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Navigating Identity and Well-being: Perspectives of HK BN(O) Immigrant Youths in the UK

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Abstract

The launch of the British National (Overseas) [BN(O)] Visa Programme in 2021 led to a new wave of migration from Hong Kong to the UK, including children and young people navigating unfamiliar sociocultural and educational environments. Identity development is a key task in adolescence, yet immigrant youths often face added challenges in making sense of their identities across two cultural worlds. While identity can serve as a protective factor for well-being (e.g., Smith & Silvia, 2011; Yoon et al., 2013), most existing research focuses narrowly on cultural identity (e.g., Baumert et al., 2024; Brown et al., 2013; Cadiz et al., 2023), often using quantitative methods that overlook identity's subjective, multifaceted, and evolving nature.

To date, there is a limited number of research that focuses on the perspective of HK BN(O) immigrant youths. This study is one of the first to explore the identities of HK BN(O) immigrant youths aged 10–15 in the UK. This study aimed to understand youths' identities; how they may have changed post-migration, their relationship to well-being, and how schools and families can support identity development. The study was grounded in symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934), social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and psychosocial development theory (Erikson, 1968).

Applying a mixed-methods design, data were collected from 25 youths across the UK through questionnaires and 8 individual interviews supported by narrative tools. Quantitative analysis of the questionnaires identified positive links between some identities (including both cultural and non-cultural identities) and well-being. Qualitative analysis of the interviews resulted in five themes: "navigation of cultural

identities," "adapting to life in the UK," "roles of relational and personal identities," "understanding identity and its impact on well-being," and "development of identity and support systems." These findings illustrate how identities are understood and renegotiated in daily life and through migration. Together, the findings highlight identity as a multidimensional, dynamic construct that plays a central role in shaping the well-being of immigrant youths in transition.

By amplifying youth voice, the study offers implications for educational psychologists, schools, and policy, promoting identity-sensitive practices that support immigrant youth well-being in a multicultural society.

Impact Statement

This study explored how HK BN(O) immigrant youths understand their identities, how these identities shift following migration, and how they relate to well-being. Findings revealed that, in addition to cultural identity, relational (e.g., child, friend), educational, and religious identities were also meaningful and linked to greater well-being. These identities were actively reconsidered and reshaped through the migration experience. The development of both culturally and non-culturally related identities was found to require ongoing support from schools and families, particularly as youths continue to navigate identity exploration. These findings have implications for educational psychologists, schools, policymakers, and future research, as outlined below.

For educational psychologists *(EPs):*

This study emphasises identity development as a crucial, yet often overlooked, area of support for immigrant youths. It highlights identity not only as a social construct shaped by sociocultural contexts but also as a deeply personal process tied to young people's reflections and well-being. Findings also indicated the protective role of strong cultural, relational, and educational identities in promoting well-being of immigrant youths. Given that immigrant youths are a potentially vulnerable group navigating complex identity changes, EPs can play a crucial role both individually and systemically to support the well-being of this group. Individually, playing a crucial role in eliciting youths' voice, EPs can use creative tools to help young people explore and articulate their identities. Systemically, they can raise awareness among educators and parents about identity development, support training on identity-sensitive practice, and help implement culturally responsive, trauma-informed

approaches that consider the emotional impact of migration and identity change. This research highlights identity development as a key area for EP intervention, essential to fostering inclusion, belonging, and well-being in increasingly diverse school communities.

For schools:

The study suggests the need for more sustained and personalised support for identity development within schools. This includes offering guided reflection, narrative-based activities, and structured discussions on identity, which could be embedded into Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. As findings also indicated that cultural identification may weaken over time, schools should adopt culturally sensitive practices that help preserve students' connection to their heritage, which has been shown to support well-being.

For policymakers:

The findings suggest that beyond reactive support for individuals facing difficulties, a more proactive and preventative approach is needed to support the settlement and well-being of HK BN(O) immigrants. Policy efforts should focus on both facilitating adaptation to life in the UK and preserving cultural heritage and identity, which were found to be protective factors for well-being, for example, community-led cultural programmes, and resources for schools to adopt identity-sensitive and culturally inclusive practices.

For research:

This is one of the first UK-based studies focused on HK BN(O) immigrant youths, a group underrepresented in migration literature. By using a mixed-methods design and narrative tools, the study offers a holistic view of both cultural and non-cultural identities. Future research could build on these findings by adopting longitudinal designs to explore how identities evolve over time, and comparative studies to examine whether similar patterns appear across other immigrant groups. Further exploration of bicultural identity, and intersecting domains such as SEN, gender, or sexual orientation, would also be valuable. Finally, this study demonstrates the utility of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to better understand youths' lived experiences and identity development.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter contextualises the thesis, starting by presenting the rationale of the study, which is then followed by the introduction of historical and cultural background of Hong Kong (HK) British National Overseas [BN(O)] immigrants. The chapter then provides an account of the professional relevance of the study for educational psychologists and schools. It ends by operationalising key terms in this paper, relevant to the context of the study.

1.2 Rationale

The development of identity, which is the sense of "who I am" (Motyl, 2010) is regarded as a primary psychosocial task of humans (Erikson, 1968). Adolescence is postulated as a critical period of developing identity as a unique individual, and as a participant in society (Erikson, 1968; Ragelienė, 2016). Youths experience accelerated cognitive and emotional development (Mastrotheodoros et al., 2019) and increased exposure to various societal contexts (Rueger et al., 2010). Further, adolescents need to reconcile their evolving sense of self with the social expectations and roles they encounter (Mastrotheodoros et al., 2019).

Situated between two cultural worlds, immigrant youths may face unique challenges with their identity negotiation (Rumbaut, 2005). Further to developing a coherent sense of self, they must navigate their identity amidst the various values, attitudes, customs and demands related to the different sociocultural contexts (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2012). Suárez-Orozco et al. (2018) outlined the three types of adaptive tasks faced by immigrant youths. These included developmental tasks universal to all youths, psychological adjustment that is related to factors like self-

esteem, life satisfaction and mental health, and acculturative tasks specifically for immigrant youths to adopt the sociocultural life of the host culture. Thus, for immigrant youths, identity development is not only a normative developmental milestone, but also a psychosocial process intricately tied to acculturation and psychological adjustment.

Numerous studies have investigated the cultural identities of immigrant youths (e.g., Baumert et al. 2024; Brown et al., 2013, etc.); however, they often overlooked the possibility that other aspects of youths' identities, such as their identities related to different relationships and roles in life, may also be renegotiated in response to shifts in the sociocultural context. Additionally, most of this previous research relied heavily on quantitative measures, with limited attention to the subjective and socially constructed nature of identity. As suggested by the theory of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934), identity is not only shaped by external social categories (e.g., social roles), but also by how individuals perceive and interpret their roles through everyday social interactions. Eliciting the views of immigrant youths towards their identity through qualitative methods can provide invaluable insights into how their identity is experienced in day-to-day life.

In addition, the development of identity has been linked to well-being in several identity theories from different perspectives, such as Erikson’s stages of psychosocial development (1968), Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory (1979), and Berry’s model of acculturation (1997). Facing the challenges of adapting into a new sociocultural environment, immigrant youths were found to be facing acculturative stress comprising feelings of uncertainty, anxiety and depression (Berry, 2006). They were more prone to adverse experience such as discrimination

and social isolation (e.g., Cadiz et al., 2023; Litam & Oh, 2022), posing threats to the well-being of this group of youths. Research has linked identity development to well-being of general youths and immigrant youths (e.g., Baumert et al., 2024; Cadiz et al., 2023), meaning that it is important to explore the identities of immigrant youths that can be influential to their well-being that already face challenges associated with migration.

Building on the theories and previous findings, this study adopted a mixed-method approach to explore how HK British National Overseas [BN(O)] immigrant youths in the United Kingdom (UK) understand and experience their identities, and how these are linked to well-being. It aimed to: (1) foreground the lived experiences and voices of this group of immigrant youths in identity research; (2) examine non-cultural identities, such as relational and educational roles, and their relationship with well-being; and (3) address the limited research on immigrant youths in the UK, particularly those from HK. By focusing on HK BN(O) immigrant youths, an emerging yet under-researched population, this study not only contributes to identity and well-being literature, but also offers timely insight to inform educational and policy practice in a shifting sociocultural landscape.

1.3 Historical and Cultural Background

The historical connection between HK, the UK and China, and the unique sociocultural and political context in HK made HK an “epicentre of identity conflicts” (Yang, 2023, p. 585). This also makes HK youths an intriguing population to study identity negotiation (e.g., Fung, 2004; Lai, 2011; Yang, 2024), especially when they have moved to a new country with different sociocultural context which can

potentially bring about changes in their identities, which may already be complicated given the unique history and status of HK.

The historical trajectory of HK has fostered a distinctive and complicated connection with both the UK and China. Located in the Peral River Delta in southern China and predominantly populated with ethnic Chinese, HK was conquered by the British army in 1841 and became a British colony until 1997. During the colonial period, HK had developed into a commercial headquarter for the traders between Britain and China, becoming known for her political stability and economic success (Carroll, 2007). This was in contrast to the other parts in China which were more deprived and experienced a lot of political instability such as the 1911 Revolution and the Chinese Civil War in 1949. These disparities, alongside the influx of Western culture and ideology such as human rights, democracy, and rule of law (Lai, 2011); the coexistence and interaction of Western culture with Chinese culture, and the bilingual context of English and Cantonese, all contributed to the growth of a sense of belonging and a local identity as “Hong Kongese” or “Hong Konger” (Fung, 2004). This identity often coexisted with, yet was differentiated from, a broader racial and cultural identity as “Chinese” (Vickers et al., 2005). At the same time, with the integration policies adopted by the British colonial government, HK people have adapted part of the British customs and values into their daily life. The sense of “Britishness” was incorporated into their Hong Konger identity, which has not been demolished through generations (Yu, 2023), continues to complicate the cultural and political self-understanding of people living in HK.

The handover of the sovereignty of HK to the Chinese government in 1997 led to the renegotiation of HK’s relationship with mainland China. The political and social influence of China on HK has been growing, and the Chinese authority has been

making an effort in advocating patriotism and promoting national identity within the territory. Scholars observed a slow increase in the proportion of people proclaiming dual identity as both “Hong Kongers” and “Chinese” (e.g., HK Chinese, China’s Hong Konger) since 1999 (Fung, 2004). However, since the mid-2000s, the emergence of localist identities and increasing hostility towards China was evident during social protests and electoral processes (Cheng, 2016), signifying the identity conflicts within HK (Yang, 2024). The 2010s marked the period of a range of social movements in opposition to government policies to promote integration of HK and China, such as the proposal of national education, the increase in Chinese immigrants and visitors (Yang et al., 2022), and localism was on the rise (notably after the 2019 Umbrella Movement) hoping for more autonomy and independence. During the rise of localism in the 2010s, the identity of being a “Hong Konger” increasingly came into conflict with the Chinese national identity (Lee & Chan, 2022).

After the 2019 Anti-Extradition Bill Movement in HK, the Beijing government imposed the National Security Law that largely restricted the degrees of freedom and autonomy in HK. This action led to a significant outflux of Hong Kongers migrating to other countries (Teo, 2021), with the UK being one of the main destination countries. In July 2020, the British government announced the implementation of a new immigrant route specifically for British Nationals (Overseas) [BN(O)] passport (issued by the British government to citizens of overseas territories during the colonial era) holders in HK, facilitating settlement and citizenship in the UK. Since then, the UK witnessed one of the largest influxes of Hong Kongers into the UK in recent history (Yue, 2023). Specifically, the Home Office (2024) reported 157,576 grants of out-of-country BN(O) visa applications from 2021 to the end of 2023. Many immigrants arrived with their families (Home Office, 2022; Yue, 2023), evidenced by at least

14,100 school applications for children from HK in 2021-2022 (DfE, 2022). It is worth noting that these figures may not fully represent the total influx, as some arrived through different visa routes, and not all local authorities reported school application data (Yue, 2023).

Efforts have been made by the British government and organisations like “HongKongers in Britain” to adopt methods like surveys and interviews to understand the background and life situations of the group of adult Hong Kongers coming to the UK (Chan et al., 2023; Rolfe & Benson, 2023). The reports from these studies revealed challenges met by HK immigrant families in their settlement and acculturation, like the difficulties in navigating the school system and the reduced social support (Chan et al., 2023; Rolfe & Benson, 2023). However, to date, there have been very few attempts to capture the perspectives of children and adolescents coming to the UK with their families, which can inform measures and policies that support the transition of the BN(O) immigrants into the UK.

Growing up in HK as a place with identity conflicts, coming to the UK with their families under the changing sociopolitical context of HK, and trying to integrate into the British social system, this group of immigrant youths make an intriguing cohort to study their identity negotiation. Understanding of the youths’ perspectives on their identity negotiation and their sense of well-being whilst settling into the UK is valuable.

The current study explored the perspectives of BN(O) immigrant youths from HK towards their different identities, and the link between their identities and indicators of psychosocial well-being. It explored various identities including cultural, relational and educational identities within the context of immigration-induced social

changes. The current study sought to develop an understanding towards this understudied group of population, regarding their identity development and their well-being, which could potentially also provide insights into their acculturation and settlement. It is hoped that the findings of this study will help inform ways to better support this group of newcomers in UK schools, both by educational psychologists and school staff, and also advocate for more responsive government measures to support them in the community.

1.4 Professional Context

One of the aims of this study was to foreground the voices of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK, shedding light on their lived experiences and perspectives on identity. By centring their narratives, the research sought to raise awareness among educational psychologists (EPs), schools, and policymakers of the identity-related challenges these youths face, and the need for more inclusive, responsive support.

The UK is a long-established country of immigration, with diverse migrant populations shaping its educational landscape. According to the Migration Observatory (Cuibus, 2024), 16% of the UK population is foreign-born at the time of the 2011-22 Census. While more recent figures are unavailable, it was also reported that in 2019, 6% of children in the UK were born abroad. Given this demographic reality, the educational system must be equipped to meet the psychosocial needs of young people from migrant backgrounds.

EPs play a vital role in listening to and advocating for children and young people (Greig et al., 2014). The SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education ,

& Department of Health and Social Care, 2015) emphasised the importance of pupil voice in decision-making, and this study offers insight into how EPs might expand their practice to include identity exploration as part of assessments and interventions. This is particularly relevant for immigrant youths, for whom strong cultural and relational identities can support well-being.

For schools and educators, the findings highlight the importance of culturally and identity-sensitive approaches. Beyond acknowledging cultural diversity, schools have a role in actively supporting identity development, which may contribute to improved psychosocial adjustment. By amplifying youth perspectives, the study also offers concrete suggestions from immigrant students themselves on how schools can better support their identity development. For policymakers, the study can offer insights into the situations and perspectives of this emerging group of immigrant youths, that may push for more responsive measures to support them.

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

This section provides the definitions of key terms used in the current study, which includes identity, well-being, HK BN(O) immigrant youths and acculturation.

1.5.1 Identity

Identity is understood as a dynamic and multidimensional construct (Fung, 2004; James, 1890) that emerges through individuals' interaction with their social and cultural environments, encompassing the socially constructed meanings and roles related to group membership, as well as the personal interpretations of these memberships that are integrated into one's sense of self (Markus & Hamedani, 2007; Weigert & Gecas, 2003). The conceptualisation of identity is detailed in 2.2.1.

This study explores several types of identity, including cultural, relational, educational, and religious identities. Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging to a cultural group, and in this study includes identities related to both the culture of origin (such as Hong Konger, Chinese, and Asian) and the host culture (such as British). It also covers bicultural identity, where individuals identify with both their heritage and host cultures. Relational identities are shaped by close personal relationships, such as being a child of parents, sibling, or good friend. Educational identity refers to being a student, shaped by experiences and expectations in the school context. Religious identity relates to one's faith or belief system, such as identifying as a Christian or a Buddhist. These different identity domains reflect the multiple roles and social contexts that shape how young people see themselves.

1.5.2 Well-Being

In this study, well-being refers to individuals' positive feelings towards their emotional experiences, psychological and social functioning (Michaelson et al., 2012). It includes emotional (hedonic) well-being that means positive emotions and life satisfaction (Kahneman et al., 1999), psychological (eudaimonic) well-being that is related to meaning of life and personal growth (Ryan & Deci, 2001), and social well-being of how individuals perceive their roles and connectedness within the society (Keyes, 1998). 2.2.2 provides a more detailed operationalisation of this concept.

1.5.3 Acculturation

Drawing on Berry's (1997) definition, acculturation refers to a dual process of cultural and psychological change that occurs when an individual comes into contact

with a different cultural context. In this study, acculturation happened when the immigrant youths moved from HK to the UK and came into contact with the culture in the UK.

1.5.4 HK BN(O) immigrant youths

HK BN(O) immigrant youths refer to children and young people, who migrated from HK to the UK under the British National (Overseas) visa route. This group typically includes individuals born in HK to parents eligible for BN(O) status, who relocated with their families following the introduction of the BN(O) visa scheme in 2021.

1.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter first outlined the rationale for the current study to explore the identities, and the link between identities and well-being of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK with a mixed-method approach. It then set the context of the study by briefing the historical and cultural background of HK BN(O) immigrants, and also the professional context of the study for EPs and schools. Key terms including identity, well-being, acculturation, and the target population were defined to establish the study's conceptual basis. The next chapter reviews literature to build its theoretical foundation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

The literature review first conceptualises the key constructs of this study, including identity and well-being, through the lens of relevant theories. It then discusses existing literature on identity development of immigrant youths, and the linkage between identities and well-being. Key findings and gaps in the literature are discussed, leading to the rationale and formulation of the research questions that guide the present study.

2.2 Key Concepts and Relevant Theories

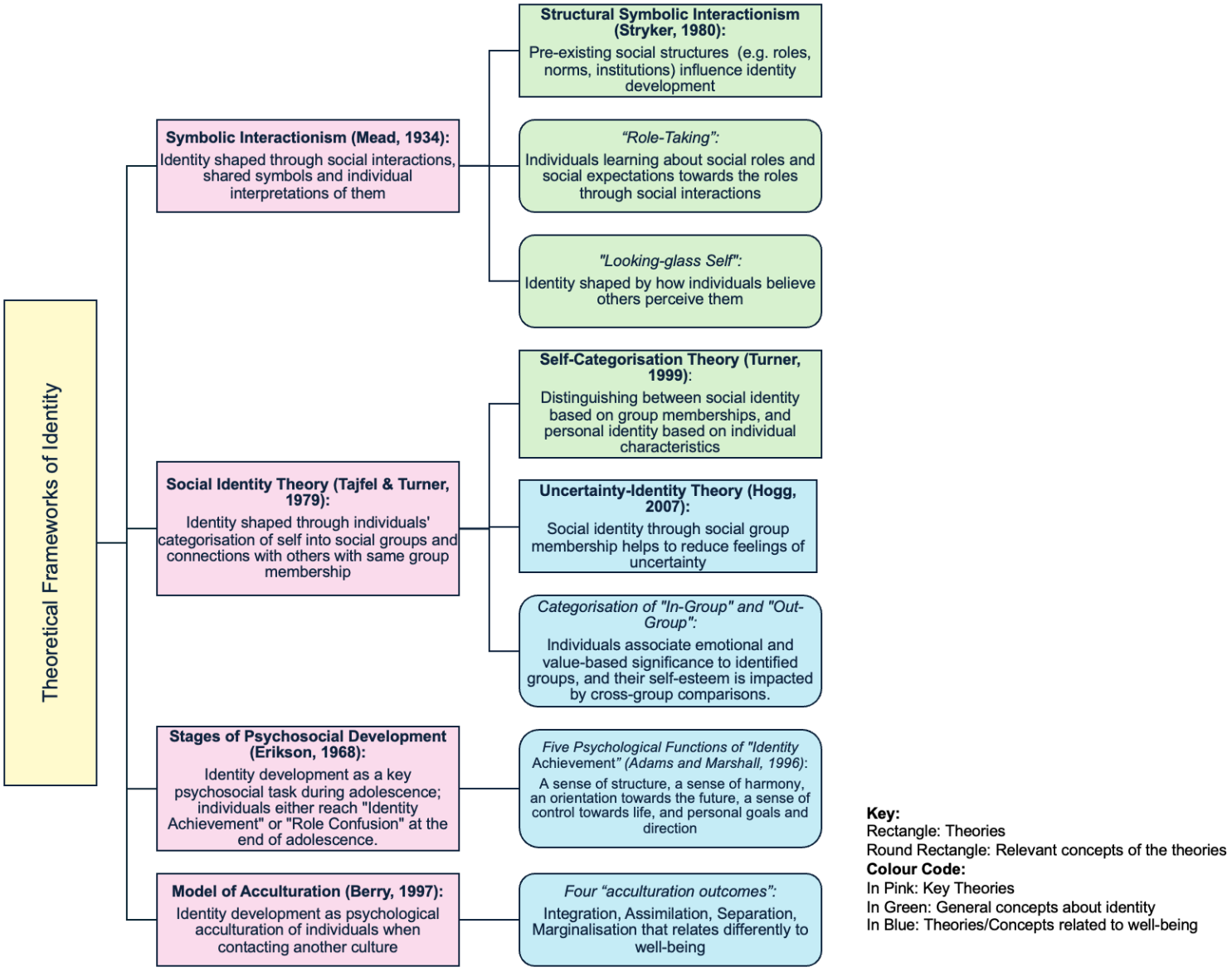
2.2.1 Conceptualising Identity

Identity can be broadly understood as the sense of "I", or self-definition (Kroger, 1996). It is a concept closely related but distinctive to the concept of "self". "Self" can be understood as a socially-grounded reflexive process through which a person becomes aware of who they are and is able to act based on that awareness. Once an individual has developed "self", the individual develops agency and becomes able to reflect and choose how to act (Weigert & Gecas, 2005). "Identity", conversely, refers to the typification of socially constructed meanings, labels, and roles that a person associates with themselves or is assigned by others (Weigert & Gecas, 2003), emerging from the integration of multiple self-understandings developed through engagement in diverse sociocultural contexts and social interactions (Markus & Hamedani, 2007). Instead of a fixed state, this study understood identity as a continuous and malleable process for humans to create their sense of self through experience (James, 1890), and the impact of socio-cultural context and individual's interpretation of them (Fung, 2004). The conceptualisation of identity in this research is informed by several theoretical

perspectives, as outlined below. Figure 1 provides an overview of the key theories that underpin this study.

Figure 1

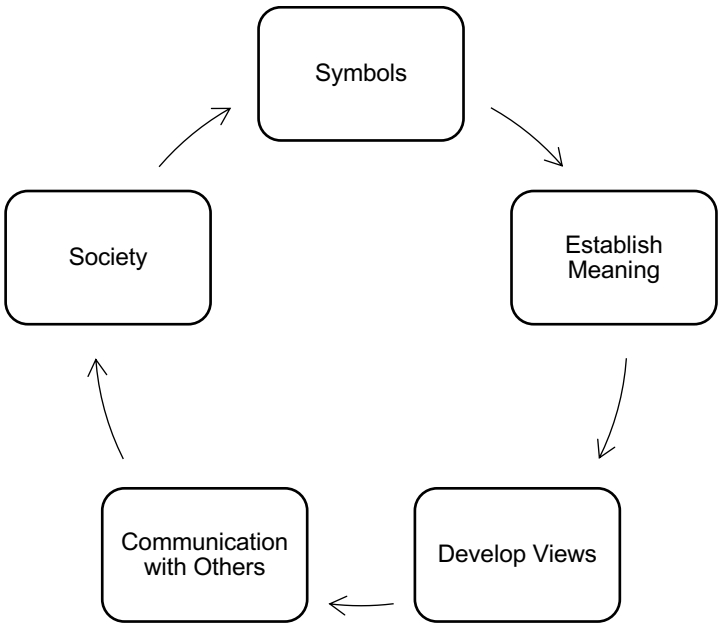
Theoretical Foundations of Identity in the Current Study



2.2.1.1 Symbolic Interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is a sociological theory that focuses on how individuals construct meaning and develop a sense of self through social interaction (Mead, 1934). The theory is closely related to identity, emphasising how identity is shaped through social interaction, the use of shared symbols (such as language), and individual interpretations. These interactive processes construct the social world, influence how people see themselves, and guide their behaviours (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Visual representation of Symbolic Interactionism



"Role-taking" is a central concept within symbolic interactionism. It refers to the process of individuals learning social roles and the social expectations towards these social roles through social interactions. As individuals come to identify with particular social roles, they adopt the behaviours and norms associated with those roles. They also observe how others enact their roles and develop an understanding of how people are expected to behave in relation to one another (Mead, 1934).

While Mead (1934) did not focus on the role of social structure on identity when he proposed the concept of role-taking, Stryker (1980, 2008) further built on the theory with his structural symbolic interactionism, which suggests identity as a crucial link between individual and social structure. He argued that pre-existing social structures such as roles, norms, and institutions shape how individuals perceive themselves and construct their identities. Stryker also proposed the idea of "identity salience", which refers to the likelihood that certain identities may become more central to an individual, depending on the social context. His idea is also suggestive of how changes in social context may also influence the importance and salience of different identities.

Another idea from symbolic interaction that stresses the role of social context on individual's identity is the "looking-glass self" as proposed by Cooley (1902). This theory explains how individuals develop their identity through imagined reflections, which is their interpretations of how others perceive and respond to them. In other words, people use others as social mirrors, and through these ongoing reflections, they form their sense of self and how they understand their own identities.

This model is highly relevant to the current study as it emphasises the role of personal interpretation of social interactions and social context in shaping one's understanding of the social world and sense of self. It is in line with one of the aims of the present study to understand the voices of young people on how they identify themselves and how they interpret these identities through self-perceived social lens. However, the study also acknowledges the critiques of symbolic interactionism, particularly its "bottom-up" focus on individual subjectivity and micro-level interactions (Carter & Fuller, 2016), which may overlook the broader influence of

cultural, political, and structural factors on identity development (Fine, 1993). Thus, to build a more comprehensive understanding of identities, the study also incorporates multiple identity theories that put a greater emphasis on sociocultural influence on identity, including social identity theory (Tafjel & Turner, 1979), acculturation Theory (Berry, 1997) and stages of psychosocial development theory (Erikson, 1968).

2.2.1.2 Social Identity Theory. Social identity theory (Tafjel, 1978; Tafjel & Turner, 1979) is a social psychological theory which considers the impact of social context on individual's self-perception. Originally developed to explain prejudice and intergroup conflict, the theory offers valuable insight into how individuals categorise themselves into social groups and form connections with others who share the same group membership. Tafjel (1978) defined social identity as individual's acknowledgement of the membership to particular social groups, and the emotional and value-based significance attached to this group membership.

Building on this, Turner (1999) introduced *Self-Categorisation Theory*, which distinguishes between *social identity* (based on group memberships) and *personal identity* (based on individual traits and characteristics). Informed by this distinction, the current study focuses on social identity, particularly the group labels that young people associate with, as opposed to personal identity descriptors.

Through shared group identity, individuals form expectations about their own and others' beliefs and behaviours, engaging in ongoing evaluation and comparison, an idea that parallels the concept of role-taking in symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934). Another point of overlap between the two theories is that social identity theory

also recognises that the salience of different social identities can shift depending on the social context.

Social identity theory highlights the tendency of individuals to categorise people into in-groups (groups they belong to) and outgroups (groups they do not belong to) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). When individuals identify with a particular in-group, they often internalise the group's associated characteristics, such as its status, emotional tone, norms, and traits, which then shape their self-perception (Ruble et al., 2004). Individuals also engage in ongoing social comparison between their ingroup and relevant outgroups, seeking positive intergroup distinctiveness, a sense that their group is favourably different, which in turn supports their self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

On top of supporting self-esteem, research grounded in social identity theory has highlighted a broader range of psychological functions served by social identity. For example, Haslam et al. (2009) suggested that social identity serves certain psychological functions; providing individuals with a sense of meaning, purpose of life, belonging, alongside practical functions like companionship, emotional bonding, physical protection, and access to resources. In his uncertainty-identity theory, Hogg (2007) suggests that the social categorisation through social identity helps to reduce feelings of uncertainty about the world and about their perceptions and behaviours.

Taken together, these perspectives point to the close connection between identity and well-being. A strong, stable, and positively regarded identity can offer emotional security, meaning, and social anchoring, all of which are essential for well-being. Erikson's theory of identity formation (1968), which will be discussed below, explains how identity might be relevant to well-being from a different perspective.

2.2.1.3 Erikson's Theory of Identity Formation. In the stages of psychosocial development theory, Erikson (1968) proposed identity development as a key psychosocial task during adolescence. Although this theory focuses on personal identity (or termed as "ego identity", defined as a sense of sameness and continuity about self) other than social identity, it offers a developmental perspective of identity development and links identity development to individual's well-being. The theory proposes that since infancy, individuals have been developing their sense of self distinctive from others social interactions, naturally picking up different social roles, such as roles related to their gender and race. Entering adolescence, individuals then reach the developmental stage of "Identity Achievement versus Role Confusion", which marks a period of growing social, emotional, and cognitive maturity (Mastrotheodoros et al., 2019; Umaña-Taylor, 2016) and increased exposure to different societal contexts and challenges (Rueger et al., 2010). They also face more societal demands and challenges (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). The combination of intrapersonal and interpersonal factors can lead to feelings of uncertainty in individuals and they face the pressure to make sense of their positions within the society.

Erikson's theory related identity to individuals' well-being. The theory proposes that during this key psychosocial developmental stage of "Identity Achievement versus Role Confusion", an individual needs to engage in a period of identity exploration and eventually commit to certain identities (Erikson, 1968; Marcia,1988). By the end of this developmental stage, if the individual arrived at identity commitment and achieved a coherent sense of self, they will achieve a sense of well-being which includes the sense of "being at home in one's body",

"knowing where one is going" and "an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count" (Erikson, 1968, p.165).

Building upon Erikson's theory, Adams and Marshall (1996) proposed that identity achievement serves five psychological functions including the provision of a sense of structure, a sense of harmony, an orientation towards the future, a sense of control towards life, and shaping personal goals and direction, which was supported by empirical evidence (Crocetti et al., 2013). However, failure to reach an optimal sense of identity, possibly due to a lack of societal support for self-exploration (Kroger, 1996), can lead to role confusion, or what Erikson called the "identity crisis". The lack of cohesion and continuity in one's identities can contribute to a decreased sense of well-being (Erikson, 1968).

While Erikson's theory highlighted the importance of adolescence as a critical period for identity formation and connects identity development to well-being, it has some limitations. First, it generally assumes a relatively linear and stable trajectory toward a coherent identity by the end of adolescence. However, recent research, particularly those on immigrant and minority youths, suggests that identity development is often more fluid, situational, and ongoing (e.g., Boland, 2020; Erentaitė et al., 2018). Second, Erikson's model has been critiqued for decontextualising identity, focusing primarily on internal processes while underemphasising the role of broader socio-political forces (Alberts & Durrheim, 2020). His framework assumes a stable and supportive environment for exploration, which are conditions that may not apply to immigrant youths navigating multiple cultural contexts, as in the current study.

Given these limitations, it is essential to consider theories that more directly address identity development in culturally diverse and migratory contexts. One such model is Berry's (1997) acculturation theory, which offers a framework for understanding how individuals negotiate identity in response to intercultural contact.

2.2.1.4 Berry's Model of Acculturation. Berry's acculturation model conceptualises acculturation as a dual process involving both cultural and psychological changes, which occur when individuals or groups encounter different cultures (Berry, 1997; 2003). As the current study focuses on individual's identity, the review of the model will focus on the psychological change at an individual level. The exposure to different cultural contexts challenges the preexisting identity, especially the cultural identity of individuals, which brings about the need to adapt and change the identity (Ozer, 2017).

Berry (2003) identified four different acculturation outcomes categorised by individual's acculturation orientation towards the heritage culture and the culture of the host society, including integration (high orientation to both heritage and host cultures), assimilation (low orientation to heritage culture, high to host culture), separation (high orientation to heritage culture, low to host culture), and marginalisation (low orientation to both). These outcomes reflect not only observable behaviours, but also internal attitudes, values, and preferences. Figure 3 illustrates the four acculturation orientations along the two key dimensions.

Figure 3

Berry's Four Acculturation Outcomes

		Adaption to the host culture	
		Low	High
Maintenance of heritage culture	High	Separation	Integration
	Low	Marginalisation	Assimilation

Berry (1997) argues that among the four acculturation outcomes, "Integration" with both high adaptation to the host culture and high maintenance of heritage is the orientation that relates to the best adaptive outcomes both theoretically and empirically, including individual's well-being, which is backed by a number of empirical studies (e.g., Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013, Yoon et al., 2013). The model is useful in understanding how individuals might have to renegotiate their cultural identities coming to new culture, and how this is related to their well-being. Berry (1997) also acknowledged the influence of the surrounding social environment on individual's acculturation orientation.

However, when applied to the development of identity, the model can have its limitations. The four categories may be too rigid to capture the complexity of people's lived experiences, especially for young people navigating multiple social worlds. It also tends to focus mainly on cultural identity, without addressing how other aspects of identity like personal, social, or political identity may also shift during the acculturation process.

For this study, Berry's model offers a useful lens for thinking about changes in cultural identity following migration. However, this study avoids using the four categories to classify participants. Instead, it aims to explore how identity is shaped in more flexible and dynamic ways, through young people's own narratives and social experiences. This approach is more suited to capturing the realities of HK BN(O) youth in the UK, whose identities are influenced not only by culture, but also by the unique political and social context they find themselves in.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives create a comprehensive foundation for understanding the identity development of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK. Symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934) highlights how young people understand who they are through their everyday interactions and how others see them. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) shows how group labels, such as being a British or Hong Konger, can shape self-perception and provide emotional significance such as sense of belonging. Erikson's (1968) theory adds a developmental view, showing how identity is especially important in adolescence and linked to well-being. Berry's (1997) model helps explain how young people might adjust their cultural identity when moving between different cultures. This study integrates these theories and adopts a multidimensional approach to examine identity as a dynamic, social, personal, context-dependent construct by exploring the identities and the narratives about these identities of HK immigrant youths coming to a new sociocultural context in the UK.

