

Public Policy Research (PPR) Funding Scheme

The Greater Bay Area and Career Opportunity for Hong Kong Youth: Integrating Big Data Analysis and Survey Experiments

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Abstract

Since the launch of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) initiative in 2015, the development of young Hong Kongers has been increasingly recognised in national policies on the GBA. The Hong Kong SAR government places great emphasis on encouraging young adults to engage in the GBA development. From the government's perspective, the GBA represents a 'golden opportunity' for local youth's development.

However, recent surveys revealed the absence of interest from the majority of local people. In particular, a large proportion of local youth expressed their unwillingness to either pursue careers or live in the nine mainland cities of the GBA. This sharp contrast between the government's enthusiasm and young adults' lack of interest will create challenges for the Hong Kong government in responding to the central government's call to develop the GBA. Alarmingly, it may be a sign that Hong Kong will be left behind in the GBA development.

The research team believes that effective strategies for engaging youth in the GBA initiative rely on a good understanding of local young people's genuine ideas about the GBA. Given Hong Kong's high Internet penetration rate, this project will collect online data to examine Hong Kongers' perceptions of the role of the GBA in youth development. Using big data analysis, the research team will investigate local people's online discussion and opinions of the GBA and youth development.

Based on the big data analysis, the research team will synthesise several core perceptions and evaluations of the opportunities and challenges posed by the GBA for local youth development. Survey experiments will be conducted with Hong Kong youth aged 18-35 to examine how these perceived opportunities and challenges affect young people's inclination to pursue careers in the nine mainland cities of the GBA. The respondents will be asked to indicate their desire to take up internships, seek employment and engage in entrepreneurship in the GBA under randomly assigned vignettes. The vignettes will be experimentally manipulated to address the concerns and worries and strengthen their perceptions of the opportunities available for local youth development in the GBA.

Having developed a better understanding of young people's aspirations, ideas and concerns in relation to the GBA through big data analysis and survey experiments, the research team will prepare a concrete report on the findings and policy recommendations for helping local youth to understand and seize the opportunities and overcome the challenges presented by the GBA.