model could be better viewed as a taxonomy. Holton (1996) echoed Kirkpatrick's view and



described this taxonomy as a group of potential evaluation tools that he used to propose an integrative evaluation model that “accounts for the impact of the primary and secondary intervening variables” (p.7). However, there is no obvious progress after this initial step in establishing such an integrative evaluation model. Later, Brewer (2010) transcribed this ideas explaining that it “becomes a decision-making process that takes into account the questions that must be answered and then applies the level or levels from the model that need to be utilized for an effective evaluation” (p.118). Indeed, in reality this model is not a comprehensive program evaluation “model”. However, the advantages of this model are that it provides a useful tool for evaluators, which focuses attention on different levels of evaluation outcomes (Carpenter, 2011) and implies that an organized approach should be concerned with all these levels. One educational example was that Carpenter (2011) employed Kirkpatrick’s model and defined four levels of outcomes for social work education evaluation, including “learners’ reactions to the educational experience; learning, conceptualized mainly as the acquisition of knowledge and skills; behavior change, including the application of learning to the work setting; and results, assessed in relation to intended outcomes” (pp.123-124).

Kirkpatrick’s model is still almost universally used and considered to be the most effective strategy for evaluating organizational training (Brewer, 2010; Carpenter, 2011). This model operates on the presupposition that return on investment is one of the most fundamental aims of training initiatives (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Since the Project P.A.T.H.S. is a PYD training program for youth, and the current study aims to examine the perceived program effectiveness and personal changes that take place in adolescents with economic disadvantage, the perceived educational outcomes are thus highlighted. In addition, Lam, To and Chan

(2018) stated that Kirkpatrick's model is "compatible with the experiential learning theory and reflective learning approach" (p.51). It is observed here that these learning perspectives are most commonly applied in social work programs and particularly in PYD programs. Although Kirkpatrick's model relates to a training paradigm, it is argued here that it is still applicable to the youth work paradigm as it is in the same vein. Therefore, Kirkpatrick's model can be considered as one of the practical models that provides evaluation direction for this study. Clearly, we have to take note of the possible limitations of applying the training model to young people.

#### *5.2.3.2 Constructivism*

Constructivism has the goal of understanding the complex world through the lived experience and point of view of those who live it. The constructivist paradigm aims to explore how objects that populate the world are created and maintained (Phillips & Hardy, 2002), which is in dialectical opposition to the dominant positivist paradigm. Ontologically, realities are not absolute or universal truths, but exist in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions that are socially and experientially based (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Constructivists hold a relativist view that the world is constructed rather than discovered, as meaningful reality is socially constructed and enacted by human beings. It is suggested that everyone can interpret and construct reality based on their experiences and interactions with their environment. Under this paradigm, the importance of language is highlighted, since constructivist epistemology holds that the nature of the social world and knowledge are products of social processes formed by the language system, interactive dialogue and reflection. Constructivist researchers or evaluators believe that searching for meanings and essences of experience are of most importance to understand and construct human

reality. Therefore, the methodology associated with this philosophical orientation comes from the qualitative approach.

By using qualitative (also called interpretative or subjectivistic) and participatory methodology, a detailed, holistic understanding of social reality can be accessed through direct interaction with participants. Qualitative research places emphasis on holistic treatment of phenomena (Schwandt, 1994). Its orientation thus moves away from explaining causality and having presumptions, as in quantitative research that aims to test hypotheses, instead it moves toward personal interpretation and places emphasis more on “understanding”, instead of “prediction”. Therefore, the constructivist rejects the experimental approach, as it is impossible and impractical to understand reality through restrictive quantified measurements and results.

Tutty, Rothery and Grinnell (1996) suggests that the aims of qualitative studies are to explore, interpret and understand the social world, which is closely related to people’s interests, through the rich meanings of their thoughts, beliefs, actions, feelings, experiences, and events. Furthermore, the purpose of qualitative inquiry is subjective; subjectivity is treated as an essential building block of understanding (Stake, 1995). In addition, it involves diverse paths of discovery, aims to understand different views, episodes, situations, actions, and experiences of the people involved and the meanings they provide. In evaluation studies, interviews and observations (both individuals and group) are frequently conducted to collect subjective views and personal feedback from participants. This approach employs an inductive process where themes and categories emerge through the analysis of data.

When discussing the paradigm of constructivism, Alkin and Christie (2004) stated that the second branch of the “evaluation tree” is mainly based in the assumptions of constructivism, i.e., the valuing branch. It focuses primarily on

identifying multiple values and perspectives mainly using qualitative research methods. In addition, Alkin and Christie also (2004) identified several evaluation theorists in this branch. For instance, Michael Scriven other than defining summative and formative evaluation in general, is the leading theorist of the “valuing perspective” and advocates the classic inductive approach - “goal-free evaluation” (Scriven, 1996). Moreover, Scriven suggests that the purpose of evaluation is to determine the program’s merits and worthiness by gathering data through a broad collection of effects. Goal-free evaluation attempts to avoid the risk of studying solely the stated program objectives and thus missing those significant but unexpected results. Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln have specifically contributed to the philosophical, theoretical and methodological perspective of naturalistic approaches to evaluation and the “valuing” branch of evaluation. They later developed the fourth-generation evaluation approach to accommodate the multiple realities that often emerge in relation to social phenomena and Robert Stake contributed through the development of the responsive evaluation approach. This evaluation approach will now be discussed.

Unlike traditional evaluation that is characterized by an emphasis on scientific and quantitative methods, responsive evaluation tends to rely on the qualitative approach to evaluation. Indeed, Stake’s model is also the foundational concept for the development of constructivist orientation in research as well as program evaluation. According to Stake (1973), responsive evaluation assumes value pluralism, which draws attention to the complexity and uncertainty of programs. The evaluator should have a good sense of choosing appropriate evaluation targets and their concerns. In addition, the evaluator should understand and recognize the importance of descriptive data and the judgments made about the program by its

stakeholders, since different stakeholders have different expectations and values. This model is less reliant on formal communication and more dependent on natural communication. Thus, it tends to be exploratory, collects descriptive data, and takes an inductive approach to understanding the world. The views of stakeholders should count in the evaluation. As such, the use of story-telling was recommended by Stake (1973), in order to allow stakeholders to express their “holistic impression, the mood, even the mystery of the experience” (p.12).

#### *5.2.3.3 Pragmatism*

The history of the pragmatic paradigm began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The word pragmatic originates from the Greek word and means “to act”. Similar to the constructivists, pragmatists reject the claim that reality and truth can be predicted and discovered through scientific statistical methods. Howe (1988) posited the use of this paradigm, in that truth is “what works” (p.14). Patton (1990) also advocated this assumption and:

...rejects methodological orthodoxy in favor of methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality. The issue then becomes not whether one has uniformly adhered to prescribed canons of either logical-positivism or phenomenology but whether one has made sensible methods decisions given the purpose of the inquiry, the questions being investigated, and the resources available. The paradigm of choices recognizes that different methods are appropriate for different situations (p.39)

Ontologically, pragmatists believe that there is a reality, however all individuals have their own distinctive interpretations of what it is. As such, the value of evaluation is not because of the discovery of truth but the demonstration that results work concerning the problem studied. Regarding the epistemology, the pragmatist is “free to study what interests you and is of value to you, study it in the different ways that

you deem appropriate, and utilize the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003, p.32). In addition, the pragmatic paradigm is a suggested orientation for mixed methods research. The underlying methodological assumption is that the methods used should fit the purpose of the study (Patton, 2002). Different evaluation researchers adopted this philosophical orientation to guide their choice of mixed methods evaluation studies with particular contexts and stakeholder groups (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003).

Regarding the evaluation tree theory, Alkin and Christie (2004) stated that the third branch (i.e., the use branch) is mainly based on the assumptions of the pragmatic paradigm. Several well-known evaluation theorists were identified in the use branch for instance, Carol Weiss, Joseph Wholey, Michael Patton and Daniel Stufflebeam. In the following, the models of Stufflebeam’s CIPP Evaluation are outlined:

- **Michael Patton’s utilization focused evaluation**

According to Patton (2008), utilization focused evaluation (U-FE) is defined as “the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs for use by specific people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness, and make decisions with regard to what those programs are doing and affecting” (p.14). He suggested a step-by-step, two-page flow chart to show how to conduct the U-FE. It is suggested that U-FE should be people-dependent, judged by the utility and actual or intended uses, by specific program stakeholders. In addition, U-FE is guided by the principles of pragmatism with several key principles (Patton, 2008). First,

stakeholder involvement is essential in the evaluation process. Patton suggested that program evaluation should consider the views of different stakeholders involved, as they are the primary intended users of an evaluation (Patton, 2008, p.72). In addition, it is believed that if intended users have been actively involved, they are more likely to feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings. Second, U-FE is highly personal and situational. There is no particular evaluation theory, model or method advocated in U-FE. The intended users can select the most suitable content, model or method for their own situation. Third, once the evaluator has identified intended users through the “stakeholder analysis”, evaluators should carefully suggest the kind of evaluation, consider how everything is done, design the evaluation and facilitate decision-making by intended users and help interpret the findings. It is believed that U-FE involves a lot of discussions between the evaluator and the intended users throughout the evaluation process. Finally, Patton (2008) emphasized that U-FE can include any evaluative purpose (summative or formative), any kind of evaluation design and data (quantitative or qualitative) and any kind of study focus (i.e., can focus on program design, implementation process, outcome or impact).

- **Stufflebeam’s CIPP model**

The CIPP model is proposed by Daniel Stufflebeam for guiding different types of evaluations (Stufflebeam, 2000, 2003). According to Stufflebeam (2003), the definition of evaluation underlying this model is “the process of delineating, obtaining, providing, and applying descriptive and judgmental information about the merit and worth of some object’s goals, design,

implementation, and outcomes to guide improvement decisions, provide accountability reports, inform institutionalization/dissemination decisions, and improve understanding of the involved phenomena” (p.34). This definition summarizes the fundamentals of the model. This approach to program evaluation emphasizes the particular decisions that a program manager will face. It systematically allows the collection of information and data about program processes and implementation. As previously stated, the CIPP model comes under the management-oriented evaluation approach (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1995). It aims to provide decision makers with data and knowledge needed to make informed and effective decisions (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). Furthermore, it is suggested that “evaluators should collect both descriptive and judgmental information; this requires employment of both qualitative and quantitative methods” (Stufflebeam, 2003, p.34).

CIPP is an acronym based on an evaluation framework for data collection related to four different levels and aspects. These are context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation. Each of these evaluations aids the collection of data for different managerial decisions. All four types of evaluation can be treated as separate forms of evaluation, yet they can also be regarded as parts or stages in a comprehensive evaluation. In evaluating a program, this model allows scrutiny of the needs and goals assessment, inputs, processes and the effects and outcomes of the programs. In 2007, Stufflebeam revised the CIPP checklist developed in 2002, which was “patterned after the CIPP Model, is focused on program evaluations, particularly those aimed at effecting long-



term, sustainable improvements” (Stufflebeam, 2007, p.1). In this checklist, the part on “product evaluation” is divided into four subparts: impact, effectiveness, sustainability, and transportability evaluations.

*(i) Context evaluation – “What needs to be done?”*

For the context evaluation, evaluators examine and evaluate the context of the program and obtain situational data to propose program objectives and make program planning decisions. In this process, needs and goal assessments are conducted. Significantly, it is also designed to determine the extent to which program objectives are aligned with the needs of program participants (Stufflebeam, 2007).

*(ii) Input evaluation – “How should it be done?”*

For the input evaluation, strategies are devised to achieve the desired program goals and results. It helps to make program structure decisions.

*(iii) Process evaluation – “Is it being done?”*

Process evaluation provides information on how the planned program is delivered and what is actually happening in the program. It includes examining and monitoring the implementation quality and performance of a program, identifying shortcomings in the procedural design or in the implementation of the program and enhancing existing intervention protocols. It serves as a continuous quality improvement process in program implementation. Scheirer (1994) suggested that process evaluation can examine the fidelity of program implementation, which can be further promoted through feedback collected during or after implementation. These evaluations provide information for program

personnel to make formative evaluation decisions, in order to modify or improve the program, or to make summative evaluation decisions, in order to evaluate the sustainability and accountability of the program.

(iv) *Product evaluation – “Did it succeed?”*

Product evaluation is the assessment of anticipated program outcomes, which is very helpful in making summative evaluation decisions. Its primary function is “to measure, interpret, and judge the attainments of a program” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfeld, 1985, p.176). This outcome evaluation mainly focuses on results in terms of program worth and effectiveness. It scrutinizes and measures the general and specific outcomes of the program and the extent to which they meet the needs of those being served, e.g., to conduct a retrospective cost effectiveness assessment. In order to assess a fuller and more complete set of outcomes, Stufflebeam & Shinkfeld (1985) suggested that a combination of strategies should be conducted. This also helps validate different data and findings. In addition, Stufflebeam (2007) stated that product evaluation can be divided into four subparts including impact, effectiveness, sustainability and transportability, which ask four questions: Were the right beneficiaries reached? Were their needs met? Were the gains for the beneficiaries sustained? Did the processes that produced the gains prove transportable and adaptable for effective use in other settings?

Having discussed the four components of the model, the CIPP model tends to come under the umbrella of formative evaluation as it runs while one program is in progress. However, the literature revealed that there is a large extent of flexibility

here as the model can be summative in nature as well (Brewer, 2010; Tan et al., 2010). When evaluators look back on completed programs, they can collect and sum up the value meaning of relevant information and mainly focus on “accountability” in the evaluation process. This matches the direction of the current study as it aims to evaluate and examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project P.A.T.H.S.. In addition, the CIPP model can be applied to both short-term and long-term evaluation and is useful for all evaluations, including formative and summative (Stufflebeam, 2002, 2003, 2007). As such, the CIPP model was found to be widely used and adaptable in many contexts including the fields of business, management, social work and education. In particular, this evaluation model has been used in many educational programs (Zhang et al., 2009). In the education context, Stufflebeam defined educational evaluation as the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives. Other than improving a program, program evaluation can serve as a way to judge the worth of a program (Stufflebeam, 2007).

Based on the above discussion, the CIPP Model is comprehensive and useful for helping evaluators to generate and focus on very important evaluation questions and issues and to consider different types or stages of evaluation (Brewer, 2010). In addition, the exploratory questions (especially the “how” and “why” questions) generated in the four components allow evaluators to gain suitable feedback. Therefore, considering the research aims of this current study, the researcher found that this CIPP model was one of the most comprehensive and practical models in evaluation theory/research. Even though the researcher is not the decision maker in the project, the proposed study is expected to provide important information regarding the long-term perceived effects and continuing impact of this program, in

which to facilitate improvement in future development of the Project or similar education programs aimed at poor youth. Yet, there are disadvantages associated with the CIPP model. Particularly, the evaluation process is time consuming and can be very costly (Tan et al., 2010).

#### **5.2.4 Implications for this current study**

As mentioned in Section 5.2.2, Coldwell and Simkins (2011) suggested all evaluators should ask three questions before choosing methods of evaluation: (1) What should be the major attention of the evaluation? (2) How to investigate these features? and (3) Whose opinions and perceptions should count in the process of evaluation? These three questions can guide the researcher to discuss the implications for the current study.

##### *5.2.4.1 Evaluation study adopting the consumer-oriented evaluation approach*

For the question relating to “what”, having considered and discussed the evaluation focus and target of this current study in previous chapters, it is closely aligned to the purposes of the consumer-oriented evaluation approach (detailed in Section 5.2.2.3). As indicated in Chapter Four, adolescents experiencing poverty are those who are growing up without opportunity for a voice (Marshall, 2003). Therefore, it is expected that their perceptions and inner voices should be further understood when evaluating the perceived outcomes and effectiveness of the P.A.T.H.S. Project. With such specific nature and goals of the present evaluation study in mind, a study adopting subjective outcome evaluation (the overall reactions and satisfaction, perceived long-term impacts and perceived changes of program participants of the Project P.A.T.H.S.) was explicitly targeted to evaluate and

examine the perceptions of program participants (with economic disadvantages) undertaking the Project P.A.T.H.S.

In the evaluation literature, it is understood that the use of quantitative studies (especially the use of randomized control studies and longitudinal studies) are the most ideal for evaluation studies. However, since this is not the focus of the study this is why the researcher did not adopt a strategy to evaluate the impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S. on poor youth. Indeed, existing literature on using subjective outcome evaluations shows that this method has a long history, which could help draw direct evaluative conclusions of the program from the perspective of the clients. Thyer (2002) suggested that examining the subjective outcome is very useful in outcome evaluation, therefore it should not be regarded as a second-class endeavor. Similarly, Royse, Thyer, Padgett and Logan (2006) also claimed that a subjective outcome evaluation approach can yield objective perceptions about program evaluation as long as valid instruments with high reliability are used. As such, the researcher of this study used well validated scales for subjective outcome evaluation. In addition, the use of qualitative evaluation (e.g., individual interviews and focus group) is also common in the field of subjective outcome evaluation. Therefore, conducting subjective outcome evaluation could also be regarded as scientific and valid in current evaluation.

In this current study, a delayed subjective outcome evaluation was proposed (not only measuring the impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in terms of reaction, learning and satisfaction, but also searching for evidence that confirms the learning experience and perceived impact and changes). Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed accordingly, with the aim of looking for perceived program effects at a delayed point in time and participant changes after joining the program. In

other words, the evaluation focuses on both “program assessment” and “individual assessment”.

#### *5.2.4.2 Identification of primary stakeholders in this current study*

As advocated in the utilization-focused evaluation paradigm, it is significant to involve the stakeholders in the evaluation process. Regarding the question on “whose opinions should be collected”, since every stakeholder in the Project P.A.T.H.S. is independent with their own thinking, free will, beliefs, life goals and resources, the characteristics of different groups can vary. With the aim of examining the perceived program effects of the program participants in terms of economic disadvantage and to understand how the program may help them in real life, it is essential to identify this specific group of program recipients as primary stakeholders, i.e., they are the group of people whose interests are ‘at stake’. Hence, their involvement is also essential in the evaluation process of this current study.

#### *5.2.4.3 Philosophical orientation of the proposed evaluative study*

The researcher in this current study understands that there is debate concerning traditional and contemporary, quantitative and qualitative evaluation approaches in terms of ontology, epistemology and methodology. It can be seen here that the history and paradigms of evaluation demonstrate a wide range of perspectives regarding who should participate in the process and determine its outcomes, with or without collaboration with program participants, in which the role and involvement of the evaluators as well as stakeholders varies. Therefore, it is argued here that evaluation methodology should only be decided when ontology and epistemology are clearly posited. Based on the review in this chapter, this current study adopted post-

positivism as the evaluation paradigm. As mentioned previously, post-positivists accept there cannot be full objectivity and adopt a critical realist stance to perceive reality. To strike a balance between “intersubjectivity” and “objectivity”, they also propose conducting research in more naturalistic settings and using more qualitative methods in research (the emphasis is on critical multiplism). Therefore, it is common to see post-positivist evaluators using and combining components of different research methods (both quantitative and qualitative) in their evaluation studies, with the aim to enhance reliability and viability of their program evaluations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Subsequently, post-positivists focus on critical multiplism and suggest practicing the multi-methods approach, which can help them to obtain a broader and deeper understanding of the issue. As such, multiple methods including both quantitative and qualitative measures are proposed in this current study to extend and reinforce certain kinds of data and interpretations and to acquire in-depth understanding of the issues under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). In addition to the fulfillment of post-positivistic criteria, this approach can also serve as a form of triangulation and a means of validation (Ammenwerth & Mansmann, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

As aforementioned, in the post-positivistic paradigm, the approach of triangulation is frequently adopted. Denzin (1978) defined triangulation as “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (p.291). Similarly, when applied to evaluation, Ammenwerth and Mansmann (2003) stated that: “Triangulation in evaluation in general means the multiple employment of sources of data, observers, methods, or theories, in investigations of the same phenomenon” (p.239). In other words, when different methodologies are involved and utilized in a study, it is believed that biases and inaccuracies in any single type of

investigation can be negated, or even exposed. Furthermore, it is believed that using multiple methods in triangulation can complement data through additional information and improve confidence in research findings, with the advantage of both validation and completeness (Greene & McClintock, 1985).

Three different types of triangulation are outlined (Denzin, 1978) and used to ensure the validity of data collection and the associated interpretations. All the following types of triangulation can be applied in parallel. They are (1) data source triangulation; (2) researcher triangulation; and (3) method triangulation (pp.294-307). Data source triangulation involves different types of information or data (either qualitative or quantitative data, or both) to address research questions. For example, if the researcher wants to evaluate the effectiveness of a positive youth program for student participants with economic disadvantage, they should collect evaluative data from them at different points in time or in different schools. In program evaluation, it is expected that triangulation of different data can facilitate further validation on the effects due to program intervention processes. Researcher triangulation involves more than one researcher in the research process (e.g., in data collection or analysis). This is good practice in program evaluation as it is believed that any possible researcher bias will be minimized. At the same time, it ensures some degree of reliability. Methods triangulation is the most discussed type of triangulation and according to Ammenwerth, Iller and Mansmann (2003), “methods triangulation is seen as the most often used triangulation approach” (p.239). It involves using a number of different methods in research, such as combining qualitative methods (e.g., focus group discussions, individual interviews and participant observations) and quantitative methods (e.g., self-administered questionnaires) in a single study. In doing so, it can improve external validity. In short, these three kinds of triangulation have arisen as



important means in the evaluation literature, with the purpose of validating research findings. In the literature concerning Project P.A.T.H.S., these three types of triangulation will be carried out respectively. For instance, different methods in the evaluation process will be employed, such as objective outcome evaluation, subjective outcome evaluation, process evaluation and interim evaluation.

Moreover, in this current evaluation study, triangulation through multiple measures is necessary, as it can help capture the complexities of any sort of intervention. Therefore, corresponding with the basic beliefs of post-positivism, this current study will employ the idea of methodological triangulation to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Three different research methods will be applied, including a self-administered questionnaire, individual interviews and repertory grid test. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods provides a broader and reinforcing perspective for the study results. Poor participants' subjective views on the program effects over time, their changes after joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. and why they had such perceptions will also be examined thoroughly in this current study, using multiple evaluation research methods.

#### *5.2.4.4 Toward a conceptual framework adapting the integrated evaluation model*

The question on “how” asks what evaluative model works best under particular circumstances; however, there is no absolute answer. Stake (2002) explains that there are many different ways to evaluate educational programs, each with their problems:

...no one way is the right way. Some highly recommended evaluation procedures do not yield a full description, nor a view of the merits and shortcomings of the program being evaluated. Some procedures ignore pervasive questions that should be raised whenever educational programs are evaluated...Some evaluation procedures are insensitive to the uniqueness of the local conditions. Some are insensitive to the quality of the learning

climate provided. Each way of evaluating leaves some things de-emphasized (p.346)

Based on the review of evaluation models documented above, nevertheless each aforesaid evaluative method or approach has its own characteristics and is beneficial in certain aspects. For instance, U-FE is “done for and with specific intended primary users for specific, intended uses” (Patton, 2008, p.37). It can therefore be one of the frameworks for this current study in order to prepare tools to evaluate the effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S., and to involve program participants with economic disadvantages (specific group of program stakeholders). The responsive evaluation approach “is an alternative...based on what people do naturally to evaluate things, they observe and react” (Stake, 1975, p.14). This is also a feasible approach for evaluation in this current study especially for strengthening the accountability to stakeholders and understanding the program effects of Project P.A.T.H.S., in light of its strengths and inadequacies. Therefore, the choice of which models to employ largely depended upon the requirement of the situation and the type of information the researcher wanted to obtain. Based on the review of the literature describing the various models of program evaluation in this chapter, with reference to the current study’s purpose and the fulfillment of post-positivistic criteria, the researcher posited that the CIPP model and Kirkpatrick’s model can serve as guiding frameworks for this subjective outcome evaluation study (details are discussed in the next section). As stated earlier, by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, a more comprehensive understanding can be gained on the program’s effectiveness from the perspective of program participants.

### **5.3 Conceptual Framework of the Study – An Integrated Evaluation**

#### **Framework**

#### **5.3.1 Combining Kirkpatrick’s model and Stufflebeam’s CIPP model as a guiding framework to conduct the subjective outcome evaluation**

Regarding the chosen Kirkpatrick’s model and Stufflebeam’s CIPP model, although these two models are general evaluation models, they both demonstrate as popular and primary models for program evaluation in the evaluation literature. For example, with reference to a study conducted by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), Kirkpatrick’s model is still recognized as the most commonly used evaluation framework among Benchmarking Forum Companies (Bassi & Cheney, 1997). In another survey, more than 90% of organizations in the US agreed to use Kirkpatrick’s model for training evaluation (Galagan, 2011). For the CIPP model, it is still extensively used today (Mertens & Wilson, 2012; Zhang et al., 2009; Warju, 2016). In addition, both models were found to be adaptable in many contexts including the fields of business, management, social work and education. Besides, numerous quantitative (e.g., randomized control study, quasi-experimental studies and longitudinal studies) evaluation studies have used, built on or incorporated these two evaluation models. Moreover, the two models are in line with the major scientific evaluation models, e.g., CIPP is keyed to professionally developed standards for sound evaluations—notably the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (2011) Program Evaluation Standards.

#### **Integration of the two models**

In the previous sections, we understand that the Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model and CIPP model can be considered as practical models that provides

evaluation direction for this study. However, it is noteworthy that both models display some potential limitations, which may not be fully adequate for the current study. For Kirkpatrick's model, other than the limitations discussed in the previous section, it was criticized for its incapability to connect the training or program to programmatic outcomes (Holton, 1996). Although this 4-level model helps evaluate the behavioral outcomes of participants, this framework solely focuses on the "how", which could not explicitly provide information on "why" a program is effective or ineffective. For the current study, exploring the "why" is crucial, therefore we have to explore the "process" factor instead of merely looking at the outcomes. Simultaneously, to understand the experience and voices of disadvantaged adolescents, we have to consider the "contextual" factor as well to have a clearer picture of why the outcomes are reached. For the CIPP model, its thoroughness could be regarded as its major limitation. Theoretically, the CIPP model is comprehensive and idealistic, but "the equity provided to all stakeholder groups, together with the requirement of input from them, means that the process of evaluation can be slow, costly and complex" (Tan et al., 2010, p.7). This may be a constraint for the current study

It is argued that there is no best method for conducting an evaluation, but we need to find the most appropriate one (Brewer, 2010; Holton, 1996; Kaufman & Keller, 1999; Mertens & Wilson, 2012). By combining Kirkpatrick's and the CIPP model, the proposed integrative evaluation model could take advantage of both evaluation models, which can enhance the conceptual flexibility, and manage the limitations of both models. For example, the key strength of the Kirkpatrick evaluation approach is the focus on behavioral outcomes of the learners involved in the training program. By incorporating the "context" and "process" evaluation of the

CIPP, this integrative model could help provide causal linkages between P.A.T.H.S programs and the programmatic outcomes. It could thus address the major drawback of the Kirkpatrick's model by providing causal linkages between P.A.T.H.S. activities and program outcomes in the specific group of adolescents.

In terms of identifying the program's outcome and effectiveness over time, other than obtaining a clear understanding of the worth and success of the Project, the researcher was also interested in exploring if the project held true to its mission. In this regard, the four-stage CIPP model used in this study could provide direction to evaluate the Project P.A.T.H.S.. In particular, the question: "Did the program succeed in the poor group?" can be addressed through product evaluation using the CIPP model (Stufflebeam, 2002; 2003; 2007). At the same time, Kirkpatrick's successive 4-level evaluation model (Kirkpatrick, 1976; 1986; 2006) is useful especially for determining the immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes (regarding their "learning", "behavior" and "results") of the poor program participants and the effectiveness of the program over time. Indeed, the four subparts of Stufflebeam's product evaluation (2007) have similar purposes. The "Impact" and "Effectiveness" components can be translated to help investigate the perceived effects and benefits of the Project P.A.T.H.S. progressively. The "Sustainability" and "Transportability" components can be interpreted to examine the perceived changes in the poor adolescents. These four subparts in CIPP product evaluation are highly consistent with the four levels proposed by Kirkpatrick. The integration of these two models could give clearer direction (e.g., follow the sequential nature of the Kirkpatrick model) to gain a fuller picture of the product evaluation in this study. While the CIPP model provides the overriding procedural direction for the evaluation study analysis on the Project P.A.T.H.S., the Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation focuses more

on the perception and changes of the participants which could embed within the CIPP Product evaluation. The proposed integration is outlined as follows:

- (1) The “reaction” in Kirkpatrick’s model evaluates similar elements as “impact” does in the CIPP model. They both evaluate program participants’ interests, impressions, feelings and satisfaction about the program and its implementers. It is the basic measure of client satisfaction. To measure the “reaction” and “impact” components in a more systematic way, the 3 “Ps” (Processes, Programs and People) were adopted as major evaluation domains in this evaluation. Details of the 3 “Ps” are discussed in Section 5.3.2.
- (2) The “learning” in Kirkpatrick’s and “effectiveness” in the CIPP product model examine the learning effects and influences that Project P.A.T.H.S. brought to the participants.
- (3) The “behavior” in Kirkpatrick’s and “transportability” in the CIPP product model study the changes of participants after participation in the Project. They both refer to the transfer of training, which measures how knowledge and skills learned from the program are applied in daily life. As stated in Chapter Three, Section 3.2, the Project P.A.T.H.S. adopted 15 PYD constructs, which were identified in 25 successful programs in the United States of America (Catalano et al., 2004). Shek and Siu (2007) further assembled these 15 PYD constructs into 7 “C”s (Confidence, Character, Connection, Competence, Compassion, Caring and Contribution) as the main indicators of adolescent growth. In particular, the five socio-emotional competency-constructs (5 “C”s, Confidence, Character, Connection, Competence and Compassion) are desired outcomes for youth and

considered universal in adolescent personal psychosocial development (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). In this current study, the outcome of the product evaluation of the integrated evaluation model, including personal qualities, perceived benefits and perceived changes among the poor adolescents were categorized based on the 7C framework.

- (4) The “results” in Kirkpatrick’s and “sustainability” in the CIPP product model both help measure if the ultimate changes of the participants occurred because of the program and if those changes are good enough to be sustained over time. In addition, to examine if the Project was the major reason for the perceived changes, the 3 “Ps” (**P**rocesses, **P**rograms and **P**eople factors) were adopted as major evaluation criteria in this part of the evaluation. Details of the 3 “Ps” are discussed in Section 5.3.2.

Another reason for combining the two models is that since the researcher was also interested in knowing more about the perceptions and voices of the specific groups of adolescents on the program implementation process; by only employing Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model and emphasizing the four assessment measures on the outcomes, this research aim would only be partly achieved. One way to achieve this and garner a fuller picture of the project was through “process evaluation” coupled with “product evaluation”, with reference to the CIPP model. According to Stufflebeam (2001; 2002; 2007), the CIPP model can be used as a whole or in sections. In other words, the components in the model can stand alone on their own merit. In this current study, the proposed process evaluation is not formative in nature as the Project P.A.T.H.S. had already concluded. Yet, it is important to understand the perceived process and implementation of the program, in particular how participants perceive the

effectiveness of the program content and the quality of the program implementers. Hence, the researcher of this current study defines the above evaluation as “process evaluation”, in which it is a supplement of “product evaluation”.

Other than incorporating the CIPP model (particularly “product evaluation”) and Kirkpatrick’s model as the outcome evaluation framework, the CIPP also guided the planning and implementation of this current study. In particular, the use of the four components of CIPP helped the researcher in this current study to focus on important evaluation questions and issues. In addition, the four components of CIPP were useful for assisting and guiding the researcher’s thoughts during different research stages. For instance, when identifying the research questions and designing appropriate research methods, context and input evaluations were conducted. For instance, the CIPP model was utilized to formulate the individual interview guide for the qualitative evaluation.

Indeed, the discussion in Chapters Two, Three and Four applied the context evaluation component of the model, which reflected the needs and goal assessments of this current study. The researcher attempted to discover the research objectives of this study and asked the question, “What needs to be done in this study?”. In the process of the literature review, the researcher compiled background information, identified the adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage as the target population and developed understanding of what needed to be done. The input evaluation helped the current study to address the identified needs. This component was aligned with the context component in this current study. Thus, the input evaluation provided information about the extent to which the research strategies were aligned with the goals determined in the first component. In the process, the



question “How should it be done?” was repeatedly asked. To address the research questions, different strategies were devised, with the process described in Chapter Six.

To conclude, this study represents the initial use of an integrative evaluation framework as a strategy to evaluate the post-program effects of PYD intervention. In the whole evaluation, Kirkpatrick’s 4-level model helped evaluate the behavioral outcomes of the poor participants through a systematic path, and the CIPP framework compensated its incapability to connect the training or program to programmatic outcomes (Holton, 1996) by exploring the “process” and “contextual” factors instead of merely looking at the outcomes. The CIPP model also helped examine “why” the P.A.T.H.S. program is effective or ineffective.

Although this integrative evaluation model cannot specify what assessment techniques should be used to measure the perceived outcomes at each stage or level (as the two models of evaluation are generic in nature, they are neither theoretical nor critical enough), its framework provides direction to examine and analyze both the progress and outcomes of the poor adolescents, as well as the process and products of the P.A.T.H.S. Project, which made the evaluation more comprehensive. This study is thus the first local attempt to propose and include an integrative evaluation framework in subjective outcome evaluation of a youth enhancement program, which provides some pointers to the research design in program evaluation.

### **5.3.2 Factors influencing the perceived program effects of disadvantaged adolescents in the outcome evaluation**

To ensure the study is more focused, three major factors (**People**, **Program** and **Process**) that influence the perceived program effects of disadvantaged adolescents were focused on.

### *5.3.2.1 Factors contributing to the products of the program*

In Western literature, it is not difficult to find numerous studies and reviews on the evaluation of school-based youth programs. Evidence in these evaluation studies shows that there are several contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of program implementation in schools. For instance, Nation et al. (2003) identified nine factors or principles that were associated with success and effective prevention programs. These were: comprehensive programs, diverse teaching methodologies, with sufficient dosage, theory driven, positive relationships with program implementers, properly timed, socio-culturally relevant, conducted outcome evaluation, and involved well-trained staff. In a review on drug abuse prevention programs in school settings, Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco and Hansen (2003) stated the importance of teacher enthusiasm when implementing a program. In another systematic review on 11 published and evaluated school-based HIV/AIDS risk reduction programs for youth in Africa, Gallant and Maticka-Tyndale (2004) suggested that longer duration of program implementation and better diversity of activities were key elements to successful program implementation. In addition, in their review of the principles of effective family interventions, Kumpfer and Alvarado (2003) identified three effective prevention approaches with 13 principles of effectiveness. For instance, principles included comprehensive multi-component interventions, holistic coverage, increased dosage or intensity, early intervention in the life cycle, use of interactive skills training methods, development of collaborative processes, and attributes and ability of the trainers (e.g., personal efficacy and confidence, affective characteristics of genuineness, warmth, humor, empathy, and ability to structure sessions) (p.465). Among these principles, Kumpfer and Alvarado (2003) advocated that there are close relationships between the characteristics of

program implementers and program effectiveness. In Hong Kong, with reference to the theory of invitational education, Shek and Ma (2008c) and Shek and Sun (2009c) used the 5Ps (**P**rograms, **P**eople, **P**olicies, **P**rocesses and **P**laces) in their cross-case analyses, as essential factors that influence the quality of program implementation of the Project P.A.T.H.S. There were different combinations of personal, contextual and environmental factors related to program effectiveness. Along this line, the researcher concludes that these five factors consist of most elements affecting the program implementation as described above.

#### *5.3.2.2 Five Ps in invitational education*

The concept of invitational education (IE) was first introduced by Purkey in 1978 (Purkey, 1978; Purkey & Novak, 1996). It aims to “promote a total school climate that is welcoming, a place that intentionally energizes people to understand and appreciate their individual and collective potential” (Steyn, 2006, p.17). In other words, this approach serves to make and empower the entire school environment and schooling process with a more humanistic-based, pleasing and successful experience for both students and educators.

Regarding the nature of humans and human potential, with reference to a student-centered approach to the teaching-learning process, IE consists of four main interrelated value-based concepts as core teaching elements. They include trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality (Purkey, 1992; Purkey & Stanley, 1991). Purkey (1992) clearly stated that these elements help educators to improve classroom interactions and student learning, and thus create a positive education environment. In addition to the four elements, with the purpose of providing a framework for better school development, five key aspects were identified in which IE has to be applied

i.e., the 5Ps: **P**rograms, **P**eople, **P**olicies, **P**rocesses and **P**laces (Purkey & Novak, 1996). These 5Ps exist in every school environment; they are a combination of elements that can be deliberately cultivated and upheld, in order to develop and facilitate a humanistic school environment and invite the realization of human potential.

This 5Ps framework is frequently adopted in various literature and research as an evaluative framework to assess invitational practices in schools and determine the degree of effectiveness of related programs (Purkey & Novak, 1996; Purkey & Siegel, 2003; Smith, 2005; Smith & Bernard, 2004). Among these 5Ps, the factor “People” (includes both students and educators) is the most significant, although all parts of a school are vital to its operation (Purkey & Novak, 1996). With particular reference to the implementation of the PYD program, the details of the 5Ps are described as follows:

**(i) People:**

This factor refers to all students and educators involved in the PYD program. It is believed that teachers’ conduct and students’ reception are reciprocal. In particular, the quality of school staff (e.g., school principals, leading administrative staff and frontline program implementers) are essential. In their recent discussion, Durlak, Weissberg and Pachan (2010) concluded that educators could bring obvious and significant improvement to students’ academic performance and personal growth through the implementation of school programs. At the same time, they are the ones who create and maintain the invitational climate, facilitate program delivery through good quality and contribute to the program’s success. For teachers, Fagan and Mihalic (2003)

stated that those who are more enthusiastic in teaching and likely to create a positive classroom atmosphere can effectively raise students' learning interests and motivation. Correspondingly, several case studies stated that those program implementers who are student-centered, responsible and passionate about implementing the program are important contributing characteristics for PYD program implementation (Lee, 2008a; Shek & Sun, 2008c). On the other hand, students are also an important component. Their participation and involvement can largely influence the implementation of the program. At the same time, their perceptions towards the program also contribute or hamper program quality.

## **(ii) Programs**

This factor refers to the nature of school programs. For the PYD program implemented in Hong Kong, this factor concerns the program's design and ready-made materials and curricula. The program should meet interests and fit the developmental needs of program participants. Moreover, Shek and Sun (2008c) indicated that a good program should be evidence-based; developed with strong theoretical underpinnings, well-designed; provide comprehensive coverage, regularly employing diverse and attractive activities and should not be tedious.

## **(iii) Places**

This factor refers to the environment in schools. Creating a pleasant physical environment and warm school atmosphere is a major way to facilitate better feelings and improvement. For the physical environment, Eccles and Gootman (2002) listed a number of physical features that helped students' learning and

development, such as surroundings characterized with physical and psychological security, bestowing students with freedom, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, support for efficacy, and opportunities for skills building.

#### **(iv) Policies**

This refers mainly to school policy, which is critical for shaping the spirit and morale of the school (Purkey & Stanley, 1991). When implementing school-based programs in both Western and Chinese contexts, schools that have clear goals and direction in the program implementation, clear manpower deployment, integrate the program into the school's formal curriculum, (Shek, Chak & Chan, 2009; Shek & Sun, 2008c) and emphasize program fidelity are found to have better program implementation (Fagan & Mihalic, 2003; Shek & Sun, 2008c).

#### **(v) Processes**

When implementing the PYD program, process refers to the manner in which the other "P's" are conducted, as well as the learning atmosphere created (Purkey & Novak, 1996). Experiences show that successful in-class programs are interactive and supportive in nature. According to Shek and Sun (2008c), the vitality of interactive and flexible teaching strategies (such as encouraging students to speak, recognizing positive behavior and self-disclosures) contribute to program success as these features largely facilitate the implementation quality of the PYD program.

### *5.3.2.3 Adopting “Processes”, “Programs” and “People” factors as major evaluation criteria in “Process” and “Product” evaluation*

Considering the specific research objectives of this current evaluation study, they aim to observe poor students’ perceived effectiveness of the program from a long-term perspective and to understand the perceived benefits of the program over time, as such “**Processes**”, “**Programs**” and “**People**” factors were adopted as the major evaluation criteria in this process and product evaluation (the CIPP model). It is believed that the success of program implementation needs the presence of both “software” and “hardware”. Among the chosen 3Ps factors, the “**Program**” factor is the hardware whereas the “**People**” factor is the “software”. As stated in Chapter Four, Section 4.2.4, a positive effect from service use on the developmental outcomes of poor adolescents was observed (Cauce et al., 2003). At the same time, research shows that school social capital (teachers’ support) is a stronger predictor of psychosocial development that fosters the positive development of youth in poverty (Ngai et al., 2012). Hence, it is important to further examine how the “**Program**” and the “**People**” contribute to multiple facets of the implementation. To ensure the study was more concentrated, even though the factors of “**Policy**” and “**Place**” do facilitate the PYD program implementation and contribute to the program’s success (Lee, 2008a; Shek & Sun, 2008c), these aspects were not the main focus of this current study, since these two aspects are mainly related to school settings and school administrators (e.g., the principals and senior management) rather than poor students (the subjects of this current study). It is clear that the participants in this current study did not have direct involvement in these two aspects when they participated in the program and thus they did not have strong significance in these areas.

In this current study, “Program” refers to and/or is associated with 1) the content of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs of the Project P.A.T.H.S.; 2) the implementation of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs; 3), the perceived effectiveness of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs and 4) the perceived Program’s relevancy to economically disadvantaged participants. For the dimension “People”, it includes evaluation of the program implementers and disadvantaged participants’ self-appraisals. For the evaluation of program implementers, their performance and attributes (including professional knowledge, attitudes and implementation skills) were scrutinized. For the self-appraisal of participants, factors included their socio-economic backgrounds, family backgrounds, learning motivation, prospects of having positive development, level of active participation, their personalities, perceived personal change, and perceived self-identity were also explored. Concerning the “Processes”, participants’ perceptions of the implementation of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs and the perceived program effects were explored. This refers to 1) relationships among instructors and participants; 2) the learning atmosphere; 3) overall experiences and perceived benefits regarding their participation in this program; and 4) overall perceived reactions of their peers and themselves.

### **5.3.3 Concluding remarks**

This current study presents an evaluation and adopts the subjective outcome evaluation approach. To address the research questions, two major evaluation foci are emphasized and investigated, these are (1) the perceived effects and benefits of the Project P.A.T.H.S. over time from the perspective of poor youth; and (2) the perceived personal changes of the participants experiencing poverty after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.. To examine these, Kirkpatrick’s model of evaluation and



Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation model were adapted as the guiding framework. This study mainly focused on outcome evaluation with an emphasis on the "long-term effects". Although there is no detailed exploration on other components of the CIPP model, on the other hand, those components (e.g., "context" and "inputs") guided the design of the interview schedule for the individual interviews to capture the whole picture on the program's effectiveness). At the same time, a conceptual structure based on the 3 "P"s (**P**rocesses, **P**rogram and **P**eople) and 7 "C"s (**C**onfidence, **C**haracter, **C**onnection, **C**ompetence, **C**aring, **C**ontribution and **C**ompassion) were used to understand the perceived effects and factors that facilitated the program implementation and influenced the perceived benefits and changes in connection with the integrated evaluation framework.

## **5.4 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, literature related to the following areas was reviewed and discussed: i) The significance of EBP; ii) The essentials of program evaluation, including its definition, paradigms, approaches and models; iii) The use of combined Kirkpatrick and CIPP models as the conceptual framework in this current study, and iv) Factors to be examined in this evaluation study. All of the above contribute to contextual understanding in this current study.

## **Chapter Six: Conceptual and Methodological Issues and Research Questions**

Chapters Two and Three reviewed the approaches on adolescent development and school-based youth enhancement programs in Hong Kong. Here, it was found that timely and effective intervention is crucial to the development of adolescents. In Chapter Four, a review on child poverty and its impact on adolescent development was conducted with reference to the worsening poverty situation in Hong Kong. Against the above background, this chapter first discusses the conceptual and methodological gaps in the related literature before the research questions are articulated and presented.

### **6.1 Conceptual Gaps**

#### **6.1.1 Unclear impact of universal PYD program on adolescents experiencing poverty**

In addition to the reviews in Chapters Two, Three and Four, it is argued here that the promotion of PYD program can be one of the initiatives to address the “non-financial” problems of youth poverty and promote positive psychosocial development. Theoretically, since the PYD approach emphasizes nurturing and building one’s strengths and competence, adolescents experiencing poverty could be provided with opportunities for growth and to build protective factors, which in turn promotes their resilience and capability, neutralizes the stigma of labeling, and facilitates them to cope with family stress. In other words, poor adolescents can have their own potential and competence to change the course of their psycho-social development. Some

evaluation studies showed that PYD programs could foster both internal and external developmental assets of low-income youth (Forrest-Bank, Nicotera, Bassett, & Ferrarone, 2016; Lewis et al., 2016; Norton & Watt, 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013).

From different reviews on the PYD approach and related studies across Western and Eastern societies, clearly many PYD interventions are effective in reducing the problems of drug use (Bond et al., 2005; Shek, 2005a, 2007), problem behaviors (Kumpfer & Alvarado, 2003; Pittman et al., 2003; Shek & Yu, 2011b; Sun & Shek, 2010), depressive symptoms (Bond et al., 2005) or school violence (Bonell et al., 2015; Fagan & Mihalic, 2003). As noted in Chapter Four, there is evidence from different Western PYD programs that young people with low SES did benefit from these interventions (Forrest-Bank, Nicotera, Bassett, & Ferrarone, 2016; Hawkins et al., 1999; Lewis et al., 2016; Norton & Watt, 2014; Taylor et al., 2017; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). However, the impact of PYD programs on adolescents experiencing poverty in the Chinese context is uncertain.

Since the Project P.A.T.H.S. is a universal PYD program in Hong Kong with firm and positive evidence that it is beneficial for the constructive development of adolescents in general, it is reasonable to assume that the Project P.A.T.H.S. may benefit the development of disadvantaged adolescents. Indeed, the Project P.A.T.H.S. has been regarded as a response to poverty (Commission on Poverty, 2006). It is believed that after participating in the program, poor participants would in turn be empowered and lifted from poverty. With such background, the researcher of this study is interested in knowing if the universal youth program also benefits this

specific population and if there any program impact differences between adolescents with and without economic disadvantage. How do economically disadvantaged youth perceive their changes after completing the program and do they also benefit from the program as those without economic disadvantage? Therefore, an investigation into how the Project differentially influences adolescents from various social economic backgrounds is timely. It is also worthy to examine if the Project P.A.T.H.S. (PYD program) is effective in promoting positive developmental trajectories across diverse populations. To fill the mentioned research gap, this study aimed to examine the perceived impact and changes of adolescents experiencing poverty.

#### **6.1.2 Unclear perceived impact about PYD program at a delayed point in time in the scientific literature**

As mentioned in Chapter Three, since most evaluation studies concerning the Project P.A.T.H.S. were conducted when participants were still joining the Project, the effects after the completion of the program are not yet fully investigated. In Western literature, follow-up studies (especially longitudinal studies) were commonly conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of different youth prevention programs. For example, research shows that Mexican adolescents who participated in the *Cuídate* program (a sexual risk reduction program) were more likely to be older at first intercourse (Villarruel, Zhou, Gallegos, & Ronis, 2010). In their discussion, Botvin, Baker, Filazzola and Botvin (1990) stated that the school-based prevention program was able to reduce the risk of alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse among youth across the United States of America. Another follow-up study examined adult participants

who joined the youth development program. Statistically significant findings were obtained and indicated that participation in a youth development program positively influenced participants' adult outcomes (Meltzer et al., 2006). In addition, 82 school-based PYD programs were analyzed in a recent meta-analysis conducted by Taylor and colleagues (2017). Positive follow-up outcomes were observed in participants, for example, enhancement in social-emotional skills and psychological well-being. From the existing literature, there is a call to document the continuing impact and effectiveness of the PYD programs in the Chinese contexts, with the aim to enhance the generalizability of the worth of PYD programs.

Concerning Hong Kong, among the published studies of the Project P.A.T.H.S., although evidence exists for longitudinal follow-up evaluation of the program (Shek & Ma, 2012a; Shek & Yu, 2012b, 2013), the subjective views of program participants were not fully examined after the completion of the 3-year program. Therefore, investigation of the continuing program effects should not be ignored (i.e., assessment of client satisfaction, perceived program effects and perceived self-changes at a delay time point from the perspective of the participants). It is worth noting the perceived program effects of the Project P.A.T.H.S. over time because it allows access to the generalizability and sustainability of the program effects across time. Essentially, to enhance knowledge in this area, a delayed subjective outcome evaluation study focusing on disadvantaged participants is required for the Project P.A.T.H.S.. It is believed here that additional subjective outcome evaluation could complement and extend existing longitudinal research of the Project. In short, to fill the research gap relating to the unclear perceived impact of PYD program at a

delayed point in time in the scientific literature, this study aimed to examine the perceived impact of the PYD program beyond two years using the subjective outcome evaluation approach.

### **6.1.3 Unclear if disadvantaged youth would apply what they have learned in the PYD program**

Specifically, the voices and views of participants on how they apply their learned skills after the completion of the Project and how the Project has changed them are under researched. Therefore, it is argued here that more subjective outcome evaluation studies at a delayed point in time are needed. Since the local poor participants have unique growing experiences and psychosocial developmental status, it is meaningful to understand if the Project P.A.T.H.S. could help particularly poor adolescents in real life contexts. For example, it is worthy to explore if the project could facilitate poor participants to cultivate their internal and external developmental asset qualities (Lerner & Benson, 2003) by obtaining social-emotional competencies (the 7“C”s Confidence, Character, Connection, Competence, Caring, Contribution and Compassion). As such, more questions would be asked such as: how do they perceive the program benefits and effectiveness, especially in terms of their psychological development? Did the economically disadvantaged youth apply what they learned in the PYD programs? How are they transferring any acquired knowledge and skills to real-life contexts? Therefore, further investigation on these unanswered questions and the understudied area is needed. As we are unclear about whether disadvantaged youth would apply what they have learned in the PYD

program, to fill this research gap, this study thus aimed to investigate how disadvantaged youth applied what they have learned in the PYD program.

#### **6.1.4 Few studies explore the perceived changes in self-identity of adolescents experiencing poverty**

As discussed in Chapter Four, from a variety of research studies across Eastern and Western societies, it is reported that adolescents who occupy a low socio-economic class are more at risk in their development (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Conger et al., 2008; Duncan, 1997; Glick & White, 2003; Ho, Li, & Chan, 2015; Lichter, 1997; Marshall, 2003; McLoyd, 1998; McLoyd et al., 2009; Shek, 2008a; Tsang, 2012). In particular, low SES and related experiences negatively affect the self-identity of young people, which leads to despair. Many poor adolescents exhibited a decline in personal aspiration throughout adolescence. Studies have also found that individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to be victimized as compared to individuals with high self-esteem (Egan & Perry, 1998). Therefore, the enhancement of self-esteem among the disadvantaged program participants may serve as a protective factor against victimization and stigmatization.

