

**For discussion on  
9 February 2012**

**Paper FC 2/2012**

## **Family Council**

### **Report of the Family Survey 2011 - Preliminary Findings**

#### **PURPOSE**

At its meeting on 6 January 2012, the Sub-committee on Family Support deliberated the preliminary findings of the Family Survey 2011 (the Survey). This paper aims to present the preliminary findings of the Survey endorsed by the Sub-committee.

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. The proposal to conduct a survey to collect information and data on the existing situation of families in Hong Kong was endorsed by the Family Council at its meeting held on 14 March 2011 (vide Paper FC 1/2011 “Work Plan for the Family Council in 2011”).

3. The primary objective of conducting the Survey was to gather an updated and empirically-based information on the families in Hong Kong, so that the Family Council will have a better understanding of the current state of the Hong Kong families in a wide range of areas covering their attitudes on family core values, work-life balance, parenthood, family functioning, satisfaction with family life, awareness of family-related programmes as well as the availability of social support network.

4. The findings of the Survey will provide useful information to facilitate the tracking of families in Hong Kong. Besides, it also gives an insight into the changes in the Hong Kong families, the challenges they face and the kind of support required.

## **THE SURVEY**

5. Against this background, Policy 21 was commissioned in March 2011 to conduct the Survey. Subsequent to the completion of focus group discussions and literature review in April 2011, the fieldwork survey was conducted from May to September 2011, with a sample size of 2 000 respondents to cover the following areas -

- (a) importance of family;
- (b) parenthood;
- (c) family functioning;
- (d) satisfaction with family life;
- (e) work-family balance;
- (f) availability of social support network; and
- (g) awareness and participation of family-related programmes.

## **PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

6. The Sub-committee on Family Support deliberated the preliminary findings and recommendations on 6 January 2011. Major preliminary findings of the Survey are as follows -

- (a) most respondents considered that family core values are important (above 80% <sup>Note</sup>);
- (b) majority of the respondents are willing to live with their parents(69% ) and support their living (85%);
- (c) a large proportion of respondents agreed that marriage is a necessary step in life (66% ) and child bearing is important in a marriage (60% );
- (d) more than half of the respondents accepted divorce as the best solution for a married couple who could not live together harmoniously provided that they did not have children (57% );

<sup>Note</sup> : It reflects the percentage of respondents showing agreement to the statement.

- (e) majority of the respondents considered that their families functioned very well (79%) and they are satisfied with their family life (81%);
- (f) quite a number of parent-respondents found the stress of raising their children overwhelming (62%);
- (g) nearly half of the respondents at work reported stress in balancing work and family (44%); and
- (h) both the awareness (40%) and participation rate (8% of family-related programmes organized by the Government and/or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were low.

Policy 21 also conducted analysis at district level. In comparison with the territory-wide survey, similar observations were made. However, care should be exercised in interpreting results at district analysis in view of the small sample size. The powerpoint presentation at [Annex](#) summarises the preliminary findings and recommendations after incorporating the views of the Sub-committee on Family Support.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

7. The preliminary findings above indicated that families in Hong Kong in general functioned quite well and respondents were also satisfied with their family life. However, the results also indicated the stress of raising children and balancing work and family as well as the low awareness and participation rate of family-related programmes organized by the Government and/or NGOs. Policy 21 therefore proposed the following recommendations for consideration by the Family Council -

- (a) strengthening of parent education;
- (b) promotion of family-friendly policy amongst employers; and
- (c) active promotion of family-related programmes through different channels.

8. The Sub-committee on Family Support had deliberated the recommendations and considered that the proposed recommendations were worth pursuing.

## **WAY FORWARD**

9. Members are invited to note the preliminary findings at this stage. Subject to any preliminary views from Members, the full report will be submitted to the Sub-committee on Family Support for endorsement. In finalizing the report, the Sub-committee will be invited to consider the following -

- (a) the communication plan with the public;
- (b) the utilization of the available data;
- (c) sharing of data with other agencies; and
- (d) whether a regular survey, say on a biennial basis, is desirable.

The Sub-committee on Family Support will then devise the strategies to take forward the recommendations.

