

# **Nottingham Trent University**

## **Document 5**

A study of students' perceived parenting styles and their  
influence on the formation of inferiority complex at a  
community college in Hong Kong

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of  
Nottingham Trent University for the degree of Professional  
Doctorate EdD

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

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# Acknowledgements

I would like to express my special appreciation and gratitude to my advisor Dr. Anne O’Grady and Dr. Adam Barnard, both of whom have been caring mentors for me. I would like to thank them for inspiring my research and helping me grow as a research scientist. Their advice on my original research and thesis writing is priceless. I would also like to thank my oral defence panel members, Dr. Ben Oldfield and Dr. Angela Fung Ying Siu, for turning my defence into an enjoyable experience with brilliant comments and suggestions. I would especially like to thank the students who shared their views with me through the questionnaires and the interview and letting me fill the gap of knowledge. All of my beloved students had been around to support me when I recruited them for data collection to finish my Ed.D thesis.

A special thanks to my wife Ariel. Words cannot express how grateful I am to my wife for all the sacrifices that she has made for me. Her prayer for me is what gives me faith along the way. I would also like to thank all my students, friends and colleagues who supported me in writing, and motivated me to strive towards my goal. At the end I would like express appreciation to my parents who have been patiently waiting for this academic achievement to come true.

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# Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between inferiority feelings as proposed by Adler and perceived parenting style of sub-degree students from a community college in Hong Kong, as well as exploring the meaning of inferiority complex among them.

The study was carried out in two phases: phase one was a quantitative study. Three hundred and eighty-nine community college students completed the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965, 1979) and Buri's Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)(1991). Phase two was a qualitative study using an extended case study approach. Data were collected via conducting face-to-face interviews with seventeen community college students, who were invited by teachers from different divisions of a large-scale community college in Hong Kong. Results showed a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and maternal permissiveness, as well as a significant negative correlation between maternal authoritarianism and self-esteem.

A key finding from this study was that parenting style contributed to students' self-esteem significantly, with maternal parenting style being one of the key sources of young people's feelings of inferiority. This is partially in line with Adler's view on permissiveness as one of the sources of inferiority complex. Data also revealed that family bonding in the traditional Chinese parenting style, which includes features like tiger parenting, filial piety, obligation to bring honour to the family, humbleness and respect for absolute parental authority, is a distinctive entity embedded in all families among those community college students who had participated in the study. Additionally, the evidence from the data revealed that inferiority complex is being defined by community college students as a by-product from comparison with other people. To the interviewees, constant comparisons between individuals in terms of (i) familial and personal circumstances; (ii) internal (include inner self-judgment) and external (include societal evaluation) would lead to a sense of inferiority. For them, the comparison with other people is the very nature of inferiority complex itself.

In conclusion, defining the inferiority complex as comparison and stating diligence as the solution for getting rid of the sense of inferiority implied that traditional Chinese parenting style is affecting these students' perception on inferiority complex. While Adler indicated that pampering and neglectful parenting style, as well as social

comparison, were contributing factors to the formation of inferiority complex, findings in this study added to the literature on Adler's construct of inferiority complex that Chinese culture is a critical component which is missing in Adler's concept of inferiority complex, when it is being applied to local community college students.

My findings would provide new insight for teachers in Hong Kong in designing teaching pedagogy and assessment methods, whilst this research also advises professional counsellors or psychologists the need to explore clients' relationships with their parents at counselling sessions, with an emphasis on parents' and client's role-taking and identities in families; and the effects of comparison with peers might have on clients.

Finally, besides filling the gap of knowledge in Adler's concept of inferiority, this study also revealed another gap of knowledge need to be further investigated, that is, what exactly is inferiority complex in Chinese culture.

# Introduction

I am a lecturer at a community college, my duty is to teach and provide guidance to students. After working for twenty years within the same community college, one of my observations over these two decades was that students generally felt inferior to their past high school schoolmates, the latter of whom could enter universities directly. They constantly compared themselves with their secondary counterparts as well as their fellow community college schoolmates to identify their own status and envision their possibilities of articulation into university for further studies. This impression was salient as graduates from different cohorts repeatedly told me that they had been avoiding secondary schoolmates' reunion gatherings as they were afraid that they could not blend in. They did not see themselves as regular undergraduate students and worried that they would have nothing to share during reunion gatherings with their own secondary schoolmates, who were current freshmen at universities.

What causes such comparison and eventually leads up to inferior feeling is my key concern. As the OECD report (1994) indicated, on top of subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, empathy and commitment to the acknowledgement of the dignity of others, self-reflection and being self-critical are among the important qualities of teacher professionalism. I genuinely care about my students' feelings and would do my best to provide better support for them. In order to do so, looking for the cause(s) of their inferior feelings would be the first step of doing so.

Moreover, when I reflect on myself as a teacher and psychologist, the first idea that came up in my mind was my own shortcomings. It might be my inherent feeling of inferiority, which I projected onto my students, so my perception of my students feeling inferior might have been my very own. However, I refuted this idea. I remembered one day, a student asked me "Why are you stuck with a community college but not a university for teaching?" My answer to him was, "I prefer teaching to doing research all the time. I am more like an action type of person, who likes to apply my knowledge more than drilling into the philosophical aspect of knowledge itself." My answer was a firm and clear one. I did not see it as my own excuse for not capable of securing a teaching post at a university. I really enjoy teaching students new knowledge and setting academic goals for students. Guiding their pathways into a bright future gives me a sense of achievement and satisfaction. I know I prefer teaching to doing research, I prefer applying knowledge to investigating knowledge

itself. So, if it was not my own projection of my inferiority onto my students, then what might be the cause of my subjugation of conceptualization upon my students? The second thought that came to my mind was Alfred Adler's (Adler, 1935; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956) theory of individual psychology. His concept of the inferiority complex might be a good explanation. However, what is inferiority complex? Even though Adler (1924,1954) defined it earlier, but in the local context, the definition becomes unclear. The understanding of the term "inferiority complex" has already raised a problem, no appropriate Chinese terminologies could translate the meanings of inferiority and inferiority complexes properly. It was not easy to use the local language to distinguish inferiority and inferiority complex without detailed explanation. Therefore, Adler's (1924, 1954) concept of inferiority complex could not be directly used to explain the situation I observed, at least superficially.

An in-depth investigation of Adler's (1924, 1954, 1964, 2011a/1930) concept of inferiority complex in the local context might provide further knowledge in answering my own questions based on what I have observed from my students. These observations stem from my psychologist perspective. In my role as a teacher, a practical perspective needs to be considered. A lecturer's job is to teach, to deliver knowledge and educate students. In addition to that, at community colleges, teachers also need to support students to further their study in universities by providing solid knowledge background as well as writing reference letters for them. While writing reference letters for students, I used to get to know the students more by having a conversation with them and trying to learn more about them. Since I am also a trained counselling psychologist, students are willing to express more and tell me their deeper concerns and frustration when they felt that they were listened to empathically. These in-depth communications with students gave me opportunities to learn more about their thoughts and feelings. Students usually would feel frustrated by their failure in meeting the high academic goals requested by parents in terms of college admission and their choices of majors. Students always mention about parents' opinion and their frustration as to whether to follow their parents' view or their own. Even recently, a student who ranks at the top-five percentile told me that she would like me to chat with her father if possible, to help convince her father to let her study abroad instead of continuing her education in Hong Kong. Her frustration and anxiety mainly came from the discrepancy between her own thoughts and parents' expectations. Her way of solving the problem was to ask me, a teacher, to convince

her father on her behalf. This indicates that parental influence and parental expectation might be crucial still, despite the fact that the students have already turned into young adults. This has also alerted me of my role as a teacher, whenever I provide guidance and advice to students, I should take into account of students' parental factor to a certain extent.

To sum up, my care and concern for students have led me to identify the causes of their inferiority feelings, if it really exists; and my interactions with them have further led me to take parental style and culture into consideration. In the following sections, I am going to further elaborate my ideas on studying Hong Kong's sub-degree students' perceived parenting styles and its influence on the formation of inferiority complex. First of all, I would discuss the uniqueness of community college in Hong Kong and how it might generate inferiority feelings within students, then I would discuss Adler's concept of inferiority complex and its relationship with parenting style to further explain why in-depth investigation is needed in both the concept of inferiority complex and its relationship with perceived parenting style and finally I would discuss the importance of indigenous study from a cross-cultural perspective.

## Community College in Hong Kong

My interest in inferiority complex could be traced back to 35 years ago when I started my undergraduate study at the University of Minnesota, Twins Cities, USA. At the university international students' orientation, every foreign student was asked to wear his national costume and sing the national anthem during an evening gathering. At that moment, I was frustrated, as I did not know what to wear and what to sing. I was a Chinese, but my nationality was British (Hong Kong) because Hong Kong was still a British colony at that time, and I could only speak in fluent English and Cantonese but not Mandarin. I felt so lost as if I were a second-class citizen. While all fellow undergraduates from different countries could easily identify their nationalities, I had to explain that I was a Chinese from Hong Kong, I was neither a real Chinese nor a real British. I had neither a Chinese passport nor an authentic British passport. I was a holder of the British (Hong Kong) passport. Moreover, I knew the British national anthem but not the Chinese one. The displacement of national identity gave me a sense of inferiority. This sense of inferiority subsided after I graduated from the

University of Minnesota and returned to Hong Kong for work and subsequently secured my master's degree in psychology.

However, the idea of inferiority became alarming again when the same student, who asked me why I did not choose to teach at a university but a community college, further commented that community college was a gathering place of public exam failures and teachers who taught at community college were also second-class teachers who were not as professional as the lecturers at universities. To him, he coined himself as a failure, a lower-class student than his secondary schoolmates did, and lecturer like me was a lower-class teacher who was unable to secure tenure at a regular university. He was comparing himself to teachers at a community college against students and teachers from the university. What was the rationale behind the different yardsticks of classifying and comparing students and teachers from community colleges versus those staying with universities? Are community colleges in Hong Kong truly venues of failures? If yes, then would it cause any sense of inferiority among students? How would this type of mentality further affect students? By looking at the development of community college in Hong Kong, one might provide some insights.

The establishment of community college was a novel idea in the Hong Kong education history, it was based on the policy address of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2000 (Education Commission Report, 2000). In the Education Commission Report (2000), the Hong Kong SAR government indicated that the aim of 21st-century education in Hong Kong should be:

“To enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes so that he/she is capable of lifelong learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change; filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of their society, and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large (p.12).”

Associate Degrees offered by community colleges provided tertiary-level education to a group of young adults who were unable to gain admission into universities through public examination, namely, the A-level examination before the year 2012 and the

Diploma of Secondary Education (DSE) examination since then. Community colleges in Hong Kong were mainly playing the role of bridging institutes, which provided secondary school students with another chance for entering university with a higher level of education that was equivalent to the first two years of university study. It was different from the United States Community College education system even though it resembled to the American model. Community Colleges in Hong Kong did not focus on providing vocational courses as their US counterparts did. Instead, associate degrees offered by community colleges in Hong Kong mainly provided a second chance for students who failed to enter university after public examination, to obtain university offers and continue their study rather than running as a terminal destination for their education. To students, community colleges were a transit to a university degree. The two-year sub-degree study was only a transitional stage. Graduates from associate degree programs mostly prefer continuing their studies at universities and receiving undergraduate degrees eventually.

Unlike community colleges in North America, which run a credit-based system in which students could choose courses they prefer and obtain relevant degrees once their total number of credits has met the graduation requirement. Community colleges in Hong Kong were mainly bridging institutes, providing a range of study majors similar to those within the conventional university system. There were limited choices of courses for students. They had to finish their studies within a two-year time frame. This one-size-fits-all type of curriculum design targeted at a smooth transition to tertiary study after graduation from the community colleges.

During the first couple of years when the colleges had just been established, the general public always had a negative view of community college graduates, and they were being labelled as failure by-products of public examinations. Both employers and universities were not eager to employ or admit this group of graduates as they did not know their work and academic capabilities and there was no way to benchmark these competencies. The Hong Kong government did not have any guidelines on how to recognize associate degrees as an academic qualification back then and nothing had been mentioned about entry requirements of civil service openings for holders of associate degrees, which should have been recognized as proper academic qualifications back then.

Two decades later, the general perception of associate degree and community colleges has changed. Graduates from community colleges who entered universities have now graduated with honours and some even graduated with advanced degrees at master or doctoral level. Those graduates who have joined the labour force in different sectors performed no worse than their university counterparts and some even achieve further. The government are now giving clearer guidelines on the levels and categories of civil servant posts that associate degree graduates are eligible to apply. This signified an official acceptance of the academic qualification of associate degrees. Therefore, even the historical development of community college was a gathering place for low public examination achievers, perceptions have changed in these years. An associate degree study gave community college graduates a second chance and fulfilled their goals in academic achievement. Then what caused associate degree students from community college to perceive themselves as less competent than their secondary schoolmates who entered universities directly after the public exam still? What made them incapable of proudly disclosing the fact that they were studying at community college when being asked by their relatives during family gatherings, as described by some students? This may be related to the underlining values of local students and their perception of success and achievement. Sailili (1996) already pointed out long ago that academic success and failure affect not just oneself but the whole family or the group to which Chinese learners belongs based on collectivistic values. So, my observation of community college students' feeling of inferiority might be caused by the constant comparison and the internal attributes of students. If it is the case, then Alfred Adler's theory in individual psychology and his concept of inferiority complex may provide further knowledge and explanation on the issue.

## Alfred Adler and Individual Psychology

Alfred Adler was the founder of Individual Psychology as well as one of the world's most inspired social thinkers ranked alongside Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung as claimed by Hoffman (1996). To understand his theory of individual psychology, as well as his concept of inferiority, reading his biography would be a good starting point since it provided a background of how Adler came up with his theory.

Alfred Adler was born in Rudolfshheim, the suburbs of Vienna in Austria on February 7, 1870, and died on May 27, 1937, in Aberdeen, Scotland because of heart failure before a scheduled lecture. He was the second son and the third child of the family with seven children. He suffered from rickets, a vitamin D deficiency that would cause softness of the bones and potential fractures and therefore he could not walk until he was four. One of his youngest brothers died next to him on the bed when he was four. He almost died because of pneumonia when he was around five years old. His mother pampered him due to his sickness, so his relationship with his father was closer. He always wanted to outdo his elder brother Sigmund as he believed Sigmund was his mother's favourite child. Adler was enrolled to the Gymnasium, the preparatory school for entrance to the Medical School at the University of Vienna. His academic performance was poor and finally improved when his father threatened him that he would have to quit the Gymnasium and become a shoemaker, which motivated him to work hard and became the top of his class. He was then accepted to the Medical School at the University of Vienna in 1888 where he met his wife Raissa Timofeyewna Epstein and they got married in 1897 and had four children. He graduated on 22nd November 1895 and became a private practice ophthalmologist, but he shifted to practise general medicine later. His interest in how inferiority feeling could motivate humans was triggered when he was treating sick children as a general practitioner of medicine and his interest in psychological effect on organ inferiority eventually led him to become specialist in neurology and psychiatry. In 1902, Freud invited him to join the Wednesday evening discussion circle. He was actively involved in Freud's psychoanalytic group. In 1910, he became president of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. However, Adler's ideas were different from Freud's as he kept questioning the basic tenets of psychoanalysis such as sex drive being the underlying motives of all behaviours, as he believed that education, politics, gender roles, poverty and other social issues were more crucial in the development of a person. He also believed that individuals were motivated by a desire to overcome inferiority feelings and to strive for wholeness and perfection. In 1911, he resigned as the president of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society and he together with nine other members left Freud's group in 1912 and established the Society for Individual Psychology. During WWI, Adler was a physician for the Austrian Army while after the war, he did various projects such as opening clinics at a state school and offered training to the teachers. In 1926, Adler went to the United States to become a lecturer and he further accepted a visiting position at Long Island College of medicine and immigrated to the United States with

his family. Alfred Adler died from heart attack while doing a series of lectures at Aberdeen University in Scotland (Fisher, 2001). Looking at Adler's lifespan development and his developmental milestone, his illness during childhood, his continuous comparison with his siblings, his parents' parenting style, along with his personal experience as a general practitioner and serving in the army as a medical officer, his relationship with Freud, his specific ontological view on human nature, all paved his way in developing his theory in individual psychology and his concept in the inferiority complex. While interpreting the core concepts of Adler's theory, it is not difficult to see the shadow of his personal development in it. In the following, I would discuss Adler's theory in individual psychology, followed by his concept in inferiority complex.

## Theory of Individual Psychology

The theory of individual psychology has three basic assumptions: (1) there is a universal sense of inferiority; (2) a person will struggle and strive for superiority to overcome the sense of inferiority, which is the characteristic of human life; and (3) the development of social feelings determines the individual and society adjustment (Adler, 1924, 1935, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938). According to Adler (1924, 1935, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938), humans are motivated primarily by social-related urges. Therefore, to him, the behaviour is purposeful, and goal-directed. Adler (2001a, 2001b) stressed on meanings in life and human beings had choices and responsibilities, and all human beings were striving for success, completion and perfection throughout their life span. Adler's (1924, 1935, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938) theory of individual psychology focused on internal determinants of behaviours such as values, attitudes, beliefs, goals and individual perception of reality. Adler was also the first to advocate the understanding of people in the systems in which they live (Corey, 2017). To Adler (2011a/1930, 2011b/1938), individuals were motivated by a desire to overcome inferiority feelings and striving for wholeness and perfection. Inferiority feeling is the normal and common functional incentive for human beings, it catalyses an individual's goal striving and achievement (Adler, 1924, 1964, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938; Ansbacher & Anbacher, 1956; Strano & Petrocelli, 2005). Only when this inferiority feeling is getting out of hand and turning into the inferiority complex, the driving force for achievement will become a problem.

Alder (1935) put forward that his individual psychology was inspired by his own experiences and deviated from the physiological explanations of psychopathology and the trait-possession characterizations disseminated by Freud, Jung, and their followers in his era (Bitter & Griffith, 2019). Even more than 80 years later since Adler first proposed his ideas in individual psychology, his theory was still sound and valid as Mansager (2005) stated, “And, indeed, whole areas of individual psychology theory are already marking the path into the future (p.114).” Sperry & Sperry (2019) also stated that Adler’s individual psychology has “significant influence and contribution to the fields of psychology, education, parent education, and psychotherapy in both the United States and England (p.183).” While investigating the clinical application of individual psychology in counselling, Belangee (2019) said,

“The concepts are easy to grasp and highly relevant even more than 80 years later, and yet, when considered as a whole, the theory is deep and broad, encompassing. It combines inter and intrapersonal dynamics, familial and childhood experiences, and societal aspects into one comprehensive view of humans and their behaviours (p.205).”

Critiques on Adler’s theory of individual psychology focused on expanding or clarifying his original ideas or typology instead of pinpointing any flaws in his theory. Powers & Griffith (1988a; 1988b) tried to validate Adler’s concept of “striving” and Baumeister & Leary (1995) and Baumeister et. al. (2000) validated Adler’s concept of “belonging.” Bitter & Griffith (2019) further elaborated Adler’s social interest–activity typology. No studies were found so far in refuting Adler’s theory of individual psychology. Like other researchers, I was not going to refute any of Adler’s concepts. I was going to look deeper into one of his concepts, “inferiority complex,” as I said earlier, community college students’ inferiority feeling was my key concern. I would like to have a better and deeper understanding of the concept of inferiority complex in the local context, so I could be able to apply it properly as an educator and a counseling psychologist. Adler’s concept of inferiority complex and the rationale for applying it within the local context would be investigated and discussed in the following sections.

## Adler's concept of inferiority complex

In Adler's theory on individual psychology, the concept of inferiority complex was his ontological consideration in the formation of psychological disorders (Adler, 1924, 1954, 1964, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938). Adler saw inferiority complex as an unhealthy way to handle the feeling of inferiority and whenever there is a life issue to be handled, subservience feelings may give rise to an inferiority complex which affects a person's physical and mental well-being. Adler (2011b/1938) described inferiority complex as

–

“The persistence of the consequences of the feeling of inferiority and the retention of that feeling, finds its explanation in the relatively greater deficiency of social feeling. The same experiences, the same dreams, the same situations, and the same life-problems, if there should exist an absolute equality in them, have different effects on every person. In this connection, the style of life and its content of social feeling are of decisive importance (p.115).”

Adler (2011b/1938) believed that the development of social feelings determines individual and social adjustments, and only when these inferiority feelings are getting out of control and are being turned into an inferiority complex, the driving force behind achievement would then become an issue. Therefore, when acts of striving to overcome inferiority are greatly hindered, the natural feelings of inferiority will be exaggerated and becomes an inferiority complex (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Inferiority complex is an exaggeration of normal inferior feelings and individuals with inferiority complex display a tendency towards overcompensation and overreaction (Heidbreder, 1927).

According to Adler (1917), an inferiority complex arises when a person finds himself in a situation where his or her abilities and attitude are belittled or rejected by other people. Adler (2011b/1938) believed that parenting style had a prominent effect on the development of the inferiority complex. To him, parents had an important role in the formation of inferiority.

"In addition to regarding an individual's life as a unity, we must also take it together with its context of social relations..... Now the style or the pattern

of a child's life cannot be understood without reference to the persons who look after him and who make up for his inferiority (p.59)."

Adler (1924,1954,1979, 2011b/1938) established that pampering and neglect are two major causes of inferiority complex in related to parenting style. To Adler (1979), the sense of insecurity caused by overprotection in parenting style is the reason why pampering leads to the inferiority complex. Adler (1964) defined pampering as –

"When we speak of a pampered child we do not simply mean a child who is loved and caressed, but rather a child whose parents are always hovering over it, who assume all responsibilities for it, who take away from the child the burden of fulfilling any of the tasks and functions it could fulfil..... This feeling of insecurity and inadequacy is characteristic of all failures (p. 89)."