While numerous studies have explored the relationship between effects of poverty and the influence on adolescents' self-identity, surprisingly, only a few studies have touched upon the perceived changes in self-identity of adolescents experiencing poverty. Regarding the PYD literature, although there is evidence supporting the notion that economically disadvantaged youth could benefit from different PYD programs and interventions (Forrest-Bank, Nicotera, Bassett, & Ferrarone, 2016; Hawkins et al., 1999; Lewis et al., 2016; Norton & Watt, 2014;

Taylor et al., 2017; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013), surprisingly, there are few studies documenting the perceived changes in participants concerning their self-identity. As such, it is significant to look at how participants perceived changes in their self-identity system after joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. for three years. To fill this research gap, this study aimed to examine the perceived changes in self-identity of adolescents experiencing poverty after joining the program.

#### **6.1.5 Few studies used the integrative evaluation model to examine the post-program impact**

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, from a variety of research studies across Eastern and Western societies, it is reported that many PYD interventions are effective in strengthening and nurturing youths' potential as a means to eliminate the likelihood of problematic behaviors and to promote healthy wellbeing. As evidence accumulates that many interventions work, the issue of how they work becomes significant for exploration. As discussed in Chapter Five, there is no best method for conducting an outcome evaluation, nevertheless evaluators need to find the most appropriate one. Therefore, we should ask what evaluative model works best in particular circumstances. Stake (2002) stated that there are many different approaches to evaluate educational programs, but each has limitations. As such, it is argued here that evaluators could combine different evaluation models to enhance conceptual flexibility and manage the limitations of the chosen models. Unfortunately, research concerning the use of integrative evaluation models to examine post-program impact is scarce. The current study thus aimed to utilize an integrative model of evaluation to



examine post-program impact to fill the research gap and represent the initial use of an integrative evaluation model as a strategy.

## **6.2 Methodological Gaps**

### **6.2.1 Lack of studies examining post-(PYD) program impact using multiple evaluation strategies in a single study**

As discussed in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.1), one limitation of local school-based programs (except the Project P.A.T.H.S.) is that single-method evaluation relying on quantitative data was used for most evaluation studies. Other than employing quantitative methodologies, Skara and Sussman (2003) suggested using qualitative methodologies in program evaluation, with the aim of further identifying factors related to intervention effectiveness or ineffectiveness. Therefore, there is a call for multiple or mixed-method type evaluations, to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to expand the scope and extensiveness of related studies (based on the assumption that the weaknesses of any one method would be compensated by the strengths of another method). Therefore, a combination of several methodologies was employed in this current study to fill the research gap. Detailed discussion on these methodologies is presented in Chapter Seven.

### **6.2.2 Few systematic evaluations in the Chinese context**

It is observed here that most existing studies on PYD or youth enhancement programs are based on Western populations. Thus, there is a lack of indigenous systematic evaluation that could enhance understanding of the post-program impact

and effectiveness of local youth enhancement programs. Furthermore, when compared to Western studies, there are fewer evaluation studies (examining the post-program impact of youth programs) in the Chinese context, especially in local social work or education settings. Since Chinese adolescents constitute around one fifth of the world's youth population, there is a call to recruit more Chinese adolescents to facilitate investigation of the effectiveness of local psychosocial intervention programs to enrich the database of literature in the Chinese context. This study thus aimed to fill this research gap by recruiting a Chinese sample in Hong Kong.

### **6.2.3 Limited research concerning adolescents experiencing poverty in the**

#### **Chinese context**

While the researcher of this current study searched for related local studies on poverty for reference, an appalling set of results was found. In light of the seriousness of the poverty situation in Hong Kong, as well as the impact of poverty precipitated in child and adolescent development, a large amount of related research in Hong Kong was naively expected. Surprisingly, the number of poverty-related studies on adolescent development is extremely low, compared with Western literature. In January 2018 for the period 1980-2017, the search terms “adolescence” and “poverty or poor” were applied in three different databases (Sociological Abstracts, PsycINFO and Social Sciences Citation Index). The results showed 6,247, 5,313 and 540 citations respectively. Meanwhile, when searching for studies in the Chinese context using the search terms “adolescence”, “poverty or poor” and “Chinese”, the number of citations decreased to 647, 79 and 5 respectively. These search results clearly

indicate that existing research is predominantly conducted in the West. Yet, only a few studies have hitherto explored the poverty of adolescents in Hong Kong. Shek (2011) also clearly stated that research on poverty and related issues in Chinese society is grossly inadequate. As a result, more research is required to develop better understanding of the life paths of poor adolescents (although there may be difficulties in recruiting the targeted population). Indeed, the need to further enrich the related databases in Hong Kong, as well as the Chinese context, is timely.

#### **6.2.4 Few subjective outcome evaluation studies used a delayed time frame**

Concerning the initial phase in the 5-year longitudinal study on the objective outcome evaluation of the Project P.A.T.H.S., although the multi-wave longitudinal data based on a randomized group trial evidenced that participants in the experimental schools had better development and lower risk behaviors than those in the control schools, what the students learned and how they applied this learning in their lives were not explored. Indeed, in what ways does the learning in the Project have implications on their lives? “How” (exploration on the understanding of the participants) and “Why” (explanations on their beliefs and behavior) questions clearly cannot be answered through a quantitative longitudinal study. Simultaneously, most long-term evaluation or longitudinal studies focus more on objective outcome evaluation, thus there is a need to conduct more subjective outcome evaluation to listen to the voices of program participants, as their subjective views and inner voices were not thoroughly examined. Specifically, their views on how the Project strengthened and changed them were understudied.

Sustainability is increasingly important to program evaluators, funders and program implementers. Thus, it is timely to understand what “happens after the initial funding for new programs expires” (Scheirer, 2005, p.320). Indeed, an effective program should examine immediate, short-term and long-term effects for its participants as it is important to know if the programs implemented are beneficial for them over time. It is also significant to understand participants’ perceptions following completion of the program after a period of time. Regrettably, nearly all youth programs in Hong Kong (except the Project P.A.T.H.S.) overlooked evidence on delayed effects and the long-term impact of the programs. Thus, the researcher in this study will pay more attention to the delayed evaluation of the PYD school-based programs, using different evaluation methods.

Evaluating post-program effects requires further data collection to examine whether the programs and benefits of the implementation continue. For instance, in a comprehensive review conducted by Hansen (1992) it was identified that while 63% of school-based adolescent drug prevention programs in the United States of America demonstrated positive outcomes, 26% were categorized as “neutral” and 11% of the programs even produced harmful outcomes for adolescents. Another example here is smoking prevention programs, while a number of follow-up studies indicated that the programs could prevent or delay the onset of smoking in adolescents, there was evidence that the effects of these prevention programs tend to decay over time (Resnicow & Botvin, 1993). In another review, Skara and Sussman (2003) indicated that “although the initial effectiveness of psychosocial strategies programming in preventing smoking and other drug abuse among adolescents has been well

established through literature reviews and meta-analyses, much less evidence exists for the long-term follow-up success of these interventions” (p.451). Evidently, much evaluation research in the field has reported the short-term or initial effects of different psychosocial development programs for youth. Although there are longitudinal evaluation studies that focus on objective outcomes, however, delayed evaluation of programs examining continuing subjective outcome evaluation are few in the field. Comprehension on the application of what they learnt over time is also under investigated.

Among the published studies related to program evaluation, the Project P.A.T.H.S. has successfully demonstrated positive program effectiveness through firm evidence. Yet, it is infrequent to find subjective outcome evaluation studies using a delayed time frame. While having firm evidence on the Project’s effectiveness and objective outcome from the longitudinal studies, there is a need to further understand whether the Project P.A.T.H.S. sustained long-term positive outcomes by investigating the perceptions and inner voices of participants. It is therefore worthy to conduct a delayed assessment to evaluate client satisfaction for adolescents, as relatively little is known concerning the program effects among underprivileged populations. The assessment of client satisfaction over time based on the perspectives of poor participants could provide a more detailed picture on the generalizability and sustainability of the program effects across time.

In addition, subjective outcome evaluations of program participants at a delayed point in time in the following areas are rarely examined and articulated. These areas include (i) subjective evaluation on the program and instructors at a delayed point in

time after completion of the Project, (ii) subjective evaluation on the perceived benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the Project, (iii) the perceived changes of program participants and (iv) the views on how program participants would apply their learning to real-life situations. Since it is important to value the views and voices of participants in the implementation of adolescent development programs (Cruz, 2004), the researcher takes this into account when examining the previously mentioned understudied areas.

#### **6.2.5 Most subjective outcome evaluation studies used a single methodology**

In the evaluation literature, many studies only used a single method, either quantitative or qualitative to conduct program evaluation. Since each method has inherent strengths and weaknesses, it is unwise to rely upon a single method for evaluating programs. With specific reference to subjective outcome evaluation, although different methodologies such as cross-sectional subjective outcome evaluation questionnaires, client satisfaction assessments or longitudinal surveys, focus groups and individual interviews are widely used in different evaluation studies, most research typically applied a single research method to assess client satisfaction and reactions. It is argued here that using a single method may not provide all the required data. Whereas, the use of mixed methods benefits from the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative methods, which can reduce the drawbacks of using a single method. Therefore, more studies should address this limitation by using multiple methodologies in client satisfaction evaluation.

### **6.2.6 Concluding remarks on the research gaps**

Table 6.1 summarizes the weaknesses and limitations of the conceptual and methodological issues discussed in this section.

## **6.3 Research Questions of this Study**

In the vein of a PYD approach (detailed in Chapter Two, Section 2.3) and the rationale of the Project P.A.T.H.S. (detailed in Chapter Three, Section 3.3), this study will focus on (1) the delayed outcome evaluation of the Project P.A.T.H.S. and (2) the positive development of disadvantaged youth by employing a strength-based perspective, instead of a deficiency paradigm. Emphasis will thus be on identifying the strengths, protective factors and positive identity change for poor adolescents. The focus of this study is expressed in the central research question, as set out below.

### **6.3.1 Central research question of this current study**

Based on the preceding discussion, the main goal of this current study was to examine the perceptions of program participants (with economic disadvantage) on the Project P.A.T.H.S. regarding the program and its effects. The central research question is:

*What are the perceived program effectiveness and personal changes that take place in adolescents with economic disadvantage who have participated in the 3-year PYD program in Hong Kong?*

### **6.3.2 Specific research questions**

The central research question was sub-divided into five specific research questions as set out below. These are aligned with the proposed conceptual framework and methodology.

#### **Process evaluation (on the “perceived process”)**

1. What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the program and instructors at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?
2. What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the perceived benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?

#### **Product evaluation**

3. How do participants apply what they learned in the program to real life?
4. What are the changes in participants after completion of the project?
5. What factors affected the changes in participants?

Although it is observed that the research questions were general in nature, the richness and fruitfulness of adolescents’ sharing should exceed the simplicity of the research questions and offer a fuller understanding of their learning experiences and the impacts they had undergone. By addressing the conceptual and methodological



gaps in this study, the researcher expects to contribute to the PYD literature and explore ways to help disadvantaged youth.

**Table 6.1: Weakness and Limitations of the Conceptual and Methodological Issues**

| <b>Weaknesses and limitations of the literature and previous research</b>                                     |
|---|
| <b><i>Conceptual gaps</i></b>   |
| 1. Unclear impact of universal PYD programs on adolescents experiencing poverty                               |
| 2. Unclear perceived impact about PYD programs at a delayed time point in the scientific literature           |
| 3. Unclear about whether disadvantaged youth would apply what they have learned in the PYD program            |
| 4. Few studies look at the perceived changes in self-identity of adolescents experiencing poverty             |
| 5. Few studies used integrative evaluation model to examine post-program impact                               |
| <b><i>Methodological gaps</i></b>   |
| 1. Lack of studies examining post-(PYD) program impact using multiple evaluation strategies in a single study |
| 2. Few systematic evaluations in Chinese context  |
| 3. Limited research in adolescents experiencing poverty in Chinese context                                    |
| 4. Few subjective outcome evaluation studies used a delayed time frame  |
| 5. Most subjective outcome evaluation studies used a single methodology                                       |

## **Chapter Seven: Research Methodology and Design of the Study**

This chapter describes the research methods and design in this current study; these were set to correspond with the research objectives and research questions mentioned in the previous chapters. The research paradigm in this current study is presented first. Then three main research approaches and strategies for evaluation studies including, quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches are presented. Since this research will undertake a mixed quantitative and qualitative design comprising three evaluation components, the details of the design are also outlined.

### **7.1 Research Paradigm Considerations**

As stated in Chapter Five, Section 5.2.3, this current study adopted post-positivism as the research paradigm. The philosophical orientation was also introduced in Chapter Five. It is believed here that the post-positivist paradigm provides a consistent philosophical framework to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative research in a natural setting. This could serve as the foundation for the researcher in the current study to proceed through the research process. In addition, using a mixed-method design could complement and extend current research findings from the Project P.A.T.H.S. through methodological triangulation.

### **7.2 Research Methods in Evaluation Research**

In empirical evaluation research, two main methods are typically used. These are qualitative and quantitative research methods (Friedman & Wyatt, 1997). In the following, the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and

qualitative approaches are briefly summarized. In addition, the use of mixed-methods in evaluation research is also outlined and discussed.

### **7.2.1 Quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches for evaluation research**

Quantitative (also called objectivistic or positivistic) methodological approaches are embedded in positivism and have been the leading methodology in various research projects, especially evaluation research. Creswell (1994) explained that quantitative research is “based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true” (p.2). This approach also applies to social science inquiry (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The primary aim of quantitative methods is to discover correlations, explanations, representativeness, clarifications and predictions of phenomena through precise and rigorous statistical procedures and measurements (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Specifically, generalization and commitment to objectivity are the strengths of the quantitative research approach. Complex behaviors can be divided into measurable variables, and their correlations and inter-correlations tested empirically, with hypotheses. Research conducted in the field of social sciences has traditionally adopted this approach.

Yet comparatively, in the field of social work, the qualitative approach for research or evaluation methods is dominant. For example, the researcher in this current study used the word “qualitative” to search the database of Social Services Abstracts from 1970 – 2018 and found 415,454 records, while there were only 13,919 results for the search using the word “quantitative”. This shows that there are

more qualitative than quantitative social services studies. This observation echoes the discussion of Franklin and Jordan (1995) that social work practice has long been affected by the tradition of qualitative research.

As discussed in Chapter Five, Section 5.2.3.2, qualitative research places emphasis on the holistic treatment of phenomena (Schwandt, 1994). Indeed, qualitative methods can provide access to lived experience through the eyes of participants (Padgett, 1998, 2016). It explores relationships within a culture, system or social context, and attempts to study different phenomena in a more natural way (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.5), qualitative research “involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. In general, the qualitative approach views the whole phenomenon as complex. It employs an inductive process where themes and categories emerge through the analysis of data. Data are controlled through the “human instrument” instead of using different inventories or questionnaires (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). In evaluation studies, interviews and observations (both individual and group) are typically conducted to collect subjective views and personal feedback from participants.

Although within the post-positivist paradigm quantitative methods are the dominant research method, qualitative methods are also adopted to provide supplementary research data. Correspondingly, post-positivists hold the belief that this paradigm fits both qualitative and quantitative methods. Therefore, post-positivists also propose using more qualitative methods in research and evaluation. Indeed, qualitative studies offer several advantages. First, is the opportunity to collect in-depth data, which may not be available from experimental or survey research.

Second, there is opportunity to fully understand the complexities of real life situations, feelings, experiences and thoughts of participants. Third, it has strength through flexibility, in-depth analysis, and the potential to observe different aspects of a social situation (Babbie, 1986). Fourth, by developing and utilizing questions, the researcher can obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the participants beliefs, attitudes, or conditions. Fifth, as interaction between the researcher and participants is emphasized to provide meaning to particular phenomenon, this shows the strength of this method, which can allow full contextual descriptions of meanings and offer rich understanding of social phenomena and human behavior (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

However, qualitative research methods are also criticized in terms of their weaknesses. Since they are mainly based on unique and personal experiences of participants, it is difficult to generalize the results and findings are not replicable. As such, qualitative findings provide little reassurance to researchers (Sells, Smith, & Sprenkle, 1995). In addition, the validity and reliability of qualitative data are always questionable when compared with empirical statistical methods (Babbie, 1986; Creswell, 1994; Moon, Dillon, & Sprenkle, 1991; Reichardt & Rallis, 1994).

As this current study examines the perceptions of poor student participants towards the PYD program, it observes and examines personal change in participants experiencing economic disadvantage. To a certain extent, although participants' change could be measured using well-tested quantitative tools, the process of change may be overlooked as there is complexity in human behavior as well as the social context. At the same time, different variables influence personal change and perceptions. However, it is impossible for a researcher to pre-define all possible variables involved in the change process. Also, subjective experiences, voices,

personal feelings, emotions of participants, and relationships not included in the study and the interpreted meanings of the “human instrument” could be ignored or go unnoticed when using only a quantitative approach. As such, it fails to capture the whole picture of the complexity of phenomena or understand multi-causality. The oversimplification of reality is another weakness, as it is not easy to generalize the results to individual cases among different contexts (e.g., the poor youth population). In addition, the law-like nature in natural sciences may not be easily applied to dynamic human behavior and social phenomena. It seems that the limitations of using a quantitative approach to examine subjects’ change and perceptions reveals the strengths of using qualitative research and evaluation methods.

### **7.2.2 The mixed-methods research approach – combination of quantitative and qualitative methods**

In a thorough literature review on research methods for social work, Peile (1988) argued that both quantitative and qualitative approaches provide a partial view of reality and truth. In addition, as there are strengths and limitations of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the idea of combining these two approaches within a study is suggested by different theorists to offset their weaknesses (Clark, 1998; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Peile, 1988; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Although some “purist” researchers argue that these two approaches should not be mixed as their paradigms are incompatible (Guba & Lincoln, 1998), there is a rising trend for integrating evaluation data collected from both qualitative and quantitative methods (Patton, 1997, 2002). Popularity of the mixed methods approach has grown in recent years (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). It is now recognized as the third major research

approach, along with qualitative and quantitative research. “Mixed methods research as the third research paradigm can also help bridge the schism between quantitative and qualitative research” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.15). This approach thus attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints from both qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). Under the paradigm of post-positivism, the current study endorses critical multiplism, in which methodological pluralism is advocated. Through the method of triangulation (by combining quantitative and qualitative methods and data), most biases, errors and limitations of single research method should be canceled out.

There has been expansion in using this approach in program evaluation in the field of education and social services (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Padgett, 2016). Indeed, the major purpose of the mixed-methods approach is to expand the scope and extensiveness of studies, which can produce a “many sided kaleidoscope and a picture of the subject under study” (Flick, 1992, p.180). Patton (2002) stated that “qualitative and quantitative data can be fruitfully combined to elucidate complementary aspects of the same phenomena” (p.558). In this respect, the mixed-methods approach can be seen as a type of methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003; Turner, Cardinal, & Burton, 2017). The inclusion of different evaluation methods can help triangulate the findings (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; Denscombe, 1998; Shenton, 2004). It aims to strengthen and enhance the validity of results, by using multiple research methods as strategies to investigate the same phenomenon or research problem (Denzin, 1978). Indeed, the Project P.A.T.H.S. has employed different evaluation strategies and the integration of the evaluation findings from different methods successfully revealed



the positive nature and effectiveness of the Project. It is believed that the continuing accumulation of evaluation findings related to the Project, we would further understand its effectiveness and impact.

Creswell (1994) proposed that there are three design models for mixed-methods research based on the sequence and status of the approaches used. The first model is the “two-phase design” or sequential study, in which a quantitative phase of study is first conducted then a qualitative phase follows, or vice versa. The two phases are conducted separately. The second model is called the “dominant-less dominant design”, in which there is a combination of one dominant research approach with a smaller component of the other approach. The third model is the mix-methodology design. In this current study, the third model is adopted in which a mix of approaches (both quantitative and qualitative) are used equally (the “equivalent status designs”) to understand the phenomenon. It is expected that with such a combination, the mix-methodology approach can help the researcher in this current study to address more types of questions than in a single research method study. This also concurs with the suggestion of Sechrest and Sidani (1995) in that “methodological pluralism is an absolutely necessary strategy in the face of overwhelming cognitive limitations and biases inherent in human mental processing and responding” (p.80).

Therefore, in line with the basic assumptions of post-positivism, the idea of triangulation was employed in this evaluation research. The major premise of triangulation is that all research methods have inherent biases and limitations. Thus, only using one method will inevitably yield biased and limited results. For this current study, a mixed-methods research approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods, with the equivalent status design, combined the strengths of both

methods to corroborate each another. As stated by Greene, Caracell and Graham (1989), this “triangulation argument requires that the two or more methods be intentionally used to assess the same conceptual phenomenon, be therefore implemented simultaneously, and, to preserve their counteracting biases, also be implemented independently” (p.256).

### **7.3 Research Design, Data Collection and Methods of Analysis in this Current Study**

With reference to the use of an integrative evaluation model discussed in Chapter Five, this study was conducted using a parallel mixed-methods design, with emphasis on both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods. It adopted a post-positivist research paradigm to evaluate the impact of a local PYD program on the understudied population of economically disadvantaged adolescents. This research design also enhanced the study’s conceptual and methodological flexibility. Most importantly, the use of a mixed-methods approach provided good methodological triangulation of data (Turner, Cardinal, & Burton, 2017). It consisted of three different evaluation components, including individual in-depth interviews, the repertory grid test and a questionnaire. Evaluation data from these three aspects were thus collected.

#### **7.3.1 Participants and sampling**

In this current study, the major research targets are those from an economically disadvantaged population. The terms and constructs “poor youth”, “economically disadvantaged youth” and “youth in poverty” in this study are interchangeably used to describe the same population. Due to limited resources and

the specific nature of the participants, purposive sampling was carried out to select cases experiencing poverty. Patton (2002) suggests that the power of purposive sampling is rooted in the selection of cases with rich information. In the sampling process, the researcher deliberately contacted schools located in the districts with large poor populations and higher poverty rates, based on a report on Hong Kong's poverty situation (HKSAR, 2013). Consequently, no school located in Hong Kong Island was selected as the proportion of poor families was relatively lower than that of the whole territory. Table 7.1 below shows the profile of the eight schools.

Table 7.1 Profile of the Eight Schools

|    | School | Region | District of school       | No. of questionnaires received (excluding interviewees) | No. of interviews conducted | Total no. of participants |
|----|--------|--------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | A      | NT     | Yuen Long                | 0   | 4                           | 4                         |
| 2. | B      | NT     | Sheung Shui (North)      | 159   | 5                           | 164                       |
| 3. | C      | KLN    | Sham Shui Po             | 115   | 6                           | 121                       |
| 4. | D      | N.T.   | Tuen Mun                 | 86  | 1                           | 87                        |
| 5. | E      | KLN    | Kowloon City             | 140   | 2                           | 142                       |
| 6. | F      | NT     | Tseung Kwan O (Sai Kung) | 0   | 1                           | 1                         |
| 7. | G      | KLN    | Wong Tai Sin             | 41  | 6                           | 47                        |
| 8. | H      | NT     | Shatin                   | 0   | 6                           | 6                         |
|    |        |        |                          | 541   | 31                          | 572                       |

As can be seen in Table 7.1 above, a total of 31 secondary 5 (S5) students from eight schools (from eight different districts in Kowloon and New Territories) were successfully recruited. Sampling was based on two major predetermined criteria, including (1) sampling students who were in S5 in the 2014-2015 school year who had participated in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in the past years; (2) students with economic disadvantage. Concerning the second criterion, this study defined students with economic disadvantage as those whose family's

financial condition met one of the following criteria: (a) current recipient of CSSA or (b) current recipient of STA, i.e., they were children from low-income families. The use of eligibility criteria for assistance schemes or particular welfare programs that involve means-testing is common in poverty research to identify targeted participants. Although some of the actual targeted population may be excluded due to their refusal of welfare assistance or financial aid, this strategy is commonly adopted in poverty research. For example, Mistry et al. (2002) and Wyman et al. (1992) recruited groups of poor children to evaluate two different projects. This strategy is also common in local studies related to poverty, where recipients of CSSA and STA were recruited as poor participants for certain studies (Ho et al., 2015; Lam et al., 2004; Shek, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2012). In Hong Kong, other than following the official poverty line (50% of median household income by household size), individuals and families receiving CSSA can be a benchmark for defining living in poverty. According to the report of Commission on Poverty (2006), poverty can be defined as an individual or household with income below the CSSA payment, “since the payment level is widely used and recognized as the threshold where the basic living requirements in our community can be met” (Paragraph 2.15, p.13). For STA, it uses the “Adjusted Family Income” (AFI) mechanism as the means test to assess the eligibility of a family for student financial assistance and its assistance level. The AFI eligibility benchmarks two levels of assistance. Those receiving the full level of assistance can also be a point of reference for defining living in poverty.

The reason for choosing S5 students was that this current study intended to conduct a 2-year follow-up. When participants joined the Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs from secondary 1 to secondary 3, they would be invited annually to complete two

Subjective Outcome Evaluation Forms (CSOES-A and CSOES-C) (see Appendix 5) at the end of the term. As such, the researcher in this current study attempted to retain a consistent time interval. In addition, a comparison between “past self”, “present self” and “future self” (across their 6-year secondary school life) was conducted using the repertory grid test, without affecting students’ preparation in public examinations, S5 students appeared to be the most appropriate participants. The aforementioned sampling strategies helped enhance the generalizability of the findings and satisfy principle 2 (i.e., justifications for the number and nature of participants in the study) proposed by Shek, Tang and Han (2005). The details of all principles suggested by Shek, Tang and Han (2005) for qualitative studies will be detailed in Section 7.3.2.2 below.

After discussion with personnel at the eight schools, both quantitative and qualitative research activities (individual interviews and repertory grid tests) were conducted between December 2014 and May 2015. To recognize their efforts and motivate the 31 participants, each were given a \$100 supermarket purchase coupon for their contribution and transportation fee.

### **7.3.2 Component one: individual in-depth interviews**

In this study, the philosophical orientation is situated within the constructivist paradigm. As discussed in Section 5.2.3.2, the constructivist paradigm aims to explore how objects that populate the world are created and maintained (Phillips & Hardy, 2002), Constructivists hold a relativist view that the world is constructed rather than discovered, as meaningful reality is socially constructed and enacted by humans. It is suggested that everyone can interpret and construct reality based on their experiences and interactions with their environment. Within this

philosophical orientation, the importance of language and narratives is emphasized. Unlike traditional evaluation that is characterized by an emphasis on scientific and quantitative methods, responsive evaluation tends to rely on the qualitative approach to evaluation. By using qualitative individual in-depth interviews, a detailed, holistic understanding of social reality can be accessed through direct interaction with participants. Therefore, investigating and understanding the inner voices and stories of poor youth can help uncover the meaning that they give to their experiences.

This methodology used in this current study aimed to address the five specific research questions: (1) “What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the program and instructors at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?” (2) “What is the subjective evaluation of the program participants with economic disadvantage of the perceived benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?” (3) “How do participants apply what they learned in the program to real life?” (4) “What are the changes in participants after completion of the project?” and (5) “What factors affected the changes in participants?”.

Individual in-depth interview is a qualitative instrument that can access in-depth information not captured by quantitative instruments, e.g., structured rating scales. Seidman (1991) stated that conducting interview is an attempt to understand the thoughts, views and inner worlds of participants. Rubin and Rubin (2005) explain that in-depth interviews are like night goggles, “permitting us to see that which is not ordinarily on view and examine that which is looked at but seldom seen” (p. vii). In this current study, following the post-positivist orientation, critical multiplism (methodological pluralism) is advocated and hence legitimizes the use of qualitative methods. Therefore, qualitative data based on interviews was firstly obtained, with

the aim of generating more comprehensive description and detailed analysis of the perceptions, as well as the opinions and experiences, of the program participants.

#### *7.3.2.1 Method and procedures*

A semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 1) was developed with reference to (1) the interview guide used in the study of Shek and Sun (2008b), which also included the elements on “People” and “Programs”; and (2) the CIPP evaluation model discussed in Chapter Five. To ensure the strategies and techniques involved were appropriate for and understandable to the samples, the interview guide and all strategies that had been specifically designed for the interview were piloted. A pilot interview was conducted with two S5 students to check if they had any difficulties in understanding the content and procedures of the interview questions. No particular problem was found in the pilot interview and therefore no amendments were necessary.

All 31 individual interviews were conducted by the researcher of this current study. Permission and consent from all participants were sought prior to the study. Letters requesting parental consent were sent to the parents of the interviewees through the teachers at the eight respective schools (see Appendix 2). All interviews took place at their own schools and they were conducted after school. Before the start of each interview, the research aims and procedures were clearly explained to all participants. Also, they were assured that all the information provided would only be used for research purposes (see Appendix 3), that they did not have to answer questions they felt uncomfortable with and that they could choose to withdraw at any time from the interview, without penalty. Each interview lasted around 1.5 to 2.5 hours. During the interview process, interviewees were encouraged to talk and share

their views and ideas freely, and thus rich data can be accessed as compared to questionnaires, i.e., the Chinese Subjective Outcome Evaluation Scale (CSOES-A and CSOES-C) (see Appendix 5). The purposeful discussion allowed a more conversational atmosphere in which to collect data with exploratory and explanatory components. Flexibility was highly maintained by establishing a free and relaxed style (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1991). In addition, all participants were debriefed individually by the researcher at the close of each interview to ensure (ethically) they left school in a good state. The interviews were conducted in Cantonese and audio-taped. After the interviews, they were transcribed verbatim and computerized using two assistants. Afterwards, the researcher checked the transcripts for accuracy and corrected them accordingly.

#### *7.3.2.2 Data analysis - interviews*

As regards the qualitative analysis, Creswell (1994) asserted that the research should construct a picture with reference to the data. Therefore, the continuous interpretive role of the researcher is important in the process of data analysis. In this current study, with more than 30 interviews to be analyzed, all collected data were managed and processed using MS Word and MS Excel. Also, all data were analyzed by following the general qualitative analytical techniques, core methods and principles suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) and set out below.

1. All audio recordings from the interviews were carefully saved. These records were transcribed into texts through full transcription with the help of student helpers.



2. The transcriptions were then checked by the researcher to ensure accuracy. Also, the transcriptions were proofread by a peer checker who was not involved in the transcription process. The peer checker is a social worker with a Master's degree in Counseling who implemented the Project P.A.T.H.S. for four years in an NGO.
3. Then all transcripts were carefully read three times by the researcher. For the first reading, she quickly scanned all transcripts to gain an understanding of the basic structure of coding and a general impression of the key words.
4. For the second reading, she re-read all materials in a more careful and detailed way to code all texts into different themes in the coding structure. Phrases and/or sentences that formed meaningful units at the raw response level were coded. Then she assigned a code to each segment of data that could address the research questions, based on the interview guide. For example, for the question "what things impressed you the most in the Tier One Program", for the student's response "the social worker played a lot of videos...I liked her so much as she told us her own stories always" at the raw response level could form two units, i.e., "love the videos shown" and "sharing of the instructor(s)"
5. For the third reading, she read all the transcripts again to check the appropriateness of the coding and to see whether revisions were needed, the codes were further combined to reflect higher-order attributes at the category of codes level. Analysis thus involved a search for patterns among the collected data. For example, concerning the question "Generally, did you have any impressive experiences concerning your participation in Project P.A.T.H.S.?", most participants shared their impressive experiences concerning their participation in P.A.T.H.S.. A total of 26 raw responses were received. After

checking the appropriateness of the coding, the related codes were combined and they were then further categorized into four categories, namely, (1) program nature; (2) program content; (3) program delivery; and others.

6. The categories of codes were further analyzed to reveal broader themes at the thematic level. As per the above example in #4, they could be further incorporated under the two categories “program activities and delivery” and “program instructor(s)”. Themes and sub-themes of the content were thus formed by indexing each theme using MS Excel, with all codes and the segments under each theme copied from a MS Word file. After analyzing all the raw codes, seven categories were classified.
7. All coded work was verified and checked by a trained social worker with a Master’s degree (i.e., the peer checker). She helped review the data and assess the appropriateness of the analysis. When discrepancies were observed, the author discussed them with the peer checker case-by-case, item-by-item, until they arrived at similar or complementary results.
8. With the intention of enhancing reliability in the interpretation process, both inter-rater and intra-rater reliability were carried out (a total of seven areas of categorization, based on the interview guide). The researcher and an assistant re-coded at least 20 randomly selected responses for each area, based on different interview questions.
9. This procedure helped reduce possible biases and misinterpretations in the process of coding and analysis. In particular, the researcher compiled reflections on the personal biases, expectations and assumptions that might influence the interpretation of data. All the results of inter-rater and intra-rater reliability will

be reported in Chapter 8. Table 8.2 also shows a summary of the reliability checks for the categorization of coding in the interviews

10. Regarding the general problems intrinsic to qualitative studies, Shek, Tang and Han (2005) suggested that 12 principles should be maintained when conducting qualitative evaluation. The researcher of this study found these principles very useful for dealing with her ideological biases and personal preoccupations. The 12 principles include:

...explicit statement of the philosophical base of the study (Principle 1); justifications for the number and nature of the participants of the study (Principle 2); detailed description of the data collection procedures (Principle 3); discussion of the biases and preoccupations of the researchers (Principle 4); description of the steps taken to guard against biases or arguments that biases should and/or could not be eliminated (Principle 5); inclusion of measures of reliability, such as inter- and intra-rater reliability (Principle 6); inclusion of measures of triangulation in terms of researchers and data types (Principle 7); inclusion of peer- and member-checking procedures (Principle 8); consciousness of the importance and development of audit trails (Principle 9); consideration of alternative explanations for the observed findings (Principle 10); inclusion of explanations for negative evidence (Principle 11); and clear statement of the limitations of the study (Principle 12) (Shek, Tang, & Han, 2005, p.184)

The above principles were cautiously upheld when conducting and analyzing the qualitative components in this current study. For instance, the researcher purposely carried out peer-checking to ensure the validity of the findings. As mentioned above, to ensure reliability both intra-rater and inter-rater reliability of the coding were also calculated.

### **7.3.3 Component two: Repertory grid test**

To investigate in more depth than the questionnaire and individual interviews, and for methodological triangulation, a repertory grid test based on personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955) was used in this current study. Using the

repertory grid test, one major research question was addressed: “What are the changes in participants after completion of the project?”. This aimed to measure the perceived changes of participants after joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. for 3 years, and to explore the effectiveness of the Project. This test was subsequently conducted immediately after each individual in-depth interview and with the same participants, to further examine their perceptions of their self-identity systems (SIS).

The repertory grid test is an assessment method based on the psychology of personal constructs (personal construct theory) developed and promoted by George Kelly (1955), a clinical psychologist. The theory of personal construct psychology has been used in different areas, including psychotherapy, personality assessments, organizational psychology and education. According to Kelly, the universe is an ongoing process. He regarded that humans are basically scientists in their everyday dealings and individuals are not merely passive learners. Indeed, they play active roles to create their own ways of seeing and interpreting the world and construct understandings about their social world even though objective reality exists. Hence, how the personal world or reality is construed, and how individuals interpret their life experiences are mainly based on past experiences and individual world views. Indeed, individuals continually construe and re-construe the events surrounding their everyday lives. As such, people see things and make sense of their world in different ways with different interpretations. In this sense, Kelly used the term “construct” to represent this idea. Also, what he called “a personal construct system” is “a way in which two or more things are alike and thereby different from a third or more things” (Kelly, 1955, p.9). In other words, these constructs are essentially bipolar, and thus both similarities as well as differences in perceptions can be identified, and also the appropriate pole of constructs, simultaneously. This personal construct system

provides networks of meaning so that the world can be experienced by anticipating the future on the basis of past experience. In short, the personal construct theory of Kelly (1955) provides a framework in which to study different aspects of self-attributes that are subject to change over time and in different social contexts. Individual's beliefs and values can thus be examined through the repertory grid test.

The repertory grid test technique is an assessment derived from personal construct theory, which allows the researcher to elicit constructs of how participants construe and perceive their own world based on their actual experience. Franklin and Jordan (1995) also suggested that the repertory grid test is a popular method used by constructivists to assess personal meanings or constructs. Winter (1992) claimed that the repertory grid test technique can effectively measure both individual and group changes. This method has successfully been applied in various business, clinical and educational settings (Fransella & Thomas, 1988; Marsden & Littler, 2000; Solas, 1992). Concerning the evaluation of self-identity, Norris and Makhoul-Norris (1976) proposed a SIS with the intention to understand a person's personal constructs relating to different aspects of themselves, which they called a community of selves. This is a hypothetical construct for defining different relationships between the self and the environment. Researchers can thus understand individual's beliefs and behavior by examining how they identify themselves and significant others. In defining the self, Norris and Makhoul-Norris (1976) suggested that there should be at least three important components, including (1) the actual self, which refers to the current representation of the person; (2) the social self, which refers to the representation of other views of a person; and (3) the ideal self, which refers to the representation of the person's desired self. In essence, the SIS helps portray an

individual's mental frame of reference, which provides understanding of a person's worldview and how they view themselves in relation to others.

Furthermore, there are some unique features of the repertory grid test. First, researchers can obtain and generate both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis in a single study. For instance, Ng (2002) used this test to examine change in participants' self-identity after joining a religious residential rehabilitation program. Luk and Shek (2006) also conducted a similar study to investigate a holistic psychiatric rehabilitation program. In both studies, it was shown that the repertory grid test is a good tool to examine cognitive change in participants. Second, this test is a flexible method that can yield very rich information that can be used to understand the subjective views of participants (Slater, 1977). The test consists of "elements" and "constructs" and the number of these items is modifiable. Third, as a popular assessment and evaluation method it assesses the personal construct system of an individual and their self-identity system from the perspective of the individual. It can thus be used in combination with other evaluation methods, such as questionnaires or individual in-depth interviews. For instance, Lam et al. (2003) used the test as one of the methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the Project Astro MIND (for project details, see Chapter Three, Section 3.1.3).

A systematical review on the use of the repertory grid test technique in the social work context was conducted by Borell, Espwall, Pryce and Brenner (2003). They suggested that the repertory grid test technique has not been systematically utilized in the Chinese culture, especially in the context of evaluation. With reference to Hong Kong, only a few examples were found. Other than examination of the Project P.A.T.H.S. (Shek, 2012a), the latest documentation is the study of Luk and Shek (2006) who adopted repertory grid test methodology as an evaluation method to

examine the perceived personal changes (emphasizing physical, psychological, social and spiritual functioning) in ex-mental health patients joining a holistic psychiatric rehabilitation program in Hong Kong.

Since the Repertory Grid test technique is specifically developed for the very purpose of investigating individual's cognitive thought processes, it is believed here that this technique is the most suitable research methodology to be applied in this current study. Thus, adopting the repertory grid test technique, this study explores how participants perceived changes in their SIS after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S., by examining how they identified with themselves and the significant changes to their life. This helped to address one research question and provide a supplementary perspective on the effectiveness of the program. With reference to this study, one major hypothesis relating to the repertory grid test is that after joining Project P.A.T.H.S. for 3 years, it is expected that participants would have positive changes in their self-identity. Based on this hypothesis, five expected outcomes are derived, which are related to the construing of the self and others. Details are discussed in Chapter Eight, Section 8.2.2.

#### *7.3.3.1 Method and procedures*

The repertory grid test typically consists of a series of “elements” and “constructs”. According to Borell et al. (2003), elements can consist of individuals, institutions, ideas, roles, and objects, which largely depend on the actual research question(s). In this current study, a set of elements were chosen because they were consistent with the research objectives. With reference to the previous study conducted by Shek and colleagues (Shek, 2012a), a grid form was developed (see Appendix 4). The ten predefined elements were supplied to elicit the constructs,

regarding the SIS of the program participants. In particular, having considered the background of the participants (adolescents experiencing poverty), two specific elements were added (i.e., Element 8 and 9). The term “an unsuccessful peer loser experiencing poverty” (Element 8) was used together with “a successful peer experiencing poverty” (Element 9). This design aims to examine how the disadvantaged youth identified themselves and elicit constructs of how they construe and perceive their world based on their actual disadvantaged experience. The ten predefined elements are:

- Element 1: Self before joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. (past self)
- Element 2: Self after the completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. (present self)
- Element 3: Self at high school graduation (future self)
- Element 4: Ideal self
- Element 5: Father or surrogate father
- Element 6: Mother or surrogate mother
- Element 7: A best friend
- Element 8: Peer group - a successful peer experiencing poverty
- Element 9: Peer group – an unsuccessful peer loser experiencing poverty
- Element 10: A successful and influential person

Aiming to identify participants’ constructs, 10 constructs were elicited from triads, which involved selecting groups of three elements from the above list. A pilot grid test was conducted with two S5 students who shared similar backgrounds to the actual research participants to test the suitability of the assessment tools and check if they encountered any difficulties in understanding the content and procedures of the



grid test. No difficulty was encountered in the pilot test. Therefore, through a continuous comparison of the elements, participants were encouraged to name the differences and similarities between the three elements by asking: “In what way is one of these elements similar to another, but different from a third?” This test procedure then produced two contrasting poles for the construct. In the interview process, the researcher had adopted an open attitude to accept and accommodate both positive and negative experiences expressed by the program participants. After determining all bipolar constructs, participants were then asked to rank each of the elements (on a 6-point scale) in relation to the construct suggested. Considering that the poor participants may sometimes have difficulties eliciting the constructs, therefore, with reference to the study conducted by Shek (2012a), two pairs of supplied constructs were added and provided. These two pairs of constructs were “appreciate oneself” versus “does not appreciate oneself”, and “good resilience” versus “poor resilience”. Finally, all ratings were entered into a matrix (i.e., 10 elements by 12 constructs).

#### *7.3.3.2 Data Analysis*

The collected grid findings were analyzed using the statistical program INGRID 72 package devised by Slater based on principal components analysis (Slater, 1977). INGRID 72 can generate a wide range of data, including group or individual analyses, as well as distances between elements in the psychological space of participant, i.e., the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between two elements. In his study, Shek (2012a) clearly stated that the measure of distance can be regarded as an indicator of a person’s degree of identification with an element. In addition, data

was also converted into an SPSS file. Relevant statistical analyses were performed after the INGRID 72 analysis.

#### **7.3.4 Component three: Subjective Outcome Evaluation Questionnaire (CSOES-A and CSOES-C)**

To serve as methodological triangulation, the Subjective Outcome Evaluation Questionnaire (Form A, CSOES-A and Form C, CSOES-C, see Appendix 5 respectively) was used as the third component for the study. The questionnaire was designed by the research team of the Project P.A.T.H.S. (Shek, Lee, & Siu, 2007; Shek & Siu et al., 2006). Other than the Hong Kong program, this questionnaire was also used in Mainland China for program evaluation (Shek, Han, Lee, & Yu, 2014). CSOES-A is a 36-item questionnaire whereas CSOES-C is a 24-item questionnaire. These are valid and reliable assessment tools that have been empirically examined (Ma & Shek, 2010; Shek, Ma, & Tang, 2011) and validated (Shek & Ma, 2014). Reliability analyses showed that these scales possess excellent internal consistency. These scales have also been widely and repeatedly used for years in both implementation phases of the Project P.A.T.H.S. (Shek, Han, Lee, & Yu, 2014; Shek, Lee, & Siu, 2007; Shek, Liang & Ma, 2017; Shek & Ma, 2014a; Shek & Siu et al., 2006; Shek & Sun, 2012b). According to Shek and Ma (2014a), the excellent factorial validity and internal consistency reported in their research findings provides good evidence for the reliability and validity of the CSOES questionnaire.

With the use of the Subjective Outcome Evaluation Forms, the following two research questions were addressed: (1) “What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the program and instructors at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?” (2) “What is the subjective

evaluation of the program participants with economic disadvantage of the perceived benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?”. With reference to this part of the study, one major hypothesis related to the Subjective Outcome Evaluation is that after joining Project P.A.T.H.S. for 3 years, it is expected that the poor participants would have more positive evaluation of the program, instructors and perceived benefits, as compared to the non-poor participants.

#### *7.3.4.1 Instruments*

In this current study, the validated Chinese Subjective Outcome Evaluation Scales (CSOES-A and CSOES-C) (see Appendix 5) were used to measure the subjective program outcomes of program participants with and without economic disadvantage. From 2005 to 2012, in order to examine the perceived program effectiveness, students participating in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs were invited to complete the CSOES respectively after completion of the program. Since 2006, more than 250 secondary schools in Hong Kong participated in both implementation phases, with more than 210,000 student participants. In the related literature, it clearly shows that the internal consistency of the CSOES is reasonably high (Shek, 2009c, 2014; Shek & Law, 2014; Shek & Lee, 2008a; Shek, Lee, Sun, & Lung, 2008; Shek & Ma, 2007; Shek, Ma, & Siu, 2014; Shek, Siu, & Lee, 2007; Shek & Sun, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2010, 2014). At the same time, it is believed that participants in this current study should have experiences in completing the subjective outcome evaluation, when they were in secondary 1, secondary 2 and secondary 3. As such, no pilot test was conducted for the use of this questionnaire.

Regarding the CSOES-A, the psychometric properties of this 36-item subjective outcome evaluation instrument were scrutinized, this illustrated that it is a

valid and reliable assessment tool. Broadly speaking, there are ten parts to this evaluation form as follows:

- Participants' perceptions of the program, such as program objectives, design, classroom atmosphere, interaction among students, and participants' participation during class (10 items with a six-point scale, ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 6 = "strongly agree")
- Participants' perceptions of the program implementers, such as the preparation of instructor, professional attitudes, involvement, and interaction with students (10 items with a six-point scale, ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 6 = "strongly agree")
- Participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program, such as promotion of different psychosocial competencies, resilience and overall personal development (16 items with a five-point scale, ranging from 1 = "unhelpful" to 5 = "very helpful")
- The extent to which participants would recommend the program to other people with similar needs (1 item with a four-point scale, ranging from 1 = "definitely will not suggest" to 5 = "definitely will suggest")
- The extent to which participants would join similar programs in future (1 item with a four-point scale, ranging from 1 = "definitely will not participate" to 5 = "definitely will participate")
- Overall satisfaction with the program (1 item with a six-point scale, ranging from 1 = "very dissatisfied" to 5 = "very satisfied")
- Things that participants learned from the program (open-ended question)
- Things that participants appreciated most (open-ended question)

- Opinions about the instructor(s) (open-ended question)
- Areas that require improvement (open-ended question).

Regarding the CSOES-C, the psychometric properties of this 24-item subjective outcome evaluation instrument were scrutinized, this illustrated that it is a valid and reliable assessment tool. There are seven parts to this evaluation form as follows:

- Participants' perceptions of the program, such as program design, quality of service, appropriateness of the program, and interaction among participants (8 items)
- Participants' perceptions of the workers, such as preparation of the workers, professional attitudes and knowledge, and interaction with participants (8 items)
- Participants' perception of the effectiveness of the program, such as promotion of different psychosocial competencies, resilience, and overall personal development (8 items)
- Things that participants appreciated most (open-ended question)
- Opinions about the workers (open-ended question)
- Things that participants learned from the program (open-ended question)
- Areas that require improvement (open-ended question).

#### *7.3.4.2 Method and procedures*

In addition to the recruitment of 31 adolescents (from eight schools) experiencing economic disadvantage, a further 541 S5 (poor and non-poor youths) from six different participating schools were invited to complete the subjective outcome evaluation questionnaires in a self-administration format. The details of the

schools were displayed in Table 7.1). This sample is regarded as heterogeneous, since they came from six different districts and socio-economic classes. There were several reasons for this methodological design. First, the normative data collected from the 31 poor youths will shed light on the long-term impact of Project P.A.T.H.S. for this population. Second, the addition of the data obtained from the non-poor adolescents will allow for systematic analyses to investigate possible differences in the longitudinal impact between-groups. While most evaluation studies statistically compare program effects between control and treatment groups (Slavin, 1999), few studies compare program effectiveness of participants from different demographic backgrounds. While Sechrest and Sidani (1995) assert the importance of context in qualitative research, simultaneously, they emphasize that they “discern no less concern for context in quantitative research” (p.80). Indeed, Shavelson and Webb (1991)’s generalizability theory in quantitative methodology is concerned precisely with context effects. Thus, the collection of subjective outcome evaluation data from both poor and non-poor youth samples would allow for the consideration and investigation of possible contextual effects on program effectiveness.

The researcher in this current study monitored the data collection process (including poor and non-poor groups), with the assistance of teachers at the selected schools. To ensure students’ active participation and genuine responses whilst completing the questionnaire, a 10-minute briefing was provided by the researcher to all schools. The background and objectives of the study were explicitly explained at this time. Anonymity and confidentiality in the handling of their information were also assured. In addition, to help students refresh their memory, the briefings also concisely reviewed the P.A.T.H.S. program and its content (both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs), before the students filled in the forms. Moreover, a consent form was

attached with the questionnaire to ask each student for their agreement to participate and explain the purpose of the study. Adequate time (30 minutes) was provided for them to complete the questionnaire and enter their personal opinions into the self-administered questionnaire.

For data input, the researcher in this current study inserted the data into EXCEL files, which can automatically compute the frequencies and percentages associated with the different ratings for an item.

#### *7.3.4.3 Data Analysis*

For the quantitative data, all data collected was inserted into an SPSS file. Statistical analysis was performed following data collection. Data was coded and tested with various statistical models. The mean scores of the scale measures in the poor and non-poor groups were compared with the data collected within the group, using the one-sample t-test. In addition, since there are different groups in this study, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also performed to compare differences in group means among the different groups.

#### **7.3.5 Data analysis: triangulating of the three components**

As a post-positivist paradigm is adopted in this current study, a probabilistic approach to approximate knowledge is therefore taken, rendering the legitimate use of mixed methods in research. In this current study, analyses from the scale measures, grid measures, and interview data were triangulated to gain a more appropriate understanding of the perceptions of participants. Both quantitative and qualitative data were given similar priority, and interpretation of data aimed to cross-validate and validate results. While data collected from the repertory grid test and the subjective

outcome evaluation questionnaire were used to generate a group profile, idiographic data obtained through the repertory grid test and individual interviews could also provide in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions and self-identity. Following the fully encompassing evaluation methods of quantitative subjective outcome evaluation and qualitative individual interviews, analyses were conducted to enable systematic comparison across data sets to identify impact at various levels, and to reveal the mutual contribution of different factors across levels of the effectiveness of the program (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008). In terms of addressing the different aspects of generalizability, it was investigated through important and specific research questions. These questions and corresponding research methods are shown in Table 7.2.

