

RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS11/H02/15 <hr/> (please insert ref. above)
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**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL  
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR  
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

**FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)**

**Completion Report**  
(for completed projects only)

**Submission Deadlines:** 1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within **six** months of the approved project completion date.  
2. Completion report: within **12** months of the approved project completion date.

**Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)**

**1. Project Title**

A Study of Ethnic Economy of Disadvantaged Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong: Exploring Experiences in the Process of Social Integration

**2. Investigator(s) And Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved**

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Dr. KWOK Kim / Assistant Professor	Felizberta Lo Padilla Tong School of Social Sciences, Caritas Institute of Higher Education
Co-Investigator(s)	Nil	
Others		

**3. Project Duration**

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date	01/01/2016		
Project Completion Date	31/12/2017	30/06/2018	Institution Approval granted on 17/10/2017
Duration (in month)	24	30	Institution Approval granted on 17/10/2017
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	31/12/2018	30/06/2019	

## **Part B: The Final Report**

### **5. Project Objectives**

#### 5.1 Objectives as per original application

1. To identify key features of business of disadvantaged ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong, including their sectoral distribution, location, previous work, entry motives, financial experiences, use of resources and support networks.
2. To explore and analyze experiences of disadvantaged ethnic entrepreneurs in Hong Kong, with emphasis on their use of ethnocultural resources in overcoming constraints in the opportunity structure, and their experiences of empowerment and disempowerment in the process.
3. To identify areas for improvement for both policy makers and practitioners working with ethnic minority groups in the context of a more inclusive multicultural society.

#### 5.2 Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: 17 October 2017 (Institute approval)

Reasons for the change: To extend 6 months of research to additionally investigate the consumer perceptions of immigrant goods in Hong Kong

1. To identify key features of business of disadvantaged ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong, including their sectoral distribution, location, previous work, entry motives, financial experiences, use of resources and support networks.
2. To explore and analyze experiences of disadvantaged ethnic entrepreneurs in Hong Kong, with emphasis on their use of ethnocultural resources in overcoming constraints in the opportunity structure, and their experiences of empowerment and disempowerment in the process.
3. To explore the consumption practice and perceptions of local Chinese towards immigrant goods.
4. To identify areas for improvement for both policy makers and practitioners working with ethnic minority groups in the context of a more inclusive multicultural society.

### 5.3 Realisation of the objectives

*(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)*

1. To identify key features of business of disadvantaged ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong.

Baseline study was conducted with 248 completed questionnaires. Key features including their sectoral distribution, business location, previous work, entry motives, financial experiences and use of language are identified.

2. To explore and analyze experiences of disadvantaged ethnic entrepreneurs in Hong Kong.

This objective has been achieved through conducting 48 field visits in 15 different areas in Hong Kong, key informant interviews with 21 persons, face-to-face in-depth interviews (60 cases with 67 persons) and 2 focus group interviews. Their use of ethnocultural resources and experience of empowerment and disempowerment have been explored. Illustration of these findings can be found in Part 6.

3. To explore the consumption practice and perceptions of local Chinese towards immigrant goods.

This objective has been achieved. 25 more face-to-face interviews with local Chinese consumers of immigrant goods were conducted. Some general patterns of consumption practice and perceptions are identified such as no frequent consumption and consumption constrained to the neighborhood. Illustration of these findings can be found in Part 6.

4. To identify areas for improvement for both policy makers and practitioners working with ethnic minority groups in the context of a more inclusive multicultural society.

This objective has been achieved. Through achieving objectives 1, 2 and 3, areas for improvement for policy makers and practitioners have also been identified. Illustration of these findings can be found in Part 6.