Furthermore, Adler also believed that neglectful parenting style, which was to him, the continuous humiliation during early childhood due to hatred and negligence from parents, that children would develop inferiority complex (Orgler, 1963). Therefore, both pampering and neglectful parenting styles, according to Adler (1924,1954,1979, 2011b/1938), would lead to an inferiority complex.

Adler's concept of inferiority complex and the influences of parenting styles were mainly derived from his clinical experiences. He provided a clear description on inferiority complex and its causation; however, he did not provide a concrete definition of inferiority complex and a clear explanation on how pampering and neglectful parenting style would cause inferiority complex. Unfortunately, no research had been found in attempting to define the inferiority complex or investigate how pampering and neglectful parenting styles caused inferiority complex. Studies on inferiority complex used various definitions even though they all referred to Adler's theory in individual psychology.

## The need to define inferiority complex

When inputting the keywords "inferiority complex" into google scholar, more than 210,000 academic articles can be found. However, no uniform or universal definition of inferiority complex was being used among studies. Some studies simple mention it as if it is a unique phenomenon without further explanation or description, for example, Poorana & Dharma (2018) defined inferiority complex as "a feeling of

inadequacy stemming from either real or imaginary sources (p. 2249).” Forster (2017) simply stated that inferiority complex was a notion that assumes Western culture to be superior to the Chinese one without further explaining what exactly inferiority complex was. David & Transavia (2012) used resolution of intrapsychic conflict to represent inferiority complex in their study of teenagers in disadvantaged families by using experiential techniques, they had not provided any explanation but just equating inferiority complex with intrapsychic conflict after described what Adler had said about inferiority complex, followed by defining intrapsychic conflict. Some other studies link inferiority complex with the focus of their study and interpret inferiority complex in the realm of their main studies. Likewise, Scheff (2000) in his review of the sociology of shame, he stated that –

“Similarly, the concept of an inferiority complex can be seen as a formulation about chronic low self-esteem, or to put it more bluntly, chronic shame. Yet Adler never used the concept of shame to integrate the various dimensions of his work, as he might have. His theory of personality was that children deprived of love at key periods in their development would become adults with either a drive for power or an inferiority complex. This can be restated succinctly in terms of a theory of shame and the social bond: children without the requisite secure bonds will likely become adults whose affects are predominately bypassed (drive for power) or overt shame (inferiority complex) (p.86).”

In Wang, Wei & Yin’s (2016) study on emotion regulation strategies on handling inferiority complex amongst immigrant children and urban children, they linked inferiority complex with emotional regulation and simply defined it as a feeling. Kaur and Kaur’s (2013) study on achievement motivation, study habits and inferiority among children of high and low educated parents, defined inferiority complex as a pervasive feeling that one's abilities and characteristics are inferior to those of others, so the product of social comparison becomes the definition of inferiority complex. In the study of the relationship between inferiority complex and frustration of adolescents, Kenchappanavar (2012) defined the inferiority complex as a lack of self-esteem. When talking about adolescent emotional development and the emergence of depressive disorders, Gilbert and Irons (2008) regarded feelings of inferiority as the definition of unfavorable social comparison. In the study of Korean culture and sense of shame, Lee (1999) did not provide any definition of inferiority complex while citing

Adler as reference but simply stated, “In the modernized society of Korea, the inferiority complex born of competition is closely related to the feeling of shame (p. 191).” In discussing Chinese graduate teaching assistants who taught composition techniques to native English-speaking students, Liu (2005) depicted the inadequate feelings of non-English speaking teachers on the linguistic standards that are so valued in their profession, such as a native accent from the US or UK, as their inferiority complex.

Other studies in relation to inferiority complex simply equated the term “inferiority complex” with self-esteem in executing inferiority complex. Self-esteem is usually described as a personal evaluation that an individual makes sense out of their self-worth, self-value, self-importance, and capabilities (Rosenberg, Rosenberg & McCord, 1978; Zakeria & Karimpour 2011). Coopersmith (1967) defined self-esteem as a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds towards himself or herself. Rowley et al. (1998) used self-esteem as a measure of African American students’ inferiority complex. Moritz et al. (2006) used covert self-esteem to represent inferiority complex in their study on persecutory delusional patients. Right at the beginning of the report made by Moritz et al. (2006) they said, “It has been theorised that patients with persecutory delusions display a lack of covert self-esteem (formerly termed “inferiority complex”), while at the same time displaying normal or even heightened levels of explicit self-esteem (p. 402).” When reading more dated research in the past few decades related to the inferiority complex, most of them were using low self-esteem as the definition or representation of inferiority complex (e.g., Callahan & Kidd, 1986; Hauck, 1997; Peterson, Stahlberg & Dauenheimer, 2000). Even when Dixon & Strano (1989) discussed the direction in measuring inferiority, as quoted, “An inferiority feeling has often been defined as a low self-concept or low self-esteem (p. 314)” within their article’s introduction.

Whenever researchers make reference to the inferiority complex, like those mentioned above, most would refer to Adler as the key reference and even cited his theory of individual psychology to support their use of the term “inferiority complex”. However, the concept of inferiority complex was subject to individual researchers’ interpretations based on researchers’ own areas of interests. None of the studies was intended for investigating the meaning of inferiority complex itself. Even though self-esteem was commonly used to reflect inferiority complex, it has its own inherent problem. While there was no concrete definition of inferiority complex, so does self-

esteem. Hosogi, ed al. (2012) defined self-esteem as the feeling of self-appreciation and is an essential emotion for people to adapt to society and lead their lives, but then the authors continued to say –

“While no consistent views on the definition of self-esteem, how it develops, and its relationship with social adjustment have been established, its importance, particularly for children, has been mentioned at several occasions and is widely accepted as common knowledge (p.2).”

Therefore, a very fundamental empirical question to be investigated would be the operational definition of inferiority complex. The lack of uniform definition of inferiority complex made it hard to understand what it exactly refers to, its relationship with other factors. In addition, it caused another empirical problem in cross-cultural application of the concept, such as within local Chinese context.

In local Chinese culture, the concept of the inferiority complex itself may be problematic. Both inferiority and inferiority complex can be translated as “zi bei”, means shame or “zi bei gan” or a feeling of shame in Chinese. The term inferiority complex sometimes will be translated as “zi bei cing gik” in Chinese, in which “cing gik” is complex, means something complicated intervening with each other and causing complicated outcome, it is a Chinese term and even Chinese themselves have difficulties in explaining and expressing in concrete and succinct ways in their mother tongue.

Therefore, whilst Adler's theory of individual psychology provides a solid theoretical framework in understanding human motivations and behaviours, the concept of inferiority complex and its applicability to local Hong Kong Chinese community college students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, of whom I study, needs to be further investigated. As Chao (1994) already stated more than two decades ago that theoretical framework in most of the psychology theories were developed in the Western countries from a more individualistic perspective, hence they are not useful for formulating conceptualizations and are originally intended to be applied to other cultures. Therefore, an indigenous study on Adler’s concept of inferiority complex can fill in the gap of knowledge in understanding and applying the concept upon local Chinese students. In addition to the definition of inferiority complex, another issue mentioned above was parenting style. How parenting style caused the formation of inferiority complex also needed further investigation. Similar to the definition of inferiority

complex, parenting styles itself, in cross-cultural application needed further investigation too.

## Parenting styles and inferiority complex

In Adler's individual psychology, he placed great emphasis on the influence of the family, particularly parents, on the development of a child's personality and sense of well-being (Adler, 1954). In his concept of inferiority complex, he further described that pampering and neglectful parenting styles were the cause of inferiority complex as mentioned above (Adler, 1924, 1954, 1964, 2011b/1938). However, Adler had not further explained the rationale behind in details or clearly defined the parenting styles. Since Baumrind's (1967, 1971) parenting theory has been empirically identified as effective when being applied in Adler's individual psychology (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1996; Gfroerer, Kern, & Curlette, 2004; McVittie & Best, 2009; Mullis, 1999; Nelson, 2006), Baumrind's (1967, 1971) typology could provide a better understanding on Adler's concept in parenting styles.

## Baumrind's theory in parenting styles

Based on her research of families, Baumrind (1967, 1971, 2005) focused on the key concepts of responsiveness and demands for parental control in influencing children's behaviours. She theorised that if the child perceived parental control as fair and reasonable, the control would be internalized and followed through by the child instead of being rejected. Baumrind's (1971, 2005) parenting typology includes four categories: (a) authoritative, having high expectations on the child's behaviours and as the same time being sensitive to the child's ability to respond to those expectations and being respectful to the child's opinion; (b) authoritarian, having high expectations on the child's behaviours but with low sensitivities to the child's opinion and abilities, basically strictly disciplinary; (c) permissive, having low expectations on the child's behaviours but with high sensitivities to the child's opinion and abilities; and (d) neglectful, having low expectations on the child's behaviours and with low sensitivities to the child's opinion and abilities, basically no rules setting at all. Baumrind (1971, 2005) associated children and adolescents' success in academic performance, social maturity and responsibility with authoritative parenting styles.

Baumrind's model of parenting styles were found to resemble parenting models of Adler's individual psychology, which identifies authoritative and democratic styles of parenting are more beneficial than autocratic or permissive parenting styles (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1996; Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964; Mullis, 1999; Popkin, 2002). Adlerian model of parenting proposed a democratic parenting style (in Baumrind's typology authoritative style) as the most ideal for psychological adjustment as behavioural compliance and psychological autonomy are viewed as interdependent, while autocratic parenting style (in Baumrind's typology authoritarian style) failed to produce responsibility in children due to the implied superior/inferior relationship between parent and child; and permissive parenting is unable to give children a sense of personal achievement, so it is potentially harmful to children (Gfroerer, Kern, & Curlette, 2004). While deliberately comparing Baumrind's research and Adlerian model of parenting, Gfroerer, Kern & Curlette (2004) found that Baumrind's research supported the efficacy of democratic/authoritative parenting styles advocated in Adlerian model of parenting - "Baumrind's model clearly parallels Adlerian theory on parenting in her use and definition of the terms for the three most noted parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive (p.382)." So, Baumrind's theory in parenting styles provided a better understanding in Adler's concept of parenting in his theory. Even though no study has been found on studying Baumrind's theory of parenting styles and their relationship with inferiority complex, her parenting styles theory provided a solid reference point for understanding Adler's claim on pampering and neglectful parenting styles caused inferiority complex. When studies in inferiority complex mostly equate inferiority complex with self-esteem, as mentioned above, research findings on parenting styles and self-esteem provided further information in the possible understanding of the relationship between parenting styles and inferiority complex.

## **Studies on parenting styles and self-esteem**

Studies had already indicated that parenting styles was related to self-esteem (Buri et al., 1987; Buri et al., 1988; Grove, 1980; Oh, 2004). Previous studies also suggested that children's self-esteem would be positively related to permissive parenting styles (Buri et al., 1988; Buri, 1989; Park, et al., 2002). Moreover, it was shown that parenting styles were related to goal orientation, imposter phenomenon, self-handicapping behaviours and motivational attitudes and beliefs (Gonzalez et al., 2001; Huang, 2007;

Want & Kleitman, 2006). Gonzalez et al. (2001) studied the relationships between Baumrind's three parenting styles as perceived by participants and their mastery and performance goal orientations. Using a sample of undergraduate college students, they found a significant relationship between perceived parenting styles and college students' goal orientation. In the study of parental rearing styles and objective confidence in relation to feelings of phoniness experienced by individuals who had achieved some levels of success and creation of an impediment to performance as an excuse for possible failure. Want and Kleitman (2006) found a significant relationship between paternal overprotection and lack of paternal care. It was also revealed that individual's feelings of phoniness and lack of maternal care was related to the creation of an impediment to performance as an excuse for possible failure in some successful individuals. Huang (2007) studied parenting practices of parenting style and parental involvement in relation to adolescents' motivation, goal orientation and autonomy, found that student's perceptions about their parents' parental practices were related to their motivational attitudes and beliefs. Results from Zakeria & Karimpour's (2011) study on parenting style and self-esteem also supported and agreed with the results from previous studies on the relationships between parenting style and self-esteem among adolescents (Buri et al., 1988; Growe, 1980; Oh, 2004). Raboteg-Saric & Sakic (2014) studied on parenting styles and friendship quality in relation to self-esteem, life satisfaction and happiness in adolescents. They found that adolescents of authoritative and permissive mothers were reported to have higher self-esteem and life satisfaction than adolescents who had authoritarian mothers. However, while these studies indicated a relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem, most of these independent researches was not affixed to a specific theory (Gfroerer, Kern & Curlette, 2004). That means, even a strong relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem was found, the link between parenting styles and inferiority complex according to Adler's theory in individual psychology could not be established still.

As Gfroerer, Kern & Curlette (2004) stated, "A review of Adlerian theory would benefit researchers empirically investigating parenting style because it provides a strong theoretical guide (p.387)." They further emphasized the need for both qualitative and quantitative researches to examine the effects of parenting styles in related to Adlerian theory. Therefore, further studies are needed to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and inferiority complex to further review Adler's claim in the causation of inferiority complex. Besides, when studying parenting styles in non-

Western culture, cultural factors also need to be considered. Studies have already indicated that the influences of parenting styles are different in non-Western cultures.

## Studies on parenting styles in non-Western culture

Studies found that Asian parents were less likely than European American parents to express warmth (Chao, 2001; Wu & Chao, 2005). The authoritative parenting style was not being found to be always effective and beneficial to Chinese, such as Blair and Qian (1998) found that parental control, which Baumrind indicated as negatively correlated to academic performance, to be positively correlated with Chinese adolescents' school performance. In the study of Chinese families, Lim and Lim (2003) clearly stated that applying western typologies in parenting style, such as Baumrind's prototypes, might be problematic in researching on Chinese families. As Lim and Lim (2003) found that Baumrind's prototypes could not accurately reflect the Chinese parenting style. Lim and Lim (2003) further believed that Chinese parenting is both culturally-specific and culturally-sensitive that more research should be focused on conceptualizing and operationalizing dimensions of Chinese parenting style, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Ang & Goh's (2006) study on the authoritarian parenting style on 548 adolescents found that adolescents who perceived their parents' parenting style as authoritarian did not belong to one homogeneous group. Ang & Goh's (2006) findings suggested that the authoritarian parenting style could have different cultural meanings for Asians. In studies with Asian samples, authoritarian parenting style was not universally associated with negative personal, social and school-related adolescent outcomes (Chao, 1994, 2001; Gonzalez et al., 2001; McBride-Chang & Chang, 1998;). Russel et. al. (2010) found that among Chinese American adolescents, parent-adolescent relationships are grounded in Confucian understandings of parental authority and intergenerational responsibility as well as in non-verbal and indirect emotional communication styles. They proposed that parental warmth and support cannot be defined separately from control in Chinese culture, which in the West have traditionally been conceptualized as distinct from warmth and support (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Padmawidjaja & Chao (2010) indicated that Asian immigrant parents may believe that children need a great deal of guidance throughout their development. Therefore, control is not only a necessity but also an important responsibility of parents. Practices or features that define parental control for Asian parents may differ from those that define the more democratic types of parental

control by European American parents due to different cultural meanings ascribed to parenting (Chao, 1994, 2001; Wu & Chao, 2005). Padmawidjaja & Chao (2010) further pointed out that two components of “guan” (parental control): contingent autonomy and obedience, were endorsed or practiced to a greater extent than behavioural control by Chinese Americans. Besides, when they examined the relations between parenting goals and control practices, they found that parental control was more strongly related to Confucian goals among Chinese American immigrants than European Americans. This also reflects the colloquial term ‘Tiger Parent’ used to depict American Chinese parenting style. The term "Tiger Parent" originated from the book written by Amy Chau (2010), “Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother”, which depicts Asian American parenting style of treating the family as collectivistic units with an emphasis on cultural values of unity, cohesion, and avoidance of shame and losing face. Tiger parents see their offsprings and families as extensions of self, consistent with the interdependent construal of selves and they valued high achievement and importance of education (Lui & Rollock, 2013). Zhang, et. al. (2017) clearly indicated the importance of revisiting Chinese parenting and re-examining the developmental course of parenting style after they studied the subtypes of Chinese maternal parenting style on the adjustment of adolescents. They found that strict-affectionate parenting represented a culture-specific subtype of parenting style in Chinese culture. Fung, Li & Lam (2017) concluded in their study on discipline strategies of Chinese parenting that Chinese parenting was more multi-faceted than the common stereotyped portrayal in research using Baumrind’s typology of parenting styles and proposed further research on parenting across cultures. Ngai et. al. (2018) found that parenting behaviours characterized by care, autonomy and overprotection had differential positive effects on public, emotional, compliant, anonymous and altruistic prosocial behaviours. Among these parenting behaviours, Ngai et. al. (2018) also found that autonomy had the most influential, positively direct effect. In addition, boys were influenced significantly more on emotional and altruistic prosocial behaviours by parental overprotection. Not just studies on Asian or Chinese culture pointed to the necessity in putting cultural context into consideration while studying parenting styles, studies involved local Hong Kong samples also pointed at a direction that a more in-depth understanding of local cultural context is crucial in the understanding of parenting style used in Hong Kong.

McBride-Chang and Chang (1998) found that authoritative parenting style was negatively associated with autonomy in a sample of Hong Kong Chinese adolescents. Leung, Lau, and Lam (1998) also identified within a sample of Hong Kong adolescents that academic achievement was positively associated with general authoritarianism. In the study of Chinese parenting in Hong Kong, Chan, Bowes, and Wyver (2009) discovered that mothers in Hong Kong embraced Chinese parental control (guan) and Chinese parental goal of filial piety and harmonious social relationships and those mothers' main styles of parenting were authoritative and manipulative.

In the study of filial piety and psychosocial adjustment in Hong Kong Chinese early adolescents, Leung et. al. (2010) found that children's filial piety belief is a theoretically important aspect of Chinese values and beliefs that are uniquely associated with a variety of psychosocial adjustment variables and should be explored cross-culturally. Chen's (2014) study on the relationship among perceived parenting style, filial piety and life satisfaction found that perceived authoritative parenting from Hong Kong adolescents was associated with reciprocal filial piety and contributed positively to young adults' life satisfaction. Chen (2014) explained that due to the emphasis on familial interdependence in the Chinese culture, Hong Kong Chinese adolescents' filial beliefs were related to the parenting they had experienced, and those beliefs may be associated with their psychosocial outcomes. A more recent study on parents' expectation on their sons and daughters' academic achievement of Hong Kong adolescents, Chui and Wong (2017) found that boys did well academically to prevent their parents from potential disappointment, but parents were happier if their daughters overachieved because they had lower initial expectations. They found that these perceptual differences affected parents' attitudes, family functioning and eventually affected adolescents' view of the family. They proposed that Chinese families should avoid having gender-based expectations towards their children because it would adversely affect how boys viewed their families. Chui and Wong's (2017) study clearly showed a close linkage of parent and child which go beyond the typical typology of Baumrind's authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles that worth further exploration. All these studies arrived at the importance of developing an indigenous understanding on parenting styles and its influence in the local Hong Kong context. Therefore, while investigating local community college students' perceived parenting style and its influence on the formation of inferiority complex, the local Hong Kong culture should be investigated.

# Summary

Adler's (1924, 1954, 1964, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938) concept of inferiority complex is a major element of his individual psychology theory related to the wellness of human beings. However, when applying the concept to understanding the mental process and behaviours of local community college students in Hong Kong, a more thorough investigation on the concept itself is needed, especially, when the term "inferiority complex" can hardly be expressed clearly in the local language with a simple term that everyone can understand. Similarly, when Adler clearly indicated the cause of inferiority complex is parenting, and the practice of parenting styles is not exactly the same in both Eastern and Western cultures, exploring the relationship between local Chinese parenting style and inferiority complex can fill in the knowledge gap. Padmawidjaja & Chao's (2010) study on parental beliefs and their relation to the parental practices of immigrant Chinese Americans and European Americans provided an empirical demonstration of the cultural processes that influence parental practices through the construct of parental goals (i.e. Confucian and child-centered), which, support those of others who have pointed to the importance of cultural "meanings" attributed to parenting practices (Chao, 1994; Chao, 2001; Kagitcibaasi, 1996; Super & Harkness, 1986). Russell et al. (2010) stated ideas about parenting and family relationships are rooted in culture a decade ago. They argued that "mainstream" thinking about parenting and parent-child relationships is grounded in Western cultural assumptions, beliefs, and practices regarding parenting and family life, which may not be applied directly to non-Western cultures. They believed that such deep-rooted Western thinking obscured cultural differences in expectations about and understandings of parent-adolescent relationships. This study fills the gap in research by using Adler's (1924, 1954, 1964, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938) individual psychology as the conceptual framework in studying the concept of inferiority complex and its relationship with parenting style in a local Chinese context. The objective of this study is to gather both quantitative and qualitative data to understand students' perception of parenting style and its influences on students' sense of inferiority and at the same time exploring the meaning of inferiority complex in the local context. Through the data obtained, knowledge not only helped further understand and expand the

concept of inferiority complex but also would provide insight for my professional development as a counselling psychologist and an educator.