2.2.2 Conceptualising Well-Being

Despite being widely studied in contemporary research, well-being remains a broad concept without a universally accepted definition (Jarden & Roache, 2023). It

is suggested that both physical health and mental health contribute to well-being (Dolan & White, 2008), and well-being exists in both subjective and objective dimensions (World Health Organisation, 2013). The current study focuses on the subjective well-being of individuals, understanding well-being as the general feelings of individuals, their functioning on both a personal and social level, and their evaluation of their lives as a whole (Michaelson et al., 2012). The study is interested in how the HK immigrant youths with different identities perceive and feel about their psychological and social functioning after coming to the UK.

For psychological well-being, some researchers like Ryff (1989) distinguish between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Hedonic well-being focuses on pleasure and positive affects like happiness (Kahneman et al., 1999). However, it is argued that the immediate feeling of pleasure is not the sole indicator of psychological well-being. Eudaimonic well-being was proposed as the psychological well-being that focuses on individuals having meaning and purpose in life and achieving life satisfaction through self-realisation (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Ryff's (1989) model of psychological well-being acknowledges the multi-dimensionality of psychological well-being and proposes six dimensions of psychological well-being: self-acceptance (positive evaluation of oneself), personal growth (sense of continued development and realisation of potential), purpose in life (having goals and a sense of direction), positive relations with others (warm and trusting interpersonal relationships), environmental mastery (ability to manage life situations effectively), and autonomy (self-determination and independence).

In addition to psychological well-being, Keyes (1998) also proposed social well-being, which is how individuals evaluate their society and their social

relationships, as an important component contributing to overall well-being. Keyes proposed five dimensions: social coherence (perceiving society as structured and understandable), social actualisation (believing society has potential and can improve), social integration (feeling part of and connected to a community), social acceptance (holding positive attitudes towards others), and social contribution (feeling that one plays a valuable role in society).

This study accounts for emotional (hedonic), psychological (eudaimonic), and social well-being to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how HK BN(O) immigrant youths experience their psychological and social functioning in a new cultural context. As these youths navigate identity development post-migration, well-being is likely shaped by how they make sense of themselves and their roles within their new environments. To capture this, the study utilised the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF; Lamers et al., 2011) as a measure of the emotional, psychological, social and overall well-being of the participants. This approach supports the study's broader aim of exploring the complex relationship between identity and well-being in the context of youth migration.

2.3 Literature Review

To establish understanding towards identity development of immigrant youths, and the linkage between identity and well-being, a systematic literature search was conducted. As empirical research on HK BN(O) immigrant population remained scarce, the literature review aimed to build understanding towards broader population of immigrant youths on their identity, and the relationship between their identities and well-being, which can provide insights into the experience of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK.

Literature was identified with three major search engines, PsycInfo, UCL Explore and Google Scholar, with the following keywords and phrases: Immigrant children, immigrant youths, immigrant adolescents, immigrant students, immigrant teenagers, identity, identity development, identity formation, identity negotiation, well-being, mental health, self-esteem, life satisfaction, acculturation. Articles from 2001 until 1st April 2025 were included. In the discussion of the papers identified, the more recent papers were prioritised whenever possible, and seminal works that were frequently referenced were also included to facilitate the discussion of key ideas.

2.3.1 Identity of Immigrant Youths

Identity development is a process in which individuals explore, commit to, and integrate societal categorisations, goals, values, and beliefs to form a coherent sense of self (Adams & Marshall, 1996; Erikson, 1950; Schwartz at al., 2006). The integrative risk and resilience model of immigrant children (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018) identifies three key adaptive tasks that they must navigate: universal developmental tasks, psychological adjustment, and additional acculturative challenges unique to navigating multiple cultures. Exposure to a new cultural context can prompt changes in the immigrant youth's identity, especially for identity related to cultures. Bosma and Kunnen (2001) argued that there will be changes in identity when individual's original belief, goals and values are not compatible with the environment that has changed. Coming to a new culture, immigrant youths must renegotiate their cultural identity, which blends aspects of both the heritage and receiving cultures, while also addressing the general challenge of negotiating personal identity arising during adolescence (Arnett, 1999; Schwartz, 2005). Due to this close linkage between acculturation and identity development, several studies

investigated the identity, and change in identity in immigrant youths, which will be discussed in section 2.3.1.1.

However, to date, there is no research directly examining the identities of HK BN(O) immigrant youths, who may experience an especially complex process of identity negotiation (as outlined in Section 1.3). This gap in the literature highlights the rationale for the current study.

2.3.1.1 Cultural Identities of Immigrant Youths. Research examining identity development of immigrant youths predominantly explored ethnic and national identities, which could collectively be categorised as “cultural identities” (Maehler et al., 2021).

Ethnic identity, sometimes called racial identity, refers to an individual’s perceptions, behaviours, feelings, ancestral lineage and sense of belonging to an ethnic group (Paat & Pellebon, 2012). In the studies of immigrants, ethnic identity refers to the identification of individuals towards their culture of origin (Maehler et al., 2021), distinguishing it from national identity, which is the identification of individuals towards the country of residence, or the country they have moved to (Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020). Historically, ethnic and national identities tended to be viewed as unidimensional constructs, representing two opposite ends of the pole of “cultural identity” (Berry, 1997; 2017). However, more recent research (e.g., Berry, 1997) has increasingly embraced a biculturalism paradigm, recognising the capacity for immigrants or individuals with bicultural backgrounds to identify with different cultures simultaneously.

Maehler and colleagues' (2021) meta-analysis examined and compared the strength of ethnic and national identity of first-generation immigrant youths (the children born in another country and immigrated to another country) by analysing 24 peer-reviewed relevant publications. The meta-analysis found a moderate level of ethnic identity (mean effect size = 3.04) and a comparatively weaker national identity (mean effect size = 2.41) among the immigrant youths in the included studies. However, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to several reasons. First, the distribution of national identity scores was more variable, suggesting inconsistency across studies. Second, only 14 of the 24 studies measured both ethnic and national identities, and just one study examined identification with the country of residence, which limits the validity of direct comparisons between the two identities. Third, overrepresentation of studies from Anglo-Saxon countries further restricts the generalisability of findings. Last, while effect sizes offer useful trends, they may oversimplify the dynamic nature of cultural identity among immigrant youths, as illustrated by some other research in the field.

For instance, a large-scale longitudinal study sampling from 5262 immigrant students studying in 8th and 9th grades at San Diego and South Florida identified four main cultural identities reported by the students in interviews, including identification to the country of origin like Vietnamese, pure identification to America, a hyphenated-American identity like Filipino-American, and a pan-ethnic group identity like Hispanic and Latino (Rambaut, 2005). Apart from illustrating the diversity in the self-selected cultural identity labels, by interviewing the participants again three to four years later, Rambaut (2005) identified significant changes in their self-identifications. During the second interview, fewer immigrant students identified as either hyphenated-American or solely American. Instead, there was a noticeable

increase in identification with their culture of origin and with pan-ethnic categories. The most commonly adopted identity label also shifted from hyphenated-American to one grounded in the participants' heritage culture. The author noted the substantial shift in cultural identities with over half of the participants (56%) reporting a different cultural identity label three to four years later and discussed the variations in the salience and stability of different types of cultural identities. These findings suggest that shifts in cultural identity among immigrant youths may occur gradually and over an extended period, which are changes that may not yet be observable within the current study's sample, who had resided in the UK for no more than three years at the time of data collection.

Song (2010) provided empirical evidence echoing the findings reported by Rambaut (2005). Via interviews conducted over a 5-year period, Song (2010) identified the three most common cultural identities reported by 192 immigrant youths aged 9–15 years, from China, Halti and Mexico. Initially, most participants (85%) in Year 1 predominantly identified with their countries of origin e.g., Chinese, although the proportion of students in this group declined to 65% in Year 5. The other popular cultural identity labels were pan-ethnic identities like Asian, and hyphenated identities like Chinese-American, and the number of participants identifying with these two labels increased over the 5-year period. Although the pattern of change observed in this study was different from the study by Rambaut (2005), the findings from these two studies illustrated cultural identity of immigrant youths as a multidimensional construct with various types of identity labels, and the fluidity of self-identities in immigrant youths. Acknowledging this complexity, the present study employed a quantitative scale to measure participants' strength of identification with various identities, including cultural identities. In the qualitative interviews,

participants were also asked to reflect on their identification with multiple identity domains (to capture multidimensionality), as well as how these identities may have changed before and after migration (to explore fluidity).

Other studies examining the cultural identity of immigrant youths assuming the biculturalism paradigm also found the tendency for immigrant youths to identify to both the culture of origin and the culture of the host country. In a recent study conducted by Baumert et al. (2024), 842 immigrant students in Germany aged 15–17 years responded to questions about their cultural identities ("I feel part of …culture" and "I feel a strong attachment towards …culture." for both heritage culture and host culture). Although the score for identification to heritage culture (m= 3.22, SD= 0.80) was notably higher than identification to the host culture (m= 2.69, SD= 0.75), most participants (43.4%; compared to 34.5% of pure identification with heritage culture, 10.7% of pure identification with host culture, and 11.3% percent with neither) were found to be identifying with both cultures.

Another study targeting British immigrant children also found the tendency of the children to have a bicultural identification. Sampling from 215 British Asian children, Brown and colleagues (2013) asked participants their preferences of language and daily practices between their host culture and their culture of origin, and a significant majority of participants, 77.2%, expressed a preference for aspects of both cultures, and the second most popular option was the sole preference for heritage culture (10.7%).

Both studies provided empirical evidence that immigrant youths may identify with both their heritage and host cultures. However, methodological limitations affected the generalisability of these findings. Brown et al. (2013) used behavioural preferences as an indirect identity measure, while Baumert et al. (2024) focused

solely on emotional attachment, neither fully capturing the complexity of cultural identity. Additionally, both studies included participants from mixed generational backgrounds, with first-generation youths making up only about 20% of their samples. Since first-generation immigrants often have distinct cultural experiences, the findings may not reflect their identity development accurately. In contrast, the current study focuses specifically on first-generation immigrant youths and uses mixed methods to provide a more nuanced understanding of their identities.

2.3.1.2 Other Types of Identities of Immigrant Youths. The vast interest of researchers in the cultural identities of immigrant youths might have stemmed from the acknowledgement that these youths have to navigate multiple cultural spheres and negotiate between various ethnic, national and racial allegiances (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018), and cultural identities might be the most susceptible to change during and following the immigration (Berry, 2017). Nonetheless, other non-cultural types of identities that feed into the development of a cohesive sense of self (Erikson, 1968) have received notably less attention in research. Through the literature search, only four empirical studies that discussed other types of identities of immigrant youths were identified, which will be discussed below.

A longitudinal study by Davis III and Kiang (2016) examined religious identity among 190 Asian high school students in the US (74% second-generation, 26% first-generation), with diverse ethnic backgrounds including Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Japanese, and Filipino, and religious affiliations such as Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Participants reported on their religious identity, engagement in religious activities, and psychological well-being across four years (9th to 12th grade, aged 13 – 18). Findings showed that both positive regard for religion and the

centrality of religious identity for the participants remained stable, suggesting that religious identity is relatively well-developed during adolescence. Engagement in religion-related activities increased over time, which the authors attributed to the strong presence of religious organisations in the Southeastern US that likely provide support for immigrant youth. The religious identity and commitment of the participants were also linked to psychological well-being, which will be discussed in section 2.3.2.4. The findings provided insights into the religious identity of immigrant youths, and the importance of sociocultural context in fostering their identity development. This finding is in line with the postulation of structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 1980) that pre-existing social structures can influence the development of identity. Acknowledging the influence of the sociocultural context, the current study deployed qualitative approach that explored the experience of immigrant youths in their social environment (e.g., school), and took into consideration sociodemographic like socioeconomic status when examining the identity and well-being of participants in the quantitative part.

Mastrotheodoros and colleagues (2021) focused on the interrelationships between personal identities in the domains of education and friendships, and ethnic and national identities in a 3-year longitudinal study with 765 immigrant adolescents from Grade 7 to 9 in Greece. The researchers observed strong and positive associations among personal, ethnic, and national identities for both identity exploration (searching for and investigating the identities) and identity commitment (personal investment into the identities they chose to identify with) across three time points. The researchers also suggested that these different identities are all parts of a broader self-concept, which could be interpreted as their coherent sense of identity. Additionally, while ethnic and national identities showed a negative

relationship with each other over time, identities related to education and friendships were not affected by the two cultural identities. It was proposed that immigrant adolescents may prioritise negotiating their cultural identities over other personal identities within the assimilationist Greek culture, which puts pressure on them to choose between their culture of origin and Greek culture (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Their findings about relationship and educational identities, and their connection with well-being of the participants is discussed in 2.4.4.

Compton-Lilly et al. (2017) presented a qualitative case study exploring the intersection of different identities of two immigrant children, aged 6 and 8, respectively in the US as they navigated their identities across home, school and community settings. The study explored how immigrant children used literacy to present and negotiate their sense of self. Data were collected from multiple sources through observations across settings, interviews with the children and adults around them, and artefacts created by the child such as self-portraits and photographs taken by themselves. Over three years, data illustrated how the children's multiple identities related to domains like race, gender, social class and spoken language interwove and interacted with one another, within their environment. Findings illustrated how these identities were picked up and negotiated by the children and the people around them. Despite the highly comprehensive methods, which limit large-scale replication, it effectively demonstrated the multidimensionality and intersectionality of identities and provided insights into an alternative way to capture self-identities through children's voice comprehensively.

Compared to research on cultural identities, studies examining other forms of identification among immigrant youths are limited, making it difficult to draw firm

conclusions. However, existing findings still offer valuable insights into how sociocultural contexts shape identity negotiation, such as the role of religious organisations, educational opportunities, and sociopolitical climate of the host country. Studies such as Compton-Lilly et al. (2017) and Mastrotheodoros et al. (2021) supported the notions that identities are interconnected and contribute to a cohesive sense of self (Erikson, 1968; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Notably, Compton-Lilly et al.'s (2017) case study offered an in-depth exploration of identity negotiation processes in immigrant youth. These findings highlight the need for more qualitative research to better understand the complex and multidimensional nature of identity among immigrant youths. To gain in-depth insights into youths' understanding of their identities, the current study incorporated qualitative approaches that allowed participants to discuss their experiences and opinions verbally (through the "identity ranking activity") and visually (through the "identity drawings").

2.3.1.3 Factors Impacting Identity Development of Immigrant Youths. Previous research on immigrant youths has identified factors that influence the strength of self-identities, predominantly for ethnic and national identities (e.g., Maehler et al., 2021; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005, etc). Addressing all factors is beyond the scope of the current paper focusing on the immigrant youths' self-identifications and their links to well-being. However, it is noteworthy to identify, consider and discuss relevant factors that may influence identity development of immigrant youths within this study.

Sociodemographic of the youths, including their gender (e.g., Maehler et al., 2021) , their age (e.g., Brown et al., 2017), age of arrival (e.g., Bene - Martínez & Haritatos, 2007) and length of residence (e.g., Phinney et al., 2022), and the

socioeconomic status (SES) (e.g., Rambaut, 2005) of the family were found to be related to their identities. The gender effect on cultural identities was often reported in previous studies with inconsistent findings. Some found that immigrant girls have stronger ethnic identity than immigrant boys (Maehler et al., 2021; Song, 2010), and were far less inclined to associate themselves with a hyphenated identity like "Haitian-American" (Rambaut, 1994; Song, 2010); however, some studies found the opposite with boys more strongly identified to their ethnic identity (e.g., Smith, 2002). Still, previous literature evidenced that gender may influence the cultural identifications of immigrant youths, which was attributed to different socialisation experiences of males and females (Rambaut; 1994; Song, 2010).

The findings regarding the effect of age have been mixed. Brown and colleagues (2017) found that older children in their study (8–11 years old) were more likely to prefer bicultural identification, whereas younger children (5–7 years old) preferred retaining their ethnic identity. Some scholars found evidence that the age of arrival to the host country instead of biological age is influential of the formation of cultural identities (e.g., Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). However, Maehler et al. (2021) and Song (2010) both failed to find a significant effect of age, or age of arrival on cultural identification. Duration of residence, compared to the age of arrival, was more consistently found to have a significant relationship with cultural identities, with immigrant children's identification with the residence country growing as they stay longer in the country (Maehler et al., 2021; Phinney et al., 2022).

The impact of parental socioeconomic status (SES) on self-identification remains unclear. While Rambaut (2005) reported higher SES as linked to stronger identification with the host country, this effect disappeared when factors like

language proficiency and school type were considered and controlled. This suggests SES may be mediated by other variables, possibly explaining the null findings in studies by Song (2010) and Maehler et al. (2021).

Apart from demographics, sociocultural factors may also shape the self-identities of immigrant youths. Parental socialisation, experience of discrimination and interaction with peers were identified to be social factors related to the cultural identities of immigrant youths. Parental attitudes towards cultural maintenance and their ethnic socialisation to the children were found to be related to stronger ethnic identity of the children, either directly (Rambaut, 2005), or indirectly through the positive effect on ethnic language proficiency (Phinney et al., 2001). Discrimination is a well-studied variable related to cultural identities, with immigrant youths report experiencing discrimination more likely to identify with their culture of origin and less likely to identify with the host culture (e.g., Potochnick et al., 2012; Schmitt et al., 2014). However, the relationship might be bilateral, with individuals with stronger ethnic identities more attuned to interethnic dynamics and more likely to report incidences of discrimination (Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Syed & Azmitia, 2010). Interaction with same ethnic peers was also found in one study to be related to a stronger ethnic identity (Phinney et al., 2001), however, more studies were required to confirm the relationship and the direction of the relationship.

In light of these findings, the current study considered sociocultural factors such as duration of stay in HK and the UK, age, gender, and socioeconomic status as potential influences on identity, well-being, and the relationship between the two.

2.3.1.4 Interim Summary and Gaps in the Literature. In conclusion, previous literature on the identities of immigrant youths predominantly focused on their cultural identities. Personal identities related to religion, friendship, and education among immigrant youths have been sparsely studied, necessitating further research in this domain. Researchers have also identified several factors influencing identity development, including demographic factors and social factors, highlighting the interplay between intrapersonal and sociocultural factors in shaping identities.

Several gaps emerge from the existing literature. First, most studies focus narrowly on cultural identities, overlooking how non-cultural identities may shift post-migration or act as stabilisers during cultural transitions (Schwartz et al., 2006, 2018; Meca et al., 2017). Second, commonly used measurement tools, ranging from single-item self-labels (e.g., Bhui et al., 2005) to more robust scales like Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) or Language, Identity, and Behavioral Acculturation Scale (LIB; Birman & Trickett, 2001), often fail to capture youths' lived experiences of identity formation or their personal meaning-making processes (Ruble et al., 2004). Third, most studies were US-based and blended different immigrant generations, limiting the research relevance to first-generation youths in specific cultural contexts. Few UK-based studies have addressed immigrant identity in recent years, especially among East Asian populations like Hong Kongers. HK BN(O) youths remain under-researched, often overlooked due to small population size and "model minority" stereotypes (Kayama & Yamakawa, 2020), despite their potentially unique acculturation challenges.

This study addresses these gaps by exploring multiple forms of identity and subjective understandings among HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK, providing insight into an understudied and growing population in the UK.

2.3.2 Well-being and Identity Development of Immigrant Youths

Previous research discussed in Section 2.3.1 highlights how the identities of immigrant youths may develop in response to shifts in their sociocultural context, shaped by both demographic and environmental factors. Building on theoretical frameworks such as Berry's acculturation model (Berry, 1997) and Erikson's psychosocial development theory (Erikson, 1968), which emphasises the relationship between identity development and individual well-being, it is also important to review literature that specifically examines how immigrant youths' well-being is linked to their evolving identities.

2.3.2.1 Well-being of Immigrant Youths. Leaving their initial supportive network and familiar social norms (Schwartz et al., 2010), and acculturating into a different culture and social system, immigrant youths must engage in acculturation while simultaneously facing age-salient developmental tasks as their non-immigrant peers (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). They must undergo both sociocultural adaptation ("doing well") like learning a new language and developing new relations (Lynch, 1992), and psychological adaptation ("feeling well"), which directly feeds into their well-being, depending on the successfulness of their adaptation (Berry, 2003). The process of acculturation may also cause acculturative stress comprising feelings of uncertainty, anxiety and depression (Berry, 2006).

The possible elevated level of stress and threats to well-being are evident in empirical research on immigrants. For instance, in a study of Chinese, Korean and Japanese immigrant students migrated to the United States, aged from 12 – 18, Yeh (2003) found that lower perceived English proficiency and greater perceived cultural distance were associated with heightened acculturative stress and psychosomatic symptoms. The 3-year longitudinal study conducted by Brown and colleagues (2013) found immigration impacts the social and psychological well-being of immigrant children. It was found that first-generation immigrant youths reported lower self-esteem and peer acceptance than white British children. Immigrant youths were also found to be more likely to experience discrimination, or being socially excluded, with the experience of discrimination have been linked to poorer physical and mental health in literature on immigrants (Viruell-Fuentes et al., 2013).

While identity development is recognised as both a developmental and acculturative challenge for immigrant youths (Lynch, 1992; Phinney, 1992; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018), it is also evident that different personal identities may be promotive, protective or detrimental to their well-being.

2.3.2.2 Ethnic Identity and Well-being. Cultural identities, including ethnic identity, national identity, and bicultural identity were widely studied and all shown to be related to the well-being of immigrant youths.

Numerous studies found a positive effect of ethnic identity on indicators of well-being of immigrant youths, including daily happiness (Kiang et al., 2006), life satisfaction (Baumert et al., 2024), general sense of well-being (Sun et al., 2020) and positive mental health (Wilson & Leaper, 2016; also see the meta-analyses by Smith

& Silvia, 2011 and Yoon et al., 2013). Baumert and colleagues (2024) tested the relationship of different identities to various indicators of well-being in 842 immigrant students aged 15 – 17 years in Germany. Results from the surveys at two time points indicated that ethnic identity was predictive of elevated school attachment, self-esteem and life satisfaction of the immigrant students. Self-esteem may be a psychological well-being indicator particularly relevant to ethnic identity, as the positive relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem has been consistently found in several studies (e.g., Brown et al., 2013; Cadiz et al., 2023; Smith & Silva, 2011). It is consistent with the postulations of the social identity theory and self-categorisation theory (Turner & Reynolds, 2011), that individuals derive self-esteem from identification with social groups.

Several reasons have been proposed to address the positive relationship between ethnic identity and psychological well-being in immigrants apart from the social identity theory. First, ethnic identity offers psychological benefits such as belonging, competence, and self-acceptance (Smith & Silvia, 2011). Second, group membership can provide practical support, including emotional bonding, companionship, and access to resources, which promotes mental well-being (Haslam et al., 2009). Third, ethnic identity may buffer against stressors like discrimination. Research suggests that experiences of exclusion may reinforce ethnic identity as a protective response, a process known as “reactive ethnicity” (Rumbaut, 2005; Cadiz et al., 2023; Litam & Oh, 2022), helping to preserve self-esteem in challenging environments (Schmitt et al., 2014).

Previous literature has illustrated the positive impact of identifying with one's heritage culture on the psychological well-being of immigrant youths with different

reasons proposed. This raises questions about whether identification with the host country's national culture may similarly promote well-being, and whether dual identification with both cultures, as posited in Berry's (1997) acculturation model, may offer even greater benefits. Studies examining national and bicultural identities provide valuable insights into these questions and form an important foundation for the present research, which investigates the relationship between cultural identity and well-being among HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK. These studies are discussed below.

2.3.2.3 National Identity and Well-being. There are fewer studies examining immigrant youths' identification with the host country and its relationship to well-being. In a study by Yeh (2003), east Asian immigrant students (Chinese, Korean and Japanese) who identified stronger to the American identity showed fewer negative mental health symptoms. English proficiency and bicultural competence were suggested to explain better mental health among more American-identified students by potentially reducing acculturation stress, though this lacked empirical support in the study. It was also found in a meta-analysis that acculturation identity (identification to the host country) is positively related to positive mental health (self-esteem, life satisfaction, positive emotions) (Yoon et al., 2013). As noted by the authors, however, Americans were overrepresented in the studies samples.

On top of ethnic identity, Baumert and colleagues (2024) also explored the effect of national identity on different domains of well-being. Results indicated that identification to Germany was positively related to life satisfaction in first-generation immigrant children after a year. A stronger national identity was also found to be predictive of better academic performance and school attachment of the students in

grade 10 (16 – 17 years old), and these two factors might have contributed to their enhanced life satisfaction. However, a key limitation was the inclusion of both first- and second-generation immigrants, with first-generation youths comprising only 22% of the sample. The study revealed differences in how cultural identities are related to life satisfaction across generations, highlighting the need to study these groups separately rather than treating all immigrant youths as a single category.

Still, the study was one of the few studies that investigated the relationship between host country identity and well-being in immigrant youths with several strengths. First, the authors considered and controlled demographic factors that can be influential of the children's cultural identity (Mahler et al., 2021). Second, the authors' considered biculturalism (identification with both the heritage culture and the host culture), suggesting that whereas strong identification with either the home culture or the host culture could boost life satisfaction, low identification to both of the cultures can be a risk factor to feelings of life satisfaction.

2.3.2.4 Bicultural Identity and Well-being. Baumert et al. (2024) were not the only researchers who discussed the accumulative effect of bicultural identity. A bicultural identity in the immigrant population was postulated by some scholars, such as Berry (1997, 2017), to be the "optimal" identity status, leading to better well-being. This notion has received support from empirical research on adult immigrant population (e.g., Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Tadmor et al., 2009). However, past literature on immigrant youths indicated the bicultural identity and well-being relationship in this population maybe more complicated.

For emotional and psychological well-being, in a large-scale study by Lee (2020) sampling over 6000 10th grade immigrant students in European countries with a mean age of 15–16 years, the cultural identities of the participants were measured by two questions. Asking first how strongly they felt they belonged to the country they resided, and second, their ethnic group of origin. Their bicultural identification was categorised according to the Berry's model of acculturation (Berry, 1997; 2017). It was found that students with integrated (bicultural) identities were more satisfied with their lives and showed fewer delinquency behaviours compared to their peers with assimilated, marginalised, and separated orientations. It was also found in the meta-analysis of 325 studies by Yoon et al. (2013) an overall weak positive effect of integrationist orientation on positive mental health, with $r = .10$, $p < .05$. A study based in east London, sampling from 2624 teenagers aged 11–14 found that integrated bicultural identity based on friendship choice was related to less mental health issues (Bhui et al., 2005). However, as a unidimensional measure of identity, friendship choice may not accurately reflect the self-identification of the teenagers. Conversely, Nigbur et al. (2008) did not find a significant relationship between an integrationist orientation with self-esteem and emotional and behavioural problems in a group of British Asian primary school children.

The longitudinal study by Brown et al. (2013) explored bicultural identity and social well-being among South Asian immigrant children in the UK. They found that an integrated identity predicted greater social competence and peer acceptance at 6- and 12-month follow-ups. However, it was also associated with increased emotional symptoms reported by teachers. The authors suggested this might be due to greater social engagement exposing bicultural youths to negative experiences like rejection or bullying. The school context was highlighted as a potential moderator, as a

mismatch between a child's bicultural orientation and the school environment may lead to distress.

These findings, along with earlier work by Brown et al. (2007) showing that school diversity affected self-esteem, discrimination, and ethnic identity, underscore the importance of contextual factors in shaping the relationship between identity and well-being. Although the validity of the report was lowered by the lack of explanation in the categorisation of low and high-diversity schools, these findings suggest immigrant children's interactions with their environment may mediate how cultural identities influence their psychological well-being, suggesting the need to understand how children themselves make sense of these experiences in their environments.

Caution is needed when interpreting the links between acculturation orientation and well-being. The term "acculturation orientation" is inconsistently defined and measured across studies, which is often inferred from behavioural preferences (e.g., clothing or social groups) rather than direct self-identification (Bhui et al., 2005; Brown et al., 2013). As Yoon et al. (2013) noted, such behavioural indicators may reflect "external acculturation," while identity is more accurately captured as "internal acculturation." This inconsistency affects construct validity and the comparability of findings across studies.

Despite these limitations, the literature indicates that bicultural integration is often associated with better well-being, though results vary depending on context. While Erikson (1968) suggested that a coherent identity supports positive psychosocial outcomes, existing research has mostly focused on cultural identity, which is only part of one's identity. Further studies are needed to explore how other identity domains contribute to the well-being of immigrant youths.

2.3.2.4 Other Types of Identities and Well-being. The previous literature on non-cultural identities and well-being was largely limited. Through the literature search, only two pieces of work relevant to this topic were identified.

The study conducted by Davis III and Kiang (2016), described in 2.3.1.2, investigated the relationship between religious identity and indicators of well-being in the 180 Asian immigrant adolescents in the US. Results indicated that religious identity was significantly associated with enhanced self-esteem, general positive feelings, and the presence of meaning in life over time. Religious identity was also predictive of reduced depressive symptoms in immigrant young girls, possibly due to the greater significance of religion for Asian females and their tendency to utilise religious resources, more readily than males, to cope with depressive symptoms, as suggested by the authors. However, the small sample in this study limited its ability to look at the potential differences associated with the wide range of cultural background and religious backgrounds reported by the participants.

Dimitrova et al. (2018) examined the links between educational (student) and relational (friend) identities and life satisfaction among 1860 majority and Roma minority youths (aged 12–19) across five Eastern European countries. The study assessed three key dimensions of identity development: commitment (the degree to which individuals adhere to chosen identity domains), in-depth exploration (the extent of reflective engagement with those commitments), and reconsideration of commitment (the extent to which individuals compare current commitments with alternatives and consider changing them). Findings showed that commitment to both identities was associated with greater life satisfaction among Roma youths, with relational identity being especially protective of life satisfaction. The authors

suggested that Roma adolescents may tie their self-worth more closely to peer relationships, where they experience more favourable social comparison than in education, where opportunities are often limited.

Previous research has demonstrated associations between different types of identity and the well-being of immigrant youths, but has predominantly focused on cultural identity. There remains limited empirical investigation into how non-cultural identities, such as educational, relational, or personal identities, may also influence well-being. Addressing this gap, the present study was designed to examine a broader range of identity domains, both cultural and non-cultural identities, in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the well-being of HK BN(O) immigrant youths.

2.3.2.5 Interim Summary and Gaps in Literature. Identity development is both a key developmental and acculturative task for immigrant children and adolescents. Prior research (e.g., Baumert et al., 2024; Davis III & Kiang, 2016) has highlighted complex links between identity domains and psychosocial outcomes. Identification to origin culture (ethnic identity) is consistently associated with positive psychological outcomes, offering belonging and social support. Identification to host culture (national identity) has been less studied but shows potential benefits, especially when combined with biculturalism. Though less explored, cultural-related identities, such as religious, educational, and relational, also show important associations with well-being.

A major gap in the literature is the focus on ethnic identity, with other identity domains underexplored. Since multiple identities contribute to a coherent sense of

self and psychosocial adaptation (Erikson, 1968), broader investigation is needed. Moreover, sociocultural context may mediate identity's impact on well-being, highlighting the importance of understanding how immigrant youths interpret their sociocultural experience, and its influence on self-identity.

Addressing these gaps, the current mixed-method study explores the self-identities of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK. It qualitatively examines how they perceive their identities and contextual influences, and, quantitatively investigates links between identity domains and psychological well-being.

2.4 Study Aims and Research Questions

The current research is one of the first attempts that aimed at developing understanding towards a novel group of HK youths who have relocated to the UK since 2021 with the launch of the new visa route, and gave voice to this group of youths, in response to the social phenomenon of the influx of HK BN(O) immigrants since the year 2021.

In light of previous research on the identity development of immigrant youths, the proposed research aims to further build on the literature by addressing the following gaps in the literature: 1) the lack of in-depth consideration of immigrant youth's own experience and their understanding of their own identities 2) the lack of research on non-cultural identities, and their relationships with well-being and 3) the limited number of research on immigrant youths in the UK, especially the East Asians, and more specifically, HK immigrant youths.

The aims and the research questions of the current research are as follows:

Aims:

1. To explore the self-identification of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK, their understanding of their identities, and how they think their identity development can be supported.
2. To observe any changes in their self-identifications after coming to the UK. From this, insight about their acculturation and settlement might also be gained.
3. To investigate the relationship between the self-identity of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK and their well-being.

Research Questions:

1. How do HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK identify themselves and make sense of their identities?
2. How do HK BN(O) immigrant youths perceive changes in their identities after migrating to the UK, and how are these related to their adaptations?
3. How are the identities of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK related to their well-being?
4. How do the immigrant youths think their identity development can be supported by school and parents?

3. Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the methodological approach of this research. It first discusses the underpinning philosophical position and the researcher's positionality. It then addresses the ethical and language considerations in the research. Finally, it details research design, including participant recruitment, data collection, and the analytical procedures employed in this mixed-methods study.

3.2 Philosophical Perspective

This research adopts critical realism as its philosophical underpinning. Critical realism is a philosophical position that leverages aspects of both positivism and interpretivism. Researchers taking this position acknowledge that while external structures and events influence individuals' actions, as emphasised in positivism, individuals also actively interpret and make sense of their experiences based on their own understanding of the world, as highlighted in interpretivism (Mukambang, 2023; Sobh & Perry, 2006).

This research studies the self-identification and the well-being of youths who moved with their family from HK to the UK. In psychological theories such as symbolic interactionism (Serpe & Stryker, 2011) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), identity is often conceptualised as a socially-constructed concept that is also dependent on personal interpretation. However, this research also views the social structure, the immigration and acculturation experience, and different relationships that the youths have as some of the real, external factors that shape these youths' identities and well-being. By acknowledging both the influence of

external realities and the individual's capacity to interpret and make sense of their experiences, this study aligns with the critical realist perspective.

In addition, a critical realist perspective also fits the mixed-method research approach adopted by this study. A critical realist perspective provides researchers with the freedom to adopt and combine methodology based on the objectives of the research (Lipscomb, 2011; Porter et al., 2017). The objectives of the research are to understand the subjective perspectives of the immigrant youths on their identity and acculturation experience, and to capture the relationship between their identity and well-being, which can be regarded as an objective reality, and thus, utilising both quantitative and qualitative approaches would be helpful to address the research objectives.