## 5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

<b>Objectives</b> <i>(as per 5.1/5.2 above)</i>	<b>Addressed</b> <i>(please tick)</i>	<b>Percentage Achieved</b> <i>(please estimate)</i>
1. To identify key features of business of disadvantaged ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong, including their sectoral distribution, location, previous work, entry motives, financial experiences, use of resources and support networks.	✓	100%
2. To explore and analyze experiences of disadvantaged ethnic entrepreneurs in Hong Kong, with emphasis on their use of ethnocultural resources in overcoming constraints in the opportunity structure, and their experiences of empowerment and disempowerment in the process.	✓	100%
3. To explore the consumption practice and perceptions of local Chinese towards immigrant goods.	✓	100%
4. To identify areas for improvement for both policy makers and practitioners working with ethnic minority groups in the context of a more inclusive multicultural society.	✓	100%

## 6. Research Outcome

### 6.1 Major findings and research outcome

*(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)*

It is identified in the survey that the most popular areas for immigrant business are Yau Tsim Mong, Yuen Long and Kowloon City districts. Over half of the small immigrant businesses are concentrated in wholesale and retail trade, and half of them are in the form of sole proprietorship. Over 60% of these immigrant entrepreneurs possess no previous business experience, and the average duration of their current business is 9.6 years. The main reasons to start business are to earn more and having difficulties to find a suitable job. Comparatively, Nepalese and Pakistani entrepreneurs use their native language more often and serve more co-ethnics in business. Main sources of finance are own's savings and family members.

Half-way breaking out businesses (break out from the co-ethnic market to serve other immigrant minorities) are identified among South Asian immigrant entrepreneurs who earn from selling goods to Indonesian and Filipino foreign domestic workers. While this emerging phenomenon can be partly explained by the restrictive policy of the Hong Kong migration regime, cultural and social marginality of both South Asian and Southeast Asian immigrants have brought them closer in economic interaction.

Immigrant entrepreneurs practice boundary work in which they identify themselves with the mainstream work ethos, the "free economy" as well as the middle-class lifestyle. This is a strive for social recognition and a way to make them feel being closer to the mainstream society. Boundary making brings to light that disadvantaged immigrants encounter considerable obstacles in the process of social integration.

Female immigrant entrepreneurs draw upon moral meanings such as religious norms and group collective traditions in explaining their business activities. These can be understood as a strategy counterbalancing the structural inequalities and dominant discourses around sexualized, classed and racialized immigrant women. Moral meanings help to make an immigrant woman more valued.

Cosmopolitan consumption is paradoxical in Hong Kong. Many people are excluded from high-end cosmopolitan consumption; consumption of inexpensive immigrant goods allows economically deprived local Chinese to be part of the cosmopolitan Hong Kong. While it helps to resolve some cultural misunderstandings and promote openness, it simultaneously builds and reinforces hierarchical boundaries based on ethnicity and class.

In responding to the needs and structural issues faced by South Asian migrants, including small entrepreneurs, social welfare institutions and practitioners demonstrate insufficient awareness in critically addressing existing policies and power relations based on race. Moreover, there is a tendency of ethnocentric bias among practitioners.

Based on the above major findings, future improvements should be made at two levels. First, policy level: to include ethnic minority self-employment and entrepreneurship as part of the social integration policy and concretize it in different programs such as business set-up and coaching programs and community building programs. Second, community education: to tackle deep-rooted racism and discrimination through awareness raising and educational programs in schools and communities.

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action  
(*Maximum half a page*)

**Further research development** - This study has identified that social integration of immigrant entrepreneurs depends not only on their economic success but also social acceptance and sense of belonging. Racial discrimination and ethnocultural bias represent major obstacles in business development as well as in long-term social integration. Racism and ways to tackle racial discrimination in Hong Kong are potential themes for further research projects. Moreover, this study has identified that local grassroots movement has excluded disadvantaged immigrant entrepreneurs to be part of the community economy. The contribution of immigrant businesses to and their interaction with the local community economy can be further explored.

