RGC Reference	38600214
please insert ref. above	

The Research Grants Council of Hong Kong
Prestigious Fellowship Scheme under the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel
Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

Part A: Project and Award Holder

1.   Project Title

Poverty in Old Age: New Measurement

2.   Award Holder and Academic Department/Unit Involved

Name/Post	Unit/Department/Institution	Contact Information
Kee-Lee CHOU/Chair Professor of Social Policy	Department of Asian and Policy Studies / Education University of Hong Kong	Tel: 2948-7473 email: klchou@eduhk.hk

Part B: The Report

5.   Workplan

5.1   Workplan as per original application

1. In the first three months, I prepared to follow-up assessment of large scale survey of 2,400 older adults (Task 1), prepare the income- and expenditure-based measure of absolute poverty as well as asset-based poverty (task 3), prepare social exclusion measure (Task 5), and develop a material deprivation index (Task 7).

2. In the period between fourth and sixth month, I completed the follow-up survey of 2,400 older persons.

3. In the last six months, I identified the poor older adults based on income- and expenditure-based as well asset-based relative measure of poverty (Task 2), income- and expenditure-based as well asset-based absolute measure of poverty (Task 4), social exclusion (Task 6), and material deprivation index (Task 8). Moreover, we identified socio-economic characteristics, immigration status and household characteristics that are significantly associated with the poor in old age according to different measures of poverty mentioned above and any combination of them.

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5.3   Realisation of the workplan
(maximum 2 pages; please state how and to what extent the work as stated in the workplan has been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

The workplan has been achieved as I planned.

6.   **Dissemination plan**

6.3   Realisation of the dissemination plan
(maximum 2 pages; please state how and to what extent the output as stated in the dissemination plan has been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

Three papers have been published as follows:
1.   Lee, Siu-Yau and **Chou, K.L.** (2016). Trends in elderly poverty in Hong Kong. *Social Research Indicators, 129, 551-564.*

   This study assesses the changing rates of elderly poverty in Hong Kong over the last twenty years and, by means of decomposition analysis, identifies the factors shaping their evolution. The analysis is based on the 5% microdata samples from the 1991, 2001, and 2011 censuses covering Hong Kong residents aged 65 and above. The results show that the rate of poverty among older adults increased from 27.7% in 1991 to 38.7% in 2001, and then to 41.4% in 2011. The increase was largely caused by a significant decline in the number of earners in the households with older adults, which offset the poverty-reducing effects of education and the percentage decrease of immigrants.

2.   Chan, A.L.S., and **Chou, K.L.** (2016). Immigration, living arrangement, and poverty risk for older adults in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Social Welfare, 25, 247-258.*

In this paper, we investigated how living arrangement affects disparities in poverty between older adults (aged 65 and older) who migrated to Hong Kong from Mainland China and those who were born in Hong Kong. Our sample consisted of 29,987 immigrants and 9,398 natives, all of whom were ethnic Chinese and living in Hong Kong at the time of the census. We found higher elderly poverty rates among immigrants than natives, a disparity that persists even after adjusting for living arrangement, human capital characteristics (education and employment status), assimilation-related variables (duration of residence and language, that is, speaking Cantonese), household composition (number of earners, children, and older adults) and demographic characteristics (age and gender). We also found that living arrangement (living alone, living with spouse only, or living with others) moderated the impact of immigrant status on elderly poverty risk, and that the impact is mainly due to the number of earners (beside the respondents themselves) in a household. Lastly, education, employment status, duration of residence, language, the number of earners and children living in households, as well as age and gender, are significantly associated with the odds of living in poverty. The implications of our results for elderly poverty and anti-poverty measures are discussed

3. Chan, A.L.S., and **Chou, K.L.** (in press). Poverty in old age: Evidence from Hong Kong. Ageing and Society.

The main purpose of this study is to assess poverty rates among Hong Kong's older population in terms of both income and consumption-based measurements by using both relative and absolute concepts of poverty. It also examines the association of socioeconomic and household characteristics with elder poverty rates. A two-stage stratified sample design was adopted. A total of 4,306 older adults were personally interviewed in their homes, yielding a response rate of 66.2%. This study makes contributions to the study of poverty in Hong Kong by revealing how income and consumption poverty rates may differ among older adults. Older adults who were both income and consumption poor were more likely to be female, widowed, living alone, and to have received less than an elementary school education. They possessed very few assets and were most likely financially dependent on family support and welfare payments. To fully understand the economic wellbeing of older adults in Hong Kong, this study proposes the joint distribution of income and consumption poverty can better identify and explain the demographic characteristics of the poor older adults. Implications of the study are discussed based on the neo-liberalist approach Hong Kong government has taken in welfare provisions.

