Exploring Services for Ethnic Minority Adolescents:

An Ethnographic Study of a Community-Based Asian American Youth Program

A thesis submitted by

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to explore how a community-based Asian American youth leadership program defines leadership, as well as to examine how that was shaped by staff members' understanding of the cultural context of the youth served by the program. The study was designed as an ethnographic study, using participant observation and staff interviews. Participants included Asian American adolescents who participated in the youth leadership projects, as well as staff members who led these projects. Data analysis followed Spradley's ethnographic methods in three steps: domain, taxonomy, and componential analysis. Six types of different knowledge and skills were identified, with incidental teaching by staff leaders, hands-on practice, and learning for individual life skills identified as the most commonly used strategies. Application of knowledge and understanding of biculturalism were further found to be two core values regarding Asian American youth's leadership development. Further research is recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of the leadership skills and strategies identified, incorporating the perspective of the youth.

Keywords: youth leadership, community-based program, Asian American, ethnographic study.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The study was designed to examine how a youth leadership program, targeting adolescents from immigrant Asian families in Chinatown, defines and operationalizes youth leadership and empowerment in implementing specific projects designed to prevent tobacco use and underage drinking. In this chapter, I provide the rationale for my focus on youth programs, especially those targeting youth leadership and empowerment for Asian American youth. I then provide a brief description of the youth program that was the focus of the study, as well as an overview of the study design and method.

Challenges of Adolescence as a Transition to Adulthood

Transitioning to adulthood is a critical process for adolescents. Adolescence is a stage of life during which young people, generally in their second decade of life, undergo an intersection of biological, cognitive, psychological, and social changes (Lerner, 2002). Although adolescence is not a period of "storm and stress" for all (Lerner, 2002), the majority do experience some developmental challenges in coping with the interactions of physical maturation (puberty), cognitive and psychosocial functioning, and social contexts. Despite adolescents' assets of energy and quick learning ability, there is also a great risk of negative outcomes caused by their poor judgment and risk-taking propensity. At least one-fourth of adolescents in the United States are facing problems including school drop-out, substance use and adolescent pregnancy (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Adolescents only spend 20% of their time in school, which leads to a higher likelihood of exposure to negative community and peer influences through their engagement in unorganized activities outside of formalized educational settings. Therefore, while adolescents

acquire values and competencies for future success, they may also get involved in risky behaviors, which could in turn lead to adverse consequences.

In addition to the risk of developmental challenges for all youth, the challenges of transitioning to adulthood may be further exacerbated for ethnic minorities**.** Minority ethnic groups are found to be more likely to live in poverty and have worse overall health than do their White counterparts (Reeves, Rodrigue, & Kneebone, 2016; Bahls, 2011). Poverty is found to be associated with fewer resources, lower achievement (Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2002) and a greater number of clinically depressive symptoms (Butler, Barbarin, & Smyth, 2014). In addition, neighborhood and community poverty are found to have an impact on academic achievement, as well as on internalizing and externalizing behaviors (McBride Murry, Berkel, Gaylord-Harden, Copeland-Linder, & Nation, 2011). Racial and ethnic minorities account for more than 40% of youth in the United States (Cauce, Cruz, Corona, & Conger, 2011). However, more ethnic minority youth are born into poorer communities. Less than half of African American and Latino children were born into non-poor or low poverty neighborhoods with fewer resources and opportunities, whereas this was the case for more than 80% of White children (Cauce et al., 2011). In other words, it is especially challenging for ethnic minority youth who live in economically under-resourced communities to navigate the developmental transition of adolescence.

Adolescent Development of Ethnic Minority Youth

Although there is a significant body of research on both the challenges and the protective factors African American and Latino American youth experience, information about the Asian American youth experience is more limited, despite the increase in population within this ethnic community. Indeed, Asian Americans have shown the highest rate of growth, 43.3%, from 2000

to 2010 among all ethnic groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In addition, approximately 5% of the U.S. population identified as Asian in the 2010 census, and 60% of Asian Americans were foreign-born (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). According to Vintage 2015 Population Estimates, about 24.6% of the Asian population (Asian or mixed Asian ethnicities) was under age 18 in 2015 (Vintage 2015 Population Estimates, 2015). In addition, although research has shown that Asian American adolescents do not engage as much in risky behaviors (such as involvement in sexual activities and substance use; Tosh & Simmons, 2007) relative to their other ethnic counterparts, they do have a higher risk for internalizing problems (such as depression, self-injury, and suicide; Sen, 2004) than do adolescents of other ethnic backgrounds.

Low socioeconomic status can be just as disadvantageous to the subgroup of Asian American youth with limited resources as it can be for other ethnic groups. However, it is critical to note that there is heterogeneity among Asian Americans, even among Chinese families in the U.S. For example, some families are from professional backgrounds, having immigrated for education and professional opportunities, but others are from low-income backgrounds. Among those low-income families, some emigrate from rural regions of China, and settle in low-income, concentrated Chinese ethnic communities in the host country such as in the Chinatowns of various cities (Kwong, 1996). Asian American youth from low-income families, are more likely to grow up with personal and environmental challenges.

Though being an ethnic minority is often thought to be disadvantageous, it can paradoxically also be a protective factor for adolescents. After all, a sense of ethnic identity has been found to be protective against stressors faced by adolescents (Williams, Aiyer, Durkee, & Tolan, 2014). For Asian American children, emerging research has shown that the maintenance of heritage culture, bilingualism and affiliation with ethnic communities could be some culturally

protective factors for their social adaptation (Zhou et al., 2012; Anyon, Ong, & Whitaker, 2014).

Therefore, being an ethnic minority can act as an asset for youth facing challenges. More

research needs to examine relevant risk and protective factors among ethnic minority youth,

especially Asian immigrant groups in the U.S., in order to obtain a thorough understanding of

ethnicity in adolescent development.

Need for Youth Programs

Out-of-school organized activities have been found to have a positive impact on

adolescents' skill development, as well as in preventing them from engaging in risk behaviors

(Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009). Among the various types of organized activities

that are prevalent, youth programs that provide a combination of activities, resources and

services seem to suit adolescents' diverse needs best. In terms of youth programs, there is a

higher participation rate and demand for youth programs among youth from low-income families

and African American and Hispanic youth compared to their higher-income Caucasian peers

(Afterschool Alliance, 2014). However, few studies have examined various aspects of Asian

Americans' participation in afterschool programs. Hence, this study focuses on a program that is

aimed at helping Asian American youth, particularly Chinese and Vietnamese youth from low-

income families. In the next section, I provide the sociocultural and historic context for the

program of the proposed study site.

Socio-cultural Context of the YES Program in Chinatown

Chinatowns have long been symbols of Chinese settlements and experiences outside

China (Kwong, 1996). Looking for work and new opportunities, the first wave of Chinese

immigrants to the United States settled down after the transcontinental railroad construction was

completed (such as the Central Pacific Railroad) in the 1870s. Chinatowns were formed soon

after because Chinese people were targets of abuse and needed refuge after the implementation

of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which resulted in the creation of segregated, residential areas

for Chinese people. Most Chinese people were from poorer regions in China, such as Guangdong

or Canton, coming for jobs, and consequently had little education (and different linguistic and

cultural backgrounds) compared to those who came as students before the 1950s. The 1965

Immigration Act led to dramatic increases in Chinese population and expansion of Chinatowns,

making it possible for new immigrants with little English literacy to settle down. This was the

case for Boston's Chinatown.

Boston's Chinatown, which is the third largest Chinatown in the United States, is a center

of Asian American life in Massachusetts. Compared with greater Boston's nine percent Asian

population, nearly 70% of Chinatown' population is Asian. As of 2010, Chinese Americans

(33.45%) form the largest subgroup of the Asian American population in Boston, whereas

Indians (21.67%) and Vietnamese (12.08%) are the second and third subgroup. In terms of

socioeconomic status, Asian Americans in the state are reported to have a 90% higher family

poverty rate and 70% higher individual poverty rate than those of white, non-Hispanics (Boston

Public Health Commission, 2017). Therefore, Asian Americans make up a large proportion of

the Boston's Chinatown population, who are also reported to have lower socioeconomic status in

the area.

As the first few community-based programs in Boston Chinatown, Boston Asian Youth

Essential Service (YES) was established in 1973 to serve low-income immigrant Asian youth,

particularly Chinese and Vietnamese in Boston. YES helps youth ages 12-21, who faced

language and cultural barriers, as well as problems in school, at home, and within the

community. YES offers a broad range of services that focus on building the strengths and assets

of youth, which they perceive as culturally competence, in addition to working on their needs and problems in order to empower youth with skills, values, and connections. Program staff members work with guardians involved in the youths' lives to coordinate services and address needs in a comprehensive and holistic manner. Adolescents ages 13-19 participate in youth leadership development training to become equipped with the skills, knowledge, and information they need to be involved in community and civic engagement work[1].

To target youth leadership development, YES has focused on facilitating youth in community and civic engagement work around prevention of risky behaviors, such as tobacco use and underage drinking. Although the Asian population in the United States has one of the lowest percentages of smokers, Boston Asians have a relatively high smoking rate, according to the Health of Boston report (Boston Public Health Commission, 2017). This high percentage may exist because many Asian residents in Boston are immigrants from countries where smoking is commonplace, such as China and Vietnam. Due to potential cultural differences, language barriers and other concerns, Asian immigrants do not routinely practice preventive health maintenance. Moreover, Asian immigrants are found to be more than three times more likely to smoke than US-born Asian Americans (Chae, Gavin, & Takeuchi, 2006).

Initiatives have been implemented to address such health concerns among the Asian population. The Asian Health Initiative (AHI) in 1994, as an example, was established by Tufts Medical Center to provide education about health issues targeting the local Asian community. Seven programs were given grants to implement various programs and outreach to provide education and raise awareness of smoking in Asian communities. Among the grantees, Boston Asian Youth Essential Services operates an anti-smoking youth leadership program "for youth by youth." The tobacco project is aimed at raising awareness about how to live smoke-free.

Youth working on the project have opportunities to plan, organize, and implement actions to raise community awareness to increase smoke-free community spaces and housing. They also work to increase positive actions among youth to prevent negative behaviors.

The Current Study

The study emerged from my volunteer work with YES during the summer of 2017. Through assisting with the implementation of the two youth leadership development projects mentioned above, I learned about differences in activities and staff-youth interactions compared to my own cultural background as a Chinese international student. Therefore, I began to develop an interest in how youth's participation in these projects facilitated their leadership development, and how the activities and strategies aligned with the project goals within YES's cultural context.

Over the past 20 years, many evaluations of afterschool programs have been conducted. A significant number of these evaluations have demonstrated their effectiveness at promoting youth development, including social and leadership skills, academic performance, and having contacts with adults in the community (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). These evaluations, however, have generally not focused on examining the formative, or operational, aspects of the programs -- for example, on establishing programs' theories of change (Weiss, 1998), and their rationales for choosing particular strategies to achieve their program goals. Initiating such formation evaluation activities can help individual programs achieve their goals by monitoring their implementation and generating opportunities to improve their program processes (Jacobs, Kapuscik, Williams, & Kates, 2000). In addition, formative evaluation also contributes more generally to the field of youth development programming.

Understanding implicit assumptions about why programs, configured as they are, should help participants achieve program goals is an important component of any thorough evaluation. This may be especially true for YES, since there is limited research on Asian American youth participating in youth development programs. Therefore, understanding YES's rationale for focusing on youth leadership and empowerment is a small but potentially important piece of this program process puzzle. The current proposed study was designed as the very first step in evaluating the program. As such, it is a participatory ethnographic study of an after-school community-based youth program aimed at helping Asian American adolescents. It is designed to explore how program staff define youth leadership and implement their approach to facilitating skills that they consider necessary for youth leadership and empowerment.

The study's focus was on understanding how the YES program defines and operationalizes youth leadership and empowerment in implementing the tobacco project. Towards this overarching objective, the research questions were:

1. How do the program leaders and staff at YES define youth leadership and empowerment?

2. What activities and strategies do the program staff implement in the Tobacco Project through which they expect to facilitate leadership development?

3. How is the program staff's understanding of the cultural context of the targeted youth reflected in their definition of and operationalization of youth leadership and empowerment in the project activities and strategies?

The study was designed using participant observation of program activities. The study also incorporated elements of community based participatory research (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006), as the study's focus was developed in consultation with YES. Moreover, the main

methods were participant observation by the student researcher who volunteers at the program and a group interview with program staff. The interview with program staff was designed specifically to elicit program staff's definition and articulation of youth leadership, and how the project's activities are expected to facilitate leadership development. The analysis of data from participant observations focused on selecting key activities to be presented to program staff. This was conducted to elicit their interpretations of how the activities and strategies observed are expected to facilitate leadership and empowerment.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Considering the study's focus on understanding a youth leadership program for Asian American youth, in this chapter I provide a review of the foci and advantages of community-based youth programs. The literature review is limited to community-based programs operating outside schools, since my primary interest is in how communities themselves think about what their youth need. Since this thesis pertains to a program in Boston's Chinatown, I specifically focus on youth leadership programs designed for Asian American youth. I further delimit the focus to only qualitative evaluation studies, because quantitative evaluation studies primarily examine program outcomes or effectiveness, whereas qualitative research can be useful in documenting the process of implementation, and, thus, eliciting richer knowledge of the program's activities and implementation.

Community-based Youth Programs

The study is focused on community-based youth programs, as community is a salient social context for adolescent development, especially for low SES ethnic minority youth. The term community-based youth program is used here to refer to after-school youth organizations and programs in the community, which are kinds of organized activities. Organized activities are usually described as having structure and adult-supervision with an emphasis on skill-building (Mahoney et al., 2009). Unfortunately, adolescents from low SES families are less likely to participate in organized activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Low income youth usually have limited participation in these activities because of fewer community resources or lower quality of public services in their neighborhoods (Shann, 2001; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Activity access of ethnic minority youth from low income families is greatly affected, as there is a great

likelihood that they live in segregated or less culturally diverse communities with limited resources.