3.3 Researcher Positionality

I recognise that my personal background may influence both the data collection and analysis processes in this research. I was born in HK in the 90s, prior to the handover of the sovereignty of HK in 1997. My experience of growing up in HK, and the socialisation by my family, schools and friends have all shaped my identity. I am holding a HK Special Administrative Region passport with my nationality recorded as “Chinese”, but I am also holding a BN(O) passport with my nationality written as “British National (Overseas)”, which is common among individuals born in HK in the 90s. Having grown up in HK, my experiences are closely tied to my interest in studying the identities of HK immigrant youths.

My decision to come to the UK for my studies further shapes this research focus. My shared cultural background with the participants can bring mutual

understanding between the participants and me; arguably enhancing my ability to interpret the data with more cultural sensitivity and potentially with greater depth. It also facilitates the building of rapport and trust during the interviews, which can contribute to a more insightful research process. For example, during the interviews, some participants expressed their interest in Hong Kong singers and athletes, which were references that I immediately understood and which served as points of connection between us.

While my background motivates my inquiry into how these children have adapted to life in the UK, I am fully aware that my identity and perspective are unique to me and may not represent the views or experiences of others. At the same time, I am aware that my positionality can influence how I conduct the research and interpret the findings. To make sure the research process is reflexive and balanced, I kept a journal and engaged in research supervision and peer discussions throughout the process.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The study was reviewed and approved by the UCL Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee, adhering to the BPS Code of Ethics throughout the research process.

Careful considerations were given to different aspects of the research, and the key aspects are discussed below. The complete, approved ethics form is in Appendix A.

3.4.1 Young Participants

Young people who are under 18 are potentially vulnerable participants, and practitioners working with them have duties to safeguard them. The study reached out to parents during recruitment, viewing them as the gatekeeper of the youths. Informed and written consent was sought from the parents, then the youths themselves. Information sheets (and verbal explanations when needed; Appendix B) about the research process and participants' rights were given to both the parents and the youths. They were also given opportunities to raise questions prior to the start of Phase I and Phase II. The researcher has an enhanced DBS check that granted the right to work with children and young people.

3.4.2 Online Interview Safety

Steps were taken to address safety, privacy and confidentiality specifically related to online interviews.

Participants were advised to join the interview at a safe and private location, such as their bedroom during the interview. Parents were given the choice to be present in the room without participating in the interview, and the researcher also conducted all the interviews at a private place, to avoid the leak of personal data. Of the eight interviews conducted, three participants had one or both parents present in the room. In all these cases, the parents did not engage with the interview content and were present solely to provide technical support if needed.

3.4.3 Sensitivity of Topic

Given the sensitive nature of identity, it was anticipated that topics such as participants' political views and reasons for migration might arise during interviews.

These topics could potentially carry risk for both participants and the researcher, particularly considering HK's legal context. In addition to formal ethical approval, this issue was carefully considered in supervision meetings to ensure participant safety, researcher protection, and research integrity. The following measures were taken:

- Anonymity: All interview data were anonymised. Pseudonyms were assigned using gender-neutral HK surnames, and identity pictures were presented without names to reduce the risk of recognition. When reporting demographics, only broad age brackets and general areas of residence were used.
- Data handling: All identifying digital data including names, contact details, Microsoft Teams call logs, and other metadata were permanently deleted once transcription or data entry into SPSS was complete.
- Balanced reporting: Adopting a critical realist stance, the researcher recognises that all accounts both from participants and the researcher are shaped by individual experiences and perspectives, and do not claim to represent an absolute "truth." Findings were therefore reported with balance and reflexivity, and interpretations were discussed with supervisors as the "outsiders" to provide alternative viewpoints and reduce bias.

3.5 Research Design

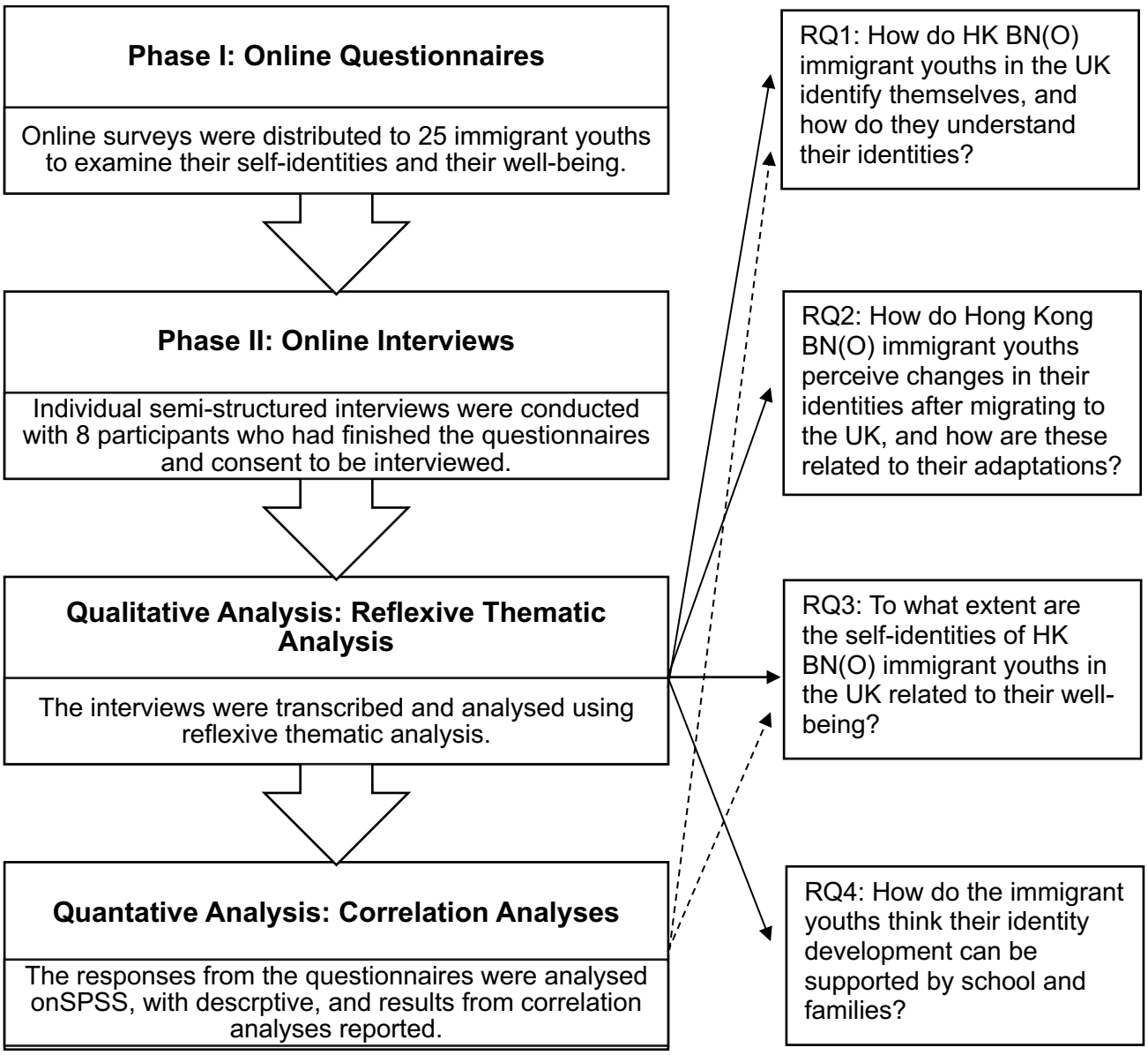
This study adopted a mixed-method design and involved two phases. It started with a quantitative phase (Phase I) with online questionnaires, followed by a qualitative phase (Phase II) that involved individual semi-structured interviews. The reason for assimilating the online questionnaires before the interviews was to reach a larger sample to identify potential participants for interview. However, during data

analysis, the qualitative data from the interviews were analysed first to ensure the analysis was more inductive and reduced the risk of interpreting interview data in a way that confirmed statistical trends. This balanced approach strengthened the study's ability to capture both the depth of individual narratives, and the broader generalisability of identity and well-being trends.

The design of the data collection and data analysis of the research and how the two phases contribute to the research questions are illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Overview of Research Design



3.5.1 Criteria for Participants

This research recruited immigrant youths including children and adolescents, aged between 10 – 15 years at the time of the study, who were born in and resided in HK most of the time during childhood, and who, with their families have relocated to the UK using the BN(O) visa since its launch in 2021.

Additional inclusion criteria include at least one year of residency in the UK, and at least 70% of time (i.e. 7.7 – 11.2 years, according to the age of the participants) spent in HK before moving to the UK, to ensure the participants had sufficient exposure to HK before coming to the UK, but who also had some living experience in the UK to reflect on and discuss in the interviews. Participants were screened with questions on the online questionnaire in Phase I (see Appendix C for the questionnaire). All participants who completed the questionnaires met the inclusion criteria, and thus all were included in the data analysis.

3.5.2 Recruitment

Phase I (online questionnaire) participants were recruited first through purposeful sampling and snowball sampling, with the aim of reaching the parental communities of HK immigrants in the UK. Recruitment advertisement (see Appendix D) was shared with two local authorities, and social media which are commonly used by Hong Kongers, including Facebook, Threads and Telegram. Personal networks were used, sharing the advertisement with parents who may have children meeting the research criteria. Recruitment through Facebook groups related to HK immigrants in the UK and through personal connections were the most effective method to recruit participants.

In the online questionnaire, participants were asked if they were interested in Phase II (individual interviews) and were invited to provide parental contact details if they wished to participate. Three participants expressed interest, and they all participated in Phase II.

As the target number of participants for Phase II was 5 – 10, to recruit more participants for Phase II, another recruitment advertisement for Phase II (see Appendix D) was shared via same ways used in Phase I. Five more eligible participants were recruited, who were required to complete the online questionnaire before taking part in the interviews.

While the research originally aimed to recruit more participants for Phase I to improve statistical power and make the results more generalisable, there were some challenges with recruitment. One reason could be that the Hongkonger community in the UK is spread out, which makes them harder to reach. Another possible reason, as mentioned in Section 3.4.3, is the sensitive nature of the research topic. For instance, during Phase II recruitment, one parent was interested in the study but worried about the possible sociopolitical consequences of her child taking part. She eventually agreed after a phone call explaining how her child's personal information would be protected throughout the research process. However, this may reflect a wider concern shared by others in the community.

3.5.3 Language Considerations

Whereas English and Chinese are the two official languages of HK, Cantonese (as a specific form of Chinese) is the mother tongue and everyday language of most Hong Kongers. Careful consideration was given to language use

throughout the data collection, data analysis and reporting of findings, to ensure participants could fully comprehend the study and express themselves comfortably. Additionally, language was carefully managed to accurately capture and reflect participants' thoughts, acknowledging language both shapes and guides human cognition, influencing how individuals perceive and interpret their experiences and social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978; Whorf, 2012).

The online questionnaire was translated by the researcher who is fluent in Cantonese and English, considering linguistic, psychological and cultural differences in HK and the UK, and used natural and child-friendly wordings. Acknowledging the researcher's own positionality as a bilingual speaker familiar with both cultural settings, and to minimise potential loss of meaning due to untranslatable terms or non-equivalent expressions, the translation focused on functional rather than literal equivalence. This approach was guided by the principles outlined in the International Test Commission (ITC) Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests (2017). The back-translation technique was then adopted, which is a common practice in cross-cultural research to validate the quality of the translation (Tyupa, 2011). The translated version of the questionnaire in Cantonese was back-translated by a peer, also a trainee EP coming from HK to the UK with psychological research experience and is proficient in Cantonese and English. The back translation was reviewed together, and the discrepancies of the translated and back-translated documents were discussed, until reaching an agreement with the wording. English and Cantonese translations were presented side by side when the participants filled in the questionnaires.

For the individual interviews, the interview schedule was developed in both Cantonese and English, and prior to the interview the participants were given a choice for the interview to be conducted in either of the languages. Seven participants preferred Cantonese and one participant chose English. The transcripts generated from the interviews were coded and analysed in their original language (Cantonese) to minimise the potential loss of meaning through translation, acknowledging the importance of maintaining linguistic and cultural nuances during data analysis (Temple & Young, 2004).

In reporting qualitative findings, selected quotes retain key words or expressions in the original language (Cantonese), followed by English translations. This approach preserves cultural nuance, particularly for emotionally or culturally embedded terms, and allows bilingual readers to engage more fully with participants' original phrasing. It is especially appropriate for a study centred on participants' voices and their self-articulation of identity. Retaining original expressions supports a more authentic representation of how identity is experienced and communicated, especially when terms lack direct English equivalents. For instance, the term “小學雞,” a highly localised expression used in HK to describe someone behaving childishly, was translated as “childish” but also presented in its original form to preserve its cultural specificity.

3.6 Phase I – Questionnaire

3.6.1 Development of Questionnaire and Piloting

The questionnaire (Appendix C) was developed with the aim to examine the self-identifications of the participants (RQ1), and the associations of different self-identities and their well-being (RQ3).

The first part of the questionnaire was about the sociodemographic information of the participants, which included their gender, age, years of residence in HK and the UK, paternal and maternal educational level as the measurement of socio-economic status, and self-rated language proficiency in Chinese and English. These demographics were all found to be factors that could impact the acculturation and the self-identification of immigrant youths (e.g., Maehler et al., 2021), and the questions about years of residence in the two places also acted as screening questions to ensure the participants met the inclusion criteria of the study. The wording of the questions and available answers, for example, on the options of parental educational level, were designed with reference to previous surveys conducted with HK immigrants in the UK (e.g., Chan et al., 2023; Rolfe & Benson, 2023).

The second part of the questionnaire examined the different identities of the participants. With reference to previous research looking into the identities of children and young people with migration or ethnic minority backgrounds (e.g., Alvarez et al., 2001; Robinson, 2005), eight identity labels were provided in the questionnaire, including Hong Konger, Chinese, British (ethnic/cultural identities), Asian (pan-ethnic identity), religious identity, student, and child and good friend (relational identities). The participants were asked to respond to indicate the strength, importance, and feelings towards each identity with four questions adopted from the Barrett's Strength of Identification Scale (Barrett, 2007), which made up 32 questions in total.

Developed by Barrett (2007), the Sense of Identity Scale (SoIS) measures the strength of national, ethnic, racial, and religious identities in children and young

people across several dimensions, including degree of identification, emotional attachment, and internalisation. The scale has been tested and used to assess a variety of identities in diverse ethnic groups, such as the national identity of adolescents in Scotland and Wales (Penny et al., 2001), the cultural identities of ethnically mixed youth in the UK (Alexander, 2002), the religious identities of Albanian children in Greece (Manouka, 2001) and in England (Takriti, 2002), and the multiple identities of English, Indian, and Pakistani children (Vethanayagam & Barrett, 2007), in samples ranging from age 5 to 18. Across these studies, the scale demonstrated acceptable to excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .60 to .91. Factor analyses consistently supported a unidimensional structure, with eigenvalues ranging from 2.02 to 3.30 and variance explained ranging from 40.8% to 80.1%, providing evidence for the scale's construct validity.

The current study adapted Barrett's Strength of Identification Scale (Barrett, 2007) by selecting four dimensions (Degree of Identification, Pride, Importance, and Feelings) that were deemed most relevant from the original six. In addition, relational and educational identities were incorporated alongside the cultural and religious identities included in the original scale. As a result of these adaptations, previous psychometric evidence (e.g., reliability and construct validity) may not be directly applicable, but can still serve as a useful point of reference. Despite the need for modification that may potentially impacted the reliability and reliability of the scale, this scale was considered more suitable for the current study than other commonly used measures. For instance, scales such as the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) or the Language, Identity, and Behavioral Acculturation Scale (LIB; Birman & Trickett, 2001) focus on a single type of identity (e.g., ethnic or

acculturative), while single-item, unidimensional measures (e.g., Bhui et al., 2005) may not adequately capture the multidimensional nature of identity explored in this study.

The third part of the questionnaire examined the participants' self-indicated well-being using the 14-item Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF; Lamers et al., 2011). The MHC-SF measures the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of the participants by asking how often they have different feelings and thoughts related to different aspects of well-being in the past month, on a 6-point scale (1 - Never, 6 - Everyday). A sample question from the scale is 'How in the past month did you feel that your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it?'. The results from this scale were computed into three main scores by adding the scores of items measuring emotional (3 items), social (5 items) and psychological (6 items) well-being for further analysis. The scale has been used in various research with typically-developing youths with different cultures of origins such as Chinese (Guo et al., 2015), Portuguese (de Carvalho et al., 2016), Dutch (Luijten et al., 2019), and Hungarian (Reinhardtz et al., 2020), aged between 7–20 years, showing good validity and reliability in psychometric properties analyses.

The draft of the questionnaire was piloted with two peers who have similar research background and proficiency in English and Chinese. Minor amendments were made regarding the grammar and wording of a few questions after piloting and discussion. The finalised questionnaire was then administered on Qualtrics, an online survey tool chosen for its flexible survey design and user-friendly interface for participants.

3.6.2 Data Analysis

The anonymised data collected from the online questionnaires were recorded and analysed with the statistical software SPSS (Version 29, IBM, 2024). First, normality tests were conducted on demographics, “identity strength” and “well-being” scores to determine the appropriateness of parametric or non-parametric statistical tests . The findings from the quantitative analysis were mainly used to address RQ1 (How do HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK identify themselves, and how do they understand their identities?) and RQ3 (To what extent are the self-identities of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK related to their well-being?), and used to supplement the findings from qualitative analysis for RQ2 (How do Hong Kong BN(O) immigrant youths perceive changes in their identities after migrating to the UK, and how are these related to their adaptations?).

To address RQ1, descriptive statistics (percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were used to summarise the strength of identification with the listed identities.

For RQ3, preliminary correlation analyses were conducted to identify associations between different identity strengths and well-being scores. Additionally, correlation analyses were performed between demographic variables (gender, age, years of residence in HK and the UK, parental education level, and self-rated Chinese and English proficiency), identity strength, and well-being scores to assess potential confounding variables.

Based on the results of correlation analyses, partial correlations were used to further explore the relationships between identified measures of identity, demographics and well-being.

3.7 Phase II – Semi-structured Interview

3.7.1 Development of Interview Schedule and Piloting

To explore participants' understanding of their identities and their experiences related to identity, semi-structured interviews were chosen. This approach allows the researcher to ask open-ended questions focused on the topic while maintaining flexibility to explore and probe based on participants' responses (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

An interview schedule was developed, which was recommended for semi-structured interviews (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The interview schedule was designed based on the objectives of the research to explore the understanding, feelings, and perceived changes in the participants' identities after coming to the UK. The development of the schedule was also informed by Barrett's Strength of Identification Scale (Barrett, 2007), which measures identity strength across multiple dimensions, and by Ruble et al.'s (2004) research on the multidimensional nature of social identity.

The draft of the interview schedule was reviewed by the same peers mentioned in section 3.5.1. The schedule was then piloted with a 14-year-old participant with informed consent, with the participant's opinions on the structure, wording, and content of the interview schedule sought. The pilot interview was excluded from data analysis. While the overall structure and content remained largely appropriate, some wording adjustments were made to enhance comprehension for children and young people participating in the interviews. For example, the question "How do you think your school/parent can help you to build your identity?" was changed to "How do you think your school/parent can help you to

be yourself, or understand who you are?” More prompting questions were added to the draft to facilitate the participants’ understanding of the questions, and to further prompt further discussion around the topics. The final version of the interview schedule is in Appendix E.

3.7.2 Ranking Activity

A ranking activity adopted from the research by Ruble et al. (2004) was used as an activity to facilitate the interviews. During the online interviews, a PowerPoint slide with eight identity labels used on the questionnaire in Phase I were presented on the screen (see Appendix F), including Hong Konger, Chinese, British, Asian, religious identity, and identities as a student, the child of parents, and good friend. Participants were first asked to choose the most important identity for them. Questions about that identity were asked, e.g., “How do you feel about having this identity? Why?”, with follow-up questions that varied based on the responses of the participants. After discussing their most important identity, participants were asked to identify their second most important identity, and the process was repeated until they had ranked five identities in order of importance. Participants were allowed to revise their rankings if they changed their views during the interview. For example, one participant, after initially placing "sibling" lower, later reconsidered its importance and moved it to a higher rank than some identities discussed earlier.

In addition, the participants were asked to provide any identities that they found important to them but had not been included in the eight labels, and then also include the proposed identities into the ranking. The identity as a “sibling” was the only additional identity proposed by the participants on top of the eight identity labels provided. After the first participant being interviewed proposed the sibling identity as

an important identity in the interview, this identity was added into the options of identities in the later interviews. With the addition of this label, four out of eight participants discussed this identity during the interviews, and three of them ranked the sibling identity as an important identity.

Recognising that individuals perceive and experience their identities in diverse ways, some flexibility was allowed during the identity-ranking task when participants found the original instruction challenging. While participants were asked to rank their five most important identities, one participant expressed difficulty limiting their choices to five and was permitted to rank six identities. Two participants indicated that they could not identify five identities as particularly important and were therefore allowed to rank only four.

3.7.3 Identity Drawing

At the end of the interview, the participants were asked to draw an “identity drawing” to illustrate their different identities with the following prompt: “Following this interview, please draw a picture of your different identities, showing how you see yourself as a person.” This activity was adapted from the study by Sirin and Fine (2008), as an additional way to complement verbal narratives and provide deeper insight towards participants’ perceptions towards their identities. Drawing is commonly used as a visual narrative approach in social research with children (e.g., Clacherty, 2024; Herth, 1998) to explore how they make sense of their experiences and is often combined with other methods as part of methodological triangulation. Most participants were willing to draw the identity drawing after the interview, although a few expressed that they were not very good at drawing. 7 out of 8 participants drew the identity picture. Their drawings clearly reflected their perceptions towards their identities, offering invaluable insights on top of their sharing during the interviews.

3.7.4 Data Analysis

With parental and children’s consent, eight individual interviews were conducted using Microsoft Teams, due to its commonality and its more accurate auto-transcriptions of different languages including Cantonese and English. Additionally, it provided a secure platform for storing recordings on the UCL Drive, providing extra protection to the data collected.

The transcripts generated by Microsoft Teams were reviewed whilst listening to the audio recordings of the interviews. The transcripts were then analysed by reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Reflexive thematic analysis

involves actively and recursively analysing the descriptive data to generate meaningful themes from the data, emphasising flexibility and reflexivity throughout the process (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This approach was chosen as it enables a flexible and reflexive exploration of participants' identity experiences, identifying individual experiences but also shared patterns among the narratives. In addition, this framework acknowledges the role of subjectivity in the research process, recognising that the researcher actively engages in theme generation (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This aligns with the study's recognition of the researcher's positionality as a HK BN(O) holder in the UK, and its potential influence on data interpretation. Moreover, it emphasises the importance of reflexivity, encouraging a critical examination of how the researcher's positionality shapes the analytical process and findings, for instance, in interpreting participants' attitudes toward different identities and their sense of belonging.

Braun and Clarke (2022) outlined six phases for reflexive thematic analysis, which were applied recursively in this study, as emphasised by the authors. The six phases and how the six phases were followed in this study were detailed below.

Phase 1: Familiarisation with the data

Me as the researcher/interviewer first engaged with the data within the interview process. Audio recordings and transcripts were generated from the online interviews on Microsoft Teams. The transcriptions were reviewed and amended on Microsoft Word by me, and each of the recordings were listened to for three to five times to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts. One recording, in particular, was reviewed five times due to the participant speaking rapidly, sharing a large volume of information, and experiencing background interruptions (e.g., being interrupted by

family members at home). This ensured that all relevant content was accurately captured.

During the transcription process, the responses that stood out to me were highlighted, with notes of initial thoughts marked beside the sentences, for example, the note “pressure to integrate into British culture?” was marked down when one participant said that it was necessary to learn to become a British. Initial thoughts of the whole dataset (e.g., student identity brings friendships) were also recorded in the reflective journal.

Phase 2: Coding

After data familiarisation, I engaged in a more systematic and thorough process to identify segments of data in the transcript, that were relevant and meaningful in relation to the research questions and applied codes to them. The whole coding process were conducted on Microsoft Word. Although software such as NVivo was initially considered, after experimentation and consultation with peers, I chose to use Microsoft Word, as it provided a more direct and efficient method with which I was familiar through prior experience. A sample of the codes generated from the transcripts can be found in Appendix G.

According to Braun and Clarke (2022), coding can vary on spectrums in terms of orientation to data (from inductive to deductive) and focus of meaning (from semantic to latent). This study adopted a more inductive approach in coding as this study focused on exploring how HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK construct, perceive, and experience their identities. Being more inductive and allowing themes to be identified from participants’ narratives ensured the analysis was more grounded

in their lived experiences and their own voices, instead of shaped by pre-existing assumptions. However, this does not mean that pre-existing identity theories were entirely disregarded. When relevant concepts arose, theoretical terms, such as Barry's theory of acculturation (1997), were noted in brackets to guide further interpretation and reflection, ensuring a balanced engagement between data-driven insights and existing frameworks.

In terms of the focus of meaning of the codes, the study adopted an approach more oriented to semantic coding, to ensure that the analysis reflected the participants narratives and lived experiences about their identity. This choice also acknowledged my positionality, aiming to minimise the risk of overinterpreting or misinterpreting the data in a way that might overly reflect my own identity and perspective.

To enhance the trustworthiness and reflexive rigour of the analysis, a peer review of the initial coding was undertaken. The peer review was not intended to validate the codes in an objective sense, but to provide a dialogic space for critical reflection and to help refine the clarity and descriptive accuracy of the codes. Samples of the codes were reviewed by a peer, and any disagreements regarding coding approach or wording were discussed until a consensus was reached. Following this process, I revisited all codes and made adjustments based on the standards agreed during the peer review, particularly in relation to clarity and descriptiveness. For instance, the code "Not holding religious identity as parents" was revised to "Not having a religious identity despite parents being religious" to more accurately reflect the meaning conveyed by the participant.

Phase 3: Generating Initial Themes and Phase

After amendments to the codes, a codebook was created (see Appendix H for an example) with all the codes and quotes of participants, to facilitate the reviewing and clustering of codes with shared meaning into themes and subthemes in relation to the research questions. The clustering process was gradual, beginning with rough notes on how ideas appeared related, for example, I noticed that a few participants mentioned their experience related to discrimination and racism, so I put the related codes together and grouped them as ‘experience of racism’, which then have become one of the subthemes later.

Phase 4: Developing themes & Phase 5: Refining, defining and naming themes

The initial notes about the shared meanings between the codes were then reviewed more systematically alongside the codes and abstracts, evolving into structured themes and subthemes through an iterative process. A thematic map was created (see section 4.3.3), and the initial themes and subthemes were shared with a peer and research supervisors, which were then refined. Each theme and subtheme was then clearly defined with written descriptions to ensure precise conceptual boundaries and consistency (see Appendix I for finalised themes, subthemes and example codes).

Phase 6: Write-up

The refined themes and subthemes are presented in Findings (Chapter 4), explained and elaborated together with relevant quotes. In the discussion (Chapter 5), the findings from the reflexive thematic analysis were discussed together with the quantitative findings to provide a more thorough insight into the research questions.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology, including philosophical foundations, the researcher's positionality, and the mixed-methods research design. Ethical considerations related to participant recruitment, data collection, and analysis were discussed. In Phase 1, participants completed questionnaires assessing their identities and well-being. In Phase 2, individual interviews were conducted to explore their experiences and perspectives on identity, with most participants also creating an identity drawing. The study employed reflexive thematic analysis for qualitative data and correlation analyses for quantitative data.

4. Results

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the findings from both study phases. The quantitative results from Phase I are presented first, examining participants' identification with different identities and their relationship with well-being. Next, themes and subthemes generated through the reflexive thematic analysis of the qualitative data in Phase II are presented. The focus is on self-identification, changes in identity after migration, participants' perspectives on the relationship between identity and well-being, and how schools and parents can support identity development. Last, the quantitative and qualitative data are discussed in synthesis in the discussion in the next Chapter.

4.2 Phase I: Online Questionnaires

Responses from the online questionnaires (N = 25) were entered into IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29, 2024) and analysed. Participant characteristics are presented first, followed by descriptive statistics on their self-reported identities and well-being. Results from correlational analyses examining the relationships between different identities and well-being are then reported.

4.2.1 Participant Characteristics

Of the 25 questionnaires completed by participants, four contained some missing responses across different sections. However, as these questionnaires were largely completed, they were included in the analysis for the sections where data was available. Pairwise deletion was adopted to handle missing data in this study. This method retains as many valid cases as possible for each analysis, which was

particularly important given the small sample size. It avoids the potential drawbacks of mean substitution, such as reduced data variability, especially for measures of identity which can vary a lot. It also avoids inflating statistical relationships artificially. While pairwise deletion can lead to varying sample sizes across analyses, this was considered acceptable due to the exploratory nature of the study and its aim to identify general patterns rather than to draw inferential conclusions. Participant demographics are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Mean	SD	Range
Age	13.39	1.41	10 – 15
English Proficiency*	7.36	1.75	2 –10
Cantonese Proficiency*	8.50	1.62	3 – 10
Length of Stay in HK (Months)	134.52	19.11	86 – 168
Length of Stay in UK (Months)	30.56	11.60	12 – 50

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	6	24.0
	Female	18	72.0
	Not Stated	1	4.0
	Total	25	100
Paternal Highest Educational Level	Primary School or Below	0	0
	Secondary School	2	8.0
	Associate Degree/Higher Diploma	1	4.0
	Undergraduate degree	9	36.0
	Master Degree or Above	11	44.0
	Not Stated	2	8.0
	Total	25	100
Maternal Highest Educational Level	Primary School or Below	0	0
	Secondary School	3	12.0
	Associate Degree/Higher Diploma	5	20.0
	Undergraduate degree	9	36.0
	Master Degree or Above	6	24.0
	Not Stated	2	8.0
	Total	25	100

* For language proficiency, ‘0’ represents ‘no knowledge’ and ‘10’ represents ‘very fluent’.

The sample had a mean age of 13.39 years (SD = 1.41) and had lived in HK for an average of 134.52 months (SD = 19.11), or approximately 11.21 years, before relocating to the UK. On average, participants have been residing in the UK for 30.56 months/2.55 years (SD = 11.60). The majority of participants were female (72%). Most participants (80%) reported that their fathers held an undergraduate degree or higher, and over half (60%) reported the same level of education for their mothers, suggesting a generally high level of parental education within the sample.

4.2.2 Descriptives: Overview of Participants' Self-Identities and Well-Being

Descriptive statistics for participants' self-reported identities and well-being are presented in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. For each identity label, participants responded to four questions, and the total strength score was calculated by summing these responses. Scores could range from 4 (weakest identification) to 16 (strongest identification). For well-being, scores were calculated in line with the original structure of the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF; Lamers et al., 2011). Participant responses were grouped into emotional, psychological, and social well-being subscales. These were then summed to generate an overall well-being score, ranging from 14 (lowest) to 84 (highest).

Table 2

Descriptives of Identity Scores (Highest to Lowest Identification Strength)

Identity	n	Mean	SD	Range
Child (of Parents)	24	13.71	2.35	8 – 16
Student	24	13.21	4.26	9 – 16
Good Friend	23	12.96	2.80	7 – 16
Hong Konger	25	12.04	2.94	6 – 16
Asian	25	11.84	3.10	7 – 16
Religious	6	11.33	2.25	7 – 13
British	25	8.36	2.31	5 – 15
Chinese	25	7.56	2.50	4 – 13

The identities participants identified most strongly with were: child of parents (M = 13.71, SD = 2.35), student (M = 13.21, SD = 4.26), and good friend (M = 12.96, SD = 2.80), indicating the importance of relational and educational roles for the identities of the participants. Among cultural identities, “Hong Konger” had the highest mean score (M = 12.04, SD = 2.94), reflecting a strong sense of cultural belonging to HK. In contrast, participants reported weaker identification with broader ethnic or host culture labels, such as “Chinese” (M = 7.56, SD = 2.50) and “British” (M = 8.36, SD = 2.31). Although only reported by six participants, religious identity had a high mean (M = 11.33, SD = 2.25), indicating this is a meaningful identity for those who held this. Overall, the data suggest that participants tended to place greater importance on personal and relational roles and the cultural identity of “Hong Konger,” while showing less connection to broader or host cultural labels.

Table 3 shows the scores for the emotional, social, psychological and total well-being of participants.

Table 3

Descriptives of Self-Reported Well-being Scores

Type of Well-Being	n	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range of Reported Scores
Emotional	24	13.75	3.11	3	18	6 – 18
Social	22	16.05	5.64	5	30	5 – 26
Psychological	23	24.74	6.85	6	36	12 – 36
Total	22	54.05	12.85	14	84	28 – 79

It is important to note that each domain of well-being was calculated using a different number of items—emotional well-being from 3 items, social well-being from 5 items, and psychological well-being from 6 items. Therefore, direct comparisons between mean scores across these domains are not appropriate. Instead, interpretations are based on the relative position of scores within the possible range for each subscale (see Table 3 for minimum and maximum scores).

Overall, the participants reported moderate to high levels of well-being, with the mean total well-being score being 54.05 out of 84. Psychological well-being also had a high mean score (M = 24.74, SD = 6.85), suggesting that many participants experienced a sense of meaning, purpose, and personal growth. Emotional well-being also showed a relatively high score (M = 13.75, SD = 3.11), indicating generally positive emotional experiences. Social well-being had a lower mean score (M = 16.05, SD = 5.64) and the widest range (5–26), reflecting greater variability in participants' perceived social integration and connectedness. These findings suggest that while many HK BN(O) immigrant youths in this study may be coping well psychologically and emotionally, their social well-being which is closely tied to their

adjustment and sense of belonging in a new cultural environment, may be more vulnerable and uneven.

