



CSDA Seminar: Research by Social Work Students

Introduction

This seminar showcases research by Social Work Honours students and covers two major themes - i) Child Development and Implications for Social Work, and ii) Social Work with Youth-At-Risk. The presentations in Panel 1 will discuss some of the issues relating to child development, as well as examine how relationships between children and family could affect a child's development. Implications for Social Work will be discussed. The presentations in Panel 2 will examine issues relating to how programmes and services impact youth-at-risk and effects on successful outcomes.

Panel 1: Child Development and Implications for Social Work

- 1) Against Odds: Relational Strategies of Low-Income Mothers That Promote Child Academic Achievement by **Avelene Tan Li Xin**
- 2) Challenging Stereotypes: Investigating Perspectives of Children from Low-Income Families Who Excel Academically by **Chelsea Cheang Jia Yun**
- 3) A Qualitative Study on Raising School-Aged Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Coping and Family Adaptions. by **Evelyn Tee Yu Ting**
- 4) Parental Beliefs in Physical Punishment by **Teoh Zheng Yong, Timothy**

Panel 2: Social Work with Youth-At-Risk

- 1) Hey Belle: A Female-Specific Youth Program and Its Effect on Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy and Future Orientation by **Claudia Tan Shilin**
- 2) A Phenomenological Study: The Effects of Institutionalisation on Individual Wellbeing and Family Relationships of Beyond Parental Control Juveniles by **Loh Jia En Marianne**
- 3) Adverse Childhood Experiences and Aggression in Juvenile Offenders In Singapore: Exploring The Moderating Influence Of Prosocial Peers And Social Support by **Lim Rui Wen**
- 4) More Than Conquerors: Resilience of Repeat Youth Offenders Towards Successful Adaptations by **Lim Julia**

4th Aug 2017 | Friday | 2:00 - 5:30pm

Lecture Theatre 14, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, NUS

Registration: <https://goo.gl/Cc2QZV>

(First-come, first-served. Deadline: 23rd Jul 2017)

For enquiries, please email csda@nus.edu.sg

Centre for Social Development Asia (CSDA) is a joint partnership between Center for Social Development at George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University (St Louis) and the Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore. The primary mission of CSDA is to conduct applied research, pioneer social development programmes, and build knowledge to inform policies and programmes in social development, with a focus on Asia.

Abstracts of Presentations

Panel 1: Child Development and Implications for Social Work

1) Against Odds: Relational Strategies of Low-Income Mothers That Promote Child Academic Achievement by **Avelene Tan Li Xin**

For low-income families, breaking out of intergenerational poverty is an uphill struggle. Although parental involvement in children's education and parenting skill are considered the most effective solutions, many parents from low-income families struggle to get involved with their children. A qualitative enquiry with a sample of mothers from the low-income bracket with high-achieving children (i.e. positive deviants) found that mothers created a relationship context that nurtured their child's agentic capabilities. To understand the relational context in real-life situations, mothers were asked to record an audio-diary of daily interactions with their children and describe moments of intimacy, stress and conflict. The study elucidates the relational context coupled with parenting strategies that foster child agency and prime them for academic success despite scarcity in financial resources.

2) Challenging Stereotypes: Investigating Perspectives of Children from Low-Income Families Who Excel Academically by **Chelsea Cheang Jia Yun**

Research evidence showed that children from low-income families face higher risks of performing poorly in school. Despite these prevailing views, some children from low-income families defy the literature and excel academically. The current research aims to shed light into the insights of Positive Deviant (PD) children who did well in school against the odds through their own lenses. Guided by the Social Relational Theory (SRT), the perspective of ten children between 10 to 13 years old were investigated through an audio diary method complemented by semi-structured interviews. The study was useful in unpacking daily-thought processes of the children especially in the aspect of their relationship with their mothers, their experiences in school and the strategies that were useful for them to excel.