## Importance of studying inferiority complex as an educator and a psychologist

To me, both educators and psychologists share the same ultimate goal, that is, helping people to fulfil their needs, by gaining knowledge, no matter it would be knowledge in their own selves or of the outside world, the difference lies within the means to achieve it. Adler's theory in individual psychology and his concept of inferiority complex is important in both education and psychotherapy. Adler sees school as an important intermediary between family and life (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). To him, schooling could correct the mistakes created by inappropriate parenting styles of a child's upbringing, so that the child could gain the knowledge in order to merge into the society healthy and become a successful person (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). So, it is through education that one's personality and even the entire life can be changed. Adler focused on child education especially on the first few years of life, which is a crucial building block of a person. To Adler (2011a/1930), the most important factor in bringing up children is education. Adler believed that schools should be a place to educate instead of handing down instructions, as in schools, difficulties can be resolved and can gradually put the pampered child and the child with organ inferiorities in a position to solve problems and help them regain the strengths to cope with their inferiority feelings (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Adler (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956) said,

“Right education is the method of developing the individual, with all his inherited abilities and disabilities. By courage and training, disabilities may be so compensated that they even become great abilities. According to Individual Psychology, “Everybody can accomplish everything,” and it is a sign of inferiority complex when a boy or girl despairs of following this maxim and feels unable to accomplish his goal on the useful side of life (p.400).”

Nordenbo et. al. (2008) pointed out that the teacher is the single factor that has the greatest influence on what the pupils learn. That means, I as a teacher, have a crucial role in changing my students, in Adler's term, to help my students regain the strength to cope with their inferiority feelings. This makes the understanding of the definition of inferiority complex and its cause, parenting styles, important for me, as an educator.

Sun and Bitter (2012) indicated that there is still a lack of empirical studies and theoretical discussion on the application of Adlerian therapy in Chinese culture. They also said that learning the values and customs of Chinese culture will be beneficial for those who would like to apply Adlerian theories to Chinese recipients.

Theories and research in the entire field of psychology are originated from Western philosophy. Ever since 1879 till now, the entire discipline of psychology, psychiatry and psychotherapy was mainly developed and standardized from Western European and Northern American practices. The formal and contemporary mode of psychotherapy had been derived from the West. The fundamental theories and research that built up the whole clinical practice of therapies, such as those of human development, human behaviors, mental processing, personality, psychological disorders, etiology, psychopathology, defense mechanisms, coping strategies and outcome of psychotherapy are also based mainly on the clinical experience and research of Western scholars and clinicians from the regime of Western Europe and North America with their local clients (Freedheim, 2003; Hergenhahn & Henley, 2013). Theories that are applicable and meaningful to Western settings with their local people may not be applicable to people from non-Western locations. Especially in practicing psychotherapy or psychological counseling, therapists or counselors need to be sensitive to the needs and characteristics of clients in order to provide effective and efficient treatments.

Competences are also very important in practicing psychotherapy or psychological counseling. Competences are not just being referred to in terms of clinical competence but also cultural competence, which means therapists need to be culturally-sensitive, relevant, oriented and responsive (Tseng, Chang & Nishizono, 2005). Bankart et al.'s (1992) said, "All forms of psychotherapy arise from and reflect the values of the culture of their times." They further stated the new trend of psychotherapy should be the reintegration of body and mind and the full awareness of our possession of all nascence for our own health and growth. We have the potential to understand our own genuine feelings that is a crucial step to reduce our

own sufferings. This is in line with Adler's idea of Individual Psychology, which emphasizes that the human society forms, not only the individual character but also the entire behavioural and emotional repertoire (Dreikurs, 1989). To Adler, human beings are not simply the products of heredity and environment. Men do not trust themselves because of the deepened sense of inferiority and avoidance of fighting against the difficulties they face. In fact, they take an erroneous view of life and only when they recognize the erroneous life perception then they can change. Therefore, Adler's individual psychology is stressed on investigating individual's attitude in relation to the world (Orgler, 1963). As a psychologist, I cannot simply focus on the person without taking the social context the person himself/herself has taken into consideration.

Furthermore, Sue (1998) clearly indicated that competent therapists and counselors must be cross-culturally competent. She proposed that scientific mindedness, dynamic sizing and culture-specific expertise are essential elements for effective psychotherapy and counseling. She believed that an effective therapist should not have presumption on his or her clients but be flexible to develop hypotheses and test them out creatively. Theories developed in one culture should not be directly applied to clients from different cultures. To her, therapist should also know what characteristics of a client should be included and generalized and what characteristics should be excluded and individualized. Any prejudice or stereotyping as well as ignoring culturally specific cultural characteristics of clients should be avoided. And finally, an effective counselor should have good knowledge and understanding of his or her own worldview and possess culturally-specific knowledge, intervention techniques and strategies of the clients he or she would apply.

Counseling or psychotherapy involves two people, the therapist and the client(s), working together under the therapeutic venue to co-construct solutions to address concerns. It is a collaborative process of the two parties (Corey, 2017). However, even though the therapist and the client share the same ethnic culture, gender, social class, religion, sexual orientation, they are still having cross-cultural encounters according to McAuliffe (2008). As both of them might experiences the same culture differently. McAuliffe (2008) defined culturally alert counseling as "a consistent readiness to identify the cultural dimensions of clients' lives and a subsequent integration of culture into counseling work (p. 5)."

All-in-all, cultural context has profound effect on mental health (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2001). Even DSM-IV and DSM-V cautious clinicians to be

culturally-sensitive in using DSM Classification to evaluate an individual from a different ethnic or cultural group. A clinician should be familiar with the individual's cultural frame of reference in order to correctly distinguish psychopathology from normal variations in behaviours, beliefs, or experience that are particular to the individual's culture. (APA, 1994; APA 2013). To be a competent and effective counseling psychologist, I have to be culturally-sensitive and on alert. Indigenous knowledge of my clients is a must.

I would like to conclude this section by quoting Duan's (2019) view on the importance of indigenous knowledge in adapting Western theories. Duan (2019) said,

“This article reflects on the cultural context of Western professional counseling and its internationalization and discusses possible harm and problems of practicing Western mental health counseling internationally. Based on observations of counseling development and research in China, the argument is made that lack of attention to the role of culture leads to harm. All professionals who are interested in being part of this internationalization movement need to adopt an international attitude, conduct sharing and learning through a dual-directional collaborative pathway and show a commitment to doing courageous work in de-constructing and re-constructing the science and practice of professional psychology for the global community. Only with proper and sufficient culturally informed effort, internationalization of mental health counseling can result in mutual enrichment and benefit all people in all cultures (p. 71).”

## Purpose of this study and research questions

The way Adler's Individual Psychology was found useful in explaining the behaviours of people in the Western world is shown above. Yet its applicability in the Eastern world still needs further investigation. Chang & Ritter (2004) stated, “Given the importance of culture, it is imperative that counsellors consider the cultural implications of using Adlerian parent education with clients (p.70).” In Oryan's (2014) study on a major Adlerian concept, he clearly indicated the importance of conceptualizing cultural values within Adlerian parent education. Oryan (2014) said

“when instructors disseminate information, they should consider cultural differences of the parent participants, instructors must always remain mindful that their advice needs to be tuned to the social norms and cultural values of their audience (p.141).”

Adler’s conceptualization of inferiority complex has been widely used and researched, however, studies that I have found so far are only building on Adler’s theory in individual psychology and whenever the concept of inferiority complex is applied, it is not being criticized nor being questioned, even its operational definition is different in different studies. I do not aim at refuting Adler’s concept of inferiority but trying to explore more about inferiority complex in local context with data obtained from participants of the study. In this study, I am going to see how local community college students would define “inferiority complex”, hoping that it can fill in the gap on the research of inferiority complex by giving it a local meaning.

Community college students’ current sense of inferiority, whether it is directly or indirectly related to or unrelated to how their parents' parenting style imposed on them worth further investigate. As Adler (1924, 1954,1964, 2011b/1938) mentioned, it is the insecurity and inadequacy created by pampering parenting style and the continuous humiliation of neglectful parenting style that caused inferiority complex. Yet, as mentioned above, both the meaning of inferiority complex, as well as the parenting styles used by local Hong Kong Chinese parents may exert different meanings and influence on community college students, so one should be cautious in adopting Adler’s inferiority concept in explaining the inferiority feeling of local students. Moreover, Adler's concept of inferiority complex was originated in 1935 in Europe, the practice of parenting may not be the same for Eastern and Western countries and cultures over these 80 years. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between inferiority feelings as proposed by Adler and perceived parenting style of Hong Kong community college students, as well as exploring the meaning of inferiority complex among these local community college students. I am not going to develop a new theoretical principle based on local data but would modify and exemplify Adler’s (1924, 1954,1964, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938) conceptualization of the inferiority complex.

To achieve the goals I have just mentioned, I have arranged the following research questions to be answered:

Main questions:

1: What is parenting?

2: What is inferiority complex?

Sub-questions:

1. To what extent do community college students experience feelings of inferiority?
2. How do community college students understand parenting style(s)?
3. To what extent do community college students acknowledge the relationship between inferiority feelings and perceived parenting styles?

# Methodology

## Introduction

This study has been carried out with the intention to examine the relationship between inferiority feelings and perceived parenting style of Hong Kong community college students, as well as exploring the meaning of inferiority complex in these local community college students. To achieve this goal, the key research questions and sub-questions listed in the above section need to be answered. The mixed methods approach was used in this study to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions. Mixed methods approach is not intended to replace either the quantitative- or qualitative-based study. The integration of different types of data from both quantitative and qualitative generated insights and enriched understanding of the research topic.

## Philosophical position of research methodology

A considerable variety of methodological approaches are available for social scientists to implement to obtain knowledge. The ontological and epistemological foundations directly affected the choice of methodological approaches to be used in any type of research project. According to Raadschelders (2011), ontology and epistemology are about: “What is the nature of the reality that we study? How are knowledge claims justified? How do we define knowledge? What are the sources of knowledge? What is the relation between the object of knowledge and the researcher? (p. 918)” Ontology is about the nature and structure of beings. Ontologies are theories of what exist (Rawnsley, 1998; Runes, 1984; Russell, 1945; Urmson & Ree, 1989); epistemology focuses on the philosophy of what we can know, the doctrine of knowing. Epistemology refers to our way of knowing, the process that we create coherent meaning from our inner and outer experiences (Audi, 2011; Keegan 2009).

Historically, social sciences research mainly relied on either qualitative or quantitative approaches. They were being considered as an alternative methodological approach to apply when conducting social sciences research (Pierce 2008). The differences

between qualitative and quantitative approach were usually presented as two different ways of viewing and assessing reality. The quantitative approach followed positivist paradigm, the object of study was independent of the researcher and knowledge was determined and confirmed through direct observations or measurements of phenomena (Cohen & Crabtree 2008) and data were collected and analysed in the form of numbers (Punch, 1998). The quantitative approach also assumed that facts were true and could be generalised to every individual all the time. However, Blaxter et. al. (2001) argued that this kind of universal truth assumption was not reliable and did not take people's ability to interpret experiences as well as giving their individual meanings under certain social and cultural context into account. On the contrary, Cassell & Symon (2004) described that qualitative approach helped researchers to gain an insider's view of the subject matter that often missed by quantitative approach. The qualitative approach collected non-numeric form of data and analysing information obtained from the research participants' point of view. The qualitative approach explored an in-depth instance or example in participants interviews (Blaxter et. al. 2001). However, qualitative approach has been criticised as time consuming and that the presence of the researcher could have a profound effect on the participants in the study (Delamont, 2012). Besides, qualitative approach was also being criticised of not referring to conventional standards of reliability and validity due to the subjective nature as the origin of a qualitative study was in single context (Creswell, 2009). Nevertheless, the goal of this study was to first identify the relationship between inferiority feelings and parenting style and then to gain an in-depth knowledge of inferiority complex and local parenting styles. It led to a combination of both approaches in this study to obtain a more comprehensive knowledge to fill in the gap about Adler's concept in inferiority complex.

Even though the viewpoints of both approaches are different, it is also possible to combine these two methods and employ them in one research project to gain more beneficial findings. The mixed methods approach was originally a triangulation method to confirm a study's results by using qualitative and quantitative methods. A mixed methods approach, however, goes beyond the initial goal of triangulation, that is, confirmation of results using different methods or data sets, to also gain a better understanding and comprehension of results, discover new perspectives, or develop new measurement tools (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998). Ghiara (2020) argued that the mixed methods research should be a distinct paradigm which allows both

epistemological and ontological pluralism. Traditionally, researchers would identify their worldviews as pragmatism (Feilzer, 2010; Morgan, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003); transformativism (Mertens, 2003; Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2013); critical realism (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010; Zachariadis, Scott & Barrett, 2013); postpositivism (Phillips & Burbules, 2000); constructivism (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011); realism (Haig & Evers, 2016; Maxwell, 2016; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010; Pawson, 2013); or feminism (Crasnow, 2015; Hesse-Biber, 2012; Leckenby & Hesse-Biber, 2007). But in social sciences research, Johnson (2011) considered that, "in general, scholars identify themselves as "quantitative", "qualitative", or "mixed methods" researchers, as if they were part of one of these research communities, rather than talking about their identities in terms of worldviews such as postpositivism, constructivism, or pragmatism (p. 33)." Similarly, Uprichard and Dawney (2016) also arguing for a "diffractive" approach, where they saw in mixed methods research, research questions could be studied through different ontological and epistemological pathways, and diffraction not only allows for such a multiplicity but also emphasizes it (Ghiara, 2020). Johnson (2012) also advocated "dialectical pluralism", a dialectical approach requires appropriately listen to each research question and purpose to form a metaparadigm, which, enabling researchers to combine ideas from competing paradigms.

One of the goals of this study was to rely as much as possible on the community college students' views of their parents' parenting style and the meaning of inferiority complex. More broad and general open-ended questions would be used to construct the meaning of perceived parenting styles and inferiority complex from the words of community college students in their life situations. This approach was based on the social constructivist's assumptions that individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences and seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Neuman, 2003, Schwandt, 2007). Although the qualitative method could answer my questions on cultural perspectives and get a deeper understanding on inferiority complex from community college students' perspective, the method itself could not provide a full picture on the relationship between Adler's (1924, 1954, 1964, 2011b/1938) concept of inferiority complex. Especially, the purpose of this study was to fill the gap in research by using Adler's (1924, 1954, 1964, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938) individual psychology as the conceptual framework in studying the concept of inferiority complex and its

relationship with parenting style in a local Chinese context. Therefore, the mixed methods approach was used, a concept originated by Campbell and Fisk (1959) when they used multimethod to study the validity of psychological traits.

## Explanatory sequential mixed methods design

Adler's (1957) theory of individual psychology and his concept of inferiority was developed in Europe in the early 20th century. By now towards the end of the 21st century, a timely reinvestigation of the concept of inferiority complex in Hong Kong Chinese students can align knowledge with time, place and cultural background.

To reinvestigate Adler's (1957) concept of inferiority, a mixed methods research methodology with an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, which also called a two-phase model by Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) was used.

The purpose for using sequential mixed methods design was seeking to provide an alternative perspective in Adler's (1957) concept of inferiority. I seek to build on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data. Using only quantitative method was not enough to address the research questions, especially in search of the meaning of local parenting styles and definition of inferiority complex, more data was needed to extend, elaborate on, or explain the first database, which might answer my research questions on whether community college students has inferiority feelings and its relationship with students' perceived parenting style. I engaged the sequential mixed methods by doing quantitative study first, then followed up with a qualitative one to obtain more detailed, specific information than can be gained from the results of statistical tests.

Scores on existing instruments measuring parenting styles and self-esteem, yield specific numbers that can be statistically analysed, can produce results to assess the relationship between community college students perceived parenting styles and their sense of inferiority, and the additional collection of qualitative data, an open-ended interviews that provide actual words of community college students in the study, offer many different perspectives on the concept of inferiority complex when one combines quantitative and qualitative methods, develops a more in-depth

understanding of how perceived parenting styles of community college students affect the formation of inferiority complex and also how students define inferiority complex. These different sources of information provide both condensed understanding of the concept of inferiority as well as the detail. The mixed method provides a better understanding of my research problem than either type by itself, which Miles & Huberman (1994) call it a “powerful mix (p.42).”

The study was separated into two phases. Phase one began with a quantitative method in which community college students’ inferiority feelings and their perceived parenting styles was tested, then followed by phase two, a qualitative method involving detailed exploration of Adler’s concept of inferiority complex through semi-structured interview. In the first phase, I intended to specify the type of information to be collected, and the type of data would be numeric information gathered from scales of instruments and in phase two I intended to allow information to emerge from participants in the study through semi-structured interviews and reporting the voice of the participants. Before going into the details of the research method in phase one and phase two studies, I would like to discuss the ethical issues, especially given the fact that I am a lecturer in the community college and the participants are students in the community college I am teaching at. To have a reliable and valid finding in a research study, following strict ethical guidelines is essential.

## Ethical issues

I am the principal lecture in the community college, and I am also a researcher, I need to be mindful in the issue of ethical consideration because of my dual role. The entire study followed strictly the British Education Research Association revised ethical guidelines for educational research, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (2018). Ethical approval for using human subject was obtained from both the Nottingham Trent University board of research ethic (Appendix A) and the University of Hong Kong research ethical committee as the community college I am working at is under the University of Hong Kong. I also strictly observed the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (2018), to make sure all participants privacy was protected and kept confidential.

Since phase one of my study involved collecting biographic Information like age, place of birth, number of siblings (see Appendix B), so it was important for me to handle the data carefully and complied with both the community college and Nottingham Trent University's policy as well as following the general principles about confidentiality. Richards (2016) suggested that information obtained from and about participants during an investigation is confidential unless otherwise agreed in advance. For the quantitative study in phase one, it also involved using existing psychological assessment instruments in questionnaire format, to protect the participants, teachers in community college were asked to distribute a consent form (see Appendix C) to the participants first and then read out the instruction in their classes. On the consent form, the purpose of the study, anonymity and voluntary nature of participants were stressed. If any participants who did not want to participate, they could be excused from participating the study either by not filling the consent form or by signing the form to indicate their unwillingness to participate. For these participants, the questionnaire would not be distributed to them. Those who signed and returned the consent form indicating their willingness to participate would receive the questionnaire. For those who participated, they were required to return the questionnaire to their class teacher immediately after finished. All questionnaires would then be put into an envelope and sealed and returned to the researcher directly by the teachers. To follow strictly with the research confidentiality requirement, students were reminded not to put their names or student identification number onto the questionnaires in order to keep the data being anonymous and protect their privacy.

Phase two of my study was a qualitative study. This study again was strictly following the British Educational Research Association [BERA] (2018) ethical guidelines. All participants were treated fairly, sensitively, and with dignity and freedom from prejudice, in recognition of both their rights and of differences arising from age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, faith, political belief or any other significant characteristics. Robley (1995) clearly pointed out, "The filament of ethics that wends its way through-out qualitative research gets its tensile strength through a respect for the dignity, autonomy, and rights of the respondent (p.48)." A quiet room with no other people around was reserved for interviews and the time of the interview was selected by participants and they had the right to reschedule according to their own schedule, the researcher would try to fit into their free time

slots to hold the interview. All participants were greeted and welcome to participate in the same manner, and all starter questions for the interview were the same. Once participants felt uncomfortable to continue with a particular topic or issue or being spotted with signs of uneasiness in their facial expression or tone of voice, they would be allowed to pause and calm down and they could choose to continue, change the topic or even terminate the interview. Fortunately, this had not happened at all during the interviews.

Participants' informed consent was obtained at the beginning of the interview, and the researcher was sensitive and open to the possibility that participants might wish, for any reason and at any time, to withdraw their consent. All participants were explicitly told that they could withdraw at any point without needing to provide an explanation. A sample of consent form used and signed by each participant is available in Appendix D. Researcher had done everything he could to ensure that all participants understood what was involved in the study, what they would be asked to do in the interview, what would happen to the information they provided, how that information would be used and how and to whom it would be reported. The participants were informed about the retention, sharing and any possible secondary uses of the research data. All participants clearly understood that the possible future uses of data included secondary data analysis by the same researcher to address the new research question. They also understood only anonymized and disaggregated data would be archived and that researcher minimizes the possibility that traces of identity retained within anonymized digital data could lead to the identification of participants. The data would be stored for up to the shortest possible time according to The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)(2018) if it was to be used. All participants gave verbal consent to this possible future usage of data.

Since the participants were students from the community college where the researcher is working at, the possibility of power relationships arising from the dual roles of lecturer and researcher was taken into consideration. It is therefore essential that researcher maintain professionalism through strict boundaries that protect the rights of the research participants by adhering to the ethical principle of beneficence to mitigate the risk of unethical practice as suggested by McDermid et al. (2014). Participants were students either from other divisions that the researcher had not taught and would not be teaching them in the future, or if researcher had taught them before, they must be from big lecture which researcher had no personal, face-to-face

interaction with before and was unable to identify them, no matter by names or student number or any other means. For those who were the researcher's students before, they were explicitly told that their non-participation was acceptable, and they could withdraw from the study at any time with no explanation required. All participants participated voluntarily with no incentive being given.

The interview was designed and executed to both put participants at their ease and avoid making excessive demands from them. Students' were treated with dignity and their time commitment was respected. In addition to obtaining consent from students, confidentiality and an atmosphere of mutual trust were developed and maintained. The interviewing process was mainly for information gathering and no judgments were made for all matters being reviewed during interviews. All the students understood they were volunteering their time and effort to disclose something about themselves and they have the right to cease participating in the study at any time. All students were willing and open to expressing themselves during the interview and none had terminated before the end of the interview. None of the participants showed any discomfort or emotional disturbance during the interview, on the contrary, they were all willing and eager to express more during the interview. In case of distress or discomfort arose if there was any, researcher had already plans for terminating the interview and letting participants calm down and express their concerns and direct them for appropriate professional help if it really happened, to protect the participants from any possible harm. Again, none of the participants showed any distress.

The confidential and anonymous treatment of participants' data was being considered. Each participant was assigned a number according to the sequence of the interview, in which the time of the interview was assigned randomly according to their time of availability. All data recorded and reported would only be referring to the number with participants' identity excluded and privacy protected. The storage of and use of personal data would comply strictly with the legal requirements stipulated in the UK by The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)(2018), as well as the Hong Kong Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (2018). All audio recording and the transcribed scripts were encrypted and stored on the researcher's computer with a password protected. As a qualitative researcher, I totally aware that my knowledge, experience, honesty, and fairness are the decisive factors of my researcher integrity, which is

crucial to the quality of the scientific knowledge and the soundness of the ethical decision in qualitative inquiry.

