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The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Department of Applied Social Sciences

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APSS463 Capstone Project

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Final Report

Topic of Inquiry:

**Using e-sports to enhance the interpersonal competence of Hong Kong's
adolescents: How it works? What obstacles existed?**

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Abstract

This qualitative research aims to explore the use of “e-sports” as an intervention approach for social workers to facilitate adolescents’ interpersonal competence, the strategies, and roles of the social worker and also the obstacles of using this approach in social work practice. In this study, two registered social workers from different youth center who have at least one-year experiences of using esports as an intervention approach were interviewed. Both of the interviewees reported that the esports program can contribute to enhancing adolescents’ interpersonal competence such as communication skills, leadership skills or the sense of empathy. Also, it is found the role of the worker in the group can be different. The barriers to using this approach have been found, including the social stigma, difficulties on promotion and the issue of licensing of esports tutor. This study can provide a possible framework for using esports as an intervention approach to social workers who are interested.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, researches have confirmed the importance of interpersonal competence to the growth of adolescents (Agochiya, 2010; Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg & Reis, 1988; Kenny, Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2013). With this competence, adolescents can establish good relationship with others which in turn contribute to their mental health, and later their interpersonal development includes romance relationship and workplace adaptation (Chow, Ruhl and Buhrmester, 2013; Kenny, Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2013; Paulk, Pittman, Kerpelman & Adler-Bader, 2011; Bonete, Calero & Fernández-Parra, 2015). Wodarski and Feit (2011) stated that learning how to work cooperatively in a team which contain certain team goals is beneficial to the interpersonal skills of teenagers. Youth activities such as team sports,

art groups and team-games-tournaments have been used as an intervention approach for several years in enhancing adolescents' interpersonal skills (Dworkin, Larson, Reed & Hanson, 2003; Wodarski & Feit, 2011). Some findings have reported that these activities can contribute to teenagers' social skills and confidence relating to peers (Patrick, Ryan, Alfred, Fredricks, Hruda and Eccles, as cited in Dworkin et al., 2003). While the popularity of esports among young people is exceeding in the world (Jenny, Manning, Keiper and Olrich, 2016) and this activity is similar with the general sport event with the element of team-games, the use of esports to enhance young people's interpersonal ability is worth for study.

Some youth agencies in Hong Kong such as Caritas Youth and Community Service (Caritas), Hong Kong Children & Youth Services (HKCYS) have launched "esport" programs in their service units to facilitate teenagers' personal development. However, the ways of enhancing the interpersonal competence via "esport" program, and the roles of social worker has yet to be found as the research on this topic is limited. Also, similar to the hip hop and rap activities, "esport" activity has been controversial in our society. Youth workers need to be cautious when using hip-hop activity as an intervention approach (Wilson, Vitoria, Perze & Evans, 2017). Thus, it is necessary to investigate the barriers of using "esport" as an intervention approach. Based on the above, the research questions of this study are as follows:

"How can the "esport" program achieve the objective of enhancing interpersonal competence of adolescents?"

"What are the roles and duties of youth workers in the "esport" program?" and

"What are the barriers when carrying out "esport" program?"

This study aims to explore the use of “e-sports” as an intervention approach for social workers to facilitate adolescents’ interpersonal competence.

2. Literature review

There are literatures discussing the importance of interpersonal competence during the growth of adolescents and it highly related to the peer relationships (Chow et al, 2013). In addition, some literatures pointed out that youth team activities such as sports and team-game tournaments are contributory to the development of adolescents’ interpersonal competence as they can provide chances for adolescents cooperate and learn from each other in the team (Wodarski & Feit, 2011; Dworkin, Larson & Hansen, 2003). Simultaneously, “esports”, which has become a very popular team activity among teenagers in the world, it involves different elements which are attractive to teenagers and it even becomes an industry in some countries such as United State and Korea (Jenny, Manning, Keiper and Olrich, 2016; Hollist, 2016). In the following sections, the above literatures will be further summarized and discussed.

2.1 Interpersonal competence and its importance

Coroiu, Meyer, Gomez-Garibello, Hessel and Körner (2015) stated that human beings are “social” by nature as we need to interact with peers every day. Shek, Yu and Siu (2015, p.266) gave a definition to the term “interpersonal competence” which can be concluded as “successful social functioning”, that is the higher interpersonal competence, the more success in social functioning. “Interpersonal competence is important for maintaining well-functioning friendships and intimacy” and it is vital for the management of conflict (Chow et al., 2013, p.192). Studies pointed out that

interpersonal competence included some important elements such as social skills, skills on rejecting other's demand and ideas, abilities of emotional control and self-disclosure (Coroiu, Meyer, Gomez-Garibello, Hessel & Körner, 2015; Chow, Ruhl and Buhrmester, 2013).

2.1.1 Establish peer relationship

It is well known that interpersonal competence is the key to child development as it will affect their relationship building with another child in same age (Kim, 2003). "Peer interaction is an important component of children's social repertoires that is associated with a variety of developmental outcomes and life skills" (Williams, Tierney, Ontai & Mastergeorge, 2010, p.348). Evidently, peer relationship plays a key role in the developmental stage of children and youth as it provides an opportunity for adolescents to learn emotional control, empathy and releasing anxiety (Motoca, Williams & Silverman, 2012). Motoca et al. (2012) further figured out that adolescents and children with low social skills may affect the quality of their peer interactions.

"Conflict-management" and "empathy" are the other elements in interpersonal competence (Thayer, Updegraf & Delgado, 2008; Chow et al., 2013). Thayer et al. (2008) added that skills in conflict management are crucial in adolescents' peer relationship as it can lower the chances of the friendship becoming discord. Thus, Chow et al. (2013) stated that empathy is the vital element in conflict management since it can help a person to have a better understanding with others' situations during the conflict and therefore that person can find better solutions which are able to satisfy the needs from each side. It is found that teenagers with higher in empathy are able to

avoid the friendship conflicts (Chow et al., 2013). It highlights again that higher level of interpersonal competence can contribute to the development of peer relationship. As the peer relationship is vital during the adolescent, interpersonal competence can facilitate the development of this relationship.

2.1.2 Promoting mental health

Kenny et al. (2013) reported that the quality of peer relationship would relate to the mental health of adolescents. Research has indicated that interpersonal skills could prevent depressive symptoms during adolescent stage (Rodriguez, Donenberg, Emerson, Wilson and Javdani, 2015). They pointed out that teenager may encounter stresses during their growth which will affect their relationship with friends and parents. Thus, interpersonal skills play a vital role in preventing depressive symptoms as it can maintain a good relationship with others and therefore they can seek help from others even they are with stresses (Rodriguez et al., 2015). Nilsen, Karevold, Røysamb, Gustavson and Mathiesen (2013) found that there are more chances to discover the depressive symptoms in teenagers with low level of social skills. As Rubin, Dwyer, Kim, Burgess, Booth-Laforce and Rose-Krasnor (2004) indicated that adolescents would experience many changes in the aspects of s biological, social and cognitive, it was found that the dependency on support from teenagers' peers was high when they were experiencing those uncertain changes. If teenagers obtained low social skills, they would be more vulnerable when they were experiencing those changes as they failed to depend on the support from friends, this situation was common to be found in girl secondary students according to the findings (Nilsen et al., 2013).

2.1.3 Pave the way for romantic relationship

Furman and Shomaker (2008) stated that the engagement of romantic relationship is one of the most noticeable and striking developments in the adolescent. Paulk et al. (2011) added that activities with partners such as dating could help maintaining the romantic relationship. While these activities are contributory to the romantic relationship, these activities highly related to the interpersonal competence. Poor interpersonal competence such as the poor dating and communication skills will affect the experiences of dating, for instance, a person who is lack of communication skills will become shy easily and he/she could not get in touch with their partners during the dating, and therefore conflict may also exist (Paulk et al., 2011).

2.1.4 Transition to adults

Some research investigated that social skills or interpersonal skills are necessary for teenagers to participate in the large society and therefore preparing teenagers becoming an adult can be carried out in the period of adolescent (Wordarski & Feit, 2011). Scales, Benson, Oesterle, Hill, Hawkins and Pashak (2015, p.160) stated that when teenagers are transiting to be a young adult, they need to cooperate with “multiple life roles” and need to “adapt flexibly” in society, the interpersonal skills can help them to compete the above tasks when they become a young adult. Also, the young adult would have more control on their lives such as financial control in terms of paying their bills, and emotion management in which they would not become emotional to use the credit card irrationally (Scales et al., 2015).