**Further dissemination of research findings** - Research findings can be further disseminated in teaching in our Institute. Research findings can be further disseminated to other teaching institutions including universities and secondary schools in the form of sharing. Moreover, they can be further shared with the public in the form of newspaper or online commentary.

**7. Layman's Summary**

*(Describe in layman's language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)*

This study has explored an under-researched dimension of social integration of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, namely their economic activities. It has identified the key features of disadvantaged immigrant business in Hong Kong. It has unfolded entrepreneurs' experiences of empowerment and disempowerment – how individual and group resources are drawn upon in constructing symbolic meanings for overcoming structural constraints and achieving business goals. It has also revealed how cosmopolitan consumption helps to promote cultural openness while reinforcing ethnic and class boundaries simultaneously. These findings have enriched our knowledge and understandings of ethnic minorities' life patterns and needs in Hong Kong. They shed light on how policy makers and practitioners can build up a more inclusive multicultural society by formulating measures and appropriate services for ethnic minority entrepreneurs in order to facilitate their social integration in the long run. This study contributes to the conceptual discussions on immigrant business in general, and in particular, the relationship between immigrant business and social integration from a non-material perspective – how the sense of respect, belonging and emotional release are equally significant as material rewards in the long-term social integration process.

**Part C: Research Output****8. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project**

(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) (denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*)	Title and Journal / Book (with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the institutional repository (Yes or No)
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published)	Under Review	Under Preparation (optional)						
2016				Kwok, Kim	Overseas Indonesian Chinese in the ethnic economy in Hong Kong. <i>Southeast Asian Studies</i> (東南亞研究), 3, 61-70.		Yes (Attachment 1)	Yes	No
2017				Lee, Kim Ming, Law, Kam-Yee. & Kwok, Kim	1997 Handover and the Change of Integration Spirit among Chinese and South Asian Hongkongers. In Law Kam-Yee (Ed.), <i>Hong Kong Spirit in Flux: 20 Years after the Handover</i> (pp.167-192). Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press.		Yes (Attachment 2)	No	No
2017				Kwok, Kim. & Law, Kam-Yee	South Asian Small Business under the 'Lion Rock' in Hong Kong. In Cheng Yu-shek (Ed.), <i>Hong Kong Nativism and Nativist Consciousness</i> (pp. 282-293). Hong Kong: Contemporary China Research Project, City University of Hong Kong Press.		Yes (Attachment 3)	No	No
2018				Kwok, Kim, Lee, Kim Ming & Law, Kam-Yee	Multicultural Social Work Practice and South Asian Migrants in Hong Kong. <i>China Journal of Social Work</i> , 11(1): 56-72.		Yes (Attachment 4)	Yes	No
	2019			Kwok Kim	"I am not getting your money": Boundary Making and Identities in Immigrant Economies in Hong Kong. <i>Social Transformations in Chinese Societies</i> .			Yes	
		Yes		Kwok Kim	Silent Contributor or Salient Entrepreneur? Moral Economy of Asian Migrant Women in Small Business in Hong Kong. <i>Asian and Pacific Migration Journal</i> .			Yes	
			Yes	Kwok Kim	Managing Marginality: Half-Way Breaking Out of Immigrant Small Businesses. <i>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</i> .				
			Yes	Kwok Kim	Searching for Difference: Consumption of Immigrant Goods in Cosmopolitan Hong Kong. <i>Journal of Intercultural Studies</i> .				
			Yes	Kwok Kim	"Indian is in my blood": Habitus and Identity Building of Indian Small Entrepreneurs in Hong Kong. <i>Asian Ethnicity</i> .				