Advantages of community-based youth programs. Community-based youth programs usually target specific goals and youth outcomes (Benson & Saito, 2000), such as facilitating youth empowerment, developing leadership skills, and reducing risky behaviors. Organized activities are characterized as offering adult supervision and opportunities for tutoring, enrichment learning and recreation while parents are working. Community-based youth programs with specific goals are one of the three common types of organized activities, in addition to school-based extracurricular activities and other after-school programs. Although self-care activities that lack direct supervision from adults can have a positive impact on youth's development in promoting greater responsibility, independence and self-reliance, they also pose potential risks for adolescents in developing psychosocial and antisocial behavior problems, such as poor adjustment in substance use (Levine Coley, Eileen Morris, & Hernandez, 2004), exposure to crime and misconduct (Levine Coley et al., 2004), fear and anxiety (Shulman, Kedem, Kaplan, Sever, & Braja, 1998), and low academic performance (Posner & Vandell 1999).

Unlike the negative impact of self-care activities on adolescents, organized activities are found to be beneficial to youth development in many ways, including higher educational attainment (McNeal, 1995), reduced substance use (Gottfredson, Gerstenblith, Soulé, Womer, & Lu, 2004), interpersonal competence (Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003), and civic engagement (Frisco, Muller, & Dodson, 2004). In addition, youth who participate in organized activities often form close relationships with adult program staff or mentors. Relationships between adults and adolescents are found to positively influence adolescents' emotional, behavioral, and academic

outcomes, and in particular, play an important role in the development of at-risk youth (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).

In addition to the benefits of organized activities for youth, community-based youth programs may reveal more in-depth information about ethnic minority youths' development, other than that of African Americans, in these programs. Not much is known about participation in organized activities among other ethnic minority groups, as most studies have targeted African and European American adolescents. Moreover, the findings of studies targeting ethnic minority adolescents generally pertain to the nature of their participation, such as the observations that Asian Americans were less likely to participate in sports (Shann, 2001) and that Latinos were least likely to participate in organized activities in general (Darling, 2005), when comparing cultural groups in a diverse context. Examining only activity preferences, however, does not provide details about how these activities have an impact on the youth, if they do, and what exactly they gain from the activities. Furthermore, examining youth's participation in a diverse context may not provide enough information for youth from minority ethnic groups. In other words, community-based youth programs can be a better context to look deeper into the participation of youth from specific ethnic minority groups, as these programs are usually based in more segregated or less culturally diverse communities serving specific cultural groups.

Focus of community-based youth programs. Compared to involvement in other organized activities and programs, participation in community programs is linked more to interpersonal development than personal development. This may be because the program provides adolescents with positive relationship experiences and connects them to adult networks (Larson et al., 2006). Such networks are especially beneficial to youth populations with limited

access to resources and those who are at-risk for poor educational and psychosocial outcomes (Sullivan, & Larson, 2010).

The other important component of community-based programs is community connection. Community-based programs work closely around pressing issues in society, although the focus has changed over the time (see Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak and Hawkins, 2004). Community-based programs for youth were first introduced in the United States, in their modern form, in the 1950s to reduce juvenile crime and transform troubled youth's character development. Intervention and treatment programs were designed to reduce problem behaviors including substance use, teen pregnancy, and violence. When important predictors of these problem behaviors were identified in the 1980s, the focus of youth programs shifted to address peer and social influences of problem behaviors through theory-guided prevention efforts.

In the early 2000s, as the positive youth development framework become prevalent, the focus on addressing single problems was then challenged. It was then changed into more a person-centered approach for adolescent development. In other words, it emphasized building personal strengths as a means to facilitate navigating and transitioning through adolescence while reducing adverse effects of risk factors. The traditional deficit model sees adolescence as a period of crisis and disturbance, and it pays more attention to the deficits of adolescents. In contrast to this model, the positive youth development framework explains the need to focus on skill and competency development, not merely problem reduction. Programs began to help youth identify and build their developmental assets on both individual- and community-level to full potential (Ersing, 2009; Catalano et al., 2004). Community-based youth programs are thus more connected to the community as the thrust of this programming is now on promoting community health rather than primarily correcting youth behaviors.

Youth leadership and empowerment. Youth leadership development is one common component of community-based youth programs, epitomizing the recent mainstream positive youth development approach of building skills and connections. Despite various theoretical frameworks used in youth leadership development studies, leadership in youth programs is typically defined as a process that helps youth gain competence. This competence is usually linked to future success and better awareness of personal strengths and challenges (Edelman, Gill, Comerford, Larson, & Hare, 2004). Youth empowerment is a major way of promoting leadership in youth, which means giving power to youth in program implementation. Although the two terms of youth leadership and empowerment are not used interchangeably here, youth empowerment is considered a core component of youth leadership development.

Leadership development is beneficial to adolescents in many ways. Leadership development opportunities were listed as one of the 10 required program elements for future preparation in the youth provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA; Decker, & Berk, 2011). According to the Act, leadership development also included community service and peer-centered activities emphasizing responsibility and positive social behaviors. Leadership training and empowerment processes are also found to have positive impact on the development of ethnic minority youth. Bloomberg, Ganey, Alba, Quintero and Alvarez Alcantara (2003) evaluated a Chicano-Latino youth leadership institute, which is an asset-based program for youth. The youth program was found to provide their Latino youth participants with many benefits. These benefits included: increased self-confidence; increased social and leadership skills; an expanded sense of community responsibility and ownership; expanded relationships with positive adult and peer role models; and increased graduation and employment rates. Moreover, the youth program also reduced the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Pirie and colleagues' study (2016) also found

immigrant youth promoted their understanding of their own strengths and development by being empowered to become cultural brokers in a youth leadership and empowerment program. However, there is a paucity of literature targeting leadership development in Asian American youth.

To summarize thus far, community-based youth programs, especially youth leadership programs, can improve adolescents' skills and interpersonal development in the community, and seem to be more accessible for youth from ethnic minority communities. However, because there is limited research on Asian American adolescents in such programs, exploring more of this cultural group's experience with these programs, here through an in-depth study of program implementation, is a worthy line of investigation. The next section discusses different types of program evaluation and study design, followed by an examination of existing program evaluations focused on ethnic minority youth, and the implications of those research findings.

Evaluation of Youth Programs

Program evaluation is defined as "the systematic assessment of the operation and/or the outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy" (Weiss, 1998, p.4). Among the different types of evaluation, impact or outcome evaluation is the most widely recognized. It answers the "does it work?" question – the question that most funders and many program administrators and participants want answered first. Equally important, however, is formative or process evaluation. This genre of evaluation is typically used to describe the many elements of a program (e.g., its goals and objectives, its operating theory, its activities, its participants and staff) and determine whether and to what extent it is being implemented as intended. All this

helps one to understand the actual operation of a program and how to make improvements (Jacobs et al, 2000).

Role of program evaluation. The benefits of conducting formative program evaluations usually include: (a) developing programs that are developmentally and culturally appropriate to achieve the intended goals of the program, (b) clarifying objectives and monitoring progress and (c) helping program staff make changes to improve program effectiveness. In addition, evaluating well-structured and administered programs can provide society with recommendations for developing more appropriate and effective youth programs to meet the great demand for high quality after-school activities.

Eight features of positive developmental settings for youth programs were developed by evaluating factors of effective youth programs, including: (a) Physical and psychological safety, (b) Appropriate structure, (c) Supportive relationships with adults and peers, (d) Opportunities for belonging, (e) Positive social norms, (f) Support for efficacy and mattering, (g) Opportunities for skill building, and (h) Integration of family, school, and community efforts (Mahoney et al., 2009). In addition to characteristics of the program settings, Hansen and Larson (2007) considered amplifying factors more from an individual level. Such factors that led to greater developmental benefits included higher dosage, intrinsic motivation such as enjoyment and future goals, holding a lead role, smaller group size and higher staff-to-youth ratio. Program evaluation therefore provides rich information for program development by looking at different elements of the programs.

Qualitative methods in program evaluation. Although experimental or quasi-experimental study designs are typically used to evaluate youth programs, non-experimental designs using qualitative methods are also used and can be most beneficial. Qualitative methods

can be useful for generating new hypotheses and gaining insight into people's understandings of the phenomena being observed. Govan, Fernandez, Lewis and Kirshner (2015) used qualitative methods to examine how youth-led community organizing helped cultivate the personal power of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. The researchers identified seven key elements beneficial to leadership development, including prioritizing youth voice, positive relationships, critical social analysis through dialogues, active engagement, accelerated learning, planning and decision making as well as debrief and reflection. The qualitative design helped to uncover the trends in thoughts and provide directions for future research and application.

A variety of different qualitative methods are used in program evaluation, including ethnography, observation, formal and informal interviews, and document analysis (Weiss, 1998). Qualitative data may yield more context-specific understandings in the process of youth development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Perry and Calhoun-Butts (2012) conducted a qualitative study of the career, educational, and cultural domains of urban Hispanic youths' developmental adjustment in an after-school program at a non-profit organization. The researchers followed the tradition of ethnographies and kept field notes to record and reflect on what they had seen and experienced as participant observers. They also conducted semi-structured interviews to explore the three domains. They found a typical profile of "family encouragement to pursue post-secondary goals and a belief in the long-term payoff of school", as well as some rare profiles such as "short-term goals of getting good grades", "of economic survival outside of school" and "saw the payoff of school as irrelevant" (Perry & Calhoun-Butts, 2012, p.508-509).

Pirie and colleagues' documentation of an innovative youth empowerment program (2016) also used multi-methods to present rich information about participants' development.

Using a community-based participatory research design, they found that engaging immigrant youth as bilingual interpreters was helpful to their navigating multiple cultural settings as a result of developing bridging social capital. The qualitative methods helped to capture common characteristics, as well as to illuminate some uncommon lived experiences, both of which were helpful for the generation of future new inquiries.

Taken together, the literature on organized activities targeting ethnic minority youth lead one to focus on community-based programs that emphasized interpersonal development, in contrast to school-based programs, that tend to focus more on academic activities or arts. Leadership development and empowerment is common in community-based programs, which is of benefit to adolescent development for all groups, including adolescents from ethnic minority communities. Formative evaluation using qualitative methods as a means of understanding the process of program development and implementation provides rich information about context-specific youth program services for adolescents with different needs.

The rationale behind the study presented in this thesis is therefore based on the review of community-based youth programs, leadership development, and program evaluation summarized here. It provides the rationale for the focus on evaluation of a community-based youth program, YES, that targets Asian American adolescents from low-income families. Although YES has been in operation for over four decades and it does track outcomes, there has been little documentation or investigation of the implementation of this program. Therefore, the study was designed to explore the program's implementation, with a focus on leadership development and empowerment as assessed through qualitative evaluation.

Chapter 3 Method

Project Description and Research Objectives

The study was designed to evaluate two youth leadership projects, which were a Tobacco Project and an Underage Drinking Project. However, during the analysis phase, only data from the Tobacco Project was utilized. Field notes from the Underage Drinking group were not analyzed for three reasons: first, because this group did not complete a full project over the course of this study's data collection period (only 6 sessions occurred); second, the activities observed did not represent the full range of the project, as was originally planned; and third, because I, as the researcher, had some time constraints. In contrast, the participant observations for the Tobacco group included all sessions that occurred from the start to the finish of preparing the Public Service Announcement (PSA). Therefore, only the Tobacco Project is further discussed here.

The Tobacco Project targeted adolescents aged 13-19 from low-income immigrant families. Youth typically worked on the project under the guidance of a program staff member on a fixed day once a week after school during the school year. Youth who participated in the project were expected to gain the skills, tobacco knowledge, and information they needed to be involved in community and civic engagement work. Youth were also expected to develop basic leadership, organizing, and social skills to communicate and support progress on tobacco issues, such as presenting relevant knowledge to the community through different ways. Activities included skills and knowledge training on tobacco, group work that covered planning for different projects, generating ideas to disseminate health information, and implementing actions.

The study was designed to document how youth leadership and empowerment were defined and operationalized by YES program staff members. It was especially concerned with

how these operationalizations were meant to help prevent tobacco use amongst Asian American

youths. As a reminder, the specific research questions were:

1. How do program leaders and staff members at YES define youth leadership and

    empowerment?

2. What activities and strategies do staff members implement in the Tobacco Project

    through which they expect to facilitate leadership development?

3. How is the program staff members' understanding of the cultural context of the

    targeted youth reflected in their definition and operationalization of youth leadership

    and empowerment in the project activities and strategies?

Research Design

The study used an ethnographic research design in which data were gathered through

participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative methods are particularly

useful in eliciting on-the-ground level perceptions and perspectives of the participants by

collecting firsthand information in the "field" or a natural setting (Creswell, 2013). In addition,

qualitative design can avoid the deficits in measures and analysis that programs for majority

culture youth use, as some items are constructed based on norms and perspectives that represent

that dominant culture.

For the ethnographic study, the qualitative design and methods of data analysis can be

helpful in the following aspects (Weiss, 1998): (a) collecting rich data in various forms, thereby

avoiding the limitations of developed instruments and single data sources, (b) gaining insight

into participants' lived experience and perspectives, (c) having a thorough understanding of the

program, through active participation and new or unexpected findings, and (d) following an

emergent design as the ongoing projects move along as well as in describing and interpreting data through insider perspectives.

Participants

Participants included youth enrolled in the programs, as well as program staff members. Data on both youth and staff participants were collected through participant observation, whereas a group interview was conducted only with program staff members. Youth participants included 7 male and 5 female Asian / Asian American adolescents aged 13-19 who participated in the Tobacco Project, as well as other youth who participate in the program activities. Staff participants included the program staff member who led the Tobacco Project and directly supervised the student researcher, as well as five other program staff members at the youth center.