2.2 Benefit of team activities for adolescents' interpersonal competence

As the importance of interpersonal competence has been identified, the enrichment of this competence needs to be addressed. Some researchers confirmed that team activities for young people could enhance their personal development including interpersonal competence (Wordarski & Feit, 2011; Dworkin, Larson & Hansen, 2003).

Wordarski and Feit (2011) pointed out that team activity could provide an opportunity to students for gaining experiences of working with others. Team-game-tournament is one of the team activities which can benefit the development of students as they need to form a group with group goals and then complete some tasks cooperatively. Wordarski and Feit (2011) added that teenagers would teach others in the team while they would learn from others simultaneously in this kind of activity. They would benefit from each other in the team, and therefore the interpersonal skills would be enhanced as they could learn how to solve problems with groupmates cooperatively, for instance, “empathy” would be highlighted in the team owing to the individual differences among group members (Wordarski & Feit, 2011).

Another research also indicated that team activities could benefit teenagers' interpersonal skills. During a team activity, team members may encounter some problems which would affect the emotions of other teammates, so they need to learn how to deal with these difficulties together and also to handle the feelings of other teammates (Dworkin, Larson & Hansen, 2003). In addition, Dworkin, Larson and Hansen (2003) added that conflict will occur in a team owing to mistakes which

caused by other team members. As some of the teenagers may be the leader in the team, they will learn the skill of handling interpersonal conflict in the team (Dworkin, Larson & Hansen, 2003).

Take an example of the school-based sport team, Hayden, Whitley, Cook, Dumair, Sliva and Scherer (2015) found that the participation of sport team in western societies could enhance adolescents' life skills which include skills of teamwork, moral development, organization skills, leadership skills and time management. One significant finding of Hayden et al (2015) was that the school-based sport participation can enhance the teamwork performance as the participants will "talk on team", "winning is the link with talking" and "talk with different people" (Hayden et al., 2015, p.767). What is more, the study pointed out that participants of school-based sport team will learn how to care and provide support to other teammates (Hayden et al., 2015). Thus, it can be estimated that team sport can benefit the positive development of adolescents.

To maximize the advantages of team activities on adolescents' development, the role of the coach is significant as the coach can enhance the positive learning process and therefore they can gain valuable experiences (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom & Coalter, 2012). Bloom, Loughhead and Newin (2008) stated that the role of coach could be multidimensional such as instructor, teacher and social worker. However, if the coach is not familiar to the skills of instructing the team in activities of team building, it will be detrimental to the team, for one thing, the cliques will appear in the team (Bloom, Loughhead & Newin, 2008). Smith, Figgins, Jewiss and Kearney (2017) stated that the team sport would encounter the stronger opponents, the successful experience of competing the stronger team can facilitate their teamwork.

2.3 “Esports”

After knowing that the team building activities can benefit the interpersonal competence of teenagers, exploring how to use the “Esports” in advancing the interpersonal competence of adolescents and the possible obstacles to the implementation are the aims of this study.

2.3.1 Definition of “esports”

“Esports” is “video game matches where players compete against other players before an audience” (Hollist, 2015, p.825). It is similar to the normal sport event which also includes the outcome of a winner and loser in a competition (Jenny, Manning, Keiper & Olrich, 2017). Hollist (2015) stated that most of the games in esports are team-based such as the game “League of Legends” (LOL), several players with their team need to compete with another team in order to get the team victory. During the esports matches, players in a team will be assigned with different roles which have unique responsibilities in the game, and thus, different roles need to cooperate with each other in order to win the match (Hollist, 2015). Communication is vital when preparing tactics before the match and changing the strategies during the match (Jenny et al., 2017).

2.3.2 The popularity of esports and the game of LOL

According to Snider (2013), the popularity of esports among young people is exceeding in the world, for instance, there were 70 million players of the game League of Legends (LOL) in 2013. There were over 30 million viewers who watched the tournament of the worldwide LOL (Hollist, 2015). In the United States, esports has been recognized by some universities as a kind of sport and students can be

offered the scholarships about esports (Jenny et al., 2017). Some figures can show the popularity of esports and the game of LOL. Global eSports Market Report (2016) estimated that the audiences of esports would increase to nearly 450 million audiences. In 2016, there are already 43 million audiences had watched the final of the world championship of LOL which is one of the video games in esports (Howell, 2017). Kwak, Blackburn and Ha (2015) stated that around 27 million players played LOL every day in the world in 2015 and therefore Tampa (2016) indicated that there were over 100 million active users that keep playing the League of Legends in 2016.

Llorens (2017) stated that LOL is one of the most successful games in esports aspect. Players need to form a team with five people in order to compete with other teams. Using different virtual character in the game, each characters in the game have different abilities and roles so it represented that the total ten players in the game need to take their own roles and responsibilities and therefore cooperating with teammates so as to beat the opponent (Llorens, 2017). As LOL is a highly cooperative activity, whether it can achieve the benefits of other team-based activities in promoting adolescents' interpersonal competence has yet to be found.

2.3.3 Esports in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, there are some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) organizing esports programs and activities. According to Lee (2017), the “The ESports Academy” has established years ago and the organization is cooperating with an NGO which is Caritas Youth and Community Service in order to organize different esports programs for young people. As shared by one of the social workers from Caritas Youth and Community Service, the self-image and social skills of some

hidden youths are weak and his team has used the esports and video games as the means to improve their social skills. After a half year of intervention, the communication skills and emotional management of this group of youth have shown some improvement (Lee, 2017). Also, Hong Kong Children and Youth Services (CYS) also organized some esports programs such as the LOL tournaments for young people in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Children and Youth Services, 2016).

2.4 Conclusion

Some findings informed this study about the importance of interpersonal competence in the adolescent. In addition, the relationship between team building activities and interpersonal competence has been investigated. While “esports” has become a popular activity among teenagers and the characteristics of “esports” is similar to team-building activity, yet, no studies have been done regarding the impact of “esports” on enhancing adolescents’ interpersonal competence. It is also found that some NGOs in Hong Kong have already organized some esports programs. How to use the “esports” as an approach to develop the interpersonal competence of adolescents in social work practice is worth for study. This study aims at investigating the application of “esports” to enhance the interpersonal competence of adolescents and the possible barriers in the course of implementation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted qualitative research method with case study approach in order to explore how “esports” can help teenagers in Hong Kong to develop their interpersonal competence and the possible obstacles of using it as an intervention approach. According to Neuman (2011), qualitative research method aims to understand the uniqueness of the specific situation and the researcher will be the instrument in order to understand that unique situation of interviewees. It can collect the information in a more detailed and in-depth way which facilitates the thick description of the issue (Besen-Cassino & Cassino, 2018). Also, the study adopted the approach of case study. According to Gerring (2007, p.211), the case study method means “the intensive study of a single case for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units”. Therefore, using case study method in research can help the researcher link the micro level of a situation to the macro level so as to show the relationship between two levels. The case study method can help the researcher to collect rich information about the operations, the potential advantages and obstacles of using “Esports” as an intervention approach in youth work.

According to Atieno (2009), there are mainly two limitations of qualitative research design: (1) the problem of ambiguities as there may be different meanings in same words or terms in human language so that the interviewer may get the wrong meanings from wordings which used by interviewees, (2) qualitative research design cannot justify the findings by wider population when comparing to quantitative research design. To handle the above limitations, the interviewer would double confirm the meanings of specific wordings from the interviewee by using the skill of

paraphrasing during the interview. Also, the interviewer would arrange more than one interview in order to find out the commonalities and differences between different interviewees. The increased sampling size can help the interviewer to justify his findings. As there are only two interviewees, it cannot generalize the findings from the limited sampling size. Thus, the interviewees will be invited from different agencies and they will have different approaches to using esports as an intervention approach so that the findings will be diverse.

3.2 Sampling and participants

According to Arsovska (2012), there are several constraints such as budgets and limited information about the target population, so the researcher can use the nonprobability sampling in some studies. Arsovska (2012) added that when the sampling frame is unavailable, non-probability sampling would be more time and cost-effective. One kind of nonprobability sampling is purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, the target interviewee will be chosen by the researcher according to the specific characteristics or criteria which will be determined by the researcher (Hibbert, Johnson & Hudson, 2012).