In sum, the two ethical dimensions in research studies mentioned by Guillemin & Gillam (2004), the procedural ethics and the ethics in practice, were followed. My research studies were conducted according to established ethical procedures by relevant institutions, issues relating to informed consent, safety and security of human subjects, privacy and confidentiality rights, and deception were strictly observed and implemented according to procedures ethical guidelines. The ethics in practice that dealt with the unpredictable issues that arise during the research process, for example, how to handle a situation where the respondent considered a question to be uncomfortable was well prepared. Also, the relational ethics proposed by Ellis (2007), that recognised and appreciated mutual respect between researcher and participant was also applied. As a researcher, I was aware of what I should do at a given moment as opposed to what the subject should do to obtain mutual respect. I also aware of my dual role as researcher and teacher and my relationship with the participants of study. I reflect from time to time as Von Unger (2016) indicated that ethical reflexivity was a core feature of qualitative research practice as ethical questions may arise in every phase of the research process (Roth & Von Unger, 2018). So, I adhere to qualitative research ethics closely to enhance the trust worthiness and validity of the qualitative study findings.

After taking serious consideration of ethical issues, the two phases of study could be carried out by selecting appropriate participants and tools.

## Phase One Quantitative research

### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between inferiority feelings and perceived paternal and maternal parenting style of students in the community college. It is hypothesised that perceived parenting styles is related to inferiority feelings as suggested by previous studies mentioned in the previous literature review section. To what extent does parenting style affect students studying in community colleges is an important question to be answered before thinking about what can be

done to help them get through inferiority complex, if there is any, while they are studying at community colleges.

## Participants

Participants of this study were 389 students studying for various associate degrees at a community college in Hong Kong. Participants were students selected from 13 different programmes in the community college who attended mass lectures. Teachers from these 13 programmes teaching mass lecture, class size of the mass lecture was around 80-250 in the community college, were randomly invited to help to invite students from their mass lectures to participate with students' consent. Students' participation was voluntary, and teachers were unable to identify who had participated and who had not in their classes. Profiles of the participants are presented in the findings section below.

## Measuring instruments

The Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (1965,1979) (Appendix E) and Buri's (1991) Parental Authority Questionnaire (Appendix F) were used in the current study to measure participants' inferiority feelings and perceived parenting styles. Both measures are well-developed instruments with a strong theoretical base and have sound validity and reliability on its own, and both scales had been widely used in research. I understand that indigenous measurement tools would be better, but before those tools exist, these two scales were most appropriate for this study as they have been widely used and studied around the world.

### Rosenberg (1965, 1979) Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

As mentioned in the previous section, literature usually equates inferiority feelings with low self-esteem (Callahan & Kidd, 1986; Hauck, 1997; Peterson, Stahlberg, & Dauenheimer, 2000). Although Adler had a definition of inferiority complex, he did not mention how it can be measured. Therefore, measurement of inferiority complex normally becomes measurement of self-esteem. In assessing global self-esteem, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES, Rosenberg, 1965) is the most widely used

measure (Byne, 1996; Wylie, 1974). The scale is also proved to be psychometrically sound across different cultures and languages (Huang & Dong, 2012; Makhubela & Mashegoane, 2017; Schmitt & Allik, 2005). In their study of inferiority complex with patients suffering persecutory delusion disorders, Moritz, Werner and Collani (2006) used Rosenberg's scale to measure patients' explicit self-esteem to compensate the shortcomings of previous studies. The tested was proven to be not only psychometrically sound but also psychiatrically sound even when being applied to psychiatric patients.

A new Inferiority Feeling Scale was developed by Akdoğan & Ceyhan (2014). However, I decided not to use it even though the authors claimed that it was the first inferiority feeling scale for non-clinical subjects and was valid and reliable only to university students. First, the scale was in Turkish, not in English; second, it had not been widely tested and used within the general university student population even in Turkey, not to mention the general public in Turkey as no test had been done; third, no cross-cultural application studies had yet been done. An independent adaptation and validation study with local norm on the scale was needed before it could be adopted and applied in local university students. This would be a new independent study and does not align with the scope of this study. Unlike Rosenberg's self-Esteem Scale, which had been widely studied and used around the world. Therefore, the new inferiority feeling scale was not considered as appropriate for this study.

The Rosenberg (1965, 1979) Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is a 10-item scale. Participants' responses were scored in a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (4 points) to strongly disagree (1 point). The higher the score indicates stronger sense of self-esteem.

## Buri (1991) Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)

In studying parenting style, Buri's (1991) Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) is an appropriate tool as it is developed to measure Baumrind's (1971) permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parental authority prototypes. Buri (1991) developed the Parent Authority Questionnaire in measuring Baumrind's concept of parenting styles in order to overcome the weaknesses of Baumrind's original scale, for instance, scale content was too academic-related, incapable of distinguishing authority

prototypes employed by mothers and fathers, and the moderate level of reliability of scale items as reflected by Cronbach alpha coefficients.

The Buri (1991) Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) is a 30-item questionnaire constructed to evaluate parental authority exerted either by the mother or father. The PAQ measures Baumrind's (1971) permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parental authority prototypes. There is a "Mother form" and a "Father form", in which both contain the same 30 items. Response on each of the 30 items is made on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The Father and Mother forms together yielded six sub-scores for each participant: Mother's Permissiveness, Mother's Authoritarianism, Mother's Authoritativeness, Father's Permissiveness, Father's Authoritarianism and Father's Authoritativeness. Score on each parenting style is ranged from 10 to 50, with higher score indicating greater appraised level of the parental authority prototype being measured. Buri (1991) has provided initial evidence of reliability and validity of the scale.

Buri's (1991) Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) had been commonly used in many different researches as cited in the literature review in the previous section. Like Gonzalez et al. (2001) studied the relationships between Baumrind's three parenting styles as perceived by participants and their mastery and performance goal orientations. Buri's questionnaire was used to measure undergraduate college students' perceived parenting styles and found a significant relationship between perceived parenting styles and college student's goal orientation.

## Data Analysis

Students' biographical information and the data collected from the two measurement tools were analysed by using SPSS through basic descriptive statistical analysis. Details would be presented in the findings section below.

# Phase Two Qualitative Study

## Introduction

This study was qualitative in design. Both postpositivist and constructivist paradigms guide the design, conduct, and analysis of this study (Charmaz, 2008; Pérez et al.,

2015). Qualitative research is a classical method for examining phenomena about which not much is known, especially when such study focuses on cross-cultural studies (Hughes & Dumont, 1993; Jorgensen, 1989; Matton, 1993). In qualitative research, the researcher forms part of the research process, same as the participants and the data they provide, and at the same time the researcher also collects and interprets data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The qualitative methodology allows a rich and multifaceted, in-depth exploration of phenomena, grounded in the worldview, vocabulary and context-specific experiences of those being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994a; Stanfield, 1994; Trickett, 1996; Weiss, 1994).

Qualitative research also helps answer the "How" questions based on information gathered directly from the respondents being studied and can help look into the articulating processes of the questions being studied from respondents' perspective (Pratt, 2009). This is exactly the purpose of this study, in terms of how parenting style affects the sense of inferiority among local Hong Kong community college students based on students' point of view.

Strauss and Corbin (1994) believed that theories should evolve with time and situation. To them, theories and knowledge are limited in time and never established forever and should be always provisional. They believed that the nature of theories and knowledge always allow endless elaboration and partial negation. Furthermore, there is no single natural law that can be used by the observer to translate all social actions across all times and places, there is no destination in social sciences studies (Burawoy, 1998; Eliasoph & Lichterman, 1999). Similarly, as I said earlier in the previous section, Adler's (1957) theory of individual psychology and his concept of inferiority was developed in Europe in the early 20th century yet it is now approaching the end of the 21st century. A timely reinvestigation of the concept of inferiority complex in Hong Kong Chinese students can align knowledge with time, place and novel cultural background.

The knowledge in the construction of parenting style can be further enhanced through qualitative studies, especially on cross-cultural studies. In the study on perceived parenting style and resilience on adolescence by Kritzas and Grobler (2005), they suggested qualitative research on their study to further enhance the knowledge on the construction of parenting style. Gfroerer, Kern & Curlette (2004) suggested qualitative comparisons of parents' and child's perception of family life would provide

detailed information about parenting style. They further stated that cross-cultural comparisons would be informative in showing how culture influences parenting.

The use of qualitative methods provides an inductive and emic account of students' experiences (Lovell, 2016). When most of the investigations related to the study of inferiority complex used quantitative methods with heavy reliance on quantitative tools that were not designed purposefully for the measurement of inferiority complex itself, qualitative methods enable us to make sense of reality, to describe and explain the social world and to develop explanatory models and theories. Among different qualitative methods, the extended case method and the grounded theory method are both suitable for this study. However, based on the researcher's worldview, the extended case method was chosen with the rationale discussed below.

## Extended Case Method

The extended case study method provided the research design for my study on community college students' perceived parenting styles and its influence on the formation of a sense of inferiority in students, as well as the definition of inferiority complex. The term "extended case method" was first coined by the Manchester School of Social Anthropology in the 1950s (Epstein, 1958; Garbett, 1970; Gluckman, 1958; 1961a, 1961b, 1964; Mitchell, 1956, 1983; Velsen, 1960, 1964, 1967). By building on pre-existing theory, the extended case methods apply reflexive science to ethnography, Burawoy, (1998) said, "In order to extract the general from unique, to move from micro to macro, and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future (p.5)". Reflexive science, according to Burawoy (1998) is an engagement of knowledge through multiple dialogues to reach explanations of empirical phenomenon, and objectivity is measured by the growth of knowledge, the imaginative and parsimonious reconstruction of theory to accommodate anomalies (Kuhn, 1962; Lakatos, 1978; Popper, 1963), the objectivity is embedded in the theory itself. The goal of the research, with the help of reflexive science, can make continuous improvement of existing theories instead of establishing a definitive "truth" about an external world, according to Burawoy (1998). It is neither the goal of this study to refute Adler's theory of individual psychology, nor disprove his concept of inferiority complex. On the contrary, I am going to look for gaps and anomalies while applying the concept of the inferiority complex in the local context and see how the concept of the inferiority complex can be further improved. In addition, the extended case study

method can be used for cultural analyses too (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 1999). As Burawoy (1998) said, "People come to recognize or misrecognize social-structural conditions through cultural forms", he further argued that "context is not noise disguising reality but reality itself (p.13)." Eliasoph & Lichterman (1999) further proposed that "culture structures people's methods of creating their own conditions (p. 231)." They also proposed three different ways of cultural analysis by using extended case studies, which are: treating culture and social structure as they interpenetrate; or treating the cultural ways people interpret their social conditions or treating culture as a kind of structure itself. The extended case method, in short, is a methodological orientation employed by critical ethnographers to refine theories (Burawoy, 1991, 1998, 2009; Elisoph & Lichterman, 1999; Tavory & Timmermans, 2009).

## Reason for choosing Extended Case Study Method in this study

Both grounded theory and extended case method are sociological ethnography claimed to provide a more comprehensive theoretical picture of social life by using a different kind of sociological approach as an alternative to functionalist positivism, but based on different epistemological perspectives, with the different conceptualization of sociological case-construction and theory (Travory & Timmermans, 2009). The goal of the extended case method is to produce a theoretically-driven ethnography, aims to modify, exemplify, and develop existing theories, whereas the grounded theory aims at identifying general theoretical principles. The purpose of this study is not going to develop a new theoretical principle based on local data but to modify and exemplify Adler's (1924,1954,1964,2011a/1930,2011b/1938) conceptualization of the inferiority complex. Besides, the act of constructing the case as an analytic unit further strengthens the justification of using the extended case method as the methodology of this study. Tavory & Timmermans (2009) stated that, both extended case method and grounded theory have similar conceptualization of case, which refers to "the way in which the empirical observation or set of observations in a study are not only 'ideographically' analyzed as a unique occurrence but as an instance situated within a series - a sociological topic of interest, a unit in an empirical or theoretical whole (p.

248).” Even with this consensus of the concept of casing, Tavory & Timmermans (2009) also indicated that it is the utilization of case that distinguishes the two. In the extended case method, a researcher explicitly uses theory as the starting point to set the boundaries of the case, whereas, in grounded theory, the case is being treated as something produced in the social world. In this study, it is clear that Adler’s theory of individual psychology and his concept of inferiority complex is the key focus of study on community college students’ perception on parenting style and its relationship with their sense of inferiority, and the whole research stemmed from Adler’s theory and was bounded within the realm of his theory. It also fit into Ragin’s (1992) term of casing that by using extended case method, it consists of elaborating general theoretical constructs with specific empirical instances. The specific empirical instance is the sense of inferiority of community college students in Hong Kong with Chinese cultural background, which I am going to study in related to the concept of inferiority complex in Adler’s theory of individual psychology. Besides, my focus is also on how culture affects students’ sense of inferiority, it represents the ‘objectivist’ pole of social sciences (Bourdieu, 1977) and extended case method is the way to explore the fit of the theoretical casing and the empirical findings.

As a conclusion, the extended case method is particularly well suited for investigating social processes that have attracted little prior research attention, where the previous research is lacking breadth and/or depth, or where a new point of view on familiar topics appears to be promising (Milliken, 2010). The ultimate goal of this kind of theory-driven ethnography is expanding and modifying the scope of formal theories with anomalous cases. In order to better understand the perceived parenting styles and their effects on students’ sense of inferiority, I adopted the extended case method framework. Although Adler’s (1924, 1954, 1964, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938) theory of individual psychology and his concept of inferiority complex has been widely studied, none has been studied locally in Hong Kong. This is the first systematic study on the concept of inferiority complex in a local context. This study is looking into Adler’s concept of inferiority complex from a Chinese cultural perspective and sees how Chinese parenting style influences students’ sense of inferiority and to seek for the meaning of inferiority complex to Chinese community college students in Hong Kong. While in the local language, the word ‘inferiority complex’ is unable to express in concrete and discrete manner, the extended case method can help to provide insight into how the concept of inferiority complex can be understood in the Chinese culture.

## Methods and Procedure

The extended case method as a reflexive science sets out from a dialogue between the social scientists and the people they study (Burawoy, 1998), interviews are then commonly used to obtain the narratives for participants. Therefore, face-to-face interviews were chosen to be one of the research methods in this study. The interviewer allows respondents to tell their own story, to offer their own “narrative” (Mishler, 1986). As Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) pointed out, interview can help understand the world from the participants’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. The interviews were to explore how community college students’ perceived parenting styles and inferiority complex and look for the relationship between these two factors according to students’ perceptions. The concept of inferiority complex formed in this study is solely constructed from data collected during the research process and are not chosen prior to the beginning of the research, and it will be compared with the original concept of inferiority complex by Adler. Generalization is not the main concern. Instead, a constructivist approach is taken. The constructivist approach does not seek the single, universal and lasting truth, as neither human realities nor real worlds are unidimensional (Charmaz, 2000). It sees reality as a continuously changing part of the world with human beings interact with the situations and what are construed as real, as objective knowledge and truth, is based on our perspectives (Schwandt, 1994). The constructivist approach also fosters my self-awareness about what I attribute to my students and how, when and why I portray those responses as real. Findings will tell what and how parenting style is related to the sense of inferiority or inferiority complex through students’ descriptions. The findings can help give a better understanding of the inferiority complex and at the same time provide direction as to how to work with students if they have a sense of inferiority.

## Participants

Purposeful sampling was used in this study for the interview phase of fieldwork. All participants met the criteria of being a community college student and a Hong Kong citizen. It is not a representative random sample for generalization to populations. In qualitative sampling the focus is on selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study, so as to enhance the richness, validity, and depth of the information (Fletcher &

Plakoyiannaki, 2010). The criteria for selecting participants in this study was their status of being a student in community college. It was the observation from the past 20 years being a teacher in community college that led me to choose community college students as the subjects of the study. As mentioned at the beginning, it was students' continuous expression of feeling not as good as their fellow secondary schoolmates in almost two-decade that raised my interest to systematically study their inferior feelings and using Adler's concept of inferiority complex as my study theoretical framework. The purpose of the study is to explore community college students' perception of their parents' parenting style, their ideas of sense of inferiority and its causes and also to explore the meaning of inferiority complex. Therefore, whether students are having a sense of inferiority is not the key focus, rather, how they perceive the sense of inferiority and inferiority complex is the real focus instead.

Research participants were students selected by teachers, who are colleagues of the researcher, in the community college. Teachers were randomly invited from each of the six divisions of the college, including Division of Arts and Humanities; Division of English; Division of Economics and Business; Division of Engineering and Technology; Division of Mathematics and Sciences and Division of Social Sciences. Those randomly selected teachers invited students from their classes who had not been taught by the researcher and did not know the researcher in person to participate with their consent. It is a purposeful sample from the community college where the researcher is working. Profiles of the participants are presented in the findings section below.

Qualitative data were collected in the format of a semi-structured interview. Brinkmann (2014) stated that the interview "has today become one of the most widespread knowledge-producing practices across the human and social sciences (p.1008)." The reason and purpose of doing an interview as stated by Kvale and Brinkmann (2008) were, "obtaining descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena (p.3)." This study was based on interviews done at different stages, from the initial thematizing and design of the study to the delivery of actual interviews, followed by stages of transcribing, analysing, and reporting the knowledge produced through the interview as suggested by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015).

## Semi-structured Interview

According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), semi-structured life world interview is defined as “an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena (p.6).” In qualitative research studies, the number of interviews is not restricted. It depends on what questions a researcher seeks to answer (Pratt, 2009). In a typical qualitative research, normally eight to 20 interviewees are sufficient according to McLeod (2011). The actual number of interviews depends on when the researcher ceases to gain new ideas or insights from the interviews. That is, the category system or theme emerged is saturated. In this study, after interviewing 17 students, no new information was deduced from the interviews and the procedure paused.

The interviewing questions were generated through the inspiration of Adler’s theory on individual psychology in which the concept of inferiority complex was his ontological consideration. Through his observation, he claimed that pampering parenting and neglectful parenting styles were the causes of inferiority complex. However, from the previous section above, studies already indicated that Oriental countries and cultures have a different practice of parenting and the influencing of parenting styles based on Western categorization are not the same in Chinese culture. In addition, the concept of inferiority complex is unclear in local Chinese culture as no direct equivalent translation could be found.

In order to find out what inferiority complex means in local community college students in Hong Kong and find out how parenting styles are related to the formation of inferiority complex, the interview started by asking students, “What do parenting styles mean to you?” and “How would you describe your parents’ parenting style?”, and once students did not provide any new information even after prompting in related to these questions, then they were being asked about “What does inferiority complex mean to you?” The last three questions being asked were, "Do you feel inferior studying at a community college?" and "What causes the sense of inferiority?" "If you feel inferior in studying in community college, how would you handle this inferior feeling?" At the end of the interview, the roundup and debriefing question was, "I have no further questions, is there anything else you would like to bring up or ask about before we finish the interview?" Any research knowledge emerged after the interview while the sound recorder was turned off and students felt easier to share

their thoughts, permission was sought to include those new insights of the research topic evolved from the informal conversation. Probing questions like: Could you say something more about that? Do you have further examples of this? Could you give a more detailed description of what happened? And follow up questions like direct questioning on what was just said; using "nod", "umm" or praise to indicate students to go on and repeating significant words, were used throughout interviews. The interview schedule together with the questions set for the semi-structured interview were shown in Appendix G. The interview was audiotaped with students' consent and then transcribed verbatim manually. The recorded voice data was transcribed into textual data for qualitative data analysis.

## Data analysis

The qualitative data collection and analysis phases occurred simultaneously. The purpose of the analysis is to develop a broader interpretation of the meaning of parenting style as well as the meaning of inferiority complex and its causes through students' description. The audio recording quality and transcription quality were carefully observed to establish the trustworthiness of data. The initial levels of coding idea or concept, analysis began as soon as an interview was transcribed.

Before I began the analysis of the first interview, I only had a general and very open-ended question. That question was, "What does parenting style mean to you?" and "What is inferiority and its causes?" During data collection, I suspended my preconceptions and prior knowledge in the area of research and gathered the emergence of concepts from the data. The purpose was to avoid preconceived academic interest concerns with, interferes the sole focus on the participant's substantive interest concerns, and the triggering of intuitive insights during states of innocence, to identify latent behaviour patterns and to increase my familiarity with the full range of possible theoretical codes. I let my interpretations of data from that first interview guide the next data collection. The data of the first interview led me to question the differences in parenting style and Chinese traditions as well as the correlation between inferiority and comparison. It was noted that the question was a little more specific after the analysis of the first interview, I was exploring students' perception of "parenting style" and "inferiority complex" using comparative analysis in comparing students' responses and looking for similarities and differences in properties and dimensions.

Data were analysed by thematic analysis, which is a method widely used in qualitative research, Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as: “A method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data (p. 79).” A thematic analysis strives to identify patterns of themes in the interview data. One of the advantages of thematic analysis is that it is a flexible method which can be used both for explorative studies, where one does not have a clear idea of which pattern one is searching for, as well as for more deductive studies, which exact area he or she is interested in. The steps of thematic content analysis include six steps: Getting familiar with the data (reading and re-reading); Coding (labeling) the whole text; Searching for themes with broader patterns of meaning; Reviewing themes to make sure they fit the data; Defining and naming themes; and finally, the write-up and presentation.

After the interview audio recording was transcribed verbatim, the verbal data was read and reread before coding and searching for meanings and patterns. During this stage, initial ideas were noted (see Appendix H for an example of an initial memo drafted) before starting to code the data. After familiarizing with the data, the next stage was to generate initial codes.