In this study, triangulation of methods (combining quantitative and qualitative methods) and data (combining quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources) are used to obtain a comprehensive picture and to verify the same phenomenon or research area. Also, after both data sets have been analyzed separately, in terms of addressing the different aspects of generalizability, all data generated from 3 different methods were merged together for analysis and further investigated through specific research questions. Several techniques were used for triangulating findings (O'Cathain, Murphy, & Nicholl, 2010):

1. Check the findings from each component and consider where findings from each method agree (convergence), offer complementary information on the same issue (complementarity), or appear to contradict each other (discrepancy). Consideration of where there is agreement, partial agreement or disagreement between findings from different components.



2. Following the threads based on the research questions: Observations found in any two out of three methods would be grouped under common observation whereas the observations found in only one method were put under unique observations.
3. Focusing attention on individual cases (those particularly negative and positive cases): comparing the responses from the 3 methods (e.g., comparing the responses to a questionnaire with their interview transcript and repertory grid results).

**Table 7.2: Specific Research Questions and Corresponding Research Methods**

| <b>Specific research questions</b>   | <b>The research method(s) used</b>  |
|--|---|
| 1. What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the program and instructors at a delayed point in time after completion of the project? | 1. Subjective outcome evaluation questionnaire<br>2. Individual in-depth interviews                           |
| 2. What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the perceived benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?      | 1. Subjective outcome evaluation questionnaire<br>2. Individual in-depth interviews                           |
| 3. How do participants apply what they learned in the program to real life?  | 1. Individual in-depth interviews   |
| 4. What are the perceived changes in participants after completion of the project?   | 1. Subjective outcome evaluation questionnaire<br>2. Individual in-depth interviews<br>3. Repertory grid test |
| 5. What factors affected the changes in participants?  | 1. Individual in-depth interviews<br>2. Subjective outcome evaluation questionnaire                           |

## **Chapter Eight: Results of the Study Based on Different Evaluation Methods**

The current study was conducted using a parallel mixed-methods design, with emphasis on both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods. It adopted a post-positivist research paradigm and utilized an integrative evaluation model as the guiding framework to evaluate the impact of a PYD program on the understudied population of economically disadvantaged adolescents. This chapter presents and describes the findings from the three evaluation components in four sections; findings from the individual interviews including the profile of key participants, findings from the repertory grid tests, quantitative evaluation data from the subjective outcome evaluation questionnaire and lastly, triangulation of the findings are discussed in the fourth section.

### **8.1 Evaluation Findings from the Individual In-depth Interviews**

As stated in Chapters Five and Seven, individual in-depth interviews were used to address the five research questions, including: (1) “What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the program and instructors at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?” (2) “What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the perceived benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?” (3) “How do participants apply what they learned in the program to real life?” (4) “What are the perceived changes in participants after completion of the project?” and (5) “What factors affected the changes of the participants?”. To this end, Stufflebeam’s CIPP evaluation model was adapted, especially for the design of the semi-structure interview guide. In the following, the profile of the research participants is presented before the findings from the individual in-depth interviews based on the CIPP model.

### **8.1.1 Qualitative findings related to the component of “Context” (CIPP)**

#### *8.1.1.1 Profile of the 31 research participants experiencing poverty*

As mentioned in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.1, a total of 31 S5 economically disadvantaged students from eight schools were successfully recruited. At the time of data collection, one student was from a family receiving CSSA, and the rest of the students' (N=30) families were recipients of full STA. Indeed, five students receiving STA reflected that their families used to receive CSSA in the past. As mentioned in Chapter Four, although the Hong Kong government established the official poverty line in 2012, it is not easy to identify and categorize the poor population in schools. To locate the target group for this study, the researcher asked the eight schools to invite those S5 students who were from families receiving CSSA or recipients of the full STA grant. These 31 participants composed of 20 (64.5%) males and 11 (35.5%) females. Their age ranged between 17 and 18 years (N=27) and four were aged 19 years at the time of data collection. Regarding the program participation, among these 31 participants, one could not join the 3-year Tier 1 Program as she returned to China when she was in secondary 3. Concerning the Tier 2 Program, all 31 participants had joined the Tier 2 Program for at least one year. Over half (N=19) revealed that they had joined the Tier 2 Program for three consecutive years between 2009 and 2012. Furthermore, 20 participants (64.5%) indicated that they did not join any similar developmental program in primary school. For those who had experience in similar programs, seven of them used to participate in the “Understand Adolescents Project” when they were in primary school. However, it is observed here that most could not recall the program content clearly. Table 8.1 summarized the descriptive statistics from the 31 participants experiencing poverty.

Concerning initial participation in the Tier 2 Program of the Project P.A.T.H.S., five participants (16.1%) reflected that they were forced to join the program either by their teachers or school social workers. However, 26 participants (83.9%) revealed that they volunteered to join

the program. The reasons for joining the program included: (1) they had interests in joining with intrinsic motivation; (2) they found the program content and activities interesting and attractive; (3) their friends joined the program; (4) they simply accepted the invitation from the teacher(s) and/or social worker(s); and (5) fee waiving activities were provided.

In this study, as the researcher wanted to know if the poor participants recognized themselves as beneficiaries, target participants joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. were asked to complete a self-evaluation. Results showed that 25 participants (80.6%) firmly agreed that they needed to join the project, especially for their personal growth and development. However, five participants felt that they should not be targeted for the project P.A.T.H.S. as it did not meet their needs. In addition, they (N=5) all perceived the program as childish, boring and meaningless to their life, yet remarkably, a total of 27 participants (out of 31) agreed that they would suggest their friends with similar backgrounds, developmental needs and personalities join the project. When asked the reasons why they would like to recommend their friends to join, all 27 participants (including one student who perceived and reflected that the Project P.A.T.H.S. as “childish, boring and meaningless to his life”) revealed that the content of the P.A.T.H.S. program should be beneficial to all adolescents. Some even asserted that the whole program catered for the developmental needs of youth in Hong Kong.

#### *8.1.1.2 The perception of poverty among the 31 research participants*

With reference to the low socio-economic background of the participants, they all indicated that suffering from poverty might have both positive and negative influences on their personal growth and psychosocial development. Although few mentioned that there was no specific influence because of their own poverty condition, it was observed that they were trying to conceal their actual stories and feelings as some were quite defensive when they were asked to share their views on the problems of poverty. In the following, perceptions towards the negative

influences are firstly presented. For this part, roughly one-third of participants shared that they had negative feelings and feel ashamed about themselves because of their deprived condition. Their strong inferiority is also observed. Participants P18, P19 and P26 expressed that:

*“As compared to others, I feel that I am a mediocre, I always experience frustration... (because of poverty), I tend to be more pessimistic.”* (P18-male)

*“When I see my classmates using luxury mobile phones, or they can buy whatever they want, I will question why I could not have the same, have I done something wrong?... why this happened to me?...or after visiting a friend’s place, I will have a very strong sense of inferiority...I feel that I am desperate and helpless as I cannot change anything.”* (P19-male)

*“In secondary 1, when seeing someone eating a big drumstick, I would envy him/her, as I could not afford to pay HK\$10 for that. They are rich but I am poor. For me, I could only manage to pay for an egg, which cost HK\$2. I always feel that I am low-grade”* (P26-male)

Second, it was also reported that they are more stressed about livelihood issues such as material well-being, learning experiences and social relationship. Concerning material well-being, a number of participants expressed that they exercised less resources, power and control over their lives. Also, they believed that they are “nurtured” to be economical but not materialistic. Participants P2, P3, P15 and P31 revealed that:

*“As compared with peers at the same age, I am very frugal. I seldom buy snacks and toys.”* (P2-male)

*“I am very careful in spending money. Unlike other people, I could not buy whatever I want...My classmates are relatively rich, they can freely buy the things they like...and each time, I have to look and check the price tag first...If I buy whatever I like, just like*

*them, I will then have no money for lunch...since my family is poor, my parents couldn't afford to let me go to the popular tutoring centers and take the "elite courses", as those courses are very expensive."* (P3-female)

*"From primary 2 to secondary 2, I found that I am disadvantaged. For example, when planning to join some activities, I found that I couldn't afford it, and I didn't have the courage to ask my mother for money, as we are very poor at that time, even having lot of difficulties for a single meal."* (P15-male)

*"Sometimes, I really want to buy an item, however, I have no money and I have no courage to ask my parents for money...perhaps the item I want sometimes is not essential. But for me, at least it can help fulfil my psychological needs. It is fate that I have no money. Therefore, sometimes I might have little complaint."* (P31-male)

Third, regarding social relationships, some participants admitted that experiencing economic disadvantage might lead to conflict with parents and friends, which negatively affected family bonding and peer relationships. Participants P1, P5 and P15 shared their views on this:

*"We used to receive the CSSA for six years, at that time, my mum did not go to work. The situation highly affected her parenting style as well as approach, and made me experience tons of stress. It is because my mom stayed at home all day and I was also required to stay at home all day. She expected to see me at all times and it seemed that I am the only thing in her life. She was very strict and always stern with me. For example, she would not allow me to go out with my friends...to this end, receiving CSSA affected our social competence and social network."* (P1-female)

*"Sometimes when I have gatherings with my classmates, they might have a rich feast. As I do not have enough pocket money, then I would just witness their big meal and say, "I am full". In fact, it is because I have no money...I chose not to join them subsequently."* (P5-male)

*“I feel that I am different with others, I am worried that my friends will know my situation and condition, and then they may ignore and leave me.” (P16-female)*

On the other hand, some participants have quite different perceptions towards the influence of poverty. They found that it can have a positive impact on their personal growth and psychosocial development. Participants P13, P5 and P15 expressed that:

*“Because of the bankruptcy of my family, I had learned how to have better wealth management, and I have nurtured a good habit on spending and saving money.” (P13-male)*

*“I won’t be that materialistic, I am not keen on those latest mobiles, as long as my own mobile works. I will only buy necessary clothing... I will consider more about my family.” (P20-male)*

*“Experiencing poverty makes me more determined. I am willing to make effort to become stronger and fight poverty, make my life worth living.” (P25-male)*

*“In fact, I am grateful to have such a family background, as I can have different experiences that those rich people can’t understand. The difficult situation and its exposure could help me find a clearer life goal...how to make a better day for me and for my family.” (P29-male)*

Based on the above sharing, poor living conditions did nurture their resilience and have a positive impact on shaping their current personality and characters, however in general, their self-confidence was not strong. Perhaps they could not observe or identify a clear causal relationship on how poverty affects their psychological development, yet nearly all participants admitted that experiencing poverty negatively influenced their self-confidence.



### 8.1.2 Qualitative findings related to the component of “Input” (CIPP)

Based on the feedback from participants, all appreciated the subsidies in the Tier 2 Program. This was because they could join different activities in the Tier 2 Program free of charge or by paying a small amount of money. The fee-waiving catered for their material needs and these activities encouraged their participation in the Project P.A.T.H.S.. At the same time, some poor participants reflected that they used to have difficulties in joining some school programs, such as offshore exchange programs and instrument classes. Although there are available resources for partial program subvention, such as the Community Care Fund (CCF), participants expressed that the financial burden was still too heavy for their families. Hence, it is observed here that the abundant financial support from The Hong Kong Jockey Club is vital for the implementation of the P.A.T.H.S. Project.

Concerning service receivers, the researcher was interested in knowing the costs of participation for three years in the Project. When asked about this, 22 participants indicated that they invested quite a lot of time and efforts in the Project, as they had joined the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs for many years. One participant shared his opinion:

*“Time, definitely! As each lesson lasted for at least 1 hour, sometimes even 2 hours...For some outdoor activities, we had to spend at least half day, excluding the preparation time prior to the visits. Therefore, I invested a lot of time!” (P5-male)*

Other than the time spent, some participants reflected that they also invested their energy, efforts and passion, especially in the Tier 2 Program. Two participants explained as follows:

*“(Time investment)...And also my “passion”. It is because I need to share my feelings with others always.” (P11-female)*

*“Should be time, efforts and energy...When we participated in the (adventure-based) training program, we are required to be committed and serious, hence I spent a lot of energy on the program.” (P20-male)*

Based on the interviews, it is observed here that most participants (especially those who appreciated the Project) were willing to sacrifice their personal time to participate in the program. They also reflected that it was well worth spending additional time joining the activities in the Tier 2 Program. Their commitment of participation was evident.

Before conducting the interviews, to further comprehend and collect basic information on the Project implementation in different schools, the researcher arrived at the schools 30-45 minutes before the interviews to meet with school principals or teachers and understand more about the implementation arrangements and processes in each school. Based on these short meetings, it was observed that all eight schools incorporated the Project P.A.T.H.S. (the Tier 1 program) into their school’s formal curriculum, such as the subjects of Liberal Studies, Integrated Humanities, Life Education, Social Studies, and Religious Studies. For three schools, they also implemented the Tier 1 Program outside normal class time, such as class masters’ periods, school assemblies, after school hours, and during school holidays. From the school perspective, all schools agreed that such an arrangement for the Tier 1 Program was successful throughout. For the Tier 2 Program, all schools let the collaborating NGOs coordinate and implement all the activities.

### 8.1.3 Qualitative findings related to the perceived “Process”

This section, with reference to the integrative evaluation model, focuses on the client’s satisfaction by examining participants’ overall impressions and experiences of the program, their comments on the program’s content and the process of program implementation. Furthermore, the researcher explored and documented how they evaluated their instructors who implemented the entire program in their schools. To measure the “reaction” (in Kirkpatrick’s model) and “impact” (in the CIPP model) components in a more systematic way, the 3 “Ps” (**P**rocesses, **P**rograms and **P**eople) were adopted as major evaluation domains.

#### *8.1.3.1 Program - general impression of the Project P.A.T.H.S.*

In each interview, three questions were asked to examine participants’ general impressions towards the Project P.A.T.H.S.. The three questions include: (1) “You had participated in the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” for three years from Secondary 1 to Secondary 3, do you like this Project? Why?” (2) “Generally, did you have any impressive experiences concerning your participation in Project P.A.T.H.S.?”; and (3) “You had participated in both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, which one do you like more? Why?” For the first question, based on responses from the 31 poor participants, the researcher in this study first categorized them into two categories, namely (1) yes and (2) no. It was found that a few answers were ambiguous, such as “No comment” (無意見), “No special feeling” (無咩特別感覺) or “no preference” (都無話鍾唔鍾意既). Based on responses to other questions and the explanation provided, the researcher finally categorized all the uncertain responses to “(2) no”. Based on these findings, the majority of participants (N=24, 77.4%) liked the Project, however, around 22.6% (N=7) did not.

For the second question, most participants shared their impressive experiences concerning their participation in P.A.T.H.S.. A total of 26 raw responses were received. They were then further categorized into four categories, namely, (1) program nature (N=2, 7.6%),

examples like “high program diversification” and “developmental in nature”; (2) program content (N=21, 80.8%); (3) program delivery (N=2, 7.6%), such as feedback like “various activities and teaching methods” and “sharing from teachers”; and others (N=1, 3.8%), such as feedback like “collaboration of SW and teacher”. Apparently, the program content is the most impressive aspect perceived in the subjects. Among these 21 participants, 16 found the content of the Tier 2 Program the most unforgettable. Another two agreed that some topics and content in the Tier 1 Program are impressive, like emotional competence and social competence. For the others, they found both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs impressive.

As mentioned in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.2.3, the principles proposed by Shek, Tang and Han (2005) were maintained in the qualitative analyses. Referring to principle 6, intra- and inter-rater reliability checks on the coding were carried out for all “counting” methods in the qualitative study (the details of the procedures and steps are in Section 7.3.2.3). For this section, the percentage of intra-rater agreement was 100% and the inter-rater agreement percentage between the researcher and the research assistant as peer checker (she is a social worker with a Master’s degree in Counseling who used to implement the Project P.A.T.H.S. for four years in a NGO) was 96%. Table 8.2 shows the summary of the reliability checks for the categorization of coding in the interviews.

In the connection with the above question, Question 3 invited participants to share their views. The findings show that around 65% (N=20) of participants like the Tier 2 Program the most. It was observed here that the reasons for such a decision were similar and consistent. It essentially revealed that participants enjoyed both indoor and outdoor programs, with experiential learning activities, rather than merely having regular and traditional lessons in a classroom setting. Although the Tier 2 Program appeared to be more welcomed, it was noteworthy to document the feedback from a follow-up question. For those who had indicated their preferences on Tier 1 or Tier 2 Programs, they were then asked if it is fine to cancel another

tier of program that is less desirable. A total of 23 participants shared their views and 22 strongly felt it was important to have both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, and that not a single one could be omitted. The reasons to support their views were also consistent. For instance, many participants mentioned that (1) although the nature of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs are different, they are developed in a complementary manner; (2) the Tier 1 Program could be a universal foundation for all students, and students could apply what they learnt in the Tier 2 Program; (3) the Tier 1 Program could first equip students with knowledge, they could then develop what they acquired through experiential activities in the Tier 2 Program; (4) with the facilitation of the Tier 2 Program, students could further deepen and build their understanding from the Tier 1 Program. To sum up, although both positive and negative views and comments were collected concerning the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, the 2-tier program design is generally well received and recognized.

#### *8.1.3.2 Processes - reaction, impressions and comments of the implementation of the Tier 1*

##### *Program*

When asked about their perceptions towards the Tier 1 Program, all participants shared their opinions about what they appreciated and disliked (see Table 8.3). Regarding the things that they appreciated most, they were highly concerned about the “program activities and delivery” (46.9%) and the “program content” (15.6%). Particularly, their responses revealed the importance of having interaction and diversified activities in the Tier 1 Program. Concerning the things they disliked in the Tier 1 Program, similar to the above findings, the “program content” (34.3%) and the “program activities and delivery” (28.6%) are the principle anxieties for students. In particular, a number of participants had negative perceptions towards their written assignments and worksheets. For all 67 responses in this part, both intra-rater and inter-rater reliability on the coding was calculated. The percentage of intra-rater agreement was 98% and

the inter-rater agreement percentage between the researcher and the research assistant was 92%. Table 8.2 shows the summary of the reliability checks for the categorization of coding in the interviews.

#### *8.1.3.3 Processes - reaction, impressions and comments of the implementation of the Tier 2*

##### *Program*

Similar to the previous section, when asked about their perceptions towards the Tier 2 Program, all participants shared their opinions about what they valued and disliked. Regarding the things that they appreciated the most in the Tier 2 Program, 32 responses were analyzed. Correspondingly, five categories were formed (see Table 8.4). Findings showed that 75% of participants (N=24) enjoyed the activities very much in the Tier 2 Program. They also like the format and strategies of the program implementation. Based on the interview findings, it was observed here that “activities using adventure-based counseling approach” and “volunteer training and services” were two popular program approaches used by social workers implementing the Tier 2 Programs and the students’ feedback was good. Concerning the things participants disliked in the Tier 2 Program, it was remarkable that 54.8% (N=17) stated that there is nothing they dislike in the program. These findings are generally consistent with results in the previously section (See Section 8.1.3.1) in that the Tier 2 Program is more welcomed by students, based on the program’s nature, content and activities. Regarding the reliability of the coding in this part, as the results are clear, the percentage of both intra- and inter-rater agreement was 100%. Table 8.2 presents the summary of the reliability checks for the categorization of coding in the interviews.

#### 8.1.3.4 People - perceptions towards participants' involvement in the Project

When asked about their involvement and participation in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, all participants shared their opinions about the participation of their classmates as well as their own responses to this Project. During the interviews, other than inviting participants to freely share their experiences, the researcher also asked them to specify whether their experiences could be considered as “positive”, “negative”, or “neutral”. Furthermore, all were invited to provide examples to illustrate their responses.

Regarding the Tier 1 Program, based on the observation of participants, overall, participation in the eight schools were quite positive. For example, three participants stated that:

*“Depends on the format, if there are activities, we will be very proactive, but if only lecturing, we will be quiet, just sit and listen...I believe that 80% of us were active, while very few were passive....sometimes people mentioned that they dislike the program, but whenever there are lessons, all of us are very participative.”* (P6-female)

*“Exciting! Happy!...Since we seldom have chance to talk in other lessons, we would be relaxed whenever we're having this lesson. For other lessons, we could only sit quietly to listen, but for this program, we can freely express our ideas related to the topics...the classroom discipline was fine, as our teachers were there”* (P10-male)

*“We are participatory; we would follow all the instructions from the social worker, as our class was good! In general, there is no negative opinion in our class...sometimes we even discuss the lesson content and jokes after class”* (P27-male)

According to the responses received, a total of 17 participants (56.7%) reported that their classmates had positive participation towards the program (e.g., the responses of “willing to

participate”, “excited”, “positive”, “relaxed”, “participative” and “active to join the activities in class” are repeatedly pointed out), while seven (21.9%) reported that their classmates’ overall responses towards the program were neutral (both positive and negative comments as well as involvement were observed in these cases). At the same time, a deteriorating response was also observed between secondary 1 and 3 in some schools. For example, two participants shared that:

*“Depends on the teacher, if the teacher is strict, the class participation and our attention would be better. Once there was a supply teacher to teach, the whole class was messy, they slept, they played and kept talking...In secondary 1, most of the students are participatory, around 90% of us were well-participative...the resistance in S1 was low...In S2, around 70% of students were still participatory, but when we were in S3, only half of us were interested in the program.” (P17-female)*

*“I found that it depends on the topic. If we like the topic, such as “Love” and “Sex”, we would be very excited. But whenever we are talking about “self-understanding” and “China and me”, we would find these topics very boring, so we would not get involved but prefer doing our own stuff...or when the social worker came, as we like her, the responses and the atmosphere would be better” (P26-male)*

However, among the 31 participants, six (19%) reflected that their classmates’ responses towards the program could be considered negative. Participants P2 and P4 expressed that:

*“In secondary 1, we were excited, 80% of us were attentive, but sometimes we would do our homework instead...In secondary 2, the response was poor, only half of us will participate, and again some would prefer to do homework. In secondary 3, only one-third*



*of the students will attend, for the rest of the class, they would choose to do their own stuff!...they show no interest at all, as they found the class boring” (P2-male)*

*“I find that not many people in class were interested...the classroom was noisy...they found it boring, then they would keep chatting...” (P4-male)*

Regarding the Tier 2 Program, with reference to the raw narratives, it shows that participation in the eight schools was very positive in general. Indeed, 74% of participants (N=23) indicated that most Tier 2 Program participants were very positive, active and participative in the program. There were repeated positive responses such as “participative”, “active”, “positive and proactive”, “enjoyable”, “happy”, “the overall participation is better than in Tier 1 Program”. For instance, some participants narrated specifically that:

*“They were proactive and participatory in general...they tried their best to join, play and have fun together, in order to complete the tasks in the Tier 2 Program” (P15-male)*

*“Very active, many people were volunteered to join the program, they really liked those activities, as those activities met our needs” (P24-male)*

*“I believe that my classmates were more interested to join the Tier 2 Program, as the program is more interactive and so our participation is better” (P31-male)*

On the other hand, it is remarkable that only one student expressed negative perceptions of the responses of their classmates to the Tier 2 Program. She perceived that the response in Tier 1 Program is better than the Tier 2 Program in her class. Although there are more interactive activities in Tier 2 Program, she found that people would gradually find it boring as the activities were frequently repetitive.

Other than the overall impression towards classmates’ involvement in the Project, another question was asked to examine participants’ own participation in the project. Table 8.5

summarizes the self-evaluation of the 31 participants. It shows that a total of 19 poor participants (61.3%) reported that they had positive responses towards the project and their own participation (both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs), while nine participants (29.0%) reported that their responses towards the program were neutral (with both positive and negative comments). With reference to the raw narratives, 19 responses were regarded as positive, two were coded as neutral, and nine were regarded as negative. The percentage of intra-rater agreement was 90% and the inter-rater agreement percentage between the rater and another research assistant was 84%. The summary of the reliability checks for the categorization of coding in the interviews is shown in Table 8.2.

#### *8.1.3.5 People - students' perceptions towards the implementers (instructors) of the Project*

Students' perceptions towards the instructors (both teachers and social workers) of both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs based on their own experiences were examined through four questions. One participant did not share his view on these aspects and therefore his response is missing. During the interviews, all participants were firstly invited to comment on the instructors of both programs. All these responses were then analyzed based on the positive or negative nature of the codes, with four different possibilities, including "positive", "negative", "neutral", and "no answer". Regarding the comments towards the instructors of the Tier 1 Program, 77.4% of participants (N=24) positively appraised the instructors (both teachers and social workers) and there was no noticeable negative comment received. For the Tier 2 Programs, 80.6% (N=24) of participants positively appraised the performance of the instructors (the instructors were solely social workers). Again, there were no obvious negative comments. Other than this initial coding, similar to the previous qualitative analyses, all meaningful responses regarding the instructors of both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs were further decoded from the raw data. Table 8.6 shows the results, which involved 80 positive raw narratives that were categorized into four different domains. These domains include (1) Built positive and caring relationship with students (15.0%),

(2) Demonstrated effective pedagogical skills and teaching (21.2%), (3) Showed good teaching attitudes (25.0%) and (4) Displayed positive personality traits (38.8%). The percentage of intra-rater agreement was 100% and the inter-rater agreement percentage between the researcher and another research assistant was 97.5%. Based on the feedback from the participants, the positive personality traits of the instructors gave very good impression to the students. These qualities also motivated students' participation and facilitated the implementation of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs. Table 8.2 shows the summary of the reliability checks for the categorization of coding in the interviews.

For the second part, student participants were further invited to freely share their thoughts and feelings regarding the communicative interactions between instructors and students. These poor participants were asked to evaluate if their instructors could understand students' backgrounds and had concern for them. From the narratives of the students, it is observed that the evaluation was very positive and no negative comments were received in any of the interviews. Student participants treasured both verbal and non-verbal instructor-student interaction. Indeed, the researcher observed a lot of positive responses. For instance, some participants stated in the interviews that:

*"At the beginning, we were not familiar with each other. We seldom interact with our instructors. But later, because of various activities, we often talk to the instructors. The interaction improved and was getting better...The communication between social workers and me is very good. I often go and find them to chat, especially when I was feeling down."* (P2-male)

*"While they were teaching, they kept trying to receive our messages sent, that means other than sharing their own messages, they were willing to listen to us, understanding*

*our thoughts and views. After collecting our views and having further consolidation, they would share and discuss with us on the next day...I enjoyed and loved to do the worksheets they gave as teachers would read and give feedback...I treasured this kind of interaction” (P5-male)*

*“I think it (the interaction) was quite good. Sometimes, after having the P.A.T.H.S. lessons, whenever our class teacher observed some of our misbehaviors, they would kindly remind us and said something like: “Would you recall what you had learned in P.A.T.H.S. please?” (P7-male)*

*“We (instructors and students) are close, we often talk...just like my friends!” (P11-female)*

*“The interaction was not only restricted in the P.A.T.H.S. lessons or programs, we went to the office of the social workers from time to time...they would chat and interact with us...For our teachers, whenever we are under pressure when studying, they would take initiatives to help and support us.” (P17-female)*

Other than positive and close interaction, most participants revealed that their P.A.T.H.S. instructors were very caring and they also know the students well, including their unique backgrounds (e.g., SES and specific needs). Some students enthusiastically expressed their views on this during the interviews:

*“Both social workers and teachers care about their students. For example, when they find the students are quiet and silent, they will approach them with concern about their situation; or they will deliberately invite us to answer their questions” (P7-male)*

*“I believe the social worker knows my situation well, as my mom keeps having communication with her. My mom suggested the social workers invite me to join their programs...The social worker understands my family situation and needs, she knows when I will need her helping hand” (P1-female)*

*“(Did the instructors care about the students?) In my school, definitely yes! We had a lot of discussion after class. The instructors not only cared about our studies, but also our daily lives...Since the Tier 1 Program was taught by our class masters, therefore they knew us very well. Unlike other lessons, we have a lot of interaction in P.A.T.H.S. lessons, so the teachers could understand us more and show their care and concern through interaction in class.” (P6-female)*

*“Yes, they really cared about us and so they prepared a lot of things for us in P.A.T.H.S....I am not sure if they know and understand everybody, but whenever they find us quiet and silent, they would intentionally approach us and offer help.” (P12-female)*

*“Personally, I believe that some of the instructors clearly know our background. As observed, they purposely arranged activities for students with similar backgrounds in Project P.A.T.H.S.” (P21-male)*

*“The instructors of P.A.T.H.S. did care and protect us. Once my classmate suffered a sprain in an activity and then he was well taken care of...At first, I thought my teachers would only challenge students, but actually they would greatly care about their students...In this program, I was really touched and grateful to have such instructors. They know my background and situation. Their care and comfort really made me melt and feel warm” (P22-male)*

*“My teachers care about me very much. At that time, I was a new immigrant and I think it was quite sensitive. I did not tell them, but they kept asking me individually, like “how’s life in Hong Kong? Did your classmates treat you badly?” At that time, I felt warmth and I treasured the intimate teacher-student relationship, in which I did not have any similar experience before...Their care and concern facilitated me to communicate with the people in the classroom as well as the school” (P27-female)*

To sum up, based on the findings, it is clear that the instructors of the Project P.A.T.H.S. played a significant role in facilitating the program’s implementation. It is observed here that both teachers and social workers used immediacy to enhance student motivation to learn and participate, so that the whole program could run smoothly. In addition, from the interviews, the participants impressed and surprised the researcher in that all had a very clear concept on the roles and work allocation between teachers and social workers. Most participants clearly outlined how the instructors worked together and collaborated in the implementation process.

#### **8.1.4 Qualitative findings related to the component of “Product” (CIPP)**

With reference to the integrative evaluation model, product evaluation equals outcome evaluation in Kirkpatrick’s model. It focuses on three major directions, including “learning and

effectiveness” (examine the learning effects, perceived benefits and influences that Project P.A.T.H.S. brought to the poor participants), “behavior and transportability” (investigate the perceived changes of participants after participation in the Project and explore the application of what they learned in P.A.T.H.S. over time and knowledge transfer) and “results and sustainability” (examine if the perceived changes of the participants occurred because of the Project and if those changes are good enough to be sustained over time). Overall, this part focuses on investigation of the overall effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S. and the perceived benefits and changes of the poor participants. With a specific concern on poverty, the researcher will examine the impact of P.A.T.H.S. on the poor adolescents.

#### *8.1.4.1 “Learning and effectiveness” - evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage on the perceived benefits after completion of the Project*

For the perceived benefits gained in the program, few questions were asked in the interview to allow participant to have free elicitation and invite them to share the gains and benefits received from the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs. To refresh their memories, a document was provided for reference that detailed the content, themes and topics of the P.A.T.H.S. program. Almost all the poor participants (N=30) agreed that they have gained and benefited from the Project P.A.T.H.S.. Similar to the previous qualitative analyses, all meaningful responses regarding the gains and benefits were further decoded from the raw data. Table 8.7 shows the results, which involved 140 positive raw narratives that were categorized into 14 domains, referring to 13 core components and constructs covered in the Project P.A.T.H.S..

From the results in Table 8.7, it can be seen that most student participants found significant benefits and enhancement in their social competence (N=37, 26.4%) and resilience (N=23, 16.4%). Regarding the reliability checking, the percentage of intra-rater agreement was 100% and the inter-rater agreement percentage between the rater and another research assistant

was 94%. Table 8.2 shows the summary of the reliability checks for the categorization of coding in the interviews.

#### *8.1.4.2 “Behavior and transportability” - self-appraisal of program participants with economic disadvantage on the perceived changes*

In addition to examining the perceived benefits of the disadvantaged participants, the current study also examined the self-evaluation of participants’ perceived changes. To this end, few questions were asked, “Do you think the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” has changed you? What are the perceived changes? Is the change positive or negative?”. Based on the findings, a total of 27 participants (87.1%) expressed that they found the program useful in their lives and there are positive changes observed. No one indicated that there was a negative change after participation of the Project. Four participants (12.9%) mentioned that there is no obvious change in them. Concerning these four participants, they explained in the interviews that they were reluctant to take part in any developmental programs in school that they chose not to get involved in. Therefore, they reported that no obvious change was made during the process. Based on what they shared, the researcher questioned them about their thoughts, all then admitted that although their participation was not active, they were already less reluctant and became more engaged in a progressive way throughout their 3-year participation.

With reference to the indicators of adolescent growth (i.e., 7 “C”s) identified by Shek and Siu (2007), consistent with the steps stated in Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.3.1, all meaningful responses highlighting the perceived changes were further decoded from the raw data. Table 8.8 shows the results, which involved 102 positive raw narratives that were further incorporated and categorized into six higher-level elements, i.e., the social-emotional competency-constructs (Confidence, Character, Connection, Competence, Compassion, Caring and Contribution), based on the definitions provided by Shek and Siu (2007).



Originally, there are seven socio-emotional competencies (7 “C”s), as terminal indicators. However, with reference to the collected responses and based on the definition of the seven competencies, no response could be categorized under “Caring” (refers to the enrichment in prosocial involvement and prosocial norms). Therefore, this study only utilizes the 6 “C”s to categorize the responses. Among the 102 responses from the students, many found that they have positive and significant changes in their characters (N=46, 45.1%). In this section, the percentage of intra-rater agreement was 100% and the inter-rater agreement percentage between the rater and another research assistant was also 100%. The summary of the reliability checks for the categorization of coding in the interviews is shown in Table 8.2.

As revealed in the interviews, most poor participants asserted a positive influence from the project P.A.T.H.S.. According to their feedback, some of their changes are very obvious, as the people (e.g., teachers and classmates) surrounding them also witnessed their positive changes. Concerning the factors affecting the changes of the poor participants, many mentioned that the change process is quite natural and progressive. Nevertheless, they reflected that a clear watershed of changes was witnessed. For example, five shared that their turning points were in secondary 2 and 3, after joining the P.A.T.H.S. project:

*“I changed a lot in secondary 2 as I could apply what I had learned in the activities. In secondary 1, social workers solely provided a lot of information and built good relationships with us. However, later in S2, I worked with them to serve the community. (Have you found that you have changed a lot?) Yes!! Also, the teachers commented that I had changed to be more active and positive.” (P1-female)*

*“I have changed since secondary 2...that I had started to join the Tier 2 Program, which was a clear defining moment.” (P10-male)*

*“It should have happened in secondary 2 and 3. At that time, there were many outdoor activities...and I found that the overnight camps were very critical in the Tier 2 Program. Since I was required to talk and share a lot in the activities, if I could not manage it, I would hinder the whole discussion and sharing process. Gradually, I found that I could accomplish the tasks well and I do believe that I have the abilities and competence to do so...I believe that this is a big influence from P.A.T.H.S.!...Due to the P.A.T.H.S. experience in secondary 2, I met many new friends in secondary 3 and I tried to be the committee members in my own class. In the past, I dare not do this and contribute, but because of the P.A.T.H.S. experiences, I took the initiative to help lead the class in the related activities” (P12-female)*

*“In secondary 1 and 2, P.A.T.H.S. was the only program which could teach and equip me with these kind of abilities. Also, after joining the P.A.T.H.S. activities, I gradually found that I already owned those competences...Although there was no formal training, all those messages and skills had been completely digested in me.” (P17-female)*

*“The changes happened in secondary 2...I was surprised that I could understand and face my own problems and find the way out by participating in the activities...At that time, I was very worried to answer questions in front of the teachers, but they kindly discussed and shared with me how they felt, and kept inviting me to try...I was inspired to have a deeper self-understanding!” (P24-male)*

Indeed, most poor participants shared similar factors that were conducive to their positive changes. Factors like teachers, social workers, content of the Tier 1 Program, actual experience in the Tier 2 Program, peers repeatedly mentioned these factors. With reference to the discussion in Sections 8.1.3.2, 8.1.3.3 and 8.1.3.5, the 3 “Ps”, **P**rogram, **P**rocess and **P**eople are importance factors affecting the positive change of poor young people.

#### *8.1.4.3 “Behavior and transportability” - the impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S. on adolescents experiencing poverty*

In this study, one major focus is to examine if the Project P.A.T.H.S. could help those experiencing economic disadvantage. As such, several questions were asked in the latter part of the interview, with the aim of examining what impact the program would have for this specific population. Concerning the views towards poverty and its impact, many participants did not feel comfortable sharing their detailed judgement. The researcher of this study asked three key questions to collect more information: (1) “After completion of the project P.A.T.H.S., have you changed your views towards poor life? Why?”; (2) “Do you think the P.A.T.H.S. program could help you deal with the impact of poverty?”; (3) “When you have to face and deal with the difficulties and pressures of poor life, what lessons and skills learned in P.A.T.H.S. could help? What are they?”. Overall, a number of participants were still hesitant and refused to answer these sensitive questions related to their own poverty situation, especially when they realized that repeated and similar questions would be asked. The possible reasons were that they were not familiar with the researcher and they perceived those questions to be embarrassing during a first meeting. Therefore, although the researcher tried different ways and strategies to invite the participants to share, selective and inexplicit answers were given for most of the related questions. Approximately, only half of the student participants shared their views and thoughts on this:

*“The teachers taught us not to compare our family situation with others, as different families have different stories...There is no need to think or compare too much, and with a negative perspective” (P3-female)*

*“I think the program is useful, whenever I encounter something bad (related to poverty), I won’t only focus on the negative side, and try my best to be more optimistic.” (P9-female)*

*“P.A.T.H.S. cannot subsidize me directly, so it can’t change my physical difficulties... but it somehow changed my mind. I can give myself a better answer. Even though I don’t have enough money to have activities outside, I can choose to stay at home, with a positive and peaceful thought.” (P10-male)*

*“I have learned not to care too much about my family situation, never believe that I am falling behind. True, if people are rich, they may have more exposure. Even though I am poor, I can still have a lot of good things to enjoy like sharing with my brother freely, enjoying the farming experience. Sometimes, I can possess something that rich people can’t experience and understand...in the past, I used to blame my parents that they gave me a bad and restricted life, but now (after completion of P.A.T.H.S.), I will think of the another side, such as if all the families and parents are the same, I would not have different life experiences, and so I can’t be a unique person now.” (P12-female)*

*“I understand myself in a deeper way, and I found that I am a socially competent person...I recalled that they taught me how to have better wealth management, so I am now good at budgeting.” (P14-female)*

*“P.A.T.H.S. program is like the wings to help me to fly into the sky...I learned how to use different angles to perceive things. Without P.A.T.H.S., I will only have a single perspective and cannot understand the comprehensive and have a fuller picture of the surrounding.” (P19-male)*

*“Now I find myself a happy guy even though I am poor...The program is useful, I was taught how to get on the right track to consume, and now I can spend wisely and won’t be easily affected by my friends.” (P24-male)*

*“I found that I have a positive and clear identity after joining the P.A.T.H.S. program. I will not care much how others perceive me, even if I am under poverty...I understand how should I choose and judge. I really think that P.A.T.H.S. program is useful to me.” (P27-female)*

*“Originally, I think people will look down upon me as I am poor. But after joining the P.A.T.H.S. activities, I found that my thoughts were wrong and poverty is not related to my own abilities.” (P24-male)*

Based on the above findings, the majority of the participants expressed positive effects from the Project P.A.T.H.S.. However, it did not demonstrate tremendous power to change the mindsets or beliefs of the poor adolescents towards poverty, or help them to manage the negative impact of poverty. Nevertheless, after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S., many poor students admitted that they found the project useful and beneficial to their socio-psychological growth

and development. The following exemplary case is a good example to explain this point in this study:

*Exemplary case in the interview (participant No. 20, “P19”-male)*

Among the 31 cases, the case of this gentleman is highly remarkable. In the interview, he positively shared how he loved the Project P.A.T.H.S. and how it changed his life. From his narrative, the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs greatly strengthened his self-confidence, facilitated his identity exploration and stimulated him to think about his future. In particular, because of the experience from the Tier 2 program, he was aspired and became more certain about his career of becoming a fireman. During the interview, he shared his concrete plans on how he would like to achieve his goal. From his narratives, it is clear that optimism, hope and aspiration were constructively instilled in him through opportunities to explore and demonstrate his strengths, competence and potential in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs:

*“For example, how to effectively communicate with others, how to choose the good over the bad, the right over the wrong, the pursuit of my dreams...Three years ago, I had no clear goal, but now, I have one, and I will move towards it...there was a big enhancement in “BF”- positive beliefs in the future. In the past, I did nothing for myself (no life goal in the past), even though I might have dreams, I didn’t take any action...now I would like to be a fireman, and currently I am working hard for it...I now have high persistence and won’t give up my dream easily”.*

*8.1.4.4 “Results and sustainability” - the application of what poor adolescents learned in the program to real life contexts*

In this study, the researcher wanted to know more about how the poor participants would apply what they learned in P.A.T.H.S. to their real life and if the application was sustained. Therefore, they were invited to share their actual experiences and examples regarding this. Among the 31 participants, 26 (83.9%) asserted that after participating in the Project P.A.T.H.S., the knowledge and skills learned are very helpful and practical to their real-life contexts. They are clear that the perceived changes in them are through participation in the Project P.A.T.H.S.. They also claim that the benefits gained could be maintained sustainably and the changes perceived could be sustained successfully. The application of knowledge and skills consists of two levels: intra- and interpersonal levels. Participants elaborate on the intrapersonal level:

*“I will use the strategies taught when I have to manage my stress.” (P3-female)*

*“P.A.T.H.S. taught me how to manage my emotions, I found it very useful...That was my first time to learn those skills in P.A.T.H.S., they are still very useful currently” (P6-female)*

*“From time to time, I still apply my critical thinking skills in analyzing if the messages received are accurate or not, I will consider further...” (P7-male)*

*“For example, how to effectively communicate with others, how to choose the good over the bad, the right over the wrong, the pursuit of my dreams...Three years ago, I have no clear goal, but now, I have one, and I will move towards to it” (P19-male)*

*“It’s applicable, for example, know how to understand other’s feelings, demonstrate better interpersonal skills, know how to take good care of my own appearance and how*

*to improve myself...will consider my own spirituality and won't be too impulsive" (P23-male)*

*"Learn to be more considerate and won't be too egocentric. Before taking action I will ask for others' opinion and collect their views...Now, I think my emotional management has improved a lot, as compared to secondary 1 and 2" (P26-male)*

*"I am still using the skills that I learned in P.A.T.H.S. to manage my negative emotions and to relax" (P29-male)*

Regarding the interpersonal level, a number of participants narrated that:

*"Yes, it is still applicable, especially when I live with the elderly, I can apply what I have learned. I know how to express my care and concern. Besides, I also make use of the skills regarding interpersonal communication when I communicate with my classmates. My current social network is much better than before." (P1-female)*

*"I will use the strategies taught when I have to manage my stress...P.A.T.H.S. taught me how to refuse my classmates assertively and effectively" (P3-female)*

*"Whenever my mom returns home, I know that she should be tired, so I will do massage for her...I found that I can still achieve what I have just said (keep showing care to them and considering their feelings)...for now, I know how to identify who are genuine friends or bad friends, and I also tell myself to demonstrate much love and care to my family and show my understanding" (P9-female)*



*“Definitely helpful and applicable! Other than joining the Project P.A.T.H.S., I also participate in other similar activities. Since I have learned the knowledge and skills in P.A.T.H.S., now I can make good use of my knowledge to teach and assist others” (P21-male)*

*“In the past, I was very self-centered, but now, after joining the P.A.T.H.S., I know how to cooperate with others, how to listen to others and use the skills I learned, until now!” (P28-male)*

*“Yes, for example, I currently can now make good use of my leadership abilities and know how to communicate with others.” (P30-male)*

In summary, participants generally perceived the program positively and the applicability and sustainability of the program also in a positive manner, as they found the beneficial effects sustainable. Again, most participants admitted that their perceived changes were due to their participation in the Project P.A.T.H.S..

### **8.1.5 Concluding remarks**

#### *Cases with negative feedback and comments*

The qualitative findings from the interviews were positive and constructive in nature. Although there are four cases with negative comments in which the Project P.A.T.H.S. was not well received, these four participants nevertheless agree that the program itself is beneficial for adolescents in some ways. While they perceived themselves not suitable to join this kind of youth enhancement program due to their personality and interests, they admitted that many

youth need this kind of developmental program to facilitate their growth. Although their views were somehow confusing, their thoughts and opinions were accepted and respected. Taking everything into account, there is no typical negative case observed in this study.

### Overall observation

Based on the perspectives of young people experiencing poverty, the following observations can be highlighted from the interview findings: (1) the overall impression towards the Project P.A.T.H.S. is positive; (2) responses towards the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs are solely optimistic and constructive; (3) poor participants had very positive perceptions of the program implementers, especially for the Tier 2 Program; (4) many participants regarded the program as helpful and beneficial in different psychosocial domains; (5) explicit changes were perceived by the participants due to the positive influence of the Project P.A.T.H.S.; (6) knowledge and skills learned in P.A.T.H.S. are applicable and practical to the real-life contexts of the poor participants. The application of knowledge and skills consists of intra- and interpersonal levels; and (7) poor participants perceived that they had acquired competencies at personal, familial, interpersonal and societal levels after participating in the Project.

## **8.2 Evaluation Findings of the Repertory Grid Tests (“Transportability” in the CIPP**

### **Model and “Behavior” in Kirkpatrick’s Model)**

To undertake the outcome evaluation of the integrative evaluation model and to further triangulate the results from the individual interviews, students’ perceptions on their changes were examined. With the use of the repertory grid tests, one major research question was addressed: “What are the perceived changes in participants after completion of the Project?”. This aimed to examine the “behavior” and “transportability” in the integrative evaluation model, in which the perceived changes of participants were investigated after having joined the Project P.A.T.H.S.

for three years. This test was subsequently conducted after each individual in-depth interview to further examine participants' perceptions of their SIS, based on personal construct theory.

### **8.2.1 The instrument used in the tests**

As described in the previous chapter and revisited here to serve as a reminder, a grid form was specifically developed (see Appendix 4) for the test. The following ten predefined elements were supplied to elicit the constructs, regarding the SIS of the program participants experiencing poverty:

- Element 1: Self before joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. (past self)
- Element 2: Self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. for 2 years (present self)
- Element 3: Self at high school graduation (future self)
- Element 4: Ideal self
- Element 5: Father or surrogate father
- Element 6: Mother or surrogate mother
- Element 7: A best friend
- Element 8: Peer group - a successful peer experiencing poverty

Element 9: Peer group – an unsuccessful (peer) loser experiencing poverty

- Element 10: A successful and influential person

With the aim of identifying the participants' constructs, ten constructs were elicited from triads, which involved selecting groups of three elements from the full list of elements. Through a continuous comparison of the elements, participants were encouraged to name the differences and similarities between the three elements. This test procedure then produced two contrasting poles for the construct. After determining all bipolar constructs, participants were

then asked to rank each of the elements (on a 6-point scale) in relation to the constructs suggested. Considering that the poor participants may sometimes have difficulties in eliciting the constructs, therefore, two pairs of supplied constructs were added and provided. Finally, all ratings were entered into a matrix (i.e., 10 elements by 12 constructs).

### **8.2.2 Expected outcomes of the personal constructs**

The repertory grid tests was used in an evaluation study (Shek, 2012a) to evaluate the effectiveness of Project P.A.T.H.S., by examining the self-identity changes of program participants after joining the program. With reference to this study, the following five expected outcomes were derived, which related to the construing of the self and others:

- **Expectation 1**

After joining Project P.A.T.H.S. for three years, it was expected that the participants would have positive changes and thus the perceived present self (after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S) would be seen as relatively closer to one's ideal self. Therefore, it was hypothesized that the mean distance between "Element 2" and "Element 4" would be shorter than that between "Element 1" and "Element 4"

- **Expectation 2**

After joining Project P.A.T.H.S. for three years, it was expected that the participants would have positive changes and thus the perceived present self (after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S) would be seen as more similar to a successful peer experiencing poverty. Therefore, it was hypothesized that the mean distance between "Element 2" and "Element 8" would be shorter than that between "Element 1" and "Element 8"

- Expectation 3

Contrary to the above Expectation 2, after joining Project P.A.T.H.S. for three years, it was expected that the participants would have positive changes and thus the perceived present self (after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S) would be seen as more dissimilar and different to a peer loser experiencing poverty. Therefore, it was hypothesized that the mean distance between “Element 2” and “Element 9” would be longer than that between “Element 1” and “Element 9”

- Expectation 4

After joining Project P.A.T.H.S. for three years, it was expected that the participants would have positive changes and thus the perceived present self (after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S) would be seen as similar and closer to a person who is successful and influential. Therefore, it was hypothesized that the mean distance between “Element 2” and “Element 10” would be shorter than that between “Element 1” and “Element 10”

- Expectation 5

For the two pairs of supplied constructs: “appreciate oneself” versus “does not appreciate oneself”, and “good resilience” versus “poor resilience”, it was expected that the participants would have positive changes after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S and thus Element 2 would have higher mean ratings in the constructs of “appreciate oneself” and “good resilience” when compared with Element 1.

### **8.2.3 Results of the grid measures**

#### *8.2.3.1 Group analyses of the grid data*

In the present study, a total of 31 economically disadvantaged students who had participated in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs were invited to complete the grids. Each grid finding was computer-analyzed using the INGRID 72 package (Slater, 1972), based on principal component analysis. The statistical program generated various measures for the examination of the relations between elements and constructs and the distances between the pairs of elements and locates the greatest variation in the grid.

To investigate the perceived changes of the poor participants after joining Project P.A.T.H.S., differences in the distances between different pairs of elements were assessed. Distances between the pairs of elements refer to the psychological distances perceived. In the output of the INGRID analysis, one of the sections could report the distance calculation, with a minimum value of 0 and a mean of 1; it is rare for this value to exceed 2. Based on this value, we could understand the perceived psychological space of the person and it could portray the similarity and/or dissimilarity between elements. The bigger the value means the greater perceived differences between the pair of elements, which means these elements are perceived as disparate in the psychological space of the individual. A value between 0.8 and 1.2 is usually considered neither particularly close nor particularly distant (Axford & Jerrom, 1986). In addition, a series of paired t-tests were conducted in order to examine the statistical differences between pairs of inter-element distances. The results demonstrated statistically significant changes (see Table 8.9). Based on the group analyses of the 31 cases, all the expected outcomes stated in the aforementioned section were supported.

The perceived present self of the poor participants is seen as more similar to their ideal self, which means the poor participants perceived themselves as more positive after completion of the program. This is taken as supporting the Expected Outcome 1. Based on the group analyses, it was found that the mean distance between Element 1 (the past self, i.e., the self before joining Project P.A.T.H.S.) and Element 4 (ideal self) was clearly longer than the mean

distance between Element 2 (the present self, i.e., the self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.) and Element 4 (ideal self): mean distance = 1.36 versus 0.82;  $t(31) = 8.216$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; effect size = 1.86.

The perceived present self of the poor participants is seen as more similar to the successful peers experiencing poverty, after completion of the program, which means the poor adolescents psychologically recognized themselves as successful, like those successful peers although experiencing economic disadvantage. This is taken as supporting the Expected Outcome 2. Based on the analyses, it is observed here that the mean distance between Element 1 (the past self, i.e., the self before joining Project P.A.T.H.S.) and Element 8 (successful peers experiencing poverty) was comparatively longer than the mean distance between Element 2 (the present self, i.e., the self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.) and Element 8: mean distance = 1.08 versus 0.85;  $t(31) = 3.463$ ,  $p < 0.002$ ; effect size = 0.92.