4.2.2.1 Bicultural Identification. To explore whether participants identified strongly with both their culture of origin and the host culture (reflecting a potential bicultural identity), a cross-tabulation was carried out using binary classifications of Hong Konger and British identity strength. Similar to the approach adopted by Berry & Sabatier (2011) to distinguish between different acculturation attitudes, the scalar midpoint of 10 of the 4 – 16 identity scale was used to distinguish low and high identification to Hong Konger/British identity. Although alternative approaches such as median splits were considered, using a consistent cut-off point allowed for clearer interpretation and comparability across different identity domains. Identity scores were recoded into two categories: "low identification" (scores below 10) and "high identification" (scores of 10 or above) for both Hong Konger and British identities. The number of participants falling into each combination (e.g. high–high, high–low, low–high, low–low) was calculated to examine patterns of dual identification. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Cross-Tabulation of Participants' Strength of Identification with Hong Konger and British Identities

	Low British Identity	High British Identity
High Hong Konger Identity	14 (56%)	5 (20%)
Low Hong Konger Identity	5 (20%)	1 (4%)

From the cross-tabulation, among the 25 participants, 14 participants (56%) reported strong identification as Hong Kongers but not as British. This was followed by participants who identified strongly with both identities (bicultural identity; n = 5) and those who identified weakly with both (n = 5). Only one participant reported strong identification with British identity but not with Hong Konger identity.

Due to the small overall sample and very low cell counts in some categories (e.g., n = 1 for high British – low Hong Konger identity), further statistical analysis was not conducted. The small and unequal group sizes violate key assumptions for inferential testing (e.g., Chi-square that requires the sample size of each size to be greater than 5; Field, 2024), reducing statistical power and increasing the likelihood of spurious or misleading results. Therefore, the cross-tabulation is presented descriptively to illustrate broad trends in cultural identification, rather than to make statistical inferences.

4.2.3 Correlational Analyses

Preliminary correlational analyses were conducted to identify significant associations between different identity types and well-being scores. Correlations of demographic variables with identities and well-being were also run to identify potential confounding variables from the demographic variables, such as age, duration of stay in HK and in the UK, language proficiency, that may influence these relationships.

4.2.3.1 Normality Tests. Normality tests were conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed, which informed the choice between parametric and non-parametric analyses. As normality tests alone are considered insufficiently

reliable (Field, 2024), Q–Q plots and histograms were also examined. Except for length of stay in HK and the UK, strength of Hong Konger identity, and the emotional, social, psychological, and total well-being scores, most data did not meet normality assumptions. Therefore, Spearman's rank correlation, a non-parametric test not requiring normal distribution, was used for all correlation analyses. Although some variables met the normality assumptions for parametric testing, a consistent statistical approach was applied to ensure comparability across analyses and avoid discrepancies from using mixed methods. The full correlations are presented in Tables 5, 6 and 7.

Table 5

Spearman's Correlations between Demographics and Identities

	Hong-Konger	Chinese	British	Asian	Religious	Child	Student	Good Friend
Gender	.13	-.15	-.18	.32	-.43	.09	-.08	.39
Age	.22	-.30	-.27	-.11	-.32	-.42*	-.07	-.13
English Proficiency	-.14	.08	.10	.12	.21	.01	-.07	.00
Cantonese Proficiency	.51*	-.01	-.10	.29	.38	.27	.23	.40
Paternal Highest Educational Level	-.05	.30	-.37	-.18	.53	.21	.36	-.27
Maternal Highest Educational Level	.27	.40	.18	.19	.44	.05	.16	.03
Length of Stay in HK	.17	-.26	-.19	.09	-.44	-.01	.01	.25
Length of Stay in the UK	-.25	.11	-.26	-.50*	.33	-.25	-.12	-.36

* indicates p<.05, ** indicates p<.001.

Table 6

Spearman's Correlations between Demographics and Well-being

	Emotional	Social	Psychological	Total
Gender	-.16	.01	.38	.18
Age	-.37	-.47*	-.22	-.44
English Proficiency	-.23	.02	-.04	-.06
Cantonese Proficiency	.22	.03	.62**	.34
Paternal Highest Educational Level	.34	-.30	-.08	-.21
Maternal Highest Educational Level	-.02	.10	-.04	.04
Length of Stay in HK	-.11	-.12	.24	.09
Length of Stay in the UK	.01	-.47*	-.43*	-.50*

* indicates p<.05, ** indicates p<.001.

Table 7

Spearman's Correlations between Identities and Well-being

	Hong-Konger	Chinese	British	Asian	Religious	Child	Student	Good Friend
Emotional	.08	.30	.07	-.08	.85*	.63**	.68**	.16
Social	.38	-.09	.39	.68**	.05	.43*	.30	.48*
Psychological	.57**	-.07	.26	.65**	.53	.55**	.39	.78**
Total	.42	-.06	.32	.61**	.46	.58**	.41	.66**

* indicates p<.05, ** indicates p<.001.

The Spearman's correlation analyses revealed a number of statistically significant relationships between the examined demographics, strength of identity, and the well-being of participants, which will be presented below.

4.2.3.2 Demographics and Identities. When exploring relationships between demographics and identities, Cantonese fluency was positively correlated with Hong Konger identity (r_s = .51, p = .011), while length of stay in the UK was negatively

correlated with Asian identity (r_s = -.50, p = .012). Additionally, age showed a negative correlation with identifying as a parent's child (r_s = -.42, p = .050). All identified correlations were moderate in strength (Evans, 1996) and significant at the .05 level, warranting caution in interpretation.

4.2.3.3 Demographics and Well-being. Some significant associations between demographics and well-being were also revealed through the correlational analyses. At the .05 significance level, length of stay in the UK was negatively correlated with social (r_s = -.47, p = .028), psychological (r_s = -.43, p = .042), and total well-being (r_s = -.50, p = .017), suggesting that a longer stay in the UK was linked to lower well-being in these areas.

Additionally, age showed a negative correlation with social well-being (r_s = -.47, p = .038), suggesting that older participants reported lower social well-being. The only positive demographic correlation was found between Cantonese fluency and psychological well-being (r_s = .62, p = .002), which could be classified as a strong association (Evans, 1996).

4.2.3.4 Identities and Well-being. Several positive correlations were identified between identity variables and well-being. Asian identity was strongly correlated with psychological (r_s = .68, p < .001) and total well-being (r_s = .67, p = .001), and moderately associated with social well-being (r_s = .48, p = .029). Good friend identity demonstrated similar patterns, showing positive associations with psychological (r_s = .78, p < .001), social (r_s = .48, p = .029), and total well-being (r_s = .67, p = .001). Identity as a child was positively correlated with different dimensions of well-being, including emotional (r_s = .63, p < .001), social (r_s = .43, p = .049), psychological (r_s =

.55, p = .007), and overall well-being (r_s= .58, p = .004). Additionally, Hong Konger identity was positively associated with psychological well-being (r_s = .57, p = .004), and both religious identity (r_s = .85, p = .032) and student identity (r_s = .68, p < .001) were positively related to emotional well-being.

To further unpick the identified relationships between identity and well-being, while considering the identified demographics that were related to identity or/and well-being as potential confounding variables of the relations, further analyses were conducted.

4.2.4 Partial Correlations: Further Exploring the Identity-Well-Being Relationship

Following the initial correlation analyses, partial correlations were conducted to further investigate the relationships between identity, well-being, and demographic variables that showed significant three-way associations. Partial correlation analysis allows for the examination of the relationship between two variables while controlling for the effect of a third (Field, 2024). This approach was used to assess whether the associations between identity and well-being remained significant after accounting for potential confounders such as age, length of stay in the UK, or Cantonese proficiency.

Four non-parametric partial correlations were conducted, and the results are reported below. It is worth noting that fewer participants were included in these analyses due to missing data, which was handled with the approach mentioned in section 4.2.1. This is because SPSS performs listwise deletion for partial correlations, requiring complete data for all variables involved, whereas bivariate

correlations use pairwise deletion. This reduction in sample size was considered when interpreting the results.

4.2.4.1 Hong Konger, Cantonese Proficiency & Psychological Well-being. Among the 22 participants included in this analysis, psychological well-being was positively correlated with Hong Konger identity (r_s = .52, p = .013) and Cantonese proficiency (r_s = .62, p = .002). A strong positive correlation was also found between HKer identity and Cantonese fluency (r_s = .60, p = .003). However, when controlling for Cantonese proficiency in partial correlation, the relationship between Hong Konger identity and psychological well-being weakened and became non-significant (partial r = .234, p = .307). This may be explained by collinearity, as Hong Konger identity and Cantonese proficiency were correlated at a moderate level. These variables likely share overlapping variance in their relationship with well-being, making it difficult to separate their unique contributions in a small sample.

4.2.4.2 Asian Identity, Length of Stay in the UK & Well-being. Positive associations were found between Asian identity with psychological well-being (r_s = .65, p <.001, n = 23) and total well-being (r_s = .61, p = .003, n = 22). The length of stay in the UK, however, was found to be negatively correlated to Asian identity (r_s = -.46, p = .027), psychological well-being (r_s = -.43, p = .042) and total well-being (r_s = -.57, p = .006). This suggested that the length of stay in the UK may influence the relationship between Asian identity and well-being.

Partial correlation analyses controlling for length of stay showed that the positive associations between Asian identity and both psychological well-being (partial r = .57, p = .006) and total well-being (partial r = .45, p = .038) remained

statistically significant, though slightly reduced. This indicates that while longer residence in the UK is associated with lower Asian identity and well-being, Asian identity still makes a meaningful and independent contribution to well-being beyond the effect of time spent in the UK.

4.2.4.3 Child identity, Age & Social Well-being. Initial correlation analyses revealed significant associations between child identity, age, and social well-being, suggesting that age might confound the relationship between child identity and social well-being. However, when the analysis was restricted to the 20 participants with complete data across all three variables, none of the correlations remained statistically significant. As a result, partial correlation analysis was not conducted to avoid drawing conclusions from a small and non-significant subset of the sample.

4.3 Phase II: Individual Interviews & Identity Drawings

Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) was used to explore the data collected from the eight individual interviews. This section begins by describing the characteristics of the interviewees, followed by an overview of how participants ranked the importance of their different identities. It then presents the key themes and subthemes identified in the analysis, supported by interview quotations and participants' identity drawings.

4.3.1 Participant Characteristics

Table 8 presents the participants' gender, age range, and duration of stay in the UK at the time of the interview. To preserve anonymity, each participant was assigned an androgynous pseudonym, and only their age range was reported. The

sample included six females and two males, recruited from various areas across the UK, including regions in the South East, Midlands, and North of England.

Table 8

Characteristics of Interview Participants

Participant (Pseudonym)	Age range	Length of Stay in the UK
Au	12 – 13	3 years
Bak	12 – 13	3 years
Chan	10 – 11	2 years
Dai	12 – 13	1 year
Fung	10 – 11	3 years
Gong	14 – 15	2.5 years
Hou	14 – 15	3 years
Ip	10 – 11	1.5 year

4.3.2 Ranking of Identities

During the interviews, participants were asked to rank different identities by personal importance. While individual ranking patterns were not incorporated directly into the thematic analysis, overall distributions are presented in Table 9 to illustrate general trends in identity importance. These rankings are also referenced where relevant to support the identified themes.

Table 9

Identity Ranking Distribution by Importance

Identity	Ranking Distribution (Number of Participants)	Total number of participants who ranked this identity
Hong Konger	1st: 2 2nd: 1 3rd: 3 4th: 1 5th: 1	8
Chinese	5th: 1	1
British	3rd: 1 4th: 1	2
Asian	2nd: 1 4th : 2	3
Religious	1st: 1 4th: 1	2
Child (of Parents)	1st: 2 2nd: 2 3rd: 1 6th: 1	6
Student	1st: 2 2nd: 1 3rd: 1 4th: 1 5th: 2	7
Good Friend	1st: 1 2nd: 3 3rd: 2 4th: 1 5th: 1	8
Siblings*	2nd: 2 5th: 1 Not ranked: 1**	4

* The option to identify as a younger/older sibling was not originally included but was added as an option after the first participant proposed this as an important identity.

** One participant mentioned and discussed the identity as a sibling but decided not to rank it as an important identity.

Viewing the total number of participants who ranked each identity, the identities of “good friend” and “Hong Konger” were consistently rated as important by all participants. The identities of “student” and “child of parents” were also widely seen as significant, with 7 and 6 participants rated them as important respectively. The distribution of the ranking showed similar patterns. Six participants ranked “Hong Konger” at the top 3 position, six ranked “good friend” at the top 3, and five ranked the identity as a child at the top 3.

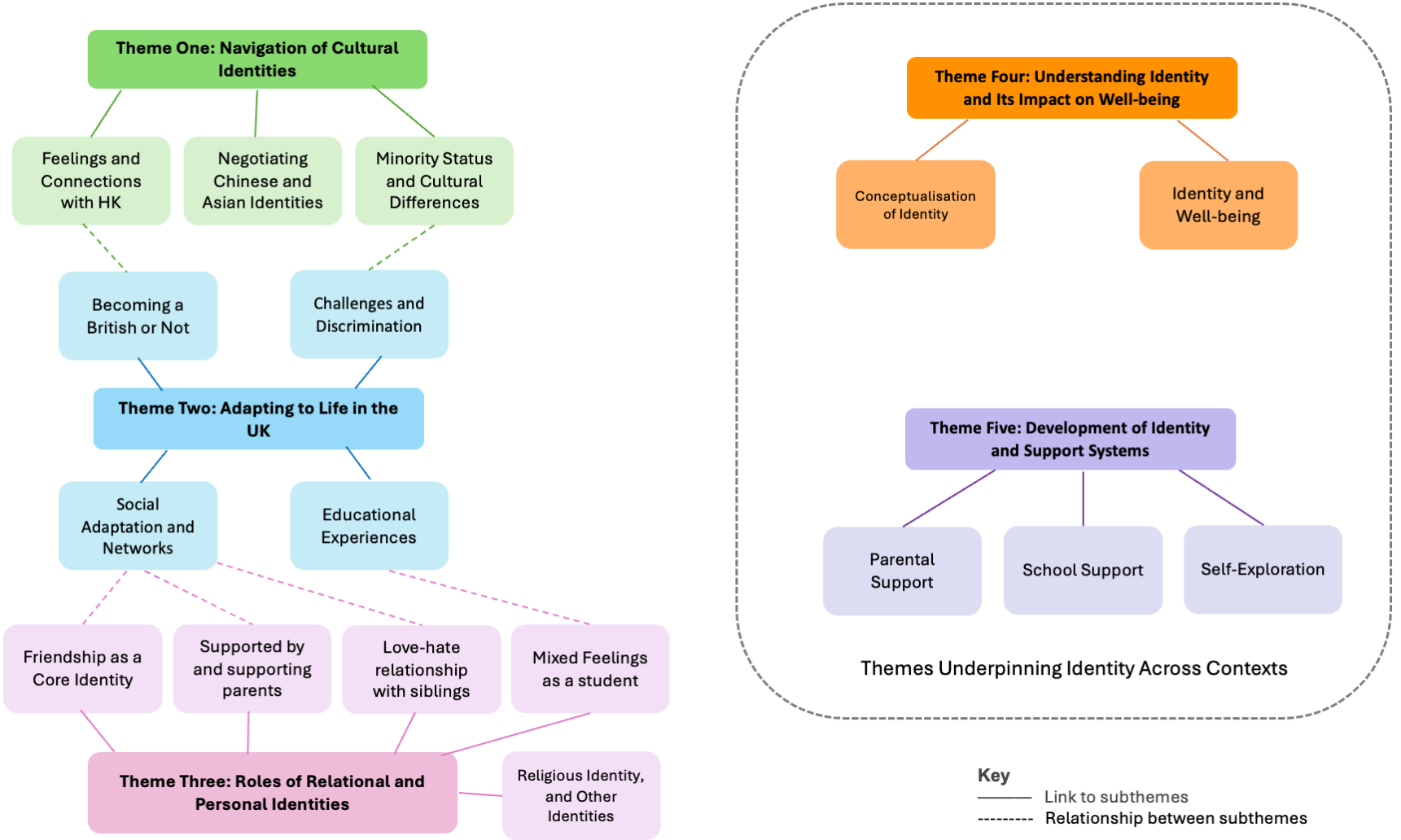
4.3.3 Overview of Thematic Map

Five key themes were identified from the data using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), including “*Navigation of Cultural Identities”, “Adapting to Life in the UK”, “Roles of Relational and Personal Identities”, “Understanding Identity and Its Impact on Well-being”*, and *“Development of Identity and Support Systems”*. Each of the themes encompass subthemes that illustrate the findings. The thematic map is presented in Figure 5, and a table detailing the themes, subthemes and example codes can be found in Appendix I.

The themes and subthemes will be discussed in Chapter 5, supported by relevant interview quotations and supplemented by the “identity drawings” drawn by the participants after the interviews. As stated in section 3.5.3 (Language Considerations), some key terms in the quotes will be presented both in English and Cantonese, to ensure cultural nuance is preserved and participants’ intended meanings are accurately conveyed.

Figure 5

Thematic Map



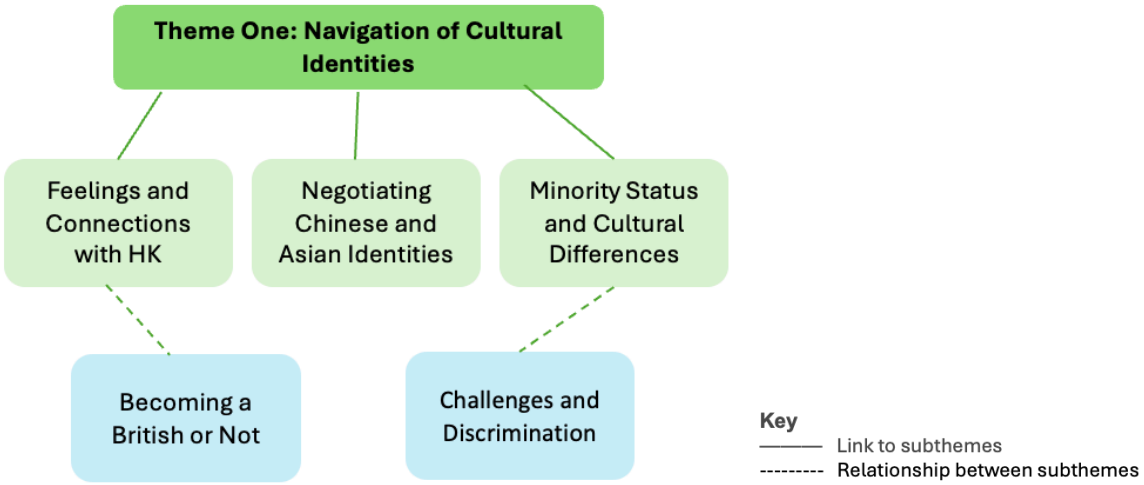
4.3.4 Theme One: Navigation of Cultural Identities

This theme explores how immigrant youths perceive and negotiate their cultural identities, including Hong Konger, Asian, and Chinese identities, and also provides insights to how the experience of immigration can impact their perceptions of their cultural identities.

The three subthemes are shown in Figure 6, alongside their relationships with other subthemes.

Figure 6

Theme One Thematic Map



4.3.4.1 Feelings and Connections with HK. All participants regarded their Hong Konger identity as significant, linking it to their birthplace and upbringing. Many expressed strong emotional connections and affection to HK and Hong Konger.

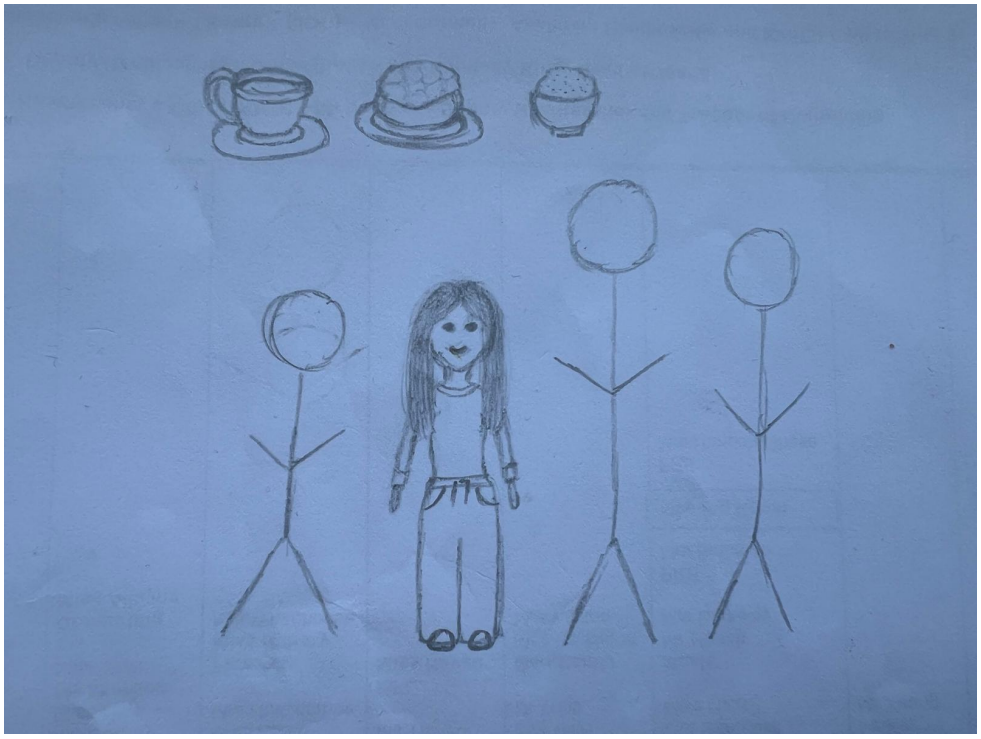
The participants often described a sense of pride in both the city and their identity as Hong Konger. Some participants highlighted "*the special status of HK between a country and a city*" (Ip) as a source of pride, while others mentioned "*Hong Konger being linked to strong academic abilities*" (Bak), "*knowledge and*

recognition of HK by foreigners", "*HK as a famous tourist hub*" (Gong), and "*good food in HK*" (Bak).

In addition to the sense of pride, participants described how HK-related elements fostered a sense of closeness while abroad. Gong shared: "*Everyone comes from the same place and speaks the same language. It naturally feels very familiar and close* (親切)." Some participants seek out "closeness" by gravitating towards familiar cultural spaces such as Chinese restaurants (酒樓) and cha chaan teng (HK-style restaurant, 茶餐廳). A few participants like Au reported that they tend to gravitate towards peers who also came from HK at school. Figure 7 shows a participant's drawing of signature food of HK such as "pineapple bun" (菠蘿包) in the identity drawing, illustrating this culture is an important part of their identity.

Figure 7

A participant's Identity Drawing with HK Food



Interests also helped maintain cultural ties. Hou and Dai enjoyed following the HK idol group “Mirror”, Ip admired HK Olympian Siobhan Haughey (何詩蓓) and HK Olympic sports team, and Dai watched 90s HK films out of curiosity about the city’s entertainment industry at its peak.

Such a sense of belonging and closeness to HK may act as the source of comfort and happiness for some participants. Au mentioned, “*Even after moving here, I won’t forget the happy life I had in HK*”. Although Fung stated that personal feelings towards HK have weakened since coming to the UK, the Hong Konger identity was still the emotional solace, saying, “*If I am not well, if I'm not welcomed in any other places, I'd feel homesick, and HK, just make me feel a lot more happier*”. Gong mentioned a special tie with the other HK people in the UK through shared cultural events:

> *After coming to the UK, I started going to more concerts. At those events, often concerts by HK singers, you would find a whole group of Hongkongers coming together, watching and singing along. Sometimes the performers would also acknowledge or express concern for those of us who have moved to the UK. Moments like that can really bring up a lot of feelings. (Gong)*

While most participants shared positive feelings in their Hong Konger identity, some participants revealed negative feelings rooted in their Hong Konger identity. Ip shared the anxiety and sadness seeing the socio-political changes in HK society, and Gong noticed the negative sides of Hong Kongers and expressed worries towards the reputations of Hong Kongers being disrupted by some bad representations of Hong Kongers: “*I feel that HK people can sometimes be quite mean, arrogant, or impolite… I don’t want to be automatically categorised as the*

same as them". These reflections suggest that participants' concerns and criticisms did not stem from detachment, but rather from a strong connection to HK.

4.3.4.2 Negotiating Chinese and Asian Identities. Compared to their Hong Konger identity, participants appeared to be less attached to identities of Chinese and Asian, which are two cultural identities that might also be related to them as they were born in the geographical area within China and Asia.

Ip was the only participant who ranked Chinese as an important identity (in the fifth place). However, this ranking was not based on a personal sense of identification; rather, Ip explained feeling connected to the identity due to having a mother who was born in mainland China, yet personally did not identify to this label. This perspective echoed those of three other participants who explicitly stated that they did not see themselves as Chinese.

The most common reasoning participants provided was that cultural identity is tied to birthplace. While acknowledging that HK is geographically part of China, they also drew distinctions between the two, and expressed uncertainty and confusion about what this means for their identities. Chan reflected on this ambiguity, stating, "*I was born in HK, not in China. But HK is part of China… so what should I do (咁點算呀)?*" Gong shared a similar sentiment and further emphasised that HK's language and culture differ from those of China. Ip also mentioned conflicting narratives about their Hong Konger versus Chinese identities between family members, and between family members and broader sociopolitical narratives, which further contributed to a sense of identity confusion.

Despite not strongly identifying as Chinese, some participants expressed an appreciation for and interest in Chinese traditional culture and history. For example, Hou and Ip mentioned enjoying learning about Chinese history and literature, as well as having an interest in Chinese musical instruments like the guqin (古箏) and Chinese cuisines.

Three participants considered the Asian identity important. Au and Dai said their awareness of this label deepened after moving to the UK as this identity became more distinctive as the ethnic minorities in the UK, and also as they came into contact with Asians from other regions. Au noted growing understanding of Asia as a vast, culturally diverse region and gained a better understanding of other Asian cultures which they previously knew little about. Au also connected to other Asian peers through common interest:

> *Sometimes I chat with some of my Indian classmates, and we end up talking about K-pop. British students here aren't always interested in K-pop, but for us Asian students, it's something we're all familiar with. We all know what K-pop is, which groups there are, who's in them, and who we each like. (Au)*

However, like how they viewed their Chinese identity, participants often contrasted their feelings toward their Asian identity with their Hong Konger identity. They described Asian identity as feeling more distant, with Asia seeming like an extension of HK rather than a core part of their identity. Dai explained this distinction, noting that Asia felt like "*a much bigger area with a lot of countries and people*".

4.3.4.3 Experiencing Minority Status and Cultural Differences. While participants felt differently towards various cultural identities, a shared experience among them was their experience as a minority, and their awareness of cultural differences in the UK. Hou mentioned:

> *It feels like after coming here, my identity as a Hong Konger stands out even more. Back in HK, you wouldn't specifically emphasise that you're a Hong Konger. But after moving here, people might ask, "Oh, you're Asian—are you Chinese or from HK? Why did you leave*? *(Hou)*

Other participants mentioned cultural practice like food practice, appearance, and language were also components that highlighted their differences in the UK. Some participants like Au and Dai also mentioned the Hong Konger identity had new meanings and acted as a reminder of their immigrant status after coming to the UK.

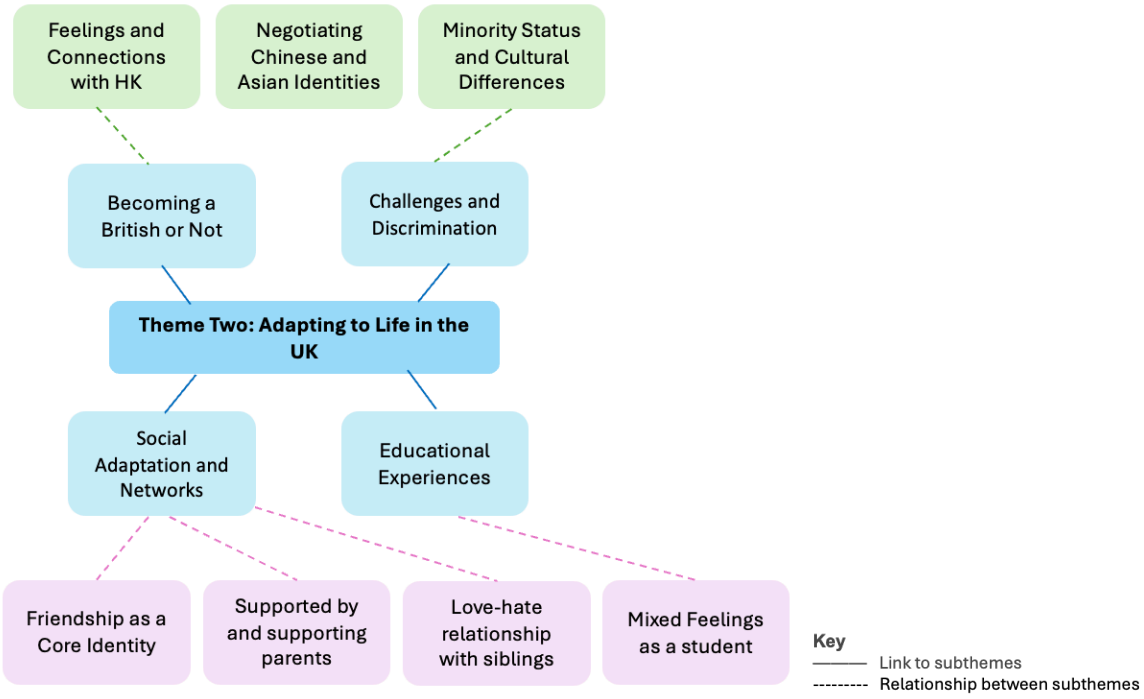
Participants had different feelings towards being different from others. Some participants like Ip and Au expressed positive feelings towards being different: "*I feel proud…Because, after all, I'm different from the people here. Also, even though I've moved here, I can still continue to do things from my own culture" (Au).* In contrast, Fung held an opposing view, preferring to blend in with local peers. These tensions between cultural maintenance and integration will be further explored in subtheme *Becoming a British or not* (section 4.3.5.1). Even among those who viewed being different positively, cultural and language differences also posed challenges, which will be presented in subtheme *Challenges and Discrimination* (section 4.3.5.4).

4.3.5 Theme Two: Adapting to Life in the UK

This theme explores how participants adapt to life in the UK after migration, encompassing four subthemes. It demonstrates how the experience of immigration brings changes towards participants' self-identification, and their perception towards different identities. Figure 8 presented below illustrates these subthemes and their connections with other subthemes.

Figure 8

Theme Two Thematic Map



4.3.5.1 Becoming a British or Not. At the time of the interview, 6 out of 8 participants did not ranked British as an important identity. Au thought that the length of stay was the reason: "*The identity as a British is somewhat important, but not quite yet... Because I feel like I haven't lived here long enough…*", While Hou explained that it was the daily language used that matters: "*I don't identify myself as British because, after moving here, I still mostly speak Cantonese. It's only during*

classes that I switch to speaking English". Ip further described the confusion and struggles in navigating between British identity and his existing cultural identities:

> *I still don't really understand what it means to be "British" because I'm not actually "British". I'm a Hong Konger and an Asian, that's who I truly am. I'm not British, so maybe it's just about small cultural things, like saying "bless you" when someone sneezes… and things like that (that makes a British). (Ip)*

This highlights the complexity of identity negotiation, where participants grapple with what it truly means to be British.

While many participants did not fully identify as British, they still felt a sense of obligation to integrate into British society. Fung, who moved to the UK at the youngest age among the participants and had lived in the UK for three years, readily identified as a British, explaining: "*Because I'm in Britain right now. And I should care about being a British person.*" This perspective was echoed by others who might not identified as British at the moment, including Au, who described a feeling of responsibility to adapt: "*Even though I'm a Hong Konger, I am now living in the UK. I need to learn about their culture, try their food, communicate with people here, and make friends.*"

Feeling the need to blend in, some participants described ways they had come to feel more integrated in the UK. These included improved English proficiency and fluency (Fung), developing knowledge of local interests such as musicals (Au), forming friendships with local peers (Chan, Fung, Hou), and adopting "British" hobbies such as football (Chan). Figure 9 presents a drawing by one participant who identified "English (British)" as an important aspect of their identity, coexisting alongside other identities such as "Hong Konger." The prominence and central

positioning of "English (British)" in the drawing may indicate that it is currently the most salient identity for this participant. This visual representation also reflects the potential for bicultural identification among HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK.

Figure 9

A Participant's Identity Drawing of Different Identities Including English (British)

4.3.5.2 Educational Experience. Participants also had to navigate their life as a student coming to the UK. While their feelings towards their student identity is included in the subtheme *Mixed Feelings as a Student* (section 4.3.6.4), this subtheme focuses on their comparisons between schooling in HK and the UK.

Participants discussed differences in school culture, school environment and student-teacher relationship between HK and the UK. Most participants generally found schooling in the UK to be less stressful and less demanding compared to HK,

where they had faced heavier workloads and more academic pressure. Dai also mentioned feeling more relaxed due to the absence of Chinese language subject in the UK.

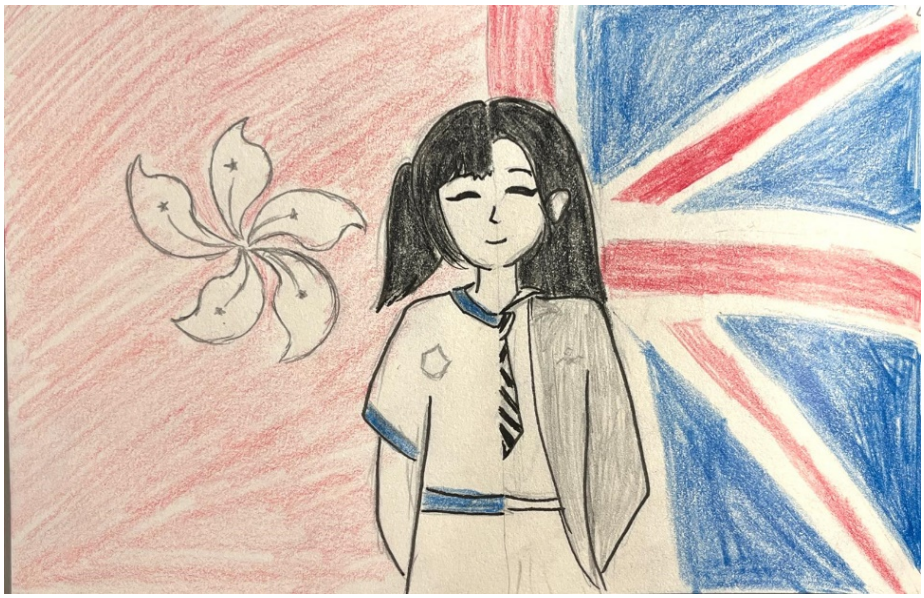
The less pressurising learning environment brought positive psychological impacts for the participants, for example, Au shared:

> *School in HK was really stressful, which made me less motivated to study. By the time I finished my homework, it was already late, leaving no time for anything else. It felt like all I did was study, which became boring. But after coming to the UK, with less pressure and fewer assignments, I became more engaged in subjects I'm interested in and even explore them at home on my own.* (Au)

Bak also described how the UK's learning environment enhanced sense of accomplishment and increased enthusiasm for demonstrating academic abilities in school assessments. The narratives illustrate how the experience of studying in the UK may shift how participants engage with their student identity. Figure 10 illustrates how one participant visually represented themselves as a student (wearing school uniform) positioned between the HK and British worlds.