Consistent with the extended case method's focus on the iterative reconstruction of theory (Burawoy, 2009), I began with a deductive coding framework consisting of codes generated according to Adler's concept of inferiority complex and Baumrind's (1996) parenting styles. However, the extended case method's focus on emergence (Burawoy, 1998) also led me to adopt an inductive coding approach driven by my emerging understanding of the sense of inferiority among community college students and their perceived parenting styles. First-order inductive coding focused on identifying major ways parenting styles can be categorized. For example, first-order codes focused on participants' description in parenting, like obedience, punishment, rules and orders. Second-order inductive codes aggregated first-order codes into larger units in meaning. For example, second-ordered codes focused on participants' views of filial piety, old-fashioned parenting style, glorification of the family and parenting styles that diminishes self-esteem. These second-ordered codes were then compared with Baumrind' parenting styles and Adler's concept of inferiority complex to understand whether the model could fully describe participants' experiences or not. Eventually some revisions were needed.

During this stage, all data were systematically coded, in a way to generate as many potential codes as possible, so after all, data was coded, data that were identified under the same umbrella code could be collated together. An example of initial coding was shown in Appendix I. After initial coding, different codes were sorted onto potential themes and sub-themes, an example is shown in Appendix J. After the previous stage of searching for themes, next it came the theme review stage. Some themes were collapsed into other themes or sub-themes, like obedience, physical and verbal punishment, and higher expectation and lots of rules now became the sub-theme “Tiger parenting style,” whereas some other codes were either broken down into smaller components or became independent sub-themes, like filial piety now become an independent sub-theme. During this theme review stage, all data extracts that fit into each theme was re-read to ensure that all data forms a coherent pattern. If some of the data did not fit around the themes, the researcher would reconsider the theme to see if it was problematic or not, or to see if data rearrangement was needed. After reviewing at the level of the coded data, a review was taken at the level of the themes to consider whether each theme was in direct relation to the data corpus. A thematic map (please see Appendix K) was used to help to visualize the relationship between the themes. After careful review and revisit of the data, themes were determined, and names were given to capture the essence of what each theme was about and what aspect of the data each theme captured.

A table of themes and sub-themes is also shown below in Table 2. Scripts that were used to derive the code of “physical and verbal punishment” and “Face” were shown in Appendix L as an example.

Table 2. Themes, sub-themes, and coding identified from data

Research questions	Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
What is Parenting?	Traditional Chinese Parenting	Tiger Parenting Style	Obedience
			Physical and Verbal Punishment

			High Expectation and controlling
		Filial Piety	Filial Piety
		Old-fashioned Parenting Style	Dictatorship and Autocratic
			Conservative, Stubborn and Unreasonable
			Value Males and Belittle Females
			Authority
			Respecting the Elder
		Obligation to bring honours to family	Face-saving
		An Indulgence Parenting Style	Indulgence and Connive
		Humbleness and respect for absolute parenting authority	Harshness and Humiliation
			Rare Signs Of Showing Appreciation, Praise and Encouragement
			Humbleness
What is Inferiority Complex?	Familial and Societal Comparison	Family and Environmental influences	Family Circumstance
			Family Background
			Expectations from the senior family members
			Academic Performance and Personal Ability

		Comparison among peers or relatives	Social Status
		Expectation and the General Standard of the Society	General Standard of the Society
	Inner self-judgment	Past Failure Experiences	Failure from the Past
		Self-expectation	Hard to Communicate with Others
			Perfectionism
			Unable to Achieve Goals
	Personal Appearance	Feel Ashamed of Personal Appearance and Body Shape	

As showed in Table 2, the codes “obedience”, “physical and verbal punishment” and “high expectation and lots of rules” were grouped under the sub-theme of tiger parenting as they all were features of tiger parenting style.

“Filial piety” was put into the sub-theme of filial piety as it was very unique in Chinese family and almost all students had mentioned something in related to it. “Dictatorship and autocratic”, “conservative, stubborn and unreasonable”, “value males and belittle females”, “authority”, and “respecting the senior family members” were put under the sub-theme of old-fashioned parenting style, as students mainly referring those as more traditional and old-fashioned.

“Face-saving” was categorized under the sub-theme of obligation to bring honours to family, as all students either explicitly or implicitly said that they had to bring honour or reserve good reputation of the entire family. “Indulgence and Connive” was put under the sub-theme of an indulgent parenting style.

“Harshness and humiliation”, “rare signs of showing appreciation”, “praise and encouragement”, and “humbleness” was put under the sub-theme of humbleness and

respect for absolute parenting authority. “Family circumstance”, “family background”, “expectations from the senior family members” were put under the sub-theme of family and environmental influences. “Academic performance and personal ability”, and “social status” was grouped together to form the sub-theme of comparison among peers or relatives. “General standard of the society” belonged to the sub-theme of expectation and the general standard of the society. “Failure from the past” itself became a sub-theme. “Hard to communicate with others”, “perfectionism” and “unable to achieve goals” were grouped under the sub-theme of self-expectations. “Feel ashamed on personal appearance and body shape” was under the sub-theme of personal appearance.

After integrating the sub-themes, three final themes were generated, one was Traditional Chinese parenting style, another theme was familial and societal comparison and the final theme inner self-judgment. All these themes were related to the formation of a sense of inferiority according to the data collected from the students.

## Findings

### Phase One Quantitative Study

#### Participants’ Profile

The total number of Phase One participants was 389 (217 females, 170 males) students studying associate degree programmes at a community college. Among these 389 students, 218 were year one students and 169 were year two students. The mean age of the sample was 19.08 years (SD= 1.972, range = 17 – 36).

Most of them were Hong Kong citizens (380 Hong Kong citizens, 7 non-Hong Kong citizens) and most were born in Hong Kong (301 born in Hong Kong, 86 born outside of Hong Kong).

Among these 387 participants, most of them were grew up from intact families, with only 39 of them growing up in single parent families and three respondents did not indicate whether they grew up from intact families or single-parent families. Seventy-six participants were the only child in their family, 189 of them had one sibling, 81 of

them had two siblings and 22 of them had three siblings. There was one participant who indicated he/she had 6 siblings, which was the maximum number of siblings one had got in this sampling pool, and 10 participants did not indicate how many siblings they had.

When looking at birth order, 195 participants were first born, 141 were second born, 32 were third born, 11 were fourth born, three were fifth born and only one was the sixth born, while 6 participants did not indicate their birth order. A summary of the participants' profile is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Profile of Participants

<b>Categories</b>		<b>Number of students</b>
Gender	Male	170
	Female	217
	Not indicated	2
Average Age	All participants	19
Year of study	Year 1	218
	Year 2	169
	Not indicated	2
Hong Kong Citizen	Yes	380
	No	7
	Not indicate	2
Born in Hong Kong	Yes	301
	No	86
	Not indicated	2
Family structure	Intact	345
	Single parent	39
	Not indicated	3
Only child in family	Yes	77
	No	309
	Not indicated	3
Number of siblings	Zero	76
	One	189
	Two	81
	Three	22
	Four	6
	Five	4
	Six	1

	Not indicated	10
Birth Order	First Born	195
	Second Born	141
	Third Born	32
	Fourth Born	11
	Fifth Born	3
	Sixth Born	1
	Not indicated	6

The current sample was one of convenience from 13 different programmes at the community college, participants were chosen from these 13 programmes: Associate of Sciences programme (n=136), followed by Associate of Social Sciences programme (n=58), Associate of Chinese Medicine programme (n=43), Higher Diploma of Chinese Medicine programme (n=38), Associate of Arts in Language and Humanities programme (n=36), Associate of Business Administration programme (n=24). Fifteen participants were from each of Associate of Arts in Media, Cultures and Creative Studies programme and Associate of Engineering programme; 11 participants were from the Associate of Health Science programme; 5 participants were from the Associate of Arts in Legal Studies programme; 3 participants were from the Higher Diploma in General Nursing programme; 2 participants were from the Higher Diploma in Corporate Communications and Management programme and 1 participant was from the Higher Diploma in Business Information Systems programme, while two participants did not indicate at which programme they were studying. The distribution of programmes being studied by participants was summarized in table 2.

Table 2

Distribution of programmes being studied by participants

<b>Programme of study</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
Associate of Sciences	136
Associate of Social Sciences	58
Associate of Chinese Medicine	43
Higher Diploma of Chinese Medicine	38
Associate of Arts in Language and Humanities	36
Associate of Business Administration	24
Associate of Arts in Media, Cultures and Creative Studies	15
Associate of Engineering	15

Associate of Health Science	11
Associate of Arts in Legal Studies	5
Higher Diploma in General Nursing	3
Higher Diploma in Corporate Communications and Management	2
Higher Diploma in Business Information Systems	1
Not indicated	2

## Results of RSES and PAQ

Both scales used in this study were shown to be reliable. The Cronbach alpha for Rosenberg (1965, 1979) Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was 0.76 in this study for the 387 participants. The Cronbach alpha of PAQ in this study for the 387 participants was 0.60 for mother's permissiveness, 0.75 for mother's authoritarianism, 0.71 for mother's authoritative, 0.55 for father's permissiveness, 0.80 for father's authoritarianism and 0.76 for father's authoritative. The relative high reliability coefficients found in the present study for most scales indicated that these scales were reliable with a set of Hong Kong-Asian samples. Although the two permissiveness subscales had a relative low Cronbach alpha coefficient as compared to other subscales used in this study, they were higher than 0.5 and demonstrated a moderate level of reliability.

Comparisons were made for demographic data for self-esteem and the different types of perceived parenting styles as shown in Table 3. Among the 56 comparisons, only three of them were significant: perceived father's authoritarian style by gender ( $t=2.653$ ,  $df=373$ ,  $p<.05$ ); perceived mother's authoritative style by year of study ( $t=2.505$ ,  $df=377$ ,  $p<.05$ ); and perceived father's authoritarian style by type of degree participants were studying ( $t=2.183$ ,  $df=373$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Since most comparisons on demographic data were not significant, they were treated as a homogeneous group for further analysis. The means and standard deviations for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and PAQ subscales are presented in Table 4 for this sample, having taken into the account the gender factor. Only perceived father's authoritarian style had significant difference by gender.

Table 3

T-values &amp; F-values of Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale and PAQ Parenting Styles by Demographic Data

		Self-esteem	Father permissive	Mother permissive	Father authoritarian	Mother authoritarian	Father authoritative	Mother authoritative
Gender	t	.641	-.708	.372	2.653*	.040	.363	-.497
	df	385	373	377	373	377	372	377
Year of Study	t	1.871	1.17	.971	1.14	.883	2.009	2.505*
	df	385	373	377	373	377	372	377
Birth Order	F	1.26	1.489	1.618	.666	.214	.458	.596
	df	3, 379	3, 367	3, 371	3, 367	3, 371	3, 366	3, 371
Number of Siblings	t	1.115	.843	.879	.434	.564	.808	.119
	df	3, 385	3, 373	3, 376	3, 373	3, 376	3, 372	3, 376
AD/HD	t	-1.26	.397	.756	2.183*	-.436	.003	.629
	df	385	373	377	373	377	372	377
HK Citizen /Not	t	-1.453	.465	.929	.969	.602	.914	-.431
	df	385	373	377	373	377	372	377
Born in HK/ Not	t	-.389	.241	-.704	-1.012	1.478	-.364	.84
	df	385	373	377	373	377	372	377
Single Parent/Not	t	-.039	-2.167	-.046	-.023	-.076	-1.64	-.753
	df	382	370	375	370	375	369	375

\* p&lt; .05

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and PAQ  
Parenting Styles

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Males</i>			<i>Females</i>			<i>P</i> =
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	170	26.43	3.59	217	26.21	3.22	.522
Father Permissiveness	166	26.94	5.39	209	27.30	4.51	.480
Mother Permissiveness	164	27.71	5.19	215	27.53	4.32	.710
Father Authoritarian	166	23.58	5.77	209	22.06	5.30	.008
Mother Authoritarian	164	23.58	5.27	215	23.56	4.90	.968
Father Authoritativeness	165	37.31	7.52	209	37.02	7.55	.717
Mother Authoritativeness	164	39.49	6.98	215	39.83	6.24	.619

Note: High score means higher self-esteem and greater appraised level of the parental authority prototype

To explore the relationship between self-esteem and different types of parenting style, correlations were computed between the RSES and PAQ measures for all participants. The correlations are shown in Table 5. There was a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and mother permissiveness ( $r = .111$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and a negative correlation between mother authoritarian and self-esteem ( $r = -.104$ ,  $p < .05$ ). That is, the higher level of mother's permissiveness, the higher the participants' level of self-esteem. On the other hand, the more evidential mother's authoritarian was, the lower the participants' level of self-esteem was. Contrarily, there is no significant relationship found between self-esteem and father authoritativeness, self-esteem and father permissiveness, self-esteem and father authoritarian and self-esteem and maternal authoritativeness.

Table 5

## Correlations between RSES and PAQ

Parenting Measures	Self-Esteem
Father Permissiveness	-.018
Mother Permissiveness	.111*
Father Authoritarian	-.001
Mother Authoritarian	-.104*
Father Authoritativeness	.063
Mother Authoritativeness	.100

\* $p \leq .05$ , two-tailed

Note:  $n=387$

The relationships among the six types of parenting style were also explored. Table 6 displayed the correlation coefficients. There were significant positive correlations between father permissiveness with mother permissiveness ( $r = .361$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with mother authoritarian ( $r = .143$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with mother authoritative ( $r = .200$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and with father authoritative ( $r = .466$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Mother permissiveness was also significantly correlated positively with mother authoritarian ( $r = .125$ ,  $p < .05$ ), with mother authoritative ( $r = .545$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and with father authoritative ( $r = .179$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Father authoritarian was found significantly correlated positively with mother authoritarian ( $r = .343$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with mother authoritative ( $r = .213$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and father authoritative ( $r = .435$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Mother authoritarian was also significantly correlated positively with mother authoritative ( $r = .430$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and with father authoritative ( $r = .175$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In Chinese culture, there is a traditional belief that parents should have different and even opposite parenting styles so they can complement each other when disciplining their children. These positive correlations among the perceived father's and mother's parenting style may reflect parents having these traditional beliefs. Moreover, the positive correlations among the parenting styles of the same parent may reflect that each parent may have all three types of parenting styles in the child's perception. The dominant type of parenting style depends on situations and the parenting style of another parent.

Table 6

Correlation Coefficients among PAQ subscales

Parenting Measures	Father Permissiveness	Mother Permissiveness	Father Authoritarian	Mother Authoritarian	Father Authoritativeness
Father Permissiveness					
Mother Permissiveness	.361**				
Father Authoritarian	.09	.100			
Mother Authoritarian	.143**	.125*	.343**		
Father Authoritativeness	.466**	.179**	.435**	.175**	
Mother Authoritativeness	.200**	.545**	.213**	.430**	.360**

\* $p \leq .05$ , two-tailed; \*\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed

Note: n=387

## Summary of Phase One Quantitative Study's Findings

Significant positive correlation was found between self-esteem and mother permissiveness. Similarly, significant negative correlation between mother authoritarian and self-esteem was also found. Results showed that parenting style had significant contribution to students' self-esteem, especially mothers' parenting style as one of the sources of children's feeling of inferiority. This is partially in line with Adler's view on permissiveness as one of the sources of inferiority complex.

Although Adler had pointed out that pampering and neglect were two major contributing factors of inferiority complex, this study did not provide strong supportive data even though a mild relationship was found. Cross-cultural findings in parenting styles studies showed that parenting style might have different effect on the development of personality in different cultures (Dornbusch et al. 1987; Garg et al. 2005; Jambunathan & Counselman, 2002; Leung et al., 1998; Pong et al. 2005; Rudy and Grusec, 2006; Steinberg et al. 1992). So, when studying Adler's theory of inferiority complex, cultural factors, such as subjective definition of parenting style, as well as the meaning of inferiority complex, needs to be considered and further explored. This led to the questions being asked in phase 2 qualitative study, which could answer my research sub-question stated in the previous section "How do community college students understand parenting styles?" and my research question on "What is inferiority complex?"

## Phase Two Qualitative Study

### Participants' Profile

In the phase two study, a total of 17 participants, again they were students from the community college where the researcher is teaching at, six males, and 11 females were interviewed. The reason for not interviewing more students was that no more new insight was gained after reviewing data gathered from these 17 students and the information received was viewed as saturated. Their average age was 19.12, ranged from 17 years old to 21 years old. All except two were born in Hong Kong. All except one were Hong Kong citizens. Two were from single families with their divorced parents when they were born. Three were from single families with their parents

getting divorced either in six months, one year or two years after they were born. Seven of the 17 students were the only child of their original families. Six of them were the firstborns in the families. Two of them were the second born and one was the third born. Most were from nuclear families with one to two siblings living together with parents. Two of the students were from low-income families and the rest were from middle-income families. Only one was from a family with seven members altogether. Nine of the 17 students were studying Social Sciences at community college with seven of these nine students were in their first-year study and one is in second and the final year of study in community college (associate degrees in Hong Kong are two-year study programmes offered by community colleges). Four were the second-year business students. Two were year-one Science students and two were year-two Chinese studies students. Detailed biographical data is shown in Table One in Appendix M.

The phase two study aimed at exploring the relationships between perceived parenting style of community college students and its influence on the formation of a sense of inferiority, as well as finding the meaning of inferiority complex, through studying the first-hand empirical data collected from face-to-face interviews with students. New insight is gained from the data, that is, perceived parenting style is an interactive process which always tangles with the family, and the concept of inferiority complex is a distinctive entity relating to comparing with others including peers and family members. Data also indicated that Adler's concept of inferiority complex was partially supported. Details of each of these findings were discussed below.

## Data partially supporting Adler's concept of inferiority complex

Adler's concept of inferiority and inferiority complex was supported to a certain extent from the interviews. For example, student number one said,

"Inferiority is.....an alert! That is telling you to do the best! But may also cause your lack of self-confidence, afraid to fight for what you want!"

This echoed Adler's concept on inferiority, which is, it can be a healthy incentive for a person to strive for superiority, but when a person is unable to handle it well and

pushes it to an extreme, it will become an inferiority complex, which will be harmful to a person's development. Adler also pointed out clearly in his conceptualization on inferiority complex (Adler,1924,1954,1964, 2011a/1930, 2011b/1938) that pampering parenting style created the inferiority complex, throughout the interview with student number three, this student repeatedly mentioned that mother pampered him and eventually made him feel inferior, especially when he compared to others. Student number three said, "When I was young, my mother treated me extremely well, not fierce at all, on the contrary she was pampering me." Later he continued to say, "I blame my mother's ways of bringing me up and also myself, as I easily give up ...." Similar to Adler's concept of the inferiority complex, this student lost his motivation to strive for superiority easily due to his mother's excessive care and concern. He said, "My mother did not force me to learn, so now, others have learned more than me, and I always give up easily, that makes me sad."

## Traditional Chinese Parenting

Across the interviews, the theme 'traditional Chinese parenting.' is apparent. It is an interactive process instead of mere demands and responses as proposed by Baumrind (1967, 1991). This theme was drawn from inductive coding of different sub-themes, like tiger parenting, filial piety, old-fashioned parenting, obligation to bring honour to family, an indulgent parenting style plus humbleness and respect for absolute parenting authority respectively. Each of these sub-themes would be discussed individually below.

### Tiger parenting

When students were being asked about what parenting meant to them, obedience, physical and verbal punishment, high expectation and numerous rules from parents were often mentioned. For example, Student one replied, "Orders, I remember the commands. That is, give you guidance". Student eight recalled, "During meal time, I will tell them what has happened to me today, if there is anything special, I am expected to tell how I handled that, then they will say what I must do and what I ought not to do, but normally I do not listen." Student two answered, "My mother normally will hit me, she wants you to behave yourself....she has strange ideas of thinking you as abnormal, feeling that you are different, that makes me feel she is very traditional." Student five responded, "My mother might have compulsive disorder, when I was in

kindergarten, my handwriting was not good, since my father could write in a very pretty way, mother thought that being a daughter of my father I should have good handwriting too, so even I had finished all my homework, she would rub it all off and had me redo the whole task again...” Student six replied, “My mother will hit me with bamboo stick and hanger, she would drag me inside the room, lock me in and hit me...” Student twelve reported, “Normally, every time after school, inside the school bus, if I told her I had fail in my dictation, she would keep scolding me till we arrived home! Then she would tell me that our next-door neighbour’s child was so bright, so hard working and I just waste my time on the computer games.” Student thirteen said, “They thought that in the Chinese society, praise will corrupt a person, scolding could motivate you to improve, that’s why when I was young, no matter how well I did, they seldom praised me.” These were typical and conventional practices in a Chinese family by showing care and concern through authoritarian means, and was termed as “Tiger Parenting” currently, after the book “Battle Hymn of the Tiger mother” by Amy Chau (2011).

## Filial Piety

Filial piety was another frequently mentioned term at interviews. For example, Student eleven told me that, “My mom would sometimes say it verbally, that is, ‘now I am going down to buy takeaways, I am holding so many things, you do not even bother to help, you lack filial piety’”. Student thirteen recounted, “That is...a master-protégé relationship, one is on top of the other, you must obey and follow, if you disobey, then you do not have any filial piety. But I think this idea is being twisted nowadays, not real filial piety but a foolish one, that is, whenever you do not listen to them, then you lack filial piety.” Student two said, “Yes, my mother is a housewife, so she will stay at home all the time to take care of us, this happened for the past ten years, no matter we go to school or not, she takes care of us. At home, the roles of mother and father are very well-drawn. A Mother is a mother; a father is a father. To a certain extent, filial piety means listening to them, obeying them, so we dare not to disobey or voice out our disagreement.”