The perceived present self of the poor participants is seen as more dissimilar to the peer losers experiencing poverty, after completion of the program, which means the adolescents with economic disadvantage currently did not recognize themselves as losers, although they are experiencing poverty. This is taken as supporting the Expected Outcome 3. Based on the analyses, it is observed that the mean distance between Element 1 (the past self, i.e., the self before joining Project P.A.T.H.S.) and Element 9 (a peer loser experiencing poverty) was significantly shorter than the mean distance between Element 2 (the present self, i.e., the self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.) and Element 9: mean distance = 0.85 versus 1.17;  $t(31) = -5.500$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ; effect size = 1.22.

The perceived present self of the poor participants is seen as more similar to the people who are successful and influential, after completion of the program, which means the poor adolescents psychologically recognized themselves as successful and influential in general. This is taken as supporting the Expected Outcome 4. Based on the group analyses, it is observed that

the mean distance between Element 1 (the past self, i.e., the self before joining Project P.A.T.H.S.) and Element 10 (a successful and influential person) was significantly longer than the mean distance between Element 2 (the present self, i.e., the self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.) and Element 10: mean distance = 1.23 versus 0.89;  $t(31) = 6.232, p < 0.001$ ; effect size = 1.23.

On the other hand, consistent with the previously expected outcomes, the comparison and analyses of the supplied constructs clearly indicated that the self-perception of the poor participants were seen to have positively changed after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.. This is taken as supporting the Expected Outcome 5. This shows that these poor participants psychologically identified themselves as more resilient (mean = 2.68, before joining Project P.A.T.H.S., and mean = 4.42, after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.;  $t(31) = -11.342, p < 0.0001$ ; effect size = 1.9). In addition, this group of poor adolescents are more willing to appreciate oneself after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. (mean = 2.97, before joining Project P.A.T.H.S., and mean = 3.74, after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.;  $t(31) = -2.965, p < 0.0001$ ; effect size = 0.619).

Overall, the findings are positive and the research question: “What are the changes in the participants after completion of the project?” could be partly answered with reference to the findings. This showed that there were positive changes in the poor adolescents after they participated in the Project P.A.T.H.S.. For instance, it was observed that they identified more with their ideal self and successful people but less with peer losers.

#### *8.2.3.2 Individual analyses of the grid data: four exemplar cases*

As revealed in the individual interviews, most participants perceived the Project P.A.T.H.S. as positive and beneficial. Since the repertory grid can be regarded as an instrument to evaluate the different dimensions of an individual's thoughts (i.e., the constructs), which can



be used to describe and interpret the meaning of oneself, other people, objects and any particular experience (i.e., the elements), the data obtained from the repertory grid method is rich enough to examine an individual's construct system. Therefore, additional to the above group analyses, individual analyses could help examine the positive changes in the participants experiencing poverty. In the following, four exemplar cases (out of 31 economically disadvantaged students) showing clear and drastic positive changes are presented for further illustration:

*Exemplary Case 1 (participant No. 2, "P2-male)*

Table 8.10 shows significant changes in the self-perception of the participant after he completed the 3-year Project P.A.T.H.S., as the ratings given in the grid between Element 1 and Element 2 are very different. Before joining the program (Element 1), he perceived himself in a negative way, such as having undesirable characteristics including being too imaginative but subjective, lack of foresight, indolent and calculating. He reflected that he did not generally appreciate himself (see Table 8.10). However, based on the grid data of Element 2, there are positive perceived changes in him and the overall evaluation is more positive than before. For example, he perceived that he currently possesses some constructive qualities and attributes such as easygoing, persistent, objective, passionate, not calculating and resilient.

According to the first and anchoring factor of the principal component analyses, Figure 8.1 shows the participant's perceptions of the different elements in his own psychological space. It can be used to visually examine the distances between different elements within the participant's grid. The principal component analyses can also highlight and elaborate the self-perception and the perceived changes in the participant in relation to the constructs and elements in his grid. With such results, it is believed that the self-perception of the participant had greatly changed in a positive way after joining and

completing the Project P.A.T.H.S.. These results also echoes the findings in the individual interview, that the participant clearly stated the benefits gained from Project P.A.T.H.S. and his perceived positive changes in relation to his participation in the program.

In particular, it is observed that the participant construed his past self as similar to the “peer loser experiencing poverty”. After completion of the project P.A.T.H.S., his present- and past- self are construed very differently (the distance indicates that the two elements are very dissimilar). He tried to identify himself with the future self and ideal self, but not with the peer loser. Also, the distance of his present self and future self are becoming closer to his ideal self, this may mean that he has a positive desire to have continuous change. This can be explained by the figures in the distances. To summarize, the findings of this individual grid demonstrate the positive and remarkable changes in the self-perception of the participant, before and after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S..

*Exemplary Case 2 (participant No. 19, “P19-male”)*

Table 8.11 shows remarkable changes in the self-perception of the participant after he completed the 3-year Project P.A.T.H.S., as the ratings given in the grid between Element 1 and Element 2 are highly different. Before joining the program (Element 1), he perceived himself in a very negative way, such as having some undesirable and unwanted characteristics including enjoyment gaining petty advantages, easily gives up, without having life goals and indomitable. He admitted that he generally did not appreciate himself (see Table 8.11). Nevertheless, referring to the grid data of Element 2, there are apparent and positive perceived changes in his overall evaluation, which is much positive than before. For example, he perceived that he currently possesses some constructive

qualities and attributes, such as having clear life goals, persistent, easy-going, organized and planned, and not greedy.

According to the first and anchoring factor of the principal component analyses, Figure 8.2 shows the participant's perceptions of the different elements in his psychological space. This can be used to visually examine the distances between different elements within the participant's grid. With such results, it is believed that the self-perception of the participant had greatly changed in a positive way after joining and completing the Project P.A.T.H.S.. The results also echo the findings in the individual interview (this case is also the exemplary case in the previous section), in that the participant clearly stated the benefits gained from Project P.A.T.H.S. and his perceived positive changes in relation to participation in the program. In particular, it is observed in Figure 8.2 that the participant construed his past self in a very negative way, even worse than the "peer loser experiencing poverty". After completion of the project P.A.T.H.S., his present- and past-self are construed in a very different and opposite way (the distance indicates that the two elements are very dissimilar). It is observed here that he identified herself with his future self, ideal self and a successful peer experiencing poverty, but not with the peer loser anymore. Also, the distance between his present self and future self are becoming closer to his ideal self, this may mean that he has a positive desire to have continuous change and his self-appreciation and self-acceptance has changed in a positive way. To summarize, the findings of this individual grid also demonstrate the positive and remarkable changes in the self-perception of the participant, before and after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S..

*Exemplary Case 3 (participant No. 25, “P25-male”)*

Table 8.12 shows significant changes in the self-perception of the participant after he had completed the 3-year Project P.A.T.H.S., as the ratings given in the grid between Element 1 and Element 2 are quite different. Before joining the program (Element 1), he perceived himself in a destructive way, such as having some undesirable characteristics including irritable, opinionated, lazy, without having life goals and passive. However, based on the grid data of Element 2, there are some positive perceived changes in him and the overall evaluation is more positive than previously. For example, he perceived that he presently owns some positive qualities and attributes such as being accommodating, having clear life goals and reflective. Although he still evaluated himself as an irritable and rough person, a more positive and improved rating can be seen.

Furthermore, according to the first and anchoring factor of the principal component analyses, Figure 8.3 shows the participant’s perceptions of the different elements in his psychological space. As discussed in the previous cases, having such results in the line graph could indicate that the self-perception of the participant had changed in a positive way after joining and completing the Project P.A.T.H.S.. These results also echo the findings in the individual interview, in that the participant clearly stated the benefits gained from Project P.A.T.H.S. and his perceived positive changes in relation to his participation in the program.

Similar to the previous two cases, it was found that the participant construed his past self as similar as to the “peer loser experiencing poverty”. This implies that he may have the intention to perceive himself as a loser. However, after completion of the project P.A.T.H.S., his present- and past- self are construed very differently as the distance indicates that the two elements are very dissimilar. He therefore tried to identify himself with his future self and a successful peer who is also experiencing poverty, but not with

the peer loser anymore. In addition, the distance between his present self and future self are becoming closer to his ideal self, this may mean that he has a positive desire to have continuous change. To summarize, the findings of this individual grid demonstrate the positive and remarkable changes in the self-perception of the participant, before and after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S..

*Exemplary Case 4 (participant No. 31, “P31-male”)*

As shown in Table 8.13, this participant perceived himself as having huge changes after completing the 3-year Project P.A.T.H.S., as the ratings given in the grid between Element 1 and Element 2 are very different. Before joining the program (Element 1), he perceived himself in a negative way, such as having some undesirable characteristics including being too generous, without clear life goals, bad-tempered, indecisive and dependent. He reflected that he did not appreciate himself in general and he was not a resilient person (see Table 8.13). However, based on the grid data of Element 2, there are positive perceived changes in him and the overall evaluation is more positive than before. For example, he perceived that he currently possesses some constructive qualities and attributes such as having clear life goals, decisive, independent, sociable and emotionally stable.

Furthermore, according to the first and anchoring factor of the principal component analyses, Figure 8.4 shows the participant’s perceptions of the different elements in his psychological space. As shown in the line graph, it is believed that the self-perception of the participant changed in a positive way after joining and completing the Project P.A.T.H.S.. These results also mirror the findings in the individual interview, in that the participant clearly stated the benefits gained from Project P.A.T.H.S. and his perceived positive changes in relation to his participation in the program.

Similar to the previous two cases, it was found that this participant construed his past self as similar to the “peer loser experiencing poverty”, as the distance between these two elements is extremely close. This implies that he may have the intention to perceive himself as a loser. Nevertheless, after completion of the project P.A.T.H.S., his present- and past- self are construed very differently as the distance indicates that the two elements are very dissimilar. He thus tried to identify himself with his future self and a successful peer who was also experiencing poverty, but not with the peer loser anymore. Additionally, the evaluation of his present self is even better than the successful peer and the successful person he knows. This may imply that the current self-appraisal of this participant is very optimistic.

In addition, the distance between his present self and future self are getting closer to his ideal self, this may mean that he has a positive desire to have continuous change. To sum up, the findings of this individual grid demonstrate the positive and remarkable changes in the self-perception of the participant, before and after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S..

#### *8.2.3.3 Concluding remarks*

Based on the perspectives of young people experiencing poverty, the following observations can be drawn from the findings of the repertory grid tests: (1) There were positive changes in the poor adolescents after they participated in the Project; (2) Many poor participants identified themselves more with their ideal self; (3) Many poor participants identified themselves more with successful peers experiencing poverty; (4) They identified themselves more with successful and influential people; (5) They psychologically identified themselves as being more resilient after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.; (6) They are

more willing to appreciate themselves; (7) A number of poor participants identified themselves less with peer losers after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S..

### **8.3 Evaluation Findings of the Subjective Outcome Evaluation Questionnaires (CSOES-A and CSOES-C) (“Impact” in the CIPP Model and “Reaction” in Kirkpatrick’s Model)**

Apart from collecting the views of 31 economically disadvantaged individuals, to serve as methodological triangulation, the Subjective Outcome Evaluation Questionnaire (Form A, CSOES-A and Form C, CSOES-C) was used as the third component of the current study. CSOES-A is a 36-item questionnaire whereas CSOES-C is a 24-item questionnaire. This is also a “product” evaluation to investigate the “impact” in the CIPP model and “reaction” in Kirkpatrick’s model to learn more about the effectiveness and impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S..

This section is in three parts. First, the profile of the study sample will be reported. Second, the psychometric properties of the instruments for subjective outcome evaluation will be described. The third part will present the major findings addressing the research questions. With the use of the Subjective Outcome Evaluation Questionnaire, the following two research questions will be addressed: (1) “What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the program, instructors and benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?” (2) “What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the perceived benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?”.

#### **8.3.1 Profile of the study sample in the subjective outcome evaluation**

As discussed in the previous chapter and as shown in Table 8.14, the sample for the quantitative study consisted of 572 S5 students, including those 31 research participants experiencing poverty. These 572 respondents were recruited from eight secondary schools and

invited to complete a questionnaire in an anonymous manner. All invited students completed the questionnaire and thus the response rate was 100%. Among the respondents, 298 were female (52.1%) and 260 were male (45.5%). The majority age ranged from 17 to 18 (88.6%). Concerning the economic status of the respondents, they were asked to indicate if their families were the recipients of CSSA. The results show that 44 participants (out of 572) were receiving CSSA (7.7%), 514 did not receive CSSA and 14 had missing data. In terms of STA, there were 147 students (out of 572) receiving the full grant (25.7%) and 115 students (out of 572) receiving half the grant (20.1%) while 296 students did not receive any subsidy (54.2%). Regarding participation in the Tier 2 Program of the Project P.A.T.H.S., roughly one third of the respondents (N=203, 35.5%) acknowledged they had joined the program in S1, S2 and S3. Table 8.14 summarizes the background demographic information of all 572 respondents.

### **8.3.2 Instruments used in the quantitative study and the psychometric properties of the scales**

In this study, two validated subjective outcome evaluation scales, i.e., the Chinese Subjective Outcome Evaluation Scales (CSOES-A and CSOES-C) (see Appendix 5), were used to measure the subjective program outcomes of the program participants with and without economic disadvantage. As discussed previously in this chapter, these scales and questionnaires had been extensively and repeatedly used in different studies of the Project P.A.T.H.S. with excellent psychometric properties (Shek, Han, Lee, & Yu, 2014; Shek & Ma, 2014a; Shek & Sun, 2012b). As detailed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.4, the questionnaire CSOES-A consists of several parts, with the aim of assessing respondents' perceptions of the program, program implementers and the students' perceived effectiveness of the program. The degree to which the respondents agreed with the statement were listed on a 5-point/ 6-point Likert scale.



The alpha mean inter-item correlation and mean item-total correlation coefficients of the two subscales are presented in Table 8.15a and Table 8.15b. The internal consistency of the Chinese Subjective Outcome Evaluation Scales (CSOES-A and CSOES-C) was good. For the sub-scale CSOES-A, reliability analysis showed that it was internally consistent (see Table 8.15a), with good alpha values for the 10 items on the program content and qualities ( $\alpha = .938$ ), 10 items on program implementers ( $\alpha = .963$ ), and 16 items on students' perceived effectiveness of the Tier 1 Program ( $\alpha = .967$ ), and the total scale ( $\alpha = .975$ ). For the sub-scale CSOES-C, good reliability was also reported (Table 8.15b), including 8 items on the program qualities ( $\alpha = .957$ ), 8 items on program implementers ( $\alpha = .963$ ), 8 items on students' perceived effectiveness of the Tier 2 Program ( $\alpha = .964$ ), and the total scale ( $\alpha = .979$ ). In addition, the interrelationships among program qualities, implementer qualities and program effectiveness of both scales were also examined by correlation analyses. As indicated in Table 8.15a and Table 8.15b, correlation analyses show that the program qualities and implementer qualities were correlated with program effectiveness in both scales.

### **8.3.3 Program, Process and People - results on the Subjective Outcome Evaluation – perceptions of the program participants towards the 3-year Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs**

Descriptive statistics on the program participants' perceptions towards the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs are presented in Tables 8.16a to 8.18b. These tables portray the percentages of the positive responses of the program participants collected from CSOES-A and CSOES-C. The attention should go to (1) the responses from the whole sample of 572 respondents (including both poor and non-poor participants) from eight secondary schools; and (2) the responses from the 31 poor respondents who were the major targets in this study.

*The responses from the 572 respondents (including both poor and non- poor participants)*

Based on the overall findings of the three domains including the program qualities, implementer qualities as well as program effectiveness, several observations can be highlighted. First, concerning the program content and its qualities, it was found that a high proportion of respondents (including both poor and non-poor participants) had positive perceptions of the program content. The percentage of positive responses towards all items of program qualities was higher than 79.9%. In particular, the overall perception towards the Tier 2 Program was very good, 5 items (out of 8) were rated higher than 90%, including “On the whole, I was satisfied with the service.” (92.9%), “The activities were carefully planned.” (92.6%), “The quality of the service was high.” (91.0%), “I had much interaction with other participants.” (90.3 %) and “The service delivered could achieve the planned objectives.” (90%).

Second, as shown in Tables 8.17a and 8.17b, most respondents (including both poor and non-poor participants) had very positive evaluation of program instructors and implementers. The percentage of positive responses towards their performance was encouraging. Nearly all the items in this domain in both CSOES-A and CSOES-C were rated higher than 90%. In particular, it is shown that the professional knowledge, program preparation and attitudes of the program implementers were highly appreciated. For example, the item “The instructor(s) was ready to offer help to students when needed” was rated highest (93.2%) in the CSOES-A. In addition, the item “The worker(s) were well prepared for the program.” and “The worker(s)’ attitudes were very good” were rated highest (95.2% and 94.2% respectively) in the CSOES-C. In short, almost all respondents perceived the instructors implementing both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs in very positive and encouraging manner; even when they had already completed the Project P.A.T.H.S. for two years.

Third, concerning the program effectiveness of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, as indicated in Tables 8.18a and 8.18b, high proportions of respondents had very positive

evaluation. 87.2% of respondents perceived that the Tier 1 Program had enriched their overall development. Among the 15 individual PYD items in this domain in the CSOES-A, they were rated between 75.5% and 86.5% (see Table 8.18a). This clearly showed that many respondents perceived the Tier 1 Program as beneficial as it had promoted their personal growth and development in different aspects. Similarly, for the CSOES-C, the results showed that the Tier 2 Program was perceived positively by the program participants. Indeed, 86.1% of respondents indicated that the Tier 2 Program had enhanced their personal growth and 84.8% agreed that the program had helped them a lot. Remarkably, 80.0% of respondents perceived that their behavior had improved after joining the program and 78.1% would receive similar services if needed in the future. This showed that they were satisfied with the program as there were positive changes for them.

Fourth, with specific reference to the Tier 1 Program, three extra questions were asked to collect views from the whole sample (N=572), including both poor and non-poor participants. As shown in Table 8.19, this further revealed that the majority of respondents (including both poor and non-poor) had positive evaluation towards the Project. These findings provide additional support for the effectiveness of the Tier 1 Program of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in that respondents were satisfied with the program (Section 8.1.3.2). Among the whole sample (N=572), 59.4% of respondents (N=340) expressed that they were willing to participate in similar courses in the future. At the same time, 79.2% indicated that they would suggest their friends who share similar needs and conditions join the program. Furthermore, 90.6% of respondents gave positive responses and agreed that they were satisfied with the Tier 1 Program. Based on the above-mentioned results, it can be concluded that the majority of the participants (including both poor and non-poor participants) perceived the Project P.A.T.H.S. in a positive way and the program was well received.

### *The responses from the 31 poor respondents*

With reference to the findings of the research participants with economic disadvantage (N=31), similar results are observed in which the responses to the items in the three domains were generally positive (Tables 8.16a to 8.18b). This shows that respondents experiencing poverty also held more favorable perceptions of the program qualities, implementer qualities, as well as program effectiveness of the P.A.T.H.S. Project. These findings can partly answer the research question: “What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the program, instructors and benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?”. These results are also consistent with the findings collected in the individual in-depth interviews.

Since the use of the Subjective Outcome Evaluation Form is expected to address the research question: “What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the perceived benefits at a delayed time point after completion of the project?”, the comparison between the poor and non-poor adolescents could investigate the possible differences in long term impacts between-groups. Details are discussed in the next section.

### **8.3.4 Differences between participants with (N=191) or without economic disadvantage (N=381)**

As stated in Chapter Seven, section 7.3.4, one major hypothesis related to the Subjective Outcome Evaluation is that after joining Project P.A.T.H.S. for 3 years, it is expected that the poor participants would have more positive evaluation on the program, instructors and perceived benefits, as compared to the non-poor population. In this quantitative study, in order to have a more significant comparison between the poor and the non-poor population, the researcher not only focused on studying the 31 poor participants but also categorized all 572 respondents into two major groups, poor and non-poor groups. All current recipients of CSSA or full STA were

categorized as the poor group (N=191), including those 31 participants from the individual interviews. For the other respondents, they were categorized as the non-poor group (N=381).

Tables 8.20a and 8.20b present the mean scores of the different domains in both CSOES-A and CSOES-C. Based on these figures, it can be generally concluded that the respondents experiencing economic disadvantage had more positive perceptions towards the Tier 1 program compared to those without economic disadvantage. As shown in Table 8.20a, the poor participants rated the program qualities and implementers in a more positive way. They also perceived the program as more effective. Regarding the Tier 2 Program, as can be seen in the Table 8.20b, the poor participants held more positive views towards the Tier 2 Program, the program implementers and the instructors. However, the mean score of the perceived program effectiveness is slightly lower than the group without economic disadvantage.

To further assess the perception differences between the participants with or without economic disadvantage on the subjective outcome evaluation, several t-tests, one-way analysis of variances (ANOVAs) and one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVAs) were performed with the three major subjective outcome measures as dependent variables and SES as the independent variable, followed by post-hoc comparisons. Results of the t-tests, ANOVAs and MANOVAs indicate that there is no significant socioeconomic effect on the perceptions towards the three domains (i.e., the program content, implementer as well as effectiveness composite variable). Other than socioeconomic effects, sex and age differences were also examined. Similarly, the results showed that there is no statistically significant difference between these variables. Nevertheless, it can be concluded here that out of the 8 measures in Tables 8.20a and 8.20b, the trend of 7 measures were in the predicted direction. To further examine the associations between the poor group and the non-poor group, the chi-square tests and binomial sign tests were performed to examine the positive responses of all the 36 items in CSOES-A (Tables 8.21a to 8.21c) and 24 items in CSOES-C (Tables 8.22a to 8.22c)

individually. Although the results of the Chi Square tests found that there was no significant relationship between the two nominal variables (poor and non-poor groups) for most of the items, it is observed that the responses of the poor group were in a more positive direction as compared (indicated by the binomial sign tests). With reference to the findings in the comparison, several observations were identified:

#### Concerning the Tier 1 Program

- i. For the responses toward the program qualities, the poor participants have more positive evaluation (out of 10 items, eight of them have a higher percentage, see Table 8.21a) than those without economic disadvantage (binomial sign test,  $p = .0547$ ).
- ii. For the responses toward the program implementers, the poor participants have more positive evaluation (out of 10 items, all of them have a higher percentage, see Table 8.21b) than those without economic disadvantage (binomial sign test,  $p = .001$ ). In particular, the percentage of all 10 items were ranged from 91.3 % to 96%, which represented the poor participants were highly satisfied with the program implementers.
- iii. For the responses toward the overall perceived program effectiveness, the poor participants have more positive evaluation (out of 16 items, 11 of them have a higher percentage, see Table 8.21c) than those without economic disadvantage (binomial sign test,  $p = .1051$ ).

#### Concerning the Tier 2 Program

- i. For the responses toward the program qualities, the poor participants have more positive evaluation (out of 8 items, five of them have a higher percentage, see Table 8.22a) than those without economic disadvantage (binomial sign test,  $p = .3633$ ).

- ii. For the responses toward the program implementers, the poor participants have more positive evaluation (out of 8 items, all of them have a higher percentage, see Table 8.22b) than those without economic disadvantage (binomial sign test,  $p = .0039$ ). Specifically, the percentage of all 8 items were ranged from 88.3 % to 98.1%, which represented the poor participants were highly satisfied with the program implementers.
- iii. For the responses toward the overall perceived program benefits, the poor participants have more positive evaluation (out of 8 items, 6 of them have a higher percentage, see Table 8.22c) than those without economic disadvantage (binomial sign test,  $p = .1445$ ).

The quantitative data obtained from the non-poor adolescents demonstrated differences in their perceptions and the long-term impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S. between-groups, which partially support the hypothesis in this part of the study. Some results lend support to the notion that poor adolescents had more favorable perceptions of the Project. This conclusion is drawn solely based on the results of the binominal test findings. In particular, while having very positive responses, with reference to the significant results in the binomial tests, it showed that the poor participants have more positive evaluation of the Project P.A.T.H.S. program implementers than those without economic disadvantage. These positive findings are highly consistent with the findings in the 31 individual interviews.

### **8.3.5 Tier 2 Program is an important and influential factor**

From the statistical analyses, it is noteworthy that having participated in the Tier 2 Program is an important and influential factor. The results of the t-tests revealed a significant difference in the scores for participants (including poor and non-poor participants) with and without participation in Tier 2 Program. Details are shown in Table 8.23. The statistical difference on the three outcome variables of CSOES-A is highly significant, which means

participation in the Tier 2 Program did have an effect on the subjective outcome evaluation of the Tier 1 Program.

### **8.3.6 Concluding remarks**

In summary, based on the perspective of young people experiencing poverty, the following observations can be highlighted from the Subject Outcome Evaluation findings: (1) The majority of the participants (including the poor and the non-poor participants) perceived the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs in a positive way; (2) The poor participants have more positive evaluation on the program, instructors and perceived benefits, as compared to the non-poor population; (3) The poor participants perceived the implementers of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs in a very positive manner in particular. They were highly satisfied with the performance and attitudes of the program implementers; (4) The poor participants regarded the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs as helpful and beneficial for them; (5) The findings demonstrate the perceived effectiveness of the program from the perspectives of the poor participants, such as promotion of different psychosocial competencies and overall personal development; (6) Joining Tier 2 Program was a strong predictor of the perceived program effectiveness for the participants (including the poor and the non-poor participants).

## **8.4 Triangulation of the Findings Based on the Three Evaluative Components**

To gain a more appropriate understanding of the perception of the participants of the P.A.T.H.S. Project, multiple methods of data collection and data analyses were used in this study. Based on the concepts of Creswell (2013), the used of mixed methods are justified in this study because this approach could provide a clearer and more comprehensive view of the program evaluation and make for more adequate explanations. In addition, triangulation of data from different methods helps minimize those distortions from interpretation. This could provide a



more appropriate understanding of the research population (Creswell, 2013). According to Denzin's (2006) typology of triangulation, there are four different types of triangulation methods. They are: data triangulation (using various data sources to examine a phenomenon); methods triangulation (using multiple methods in a research); investigators triangulation (having multiple researchers collecting and understanding data); and theory triangulation (using multiple perspectives to interpret the findings). It is believed here that the use the triangulation in this study can neutralize the bias inherent in specific data sets, methods and investigators.

In this study, concurrent triangulation was conducted using multiple methods (including quantitative and qualitative methods) and data (quantitative and qualitative data). In addition, both quantitative and qualitative data were given similar priority, and interpretation of data aimed to cross-validate and validate the findings. For instance, if the findings obtained through qualitative data analysis (e.g., the interview data, grid measures) are consistent with the results obtained through quantitative analysis (i.e., the scale measures), it is argued here that the analysis and interpretation of this data is sound. With reference to all the evaluation findings, an overall summary is shown in Table 8.24.

All these findings from different methods provide the foundation to answer the research questions in this study. In the following, triangulation of data as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used. Indeed, all data collected using the three methods were merged for analyses. Observations found in any two or three were grouped and discussed respectively, with reference to the five specific research questions. These questions and corresponding research methods are shown in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3.5, Table 7.2.

#### **8.4.1 Merged findings addressing research question 1: *“What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the program and instructors at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?”***

For this research question, two research methods, a subjective outcome evaluation questionnaire (N=31) and individual in-depth interviews (N=31) were used. The findings were consistent and complementary. The triangulation of data based on these two methods point to two observations: (1) Most responses from the poor participants towards the Project P.A.T.H.S. are positive and they viewed the Project P.A.T.H.S. (including both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs) in a favorable light; and (2) Almost all the poor participants had positive views on the program implementers (including the teachers and social workers), as set out below.

**(1) Perceptions of the poor participants towards the programs of the Project P.A.T.H.S.**

Among the 31 cases in the individual interviews, findings shows that the majority of participants (77.4%) liked the Project (see Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.3.1). In addition, 87.1% of participants (N=27) gave positive responses about the Project P.A.T.H.S. in general. Only four cases (12.9%) had overall negative responses. These findings are highly consistent with the corresponding evaluative measures in the subjective outcome evaluation (see Tables 8.15a and 8.15b). When comparing the previously mentioned findings with the findings from the entire sample, including both poor and non-poor participants, similar and consistent findings were observed. The majority of participants gave positive responses for the Project P.A.T.H.S. and many were willing to join the program again and suggested their friends join the program (see Tables 8.15a, 8.15b and 8.19). In addition, a lot of participants indicated that they were satisfied with the Tier 1 (85.1%) and Tier 2 (92.9%) Programs. With specific reference to the poor population (N=283) among the entire sample, the responses collected were more positive, comparatively. Table 8.19 presented the views between the poor (including the 31 major targets in this study) and non-poor groups. With regard to the three questions asked in the questionnaire, more positive responses (with higher percentages in all three questions)

were observed from the poor group. In particular, 66% of the poor students are willing to join the program. At the same time, it was encouraging to note that 84.4% indicated that they would suggest their friends who share similar needs and conditions to join the program. Overall, based on the quantitative and qualitative findings in the subjective outcome evaluation questionnaire, the positive responses are significant and imply that the overall perceptions of the poor participants towards the Project P.A.T.H.S. were positive.

With reference to how the participants perceived the program (including the program design, content, features, program implementation and qualities), the qualitative findings (i.e., the interviews) showed that the results were mainly positive in nature. Although some neutral and negative views (e.g., some students perceived the program to be boring or not useful) were observed in the interviews, they were not the dominant views. Therefore, it is argued that both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs were well-received by the participants experiencing poverty. In particular, the evaluation on the Tier 2 program was perceived in a more favorable light. In connection with the findings from the individual interviews (N=31), the majority of participants (65%, N=20) stated that they liked the Tier 2 program more (see Sections 8.1.3.1 and 8.1.3.4). These findings are also consistent with the subjective outcome evaluation data, in that a high portion of participants had more positive perceptions of and higher satisfaction from the Tier 2 program content (see Section 8.3.3). Overall, the triangulated findings based on the two research methods revealed that the perceptions of the poor participants towards the Project P.A.T.H.S. and its programs were constructive, especially the Tier 2 Program.

**(2) Perceptions of the poor participants towards the program implementers of the Project P.A.T.H.S.**

It is observed in both qualitative and quantitative findings that the majority of the participants had a very positive evaluation of program implementers, i.e., the school teachers and the social workers from the NGOs (see Sections 8.1.3.5 and 8.3.3). Specifically, both qualitative interview and subjective outcome evaluation data indicated that the program implementers were perceived as highly passionate in conducting the program with professional knowledge. Most poor participants also described the program implementers as well-prepared for the Project. In particular, instructors of the Tier 2 Program were positively rated on the eight indicators in the subjective outcome evaluation, ranging from 87.1% on “the worker(s) cared about the participants” to 96.8% on “on the whole, participants were satisfied with the worker(s)” (see Table 8.17b). Consistent data was also collected in the individual interviews. All in all, almost all participants in this study revealed that they were highly satisfied with the program implementers.

Interestingly, one thing merits attention: It was observed that participants had a very clear understanding of the collaboration between the teachers and social workers. For instance, in the individual interviews, all participants mentioned that the Tier 2 program was solely led and conducted by social workers in collaboration with the teachers, while the teacher took the lead in the Tier 1 program utilizing the curricula approach. Although a short introduction was provided and a brief outline of the program was distributed before the questionnaire and each interview, the researcher did not mention the nature and arrangement of such interdisciplinary collaboration. From the narratives of the students, this clear and positive perception among the poor participants also has a positive impact on the overall satisfaction of the project implementers.

#### **8.4.2 Merged findings addressing specific research question 2: *“What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the perceived benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?”***

To address this research question, two research methods were used, the subjective outcome evaluation questionnaire and individual in-depth interviews. The triangulation of data based on these two methods points to two observations: (1) The effectiveness of Project P.A.T.H.S. has been demonstrated; and (2) Most participants experiencing poverty benefited from the both Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs.

##### **(1) Perceived effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S. and the benefits gained**

Participants experiencing poverty benefited from both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs and their acknowledgment of the effectiveness of Project. Based on the quantitative and qualitative data, it suggested that participants experiencing poverty generally perceived the Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs of the Project P.A.T.H.S. to be beneficial and meaningful to their psychosocial development. From the interview data (N=31), a number the participants perceived many beneficial effects of the program in 14 psychosocial domains (see Table 8.6). In particular, benefits and gains in the domains of social competence (26.4%), resilience (16.4%), emotional competence (11.4%) and self-efficacy (7.1%) were repeatedly mentioned. These observations are also consistent with the subjective outcome evaluation findings that lots of respondents acknowledged the effectiveness (benefits) of Tier 1 Program (see Table 8.18a) and Tier 2 Program (see Table 8.18b) to be positive. For example, for the subjective outcome evaluation of the Tier 1 Program, respondents (N=31) positively rated the sixteen indicators for program effectiveness, ranging from 71.0% on “the Tier 1 Program had helped me to have life reflections” to 96.8% on “the Tier 1 Program had enhanced my social competence” and 100% on “the

Tier 1 Program had strengthened my bonding with teachers, classmates and my family” (see Table 8.18a). For the evaluation of the Tier 2 program, the poor participants (N=31) positively rated the eight indicators for program effectiveness, ranging from 80.6% on “participants’ behavior had become better after joining this program” to 96.8% on “participants had positive changes after joining the program” and 96.8% on “participants had learnt how to help themselves” (see Table 8.18b). Based on these triangulated findings, they indicate that participants experiencing poverty generally recognized the perceived program effectiveness was high and the perceived benefits were significant.

#### **8.4.3 Merged findings addressing research question 3: *“How do participants apply what they learned in the program to real life?”***

Since individual in-depth interviews were the major research method used to address this research question, there are no merged finding presented here. For the related findings for this research question see Section 8.1.1.4.

#### **8.4.4 Merged findings addressing research question 4: *“What are the changes in participants after completion of the project?”***

For this research question, all three research methods, the individual in-depth interviews, repertory grid tests and the subjective outcome evaluation questionnaire were used. All findings were highly consistent. The triangulation of data point to four observations (set out in turn below), including (1) the poor participants indicated that they had significant positive change and acquired competencies at personal and interpersonal levels after completion of the Project, (2) the perceived positive changes were more noticeable in those who had more active participation in both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, (3) the Project P.A.T.H.S. helped cultivate aspirations in

the poor adolescents in a constructive manner, and (4) a significant correlation between the perceived effectiveness of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs and changes to self-identity was observed.

**(1) Perceived changes and acquired competencies in participants after completion of the project**

The poor program participants perceived that the Project P.A.T.H.S. had induced positive changes in them. For example, regarding the quantitative data of the Tier 2 Program (see Table 8.18b), 96.8% of the poor participants indicated that they had perceived positive change after joining the program. In addition, 96.8% of participants expressed that they had learnt how to help themselves through participating in the program. Indeed, 93.5% learnt how to solve their problems through participating in the program. Overall, 83.9% of the poor adolescents agreed that the services had enhanced their growth. For the qualitative findings (i.e., interviews), many of the poor adolescents clearly expressed that concrete and positive changes were observed in relation to the aspects of PYD competencies constructs at intra- and inter-personal levels after joining and completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. (see Table 8.7). In particular, it was encouraging to note that 45.1% of the perceived changes were related to the nurturing of better characters.

In addition to Section 8.1.1.5, the grid analysis provides additional information in which the positive findings point to the beneficial effects of the Project P.A.T.H.S.. With reference to group analyses of the grid (see Section 8.2.3.1) and the two exemplar cases in the interview, the poor adolescents illustrated their perceived positive changes and the findings evidently demonstrated the positive impact of the Project. In addition, some of the elicited constructs provided by the poor adolescents in the grid tests were highly consistent with the perceived changes described in the interviews. For example, constructs related to intrapersonal qualities such as “have clear life goal”, “persistent”,

“emotionally stable” and constructs related to interpersonal qualities such as “considerate”, “sociable”, “accommodating” were expressed in the interviews when they were asked to share their perceived changes.

Based on the findings from the grid, these indicated a significant positive change between the “Past Self” and the “Present Self” of the poor adolescents. The group analyses showed that the poor youth identified more with the “ideal self ” and “a successful peer experiencing poverty,” but less with “a peer loser experiencing poverty ” after joining the Project. This showed that the poor group was much more motivated to evaluate themselves in a positive manner.

With recognition of the perceived program impact of the Tier 1 and 2 Programs, these findings provide further support for the effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S.. However, it is interesting to note that while most poor program participants recognized the benefits and effectiveness of the Project, it seemed that these positive evaluations could not significantly extend to how they manage life difficulties regarding their poverty experience. This observation was revealed in the qualitative interviews in particular (see Section 8.1.4.3). Although most poor adolescents admittedly found the project useful and beneficial to their socio-psychological growth and development, the Project P.A.T.H.S. did not demonstrate tremendous power in changing their mindsets or beliefs towards poverty, or help them to manage the negative impact of poverty more generally.

**(2) Changes were more observable in those who had more active participation in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs**

In connection with the individual analyses in both the interviews and grid tests, it is observed here that those who identified as active participants in both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs, had more noticeable and positive results in the grid analyses. The three



exemplar cases in the grid test and the exemplar case in the interview support this argument. When comparing the findings in both the interviews and grid test, it is observed that these participants evaluated themselves as active and keen participants in the program. At the same time, it is noteworthy that they explicitly mentioned in the interviews their perceived gains and actual positive changes after joining the program. Remarkably, they identified that their perceived “selves” before and after joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. were very dissimilar and the positive changes in their self-identity were significant. It is reasonable then to argue that active participation in the project would lead to better psychosocial development in poor youth. On the other hand, for those who were comparatively reluctant and passive in participating in the project, their perceived changes are less and not significant, as revealed in the interviews (N=4). In addition, the findings from the grid tests were also consistent. The individual analyses showed that the changes between the “Past Self” and the “Present Self” were not significant, as compared with those active participants. It was found that this group of reluctant and passive participants construed their “Past Self” as similar to their “Present Self”, in a negative way. This distance indicates that the two elements are very similar, which means changes are not significant and self-perception tends to be negative.

**(3) Aspirations cultivated in the poor adolescents after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.**

One of the good signs observed in the poor participants is that although they live in poverty, many hold positive beliefs about their future. In particular, as discussed in Section 8.1.2.2, for those P.A.T.H.S. participants with more constructive views and perceived gains during the process, they tend to hold attitudes that are more positive and are willing to play an active role in exploring and shaping their future in a positive way.

In Section 8.2.3.2, the discussion of the four exemplar cases are good examples that illustrate this point. At the same time, the interview findings showed the intention of a number of poor participants in that they are actively exploring opportunities in life to achieve their life goals and ambition because of the Project. This also shows that the Project could help kindle their aspiration for life in a positive and determined manner.

**(4) Correlation between the perceived effectiveness in the Tier 1 program and changes in self-identity**

Correlational analyses were conducted to examine the findings based on the subjective outcome evaluation and repertory grid test (Tables 8.25a and 8.25b). It was observed here that the subjective outcome evaluation results based on structured measures and the repertory grid findings (perceived changes in terms of differences in elements) are highly correlated. As set out below, triangulation of the two data sets points to two observations, including (1) the correlation between the perceived effectiveness in Tier 1 program and the changes in self-identity are significant, (2) the correlation between the perceived benefits in the Tier 2 program and the changes in self-identity are also significant.

Table 8.25a showed the correlation results between the subjective outcome measures and the distance between different elements in the grid test. These results were found to be statistically significant between the “perceived effectiveness in Tier 1 program” and “distance between Elements 1 and 2” ( $r(30) = .375, p < .05$ , two-tailed), Elements 2 and 4 ( $r(30) = -.413, p < .05$ , two-tailed) and Elements 2 and 10 ( $r(30) = -.504, p < .01$ , two-tailed). In summary, the perceived effectiveness in the Tier 1 program was found to be a persuasive predictor of positive self-identity changes in poor adolescents.

In addition, Table 8.25b shows the correlation among the subjective outcome measures of the Tier 2 Program and the distance between different elements in the grid test. Similarly, the results were found to be statistically significant between the “perceived program effectiveness in Tier 2 program” and “distance between Elements 1 and 2” ( $r(30) = .376, p < .05$ , two-tailed), Elements 2 and 4 ( $r(30) = -.481, p < .01$ , two-tailed) and Elements 2 and 10 ( $r(30) = -.521, p < .01$ , two-tailed). To summarize, the perceived effectiveness in the Tier 2 program was found to be an influential predictor of positive self-identity changes in adolescents experiencing poverty.

#### **8.4.5 Merged findings addressing research question 5: “*What factors affected the changes in participants?*”**

Since individual in-depth interviews were the major research method used to address this research question, there are no merged finding to be presented here. For the related findings for this research question see Section 8.1.4.2.

In summary, the **Program** (program content of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs), **Process** (the program implementation and the actual experience in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs) and the **People** (program implementers like teachers and social workers) are importance factors conducive to the positive changes of the poor youth.

### **8.5 Concluding remarks**

This study, undertook a comprehensive examination through the fully encompassing evaluation methods of qualitative individual interviews, repertory grid tests and quantitative subjective outcome evaluation, to enable systematic comparison across data sets to explore the poor participants’ perceptions in different aspects, and to reveal the mutual contribution of different factors to the perceived benefits and effectiveness of the P.A.T.H.S. Project. The mixed-

method design combined the strengths of both methods. The triangulation of data from the three sources provide a more comprehensive understanding of the adolescents experiencing poverty. This also helps to minimize possible distortions from interpretation (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Lambert & Loiselle, 2008). Furthermore, the triangulated data complemented and extended existing research on the Project. In terms of addressing the different aspects of generalizability, this was investigated through the research questions.

Table 8.1 Summary of the demographic information of the 31 research participants experiencing poverty

| Categorical variables   | N  | %    |
|---|----|------|
| <b>Age</b>  |    |      |
| 17  | 15 | 48.4 |
| 18  | 12 | 38.7 |
| 19 or above   | 4  | 12.9 |
| <b>Sex</b>  |    |      |
| Female  | 11 | 35.5 |
| Male  | 20 | 64.5 |
| <b>Household economic status</b>                                    |    |      |
| Currently receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance        | 1  | 3.2  |
| Not receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance              | 30 | 96.8 |
| <b>Current recipients of School Textbook Assistance Scheme</b>      |    |      |
| Full grant  | 30 | 96.8 |
| Half grant  | 0  | 0    |
| Not receiving the grant   | 1  | 3.2  |
| <b>Used to join similar developmental program in primary school</b> |    |      |
| Yes   | 11 | 35.5 |
| No  | 20 | 64.5 |

Table 8.2 Summary of the reliability test for the categorization of coding in the interviews

| <b>Area of categorization</b>  | <b>Intra-rater agreement (%)</b> | <b>Inter-rater agreement (%)</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Impressive experiences in the Project P.A.T.H.S.   | 100%                             | 96%                              |
| Responses on views towards the Tier 1 Program  | 98%                              | 92%                              |
| Responses on views towards the Tier 2 Program  | 100%                             | 100%                             |
| Self-evaluated Responses of the poor participants to the Project P.A.T.H.S                                 | 90%                              | 84%                              |
| Positive perception of the poor participants towards the program instructors in Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs | 100%                             | 97.5%                            |
| Self-evaluation of the Poor Program Participants on the Perceived Benefits after Completion of the Project | 100%                             | 94%                              |
| Self-evaluation of the Poor Program Participants on the Perceived Changes after Completion of the Project  | 100%                             | 100%                             |

Table 8.3 Responses on views towards the Tier 1 Program

| Things that the respondents appreciated   |           |              | Things that the respondents disliked  |           |              |
|---|-----------|--------------|---|-----------|--------------|
| <i>Categories</i>   | <i>N</i>  | <i>%</i>     | <i>Categories</i>   | <i>N</i>  | <i>%</i>     |
| <b>Program Nature</b>   | 2         | (6.3)        | <b>Program Nature</b>   | 0         | (0)          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program is relaxed in nature</li> <li>The program is not similar to the traditional subjects</li> </ul>  |           |              |   |           |              |
| <b>Program Content</b>  | 5         | (15.6)       | <b>Program Content</b>  | 12        | (34.3)       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The content stimulated and facilitated personal reflection</li> <li>Like the topic of “Stress Management”</li> <li>Like the topic of “Self-understanding”</li> <li>Like the topic “Interpersonal Relationship”</li> <li>Like the topic “My favorite”</li> </ul>  |           |              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having too many key points to be introduced, which are boring in nature.</li> <li>Staying in the classroom to have lessons is uninteresting</li> <li>Dislike the topics related to “Interpersonal Relationship”</li> <li>A bit embarrassed when talking about “sex” in class</li> <li>Relatively vague</li> <li>Not very helpful</li> <li>Overall, it is a bit boring</li> <li>The content is boring</li> <li>Having too many things to be introduced, which are boring.</li> <li>The content is boring</li> <li>The content is rigid and inflexible</li> <li>Just like having ordinary classes</li> </ul> |           |              |
| <b>Program Activities and Delivery</b>  | 15        | (46.9)       | <b>Program Activities and Delivery</b>  | 10        | (28.6)       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Love the videos shown</li> <li>Like interactive activities</li> <li>Enjoy the group discussion</li> <li>Enjoy interactive games</li> <li>Love the funny games</li> <li>Having games and interactive activities, with gifts</li> <li>Love the psychological tests</li> <li>Sing and play together</li> <li>Love the role play games</li> <li>Enjoy interactive games and role play activities</li> <li>Have a lot of interaction in the lesson</li> <li>Love the videos and movie shown</li> <li>Like interactive activities</li> <li>The mode of the lesson</li> <li>Love the gifts and recognition</li> </ul> |           |              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hate to do worksheets</li> <li>Hate to do worksheets</li> <li>Single lecturing is not good</li> <li>Hate to do worksheets</li> <li>Hate to do worksheets</li> <li>Dislike the written assignments and worksheets</li> <li>Being forced to answer questions</li> <li>The written tasks are boring</li> <li>Hate to do worksheets</li> <li>Less interactive because of the video playing</li> </ul>  |           |              |
| <b>Program Instructor(s)</b>  | 3         | (9.4)        | <b>Program Instructor(s)</b>  | 2         | (5.7)        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Love the sharing of the instructor(s)</li> <li>Love the teaching of the social worker</li> <li>Love the teaching of the social worker</li> </ul>   |           |              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The instructor is too theoretical</li> <li>The instructor simply read the PPT out</li> </ul>   |           |              |
| <b>Others</b>   | 1         | (3.1)        | <b>Others</b>   | 1         | (2.9)        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PATHS borrowed lessons from other boring subjects</li> </ul>   |           |              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No feedback was found in the marked written assignments</li> </ul>   |           |              |
| <b>Nothing appreciated</b>  | 1         | (3.1)        | <b>Nothing Disliked</b>   | 6         | (17.4)       |
| <b>No Answer</b>  | 5         | (15.6)       | <b>No Answer</b>  | 4         | (11.4)       |
| <b>Total responses</b>  | <b>32</b> | <b>(100)</b> | <b>Total responses</b>  | <b>35</b> | <b>(100)</b> |

Table 8.4 Responses on views towards the Tier 2 Program

| Things that the respondents appreciated   |          |          | Things that the respondents disliked   |          |          |
|---|----------|----------|--|----------|----------|
| <i>Categories</i>   | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Categories</i>  | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i> |
| <b>Program Content</b>  | 4        | (12.5)   | <b>Program Content</b>   | 2        | (6.5)    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Like providing service for children</li> <li>Like providing service for elderly</li> <li>Like the program content</li> <li>Go camping and learn “Team Building”</li> </ul> |          |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dislike the preparation of the social service</li> <li>Dislike the arranged community visits</li> </ul>   |          |          |
| <b>Program Activities and Delivery</b>  | 24       | (75.0)   | <b>Program Activities and Delivery</b>   | 5        | (16.1)   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Love the activities arranged (23 responses collected)</li> <li>enjoy the interaction with others</li> </ul>  |          |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dislike the personal meditation and related training</li> <li>Sometimes too much lecturing</li> <li>Sometimes the activities are too challenging</li> <li>Feeling bored when doing the activities alone</li> <li>Too much reflective exercises</li> </ul> |          |          |
| <b>Others</b>   | 1        | (3.1)    | <b>Others</b>  | 2        | (6.5)    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My own involvement and participation in the activities</li> </ul>  |          |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dislike the free rider in the preparation of the service</li> <li>Dislike those quiet people</li> </ul>   |          |          |
| <b>Nothing appreciated</b>  | 0        | (0)      | <b>Nothing Disliked</b>  | 17       | (54.8)   |
| <b>No Answer</b>  | 3        | (9.4)    | <b>No Answer</b>   | 5        | (16.1)   |
| <b>Total codes</b>  | 32       | (100)    | <b>Total codes</b>   | 31       | (100)    |



Table 8.5 Self-evaluated responses of the poor participants to the Project P.A.T.H.S.

| <b>Self-evaluated Responses of Poor Participants to the Project P.A.T.H.S.</b>  | <b>Total Count (%)</b> |
|---|------------------------|
| <p><b>Overall Positive Evaluation</b></p> <p><i>Related Positive Responses (N=19; see examples below)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very active, especially in Tier 2 program</li> <li>▪ Good involvement (e.g., “active”; “involved”; “eager to join the program”; “willing to participate”)</li> <li>▪ Other responses (e.g., “relaxed”; “happy”; “playful”; “helpful”)</li> </ul> | <b>19 (61.3%)</b>      |
| <p><b>Overall Neutral Evaluation</b></p> <p><i>Related Neutral Responses (N=2; see examples below)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “The Tier 1 and Tier 2 program were partially welcomed”</li> <li>▪ “The classes with disciplinary problems partially accept the program”</li> </ul>   | <b>9 (29.0%)</b>       |
| <p><b>Overall Negative Evaluation</b></p> <p><i>Related Negative Responses (N=9; see examples below)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feeling bored</li> <li>▪ Having difficulties in discussion</li> <li>▪ Other responses (e.g., “poor reaction as the program was held after school”; “poor discipline”; “passive”)</li> </ul>   | <b>3 (9.7%)</b>        |
| <b>Total (%)</b>  | <b>31 (100%)</b>       |

Table 8.6 Positive perception of poor participants towards the program instructors in Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs

| <b>Domains of the positive views of the poor participants</b>  | <b>Total Count (%)</b> |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>Built positive and caring relationship with students</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=12; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cared about students – inside of the classroom and out</li> <li>▪ Students could rely on them</li> <li>▪ Understood students' need clearly</li> <li>▪ Had good relationship with students</li> <li>▪ Welcomed by students</li> <li>▪ Students described the instructors as angel (care about students)</li> </ul>   | <b>12 (15.0%)</b>      |
| <b>Demonstrated effective pedagogical skills and teaching</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=17; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepared gifts to motivate students participation</li> <li>▪ Effectively led the students to do the meaningful reflection</li> <li>▪ gave clear instructions</li> <li>▪ Good and interesting teaching</li> <li>▪ As good as teaching other ordinary subjects</li> <li>▪ Willing to have self-disclosure and personal sharing to illustrate the concepts</li> <li>▪ had lots of interaction with class</li> <li>▪ As good as teaching other ordinary subjects</li> </ul> | <b>17 (21.2%)</b>      |
| <b>Showed good teaching attitudes</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=19; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Positive and good attitudes</li> <li>▪ Observant</li> <li>▪ Well-prepared</li> <li>▪ Passionate and enthusiastic in teaching</li> <li>▪ Offered help and support to students when teaching and implementing activities</li> <li>▪ Well organized</li> <li>▪ Willing to hear students' voice</li> </ul>  | <b>19 (25.0%)</b>      |
| <b>Displayed positive personality traits</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=31; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pleasant</li> <li>▪ Responsible</li> <li>▪ Nice</li> <li>▪ Tolerant and understanding</li> <li>▪ Humorous</li> <li>▪ Easygoing</li> <li>▪ Patient</li> <li>▪ Serious</li> <li>▪ Active</li> </ul>  | <b>31 (38.8%)</b>      |
| <b>Total (%)</b>   | <b>80 (100%)</b>       |

