

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Youth Identity



Professor CHEUNG, Yuet-Wah and his interdisciplinary research team explored the self-identity of youths and its relationship with psychological and social factors. The primary objective was to understand how different degrees of commitment making, identification of commitment, exploration in breadth and depth, and ruminative exploration influence youth identity.

Conducted over four waves with a sample of 958 secondary school students and 882 post-secondary/university students, the study utilized the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) to measure various identity statuses. Psychosocial variables such as stressful life events, attachment to parents, prosocial behaviors, proactive personality, life satisfaction, social networking addiction, proactive career behavior, and deviant behavior were assessed. Using latent class growth mixture models (LCGM), the results reveal the development of youth identity and their associations with psychosocial indicators, providing a comprehensive understanding of the trajectories and correlates of youth identity development.



Youths in the achievement and searching moratorium statuses exhibited higher levels of prosocial behavior, lower levels of deviance, lower levels of social media addiction, and higher levels of proactive career behavior. Stressful life events, proactive personality, prosocial behavior, and attachment to parents significantly influenced identity development. Additionally, life satisfaction, social networking addiction, proactive career behavior, and deviant behavior varied across different identity statuses, highlighting the importance of targeted interventions to promote desirable identity development.

The research uncovered key relationships between youth identity status and psychosocial variables. The validation of the DIDS scale for Hong Kong was a notable achievement, providing a reliable tool for future studies in the region. The study also identified key factors that contribute to desirable identity statuses, such as achievement status, and highlighted the importance of organized youth activities in fostering positive identity development. The project team organized an international conference titled “Rediscovering Youths Today: Identity, Subculture, Psychosocial Functioning, and Service Needs” in November 2023, featuring presentations from renowned scholars, and attracted over 80 participants. Additionally, a press conference was held in April 2024 to disseminate the findings to a broader audience, including media representatives and the general public.

ENHANCING YOUTH PROGRAMS

The immediate impact of the project was evident through the validation of the DIDS scale, which now serves as a valuable resource for researchers and practitioners in Hong Kong. This validation enables more accurate assessments of youth identity statuses and their associations with psychosocial functioning, benefiting agencies and schools in organizing effective youth activities. Collaboration with organizations such as the Child Development Initiative Alliance (CDIA) are in progress to integrate youth identity into their program planning and evaluation.



In the longer term, the project has laid the groundwork for future research and interventions aimed at enhancing youth identity development. Plans for an intervention study involving control trials and pre- and post-test measurements are underway, with the goal of identifying effective youth activities that promote desirable identity statuses. The potential application of the DIDS scale in other regions, such as the Greater Bay Area and mainland China, also opens up opportunities for broader impact.

The project provides a deeper understanding of the factors that influence youth identity and psychosocial well-being. By identifying key elements that contribute to positive identity development, the study offers valuable insights for designing targeted interventions and support systems. These efforts can help young people navigate the complexities of identity formation, ultimately developing into a generation of well-adjusted, socially aware individuals.



“ *Understanding the intricate relationship between youth self-identity and various psychological and social factors provide valuable insights and tools for future research and interventions.* ”

Related Publications and Presentations

Chui, Chi-fai Raymond, Li Hang, Alex Chi-keung Chan, Nicolson Yat-fan Siu, Raysen Cheung, Wang On Li, Kelly Zheng-min Peng, Yuet-Wah Cheung, Marco Siu-fung Cheung, Naizan Xu (2025). Prosocial behaviour, individualism, and future orientation of Chinese youth: The role of identity status as a moderator. *Behavioral Sciences* 15(2), 193. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15020193>

Li, Hang, Raymond Chi-fai Chui, Wang-On Li and Jason Tak-sang Chow (2025). Social media use and political participation among young people in Hong Kong: A structural equation analysis. In A.Z.H. Yee (Ed.), *Mobile Media Use among Children and Youth in Asia*. Singapore: Springer.

Cheung, Y.W., W.L.R. Cheung, W.O. Li, C.F.R. Chui, K.Z. Peng, H. Li, P.K. Man, S.F.M. Cheung, N.Z. Xu (2025). Insights from the four-wave longitudinal study of youth identity status in Hong Kong. *Open Access Journal of Addiction and Psychology* 8(1): 2025. <https://irispublishers.com/oajap/pdf/OAJAP.MS.ID.000680.pdf>

Cheung, Yuet-wah, Raysen Wai-leung Cheung, Raymond Chi-fai Chui, Alex Wang-on Li, Hang Li, Kelly Zhengmin Peng and Pui-kwan Man (2022). Moderation effects of youth identity status in criminogenic explanations of deviance among young people in Hong Kong. *The 23rd Annual Conference of the Hong Kong Sociological Association entitled “Health and Wellbeing in (Post-) Pandemic Times”*, Hong Kong Lingnan University, December 3.

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