In this study, social workers with particular background were identified. The criteria for selection were: (1) Registered social worker (RSW), (2) Have experiences for organizing “esports” activities in youth center for around a year, and (3) Preferable to have experiences of organizing other types of team-building activity as the interviewees can figure out the differences between different types of team-building activities. The esports activities should not be the one-off program as the researcher needs to investigate the relatively long-term effect of those esports program on adolescents’ interpersonal competence.

A total of two social workers who have used “esports” as an intervention approach will be invited. Up to now, one social worker has been invited and interviewed and the remaining social worker is being approached by the researcher. The interviewee who participated in the first interview is twenty-five years old and he has been worked in the current agency since one and half year ago. He is currently working with an integrated children and youth center. He has used esport as an intervention approach since one year ago. The remaining interviewee will also match the criteria which have mentioned in this section.

3.3 Data collection

First of all, the study was approved by the Human Subject Ethics Sub-committee of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. An in-depth interview has been arranged with face-to-face interview. Before the interview, some preparations were carried out. The researcher contacted the social workers and then sent him the background information of the study which includes the purpose and the right of interviewee. The first interview was arranged in the interview room located in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University so as to ensure privacy. Before the interview started, the researcher firstly briefed the detail of information sheet (Appendix 2) to the interviewee and gave that sheet for his reference. Then, a consent form (Appendix 3) was given to the interviewee for signing. During the interview, further probing questions had been asked for further inquiries during that interview held. Also, the researcher asked for the interviewee’s consent for audio-recording. The remaining interview would be held in early March.

3.4 Instrumentation

The researcher designed the interview guide (Appendix 4) based on the literature review and the purpose of the interview. A semi-structured interview with a set of open-ended questions had been proposed by the researcher, for instance, “how” and “what” questions will be asked and the researcher can gain detailed information by asking these questions (Besen-Cassino & Cassino, 2018). Examples of questions were: “Could you please describe to me the content and purpose of the “esports” programme in your center?”, “How can teenagers enhance their interpersonal competence?” There are five sections in the interview guide, including Introduction, Background Information, Experiences of using “Esports” as an intervention approach, Opinion on using Esports as an intervention approach and Suggestions when confronting the obstacles.

3.5 Data Analysis

The interviews of the study had been audio-recorded and then transcribed. The transcription of the recording will be coded in order to analyze the meanings of their responses. In this study, the content of in-depth interview will be analyzed by using content analysis in order to gain information about how the social worker feels about the “esports” approach, their subjective experiences and their inner thoughts about “esports” approach in youth work.

According to Besen-Cassino and Cassino (2018), content analysis is a method that can study the communication between interviewer and interviewee in an in-depth interview systematically. Also, the researcher can investigate the subjective experiences of the interviewee and their inner thoughts (Besen-Cassino & Cassino, 2018). Thus, we can transform the qualitative information into quantitative materials

by studying the answer of “what, why and how” questions (Neuman, 2011). It is important for the researcher to increase the reliability when using content analysis. Thus, coding is needed as it can let the reader understand why the researcher would identify certain meanings for the statements of the communication. The researcher must prepare a number of examples in order to justify their identification (Besen-Cassino & Cassino). The recordings of the interview will be listened repeatedly and therefore categorized the similar words of ideas into different groups for data analyze. Then, the findings can be visible and systematic to the readers.

According to Elo and Kyngas (2007), content analysis contains two types which are inductive and deductive and both of two types can be represented in three phrases, including preparation, organizing and reporting. The inductive content analysis will be adopted as the interpersonal competence cannot be measured by a set of certified indicators During the preparation, different words or terms in the transcript will be classified into different categories, these categories will be represented by a word or theme (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). After finishing the preparation, both inductive and deductive content analysis need to carry out the process of coding and finally the result will be reported with reference to the different categories in the coding process. (Elo & Kyngas, 2007).

3.6 Ethical considerations

According to Besen-Cassino and Cassino (2018), the researcher has the responsibility to comply with the principle of confidentiality, which they have to protect the privacy of someone who involved in a research. One interview has been conducted before the submission of the mid-term report. The researcher had sought the ethical approval from the Human Subject Ethics Sub-committee of the Hong Kong

Polytechnic University. Then, the researcher had sent the information sheet and consent form to the interviewees. Thus, one interviewee was informed that their information is for the academic use only. During that interview, the interviewee had been told that the participation of the project would not cause any harm to him and he has the right to stop and quit this project if he found any concerns. In addition, the researcher protected the information by storing the data securely and confidentially by setting a password to the recording. What is more, interviewees had been given the code names in order to protect their privacy and anonymity in this study. Moreover, only the researcher and the supervisor of him/her can access to the personal data of the interviewees, all the data will be deleted after the project is completed.

3.7 Difficulties and Contingency Plans

The first difficulty is about the arrangement of the remaining interview. Since the second interviewee did not reply to the researcher's invitation, the feasibility of engaging him is not certain. Apart from inviting him, the researcher will also approach another target interviewee who is known by the schoolmate of the researcher. The second difficulty is about the time limitation. Since the final report will be finished in late April, the time for coding the data may not be enough. The first interview has been taken more time than expected and therefore the time used for transcription may be even longer which will affect the process of data analysis and submission of final report. While having the experience of first interview, the researcher will be more able to focus on the key points of the interview guide. It is expected that less time will be required and this also facilitates the invitation of second interviewee.

4. Results

This project aims to investigate how the esports program can achieve the objective of enhancing interpersonal competence of adolescents. The roles of youth worker and the barriers when carrying out the esports program have also been explored. This chapter provided a detail analysis of the interviews which were conducted with two social workers who have experiences to carry out esports program in youth center.

4.1 Interviewees' Demographics

In this project, two interviewees have been interviewed. Mr. F is a registered social worker who has been working in an integrated children and youth center (ICYSC). He belongs to the youth team and his duty mainly focuses on the core and non-core programs of the ICYSC. For the core program, he would organize programs like career planning program for adolescents in the school and competence developing program. For the non-core program, he would organize the interest groups for adolescents. Mr. F has organized the esports program in this center for around one year.

Mr. G is a registered social worker and he is working in the youth team specialized in internet and online outreaching service of a NGO. His duty mainly focuses on the internet service for adolescents such as the internet counseling service and he has organized the esports activity for five years since 2013.

4.2 Findings

According to Mr. F and Mr. G, they have organized several esports training groups for adolescents. Both of their groups would participate the tournament which would

be organized by their own organizations. Only the members who joined the training group can join the tournament. Thus, the daily group activities would be the preparation before participating the esports tournaments according to both Mr. F and Mr. G. Based on their interviews, three areas related to the implementation of esports program would be introduced, namely the possible strategies of using esports to enhance the interpersonal competence of adolescents, the roles of social worker in esports group and the barriers of using esports in youth service.

4.2.1 Possible strategies of using esports to enhance interpersonal competence

4.2.1.1 Conflict scenario emerged in esports

i. Conflict on assigning “roles” of esports game

Both Mr. F and Mr. G mentioned about “role” in an esports game. Mr. F indicated that there are team-based esports game and non-team-based esports games. The examples of former one are “League of Legends” (LOL) and “Overwatch”. Both Mr. F and Mr. G mainly organized the esports program with using team-based esports game as an intervention mean. Mr. F and Mr. G mentioned that team-based esports games have its common characteristic that is every team mates will be responsible for a fixed role. For instance, Mr. F mentioned that there are five roles in a team of LOL including “Attack Damage Carry”, “Support”, “Top lane carry”, “Caster” and “Jungler”. The team with different roles will compete with another team to win the game.

According to Mr. F, the group members always have a conflict with the selection of the roles. For instance, teenagers want to perform themselves so they would choose to be responsible for some roles which can let them perform well. Some roles such as

“Support” always need to sacrifice himself and therefore not many group mates want to choose to play as a “support”. The conflict on roles existed. However, Mr. F recognized that the conflict on the selection of roles could let them understand the importance of **compromise** in a team.