Table 8.7 Self-evaluation of Poor Program Participants on the Perceived Benefits after Completion of the Project

| <b>Dimensions of constructs covered in the program</b>   | <b>Total Count (%)</b> |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>Behavioral Competence</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=9; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learn to be more independent</li> <li>● Learn to take decisive action and work towards goals</li> </ul>   | <b>9 (6.4%)</b>        |
| <b>Beliefs in the Future</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=6; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learn to set (realistic and achievable) goals</li> </ul>  | <b>6 (4.3%)</b>        |
| <b>Bonding</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=8; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote better family or parent-child relationship</li> <li>● Promote stronger bonding with friends</li> <li>● Learn to understand and care about others</li> <li>● Learn how to share with parents</li> <li>● Develop better relationship with teachers and social workers</li> <li>● Develop good and quality friendship</li> </ul> | <b>8 (5.7%)</b>        |
| <b>Cognitive Competence</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=6; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learn how to be reflective</li> <li>● Promote stronger critical thinking skills Seriously check if the content of those advertisements are accurate</li> <li>● Widen one's horizons and cognitive ability</li> </ul>   | <b>6 (4.3%)</b>        |
| <b>Emotional Competence</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=16; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Better emotional control and management</li> <li>● Learn how to calm down when having negative emotions</li> <li>● Learn how to be more patient and accommodating when having negative emotions</li> </ul>  | <b>16 (11.4%)</b>      |
| <b>Positive and Healthy Identity</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=8; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have deeper self-understanding</li> <li>● Develop a more positive identity</li> <li>● Deeper understanding on one's strengths</li> <li>● Have a clearer identity as "Hong Konger"</li> </ul>  | <b>8 (5.7%)</b>        |
| <b>Moral Competence</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=6; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learn how to define and judge what is right and wrong</li> <li>● Learn to develop moral characters</li> </ul>  | <b>6 (4.3%)</b>        |
| <b>Prosocial Involvement</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=3; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enjoy doing volunteer work</li> <li>● Willing to help others as volunteer</li> <li>● Learn to care the needy in the society</li> </ul>  | <b>3 (2.1%)</b>        |

(continued)

(continued)

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Resilience</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=23; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learn how to manage stress</li> <li>● Learn how to face life challenges</li> <li>● Learn how to over difficulties</li> <li>● Learn to be more optimistic</li> <li>● Learn to be more positive and promote positive thinking</li> <li>● Not easy to give up</li> <li>● Promote stronger resilience</li> <li>● Willing to face and solve the problems in daily lives</li> </ul>  | <b>23 (16.4%)</b> |
| <b>Social Competence</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=23; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop better social skills and competence</li> <li>● Can make more new friends in or after the activities</li> <li>● Have deeper understanding of the peers</li> <li>● Learn better social and communication skills</li> <li>● Learn how to express oneself and say no to bad friends</li> <li>● Learn to be more proactive in interpersonal relationship</li> <li>● Learn how to tolerate others weaknesses</li> <li>● Learn how to trust others</li> <li>● Promote better interpersonal relationship</li> </ul> | <b>37 (26.4%)</b> |
| <b>Self-Determination</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=2; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learn to be more determined</li> </ul>  | <b>2 (1.4%)</b>   |
| <b>Self-Efficacy</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=10; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learn how to accept oneself</li> <li>● Learn to be more assertive</li> <li>● Learn to be more outgoing</li> <li>● Learn to be more thoughtful</li> <li>● Promote better self-efficacy</li> <li>● Promote stronger self-confidence</li> <li>● Promote stronger self-worth</li> </ul>   | <b>10 (7.1%)</b>  |
| <b>Spirituality</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=1; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Start to think about life and meaning of life</li> </ul>  | <b>1 (0.7%)</b>   |
| <b>Others</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=5; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overall attitudes were changed positively</li> <li>● Learn to be more matured</li> <li>● Promote one's leadership</li> </ul>  | <b>5 (3.6%)</b>   |
| <b>Total (%)</b>  | <b>140 (100%)</b> |

Table 8.8 Self-evaluation of Poor Program Participants on the Perceived Changes after Completion of the Project

| <b>Dimensions of competencies constructs</b>  | <b>Total Count (%)</b> |
|---|------------------------|
| <b>Character</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=46; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Better leadership, including self-leadership</li> <li>● One's own horizon was broadened</li> <li>● Less egocentric</li> <li>● Be more cautious and conscientious</li> <li>● Be more easy-going</li> <li>● Be more positive and optimistic</li> <li>● Be more proactive and open</li> <li>● Be more matured</li> <li>● Be more talkative and willing to share</li> <li>● Be more patient</li> <li>● Be more punctual</li> <li>● Be more independent</li> <li>● Be more proactive and</li> <li>● Attitudes changed in a positive way</li> </ul> | <b>46 (45.1%)</b>      |
| <b>Competence</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=13; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Better emotional management</li> <li>● Better resilience</li> <li>● Have capacity to change bad habits</li> <li>● Know how to express oneself</li> <li>● Be more reflective</li> <li>● Be more responsible</li> <li>● Better social competence</li> <li>● Better social and communication skills</li> <li>● Have stronger persistence</li> </ul>   | <b>19 (18.6%)</b>      |
| <b>Confidence</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=13; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Better self-trust and self-confidence</li> <li>● Deeper discovery of one's potential</li> <li>● Be more assertive</li> <li>● Be more courageous</li> <li>● Be more decisive</li> </ul>   | <b>13 (12.8%)</b>      |
| <b>Connection</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=13; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make more friends</li> <li>● Better peer relationship</li> <li>● Better parent-child relationship</li> <li>● Better interpersonal relationship</li> </ul>  | <b>13 (12.8%)</b>      |
| <b>Compassion</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=9; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be more considerate</li> </ul>  | <b>9 (8.8%)</b>        |
| <b>Contribution</b><br><i>Related Positive Responses (N=11; see examples below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Willing to do more volunteer work</li> </ul>   | <b>2 (1.9%)</b>        |
| <b>Total (%)</b>  | <b>102 (100%)</b>      |

Table 8.9 The paired samples test for the two anchoring points (N=31)

| Pairs          | Mean Difference | t      | effect size | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|-----------------|
| E1E4 Vs. E2E4  | 0.54            | 8.216  | 1.86        | 0.0001          |
| E1E8 Vs. E2E8  | 0.23            | 3.463  | 0.92        | 0.002           |
| E1E9 Vs. E2E9  | 0.32            | -5.500 | 1.22        | 0.0001          |
| E1E10 Vs. E2E9 | 0.34            | -6.232 | 1.23        | 0.001           |

E1: Self before joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. (past self)

E2: Self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. for 2 years (present self)

E4: Ideal self

E8: Peer Group - a successful peer experiencing poverty

E9: Peer Group - a (peer) loser experiencing poverty

E10: A successful and influential person

Table 8.10 Raw Grid from for Exemplary Case 1 (Informant 2, “P2-Male”)

|    | 1.  | 2.  | 3.   | 4.         | 5.                         | 6.                         | 7.          | 8.                                     | 9.                                  | 10.                                 | Construct pole                              |   |   | Contrast pole                                 |   |   |
|----|---|---|--|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|    | Self before joining Project PATHS (Past self) | Self after completion of Project PATHS for 2 years (Present self) | Self at high school graduation (Future self) | Ideal self | Father or surrogate father | Mother or surrogate mother | Best friend | A successful peer experiencing poverty | A (peer) loser experiencing poverty | A successful and influential person |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|    |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     | 6   | 5 | 4 | 3   | 2 | 1 |
| 1  | 1   | 3   | 4  | 5          | 6                          | 5                          | 3           | 6                                      | 4                                   | 5                                   | Practical                                   |   |   | Imaginative                                   |   |   |
| 2  | 4   | 5   | 5  | 5          | 1                          | 2                          | 5           | 1                                      | 6                                   | 3                                   | Easygoing                                   |   |   | Serious                                       |   |   |
| 3  | 3   | 5   | 5  | 5          | 4                          | 5                          | 4           | 6                                      | 1                                   | 5                                   | Persistent                                  |   |   | Easy to give up                               |   |   |
| 4  | 1   | 5   | 5  | 6          | 2                          | 2                          | 4           | 3                                      | 2                                   | 6                                   | Objective                                   |   |   | Subjective                                    |   |   |
| 5  | 6   | 4   | 4  | 2          | 3                          | 4                          | 3           | 2                                      | 5                                   | 1                                   | Lack of Foresight                           |   |   | Visionary                                     |   |   |
| 6  | 3   | 5   | 4  | 5          | 5                          | 5                          | 5           | 5                                      | 2                                   | 5                                   | Passionate                                  |   |   | Cool  |   |   |
| 7  | 2   | 3   | 4  | 5          | 6                          | 6                          | 4           | 6                                      | 4                                   | 4                                   | Hardworking                                 |   |   | Indolent                                      |   |   |
| 8  | 5   | 4   | 4  | 4          | 4                          | 5                          | 3           | 6                                      | 3                                   | 5                                   | Active                                      |   |   | Passive                                       |   |   |
| 9  | 2   | 5   | 4  | 4          | 5                          | 5                          | 5           | 3                                      | 4                                   | 2                                   | Not calculating                             |   |   | Calculating                                   |   |   |
| 10 | 5   | 6   | 4  | 4          | 3                          | 4                          | 5           | 4                                      | 1                                   | 4                                   | Keen to participate in prosocial activities |   |   | Resist to participate in prosocial activities |   |   |
| 11 | 2   | 3   | 4  | 4          | 4                          | 5                          | 5           | 4                                      | 5                                   | 4                                   | Appreciate oneself                          |   |   | Not appreciate oneself                        |   |   |
| 12 | 2   | 5   | 5  | 5          | 5                          | 6                          | 4           | 6                                      | 3                                   | 5                                   | High resilience                             |   |   | Low resilience                                |   |   |

Table 8.11 Raw Grid from for Exemplary Case 2 (Informant No. 19, “P19-Male”)

|    | 1.  | 2.  | 3.   | 4.         | 5.                         | 6.                         | 7.          | 8.                                     | 9.                                  | 10.                                 | Construct pole         |   |   | Contrast pole                     |   |   |
|----|---|---|--|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
|    | Self before joining Project PATHS (Past self) | Self after completion of Project PATHS for 2 years (Present self) | Self at high school graduation (Future self) | Ideal self | Father or surrogate father | Mother or surrogate mother | Best friend | A successful peer experiencing poverty | A (peer) loser experiencing poverty | A successful and influential person |                        |   |   |                                   |   |   |
|    |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     | 6                      | 5 | 4 | 3                                 | 2 | 1 |
| 1  | 1   | 6   | 5  | 6          | 5                          | 2                          | 4           | 3                                      | 1                                   | 4                                   | Not greedy             |   |   | Keen on gaining pretty advantages |   |   |
| 2  | 1   | 6   | 6  | 6          | 3                          | 4                          | 6           | 6                                      | 3                                   | 4                                   | Persistent             |   |   | Easy to give up                   |   |   |
| 3  | 1   | 6   | 6  | 6          | 4                          | 4                          | 4           | 5                                      | 2                                   | 5                                   | Having clear life goal |   |   | Without having life goal          |   |   |
| 4  | 1   | 2   | 4  | 5          | 5                          | 4                          | 4           | 6                                      | 3                                   | 5                                   | Not strong-minded      |   |   | Having strong-minded              |   |   |
| 5  | 2   | 6   | 4  | 5          | 3                          | 2                          | 3           | 4                                      | 3                                   | 5                                   | Easygoing              |   |   | Indomitable                       |   |   |
| 6  | 2   | 6   | 6  | 6          | 4                          | 5                          | 4           | 6                                      | 3                                   | 6                                   | Organized and planned  |   |   | Not organized and planned         |   |   |
| 7  | 1   | 3   | 4  | 5          | 4                          | 5                          | 3           | 6                                      | 3                                   | 4                                   | Independent            |   |   | Dependent                         |   |   |
| 8  | 1   | 6   | 6  | 6          | 4                          | 4                          | 4           | 6                                      | 2                                   | 4                                   | Persistent             |   |   | Easy to be discouraged            |   |   |
| 9  | 2   | 5   | 5  | 5          | 4                          | 3                          | 5           | 4                                      | 4                                   | 3                                   | Considerate            |   |   | Egocentric                        |   |   |
| 10 | 2   | 4   | 6  | 6          | 5                          | 5                          | 5           | 6                                      | 2                                   | 6                                   | Practical              |   |   | Imaginative                       |   |   |
| 11 | 2   | 5   | 5  | 5          | 4                          | 4                          | 3           | 6                                      | 3                                   | 6                                   | Appreciate oneself     |   |   | Not appreciate oneself            |   |   |
| 12 | 3   | 5   | 6  | 6          | 4                          | 4                          | 3           | 6                                      | 2                                   | 4                                   | High resilience        |   |   | Low resilience                    |   |   |



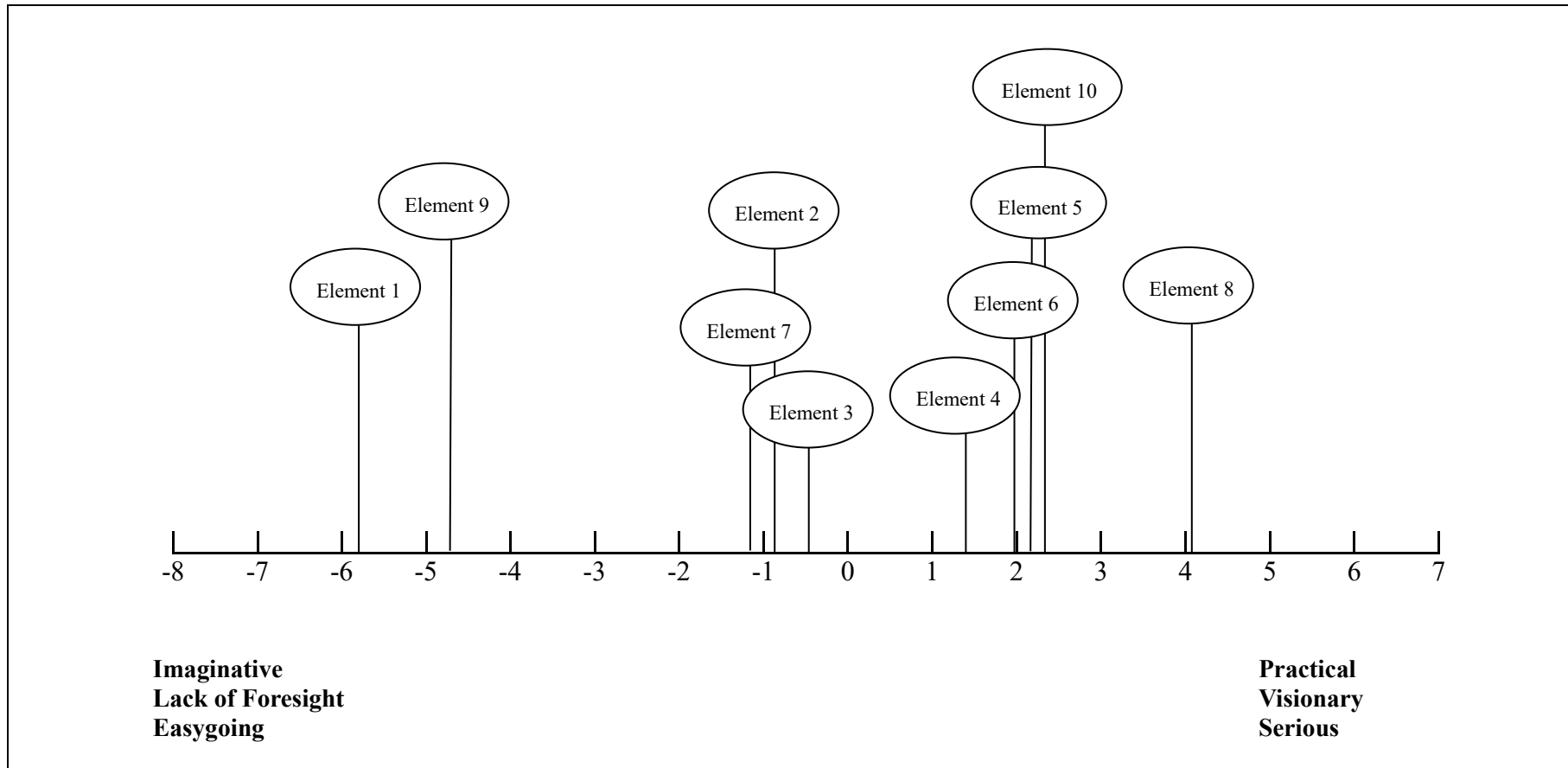
Table 8.12 Raw Grid from for Exemplary Case 3 (Informant No. 25, “P25-Male”)

|    | 1.  | 2.  | 3.   | 4.         | 5.                         | 6.                         | 7.          | 8.                                     | 9.                                  | 10.                                 | Construct pole         |   |   | Contrast pole            |   |   |
|----|---|---|--|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|---|---|
|    | Self before joining Project PATHS (Past self) | Self after completion of Project PATHS for 2 years (Present self) | Self at high school graduation (Future self) | Ideal self | Father or surrogate father | Mother or surrogate mother | Best friend | A successful peer experiencing poverty | A (peer) loser experiencing poverty | A successful and influential person |                        |   |   |                          |   |   |
|    |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     | 6                      | 5 | 4 | 3                        | 2 | 1 |
| 1  | 6   | 4   | 3  | 2          | 5                          | 2                          | 5           | 3                                      | 5                                   | 2                                   | Irritable              |   |   | Gentle                   |   |   |
| 2  | 2   | 5   | 5  | 6          | 1                          | 5                          | 5           | 4                                      | 2                                   | 3                                   | Accommodating          |   |   | Opinionated              |   |   |
| 3  | 2   | 2   | 3  | 5          | 4                          | 5                          | 5           | 6                                      | 6                                   | 6                                   | Hardworking            |   |   | Lazy                     |   |   |
| 4  | 2   | 3   | 5  | 5          | 5                          | 5                          | 5           | 5                                      | 2                                   | 5                                   | Preserving             |   |   | Not preserving           |   |   |
| 5  | 2   | 5   | 5  | 5          | 4                          | 3                          | 5           | 4                                      | 2                                   | 6                                   | Having clear life goal |   |   | Without having life goal |   |   |
| 6  | 3   | 5   | 5  | 4          | 4                          | 3                          | 5           | 3                                      | 2                                   | 5                                   | Radical                |   |   | Conservative             |   |   |
| 7  | 4   | 5   | 5  | 6          | 3                          | 3                          | 5           | 5                                      | 3                                   | 5                                   | Optimistic             |   |   | Pessimistic              |   |   |
| 8  | 2   | 4   | 5  | 5          | 2                          | 5                          | 3           | 4                                      | 2                                   | 5                                   | Reflective             |   |   | Not reflective           |   |   |
| 9  | 2   | 3   | 3  | 5          | 4                          | 4                          | 5           | 4                                      | 3                                   | 5                                   | Thoughtful             |   |   | Rough                    |   |   |
| 10 | 2   | 5   | 4  | 5          | 4                          | 3                          | 5           | 4                                      | 2                                   | 5                                   | Active                 |   |   | Passive                  |   |   |
| 11 | 4   | 4   | 4  | 5          | 4                          | 4                          | 5           | 5                                      | 3                                   | 5                                   | Appreciate oneself     |   |   | Not appreciate oneself   |   |   |
| 12 | 3   | 4   | 4  | 5          | 4                          | 4                          | 5           | 5                                      | 3                                   | 5                                   | High resilience        |   |   | Low resilience           |   |   |

Table 8.13 Raw Grid from for Exemplary Case 4 (Informant No. 31, “P31-Male”)

|    | 1.  | 2.  | 3.   | 4.         | 5.                         | 6.                         | 7.          | 8.                                     | 9.                                  | 10.                                 | Construct pole            |   |   | Contrast pole              |   |   |
|----|---|---|--|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|---|---|
|    | Self before joining Project PATHS (Past self) | Self after completion of Project PATHS for 2 years (Present self) | Self at high school graduation (Future self) | Ideal self | Father or surrogate father | Mother or surrogate mother | Best friend | A successful peer experiencing poverty | A (peer) loser experiencing poverty | A successful and influential person |                           |   |   |                            |   |   |
|    |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     | 6                         | 5 | 4 | 3                          | 2 | 1 |
| 1  | 3   | 5   | 6  | 6          | 1                          | 6                          | 4           | 3                                      | 2                                   | 3                                   | Careful accounting        |   |   | Generous                   |   |   |
| 2  | 1   | 3   | 4  | 5          | 5                          | 2                          | 5           | 4                                      | 2                                   | 2                                   | Trendy                    |   |   | Old fashioned              |   |   |
| 3  | 2   | 5   | 5  | 6          | 5                          | 4                          | 5           | 5                                      | 1                                   | 4                                   | Having clear goal in life |   |   | Without clear goal in life |   |   |
| 4  | 1   | 4   | 5  | 6          | 2                          | 4                          | 5           | 5                                      | 3                                   | 4                                   | Decisive                  |   |   | Indecisive                 |   |   |
| 5  | 1   | 5   | 6  | 6          | 5                          | 2                          | 6           | 5                                      | 2                                   | 5                                   | Independent               |   |   | Dependent                  |   |   |
| 6  | 3   | 4   | 5  | 6          | 5                          | 4                          | 5           | 3                                      | 1                                   | 4                                   | Calm                      |   |   | Neurotic                   |   |   |
| 7  | 3   | 6   | 6  | 6          | 5                          | 6                          | 5           | 2                                      | 1                                   | 5                                   | Sociable                  |   |   | Not sociable               |   |   |
| 8  | 2   | 4   | 5  | 5          | 4                          | 5                          | 3           | 3                                      | 2                                   | 4                                   | Thoughtful                |   |   | Careless                   |   |   |
| 9  | 2   | 5   | 5  | 5          | 4                          | 4                          | 5           | 3                                      | 4                                   | 3                                   | Emotionally stable        |   |   | Bad tempered               |   |   |
| 10 | 2   | 5   | 5  | 6          | 4                          | 3                          | 1           | 2                                      | 4                                   | 3                                   | Objective                 |   |   | Subjective                 |   |   |
| 11 | 2   | 5   | 5  | 6          | 5                          | 4                          | 6           | 3                                      | 2                                   | 5                                   | Appreciate oneself        |   |   | Not appreciate oneself     |   |   |
| 12 | 3   | 5   | 5  | 6          | 5                          | 3                          | 5           | 4                                      | 3                                   | 5                                   | High resilience           |   |   | Low resilience             |   |   |

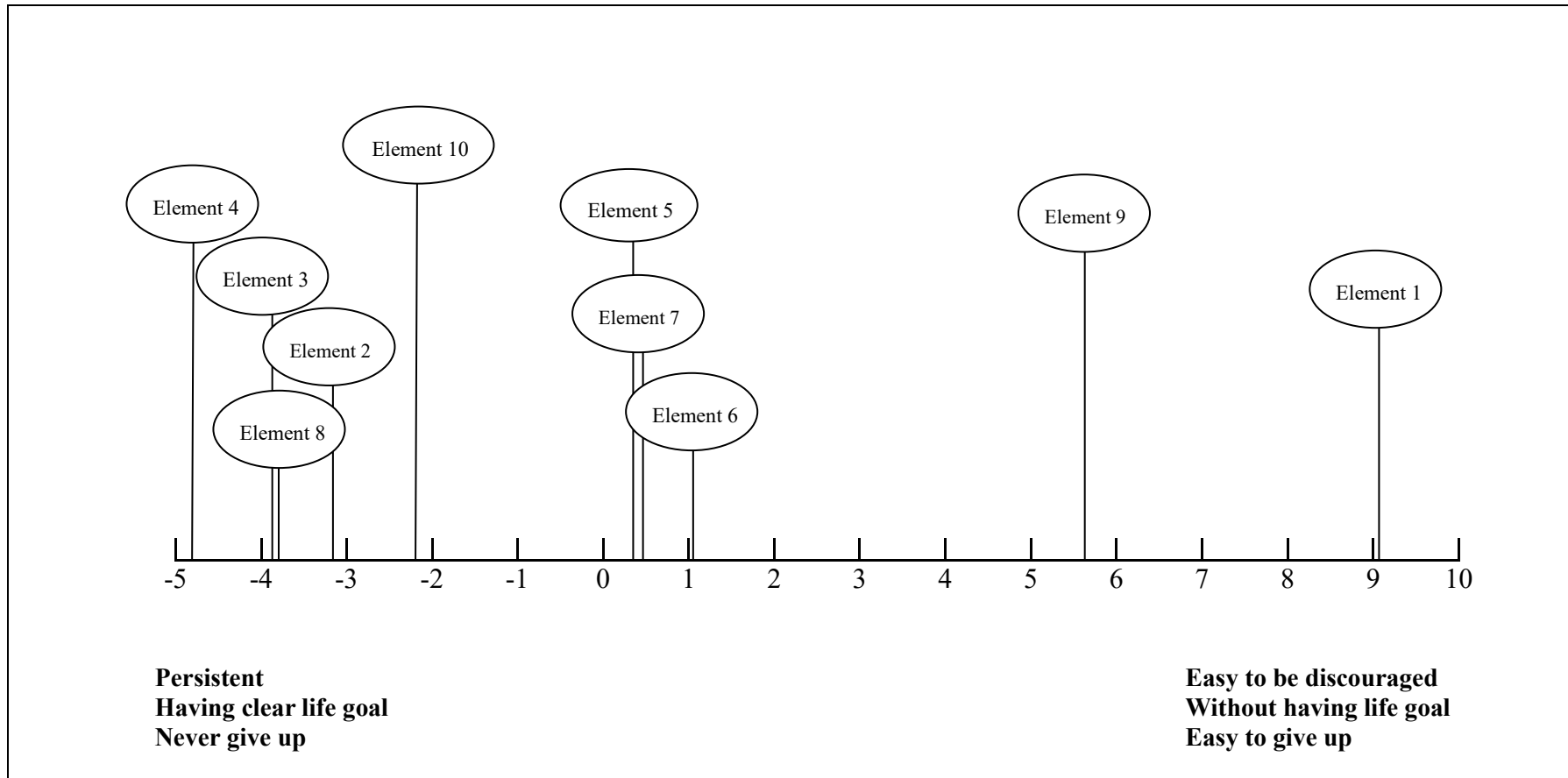
Figure 8.1 Line graph showing the mental representation of different roles in terms of the first principal component (Informant No. 2“P2-Male”)



Element 1: Self before joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. (past self)  
 Element 2: Self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. for 2 years (present self)  
 Element 3: Self at high school graduation (future self)  
 Element 4: Ideal self  
 Element 5: Father or Surrogate Father

Element 6: Mother or Surrogate Mother  
 Element 7: A best friend  
 Element 8: Peer Group - a successful peer experiencing poverty  
 Element 9: Peer Group - a (peer) loser experiencing poverty  
 Element 10: A successful and influential person

Figure 8.2 Line graph showing the mental representation of different roles in terms of the first principal component  
(Informant No. 19, “P19-Male”)



Element 1: Self before joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. (past self)

Element 2: Self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. for 2 years (present self)

Element 3: Self at high school graduation (future self)

Element 4: Ideal self

Element 5: Father or Surrogate Father

Element 6: Mother or Surrogate Mother

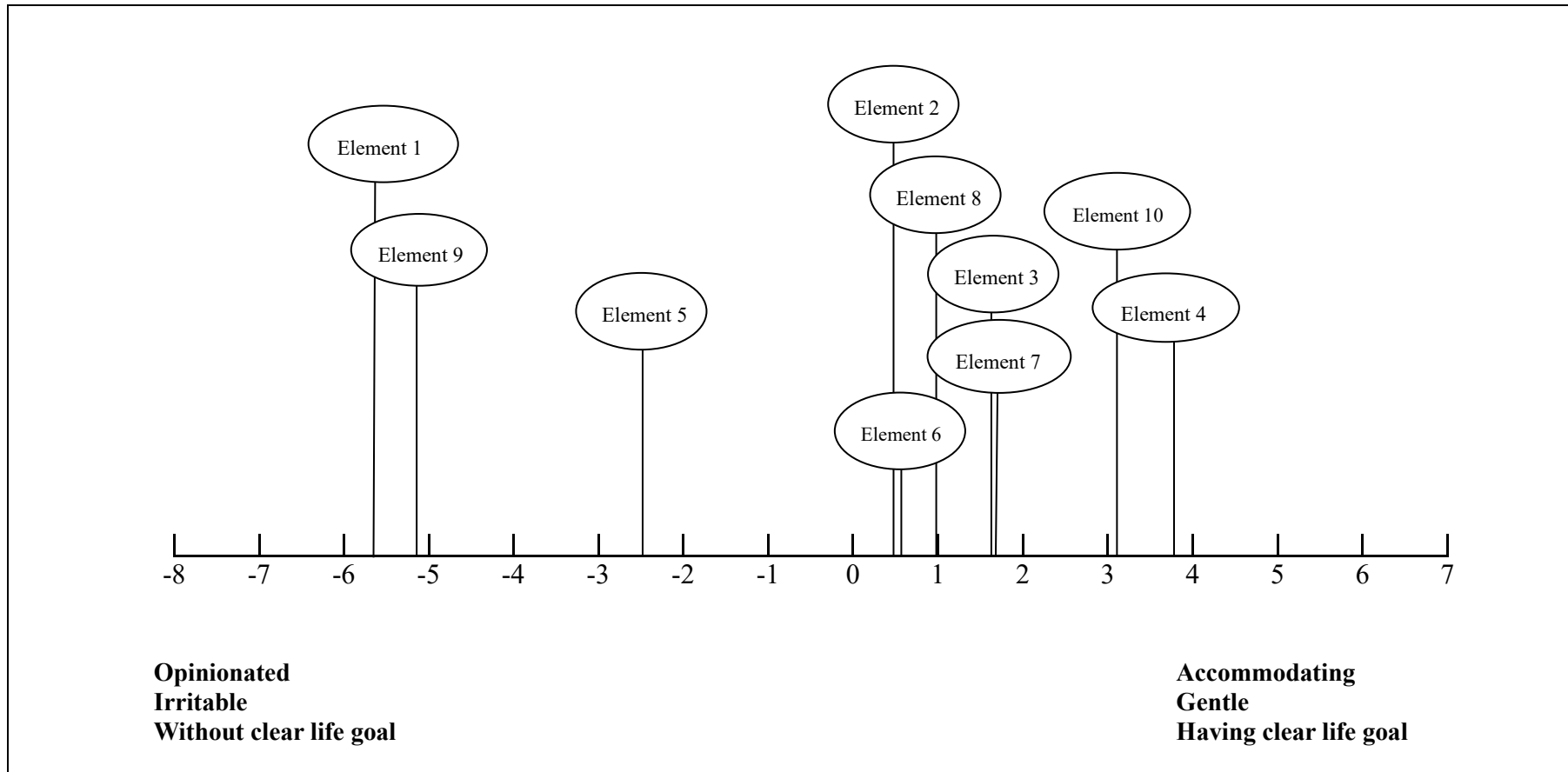
Element 7: A best friend

Element 8: Peer Group - a successful peer experiencing poverty

Element 9: Peer Group - a (peer) loser experiencing poverty

Element 10: A successful and influential person

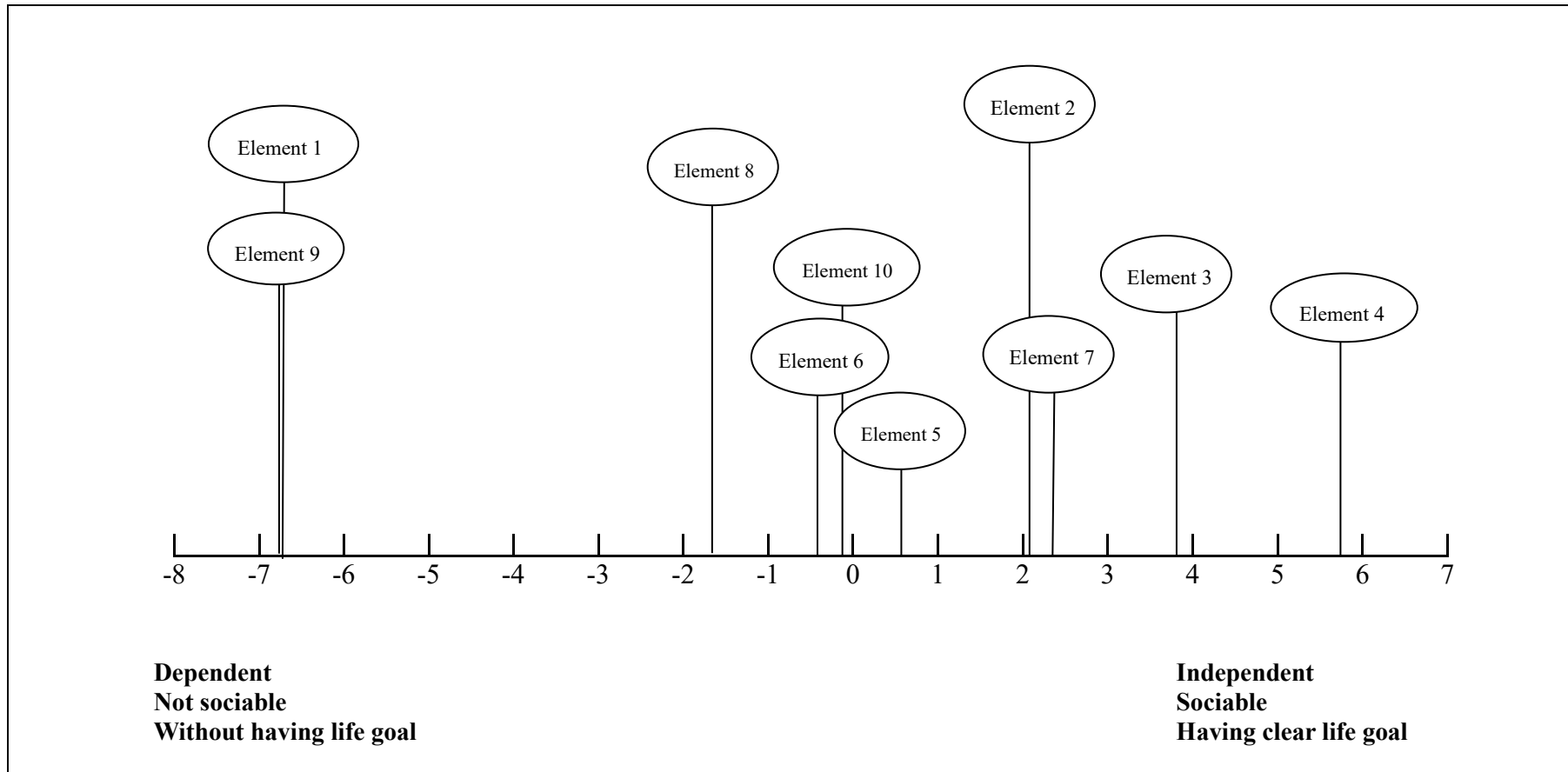
Figure 8.3 Line graph showing the mental representation of different roles in terms of the first principal component (Informant No. 25, “P25-Male”)



Element 1: Self before joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. (past self)  
 Element 2: Self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. for 2 years (present self)  
 Element 3: Self at high school graduation (future self)  
 Element 4: Ideal self  
 Element 5: Father or Surrogate Father

Element 6: Mother or Surrogate Mother  
 Element 7: A best friend  
 Element 8: Peer Group - a successful peer experiencing poverty  
 Element 9: Peer Group - a (peer) loser experiencing poverty  
 Element 10: A successful and influential person

Figure 8.4 Line graph showing the mental representation of different roles in terms of the first principal component  
(Informant No. 31, “P31-Male”)



Element 1: Self before joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. (past self)  
 Element 2: Self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. for 2 years (present self)  
 Element 3: Self at high school graduation (future self)  
 Element 4: Ideal self  
 Element 5: Father or Surrogate Father

Element 6: Mother or Surrogate Mother  
 Element 7: A best friend  
 Element 8: Peer Group - a successful peer experiencing poverty  
 Element 9: Peer Group - a (peer) loser experiencing poverty  
 Element 10: A successful and influential person

Table 8.14 Summary of the demographic information of 572 respondents

| Categorical variables   | N   | %    |
|---|-----|------|
| <b>Age</b>  |     |      |
| 15 or under 15  | 1   | 0.2  |
| 16  | 4   | 0.7  |
| 17  | 368 | 64.3 |
| 18  | 139 | 24.3 |
| 19 or above   | 51  | 8.9  |
| No answer   | 9   | 1.6  |
| <b>Sex</b>  |     |      |
| Female  | 298 | 52.1 |
| Male  | 260 | 45.5 |
| No answer   | 14  | 2.4  |
| <b>Household economic status</b>                                    |     |      |
| Currently receiving CSSA  | 44  | 7.7  |
| Not receiving CSSA  | 514 | 89.9 |
| No answer   | 14  | 2.4  |
| <b>Current recipients of STA</b>                                    |     |      |
| Full grant  | 147 | 25.7 |
| Half grant  | 115 | 20.1 |
| Not receiving the grant   | 296 | 51.7 |
| No answer   | 14  | 2.4  |
| <b>Had participated in the Tier 2 Program in both S1, S2 and S3</b> |     |      |
| Yes   | 203 | 35.5 |
| No  | 354 | 61.9 |
| No answer   | 15  | 2.6  |

Table 8.15a Psychometric Properties of the Subjective Outcome Evaluation  
Measures - CSOES-A

|  | Cronbach's Alpha | Mean Inter-item Correlation | Inter-scale Correlation (Pearson) |                                 |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|  |                  |                             | Implementer Qualities             | Perceived Program Effectiveness |
| Program qualities (10 items)               | .938             | .603                        | .744**                            | .674**                          |
| Implementer qualities (10 items)           | .963             | .722                        | --                                | .586**                          |
| Perceived program effectiveness (16 items) | .967             | .646                        | --                                | --                              |
| Total Scale (36 items)                     | .975             | .519                        | --                                | --                              |

\*\* P< .01

Table 8.15b Psychometric Properties of the Subjective Outcome Evaluation  
Measures - CSOES-C

|   | Cronbach's Alpha | Mean Inter-item Correlation | Inter-scale Correlation (Pearson) |                                 |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|   |                  |                             | Implementer Qualities             | Perceived Program Effectiveness |
| Program qualities (8 items)               | .957             | .740                        | .828**                            | .826**                          |
| Implementer qualities (8 items)           | .963             | .773                        | --                                | .687**                          |
| Perceived program effectiveness (8 items) | .964             | .778                        | --                                | --                              |
| Total Scale (24 items)                    | .979             | .663                        | --                                | --                              |

\*\* P< .01



Table 8.16a Summary of the views of the program participants of the 3-year program (Tier 1 Program) implemented from academic years 2009 to 2012

|  | Participants with positive responses (options 4-6)* |       |   |       |                       |       |
|--|---|-------|---|-------|-----------------------|-------|
|  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (A) (N=31)  |       | Participants from 8 Different Schools (B) (N=541) |       | Overall (A+B) (N=572) |       |
|  | N   | %     | N   | %     | N                     | %     |
| 1. The objectives of the curriculum were very clear.                                     | 29  | 93.5% | 474   | 87.6% | 503                   | 87.9% |
| 2. The design of the curriculum was very good.   | 27  | 87.1% | 466   | 86.1% | 493                   | 86.2% |
| 3. The activities were carefully planned.  | 27  | 87.1% | 470   | 86.9% | 497                   | 86.9% |
| 4. The classroom atmosphere was very pleasant.   | 27  | 87.1% | 483   | 89.3% | 510                   | 89.2% |
| 5. There was much peer interaction amongst the students.                                 | 29  | 93.5% | 482   | 89.1% | 511                   | 89.3% |
| 6. I participated actively during lessons (including discussions, sharing, games, etc.). | 27  | 87.1% | 467   | 86.3% | 494                   | 86.4% |
| 7. I was encouraged to do my best.   | 29  | 93.5% | 455   | 84.1% | 484                   | 84.6% |
| 8. The learning experience I encountered enhanced my interest towards the lessons.       | 27  | 87.1% | 430   | 79.5% | 457                   | 79.9% |
| 9. Overall speaking, I had a very positive evaluation of the program.                    | 25  | 80.6% | 462   | 85.4% | 487                   | 85.1% |
| 10. On the whole, I like this curriculum very much.                                      | 27  | 87.1% | 454   | 83.9% | 481                   | 84.1% |

\* All items are on a 6-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= agree and 6= strongly agree. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 4-6) are shown in the table.

Table 8.16b Summary of the views of the program participants of the 3-year program (Tier 2 Program)

|   | Participants with positive responses (option 4-6)* |       |   |       |                       |       |
|---|--|-------|---|-------|-----------------------|-------|
|   | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (A) (N=31) |       | Participants from 8 Different Schools (B) (N=279) |       | Overall (A+B) (N=310) |       |
|   | N  | %     | N   | %     | N                     | %     |
| 1. The activities were carefully planned.   | 28   | 90.3% | 259   | 92.8% | 287                   | 92.6% |
| 2. The quality of the service was high.   | 28   | 90.3% | 254   | 91.0% | 282                   | 91.0% |
| 3. The service provided could meet the participants' needs.                       | 27   | 87.1% | 248   | 88.9% | 275                   | 88.7% |
| 4. The service delivered could achieve the planned objectives.                    | 28   | 90.3% | 251   | 90.0% | 279                   | 90.0% |
| 5. I could get the service they wanted.   | 24   | 77.4% | 245   | 87.8% | 269                   | 86.8% |
| 6. I had much interaction with other participants.                                | 29   | 93.5% | 251   | 90.0% | 280                   | 90.3% |
| 7. I would recommend others who have similar needs to participate in the program. | 29   | 93.5% | 239   | 85.7% | 268                   | 86.5% |
| 8. On the whole, I was satisfied with the service.                                | 29   | 93.5% | 259   | 92.8% | 288                   | 92.9% |

\* All items are on a 6-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= agree and 6= strongly agree. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 4-6) are shown in the table.

Table 8.17a Summary of the views of the program participants of the instructors implementing the Tier 1 Program

|  | Participants with positive responses (options 4-6)* |       |   |       |                       |       |
|--|---|-------|---|-------|-----------------------|-------|
|  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (A) (N=31)  |       | Participants from 8 Different Schools (B) (N=541) |       | Overall (A+B) (N=572) |       |
|  | N   | %     | N   | %     | N                     | %     |
| 1. The instructor(s) had a good mastery of the curriculum.                   | 29  | 93.5% | 491   | 90.8% | 520                   | 90.9% |
| 2. The instructor(s) was/were well-prepared for the lessons.                 | 27  | 87.1% | 490   | 90.6% | 517                   | 90.4% |
| 3. The instructor(s)' teaching skills were good.                             | 25  | 80.6% | 489   | 90.4% | 516                   | 90.2% |
| 4. The instructor(s) showed good professional attitudes.                     | 28  | 90.3% | 502   | 92.8% | 529                   | 92.5% |
| 5. The instructor(s) was/were very involved.                                 | 29  | 93.5% | 499   | 92.2% | 528                   | 92.3% |
| 6. The instructor(s) encouraged students to participate in the activities.   | 28  | 90.3% | 505   | 93.3% | 532                   | 93.0% |
| 7. The instructor(s) cared for the students.                                 | 29  | 93.5% | 491   | 90.8% | 520                   | 90.9% |
| 8. The instructor(s) was/were ready to offer help to students when needed.   | 28  | 90.3% | 506   | 93.5% | 533                   | 93.2% |
| 9. The instructor(s) had much interaction with the students.                 | 28  | 90.3% | 477   | 88.2% | 502                   | 87.8% |
| 10. Overall speaking, I had a very positive evaluation of the instructor(s). | 29  | 93.5% | 504   | 93.2% | 531                   | 92.8% |

\* All items are on a 6-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= agree and 6= strongly agree. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 4-6) are shown in the table.

Table 8.17b Summary of the views of the program participants of the workers implementing the Tier 2 Program

|  | Participants with positive responses (option 4-6)* |        |   |       |                       |       |
|--|--|--------|---|-------|-----------------------|-------|
|  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (A) (N=31) |        | Participants from 8 Different Schools (B) (N=279) |       | Overall (A+B) (N=310) |       |
|  | N  | %      | N   | %     | N                     | %     |
| 1. The worker(s) has/have professional knowledge.          | 29   | 93.5%  | 261   | 93.5% | 290                   | 93.5% |
| 2. The worker(s) demonstrated good working skills.         | 30   | 96.8%  | 259   | 92.8% | 289                   | 93.2% |
| 3. The worker(s) were well prepared for the program.       | 30   | 96.8%  | 265   | 95.0% | 295                   | 95.2% |
| 4. The worker(s) understood the needs of the participants. | 28   | 90.3%  | 263   | 94.3% | 291                   | 93.9% |
| 5. The worker(s) cared about the participants.             | 27   | 87.1%  | 262   | 93.9% | 289                   | 93.2% |
| 6. The worker(s)' attitudes were very good.                | 31   | 100.0% | 261   | 93.5% | 292                   | 94.2% |
| 7. The worker(s) had much interaction with participants.   | 30   | 96.8%  | 242   | 86.7% | 272                   | 87.7% |
| 8. On the whole, I was satisfied with the worker(s).       | 30   | 96.8%  | 261   | 93.5% | 291                   | 93.9% |

\* All items are on a 6-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= agree and 6= strongly agree. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 4-6) are shown in the table.

Table 8.18a Perceived effectiveness of the Tier 1 Program by the program participants

| The extent to which the Tier 1 Program of the Project P.A.T.H.S. has helped you: | Participants with positive responses (options 3-5)* |        |   |       |                       |       |
|--|---|--------|---|-------|-----------------------|-------|
|  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (A) (N=31)  |        | Participants from 8 Different Schools (B) (N=541) |       | Overall (A+B) (N=572) |       |
|  | N   | %      | N   | %     | N                     | %     |
| 1. It has strengthened my bonding with teachers, classmates and my family.       | 31  | 100.0% | 435   | 80.4% | 466                   | 81.5% |
| 2. It has strengthened my resilience in adverse conditions.                      | 29  | 93.5%  | 424   | 78.4% | 453                   | 79.2% |
| 3. It has enhanced my social competence.   | 30  | 96.8%  | 453   | 83.7% | 483                   | 84.4% |
| 4. It has improved my ability in handling and expressing my emotions.            | 29  | 93.5%  | 441   | 81.5% | 470                   | 82.2% |
| 5. It has enhanced my cognitive competence.                                      | 27  | 87.1%  | 428   | 79.1% | 455                   | 79.5% |
| 6. My ability to resist harmful influences has been improved.                    | 28  | 90.3%  | 467   | 86.3% | 495                   | 86.5% |
| 7. It has strengthened my ability to distinguish between the good and the bad.   | 27  | 87.1%  | 465   | 86.0% | 492                   | 86.0% |
| 8. It has increased my competence in making sensible and wise choices.           | 28  | 90.3%  | 454   | 83.9% | 482                   | 84.3% |
| 9. It has helped me to have life reflections.                                    | 22  | 71.0%  | 439   | 81.1% | 461                   | 80.6% |
| 10. It has reinforced my self-confidence.  | 26  | 83.9%  | 406   | 75.0% | 432                   | 75.5% |
| 11. It has increased my self-awareness.  | 28  | 90.3%  | 440   | 81.3% | 468                   | 81.8% |
| 12. It has helped me to face the future with a positive attitude.                | 27  | 87.1%  | 439   | 81.1% | 466                   | 81.5% |
| 13. It has helped me to cultivate compassion and care about others.              | 28  | 90.3%  | 461   | 85.2% | 489                   | 85.5% |
| 14. It has encouraged me to care about the community.                            | 26  | 83.9%  | 440   | 81.3% | 466                   | 81.5% |
| 15. It has promoted my sense of responsibility in serving the society.           | 27  | 87.1%  | 434   | 80.2% | 461                   | 80.6% |
| 16. It has enriched my overall development.                                      | 27  | 87.1%  | 472   | 87.2% | 499                   | 87.2% |

\* All items are on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = unhelpful, 2 = not very helpful, 3 = slightly helpful, 4 = helpful, 5 = very helpful. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 3-5) are shown in the table.

Table 8.18b Perceived effectiveness of the Tier 2 Program by the program participants

| The extent to which the Tier 2 Program of the Project P.A.T.H.S. had helped you:   | Participants with positive responses (option 4-6)* |       |   |       |                       |       |
|--|--|-------|---|-------|-----------------------|-------|
|  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (A) (N=31) |       | Participants from 8 Different Schools (B) (N=279) |       | Overall (A+B) (N=310) |       |
|  | N  | %     | N   | %     | N                     | %     |
| 1. The service has helped me a lot.  | 28   | 90.3% | 235   | 84.2% | 263                   | 84.8% |
| 2. The service has enhanced my growth.   | 26   | 83.9% | 241   | 86.4% | 267                   | 86.1% |
| 3. In the future, I would receive similar service(s) if needed.                    | 29   | 93.5% | 213   | 76.3% | 242                   | 78.1% |
| 4. I have learnt how to help myself through participating in the program.          | 30   | 96.8% | 240   | 86.0% | 270                   | 87.1% |
| 5. I have had positive change(s) after joining the program.                        | 30   | 96.8% | 236   | 84.6% | 266                   | 85.8% |
| 6. I have learnt how to solve their problems through participating in the program. | 29   | 93.5% | 235   | 84.2% | 264                   | 85.2% |
| 7. My behavior has become better after joining this program.                       | 25   | 80.6% | 207   | 74.2% | 232                   | 74.8% |
| 8. Those who knew me agree that this program has induced positive changes in me.   | 27   | 87.1% | 221   | 79.2% | 248                   | 80.0% |

\* All items are on a 6-point Likert scale with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree and 6 = strongly agree. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 4-6) are shown in the table.