Figure 10

A Participant's Identity Drawing as a Student Situating between HK and the UK



4.3.5.3 Social Adaptation and Friendship Network. Social relationships, specifically friendships, were reported to be a key aspect for the participants to renegotiate after coming to the UK. Compared to their educational experience, the participants tended to feel more mixed towards their social relationships in the UK. Hou recalled befriending local peers as the only Hong Konger at school. However, a negative experience of having secrets leaked by these friends later affected Hou's trust in local peers.

While Hou acknowledged that this could be individual cases, Hou and some other participants like Au and Dai appeared to feel stronger bonds with childhood friends they made in HK whom they have known for a longer time. They made an effort to stay connected with these friends in HK. Even after moving to the UK, Dai still chatted casually and reached out to friends in HK through online platforms when

they felt bored. Au, on the other hand, shared the feelings of drifting apart from friends in HK:

> *I started losing touch with some friends in HK. Over time, we contacted each other less and gradually grew distant, so we're not as close anymore... I think it's a bit of a shame (可惜), but also something that feels inevitable (無奈).*
>
> *(Au)*

Despite valuing the friendships with their friends in HK, individuals did not appear to be socially isolated in the UK. Some of them reported befriending peers from HK. Some, like Ip and Fung shared how they blend in with local peers, showing varied social adaptation experiences. Additionally, many participants shared the importance of friendships in their day-to-day life, which will be detailed in the subtheme *Friends are Indispensable* (section 4.3.6.1).

4.3.5.4 Challenges and Discrimination. Language barriers and discrimination were some challenges participants faced. Both Gong and Hou described initial difficulties with English upon arriving in the UK. Gong found local slang difficult to understand, affecting Gong's ability to connect with peers. Hou, however, received support from local friends: "*When I first arrived, many local friends were willing to help me. My English was poor… They patiently taught me these differences one by one.*" Their experiences highlight the interplay between language challenges, and with the social adaptation mentioned in subtheme Social Adaptation and Friendship Network (section 4.3.5.3).

Beyond language barriers, several participants shared experiences of discrimination based on their cultural background. Au recalled that some peers were

mocking Au's culture of origin, and Fung described encountering offensive remarks targeting Hong Kongers at school. While Au and Au's friends felt helpless and uncertain about how to respond, Fung expressed frustration, stating, "*I feel a bit disappointed in them because I thought they're quite sensible about it. I thought they should show some manners*". Ip shared the fear of being a victim and did not want to disclose own cultural background at first going to a new school.

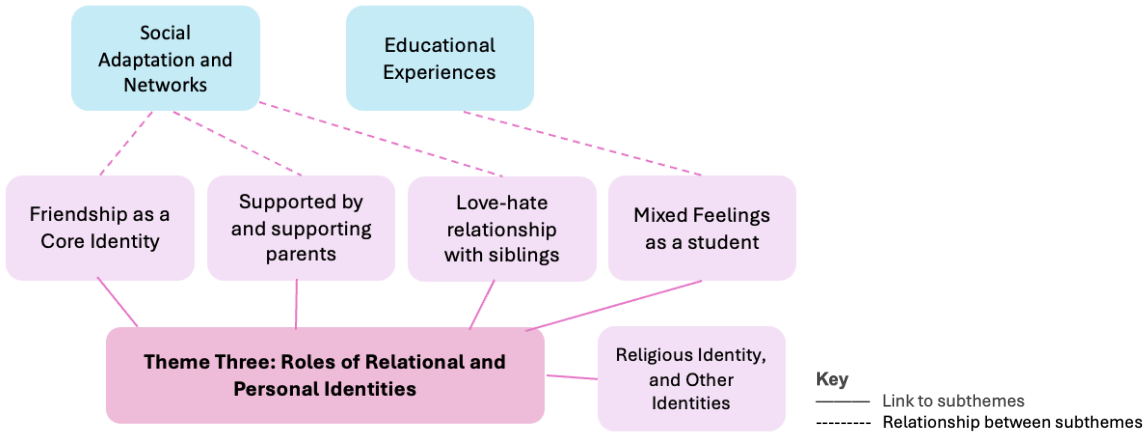
However, experiences of discrimination were not universal. Dai, for instance, shared that there was no experience of racism and perceived the UK to be a highly diverse place.

4.3.6 Theme Three: Roles of Relational and Personal Identities

This theme represents the views and feelings of the participants about the roles of different relational identities and other personal identities, and how they were changed after the migration. Figure 11 demonstrates the five subthemes and their connections.

Figure 11

Theme Three Thematic Map



4.3.6.1 Friends are Indispensable. "Friend" was a highly valued identity, as it was ranked by all eight participants and was mostly highly ranked.

Participants described positive experiences with their friends and highlighted different roles that friendships played in their lives, including being playmates, providing companionship and shared experiences, creating a space for sharing, offering emotional support and comfort, and providing practical help when needed.

Participants also held expectations for themselves and others as good friends. Au expressed the possible bad feelings for not being a "good friend," while Fung described a good friend as someone who is *"kind, supportive, loyal, faithful, and respectful"*. Similarly, Dai had a strong sense of what a friend should be like and felt frustrated when Dai's friend failed to meet this expectation:

> *One time, I got scolded by the teacher, and my friend laughed at me for it. She kept making fun of me, so we ended up arguing. After that, we didn't talk to each other for a while and weren't as close anymore. I thought she was really mean. (Dai)*

4.3.6.2 Supported by and Supporting Parents. The identity as a child was regarded as an important identity by most participants. Many reflected on their upbringing and the care they received from their parents. Gong acknowledged parents' sacrifices in moving to the UK for their children's future：

> *Maybe it's because, when we immigrated here, it was mainly for our sake, for our future. So even though, as young people, especially as students, we often feel reluctant to leave our friends and struggle with the move, the truth is our*

> *parents sacrificed even more. They left everything behind to come to the UK for us, for our future. So really, they did it out of care and for our benefit (為我地好). (Gong)*

Also appreciating the caring and love of parents like Gong, Bak saw academic success as a way to repay parents' upbringing.

However, not all participants viewed this identity entirely positively. Some felt their parents were too authoritarian, leading to moments of frustration. Still, Gong believed that strict parenting reflected care, explaining, "*I especially feel my identity as a child when my parents scold me. If I weren't their child, they wouldn't scold me. It just means they want me to improve and do better.*"

The changes in parent-child relationships after migration were brought up by some participants. Gong thought that the "shared isolation" in the UK enhanced the intimacy and closeness with own parents: "*After coming to the UK, since we had nothing else (冇人冇物) and only had each other, our relationships improved a lot, and this identity became much more important"*. In addition, compared to being mainly supported by their parents, some participants felt a greater sense of responsibility to support their parents in the UK. Bak specifically mentioned the feeling of obligation to provide language support to her parents, which was also shared by Au who said: "*Sometimes when your parents don't understand an English word, like when a British person says something to them and they don't understand the word, then they'll ask you about it*".

4.3.6.3 Love-hate relationship with siblings. The identity of being an older or younger sibling was not initially provided as an option for participants. However, the

option of this identity was added after being proposed by the first interviewee. Four participants identified this as significant, with one of them mentioned and discussed the identity but preferred not to rank it. Compared to the other relational identities, participants expressed feelings that were more mixed toward their role as a sibling, which is a mix of responsibilities, conflicts and shared moments of connection.

Older siblings often described the responsibility of caring for younger siblings. Chan shared, "*I'm always picking up after my younger brother, especially his toys. It's really exhausting.*" Bak noted that this responsibility grew after moving to the UK, explaining, "*As they got older, they had more homework, so I had to help them more often*". In contrast, younger siblings like Gong appreciated the care and support from their older siblings.

Participants acknowledged negative aspects of sibling relationships, noting occasional arguments and conflicts. However, they also reported enjoying their siblings' companionship at times. Gong reflected on how maturity strengthened her sibling relationship, stating:

> *Now that we've grown up, we're no longer as childish (小學雞) as before, arguing over every little thing. When we were younger, I didn't really know what they liked or cared about. But now, I have a better understanding of them, we've become much closer, and overall, we're both happier. (Gong)*

4.3.6.4 Mixed Feelings as a Student. Apart from relationship-based identities, being a student is another common identity among the youths. Seven participants ranked student as a significant identity, while expressing complicated feelings towards this identity, viewing this identity as important but not always liked.

The participants noted the different things brought by the student identity. Some, like Hou, emphasised the role of school in acquiring knowledge and skills, while Gong connected this identity to future aspirations, explaining, "*Being a student is about learning, discovering strengths and interests, and figuring out the path for the future, it's a process.*" Others associated their student identity with peer relationships and friendships.

However, participants were also aware of the responsibilities that come with it which they do not always enjoy, like daily school attendance, homework, and assessments. Au described lessons as "boring," while Bak specifically mentioned feeling stressed about the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), indicating that while adjusting to the British education system, the participants also experiencing its academic pressures.

Despite these challenges, participants found positives in their student identity. Dai appreciated the long school holidays, while others like Bak and Ip experienced a sense of accomplishment through academic or extracurricular success. Gong and Bak both shared how representing own schools in competitions strengthened her sense of belonging.

4.3.6.5 Religious Identity, and Other Personal Identities. Two participants identified with a religious identity but held different views on its meaning. Fung, who had not been baptised but identified as a Christian, expressed happiness in own faith: "*I feel happy because it means that I don't have to sin anymore.*" Bak, baptised as a child due to family, saw religion as a “natural” and “common” identity linked to

rituals and activities. Bak reported attending the children's activities of the church more frequently in the UK due to increased opportunities.

One participant also mentioned having Attentional Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), diagnosed in primary school in HK, which brought access to support. While not a focus of the interview, SEND-related identities may be important for some individuals and warrant further exploration.

All in all, this theme illustrated that the identities which did not have direct relation with culture were also highly regarded by the participants, and they formed their sense of self through the experience and perceptions related to these identities both in HK and also in the UK. Figure 12 shows a participant's flower-themed identity drawing, with the word "我" ("I" or "me") in the centre, surrounded by four petals representing different identities: being from HK (top, symbolised the flag of HK), family (top right, "家庭"), friends (bottom, "朋友"), school life (top left, "學校"), representing how the self is shaped through close relationships and cultural roots.

Figure 12

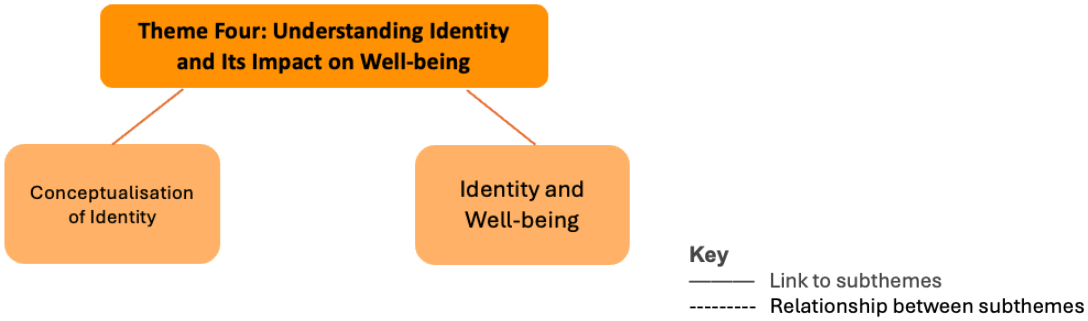
A Participant's Identity Drawing of "Me"

4.3.7 Theme Four: Understanding of Identities

This theme captures concepts towards identity explicitly or implicitly expressed by the participants during the interviews. Figure 13 shows the thematic map of this theme.

Figure 13

Theme Four Thematic Map



4.3.7.1 Conceptualisation of Identity. Some participants linked the concept of identity to their sense of self. However, some participants struggled to explain this

concept in their words. Instead, their understanding of identity, including the consistency of identities, their values, and their interconnections were embedded in the discussions about their own identities.

While some aspects of identity (e.g., feelings, understanding towards their identity) changed over time and with migration, as illustrated in subthemes like *Feelings and Connections with HK* (section 4.3.4.1) and *Love-hate Relationship with Siblings* (section 4.3.6.3), many saw their identity labels as largely stable. Dai expressed the Hong Konger identity was unchanged and enduring: "…*because I will always be from there (HK). These things (Identities) don't change easily; they've been with me for a long time…*". Similar views were expressed about other identities, including Asian, student, and child of their parents by others. Au explained, "*Whether you're in HK or the UK, you're still a daughter. That hasn't changed*".

Although participants generally viewed their identities as stable, many felt they should be treasured rather than taken for granted. Gong showed gratefulness towards friendship: "*It's not always easy to find friends you get along with and have fun with, so I think it's important to appreciate the friends I have now and enjoy being with them*", which was shared by Chan who said that not everyone has good friends. Similarly, Au also noted that it is not a certainty for everyone to be the children of good parents.

Some participants also saw interconnections between different identities. Bak suggested that Hong Konger and student identities were prerequisites for forming friendships, while Chan linked the identity as a child to the identity as a sibling, and Hou thought that the child identity act as a reminder of her Hong Konger identity.

4.3.7.2 Identity and Well-being. When asked how their identities were related to their well-being, six participants thought that the identity as a good friend was the most related to their well-being, explaining the emotional support and companionship friends can provide during times of distress. Au extended this beyond emotional (hedonic) well-being, highlighting how friendship also contributes to psychological (eudaimonic) well-being by offering motivation and purpose: "*Being a good friend means sometimes chatting with them, which makes me feel happier. For example, when we talk about what we want to do when we grow up, it motivates me.*"

Some participants saw their child identity as beneficial to their emotional well-being, much like friendships. Dai pointed out its unique role in physical well-being, explaining: *"If you're physically unwell, your friends can't take care of you. Only your parents can."*

Some participants thought that their student identity may bring negative impacts to both their emotional, psychological and physical well-being, like Gong: *"If you have a test or an exam, you might start feeling a lot of pressure, which can make you really stressed…Eventually, the stress can even affect your body and make you feel unwell".*

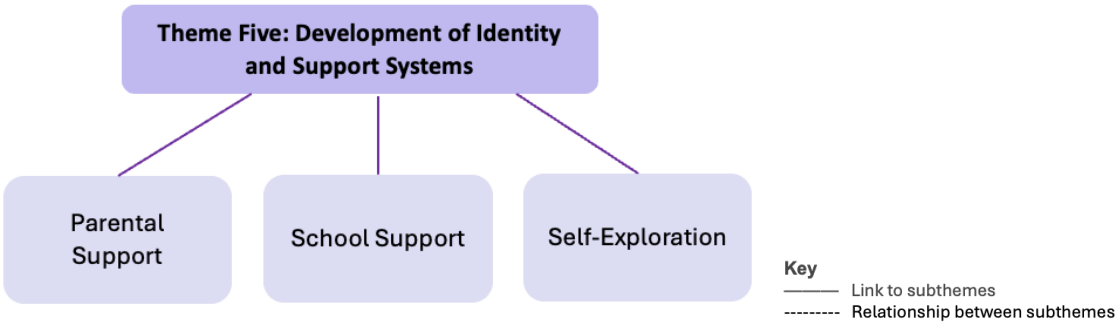
However, apart from the identities as good friend, child and student, most participants believed other identities, especially cultural ones like Hong Konger, had little or no impact on their well-being.

4.3.8 Theme 5: Development of Identity and Support Systems

This theme captures participants' perspectives on how schools and parents have supported or can support their identity development. Figure 14 presents the three subthemes.

Figure 14

Theme Five Thematic Map



4.3.8.1 School Support. Some participants struggled to recall how their schools had supported their identity development, while others felt that their schools' efforts had been ineffective. Bak found short-term cultural events unhelpful with supporting cultural identity, stating:

> *They have things like Cultural Months, where one month they celebrate Black History, and the next, Asian culture. I feel like, even though they do acknowledge these things, the impact is quite small—it's mostly just a few assemblies, and that's it.* (Bak)

This sentiment was shared by a few others like Au and Chan. Au also mentioned that these events may not be helpful for cultural identities that have already been well-established:

The school held things like Culture Day, where you're asked to bring food from your culture or wear traditional clothing... but it didn't particularly make me feel more connected to being Hong Konger, because I already knew that I was one. (Au)

From a different angle, Ip noted that Asian and Hong Konger identities were often overlooked in these cultural awareness initiatives.

However, this does not mean participants believed schools played no role in identity development. For example, Au valued career advisors for helping students understand their interests and future identities, while Gong suggested school-based group games and activities where students could reflect on their identities and exchange ideas about their identities with their peers. Others emphasised the impact of supportive teachers, believing that more caring relationships could foster identity growth.

Other than direct school efforts, some participants found the school environment itself served as a space for identity exploration naturally. Ip felt he could develop identities as a good friend and British through school interactions, while Hou saw academic success as reinforcing the identity as a student.

4.3.8.2 Parent Support. Compared to schools, participants generally felt their parents played a greater role in shaping their identities. Ip frequently mentioned the socialisation of cultural identities by parents, which was similar to Hou, who shared, *"When we were still in HK, they kept explaining why (the sociopolitical reasons) we had to leave and move to the UK"*.

Parents also influenced other aspects of identity. Bak and Chan described how their parents reinforced their roles as older siblings by giving them

responsibilities to care for their younger siblings. Hou noted that her parents encouraged her to develop her good friend and British identities by encouraging her to play with local peers.

At the same time, some participants felt their parents could better support identity development by allowing more freedom for self-exploration, discussed in the next section. Gong expressed this, stating*, "…don't give us too many restrictions or limit how we express ourselves… giving us more freedom to choose how we want to be as a person would be better"*.

4.3.8.3 Self-Exploration. Two participants, Dai and Ip, described independently exploring their identities through reading, listening to the radio, and using the internet. Both expressed an interest in the experiences of refugees. While they did not explicitly connect these narratives to their own situations, their engagement with such content suggests a potential curiosity about displacement and belonging. Dai shared:

> *Most of the things I learn are just from looking things up online. If I find something interesting, I click on it to read more. For example, I've come across stories about refugees who moved to other countries and talk about how much they miss their homeland. Some (refugees) even say, 'I'm not really from the country I'm living in now—I'm someone who fled from my home country'. (Dai)*

This highlights how some participants actively explored their identities through independent learning, showing that identity development is shaped not only by family and school but also by personal curiosity and reflection.

5. Discussion

5.1 Summary of Findings

By listening to the voice of the youths, the aims of the study were to understand the self-identification of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK, to examine how these identifies might be impacted by the immigration to the UK, and to provide insights into the connection between identity and well-being in this group of youths. Four research questions were generated to address these aims. Table 10 illustrates how the findings from the questionnaires and interviews were mapped onto each of the questions.

Table 10
Mapping of Results onto RQs

RQ	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
1. How do HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK identify themselves and make sense of their identities?	Descriptives	Theme One: Navigation of Cultural Identities Theme Three: Roles of Relational and Personal Identities Theme Four: Understanding Identity and Its Impact on Well-being
2. How do Hong Kong BN(O) immigrant youths perceive changes in their identities after migrating to the UK, and how are these related to their adaptations?	Descriptives (Cross-Tabulation Data)	Theme One: Navigation of Cultural Identities Theme Two: Adapting to Life in the UK Theme Three: Roles of Relational and Personal Identities
3. How are the identities of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK related to their well-being?	Correlational Data Partial Correlational Data	Theme One: Navigation of Cultural Identities Theme Two: Adapting to Life in the UK Theme Three: Roles of Relational and Personal Identities
4. How do HK BN(O) immigrant youths think schools and parents can support their identity development?	/	Theme Five: Development of Identity and Support Systems

5.2 Identities of HK immigrant Youths (RQ1)

Descriptive data from the questionnaires, and qualitative findings from the interviews were used to address RQ1: How do HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK identify themselves and make sense of their identities?

5.2.1 Cultural Identities

Quantitative findings suggested that among the different cultural identities, the immigrant youths in this study had a relative strong identification to the identity label as “Hong Konger”. The mean score of the strength of identification towards “Hong Konger” had the highest mean on the questionnaires (M= 12.04, SD = 2.94). This was then supported by interview responses of the youths. All youths regarded Hong Konger as an important identity for them, sharing their pride, sense of belonging and sense of connectedness to HK, despite living abroad. They still seek connectedness with HK through gravitating towards Hong Kongers, having interests related to HK, and seeking experiences related to HK (e.g., restaurant and concerts) in the UK. Some youths reported negative feelings whilst showing care towards the HK society and the reputations of Hong Kongers.

The youths reported weaker identification towards the identities of Asian and Chinese, which can also be classified as potential ethnic identities related to their culture of origin. From the questionnaire results, the mean of strength of identification towards “Asian” and “Chinese” were 11.84 (SD = 3.10) and 7.56 (SD = 2.50) respectively. The weaker identification was also reflected in the interviews, with less youths ranking these as important identities for them.

Their stronger identification as Hong Kongers, compared to broader labels like Asian or Chinese, can be understood through social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner,

1979), which suggests that people are motivated to affiliate with groups that provide emotional and psychological meaning. This is further corroborated by social categorisation theory (Turner & Reynolds, 2012), suggesting group alignment often occurs automatically, as individuals classify themselves and others into meaningful social categories to make sense of the social world. Being born and raised in HK, which is historically, politically, culturally, and linguistically distinct from mainland China, the identity of Hong Konger may offer a more meaningful and immediate sense of group belonging. Identifying Hong Kongers as their ingroup not only fostered pride and self-esteem, but also shaped their social preferences, as many gravitated toward culturally related people, experiences, and interests while abroad. In contrast, the label “Asian” was often described as distant and abstract, reflecting the vast cultural diversity of the region and its lesser personal relevance. To many participants, their identities tied to their culture of origin remained stable and significant for them even after migration.

The youths in this study also reported weaker identification towards the identity as “British”, a cultural identity related to the host country they are now staying in, both in the questionnaires (M = 8.36, SD = 2.31) and interviews. This finding is consistent with previous studies that reported immigrant youths have a stronger identification to the culture of origins but weaker identification to the host culture (Baumert et al., 2024, Maehler et al., 2021; Song, 2010). The identification of the youths towards British culture, and their bicultural identity will be further discussed in section 5.3.1.

5.2.2 Non-Cultural Identities

The findings of the study indicated that non-cultural identities were valued just as highly as cultural identities, and in some cases, even more so. The questionnaire results revealed that identities as “child of their parent” (M = 13.71, SD = 2.35), “student” (M = 13.21, SD = 4.26), “good friend” (M = 12.96, SD = 2.80) were the ones the youths identified the strongest to. Most of the interviewees also regarded these three identities as important identities for them. For those with siblings, the identity as siblings were considered important for them. When talking about these identities, they tended to think about the relationships, the roles of themselves and others, and the functions of these identities.

The identities of “child,” “good friend,” and “sibling” are all relational identities, grounded in the social relationships that are significant in the lives of the youths. When discussing the importance of these identities, participants often reflected on the impact identities have on their lives. The identity of “good friend” was typically discussed in a positive light, with many youths describing the emotional and practical support their friends provided in daily life. Similarly, the roles of “child” and “sibling” were described in relation to the care, guidance, and companionship received from parents and siblings. However, some participants also expressed negative emotions connected to these roles, including conflict with peers, feelings of parental authoritarianism, and the burden of caregiving responsibilities toward younger siblings.

The youths also expressed assumptions about the roles and expectations associated with both their own identities and those of their significant others. For example, they described feeling a sense of responsibility to care for their friends or to

repay their parents through academic achievement. They also held expectations of others, such as believing that parental scolding was a sign of care. When these expectations were not met, such as a friend acting insensitively, some participants expressed feelings of disappointment. Symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934) highlights the process of “role-taking”, in which individuals learn social norms from daily interactions and form social expectations towards themselves and others based on their identities, which shape how they interpret relational experiences and construct meaning around their identities. The immigrant youths, aged 10 – 15 in this study, appeared to have formed expectations towards different identities from social interactions already. This finding that individuals hold nuanced expectations of themselves and others in relational roles also brings implications to EP practice, to facilitate reflective spaces by reflective and narrative-based tools and allow the youths to reflect on and share their perspectives towards their different identities. The “circle of support” map (O’Brien & Pearpoint, 2007), a tool that supports individuals to reflect and learn about the different types of relationships supporting them in their lives, is an example of such tools.

The student identity, or their educational identity (Dimitrova et al., 2018), was described as a complicated one by the youths in the interviews. Similar to their relational identities, participants demonstrated awareness of the expectations associated with this role, particularly the responsibility to learn and engage in school. The youths acknowledged the importance of these although they did not always enjoy them (see section 4.3.6.4). Some linked their role as a student to future opportunities, while others emphasised how it gave them a sense of belonging, accomplishment, and the opportunity to build friendships. These findings align with the psychological and practical functions of social identity outlined by Haslam et al.

(2009), which include providing meaning, purpose, social connection, and access to resources.

Religious identity was an identity held by some of the immigrant youths in the questionnaires and interviews. While the number of participants (2 out of 8) were rather limited to make conclusive remarks, the reflections of the two youths with religious identity during the interviews illustrated that the meaning attached to a religious label can differ significantly across individuals. For instance, one participant self-identified to the religious label without formal rituals (baptism), while another highlighted how their religious identity was shaped by family traditions and involvement in religious activities. These narratives suggest that religious identity can carry varied meanings across individuals, shaped by personal experiences, values, and familial influences. This finding aligns with the results of a qualitative study by Vikdahl and Liljestrand (2021), which explored the narratives of religious immigrant youth. Their study similarly found a broad range of meanings attached to religious identity. A participant viewed religion as central to their lives, while another framed it as an inherited identity passed down through family.

While non-cultural identities have often been overlooked in previous research on immigrant youth (e.g., Baumert et al., 2024; Rambaut, 2005, etc.), the findings from this study demonstrate how such identities are deeply embedded in meaningful relationships and everyday roles. These identities provide social connection, emotional support, and a sense of responsibility, contributing significantly to the youths' overall identity experience. This suggests that identity development in migration contexts involves not only navigating between heritage and host cultures but also maintaining and negotiating relational roles that offer stability, meaning, and

belonging (Mastrotheodoros et al., 2021), in response to the changing social context owing to the immigration process. These roles may serve important psychosocial and practical purposes (Kaniušonytė et al., 2019) , especially as immigrant youths navigate the disruptions and adjustments that often accompany migration.

5.2.3 General Conceptualisation of Identity

The findings from the subtheme *Conceptualisation of Identity* (4.3.7.1) suggest that the youths' understanding of identity varied in depth and clarity. Some explained identity to be an expression of the self, and some revealed their understanding indirectly through reflections on different identities they had. In general, participants viewed most of their identities as relatively stable with time and migration. Many of them expressed appreciation of the values and uniqueness of their identities, and some of them viewed identities as interconnected to one another.

Participants' views that their identities, including cultural and relational identities were relatively stable were not surprising from a developmental perspective, as previous literature suggested that individuals developed sense of stability and organisation towards self and social categories during middle childhood before adolescence (Rholes et al., 1990; Ruble et al., 2004). However, this paper goes further to argue that while the labels and relative importance of certain identities appeared stable in the eyes of the youths, their understandings, interpretations, and emotional connections to those identities were constantly evolving, particularly within the context of migration. This ongoing negotiation and meaning-making process is explored in section 5.3.

While participants expressed largely positive attitudes toward identities such as child, student, and good friend, it is important to consider the characteristics of the sample. The group was relatively homogeneous. According to HK Census in 2021, 47.0% of the population has secondary school level as their highest education levels, and 34.6% achieved post-secondary level of education (HKSAR Census and Statistics Department, 2022) . In the study, according to the reported data, 84% of the participants' fathers and 80% of the participants' mothers achieved at least a post-secondary diploma. This indicated that participants might have a higher-than-average socioeconomic background. Related to this, from the interview contents, many participants appeared to have a supportive family environments, and access to quality education in HK and the UK.

The higher-than-average socioeconomic background for HK immigrants in the UK were also reported by other studies (Rolfe & Benson, 2023; Yue, 2023), therefore it is possible that the participants in this study were representing the majority of the HK immigrant youths. However, these factors such as socioeconomic background and family environment likely influenced their identity experiences in ways that may not be generalisable to all immigrant youths. Therefore, future research should explore whether young people from different backgrounds, including those with less parental support, lower socioeconomic status (SES), or disrupted migration journeys, share similar identity attitudes and similar process of identity negotiation.

Some participants described their identities as interconnected. For example, seeing the student role as a pathway to building friendships, or viewing their identity as a child of HK parents as a reminder of their Hong Konger identity. These reflections suggest that, as they move through adolescence, immigrant youths may

begin to see their identities as overlapping and intertwined. According to Amiot et al. (2007), younger adolescents often understand their identities as compartmentalised and context-specific, while identity integration typically begins in middle adolescence. Given that participants in this study were in early to middle adolescence, it would be valuable for future research to explore how conceptualisations of identity evolve across different developmental stages.

This growing awareness of the interconnectedness of identities also reflects Erikson's (1968) idea that identity formation, happening primarily in adolescence, involves bringing together different roles and experiences to build a more coherent sense of self. However, as mentioned in section 2.2.1.3, this theory assumes a relatively linear progression toward a stable identity by the end of adolescence, and it does not fully account for the fluid, shifting nature of identity related to migration (e.g., Boland, 2020; Erentaitė et al., 2018). It also places limited emphasis on the sociocultural and political contexts, which are factors that are especially relevant for HK BN(O) youths adapting to life in the UK. For immigrant youths, identity development may follow a different trajectory and lead to different outcomes compared to their non-immigrant peers. Future research could usefully explore how identity evolves for immigrant youths, especially in late adolescence.

5.2.4 Summary of Findings for RQ1

The study is one of the first that provides insights into how an emerging group of HK BN(O) immigrant youths view their different identities, which include:

- Participants most strongly identified as "Hong Kongers," a label tied to shared language, culture, and place of birth. This identity offered a sense of

emotional connection and belonging, consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In contrast, “Chinese,” “Asian,” and especially “British” identities were less strongly endorsed. This finding was explained through the lens of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

- Relational Identities (child, good friend, siblings) and educational identity as students are vital identities for the immigrant youths. These roles were discussed in terms of emotional influence, practical impact, and social expectations, highlighting the influence of daily interactions on identity development. This aligns with symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934), which emphasises the role of social relationships and role-taking in shaping identity.
- Most participants viewed their identities as relatively stable and meaningful, though their interpretations evolved through experience. Some recognised interconnections between roles, reflecting early signs of integrative identity formation as described by Amiot et al. (2007) and Erikson (1968).

5.3 Perceived Changes in the Identity of Immigrant Youths (RQ2)

Descriptives from the questionnaires and the findings from the qualitative analysis were used to address RQ2: How do Hong Kong BN(O) immigrant youths perceive changes in their identities after migrating to the UK, and how are these related to their adaptations?

5.3.1 Acculturation and Changes in Cultural Identity

The findings from the interviews illustrated how acculturation, which is conceptualised as the psychological and sociocultural changes of an individual when groups of people from different cultures come into contact and interact continuously

(Berry, 2003), is a process closely linked to the negotiation of cultural identity. For the immigrant youths in this study, the migration to a new culture appeared to bring about self-reflections on the existing cultural identities related to culture of origin (Hong Konger, Asian and Chinese). Whilst these cultural identities were originally related to place of birth, language, culture and emotional significance, some also associated the identities to the status as an immigrant after migration. This reflection may be rooted or reinforced by the experience of being "standout" as the minorities, both to the others but also to themselves, as they were noticing the cultural and appearance differences between them and the others in the UK. This might also explain why two of the participants had become interested in exploring topics related to refugees, which can be connected to issues of belonging and displacement.

The cultural difference is experienced differently among immigrant youths. Some felt positively towards the difference, embracing diversity and being proud of their culture of origin. However, some preferred not to be different from the others. Also related to this theme of being different were the challenges faced by the youths in the UK. Some reported facing language challenges when they first came to the UK. Many youths described experiences of encountering racism from their peers due to their cultural background, illustrating the importance of school support such as additional language support and anti-racist practices.

This heightened awareness of difference may have contributed to the youths identifying "Hong Konger" as an ingroup and "British" as an outgroup. In terms of bicultural identification (identifying to both the culture of origin and the host culture), most participants in this study tend to identify to the Hong Konger identity only. According to the cross-tabulation from the questionnaires, 56% of respondents only

identified strongly to the identity as a Hong Konger but not British. In the interviews, 75% (6 out of 8) did not rank British as an important identity for them. The finding is in contrast to the studies by Brown et al. (2013) and Baumert et al. (2024) reporting bicultural identification of the majority. This reflects the process described in self-categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987), where social context shapes which identities become most salient and how individuals position themselves in relation to others. However, these experiences alone do not fully explain why most participants did not identify as British. This can also be attributed to personal factors, such as the youths' different understanding towards the British identity, their length of stay in the UK, and sociocultural factors, which are explained below.

When discussing British identity in the interviews, participants raised various ideas about "what makes someone British", including length of stay, language, and cultural difference. The concept of bicultural identity was less familiar or harder to relate to, with many preferring to identify with one culture rather than both. The relatively short time they spent in the UK may partly explain this. Previous studies have found that identification with the host culture tends to grow with time (Maehler et al., 2021; Phinney et al., 2022). Since the participants in this study had been in the UK for no more than three years under the BN(O) visa scheme launched in 2021, their connection to British identity may still be emerging, and worth tracking via longitudinal studies.

