

# **Navigating Adversity: Exploring the Experiences of Adults Growing up in Poverty with Positive Outcomes in Later Life**

**Cheung Wan Ying**

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

## **Abstract**

In Hong Kong, current research on the design of welfare systems is dominated by mixed methods or pure quantitative studies. Current Hong Kong welfare schemes, as informed by these studies, could be more effective by considering more qualitative studies which could ameliorate limitations of mixed or quantitative studies. This qualitative study utilizes in-depth interviews to explore the subjective experiences of adults who grew up in poverty but achieved positive outcomes in later life. The aim of this study is to identify the participants' perceived limitations during childhood and the key elements that helped them overcome these limitations, which could have contributed to their achievements, such as higher education and professional careers. This study was performed from a constructivist point of view using a relativist epistemology. The main findings of this study revealed that the participants perceived limitations towards education and career paths but developed strategies to overcome these limitations. The findings of this study provided new insights for the complex poverty problem in Hong Kong. In the context of social work practice, this study enhances our understanding of welfare schemes in Hong Kong, and offers empirical evidence for the development and improvement of these schemes.

**Keywords:** child poverty, cycle of poverty, resilience, social capital, welfare systems