Table 8.19 Other aspects of subjective outcome evaluation of the Tier One Program

**Q: If your friends have needs and conditions similar to yours, will you suggest him/her to join this course? (N=572)**

| 1                           |      | 2                |       | 3            |       | 4                       |      | Participants with positive responses (option 3-4) |       |
|-----------------------------|------|------------------|-------|--------------|-------|-------------------------|------|---|-------|
| Definitely Will Not Suggest |      | Will Not Suggest |       | Will Suggest |       | Definitely Will Suggest |      |   |       |
| N                           | %    | N                | %     | N            | %     | N                       | %    | N   | %     |
| 13                          | 2.3% | 103              | 18.0% | 406          | 71.0% | 47                      | 8.2% | 453   | 79.2% |

**Q: Will you participate in similar courses again in the future? (N = 572)**

| 1                               |      | 2                    |       | 3                |       | 4                           |      | Participants with positive responses (option 3-4) |       |
|---------------------------------|------|----------------------|-------|------------------|-------|-----------------------------|------|---|-------|
| Definitely Will Not Participate |      | Will Not Participate |       | Will Participate |       | Definitely Will Participate |      |   |       |
| N                               | %    | N                    | %     | N                | %     | N                           | %    | N   | %     |
| 29                              | 5.1% | 200                  | 35.0% | 295              | 51.6% | 45                          | 7.9% | 340   | 59.4% |

**Q: On the whole, are you satisfied with this course? (N = 569)**

| 1                 |      | 2                       |      | 3                     |      | 4         |       | 5                    |       | 6              |      | Participants with positive responses (option 4-6) |       |
|-------------------|------|-------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|-----------|-------|----------------------|-------|----------------|------|---|-------|
| Very Dissatisfied |      | Moderately Dissatisfied |      | Slightly Dissatisfied |      | Satisfied |       | Moderately Satisfied |       | Very Satisfied |      |   |       |
| N                 | %    | N                       | %    | N                     | %    | N         | %     | N                    | %     | N              | %    | N   | %     |
| 6                 | 1.0% | 14                      | 2.4% | 31                    | 5.4% | 348       | 60.8% | 146                  | 25.5% | 24             | 4.2% | 518   | 90.6% |

Table 8.20a Mean and Standard Deviations among Variables in CSOES-A by Groups

|                                    | Participants with Economic Disadvantage |      | Participants without Economic Disadvantage |      | Overall |      |
|------------------------------------|---|------|--|------|---------|------|
|                                    | M                                       | (SD) | M  | (SD) | M       | (SD) |
| Program Qualities (10 items)       | 4.44                                    | .73  | 4.34                                       | .76  | 4.37    | .75  |
| Implementers Qualities (10 items)  | 4.69                                    | .68  | 4.61                                       | .80  | 4.63    | .76  |
| Program Effectiveness (16 items) * | 3.32                                    | .73  | 3.26                                       | .75  | 3.28    | .74  |
| Total Scale (36 items)             | 4.00                                    | .63  | 3.94                                       | .68  | 3.96    | .66  |

\* All items in this domain are on a 5-point Likert scale

Table 8.20b Mean and Standard Deviations among Variables in CSOES-C by Groups

|                                  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage |      | Participants without Economic Disadvantage |      | Overall |      |
|----------------------------------|---|------|--|------|---------|------|
|                                  | M                                       | (SD) | M  | (SD) | M       | (SD) |
| Program Qualities (8 items)      | 4.52                                    | .77  | 4.47                                       | .83  | 4.49    | .81  |
| Implementers Qualities (8 items) | 4.71                                    | .73  | 4.63                                       | .84  | 4.66    | .80  |
| Program Effectiveness (8 items)  | 4.31                                    | .94  | 4.34                                       | .90  | 4.33    | .91  |
| Total Scale (24 items)           | 4.51                                    | .74  | 4.49                                       | .80  | 4.50    | .78  |

Table 8.21a Comparison between Poor Group and Non-poor Group among Items in CSOES-A (Program Qualities)

| Program Qualities (10 items)   | Participants with positive responses (options 4-6)* |       |  |       | Chi Square value | p value (2 sided) |
|--|---|-------|--|-------|------------------|-------------------|
|  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (N=191)     |       | Participants without Economic Disadvantage (N=381) |       |                  |                   |
|  | N   | %     | N  | %     |                  |                   |
| 1. The objectives of the curriculum were very clear.                                     | 154   | 89.0% | 337  | 88.2% | .074             | .886              |
| 2. The design of the curriculum was very good.   | 150   | 86.7% | 329  | 86.1% | .034             | .895              |
| 3. The activities were carefully planned.  | 153   | 88.4% | 330  | 86.6% | .355             | .586              |
| 4. The classroom atmosphere was very pleasant.   | 153   | 88.4% | 345  | 90.3% | .454             | .546              |
| 5. There was much peer interaction amongst the students.                                 | 157   | 91.8% | 340  | 89.2% | .872             | .442              |
| 6. I participated actively during lessons (including discussions, sharing, games, etc.). | 154   | 89.0% | 327  | 86.1% | .923             | .414              |
| 7. I was encouraged to do my best.   | 151   | 87.3% | 318  | 83.5% | 1.336            | .309              |
| 8. The learning experience I encountered enhanced my interest towards the lessons.       | 143   | 82.7% | 302  | 79.5% | .767             | .419              |
| 9. Overall speaking, I had a very positive evaluation of the program.                    | 145   | 83.8% | 330  | 86.4% | .639             | .435              |
| 10.On the whole, I like this curriculum very much.                                       | 147   | 85.0% | 322  | 84.3% | .042             | .900              |

\* All items are on a 6-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= agree and 6= strongly agree. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 4-6) are shown in the table.

Table 8.21b Comparison between Poor Group and Non-poor Group among Items in CSOES-A (Implementers Qualities)

| Implementers Qualities (10 items)  | Participants with positive responses (options 4-6)* |       |  |       | Chi Square value | p value (2 sided) |
|--|---|-------|--|-------|------------------|-------------------|
|  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (N=191)     |       | Participants without Economic Disadvantage (N=381) |       |                  |                   |
|  | N   | %     | N  | %     |                  |                   |
| 1. The instructor(s) had a good mastery of the curriculum.                   | 163   | 94.2% | 345  | 90.6% | 2.103            | .184              |
| 2. The instructor(s) was well-prepared for the lessons.                      | 161   | 93.1% | 343  | 89.8% | 1.529            | .267              |
| 3. The instructor(s)' teaching skills were good.                             | 158   | 91.3% | 343  | 89.8% | .234             | .756              |
| 4. The instructor(s) showed good professional attitudes.                     | 163   | 94.2% | 352  | 92.4% | .610             | .479              |
| 5. The instructor(s) was very involved.                                      | 165   | 95.4% | 350  | 91.6% | 2.507            | .155              |
| 6. The instructor(s) encouraged students to participate in the activities.   | 166   | 96.0% | 352  | 92.4% | 2.489            | .138              |
| 7. The instructor(s) cared for the students.                                 | 163   | 94.2% | 344  | 90.1% | 2.617            | .141              |
| 8. The instructor(s) was ready to offer help to students when needed.        | 166   | 96.0% | 354  | 92.7% | 2.173            | .186              |
| 9. The instructor(s) had much interaction with the students.                 | 161   | 93.1% | 330  | 86.4% | 5.202            | .022              |
| 10. Overall speaking, I had a very positive evaluation of the instructor(s). | 166   | 96.0% | 353  | 92.4% | 2.468            | .138              |

\* All items are on a 6-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= agree and 6= strongly agree. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 4-6) are shown in the table.

Table 8.21c Comparison between Poor Group and Non-poor Group among Items in CSOES-A (Program Effectiveness)

| Program Effectiveness (16 items)   | Participants with positive responses (options 3-5)* |       |  |       | Chi Square value | p value (2 sided) |
|--|---|-------|--|-------|------------------|-------------------|
|  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (N=191)     |       | Participants without Economic Disadvantage (N=381) |       |                  |                   |
|  | N   | %     | N  | %     |                  |                   |
| 1. It has strengthened my bonding with teachers, classmates and my family.     | 149   | 86.1% | 307  | 80.2% | 2.880            | .090              |
| 2. It has strengthened my resilience in adverse conditions.                    | 141   | 81.5% | 301  | 78.5% | .620             | .496              |
| 3. It has enhanced my social competence.                                       | 150   | 87.2% | 322  | 84.1% | .918             | .370              |
| 4. It has improved my ability in handling and expressing my emotions.          | 145   | 83.8% | 314  | 82.2% | .277             | .631              |
| 5. It has enhanced my cognitive competence.                                    | 139   | 80.3% | 304  | 79.4% | .070             | .821              |
| 6. My ability to resist harmful influences has been improved.                  | 151   | 87.3% | 331  | 86.4% | .076             | .893              |
| 7. It has strengthened my ability to distinguish between the good and the bad. | 147   | 85.0% | 334  | 87.2% | .510             | .503              |
| 8. It has increased my competence in making sensible and wise choices.         | 148   | 85.5% | 322  | 84.1% | .199             | .705              |
| 9. It has helped me to have life reflections.                                  | 135   | 78.0% | 313  | 81.7% | 1.036            | .354              |
| 10. It has reinforced my self-confidence.                                      | 133   | 76.9% | 289  | 75.5% | .132             | .749              |
| 11. It has increased my self-awareness.  | 141   | 81.5% | 313  | 81.7% | .004             | .519              |
| 12. It has helped me to face the future with a positive attitude.              | 139   | 80.3% | 314  | 82.2% | .272             | .636              |
| 13. It has helped me to cultivate compassion and care about others.            | 143   | 83.1% | 333  | 87.2% | 1.595            | .235              |
| 14. It has encouraged me to care about the community.                          | 145   | 83.8% | 306  | 80.3% | .963             | .348              |
| 15. It has promoted my sense of responsibility in serving the society.         | 148   | 85.5% | 301  | 78.8% | 4.059            | .047              |
| 16. It has enriched my overall development.                                    | 155   | 90.1% | 332  | 85.9% | 1.146            | .326              |

\* All items are on a 5-point Likert scale with 1= unhelpful, 2= not very helpful, 3= slightly helpful, 4= helpful, 5= very helpful. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 3-5) are shown in the table.

Table 8.22a Comparison between Poor Group and Non-poor Group among Items in CSOES-C (Program Qualities)

| Program Qualities (8 items)   | Participants with positive responses (options 4-6)* |       |  |       | Chi Square value | p value (2 sided) |
|---|---|-------|--|-------|------------------|-------------------|
|   | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (N=191)     |       | Participants without Economic Disadvantage (N=381) |       |                  |                   |
|   | N   | %     | N  | %     |                  |                   |
| 1. The activities were carefully planned.   | 97  | 94.2% | 188  | 92.6% | .261             | .811              |
| 2. The quality of the service was high.   | 94  | 91.3% | 183  | 90.6% | .012             | 1.000             |
| 3. The service provided could meet the participants' needs.                       | 91  | 88.3% | 180  | 88.7% | .007             | 1.000             |
| 4. The service delivered could achieve the planned objectives.                    | 93  | 90.3% | 183  | 90.6% | .007             | 1.000             |
| 5. I could get the service they wanted.   | 87  | 84.5% | 178  | 87.7% | .610             | .479              |
| 6. I had much interaction with other participants.                                | 94  | 91.3% | 183  | 90.1% | .099             | .838              |
| 7. I would recommend others who have similar needs to participate in the program. | 91  | 88.3% | 175  | 86.2% | .276             | .720              |
| 8. On the whole, I was satisfied with the service.                                | 97  | 94.2% | 188  | 92.6% | .261             | .811              |

\* All items are on a 6-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= agree and 6= strongly agree. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 4-6) are shown in the table.

Table 8.22b Comparison between Poor Group and Non-poor Group among Items in CSOES-C (Implementers Qualities)

| Implementers Qualities (8 items)                           | Participants with positive responses (options 4-6)* |       |  |       | Chi Square value | p value (2 sided) |
|--|---|-------|--|-------|------------------|-------------------|
|  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (N=191)     |       | Participants without Economic Disadvantage (N=381) |       |                  |                   |
|  | N   | %     | N  | %     |                  |                   |
| 1. The worker(s) had professional knowledge.               | 98  | 95.1% | 188  | 92.6% | .719             | .471              |
| 2. The worker(s) demonstrated good working skills.         | 101   | 98.1% | 185  | 91.1% | 5.365            | .025              |
| 3. The worker(s) were well prepared for the program.       | 100   | 97.1% | 191  | 94.1% | 1.318            | .401              |
| 4. The worker(s) understood the needs of the participants. | 97  | 94.2% | 190  | 93.5% | .039             | 1.000             |
| 5. The worker(s) cared about the participants.             | 98  | 95.1% | 188  | 92.6% | .719             | .471              |
| 6. The worker(s)' attitudes were very good.                | 102   | 99.0% | 186  | 91.5% | 6.765            | .009              |
| 7. The worker(s) had much interaction with participants.   | 91  | 88.3% | 177  | 87.2% | .084             | .856              |
| 8. On the whole, I was satisfied with the worker(s).       | 101   | 98.1% | 187  | 92.1% | 4.355            | .040              |

\* All items are on a 6-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= agree and 6= strongly agree. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 4-6) are shown in the table



Table 8.22c Comparison between Poor Group and Non-poor Group among Items in CSOES-C (Program Effectiveness)

| Program Effectiveness (8 items)  | Participants with positive responses (options 4-6)* |       |  |       | Chi Square value | p value (2 sided) |
|--|---|-------|--|-------|------------------|-------------------|
|  | Participants with Economic Disadvantage (N=191)     |       | Participants without Economic Disadvantage (N=381) |       |                  |                   |
|  | N   | %     | N  | %     |                  |                   |
| 1. The service has helped me a lot.  | 90  | 88.2% | 172  | 87.8% | .015             | 1.000             |
| 2. The service has enhanced my growth.   | 90  | 88.2% | 175  | 89.3% | .075             | .846              |
| 3. In the future, I would receive similar service(s) if needed.                    | 87  | 85.3% | 154  | 78.6% | 1.960            | .214              |
| 4. I have learnt how to help myself through participating in the program.          | 93  | 91.2% | 175  | 89.3% | .262             | .688              |
| 5. I have had positive change(s) after joining the program.                        | 89  | 87.3% | 176  | 89.8% | .440             | .561              |
| 6. I have learnt how to solve their problems through participating in the program. | 89  | 87.3% | 173  | 88.3% | .064             | .852              |
| 7. My behavior has become better after joining this program.                       | 80  | 79.2% | 151  | 77.4% | .122             | .769              |
| 8. Those who knew me agree that this program has induced positive changes in me.   | 88  | 84.3% | 161  | 82.6% | .146             | .747              |

\* All items are on a 6-point Likert scale with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= agree and 6= strongly agree. Only respondents with positive responses (i.e., options 4-6) are shown in the table.

Table 8.23 Results of independent sample t-tests testing the three subjective outcome evaluation measures of CSOES-A

|                                    | Participants with the participation of Tier 2 Program |      | Participants without the participation of Tier 2 Program |      | t value | p value |
|------------------------------------|---|------|--|------|---------|---------|
|                                    | M   | (SD) | M  | (SD) |         |         |
| Program Qualities (10 items)       | 4.54  | .64  | 4.26   | .79  | 4.461   | .0001   |
| Implementers Qualities (10 items)  | 4.86  | .69  | 4.48   | .77  | 5.712   | .0001   |
| Program Effectiveness (16 items) * | 3.47  | .69  | 3.16   | .74  | 4.880   | .0001   |
| Total Scale (36 items)             | 4.15  | .58  | 3.83   | .68  | 5.433   | .0001   |

\* All items in this domain are on a 5-point Likert scale

Table 8.24 Overall summaries of the evaluation results based on the data from the adolescents experiencing poverty (N=31)

| Evaluation strategy           | Evaluation result   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Qualitative Interviews        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The overall impression towards the Project P.A.T.H.S. are positive.</li> <li>2. The responses towards the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs are solely optimistic and constructive.</li> <li>3. The poor participants had very positive perceptions of the program implementers, especially for the Tier 2 Program.</li> <li>4. Many participants regarded the program as helpful and beneficial to in different psychosocial domains.</li> <li>5. Explicit changes were perceived by the participants due to the positive influence of the project P.A.T.H.S..</li> <li>6. The knowledge and skills learned in P.A.T.H.S. are applicable and practical to the real life of the poor participants. The application of knowledge and skills consists of intra- and interpersonal levels.</li> <li>7. The poor participants perceived that they had acquired competencies at the personal, familial, interpersonal and societal levels after participating the Project.</li> </ol> |
| Repertory Grid Tests          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There were positive changes in the poor adolescents after they participated in the Project.</li> <li>2. They identified themselves more with their ideal self.</li> <li>3. They identified themselves more with successful peers experiencing poverty.</li> <li>4. They identified themselves more with successful and influential people.</li> <li>5. They psychologically identified themselves as more resilient after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S</li> <li>6. They are more willing to appreciate themselves after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S.</li> <li>7. They identified themselves less with peer losers</li> </ol>   |
| Subjective Outcome Evaluation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The poor participants perceived the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs in a positive way.</li> <li>2. The poor participants perceived the implementers of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs positively. They were highly satisfied with their performance and attitudes</li> <li>3. The poor participants regarded the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs as helpful and beneficial to them.</li> <li>4. The findings demonstrate the perceived effectiveness of the program from the perspectives of the poor participants, such as promotion of different psychosocial competencies and overall personal development</li> <li>5. Joining Tier 2 Program was a strong predictor of the perceived program effectiveness of the poor participants.</li> </ol>   |

Table 8.25a Correlation between CSOES-A and Repertory Grid

|  | Correlation (Pearson) |                       |                       |                       |                        |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|  | Distance between E1E2 | Distance between E2E4 | Distance between E2E8 | Distance between E2E8 | Distance between E2E10 |
| Program qualities (10 items)               | .272                  | -.154                 | -.095                 | .046                  | -.298                  |
| Implementer qualities (10 items)           | 0.050                 | .053                  | -.230                 | -.195                 | .012                   |
| Perceived program effectiveness (16 items) | .375*                 | -.413*                | .100                  | .220                  | -.504**                |

\* P< .05 (2-tailed), \*\* P< .01 (2-tailed)

E1: Self before joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. (past self)

E2: Self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. for 2 years (present self)

E4: Ideal self

E8: Peer Group - a successful peer experiencing poverty

E9: Peer Group - a (peer) loser experiencing poverty

E10: A successful and influential person

Table 8.25b Correlation between CSOES-C and Repertory Grid

|  | Correlation (Pearson) |                       |                       |                       |                        |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|  | Distance between E1E2 | Distance between E2E4 | Distance between E2E8 | Distance between E2E8 | Distance between E2E10 |
| Program qualities (10 items)               | .300                  | -.401*                | .134                  | .068                  | -.265                  |
| Implementer qualities (10 items)           | .299                  | -.337                 | .158                  | .192                  | -.186                  |
| Perceived program effectiveness (16 items) | .376*                 | -.481**               | .019                  | .163                  | -5.21**                |

\* P< .05 (2-tailed), \*\* P< .01 (2-tailed)

E1: Self before joining the Project P.A.T.H.S. (past self)

E2: Self after completion of the Project P.A.T.H.S. for 2 years (present self)

E4: Ideal self

E8: Peer Group - a successful peer experiencing poverty

E9: Peer Group - a (peer) loser experiencing poverty

E10: A successful and influential person

## **Chapter Nine: Integration of Findings and Overall Discussion**

This chapter further discusses the findings of this study. There are several sections in this chapter. The first section discusses the research questions with integration of the major findings. Then the advances and the contributions of the study are discussed. Lastly, the implications for further research will be examined.

### **9.1 Addressing the Research Questions of this Study**

As mentioned in Chapters Five and Six, the main goal of the current study was to examine the perceptions of the program participants (with economic disadvantage) of the Project P.A.T.H.S. regarding the program and its effects. The overall research question was: *“What are the perceived program effectiveness and personal changes that take place in adolescents with economic disadvantage who have participated in the 3-year PYD program in Hong Kong?”*. To recap, this question was then divided into the following five research questions, including:

- (1) What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the program and instructors at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?
- (2) What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the perceived benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?
- (3) How do participants apply what they learned in the program to real life?
- (4) What are the changes in participants after completion of the project?
- (5) What factors affected the changes in participants?

In the following, all five research questions are discussed respectively alongside integration of the findings.

**9.1.1 Research question 1: “What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the program and instructors at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?”**

*9.1.1.1 Evaluation of the P.A.T.H.S. program*

To address this part of the research question, the related findings from both the qualitative (see Chapter Eight, Section 8.1, regarding the individual interviews) and quantitative studies (see Chapter Eight, Section 8.3) were overall positive. These positive responses are significant indicators that implied the overall perceptions of the poor participants towards the Project P.A.T.H.S. were positive (i.e., program quality, instructor, program effectiveness). As detailed in Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.1, over 80% of the poor participants gave positive responses towards the Project P.A.T.H.S. in the interviews. Two crucial observations can be highlighted: (1) Most responses from the poor participants towards the Project P.A.T.H.S. are positive and they viewed the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs in a favorable light; (2) Many poor participants evaluated the program content in a positive manner.

It is argued here that both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs were well received by participants experiencing poverty. One reasons for such a positive impression was that fee-waiving activities were provided to the poor participants. Indeed, many poor families in Hong Kong may have financial difficulties supporting their children to join extracurricular activities (Wong & Lou, 2010) and thus affecting the investment of human capital for their children (Yeung et al., 2002), in which these activities

could help foster positive competencies in their children. According to Sen's (1999) capability approach to child poverty, the deficiency of familial resources (both tangible and intangible) would obliterate the opportunity for their kids to develop their full potentials that results in isolation and lower quality of life (Von Rueden et al., 2006). Besides, Duncan, Yeung, Brooks-Gunn and Smith (1998) argued that childhood poverty has great impacts on the life chances of children. In Hong Kong, Shek and Tsui (2012) also indicated that poor youth were more aware of their limited life chances which lead them to negatively perceive themselves, with lower future aspirations and orientations as compared to those without economic disadvantage. Due to the support of the HKJC, opportunities to join additional activities were given. In this study, all 31 poor adolescents admitted that they could sufficiently benefit from the subsidies from the HKJC. This gave supplementary positive impressions as their immediate financial needs were fulfilled. At the same time, additional opportunities were given because of their participation in the Project. Ngai, Cheung and Ngai (2012) concluded that "service use" (i.e., the participation in developmental programs offered by schools and NGOs) is one of the factors conducive to the positive development of economically disadvantaged youth. At the same time, they stated in their study that "when young people suffering from economic hardship obtain access to adequate resources and opportunities, they can desist from failure and social exclusion" (p.143). In any case, the adequate subsidies from the HKJC provided opportunities and laid a good foundation for growth for those participants experiencing poverty.

There is little doubt that the program P.A.T.H.S. was well received. For instance, in Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.3.1, the design and implementation of the 2-

tier program was highly recognized. The poor participants could recall almost all the content of the Project. They also strongly consented on the importance of having both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, giving concrete reasons and examples. Furthermore, the quantitative data further supports this argument. The triangulated findings showed that the majority of the poor participants enjoyed the activities very much in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs. They also liked the format and strategies of the program implementation. In particular, evaluation on the Tier 2 program was perceived in a more favorable light. Based on the interview findings, it is observed here that “activities using adventure-based counseling approach” and “volunteer training and services” were two popular program approaches used by social workers implementing the Tier 2 Programs and students’ related feedback was good. This is also consistent with previous studies’ findings that these two intervention approaches were the major program elements adopted for the Tier 2 Program (Shek & Lee, 2008; Shek, Lee, Sun, & Lung, 2008).

In addition, findings from the poor participants are similar and consistent with the corresponding evaluative measures in the subjective outcome evaluation of the entire sample, including both poor and non-poor participants. When comparing the current qualitative results in this study with the previous findings in the P.A.T.H.S. literature (including both Experimental Implementation Phase, Full Implementation Phase and Extension Phase), comparable findings were observed (Shek, 2006d, 2009a; Ma & Shek, 2013b; Shek, Han, Lee, & Yu, 2014; Shek & Ma, 2012d; Shek & Sun, 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2013). For example, using the data collected in the pre-post tests from 546 students who joined the project in the first year of the Experimental Implementation Phase, Shek (2006d) stated that high proportions who had joined the Experimental and Full Implementation Phases had

positive perceptions of the program and the instructors. In addition, based on the subjective outcome evaluation results of the Experimental and Full Implementation Phases (2005–2009) of the Project, Shek and Sun (2012a) examined the data from 206,313 participants and stated that the majority had good and positive perceptions towards the program and the program implementers. On the whole, the present findings are highly similar to existing evaluation studies of the Project P.A.T.H.S..

Overall, the current study shows that the poor participants were satisfied with the Project P.A.T.H.S. at a delayed point in time after completion of the program. For those who were more engaged were more likely to report higher satisfaction and to observe greater benefits. Although there were negative views towards the Project (e.g., four students perceived the program to be boring or not useful), they were not the dominant views. For the participants who shared negative responses, they claimed that they were not suitable to participate in this Project as they were strongly reluctant to this kind of developmental program. Indeed, they mentioned that the program was good for young people. This phenomenon is also consistent with the published evaluation studies of the Project P.A.T.H.S., that about 80% of participants were satisfied with the program (Ma & Shek, 2010; Shek, 2012d; Shek & Sun, 2007b).

#### *9.1.1.2 Evaluation on the P.A.T.H.S. instructors*

To address this part of the research question, the triangulated findings displayed very positive results (see Chapter 8, Sections 8.1 and 8.3). Three significant observations can be highlighted for this part of the research question: (1) Almost all the poor participants had positive views on the program implementers (i.e., the school teachers and the social workers from the NGOs); (2) Nearly all participants experiencing poverty revealed that they were highly satisfied with the program



implementers; (3) It is observed here that the poor participants had a very clear understanding on the collaboration of the teachers and social workers. From the narratives of the poor participants, this clear and positive perception among them also provides an affirmative impact on the overall satisfaction of the project implementers, as the poor participants stated that the implementers had done a very good job in their respective roles.

Concerning the first two observations, as reflected by the positive quantitative data (see Chapter Eight, Section 8.3.3) and affirmative qualitative responses (see Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.3.5), it was found that most of the poor participants greatly appreciated the teaching attitudes, teaching performance and the positive personality traits of the instructors of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs. Furthermore, it was revealed in the interviews that poor participants treasured both verbal and non-verbal instructor-student interaction.

Other than the favorable quantitative evaluations, some frequent qualitative responses were also collected from different interviewees. This displays that these program implementers not only maintained high quality in teaching, they also actively facilitated the learning and development of the participants experiencing poverty during the program implementation. All these descriptors are in line with previous studies of P.A.T.H.S. (Shek & Sun, 2008b; 2008c). In particular, the implementers' performance in the Tier 2 program was significantly recognized and valued by participants. Overall, it is observed here that both teachers and social workers used personal teaching efficacy and immediacy to enhance student motivation to learn and participate, and thus positively affected the program implementation and quality. This finding is also in line with the findings of Western research (Deemer, 2004; Viggiani, Reid, & Bailey-Dempsey, 2002). For example, in

a systematic and comprehensive review, Taylor et al. (2017) indicated that teachers (program implementers) should play a key role in PYD programs, to promote students' social, emotional and academic growth. At the same time, without quality implementation, the potential impact of PYD programs will be diminished and ruined. Oberle (2018) shared similar ideas in his study that “teachers” was one of the central components for early adolescents' emotional well-being. Also, supportive classroom environment and positive relationships with teachers were contextual assets in a PYD program. Therefore, it is reasonable to state here that program implementers are key building blocks for program effectiveness.

Again, similar to the previous section, the above findings are comparable to the corresponding evaluative measures in the subjective outcome evaluation of the entire sample, i.e., many P.A.T.H.S. participants commonly shared positive perceptions of the program implementers. Moreover, the current findings are also consistent with previous evaluative studies in the three different phases of the Project P.A.T.H.S. (Shek, 2006d; 2009a, 2012b, Ma & Shek, 2013b; Shek, Han, Lee, & Yu, 2014; Shek & Lee, 2008; Shek & Ma, 2012d; Shek & Sun, 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2013). For instance, in a study conducted by Shek and Lee (2008), 2,173 students in 52 schools who had joined the project in the first year of the Experimental Implementation Phase were invited to join the evaluation after completion of the program. The findings showed that high proportions of participants had positive perceptions of the instructors. In addition, Shek, Yu and Ho (2011) examined 34,081 participants' subjective evaluation of the Tier 2 Program in the Full Implementation Phase. The majority of the program participants generally had positive views on the program and the program instructors. What's more, Shek and Sun (2014) investigated students' perceptions of the Tier 2 Program (N=153,761) in the Extension Phase.

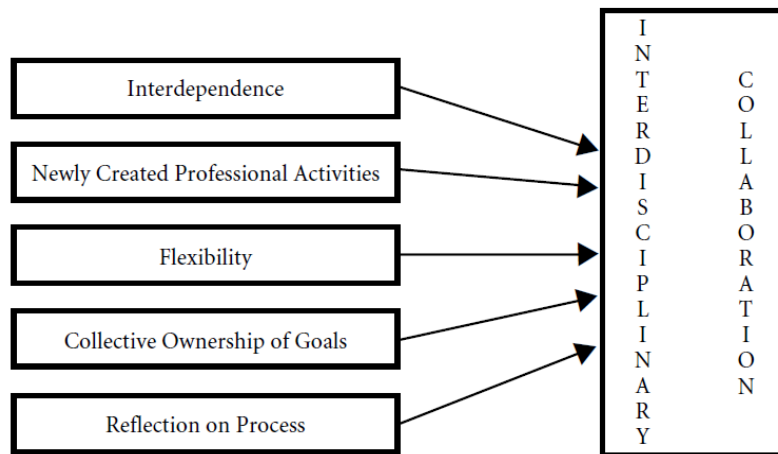
Findings here also showed that participants were satisfied with the program and its implementers.

As previously mentioned, one remarkable observation in the interview is that all the poor participants had very clear understanding on the collaboration of the teachers and social workers, including the nature and arrangement of the collaboration. Interestingly, this is not a typical phenomenon, especially because the related evaluation and interviews were conducted after the Project P.A.T.H.S. had completed for two years. Indeed, the implementation of large-scale youth development programs in schools is not simple. The good and deep impression of students clearly is another indicator that shows the outstanding work of the program implementers. One possible reason for this phenomenon is that the interdisciplinary collaboration is clearly defined in each school and all the teams in different schools are well-functioning.

Collaboration refers to individuals or organizations working together to address problems and deliver outcomes that are not easily or effectively achieved (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, 2013). Interdisciplinary collaboration originated from the healthcare setting, where workers are expected to collaborate with their colleagues and has since been transferred to other settings, such as social work and education (Bronstein, 2003). It refers to a group of people from different disciplines working together with complementary skills, in which they commit to a common purpose and contribute towards the same performance goal. In the process, this working group becomes more mutually accountable in accomplishing its tasks (Bronstein, 2003; Parker-Oliver, Bronstein, & Kurzejeski, 2005). Collaboration involves communication and connection. It is developed and sustained by mutual trust, power sharing and a shared belief in achieving a common

goal (Bronstein, 2003, Pugach, 1992, Viggiani, Reid, & Bailey-Dempsey, 2002). Many studies have documented the positive impact of effective interdisciplinary collaboration, including working teams in the disciplines of medicine, health care, education, psychology, social work and business (Bronstein, 2003, Parker-Oliver et al., 2005; D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, San Martin Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005, McDonald, Bradish, Billingham, Dibble, & Rice, 1991; Petri, 2010). In particular, strong and effective social worker-teacher collaboration can be the centerpiece for creating change in students (McDonald et al., 1991; Bronstein, Ball, Mellin, Wade-Mdivanian, & Anderson-Butcher, 2011; Pugach, 1992, Viggiani, Reid, & Bailey-Dempsey, 2002; Engum & Jeffries, 2012). Good collaborative activity practices can also significantly enhance the educational environment and eventually benefit all students in school (Pugach, 1992). From the narratives of the students in this current study, intensive staff contribution and harmonious interdisciplinary cooperation are realized in the process.

Bronstein (2003) proposed a model for interdisciplinary collaboration research and practices (see Figure 9.1). In her model, five tangible and intangible components contribute to program success, including (1) Newly created professional activities, (2) Interdependence, (3) Flexibility, (4) Collective ownership of goals, and (5) Reflection on process. Bronstein's model draws on an extensive meta-analysis of the social work literature and it is the most extensively cited perspective in the related literature. This model is considered appropriate for the defined context because these five key components can be regarded as the direction for understanding the effective interdisciplinary collaboration of the P.A.T.H.S. implementers, based on the perceptions of the poor participants.



**Figure 9.1: Components of an Interdisciplinary Collaboration Model (Bronstein, 2003)**

One of the unique features of the Project P.A.T.H.S. is to advocate collaboration between social workers and educators. It intentionally provides a special “platform” and “chance” for implementers’ collaboration (newly created professional activities). Both social workers and teachers can demonstrate their expertise in the implementation process under the two-tier program design and these P.A.T.H.S. activities maximize the expertise of each team member (Bronstein, 2003). As such, the program implementers can function interdependently and have a clear understanding of their roles in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs (Interdependence). The clear division of labor and job allocation, “occurrence of and reliance on interactions among professionals” (Bronstein, 2003, p.299) are portrayed by the participants. Both implementers “shared responsibility in the entire process of reaching goals” (Bronstein, 2003, p.301), including the tailor-made Tier 1 program for students, and joint design and implementation of the Tier 2 program (Collective ownership of goals). Based on the narratives of students, although it is not certain if the components of “Flexibility” and “Reflection on process” were witnessed, considering the portrayals of the implementers attitudes and effective communication

with students, it is believed here that being flexible and reflective could also be regarded as their characteristics.

Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the social worker - teacher collaboration in schools implementing the Project P.A.T.H.S. were effective. Indeed, strong and effective social worker-teacher collaboration can be the centerpiece for creating change in students. This kind of collaborative practice can promote positive educational outcomes and have a positive influence in the classroom, as well as the entire school atmosphere (Bronstein, 2003; Viggiani, Reid, & Bailey-Dempsey, 2002). This not only benefits the poor adolescents, but also significantly enriches inter-professional collaboration between social workers and educators in the local context.

#### *9.1.1.3 Addressing research question 1*

In summary, with reference to research question 1, it is reasonable to conclude that participants experiencing economic disadvantage had constructive and positive subjective outcome evaluation of the program and instructors of the Project P.A.T.H.S. at a delayed point in time after completion of the Project. Other than having a positive perception of the Project, it is clear that the P.A.T.H.S. program itself and its implementers are critical factors for effective implementation of the Project. Referring to the existing literature on the Project P.A.T.H.S., Shek and Sun (2008b) suggested using the 5 ‘P’s to evaluate the factors affecting the implementation quality of the Program. As discussed in the literature review (Chapter Five, Section 5.3.2), “**P**rogram” and “**P**eople” are reported as two important factors for effective implementation of the P.A.T.H.S. Project (Shek & Sun, 2008b; 2008c). In this study, consistent findings were observed. These two factors did not only affect

the general impression of the poor participants, but also positively influenced change in their development. Since the perceived changes of the participants are discussed when addressing research question 5, further exploration is elaborated in Section 9.1.4 below.

**9.1.2 Research question 2: “What is the subjective evaluation of program participants with economic disadvantage of the perceived benefits at a delayed point in time after completion of the project?”**

Since many subjective outcome evaluation studies of the Project P.A.T.H.S. were conducted when participants were still joining the 3- year Project, it is significant to investigate the program effects after completion of the program for a period of time.

*9.1.2.1 Perceived program effectiveness and benefits for the poor adolescents*

With reference to research question 1, similar findings were observed in research question 2 based on the quantitative and qualitative data (as discussed in Chapter 8). The triangulated findings showed that high proportions of the poor participants acknowledged the effectiveness of P.A.T.H.S. and regarded the Project as helpful and beneficial to their overall psychosocial development, even at a delayed point in time after completion of the Project for almost two years (details can be found in Chapter Eight, Section 8.4.2).

*How PYD qualities help the poor adolescents*

Damon (2004) stated that the PYD perspective “emphasizes the manifest potentialities rather than the supposed incapacities of young people—including young

people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and those with the most troubled histories.” (p.15). Indeed, the results of this study showed how PYD qualities help the poor adolescents. The perceived benefits were observed in relation to the domains of PYD constructs promoted in the P.A.T.H.S. Project. These are behavioral competence, cognitive competence, emotional competence, moral competence, social competence, clear and positive identity, self-determination, self-efficacy, beliefs about the future, spirituality, and prosocial involvement.

In particular, almost all participants experiencing poverty explicitly shared the perceived benefits of joining the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs. For example, they found lots of beneficial effects and enhancement in their social competence (e.g., improved communication and relationship with peers and family), resilience (e.g., enhanced stress management), emotional competence (e.g., enhanced ability in handling emotions) and self-efficacy (e.g., enhanced self-understanding and self-confidence). Again, the aforementioned results are highly consistent with previous research findings of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in that there was support for the benefits of the program in promoting PYD in adolescents (Ma & Shek, 2010; Shek, 2006d; Shek, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e; Shek, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2010b, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c; Shek & Lee, 2012; Shek & Ma, 2011a, 2012a, 2012d; Shek & Ma, 2010b; Shek, Ma, & Merrick, 2008; Shek & Sun, 2007a, 2008a, 2009c, 2010, 2012b, 2014; Shek & Yu, 2011c, 2012b). Also, the overall program effects of the Project can be generalized to the group of adolescents experiencing poverty.

Based on the qualitative findings (see Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.1), it is clear that poverty brings negative effects for the participants. They admitted that experiencing poverty negatively influenced their self-confidence and affected family bonding and peer relationships. Therefore, they are more stressed about livelihood



issues such as material well-being, learning experiences and social relationships. For their perceived enhancement in psychosocial competencies (i.e., behavioral competence, cognitive competence, emotional competence, moral competence, social competence and resilience), other than the perceived benefits expressed by the poor youth, with reference to the concepts of protective factors in resilience literature, it can be conjectured that their intra- and inter-personal competencies gained through the Project P.A.T.H.S. would serve as shields, which could buffer the negative effects of adversity related to poverty and thus further develop their capability and promote their resilience (Masten & Garmezy, 1985). In addition, it is believed that these competencies could help protect this group of poor participants from stressful life events brought about by poverty, minimizing the occurrence of maladaptive development and problem behavior (Cauce et al., 2003; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Garmezy, 1993; Masten, 2014; Masten & Garmezy, 1985).

Phillips and Pittman (2003) indicated that experiencing poverty would have a negative impact on the identity processes and formation of adolescents. They pointed out that “stress, social stigma or marginalization, and the nature of the opportunity structures faced by many poor adolescents conspire to create a context that is not conducive to exploring identity issues” (p.123). With reference to Bandura’s (1989) self-efficacy model, it is conjectured that higher levels of self-efficacy and self-mastery in the poor youth can be related to a lower level of risk and problem behaviors as they would self-identify with more positive and optimistic beliefs.

One remarkable thing deserving attention from the interviews was that 80.6% of the poor youth strongly agreed that they were target participants for joining the Project P.A.T.H.S.. Among the other 20%, although they were reluctant to join

the Project, two (out of five) agreed and asserted that the entire program of P.A.T.H.S. could cater for the developmental needs of young people in Hong Kong. In other words, even though they disliked joining the program, they could observe the positive effects of the program and actual benefits for those with similar developmental needs and socio-economic backgrounds.

As discussed in Chapter Four (Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2), with reference to the family stress model (Conger, Elder, & Lorenzo, 1994) and family investment model (Conger & Donnellan, 2007) concerning poverty, it is argued here that economically disadvantaged adolescents would have relatively poorer personal and psychological well-being than those without economic disadvantage. Also, within the unique social context of Hong Kong, it is also examined and documented in previous studies that the psychosocial development and adjustment among economically disadvantaged adolescents in Hong Kong are negatively influenced by family stress, family functioning, family quality of life and parent-child relationships (Chou, 2012; Goodstadt, 2013; Ho, Li, & Chan, 2015; Leung & Shek, 2011; Ngai et al., 2012, Shek, 2008a; Shek & Tsui, 2012). However, in the current study, positively perceived identity and psychological status were consistently reported. Considering that this group of poor adolescents had participated in the Project P.A.T.H.S. for several years, the intervention might have some buffering effects for them, leading them to experience a relatively steady psychological health development over time.

In addition, since the majority of the disadvantaged participants found the Project to be beneficial for their overall psychosocial development, this means the Project was a very good foundation for developing positive personal competencies, life skills, bonding with others, as well as healthy values and beliefs in poor youth, which in turn promotes the well-being of poor youth and contributes to their PYD. As

stated by Sen (1999), youth capacity development is crucial for poverty reduction. Basic capabilities are the abilities to satisfy certain elementary and important “functionings” (such as happiness, having self-respect or being well-nourished) up to certain levels and give value to life. These developed competencies and skills can also be regarded as inner developmental assets that “shield” against their life challenges and setbacks, serving as protective factors especially when they face the difficulties of poverty, which could help navigate adolescence in a healthy way (Roth & Brooks-Gunn 2003, p.94). It is argued here that if poor youth could be empowered with more PYD attributes (Catalano et al., 2002, 2004), competencies (Lerner, 2005; Lerner & Benson, 2003; Weissberg & O’ Brien, 2004) and developmental assets (Benson, 1997, 2007; Lerner & Benson, 2003), and these “qualities” can be aligned with their environments, even in a disadvantaged condition, adolescents experiencing poverty could still off-set the negative impact of poverty, in which we witnessed real changes in some cases. This approach also corresponds to the local alleviation strategies proposed by the Hong Kong Government, with the aim of encouraging “asset-building” in disadvantaged adolescents (Commission on Poverty, 2006).

#### *Mixed effects of the 2-tier program*

Among the published studies of the Project P.A.T.H.S., the focus has not been on investigating the mixed effects of the 2-tier program. As such, in this study the researcher attempted to examine mixed effects of the program through the individual interviews. Generally, the program content of both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs were found to be impressive and helpful, based on the narratives of the poor participants. Although two-third of the students reflected that they liked the Tier 2 Program more, they explicitly revealed the importance of having a Tier 1 Program,

which could not be eliminated. In addition, nearly all strongly agreed with the complementary functions and benefits of having both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs. In Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.3.1, the design and implementation of the 2-tier program was well-recognized. Many participants strongly agreed on the importance of having both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs. Constructive feedback and comments were received from most participants. It is argued here that both programs brought combined and complementary effects and had a positive impact on poor adolescents. These findings from the interviews are consistent with the findings in recent studies of the Project P.A.T.H.S.. Based on the objective outcome evaluation findings of two studies (Ma & Shek, 2017; Ma, Shek, & Chen, 2018), positive outcomes of the combined effects of the 2-tier program were observed.

While the majority expressed the positive effects of P.A.T.H.S. towards their development, it was reported in the interviews that the Project could not impressively help disadvantaged youths to deal with poverty in an appropriate manner. One possible explanation is that the nature and the original aims of the Project P.A.T.H.S. were not set as a poverty alleviation program to help poor youths forge better life chances. Therefore, it is understandable why the participants did not have impressive ideas on how P.A.T.H.S. could help them deal with the tangible problems of poverty.

#### *9.1.2.2 Addressing research question 2*

Based on the triangulated findings, one major conclusion drawn from the findings is that the majority of the poor program participants perceived numerous beneficial effects of the program with reference to different psychosocial domains. It is thus argued that poor youth benefited equally from the program as did the general youth population. In particular, with reference to binominal test findings, they lend

support to the notion that poor adolescents have more favorable perceptions of the Project. The results also showed that there were differences in the perceived impact of the Project between the poor and non-poor participants. As such, the overall program effects of the Project can be generalized to the group of adolescents experiencing poverty.

Conversely, in other local studies exploring adolescents experiencing poverty, poor adolescents consistently reported a lower level of PYD, rating themselves less positive in numerous competencies. Also, it was predicted that there will be a decline in poor youth's PYD (Shek & Lin, 2014; Shek & Tsui, 2012, 2013). In this study, although the economically disadvantaged youth did not strongly mention that the Project P.A.T.H.S. could help them deal with the tangible problems related to poverty, most had a positive perception of the Project and found a number of perceived benefits at intra- and inter-personal levels for their psychosocial development after completion of the Project. These results are quite different from those predicted in the local studies. Therefore, this study provides important evidence to support the argument of importance of PYD, as most disadvantaged adolescents do not experience any decline after participation. Indeed, they are able to improve their sense of hope and strengthen their purpose in life through better self-understanding and self-exploration.

### **9.1.3 Research question 3: “How do participants apply what they learned in the program to real life?”**

#### *9.1.3.1 Knowledge application of the poor adolescents*

To address this research question, the findings associated with the interview revealed that the poor adolescents could make use of what they learned in P.A.T.H.S.

and apply their learning in real life settings. While the effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S has been shown, the positive evaluations of the poor participants were extended to the helpful and practical knowledge and skills learned in the Project. With reference to the discussion in Chapter Four, Section 4.3, the accumulation of human capital (knowledge and skills in the domain of psychosocial competences) greatly benefits the poor youth. From the narratives of the poor participants, it revealed that the Project P.A.T.H.S. effectively supported their human capital development to achieve positive outcomes related to their intra- and inter-personal growth and development.

Indeed, the application of the learnt knowledge is a process that makes important meaning of the learning experience. It involves making sense of knowledge learnt and performing as well as sustaining what has been learnt in actual life. With reference to the narratives of the participants (see Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.4.4), they explicitly stated how they were applying what they had learned in P.A.T.H.S. to real life. The application of knowledge and skills consists of two levels: intra- and inter-personal. Participants asserted that the benefits gained in the process could be sustainably maintained. Perceived changes from the knowledge application could also be sustained after the completion of the Project. With reference to “product” evaluation of the CIPP model (Stufflebeam, 2007), discussed in Chapter Five, the sustainability of program effectiveness was observed. Motivation and confidence in sustaining skills and knowledge they acquired were also evident.

In fact, the application of the learned knowledge has significant meaning for their learning experience. From what the young people shared, it was clear that the knowledge application was initiated by themselves. The application process depends much on the use of internalized and tacit knowledge, and then applying what has been

learnt in the real life setting or in the future (Hamer & van Rossum, 2010). When this group of disadvantaged students were intrinsically motivated to engage in more meaningful learning, they decisively reflected on the process of learning. This implies that the knowledge and skills learnt in the Project were highly digested and internalized and this process should involve participants' self-reflection. Experience itself cannot produce true learning. It is argued here that "experience becomes educative when critical reflective thought creates new meaning and leads to growth and the ability to take informed actions" (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999, p.180). Having purposeful and critical reflection are found to be an important component in the learning process of individuals, which facilitates in-depth and transformative student learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Lucas, 2012). Reid (1993) defined reflection as "a process of reviewing an experience of practice in order to describe, analyze, evaluate and so inform learning about practice" (p.306). In addition, "students can use critical reflection practices for engaging in metacognition. It is associated with a number of learning outcomes including improved thinking, learning and assessment of self and social systems" (Lucas, 2012, p.163). In Project P.A.T.H.S., both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs emphasized the important of having guided reflection. Through interactive and reflective discussion or activities, all participants were taught to habitualize self-reflections, in which the participants could communicate with their internal voice and align their beliefs in future action.

In this study, enthusiasm in their reflections was observed in most poor P.A.T.H.S. participants. Through this, they were able to gain insight into their skills, competencies and knowledge. Their engagement in critical reflection also facilitated them in exploring, understanding, making sense of themselves, their learning experience and preparation for the future. After undergoing purposeful and critical

reflection, consolidated ideas would be internalized and concretely applied as everyday skills (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Lucas, 2012). As such, the knowledge application process can be regarded as the meaning making process of personal development. In some sense, it is a kind of advancement of their cognitive competence. Yet, it is more important that the poor adolescents can play a leading role and make full use of their learnt competence and skills to respond to the problems and difficulties they face in real life situations, such as setbacks due to poverty.

#### *9.1.3.2 Addressing research question 3*

In this study, evidence shows how the poor participants effectively applied what they had learned in the Project to their daily life. The application of learnt knowledge and skills could be regarded as a sign of positive change. The current findings also indicate that the effects of this PYD program over time tend to be sustained. Indeed, a plethora of research reported the short-term or initial effects of different psychosocial development programs for youth; however, much less evidence exists for the follow-up success of the program (Hansen, 1992; Resnicow & Botvin, 1993; Scheirer, 2005; Skara & Sussman, 2003; Wolfenden et al., 2019). The current evaluation study significantly showed that a high level of program effects are sustained in the poor adolescents after the completion of the P.A.T.H.S. Project. These apparent delayed effects are constructive throughout and further reveal the program effectiveness of the P.A.T.H.S. Project.

#### **9.1.4 Research question 4: “What are the changes in participants after completion of the project?”**



#### *9.1.4.1 The perceived changes in the program participants in terms of the “6Cs”*

With reference to the triangulated findings, almost all participants (N=27) with economic disadvantage stated the explicit perceived effectiveness of Project P.A.T.H.S. and perceived personal changes after completion of the program. However, four participants indicated that no significant change occurred. With reference to Kirkpatrick’s 4-level model (1976, 1986), if no behavior change occurs (this refers to Level 3), evaluators should determine if it is because of participant dissatisfaction with the program (i.e., Level 1) or because of failure to achieve the learning outcome (i.e., Level 2). From the narratives of the four participants, it is observed here that the major reasons for lack of behavioral change were not strongly related to the outcomes of Level 1 and 2, rather, it was factors beyond the scope of the Project P.A.T.H.S., such as their natural reluctance to join any developmental programs held in school and lack of motivation to be involved in the experiential learning activities.

Concerning positive changes in the 27 poor participants, enhancement in different psychosocial competencies, clear and positive identity, resilience and self-efficacy was documented. Again, these observations are consistent with the evaluation findings of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in that the students demonstrated positive change in 15 outcome indicators (Shek, 2006d, 2009b, 2009c, 2010a; Shek & Ma, 2012a; Shek, Siu, & Lee, 2008; Shek & Sun, 2012b). Indeed, studies document the weak linkage between clients’ expressed attitudes or intention and their subsequent behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Kraus, 1995). It is argued here that changes in intentions are not necessarily related to equivalent changes in behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Hence, having concrete attitudinal and behavioral changes

in the poor youth are prevailing indicators that demonstrate the actual program effectiveness of the Project.

As stated in the conceptual framework (see Chapter Five), the seven socio-emotional competency-constructs (Competence, Character, Connection, Confidence, Caring, Compassion and Contribution) are the measurement of students' perceived changes for this study, and their relevancy to the 15 PYD constructs of Project P.A.T.H.S. can be seen in Chapter Five, Section 5.3. Regarding the interview data and based on the definition of the seven competencies, as no response could be categorized under "Caring" (refers to the enrichment in prosocial involvement and prosocial norms), this study only utilized the other 6 "C"s as the discussion framework. Among the responses from the students, nearly half found that they had positive and significant changes in their "Characters". In addition, it can be concluded here that the disadvantaged youth perceived more positive changes in their "Competence", "Connection" and "Confidence" while they put less emphasis on "Compassion" and "Contribution". The constructive changes perceived by poor P.A.T.H.S. participants in "Character", "Competence", "Connection" and "Confidence" are further discussed below.