### 9. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered

*(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)*

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the institutional repository (Yes or No)
March/2016/Jakarta	香港族裔經濟中的印尼華人	Third International Conference on Chinese Indonesian Studies (ICCIS 2016), Indonesia.	2016	Yes (Attachment 5)	Yes	No
February/2017/Hong Kong	Women in the Ethnic Business in Hong Kong: Family Dependent or Independent Entrepreneur	International Conference on Imagining the Future: Community Innovation and Social Resilience in Asia, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.		Yes (Attachment 6)	Yes	No
August/2017/Athens	Exploring the Roles of Ethnic and Class Resources in South Asian Immigrant Economy in Hong Kong	The Migration Conference 2017 (TMC), Harokopio University, Athens, Greece.		Yes (Attachment 7)	Yes	No
October/2017/Vienna	Negotiation of Citizenship through Business: Accounts of South Asian Migrants in Neoliberal Hong Kong	International Seminar of Migrants as Entrepreneurs? Recent Debates in the Scholarship and Practice, University of Vienna, Austria.		Yes (Attachment 8)	Yes	No
June/2018/Lisbon	Searching for Difference: Consumption of Ethnic Minority Goods in Neoliberal Hong Kong	The Migration Conference 2018 (TMC), Lisbon, University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal.		Yes (Attachment 9)	Yes	No
November/2018/Hong Kong	"I am not getting your money": Counterframes and Negotiation of Multicultural Citizenship Through Business Activities	2018 Global City Roundtable, Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.		Yes (Attachment 10)	Yes	No

### 10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning

*(Please elaborate)*

Research knowledge and experience has been transferred in various forms of teaching and learning activities. These include 1) integrating immigrant economic activities as a theme topic in some teaching curricula of Social Sciences subjects (such as Contemporary Issues in Hong Kong and Contemporary Chinese Communities) of our Institute; 2) organizing student field visits to the ethnic minority concentrated areas such as Kowloon City and Kwai Chung; and 3) coaching students in their group projects and internship project in the ethnic minority areas.

### 11. Student(s) Trained

*(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)*

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
Nil			

## 12. Other Impact

*(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)*

Research results and experience have been shared in various ways with the public in order to enhance understanding of disadvantaged immigrant entrepreneurs:

1. Open talk on “South Asian Network of the South Asian HongKongers”, Kowloon City Book Fair, 4 December, 2016.
2. Sharing on “女性，族裔經濟中沉默的貢獻者？” (Women – Silent Contributors of Ethnic Economy?), The Association for the Advancement of Feminism, 7 June, 2017.
3. Sharing on “Ethnic Minority Economy in Hong Kong. Implications for Social Services”, Ethnic Minority Network of Hong Kong Council of Social Services, 4 July, 2017.
4. Talk on “South Asian Small Enterprises Under the Lion Rock”, Reading Hong Kong Series Public Seminar, Academy of Hong Kong Studies, 10 March, 2018.
5. Facilitated journalist report: “少數族裔女強人 尼泊爾女子開餐廳酒吧打理金舖” (Strong Ethnic Minority Woman, Nepalese Opening Restaurant and Running Jewelry Shop), by Willis Ho, HK01, 12 December, 2016.
6. Commentary in newspaper: “本土人 vs 異鄉人” (Locals VS Strangers), by Kwok Kim, Ming Pao Daily News, 12 September, 2017.
7. Commentary in newspaper: “跨族裔社企的社會意義和限制” (Social Meanings of Cross-Ethnic Social Enterprises and Limitations), by Kwok Kim & Lo Kai Chung, Apple Daily, 15 March, 2019. Available: <https://hk.news.appledaily.com/local/realtime/article/20190315/59369992>

## 13. Public Access Of Completion Report

*(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)*

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons
Nil	

**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL  
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR  
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

**FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)**

**Completion Report - Attachment**  
*(for completed projects only)*

**RGC Ref. No.:** UGC/FDS11/H02/15

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. KWOK Kim

**Project Title:** A Study of Ethnic Economy of Disadvantaged Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong: Exploring Experiences in the Process of Social Integration

**Statistics on Research Outputs**

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (Please specify)
No. of outputs arising directly from this research project [or conference]	3	6	2	Nil	4 public talks and 2 newspaper commentaries