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Introduction

This is Gizem Arat, from HKU, Department of Social Work and Social Administration. I am a final year PhD student. My research area is about the articulation of resilience in ethnic minority youth regarding their mental health and risk behaviors. My thesis focuses the positive outcomes of youth development, including their career aspirations. I hope my culturally sensitive research may help this specific population obtain better life opportunities in terms of employment.

What has been done so far?

In Hong Kong similar to other Asian settings, education is not only a prominent tool for social mobility but also for better employment opportunities. Many empirical evidence, NGO reports, and social media have also pointed out the fact that most ethnic minority students demonstrated lower academic achievement compared to their Hong Kong Chinese counterparts (Arat et al. 2016), most probably due to the current education system in terms of less emphasis on Chinese language learning (Bhowmik & Kennedy, 2016). Indeed, poor academic performance may lead many Hong Kong ethnic minority youngsters to drop out of school or hold unstable jobs (Bhowmik & Kennedy, 2016). Unfortunately this tends to stereotype non ethnic majority individuals' as trapping in low paying jobs (e.g., constructive work) or lower educational aspirations (Kwok, Chiu, Lo, & Wu, 2014). However, many of them reported career or occupational aspirations (Arat, 2017) which may break the assumption of ethnic minorities seem not opt for better job opportunities in our city. Ethnic minorities were mostly employed through

their social networks (Kapai, 2015). In other words, the ones who are academically successful were found to succeed in their lives via their social capital such as extended family network (Lau, 2015). Such may point out that fact that ethnic minorities who reside in segregated neighborhoods or do not have any key people to integrate into the mainstream society may fail in the existing job market and may be unaware of the existing services (e.g., Ambassador Scheme for Ethnic Minorities, Youth Employment and Training Programme) to meeting their needs.

What needs to be done?

- We should adopt a holistic approach given ethnic minorities' experiences and resources may be different from their Hong Kong Chinese individuals, most probably due to their socio-cultural backgrounds. This approach may be comprised of promoting culturally sensitive education system, articulating Chinese language learning, encouraging ethnic minority community economic development, articulating affirmative action in various domains in the society and government, and also preventing discrimination in work (Froy & Pyne 2011).
- There should be more concrete legal efforts to protect ethnic minority rights regarding the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) on vocational training, including the employees' culturally sensitivity along with the interpretation services for both employers and employees. In the current version of the RDO, (Section 20) Persons concerned with provision of vocational training, these important concerns seem to very unclear.
- Keeping in mind that every individual is unique and his/her needs are different, government should take more active role in providing job opportunities for ethnic minority individuals with special educational needs (SEN). In recent years, there are many efforts taken by the NGOs (e.g., the Zubin Foundation) in terms of the rights of ethnic minorities with SEN. The government may collaborate with NGOs, grassroots organizations as well as ethnic minority

communities to understand and analyze their needs and strengths to develop a framework for their employment.

- Ethnic minority young people play an important role in the socioeconomic growth of an ageing society with a decreasing fertility rate, i.e., Hong Kong. Therefore, much is needed to assist the younger ethnic minority generation in getting ahead in life so that they can successfully contribute to the future human capital development of Hong Kong society. The government should adopt youth-friendly social policy which will more likely to encourage positive outcomes of youth development that may ease the transition of adulthood. In other words, the government should initiate social policy implications not for youth but *with* youth considering a handful of international research (e.g, OECD, 2010; United Way of Toronto, 2008) has demonstrated that support for youth policies seem to result in higher levels of employment of ethnic minorities both in Western and non-Western settings.

- Though many scholars and different stakeholders have been putting great effort to facilitate the employment procedures or processes in terms of ethnic minorities' best interest, a significant cultural factor which is the big influence of religious leaders seem to be not taken into account. For instance, in South Asians particularly with Muslim backgrounds, religious leaders appear to shape individuals'/communities' aspirations or career development with respect to gender, i.e., females are more likely to be housewives while males tend to be breadwinners. Further implications may focus on this particular factor to encourage more female South Asians' to get employed.