

## **INFORMATION LITERACY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN HONG KONG: ACTUAL ABILITIES, SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND TEACHERS' SUPPORT**

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Accessing information sources has become more important in this information age. With an abundance amount of information available every day, searching for reliable, accurate and useful information and being able to use it wisely pose a challenge to individuals in society (Smith et al., 2013). Catering to the Liberal Studies curriculum in Hong Kong, secondary school students are taught and expected to apply their information literacy skills to inquiry-based projects. The importance of information literacy is thus acknowledged as a significant issue in Liberal Studies education in Hong Kong (Siu, Chan & Chu, 2014). In spite of recent research looking into the development of information literacy among students (Chu, Tse & Chow, 2011), there have been relatively few studies exploring how students perceive teachers' support on information literacy or how they perceive their own abilities in information literacy.

To fill the gaps, this study aims to examine: (1) how students' abilities in information literacy differ across Forms and academic performances; (2) how students' perceptions towards their own information literacy abilities and teachers' support differ across Forms and academic performances; and (3) the relationships between students' information literacy abilities and perceptions.

A mixed method research design was adopted in the study. Twelve classes of junior secondary school students (Forms 1 to 3) from a local secondary school were recruited to participate. Each form comprised of four classes with varying academic performances. First, an information literacy ability test was administered to examine students' knowledge about information literacy. Then, a questionnaire survey was distributed to the participants to solicit their perceptions towards their self-perceived ability in information literacy and teachers' support on information literacy. In addition, some participants were randomly selected to participate in follow-up semi-structured focus group interviews.

Statistical analyses such as linear regression and the one-way ANOVA test were conducted on the quantitative data collected. Results showed that the highest-form (Form 3) students performed best in the information literacy ability test, while all students achieved a relatively better performance in the aspects of "identifying potential sources" and "evaluating sources" than the aspects of "developing the topic", "search strategies" and "ethical use of information". In terms of students' perception towards teachers' support, interestingly, the lowest-form (Form 1) students reported having received more support from teachers than the other two forms. Meanwhile, the highest-form (Form 3) students perceived that they had a relatively lower information literacy ability than the other forms. Regarding the relationship between students' perception towards teachers' supports and their abilities, it has been found that a more positive perception towards teachers' instructions on information literacy is related to higher scores in the information literacy ability test. Findings also revealed a moderately positive relationship between students' self-perceived and actual information literacy abilities. Taking students' academic performances into consideration, expectedly in all three forms, the class with the best general academic performance achieved the best in the information literacy ability test. These findings suggested that teachers should pay more attention to cultivating students' information literacy abilities in certain aspects, also implying that teachers can adjust their support on information literacy according to students' general academic abilities.

## References

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