## Old-Fashioned Parenting

For old-fashioned parenting, interviewees pinpointed the fact that their mothers or fathers were dictators and autocrats back home, who were usually conservative,

stubborn and unreasonable, most importantly they value males and belittle females, always show their authority and request for respecting elders are crucial even things go wrong. For example, Student four said, "His ideas are old fashioned, very stubborn. Not keeping up with the society. He still thinks I am a little child, so he holds my hand, hugs me, and during the holiday, wants the whole family to sit together at the living room to watch TV. That is impossible, I have grown up already, I am still studying and having lots of assignments, both me and my younger sister do not bother to listen to him." Student twelve recalled, "They care about my little brother more, I am the fourth daughter in the family, when I was born, they expected a boy instead of me." Student fifteen complained, "He is unreasonable, an egg falls onto the ground and broke, he would scold my mother and blame her for washing the egg, otherwise the egg would not have fallen and broken."

## **Obligation to bring honours to family and the indulgent parenting style**

Besides old-fashioned parenting style, 'face-saving' and bringing honour to family were two other common factors disclosed by interviewees. For example, Student six revealed, "Yes, Chinese put great emphasis on 'face'...in fact, I think Chinese frequently look at 'face', even when they teach their children. From ancient time till now, there is a rule of not bringing shame or bad reputation to the family, that is, frequently ask you to bring glory to the family, that is 'face'." Student nine said, "Parents, those parents of their children, yes, they all want to be good to their children, but I also feel that they are having vanity. I remember when I was young, if I got good academic results, my mother would go to those school-parent gatherings, but if my results were bad, she would not go. So, it is two-fold, one is not wanting to be looked down by relatives, other is want to boast how good her daughter is."

## **Humbleness and respect for absolute parenting authority**

Interviews also reviewed that features like harshness and humiliation, rare signs of appreciation, praise, and encouragement, plus humbleness are typically found in insulting parenting style. For example, Student six said, "When I was in primary 3, or starting from primary 3, she would say 'Why are you so fat? What should I do now? Why did I give birth to such a fat person?' Then she would say, 'By the time you grow

up, if you are still so fat, would you blame me for making you so fat?” Student seven said, “I was being asked ‘Are you deaf? Are you dumb? You are useless’...it happens all the time when I was young, so instead of logically analysing the matter, I always started to blame myself first.” Student two said, “When I was doing well, then my father would say, ‘Do not be so self-satisfied! You should not act like this...’ I think he is mocking me, that is when I feel like I am good, he wants me to be humble and not braggy, but I am not!”

Interviews with students revealed the gap in knowledge that parenting style used in local Hong Kong families has strong family bonding. I triangulated with other studies on local parenting styles, for example, those I cited in the previous literature review section (e.g. Chan, Bowes & Wyver, 2009; Chen, 2014; Chui & Wong, 2017), which all point out that the traditional Chinese parenting style is relation-oriented with strong bonding to the family. As seen from all the scripts quoted above, none has shown any individualistic characteristics. No matter whether students liked or disliked about their parents’ parenting style, they showed respect and obedience, and interactions with parents and family members were obvious as mentioned in almost all interviews. Just like Student one said, “Since my father was very strict, even I had my own ideas, I dared not to speak my mind...because I was afraid of disobeying him.”

When students were being asked about their views on parenting style and the causes of their sense of inferiority, most of them mentioned comparison. The way I coin the inferiority complex would be illustrated below in terms of comparisons.

## Inferiority complex is the act of comparison

The strength of the extended case method can be seen from the data collection process that served to alert me of the discrepancies between Adler’s original concept of inferiority complex and the student respondents’ definition of it. When asking about what inferiority complex is, almost all respondents mentioned about comparisons explicitly or implicitly, and the comparison targets are family members or other people, like schoolmates, some may be compared with parents’ expectation, some even compared against others in terms of social status or education achievements. For example, student one said, “An alert! That is telling you to do your best! It may also drive your self-confidence low, afraid to fight for what you want! For

example, in group projects now, I have hesitation, fear that there is something I do not know. That is, in my Chinese course, I have learned similar contents before, and understood things well, but I am afraid that if I speak out....that is, I see my groupmates not performing well, I would like to lead, but am afraid that once they follow my ideas, with poor outcome at the end, they will blame me, so I am reluctant to say my ideas." This student had an expectation upon himself and would like to perform well, however, he also considered that the others might disagree with him, so he would withhold his ideas in order not to get himself humiliated if things went wrong. Student two said, "Hm..... That is, to a certain extent with my own feeling of inferiority is tied to a certain situation, you are being excluded by others from the ranking while comparing with others, you lack confidence to say that you are definitely better than the others!" This student compared himself with others and worried about non-acceptance by others and started to doubt his/her own abilities. The comparison does not exist only within the family, schoolmates or friends, but also among the community members, for example, Student 14 said, "May be owing to my social status, my education level or expectation from the social norm, maybe all three of these, even my salary was not as good as others." Student 17 said, "...it could be related to the socioeconomic status of your parents, the problem in communications with parents during adolescence, so you felt not being loved by them, then you develop a sense of inferiority." The acts of comparison do not happen as a current event but happened a long time ago when students were young and the impacts last till today. For example, Student six said, "When I was young, I would feel that I had no self-worth, no self-esteem ah, no status, nothing. That is, even worse than a pig. I even doubt that I am a living creature because my mother always compared me with those who were excellent in academic performance, so I had low self-esteem, yes, there were times I had better grades, but mother would then said why I did not compare with those who even did better than me, I started to doubt if I was really useless, then I started to feel lost. I lost my self-esteem, no status, whatever she said was right and I had no say in it, therefore, I feel I am inferior."

## Parenting style and the cause of inferiority complex

Since Adler said pampering and neglect parenting styles are the causes of inferiority complex, so students were asked about how they perceived their parent's parenting style and the cause of inferiority complex. Based on deductive coding, it can be

separated into two sub-themes: family and environmental influences, and inner self-judgment.

## Family and environmental influences

Interviews indicated that both family and society took a vital role in causing the sense of inferiority among students. Familial and societal comparison included the family background and environmental influences, comparison among peers or relatives, or comparison against expectations and the general standard of the society. For example, Student two said, "I feel that my mother gave too much guidance and cared too much about me, you think about that, my younger sister, she is already 12 years old, while eating fish, my mother would still specifically hand my sister her own portion." Student three said, "In a family, there should be both a father and a mother, their roles are different, what they teach their child are different, and me, with only a mother to teach me, without a father, yes, that's it." Student nine pitied herself, "I feel that I am not as good as others, or others have something, but I do not have." Student twelve said, "I feel that my family's economic status make me feel inferior, when I was young, the family received social welfare subsidy, more accurately, I did not have money to learn different things." Student 17 said, "During adolescence, I still could not adapt to the lifestyle in Hong Kong, my family members were all busy and did not communicate well, so they always argued. I felt like my family did not love me and I had no friends outside." The data signified "the comparison between peers or relatives", both in comparing academic or non-academic achievements and even social status was critical in inducing the students' sense of inferiority. From the perspective of interviewees, not only comparing with the peers or relatives would induce inferiority, "family circumstance, family background, expectation from the elders", plus "expectation and the general standard of the society" would lead to inferiority as well. However, the coverage of contents was not as significant as the category of "comparison between the peers or the relatives" did, but still, they were being considered as reasons in causing a sense of inferiority among students.

## Inner self-judgment

Sense of inferiority is not rooted in one or dual grounds, yet, they are generated from multi-faceted fields, internally and externally. Apart from external factors like comparing with others and the society which mentioned above that causes inferiority,

inner self-judgment such as failure experiences in the past, self-expectation and personal appearance are the items that gave rise to a sense of inferiority to students as well. Whereas self-expectation takes up the largest part to account for, in which students commonly found it hard to communicate with others, unable to achieve goals, followed by perfectionism on oneself. Other factors like "experience with failures in the past" and "personal appearance" such as feeling ashamed on personal appearance and body shape also contributed to shaping interviewees to have a sense of inferiority. For example, Student eleven said, "I feel like I do not understand others." Student seventeen said, "Inferiority, is a major part of me, about 70 percent are from myself. I told you earlier that I have learnt how to read and write early, so I read a lot, and from the readings, I understand how the world runs. Since I have no real-life experience, but I follow my readings to draw an immature conclusion about the world and think that life is meaningless, and I move in the wrong direction. I like to produce Chinese literature, so I exaggerate my negative feelings, that's it." Moreover, sometimes students may compare themselves with one's internal value and expectation, for example, Student seven defined inferiority complex as "the differences between self-set targets and achievements, it should be inferiority complex." Student eight said, "Inferiority complex is lack of self-confidence, feeling one is not as good as others." Student twelve even accepted that she was ugly when she was young without questioning about it, "My mother always compares me with others. I was ugly when I was young, but my younger sister was cute and pretty, my parents cared about her more, and did not let people see me and care about me. Well, Inferiority complex...that is, my mother always scolded me on a school bus when travelling home, saying that I was lazy and always played computer games, while my neighbours' sons and daughters were so hard working when I failed my dictation." The internal feeling of inadequacy as well as the external comparison of others clearly defined inferiority complex by Student sixteen, "Inferiority complex, that is, when compared with others, feel like a failure, not as good as others, incapable. Unable to do what I want to do and unable to achieve what others achieve."

## Summary in Phase Two Qualitative Study's Findings

Findings from the interviews only partially supported Adler's concept of the inferiority complex. Comparison of offspring with others' children becomes a distinct factor

which is subsumed in traditional Chinese parenting styles, thus causing a sense of inferiority among Hong Kong community college students, but at the same time, the act of comparison with others itself is also being identified as the inferiority complex. However, no connection was found between the sense of inferiority and inferiority complex. Students did not mention anything about the relationship between inferiority feelings and inferiority complex. Even being probed, no concrete explanation was given on what drove them to define an inferiority complex as a comparison with others. Even when students were asked about how they could handle such a sense of inferiority caused by comparison with others, most would only say studying hard and trying their best. No concrete or uniform answers were given. While looking at parenting style, traditional Chinese parenting has a strong family bonding which indicates that relationships among family members are important, and they play a huge influence on the cause of sense of inferiority among local community college students.

## Summary of the Overall Findings

A key finding from this study was that parenting style had a significant contribution to students' self-esteem, especially mothers' parenting style as one of the sources of young people's feelings of inferiority. This is partially in line with Adler's view on permissiveness as one of the sources of inferiority complex. Data also revealed that family bonding in the traditional Chinese parenting style, which includes: tiger parenting, filial piety, bringing honour to the family, old-fashioned parenting, humbleness and respect for absolute authority from parents, is a distinctive entity embedded in all families among the community college students who participated in the study.

The evidence from the data revealed that inferiority complex is being defined by community college students as comparisons with other people. To the interviewees, constant comparisons: both familial and personal, internal (include inner self-judgment) and external (include societal evaluation) lead to a sense of inferiority. For them, the act of comparison with other people is the inferiority complex itself. These findings provided a clear answer to my research questions as to what inferiority

complex is, what parenting means to the local community college students and the relationship between parenting and inferiority feelings of these students.

# Discussions

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between inferiority feelings as proposed by Adler and perceived parenting style of sub-degree students from a community college in Hong Kong, as well as exploring the meaning of inferiority complex among them. Answers to my research questions on what inferiority complex is and what parenting is to the local community college students and the relationship between parenting styles and inferiority feelings experienced by these students based on my findings helped to achieve the goal of this study and pointed out that Chinese culture is a critical component which should be added in Adler's concept of inferiority complex when applied to local community college students in Hong Kong.

## Research question 1: What is parenting?

Although Adler pointed out that pampering and neglect were two major contributing factors of inferiority complex, this study did not provide strong supporting data even though mild relationship was found. Cross-cultural findings in parenting styles studies showed that parenting style might have different effects on the development of personality in different cultures (Dornbusch et al. 1987; Garg et al. 2005; Jambunathan & Counselman, 2002; Leung et al., 1998; Pong et al. 2005; Rudy & Grusec, 2006; Steinberg et al. 1992). So, when studying Adler's theory of inferiority complex, cultural factors, such as subjective definition of parenting style, needs to be considered and further explored.

The homogeneous nature of demographic data found in this study may indicate that factors other than age, gender, number of siblings, birth order, place of birth and areas of studies could possibly affect Hong Kong community college students' perception on parenting styles and their own self-esteems. Further exploration is needed to find out what would subsequently affect students' perception of parenting styles and what factors contribute to their perception on their own self-esteem.

The moderate relationship found between perceived parenting styles and self-esteem agreed with that of Gonzalez et al. (2001)'s study. Perhaps college students are moving away from the shadows of their parents, therefore their perception of

parental influence was judged to be less influential. A stronger relationship between perceived parenting styles and self-esteem may be more apparent with younger children when parental presence is more immediate.

The significant relationships between perceived father and maternal parenting styles and self-esteem found in this study indicated that students might have similar reciprocal perceptions on their parents. Different possibilities may lead to this, for instance, both parents are working and may not have enough time to stay with their children, the time and quality of interactions between parents and children, and children's expectation on parents' responsibilities. An exploratory study is needed to find out what these college students are thinking, how they define parenting style, their perceived parenting styles and self-esteem. As Wu (1996) pointed out in his study on children's self-esteem and parenting styles in Taiwan that the positive perceptions of authoritarian parenting in Chinese cultures may contribute to the lack of association between parental authoritarianism and children's low self-esteem. The perception of Hong Kong students on the different parenting styles worth further exploration.

The unique contribution of the extended case method does not lie with its innovation of findings, but its ability to link experiences, outcomes and context, in ways that support new understandings of causal relationships. By virtue of the use of the extended case method, this study provided key contextual information about the causal element in the formation of the inferiority complex. It can, therefore, provide a roadmap for how future studies in inferiority complex in Chinese culture can be structured and can offer concrete suggestions for intervening with students having a sense of inferiority or inferiority complex.

This study aimed at investigating the nexus or the connection of perceived parenting style among community college students and its influence on the formation of the inferiority complex. Findings in the present study clearly indicated the presence of family bonding in Chinese tradition parenting style is essential and influential which includes: tiger parenting, filial piety, bringing honour to the family, being humble and respecting absolute authority from parents. These findings echo prior quantitative studies that have shown that parenting in Chinese culture is distinctive which go beyond the typical typology of Baumrind's authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles (Chui & Wong, 2017). Padmawidjaja & Chao (2010) pointed out that two

components of guan: contingent autonomy and obedience, were endorsed or practiced to a greater extent than behavioural control by Chinese Americans. Chen (2014) explained that due to the emphasis on familial interdependence in the Chinese culture, Hong Kong Chinese adolescents' filial beliefs were related to the parenting they had experienced, and those beliefs may be associated with their psychosocial outcomes. Chui and Wong's (2017) studies on Hong Kong adolescents clearly showed a close linkage of parent and child that could be of a point of reference.

Tiger parenting is most frequently expressed in the interviews. Tiger parenting expressing as an authoritarian parenting style is not necessarily negative in Chinese culture because it is viewed as a way of showing concern and involvement (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Chen, 2014). Findings in this study demonstrated it clearly as most students reviewed that their parents are strict and expecting obedience but at the same time students are not too rebellious against parents' control. Yet in fact, when things came to practice, tight parental control brought side effects and adverse insights to students who eventually suffered from inferiority too as revealed in the data.

Filial piety (xiao) is rooted in Confucian philosophy in Chinese culture (Bond, 1991; Ho, 1994; Sung, 1995; Yeh & Bedford, 2004) and is based on the Confucian idea that one's life is given solely by one's parents. Therefore, children should show gratitude towards their parents in innumerable ways (Wong, Leung & McBride-Chang, 2010). Filial piety is essential to the Chinese family system as it is the guiding rules for children's behaviour towards their parents (Chao, 1994; Ho, 1996; Yeh & Bedford, 2004). In order to show filial piety in a family, children should love and respect their parents, preserve family honour and show financial, emotional and physical care for parents, especially when their parents are getting old (Ho, 1994). In accordance with Confucian ideas, Chinese parents place great emphasis on filial piety, education and proper behaviour (Shek & Chan, 1999). According to Confucian thought, filial piety is the prime guiding principle of socialization (Ho, 1981). The traditional saying that "Among hundreds of behaviours, filial piety is the most important one" (bai xing xiao wei xian) indicates that filial piety is the highest value among all in the eyes of Chinese people. In particular, showing respect to parents and obedience are highly valued and emphasized. The traditional expectation for obedience is clearly revealed in the saying that, "If a father wants the son to die, the son cannot disobey" (fu yao zi si, zi bu neng bu si). Filial piety is also a clear concept of parenting surfaced in this study. Almost all

students revealed that to a certain extent, honouring parental wishes and respecting parents' and family reputation are important no matter they see it as positive or negative to their own personal growth and dignity or not. As long as their parents are logical and rational, they have no problems obeying their parents. In fact, students showed that even if their parents are illogical and irrational, they would still obey first but retaliate later. It is a passive-aggressive response. Some may turn it to an incentive to strive for academic excellencies or in Adler's term, strive for superiority in different aspects of their lives, but some may turn the anger inward and internalize it into self-blame and guilt and eventually lead to a sense of inferiority as stated by students.

The notion of family bonding in the traditional Chinese parenting style strongly coincides with Cho's (1994) introduced the concept of 'guan', an indigenous Chinese ethnotheory of child-rearing, which she borrowed the term "guan" from Tobin, Wu, and Davidson (1989). She translated 'guan' into English as 'training'. Tobin et. al. (1989) explained that 'guan' literally means 'to govern', which embraces the concept of to control and to restrict, however, they further explained that the term has a positive connotation of 'to care for' and 'to love'. Chao (1994) also suggested Chinese parents believe that firm control and governance of the child are synonymous with deep concern and care, and high involvement of the mother. Findings in this study reviewed that "guan" is a key concept of parenting in the local Chinese sample. Students all indicated that it is a traditional way of parenting and they are expecting it. The problem is not on "guan" itself but on how it is delivered. All students agreed that values, righteousness should be taught, and wrongdoing should be punished. Only when punishment is severe and involve corporal punishment that it might have a negative effect and might cause a sense of inferiority.

Findings in this study are also consistent with the findings of Shek (2005), that Chinese adolescents' perception on the role of fathers and mothers has been changed from the traditional "strict father, kind mother" to a contemporary Chinese culture of "strict mother and kind father". Among the 17 students, only one of them had their fathers as key parenting figure, as student 14 said, "In reality, father teaches me as mother seldom control 'guan' me"; another two students were taking care of by both parents - student number five said: "half and half"; student number 10 said, "They take turns to act as the bad guy because they do not want to be the bad guy all the time"; and student 16 was taken care of by her aunt (her mother's elder sister) when she was young. For the rest of the research subjects, their mothers played an important and

influential role in parenting when those students were young. Most of these mothers are strict. Controlling, scolding and use corporal punishment are common practices of these mothers, according to the students. For example, student three mentioned that, “When I was young, she would scold me more, if I did not listen attentively, she would hit me.” Student six said, “I think something that is not good...when I was young, mother would hit me with a bamboo stick or hanger, she would drag me into a room, locked me inside and hit me, back then my father would not stop her.....”

Chinese culture requires people to obey and participate in social rituals, follow established customs and accept social norms. Individuals are evaluated to a certain extent by how well they handle and execute familial and gender roles and mandated social rules. Whenever the prescribed familial and societal standards cannot be met, the person may feel inferior, incapable or inadequate. The assessment of self, both internally and externally by making comparison becomes a central aspect of Chinese psychological functioning. In this sense, the sense of inferiority and even an inferiority complex might be culturally induced (Sun & Bitter, 2012). This needs further investigation and exploration. This led to another finding in this study, the definition of inferiority complex.

## Research question 2: What is inferiority complex?

Inferiority complex, in this study, is being defined as comparison with others by the students. To the interviewees, constant comparisons both internally (within oneself) and externally (with others) within the person would lead to a sense of inferiority, however, to them comparison with others is inferiority complex itself and it would lead to further comparison.

The notion of comparison found in this study is in line with Adler’s idea of inferiority, in which he believed that inferiority feelings are the normal and common functional motivators for human beings, which catalyse an individual’s goal striving and achievement and is defined in terms of self-comparison (Adler, 1924,1964a, 2011a, 2011b; Dreikurs, 1954; Ansbacher & Anbacher, 1956; Strano & Petrocelli, 2005). Only when this self-comparison turns externally and hinder a person’s self-improvement

then, it becomes an inferiority complex. Findings in this study echoed Adler's idea. However, whether comparison prompts one into his inferiority complex or it is the end product "inferiority complex" itself, that worth further exploration.

Students explicitly stated that an inferiority complex is an outcome of making comparison with others. Therefore, the external comparison is both the mean and the end. It is one of the causes of inferiority feelings and eventually leads to inferiority complex and it then becomes the inferiority complex itself. Due to this ambiguity, I am unable to draw a firm conclusion, even external comparison with others is a distinct factor that was found to be related to an inferiority complex. Further investigation to clarify this mean-end controversy is needed.

This is the first time an inferiority complex is being defined as the external comparison. Whether it is a misunderstanding of language still needs further investigation. There is no direct translation of the term "inferiority complex" in Chinese, so during the interview, "inferiority complex" was used, as all interviewees are capable of understanding English. They had no prior knowledge in Adler's theory. Their responses to what an inferiority complex is were based on their instinct instead of prior knowledge nor implied by the meaning of the Chinese word being used.