Other sociocultural factors also likely play a role in identity development. As noted in section 2.3.1.3, youths who reported experiencing discrimination were more likely to identify with their culture of origin (Potochnick et al., 2012; Schmitt et al., 2014). Parental influence is another key factor, with studies finding that parental

socialisation is influential of the ethnic identity of their immigrant children (Phinney et al., 2001; Rambaut, 2005). This group may represent youths whose parents not only strongly identify as Hong Kongers, but also actively socialise their children into this identity (see section 4.5.2). Finally, the tendency to form friendships with peers from the same cultural background of this group of participants (see 4.3.2) may further reinforce their identification with HK, as suggested in previous literature (Phinney et al., 2001).

5.3.2 Changes in Relational Identities

Findings from this study illustrated that apart from cultural identities, the immigrant youths may have to renegotiate their other identities due to migration.

For relational identities, the identity that may experience the most changes could be the “good friend” identity. The sharing from the immigrant youths revealed that while the good friend identity remained an important identity for the youths, which aligns with studies on adolescence that most adolescents regard their friends as one of the most important people for them (Güroğlu, 2022; Kiesner et al., 2004). The immigrant youths in this study must negotiate their existing and new relationships with their friends. Many expressed that they continued to value their friends in HK but had to adapt how they maintained these relationships. Some also shared feelings of sadness and loss about losing touch with certain friends, highlighting the emotional impact of these changes on their sense of identity as a friend.

The immigrant youths also differ in their preference of friends in a new culture, with some still preferring to gravitate towards friends also from HK, while some

expressed the comfort of blending in with local peers. This variation may be related to how they see and position their cultural identities. Notably, the youths who reported having closer friendships with local peers were also those who identified British identity as important, which was an observation consistent with Phinney et al. (2001), who found a link between peer affiliation and cultural identity. However, given the small sample size and the fact that this finding resulted from the qualitative data, further research is needed to explore the relationship between friendship preferences and the strength or salience of cultural identities. These patterns offer early insight into how relational experiences in a new environment may interact with the cultural identity.

Caring responsibility, companionship and mixture of positive and negative feelings associated with the sibling identity appeared to remain largely stable after migration. Changes in sibling relationships mentioned by participants seemed to reflect general maturation, rather than being directly shaped by the migration experience. In contrast, the identity of being a child of their parents showed more noticeable shifts for some youths, particularly in terms of role expectations and emotional significance. While this identity previously centred on being cared for and guided, some participants described a reversal of roles after migration, where they began supporting their parents, especially in situations requiring English language skills. This shift in the parent-child dynamic, where the child becomes more competent in the host country's language and culture, has been documented in previous research which suggested that migration can alter traditional family roles, with children often taking on responsibilities such as "language brokering" for their parents due to quicker adaptation and more exposure (Kam & Lazarevic, 2014; Titzmann & Lee, 2018).

A participant also shared how shared social isolation faced by the whole family due to the migration to the UK in turn enhanced the intimacy and closeness between the participant with the parents. This sharing is different from the suggestion that migration could reduce closeness of parents and children, due to factors like increased conflicts arose from acculturative stress and reduced time for parents to be with their children to earn a living in a new country (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). While the experience of this participant may not be universal to other HK immigrant youths, this difference highlights that relational identity changes after migration are not uniform, but shaped by individual experiences, relationship dynamic, and the broader social context.

5.3.3 Changes in Other Identities

The student identity appeared to remain relatively stable in terms of the label itself. While the qualitative findings indicated that its association with academic responsibilities had not changed, participants' feelings toward the identity seemed to shift in response to their experiences within the UK educational system. Most participants shared positive views about their life as students in the UK, describing schools as less stressful and demanding than those in HK. Some also noted that this reduced academic pressure contributed to greater motivation and enjoyment in their studies, illustrating the impact of the sociocultural context on individuals' affiliation to their identities, even with the same identity label.

Although religious identity was not discussed by most participants, the reflections offered by a few still provided valuable insight into how this identity may evolve in response to sociocultural change following migration. One participant

described a strengthened commitment to the religious identity, which was attributed to greater opportunities to engage in religion-related activities in the UK. This aligns with findings by Davis III and Kiang (2016), who emphasised the role of sociocultural context in shaping religious identity development among immigrant youths.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while identity labels may remain stable, the meaning, emotional significance, and level of commitment associated with those identities can shift as young people adjust to a new cultural environment. This highlights the important role of the sociocultural context in shaping identity perception and development among immigrant youth. Further, these observations align with acculturation model that views identity as dynamic and context-sensitive (e.g., Schwartz et al., 2010), and with symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934), which emphasises how identity is continuously reconstructed through social experiences and interaction.

5.3.4 Summary of Findings of RQ2

The findings illustrate the renegotiation of identity of HK immigrant youths coming to a novel sociocultural context in the UK. Key findings include:

- The experience of being different and being the minority caused reflections in the participants on their original cultural identities (Hong Konger, Asian, Chinese). These identities may become more salient, and new meanings like the status as an immigrant are associated with them. This group of immigrant youths tend not to identify with a bicultural identity and view the British as an out-group. Both demographic and sociocultural factors may explain this.

- Relational identities of them were renegotiated, especially for “good friend” and “child” identities. The youths have to establish new friendships but also maintain the existing friendships abroad. Some experienced a certain degree of reversal of roles with the child identity, where they take up more responsibilities to take care of their parents in a new linguistic context.
- The student identity remained stable in label but became more positively experienced due to the less pressurising UK school environment. For some, religious identity strengthened with increased opportunities for religious involvement post-migration.

5.4 Relationship between Identities and Well-being (RQ3)

The findings from quantitative analysis of questionnaires, integrated with the sharing by the immigrant youths during interviews contributed to the RQ3: How are the identities of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK related to their well-being?

5.4.1 Cultural Identity and Well-being

While participants in the interviews often felt that cultural identities had little or no impact on their well-being, the quantitative findings told a different story. Stronger identification with both Hong Konger and Asian identities was positively associated with various aspects of well-being. Specifically, Hong Konger identity was linked to better psychological well-being, while Asian identity was associated with higher psychological, social, and overall well-being. This not only supports previous research showing positive links between ethnic identity and well-being (e.g., Baumert et al., 2024; Smith & Silva, 2011; Sun et al., 2020), but also extends it by suggesting that broader pan-ethnic identities, such as “Asian,” may offer particularly meaningful support in a migration context.

British (national) identity was found neither positively or negatively related to well-being, which was contrary to previous findings such as Baumert et al (2024) and Yoon et al (2013). It could be possible that the participants in this study tended to have lower identification to the British identity for reasons previously outlined (section 5.3.1), such as short duration of stay in the UK and differing ideas of the meaning of a British identity. Additionally, many of the earlier studies were conducted in the United States, where sociocultural norms around identity and integration may differ from those in the UK. For example, it is common for immigrants in the U.S. to adopt hyphenated identities (e.g., Rambaut, 1994; Song, 2010), whereas this is less typical in the UK. These contextual differences could influence how national identity is perceived and how strongly it is related to well-being. Future research could explore the factors that influence low identification with British identity among immigrant youths, and how this may shape their well-being over time in the UK context.

Notably, “Asian” identity was the only cultural identity significantly related to social well-being. One possible explanation is that pan-ethnic identities may foster a broader sense of community and inclusion among immigrant youth, especially in multicultural settings like the UK. For example, one participant shared the common interest with Asian peers, which distinguished them from the non-Asian peers. This suggests that pan-ethnic identities may act as a social bridge, helping young people connect with a wider range of peers and feel a stronger sense of inclusion within culturally diverse environments. In comparison, specific cultural identities such as “Hong Konger” may support connection within a Hong Konger peer group but may not contribute as much to a broader sense of belonging in the wider UK community. The “Asian” identity, therefore, may be more socially useful in helping immigrant

youths relate to others with shared experiences and build supportive relationships that extend beyond their immediate heritage background.

As Smith and Silva (2011) suggested, ethnic identity can promote a sense of belonging, competence, and self-acceptance, while Haslam et al. (2009) emphasised its practical functions, such as providing companionship, shared understanding, and access to group-based support. Although participants did not explicitly connect cultural identity to well-being, their accounts of feeling emotionally connected to things related to their culture of origin suggest that cultural identity plays a meaningful role in their adaptation. These findings reinforce the idea that ethnic and pan-ethnic identities can serve both psychological and social functions that support overall well-being in the context of migration. The results from partial correlation of demographics, identity and well-being provided further insight into the nature of cultural identities, and their relationship with well-being.

5.4.1.1 Hong Konger identity, Cantonese proficiency and psychological well-being. Hong Konger identity was moderately correlated with Cantonese proficiency. Both the identity of Hong Konger and Cantonese proficiency were positively related to psychological well-being, and the relationship between Hong Konger identity and psychological well-being diminished when Cantonese proficiency was controlled. This suggests that the two variables are closely connected, and Cantonese proficiency may be an important factor in expressing and sustaining cultural identity. Indeed, some participants suggested in the interviews that the use of Cantonese was tied to the Hong Konger identity, and it was also what makes this identity different from the other cultural identities like Chinese and Asian. This finding aligns with symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934), which views language as a key symbolic

resource through which individuals construct meaning and identity in social contexts. It also resonates with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which suggests that language can act as a boundary marker that reinforces group membership, contributing to self-esteem and well-being. From this perspective, Cantonese proficiency may strengthen feelings of belonging and continuity, which are especially valuable in the context of migration and identity negotiation.

It is worth noting that while Cantonese fluency and Hong Konger identity were related, the strength of connection was moderate (r_s = .51, p = .011), suggesting Cantonese is just one important aspect of the Hong Konger identity, amongst other potential factors like culture and shared lifestyle, as stated by the participants (see section 5.3.1). While the unique contribution of Hong Konger identity is difficult to isolate statistically due to its overlap with language, these findings highlight the importance of viewing identity as multidimensional, with language as a central component.

In this study, Cantonese proficiency was measured using a self-rating scale. While previous research has shown that self-reported language measures often correlate with real-world language ability (e.g., Macbeth et al., 2022), such measures are vulnerable to biases, including self-enhancement bias (Leising et al., 2016) and social desirability bias (Rosenman et al., 2011). For example, participants who strongly identified as Hong Kongers may have perceived and reported their Cantonese proficiency as higher (self-enhancement bias) , especially if they considered the language central to their identity. Additionally, knowing that the study focused on the Hong Kong population may have influenced some participants to give more favourable ratings (social desirability bias). To address this limitation, future

research could supplement self-reports with parent or teacher ratings, or include objective language assessments to triangulate findings and improve reliability.

5.4.1.2 Asian identity, Length of Stay in the UK and Well-being. Asian identity was positively associated with psychological, social, and overall well-being, whereas longer duration of stay in the UK was negatively linked to both Asian identity and well-being. Even after controlling for length of stay, the positive association between Asian identity and well-being remained significant, though slightly reduced. This suggested length of stay in the UK may negatively impact both Asian identity and well-being of the youths, but at the same time, Asian identity itself still makes a meaningful and independent contribution to the well-being of HK immigrant youths.

These findings offer indirect support for the idea that pan-ethnic identity can serve as a protective factor, buffering against acculturative stress (Berry, 2003) and sociocultural stressors such as discrimination (Cadiz et al., 2023; Litam & Oh, 2022). During the interview, the immigrant youths mentioned stressors such as social adaption, language challenges and experience of discrimination, which could possibly impede their well-being as they stay longer in the country; nonetheless, the Asian identity may act not just as a buffer against these stressor, but also act as a source of belonging and psychological support in the migration context.

5.4.2 Relational identity and well-being

During the interviews, most youths described their identity as a good friend as the most relevant to their well-being, highlighting how emotional support, companionship, and meaningful conversations contributed to both emotional

(hedonic) and psychological (eudaimonic) well-being. This perception was partially supported by the quantitative findings, which showed that stronger identification with the good friend identity was positively associated with psychological, social, and overall well-being, although not significantly related to emotional well-being. The mismatch between youth's views and quantitative findings regarding good friend identity and emotional well-being may reflect the nature of emotional well-being itself, which is more reactive to immediate experiences, factors that may not directly align with how youths perceive and value their identity as a friend.

Some participants also described their child identity as closely linked to well-being, primarily due to the support and care embedded in the parent-child relationship. This was echoed in the quantitative results, which showed that stronger identification as a child was significantly associated with emotional, social, psychological, and overall well-being. A few participants also highlighted the connection between child identity and physical well-being, noting the protective and nurturing role their parents played in ensuring their daily needs were met. These identified positive associations between relational identities and well-being build on previous research by Dimitrova et al. (2018), who found that greater commitment to friend identity was associated with higher life satisfaction among ethnic minority youths.

There was also a weak negative correlation between age and both child identity and social well-being, suggesting that older participants may identify less with the child role and evaluate the society and their social relationships less positively. However, these relationships were not sustained when tested through partial correlation and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Overall, the consistent links between relational identities and various aspects of well-being suggest that roles grounded in close interpersonal relationships offer psychological support, belonging, and a sense of meaning, which are resources that may be especially vital for young immigrants navigating change and cultural transition. Moreover, as these identities are social in nature, stronger identification may enhance how individuals perceive their relationships and position in society, supporting social integration and contributing to a greater sense of being valued.

5.4.3 Other Identities and Well-being

A positive relationship was identified between student identity and emotional well-being. However, this finding appeared to contrast with the interview data, where immigrant youths expressed mixed feelings toward the student identity. While they acknowledged its importance in providing learning opportunities and future prospects, many also reported negative emotions such as stress and boredom associated with academic responsibilities. Some also explicitly mentioned their thoughts that student identity was harmful for well-being through academic stress. Some participants highlighted feelings of accomplishment and belonging tied to the student role, though these experiences seem to align more closely with psychological (eudaimonic) well-being, which is related to meaning and purpose, rather than emotional (hedonic) well-being, which reflects more immediate positive affect.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that, despite the challenges linked to academic life, the student identity still offers a sense of structure, purpose, and belonging that supports well-being in a broader sense. In addition, as some participants noted, the student role also enabled them to build friendships and

assume the “good friend” identity at school, which was an identity they generally viewed positively with largely positive experience with the identity. Another factor may be the relatively positive experiences many HK immigrant youths reported regarding education in the UK. Compared to their experience in HK, they described UK schooling as more enjoyable and less pressurising, which may contribute to more positive day-to-day emotional experiences associated with being a student.

The quantitative results also suggested that religious identity may be associated with higher emotional well-being. This aligns with previous research indicating that religious identity in immigrant youths is linked to positive affect (Davis III & Kiang, 2016). Insights from the interviews help to contextualise this relationship. Of the two participants who identified as having a religious identity, one described feelings of happiness tied to the spiritual meaning of their faith, while the other shared increased involvement in children’s religious activities in the UK. These accounts illustrate how religious identity can serve both spiritual and social functions (Davis III & Kiang, 2016), potentially supporting emotional well-being. Such roles may be especially important for immigrant youths who must renegotiate their social life and broader sense of identity following migration. However, given the small number of participants and the statistical significance being at the .05 level, which indicates a relatively modest level of confidence and may affect the reliability, this finding should be interpreted with caution.

5.4.4 Summary of Findings of RQ3

The study illustrates how the strength of some identities have positive relationships with well-being, and provides insights into these relationships, which include:

- Hong Konger identity and Cantonese proficiency were closely linked, and both were associated with psychological well-being. When controlling for Cantonese, the effect of Hong Konger identity diminished, suggesting that language plays a key role in expressing and sustaining cultural identity.
- Asian identity was related to better psychological, social well-being and overall well-being. While longer residence in the UK was negatively related to both Asian identity and well-being, Asian identity may act as a unique contributor to well-being and buffer against the negative effect of the length of stay in the UK on well-being.
- Strong identification with good friend and child identity was linked to better psychological, social, and overall well-being. Child identity was also related to emotional and physical well-being, highlighting the support and care associated with family ties. Age showed a weak negative correlation with child identity and social well-being, though not conclusive.
- Student identity was positively associated with emotional well-being, despite mixed feelings expressed in interviews. This may reflect more positive school experiences in the UK. Religious identity also showed a potential link with emotional well-being, though findings were limited by a small sample.

5.5 Supports to Identity Development (RQ4)

Qualitative findings from the interviews provided insight for RQ4: How do HK BN(O) immigrant youths think schools and parents can support their identity development?

5.5.1 School Support

Immigrant youths were asked how they felt schools in the UK had supported their understanding and exploration of identity. Overall, the findings suggest that while school settings naturally offer opportunities for identity development through daily interactions and experiences, participants did not find existing school support particularly effective in facilitating this process. The most commonly mentioned measure was cultural awareness events. However, some youths did not find these events meaningful, possibly because they already viewed their cultural identity as Hong Konger as well-established, and also due to limited coverage of the cultural awareness event on their culture, and the one-off nature of the events, as stated by the participants themselves.

Rather than brief, one-off whole-school activities, participants preferred more personalised support, such as guidance from career advisors to explore interests and aspirations. Many also highlighted the importance of supportive teacher-student relationships, and one suggested group activities at school for identity reflection and peer discussion.

As shown throughout the findings, the migration experience prompted many youths to renegotiate both their cultural and non-cultural identities, including the meaning and emotional significance of these roles. This took place alongside typical developmental tasks of adolescence (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018), as well as challenges such as discrimination and language barriers. The study also highlighted links between the strength of certain identities and well-being, pointing to the need for more effective and ideally more personalised school-based support.

As suggested by the immigrant youths in the study, closer teacher-student relationships and more frequent conversations could offer a simple yet impactful way

to foster identity reflection. Building on one youth's suggestion of school activities that promote self-reflections, schools can also draw on narrative identity approaches, which emphasise how individuals construct meaning through personal stories of their past, present, and imagined future (McAdams, 2018). Practical tools such as the Social Identity Wheel (University of Michigan, 2020), Tree of Life (Ncazelo, 2006), or the identity ranking activity/identity drawing used in this study, may offer some accessible and engaging ways to support students in exploring and articulating their identities. These tools, already in use by several educational psychologists, can be used at individual, group and even whole-school level, and are relevant not only for immigrant youths but for all students, who share the universal need to explore and navigate their evolving identities.

5.5.2 Parental Support

The views of immigrant youths on parental support in their identity negotiation were also explored during the interviews. The findings suggest that participants generally viewed their parents as either supportive of their identity development, or believed that parents should allow them the freedom to explore their identities independently.

Parents were seen as playing an active role in the socialisation of identity, especially in shaping cultural identity. Some participants described receiving direct guidance through conversations and stories about their cultural background. This aligns with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which suggests that individuals form part of their identity through group membership and the values and norms associated with that group. These findings also support earlier research

showing that parental socialisation can strongly influence children's cultural identity (Phinney et al., 2001; Rumbaut, 2005).

For other identities, such as being a friend or a sibling, participants seemed to develop role expectations through day-to-day interactions and modelling from their parents. This reflects symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934), which emphasises how identities are shaped through social experiences and the meanings attached to different roles and relationships.

Nonetheless, as noted earlier, the participants in this study may represent a specific group of young people whose parents were generally supportive and actively involved in their development. It is also possible that parents who chose to relocate to the UK held a clearer sense of cultural identity and personal sociopolitical views (see Yue, 2023), which may have contributed to a more proactive role in supporting their children's identity development. It is important to acknowledge that for children from other cultural backgrounds or different family circumstances, the role of parents in identity socialisation may differ.

While some participants spoke about how schools and parents could support their identity development, others expressed a preference for having the freedom to explore their identities independently. These perspectives are discussed next.

5.5.3 Self-Exploration

The findings from the interviews also revealed the preference of some youths to explore and understand different identities by themselves. They reported motivation to do their own research through means such as the reading and researching online. For some, migration appeared to spark an interest in topics like

displacement and belonging, including the experiences of refugees. This motivation may have been shaped by their own migration journey, but it also reflects a developmental process described by Erikson (1968), who proposed that adolescence is a key period for active identity exploration. This process is typically associated with middle adolescence, around ages 14 to 17, when individuals begin to experiment with and integrate different aspects of identity in order to form a coherent sense of self (Kroger, 2007). Given that participants in this study were aged between 10 and 15, it is reasonable that some had already begun this process of self-exploration, even without direct adult guidance.

While participants valued the freedom to explore without pressure from parents, the findings also highlight the importance of a supportive environment. As discussed in earlier sections (4.5.1 and 4.5.2), relationships with teachers and family members, as well as opportunities for reflection, played a meaningful role. As Kroger (1996) suggested, societal support is essential for one to reach an optimal sense of identity, which aligns with symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934) which emphasises the role of everyday interactions on development of identity.

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) can also be used to conceptualised identity as a construct formed within a broader social context, where support from family, school, and community matters. However, in the context of this study, it may not fully account for the active role played by HK BN(O) youths in shaping their own identities, for example, through self-led exploration and meaning-making post-migration, as highlighted by symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934). Additionally, as the theory was originally developed within relatively stable cultural settings (Kaushik et al., 2023), it may be less suited to capturing the fluid and

context-specific identity processes experienced by immigrant youths navigating life between HK and the UK.

5.5.4 Summary of Findings of RQ4

The study provides unique insights into how HK immigrant youths view the current support with their identity development, and how they want their identity development to be supported. The key findings include:

- Most participants felt formal school-based support was limited or superficial. Youths valued personalised support, such as meaningful teacher relationships and guided reflection.
- Parents were seen as supportive or were expected to allow autonomy. Cultural identity was often shaped through direct guidance, while other roles were shaped through everyday interactions, consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934).
- Some youths started to explore identities independently, reflecting Erikson's (1968) theory of adolescent identity formation. Still, supportive sociocultural environments from school and family were seen as important to this process.

5.6 Summary of Key Findings

The findings from this study showed that both cultural identities (e.g., Hong Konger, Asian) and non-cultural identities (e.g., student, good friend, child) played vital roles in the daily lives of HK immigrant youths. While these identity labels largely remained stable post-migration, they were actively reflected on and renegotiated in response to changes in the youths' sociocultural context, illustrating the dynamic and fluid nature of identity. Several identities, including Hong Konger, Asian, child, and friend were positively associated with well-being.

Further analysis suggested that Cantonese proficiency may support the formation, expression, and maintenance of a Hong Konger identity and contribute to

well-being. Similarly, Asian identity appeared to buffer the negative impact of longer residence in the UK on well-being, indicating its protective role.

The study also found that many youths perceived school-based support for identity development as limited or superficial. In contrast, parents were often seen as supportive figures in shaping identity through everyday interactions. At the same time, some youths expressed a desire for greater autonomy and freedom in exploring their identities.

5.7 Strengths and Limitations

5.7.1 Strengths of the Study

This study offers a unique and timely exploration of the identity experiences of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK, an emerging yet under-researched population. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study captured both the breadth and depth of identity-related experiences. Quantitative findings revealed general identity trends and links to well-being, while qualitative data highlighted how youths made sense of their identities through personal narratives. The quantitative and qualitative findings also supplement each other in building a more comprehensive picture about the youths' identity, for example, to form an understanding of their bicultural identification from both their narratives and also the scores obtained from the quantitative measures.

The focus of the study using immigrant youth's voice is also a strength. Findings revealed the complex and ambivalent feelings participants held toward certain identities, and the diverse ways in which shared identity labels were

understood and experienced, underscoring the importance of centring youth voice in research on identity development.

The methodology included creative tools (identity ranking activities and identity drawings) which effectively supported participants in reflecting on and articulating their identities, demonstrating the value of age-appropriate, narrative-based techniques not just in identity research, but also for educators and educational psychologist practice.

Another strength is the study's inclusion of non-cultural identities, such as relational and educational roles, which are often overlooked in migration and identity literature. The findings not only revealed the significance of these identities for immigrant youths but also illustrated how they may evolve post-migration and relate meaningfully to various aspects of well-being.

Finally, the researcher's shared background as a Hong Konger on the BN(O) route offered cultural and experiential insight that enhanced rapport with participants and enriched interpretation of the findings, while training in educational psychology ensured critical reflection and ethical rigour throughout the process.

5.7.2 Limitations

This study carries several methodological limitations. The quantitative sample size was relatively small, limiting the representativeness and reliability of the findings. It also restricted the scope of statistical analyses that could be meaningfully conducted. The analysis focused on descriptive statistics and correlation, and due to the study's cross-sectional design, it is not possible to infer causal relationships, for example, whether identity influences well-being or the other way around. A longitudinal design would be especially valuable for future research, as participants had only been in the UK for up to three years, and both identity development and cultural adaptation are processes that unfold over time.

Related to this limitation was the challenges in recruitment of participants, which may have been due to the geographical dispersion of the Hongkonger community across the UK and the sensitivity of the research topic, given the sociopolitical context in Hong Kong. Some potential participants may have had concerns about the possible sociopolitical consequences of taking part in a study like this. Future research on similar topics should take these concerns into account and build on the current study's approach to support participants' psychological safety, for example, by clearly stating and explaining how personal data and participant identities will be protected during recruitment stage.

Additionally, most participants came from relatively similar backgrounds. Most were females, and many appeared to have higher socioeconomic status with stable home lives and supportive parents. The generalisability of the findings to male immigrant youths may be limited. As found in previous studies (e.g., Maehler et al., 2021; Song, 2010), male immigrant youths may have different self-identifications from females. The identity and well-being link of males and females may also be different.

For example, the possibility that male immigrants may feel more reluctant to discuss their feelings and inner world like their identities were raised by a parent who was interested for her son to participate in the study. The gender difference in identity of immigrants can be further explored in future research.

While the homogenous in the socioeconomic background of the participants may have limited the generalisability of the findings to more diverse immigrant groups, previous surveys on BN(O) immigrants (e.g., Chan et al., 2023; Rolfe & Benson, 2023) suggested that such characteristics are common in this particular community. In that sense, the sample may still reflect the broader demographic of HK BN(O) immigrant youths, though the findings may not be transferable to other immigrant populations. The participants were aged between 10 and 15, placing them in late childhood to early adolescence. This age range may not represent the peak period of identity development as proposed in classic theories such as Erikson's (1968), which suggest that identity formation becomes more prominent during middle to late adolescence.

The researcher's positionality as a fellow Hong Konger and BN(O) visa holder was a double-edged sword. While it helped build trust and rapport, it may have also influenced how participants responded, perhaps making them feel more comfortable affirming certain identities, such as "Hong Konger."

In addition, in the questionnaires, this study examined the immigrant youth's identity by measuring the strength of identification to different identities. While it is sufficient to capture the general pattern of self-identification among the immigrant youths, this approach to explore identity cannot fully capture identity as a dynamic and evolving concept, and the change in identity through time. The qualitative

approach and narrative tools used in this study helped to address this limitation, enabling in-depth exploration of how identities were experienced and transformed before and after migration. Apart from adopting narrative approaches to explore identity, future research could also consider incorporating frameworks such as Marcia's (1966) identity status model, which distinguishes between different stages of identity development (diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement) based on levels of exploration and commitment. This could provide a more process-oriented understanding of how immigrant youths navigate identity over time, particularly in response to changing sociocultural contexts.

5.8 Implications of the Study

The findings of the study lead to a few implications for educational psychologists, schools and educators, and government policy.

5.8.1 Educational Psychologists (EPs)

The study illustrated identity as a personal, social and dynamic concept, and the protective role of strong cultural, relational and educational identities in promoting well-being. For EPs, the findings suggest that there should be wider acknowledgement and consideration of identity development (including cultural, relational and personal identities) as an core part of their assessment, formulation, and intervention work with migrant students. This underscores the importance of exploring young people's, particularly immigrant and minority youths' perceptions of their identities during assessment and intervention.

It also points to the need for EPs promoting school-wide awareness, not only of culturally sensitive practices, but also of the broader importance of supporting identity development in educational settings. EPs can also develop and provide targeted training for educators and school staff in identity-sensitive and trauma-informed approaches, with a focus on understanding the emotional and psychological impact of migration, cultural displacement, and identity loss, which are the findings from the current study.

The role of educational psychologists in eliciting the views and feelings of children and young people was highlighted in the SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education, & Department of Health and Social Care, 2014), and it is proposed that educational psychologists should make use of this role to empower the children and young people and to promote their capacity to express their views (Greig et al., 2014). The current study utilised two activities, the identity ranking activity and the identity drawing to explore the perceptions of the youths towards their identities, which are approaches that are more person-centred and narratives that allow in-depth exploration of the youth's lived experience. Similar tools, such as the "Social Identity Wheel" (University of Michigan, 2020), "Tree of Life" (Ncazelo, 2006), and the "Circle of Friendships" (O'Brien & Pearpoint, 2007), offer additional accessible methods that can be used in both individual and group-level work to support identity exploration.

In addition, the findings also illustrated the appreciation of the youths towards an appropriate level of parental guidance and support in identity. EPs can provide support to developing workshops and resources that can help parents better understand how to support identity development without being overbearing.

5.8.2 Schools and Education Practitioners

Apart from illustrating stronger identifications to certain identities can be protective factors of immigrant's youths well-being, the current findings also suggested that the immigrant youths might find the current support at schools to support identity exploration not efficient. The findings also find weak evidence that the longer duration in the UK may weaken the strength of identification to culture of origin, which is related to better well-being. It is thus important for schools to adopt culturally sensitive practice that helps preserving students' connection to their heritage identities while they are developing identification to the host culture. Schools should also consider providing more personalised and ongoing forms of support, such as opportunities for guided reflection, identity-related discussions, and narrative-based activities, in order to support youths' understanding and self-exploration of identities. This may be particularly beneficial for students from immigrant or minority backgrounds, who may be navigating complex identity negotiations.

Additionally, incorporating identity development into Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education or pastoral programmes could offer a structured way to support all students, including both immigrants and non-immigrants in making sense of who they are within a diverse and changing society.

5.8.3 Government Policy

The current findings offer valuable insights for policymakers developing support structures for immigrant youths in the UK, particularly those arriving through newer migration pathways such as the BN(O) route. Since 2021, the UK government has implemented the HK BN(O) Welcome Programme, which provides support for

settlement, language, employment, and well-being, most recently updated in March 2025 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025). This study's findings that strong cultural and relational identities are associated with better well-being suggest that government support could go beyond reactive services aimed at those already experiencing difficulties. Instead, a more proactive, integrative approach could be adopted, one that not only supports adaptation but also values and preserves cultural heritage, rather than promoting assimilation alone. Government policy also takes a key role in promoting curriculum and school practice that are culturally responsible and is identity sensitive.

5.9 Suggestions for Future Research

This mixed-methods study offers early insights into the identity experiences and well-being of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK. It highlighted the value of narrative approaches and the need to consider non-cultural identities alongside cultural ones in understanding immigrant youth identity. However, this was small-scale research conducted within a short time-period, on a rather homogenous sample, which limits generalisability. Future research should consider longitudinal cohort designs to explore how identity and its links to well-being evolve over time, especially as youths continue to adapt culturally. Comparative studies across different immigrant groups would help determine whether the patterns observed are unique to HK youths or reflect broader migrant experiences.

Future research could also investigate factors that facilitate or hinder bicultural identification, and explore other identity domains such as SEN, gender, and sexual orientation, which may intersect with migration. Finally, this research investigated the identity development of youths aged 10–15 years, who were at their childhood or early adolescence period, developing their understanding towards identities. Future

research could explore immigrant identity development at later stages of adolescence to build a more comprehensive picture of how identities evolve over time in response to migration.

6. Conclusion

This study explored how HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK understand their different identities, how these may have changed after migrating, and how identity is linked to their well-being. Using a mixed-methods approach that combined questionnaires with interviews supported by creative narrative tools, the research gave space for this underrepresented group of young people to share their perspectives and experiences in their own words.

The findings showed that identities such as “Hong Konger,” “child of parent,” “good friend,” and “student” were particularly important to the participants. These identities continued to matter after migration, though their meanings were often renegotiated in light of the new environment. While most participants did not identify strongly as “British”, many felt a sense of pressure or obligation to adapt to British society, reflecting the complex process of identity navigation in a new cultural setting.

Several identities were found to be positively linked to well-being, suggesting that strong connections to cultural and relational roles can provide support and stability for immigrant youths. These results point to the importance of supporting young people’s identity development in schools and other settings, not only through cultural awareness, but through more ongoing and personalised opportunities for reflection and dialogue of their identities.

For educational psychologists, the study highlights the value of using creative tools to explore identity in depth, and of working alongside schools to build environments where young people’s identities are understood and supported. By centring youth perspectives, the study contributes to a more grounded understanding of how identity and well-being are experienced in real-life migration contexts, and offers practical ways to respond.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Form

Doctoral Student Ethics Application Form

Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute of Education (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in simple terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

Registering your study with the UCL Data Protection Officer as part of the UCL Research Ethics Review Process

If you are proposing to collect personal data i.e. data from which a living individual can be identified **you must be registered with the UCL Data Protection Office before you submit your ethics application for review**. To do this, email the complete ethics form to the UCL Data Protection Office. Once your registration number is received, add it to the form* and submit it to your supervisor for approval. If the Data Protection Office advises you to make changes to the way in which you propose to collect and store the data this should be reflected in your ethics application form.

Please note that the completion of the** UCL GDPR online training **is mandatory for all PhD students.

Section 1 – Project details

a. Project title: Examining Identities and Psychological Well-being of HK BN(O) Immigrant Youths in the UK: Implications for their Settlement
b. Student name and ID number (e.g. ABC12345678): Yeung Kiu Ho (Carol) 20179206
c. ***UCL Data Protection Registration Number:** Z6364106/2024/06/78 social research
    a. Date Issued: 08/06/2024
d. Supervisor/Personal Tutor: Dr Jessica Hayton Dr Karen Majors
e. Department: Psychology and Human Development
f. Course category (Tick one):

PhD	☐
EdD	☐
DEdPsy	☒

g. **If applicable**, state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.
h. Intended research start date: 01/06/2024
i. Intended research end date: 23/05/2024
j. Country fieldwork will be conducted in: The United Kingdom
k. If research to be conducted abroad please check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and submit a completed travel risk assessment form (see guidelines). If

the FCO advice is against travel this will be required before ethical approval can be granted: *UCL travel advice webpage*

l. Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?