Procedures

Recruitment. As a volunteer, I participated in the day-to-day activities of the program twice a week. As a participant observer, I observed youth participants as we participated in the program as usual. Based on consultation with the program director and the Social, Behavioral and Educational Research Institutional Review Board (SBER IRB) director at Tufts University, it was determined that youth participants could be exempt from informed consent procedures because data on their activities were to be elicited through the researcher's participant observation of their participation in the program's ongoing activities, and not through individual interviews. As a participant observer, I also observed the ongoing program without requiring any interaction beyond my normal interactions with the youth in the context of my role as a volunteer. The only participants specifically recruited for the study were the program staff

members who work with the youth. Recruitment of program staff members was conducted on site, and I directly talked to them at the youth center.

Signed informed consent was obtained from program staff members using standard procedures. Although participant observation included youth who participated in the program activities and projects, informed consent of adolescents was not necessary because youth were not asked to do anything for the study other than participate in the normal, day-to-day activities of the program. In addition, no identifiable information was collected. Pseudonyms and approximate age and gender of participants were used in the field notes.

Data collection. The study took place from October 2017 to March 2018 at the YES program youth center site. The analysis for the study was based on 10 participant observations, and conducted for 2-4 hours twice a week for 10 weeks.

Data Sources

Field Notes and Memos from Participant Observation. Field notes were the major source of data, which were supplemented with interpretive memos. During the 2-4 hours per week I spent at the youth center, I typically observed activities and interactions among youth participants and staff members, and larger program-wide events happening there with a main focus on leadership development and empowerment. As a participant observer, I participated in the social interaction and group activities on site and observed how the activities are organized, as well as how staff members verbally and nonverbally communicated with and guided adolescents. Notes were occasionally taken during activities, and completed field notes were prepared immediately after observation. Field notes documented elements including the date, time, location, people, activities, behaviors, and language. My reflections and interpretations were also documented as reflective notes, next to the descriptive notes.

As I completed field notes after each participant observation session, I prepared memos to provide more background context for the ongoing activities, based on information about the program. The program information included observed working philosophy and summaries of the projects and progress completed in summer 2016 that provide the basis for subsequent activities during the 2017-18 academic year. I also included information in separate memos to explain necessary background information about some activities and events, as there were relevant activities that happened on the days when I was not at the youth center. Memos helped me to "connect the dots," promoting better understanding of the day-to-day program activities. Memos were also written to reflect on certain events documented in the field notes (as a self-reflective and analytic process).

Group Interview. A semi-structured interview with staff members was conducted to fulfill the following two functions: First, in following the ethnographic approach, staff members provided participant feedback as key informants by participating in the interview and checking my interpretations of the observations of project activities and staff strategies. Second, staff members provided their definition of youth leadership and empowerment as well as their culturally-based understanding of how they plan and implement the leadership and empowerment activities. In addition, interviewing community members was also an important component of community-based research that engaged community members in the design and implementation of research meant to benefit the community (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). Staff members were therefore provided an opportunity to be active participants in the research process, which made it easier to achieve both research goals and potential future program changes.

Program documents. YES has a document that describes its goals for leadership development, such as developing basic leadership skills; identifying issues and priority areas;

presenting and communicating ideas to decision-makers, stake holders, and the media; and

seeking informational support from staff members and resources in the community. There is also

an adapted After-School Initiative's Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development, which is

used by YES annually to evaluate youth's development, their satisfaction with the YES programs

and services in general, as well as to document gains in skills and core values. These existing

documents were reviewed for information about the organization's rationale for focusing on

youth leadership and empowerment as well as the staff members' operationalization of youth

leadership and empowerment. Additionally, the documents were helpful for learning the

importance of promoting leadership development among Asian American youth from low-

income families. There was some information about reasons for facilitating youth's leadership

through the tobacco and alcohol use prevention programs as well.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in three main steps, following Spradley's ethnographic

methods (1979, 1980), including domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential

analysis. Data compiled from participant observations and staff interviews were analyzed in

search of cultural interpretations relevant to leadership development. As a first step of

ethnographic analysis, domain analysis provides a general idea about possible domains of

interest that are derived from the research questions. In the second step, taxonomic analysis helps

organize and simplify the domains and smaller categories identified in the previous step. Finally,

in the third step, componential analysis identifies similarities and contrasts among terms or

components of cultural meaning associated with emerging categories used by participants.

In following both the ethnographic research design as well as the community-based

participatory research approach, the group interview occurred mid-way through the analysis, so

that the researcher could share preliminary results and solicit staff members' perspectives and

input in the process of interpreting the data. The results of the first two steps of ethnographic

analysis (domain and taxonomic analysis) were presented to the staff members at this point, to

elicit their feedback and suggestions for how to revise previous steps, before moving to the final

step of componential analysis. See Figure 1 detailing this data analysis process.

Chapter 4 Results

This study explored the YES program's understanding of youth leadership and empowerment. It also explored how the staff members' understanding of youth's cultural context came into play in their implementation of project activities and the strategies used to target youth leadership and empowerment. As was previously noted in the literature review, there has heretofore been relatively little discussion about community-based youth leadership programs for Asian American adolescents, especially those from low-income families. The study was designed to document how youth leadership and empowerment were defined and operationalized by staff members in the YES program in implementing a specific project to prevent tobacco use among Asian American youths. In response to the research questions, participation observation of ongoing projects provided rich information about activities and staff strategies. The interview with main staff members not only served as supplementary information about activities and strategies, but also revealed staff members' definition and operationalization of youth leadership and empowerment, as well as how their cultural understanding was reflected in the leadership program.

The study uses an ethnographic research design in which data were gathered through participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was conducted in three main steps, following Spradley's ethnographic methods (1979, 1980), including domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis.

Data set

The data set for this study was based on 12 participant observations conducted over the period of October 2017 to February 2018. Out of the 12 field notes collected, 10 were based on observations of the 10 sessions of the Tobacco group, and 2 were based on observations of two

YES events that were organized for all YES program youth participants. In addition, the data set included memos and notes from planning meetings that I attended with staff members. Notes from these meetings included incidental information that I learned about program objectives and project leaders' thoughts about skills. The skills mainly referred to those which were targeted by staff members as they planned activities for each session. Finally, the data set also included a group interview with staff members, which was conducted mid-way through the analysis and was designed as member-checking from the ethnographic design perspective. This step also served to include program staff as active participants in data analysis and interpretation, a key principle of community based participatory research.

In addition to the sessions documented in the field notes, there was an important event for the Tobacco group I was not able to attend. Therefore, after hearing the event details from the staff and seeing the event photos, I prepared a memo about the event. Thus, the data set for the analysis included the 12 field notes selected, and 1 supplementary memo (see Table 1).

Analytic Overview

Figure 2 shows the different steps of Spradley's (1979, 1980) ethnographic data analysis process, from domain analysis of participant observation field notes to extracting cultural themes, derived from the componential analysis. This figure reflects the iterative process typical of qualitative analysis. First of all, there is a back-and-forth between data collection and analysis. For example, after collecting data from the staff interview, I went back to domain analysis and added a new focus on skills. In addition, when I returned to domain analysis, I also incorporated the staff members' perspectives in the preliminary analysis.

Step 1: Domain Analysis

As a first step of ethnographic analysis, domain analysis provides a general idea about possible domains of interest that are derived from the research questions. For example, in this case, I was interested in documenting activities and staff strategies observed during program activities. I read through the description of activities and staff-youth interactions recorded in field notes in search of categories of cultural domains ("cover terms"), smaller categories inside the domain (included terms), as well as the semantic relationship linking the cover and included terms. For example, youth listening to a lecture on tobacco is an activity. Here "activity" is a cover term, "listening to a lecture" is an included term, and "is a kind of" is the semantic relationship linking two terms. I first selected potential semantic relationships, such as strict inclusion (X is a kind of Y), looking at types of activities, and means-end (X is a way to do Y) looking at strategies used by the staff member. I then searched for covers and included terms that fit the semantic relationships, and transferred the structure of each domain to a separate spreadsheet in an Excel worksheet.

As shown in the data catalogue (see Table 1), the main **activities** of the Tobacco Project included informative speeches about tobacco, creating comic strips, making PSA (Public Service Announcements), managing social media, and presenting at information sessions outside YES. The staff member seemed to use various strategies while interacting with youth during the activities. For example, the staff member debriefed after lectures to talk about participation during lectures, and was aware of the specific skills and personalities of youth, assigning youth to groups accordingly. Although the themes of YES events were not relevant to what the Tobacco group did, the interaction between the staff and the youth members provided rich information about the thinking behind staff strategies during Tobacco group activities. Therefore, for the preliminary coding, I decided to identify **main activities** in the Tobacco Project and the

key interactions between staff and youth in these activities, as two possible aspects that might reflect the program's understanding of youth leadership and empowerment.

Therefore, I focused on the two domains of **activities** and **strategies**. To begin analysis, I undertook a process of open coding, in search of all text that was relevant to activities and strategies in the data. As I was looking for the included terms, I noticed that, in addition to the pre-decided domains, new domains emerged. The different types of activities could also be reorganized into different steps of activities. Similarly, looking differently at staff strategies and their interaction with youth, their behaviors could also reflect the responsibilities of their different roles. As a result, I created four domain analysis charts using four different semantic relationships, including *types of activity*, *types of leadership development strategies*, *sequence of activities*, and *types of staff roles*. Table 2 shows a few examples that are selected from the full charts, which illustrates the outcomes from the step of domain analysis.

Step 2: Taxonomy Analysis

Taxonomic analysis helps organize and simplify the domains and smaller categories identified in the previous step. A taxonomy is a set of categories in terms of a single semantic relationship. So first, I created taxonomies to show the relationships among all included terms inside the domains of **activities** and **staff strategies,** respectively. Taking the example of **activities** again, in addition to "listening to a lecture," there are also categories of "creating comic strips" and "making PSAs." At the next level in the taxonomy, under the category "making PSAs," there are "filming the PSA," "editing the video" and "reviewing the PSA." Figure 3 is an example of a screenshot that shows how I organized the data in the Excel worksheet in preparation for taxonomy creation.

Taxonomies help organize categories of both the same and different levels. I looked for similarities between included terms, and included additional included terms if there were any left. I then searched for larger domains on different levels. Finally, I constructed a taxonomy represented in a hierarchy graphic for each domain. The full taxonomies for each of the four following semantic relationships are presented in the appendix: Taxonomy of activities, Taxonomy of staff strategies, Taxonomy of sequence of activities, and Taxonomy of staff roles. Figure 4 is a sample of the Taxonomy of Activities, the PSA activities. Under the umbrella of "making PSAs", there are seven sub-activities, including "collecting resources", "watching sample PSAs", "making PSA plan", "filming PSA", "editing PSA", "editing PSA", "reviewing", and "reflecting on PSA making process". More detailed activities are included under each sub-activity.

Group Interview and Revised Taxonomies

The group interview was conducted after the taxonomy analysis was completed. The staff member of the Tobacco Project and the executive director of YES participated in the interview. Although the interview was not a formal community feedback opportunity, I borrowed this idea from the community based participatory research framework that involves community members in each stage of the research (Collins et al., 2018; Belone et al., 2016). I presented preliminary data to YES staff members to learn about their interpretations, as well as to get verification and further recommendations from them.

The interview was conducted in two phases. For the first part of the interview, the staff members were asked about their definition and operationalization of youth leadership and empowerment, as well as how their past experiences and cultural understanding was reflected in the definitions. Examples of activities and strategies extracted from the observation were

prepared beforehand as prompts. Three key aspects of youth leadership and empowerment were brought up by program staff. The first was *application of knowledge and skills*. Staff members thought the knowledge and skills component illustrated the process of leadership development, which starts from empowering youth with various knowledge and skills (including what it means to be a leader, subject at hand, other related skills, and resources), moves on to trying skills at different levels and applying the knowledge to projects or real-life situations, and finally reaches to making an impact and ideally being beneficial to long-term development.

The second was *self-awareness and self-growth*, which helped youth identify their strengths and challenges, and feel more prepared to utilize the knowledge and skills to make a difference. The third was the *ability or courage to connect with different people*; this was important because it was seen as difficult for youth to have leadership skills if they were intimidated by adults – representing formal institutions and also simply as individuals -- or if they felt socially isolated.

For the second part of the interview, I presented the four taxonomies to the interviewed staff members for feedback. I also asked staff members questions to understand what activities and strategies in the program were considered salient to them. Based on that, I tried to explore staff members' culturally-situated understanding underlying youth leadership and empowerment. This is the process that leads to componential analysis, as it uses the cultural knowledge of staff members to note what categories and contrasts are salient to them.

Although the taxonomies made sense to staff members, they looked at the Tobacco Project activities from a different perspective. Instead of focusing more on the *outcomes* resulting from activities to raise anti-smoking awareness, including PSAs and comic strips, staff members paid more attention to the growth and healthy development of youth participants. They

preferred to use smaller teachable moments and activities to make sure the youth learn or gain something meaningful for future success during each session. It was clear from the overarching goal of YES that they valued the long-lasting effects and real-life application of the knowledge and skills youth participants learned through the leadership projects, including the tobacco project. For example, to help the youth develop self-advocacy skill, the staff member created opportunities in different sessions to practice the skills and address the importance of "having a voice". Practice included deciding on the design of a product, signing up for what tasks to work on, and voting for PSA plans. In the meantime, the staff member who led the Tobacco Project made the point that the youth would not get what they wanted if they did not speak up.