“Every time I was holding an esport group, the conflict on selection of roles must exist at the first time, however, I recognize that it can let them know the importance of compromise in a team. For one thing, I will facilitate them to think about the strengths and weaknesses of each teammate and compromise a role selection plan that can let them win the competition easily.” (Mr. F)

G pointed out that the statistics of contribution in the game called Kill, Death and Assist (KDA). KDA can reflect the contributions of a player in a team. However, Mr. G also mentioned that some roles like the “Support” usually needs to be sacrificed in a fight for the first time and thus their KDA would not be a nice statistic. However, teammates would blame the other teammate with a bad KDA according to Mr. G. “I think that someone who blames others did not have an understanding on the role of the teammate with a bad KDA”. Mr. G mentioned his experiences that some group members blame their teammate with a bad KDA, yet, they finally won the game. Therefore, Mr. G demanded them to think about the feelings of that teammate with a bad KDA. “If you scarified yourself and play very hard to win the game, but your teammates still blame on you, what is your feelings”. Thus, Mr. G believed that it is a suitable place for him to help the group members develop the concept of **empathy**.

ii. Conflict on expectation of other teammates

Mr. G mentioned that conflict on expectation of different roles must exist in an esports group according to his experiences. Mr. G indicated that in a team esports game, each of roles have its function and they need to cooperate with other roles to win the game. However, they would not share their expectation with others at the beginning of the group. Mr. G mentioned that many of group members did not have friends to play the game with them at home and thus they came to our group. They were used to play alone with strangers and they seldom share what they think in their mind. Conflict will usually exist.

“At the beginning of the group, when the group members were training, they seldom speak to each other. One group member (A) complained that another group member (B) did not come to support (A) in the game at that time and (A) blamed that member (B) only focus on his work. Yet, I asked why he did not ask for help at that time, he answered me that “I guessed he will know I need help”. I think it is a good place for me to do intervention” (Mr. G).

Mr. G believed that the design of the esports games especially LOL demand a large amount of communication. Yet, teenagers may not able to communicate well at the beginning stage of the group and he believed that the conflict always will exist. However, he did not think conflict is something negative. In contrast, he believed that the existence of conflict could let him felicitate the interpersonal competence of the teenagers such as the **communication skills**.

4.2.1.2 The use of debriefing and replay

When the researcher asked about the way which can help social worker to enhance the interpersonal competence of adolescents, both Mr. F and Mr. G mentioned the importance of debriefing and “replay” of the game. The “replay” of the game means that all the interactions, behaviors and scenarios which were shown in the monitor during the game will be recorded. They pointed out that the debriefing session and the use of replay are the keys to let the group members know what they have done wrongly.

Mr. F mentioned that there would be a debriefing session after the training, either arranged in the format of individual or the group. He would assess the performance of the group members in a game and recorded the key moments such as the conflict scenario. After the game, he would make use of the replay of the game to let the group members to discuss the conflict scenario. Mr. F recognized that the discussion can facilitate a deeper reflection on members’ performance and therefore they would seek for improvement.

“I believed that the replay can help them to rethink about their behaviors in another perspective. When they were watching their performance in the replay, I tended not blame a specific member’s performance in the game. In contrast, I would focus more on their behaviors of interacting with other teammates. Therefore, I would let them discuss what could they do better in next time, for instance, the negative attitude (To Forfeit the game) towards other teammates would affect the morale of the whole team.” (Mr. F).

Mr. G also recognized that the debriefing and the use of replay are vital in the esports group. Mr. G mentioned the function of debriefing was to connect the conflict

scenario to the reality. Mr. G pointed out an example, a group member did not trust the instruction of another group mate in the game, and therefore they lost the game finally. According to Mr. G' observation, the group member who did not trust others, he usually did not listen to other's opinion since he has no **trust** in others. Thus, he would use this scenario in the game to let them know the importance of trust in the peer relationship.

“The interaction in the game actually is same as the interaction in the reality. The debriefing session is the most important part of the esports training group as I need to connect what they learn in the game to the reality so they can have growth in their personal developmental stage. I think it is the social worker's work in this kind of group.” (Mr. G)

Mr. G believed that the replay is the most convincing tool for him to intervene the behavior problems of the group members. Mr. G indicated that the group members can review what they spoke and did during the training game and they could not be able to refute the social workers or other tutors. What is more, Mr. G indicated that in his design of esports group, the session of analyzing the replay must be included. The whole session would be used for analyzing and discussing the replay of the previous training session. The group members needed to finish the PowerPoint to analyze their performance. Mr. G believed that it could enhance the **ability of self-reflection**.

4.2.1.3 The elements of “competition” emerged in esports

- i. The element of team-based sport - “Leading” and “Losing”
- a) Being a losing team

Mr. F mentioned that there will be leading team and losing team during the game is processing, just like the other team sport such as football and basketball. Mr. F believed that the experience of being the losing team and achieve the comeback could

help the group members to strengthen the **skills of collaborating** with others in a team when **facing the difficulties**. Mr. F stated that they need to plan the game ahead with each other during the game in order to achieve the common goal which is to win the game. F believe that these experiences can contribute to their future career development.

“When they were losing in the game, they usually want to surrender to the opponent because the game provided a system for the losing to forfeit the game. However, giving up the game is not allowed in my esports group and I would encourage them to collaborate with other teammates and discuss how to win the game in the remaining time.” (Mr. F)

Mr. G also mentioned this point and he added that in the design of the esports game especially like LOL, the losing team can create many chances to achieve the comeback and win the game but the losing team needs to put more effort and to try with risks. “Even in the pro-players’ competition, we can see a lot of comeback in the game and the experience of the comeback can facilitate their learning deeply in their mind.”

The importance of **encouragement** is also important according to Mr. G. When the team was losing, Mr. G would advise them to encourage the other teammates with a poor performance. According to Mr. G, it was found the team can achieve the comeback more easily in his groups. They would understand the importance of encouraging the teammates through their experiences in the game.

b) Leading team

According to both Mr. F and Mr. G, the experiences of being leading team are valuable to their development of interpersonal competence. Mr. F told the researcher his group members sometimes need to train with another team from different ICYSC units. When they are the leading team, they would laugh at the opponent in the game. Mr. F recognized that it was a disrespectful behavior. Thus, Mr. F believed the experience of being a leading team could help the worker to teach the group members about the importance of **respecting** others.

Mr. G added that when his members laugh at the opponent, he would facilitate the members to think about the feelings of being laughed when they are the losing team during the debriefing session. Mr. G hoped that they could learn the concept of **empathy** when they are the leading team and therefore they can learn to respect their opponents.

ii. The underdog

It was found that the esports games usually will have its ranking system to identify the abilities of the players according to Mr. G. Sometimes, the group members of Mr. G need to compete with the team which was formed by players with higher rank. Mr. G's team became the underdog in the match. Mr. G believed the experiences of being the underdog team can let the group members understand the importance of **cooperation** and therefore they will try to cooperate with others in the next time, and even in their daily lives. For instance, Mr. G found that the group members would help each other to buy their lunch boxes to save times.

“I remembered that my group needed to compete with a team which was formed by player with a very high rank. However, that team was formed by five individual players and my team has cooperated with each other since few months ago. Finally, my team got the victory and the members told me that the cooperation was much more vital than the personal rank. The game could provide these kinds of experiences for their learning.” (Mr. G)

4.2.2 Roles of the worker

The researcher asked Mr. F and Mr. G how they could facilitate their learning in the debriefing session as teenagers are at the rebellious stage. Mr. F and Mr. G gave different answers to the researcher.

4.2.2.1 Co-work with esports tutor

The design of Mr. G’s esports group is that the social worker needs to co-work with an esports tutor, who is the current or ex pro-players and players with very high rank. Mr. G believed that the social worker might not be able to convince the young group members. Thus, he recruited an esports tutor to work with him. When the social worker wants to bring certain themes or messages to a session of the group, he will inform the session plan to the esports tutor in advance and the messages will be brought out by the esports tutor and the social worker will therefore add other messages in the debriefing session together with the tutor. Mr. G indicated that when the tutor pointed out the members’ problematic behaviors in the game, the social worker needed to link up these scenarios to the reality. Therefore, their reflections on their problematic behaviors can facilitate their personal development in daily lives.

“In this first part of the group, I will use some times to carry out some tasks with social work elements just like the traditional developmental group for teenagers, the esports tutor will be responsible for the second part of the group” (Mr. G).

Mr. G believed that if the esports tutors could transmit some important messages, the young group members tended to take them easily.

4.2.2.2 Being a coach

Mr. F pointed out that he would become the coach of his team. Mr. F believed that the repeated experiences could facilitate their learning process. Mr. F would rather train with the group members together and assess the problematic behaviors of some group members and he would intervene after the game.

