



BDF200060: Pathway to Desistance: A Qualitative Study of young ex-drug users in Hong Kong

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Research Background

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- Drug abuse is a severe global issue, especially drug abuse problem among young people
 - Hong Kong is no exception
 - it is important and essential to explore the knowledge on **desistance** in local young ex-drug abusers and invent a Desistance Model tailored to the local young drug abusers' needs.

Research Objectives

- i) To enrich the desistance theories among the local and international literature;
- ii) To advance the general crime desistance framework with embedment of drug abuse-related factors;
- iii) To explore the scope for fostering desistance from young drug users;
- iv) To examine the significance of different desisters in preventing cycle of relapse;
- v) To propose a localized and integrated desistance model for young drug addicts;
- vi) To develop a set of basic principles for the use of desistance model in Hong Kong;
- vii) To make recommendation to government or social welfare sectors based on study findings.

Methodology

- Qualitative method
 - Open-ended unstructured in-depth interviews with different stakeholders

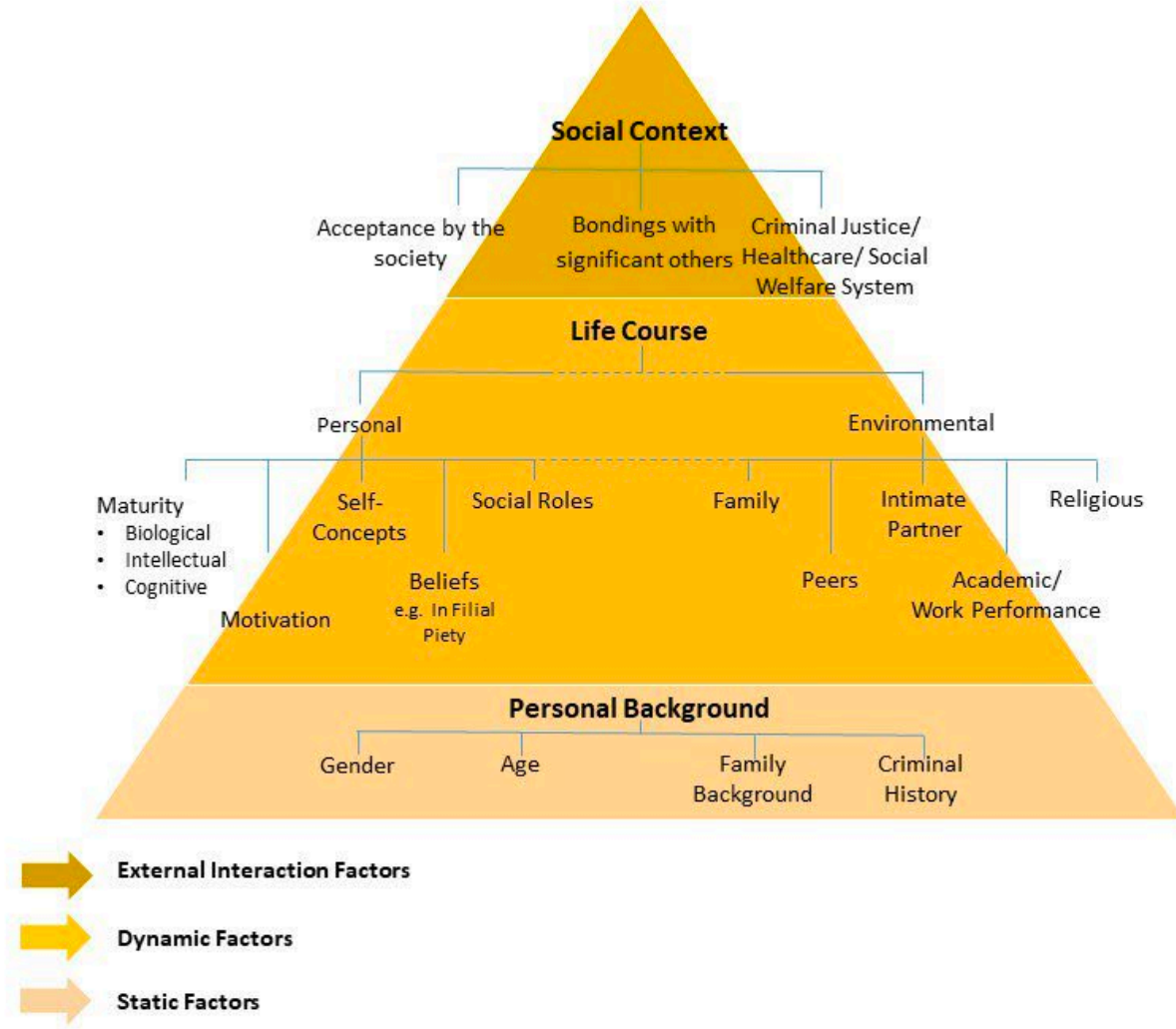




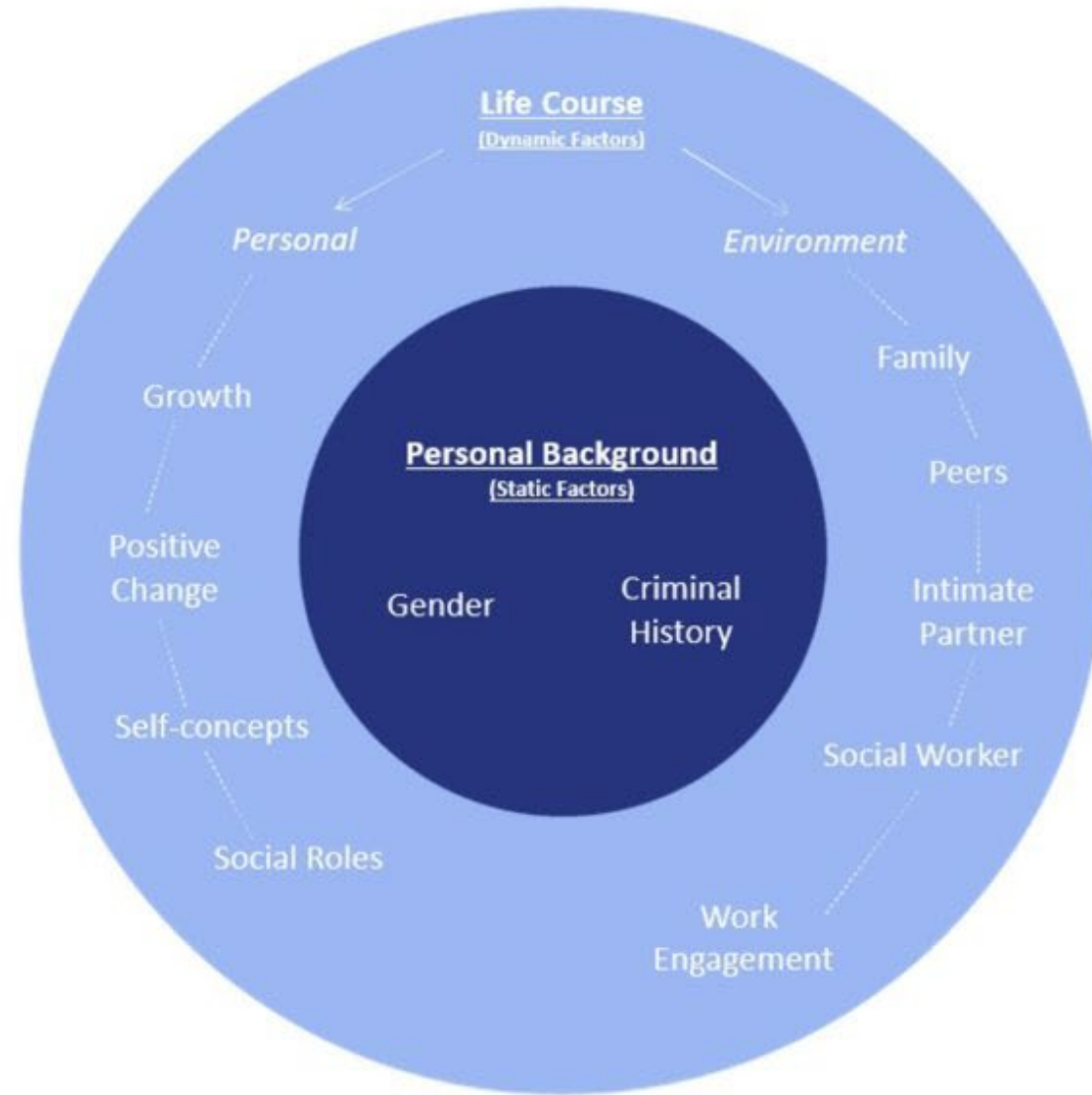
Overview of the Sample

- Group 1: 25 young ex-drug abusers that had abstained from drug taking for at least one year before their ages of 21,
- Group 2: 26 significant others, including 15 paired case workers, that had supported ex-drug abusers throughout their desistance pathways,
- Group 3: 25 case workers that had handled cases of young ex-drug abusers

Proposed Conceptual Framework



Finalised Conceptual Framework



Applicability of incorporating desistance into existing anti-drug services for young drug users in Hong Kong

- Although the static factors (gender and criminal history) cannot be changed, other localized dynamic factors (personal and environmental desisters) could be manipulated or strengthened in both case works, group works or mass programmes. In Chinese community, the concept of family is emphasized.
- The professional social welfare, healthcare and law enforcement measures in Hong Kong provide a comprehensive network in offering different types of services for different types of drug users
- Hence, it is feasible and applicable to further strengthen and consolidate the desisters for assisting young people to sustain long-term drug-free life in local context

Recommendations to government and social welfare sectors

- The social welfare sectors can have a brief review on different measures in order to package the component with reference to the desisters being identified.
- Practitioners or facilitators may equip drug users and their supportive network necessary skills or values in advance to create potentials for fostering desisters.
- The government may consider further promoting the concept of desistance into other healthcare or law enforcement practices as an interdisciplinary matrix may let different desisters to support each other
- More effort shall be placed in building a more inclusive community for ex-drug users and other community stakeholders

Research limitations and the scope of future research

- The limitation of generalization (N=76)
- Difficulties in recruiting a more balanced sample
- Many cases have been lost during the Covid-19

Thank you

Any question? 

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