Another important message that emerged from the interview was the importance of learning social norms and conventions. Staff members thought it important to help the youth understand what it means to be an Asian American. In other words, they wanted the youth to be aware of their own Chinese or Vietnamese cultures without being overly proud (i.e., seeing their traditions and customs as the best), while at the same time adapting themselves to mainstream culture and values. This cultural understanding went hand in hand with their emphasis on connecting youth with people outside the program, especially people from other cultural groups and adults representing formal organizations and institutions, such as doctors from Tufts Medical Center and Boston Police officers.

Aside from the questions about leadership activities and strategies, staff members also shared rich information about general YES values and philosophy. First, youth participants are selected to work on the projects for different reasons. Three kinds of adolescents are usually considered: adolescents who are ready to work in a group, adolescents who are interested in the subject matter, and adolescents who might see this as challenge but can use the opportunity to

work with others and learn something meaningful. Second, staff members prefer instilling values

through action than merely discussion. For example, to teach about care and kindness, staff

members cared about the youth and told them to give a hand when they saw others struggling

during activities. They did not just say vague and empty things, such as "we should be kind to

each other." They actively modeled the behavior they wanted their youth to use. For example, I

recall from my observation that there was a time when the staff member encouraged other girls

to comfort a girl who looked sad, and the staff member herself hugged the girl.

Third, staff members try to make the organization a family, and this is the top rule for the

youth. By family, staff members meant promoting the positive values of a family, including

caring about each other, being supportive and sharing the responsibility of keeping the program

space clean and comfortable. However, it is not designed to be a nuclear family, and as such the

staff members first and foremost have a professional responsibility. This means the staff

members have clear boundaries in terms of their role as staff members, and cannot scold or

lecture the youth as their parents can. Last but not least, a passion for working with the youth is

essential to the selection of staff members. All positions at YES are open to anyone who is

devoted to youth development and cares about the youth, regardless of ethnicity; at this point,

however, everyone is Asian and a former YES program participant. All these practices reflect the

youth-centered approach the program uses.

Therefore, instead of adding items or making changes to the taxonomy charts, staff

members suggested including more anecdotes to explain their embedded understanding of youth

leadership and empowerment. In addition, I was inspired when staff members talked about their

greater focus on knowledge and skills than the activities themselves, which may lead to more

specific behavioral changes for the youth participants.

I decided to go back to the data set and conduct another round of open coding of the qualities and skills YES wanted the youth to have. According to them, empowering youth with particular pieces of information is the first and most important step for youth to develop leadership, because knowledge is the foundation of later application. Therefore, I think it was important to include knowledge as well. Meanwhile, to help with the open coding of youth leadership knowledge, in addition to what was mentioned in the interview, I incorporated relevant leadership development skills of adolescents that are reflected in the literature (Larson & Angus, 2011), and the positive youth development domains from the toolkit for evaluating positive youth development used by YES (Colorado Trust, 2004). Here I present a revised example of the results of the new domain analysis (see Table 3). I selected the strict inclusion (X is a kind of Y) semantic relationship in search of the domain of **skills**. Example skills or behaviors that are included are "introducing new kids to everyone," "working to simplify the PSA plan," and "creating a storyboard to present their ideas." I then moved onto taxonomy analysis, and made a new taxonomy of skills to present the skills program staff wanted the youth to have (see Figure 5). Main categories of skills are "understanding of cultural conventions," "cognitive abilities," "sense of self," "life skills," and "tobacco knowledge." Sub-categories are included below each category.

Step 3: Componential Analysis

Componential analysis identifies contrasts among terms or components of meaning associated with cultural categories. I first showed taxonomies to staff members during the group interview to verify the data derived from participation observation. I then asked them about selective examples and contrasts of activities and staff strategies to learn about staff members' understanding of how they tailored the activities and strategies to facilitate Asian American

youth's leadership development. Questions asked about how staff members understand their definition of leadership and empowerment through their cultural lens and how they thought specific activities (such as creative thinking activities) and strategies (such as addressing conventions and encouraging interaction with adult professionals) are useful for Asian American youth. I finally prepared a paradigm worksheet for each selected cultural domain, and recorded dimensions of contrasts that reveal cultural themes based on interview responses and contrasts discovered from the taxonomy of skills (see Figure 5).

I first made two preliminary componential paradigms, which reflected staff members' understanding of important skills for youth leadership development (see Tables 4 and 5). Table 4 looks for contrasts across different life skills, including self-advocacy, communication skills, presentation skills, and teamwork. These skills share specific elements, insofar as they involve interacting with people, but they also show differences in areas of voicing individual concerns, spreading knowledge, making an impact on self and others. Take self-advocacy as an example: It requires the youth to interact with people, voice their concerns, and have self-growth, which is consistent with staff members' expectation of interpersonal communication and having a voice to make a change. Inspired by the staff interview, Table 5 shows the differences in the goals -- namely, between goals of the program as a grantee (that is, what the program commits to achieve to receive funding from the Asian Health Initiative, AHI), and goals of the program within the broader YES program. Surprisingly, the most obvious commonality is a call for fostering connection to the Asian community. The youth program also makes an effort to have the youth interact with people outside of the Asian community, learn mainstream culture and social norms, apply the knowledge learned to real-life situations, and learn skills through other enriching activities, while AHI cares more about the application of tobacco knowledge.

However, although the two tables captured some core values that staff members tried to convey during the activities and staff-youth interactions, they did not seem able to explain clearly how their understanding of the cultural context of the youth played a role in their understanding of youth leadership and empowerment. Take Table 4 as an example: "Interacting with people" and the rest such as "making impact on one's own growth" and "making an impact on others" do not seem to be on the same level but are rather hierarchically distinct. "Making impact on one's own growth" and "making impact on others," in particular, are in fact subcomponents of one factor "making impact". The distinctions between them are not made clear enough for people to understand the underlying cultural value.

Therefore, I went back to the staff interview and taxonomy of skills to look for the most important and common dimensions. I found that the knowledge and application component stands out. As staff members mentioned in the interview, in addition to teaching youth the knowledge, which was essential to youth leadership development, they placed great value on the application of that knowledge -- not only within the context of the project, but also to other real-life situations. Therefore, according to staff members, different dimensions of knowledge and their application seemed to be salient. At the same time, it occurred to me that the domains in the taxonomy of skills could be reorganized to form a taxonomy of knowledge or skills. As a result, I went back to the taxonomy analysis a third time, and revised the taxonomy by regrouping the domains into different types of knowledge. Altogether six different categories of skills and knowledge were identified:

1. **Cultural Knowledge**, including interest in culture ("s*taff member taking the youth to outdoor ice-skating and rock-climbing activities,*" "*staff member sharing Asian advice when hearing a youth catches a cold*"), social norms and conventions ("*staff member*

talking about attentiveness and punctuality after the training lecture”), sense of belonging (“*staff member setting up the showcase corner and calling all the youth of Tobacco Group to come and see*”), and connection to community (“*staff member encouraging the youth to think about tobacco in real-life contexts such as Chinatown*”);

2. **Interpersonal Skills**, including communication (“*one youth interviewing the lecturer on facts about smoking*”), comfort with others (“*staff member assigning two boys who got along well with each other to work on a task*”), caring (“*staff member suggesting everyone have some hot water and give each other a hug when they came back from PSA filming outside*”), and respect for others (“*staff member waking a sleepy youth up during the lecture*”);

3. **Intellectual Development**, including appraisal (“*staff member showing the youth guiding questions to help them evaluate existing PSA videos*”), problem-solving (“*staff member having the youth figure out how to become admin to manage social media pages*”), decision-making (“*staff member giving examples of potential information board plans, and letting the youth make the final decision*”), creativity (“*staff member having the youth do a creative caption-writing activity*”), feasibility thinking (“*staff member restating the project goal and helping the youth think about how to simplify the PSA plan*”), goal-setting/vision (“*staff member giving an overview of next week's plan*”), and planning/organizing (“*staff member teaching the PSA group to think about the big picture and create a path towards the goal*”);

4. **Personal Development**, including self-reflection (“*youth learning from each other about how to manage the social media page in a better way*”), self-worth (“*youth*

taking control of PSA filming and feeling satisfied with the scenes"), confidence

("*youth presenting their achievements and tobacco knowledge to people at the*

information session"), ownership ("*the PSA group coming up with a draft filming*

plan by themselves," "*youth setting up the projector and helping put it back*

spontaneously"), sense of purpose, experimental spirit ("*staff member encouraging*

the girls to try playing the corn hole game for the first time"), perseverance ("*the PSA*

team trying different ways to solve the technical problem until it is fixed during

filming"), and responsibility ("*staff member talking to a kid about his responsibility*

when he wanted to leave the job to someone else");

5. **Tobacco Knowledge** ("*youth listening to lecture by a professional on other tobacco*

   products"); and

6. **Life Skills**, including self-advocacy ("*staff member having the youth to vote for the*

   PSA plan to work on"), teamwork ("*staff member having the youth pair up and work*

   on writing captions for the picture together"), and presentation ("*staff member having*

   the youth work in groups to brainstorm PSA ideas and present to the big group").

To conduct the componential analysis, I also integrated some of the dimensions of

contrasts from the previous componential paradigms (see Tables 4 and 5). With a focus on types

of knowledge and application of knowledge, I made a new paradigm that included both

leadership skills and staff strategies that facilitate leadership development. This paradigm shows

the differences in source of knowledge, teaching methods, and learning objectives across all

types of knowledge addressed at the program. For example, for tobacco knowledge and self-

advocacy skills, the paradigm shows that youth gain knowledge both from staff members and

from adults outside the program, who offer lectures to the youth. In terms of teaching methods,

tobacco knowledge is conveyed both through hands-on practice and also via lectures, whereas self-advocacy is taught through incidental teaching. Incidental teaching refers to utilizing the teaching moments in the activities rather than lecturing to address certain knowledge or skill. Finally, in terms of learning objectives, self-advocacy is only an individual life skill. However, the youth are expected to master tobacco knowledge (project specific individual skill), prevent themselves from smoking (individual life skill), and also disseminate an anti-smoking message in the community (community involvement), which meet all three learning objectives. Therefore, the paradigm helps capture the similarities and contrasts between different knowledge and skills.

Table 6 presents the final paradigm of leadership knowledge. It is clear here that the staff member is the main source of knowledge, complemented by occasional peer learning and outside resources. Hands-on practice and incidental teaching are the commonly used teaching method, and observation or modeling is mostly used to teach cultural knowledge. Only tobacco knowledge and presentation skills involve lecture-style teaching. Individual life skills are the main focus of the program, followed by community connection.

Summary

The primary findings, then, are as follows:

Definition of youth leadership. According to YES staff members, youth leadership is made up of three key components: application of knowledge and skills, self-awareness and self-growth, and ability to connect with people from different cultural groups.

Activities and strategies that facilitate youth leadership. From the preliminary analysis, a variety of activities and strategies were identified to help youth fulfill the program goals. Youth participated in six main activities (including listening to lectures, creating comic

strips, making PSA videos, making information board, presenting at information session, and managing social media pages) as well as other pre- and post-group activities.

To implement the activities and facilitate development, staff members utilized the following strategies: teaching and guiding (including providing informational support, building skills, and providing specialized guidance), addressing conventions and social norms (including addressing general behaviors, addressing YES rules, and addressing cultural practices), incorporating youth's voice (including sharing or transferring power to the youth, and encouraging the youth to experiment their ideas), and creating a positive environment.

However, after the interview with staff members, there appeared to be a discrepancy between the program's primary goals and those of the funding agency. In other words, the underlying rationales behind the activities were not exactly the same. According to the funder, making tobacco PSA and comic strips was hoped to raise the awareness of anti-smoking and thus prevent risky smoking behaviors of the youth, which was their outcome goal. However, in addition to that, YES also wanted the youth to promote long-term healthy development and master other life skills (such as self-advocacy and public speaking) through the activities. Focusing only on the activities did not fully represent what staff members expected the youth to learn. Therefore, instead of continuing to focus on activities, skills and knowledge became the new focus. Six types of skills and knowledge were identified: cultural knowledge, interpersonal skills, intellectual development, personal development, tobacco knowledge and life skills. Three aspects of staff strategies became the focus: the sources of knowledge, teaching methods, and learning objectives. Staff teaching, incidental teaching, hands-on practice, and learning as individual life skills are the most used.

Youth leadership and its cultural context. The skills and teaching methods in the componential paradigm reflect what YES staff members considered important for the program. The following values and philosophies were addressed in the staff interview: a) taking a youth-centered approach and creating a caring environment; b) teaching life skills that have long-lasting effects and real-life application; c) instilling values through words and deeds; d) helping youth understand what it means to be an Asian American by connecting youth with both the Asian community and other cultural groups. Taken together, knowledge and its application is a main component of YES's youth leadership development.

Chapter 5 Discussion

In this chapter, I present an in-depth interpretation of the results reported in the previous chapter, with particular focus on the last of my research questions: How does staff members' cultural understanding play a role in their definition and operationalization of youth leadership and empowerment? Two main aspects of cultural understanding -- knowledge and staff strategies -- are discussed first, followed by a discussion of the potential implications and future directions of these aspects for research and program practices.

Knowledge

Knowledge is considered more representative of youth leadership and empowerment than the leadership activities are. Leadership and empowerment are viewed as two closely related constructs that are reflected by similar knowledge and skills. Six main distinctive types of knowledge and skills were identified to be relevant to the leadership development of Asian American youth, especially for those from low-income families.