Sometimes, Mr. F would meet the specific group member individually if necessary. He believed that the negative behaviors in the game might relate to their daily lives. Thus, Mr. F would provide individual counseling with certain group members and to use the scenario of the game to intervene with their problematic behaviors which might bring negative effect to their interpersonal relationship.

4.2.2.3 Training a leader

Both Mr. F and Mr. G mentioned one of the tasks which the social worker needs to do is to facilitate a group leader, who can help them deliver the messages about the ways to enhance interpersonal competence.

Mr. F has three esports groups, including the group for post-secondary students, senior form students and junior form students. He would invite the members of post-secondary group to be the mentor of the members of secondary school as he found that the mentor is much more convincing to them. However, Mr. F pointed out that the mentor needs to be trained by the social worker as one of the tasks of the social worker is to train the mentor.

Mr. G mentioned that he would invite some former members of his group to be the leader in current groups. The leaders will be the manager and peer counselor of the team. They will help the worker to assess the performance of the group members and provide emotional support to certain group mates. Thus, identifying and training the group leader is one of the tasks of the social worker in an esports group.

4.2.3 Barriers encountered

4.2.3.1 Not being accepted by the organization and colleagues

Although Mr. F's center in-charge agreed on the use of esports as an intervention approach, his supervisor and colleagues would have some opinions towards his esports groups and these views will affect the motivation of the social worker to choose using esports to be an intervention approach.

“My supervisor did not understand why I need to use this approach to facilitate the personal development of teenagers, she thinks that playing video games is not good for their positive development so she always suggests me to use another intervention approach. Also, my colleagues usually ask me about the esports and their attitudes made me be embarrassed. I think these factors will affect whether the social worker will choose using esports as an intervention approach or not.”
(Mr. F).

Mr. G also mentioned the support from the organization is important. For him, he felt delighted that his organization is willing to support the esports group and provide a lot of recourse for the group. Mr. G indicated that the venue and the gear are necessary for the esports group. He did not accept to hold the esports group in the internet bar. He recognized that the group must be held in the center so the support of the venue and the gear is needed. Thus, Mr. G hoped the government can provide resources on the venue and the gear to NGO to hold the esports programs as the venue and the gear are the main limitations of organizing the esports program.

4.2.3.2 Restriction of promoting the esports group

Mr. F reported that he could not promote his esports group in the newsletter of his center as the center in-charge worried the parents will complain about it. He found difficulty when recruiting group members at the beginning.

“It was difficult to promote the esports group at the beginning since some parents will not agree their son to play video games in the center and at home. Thus, the bias and prejudice towards the esports group are one of the barriers” (Mr. F).

Mr. G told the researcher on his experiences of promoting esports group to the school. Although Mr. G recognized that the best way to promote the esports group is to hold the group and the matches in the school, he can only hold the esports groups in two secondary schools till now.

4.2.3.3 Hard to recruit the esports tutor

This point was mentioned by Mr. G only since he would recruit the esports tutor to work with him when carrying out the esports group. Mr. G pointed out that there is lots of adventure tutors in the market but there is no formal system to certify the qualification of an esports tutor. Since the previous esports tutors need to be a pro-player in mainland China, he found difficulty to recruit a new suitable esports tutor with certain qualities.

“The esports tutors are necessary for my esports group since they can help me to deliver the core messages to the group members. However, many of them need to continue their adventure on esports so I find difficulty to recruit a suitable esports tutor with qualities.” (Mr. G)

4.2.4 Summary

In brief, both of the workers believed the conflict emerged in esports can provide opportunities for them to facilitate the improvement on their interpersonal competence. The use of debriefing and the “replay” of esports games are the key, Mr. G believed that the debriefing session can link up the experiences in the game to the reality and Mr. F recognized that the replay can let the group members to have deeper self-reflection on their performance in wider perspective. The esports also contain the characteristics of traditional team sport and it can contribute to the development of teenagers’ interpersonal competence.

There are differences on view about the role of workers between Mr. F and Mr. G. Mr. F recognized he is the coach of the team and Mr. G believed that working with an esports tutor will be more effective to enhance their interpersonal competence. Both of them agreed the support from the organization is vital. The limitation of activity promotion will also be the barrier when organizing esports programs. Mr. G also mentioned it is difficult to recruit an esports tutor with good qualities and it will affect the effectiveness of the esports group.

5. Discussion

This project aims to investigate the operation of using Esports to enhance the interpersonal competence of adolescents, the role of the youth social worker when carrying out Esports program and what the barriers existed when organizing the Esports program. The project adopted the qualitative research method and two registered social workers who have experiences of organizing Esports program in the Integrated

Children and Youth Center or the youth organization were interviewed. In this section, the findings and its limitations will be discussed. Furthermore, this section will explore the implications of this study for the different level in society including social work practice, policy and further research.

5.1 Summary of key findings

5.1.1 Strategies of using Esport to enhance interpersonal competence

5.1.1.1 Conflict emerged in an Esport program

It is reported that the element of conflict will be emerged in Esport program. Participants reported that when adolescents are playing team Esport games, they need to take up a specific role with different responsibilities and functions in the game. Each of roles are vital in the game. However, it is reported that conflict on the roles will emerged in the team Esport games, including the conflict on selection of the roles, expectations of the roles and performance of the roles.

An interviewee reported that some roles are not popular as adolescents cannot perform themselves in the spotlight. When they are discussing about the selection of the roles, some of them will scramble for the opportunities of taking up a role which can perform in the spotlight. This part of findings is consistent with Lee (2017)'s description that some hidden youths lack their positive self-image so they can facilitate their self-image in the game and it is also found that the Esport game can contribute to their development of self-image. However, if the chance of being in the spotlight was robbed or given to other team mates and they could not facilitate their self-image in the game, it can be estimated that the conflict between teammates will eventually exist.

Yet, the interviewee indicated that the conflict can facilitate the adolescents to learn the importance of compromising when working with each other. The interviewee reported that he will make use of the scenario of the conflict on selection of the roles. Therefore, he will guide them to think about the ultimate goal of playing Esport game, strengths and weaknesses of each group mates. The ultimate goal is to win the game. Thus, the group members will then to plan the selection of the roles which can help them to win the game. This part of findings consistent with Wordarski and Feit (2011)'s findings that team activities provide certain common team goals, the group members need to cooperate with each other to achieve the team goal and they can learn cooperating with others. Hayden, Whitley, Cook, Dumair, Sliva and Scherer (2015) also pointed out that the ultimate goal of team sport is about "winning", teammates need to do something which can help them to win the game. Thus, it can be estimated that if there are some common team goals in the team, the goal is on the first priority and they need to compromise with some decisions in order to achieve the team goal.

What is more, previous study indicated that adapting different roles and tasks in the workplace is one of the elements in the interpersonal competence. Scales, Benson, Oesterle, Hill, Hawkins and Pashak (2015, p.160) stated that when adolescents are transiting to adult, they need to adapt flexibly with different roles in society as they need to cooperate and work with people with different personality. According to the above finding, it seems that learning to compromise when working with others is similar to adapting different roles and tasks flexibly. Thus, it can be estimated that the conflict on the selection can facilitate the interpersonal competence of adolescents.

Another interviewee also mentioned that the conflict on the expectation and performance of the teammates also emerged in the Esport game. He reported that some teammate may feel dissatisfied with the performance of a specific teammate. They will blame and laugh on that teammate either they win or lose the game. This situation always exists in his Esport groups. However, he also recognized that the use of conflict can be the strategies for him to facilitate the interpersonal competence of the adolescents. During the debriefing section, he will guide them to review the performance of the specific teammate. For one thing, he will encourage the group members to imagine about the feelings that they tried hard and paid a lot of effort in the game but their teammates still kept blaming them. The interviewee believed that the reflection can facilitate their sense of empathy. This part of findings consistent with Wordarski and Feit (2011)'s findings that teenagers will teach or communicate with other teammates in the team activity since they need to win the game, they will learn the concept of empathy during the teaching process since they would aware the individual differences among their groupmates. What is more, previous research indicated that empathy is another important element of interpersonal competence, learning empathy can help adolescents to establish their peer relationship and to avoid conflict with their peers in daily lives (Thayer, Updegraf & Delgado, 2008; Chow et al., 2013). Although those adolescents may have conflict in the Esport group, they can learn the concept of empathy and to avoid having conflict with others in daily lives.