## Critical component missing in Adler's concept of inferiority complex - Chinese Culture

Students' responses to parenting style and definition of inferiority complex reflected that the Confucius tradition emphasized on close and united interpersonal relationships are influential in Chinese culture. Students have been compared with others by their parents for a long time and the impacts of comparison are deep-rooted in their hearts. Based on the findings, students are the sufferers of inferiority feelings due to comparison under the traditional Chinese parenting style. Therefore, they instinctually claimed external comparison being the inferiority complex. It also coincides with my initial observation that students are feeling inferior in community

college. While they all mentioned that working hard or studying hard were their choices of removing the sense of inferiority. It implied that educational achievement is utmost important to them. Studying in a community college is a steppingstone for them to attain higher academic achievement which can help them get rid of the sense of inferiority. The emphasis on educational achievement and comparison with peers and relatives reflects the strong influence of traditional Chinese parenting style based on Confucian culture (Cho, 1994; Shek, 2005; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). The Chinese culture is the critical component that is missing in Adler's concept of inferiority complex when applying to the understanding of community college students' sense of inferiority. Also, the finding revealed another gap of knowledge to be filled in future studies, that is, what exactly is inferiority complex in Chinese culture while comparison is deep-rooted in people's lives?

## Summary

On the whole, based on students' responses, all of them are carrying a sense of inferiority as all of them relayed inter-and intrapersonal comparison as part of their life to some extent, and the family bonding in traditional Chinese parenting style they mentioned played a key contributing role in perpetuating their sense of inferiority. However, I will not say all students are having inferiority complex even though all have compared with others, none has said a word on they have an inferiority complex, they only agreed that they have a sense of inferiority. And the definition of inferiority in the local context need further investigation.

# Limitations of this study

## Measurement of inferiority complex

One of the limitations of this study is its measurements. Following the majority of similar studies on the inferiority complex (e.g. Callahan & Kidd, 1986; Hauck, 1997; Peterson, Stahlberg & Dauheimer, 2000), this study also used a self-esteem measurement to measure participants' inferiority complex. However, right at the beginning of their study on parenting style and self-esteem, Zakeria and Karimpour (2011) clearly pointed out that, "The concept of self-esteem is one that is difficult to clearly define (p. 758)." Moreover, the questions listed in the Rosenberg (1965, 1979) Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) are asking for a general evaluation of self. Therefore, it may not have fully conceptualized the entire spectrum of self-esteem. Hooks (2003) proposed that there should be more dimensions to be included in the conceptualization of self-esteem, such as one's confidence in the ability to think and cope with the basic challenges in life; confidence in one's right to be successful and happy; feelings of being worthy, deserving, entitled to assert one's needs and wants, achieving values, and enjoying the benefits of efforts. In addition, Adler defined inferiority complex as "the persistence of the consequences of the feeling of inferiority and the retention of that feeling, finds its explanation in the relatively greater deficiency of social feeling (Adler, 2011a, p. 115)." In this sense, the general definition of self-esteem may cover some aspects of Adler's inferiority complex but may not be completely identical to the concept of inferiority complex. Equating inferiority complex to low self-esteem may exclude some of the major facets of the construct, thus compromising the multidimensional nature of this variable. Dixon and Strano (1989) found that scholars often equated inferiority feelings with low self-esteem and low self-concept, which they thought was inconsistent with Adler's own comparative definition. They emphasized the necessity of developing a valid and reliable measure of inferiority, be independent from measures of self-concept and self-esteem, and focused more on people's subjective perception and goals. Dixon and Donald (1989) proposed that in designing a measure for inferiority feeling, the following elements should be considered:

"(1) The comparison of self with family members, (2) this comparison relative to the perception to physical characteristics, social characteristics,

and personal goals and standards, and (3) the comparison of self to family members as a subjective evaluation rather than an objective reality. (p.320)”

Strano and Petrocelli (2005) also stated that the literature failed to explore fully on Adler’s definition on inferiority complex and continuously equate inferiority feelings to low self-esteem (Callahan & Kidd, 1986; Hauck, 1997; Peterson, Stahlberg & Dauenheimer, 2000). It is clear that in understanding the concept of inferiority complex, one should go beyond equating self-esteem with inferiority feelings. A clear definition of inferiority complex is necessary before a clear measurement can be developed. Without a specific measurement of inferiority complex, using a general measurement of self-esteem such as the RSES to reflect one’s inferiority complex may pose risks to the validity of research findings.

## Scope of Parenting Style

Another limitation of this study is the scope of parenting style. Buri’s (1991) Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) was constructed according to Baumrind’s (1971) permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parental authority prototypes. However, Buri’s Parental Authority Questionnaire has only identified three major parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. It does not include the later added neglectful or disengaged style (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Therefore, even though Baumrind’s parenting typology fit well into Adler’s individual psychology theory and practice in education, parenting and counselling, the Buri’s PAQ does not fully measure all Baumrind’s parenting styles. There is still an important category related to inferiority complex, the neglectful parenting style, which has not been included in the PAQ. On the other hand, Darling and Steinberg (1993) conceptualized parenting styles differently. They see family constellation of attitudes toward children, communications among family members and emotional climate created by expressive behaviours of parents as important elements of parenting style. According to Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch and Darling (1992), “Acceptance-involvement”, “psychological autonomy-granting” and “behavioural strictness supervision” are the three styles of parenting that they believe to have impact on children’s development. This has provided another perspective in understanding of parenting style apart from Baumrind’s typology. Therefore, using only Baumrind’s perspective on parenting style may limit the scope of such a variable. The measures used to operationalize and assist

in defining these variables may not stand for some of the perspectives from different theorists. Therefore, studying the relations between parenting style and inferiority complex in Adler's theory, both variables need a clear definition in relation to the theory itself.

## Limitations in qualitative study

There are several limitations to this qualitative study. First of all, students' self-report was used solely and objective validation of these interviews through other data sources, such as parents' or siblings' perceptions of parenting styles, as well as their views on students' sense of inferiority were not secured. In addition, students' perceptions of parenting style and their sense of inferiority may be subject to common method variance, as both perceived parenting styles and sense of inferiority data were collected from the same source, that is, the students, increasing the risk of biased conclusions. Literature suggests that parents and their siblings often interpret parental behaviours differently (Guion et al. 2009; Kendler et al. 1997; Tilton-Weaver et al. 2010). Achenbach (2011) suggested using multiple sources of information (including parent- and adolescent-reports) as a diverse standard method in family studies and developmental science. However, because parent- and adolescent-reports correlations modestly (Achenbach et al. 1987; De Los Reyes & Kazdin 2005; Kraemer et al. 2003), Kraemer et al. (2003) suggested that researchers ought to collect information through multiple sources and should choose an informant based on conceptualizing the contexts and perspectives that influence expression of the characteristic of interest, and then identifying informants who represent those contexts and perspectives accurately. De Los Reyes et al. (2015) proposed that researchers should actively use informant discrepancy scores (i.e. scores conveying the degree of mismatching views between informants) to gain rich information that may not be otherwise accessible through other forms of measurements (Dimler et al., 2017). Future studies should include as many potential / eligible participants as possible.

Moreover, the participants were relatively homogenous in profile and the sample size of the participants was small. All participants were from the same community college, while in fact, there are more than one community college in Hong Kong. The extent to which the responses of these students are representative of the experiences and understandings of parenting style and sense of inferiority from different economic

statuses, family backgrounds, parents' education level, number of siblings, peers' academic achievement and so on remains to be explored.

Moreover, perceived parenting style and sense of inferiority may vary with developmental stages. Longitudinal studies, from an earlier stage (e.g. middle or high school), may have overlooked the developmental trajectory of these constructs. Longitudinal research would enable us to better understand the developmental changes in the relationships between perceived parenting styles and inferiority feelings. In addition, the present study did not explore gender differences due to its small sample size. Future studies could explore how the genders of students influence their perceptions of their parents and their views on inferior feelings.

Finally, the researcher-researched relationship needs to be considered. While the researcher was the teacher in the community college and the participants were students in the same college in this study, an inherent power of imbalance between the parties exist. As Råheim et al (2016) indicated, to handle this researcher-researched issue, the researcher's continuous reflexive awareness is paramount. Even though all possible ethical measures had been implemented to deal with this power imbalance and I was reflexive and critically aware the impact of my presence on the research context, perspective chosen, methodological choices made, still an ideal situation should be having another independent research assistant to collect data and interact with students to further diminish the researcher-researched biases. Besides, examination of the self through critical reflection and supervision are also necessary of ethical research in the future in using qualitative methods (Hewitt, 2007). Al-Natour's (2011) suggested several ways to handle researcher-researched impact in qualitative research. Among those he proposed, I believe be wary of own expectations and biases and identify the complicated positionality of the researcher and map out the limitations of the project are utmost important.

# Recommendations for Future Studies

Future research should also consider the inclusion of different aspects of parenting styles that the literature has covered. As family compositions and mode of interactions of 21<sup>st</sup> century are significantly different from those of the 70s, apart from Baumrind's (1971) permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parental authority prototypes, will there be other relevant constructions of parenting style that can better explain the impacts of parenting on children's development of self-perception and feelings toward oneself?

Similarly, self-reported global self-esteem may just reflect part of the person's perception, which is consciously manipulated. Deep down, more subjective feelings related to inferiority still needs to be unveiled. Open-ended qualitative methods may be a useful methodology in gathering information about inferiority complex, especially when subjective perceptions are necessary in understanding the concept of inferiority.

As Orgler (1963) pointed out that in summarizing the sources of inferiority complex, a case study approach is important to find out the underlying causes of inferiority complex. She wrote:

“We have seen three distinct groups, which have their form of life from different sources, but resemble each other in the stream of life, it is important to find out in the case-history of a difficult child, of a nervous person, of a criminal, of a drunkard, what has hindered him from developing his interest in others and why he has not overcome his sense of inferiority, but has developed an Inferiority Complex (p.79).”

Observations during data collection further illustrated the necessity of using the qualitative research approach in the exploration of parenting styles and inferiority complex. For instance, a student refused to finish the entire biographic data section and said, “I lived with my grandparents when I was young, and I have no ideas on how my parents treated me during my childhood.” Another student only finished the father's PAQ scale and said, “I grew up from a single-parent family and then my father remarried, and I lived with my step-mother. I have no recollection on how my biological mother treated me at all when I was young.” These two students' responses raised a few questions. First, what are the definitions of a “father” and a “mother”? Do the terms “father” and “mother” refer to just the biological ones only? Can they

be applied to cohabited or stepparents? When following Dixon & Strano's (1989) idea that the family of origin was a key element in individual's forming perception of themselves and eventually enduring comparative feeling of inferiority, then for the two students above, to whom should they refer as their family of origins? How about the influence of caregivers other than parents in early childhood? These variables are not considered in Adler's conception of inferiority complex and is worthy for further exploration. Finally, the definition of inferiority complex, when students said it is comparison to others, then what is the mean and what is the end? Further study is required to further explore the meaning of inferiority complex in the local Chinese context, what is the relationship between the deep-rooted culture generated comparison and inferiority complex, is it the mean or the end of inferiority complex? What is its contribution in constructing the concept of inferiority complex?

## Conclusion

Despite the limitations of the present study, results show some evidence for a strong relationship between parenting practices and students' inferiority feelings. Moreover, this study unveils some problems in the conceptualization and operationalization of inferiority complex and parenting styles. A more in-depth investigation on perceived parenting style and inferiority complex in the local context is necessary. With the constraints of existing measures, an exploratory qualitative research method may overcome these limitations and provide a better understanding on Adler's theory in inferiority complex.

Based on the analysis of community college students' perception of parenting style and inferiority complex provides insight into understanding Adler's concept of inferiority complex in the local Chinese context. While taking Chinese culture into consideration, family bonding as well as intra- and inter-personal comparison are the main sources of a sense of inferiority instead of pampering or neglectful parenting style as proclaimed by Adler. It also generates a new prospect in deciphering inferiority complex itself, which is, the local Hong Kong Chinese community college students make comparison with others as an inferiority complex. This is different from Adler's original perspective. From Adler's perspective, an inferiority complex is "the presentation of the person to himself and others that he is not strong enough to solve a given problem in a socially useful way" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 256). An inferiority complex is a pervasive feeling that one's abilities and characteristics are

inferior to those of other people, which does not lead to any compensation and it becomes a deadlock for any further development according to Adler (2011a/1930). Therefore, comparison with others may lead to an inferiority complex but not inferiority complex itself while referring to Adler's conceptualization.

The extended case method provides a clear insight into understanding parenting style and inferiority complex in the local context. Parenting is no longer simply giving commands and responses by parents upon children but an interactive process that is related to the bonding with the family, something that is embedded in the family. When being asked what inferiority complex is, most will say it means making comparisons with others, but while being asked how this inferiority complex was formed, students again said it originated from judging themselves against others.

This study is important because it offers more than just a reformulation of Adler's concept of inferiority complex relevant to local Chinese. Instead, this study offers indigenous concepts that were formulated according to Chinese culture. The Chinese concepts were derived from a cultural framework based on Confucian traditions emphasizing the individual's role and responsibilities for maintaining harmonious relations with others. The evolution of the theme "Traditional Chinese Parenting" from this study further demonstrated the influence of cultural process and again showed the importance of developing indigenous parenting typology for Chinese cultures.

# Implications

As an educator and practicing counselling psychologist for more than 20 years, I have my own biases and different opinion about the field and what I believe to be essential conditions of becoming culturally competent and ethical. The findings of the study once again raised my awareness of my own biases. Hays (1996) clearly indicated that indigenous heritage is one of the main elements that counsellors and educators should be aware of in order to help them examine their own biases and areas of inexperience regarding minority cultures and use it to consider the salience of multiple cultural influences and identities with their clients.

## As a practitioner

Pedersen, Crethar, & Carlson (2008) suggested that professional counsellors should go beyond the comfort zone of an individualistic perspective on empathy and increase their competence in a relationship-centred context. They emphasized that counsellors should infuse their own clinical work with inclusive principles and multicultural sensitivity and learn the ways to help clients explore, discover, and leverage those internalized voices of the "culture teachers" that instruct clients of who we (and they) are, how to behave, and how to resolve their problems or find life balance. Since being empathetic is essential in daily practice for a counselling psychologist, Pedersen & Pope (2010) clearly pointed out that the definition of empathy focuses exclusively on the individuals in Western cultures, whereas in traditional non-Western cultures, empathy more typically involves an inclusive perspective focusing on the individual and significant others in the societal context. They proposed using "inclusive cultural empathy," which is based on a more relationship-centred perspective, as an alternative interpretation of the empathic process. Findings in this study echo their theory, not just empathy, but also the understanding of parenting and family, professional counsellor or psychologist should also take a more indigenous and culturally-inclusive manner in handling it. Nwachuku & Ivey (1991) already proposed using culture-specific counselling as a supplement to cross-cultural and multicultural approaches. In the culture-specific approach, they suggested to start with the culture and its peoples and search for natural helping styles, to generate new theory and technologies of helping. In contrast with the conventional approach of adapting existing counselling theory to "fit" a new culture. As suggested by Sun and Bitter

(2012), there is still a lack of empirical studies and theoretical discussion on the application of Adlerian therapy in Chinese culture. Learning the values and customs of this culture will be beneficial for those who would like to apply Adlerian theories to Chinese recipients.

Being a counselling psychologist, the current findings remind me to gain more in-depth understanding of my clients' family backgrounds, especially pertaining to issues related to family bonding in the traditional Chinese parenting. While telling that my clients authoritative or democratic parenting is the best, I should also bear in mind the traditional Chinese culture and values. Instead of unilaterally guiding clients to think about the benefit of authoritative parenting, I should also help them look into the Chinese culture parenting and strike a balance in between, in order to resolve either their own problems or other problems within their families.

## As an educator

Within an effective education system, teachers should hold multicultural values on how to best educate students from diverse communities and education must be responsive to the specific cultural needs of students. This knowledge in different cultures and subcultures would help the educator develop effective lesson plans and teaching strategies, motivate and engage students, communicate with students and parents (Leavitt, Wisdom & Leavitt, 2017).

In the context of education and learning, Leach & Little (1999) suggested that the notion of culture should be treated as an interactive and dynamic social process between learners and educators. They believed that there are gaps between the cultures of learners and educators. When learning occurs, the gaps are bridged to a certain extent. The educator can build from the learner's culture in a way makes learning effective. It might be helpful for teachers or educators to be mindful that Baumrind (1996)'s typology of authoritarian parenting style is not universally associated with negative outcomes when delivering services to local students. Traditional Chinese values which emphasize on family bonding should be considered. Simply stating that the usage of authoritative parenting style is the best would be too unidirectional and may not be appropriate for Chinese families, as it does not include the concept of family bonding, relationship of family members in its conceptualization. Besides, constant comparison among peers might have a deep-rooted effect on

students' sense of inferiority. In fact, community college(s) in Hong Kong may be the place that attracted those who feel inferior under the traditional Chinese parenting styles, who were trying their best to achieve academic excellence by entering local or overseas university, in order to fulfil their duties of good daughters or good sons to bring back honour and respect for their families. More studies need to be done on whether inferiority feelings are universal among community college students and how the traditional Chinese parenting styles and the family bonding affect them. Then proper parenting education can be designed based on Adler's Individual Psychology and proper counselling can be provided to students to remove their inferiority complex and change their inferiority feelings into an incentive for them to excel for achieving superiority and bringing honour to their families.

As a lecturer working at a community college, the findings in this study have alarmed me to trim down the element of comparison among students or maybe even among teachers. Although comparison seems to be natural among Hong Kong-Chinese, the current study has clearly indicated that this custom may lead to a sense of inferiority in an education setting and even worse, generating the inferiority complex as a result. Therefore, reducing comparison in the school setting is important. Nowadays, students at community college are no longer being assessed by comparing with others in the same course but against their own performance with reference to the pre-determined learning outcomes. The assessments for learning are measured against standard referencing, which is good for reducing comparison. However, this is only the first step towards achieving self-worth, through which students are still comparing with their old selves. To further reduce the possibility of self-comparison which may also lead to a sense of inferiority, students should be encouraged to look forward instead of backward. Teachers should help the students focus on self-enhancement and improvement instead of focusing on past mistakes. Learning from a mistake is important but learning new skills to overcome one's own shortcomings is more important than indulging in past mistakes. The same concept should be applied to teachers too, as we are role models to our students. Our own positive forward-looking attitude and self-enhancing behaviour is essential for students' development.

Finally, I would like to end my thesis with a direct citation from Adler (1935) –

“Life (and all psychic expressions as part of life) moves ever toward  
“overcoming,” toward perfection, toward superiority, toward success. You

cannot train or condition a living being for defeat. But what an individual think or feels as success (i.e., as a goal acceptable to him), that is his own matter (p.2).”

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## Appendixes

Appendix A

# NTU Doctoral School

06 April 2017

Dear Frank

### **Re: Professional Doctorate Ethical Approval Confirmation**

Thank you for submitting an ethical approval application.

I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application has been approved.

Student's Name LEUNG, King Wai NTU ID N0445902

Supervisor's Name Dr Adam Barnard/Dr Anne O'Grady

Course EdD - Education

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me either by telephone on +44 (0) 115 848 8154 or email [ntuprofdadmin@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:ntuprofdadmin@ntu.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely



Dawn James  
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Biographic Information

Student ID number: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: M / F

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Programme of study: Associate of \_\_\_\_\_

Year: 1 / 2

Are you born in Hong Kong?: Yes / No

If Not, are you Hong Kong citizen: Yes / No

Did You grow up in a single-parent family (for your first 6 years since birth): Yes / No

Are you the only child of the family?: Yes / No

If NO, then how many siblings (兄弟姊妹) do you have?: \_\_\_\_\_

And you are the : 1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup> / 7<sup>th</sup> child

Informed Consent Form (Questionnaire)  
HKU SPACE Community College

Cultural influence on perceptions of parenting styles of Alfred Adler's theory in Inferiority complex  
among students in HKUSPACE Community College

Dear students,

I am Frank Leung, a Principal lecturer at the HKU SPACE Community College. I am conducting a research project to investigate the parenting styles of our students in relation to Adler's concept of Inferiority Complex. I would like to invite your participation in my study. Your invaluable participation would help the understanding and application of Adler's counselling theory in the local context.

If you opt to participate, you will complete a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire will take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

Please complete the reply slip below to indicate whether you have decided to participate in this research or not. All information obtained will be used for research purposes only. Participant will not be identified by name in any report of the completed study. Participation is entirely voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without any negative consequences. If you want to withdraw from the study after finishing the questionnaire, please let me know on or before December 31, 2015 and all your data will be removed. If you have any questions concerning the research, please feel free to contact me (frank.leung@hkuspace.hku.hk). If you want to know more about the rights as a research participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, the University of Hong Kong (2241-5267).

If you understand the contents described above and agree to participate in this research, please sign below. Your help is very much appreciated!

Yours sincerely,  
Frank K.W. Leung  
Principal Lecturer  
HKU SPACE Community College

-----  
Reply Slip

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

I \*\* will / will not participate in the research. (\*\* Please delete as if inappropriate.)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Informed Consent Form (Interview)

HKU SPACE Community College

1<sup>st</sup> November 2017

Perceptions of parenting styles in development of Inferiority complex among Community College Students

Dear Students,

I am Frank Leung, Head of the Division of Social Sciences at the HKUSPACE Community College. I am conducting a research project to explore the parenting styles of your parents and its influence on you. I would like to invite you to participate in my study.

You are being asked to take part in an interview lasting for approximately 30 to 60 minutes. I will ask you a series of questions about your perception of your parents' parenting style. Your responses will be audio recorded. During the interview, please let me know if you would rather not answer any of the questions directed to you. Please complete the reply slip below to indicate whether you are happy to participate in this research or not. All information obtained will be used for research purposes only. Participant will not be identified by name in any report of the completed study.

To protect your anonymity all names, places and organizations will be changed. Only the researcher will have access to the recordings. The recorded data will be encrypted and stored in the researcher's computer with password protection. The retention of data collected will be in line with Data Protection Act-1998, after the completion of the study. After the retention period, the data will be disposed safely.

