Topic: Social Participation and Life Satisfaction among Young-old and Old-old – What are the key components?

Abstract:
Better life satisfaction has long been found among aged adults who possess greater social capital, measured by higher levels of social participation and wider social networks. Theoretically, frequent social participation increases social connections, social support, and social cohesion, which in turn leads to better psychological well-being. Studies also show that there are differences among young-old and old-old, particularly in terms of their health, socio-economic status and demands. This study explores the serial mediating effects of structural and functional social support between social participation and life satisfaction. It is hypothesized that different mechanisms afforded by indirect effects of social network size and social support mediate the effects of social participation on life satisfaction among young-old and old-old. Recruited young-old (n = 412) and old-old research participants (n = 307) completed a set of questionnaires including measures of frequency of social activities, structural and functional social support, Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and socio-demographic variables. Based on bootstrapped mediation analyses with 10,000 repetitions, the association of social participation and life satisfaction is found to be serially and partially mediated by structural and functional social support among the young-old after controlling the socio-demographic variables. However, full mediation by these two variables is found among the old-old. The findings suggest that functional social support plays a more essential role to psychological well-being of aged adults, especially among the old-old.

Speaker’s brief biography:
Stephen Chan is currently a part-time PhD student in the Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, under the supervision of Dr Alma Au and Dr Simon Lai. He obtained his master degree in Applied Psychology from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and devoted himself to research projects pertaining to parenting and ageing. His research interests center on ageing, especially the relationships between social determinants and psychological well-being as well as the relationships between age-stereotype and cognitive performances.