Intellectual development and personal development skills. Although leadership is defined differently among scholars, there is usually a common focus on intellectual abilities and personality characteristics. Most elements of the intellectual and personal development in this study are consistent with the cognitive and personal aspects of marginalized youth leadership development addressed by Govan and colleagues (2015). These skills seem to be incorporated to help youth develop a critical lens (for example, appraisal, feasibility thinking), solve real-life problems, feel ownership and accomplishment (for example, responsibility, self-worth, confidence, sense of purpose), get involved in planning and decision-making processes, and debrief and reflect for future improvements (for example, appraisal, self-reflection). In addition, perseverance shows that the youth are expected to learn to devote enough time and energy to

their work. This also reflects youth's understanding of relationship between an action and anticipated outcome epitomized as mobilizing effort by Larson and Angus (2011).

Creativity is no doubt crucial to leadership development, which is raised by Sternberg (2017) as one of the means (other skills including critical thinking, common sense, passion, and wisdom) to the desired end of citizenry and ethical leadership. The experimental spirit is usually interwoven with other elements, such as confidence and creativity, but none of them emphasizes the importance of courage, especially for the youth participants who are intimidated and resistant to new experiences. As staff members said in the interview, although it was outside the Tobacco Group work time, the staff member took the youth to indoor rock-climbing and she wanted everyone to have a try, "*It doesn't matter if you don't go all the way to the top. Even if you make half the way, you will be very pleased with yourself.*" She would later use this as an example to talk with individuals about their personal growth. The courage to try out new ideas lays the foundation for further progress.

Life skills. Three specific skills in the Tobacco Project were found with respect to life skills, including self-advocacy, teamwork, and presentation skills. As is discussed by MacNeil (2006), there is limited research on leadership development among youth. Leadership literature puts a great emphasis on adult leadership development, and only focuses on plans to prepare youth now and have them lead or practice leadership skills when they become adults. According to MacNeil (2006), the youth leadership development literature tends to focus on leadership ability, including skills, knowledge, and talents, while the adult leadership development literature also focuses on authority issues, including voice, influence, and decision-making power, in addition to ability. In other words, real-life considerations are considered a key component of adult leadership, but not of youth leadership. Although the three skills identified in this study do

not necessarily fit with the authority framework presented by MacNeil, they represented the program's concern for sustainability and the practicability of the skills as the youth mature. Therefore, these life skills are incorporated to serve as a means to achieve more effective leadership and future success.

   Interpersonal skills and cultural knowledge. Communication, comfort with others, caring, and respect for others are grouped into the big category of social development skills. As leadership development requires an interactive process, interpersonal skills build a foundation for future steps. Another set of Cultural Knowledge skills, which sometimes overlaps with interpersonal skills, includes interest in culture, social norms and conventions; a sense of belonging; and connection to community.

   Learning interpersonal skills and cultural knowledge is especially important for minority youth as they may develop leadership by better understanding their biculturalism. In terms of biculturalism, Wong (2010) described a community-based youth center as a space that connected the youths' multiple worlds of family, friends, and school. It provided Chinese American youth from low-income families with authentic care, in which staff embrace youth as individuals with care and respect, and culturally relevant understanding, which compensated for the necessary support, services, information, and skills that parents and school teachers were unable to offer.

   Similarly, although YES did not necessarily teach "Asian pride," it tried to imbue youth with a sense of ethnic identity by exposing them to Asian culture. Instead of leading classes on Chinese languages or Chinese history, staff had youth utilize their culture during the project, such as designing a bilingual project logo. They also naturally incorporated Chinese holiday celebrations and decorations in the building. However, understanding of Asian culture alone is not enough. The goal is to keep a good balance of home culture and U.S. culture. As one staff

member said, "*I was born here, but before I went to kindergarten everything was Chinese. My father spoke fluent English, but we only spoke Chinese at home… because you lived in Chinatown, usually people who come to your house are still Asian.*" Therefore, it is possible for those who were born in the United States to know little about American culture and values.

In addition to exposure to both cultures, social adaptation to the host culture is also critical, which may impact long-term individual well-being. Living in the U.S. could be more challenging for those who have poorer English language competence. Not all youth growing up here can communicate well in English, due to their length of stay, where they live, the culture that surrounds them, and other reasons. Being well aware of this, staff members insist on making YES an English-speaking environment, even though all of them could speak a second Asian language. These linguistically less competent youth "*might not be happy either… because living in America, they don't know their way around. They won't succeed in life. They are not gonna survive. So we don't accept them as only knowing Chinese or Vietnamese.*" This is why staff members worked hard to make sure the youth also appreciated mainstream U.S. culture, which is critical to their future development.

Staff members shared a story form when they first moved into the building in the 1970s. People in the community wanted to give them traditional Chinese and Vietnamese objects in order to make the place look more Asian, but they refused. They only wanted modern materials because they knew the youth liked that décor. Back then, people did not appreciate this nod toward the modern U.S., because they thought the program did not care about the Asian culture. But as time passed, people could see how Asian culture is appropriately incorporated into youth's work within the U.S. context. The key message staff members try to convey to the youth

is to have a healthy balance in their bicultural experiences. Being an Asian American means there should be pride in both cultures instead of too much pride in, or indifference to, either of them.

The work of helping youth navigate across two cultures is a similar role to what a "cultural broker" does. A cultural broker is someone who bridges, links, or mediates between groups of different cultural backgrounds to resolve conflicts or produce change, insofar as he or she provides individuals with support and resources to be capable of acting in another culture (Jezewski, 1990; Pirie et al., 2016). These supports and resources can be considered as social capital, which is generally generated by social support and social network interactions and redefined based on a different set of theoretical criteria (Bourdieu, 1977; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). Hawkins, Vashchenko and Davis (2011) described social capital as a useful lens for viewing the impact of youth's social interaction, and discussed three types of social capital in the communities: bonding (relationship among homogenous members, e.g., family, close friends), bridging (weak ties with people dissimilar to some extent, e.g., community leaders, parents' friends) and linking relationships (links with people in positions of power and authority, e.g., businesses, jobs in the community). For ethnic minority youth, social capital plays an important role in their own acculturation and their family members' lives (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006) as they gain support and resources through community-based social networks in addition to bonding social capital. To help youth strengthen their roots to their neighborhood and culture, although YES did not emphasize the home culture, it did create a caring and safe environment for the youth to "hang out" with each other and explore themselves, to develop a close social network.

On the other hand, to achieve a balanced biculturalism, bridging and linking social capital seem to be the main emphasis of YES. One important component of YES leadership program is

the ability to connect with people from different cultural groups. That staff members provide

only knowledge and skills such as tobacco knowledge and presentation skills is not considered a

good model. This is because in limiting focus to just this knowledge, youth are not exposed to

anyone else except staff members. Instead, staff members want the youth to learn to interact with

a broad array of people, not only those who agree with and know them well. YES believes that

youth cannot develop into leaders if they are intimidated by other people or feel socially isolated.

To achieve this, staff members not only invite professionals to YES to give lectures on tobacco,

but also take the youth out to interact with people outside YES. For example, YES held events

like cook-out barbeque with police officers and mock trial with lawyers. Staff members utilized

these events to teach the youth cultural conventions and prosocial skills, in order to help them

better connect with the experienced and professional adults in the community. Youth also gave

presentations on anti-smoking topics to younger children at a summer program, and interacted

with both children and adults at information sessions to showcase their smoke-free products.

Pirie et al. (2016) studied how a youth empowerment program facilitated social capital, and

found that supporting youth's relationships with adults in the community could help them

become more confident and capable of accessing institutions of power. Reaching out to people

outside YES and even outside the community with high-resource adults provides the youth with

both bridging and linking social capital.

      Tobacco knowledge. As part of an anti-smoking initiative, the mastery and dissemination

of tobacco knowledge is a requirement for youth working on the project. Understanding the harm

of tobacco prevents the youth from engaging in smoking risky behaviors themselves, which is

consistent with the set objective of the health initiative. Furthermore, learning the tobacco

knowledge also creates opportunities for the youth to practicing other skills by organizing and disseminating the information.

Programming Strategies

It was primarily the staff members who planned and organized activities. They promoted their objectives through the choices they made in three programming components: the source of knowledge/information (e.g., staff, peer, or other non-YES adult), the teaching methods employed (e.g., lecture, incidental teaching, observation, or hands-on practice), and the learning objectives they targeted (e.g., project specific individual skills, individual life skills, or community involvement). YES's strategies of staff delivering knowledge, teaching through hands-on practice, and focusing on individual life skills reflect the program's culturally embedded practices. Here I discuss the main issues of the youth-centered approach, caring environment and staff-youth relationships, supervised practice and real-life application, which are derived from the above programming strategies.

Youth-centered approach. In addition to maintaining a generally youth-centered approach, the staff member took time to consider each individual participant in the Tobacco group. For example, she tried to determine what might be causing a specific youth not to do as well as he was supposed to do. Most of the time, she chose to address these issues in a group, because participants' challenges were not uniquely their own, and it was possible to find a way to address issues that were common across the youth. It was also because it might be easier for the youth to learn in the group by observing and thinking even if they were at different places at this point. For example, public speaking or presentation skills are essential to all youth, no matter whether they are struggling at home or school. However, this is not something, in general, that

Asians value and work to achieve. Having the youth work in pairs or small groups allowed all of them to have some practice expressing their own ideas.

In this way, some of the activities did not, strictly speaking, follow the official programming plan. Even though the YES program staff knew the youth quite well and felt close to them, some individualization of personal development goals by youth was required. Further, there were still larger project objectives to fulfill, such as raising anti-smoking awareness and reducing health risks. The staff member did not see these objectives as being in conflict, because the youth also needed to feel they have done something meaningful. In addition to her cheering them on for the personal development each youth demonstrated, the youth also produced what the agreement with the funders proposed -- for example, the anti-smoking PSA videos and comic strips. Both types of "products" were seen as valuable.

Caring environment and staff-youth relationships. In contrast to standard classes taught at schools or in pre-structured leadership development workshops, the Tobacco Group project had more flexibility, because the staff member made adjustments to the program along the way. Youth behaved and expressed themselves more freely and actively when they were with the staff member than they were with other professionals. Although no outcome data were obtained, youth seemed to learn and act better where they felt comfortable and relaxed. This was in line with what was found by Langhout, Rhodes and Osborne (2004); namely, they had an appropriate structure in place, and that structure and support were essential to mentoring relationships. In addition, the staff-youth relationship is similar to the positive relationships describe by Rhodes and Dubois (2006), which are characterized by being close, consistent, and enduring and are found to promote positive outcomes and avoid harm. Positive staff-youth relationships may also be helpful to the learning of cultural knowledge and interpersonal skills,

as the content is hard to teach through standard lectures. Staff modeling and youth observation in a supportive setting, on the other hand, spread the cultural knowledge and the knowledge of interpersonal skills more easily.

This significant engagement with incidental teaching and hands-on practice also relies heavily on the quality of the staff member who is involved. As the staff member adds, "*Not every musician is a good teacher;*" consequently, they attend workshops and trainings from time to time, to learn up-to-date thinking about what is most appropriate for the youth to be taught. The selection criteria of YES staff includes addressing whether the person has the passion to work with youth and whether he or she is prepared to take on the responsibilities. Establishing a caring environment and hiring responsible staff members are also in line with many key features of effective youth programs, such as sense of safety and belonging, supportive relationships, and appropriate structure (Mahoney et al., 2009), which help promote youth's healthy development.

Supervised practice and real-life application. As the staff member who leads the Tobacco Group said, "[people don't develop human beings] *simply by looking at written text*". Given this quote, it's perhaps unsurprising that empowerment through knowledge and its application in real-life contexts turns out to be one of the core YES guidelines of the youth leadership program. It is also the biggest difference from the stated goal of the anti-smoking program. Instead of focusing only on tobacco-related information and anti-smoking activities, the staff member also want the youth to become leaders in life: "*Leadership is not about underage drinking or tobacco because that is pointless… because teenagers need so many skills to step out of here [YES program] someday… when they are here [we want them] to feel good about themselves to do the right thing, to begin to develop knowledge and skills and connection with people.*"

This idea of transmitting youth knowledge, teaching them skills and helping them practice and apply what they learn is a key feature of effective youth intervention programs. Conley, Durlak and Kirsch (2015) likewise found supervised practice of skills to be a promising direction for youth mentoring programs through their meta-analysis of mental health prevention programs. Conley and colleagues found supervised practice was essential to effective skills training, and such programs also produced more positive outcomes including stress reduction and academic adjustment compared to programs without practice or non-skill programs. Additionally, the researchers found that programs with supervised practice were beneficial for ethnic minority students. The combination of behavioral rehearsal and supportive feedback allows students to absorb the knowledge and practice to master.

Summary

The aim of this study was to explore how an Asian American youth leadership program is operationalized and implemented through a culturally based understanding of youth's community and developmental context. The qualitative research design allowed me to gain richer insights into the meaning of Youth Leadership and Empowerment. Six distinct knowledge and skills and three aspects of staff strategies have been identified in the specific program. In contrast to the common components of youth leadership, mostly the cognitive and personal development skills, the focus on cultural knowledge and interpersonal skills elicited more culturally specific considerations for Asian American youth, especially those from low-income families. In addition, the value placed on learning life skills, and the emphasis on supervised practice and real-life application, along with youth-centered approach and caring environment, appear as critical elements in this program's approach.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

Using ethnographic methods, this study examined how a community-based Asian American youth leadership program operationalized youth leadership in implementing a tobacco project. I asked what activities and strategies were utilized to facilitate leadership development, and how these reflected staff members' cultural understanding. I conclude in this chapter by briefly responding to the research questions of the study, and then raising a few of its implications for future research and youth program practice.

1. According to YES staff members, youth leadership and empowerment means the application of knowledge and skills, the development of self-awareness and self-confidence, and the ability to connect with people.

2. Staff members focused more on activities that involve general knowledge and skill building in addition to those obviously pertain to leadership development and tobacco prevention. Six types of skills and knowledge were identified: cultural knowledge, interpersonal skills, intellectual development, personal development, tobacco knowledge and life skills. In terms of strategies, staff is the main source of knowledge; incidental teaching and hands-on practice are the main teaching methods; learning for individual life skills is the main learning objective.