One major reason for these findings may be because of constructive knowledge application, since the application of learnt knowledge and skills could be regarded as a sign of positive change (Moshman, 2005). Adolescents (poor and non-poor) may experience different changes in their life, some of which can constitute better or worse psychological development. Moshman (2005) identified four criteria that indicate the processes of change as developmental, especially those changes that are (1) extended over time (months and years); (2) internally directed (regulated from within, not externally caused); (3) qualitative (a change in kind but not just

quantitative) and (4) systematically progressive (moving forward over time in a more mature and adaptable way). These four criteria can serve as the direction for understanding the changes of the poor participants after they had undergone knowledge application.

#### *9.1.4.2 Perceived changes in their “Character attributes”*

As previously stated, Character refers to individuals’ disposition, responsibility, autonomy and spirituality. From the narratives of the poor participants, many mentioned positive changes in their personality and attitudes. There were also enhancements in responsibility and improvements in dispositional weaknesses. Most of these stated changes took place when they were still participating in the Project. In the process of knowledge and skills application, the poor participants have opportunities to make use of different skills and apply the concepts learnt in P.A.T.H.S. in their daily life (e.g., the poor participants tried to adopt more positive and optimistic attitudes towards their lives and other people, improve their leadership and self-leadership during and after the programs, learn to be more cautious and conscientious, and more independent and proactive). The successful application experiences throughout these years gave them new idea and awareness of how they should perceive and evaluate themselves and others.

With reference to the four criteria of developmental change proposed by Moshman (2005), knowledge application was initiated by the poor adolescents, they displayed personal changes and improvements, which were sustained and extended over a substantial period of time. In addition, application quality can be observed in the ways in which the poor youth consolidated and applied their internalized knowledge, not only by counting the frequency of behaviors, but the whole

transformation could be observed by the poor youth themselves and by the people around them. It is remarkable that their changes in “Character” are progressive and move in the direction of greater adaptation or maturity. These character strengths can be strong buffers against a variety of adolescent psychosocial problems (Park & Peterson, 2006). Positive personality characters can also serve as protective factors for them to face adverse conditions (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), such as experiencing poverty.

#### *9.1.4.3 Enhancement in their “Competence” and “Connection”*

In this study, the indicator “Connection” refers to the development of positive relationships with healthy adults and positive peers. Competence refers to five of the PYD constructs. They are Cognitive Competence, Behavioral Competence, Emotional Competence, Moral Competence and Social Competence. Indeed, these two constructs are interrelated. For example, higher social competence will facilitate the development of stronger bonding in interpersonal relationships.

As discussed in Chapter Four, it is argued here that the developmental paths of poor adolescents in Hong Kong are particularly problematic and difficult (Ngai, Cheung, & Ngai, 2012), as their psychological well-being and socio-emotional development are easily threatened by their adverse conditions. As disclosed in Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.1.2, about one-third of the poor participants shared in the interviews that they have negative feelings and may feel ashamed about themselves because of their deprived condition. At the same time, they are more stressed about livelihood issues, such as learning experiences and social relationship. These findings are consistent with the literature, in that poor youth tend to be disadvantaged in terms of socialization, which may result in long-term developmental deficits (Belsky,

Vandell, Burchinal, Clarke-Stewart, McCartney, & Owen, 2007). As such, having positive changes in “Competence” and “Connection” are specifically meaningful for this group of poor youth. Indeed, competence is a major component of cultivating resilience for adolescents (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), which is especially important for economically disadvantaged youth who face many life challenges and difficulties. Also, it is argued here that social-emotional competence could reduce the impact of poverty (Durlak et al., 2011; LeBuffe & Bryson, 2017). Based on the interview findings, the poor youth explicitly described their enhancement in these two domains. Almost all shared the perceived benefits and the actual changes or enrichment in their own social competence (e.g., improved communication and relationship with peers, teachers and family), resilience (e.g., enhanced stress management) and emotional competence (e.g., enhanced ability in handling negative emotions and demonstrating empathy and respect to others). In addition, all of the above aligned with the process of knowledge application as previously discussed. Therefore, based on the developmental changes, it is reasonable to conclude that the poor adolescents further developed their competences (especially those non-academic competences) and connections as protective factors contributing to their own resilience, psychological and socio-emotional well-being after joining the P.A.T.H.S. Project.

#### *9.1.4.4 The improvement of “Confidence”*

As Kelly (1955) proposed, people are scientists who explore the world at different times and in different social contexts by checking and validating their personal hypotheses with reference to their experience. These personal interpretations and beliefs help render better prediction and control of events for themselves and

guide future behavior. Therefore, changes and adaptation will be made through the process of reconstruction of beliefs. In this study, based on the concepts of Norris and Makhoul-Norris (1976), four components of self were explored in the grid tests among the youth experiencing poverty, namely, the Past Self, the Real Self, the Future Self, and the Ideal Self, by examining the different constructs employed by the research participants in perceiving their different components of self.

Based on the grid findings, it is observed here that the Actual Self and Future Self of these youth are generally more positive than the Past Self. With reference to the interview findings, it is observed here that there are positive perceived changes in participants' confidence (e.g., having better self-trust and deeper discovery of one's potentials, performed as more assertive, courageous and decisive). In this study, "Confidence" refers to self-worth (having a positive and clear perceived self-identity and social identity) and having positive beliefs about the future. Both of the above findings revealed positive changes in the poor participants. In fact, Attree (2006) stated that poor youth tended to exclude themselves from having few aspirations to improve their situations in the future. Shek and Tsui (2012) also indicated in a local study that economic disadvantaged youth tended to negatively perceive themselves, with lower future aspirations and orientations. Therefore, the changes found in this group of adolescents are highly meaningful. It is remarkable that positive self-concept is considered an important indicator of youth's psychological well-being (Sharma & Sharma, 2010).

One typical example in this study was the exemplary case 1 from the interviews, who was also one of the exemplary cases in the repertory grid tests. This young man clearly stated in the interview that the Project had strengthened his self-confidence, facilitated his identity exploration and stimulated him to think about his

future. He was aspired and became more certain about his career to become a fireman and he had some concrete plans for achieving his goals. With reference to the discussion in Chapter Two, Section 2.2, Frankl (1979) stated the importance of having a sense of meaning and purpose and life. From the narratives of this poor participant, we could see that hope and aspiration were constructively instilled in him through the chance to explore and demonstrate his character strengths, competence and potentials in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs. The Project successfully instilled aspirations in him to explore the life meaning and to set goals for better future. According to Frankl (1979), the sense of meaning and purpose in life can facilitate his resiliency in adults. His positive changes were also shown in the individual analysis of the grid (case 2 see Chapter Eight, Section 8.2.3.2). It is believed that these positive changes would keep him oriented to what is most important in his life, provide him motivation and direction, and facilitate him for a better adjustment to stressful life events (Frankl, 1969, 1979).

These positive and actual changes in this group of poor participants could be the results of several reasons: (1) constructive process of knowledge application; (2) undergone critical reflection (3) nurturing of stronger intra- and inter-personal competence; and (4) increased level of self-efficacy in socializing with peers, the program implementers and other people. All these factors encompass positive change in the self-description of the poor participants.

Young people experiencing poverty can be active agents and “scientists” in construing and constructing their lives and influencing the lives of those around them (Kelly, 1955). The participants in this study demonstrated that they could be active agents who exercise their choices in decisions to construe and affect their own lives. Simultaneously, these new experiences and perceived changes also offered a positive

sense of continuity and predictability as people generally predict the future by expecting the replication of past events, which greatly enhanced their self-evaluation. For example, most active participants in P.A.T.H.S. showed more positive views of their “Actual Self” and “Future Self”. When the poor adolescents had a more positive sense of self-identify, they arrived at a good sense of psychosocial identity and competence, which consequently neutralized or even diminished the negative effects from poverty, and thus they could continue to construe their personal world in a more positive way.

#### *9.1.4.5 Addressing research question 4*

With reference to the triangulated findings, almost all participants with economic disadvantage stated that they experienced perceived personal changes after completing the program. These changes are positive in nature and associated with the enhancement in their psychosocial competencies. Furthermore, the poor participants also perceived themselves to be more similar to their ideal self but more dissimilar to unsuccessful peers after participating in the Project P.A.T.H.S.. With reference to the 6Cs framework, it is reasonable to conclude here that the perceived personal changes stated by the participants with economic disadvantage further supported the effectiveness of the P.A.T.H.S. Project. The enhancement in intra- and inter-personal qualities could serve as protective factors to enhance their coping effort and positive development (Garmezy, 1993). It is argued here that if the poor adolescents can be facilitated to develop the 6Cs during the crucial time of their development, they would in turn be empowered and alleviated from.

Indeed, the Project P.A.T.H.S. was not developed as a “targeted” program to alleviate particular adolescent problems. Yet, it is argued that this general youth



enhancement program did benefit adolescents with specific problems (as in the case of poor students in this study). Shek and Leung (2013) revealed that the:

...positive youth development approach is analogous to Chinese medicine that emphasizes the concept of restoring the origin and nurturing the principal strengths, which suggests that if one has good inner strength, it will help to prevent the occurrence of illness (p.10)

The Chinese notion of “gu ben pei yuan” means consolidation of the inner foundation and strengthening of inner strengths. In other words, if disadvantaged adolescents have better psychosocial competencies (the inner strengths), the risks for them to demonstrate problem behaviors could be reduced (Shek et al., 2011).

In William Julius Wilson’s ‘The Truly Disadvantaged’ (2012), he argued that to address poverty, universal programs are far more effective than stigmatized targeted programs limited to the weak. According to Greenstein (1991), “Because targeted programs have a narrower base, they are doomed to yield disappointing results and that universal approaches do better, last longer, and nearly always prove preferable.” (p.438). Proponents of the Project P.A.T.H.S. also share similar ideologies. On the other hand, Skocpol (1991) explicitly stated that targeting is an inferior approach. It is not difficult to explain the cause why sometimes targeted programs are problematic. For most targeted programs designed for adolescents, their problems and risky behaviors are the major focus. As such, these programs are prone to criticisms of stigmatization and accusing the adolescents. In many cases, the programs oppressed their competence to manage the setbacks and adversities, and thus shaped their self-concept in a negative manner (Rapp & Goscha, 2012). In their

study, Botvin, Griffin and Nichols (2006) also indicated that universal school-based programs are potential interventions for preventing multiple problem behaviors, including some not directly targeted. With specific example of poor youth, the youth program with a universal approach may reach the real targets of economically disadvantaged, as no one is required to meet specific eligibility requirements. Therefore, this specific population may benefit from the program. To this end, Sen (1999) also indicated that the process of identifying the disadvantaged is often invasive and stigmatizing, which would have some negative effects on their self-respect and could be a barrier to their “empowerment” process (Sen, 1999). To sum up, it is believed that the program effectiveness of P.A.T.H.S. could foster positive outcomes for underprivileged populations and buffer the risks over time. The current findings could also serve as evidence that the program effects of the Project P.A.T.H.S. can be generalized to other groups of adolescents.

#### **9.1.5 Research question 5: “What factors affected the changes of participants?”**

##### ***9.1.5.1 “Program”, “People” and “Process” are factors for perceived change***

Through solid evidence on the positive perceived changes in the poor participants, to gain a fuller picture on the program’s effectiveness it is significant here to examine the factors affecting the changes in them. Based on the interviews findings reported in Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.3, it is observed here that some factors related to the P.A.T.H.S. program (program design, content and diverse activities), its implementers (both frontline teachers and social workers) and the process (relationships among instructors and participants, the learning atmosphere and the overall experiences and perceived benefits regarding their participation) are key factors affecting participants’ perceived personal changes. It is argued here that the

success of the program implementation and it being influential, needs the presence of both “software” and “hardware”. Essentially, the “**P**rogram” factor can be regarded as the hardware, whereas the “**P**eople” factor as the “software”.

Those remarkable changes in participants were solely due to the growth in their character strengths, personality and social competence. Participants considered the changes were related to the nature and the content of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, the diverse activities, reflective opportunities and participation process in the programs. As indicated by Sobeck, Abbey and Agius (2006), a good youth program should fit the developmental needs of the target population. Although Project P.A.T.H.S. was not a poverty alleviation program, the promotion of holistic development catered for and addressed the psychosocial developmental needs of the poor adolescents. That was why these youth reflected that the program facilitated positive change in them.

With reference to the literature concerning youth programs, Nation et al. (2003) identified nine principles associated with successful and effective prevention programs. Indeed, seven can be observed in the Project P.A.T.H.S., such as (1) comprehensive programs, (2) diverse teaching methodologies, (3) with sufficient dosage, (4) theory driven, (5) positive relationships with program implementers, (6) conducted outcome evaluation, and (7) involved well-trained staff. Furthermore, in their review, Kumpfer and Alvarado (2003) advocated that “attributes and ability of the trainers” should be one of the principles of effectiveness in prevention programs. Attributes and abilities, such as personal efficacy and confidence, affective characteristics of genuineness, warmth, humor, and empathy and ability to structure sessions are vital for program implementation. Also, they reiterated the close relationship between program implementers and program effectiveness. In another

review on youth prevention programs in school, Dusenbury et al. (2003) explained the importance of teacher enthusiasm for successful program implementation. All these factors raised in reviews are repeatedly mentioned by the poor participants in the interviews.

In fact, in the literature on Project P.A.T.H.S., Shek and Sun (2008a) also indicated that there are 5 ‘P’s factors in implementation quality, namely **P**rogram, **P**eople, **P**rocess, **P**olicy and **P**lace. In this study, three of the proposed factors, **P**rogram, **P**eople and **P**rocess were employed to understand how the changes in the poor adolescents were positively influenced. From the narratives of the participants, it was found that the “**P**eople” factor (the frontline program implementers) was of paramount importance in the “**P**rocess”. Specifically, many poor adolescents in this study indicated that help and encouragement from the program implementers were significant to their change. In addition, the self-disclosure of program implementers helped young people engage in more self-reflection. They felt close to their teachers and social workers over a longer period of time because of their passionate attitudes, sincere self-disclosure, tangible and intangible support and encouragement. This group of young people felt loved, respected and valued, which in turn gave them courage to step out of their comfort zone and make a difference in the process. Elias, Zins, Graczyk and Weissberg (2003) concluded in their study that “psychoeducational innovations are predominantly dependent on human operators, rather than technologies, for their implementation” (p.304). Indeed, the program implementers played a role as mentors during the implementation, which greatly affected the “**P**rocess” as well. In a thorough and systematic review of youth prevention programs, Durlak and DuPre (2008) stated that characteristics of program providers are one of the factors influencing the overall implementation process of

youth programs. Also, there evidence shows that through providing advice and encouragement to youth, mentors can greatly enhance the psychological and social well-being of the mentees (DuBois et al., 2002). Consistently, different studies and reviews in the literature of P.A.T.H.S. have also stated the importance of program implementers, especially contributing to successful program implementation (Shek & Sun, 2008c, 2009b; Shek & Chak, 2010a; Shek, Chak, & Chan, 2008, 2009; Shek, Lung, & Chak, 2012; Wu & Shek, 2012). Indeed, school teachers' support is a critical social-emotional component that influences students' learning and achievement performance among disadvantaged students (Becker & Luthar, 2002). Other than the individuals' characteristics, Garmezy (1993) stated that the presence of external support systems can be a major protective factor for nurturing adolescents' resilience and competence. Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) also have a similar conclusion in that some protective factors, like having a good adult mentor or participation in extracurricular activities can serve as development assets or protective factors that help poor youth deal with the adverse effects and negative outcomes associated with poverty. In a local study, similar findings are proposed by Ngai, Cheung and Ngai (2012) in that support from school teachers is conducive to the positive development of economically disadvantaged youth. Consistent with the findings of Western resilience literature, this clearly shows that the role of significant others is an important protective factor for youth in poverty (Cauce et al., 2003; Hauser, 1999; Hjermadal et al., 2006). Therefore, it is argued here that frontline implementers of P.A.T.H.S. play a significant role in promoting a smooth implementation process and facilitating positive change for poor adolescents.

In the literature of ecological perspective and resilience, through examining the risk and protective factors, it is observed that disadvantaged children and youth

are greatly affected by their microsystems (such as family and neighborhood) (Fantuzzo & LeBoeuf, 2011, Neuman, 2009; Sastry, 2012). Indeed, teachers and schools are also important microsystems of poor youth, with reference to the encouraging findings in this study, teachers and social workers could gain insights into facilitating the adolescents experiencing poverty to minimize their risk factors and maximize their protective factors in the context of poverty.

#### *9.1.5.2 Addressing research question 5*

In summary, the findings in this study indicated that three factors, **People**, **Program** and **Process** play an important role in facilitating positive change in the group of poor participants. In particular, the **People** factor had tremendous power in contributing to the enhancement of the program process and improvement for poor participants. These factors not only demonstrated that program effectiveness was determined by quality program content, smooth program implementation and devoted as well as passionate instructors, it also shed light on the successful factors in program development leading to program success.

#### **9.1.6 Concluding remarks**

In this study, the major research question was “What are the perceived program effectiveness and personal changes that take place in poor adolescents who participated in the 3-year PYD program in Hong Kong?” With reference to the five related research questions, these findings showed that disadvantaged adolescents had positive views about the Project P.A.T.H.S. and its implementers. They also perceived the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs of the Project to be beneficial to their overall development. The evaluation findings highly support the effectiveness of the

Project in which the effects are sustainable over time. Concerning the personal changes that took place in poor adolescents, participants with economic disadvantage stated positive perceived personal changes in their self-identity and psychosocial competencies (with reference to the 6Cs, Character, Competence, Confidence, Connection Contribution and Compassion) after completion of the program. Lastly, the three factors **Program**, **People** and **Process** are critical factors contributing to their perceived personal changes.

The Project P.A.T.H.S. is a generic youth enhancement program, therefore no specific component was developed to address the potential problems of adolescents experiencing poverty. However, the current findings demonstrated that disadvantaged youth benefited equally from the program as did the general youth population. In other words, it is suggested that the PYD youth enhancement program did benefit the neglected population experiencing poverty. This study also successfully provides a fuller picture on the generalizability and sustainability of the program's effects across time.

## **9.2 Conceptual Advances in the Study**

With reference to the conceptual limitations of the studies and literature stated in Chapter Six, this study makes several conceptual advances. Details are as follows.

### **9.2.1 A pioneering and original research adopting the PYD paradigm**

In many poverty studies, different conventional perspectives have been used to understand problems of adolescents, which typically adopt a pathological view and deficit model of adolescence. This study is pioneering and original because it adopted the PYD paradigm to examine the perceived continuing impact of PYD programs on

adolescents experiencing poverty, which shows the generalizability of universal PYD programs' impact across populations. It also contributes to the conceptualization of holistic development of adolescents in the context of poverty. Thus, the findings of the present study not only enrich knowledge on the existing scope of PYD programs, but also provide pioneering findings on the program impacts for the specific group of adolescents. In addition, the findings have contributed to knowledge development, in which this study reduced social stigmatization of poor youth by focusing on their positive outcomes instead of their problems and deficiencies. This also helps with exploration of effective ways to help disadvantaged adolescents. For example, implementing programs for the disadvantaged by adopting the PYD paradigm, which could greatly reduce social stigmatization and victimization. Moreover, this study successfully supports the notion that universal PYD program is a favorable way to promote better youth development for adolescents experiencing poverty.

### **9.2.2 Enriches understanding of the impact of PYD program on adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage**

Responding to the view that “despite strong scholarly interest in understanding positive youth development and finding ways to promote it, empirical work on these issues specifically in relation to youth who are poor or from low socioeconomic status backgrounds is very sparse.” (McLoyd et al., 2009, p.477), this study enriches understanding of the impact of PYD program on adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage. Indeed, this study mirrors existing Western literature in assessing the impact and effectiveness of PYD programs on poor youth. These findings demonstrate how universal PYD programs reveal positive outcomes and positive change in their psychosocial competencies. Furthermore, this study provides valuable



data concerning the positive aspects and development of adolescents with economic disadvantage, particularly in the Chinese context. These findings thus contribute to the growing literature on poverty.

### **9.2.3 Application of PYD knowledge gained**

This study successfully examined the application of PYD knowledge gained from the perspective of poor adolescents. The findings reveal the perceptions of adolescents experiencing economic disadvantage towards the PYD program in terms of personal changes, program benefits, and its applicability over time. These novel and valuable findings filled the research gap as this is one of the neglected aspects in PYD literature. This study also provided an interesting addition to the PYD literature through exploration of practical ways for helping disadvantaged adolescents. For example, implementing youth enhancement programs for disadvantaged youth by equipping them to develop generic psychosocial competences (i.e., the PYD constructs).

### **9.2.4 Advancement in proposing and using an integrative evaluation framework**

This study represents the initial use of an integrative evaluation framework as a strategy to evaluate post-program effects of PYD intervention. The use of an integrative evaluation framework highlights and supports the strengths and importance of subjective outcome evaluation. Kirkpatrick's 4-level model helped with the evaluation of the behavioral outcomes of the poor participants through a systematic path, and the CIPP framework compensated its incapability to connect the training or program to programmatic outcomes (Holton, 1996) by exploring more of the "process" factors instead of merely looking at the outcomes. The CIPP model thus

helped examine “why” the P.A.T.H.S. program is effective or ineffective. The integrative evaluation framework provided clear direction to examine both the progress and outcomes of the poor adolescents, as well as the process and products of the Project P.A.T.H.S., which made the evaluation more comprehensive. This study is the first local attempt to propose and include an integrative evaluation framework in subjective outcome evaluation of a youth enhancement program, which provides some pointers to the research design in program evaluation.

#### **9.2.5 Captured the continuing impact of a PYD program**

To address the call to document the effectiveness of the PYD programs in the Chinese context (Shek & Yu, 2011), with the aim of enhancing the generalizability of the worth of PYD programs, this study successfully captured the continuing impact (beyond 2 years) of a PYD program in the Chinese context and suggested that the PYD program is a favorable way to promote better youth development for adolescents experiencing poverty. Simultaneously, the findings in the present study demonstrate the effectiveness of the PYD program in the non-Western context, which also enhances the generalizability of the value of the implementation of PYD programs across contexts. At the same time, it enriches the related literature in the Chinese context. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that this study is pioneering research in Hong Kong adopting the PYD paradigm to evaluate the perceived continuing impact of a youth program on the neglected population.

### **9.2.6 Subjective outcome evaluation at a delayed point in time**

This study looked at subjective outcome evaluation at a delayed point in time, which successfully showed generalizability across time. It thus enriches the literature on subjective outcome evaluation. Royse (2007) commented that using the client satisfaction approach to conduct a client satisfaction survey, especially the lack of standardized evaluation tools, may generate bias and problems in the evaluation. By utilizing well validated tools in the delayed subjective outcome evaluation, the findings of the present study successfully offset some of the inadequacies in the related evaluation literature.

## **9.3 Methodological Advances in the Study**

With reference to the methodological limitations of the study and literature stated in Chapter Six, this study makes several conceptual advances. Details are as follows.

### **9.3.1 First post-program study using mixed-methods strategies**

This study is the first post-program study (after 2 years) using mixed-methods strategies, which highly supports the strengths of using different evaluation methods and triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data. Methodologically, application of both quantitative and qualitative methods in this study not only provided a more comprehensive understanding of how to conduct mixed methods study effectively, it also expanded the scope and extensiveness of this study. These methods and strategies helped provide a fuller view of the learning experiences of the disadvantaged youth and the impact and effectiveness of the Project. In addition, the use of triangulation is reinforced in this study, which promotes the trustworthiness of the findings. The findings in the qualitative interviews yielded comprehensive and

fruitful data. The findings in the repertory grid tests provided additional quantitative and qualitative data to support the findings from the previous methods. Triangulation of all these collected data effectively provided more information about the subjective views and inner voices of the poor participants.

### **9.3.2 The successful recruitment of Chinese adolescents**

This study deliberately recruited Chinese adolescents in the post-program evaluation. The current study thus makes a critical contribution here because it successfully fills an important research gap and addresses the methodological weaknesses. It also enriches our understanding of Chinese adolescents experiencing poverty and the database of indigenous evaluations and literature in the Chinese context.

### **9.3.3 The successful recruitment of adolescents experiencing poverty**

This study successfully expands the limited research concerning the poor population. With inadequate studies examining the impact of PYD program on poor adolescents, this study successfully recruited adolescents experiencing poverty. It also enhances understanding of the long-term perceived impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in this understudied group. Hence, it fills the research gap, contributes to the growing literature and enriches the database with respect to the implementation of school-based youth programs for poor adolescents and PYD programs within the school and social work contexts in Hong Kong.

## **9.4 Practical Significance and Contributions**

### **9.4.1 Demonstrates the continuing perceived effects of the PYD program**

This study supplies important information and evidence regarding the post-program effects and continuing impact of the local PYD program. Furthermore, findings from this study also provide insights into the program implementers to help frontline teachers and social workers enhance their understanding of the effectiveness of the P.A.H.T.S. Project. These findings provide evidence supporting the significance of implementing PYD program in school setting. The findings in this study can serve as a reference to provide feedback for researchers and facilitate improvements in future developments of the Project or similar educational programs. In a broader context, this study also provides implications for program developers in the field concerning planning and implementation of PYD programs and school-based youth programs in the Chinese context for evidence-based practice.

#### **9.4.2 Provides valuable data regarding disadvantaged youth**

This study provides valuable data concerning the positive aspects and development of adolescents with economic disadvantage, particularly in the Chinese context. Findings on the perceived program benefits, personal changes and program applicability over time can provide youth programs with the tools to cultivate positive and holistic development over time. Also, this data can facilitate frontline teachers and social workers to have in-depth understanding of the perceptions of adolescents in poverty. In a broader context, the findings from this study also provide insight for policy makers and program developers in the field about the future planning of child poverty alleviation and implementation of school-based youth programs through further exploration of

the processes and impact of PYD programs, including adopting PYD and assets-building as the foci for intervention.

#### **9.4.3 Demonstrates the relevance of universal PYD programs for poor adolescents**

Since one of the foci of this evaluation study was to explore how the economic disadvantaged participants connected their program experiences to their real-life situations, the triangulated findings demonstrate the relevance of the PYD program to poor adolescents. It is argued here that universal PYD program can facilitate psychosocial development in this specific group. Furthermore, findings from this study also provide insight for program implementers and can help frontline teachers and social workers enhance their understanding of the impact of the universal program on poor youth.

### **9.5 Implications for Further Research**

First, regarding the encouraging findings in this study, a question may be asked: will the positive impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S. sustain over a long period of time? As such, follow-up investigation on the long-term impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S. on adolescents experiencing poverty is recommended. Conducting follow-up evaluation is suggested when participants are in early and middle adulthood. The findings from such evaluation studies will provide important information on long-term program effectiveness and its sustainability. Also, the findings may provide further insight for developing future youth enhancement programs, youth policies or poverty alleviation strategies.

Second, this study solely covered the learning experiences of 31 adolescents experiencing poverty from eight schools. Further research could be carried out with a larger sample size, so that a more comprehensive picture can be captured and explored. Furthermore, a wider selection of research participants from different schools is important. Consequently, different voices of poor adolescents could be heard and considered.

Third, since Project P.A.T.H.S. is a generic PYD program, it is important to understand how the program may help different populations in real life contexts. Although there is a great deal of firm evidence showing the effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S. in promoting PYD, this should not be interpreted as endorsement of “one-size-fits-all”. Provided the encouraging results in this study, it is suggested here to extend the target population to participants with different kinds of psychological needs (e.g., students with special educational needs in Hong Kong). Indeed, it is meaningful to understand the generalizability across different population.

## Chapter Ten: Conclusion

This thesis concludes with a summary of the study, its strengths and limitations.

### 10.1 Summary

The main goal of this current study was to examine the perceptions of participants (with economic disadvantage) from the Project P.A.T.H.S. regarding the program and its effects. The central research question was:

*“What are the perceived program’s effectiveness and personal changes that take place in poor adolescents who participated in the 3-year PYD program in Hong Kong?”*

This study is pioneering research in Hong Kong, adopting a post-positivism research paradigm to evaluate the perceived impact of a PYD program on the neglected population – adolescents experiencing poverty. It serves as a starting point for listening to the voices of poor youth about their experiences and perceptions towards the P.A.T.H.S. Project.

In this study, an integrated evaluation model integrating Kirkpatrick’s model of evaluation and Stufflebeam’s CIPP model was used as a guiding framework for the subjective outcome evaluation. To address the main research question, this study was conducted using a parallel mixed-method design. Three research strategies were used here, individual in-depth interviews (qualitative data), repertory grid tests (both quantitative and qualitative data) and Subjective Outcome Evaluation quantitative data). First, individual interviews were conducted with 31 S5 students experiencing



poverty who had previously joined the Project P.A.T.H.S. from secondary 1 to 3. Second, a repertory grid test was subsequently conducted to further examine respondents' perceptions of their SIS after having joined the program (N=31). Third, for the purpose of triangulation, subjective outcome evaluation questionnaires were used to gauge not only poor participants' views of the program, implementers and benefits, but also a group of students who had also participated in the program for 3 years between 2012 and 2015 (N=541). All in all, this study found that adolescents experiencing poverty perceived the local PYD program, Project P.A.T.H.S., in a constructive manner. They explicitly stated that there were perceived program effectiveness and personal changes for them after participating in the program. Five main conclusions can be drawn from the present findings based on the five specific research questions. Details are as follows.

First, triangulation of the findings based on quantitative and qualitative evaluation strategies suggested that participants with economic disadvantage had positive perceptions of the program and implementers at a delayed point in time.

Second, not only did they have good perceptions of the Project, poor participants perceived the program to be helpful and beneficial for them. Although the influence and impact on helping them deal with tangible poverty in real life situations is not strong, many poor participants found Project P.A.T.H.S. beneficial to their psychosocial development and growth. The perceived benefits were categorized with reference to the PYD model proposed by Catalano et al. (2004), with fourteen PYD psychosocial constructs.

Third, many poor participants agreed that the knowledge and skills learned in the P.A.T.H.S. programs were helpful and applicable. They explicitly shared concrete examples and illustrated how they applied what they had learned to their real life. The most crucial thing is that the effects of such knowledge application were sustained. These apparent delayed effects are constructive throughout and reveal the program effectiveness of the P.A.T.H.S. Project.

Fourth, with reference to the 6Cs: Character, Competence, Confidence, Connection, Contribution and Compassion, the poor participants perceived that there was effectiveness from Project P.A.T.H.S. and personal change. Specifically, greater changes in Character, Competence, Confidence and Connection were demonstrated by their higher frequency in narrating these four areas in the interviews. Furthermore, the poor participants also perceived themselves to be more similar to their ideal self but more dissimilar to unsuccessful peers after participating in the P.A.T.H.S. Project.

Fifth, the three factors Program, People and Process were suggested as influential factors for participants' personal change. Particularly, the People factor had remarkable influence in contributing to the enhancement of the program process and improvement for poor participants.

## **10.2 Strengths of the Current Study**

### **10.2.1 Successful in addressing the issues on generalization**

In this study, the properties and advancements in terms of “generalization” of different elements are highly recognized. The details are as follows.

#### *10.2.1.1 Generalization across methods*

As discussed in Chapter Three, although many local school-based youth programs (except the Project P.A.T.H.S.) have some type of evaluation components, single-method evaluation relying on quantitative data was used in most evaluation studies. With reference to the post-positivistic orientation, to conduct a more comprehensive evaluation, this study made use of multiple evaluative strategies, including individual interviews, repertory grid tests and quantitative subjective outcome evaluation to examine the same phenomenon. The use of multiple evaluation strategies in this study provides a broader and reinforcing perspective for the study's findings. At the same time, the integration and accumulation of evaluation findings further revealed the positive impact and effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S.

#### *10.2.1.2 Generalization across data*

As mentioned above, single-method evaluation was commonly conducted in the past. As a result, mostly quantitative data was collected and aggregates. Based on the use of multiple evaluation methods in this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. This facilitates the generalization across different data and expands the scope and extensiveness of the current study, especially enhancing understandings of economically disadvantaged adolescents in a more comprehensive way.

#### *10.2.1.3 Generalization of program effects across time*

In Chapter Three, it was indicated that many local youth programs (except the Project P.A.T.H.S.) overlooked evidence on the delayed effects and impact of the

program (e.g., the assessment of program effectiveness at a delayed point in time). This study revealed the importance of conducting follow-up evaluation and shows that investigating delayed effects are important. By practicing multiple evaluative methods in this study, the delayed program effects of the Project P.A.T.H.S. can be further consolidated and generalized, which provides a more comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the P.A.T.H.S. Project.

#### *10.2.1.4 Generalization of program effects across populations*

In Chapter Three, based on existing literature of the Project P.A.T.H.S., it was observed that there are only some available studies focusing on different groups of adolescents. In this study, focus was placed on economically disadvantaged youth. This helped to further examine the program effects among different groups of understudied participants, to further support the effectiveness and positive impact of the Project.

#### *10.2.1.5 Generalization of program effects across contexts*

While many studies show the positive outcomes and the effectiveness of the Project P.A.T.H.S., there has been little focus on understanding the program's applicability in real life contexts. This study explored the actual application and transfer of learning to real life settings. It is important to see if and how the program participants are transferring any acquired skills and knowledge to real life contexts after having joined the PYD program for three years. Other than the program's applicability, most existing studies on PYD are based on Western populations. There

is a lack of indigenous evaluation that could enhance understanding of the effectiveness of local PYD programs. Since the population of Chinese adolescents is around one fifth of the world's youth population, this study recruited local adolescents to facilitate the investigation of the effectiveness of local psychosocial intervention programs, to enrich the database of literature in the Chinese context. This study filled this research gap.

### **10.3 Limitations of the Current Study**

First, it is well-understood that the use of quantitative studies (especially the use of RCT and longitudinal studies) are the most ideal for evaluation studies. Yet, as this was not the focus of the study, the use of subjective outcome evaluation was justified earlier. For future research, follow-up investigation on the long-term impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S. on adolescents experiencing poverty is recommended. It will be beneficial if the correlations between the psychosocial variables and the poor adolescents can be further investigated.

Second, the sample of the poor participants (N=31) is relatively small. In order to evaluate their experience at a delayed point in time after completion of the Project, it might appear desirable if their original quantitative data collected during their participation in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs could be used for comparative analyses with the current data. However, the researcher of this study could not get access to the data set and analyses of such data may be problematic (e.g., the groups differed in their psychosocial attributes), thus it may not be meaningful to compare such findings. If resources permit and are available, another follow-up study could be

conducted to increase understanding of the long-term impact of the Project P.A.T.H.S. on the poor population.

Third, regarding the use of the repertory grid test, one practical limitation is that it took quite a long time to complete as it was a time-consuming procedure. In the process of the individual interviews and the test, some participants found that duration (more than two hours) was too long and lost patience with the repertory grid test. Given the relatively short attention span and low tolerance level of the participants, the researcher deliberately attempted to present the repertory grid test in an interesting way. In addition, all participants were debriefed individually by the researcher at the close of each interview to ensure they left school in a good state. For some of the participants, a short tea break was provided when the interview exceeded 1.5 hours. Another possible limitation is regarding the researcher's experience in conducting the tests. Borell and Brenner (2003) stated that the utility of the repertory grid technique heavily depends on the researcher's experience. Thus, to ensure all the participants understood the test and how to provide reliable data, the researcher prepared two sets of materials that could facilitate the poor participants to grasp the complicated ideas of the grid. Also, pilot tests were carried out and there were no problems encountered in the test process.

With reference to the experience of Shek (2012a), the researcher was guided to consider that the perceived changes of self-identity in the participants can be attributed to factors other than the Project P.A.T.H.S. (e.g., their significant others, natural maturation changes or other key turning points). Since there is no comparison group in the study, the design does not permit the researcher to draw the conclusion

that the Project P.A.T.H.S. caused all those positive changes in the poor participants. To this end, whenever the researcher finished conducting the tests, she would spend 20 minutes explaining the grid test results to the poor participants. In the process, she asked different follow-up questions about the results and tried to confirm the key reasons for changes and if the reasons were related to the Project. Such additional meeting time also provided useful information for the researcher to analyze the interview data.

Fourth, as discussed in Chapter Five, while subjective outcome evaluation (client satisfaction approach) is the evaluation approach commonly used in different fields, Weinbach (2005) noted several weaknesses of client satisfaction evaluation. Although the delayed subjective outcome evaluation was conducted to eliminate some of the potential problems, the following two limitations were observed in the current study.

1. *The objectivity of the results is doubtful*

Weinbach (2005) questioned the objectivity of the results as the assessments are subjective and self-reported evaluations. Thus, to yield more objective observations from program participants in the quantitative study, validated subjective outcome measures (Ma & Shek, 2010; Shek & Ma, 2014; Shek, Ma, & Tang, 2011) were used. Royse, Thyer, Padgett and Logan (2006) supported the notion that the subjective outcome evaluation approach can yield objective perceptions about program evaluation as long as valid instruments with high reliability are used. In addition, the two scales used in this study were adopted from the Project P.A.T.H.S., which were

also reported to correlate with objective outcome measures in the Project (Shek, 2009c; Shek, Lee, Siu, & Ma, 2007). Therefore, the use of the current scales could advocate the “objectivity” of using the subjective outcome measures in certain levels.

For the qualitative interviews, as the researcher was highly involved in the whole evaluation study, to avoid the problem of subjectivity, which could affect the interpretation of the findings (especially in qualitative studies), she deliberately paid attention to and was alert to possible alternative explanations of the positive findings. For example, she intentionally performed reliability checks for the categorization of coding in the interviews. Having two coders also increased the reliability of this study. Also, her attention was focused on negative outcomes and results to remain objective when analyzing the data. More details will be discussed in point #2 below. In addition, to strengthening and enhancing the validity of results, triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods was conducted. As indicated by Greene, Caracell and Graham (1989), the intentional use of triangulation (the methodological triangulation of data) can counteract biases. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) also stated that methodological triangulation can enhance the credibility of a study.

## 2. Participants may not tell the truth, thus creating bias

Since all 31 poor participants were directly recruited by the schools, they might feel happy or appreciated to be selected for the study and thus provide positive feedback especially in the interviews, with the aim to play the role of good students or subjects. Also, as the researcher was a stranger to them, some might be motivated to help her by acting as a good subject, which may have led them to evaluate the program in a



positive manner. To guard against these possible limitations, several steps were taken by the researcher. First, concerning participant demand characteristics (Nichols & Maner, 2008), such as “pleasure” and/or “pressure” from the invitation of teachers and principals that may have led to the 31 poor participants having a tendency to give positive evaluation, the researcher made every effort to reduce demands before completing the questionnaire and conducting the interviews. For example, she kept reminding all 31 participants (as well as the 541 respondents participating in the subjective outcome evaluation) to respond to the questionnaire anonymously and reflect their views in a frank way using a serious manner. The poor participants were encouraged to express their views (both positive and negative) freely in the interviews. As such, negative ratings, comments and feedback were reported in both the quantitative and qualitative studies.

Another possible explanation for positive findings is due to the hypothesis of random responses, in which we assumed that the respondents did not respond seriously when completing the questionnaire. In this study (the quantitative part), this explanation could also be dismissed, as the entire questionnaire was found to be internally consistent with good reliability.

## Interview Guide of the Individual Interview

### **1. Context Evaluation (情景評估)**

- Have you ever joined any program(s) in primary school that is/are similar to the Tier 1 Program of the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”?  
你在小學曾否上過類似「共創成長路」計劃第一層培育活動的課程？
- What do you think is/are the difference(s) between the Tier 1 Program of the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” and any other similar program(s)?  
你覺得「共創成長路」計劃第一層培育活動與其他類似的課程有甚麼分別？
- Have you ever participated in any program(s) in primary school that is/are similar to the Tier 2 Program of the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”?  
你在小學曾否參加過類似「共創成長路」計劃第二層培育活動的活動？
- Why did you participate in the Tier 2 Program of the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”?  
為何你會參加「共創成長路」計劃第二層培育活動的活動？
- How would you describe your family’s financial situation?  
你會怎樣形容你家庭經濟的情況？
- Has your family’s financial situation affected your participation in the Tier 2 Program of the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”?  
你家庭經濟的情況，有沒有影響你參與第二層培育活動的活動？

### **2. Input Evaluation (輸入評估)**

- Throughout the three years you had been involved in the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”, what have you dedicated the most to the Program (e.g., your time, money, effort or energy)?  
在參與「共創成長路」計劃的三年裡，你覺得自己為這計劃付出最多的是甚麼（例如時間、金錢或精力）？
- Did your school provide any financial support to students with financial needs, in order to help them participate in the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” or other similar on-campus or off-campus school activities?  
學校有為家庭經濟有需要的同學提供經濟支援，以助他們參與「共創成長路」計劃或其他類似的校內或校外活動嗎？

### **3. Process Evaluation (過程評估)**

#### 1) General Impression about the Program (對計劃的整體印象)

- You had participated in the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” for three years from Secondary 1 to Secondary 3, do you like this Project? Why?  
你在中一至中三已經參加了三年「共創成長路」計劃，你喜歡這個計劃嗎？為甚麼？
- You had participated in both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, which one do you like more? Why?

你同時也有參與第一層培育活動及第二層培育活動，你喜歡哪一個較多？為甚麼？

## 2) Comments about the Program Content (對計劃內容的意見)

- When participating in the Tier 1 Program, were there any activities that aroused your interest and encouraged your involvement? <Students may refer to the attachment (in Chinese) for the Program details >  
在第一層培育活動，有沒有一些活動最能引起你的興趣並投入其中？(學生可參考附件)
- What do you like about the Tier 1 Program? What do you dislike about it?  
關於課程，有甚麼是你喜歡的？又有甚麼是你不喜歡的？
- When participating in the Tier 2 Program, were there any activities that aroused your interest and encouraged your involvement?  
在第二層培育活動，有沒有一些活動最能引起你的興趣並投入其中？
- What do you like about the Tier 2 Program? What do you dislike about it?  
關於第二層培育活動，有甚麼是你喜歡的？又有甚麼是你不喜歡的？
- On the whole, what impressed you most when you were involved in the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”?  
整體而言，在參與「共創成長路」計劃的時候，令你印象最深刻的是甚麼？

## 3) Comments about the Program Implementation (推行計劃時的情況)

- What do you think about the overall involvement of students when they were participating in the Tier 1 Program?  
之前在進行第一層培育活動時，你認為整體同學的參與程度怎樣？
- What do you think about the learning atmosphere and the classroom discipline?  
你覺得課堂的氣氛及秩序怎樣？
- What do you think about the overall involvement of students when they were participating in the Tier 2 Program?  
之前在進行第二層培育活動時，你認為參與的同學的參與程度怎樣？
- What do you think about the learning atmosphere and the discipline?  
你覺得活動的氣氛及秩序怎樣？
- In your opinion, how did your classmates find the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”?  
對於整個「共創成長路」計劃，你認為整體同學有甚麼反應或看法？
- What are your own opinions and views towards the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”?  
對於整個「共創成長路」計劃，你自己有甚麼反應或看法？
- Do you think you were actively involved in the activities of both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs? Why?  
你覺得自己投入參與第一層培育活動及第二層培育活動嗎？為甚麼？
- What do you think of your involvement in the three years when you participated in the programs?  
你對自己在過去三年的參與有何評價？為甚麼？

## 4) Comments about the Instructors (對導師的意見)

- What do you think about the Instructors who led the Tier 1 Program?  
你對於帶領第一層培育活動的導師有甚麼意見？
- What do you think about the Instructors who led the Tier 2 Program?  
你對於帶領第二層培育活動的導師有甚麼意見？
- How would you comment on the communication between the instructors and students? What is your observation?  
有關導師與同學的交流情況，你的感覺如何？你有何觀察？
- Did “Instructors” (this element) have any influence on your participation in the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”? Why?  
「導師」（這個元素）對你參與「共創成長路」計劃有影響嗎？為甚麼？

#### **4. Product Evaluation (成效評估)**

##### 1) Evaluation of the “Effectiveness” of the Program (評估計劃的成效)

- On the whole, do you think the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” could help the personal growth and development of young people?  
整體而言，你覺得這個「共創成長路」計劃對年青人的個人成長及發展有沒有幫助？
- Do you think the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” could help your personal growth and development?  
你認為「共創成長路」計劃對你的個人成長及發展是否有幫助？
- Did you gain and benefit from the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”? If so, what did you gain?  
你認為「共創成長路」計劃令你有甚麼得著？
- You had participated in both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Programs, which one do you think could help you more? Why?  
你同時也有參與第一層及第二層培育活動，你覺得哪一個對你幫助較大？為甚麼？
- If you had only participated in the Tier 1 Program and not the Tier 2 Program, do you think this will help you differently? Why?  
假如你只參加第一層培育活動而沒有參加第二層培育活動，你認為這對你的幫助會有不同嗎？為甚麼？
- After learning the knowledge and skills from the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”, are they helpful to your current life? In what aspects?  
在學了「共創成長路」計劃所授的知識和技巧後，對你現在的生活是否有幫助？是哪些方面的幫助？

##### 2) Evaluation of the “Impact” of the Program (評估計劃的影響)

- Do you think the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” has changed you? What are the perceived changes?  
你覺得「共創成長路」計劃有沒有令你改變？是哪些方面的改變？
- If you find that you have changed, what factors do you think have facilitated these changes?  
若你覺得自己有改變，你認為有甚麼因素促使這些轉變？
- If you find that you have changed, when did the changes start?  
若你覺得自己有改變，這些轉變是從何時開始？
- If you find that you have had no change at all, what are the possible reasons?  
若你沒有察覺自己有任何改變，你認為是甚麼原因？

\*\*\*Questions regarding socio-emotional competencies “5Cs”

\*\*\*有關情緒社交能力“5Cs”的問題

- Confidence - Do you think the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” could strengthen your self-confidence? Please explain.  
你認為「共創成長路」計劃能否加強你的自信心？請加以解釋。
- Character - Do you think the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” could enhance your sense of responsibility and autonomy? Please explain.  
你認為「共創成長路」計劃能否加強你的責任感及自主？請加以解釋。
- Connection - Do you think the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” could strengthen the connections and relationships with your family, teachers and friends? Please explain.  
你認為「共創成長路」計劃能否加強你與家人、老師和朋友的聯繫及關係？請加以解釋。
- Competence - Do you think the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” could improve your abilities in different areas (such as facing difficulties, managing emotions)? Please explain.  
你認為「共創成長路」計劃能否提升你不同方面的能力（如面對困難的能力，管理情緒）？請加以解釋。
- Compassion - Do you think the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” could cultivate your compassion and care for others? Please explain.  
你認為「共創成長路」計劃能否建立你對他人的憐憫和關懷？請加以解釋。

3) Evaluation of the “Sustainability” of the Program (評估所學知識的延續性)

- (If applicable) Do you think the benefits gained from the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” have continuously helped you until now? Why?  
(如適用)，你認為「共創成長路」計劃對你的幫助是否持續至今？為甚麼？
- (If applicable) Have your changes attributable to the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” been continued or sustained? Why?  
(如適用) 你因「共創成長路」計劃而有的改變有否持續或延續？為甚麼？
- What factors do you think (e.g., personal, family, peers and other factors) have influenced or contributed to the above-mentioned sustainability?  
你認為有哪些因素（例如個人、家庭、朋輩等因素）曾影響或幫助過上述的持續性？

4) Evaluation of the “Transportability” of the Program (評估所學知識的轉移)

- Have you applied the beliefs you learned in the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” to your daily life? Try to give some examples.  
你有沒有把在「共創成長路」計劃學到的信念應用在生活中？試舉例說明。
- Have you applied the knowledge you learned in the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” to your daily life? Try to give some examples.  
你有沒有把在「共創成長路」計劃學到的知識應用在生活中？試舉例說明。

- Have you applied the skills you learned in the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” to your daily life? Try to give some examples.  
你有沒有把在「共創成長路」計劃學到的技巧應用在生活中？試舉例說明。
- Did you encounter any difficulties in applying what you have learned in your daily life? 在應用所學於生活的過程中，你有遇到甚麼困難嗎？
- Do you think your family’s financial situation has hindered or helped you to apply what you have learned in your daily life?  
你認為你家庭經濟的情況，有影響或幫助你把學到的東西應用在生活中？

#### 5) Other Comments (其他意見)

- If you could use three descriptors to describe the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”, which three descriptors would you use?  
如果請你用三個形容詞來形容「共創成長路」計劃，你會用哪三個形容詞？

— END —

— 完 —

附件一 「共創成長路」第一層培育活動（中一課程）--單元名稱及相關構念

|      |      | 單元名稱   | 單元編號   | 構念                  |
|------|------|--|--------|---------------------|
| 核心課程 | 整全課程 | 亦師亦友   | BO 1.1 | 1. 與健康成人和益友的聯繫 (BO) |
|      |      | 性格的力量  | BO 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 朋友交叉點  | BO 1.3 |                     |
|      |      | 結伴同行   | BO 1.4 |                     |
|      |      | 中國與我   | SC 1.1 | 2. 社交能力 (SC)        |
|      |      | 同心耀香江  | SC 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 情緒字典：<br>單元目標：認識情緒的基本概念，運用詞彙形容不同種類的情緒。<br>遊戲內容：情緒速遞，假如我是……                       | EC 1.1 | 3. 情緒控制和表達能力 (EC)   |
|      |      | 真情流露   | EC 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 大腦軟件   | CC 1.1 | 4. 認知能力 (CC)        |
|      |      | 網上情緣？<br>單元目標：應用理性和批判思考技巧去分析網上交友的問題，應用創意思考技巧去處理結識網友的問題。<br>遊戲內容：「網上情緣？」，「網友『貼士』」 | CC 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 為我好？   | BC 1.1 | 5. 採取行動能力 (BC)      |
|      |      | 如何啟齒？  | BC 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 誰可先上車？<br>單元目標：明白要維持公平的原則，需要大家一同付出。明白維持公平時，需要平衡各方的需要，情理兼備。<br>遊戲內容：「誰可先上車？」      | MC 1.1 | 6. 分辨是非能力 (MC)      |
|      |      | 同一車廂內  | MC 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 天生我才   | SE 1.1 | 7. 自我效能感 (SE)       |
|      |      | 我做得到<br>單元目標：體會成功的經驗，從過往的生活中尋找成功的經驗。<br>遊戲內容：「輕於鴻毛」，「我的快樂時代」                     | SE 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 我值得讚賞  | SE 1.3 |                     |
|      |      | 我為我掌舵  | SE 1.4 |                     |
|      |      | 國有國法、家有家規  | PN 1.1 | 8. 親社會規範 (PN)       |
|      |      | 入鄉隨俗   | PN 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 一起走過的日子  | RE 1.1 | 9. 抗逆能力 (RE)        |
|      |      | 錢包失蹤事件   | RE 1.2 |                     |

|  |  |  |        |                    |
|--|--|--|--------|--------------------|
|  |  | 笑臨功夫<br>單元目標：學習五種處理負面情緒的方法，幫助學生建立正面價值。<br>遊戲內容：「笑臨功夫」，「武林大會」               | RE 1.3 |                    |
|  |  | 衝突教室   | RE 1.4 |                    |
|  |  | 自主執照   | SD 1.1 | 10. 自決能力 (SD)      |
|  |  | 明智之舉   | SD 1.2 |                    |
|  |  | 夢想號列車  | SD 1.3 |                    |
|  |  | 志趣餅店   | SD 1.4 |                    |
|  |  | 我的最愛？  | SP 1.1 | 11. 心靈質素 (SP)      |
|  |  | 同一天空下  | SP 1.2 |                    |
|  |  | 如果我話事  | ID 1.1 | 12. 明確及正面的身份 (ID)  |
|  |  | 知己知彼   | ID 1.2 |                    |
|  |  | 我的驕傲<br>單元目標：發掘自己的優點，掌握從不同角度和用不同方法找出自己的優點。<br>遊戲內容：「我最欣賞」，「你有一個優點!」，「我的驕傲」 | ID 1.3 |                    |
|  |  | 讓我告訴你  | ID 1.4 |                    |
|  |  | 是好是壞？  | BF 1.1 | 13. 建立目標和抉擇能力 (BF) |
|  |  | 人生指南針  | BF 1.2 |                    |
|  |  | 公益活動是甚麼？   | PI 1.1 | 14. 參與公益活動 (PI)    |
|  |  | 避之則吉   | PI 1.2 |                    |
|  |  | 學校也公益  | PI 1.3 |                    |
|  |  | 公益活動為社區  | PI 1.4 |                    |