Also, one interviewee reported that the conflict on the expectation of teammates will exist frequently too. For instance, a group member may expect and guess their other teammates will take up certain tasks in the game, yet, those teammates did not take up the certain tasks and therefore the conflict existed as that group member will blame those teammates. That group member did not express his expectations and

needs to the teammates. The interviewee believed that the conflict on the differences of expectation can let the adolescents aware the importance of communication. He would encourage the group members to express their thoughts and needs in the game rather than being silent. This part of findings consistent with Hayden et al. (2015)'s findings that communicating with other teammates is one of the way to win the game since nobody can win alone in team sport. It is found that teenagers will learn the importance of expressing the needs and telling the truth to the teammates as these are the key elements in team sport (Hayden et al., 2015). Thus, if the team lose the game and the conflict on the expectations among teammates existed, the worker can let the group members understand the importance of communication and encourage them to communicate with teammates more frequently in the next competition since the research found that communication is the key to play well in the team sport. In brief, the above examples of conflict scenario which emerged in the Esport game can help worker enhance the interpersonal competence of the adolescents.

5.1.1.2 The use of debriefing and replay

Two interviewees also reported that one of the strategies to enhance the group members' interpersonal competence is to make use of debriefing and "replay". The interviewees reported that the debriefing with playing the replay of the game is the key to convince the group members to review their negative behaviors.

An interviewee indicated an example to point out the importance of the debriefing session. He stated that he will assess the performance of the group members when they are playing the game, it is not suitable to do the intervention when they are playing since the game is intense and full of contingency. After the game ended, he would discuss the problematic behaviors and the reasons for why they would lose the

game with the group members. He believed that the discussion after the game can facilitate the deeper reflection on their behaviors as they can share their opinions and thoughts with others and the worker can help them integrate their ideas in order to plan how to improve the performance in next match. This part of finding is consistent with the study of Miller (2001), it is found that the use of debriefing in the structured group can provide the capacity for group members to review the key moment of the group session, the members can also share their thoughts and feelings in the group and therefore to integrate the ideas for further planning and actions. The above descriptions on debriefing match the findings of this part since it is reported that the debriefing of Esport group also aims to facilitate the members to reflect on their performance in the game and therefore to find out the solutions and plans for improvement.

Another interviewee reported that the debriefing can help him connect the situation of reality and the game. He believed that the problems and incident which happened in the game would actually relate to the reality. For instance, he indicated that one member who did not trust his teammates in the game, it is found that he did not trust others in the reality too. Thus, he indicated that the debriefing session can be used by the worker to facilitate the reflection on their behaviors of the members in daily lives. The part of findings is consistent with Fanning and Gaba (2007)'s findings that the debriefing is the important part of learning, it is the key element in different learning theory such as Kolb's experiential learning. Fanning and Gaba (2007) added that the facilitator can make use of the debriefing to encourage the members reflect on their life experiences after they gained the experience in the scenarios of group activity. What is more, it is found that the debriefing can provide the function of

healing that the group members can provide support to other group mates and therefore they can cope with the incidents which encountered in daily lives (Miller, 2001). Thus, it showed that the debriefing can link up experiences which gained in the group with the daily lives.

Both interviewees reported the replay or video recording is vital to convince the group members when the worker is pointing out their problematic behaviors in the game. One interviewee pointed out that the replay can provide an opportunity for the members to review their performance in the game from the third-person perspective. Another interviewee also indicated that the replay is a convincing tool for him to intervene the behavior problems since the replay recorded all conversations and behaviors when they are playing the game so it is difficult for them to disagree the opinions from social workers or Esport tutor. This part of findings is consistent with Strand, Gulbrandsen, Slettebø and Naden (2016), it is found that some laboratory students recognized that the digital video recording can help them reflect and promote self-assessment. Those students reported that sometimes they could not understand what they did wrong in the practice, so the video can help them review their performance (Strand, et al., 2016). What is more, Strand et al. (2016) pointed out that when those laboratory students are watching the video of their practices together, they can share their opinions on the performance with each other and therefore to find out the solutions to improve themselves. Thus, it is believed that the replay can facilitate the learning process of the group members in the Esport group since they can review their problematic behaviors more clearly in another perspective. They can also share their opinions on other teammates according to the replay and therefore to improve themselves.

5.1.1.3 The elements of “competition”

Interviewees reported the Esport included the elements of traditional team sports, including “Leading” and “Losing” and “the underdog”. These characteristics can facilitate the experiences which can enhance their interpersonal competence.

An interviewee pointed out that it will be usual to be the losing team in the game and the team will encounter a lot of difficulties when they are being the losing team. If the losing team hopes to comeback in the game, they need to cooperate with each other in order to avoid making mistakes in the remaining time and they need to design the remaining game plan carefully together. Thus, he indicated that the experiences of being the losing team can enhance the skills of collaborating with others in a team when facing the difficulties. The part of findings is consistent with Dworkin, Larson and Hansen (2003)’s findings that team members would encounter several problems and difficulties when participating the team activities, the group members will need to learn how to tackle those difficulties with the teammates. When a team encountered some difficulties, the emotion issues such as some negative emotions will exist so it is vital for the team to learn managing conflict and emotion issue (Dworkin et al., 2003). Thus, the experiences of being a losing team create the platform and environment for the group members to learn skills of cooperating with others such as the communication skills and the skills of emotional management. It is similar to the traditional team sports or activities.

Sometimes, the team will be the winning team. Thus, an interviewee indicated that the experiences of being the winning team can let them learn respecting others. He pointed out that some teenagers will be so proud and arrogant when they are

winning. Thus, he will use the group members' experiences of being the winning team to indicate the importance of respecting others. For instance, when the group members laughed at their opponents, the worker will facilitate them to think about the feelings of their opponents. This part of findings is consistent with Agochiya (2010) and Rudd and Stoll (1998)'s findings. Agochiya (2010) pointed out that respecting others is a vital element in interpersonal competence since it is contributory to a good interpersonal relationship. Rudd and Stoll (1998) mentioned traditional sports can facilitate the sportsmanship of the players, such as learning to respect the opponents. It can be educated to the players by the coaches and mentors during the competition (Rudd & Stoll, 1998) Thus, the Esport competition is similar with the traditional sports that can facilitate the sportsmanship of the players, including respecting others in the competition.

One interviewee pointed out the element of "the underdog", which is usual in the traditional sports. He reported that it will be possible that a weak team to beat the stronger team in the Esport competition. Even in the professional Esport competition, there were many examples which can show that the weakest team beat the strongest team because the weakest team was more cooperative than the strongest team in that competition. Thus, he would use these examples to encourage the group members to be more cooperative in the game they are competing with the stronger team. If they beat the stronger team, the experiences can convince them that cooperation is more important than the personal abilities in a team-based game. This part of findings is consistent with Smith, Figgins, Jewiss and Kearney (2017)'s findings, it is found that in the traditional team sport, the underdog team may scrape the victory when competing with stronger team owing to the strong motivation and effort of the team. Thus, the situation of the underdog team winning the competition of both the

traditional team sport and Esport can be happen. It is believed that the undefeated experiences can reinforce the group members to put more effort when cooperating with others in the future.

5.1.2 The roles of workers

5.1.2.1 Co-work with Esport tutor

One of the interviewees reported that he would cooperate with an Esport tutor. He pointed out that he could not convince the group members to accept his suggestions and opinions during the debriefing since his ability and knowledge on the Esport game may be insufficient to convince his group members. Thus, he may not able to facilitate the changes on the group members. Therefore, he would invite Esport tutors who are the professionals in Esport, such as the pro-players. He believed that teenagers would listen and accept the opinion from someone that they admired. Thus, the theme and messages of a group session will be carried out by the Esport tutor. This part of findings is consistent with Bloom, Loughhead and Newin (2008)'s study that it is vital for the coach to be equipped with professional knowledge when holding the sport training activity. Also, Paylor (2010) also stated that social workers lack the knowledge about the sport is one of the limitations of social worker promoting sport activity, for instance, they do not familiar with the needs of service users in sport area. The interviewee cooperated with the Esport tutor and the strengths of the tutor were exerted in order to bring out messages from social worker. Some previous research had indicated that the multidisciplinary cooperation in social work sector was effective since the knowledge of different professionals will be different, the professionals can have complementary advantages (Epstein, 2013; Cole, Siegel & Yau, 1992). Another study also pointed out that social work group practice can benefit

from the co-leadership (Nosko, 2003). It seems that the multidisciplinary cooperation can contribute to the Esport program as it can help to enhance the interpersonal competence of the members.