3. Being a youth leadership program for Asian American youth, staff members take a youth-centered approach, create a caring environment and work toward establishing and maintain positive staff-youth relationships, and focus on supervised practice and real-life application. The application of knowledge and an understanding of the virtues and mechanics of biculturalism are two core YES values, in terms of youth leadership development.

Limitations

Although the study produced some interesting findings, it also has multiple limitations. First of all, the study was conducted over a short period of time, and as a result, some particular aspects of the program have likely gone undocumented, due to the limited opportunities for observations and interview. More time was also needed to delve, in more depth, into the program's culture and its expression of culturally resonant practice. Qualitative data collection and analysis is particularly time-consuming, requiring a thorough understanding of data from different sources, and the ability to move back and forth, revise and reanalyze as interpretations develop. I did not have enough time to pay this process full justice.

Another limitation is the limited focus of the study. As a preliminary study, it only explored the implementation of the Tobacco Project, and then did that based on two staff members' perspectives. Youth participants' information and voices were not incorporated so as not to affect the group dynamics of the project and youth participation. This might result in a one-sided understanding of the staff-youth interactions recorded during the observations.

Additionally, because of the shortness of available time to conclude this study, a second coder was not used to confirm the coding and interpretation process of data analysis. Thus, there is not enough verification of how the data were categorized and interpreted. Although participant observations and staff interview supported and complemented each other to some extent, no methodology triangulation was used to show the validity of the data.

Implications for Future Research and Application

I hope this study makes a modest contribution to research on leadership program for Asian American youth. It describes some of the daily realities and practices of such youth programs to help people understand the underlying process of the implementation of this

particular program, which presents one profile of the programs for low-income Asian American youth in Chinatown. By addressing cultural knowledge and life skills, the program points out the potentially significant role of community-based programs in helping Asian American youth develop skills and navigate across cultures to achieve future success, which is in line with the development of types of social capital. The program also conveys a message that as we live in an information age with ever-changing knowledge, it is important to have up-to-date staff development about new things to meet the needs of the youth. Staff members' definition of leadership not only adds to the youth leadership literature, but also gives insights to what leadership means in the United States for minority cultural groups.

The study identifies particular bodies of knowledge and skills that the program promotes, as well as the common strategies to facilitate leadership development that are used by staff members. This can also serve as a preliminary framework for future program evaluation to look deeper into youth's performances on these indicators. For example, if the knowledge and skills identified in the componential paradigm (see Table 6) are acknowledged by staff members, measures can be used to examine each, to determine how effectively the program achieves benefits in these areas.

A second potential contribution is the shifted focus from activities addressing general leadership development and tobacco knowledge to a variety of skills according to staff members. This throws a new light on the actual implementation of program, which may differ from the program goals that we may take for granted. As is the matter of many grassroots organizations, the program seems caught in a conundrum: It needs to meet the goals set by the funders, such as raising awareness and reducing health risks. But it also has other different goals to achieve. For example, the staff member took advantage of the anti-smoking projects to teach the youth life

skills such as self-advocacy, something the funder does not explicitly endorse, nor had these youth paid much attention to them in their daily life.

Instead of naming this additional goal as self-advocacy for the youth or the funders, staff kept it in mind and initiated activities to promote it, for example, in having youth choose the color for the logo. She created opportunities for the youth to practice advocating for themselves when appropriate, telling them even if they chose to have a small voice at the beginning, they still had a voice. In this case, throughout the program, the knowledge or skill is more likely to stay with the youth and be applied later in life, either for individual purpose or for the community. Such theory of the program falls in line with the evaluations of similar skill-training programs that emphasize supervised practice (Conley et al., 2015), and adds to that body of research. It reiterates the point that the program objective (such as promoting health) can also be achieved through activities other than direct health intervention (such as life skill building activities). A Chicano-Latino youth leadership program similarly found reduced risky health behaviors by participating in a variety of activities and community service projects that focused on developing positive youth development (Bloomberg et al., 2003). Inspired by these practices, there might be two routes of the program-funder relationship. On one hand, the program should cater to the funder by making the program theory more explicit. Programs can achieve this by taking an initiative to advocate for the significance of having other non-tobacco relevant knowledge and skills in the program, and assure the funders of the alignment between their activities, process goals and long-term goals. On the other hand, funders should also cater to the programs and become more open-minded about the different pathways to achieve the expected project objectives.

A third contribution is that the study reflects the strength and wisdom of community-based participatory research. Even though I myself share similar ethnic background with the youth and staff members, I experienced a shift from outsider to insider during my volunteer time at YES. It was not until I developed rapport with staff and youth participants and had conversations with staff members about the program that I came to understand the youth program culture and YES culture. I realized I would not have been able to collect this rich information were I not considered a member of YES, had not developed this special, collaborative relationship. In this case, a close relationship between the researcher and the program, including the youth, worked to enhance the validity of my study. In addition, I used the staff interview as part of a feedback loop – a "community report back" (Collins et al., 2018; Belone et al., 2014) during which I reported part of my results to the staff members and recorded their perspectives on the interpretation of findings. This also serves as member-checking and helps me gain rich and accurate information from the community for further data analysis.

In conclusion, future research can involve youth's voice and evaluate the effectiveness of leadership skills and strategies that are identified in this study, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to see whether certain elements are more important for the leadership development for low-income Asian American youth. Time permitting, researchers are also encouraged to build relationship with the programs in the community before they dive into the studies, in order to gain a richer cultural understanding of the people and their practices. Meanwhile, youth leadership programs can learn from the practices for helping the youth prepare for long-term success, such as using youth-centered approach in a caring environment, and combining teaching and practice. As we are aware of the significance of knowledge application

and an understanding of biculturalism, more explicit operationalization of these should be

examined, to see how they can be better incorporated into youth leadership programs.

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Footnotes

[1]This information is taken from the program documents of Boston Asian Youth Essential

Service.

Tables

Table 1

Data Catalogue

Field Note #	Tobacco Group
FN1	Listening to Doctor's Lecture on Tobacco
FN3	Listening to a Public Health Advocate's Speech on Other Tobacco Products
FN4	Creating Comic Strips
FN5	Brainstorming PSA ideas
FN6	Planning for PSA & Making Comic Strips
FN8	Filming PSA
FN9	Filming PSA & Making Info Board
FN10	Filming PSA
FN11	Editing PSA & Managing Social Media
Memo 1	Presenting at Info Session
FN12	Planning for New PSA
	YES Event
FN2	BBQ Party with Boston Police Department outside YES
FN7	Mock Trial

Table 2

Example Domain Analysis Results

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
Doing group activity for creative thinking Watching example videos to know how to make PSAs Piloting the first scene of the PSA Presenting anti-smoking knowledge to people at the information session Posting PSA on social media …	Is a kind of	Activity
Explaining background information about the project Guiding how to make feasible plans Encouraging interaction with adult professionals Having youth vote for PSA plans …	Is a kind of	Leadership Development Strategy
Listening to lectures on tobacco Learning the goals of PSA making Brainstorming ideas for PSA plans Presenting PSA ideas to the whole group …	Is a step of	Tobacco Group Activity
Providing reliable information sources as a resource person Emphasizing teamwork as a facilitator Promoting a sense of belonging as a team leader Addressing conventions and social norms as a close adult …	Is a kind of	Staff Role

Table 3

Table of domain analysis results

Included Terms	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
Staff explaining sick leave to kids (Knowledge of culture)	Is a kind of	Skills
Introducing new kids to everyone (Sense of belonging to YES)		
Staff telling kids to jump in and help others whenever they see other kids struggling (Caring)		
Staff asking kids whether they liked the lecture or not (Appraisal/Evaluation)		
Kids working to simplify the PSA plan (Problem solving)		
Kids helping set up (Self-worth)		
Staff having the kids vote for the PSA plan (Self-advocacy)		
Kids reminding one another what to do during PSA filming (Teamwork)		
Kids creating a storyboard to present their ideas (Presentation skills)		
…		

Table 4

Componential paradigm of skills

	Interacting with people	Voicing individual concerns	Spreading knowledge	Making an impact on one's own growth	Making an impact on others
Self-advocacy	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Communication skills	Yes	No	No	No	No
Presentation skills	Yes	No	Yes	Not-so-much	Yes
Teamwork	Yes	Yes	Not-so-much	Yes	Yes

Table 5

Componential paradigm of goals

	Connection to Asian community	Interacting with people outside Asian community	Learning mainstream culture and social norms	Applying tobacco knowledge	Applying knowledge to real-life situations	Learning skills through other enriching activities
YES goals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not-so-much	Yes	Yes
AHI goals	Yes	Not-so-much	No	Yes	No	Not-so-much

Table 6

Componential paradigm of leadership knowledge

		Source of Knowledge			Teaching Methods				Learning Objectives		
		Staff	Peer	Non-YES Adults	Lecture	Incidental Teaching	Observation	Practice	Project Specific Individual Skills	Individual Life Skills	Community Involvement
Cultural Knowledge	Interest in Culture	√	√	√		√	√	√		√	
	Social Norms and Conventions	√		√		√	√	√		√	
	Sense of Belonging	√					√	√		√	
	Connection to Community	√	√			√	√	√		√	√
Interpersonal Skills	Communication	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
	Comfort with Others	√	√				√	√		√	√
	Caring	√				√	√	√		√	√
	Respect for Others	√		√		√	√	√		√	√
Intellectual Development		√				√		√	√	√	
Personal Development		√	√			√		√		√	
Tobacco Knowledge		√		√	√			√	√	√	√
Life Skills	Self-advocacy	√				√		√		√	
	Teamwork	√	√			√		√	√	√	
	Presentation	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√

Notes. Intellectual Development includes appraisal, problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, feasibility thinking, goal-setting/vision, planning/organizing; Personal

Development includes self-reflection, self-worth, confidence, ownership, sense of purpose, experimental spirit, perseverance, responsibility
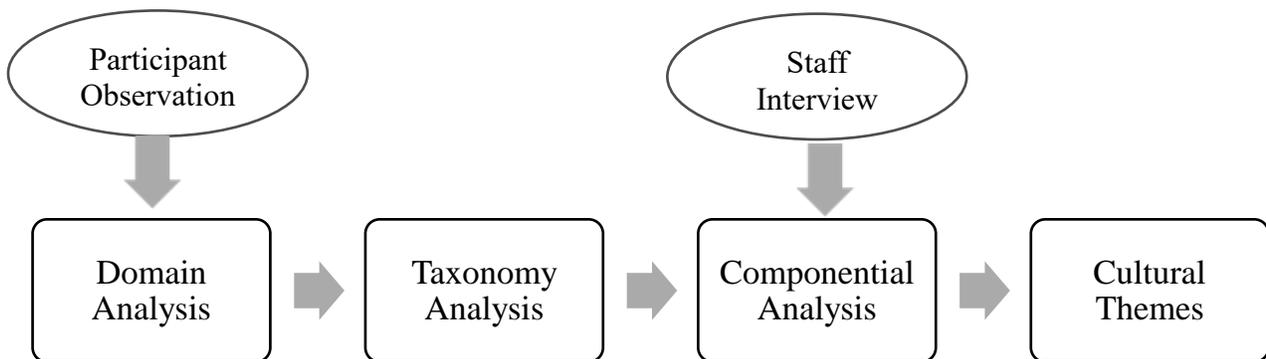
Figures

Participant Observation

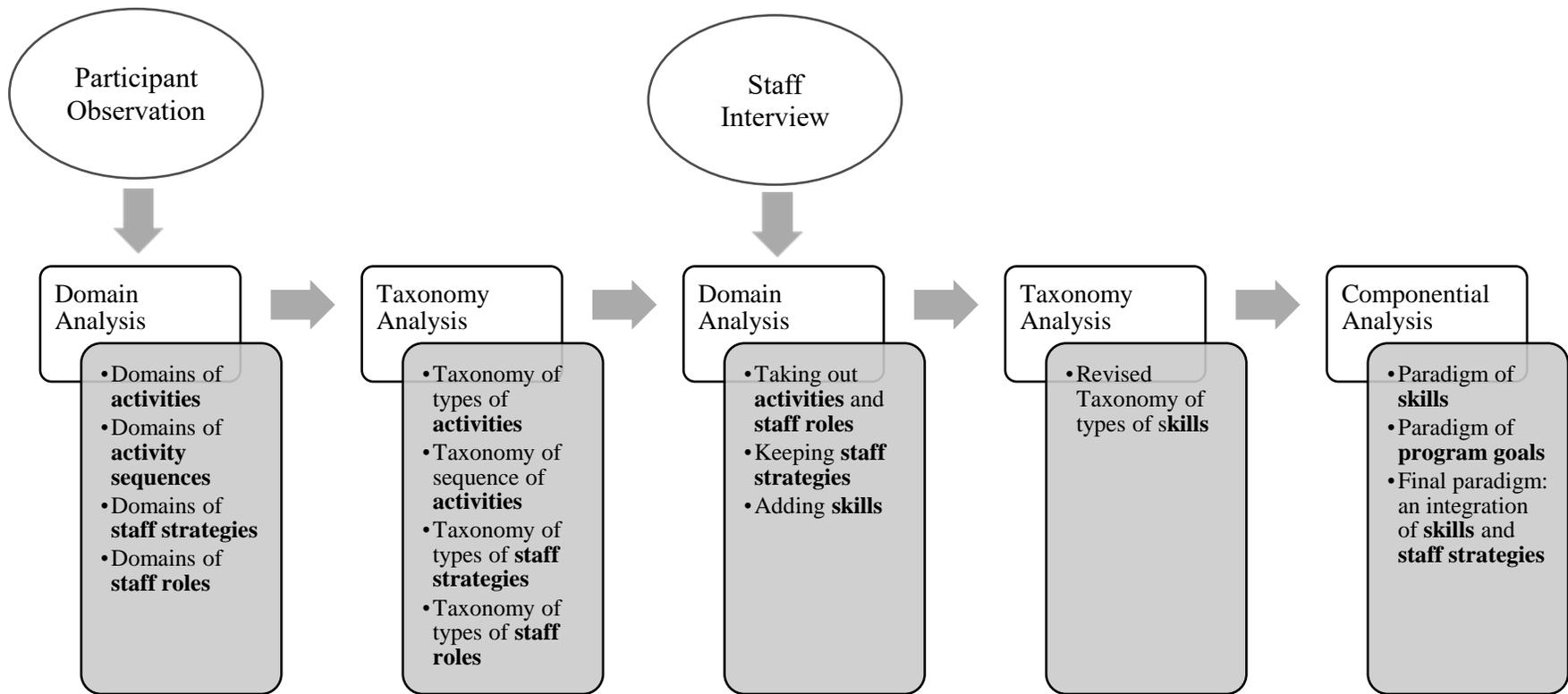Staff Interview

Domain Analysis

Taxonomy Analysis

Componential Analysis

Cultural Themes

Figure 1. Data analysis process.