附件二 「共創成長路」第一層培育活動（中二課程）--單元名稱及相關構念

|      |      | 單元名稱  | 單元編    | 構念                  |
|------|------|---|--------|---------------------|
| 核心課程 | 整全課程 | 後街第 13 座  | BO 2.1 | 1. 與健康成人和益友的聯繫 (BO) |
|      |      | 父母之命?   | BO 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 誰是香港人   | SC 2.1 | 2. 社交能力 (SC)        |
|      |      | 職業狂想曲   | SC 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 知心人   | EC 2.1 | 3. 情緒控制和表達能力 (EC)   |
|      |      | 合情合理  | EC 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 獨力難「知」  | EC 2.3 |                     |
|      |      | 理想對象<br>單元目標：認識理想對象的特質和傾訴時的要素，學習基本聆聽技巧和回應技巧。<br>遊戲內容：「理想對象」，「隨時候命」                                  | EC 2.4 |                     |
|      |      | 思維型格大揭祕   | CC 2.1 | 4. 認知能力 (CC)        |
|      |      | 「創」世紀   | CC 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 好心批評?   | BC 2.1 | 5. 採取行動能力 (BC)      |
|      |      | 歉意何處尋?  | BC 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 餐廳的一角   | MC 2.1 | 6. 分辨是非能力 (MC)      |
|      |      | 讓位奇兵<br>單元目標：懂得反省自私的行為，從而學會顧及別人的需要，主動幫助別人。學會幫助別人時，要有勇氣、智慧和策略。<br>遊戲內容：「奪位奇兵」，「遙控讓位」                 | MC 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 學習全攻略   | SE 2.1 | 7. 自我效能感 (SE)       |
|      |      | 扭曲怪獸屋<br>單元目標：認識扭曲思想，學習識破扭曲思想。<br>遊戲內容：「『田』字遊戲」，「扭曲怪獸屋」，「勇闖怪獸屋」                                     | SE 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 不一樣的責任  | PN 2.1 | 8. 親社會規範 (PN)       |
|      |      | 子恩一家的新年   | PN 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 瘦身多面睇   | PN 2.3 |                     |
|      |      | 衡量天秤  | PN 2.4 |                     |
|      |      | 生還者   | RE 2.1 | 9. 抗逆能力 (RE)        |
|      |      | 幽默一刻  | RE 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 現代漂流記   | RE 2.3 |                     |
|      |      | 人生處處是考場<br>單元目標：分辨於日常生活中可協助學生成長的困難和挑戰，重視每一個生活片段為成長過程中的學習機會<br>遊戲內容：「我估你係『乜乜乜』」，「挑戰 24 小時」，「人生處處是考場」 | RE 2.4 |                     |

|  |  |   |        |                    |
|--|--|---|--------|--------------------|
|  |  | 選擇面面觀   | SD 2.1 | 10. 自決能力 (SD)      |
|  |  | 先「抉」條件  | SD 2.2 |                    |
|  |  | 在他方的生命  | SP 2.1 | 11. 心靈質素 (SP)      |
|  |  | 金錢世界  | SP 2.2 |                    |
|  |  | 活一天<br>單元目標：明白人在生命中會遇到不同的挑戰和痛苦，藉反思尋找人生意義<br>遊戲內容：「我的日記」,「少女日記」,「呀咩吉祥」 | SP 2.3 |                    |
|  |  | 終與始   | SP 2.4 |                    |
|  |  | 生命有「價」  | ID 2.1 | 12. 明確及正面的身份 (ID)  |
|  |  | 志同道合  | ID 2.2 |                    |
|  |  | 一路向前  | BF 2.1 | 13. 建立目標和抉擇能力 (BF) |
|  |  | 開心前行  | BF 2.2 |                    |
|  |  | 百忍成金  | BF 2.3 |                    |
|  |  | 應變則變  | BF 2.4 |                    |
|  |  | 生命拼圖  | PI 2.1 | 14. 參與公益活動 (PI)    |
|  |  | 親親公益  | PI 2.2 |                    |
|  |  | 互動公益  | PI 2.3 |                    |
|  |  | 校園種植日   | PI 2.4 |                    |

附件三 「共創成長路」第一層培育活動（中三課程）--單元名稱及相關構念

|      |      | 單元名稱   | 單元編號   | 構念                  |
|------|------|--|--------|---------------------|
| 核心課程 | 整全課程 | 現代愛情故事<br>單元目標：明白自己對戀愛的態度，認識戀愛關係的必備元素。<br>遊戲內容：「現代愛情故事」，「戀愛方程式」          | BO 3.1 | 1. 與健康成人和益友的聯繫 (BO) |
|      |      | 自由戀愛？  | BO 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 「她」來自中國  | SC 3.1 | 2. 社交能力 (SC)        |
|      |      | 香港的兄弟姊妹  | SC 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 誰對誰錯   | SC 3.3 |                     |
|      |      | 一日有一記<br>單元目標：了解朋友間衝突的原因，學會面對朋友間的衝突和處理方法。<br>遊戲內容：「一日有一記」                | SC 3.4 |                     |
|      |      | 眾「理」尋它   | EC 3.1 | 3. 情緒控制和表達能力 (EC)   |
|      |      | 離開幽谷   | EC 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 真真假假   | CC 3.1 | 4. 認知能力 (CC)        |
|      |      | 廣告睇真 D   | CC 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 快樂鑰匙   | BC 3.1 | 5. 採取行動能力 (BC)      |
|      |      | 寬恕與報仇<br>單元目標：明白真心原諒別人的重要性。體會以報復的心態去處理別人對自己的過犯，所帶來的負面影響。<br>遊戲內容：「大榮與阿強」 | BC 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 現實與理想  | MC 3.1 | 6. 分辨是非能力 (MC)      |
|      |      | 強人是我？  | MC 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 愛情密碼<br>單元目標：懂得珍惜愛情和有承諾地戀愛，不輕易放棄。探討結束一段感情時應有的態度。<br>遊戲內容：「愛情誓詞」，「好心分手？」  | MC 3.3 |                     |
|      |      | 密碼風雲   | MC 3.4 |                     |
|      |      | 誰是富翁？  | SE 3.1 | 7. 自我效能感 (SE)       |
|      |      | 理想發電站  | SE 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 誰可決定？  | PN 3.1 | 8. 親社會規範 (PN)       |
|      |      | 理直氣壯？  | PN 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 知足常樂   | RE 3.1 | 9. 抗逆能力 (RE)        |
|      |      | 轉危為機   | RE 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 生於憂患？  | RE 3.3 |                     |
|      |      | 給我一個希望的家   | RE 3.4 |                     |
|      |      | 放眼四方   | SD 3.1 | 10. 自決能力 (SD)       |
|      |      | 我有說話未曾講  | SD 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 幸運兒  | SP 3.1 | 11. 心靈質素 (SP)       |
|      |      | 價值何在？  | SP 3.2 |                     |

|  |  |   |        |                    |
|--|--|---|--------|--------------------|
|  |  | 為甚麼？<br>單元目標：從面對人生困難的故事中，思考生命的價值，明白信念對人生的意義。<br>遊戲內容：「人體何價?」,「『人』、『狗』何價?」,「『活著』的價值」       | SP 3.3 |                    |
|  |  | 生命小說  | SP 3.4 |                    |
|  |  | 穩如泰山  | ID 3.1 |                    |
|  |  | 古今男女  | ID 3.2 | 12. 明確及正面的身份 (ID)  |
|  |  | 未來會係點？  | BF 3.1 | 13. 建立目標和抉擇能力 (BF) |
|  |  | 求職廣場  | BF 3.2 |                    |
|  |  | 天賜禮物  | BF 3.3 |                    |
|  |  | 展望未來<br>單元目標：制定短期和長期的事業計劃。<br>建立評估及獎賞的思考模式，藉以增強他們追求目標的毅力。<br>遊戲內容：「時空快鏡」,「展望未來」,「停一停、想一想」 | BF 3.4 |                    |
|  |  | 長幼共融歡樂夜   | PI 3.1 | 14. 參與公益活動 (PI)    |
|  |  | 齊來參與  | PI 3.2 |                    |
|  |  | 獨家秘訣  | PI 3.3 |                    |
|  |  | 意見收集  | PI 3.4 |                    |

Date: XXX, 201X

Dear Parents,

**Evaluation study of the long-term impact of the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” in Hong Kong**

Since 2005, the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”, a large-scale youth enhancement program, was implemented in over 250 secondary schools in Hong Kong. The school where your child has been studying (XXX Secondary School) is also one of the participating schools of the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” on teenagers, we are now conducting an evaluation study. With the approval from the School Principal, I will be visiting the school to have an individual interview with your child on XXX, 201X, in order to understand their personal experiences, opinions and feelings about the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”. The interview will take about two hours.

In this study, the information provided by your child will only be used for research purposes. The information and data collected will be destroyed after the completion of the study. The related results will only be cited in research reports, books or periodicals. **I will not disclose the name of the research participants and the name of their schools. In addition, the interview process will not result in any negative impact on your child.**

If you do not wish for your child to participate in this study or have questions about the arrangement, please contact me at 2766-XXXX or 9344-XXXX. Thank you!

Yammy CHAK  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Applied Social Sciences  
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

敬啟者

**貴子弟參與「共創成長路」計劃的跟進評估研究**

自 2005-06 學年開始，「共創成長路—賽馬會青少年培育計劃」已在全港二百五十多間中學推行。而 貴子弟就讀的學校 (X X X 中學) 也是「共創成長路」計劃的參與學校之一。為了深入了解「共創成長路」計劃對 貴子弟的成效及幫助，我們現進行上述評估研究。承蒙學校的答允，本人將於二零一X年X月XX日，到學校與 貴子弟進行個人訪談，以了解他們對「共創成長路」計劃的個人經驗、看法和感受。面談約需大概兩小時；故特函通知。

在是次研究中， 貴子弟所提供的資料只會供本研究之用，有關資料會於整項研究結束後，全被銷毀。而所得結果將會被引述於研究報告或有關之書刊上。本人將不會透露 貴子弟的名字及學校名稱，在過程中將絕不會對 貴子弟帶來任何負面的影響。

若閣下不希望 貴子弟參與是次研究，或對是次安排仍有疑問，歡迎致電 2766-XXXX 或 9344-XXXX 與本人聯絡。謝謝！

此致

貴家長

香港理工大學應用社會科學系  
博士研究生  
卓麗茵

二零一X年X月XX日

### **Consent Form for Research Participants (English Version)**

1. I voluntarily participate in the individual interview of the study on the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”, conducted by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
2. I agree to be interviewed to share my personal experiences and views relating to the Project. I allow the researcher to use my data in an anonymous manner for research purposes and understand that such data will be used in research reports or related books and periodicals. I agree that that all data that can be used to identify myself should be kept confidential. The information provided should also be destroyed after the completion of the study.
3. I understand that in the course of the interview discussion, I may choose not to answer some questions that I do not wish to respond to.
4. The interviewer has clearly explained to me the content of the consent form and answered my questions about the study.

Name of Respondent : \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Observer : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

### **參加者受訪同意書 (中文版)**

- (一) 本人願意參與由香港理工大學進行有關「共創成長路」計劃的個人面談及討論研究。
- (二) 本人同意接受訪問，以面談方式，講述與是項計劃有關之個人經驗、遭遇及看法。本人明白此等資料將會被引述於研究報告或有關之書刊上，惟一切可以用以辨別本人身份之資料，將會絕對保密，不被公開。而本人提供之資料，亦會於整項研究結束後，全被銷毀。
- (三) 本人明白在是次個人面談和討論中，本人可以選擇不回答一些本人不想回應的問題。
- (四) 訪問員已向本人清楚解釋這份受訪同意書的內容，並回答本人所詢問有關是項研究的問題。

受訪者 : \_\_\_\_\_

見證人 : \_\_\_\_\_

日期 : \_\_\_\_\_ 年 \_\_\_\_\_ 月 \_\_\_\_\_ 日

## Appendix 4 Repertory Grid Test Form (English version)

### Information of the respondent

Name or Code : \_\_\_\_\_ Male ☐ Female ☐ School : \_\_\_\_\_

The respondent had participated in the Tier 1 Program from Secondary One to Secondary Three? Yes ☐ No ☐

The respondent had participated in the Tier 2 Program from Secondary One to Secondary Three? Yes ☐ No ☐

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

S1 Yes/No

S2 Yes /No

S3 Yes/No

S1 Yes/No

S2 Yes /No

S3 Yes/No

| Elements                         |    | 1.  | 2.  | 3.   | 4.         | 5.                         | 6.                         | 7.          | 8.                                     | 9.                                  | 10.                                 | Construct pole     |   |   | Contrast pole          |   |   |
|----------------------------------|----|---|---|--|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|------------------------|---|---|
|                                  |    | Self before joining Project PATHS (Past self) | Self after completion of Project PATHS for 2 years (Present self) | Self at high school graduation (Future self) | Ideal self | Father or surrogate father | Mother or surrogate mother | Best friend | A successful peer experiencing poverty | A (peer) loser experiencing poverty | A successful and influential person | 6                  | 5 | 4 | 3                      | 2 | 1 |
| 2,5,6                            | 1  |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |
| 2,5,7                            | 2  |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |
| 2,8,9                            | 3  |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |
| 2,5,10                           | 4  |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |
| 2,6,10                           | 5  |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |
| 2,9,10                           | 6  |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |
| 2,6,8                            | 7  |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |
| 2,6,9                            | 8  |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |
| 2,7,10                           | 9  |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |
| 2,7,9                            | 10 |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |
| 2, __, __                        | 11 |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     | Appreciate oneself |   |   | Not appreciate oneself |   |   |
| 2, __, __                        | 12 |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     | High resilience    |   |   | Low resilience         |   |   |
| Special observation or remarks : |    |   |   |  |            |                            |                            |             |  |                                     |                                     |                    |   |   |                        |   |   |



# Appendix 4 Repertory Grid Test Form (Chinese version)

## 參加者資料

姓名或編號：\_\_\_\_\_ 男 ☐ 女 ☐ 學校名稱：\_\_\_\_\_

填表日期：\_\_\_\_\_

受訪者在中一至中三都有參加第一層培育計劃？ 是 ☐ 否 ☐ 中一 有 / 沒有

中二 有 / 沒有

中三 有 / 沒有

受訪者在中一至中三都有參加第二層培育計劃？ 是 ☐ 否 ☐ 中一 有 / 沒有

中二 有 / 沒有

中三 有 / 沒有

| 類別        |    | 1.         | 2.                       | 3.              | 4.   | 5.        | 6.        | 7.      | 8.          | 9.           | 10.       | 構念 |   |   | 相反的構念 |   |   |
|-----------|----|------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------------|--------------|-----------|----|---|---|-------|---|---|
|           |    | (即剛升上中一的我) | 已參加完三年「共創成長路」計劃的我(即現在的我) | 中學畢業時的我(即兩年後的我) | 理想的我 | 爸爸或親爸爸如的人 | 媽媽或親如媽媽的人 | 一位最好的朋友 | 一位成功或有影響力的人 | 一位家境清貧的同輩失敗者 | 一位成熟的同輩朋友 | 6  | 5 | 4 | 3     | 2 | 1 |
| 2,5,6     | 1  |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2,5,7     | 2  |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2,8,9     | 3  |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2,5,10    | 4  |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2,6,10    | 5  |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2,9,10    | 6  |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2,6,8     | 7  |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2,6,9     | 8  |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2,7,10    | 9  |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2,7,9     | 10 |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2, __, __ | 11 |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 2, __, __ | 12 |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |
| 特別觀察或評論：  |    |            |                          |                 |      |           |           |         |             |              |           |    |   |   |       |   |   |

**The Hong Kong Polytechnic University**  
**Department of Applied Social Sciences**

**Evaluation study of the long-term impact of the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” in Hong Kong**

Dear Secondary 5 Students,

I am a PhD candidate at the Department of Applied Social Sciences of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and am currently conducting my doctoral study.

This study is related to the “Project P.A.T.H.S.” and I hope to learn more about its effectiveness on young people. You are invited to express your views and share your opinion. All data you provide will only be used for this study and all personal data will be kept strictly confidential. This questionnaire is not an assessment of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions, so please answer the questions based on your own understanding or feelings. Please do not discuss with others.

The questionnaire covers three parts. You are expected to answer all questions in each section. Please read the following guidelines and examples carefully before answering the questions. If you have any queries, you can ask at any time. Upon completion, please return the questionnaire to the researcher. Thank you very much for participating in the research.

Yammy CHAK

PhD Candidate

Department of Applied Social Sciences

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University



**Guidelines and examples:**

In this questionnaire, we would like to know your views on the “Project P.A.T.H.S.”. Read each question carefully, then choose the answer that best represents your feelings and thoughts, and then fill the appropriate circle. Please note that you do not need to completely fill in the circle. See the following example of “correct” and “incorrect” ways:

Correct way:    ④ ⑤

Incorrect way:    ③ ④ ⑤

If you need to change the answer, you just need to delete the old answer with the “X”, then fill in the circle for the new answer. See the example below:

The correct way to change your answer : ① ②  

Part I: The Tier 1 Program (i.e., the program that all students had to participated in), you may refer to the attached curriculum (in Chinese) for reference.

1. Please recall all the details of your participation in the “Tier 1 Program” from Secondary 1 to Secondary 3, then select the answers that best represent your feelings and thoughts in the table below, and fill in the circles according to the instructions on the first page.

| Your views towards the 3-year program (Tier 1 Program) implemented and the instructor(s) |   | Options           |          |                   |                |       |                |
|--|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
|  |   | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
|  |   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Slightly Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Your views towards the “Tier 1 Program”  |   |                   |          |                   |                |       |                |
| 1.   | The objectives of the curriculum were very clear.                                     | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 2.   | The design of the curriculum was very good.   | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 3.   | The activities were carefully planned.  | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 4.   | The classroom atmosphere was very pleasant.   | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 5.   | There was much peer interaction amongst the students.                                 | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 6.   | I participated actively during lessons (including discussions, sharing, games, etc.). | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 7.   | I was encouraged to do my best.   | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 8.   | The learning experience I encountered enhanced my interest towards the lessons.       | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 9.   | Overall speaking, I had a very positive evaluation of the Program.                    | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 10.  | On the whole, I like this curriculum very much.                                       | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| Your views towards the instructor(s)   |   |                   |          |                   |                |       |                |
| 1.   | The instructor(s) had a good mastery of the curriculum.                               | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 2.   | The instructor(s) was/were well-prepared for the lessons.                             | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 3.   | The instructor(s)’ teaching skills were good.   | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 4.   | The instructor(s) showed good professional attitudes.                                 | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 5.   | The instructor(s) was/were very involved.   | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 6.   | The instructor(s) encouraged students to participate in the activities.               | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 7.   | The instructor(s) cared for the students.   | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 8.   | The instructor(s) was/were ready to offer help to students when needed.               | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 9.   | The instructor(s) had much interaction with the                                       | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |

|     |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|     | students.  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10. | Overall speaking, I had a very positive evaluation of the instructor(s). | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ |

2. Please evaluate the extent to which the “Tier 1 Program” (i.e., the program that all students had to participate in) has helped you, then select the answers that best represent your feelings and thoughts in the table below, and fill in the circles according to the instructions on the first page.

| What impact the “Tier 1 Program” (i.e., the program that all students had participate in) would have on you? |   | Options   |                  |                  |                |              |
|--|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|
|  |   | 1         | 2                | 3                | 4              | 5            |
|  |   | Unhelpful | Not that Helpful | Slightly Helpful | Pretty Helpful | Very Helpful |
| 1.   | It has strengthened my bonding with teachers, classmates and my family.     | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 2.   | It has strengthened my resilience in adverse conditions.                    | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 3.   | It has enhanced my social competence.                                       | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 4.   | It has improved my ability in handling and expressing my emotions.          | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 5.   | It has enhanced my cognitive competence.                                    | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 6.   | My ability to resist harmful influences has been improved.                  | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 7.   | It has strengthened my ability to distinguish between the good and the bad. | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 8.   | It has increased my competence in making sensible and wise choices.         | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 9.   | It has helped me to have life reflections.                                  | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 10.  | It has reinforced my self-confidence.                                       | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 11.  | It has increased my self-awareness.   | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 12.  | It has helped me to face the future with a positive attitude.               | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 13.  | It has helped me to cultivate compassion and care about others.             | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 14.  | It has encouraged me to care about the community.                           | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 15.  | It has promoted my sense of responsibility in serving the society.          | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |
| 16.  | It has enriched my overall development.                                     | ①         | ②                | ③                | ④              | ⑤            |

3. If your friends have needs and conditions similar to yours, will you suggest him/her to join this Program?

- |                                   |                     |              |                            |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| ①                                 | ②                   | ③            | ④                          |
| Definitely<br>will not<br>Suggest | Will not<br>Suggest | Will Suggest | Definitely<br>will Suggest |

4. Will you participate in similar programs again in the future?

- |                                       |                         |                     |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ①                                     | ②                       | ③                   | ④                                 |
| Definitely<br>will not<br>Participate | Will not<br>Participate | Will<br>Participate | Definitely<br>will<br>Participate |

5. On the whole, are you satisfied with this Program?

- |                      |                            |                          |           |                         |                |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|
| ①                    | ②                          | ③                        | ④         | ⑤                       | ⑥              |
| Very<br>Dissatisfied | Moderately<br>Dissatisfied | Slightly<br>Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Moderately<br>Satisfied | Very Satisfied |

6. Please complete the following questions:

6.1 Please write at least one of the most important things you have learned from the “Tier 1 Program” (If none, please write “Nil”).

---

6.2 Please write at least one of the things that you appreciated the most in the “Tier 1 Program” (If none, please write “Nil”).

---

6.3 Your views towards the instructors implementing the “Tier 1 Program” (If none, please write “Nil”).

---

6.4 In what ways the Tier 1 Program could be improved? (If none, please write “Nil”).

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## Part II: The Tier 2 Program

*\*\*If you have never participated in the “Tier 2 Program”, please go to Part III directly.*

1. Please recall all the details of your participation in the “Tier 2 Program” from Secondary 1 to Secondary 3, then select the answers that best represent your feelings and thoughts in the table below, and fill in the circles according to the instructions on the first page.

| Your views towards the 3-year program (Tier 2 Program) implemented and the instructor(s) |  | Options           |          |                   |                |       |                |
|--|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
|  |  | 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4              | 5     | 6              |
|  |  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Slightly Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Your views towards the program   |  |                   |          |                   |                |       |                |
| 1.   | The activities were carefully planned.   | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 2.   | The quality of the service was high.   | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 3.   | The service provided could meet the participants' needs.                       | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 4.   | The service delivered could achieve the planned objectives.                    | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 5.   | I could get the service I wanted.  | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 6.   | I had much interaction with other participants.                                | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 7.   | I would recommend others who have similar needs to participate in the program. | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 8.   | On the whole, I was satisfied with the service.                                | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| Your views towards the program worker(s)   |  |                   |          |                   |                |       |                |
| 1.   | The worker(s) has/have professional knowledge.                                 | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 2.   | The worker(s) demonstrated good working skills.                                | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 3.   | The worker(s) were well prepared for the program.                              | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 4.   | The worker(s) understood the needs of the participants.                        | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 5.   | The worker(s) cared about the participants.                                    | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 6.   | The worker(s)' attitudes were very good.                                       | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 7.   | The worker(s) had much interaction with participants.                          | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |
| 8.   | On the whole, I was satisfied with the worker(s).                              | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤     | ⑥              |

2. Please complete the following questions:

2.1 Please write at least one of the things that you appreciated the most in the “Tier 2 Program” (If none, please write “Nil”).

---

2.2 Your views towards the workers implementing the “Tier 2 Program” (If none, please write “Nil”).

---

3. Please evaluate the extent to which the “Tier 2 Program” has helped you, then select the answers that best represent your feelings and thoughts in the table below, and fill in the circles according to the instructions on the first page.

| What impact the “Tier 2 Program” would have on you? |   | Options           |          |                   |                |          |                |
|---|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|
|   |   | <b>1</b>          | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b>          | <b>4</b>       | <b>5</b> | <b>6</b>       |
|   |   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Slightly Agree | Agree    | Strongly Agree |
| 1.  | The service has helped me a lot.  | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤        | ⑥              |
| 2.  | The service has enhanced my growth.   | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤        | ⑥              |
| 3.  | In the future, I would receive similar service(s) if needed.                  | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤        | ⑥              |
| 4.  | I have learnt how to help myself through participating in the Program.        | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤        | ⑥              |
| 5.  | I have had positive change(s) after joining the program.                      | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤        | ⑥              |
| 6.  | I have learnt how to solve my problems through participating in the program.  | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤        | ⑥              |
| 7.  | My behavior has become better after joining this program.                     | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤        | ⑥              |
| 8.  | Those who knew me agree that this program has induced positive changes in me. | ①                 | ②        | ③                 | ④              | ⑤        | ⑥              |

4. Please complete the following questions:

4.1 Please write at least one of the most important things you have learned from the “Tier 2 Program” (If none, please write “Nil”).

---

4.2 In what ways the “Tier 2 Program” could be improved? (If none, please write “Nil”)

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### Part III: Demographic information

The following questions are related to your personal and family status, **the data provided will be kept absolutely confidential**. Please feel free to choose your answers and fill in the corresponding boxes.


**1. Your Age:**

- |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Under 15                   | 16                         | 17                         | 18                         | 19 or above                |


**2. Sex:**

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Male                       | Female                     |

**3. Have you participated in the “Tier 1 Program” (i.e., all students had to participated in) of the Project P.A.T.H.S. from Secondary One to Secondary Three?**

- |                            |                            |   |    |                                |                               |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|----|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |  | S1 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Yes                        | No                         |   | S2 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|                            |                            |   | S3 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**4. Have you participated in the “Tier 2 Program” of the Project P.A.T.H.S. from Secondary One to Secondary Three?**

- |                            |                            |   |    |                                |                               |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|----|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |  | S1 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Yes                        | No                         |   | S2 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|                            |                            |   | S3 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**5. Does your family receive Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) at present?**

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes                        | No                         |

**6. Does your family receive School Textbook Assistance (STA) this year?**

- |                            |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes,                       | Yes,                       | No                         |
| Full Grant                 | Half Grant                 |                            |

**-End of questionnaire-  
Thank you very much**



香港理工大學  
應用社會科學系

「共創成長路計劃」跟進評估研究

親愛的中五同學：

你好！本人是香港理工大學應用社會科學系的研究生，現正進行博士論文研究。

是次研究是一項有關「共創成長路計劃」的跟進評估研究，以進一步了解該計劃的成效及對青少年的幫助。現邀請你提供一些意見及資料。你所提供的一切資料，只會用於本研究，個別參與者的資料也會絕對保密。本問卷並非評估你的能力，當中的問題也沒有所謂對或錯的答案，所以請你憑著你對自己的認識或感覺作答，並不需跟他人商討。

此問卷共有三個部分，請你回答每一部分的所有問題。在回答問題前，請先詳細閱讀以下有關指引及例子。如有任何疑問，你可隨時發問。完成後，請你將問卷交回工作員。謝謝你的幫忙。

香港理工大學應用社會科學系  
博士研究生  
卓麗茵


問卷填寫指引：

在這份問卷中，我們想了解你對過去三年推行的共創成長路計劃之意見。請細心閱讀有關問題，然後選出最能代表你感受和想法的答案，並把該圓形塗黑。請注意，你並不需完全塗黑有關圓形。請參閱以下「正確」及「不正確」塗黑圓形的例子：

正確塗法： ①    ⑤

不正確塗法： ①    ④ ⑤

如果你需要更改答案，你只需要用「**X**」號將舊答案刪去，然後塗黑最能代表你感受和想法之新答案。請參考以下例子：

正確刪除答案的方法： ① ②  

**第一部分：第一層培育活動（即全體同學參與的課程），同學可參閱附件之課程大綱**

1. 請回想一下你在中一至中三參與「第一層培育活動」的所有細節，然後在下表選出最能代表你感受和想法的答案，並按第一頁的指示將該圓形塗黑。

| 你對「第一層培育活動」<br>(即全體同學參與的課程)<br>和導師（老師、社工等）的觀感： |                                | 同意程度          |         |               |          |    |          |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------|---------|---------------|----------|----|----------|
|  |                                | 1             | 2       | 3             | 4        | 5  | 6        |
|  |                                | 非常<br>不同<br>意 | 不同<br>意 | 有點<br>不同<br>意 | 有點<br>同意 | 同意 | 非常<br>同意 |
| 你對這個三年的課程的觀感：                                  |                                |               |         |               |          |    |          |
| 1.   | 課程的目標很清楚。                      | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 2.   | 課程內容設計得很好。                     | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 3.   | 教學活動安排得很有條理。                   | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 4.   | 課程進行時的氣氛很好。                    | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 5.   | 在課程中，同學間有很多交流。                 | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 6.   | 我積極參與課程內的活動（包括：討論、<br>分享、遊戲等）。 | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 7.   | 在課程中，我獲得鼓勵去做到最好。               | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 8.   | 課程中的學習經驗，增進我對有關課程的<br>興趣。      | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 9.   | 我對課程的整體評價很高。                   | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 10.  | 整體而言，我很喜歡這個課程。                 | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 你對導師（老師、社工等）的觀感：                               |                                |               |         |               |          |    |          |
| 11.  | 導師對課程有充分的掌握。                   | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 12.  | 導師的準備功夫充足。                     | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 13.  | 導師的教學技巧良好。                     | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 14.  | 導師的專業態度很好。                     | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 15.  | 導師表現很投入。                       | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 16.  | 導師鼓勵同學參與課程活動。                  | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 17.  | 導師關心同學。                        | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 18.  | 同學有需要時，導師樂意提供協助。               | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 19.  | 導師與同學有很多交流。                    | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 20.  | 我對導師的整體表現有正面的評價。               | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |

2. 請評估「第一層培育活動」(即全體同學參與的課程)對你的幫助有多大,然後在下表選出最能代表你感受和想法的答案,並按第一頁的指示將該圓形塗黑。

| 「第一層培育活動」(即全體同學參與的課程)<br>對你的幫助: |                    | 幫助程度 |      |      |      |       |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
|                                 |                    | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5     |
|                                 |                    | 沒有幫助 | 幫助不大 | 有些幫助 | 頗有幫助 | 有很大幫助 |
| 1.                              | 鼓勵我增強與老師、同學及家人的聯繫。 | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 2.                              | 加強我面對逆境的能力。        | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 3.                              | 促進我與人相處的能力。        | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 4.                              | 增強我表達及處理情緒的能力。     | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 5.                              | 加強我的分析能力。          | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 6.                              | 改善我抗拒不良影響的能力。      | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 7.                              | 增加我分辨是非的能力。        | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 8.                              | 加強我作出明智抉擇的能力。      | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 9.                              | 幫助我反省生命。           | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 10.                             | 加強我的自信。            | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 11.                             | 增加我對自己的認識。         | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 12.                             | 幫助我更積極面對將來。        | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 13.                             | 培養我對他人的憐憫和愛護。      | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 14.                             | 鼓勵我參與及關懷社區。        | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 15.                             | 培養我貢獻社會的責任感。       | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |
| 16.                             | 促進我的整體成長。          | ①    | ②    | ③    | ④    | ⑤     |

3. 如果你的朋友與你的情況／需要相似,你會否建議他／她參加這類課程?

①                      ②                      ③                      ④  
一定不會      不會                      會                      一定會

4. 如果將來有機會,你會否再參加這類課程?

①                      ②                      ③                      ④  
一定不會      不會                      會                      一定會

5. 整體而言,你對這個課程的滿意程度是:

①                      ②                      ③                      ④                      ⑤                      ⑥  
十分不滿意      頗不滿意      不滿意                      滿意                      頗滿意                      十分滿意

6. 請完成下列各題：

6.1 請寫出一項或以上你從本課程（**第一層培育活動**）中學到最重要的東西：（如沒有，請填「沒有」。）

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6.2 請寫出一項或以上你認為在本課程中最值得欣賞的地方：（如沒有，請填「沒有」。）

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6.3 你對課程的導師有何意見？（如沒有，請填「沒有」。）

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6.4 你認為本課程有哪些地方需要改善？（如沒有，請填「沒有」。）

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**第二部分：第二層培育活動**

**\*\*如你在過去從來沒有參加過第二層培育活動，請直接填寫第三部分**

1. 請回想一下你中一至中三參與**第二層培育活動（下稱計劃）**之所有細節，在下表選出最能代表你感受和想法的答案，並按第一頁的指示將該圓形塗黑。

| 你對所參加的計劃及工作員的觀感： |                    | 同意程度          |         |               |          |    |          |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------|---------------|----------|----|----------|
|                  |                    | 1             | 2       | 3             | 4        | 5  | 6        |
|                  |                    | 非常<br>不同<br>意 | 不同<br>意 | 有點<br>不同<br>意 | 有點<br>同意 | 同意 | 非常<br>同意 |
| 你對所參加的計劃的觀感：     |                    |               |         |               |          |    |          |
| 1.               | 有關活動的安排很好。         | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 2.               | 服務的質素很高。           | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 3.               | 服務能滿足服務使用者的需要。     | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 4.               | 服務能達到預定的目標。        | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 5.               | 我能夠得到我想得到的服務。      | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 6.               | 我和其他組員有很多的交流。      | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 7.               | 我會介紹與我處境相同的人參加這計劃。 | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 8.               | 整體而言，我滿意有關的服務。     | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 你對工作員的觀感：        |                    |               |         |               |          |    |          |
| 9.               | 工作員有專業知識。          | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 10.              | 工作員的工作手法很好。        | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 11.              | 工作員在推行活動前有充足的準備。   | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 12.              | 工作員明白服務使用者的需要。     | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 13.              | 工作員關心服務使用者。        | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 14.              | 工作員的態度很好。          | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 15.              | 工作員與我有很多的交流。       | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |
| 16.              | 整體而言，我滿意工作員的表現。    | ①             | ②       | ③             | ④        | ⑤  | ⑥        |

2. 請完成下列各題：

2.1 請寫出一項或以上你認為**第二層培育活動**最值得欣賞的地方：（如沒有，請填「沒有」。）

2.2 你對第二層培育活動的工作員有甚麼意見？（如沒有，請填「沒有」。）

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3. 請評估你參加完第二層培育活動對你的幫助，然後在下表選出最能代表你感受和想法的答案，並按第一頁的指示將該圓形塗黑。

| 你所參加的計劃對你的幫助： |                          | 同意程度  |     |       |      |    |      |
|---------------|--------------------------|-------|-----|-------|------|----|------|
|               |                          | 1     | 2   | 3     | 4    | 5  | 6    |
|               |                          | 非常不同意 | 不同意 | 有點不同意 | 有點同意 | 同意 | 非常同意 |
| 1.            | 我接受的服務對我的幫助很大。           | ①     | ②   | ③     | ④    | ⑤  | ⑥    |
| 2.            | 我接受的服務促使我有所成長。           | ①     | ②   | ③     | ④    | ⑤  | ⑥    |
| 3.            | 如有需要，我會再接受類似的服務。         | ①     | ②   | ③     | ④    | ⑤  | ⑥    |
| 4.            | 在服務中，我學到怎樣幫助自己。          | ①     | ②   | ③     | ④    | ⑤  | ⑥    |
| 5.            | 參加這個計劃後，我有正面的改變。         | ①     | ②   | ③     | ④    | ⑤  | ⑥    |
| 6.            | 從服務中，我學到解決自己問題的方法。       | ①     | ②   | ③     | ④    | ⑤  | ⑥    |
| 7.            | 和我最初參加這個計劃時比較，我的行為有很大改善。 | ①     | ②   | ③     | ④    | ⑤  | ⑥    |
| 8.            | 認識我的人認為這個計劃令我有正面的改變。     | ①     | ②   | ③     | ④    | ⑤  | ⑥    |

4. 請完成下列各題：

4.1 請寫出一項或以上你從第二層培育活動中學到最重要的東西：（如沒有，請填「沒有」。）

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4.2 你認為第二層培育活動有哪些地方需要改善？（如沒有，請填「沒有」。）

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### 第三部份：有關個人和家庭現況的資料

以下是問及一些有關你個人和家庭現況的資料，你提供的資料會絕對保密。因此請放心選出你的答案，並將該空格塗黑。

1. 你的年齡是：

- |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15歲或以下                     | 16歲                        | 17歲                        | 18歲                        | 19歲或以上                     |

2. 性別：

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 男                          | 女                          |

3. 你在中一至中三都有參加「共創成長路」計劃第一層培育計劃（即全體同學參與的課程）嗎？

- |                            |                            |     |    |                            |     |                            |      |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----|----|----------------------------|-----|----------------------------|------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | └─→ | 中一 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 有參加 | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 沒有參加 |
| 是                          | 不是                         |     | 中二 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 有參加 | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 沒有參加 |
|                            |                            |     | 中三 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 有參加 | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 沒有參加 |

4. 你在中一至中三都有參加「共創成長路」計劃第二層培育計劃嗎？

- |                            |                            |     |    |                            |     |                            |      |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----|----|----------------------------|-----|----------------------------|------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | └─→ | 中一 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 有參加 | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 沒有參加 |
| 是                          | 不是                         |     | 中二 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 有參加 | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 沒有參加 |
|                            |                            |     | 中三 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 有參加 | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 沒有參加 |

5. 你的家庭現在是否接受政府的綜合社會保障援助金（綜援金）？

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 是                          | 否                          |

6. 在過去一個學年，你家庭有獲發學校書簿津貼嗎？

- |                            |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 有，並獲<br>全額津貼               | 有，並獲<br>半額津貼               | 沒有                         |

（問卷完）謝謝你的幫忙！



附件一 「共創成長路」第一層培育活動(中一課程)--單元名稱及相關構念

|      |      | 單元名稱   | 單元編號   | 構念                  |
|------|------|--|--------|---------------------|
| 核心課程 | 整全課程 | 亦師亦友   | BO 1.1 | 1. 與健康成人和益友的聯繫 (BO) |
|      |      | 性格的力量<br>單元目標：探討性格對人際關係之影響。遊戲內容：香江十大不受歡迎言行選舉.....                            | BO 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 朋友交叉點  | BO 1.3 |                     |
|      |      | 結伴同行   | BO 1.4 |                     |
|      |      | 中國與我   | SC 1.1 | 2. 社交能力 (SC)        |
|      |      | 同心耀香江  | SC 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 情緒字典：<br>單元目標：認識情緒的基本概念，運用詞彙形容不同種類的情緒。遊戲內容：情緒速遞，假如我是.....                    | EC 1.1 | 3. 情緒控制和表達能力 (EC)   |
|      |      | 真情流露   | EC 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 大腦軟件   | CC 1.1 | 4. 認知能力 (CC)        |
|      |      | 網上情緣？<br>單元目標：應用理性和批判思考技巧去分析網上交友的問題，應用創意思考技巧去處理結識網友的問題。遊戲內容：「網上情緣？」，「網友『貼士』」 | CC 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 為我好？   | BC 1.1 | 5. 採取行動能力 (BC)      |
|      |      | 如何啟齒？  | BC 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 誰可先上車？<br>單元目標：明白要維持公平的原則，需要大家一同付出。明白維持公平時，需要平衡各方的需要，情理兼備。遊戲內容：「誰可先上車？」      | MC 1.1 | 6. 分辨是非能力 (MC)      |
|      |      | 同一車廂內  | MC 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 天生我才   | SE 1.1 | 7. 自我效能感 (SE)       |
|      |      | 我做不到<br>單元目標：體會成功的經驗，從過往的生活中尋找成功的經驗。遊戲內容：「輕於鴻毛」，「我的快樂時代」                     | SE 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 我值得讚賞  | SE 1.3 |                     |
|      |      | 我為我掌舵  | SE 1.4 |                     |
|      |      | 國有國法、家有家規  | PN 1.1 | 8. 親社會規範 (PN)       |
|      |      | 入鄉隨俗   | PN 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 一起走過的日子  | RE 1.1 | 9. 抗逆能力 (RE)        |
|      |      | 錢包失蹤事件   | RE 1.2 |                     |
|      |      | 笑臨功夫<br>單元目標：學習五種處理負面情緒的方法，幫助學生建立正面價值。遊戲內容：「笑臨功夫」，「武林大會」                     | RE 1.3 |                     |
|      |      | 衝突教室   | RE 1.4 |                     |

|  |  |  |        |                    |
|--|--|--|--------|--------------------|
|  |  | 自主執照   | SD 1.1 | 10. 自決能力 (SD)      |
|  |  | 明智之舉   | SD 1.2 |                    |
|  |  | 夢想號列車  | SD 1.3 |                    |
|  |  | 志趣餅店   | SD 1.4 |                    |
|  |  | 我的最愛？  | SP 1.1 | 11. 心靈質素 (SP)      |
|  |  | 同一天空下  | SP 1.2 |                    |
|  |  | 如果我話事  | ID 1.1 | 12. 明確及正面的身份 (ID)  |
|  |  | 知己知彼   | ID 1.2 |                    |
|  |  | 我的驕傲<br>單元目標：發掘自己的優點，掌握從不同角度和用不同方法<br>找出自己的優點。遊戲內容：「我最欣賞」，「你有一個優<br>點!」，「我的驕傲」 | ID 1.3 |                    |
|  |  | 讓我告訴你  | ID 1.4 |                    |
|  |  | 是好是壞？  | BF 1.1 | 13. 建立目標和抉擇能力 (BF) |
|  |  | 人生指南針  | BF 1.2 |                    |
|  |  | 公益活動是甚麼？   | PI 1.1 | 14. 參與公益活動 (PI)    |
|  |  | 避之則吉   | PI 1.2 |                    |
|  |  | 學校也公益  | PI 1.3 |                    |
|  |  | 公益活動為社區  | PI 1.4 |                    |

附件二 「共創成長路」第一層培育活動(中二課程)--單元名稱及相關構念

|      |      | 單元名稱   | 單元編號   | 構念                  |
|------|------|--|--------|---------------------|
| 核心課程 | 整全課程 | 後街第 13 座   | BO 2.1 | 1. 與健康成人和益友的聯繫 (BO) |
|      |      | 父母之命?  | BO 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 誰是香港人  | SC 2.1 | 2. 社交能力 (SC)        |
|      |      | 職業狂想曲  | SC 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 知心人  | EC 2.1 | 3. 情緒控制和表達能力 (EC)   |
|      |      | 合情合理   | EC 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 獨力難「知」   | EC 2.3 |                     |
|      |      | 理想對象<br>單元目標：認識理想對象的特質和傾訴時的要素，學習基本聆聽技巧和回應技巧。遊戲內容：「理想對象」，「隨時候命」                                   | EC 2.4 |                     |
|      |      | 思維型格大揭祕  | CC 2.1 | 4. 認知能力 (CC)        |
|      |      | 「創」世紀  | CC 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 好心批評?  | BC 2.1 | 5. 採取行動能力 (BC)      |
|      |      | 歉意何處尋?   | BC 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 餐廳的一角  | MC 2.1 | 6. 分辨是非能力 (MC)      |
|      |      | 讓位奇兵<br>單元目標：懂得反省自私的行為，從而學會顧及別人的需要，主動幫助別人。學會幫助別人時，要有勇氣、智慧和策略。遊戲內容：「奪位奇兵」，「遙控讓位」                  | MC 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 學習全攻略  | SE 2.1 | 7. 自我效能感 (SE)       |
|      |      | 扭曲怪獸屋<br>單元目標：認識扭曲思想，學習識破扭曲思想。遊戲內容：「『田』字遊戲」，「扭曲怪獸屋」，「勇闖怪獸屋」                                      | SE 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 不一樣的責任   | PN 2.1 | 8. 親社會規範 (PN)       |
|      |      | 子恩一年的新年  | PN 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 瘦身多面睇  | PN 2.3 |                     |
|      |      | 衡量天秤   | PN 2.4 |                     |
|      |      | 生還者  | RE 2.1 | 9. 抗逆能力 (RE)        |
|      |      | 幽默一刻   | RE 2.2 |                     |
|      |      | 現代漂流記  | RE 2.3 |                     |
|      |      | 人生處處是考場<br>單元目標：分辨於日常生活中可協助學生成長的困難和挑戰，重視每一個生活片段為成長過程中的學習機會。遊戲內容：「我估你係『乜乜乜』」，「挑戰 24 小時」，「人生處處是考場」 | RE 2.4 |                     |

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|  |  | 選擇面面觀   | SD 2.1 | 10. 自決能力 (SD)      |
|  |  | 先「抉」條件  | SD 2.2 |                    |
|  |  | 在他方的生命  | SP 2.1 | 11. 心靈質素 (SP)      |
|  |  | 金錢世界  | SP 2.2 |                    |
|  |  | 活一天<br>單元目標：明白人在生命中會遇到不同的挑戰和痛苦，藉反思尋找人生意義<br>遊戲內容：「我的日記」，「少女日記」，「呀咩吉祥」 | SP 2.3 |                    |
|  |  | 終與始   | SP 2.4 |                    |
|  |  | 生命有「價」  | ID 2.1 | 12. 明確及正面的身份 (ID)  |
|  |  | 志同道合  | ID 2.2 |                    |
|  |  | 一路向前  | BF 2.1 | 13. 建立目標和抉擇能力 (BF) |
|  |  | 開心前行  | BF 2.2 |                    |
|  |  | 百忍成金  | BF 2.3 |                    |
|  |  | 應變則變  | BF 2.4 |                    |
|  |  | 生命拼圖  | PI 2.1 | 14. 參與公益活動 (PI)    |
|  |  | 親親公益  | PI 2.2 |                    |
|  |  | 互動公益  | PI 2.3 |                    |
|  |  | 校園種植日   | PI 2.4 |                    |

附件三 「共創成長路」第一層培育活動(中三課程)--單元名稱及相關構念

|      |      | 單元名稱   | 單元編號   | 構念                  |
|------|------|--|--------|---------------------|
| 核心課程 | 整全課程 | 現代愛情故事<br>單元目標：明白自己對戀愛的態度，認識戀愛關係的必備元素。遊戲內容：「現代愛情故事」，「戀愛方程式」              | BO 3.1 | 1. 與健康成人和益友的聯繫 (BO) |
|      |      | 自由戀愛？  | BO 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 「她」來自中國  | SC 3.1 | 2. 社交能力 (SC)        |
|      |      | 香港的兄弟姊妹  | SC 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 誰對誰錯   | SC 3.3 |                     |
|      |      | 一日有一記<br>單元目標：了解朋友間衝突的原因，學會面對朋友間的衝突和處理方法。<br>遊戲內容：「一日有一記」                | SC 3.4 |                     |
|      |      | 眾「理」尋它   | EC 3.1 | 3. 情緒控制和表達能力 (EC)   |
|      |      | 離開幽谷   | EC 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 真真假假   | CC 3.1 | 4. 認知能力 (CC)        |
|      |      | 廣告睇真 D   | CC 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 快樂鑰匙   | BC 3.1 | 5. 採取行動能力 (BC)      |
|      |      | 寬恕與報仇<br>單元目標：明白真心原諒別人的重要性。體會以報復的心態去處理別人對自己的過犯，所帶來的負面影響。<br>遊戲內容：「大榮與阿強」 | BC 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 現實與理想  | MC 3.1 | 6. 分辨是非能力 (MC)      |
|      |      | 強人是我？  | MC 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 愛情密碼<br>單元目標：懂得珍惜愛情和有承諾地戀愛，不輕易放棄。探討結束一段感情時應有的態度。遊戲內容：「愛情誓詞」，「好心分手？」      | MC 3.3 |                     |
|      |      | 密碼風雲   | MC 3.4 |                     |
|      |      | 誰是富翁？  | SE 3.1 | 7. 自我效能感 (SE)       |
|      |      | 理想發電站  | SE 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 誰可決定？  | PN 3.1 | 8. 親社會規範 (PN)       |
|      |      | 理直氣壯？  | PN 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 知足常樂   | RE 3.1 | 9. 抗逆能力 (RE)        |
|      |      | 轉危為機   | RE 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 生於憂患？  | RE 3.3 |                     |
|      |      | 給我一個希望的家   | RE 3.4 |                     |
|      |      | 放眼四方   | SD 3.1 | 10. 自決能力 (SD)       |
|      |      | 我有說話未曾講  | SD 3.2 |                     |
|      |      | 幸運兒  | SP 3.1 | 11. 心靈質素 (SP)       |
|      |      | 價值何在？  | SP 3.2 |                     |

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|  | 為甚麼？<br>單元目標：從面對人生困難的故事中，思考生命的價值，明白信念對人生的意義。遊戲內容：「人體何價？」，「『人』、『狗』何價？」，「『活著』的價值」   | SP 3.3 |                    |
|  | 生命小說  | SP 3.4 |                    |
|  | 穩如泰山  | ID 3.1 |                    |
|  | 古今男女  | ID 3.2 | 12. 明確及正面的身份 (ID)  |
|  | 未來會係點？  | BF 3.1 | 13. 建立目標和抉擇能力 (BF) |
|  | 求職廣場  | BF 3.2 |                    |
|  | 天賜禮物  | BF 3.3 |                    |
|  | 展望未來<br>單元目標：制定短期和長期的事業計劃。建立評估及獎賞的思考模式，藉以增強他們追求目標的毅力。遊戲內容：「時空快鏡」，「展望未來」，「停一停、想一想」 | BF 3.4 |                    |
|  | 長幼共融歡樂夜   | PI 3.1 | 14. 參與公益活動 (PI)    |
|  | 齊來參與  | PI 3.2 |                    |
|  | 獨家秘訣  | PI 3.3 |                    |
|  | 意見收集  | PI 3.4 |                    |

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