Yes ☐
External Committee Name: Enter text
Date of Approval: Enter text

No ☒ ***go to Section 2***

If yes:

- Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.
- Proceed to Section 10 Attachments.

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC). In addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.

Section 2 - Research methods summary (tick all that apply)
☒ Interviews
☐ Focus Groups
☒ Questionnaires
☐ Action Research
☐ Observation
☒ Literature Review
☐ Controlled trial/other intervention study
☐ Use of personal records
☐ Systematic review **– if only method used go to Section 5**
☐ Secondary data analysis ***– if secondary analysis used go to Section 6***
☐ Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups
☐ Other, give details: Enter text

Please provide an overview of the project, focusing on your methodology. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, data collection (including justifications for methods chosen and description of topics/questions to be asked), reporting and dissemination. Please focus on your methodology; the theory, policy, or literary background of your work can be provided in an attached document (i.e. a full research proposal or case for support document). *Minimum 150 words required.*

Aims

1. To understand the self-identification of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK, and their understanding of their identities.
2. To investigate the relationship between the self-identity of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK and their well-being.
3. To gain insight into the settlement and acculturation of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK through the understanding of their self-identity and indicators of their well-being.

Research Questions

1. How do HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK identify themselves, and how do they understand their identities?
2. To what extent are the self-identities of HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK related to their psychological and social well-being?

Participants

The target participants in this research will be immigrant youths which include children and adolescents, aged between 11-15 years, who were born in and resided in HK most of the time before coming to the UK, and who, with their families have relocated to the UK using the BN(O) visa since the launch of the BN(O) visa migration route in 2021. Eligible participants should have least one year of residency in the UK, and at least 70% of time (e.g., 7.7-10.5 years) spent in HK before coming to the UK. The purpose of the inclusion criteria is to ensure the participants have sufficient exposure to HK culture before coming to the UK, so it does not rule out students who might spent less than 30% of the time overseas, such as some boarding or summer school experience, as long as the participants were born and spent the majority of the time in HK.
The inclusion criteria will be stated on the participant information sheet and relevant questions will be asked on the survey to check the eligibility of the participants. The data of participants not meeting the inclusion criteria will not be included in the analysis.

Recruitment of Participants

The current study will recruit participants through convenience sampling and snowball sampling to reach the parental communities of HKers in the UK. Advertisements about the research will be shared on social media, such as via Facebook and Telegram, specifically targeting the community groups of HKers in the UK. Information about the research will also be sent to educational psychology services to invite EPs to help spreading the message within their boroughs. Organisations such as the "Hongkongers in Britain" and "Good Neighbour Church England" that have access to HKer

communities in the UK will also be contacted to help publicise the proposed study if possible. The parents and children who are interested in joining the study can click on the link on the advertisement and be directed to read the information sheet. Informed consent will be obtained from both the parents and children before the children can participate in the study.

Research Design

The current study will adopt an explanatory mixed-method design involving two phases, starting from a quantitative phase (Phase I) and following up the results with a qualitative phase (Phase II), aiming to provide in-depth explanations of the findings in Phase I (Creswell & Plano, 2018). The design of the study is illustrated below.

Phase	Materials Used	Information Collected
Phase I: Online Surveys Online surveys will be distributed to 50 – 60 immigrant youths to examine their self-identities and their well-being.	• Barrett's Strength of Identification Scale (Barrett, 2007) • Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF; Lamers et al., 2011)	• Demographics • Identification towards different identity labels • Additional identities indicated by the particip • Emotional, Psychologica and Social Well-being
Phase II: Individual Interviews Online interviews will be conducted with 5 – 10 participants who have finished the online surveys and consented to be interviewed.	• Identity Prompt Cards (Ranking Activity)	• Youths' understanding towards their self-identiti • Youths' experience associated to their self-identities • Post-interview: An "ident map" drawn by the youth themselves illustrating their different identities

Phase I – Online Survey

Phase I involves an online survey targeting 50 - 60 participants, administered on Qualtrics, to examine their associations with different self-identities and their psychosocial well-being. The survey consists of three parts (see Appendix I). The first part of the survey will gather the demographic information of the participants, including gender, age, years of residence in the UK, parental educational levels to inform socio-economic status, and self-rated language proficiency in Chinese and English, which were all found to be factors that might impact the acculturation and the self-identifications of immigrant youths (Maehler et al., 2021). This part of the questionnaire is designed based on my previous experience in research and with reference to previous surveys conducted with HK immigrants in the UK (e.g., Chan et al., 2023; Rolfe & Benson, 2023).

The second part of the questionnaire examines the self-identifications of the immigrant youths. The participants will be provided with various identities, including ethnic identities that were found to be common in people from HK (HKer, Chinese), national identity (British), pan-ethnic identity (Asian), religious identity (self-indicated), identity as a student (educational identity) and identity as a daughter/son and identity as a friend (relational identities). These types of identities were derived from previous research examining the identities of youths with ethnic minority backgrounds (e.g., Alvarez et al., 2001; Robinson, 2005), which were found to be important and salient for them. The participants will be asked to indicate the strength, the importance, and their

feelings towards each of these identities with four questions from the Barrett's Strength of Identification Scale (Barrett, 2007) for each identity, making a total of 32 questions. Participants will also be asked to provide any self-identities they think are important to them but have not been mentioned. The answers provided will help inform the analysis and inform the materials used during the interviews in Phase II.

The final part of the questionnaire will examine the participants' well-being with the 14-item Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF; Lamers et al., 2011). The MHC-SF measures the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of the participants by asking how often they have different feelings and thoughts related to different aspects of well-being in the past month, on a 6-point scale (0 - Never, 5 - Everyday). Sample questions include "How in the past month did you feel that your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it?". Results from this measure can be computed into three main scores by adding the scores of items measuring emotional (3 items), social (5 items) and psychological (6 items) well-being. The scale has been used in various research with non-clinical youths with different cultures of origins such as Chinese (Guo et al., 2015), Portuguese (de Carvalho et al., 2016), Dutch (Luijten et al., 2019), and Hungarian (Reinhardtz et al., 2020), etc, with age range from 7 – 20, showing good validity and reliability in psychometric properties analyses.

Phase II – Semi-structured Interviews with Youths

5 – 10 participants who have completed the online survey, and who have expressed an interest to interviewed on the consent form will be invited to participate in Phase II, to further explore their understanding of their self-identities (see Appendix II for the draft interview schedule). If there are more than 10 participants who indicated an interest to be interviewed, the study will adopt a random sampling method and to pick 10 participants to be interviewed randomly.

The interviews will be conducted on Microsoft Teams with UCL account and the interview will be audio-recorded on teams, and the audio will be used for transcription purposes with consent from parents and children. It is estimated that each session will last for about 40 – 50 minutes.

A ranking activity adopted from the study by Alvarez et al. (2001) will be used to facilitate the interview. Eight identity prompt cards will be shown on the screen via screensharing of a slide: ethnic identities (HKer, Chinese), national identity (British), pan-ethnic identity (Asian), religious identity (self-indicated), identity as a daughter/son, identity as a student and identity as a best friend. More identities might be added according to the responses collected in the online survey. The participants will be asked to rank the top 5 identities that are most important to them, and only one identity is allowed for each of the ranking. Based on the participants' responses, follow-up questions and prompt questions will be asked, for example, "why is [this identity] more important than [that identity]?".

At the end of the interview, the participants will be asked to draw an "identity map" (Sirin & Fine, 2008) right after the interview to illustrate their different identities with the following prompt: "following this interview, please draw a picture of your different identities, showing how you see yourself as a person, and send it back to me within one and a half hours after this interview". Parents of the participants can send the picture created by the participants to the researcher's email address.

Language of Materials

To make the information accessible to the immigrant youths from HK, a translated version of the online survey will be provided. With reference to the language guidelines for translating and adapting tests (Gregoire, 2018), the survey will first be translated by the researcher, using natural and children-friendly wordings that focus on functional equivalence. The translated version of the survey will then be back-translated by another trainee educational psychologist, who is a native speaker of Cantonese and has proficient English, who has in-depth knowledge about HK culture and is currently living in the UK, and who has experience in psychological research. The back translation will be reviewed together and the discrepancies of the translated and back-translated documents will be discussed, until an agreement is reached with regarding the wordings. Each question will be presented in both English and Cantonese on the questionnaire. The interview sessions will be conducted in either Cantonese or English, determined by the participants' preference.

Section 3 – Research Participants (tick all that apply)
☐ Early years/pre-school
☒ Ages 5-11
☒ Ages 12-16
☒ Young people aged 17-18
☐ Adults please specify below
☐ Unknown – specify below
☐ No participants

Children and adolescents aged 11-15.

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC).

Section 4 - Security-sensitive material (only complete if applicable)
Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call; involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups.

a. Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐
b. Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐
c. Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

Section 5 – Systematic reviews of research (only complete if applicable)

a. Will you be collecting any new data from participants?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐
b. Will you be analysing any secondary data?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐

* *Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues***

If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) ***and*** *if you have answered* ***No*** *to both questions, please go to* ***Section 8 Attachments.***

Section 6 - Secondary data analysis (only complete if applicable)

a. Name of dataset/s: Enter text
b. Owner of dataset/s: Enter text
c. Are the data in the public domain?
   Yes ☐ No ☐
   If no, *do you have the owner's permission/license?*
   Yes ☐ No* ☐

d. Are the data special category personal data (i.e. personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation)?
   Yes* ☐ No ☐

e. Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?
   Yes ☐ No* ☐
f. **If no**, was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?
   Yes ☐ No* ☐
g. **If no,** was data collected prior to ethics approval process?
   Yes ☐ No* ☐

* *Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues***

If secondary analysis is only method used ***and*** *no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to* ***Section 9 Attachments.***

Section 7 – Data Storage and Security

Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.

a. Data subjects - Who will the data be collected from?
   HK BN(O) immigrant youths in the UK, aged 11 – 17.
b. What data will be collected? Please provide details of the type of personal data to be collected
   1. Self-reported sociodemographic data: gender, age, years of residence in the UK, parental educational levels to inform socio-economic status, and self-rated language proficiency in Chinese and English

2. Parent's contact, including email address and phone number (chosen by parents) for me to contact later to arrange interview
3. Responses on online surveys about social identities and well-being
4. Audio recording of the online interviews and the transcriptions generated about participants' views towards their social identities
5. Participants' drawing about their different identities

Is the data anonymised? Yes ☐ No* ☒
Do you plan to anonymise the data? Yes* ☒ No ☐
Do you plan to use individual level data? Yes* ☒ No ☐
Do you plan to pseudonymise the data? Yes* ☒ No ☐

** Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues***

c. **Disclosure –** Who will the results of your project be disclosed to?
My supervisors, external examiners, and readers of the thesis
Disclosure – Will personal data be disclosed as part of your project?
Anonymised/pseudonymised data will be reported in the result session of the final thesis to illustrate the characteristics of the participants in the study. No real names will be used, and demographic information will be processed before the presentation. Individual level quotes might be shared for qualitative analysis using pseudonyms.

d. Data storage – Please provide details on how and where the data will be stored i.e. UCL network, encrypted USB stick**, encrypted laptop** etc.
The response on the online survey is anonymised and is stored in the UCL Qualtrics platform. The exported data from the online survey from Qualtrics would be stored in UCL OneDrive associated to my UCL account. The audio recording, transcriptions of interviews, and the "identity map" drawings will also be stored in UCL OneDrive of my account.

*** Advanced Encryption Standard 256 bit encryption which has been made a security standard within the NHS*

e. **Data Safe Haven (Identifiable Data Handling Solution)** – Will the personal identifiable data collected and processed as part of this research be stored in the UCL Data Safe Haven (mainly used by SLMS divisions, institutes and departments)?
Yes ☐ No ☒

f. How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format?
The online survey (survey responses) is anonymised, with only the necessary demographics collected (gender, age, years of residence in the UK, parental educational levels to inform socio-economic status, and self-rated language proficiency in Chinese and English). The identifiable personal data including name and personal background from the online interview (audio recording and transcription generated from it) will be removed once pseudonyms are assigned

to the data. The processed data without identifiable personal data will be kept electronically for ten years after the thesis has been submitted, in accordance with UCL Research Data Policy.

Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area? (If yes, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with GDPR and state what these arrangements are)
No

Will data be archived for use by other researchers? (If yes, please provide details.)
No

g. If personal data is used as part of your project, describe what measures you have in place to ensure that the data is only used for the research purpose e.g. pseudonymisation and short retention period of data'.

The participants were directed to a separate form independent from the online survey when they were asked to leave their parents' contact. This is to reduce the possibility for anyone to be able to match the parents' contact with the responses on the questionnaire.
The transcriptions generated from interviews and the picture drawn by participants will be pseudonymised. Two different pseudonyms will be assigned to the interview data and the picture drawn by the same participant, to reduce the possibility for participants to identify themsleves. Any identifiable personal data will be removed at the end of the project.

* *Give further details in* ***Section 8 Ethical Issues***

Section 8 – Ethical Issues
Please state clearly the ethical issues which may arise in the course of this research and how will they be addressed.
All issues that may apply should be addressed. Some examples are given below, further information can be found in the guidelines. *Minimum 150 words required.*

- Methods
- Sampling
- Recruitment
- Gatekeepers
- Informed consent
- Potentially vulnerable participants
- Safeguarding/child protection
- Sensitive topics
- International research
- Risks to participants and/or researchers
- Confidentiality/Anonymity
- Disclosures/limits to confidentiality

- Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection)
- Reporting
- Dissemination and use of findings

- *Sampling, recruitment and gatekeepers*

The study will sample from a group of young people under 18, who are potentially vulnerable participants. The study will make sure the young people and their parents are clear about the purpose and the purpose of the study, and their rights in the study by information sheet and consent forms, and they will be given time and method to ask me questions before, during and after the process.
The study will recruit participants via advertisement spread through online platforms, such as Facebook community groups. As the member inside the groups, I will make sure I maintain my professionalism as a researcher throughout the recruitment process, adhering to the stated process to invite participants, sharing information sheet and obtaining informed consent. As I reach out to the parental community to recruit their children as the young participants, the parents can act as the gatekeepers of their children.

- *Informed Consent*

As the study covers a topic that can be sensitive, informed consent will be collected from both the parents and the young participants themselves.
Before participating, parents and youths will be provided with youth-friendly information sheets (available in both Cantonese and English) (see Appendix III, IV) explaining the purpose of the study, the method of data collection, their rights as participants including opting out from the study, a “change of mind” period within four weeks to request the deletion of their data, and ensuring their data will be processed and protected securely. They will also be provided with the contacts of the researcher if they have any concerns or questions.
They will also be provided with consent forms (see Appendix V) to indicate whether they agree to participate/for their child to participate. On the consent form, the parents will be instructed to give informed consent, then read the consent form to their children, there will be a separate box on the same consent form for the child’s assent to participate in the study. Young people and parents will also indicate their interest in later online interviews. Participants who respond "yes" will be contacted to arrange online interviews during phase II.
If the children and parents hope to withdraw from the study and want their data to be removed, they can contact me directly within four weeks (28 days) after participating in the online survey/online interview to make this request. I will state their rights to do so in the information sheet and assures that no consequence will follow.

- *Potentially vulnerable participants, Safeguarding/child protection*

Young people who are under 18 are potentially vulnerable participants. I have been DBS checked that allow me to work with children and young people. Parents of the young people are included in the process of providing consent, asking questions, answering part of the questionnaire to act as the gatekeeper for their children, and they are also

given the choice to stay inside the room with their children during the individual interview (without participating in the interview), to ensure the safety of their children.

- *Sensitivity of Topic*

The research explores how the youths view themselves and their personal experiences related to their identities (e.g. coming to the UK with their families, discrimination, etc). I will address potential discomfort in participants by highlighting associated risks in the information sheet and providing my contact details for support. I would direct children who needs further support to service that provide support to children such as Childline and YoungMinds.
As a HKer in the UK myself, I might also experience different feelings during the process of the research. I will keep a reflective diary of myself to keep track of my feelings and well-being, and seek appropriate support, such as the UCL mental health if I need further support.
Before the interview, youths will be reminded that they can tell or signal to me when the questions make them feel uncomfortable, and their rights to not answer the question. If participants show signs of discomfort during interviews, I will pause to remind them of their right to withdraw.

- *Online Interview Safety*

Steps will be taken to address safety, privacy and confidentiality specifically related to online interviews.
Participants will be advised to choose a safe and private location, preferably their home, for the interview. Parents can opt to be present without participating in the interview. I will also be conducting the interview and reviewing the audio recording/transcription at a private place to avoid the leak of personal data and content.
Participants will be reminded of the recording and transcription process, with assurance of secure handling. They will also be ensured pseudonyms will be used on the transcripts, and I will be the only one who can match the identities of the participants, and who can get access to the original audio recordings. Once data are transcribed and anonymised for subsequent analysis, the original recordings of the interview will be deleted.

- *Reporting , dissemination and use of findings*

Processed data from the questionnaire response will be reported in the written report. The online interview will be audio-recorded on Microsoft teams, with only the audio record used to generate transcriptions. The interview findings will also be analysed and reported, and some quotes of the participants might be reported with only their pseudonyms reported. The “identity map” pictures created by the participants might also be included in the written report, with pseudonyms different from the pseudonyms given to the interview data, to reduce the possibility for participants to identify themselves. How the findings will be reported, disseminated and used will be made clear to the participants and their parents on the information sheets.

- *Data Protection and Management*

Data obtained from the study will be protected and handled in accordance with the GDPR, which includes secure storing of data in UCL OneDrive, anonymisation of questionnaire responses, pseudonymisation of audio recordings, transcriptions of the

interview and the drawings by the participants, limitation of the use of data to the explained purpose, and limitation of the duration of storage of the processed data for 10 years in the UCL network.

Please confirm that the processing of the data is not likely to cause substantial damage or distress to an individual
Yes ☒
Section 9 – Attachments.
Please attach your information sheets and consent forms to your ethics application before requesting a Data Protection number from the UCL Data Protection office. Note that they will be unable to issue you the Data Protection number until all such documentation is received

a. Information sheets, consent forms and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research (List attachments below)
   Yes ☒ No ☐
   Young Person Information Sheet, Parent Information Sheet, Consent Form
b. Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee Yes ☐
c. The proposal ('case for support') for the project Yes ☐
d. Full risk assessmentYes ☐Section 10 – Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information in this form is correct and that this is a full description of the ethical issues that may arise in the course of this project.

I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor.
Yes ☒ No ☐

I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.
Yes ☒ No ☐

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:

The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project.
Name Yeung Kiu Ho
Date 07/05/2024

Please submit your completed ethics forms to your supervisor for review.

Notes and references

Professional code of ethics
You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:
British Psychological Society (2018) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*
Or
British Educational Research Association (2018) *Ethical Guidelines*
Or
British Sociological Association (2017) *Statement of Ethical Practice*

Please see the respective websites for these or later versions; direct links to the latest versions are available on the Institute of Education Research Ethics website.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks
If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through at IOE.

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

Appendix B: Information Sheets and Consent Forms

Institute of Education

UCL

參與者須知(家長版本)

Parent Information Sheet

研究名稱：

探究在英國的香港 BN(O)移民青年的身份認同和幸福感：揭示他們在英的適應

Research Project Title: Examining Identities and Psychological Well-being of Hong Kong BN(O) Immigrant Youths in the UK: Implications for their Settlement

研究背景 About the study

過往研究發現，童年和青春期是青少年發展身份認同的關鍵時期，對他們的心理狀態(或稱幸福感)很重要。 移民青年在建立自己的身份認同時可能會面臨額外的挑戰，因為他們必須在兩個具有不同文化和社會制度的地方之間流動。 他們在適應新環境時也可能承受更大的壓力，影響他們的心理健康。了解他們建立身份認同的過程可能有助我們在成長路程中從旁協助。

本研究旨在探討持有英國國民海外（BN(O)）簽證，與家人一起從香港移居到英國的兒童和青少年的身份認同和幸福感。 本研究希望能了解移民青年對自身身分的看法，並探究他們的不同的身份認同與他們的幸福感是否相關。

為甚麼這項研究這麼重要？

- 此研究為香港 BN(O) 移民青年提供了發聲的渠道，並幫助我們了解他們在英國的定居情況。
- 研究結果可以幫助我們了解移民青年如何發展並理解他們的不同身份認同，而這些可能與他們的幸福感有關。
- 研究結果可為政策發展和教育實踐提供重要訊息，以支持移民青年或少數族裔背景青年的身份認同的健康發展。

Past studies found that childhood and adolescence are critical periods for youths to develop identities, and this is important for their well-being. Immigrant youths may face extra challenges in developing their identities because they have to move between two places with different culture and social system. They may also be more stressed when adapting to the new place they moved to, impacting their well-being. Understanding the process of their identity development can be important to develop ways to support them on their journey.

The study aims at **exploring the identities and the well-being of children and adolescents who have moved from Hong Kong to the UK with their families with the British National**

Overseas (BN(O)) visas. This study would like to listen to the immigrant youth's views towards their own identities, and to see whether their identities are related to their well-being.

Why is this Study Important?

- The study gives voice to Hong Kong BN(O) immigrant youths and help us to understand their settlement in the UK.
- The study findings help us to understand how immigrant youths are developing and making sense of their identities, and these can be related to their well-being.
- The study findings may inform policies and educational practises to support the adaptive identity development of immigrant youths or youths from ethnic minority background.

研究者背景 About me

我是 Carol Yeung，是一名就讀倫敦大學學院教育研究院的二年級實習教育心理學家。我對於孩子與青少年親見訴說的經驗和觀點很感興趣，他們的聲音有助於改善現行教育方法，有利於學童的學習和心理發展。

I am Carol Yeung, a year 2 trainee educational psychologist of the Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology programme in UCL Institute of Education. I am interested in children and young people's voice of their experience and their views that can help improving education practices and enhancing children's learning and well-being.

研究過程 What will happen now?

這個研究分為兩部分，您和您的孩子可以選擇參加兩個部分，或只參加第一部分。

<u>填寫同意書</u>

在閱讀本參與者須知後，請為您的孩子讀出參與者須知(青少年版本)，然後與他一起填寫同意書。

<u>第一部分—網上問卷</u>

如果您和您的孩子都同意參與這個研究，您的孩子會被邀請完成一項有關他/她的背景、身份認同和幸福感的網上問卷。請您協助完成有關家長教育程度的兩個問題，然後將設備交給您的孩子讓他完成餘下的部分。完成整份問卷約需 10 - 15 分鐘。

<u>第二部分—線上個人訪談</u>

在同意書上，您和您的孩子可以選擇是否參加研究的第二部分。 如果您表示有興趣並留下您的聯絡方式，我會稍後在聯絡您，與您討論有關線上個人訪談的安排。我會與您的孩子進行一項活動，詢問您的孩子對其身份認同的看法和感受，並了解以及移居英國會否影響他們的

並了解以及移居英國會否影響他們的這些看法和感受。線上個人訪談大約需時 40 至 50 分鐘。在完成訪談後，我會請您的孩子畫一張與訪談內容有關的圖畫，請您幫忙將圖畫上傳並傳送給我。

The study has two parts. You and your child can choose to take part in both parts of the study, or only the first part.

Consent: After reading this information sheet, please read the young person information sheet to your child, and then fill in the consent form with your child together.

Part One – Online Survey: If both you and your child agree to take part in the study, your child will be invited to complete an online survey about his/her background, identity and well-being**.** Please help completing the two questions about parental educational level, then hand over the device for your child to complete the rest of the survey. It will take about 10 – 15 minutes to complete the survey.

Part Two – Online Individual Interview: On the consent form, you and your child can choose to participate part two of the study or not. If you expressed interest and leave your contact information, you will be contacted later to arrange a time for your child to participate in an online interview with me. I will do an activity and ask about your child his/her views and feelings about his/her identity, and whether moving to the UK has impacted these in anyways. The interview will take about 40 – 50 minutes. After the interview, I will ask your child to draw a picture about what we talked about in the interview (his/her identities), please help to upload and send the picture to me.

我與孩子提供的資訊會被如何處理？
What will happen to the information provided by me and my child?

- 所有資料都將被**匿名處理**，有關您和您孩子的所有個人資訊都會被保密。 只有當有任何資訊表明他/她或其他人的安危面臨重大風險時，我才會將這些資訊分享給其他專業人士，以確保您的孩子、您以及其他人的安全。
  All data will be **anonymised**, and all the personal information about you and your child will be kept confidential. Only if there are any information that shows that he/she or others are at significant risk, I will have to share the information to another professional to ensure safety of your child, you and others.

- 如果您的孩子參加線上訪談，我將在私人房間進行線上訪談，並使用耳機確保其他人不會聽到訪談內容。 建議您的孩子也在安全且私密的房間進行訪談，例如睡房。在我與您的孩子進行線上訪談時，您可以選擇是否留在房間，但您並不需要參與訪談。

If your child is participating in the online interview, I will conduct the online interview in a private room, and make use of earphones to ensure no other person will hear the content of the interview. It is advised that your child to also join the online interview in a room that is safe and private, such as bedroom. You can choose to stay in the room or not during the interview, but you will not have to participate in the interview.

- 訪談將被錄音和轉錄為文字，錄音和書面記錄將安全地儲存在加密的電腦中。訪談的書面記錄將與您和您孩子的個人資訊分開存儲，以盡量減少您的孩子和您被識別的可能性。
  The interview will be recorded and transcribed, and the recording and written record will be stored securely in an encrypted computer. The written record will be stored separately from you and your child's personal information to minimise the possibility for your child and you to be identified.

- 在完成問卷（第一部分）或訪談（第二部分）後的四週內，如果您改變了主意並想退出研究，您和您的孩子可以要求從研究中刪除您的資料。
- Within four weeks after completing the survey (Part One) or the interview (Part Two), if you have changed your mind and want your child to withdraw from the study, you and your child can request your data to be removed from the study and deleted.

- 您提供的資訊將僅用於研究目的。 研究結果將在我的期末論文中發佈。 根據倫敦大學學院 (UCL) 指南，研究資料將保留至少 10 年，但所有個人資訊將被刪除。
  The information you provided will only be used for research purpose. The findings will be reported in my final thesis. Research data will be retained for a minimum of 10 years in compliance with UCL guidelines, with all personal information removed.

在這項研究中，我和孩子還要注意甚麼？

Are there anything that we need to be aware of in this research?

這項研究是關於您的孩子在移居英國之前和之後對自己身份認同的看法和感受。 有些孩子可能在談論他們的個人經歷和感受時感到不舒服。 我將確保您的孩子知道他/她可以選擇不回答任何讓他/她感到不舒服的問題，也可以隨時終止訪談。 如果您希望我在訪談後跟進任何問題，也可以在訪談後與我聯繫。

This study is about your child's views and feelings towards his/her own identities before and after coming to the UK. There is a risk for some of the children to feel uncomfortable talking about their personal experience and feelings. I will make sure your child know that

我的孩子必須參加嗎？Do my child have to take part?

參與本研究是**完全自願**的。 我希望您的孩子會發現這是一次寶貴的經歷，但在任何時候選擇不參加或退出研究都不會有任何後果。

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. I hope your child will find it a valuable experience, but there will be no consequence for not taking part or quit at any time of the study.

資料保護隱私權聲明 Data Protection Privacy Notice

此研究的控制者是倫敦大學學院(UCL)。 倫敦大學學院數據保護職員負責監督涉及處理個人數據的活動，您可以透過 data-protection@ucl.ac.uk 聯繫他們。
這份「本地」隱私權聲明列出了適用於本特定研究的資訊。有關倫敦大學學院如何使用參與者信息的更多信息，請參閱我們的「一般」隱私聲明：
參與此研究者，請按這裏了解詳情。
用於處理您的個人資料的合法依據是：「公共任務」。
我們會就研究需要處理您的個人資料。如果我們能夠對個人資料進行匿名化或假名化，我們將對您提供的資訊採取此措施，並儘可能減少對個人資料的處理。
如果您對個人資料的處理方式有疑問，或者您想就您的權利與我們聯繫，請以電郵 (data-protection@ucl.ac.uk) 聯絡倫敦大學學院。

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.
This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice: For participants in research studies, click here.
The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.
The lawful basis that will be used to process your personal data is: 'public task'.
Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data, we will undertake this with the information you provide and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.
If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

如有問題，您們可以透過電郵 與我聯絡。謝謝！
Please contact me by email if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Institute of Education

UCL

參與者須知(青少年版本)
Young Person Information Sheet

請讓您的家長為您讀出這份須知。Please ask your parent to read this to you.

研究名稱：探究在英國的香港 BN(O)移民青年的身份認同和幸福感：揭示他們在英的適應
Research Project Title: Examining Identities and Psychological Well-being of Hong Kong BN(O) Immigrant Youths in the UK: Implications for their Settlement

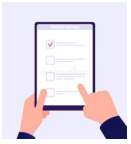
我是誰？Who am I?
我是 Carol Yeung。我是一名來自香港並在英國接受培訓的實習教育心理學家。我常與小孩與青少年工作，希望能幫助他們在學校學習與更快樂地成長。
I am Carol Yeung. I came from Hong Kong and I am training to be an educational psychologist in the UK. I work with children and young people to find out what can help with their learning and happiness at school.

我為甚麼在做這個研究？Why am I doing this project?
我想知道移居到其他國家的年輕人如何看待及形容自己，即他們的「身份認同」。我也想找出這些年輕人的身份認同與他們的快樂與幸福感有沒有關係。
I would like to know how young people who moved to a new country see themselves and describe who they are, which is their "identities". I also want to find out if the way young people see themselves is connected to how happy and content they feel in their everyday lives.

在這項研究中您將會做甚麼？What will you be asked to do?
這個研究分為兩部分，您可以選擇參加兩個部分，或只參加第一部分。
The project has two parts. You can choose to join both the first and second part of the study, or to join the first part only.

如果您和您的家長同意參加這個研究，您將會：
If you and your parents agree for you to join this study, you will be asked to:

- **第一部分：完成一份網上問卷 (約需 10 - 15 分鐘完成)。**
  Part 1: Complete an online questionnaire which takes about 10 - 15 minutes.



- 第二部分(可選擇是否參加)：與我做一個線上個人訪談(約 40 - 50 分鐘)。
  我會問您一些問題，以及和您做一個活動。

  完成訪談後，我會請你畫一幅與這次訪談內容有關的圖畫，
  並請您的家長幫忙上載並傳送給我。

  Part 2 (Depends on your choice): Do an individual online interview with me, which takes about 40 - 50 minutes. I will ask you some questions and do an activity with you.

  After the interview, I will ask you to draw a picture about what we talked in the interview, and ask your parent to send the picture back to me.

您將會被問甚麼問題？What questions will you be asked?

- 我會問您有關您如何看待和描述自己 (即您的「身份認同」)、
  您對這些身份的感受以及它們對您有多重要等的問題。
  I will ask you questions about how you see and describe yourself (your "identities"), how you feel about these identities and how important they are to you.
- 在網上問卷中(第一部分)，我會問您有關您在日常生活中感到多快樂和滿意。
- On the online questionnaire (Part 1), I will also ask you questions about how happy and content you are in your daily life.
- 您可以選擇不回答讓您感到不舒服的問題。**You do not have to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable to answer.**

關於線上訪談，您需要知道甚麼？What do you have to know about the online interview?

- 我將會錄製我們的訪談，讓我可以再次收聽訪談的內容，確保我不會錯過您分享給我的重要資訊。
  I will record the online interview so that I can listen to them again and make sure I do not miss any important information. The recordings will be saved on a secure computer.

- 我會在私人房間裏帶着耳機進行這個訪談，確保沒有人能聽到您與我分享的內容。
  I will join the online interview in a private room and use earphones, so that no one can hear what you share with me.

- 您也可以選擇在談間私密而安全的房間（例如您的睡房）進行這個訪談。您的家長也可以選擇是否與您一起留在房間，但他們並不會參與訪談。

You may also want to join the interview in a room that is private and safe, like your own bedroom. Your parents can also choose to stay in the room with you, but they will not join the interview.

我會如何處理您分享給我的資訊？What will happen to the information you tell me?

- 我將會整合研究成果，然後寫一份書面報告，並與其他人分享我的報告，但是不會公開您的姓名和身份。其他人不會知道這些資訊是您向我分享的。
  I will be writing a report about my findings, and I will share my report to others, but I will not use your own name. Other people will not know it is you telling me the information.
- 我會保密您告訴我的事情，除非您說的事情會令我擔心您或其他人的安危，這樣我便需要把這件事告訴其他可以提供幫助的人。
  What you tell me is private and stays between us. But if you say something that makes me worry about you or someone else, I'll need to tell someone who can help.

您現在可以做甚麼？What can you do now?

- 與您的家長填寫同意書，確認您是否想要參加這項研究。
  您的家長會將已填妥及簽簽署的同意書寄回給我。
  Fill in the consent form with your parents, to tell me whether you want to take part. Your parents will send me back the completed and signed consent form.

- 您可以透過電郵 (kiu.yeung.20@ucl.ac.uk) 向我提問。如果您選擇參加訪談，在訪談前我也會給您時間讓您問我問題。
  You can ask me questions by sending email (kiu.yeung.20@ucl.ac.uk) to me.
  I will also give you time to ask me questions if you choose to join the interview.

- 在交回填好的同意書後，您會被要求填寫一份網上問卷（第一部分）。
  請讓您的家長填寫有關他們教育水平的第一、二條問題，
  然後交給您完成整份問卷。
  After sending back the consent form,
  you will be asked to fill in the online questionnaire (Part 1)
  Please ask your parents to fill in the first two questions about their educational level, then complete the questionnaire by yourself.

- 如果您有興趣參加線上訪談（第二部分），請讓您的家長在同意書上留下聯絡方式。
  If you are interested in taking part in the online interview (Part 2),
  please ask your parents to leave contact details on the consent form.

- 如果您改變了主意並想退出這個研究，您和您的家長可以在完成網上問卷或線上訪談後四個星期內告訴我。我會把您的資訊刪除，並不會再聯絡您。
  If you have changed your mind later, you and your parent can tell me you want to stop participating in this study in four weeks after the online questionnaire or online interview. I will then delete your data and will not contact you again.