Participation is entirely voluntary. This means that you can choose to stop at any time without negative consequences. If you wish to withdraw you should let me know and ask for your data to be withdrawn from the study by 15<sup>th</sup>

December 2017. If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me. If you want to know more about the rights as a research participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee, the University of Hong Kong (2241-5267).

If you understand the contents described above and agree to participate in this research, please sign below. Your help is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Leung

HKUSPACE Community College

13/F, 28 Wang Hoi Road, Kowloon Bay, Kowloon.

Tel:3762-2255

Email: frank.leung@hkuspace.hku.hk

---

*Reply Slip*

*Name of Participant:*

*I \*\* will / will not participate in the research.*

*I \*\* agree/do not agree to the audio-recording] during the procedure.*

*I \*\* wish / do not wish to be identified. (if the procedure involves personal interview)*

*(\*\* Please delete as appropriate.)*

*Signature:*

*Date:*

**ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE**

Instructions

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

6. I certainly feel useless at times.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

10. I take a positive attitude towards myself.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

### Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) Pertaining to Fathers

Instruction: For each of the following statements, give your rating on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree) that best describes how that statement applies to you and your father. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your father during your years of growing up at home (mainly the first 6 years of your life). There are no right or wrong answers, so do not spend too much time on any particular item. We are interested in knowing your overall impression regarding each statement. Please make sure that you have not omitted any items.

___	1. While I was growing up, my father felt that in a well-run home the children should lead their own way of living in the family as often as the parents do.
___	2. Even if his children didn't agree with him, my father felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what he thought was right.
___	3. Whenever my father told me to do something as I was growing up, he expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.
___	4. As I was growing up, once a family policy had been established, my father would discuss the reasoning behind such policy with his children in the family.
___	5. My father has always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.
___	6. My father has always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.
___	7. As I was growing up, my father did not allow me to question any decision he had made.
___	8. As I was growing up, my father directed the activities and decisions of the children in family through reasoning and discipline.
___	9. My father has always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.
___	10. As I was growing up, my father did not feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behaviors simply because someone in authority had established them.
___	11. As I was growing up, I knew exactly what my father expected of me in my family, but I also felt that I might freely discuss those expectations with my father when I felt that they were unreasonable.
___	12. My father felt that wise parents should teach their children early as to who is the boss in the family.
___	13. As I was growing up, my father seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behaviors.
___	14. Most of the time as I was growing up my father did what the children in

	the family wanted when making family decisions.
___	15. As the children in my family were growing up, my father consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.
___	16. As I was growing up, my father would get very upset if I tried to disagree with him.
___	17. My father felt that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children activities, decisions, and desires as they grow up.
___	18. As I was growing up, my father let me know what behaviors he expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, he punished me.
___	19. As I was growing up, my father allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of directions from him.
___	20. As I was growing up, my father took the children's opinion into consideration when making family decisions, but he would not decide for something simply because the children wanted it.
___	21. My father did not view himself as responsible for directing and guiding my behaviors as I was growing up.
___	22. My father had clear standards of behaviors for the children at our home as I was growing up, but he was willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family.
___	23. My father gave me directions for my behaviors and activities as I was growing up and he expected me to follow his directions, but he was always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss those directions with me.
___	24. As I was growing up my father allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and he generally allowed me to make decisions for myself what I was going to do.
___	25. My father always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they did not do what they were supposed to as they were growing up.
___	26. As I was growing up, my father often told me exactly what he wanted me to do and how he expected me to do it.
___	27. As I was growing up, my father gave me clear directions for my behaviors and activities, but he showed understanding when I disagreed with him.
___	28. As I was growing up, my father did not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family.
___	29. As I was growing up, I knew what my father expected of me in the family and he insisted that I should conform to those expectations simply out of respect for his authority.
___	30. As I was growing up, if my father made a decision in the family that hurt me, he was willing to discuss that decision with me and admit it if he had made a mistake.

Please continue onto the next page.

### Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) Pertaining to Mothers

Instruction: For each of the following statements, give your rating on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree) that best describes how that statement applies to you and your mother. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your mother during your years of growing up at home (mainly the first 6 years of your life). There are no right or wrong answers, so do not spend too much time on any particular item. We are interested in knowing your overall impression regarding each statement. Please make sure that you have not omitted any items.

___	1. While I was growing up, my mother felt that in a well-run home the children should lead their own way of living in the family as often as the parents do.
___	2. Even if his children didn't agree with her, my mother felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what she thought was right.
___	3. Whenever my mother told me to do something as I was growing up, she expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.
___	4. As I was growing up, once a family policy had been established, my mother would discuss the reasoning behind such policy with her children in the family.
___	5. My mother has always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.
___	6. My mother has always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.
___	7. As I was growing up, my mother did not allow me to question any decision she had made.
___	8. As I was growing up, my mother directed the activities and decisions of the children in family through reasoning and discipline.
___	9. My mother has always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.
___	10. As I was growing up, my mother did not feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behaviors simply because someone in authority had established them.
___	11. As I was growing up, I knew exactly what my mother expected of me in my family, but I also felt that I might freely discuss those expectations with my mother when I felt that they were unreasonable.
___	12. My mother felt that wise parents should teach their children early as to who is the boss in the family.
___	13. As I was growing up, my mother seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behaviors.
___	14. Most of the time as I was growing up my mother did what the children in

	the family wanted when making family decisions.
___	15. As the children in my family were growing up, my mother consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.
___	16. As I was growing up, my mother would get very upset if I tried to disagree with her.
___	17. My mother felt that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children activities, decisions, and desires as they grow up.
___	18. As I was growing up, my mother let me know what behaviors she expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, she punished me.
___	19. As I was growing up, my mother allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of directions from her.
___	20. As I was growing up, my mother took the children's opinion into consideration when making family decisions, but she would not decide for something simply because the children wanted it.
___	21. My mother did not view herself as responsible for directing and guiding my behaviors as I was growing up.
___	22. My mother had clear standards of behaviors for the children at our home as I was growing up, but she was willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family.
___	23. My mother gave me directions for my behaviors and activities as I was growing up and she expected me to follow her directions, but she was always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss those directions with me.
___	24. As I was growing up my mother allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and she generally allowed me to make decisions for myself what I was going to do.
___	25. My mother always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they did not do what they were supposed to as they were growing up.
___	26. As I was growing up, my mother often told me exactly what she wanted me to do and how she expected me to do it.
___	27. As I was growing up, my mother gave me clear directions for my behaviors and activities, but she showed understanding when I disagreed with her.
___	28. As I was growing up, my mother did not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family.
___	29. As I was growing up, I knew what my mother expected of me in the family and she insisted that I should conform to those expectations simply out of respect for her authority.
___	30. As I was growing up, if my mother made a decision in the family that hurt me, she was willing to discuss that decision with me and admit it if she had made a mistake.

End

I started each interview by saying, "Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview voluntarily and let me take a sound recording of our interview. Let me once again assure you that all information will be kept confidential and will be used anonymously for this research only as stated in the consent form. I am interested in the meaning of parenting to young people like you. I want to first ask you for a very general question on what you think parenting is? Do you have any questions before I start interviewing you?"

Student #1	29 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017, 12:00pm
Student #2	30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017, 10:30am
Student #3	30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017, 2:00pm
Student #4	30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017, 3:00pm
Student #5	30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2017, 4:00pm
Student #6	1 <sup>st</sup> December, 2017, 11:00am
Student #7	1 <sup>st</sup> December, 2017, 2:00pm
Student #8	2 <sup>nd</sup> December, 2017, 5:30pm
Student #9	5 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017, 4:00pm
Student #10	6 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017, 10:00am
Student #11	6 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017, 1:00pm
Student #12	6 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017, 2:30pm
Student #13	7 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017, 1:30pm
Student #14	7 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017, 1:30pm
Student #15	7 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017, 4:30pm
Student #16	7 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017, 5:30pm
Student #17	8 <sup>th</sup> December, 2017, 3:30pm

Date: 30th November, 2017, 2:00pm

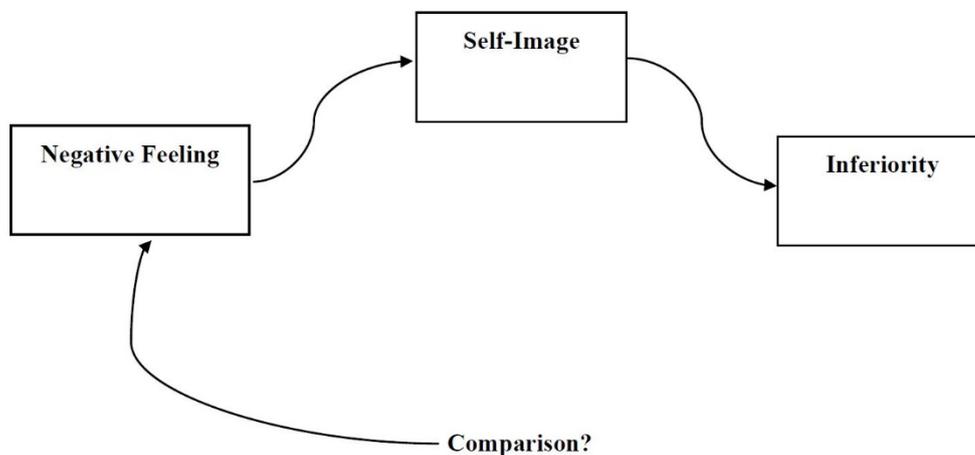
Concept: Feel ashamed about personal appearance and body shape

Raw data

*I was chubby and had been suffering from obesity when I was small. Being despised and boycotted were my ways of life and what my life had to be. People just kept bullying and teasing me. All of these things happened in primary school and I started to have a sense of inferiority.*

MEMO

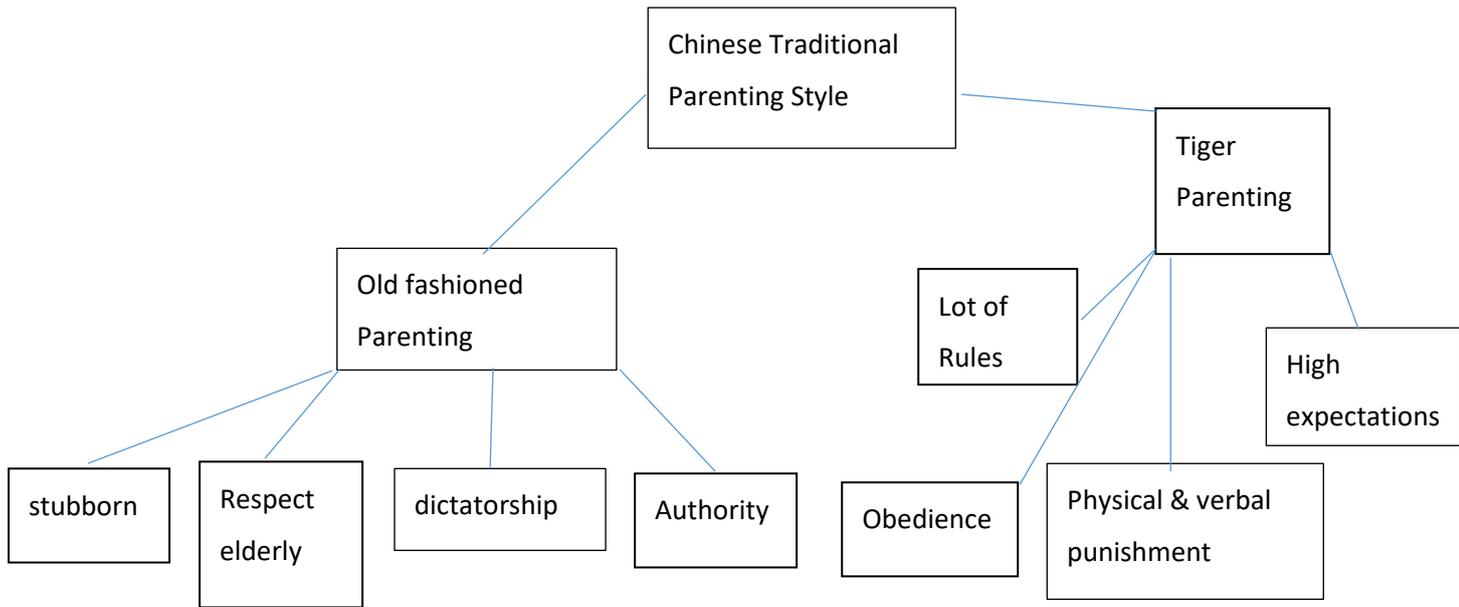
In this interview, the reason for having a sense of inferiority was the response by a straightforward question presented by the researcher. From the conversation, the interviewee described her body figure as not only chubby but also obese. She bluntly pointed out the fact of having inferiority feelings was due to unfavourable body shape and her experiences of being bullied. Although it happened in her primary school life, the interviewee is now studying in the tertiary sector but she could still recall the past in great details. It showed that personal appearance and unfavourable body shape played a crucial role to shaping her sense of inferiority.



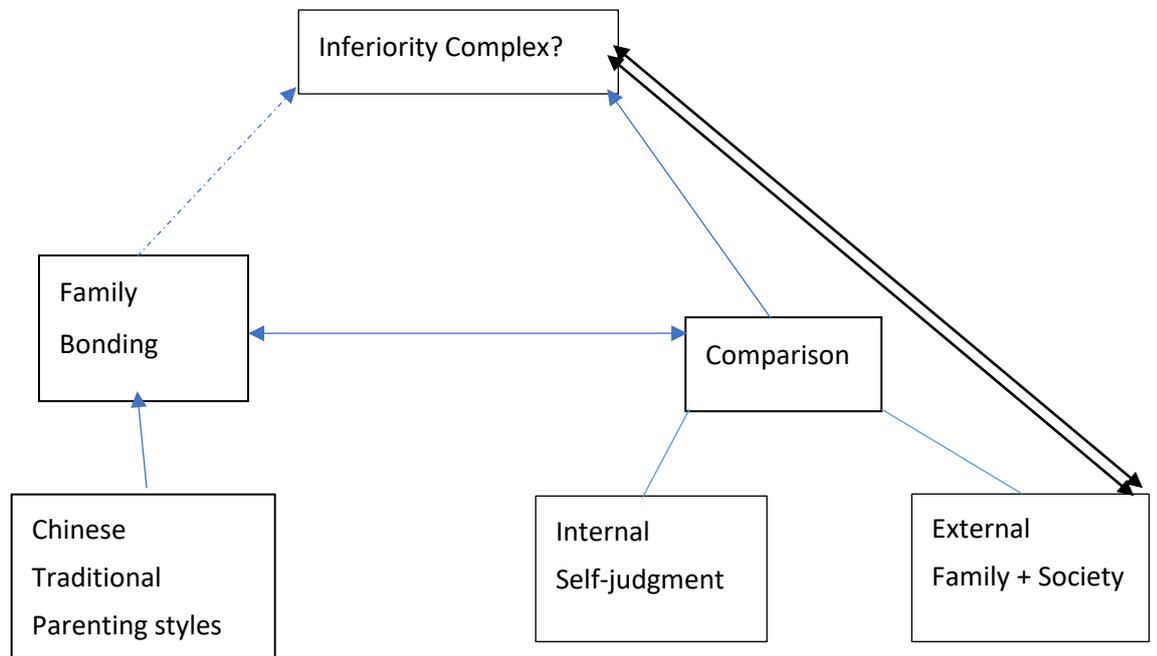
Example on initial coding. Coded data is highlighted, and the corresponding codes are listed in the next column.

Student	Data Item	Initial Code
#8	<p>those parents, parents might want to do good to their children, well I feel I also have a little pride, because when I was young, whenever I got good grades, my parents would like to go to parents-teacher association meetings, but when my academic performance was not that good, they did not go. So I guess I understand. Well two folds, one is unwillingness to be looked down by relatives, that is can talk big about their daughter can get good academic performance is another.</p>	<p>Traditional, caring Face, good attitude Honour, esteem, demand, expectation, action, relationships with others Shame, doubt, rejection Expectation Comparison, pride Performance, achievement</p>
#13	<p>um...my father belongs to authoritative, would force me to learn something, he said, when I was 4, I started to learn Chinese words at home, then used six months to learn all primary six level Chinese words, really learned all primary six Chinese. Um..I am forced to obey to some Eastern, Chinese style of brutality.</p>	<p>Power Obey Pride Tradition Honour Respect, filial piety</p>

Mind-map showing an example of searching for themes



Thematic map to visualize the relationship between themes



The following scripts showed the coding of physical and verbal punishment

Interviewee 1: When I was young, normally (my father) would scold me, if (I did) not follow (his) order, (he) would spank me.

Interviewee 2: ...when I was young, I would not question (my parents) why (they) spanked me...if not turning in homework was normal (among all kids), why (did they) have to spank me and punish me?

Interviewee 6: I want to supplement...when I was young, (my) mother would bring me to my room, lock the door and hit me with a bamboo stick or coat check, and my father would not stop her.

Interviewee 9: It was a bit harsh when I was young, it was real, if you talk about value(s), I cannot remember (them) now, but if you talk about school performance, I remember (that) clearly, because it was the type of corporal punishment, for example, when I was young, if (my vocabulary in) writings were not written tidily, she would rub off the whole page, even just one word was wrong, rubbed off the whole page, then followed by having me stand still at the corner, use bamboo stick to hit me, something like that...

Interviewee 13: well, family member, usually scold me or spank me, but maybe I am from a single-parent family, (my) family member did not have much time to take care of me due to work, but (the) usual parenting style is like that, scold and spank.

Interviewee 14: parents (taught) me....er....sometimes use foul language, sometimes spank(ed) me as their education level is not high.....they think scold(ing) or spank(ing) is good, but I am their son, I do not think it is good or appropriate as I was (given birth) by them.

Interviewee 17: Um...my father belongs to (the) authoritative (style), (he) would force me to learn something. When I was 4, I started to learn Chinese words at home, then used six months to learn all primary six level Chinese words, really learned all primary six Chinese. Um...I was forced to obey some Eastern, Chinese style of brutality.

The following scripts showing the coding: Face-saving

Interviewee 5: Well, I feel that the Chinese always care about face. Even if you were a child, since ancient time till now, there is a rule that you should not do

things to harm the reputation of your family, instead, you should bring honor to your family and ancestors, that is what face is about.

Interviewee 6: Well I really want to enter university, because my mother wants that and she really cares about face, she already tells all our relatives that I am studying in HKU but in fact I am not, I have told her that I am not studying in HKU and I am not a university student, but she keeps boasting around that I am studying in university and forced me to say something like “I do not want to waste your money, therefore, I must enter university after studying for the associate degree”.

Interviewee 8: Those parents might want to do good to their children, well I feel I also have a little pride, because when I was young, whenever I got good grades, my parents would like to go to parent-teacher association meetings, but when my academic performance was not that good, they did not go. So I could guess with understanding. Well, two folds, one is they did not want to be looked down by relatives, meaning they could brag about their daughter who could get good academic performance as well.

Interviewee 12: er huh um...also, want to have face, that is they will compare myself with others.

Interviewee 13: ...may be feel ashamed or losing face, the little child sometimes prefers to be similar with others instead of standing out, to avoid being laughed at or make himself look strange.

Interviewee 14. Yes, that's true, their son cannot get admitted into university, they feel losing face. Since my aunt's daughter managed to enter university, they always tell people that my aunt was harsh and always brought my cousin to private tutorial classes. My father imitated my aunt and always said, “Look at your cousin, she always studies hard and entered university earlier, look at you, how about you? You are only studying for an associate degree! Tell me why!

Interviewee 15: he never mentioned that he has a daughter, my elder step-sister, not until she entered university, you know, Beijing University is a prestigious university, then he started to tell everyone that he has a daughter. I feel like he cares about face very much.

Table one: Biographical data of participants

Student	Gender	Age	Program of study	Year of study	Born in an intact or single family	Birth order	Siblings	Place of birth	Average family monthly income in HK\$
1	M	20	Social Sciences	1	Intact family	1st born	1 younger brother	Hong Kong	40,000
2	F	19	Social Sciences	1	Intact family	1st born	2 younger sisters	Hong Kong	16,000
3	M	19	Social Sciences	1	Single family	2nd	1 elder sister	Hong Kong	13,000
4	F	18	Social Sciences	1	Intact family	1st born	1 younger sister	Hong Kong	13,000
5	F	19	Business	2	Intact family	1st born	1 younger sister	Hong Kong	15,000
6	F	19	Social Sciences	1	Intact family	Only child		Hong Kong	6,000
7	M	20	Business	2	Intact family	1st born	1 younger sister	Hong Kong	50,000
8	F	19	Business	2	Single family	Only child		Hong Kong	20,000
9	F	20	Business	2	Intact family	1st born	1 younger brother	Hong Kong	15,000
10	M	18	Sciences	1	Intact family	Only Child		Hong Kong	23,000
11	F	18	Sciences	1	Intact family Parents divorced when she was 6-month old	2nd	1 elder brother	Hong Kong	6,000
12	F	21	Social Sciences	1	Intact family	3rd	2 elder sisters, 1 younger brother, 1 younger sister	Hong Kong	25,000
13	M	19	Chinese Studies	2	Intact family, parents divorced after he turned one year old	1st born	1 younger step-brother	Hong Kong	25,000
14	M	20	Chinese Studies	2	Intact family	Only child		Hong Kong	30,000

15	F	19	Media, Culture and Creative Studies (under the Division of Social Sciences)	2	Intact family Parents divorced when she was two years old	Only child	1 elder step-sister	Wuhan, China	16,000
16	F	17	Social Sciences	1	Intact family	Only child		Hong Kong	20,000
17	F	20	Social Sciences	1	Intact family	Only child		Sichuan, China, immigrated to Hong Kong while entering secondary school	18,000