Participant
Observation

Staff
Interview

Domain Analysis
- Domains of **activities**
- Domains of **activity sequences**
- Domains of **staff strategies**
- Domains of **staff roles**

Taxonomy Analysis
- Taxonomy of types of **activities**
- Taxonomy of sequence of **activities**
- Taxonomy of types of **staff strategies**
- Taxonomy of types of **staff roles**

Domain Analysis
- Taking out **activities** and **staff roles**
- Keeping **staff strategies**
- Adding **skills**

Taxonomy Analysis
- Revised Taxonomy of types of s**kills**

Componential Analysis
- Paradigm of **skills**
- Paradigm of **program goals**
- Final paradigm: an integration of **skills** and **staff strategies**

Figure 2. Detailed steps of data analysis process.

Main Activities	Sub Activities	Source
Listening to training lectures	listening to a lecture on tobacco by a doctor from Tufts Medical Center	FN1
	interacting with the doctor during Q&A	FN1
	interviewing the doctor	FN1
	debriefing after the speech	FN1
	introducing each other before the speech	FN3
	listening to a lecture on other tobacco product by a guest speaker	FN3
	debriefing after the speech	FN3
Creating comic strips	doing "creative thinking" group activity	FN4
	retrieving password of the storyboard account	FN4
	discussing elements of the comic story	FN4
	taking photos of locations for later use	FN4
	brainstorming the story of the comic strip	FN4
	role-playing the story	FN4
	drawing a draft storyboard with scripts	FN4
	signing up for the projects	FN6
	adding Chinese translation to the comic episode	FN8
	creating the digital comic episode	FN8
	fixing comic strips	FN13
Making PSA	recording the interview with the doctor	FN1
	reviewing the video together	FN1
	deciding roles	FN3
	doing "think creative" group activity	FN4

Figure 3. Example screenshot of taxonomy analysis process.
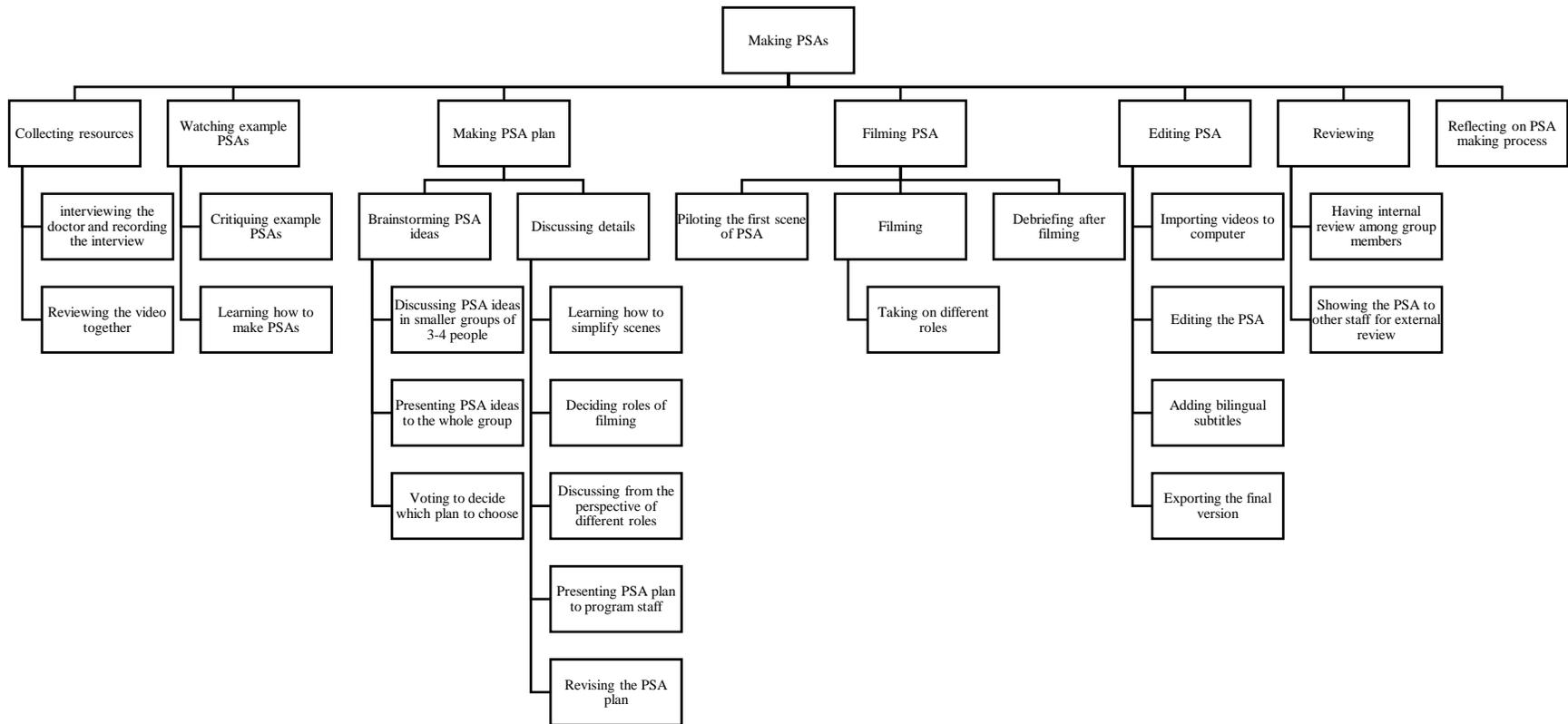
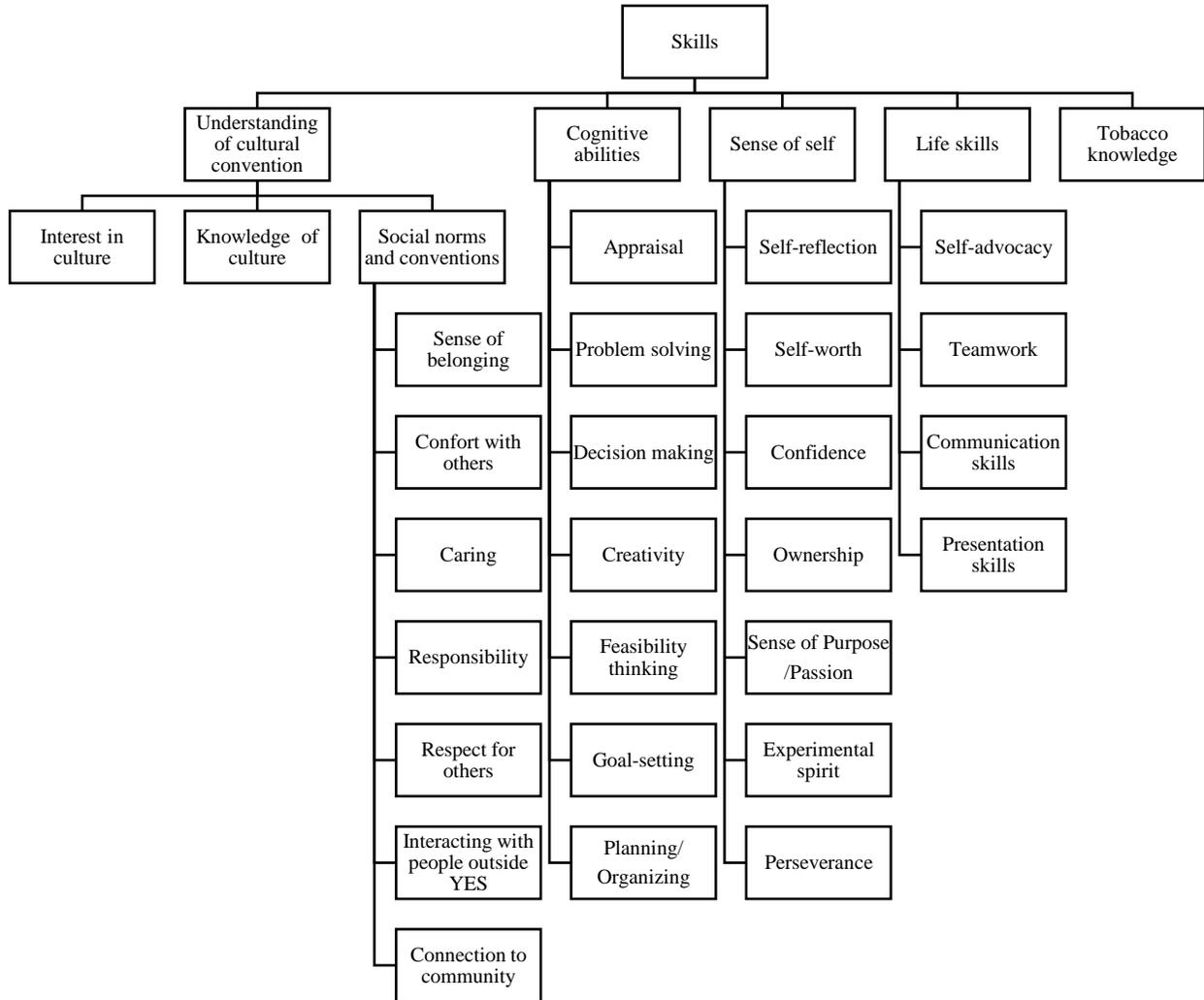*Figure 4.* Taxonomy of the PSA activities.

Figure 5. Taxonomy of skills.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

I. Definition of youth leadership and empowerment
- How do you define youth leadership/empowerment?
- How do you think your personal experiences and values might affect your understanding of youth leadership and empowerment?
- How is this definition affected by your knowledge of the teens and their culture?

III. Discussion around taxonomies of activities and staff strategies
- What activities and strategies do you use to facilitate leadership development?
  - Can you help me understand the sequence of activities/types of activities/staff strategies/staff roles? [discuss taxonomies]
- What are some activities you find most useful for Asian teens?
  - *Debrief after Dr. Salem's lecture about knowledge and behaviors during lecture*
  - *Having teens interview Dr. Salem*
  - *Having teens introduce themselves before Angelo's OPT lecture*
  - *Having the "think creative" activity and guiding them through*
- Are there any strategies that you use in particular for working with Asian teens?
  - *Leading the group in a causal manner occasionally while sometimes talking in a more formal and powerful way (e.g., different stages of the project)*
  - *Inviting YES staff and youth to follow social media pages and like the posts*
  - *Despite shooting down ideas when teens were planning for PSA filming, most of the time encouraging them to experiment new ideas*
  - *Addressing conventions and cultural norms*
- How do you choose the activities for the project?
- How do you see your experience of being a YES kid before coming into play when you plan and implement the project activities?
- Do you use different strategies when interacting with different teens? What makes you do so and how do you make the choices?
  - Heterogeneity regarding immigration statuses; SES
  - Skills/strengths/personality
    - *Allocating tasks involving Chinese writing to specific teens; not requiring all of them to know Chinese*
    - *Assisting with the less motivated/skillful group when brainstorming PSA ideas in smaller groups*
    - *Being aware of group dynamics when splitting teens up*
- Can you help me understand what (leadership) skills and development outcomes YES expects the teens to gain from the program?
- Why do you choose to do it this way?
  - For fun/experience enrichment/skill-building/networking/being task-orientated
  - Teens aren't clear about the goals of the program and project
  - YES as a "Family"; YES environment & rules; Chinese culture in US context
  - *Hanging out/chatting with teens outside project hours*
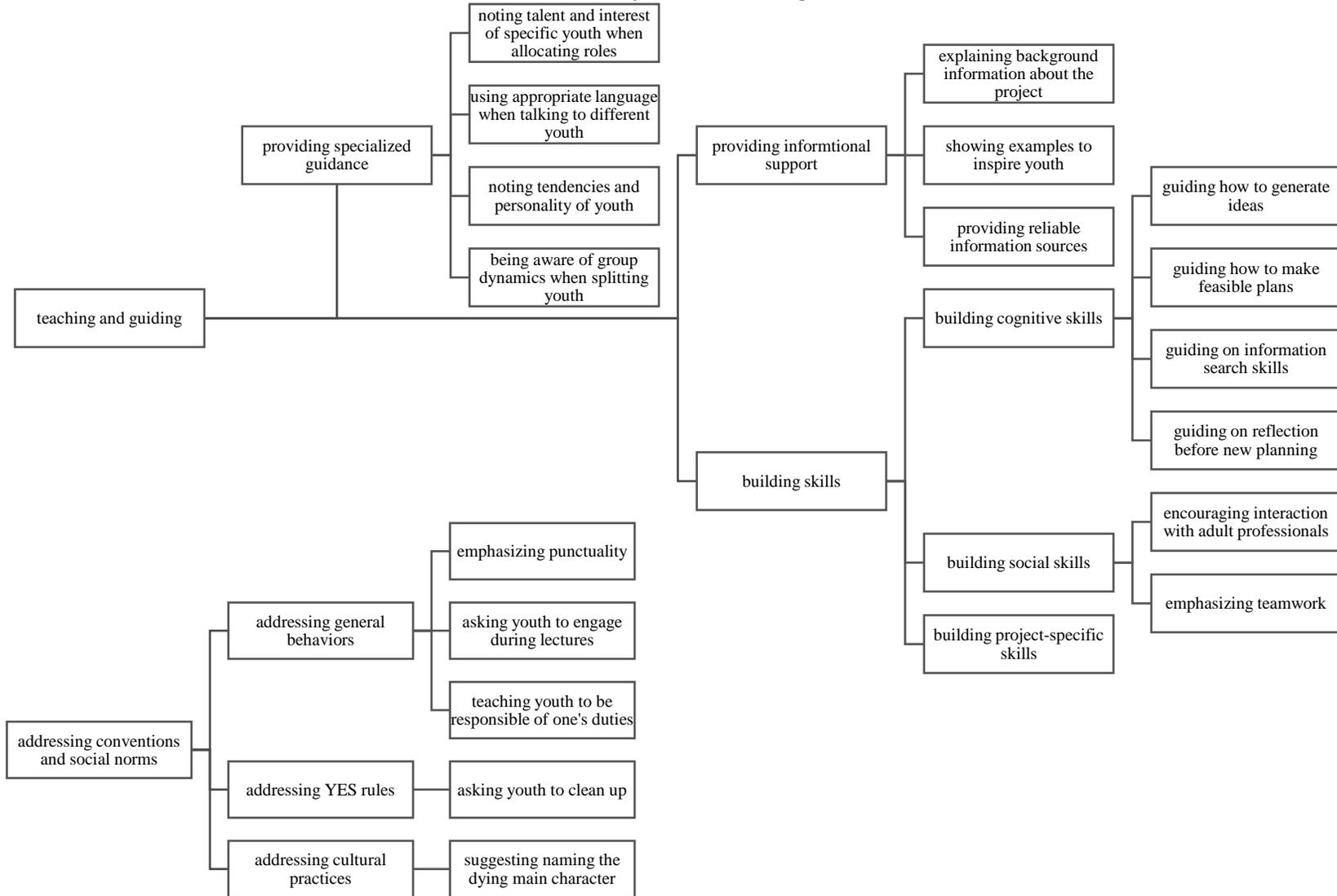
Appendix B