如有問題，您們可以透過電郵( )與我聯絡。謝謝！
Please contact me by email ( ) if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Appendix C: Finalised Questionnaire

A 部分：個人資料
Part A: Demographics

1. 你的性別是甚麼？ What is your gender?
- 男 Male - 女 Female

2. 你今年幾歲？How old are you?
____ 歲 years old

3. 你在英國居住了多久？ How long have you been living in the UK?
____ years ____ months

4. 在移居英國前，你在香港居住了多久？
How long have you stayed in HK before coming to the UK?
____ years ____ months

5. 你的爸爸達到最高的教育程度是？ What is your father's highest educational level?
- 小學或以下 Primary School and Below - 中學 Secondary School - 副學士/高級學位 Associate Degree/Higher Diploma
- 學士學位 Undergraduate degree - 碩士學位或以上 Master degree or above

6. 你的媽媽達到最高的教育程度是？ What is your mother's highest educational level?
- 小學或以下 Primary School and Below - 中學 Secondary School - 副學士/高級學位 Associate Degree/Higher Diploma
- 學士學位 Undergraduate degree - 碩士學位或以上 Master degree or above

7. 由 0（沒有認識）到 10（母語水平），你認為你的英文有多好？
From a scale from 0 (No Knowledge) to 10 (Native), how good do you think your English is?

8. 由 0（沒有認識）到 10（母語水平），你認為你的廣東話有多好？
From a scale from 0 (No Knowledge) to 10 (Native), how good do you think your Cantonese is?

B 部分：身份認同
Part B: Identities

身份認同是指你是誰，和令你獨特的地方。身份認同包括了你的信念、價值觀、興趣，以及令你成為你自己的經歷。
Identity is who you are and what makes you unique. It includes your beliefs, values, interests, and experiences that shape who you are as a person.

請想一下你作為香港人/中國人/英國人/亞洲人/宗教成員/兒女/學生/好朋友的身份並回答以下問題。Please think about your identity as a [HKer/Chinese/British/Asian/Member of your religion/Child of your parents/Student at school/Best friend of a peer].

1) 你有多認同你是一個[身份]？How much are you [identity]?'
2) 你有多自豪你是一個[身份]？How proud are you about being [identity]?
3) [身份]這個身份對你有多重要？How important is it that you are [identity]?
4) 作為一個[身份]，你有甚麼感受？How do you feel about being [identity]?

C 部分：生活中的感受和想法
Part C: Feelings and Thoughts About Your Life
回想一下你過去一個月的生活。你有多常有以下的感受或想法？
Think about how you have been doing in the past month. How often do you have the following feelings or thoughts?

在過去一個月，你有多常感到…… During the past month, how often did you feel …	從不 Never	一至兩次 Once or Twice	約一星期一次 About Once a week	一星期二至三次 2 or 3 Times a week	差不多每天 Almost Everyday	每天 Everyday
1. 快樂？happy?						
2. 對生活感興趣？ interested in life?						
3. 滿意自己的生活? satisfied with your life?						
4. 對社會有貢獻？that you had something important to contribute to society?						
5. 對某個社群有歸屬感 (如社會群體、社區、城市、學校）? …felt a sense of belonging to a particular community (e.g., social group, neighbourhood, city, or school)?						
6. 對某個社群有歸屬感 (如社會群體、社區、城市、學校）? that you belonged to a community (like a social group, your neighbourhood, your city, your school)?						
7. 對於像你這樣的人，這個社會正在變得更美好？that our society is becoming a better place for people like you?						
8. 人們基本上都是好人？ that people are basically good?						

9. 社會的運作對你來說有意義？that the way our society works makes sense to you?						
10. 你喜歡你大部分的性格？that you liked most parts of your personality?						
11. 擅於履行你在日常生活中的責任？ good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life?						
12. 你與其他人有溫暖而有信任感的關係？ that you had warm and trusting relationships with others?						
13. 你曾有具挑戰性的經歷，讓你成長和成為一個更好的人？ that you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person?						
14. 有信心思考或表達自己的想法和意見？ confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions?						
15. 你的生活有方向感或意義？ that your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it?						

您有興趣參加一個後續的訪談，與我分享更多您的想法嗎？
Are you interested in participating in a follow-up interview to share with me more of your thoughts?
- 是 Yes - 否 No

如果有興趣，請留下你家長的聯絡方式。
If yes, please leave the contact details of your parents.

感謝您花時間完成這份問卷。您的回答可以幫助我了解像您這樣從香港移居到英國的年輕人如何看待和感受自己的身份，以及這與他們日常生活中的快樂和滿足感有何關係。 如果您願意在個人訪談中與我更詳細討論這些問題我將非常感激，但是否參加將完全取決於您。非常感謝！
Thank you for spending time finishing the survey. Your answers can help me to understand how young people like you moving from HK to the UK think and feel about who they are, and how this might be related to how happy and content they are in their daily life. I will be very thankful if you can talk more about these with me in an individual interview (please indicate your interest next page), but it is totally up to you to join the interview or not. Thank you very much!

Appendix D: Recruitment Posters (Phase I & II)

Institute of Education

UCL

Understanding the Identities and Well-Being of Young People Coming from Hong Kong to the UK

My name is Carol Yeung. I am a trainee educational psychologist at Institute of Education, UCL. I am doing a research on the **identities and well-being** of youths who **came from Hong Kong to the UK with BN(O) visa.**

Your children are invited to take part in the study if they:

- **Are aged 10-15, who moved from Hong Kong to the UK using BN(O) visa after year 2020**
- **Were born and lived in Hong Kong most of the time (at least 70% of the time) before moving to the UK**
- **Have stayed in the UK for at least a year**

Your children can take part by answering an online survey, and if interested, they can also choose to participate in a follow-up online individual interview.

If you and your children are interested to take part, please read the information by the link below, or by scanning the QR code.

https://qualtrics.ucl.ac.uk/jfe/form/SV_3sn7wowxRuEXMRE

Please feel free to contact me by [redacted] if you have any q[redacted]

Institute of Education

UCL

探討移居至英國的香港青少年的身份認同和幸福感

我是Carol。我是一名在倫敦大學教育學院受訓的實習教育心理學家。我現在正進行一個有關以BN(O)簽證從香港移居至英國青少年的身份認同和幸福感的研究。

如果您的孩子符合以下條件，便可以考慮參與這個研究：

- **10-15歲，於2020年後使用BN(O)簽證從香港移居到英國**
- **在香港出生，在移居英國前大部分時間（至少70%時間）居住在香港**
- **已在英國居住至少一年**

您的孩子將會回答一份網上問卷，如果有興趣，他們也可以選擇參加後續的線上個人訪談。

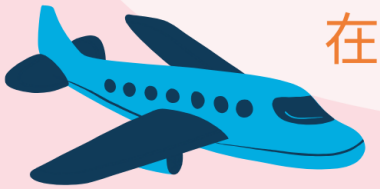
如果您和您的孩子有興趣參加這個研究，請透過下面的連結或QR Code閱讀資訊頁，並填寫問卷。

https://qualtrics.ucl.ac.uk/jfe/form/SV_3sn7wowxRuEXMRE

歡迎隨時透過 kiu.yeung.20@ucl.ac.uk 與我聯絡以了解更多。

STUDY ON HONG KONG IMMIGRANT YOUTHS IN THE UK

在英港人青少年研究



我是誰? ABOUT ME

我是Carol。我是一名在倫敦大學教育學院受訓的實習教育心理學家。
I am Carol, I am a trainee educational psychologist in the UK.

我在做甚麼? WHAT I AM DOING

我在做一個有關移英港人青少年身份認同的研究。
在研究的第一階段，我邀請了一些青少年填寫了網上問卷。
現在我想邀請**曾經填寫過問卷**或是**沒有填寫，但有興趣參與研究**的青少年進行一個為時45-50分鐘的**線上訪談，以了解青少年對自己不同身份的看法。**

I am doing a study on the identity of young people who immigrated to Hong Kong in the UK.
In the first phase of the study, I invited some teenagers to fill out an online questionnaire.Now I would like to invite teenagers **who have filled out the questionnaire** or **have not filled it out but are interested in participating** in the research to conduct a 45-50 minute online interview, to explore how teenagers think about their different identities.

研究詳情 ABOUT THE STUDY

如果您的子女或您自己是: *1. 10-15歲 2. 在香港出生，在移居英國前大部分時間（至少70%時間）居住在香港 3. 已在英國居住至少一年*
便可在以下表格填寫聯絡方法，我會聯絡您與您討論有關訪談的詳情。
在訪談結束後，我會邀請參與者繪畫一幅與這次訪談有關的圖畫，
並將送出£5 AMAZON 現金卷給把圖畫傳送給我的參與者，以示感謝。

If your child or yourself is: *1. 10-15 years old 2. Born in Hong Kong and lived in Hong Kong most of the time (at least 70% of the time) before moving to the UK 3. Has lived in the UK for at least one year*
Please fill in the contact information in the form below and I will contact you to discuss the details of the interview.
At the end of the interview, I will invite participants to draw a picture related to the interview. To thank you for taking part, a £5 Amazon voucher will be gifted to those who send me their drawings.

請在以下連結留下聯絡方式:
Please leave contact details in the link below:
https://forms.office.com/e/W05kycniNP

如有問題，歡迎隨時透過 kiu.yeung.20@ucl.ac.uk 與我聯絡。
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me through

Appendix E: Finalised Interview Schedule

1. Language Preference
Purpose: Setting language for the interview and understanding language background
你想用英文定廣告話進行呢個訪問？ What is your preferred language for this interview? 你點解會選擇呢個語言？ Why have you chosen this language?
2. Introduction
Purpose: To build rapport, to give introduction of myself and the study
多謝你今日參與呢個訪問。我係 Carol，我係倫敦大學教育學院既博士生。我依家接受緊教育心理學家既培訓，我既工作係支援小朋友同年輕人既學習。作為培訓既一部分，我依家正進行緊對同家人由香港移居黎英國既年輕人既研究。我有興趣知道你對於你唔同既身份既睇法，同埋你同呢啲身份有關既經歷。 如果您有問題想問我，可以選擇依家問。如果你係訪問過程中有任何問題，我地都可以隨時暫停，等我回答您既問題。 Thank you for coming today. I am Carol, and I am a doctorate student studying at the IOE which is a university in London. I am training to be an educational psychologist and my job is about supporting children and young people's learning. As part of my training I am doing research on the identity of HK children who have come to the UK with their family members. I am interested to know about your views towards your different identities, and your experience related to your different identities. Does that all make sense? You can ask me some questions now if you like? You can also stop me at any moment if you have a question for me, I don't mind.
3. Ethical Issues
Purpose: To remind participants of their rights
係上次填寫問卷時，您既家長同您同意左參加呢個研究。係我地開始訪問之前，我想再確認一次，您係咪都係仲願意參加呢次訪問？（如願意）好，咁我依家會講一啲您作為受訪者既權利。我會講解一陣間個訪問會點進行，同埋當你想中止訪問既時候可以點做。您覺得 OK 嗎？ 1. 呢個訪問會進行大約 40-50 分鐘。 2. 係呢個訪問之後，我會請您係一個半鐘之內畫一幅同今次訪問有關既圖畫，您可以自己或者請您家長將幅畫 send 去我既 email。 3. 訪問中如果有啲問題令您覺得唔舒服，可以隨時話比我聽，您可以選擇唔回答任何您唔想回答的問題。您既答案唔會有分對與錯，就算你無答案都無問題。您可以同我講「下一題」，然後我就可以問下一題。如果您想終止呢個訪問，或者我認為我地需要終止呢個訪問，我地都可以隨時停止。如果您想終止訪問或唔回答問題，您都唔會有任何後果。

4. 呢個訪問會被錄音，內容會被轉錄成文字，方便我以後回顧。您既名字將會被刪除，而我會係唯一可以將你個名同段錄音匹配的人。呢啲資料將被安全地儲存，並且只會係研究中使用。
5. 您係訪問中所講既一切都將被保密，除非您所說的內容可能對保護您或他人的安全好重要，我就需要同可以處理到呢啲事既專業人士講。

您明唔明白我以上所講既內容？您需唔需要我再重覆或者解釋任何內容？您仲願唔願意參加呢個訪問？咁我地依家會開始呢個訪問。

Your parents and you have agreed to participate in this study before you completed the survey last time, So before we start here, I want to check that you are still happy to take part in this interview? (yes/no). [if yes], Great, so I am going to share a few things with you which we call your rights as a participant. This explains what is going to happen next, and what to do if you want to stop. Is that okay?

1) This interview will take around 40 – 50 minutes.
2) After the interview, I will ask you to draw a picture related to the content of this interview, and to send it back within 1 and a half hour after the interview. You or your parent can send the picture to my email.
3) You can tell me anytime when you do not feel comfortable during the interview, and you can choose not to answer any questions that you don't want to. There are no wrong answers, even if you don't have an answer – you can just tell me "next" and we can move on. We can also stop the interview when you feel you do not wish to continue with that. If I think that we need to stop, I will also tell you. You will not get into any trouble if you want to stop or don't answer a question.
4) This interview will be recorded, and what we say will be transformed into written words so that I can look back at it later. Your name will be removed and I will be the only one that can match your name with the recordings. The data will be stored securely and will only be used for this research.
5) Everything you say in the interview will be confidential, unless what you say might be important to keep you or others safe.

4. Procedure

係訪問開始既時候，我會講出今日既日期同時間。然後我會請您講你自己個名，再問一啲關於你背景既問題。之後我會同你傾下身份認同既意思，然後就會進行一個活動。當我地做緊呢個活動既時候，我會問您有關您對自己身份認同既睇法，同埋有關你唔同身份認同既經歷既問題。係我地開始之前，您仲有無咩問題？

咁我依家會開始錄音。

I will begin the interview by stating my name and the date and time now. I will ask you to tell me your name, and I will ask some questions about your background. After that I will talk with you about the meaning of identity, then we will move forward to a collaborative activity. When we are doing the activity I will ask you some questions about your views towards your own identities and your experience about your different identities. Do you have any questions before we start?

I will start the recording now.

Purpose/Theme	Interviewing Questions	Prompting Questions
Gathering Background Information	1. 您今年幾多歲？How old are you? 2. 您幾歲既時候黎左英國？您係英國住左幾耐？At what age did you come to the UK? How many years have you spent living in HK before coming here?	
Checking participants' understanding of the concept of "identity"	3. 您覺得「身份認同」係咩意思？What do you think does the word "identity" means?	- 有無一啲身份認同既例子？ - Can you give me some examples of identity?
Explaining the concept of identity, introducing the procedure of the ranking activity	係呢個訪問入面，身份認同即係您係呢個社會之中認為自己係咩人。身份認同包括您鍾意做咩，您所做既事，您黎自邊到，您相信啲咩，令到您同其他人唔同。 我地係社會入面有好多唔同既身份，例如我地既種族、我地既國藉、我地既宗教信仰，甚至我地作為一個學生、作為子女或者朋友既身份。 依家我地要做一個活動，傾下您唔同既身份。係螢幕上您會見到唔同既卡片，代表住你可能會有既唔同既身份，例如種族、宗教，以及你係唔同關係中既身份。我想知呢啲身份對你你講有幾重要，再同你傾下你對呢啲身份既睇法、感受同有關既經驗。 您明唔明白螢幕上呢啲身份既意思？有無咩身份係想我解釋既？ In this interview, identity means who you think you are as a person in the society. It includes things like what you like to do, how you act, where you come from, and what you believe in, making you different from everyone else. We take up different identities in the society, for example our race, our nationality,	

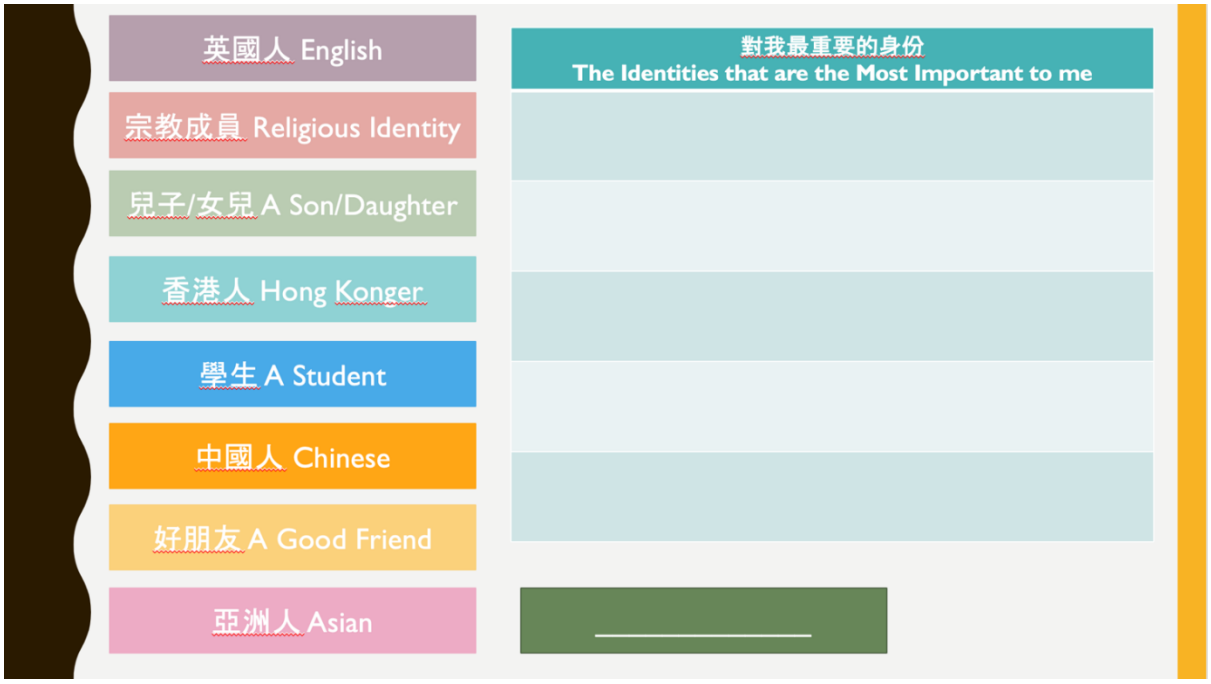
	our religion, and even our identities as a student, a child of our parents and a good friend. Now we are going to do an activity to talk more about your different identities. On the screen you can see different cards representing identities in different domains, for example racial identity, religious identity, and your identity in different relationships. I would like to know how important are these identities to you, and discuss with you your views, feelings and experience related to these identities. Do you understanding the meaning of all the cards on the screen? Are there any cards that you want me to explain further?	
Importance of their identities	依家我想您諗下呢啲身份對您黎講有幾重要。 Think about how important these identities are. 4. 係呢啲身份之中，邊一個對您黎講係最重要既？ Among all these identities, which one do you think is the most important to you? 5. 點解呢個身份對你黎講咁重要？ Why is this identity that important to you? 6. 點解你會放佢係呢個位? Why have you put this identity at this ranking?	
Understanding of their identities	7. 呢個身份對您有咩意義？ What is the meaning of this identity to you? 8. 您點解會有呢個身份？ What are the reasons that make you to have this identity? 9. 有無咩事件或者經歷係建立左您呢一個身份認同？	- 你覺得呢個身份對你嚟講有咩特別？ What is special about this identity for you? 10. 有無咩事件或者經歷令到你特別感受到呢個身份認同？

	Were there any events or experience that shape up your identity?	Were there any events of experience that make you particularly aware of this identity?
Feelings towards their identities	11. 對於擁有呢個身份，您有咩感受？點解？ How do you feel about having this identity? Why?	- 您對呢個身份有無正面既感受？有無負面既感受？ Do you have positive feelings towards this identity? Do you have negative feelings towards this identity? - 您對於呢個身份仲有無其他感受？ Do you have any other feelings related to this identity?
Change in identity related to moving to the UK	12. 係您黎左英國之黎，您對呢個身份既理解同感受有無任何改變？ After moving to the UK, are there any changes in your understanding and feelings towards this identity?	- 如果有，有啲咩轉變？您認為點解會有呢啲轉變？If yes, in what ways? Why do you think this change happened? - 呢個身份對您既重要性有無改變？Has this identity become more important or less important to you? - 您對呢個身份既感受有無改變？Do you have different feelings towards this identity? - 如果無，您覺得點解會無？If no, why do you think there are no changes?
Continuation of the ranking activity	13. 除左呢個身份之外，邊一個身份對你黎講係第二/三/四/五重要？ Apart from this identity, what is another identity that is the most important to you?	

	(Repeat questions 4 – 10)	
Well-being, Identity and Support	身心健康既意思即係它不只是指身體上的健康，還包括了心靈和情緒上的快樂，生活中的滿足感。當我們說一個人有良好的身心健康，就是說他不僅身體健康，心情也好，生活中感到開心和有意義。 Well-being refers to a person's overall health and happiness. It not only refers to physical health but also includes mental and emotional well-being, as well as a sense of satisfaction in life. When we say that someone has good well-being, it means they are not only physically healthy but also in a good mood, feeling happy and finding meaning in their life. 14. 你覺得我地頭先講過既嗰一啲身份，同你係日常生活中既身心健康有無關係? Do you think the identities that we talked about are related to your well-being in daily life? 15. 你覺得學校可以點樣幫你做自己，或者幫你知道自己係邊個？ How do you think your school can help you to build your identity? 16. 你覺得你嘅家長可以點樣幫你做自己，或者知道自己係邊個？ How do you think your parents can help you to build your identity?	- 如果有，有啲咩關係？ - 你覺得有無邊個身份係佢地特別幫到你？Are there any identities that you think they can particularly help you with?

多謝你今日黎參與呢個訪問。係呢個訪問之後，我想請你畫一幅圖畫，代表你自己各種唔同既身份，同埋你點樣看待自己。Thank you for coming to this interview. Following this interview, please draw a picture of your different identities, showing how you see yourself as a person.

Appendix F: Ranking Activity Used in Interviews



Appendix G: Example of Coded Interview Transcripts

Hou: A translated Transcript

Transcript	Initial Codes
Yeung, Kiu Ho 18:14-18:19 咁呢個身份對你嚟講有咩意義咧？ Then what does this identity means to you? **Hou** 18:19-18:22 即係佢係代表我係係邊度出世呀， It represents where I was born, 然之後我阿爸阿媽都喺嗰度出世， , and then my parents were also born there. 咁都喺嗰度，即係我係基本上成個小學都喺嗰度長大嘅。 . So, it's like, I basically grew up there during my entire primary school years. **Yeung, Kiu Ho** 18:22-18:34 嗯。即係細個啦，基本上喺嚟到之前都喺嗰度長大。咁又係有冇啲事件呀或者有啲經歷係你可以分享嘅，係你覺得特別令到你感受到有呢個身份認同? That means basically you grew up there when you were young and before you came here. Are there any events or experience you can share that made you feel that you have this identity as a HKer? **Hou** 18:34-19:19 諗…其實係……應該係我之前有一排就鍾意 mirror 嘅。咁中意嗰一排，咁我就會諗，中意喺小學嗰陣時，就係係小學喺度…即係，嚟到之後喺 local 咁樣，咁我就會諗喺班上面同我啲 local 嘅 friend share，就係關於 Mirror 既野。	HKer identity related to birthplace HKer identity related to parental birthplace/ Intergenerational Connection to HK HKer identity related to childhood experiences and upbringing in HK Sharing HKer idols and pop culture with local peeers

Hmm… I used to like 'Mirror' (a HK boy band). When I liked them when I was in primary school, after I came to the UK and attended local primary school, I would share with my local friends the things about 'Mirror'. 咁其實就係呢個時候令我好，即係發現自己係香港人，然後之後係鍾意啲嘢係好香港既。 It was during this time that I really realised I am a HongKonger, and after that, I found myself liking things that are very 'HK.	Realisation of attachment to HK culture

Fung: A transcript from an interview originally in English

Transcript	Initial Codes
Yeung, Kiu Ho 31:38-31:45 So what do you think being a British means then? **Fung** 31:45-31:53 It means that for me, I don't have to be that different from anyone else. **Yeung, Kiu Ho** 31:53-31:59 Hmm, so by anyone else, you mean like, who are you meaning? **Fung** 31:59-32:02 My classmates. **Yeung, Kiu Ho** 32:02-32:08 Your classmates, so are your classmates all British then? **Fung** 32:08-32:13 Not all of them, but I still want to be like them because I don't really want to be different. **Yeung, Kiu Ho** 32:13-32:27	Not wanting to be different from peers Urge to assimilate with peers in the UK

What do you think you have to do in order to become like them? Because you say that you want to become like them. **Fung** 32:27-32:46 So I could talk more fluently and don't have to be…don't have to be that 'stuttery'. 'Cause, I'm always 'stuttery'. **Yeung, Kiu Ho** 32:46-32:56 Yeah. So you are just, trying hard to become a British, so that's what you're telling me, right? **Fung** 32:56-32:58 Yeah. **Yeung, Kiu Ho** 32:58-33:09 OK, So what do you think is special about being a British for you then? **Fung** 33:09-33:25 I think being a Britain (British) is special to me because…I would be…(paused for 3 secs) How would I phrase it? **Yeung, Kiu Ho** 33:25-33:29 Sorry I can't cannot hear what you say. So you would be… **Fung** 33:29-33:52 So I think it would be special for me to be a British person because I could, I could know where in, I could know what English places are like, where they are, and I wouldn't have to get so lost all the time.	Speaking fluent English as essential to become a British Being British can bring better navigation in the UK

Appendix H: Example Page of Codebook

Code	Abstract	Potential Grouping
Having interest in Hk idols and pop culture and sharing with Uk peers	其實係……應該係我之前有一排就鍾意 mirror 嘅。咁中意嗰一排，咁我就會諗，中意喺小學嗰陣時，就係係小學喺度…即係，嚟到之後喺 local 咁樣，咁我就會諗喺班上面同我啲 local 嘅 friend share，就係關於 Mirror 既野。咁其實就係呢個時候令我好，即係發現自己係香港人，然後之後係鍾意啲嘢係好香港既。 (Hou) Actually… it was… I think there was a period when I really liked MIRROR (HK idol group). During that time, when I was into them, um—I liked them back in primary school. So back in primary school… after I came here and studied at a local school, I would, um, share things about MIRROR with my local friends in class. And it was actually during that time that I really… realised I was Hong Konger, and that the things I liked were very "Hong Kong." (Hou)	Affections towards HK/HKer (Interest)
Admiring HK athletes	但係因為我都好鐘意何詩蓓（香港運動員）啦。(Ip) But I also really like Siobhan Haughey (the Hong Kong athlete). (Ip)	Affections towards HK/HKer (Interest)
Happiness in HKer identity related to the memory of the previous life in HK	(我對於香港人呢個身份）覺得開心，因為，即係我嚟咗呢邊之後，我都唔會唔記得我以前香港嗰個生活囉。 (Au)	Affections towards HK/HKer (Connection)

	(About being a Hongkonger) I feel happy, because—even after coming here, I haven't forgotten the life I used to have in Hong Kong. (Au) 可能因為我喺即係我喺香港成長或者生活嘅日子都好開心。 (Fung) Maybe it's because the time I spent growing up or living in Hong Kong was really happy. (Fung)	
HKer identity related to feeling of homesick	我係一個好 home sick 既人。 (Ip) I'm a very "homesick" person. (Ip)	Affections towards HK/HKer (Connection)
Happy with sense of belonging in the HK society	Because so…It's about me being part of HK. And that's really nice knowing. (Fung)	Affections towards HK/HKer (Connection)
HKer identity as a source of comfort and belonging in times of alienation	Because, If I am not well, if I'm not welcomed in any other places, I'd feel homesick, and HK, and HK, just make me feel a lot more happier. (Fung)	Affections towards HK/HKer (Connection)

Appendix I: Themes, Subthemes and Example Codes

Theme	Subtheme	Example Codes
Theme 1: Navigation of Cultural Identity This theme explores how immigrant youths perceive and negotiate their cultural identities, including HKer, Asian, and Chinese identities, how migration has affected their self-perception, and their experiences as a minority in the UK..	**1.1 Feelings and Connections with HK** Examines the special bond youths feel toward HK, including pride, cultural affinity, and shared experiences with other HKers in the UK. (Related to 1.2, 1.3)	HKer identity linked to membership in the HK society, Pride in being a HKer, Feeling of closeness with other HKers, HKer identity as a source of comfort and belonging in times of alienation, Having interest in Hk idols and pop culture, Collective moments with Hkers in the UK, Noticing negative sides of Hkers, Negative feelings seeing the sociopolitical changes in HK
	1.2 Negotiating Chinese and Asian Identities Explores perceptions of Chinese and Asian identities and how Asian identity fits within a broader cultural context. (Related to 1.3)	Distinguishing HKers from Chinese, Conflicting narrative from authority and parents on HKer vs Chinese identity, Appreciating Chinese culture and history, Parent having Chinese identity, Asian identity as an extension of HKer identity, Realisation of Asian as a vast place with different culture, No feelings towards Asian identity as too many people have the same identity
	1.3 Experiencing Minority Status and Cultural Differences Highlights cultural contrasts between HK and UK, feelings of being different, and experiences of standing out as a minority in the UK. (Related to 2.1, 2.4)	HKer and Asian identity becoming more prominent overseas, Pride in maintaining HK practice and being different in the UK, Not wanting to be different from peers, Appreciating being different from others in cultural practice in the UK, Peer interest towards cultural background and reasons for migration, Contrasting language and food practice between people in the Uk and Hkers, Difference in appearance, language and culture as an Asian
Theme 2: Adapting to Life in the UK	**2.1 Becoming a British or Not** Discusses whether youths identify as British, the pressure to assimilate, and how daily experiences reinforce or challenge their	Feeling obligated to learn to be a British living in the UK, Cold weather acting as reminder of being in the UK not HK, Not identifying as a British yet, Academic

This theme focuses on how immigrant youths adapt to British life, including identity shifts, educational experiences, social integration, and challenges faced.	sense of belonging opinions on whether they identified as British or not.	performance in English reinforces British identity, The new hobby of playing football in the UK helps blending in
	2.2 Educational Experiences Compares school experiences in HK and the UK, highlighting differences in academic pressure, motivation, and adaptation to new learning environments.	Less stressed and more motivated to learn in the UK learning environment, More sense of accomplishment enhances enjoyment as a student in the UK, Feeling less stressed as a student in the UK not having to study Chinese language
	2.3 Social Adaptation and Friendship Network Explores how youths navigate friendships in the UK and maintain relationships with friends from HK, including cultural barriers and new social dynamics.	Feel more understood by childhood friends in HK compared to new friends in the UK, Befriending locals as the only HKer at school, Keeping in touch with HK friends, Drifting apart from friends in HK
	2.4 Challenges and Discrimination Covers challenges like language barriers, struggles in communication and experiences of racism.	Language challenges in the UK as a driver for improvement, Communication difficulties with parents with proficient English but less proficient Cantonese, Experience of racism as a HKer and Asian, Fear of being discriminated against with disclosure of Hker and Asian identities, Unsure how to respond to racism
Theme 3: Role of Relational and Personal Identities Immigrants youths explained the roles of different relational identities and interpersonal relationships have in their daily life. Other personal identities including student and religious identities were also discussed.	**3.1 Friends are indispensable** Highlights the mutual support, companionship, and shared experiences that make friendships essential to identity.	Friends bring mutual happiness and support, Growing up with companionship of friends, Expectations to treat friends well, Concept of what a good friend means, Common hobbies facilitate building of friendships, Clashing interest in football teams not affecting friendships
	3.2 Supported by and supporting parents Explores the evolving parent-child relationship, from receiving care to mutual emotional and practical support post-migration.	Moments of feeling being cared by parents, Learning and becoming myself from parents' upbringing, Feeling more sense of responsibility to support parents in the UK, Increased intimacy and closeness with family

		members after migration with simpler life/shared isolation
	3.3 Discusses the complexities of sibling bonds, from responsibilities and conflicts to companionship and mutual understanding.	Feeling burdened to take care of younger sibling, Sibling as a companion, Occasional misunderstanding and conflicts with sibling, Maturity brings mutual understanding and increased enjoyment in sibling relationship
	3.4 Mixed Feelings as a student Examines mixed feelings about student identity, such as academic pressures, sense of accomplishment and belonging.	Student identity is important but not liked sometimes, Fear of losing student identity, Representing school in competition increases sense of belonging at school, Not always enjoying the responsibility as a student to go to school
	3.5 Religious Identity, and Other Personal Identities (Shorter) Sharing of some immigrant youths with their views towards other personal identities they have.	Religious identity linked to the belief of spiritual being, Feeling of happiness of religious identity due to religious meaning associated, Taking up responsibilities in religious rituals, Diagnosis of ADHD enlisted academic support in HK school
Theme 4: Understanding of Identities It captures some concepts towards identity expressed by the immigrant youths during the conversations, and also how they think identity is related to well-being.	**4.1 General Concept of Identity** Examines how youths define identity, including stability, change post-migration, and interconnections between different roles.	Identity defined as the person you are, Identity felt the same after migration, Treasuring having good friends, other identities are the of the identity as a good friend, Linking identity as a son to identity as a sibling, Daughter identity as a reminder of HKer identity
	4.2 Identity and Well-being Explores the positive and negative effects of different identities on well-being.	Positive impact of friend identity on emotional and psychological well-being, Negative impact of student identity on emotional and physical well-being, Some identities are unrelated to well-being
Theme 5: Development of Identity and Support Systems	**5.1 School Support** Immigrant youths shared how the school have supported, and what the schools can do more to support their identity development.	School socialisation of how one should treat others, School as a place to build identity as a good friend and British. School events not helpful with building identity,

		Academic support can foster positive feelings towards student identity
	5.2 Parental Support Immigrant youths shared what their parents have done, and what the parents can do more to support their identity development.	Parents chatting with their children about daily life helps with identity development, Parent narrating the reasons of migration, Parent encouraging development of social relationships with local peers
	5.3 Self-Exploration Some immigrant youths shared how they explore different identities by themselves.	Exploring information of identity out of own interest, Parents can give more freedom for self-exploration, Experience in HK enhances understanding and interest in the situation of refugees, Friends very helpful and important in identity development, Friends facilitating and encouraging self-exploration of identity