3) A Qualitative Study on Raising School-Aged Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Coping and Family Adaptions. by **Evelyn Tee Yu Ting**

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the most common clinical development diagnosis among children in Singapore. ASD is also a lifelong developmental disability, and it can have profound impact on families having children with ASD. This thesis explored the experiences of how families cope to achieve family adaptation while raising school aged children with ASD, as well as the various factors that influence their coping behaviours. Qualitative interviews with 8 primary caregivers were conducted. The findings pointed to social work implications such as: the importance of adopting strengths-based perspective and of helping families build sustainable social support systems, as well as the need to develop their sense of coherence while working with these families.

4) Parental Beliefs in Physical Punishment by **Teoh Zheng Yong, Timothy**

The aim of this study was to explore beliefs of parents regarding the use of physical punishment in the raising of their children. This study measured the extent to which parents believe that physical punishment is necessary, effective and harmless, and the effect of such beliefs on its use. To this end a descriptive quantitative study utilizing a self-reported questionnaire with a sample of 154 parents was employed. The findings reveal that such beliefs do exist and that the belief of necessity predicted the use of physical punishment. Such findings can be used to inform public education and awareness raising campaigns to further the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and what it stands for in Singapore.

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Abstracts of Presentations

Panel 2: Social Work with Youth-At-Risk

5) Hey Belle: A Female-Specific Youth Program and Its Effect on Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy and Future Orientation by Claudia Tan Shilin

Despite current research stating that female and male youths having varying needs, local literature still remains sparse and limited on the effects of gender-specific youth programs. Thus, this study aims to provide insights on the effects of a local female-specific youth program – Hey BELLE, on their participants' self-esteem, self-efficacy and future orientation. In-depth interviews and surveys were conducted with fourteen participants, and data was thematically analyzed. The findings pointed to high level of self-esteem, self-efficacy and future orientation among the participants. Hence, this study also seeks to identify the key elements of the program that attributed to the high levels.

6) A Phenomenological Study: The Effects of Institutionalisation on Individual Wellbeing and Family Relationships of Beyond Parental Control Juveniles by Loh Jia En Marianne

Literature suggest that isolating 'uncontrollable' juveniles, who often committed no crime, is counter-productive in correcting deviant behaviour. In Singapore, such cases are intervened by the BPC Order. This study aims to provide insights into institutionalisation experiences of BPC juveniles. Qualitative interviews with seven participants were conducted, and analysed. Negative emotions persisted throughout the BPC process leading to institutionalisation. During institutionalisation, BPC juveniles managed challenges by harvesting coping strategies ranging from self to environment. While institutionalisation caused further strain in parent-child relationships, disputing literature is the finding that it had positive effects on their psychoemotional wellbeing. Findings bears practice and policy implications for the BPC population.

7) Adverse Childhood Experiences and Aggression in Juvenile Offenders In Singapore: Exploring The Moderating Influence Of Prosocial Peers And Social Support by Lim Rui Wen

This study's objective was to explore the relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and aggression in juvenile offenders in the Singapore context. The study also examined the moderating role of social support and prosocial peers on this relationship. Using participants from a nationwide study of juvenile offenders between the ages of 12 and 21 years old, information was gathered on their levels of ACE, aggression, social support, and prosocial peers. Results of the study indicated that (i) ACE was found to be a significant predictor of aggressive behaviour in juvenile offenders, (ii) Social support and prosocial peers were not significant predictors of lower levels of aggression, and (iii) there was no significant moderation effect of social support and prosocial peers on the relationship between ACE and aggression in juvenile offenders. The implications for prevention, intervention efforts, and future research directions are discussed.

8) More Than Conquerors: Resilience of Repeat Youth Offenders Towards Successful Adaptations by Lim Julia

A wealth of literature has sought to examine the causes of offending, and identify the predictors of recidivism among youths. However, few studies have explored the lived experiences of repeat youth offenders which influenced their re-entry to the system, their challenges faced, and most importantly, the protective mechanisms that supported their journey towards successful adaptations. Using the resilience framework and desistance theory, qualitative interviews were conducted with nine youths who have successfully desisted from crimes and become productive and well-functioning adults. These insights offer key perspectives and practice implications on supporting these unique individuals' journey towards sustained positive change.