

## **Relationship between Self-esteem and Ability Grouping: Investigation of the Positive Assimilation Effect in Hong Kong**

**ABSTRACT**      *The aim of this study was to test the relationships between students' self-esteem and the class stream they attend in a non-Western context. Responses of 100 Hong Kong secondary school students to the Chinese Adolescent Self-Esteem Scale were analyzed by one-way Analysis of Variance. Higher general and academic self-esteem were reported by students from high stream classes than those from low stream classes. The findings supported the positive assimilation effect of ability grouping within school. Implications of the findings for overcoming the limitations of the current study and the impacts of ability grouping on students' personal development are also discussed.*

Ability grouping has been common practice for organizing schools and classes in Hong Kong. Particularly in secondary schools of Hong Kong, different schools are admitting students of different academic capabilities, with band one students of higher academic ability while band three students of the lower ones. Moreover, within some secondary schools, students are further streamed into different classes according to their academic ability. Though it is currently a common practice to group students into different schools and classes according to their academic ability, it is still highly controversial that whether ability grouping (or streaming) could benefit students in terms of their academic achievements and