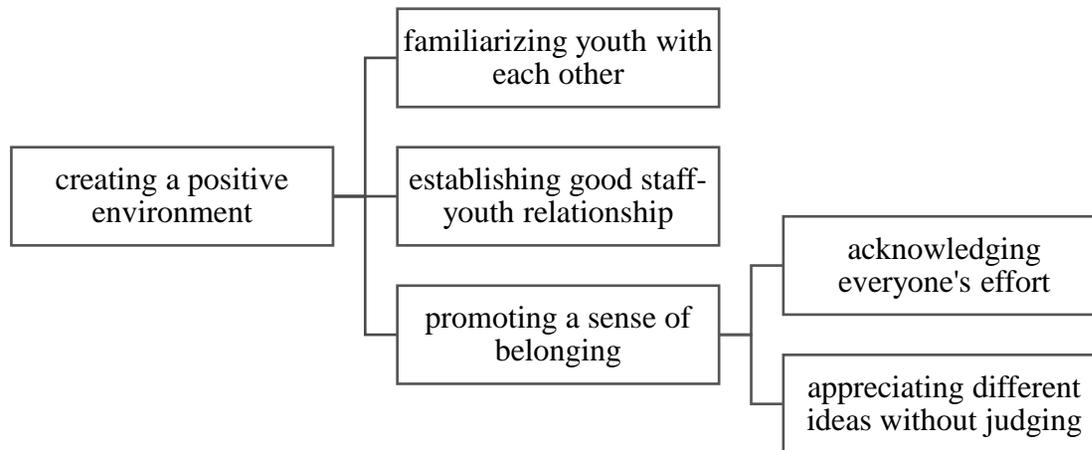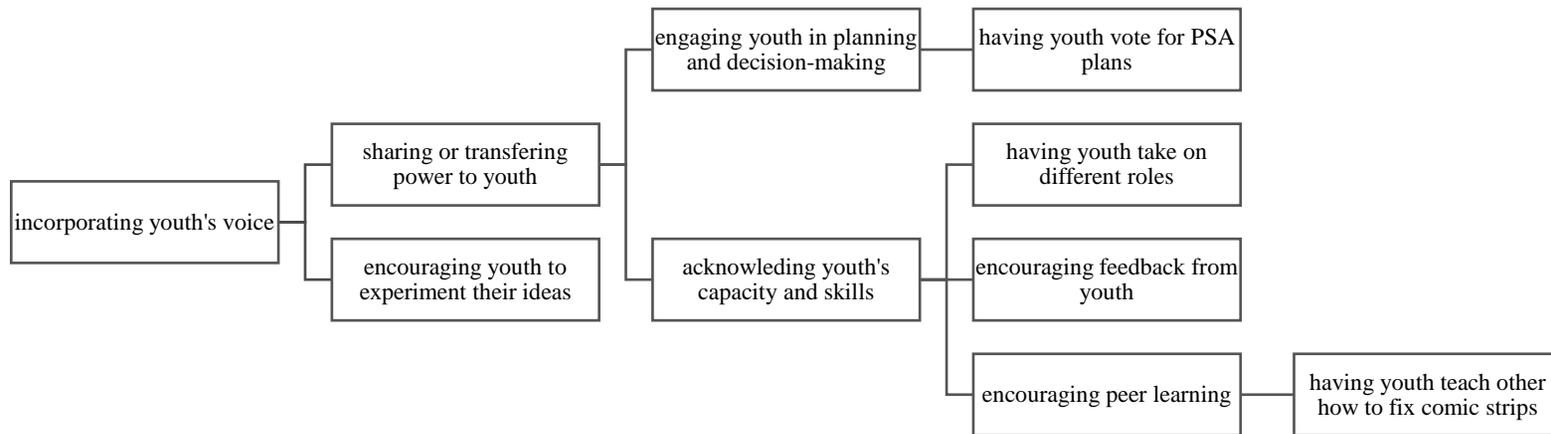Taxonomy of Activities

- **Listening to lectures**
  - Paying attention to content of lecture
  - Interacting with lecturers during the lecture
    - Introducing each other
    - Asking lecturer questions
  - Debriefing after lectures
- **Creating comic strips**
  - Doing group activity (adding captions to photos) for creative thinking
    - Individual brainstorming captions
    - Working and discussing in pairs on one photo
    - Sharing ideas with whole group
  - Discussing storyline
    - Brainstorming stories
    - Role-playing dialogues
    - Drawing a draft with script
  - Collecting resources
    - Taking photos of locations
  - Creating the digital comic episode
    - Making an English episode
    - Adding Chinese translation
  - Fixing formatting and making revisions
- **Making PSAs**
  - Collecting resources
    - Interviewing the doctor after the lecture and recording the interview
    - Reviewing the interview together
  - Watching example PSAs
    - Critiquing example PSAs
    - Learning how to make PSAs
  - Making PSA plan
    - Brainstorming PSA ideas
      - Discussing PSA ideas in smaller groups of 3-4 people
      - Presenting PSA ideas in group to the whole group
      - Voting to decide which plan to choose
    - Discussing details of PSA plan
      - Learning how to simplify scenes and make filming more doable
      - Deciding roles of filming
      - Discussing from the perspective of different roles
      - Presenting PSA plan to program staff
      - Revising the PSA plan
  - Filming PSA
    - Piloting the first scene of PSA
    - Filming

- Taking on different roles and filming the remaining scenes (PSA group)
- Maintaining order of the filming site (comic group)
  - Debriefing after filming
- Editing the video
  - Importing videos to computer
  - Editing the PSA
  - Adding bilingual subtitles
  - Exporting the final version
- Reviewing
  - Having internal review among group members
  - Showing the PSA to other staff for external review
- Reflecting on PSA making process and implication for new PSA making
- **Making information board**
  - Learning the reason for making the information board
  - Brainstorming ideas for info board layout
  - Presenting plan to staff
  - Collecting resources
    - Searching information online individually
    - Exchanging information in materials of previous projects in the group
  - Making the information board
  - Changing the layout and format of content on the information board
- **Presenting at info session**
  - Displaying project products
  - Presenting smoking knowledge to people
  - Conducting knowledge and smoking behavior surveys
- **Managing social media pages**
  - Posting smoking knowledge
    - Sharing smoking-related posts
    - Creating polls to ask questions about smoking
  - Posting project products
    - Posting PSA
  - Inviting YES staff and youth to follow and like the posts
- **Pre- and post-group activities**
  - Socializing at YES
    - Chatting and hanging out
      - With group members
      - With program staff
      - With other YES youth
  - Participating in other YES activities
    - Brainstorming ideas for the "just because" project
  - Setting up
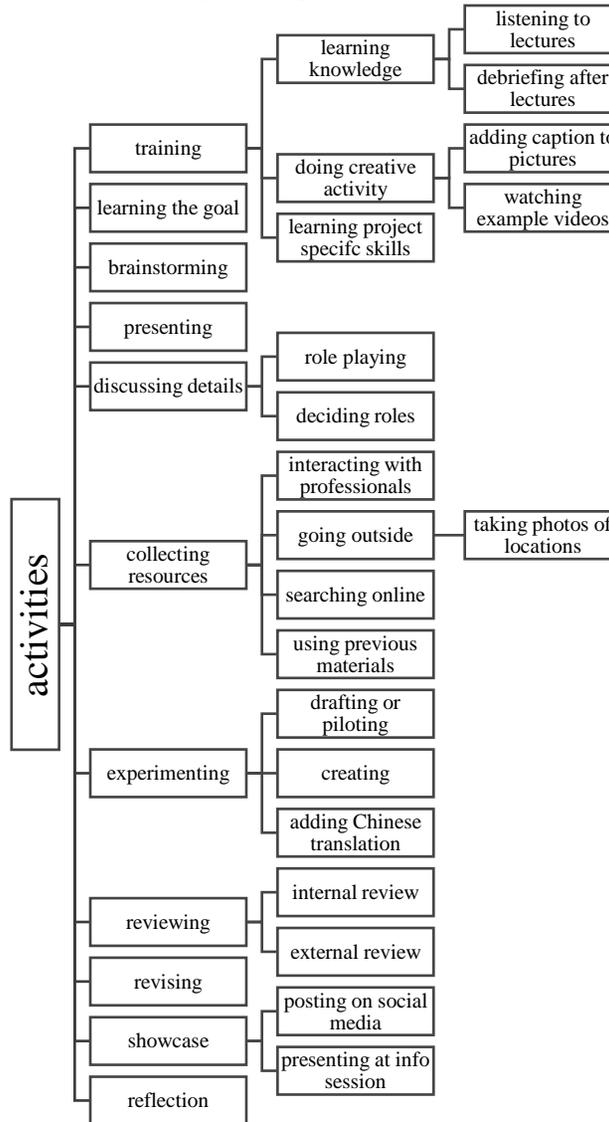 - Cleaning up

Appendix C

Taxonomy of Staff Strategies

```
incorporating youth's voice
├── sharing or transfering power to youth
│   ├── engaging youth in planning and decision-making
│   │   └── having youth vote for PSA plans
│   └── acknowleding youth's capacity and skills
│       ├── having youth take on different roles
│       ├── encouraging feedback from youth
│       └── encouraging peer learning
│           └── having youth teach other how to fix comic strips
└── encouraging youth to experiment their ideas
```

```
creating a positive environment
├── familiarizing youth with each other
├── establishing good staff-youth relationship
└── promoting a sense of belonging
    ├── acknowledging everyone's effort
    └── appreciating different ideas without judging
```

Appendix D

Taxonomy of Sequence of Activities

Appendix E

Taxonomy of Staff Roles

- **Teacher/Resource person**
  - Providing information support
    - Explaining background information about the project
    - Showing examples to inspire youth
    - Providing reliable information sources
  - Teaching skills
    - Building cognitive skills
      - Guiding how to generate ideas
      - Guiding how to make feasible plans
      - Guiding on information search skills
      - Guiding on reflection before new planning
    - Building social skills
      - Encouraging interaction with adult professionals
      - Encouraging peer learning
        - Having youth teach other how to fix comic strips
    - Building project-specific skills
      - Giving instructions on how to make PSAs and comic strips
- **Facilitator**
  - Noting talent and interest of specific youth
    - Allocating roles and duties to specific youth
    - Using appropriate language when talking to different youth
    - Noting tendencies and personality of youth
  - Sharing or transferring power to youth
    - Having youth take on different roles
    - Engaging youth in planning and decision-making
      - Having youth vote for PSA plans
    - Encourage feedback from youth
    - Encouraging youth to experiment their ideas
  - Emphasizing teamwork
    - Familiarizing youth with each other
    - Being aware of group dynamics when splitting youth
- **Team leader**
  - Promoting a sense of belonging
    - Acknowledging everyone's effort
    - Appreciating different ideas without judging
  - Evaluating performance and giving feedback
- **Close adult**
  - Addressing conventions and social norms
    - Addressing general behaviors
      - Emphasizing punctuality
      - Asking youth to engage during lectures
      - Teaching youth to be responsible of one's duties

- ▪ Addressing YES rules
  - Asking youth to clean up
- ▪ Addressing cultural practices
  - Suggesting naming the dying main character
- o Establishing good staff-youth relationship