

III Research Findings

This survey questionnaire comprises five main parts, namely “Views on happiness”, “Happiness and relationship with parents/children”, “Happiness and relationship with other people”, “Happy activities/events” and “Advice for Hong Kong people”. Key findings are summarized below. Cross-references can be made with the tables in Appendix II.

(I) Views on “Happiness”

- 3.1 The survey began by asking the respondents if they were happy in the few months prior to the interview. Results showed that children were the happiest group over the past few months, followed by young adults and then parents. 74% of the children reported that they were happy, while the respective percentage for young adults and parents were 56% and 54%. On the other hand, 11% of the parents claimed that they were unhappy while 9% young adults and only 3% children felt the same. (Table 7)
- 3.2 When asked to give a rating, out of 0-100, to describe how happy they were in the past few months, the mean score obtained from the children group was 76.7, while that for the young adults and parents were 67.2 and 64.8 respectively. (Table 8)
- 3.3 The respondents were also asked to rate the degree of happiness of people around them. Regarding this, the mean scores of the children, young adults and parents interviewed were 75.8, 66.3 and 64.8 in respective order. In other words, parents perceived people around as happy as themselves, while both young adults and children perceived others relatively less happy than they were themselves. (Table 9)
- 3.4 As high as 83% of the children group agreed to the statement “happiness depends on how I deal with my life”, while the respective percentages for the young adults and parents were 91% and 85%. (Table 10)
- 3.5 “The richer I am, the happier I become” did not sound true to around half of the respondents, as 58% children, 39% young adults and 27% parents disagreed to it. While only 22% children, 32% young adults and 27% parents agreed to this statement. (Table 11)

- 3.6 A landslide majority of all three groups agreed to the statement “the happier my family is, the happier I am”, with 94% children, 89% young adults and 96% parents. (Table 12)
- 3.7 Similarly, “the more happiness I can bring to the others, the happier I am” was agreed by 92% children, 89% young adults and 91% parents. (Table 13)
- 3.8 On the contrary, just over half of the children (57%) agreed that “Hong Kong is a place full of happiness”, while only 34% young adults and 42% parents agreed to this statement. (Table 14)

(II) Happiness and Relationship with Parents/Children

- 3.9 The second part of the survey gauged the respondents’ relationship with their parents/children. To begin with, the survey asked whom the respondents were the happiest to be with. Findings showed that both the children and young adults were the happiest when being with their “friends/schoolmates/colleagues” (53%, 32%), and “mother” came next (21%, 25%). On the other hand, more than half of the parents said they were happiest to be with their “children” (51%) while one-fourth of them claimed they were happiest when “spouse/lover” (25%; Table 15-17).
- 3.10 When feeling unhappy, children and young adults preferred talking to “friends/schoolmates/colleagues” most (48%, 57%), whereas parents would run to their “spouse/lover” (42%) to air their grievances. The second and third most frequently quoted answer for children were “mother” (28%) and “siblings” (8%). “Spouse/lover” (17%) and “mother” (11%) were the second and third most frequently mentioned person for young adults, while that for parents were “friends/colleagues” (23%) and their “children” (9%; Tables 18-20).
- 3.11 When asked to rate the current relationship with parents, the average score given by the children and young adults were 80.0 and 74.3 respectively. Meanwhile, the mean score obtained from the parents when asked to evaluate the relationship with their children was 79.0. (Table 21)
- 3.12 With regards to the children and young adults, “study hard / work hard” (80% children, 62% young adults) and “spend more time with them” (66% children, 83%

young adults) were the two most common used tactics to make parents happy. On the other hand, on things that parents would do to make their children happy, “doing outdoor activities together” (72%) topped the list while “having fun at home” (58%) came next and followed closely by “chatting / telling stories” (53%, Tables 22- 24).

(III) Happiness and Relationship with Other People

- 3.13 On interpersonal relationship, 42% children reported that their relationship with “friends” affect their mood most, while 39% and 9% concerned about relationship with “parents” and “schoolmates” most. For young adults, 35% cared about relationship with “parents” most while 23% and 20% reported that they care about “friends” and “spouse/lover” most respectively. 37% parents reported that they most concerned about “spouse/lover”, 26% for their “children” and 8% for “colleagues”. (Tables 25-27)
- 3.14 When someone around felt unhappy, more than half of all the three groups believed “talking to him/her / telling jokes” (56% parents, 59% young adults and 68% children) would be the best tactic to make that person feel better. (Tables 28- 30)

(IV) Happy Activities/Events

- 3.15 When asked what kind of activities/events would make oneself happy, 44% children and 40% young adults found themselves the happiest when engaging in ‘personal leisure activities’, while a respective of 31% and 29% of these two groups opted for “leisure activities with friends”. On the other hand, “leisure activities with family” (37%) topped the list for parents, and ‘personal leisure activities’ (24%) came next, followed by “leisure activities with friends” (14%; Tables 31-33).
- 3.16 When asked how they would express their feeling when the respondents were happy, majority of all the three groups reported they would express by behaviours, like laughing, singing, whistling (84% parents, 76% young adults and 70% parents; Tables 34-36).

- 3.17 With respect to volunteer work participation, 45% of the children reported they volunteered usually, while 33% young adults and 24% parents claimed that same. Among those volunteers, the average number of hours they spent on volunteer work in the past year were 27.4, 67.2 and 72.3 for children, young adults and parents respectively. Meanwhile, more than 80% of the volunteers across all three groups found themselves happier after volunteering (86% children, base = 228; 83% young adults; base = 169; 89% parents, base = 122; Tables 40-41).

(V) Advice for Hong Kong People

- 3.19 What advice the respondents would offer to Hong Kong people in order to be happier? “Take things easy / not to be stubborn” topped the lists of both children (24%) and young adults (27%), while most parents think Hong Kong people should simply “reduce workload” (28%) to achieve this goal. (Tables 37 - 39)
- 3.20 Lastly, all respondents were asked how many times they would smile or laugh in one typical day. Findings revealed that children tended to smile or laugh the most frequently (24.2 times), while young adults (23.6 times) came next at a close distance, and followed by parents (20.1 times; Table 42).

IV Concluding Remarks

- 4.1 This survey has found beyond doubt that children are much happier than adults, and parents seemed to be the most worried group. Most children also considered Hong Kong to be a place “full of happiness”, while only 40% of the parents and one-third of all young adults agreed.
- 4.2 Almost everyone agreed with the statements that “the happier my family is, the happier I am”, “the more happiness I can bring to the others, the happier I am”, and “happiness depends on how I deal with my life”. However, most children and half of the parents did not agree that “the richer I am, the happier I become”. Young adults were split almost equally in opinion on this statement.
- 4.3 Children and young adults felt happiest when they were with their friends, schoolmates, or colleagues, while parents felt happiest when they were with their children. When they felt unhappy, children and young adults would like to talk to their friends, schoolmates and colleagues, while parents would go to their spouse.
- 4.4 Children said that their mood was mostly affected by their relationship with friends and parents, while the mood of young adults was mostly affected by their relationship with parents. The mood of parents was mostly affected by their relationship with the other half.
- 4.5 Regarding activities, parents found themselves happiest when they were engaged in family leisure activities, while children and young adults enjoyed personal leisure activities most. Most parents would bring their children outdoors to make them happy, young adults would spend more time with their parents to make them happy, while children would study hard to make their parents happy. Across all groups, those who have done volunteer work found themselves happier after volunteering.
- 4.6 Finally, in order to make Hong Kong people happier, parents would recommend reducing people’s workload, while children and young adults would advise people to take things easy and not to be stubborn.