5.1.2.2 Being a coach

The remaining interviewee adopted another approach. He reported that he was the coach in his Esport group. That means, all the messages and themes with social work elements will be carried by him. He would train the group technically and also carry out the debriefing session by only himself. This part of findings is consistent with Bloom, Loughhead and Newin (2008)'s study that the coach in youth team sport can be multidimensional, teachers and social workers also can be the coach of youth team sport if they have the certain skills and knowledge of the sport. Thus, social workers taking the responsibility of being a coach in team Esport program can be another approach.

5.1.2.3 Training a leader

Two interviewees reported that they would train the leader in their group. It is reported that the leader is convincing to give opinions and suggestions to the remaining group members. Also, they can provide emotional support to the group members, for instance, they would encourage the teammates when they were losing the game. Dworkin, Larson and Hansen (2003) indicated that the leaders in the team sport is expected that they can handle the emotional issues and conflict in the team. Dworkin et al. (2003) added that the leadership skills are one of the elements of interpersonal competence. Thus, training the leader is one of the missions and targets of social worker as it is a way to enhance the interpersonal competence of the group members.

5.1.3 Barriers encountered

5.1.3.1 Restriction of promoting the esports group

i) Center and colleagues

Both of interviewees indicated that the support from the center and colleagues are important as it helps to promote the Esport group. For instance, an interviewee struggled on promoting the Esport group as he could not promote the group in the newsletter of the center, his supervisor did not agree on this approach too. This situation can be found in hip-hop therapy in social work. It is found that some Rap lyrics cannot be accepted in the public and there were cultural barriers (Kobin & Tyson, 2006). Thus, the center or colleagues do not familiar with this approach may be one of the causes that the Esport group cannot be accepted by the center. Some of other NGOs may refuse to use esports as an intervention approach due to several reasons. Christian Weekly (2018) pointed out that some church such as Assemblies of God West Point Church, they may afraid that teenagers may be addicted to the video games in esports and the church may therefore become the game center eventually so it is vital to have a deep discussion on esports before using the esports as an intervention approach in the church. Thus, it can be observed that some organizations such as the Christian NGOs may have hesitation to apply the esports approach owing to the factors of addiction of playing video games.

ii) Parents of the group members

What is more, Mr. F pointed out that some parents may hesitate to let their child join the esports group as they would not agree their child to play video games either at the home or youth center. A research also indicated that the parents may not familiar with the content of Rap music and hip pop culture, it is found that they would worry the rap and hip pop group would bring negative effect to teenagers' attitude and

behaviors (Travis & Deepak, 2013). Thus, it may be difficult for the parents accept their child to join the rap music group owing to the misunderstanding of the content of the group. Therefore, it is usual that parents cannot understand the popular sub-culture of teenagers and it can be estimated that they would have the hesitation of letting their child to join certain groups which used the sub-culture as the means of intervention.

5.1.3.2 Hard to recruit the esports tutor

It is reported that there is no certification system for Esports tutor in Hong Kong. Thus, it is difficult for the social worker to recruit a Esports tutor in the Esports group. The qualities of the Esports tutor cannot be examined. This part of findings is consistent with Sample and Hylton (1996)'s study that the certified adventure trainers are beneficial to the participants of adventure based activity since they need to be responsible and liable to the participants owing to their licenses. Also, the qualities of the trainer can be ensured (Sample & Hylton, 1996).

5.2 Limitations

Owing to the unavailability of sampling frame, the nonprobability the sampling method is used. However, the reliability and validity of the interview may be limited. Yet, the two social workers are working in different centers using the different approach on Esports program. The research can provide two approaches of the Esports program for adolescents. Also, the case study approach will help to manage this situation as Gerring (2007) stated that case study method can help the researcher to gain rich understanding of the case and link up the micro case to situation in macro level, using the case of specific youth centers in order to investigate the commonalities of the obstacles that they are facing and therefore to analyze these commonalities to link up the esports approach in macro level.

What is more, as the studies adopted the qualitative research method, the interview is self-reported by the interviewee. Their memories may be selective and not accurate. Thus, the interviewer always clarified ambiguous questions and asked the meanings of specific wordings and descriptions from the interviewee. Also, the interviewer avoided to use leading questions and most of the time open questions were asked to allow interviewees to expand upon their replies. Confidentiality was emphasized to allow interviewees to give more truthful responses.

5.3 Implications

5.3.1 Implication for social work practice

Facilitating the development of young people is the mission of youth social worker. In recent years, the youth workers had tried a lot of different means and approaches in order to enhance the adolescents' development of interpersonal competence, including using hip pop and adventure-based activity (Raphael & Anne, 2011; Tucker, 2009). Using the means which are popular in youth culture to carry out intervention in social work practice is common in youth work and it is found that they were effective. Esport is being more popular in the world especially in youth culture (Jenny et al., 2017; Howell, 2017). It will be attractive to young people if the youth worker uses the Esport as the intervention approach in social work practice. In this study, it is found that using Esport can effectively enhance the interpersonal competence of young people, namely, the communication skills and skills of managing conflict. The youth workers need to consider some points before they use Esport as an intervention approach.

First of all, conflict is usual and common to be existed in the esports group. The youth worker should not stop and deal with the conflict immediately. Each time of arguing with the teammates will be their valuable experiences which can contribute to their development of interpersonal competence. The youth worker can even let them argue during the game so as to facilitate the concept of good communication and cooperation when working in a team. For instance, if they finally lose the game, the youth worker can carry out the intervention at this moment to let them know the reason why they lose the game is owing to the bad communication skills.

Secondly, it is found that the debriefing and the digital recording which is the replay play the key role in order to enhance the interpersonal competence of the teenagers. When the youth workers are planning the session plan of the Esports group, they should reserve at least half of the group session for the debriefing. Therefore, the group members can discuss and share their thoughts and feelings when they were playing the game, the worker can connect the critical scenario in the game with their daily lives so that the members can also proceed changes in the reality. Also, the equipment which can record the conversation and the scenario of the game should be included in the Esports group since it is found that the replay can convince the young group members to understand the messages from social worker.

Finally, each of the scenes in the game can be used by the worker to facilitate the interpersonal competence of the group members, namely, either the scene of the team is winning and losing. The situation which can be encountered in the game can match the situation in reality. The worker cannot neglect any critical situation in the game.

5.3.2 Implication for policy

As it mentioned before, one of the approaches when planning the operation of Esport program is to cooperate with an Esport tutor. The esport tutor can play a vital role in leading and convincing the group members. However, it is different from adventure-based trainer, there is no a certified system for Esport tutor yet so one of the interviewees finds difficulties in recruiting the tutor. Sample and Hylton (1996) stated that the certified adventure trainers are beneficial to the participants of adventure-based activity since they need to be responsible and liable to the participants owing to their licenses, the qualities of the trainer can also be ensured. Therefore, it seems that there is a need to set up the qualification system for Esport tutor. What is more, the equipment is important when holding Esport program too, namely, the computer and other Esport gear. The government may need to consider subsidizing the Esport program in youth service.

What is more, the policy on promoting Esport is also important. Since it is found that there are still bias on Esport in current society, the promotion of Esport is needed. The government can set up the inter-school competition of Esport for student, just like the traditional sports in Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation. Actually, there is a government report which indicated that the regular Esport competition can contribute to the promotion of Esport (Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, 2017). Thus, the regular Esport competition is needed.

Finally, As the talent or the status of esport player are not being appreciated, the Hong Kong government can refer to the successful experience of other countries. Funk, Pizzo and Baker (2018) stated that the industry of esports in United State and South Korea is successful as it has become the consumer demanded industry. One of the key

factors is the well-developed broadcasting system. The local competition will be broadcasted to the audience of the whole world, many economic activities will be involved such as advertising industry (Hollist, 2015; Funk et al., 2018). The Hong Kong government can focus on developing a broadcasting system and therefore the revenue can be generated. Thus, the income of esports players or other staff in the esports industry can be ensured. It can be estimated that the skills and status of esports play will be more acceptable owing to the more stable income in the esports industry.