Another three papers have been submitted for consideration of publication:

1. **Chou, K.L.** (2016). Material deprivation in old age: Evidence from Hong Kong. *Ageing and Society.*

This paper reports on the validation of a material deprivation index based on an approach proposed by Townsend (1979) in Hong Kong. Through a survey of older Chinese people aged 65 and older, we found that a broad consensus regarding the necessities in their daily lives exists and the material deprivation index is a reliable and valid measure of poverty because the reliability and validity of the deprivation index is good and acceptable. Finally, we have shown that the overlap between the poor in terms of income and the deprived is moderate and the profiles of those who are core poor (both poor in terms of income and the deprived) are more similar to those who are

deprived than those who are poor in terms of income. A material deprivation index has been developed, which offers a supplementary measure of poverty other than income poor and provides future avenues for improved understandings of poverty in old age.

2. **Chou, K.L.** (2016). Poverty, Deprivation and Health in Hong Kong Chinese older adults. *Social Science and Medicine.*

This study examined the relationship between material deprivation and self-rated health, depressive symptoms, vision loss, hearing loss, and pain. We found that material deprivation is significantly associated with poor self-rated health, moderate levels of depressive symptoms, hearing loss, and pain even after adjusting for income poor, age, gender, education, marital status, living arrangements, chronic medical conditions, self-recognition of forgetfulness, social support, sleep quality, access to medical facilities, and neighbourhood collective efficacy. We also found interaction effects of deprivation and income poor on depressive symptoms and hearing loss. These results are consistent with previous findings indicating that both income poor and deprivation are associated with self-rated health and depressive symptoms, but it is the first time that an interaction has been found between these two poverty measures. Our results suggest that material deprivation may be a better measure of poverty than income poor, especially when evaluating the link between poverty and health. Reducing poverty in old age may protect the physical and mental well-being of older persons, in turn reducing health care service expenditure.

3. **Chou, K.L.** (2016). Poverty, Deprivation and Life Satisfaction. *The Gerontologist.*

This investigation examines the association of four measures of poverty (income-, expenditure-, and asset-based poverty, and material deprivation) with life satisfaction. Perceived life satisfaction was measured among older Chinese persons aged 65 and over. Beside life satisfaction and measures of poverty, the study assessed socio-demographic variables, financial strain, health indicators, and social and community resources. Those who faced expenditure-based poverty, material deprivation, and asset-poverty reported a significantly lower level of perceived life satisfaction, while the association between expenditure-based poverty and life satisfaction was found to be the strongest. Other factors that had an impact on life satisfaction included gender, education, and marital status; financial strain; social support; the number of close family members and friends; self-rated health; functional capacity; perceived memory; pain; sleep quality; neighborhood collective efficacy; and engagement in cultural and entertainment activities. From the theoretical perspective, the findings have strong implications for the understanding of the factors that shape the perception of quality of life in old age. Our results also have important policy implications for the official measurement of poverty, monitoring of the poverty situation, and the development of anti-poverty measures to help older persons living in poverty to improve the quality of their lives.

Findings of this project are also presented in the following four international conferences:

Chou, K.L. (November 24, 2016). Income poor, material deprivation and health of Hong Kong older persons. The fourth International Conference on Social Policy and Governance Innovation: Innovation in Social Service Deliver. Education University of Hong Kong. Hong Kong.
Chou, K.L. (November 28, 2015). *Asset poverty: A study of Hong Kong older adults.*
Plenary session, The Third International Conference on Social Policy and Governance

Innovation: Smart and Inclusive Growth in Urbanization. South China University of Technology: Guangzhou China.

Chou, K.L. (November, 2014). *Poverty in old age: Evidence from Hong Kong.* Presented at the 67th Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting, Washington, DC, USA.

Opinion editorial in local newspapers.

1. 長者匱乏指數與健康(2016 年 11 月 12 日明報)
2. 長者匱乏指數(2016 年 10 月 17 日明報)
3. 考慮資產後長者貧窮率有變 (2014 年 10 月 21 日信報)
4. 長者貧窮率被高估了—再論香港的第一條貧窮線 (2014 年 8 月 13 日明報)

7. **Other impact** *(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, knowledge transfer, etc.)*

Based on the findings of this project, I have successfully solicited one project entitled "Investment pattern and performance of Mandatory Provident Fund scheme members: A historical administrative record analysis" funded by the Public Policy Research Scheme operated by the Central Policy Unit.

Central Policy Unit. Public Policy Research Scheme. 2016-2017. Investment pattern and performance of Mandatory Provident Fund scheme members: A historical administrative record analysis. HK$ 336,390.