5.3.3 Implication for further research

This study focuses on exploring the strategies of using Esport program in youth service to enhance the adolescents' interpersonal competence in Hong Kong. In this study, the service provider has been interviewed and both interviewees reported that they are satisfied the outcome and efficiency of the esports group which can enhance the interpersonal competence of adolescents. Yet, the opinions and feedback from the adolescents who are the participants of the esports group, are yet to be found. If the feedback and the views on the outcome of esports group from the adolescents are collected, the efficiency of using esports program to enhance teenagers' interpersonal competence can be proved by different perspectives.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study aims to explore the use of esports in youth social work practice. Esports has been more popular in the worldwide and it is attractive to the teenagers. Same as other youth sub-culture such as hip hop and rap music, it is found that some of the youth service providers in Hong Kong has started to use esports as an intervention approach in recent years. This study has found that using the esports as a mean can be contributory to enhance adolescents' interpersonal competence. Some

strategies are needed when social worker is designing the esports program for adolescents: (1) Conflict is the key element in the esports group and worker need to carry out intervention when they are having conflict; (2) the debriefing section and the use of replay can convince them to have improvement, and (3) making use of the element of traditional team sport which can be also found in the esports. What is more, the role of the worker can be different either being a coach and social worker concurrently or cooperating with the esports tutor. Social workers may encounter some barriers when using this approach owing to the social bias on the esports. To encounter these barriers, there is a need for the government to promote esports by organizing official competition, developing broadcast system for esports and establishing the license for esports tutor. In brief, this study can provide a possible framework and examples of using esports as the means to enhance adolescents' interpersonal competence. It is worth to have further research on the outcome of using esports group to enhance interpersonal competence as feedback and comments from the service users are also needed to be examined.

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Appendices 1

Project summary

Background

Researches have indicated the importance of interpersonal competence during the adolescent years as it can provide interpersonal support when facing the stressful lives. Moreover, studies found that higher level of interpersonal competence can contribute to the development of peer relationship and future career. Developing adolescents' interpersonal competence thus can prepare them becoming an adult. Researches have also confirmed that team-building activity is able to enhance interpersonal competence of adolescents. While "Esport", as a team-based game, has been growing rapidly, some youth centers in Hong Kong have tried to use esports as an intervention approach when organizing youth programs. Yet, no studies have been done regarding the impact of "esports" on enhancing adolescents' interpersonal competence and the ways of implementation. This study aims at investigating the use of "esports" to enhance the interpersonal competence of adolescents and the possible barriers in the course of implementation.

Methodology

This study will adopt qualitative research method with case study approach. A semi-structured interview will be arranged. Purposive sampling will be adopted. Two social workers with experiences of using esports as an intervention approach will be interviewed. Content analysis will be used for data analysis after the interview.

Significance

Interpersonal competence is vital during the growth of adolescents and there are findings showed that team sports could help promoting teenagers' interpersonal competence. As "esports" is very popular and attractive in the whole world now and there are some youth agencies used it as an intervention approach in order to promote positive development towards adolescents. The details of the operation of "esports" activities for youth and what obstacles faced by the social workers when carrying out "esports" activities will be investigated in this study. Since "esports" is a new activity, many social workers may not familiar with it. This study can help others youth social workers to have more understanding on how to use "esports" as an intervention approach in their work.

探討在社會工作實務中如何運用電子競技活動以提升青少年的人際交往能力及其在推行上的困難

參與研究邀請書

誠邀閣下參加由香港理工大學應用社會科學系應屆畢業學生吳家鋒負責執行，黃秀娟博士負責監督的上述研究計劃。這項研究目的是以質性研究方法了解現時在香港青少年社會服務機構的社工如何運用電子競技活動以提升青少年的人際交往能力，以及在推行上的困難。研究方法會使用訪談形式，需時約一小時十五分鐘。在過程中訪問員會盡可能避免引起受訪者感到任何不適。這項計劃已獲得香港理工大學人類實驗對象操守小組委員會 (HSESC，參考編號為：HSEARS20180111004) (或其代表) 批核

閣下有充分權利在研究開始之前或之後決定退出這項研究，而不會受到任何對閣下的懲處或被追究責任。凡有關閣下的資料將會保密，一切資料的編碼及錄音只有研究人員得悉。

如閣下想獲得更多有關這項研究的資料，請與吳家鋒先生聯絡 [16047@](mailto:16047@polyu.edu.hk)，或可聯絡黃秀娟博士，[電郵 sswsk@](mailto:sswsk@polyu.edu.hk)。你也可以書面形式聯絡香港理工大學道小組委員會秘書莫小姐提出查詢，地址為香港理工大學 Z 座 404 室研究事務處。

謝謝閣下有興趣參與這項研究。

研究員
香港理工大學應用社會科學系應屆畢業學生
吳家鋒 先生敬上



《探討在社會工作實務中如何運用電子競技活動以提升青少年的人際交往能力及其在推行上的困難》

參與研究同意書

本人(以下署名) 同意參加由香港理工大學應用社會科學系應屆畢業學生吳家鋒負責執行，黃秀娟博士負責監督的上述研究。我明白會被邀請進行一小時的訪談，訪談內容是圍繞香港青少年社會服務機構的社工如何運用電子競技活動以提升青少年的人際交往能力，以及在推行上的困難。

研究員已經向本人解釋將會對訪談內容錄音，作為日後資料整理和分析之用。研究員同時亦已經向本人解釋本人作為受訪者的權利。

本人明白參與此項研究是自願的，本人隨時可以自己或在研究員的要求下退出研究而不會負上任何責任。

本人明白參與此項研究不會對個人、家庭、生活及學習/工作構成任何危害，所有有關本人提供的資料均受到嚴格保密，日後的研究報告若有需要引用這些資料時，也不會辨認出個人私隱的資料。

本人亦明白本人所提供的資料，在研究完成後三個月內將會完全被銷毀。

簽名:

正楷姓名:

日期

Using Esports to enhance the interpersonal competence – How it works? What is the obstacles?

Interview Guide

Duration: 45 minutes

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Using “Information Sheet” to introduce the purpose and the arrangement of the interview and other information about the study.
- Introduce the rights of the informants.
- Signing of the consent form (Consent Form).

Background information (10 minutes)

1. How long have you been working in this agency?
(你在該機構工作了多久?)
2. What is the nature of your job?
(你在機構主要的工作是什麼?)
3. What kinds of group activities have you ever organized?
(你在機構內主要舉辦過什麼類型的活動/小組?)
4. How long have you been organizing Esports programs?
(你舉辦電競為主題的活動有多久了?)
5. Are the esports programs popular in the center?
(這些電競活動受歡迎嗎?)
6. What are the popular video games in Esports programs?
(通常受歡迎的電競活動，是以什麼遊戲為主?)

Experiences of using “Esports” as an intervention approach (10 minutes)

1. Can you tell me the reasons you choose Esports as an intervention approach?
(為什麼你會採用電子競技來作為小組/活動的介入手法?)
1. What are the characteristics of your chosen video games?
(有什麼因素令到你會選擇剛才提及過的遊戲作為電競活動的核心內容?)
2. How can the esports programs achieve the aim of improving the interpersonal competence of the participants?

(你認為電競活動該如何設計才能令到青少年的人際交往能力得到改善?)

3. Can you give me some examples of esports program design?

(承上題,有沒有什麼例子?)

4. What are the roles and responsibilities of social workers in the programs? Can you tell me with some examples

(你在舉辦過的電競活動中，你擔當著的什麼角色？社工的責任是什麼?)

Opinion on using Esports as an intervention approach (10 minutes)

1. Based on your personal experiences, what difficulties have you encountered when organizing the esports program? How you cope with then?

(根據你的個人經驗，你在舉辦這些電競活動時遇到過什麼困難？你如何面對或解決?)

2. What are the commonalities and differences between traditional group programs and esports program in the youth center?

(傳統的團隊活動和電競活動有什麼異同之處?)

3. What will you say about the effectiveness of using esports in enhancing teenagers' interpersonal competence? In what ways you evaluate the effectiveness?

(你會如何評價這些電競活動在提升青少年的人際交往能力方面的成效?)

Suggestions when confronting the obstacles (5minutes)

1. Will you use this approach again in the coming future? Why or why not?

(你會不會在將來繼續使用電競來作為介入手法？為什麼?)

2. What are the important factors in influencing the effective use of esports in social work practice? (你認為有什麼重要的因素/配套能夠影響到這些電競活動在提升青少年人際交往能力的成效?)

At the end of the interview (5 minutes)

1. Do you have any other ideas and thoughts that you would like to share at the end of this interview? (在面對完結前，你有沒有其他意見分享?)