**Family Council Secretariat  
January 2012**

# Family Survey 2011



Home Affairs Bureau  
Family Council 1

***Enumeration Results***

***Importance of Family***

***Parenthood***

***Family Functioning***

***Satisfaction with Family Life***

***Balancing Work and Family***

***Social Support Network***

***Awareness and Participation of Family-related Programmes***

***Analysis at District Level***

***Recommendations***

## *Enumeration Results*

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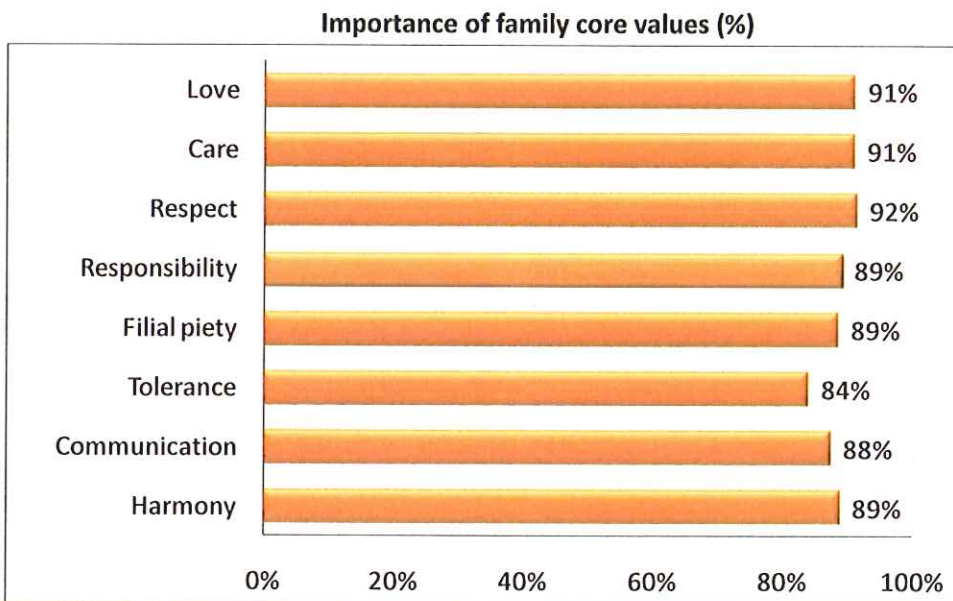
### Enumeration results

	Number	%
Total no. of living quarters (LQs) sampled	3,500	100
No. of invalid LQs excluded	450	12.9
No. of eligible sample	3,050	87.1
Total no. of effective sampled LQs	3,050	100
No. of LQs refused to be interviewed	436	14.3
No. of non-contact LQs	614	20.1
No. of LQs successfully enumerated	2,000	65.6
No. of respondents successfully interviewed	2,000	

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# Importance of Family

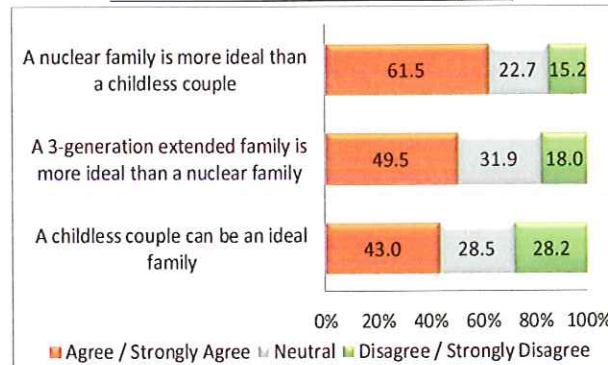
*Most people still considered family core values as important*



## Attitudes towards ideal family varied

- 62% of the respondent agreed that “a nuclear family is more ideal than a childless couple”.
- 50% also agreed that “a 3-generation extended family is more ideal than a nuclear family”.
- 43% also expressed that “a childless couple can also be an ideal family”.

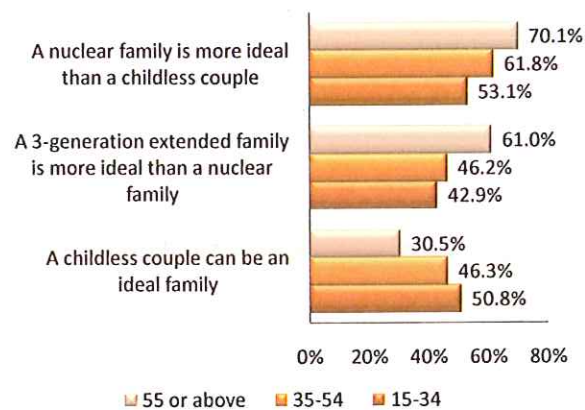
Attitudes towards ideal family (%)



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## Attitudes towards ideal family varied

By age group (Agree / Strongly Agree)

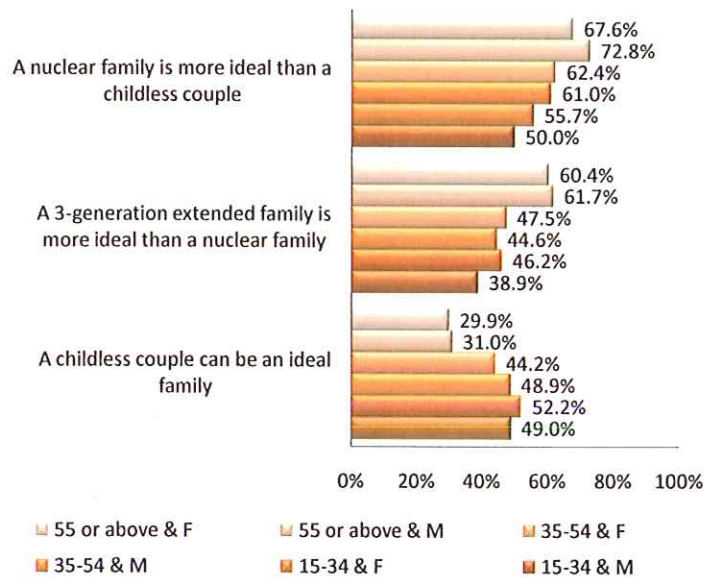


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## Attitudes towards ideal family varied

### By age group and gender (Agree / Strongly Agree)

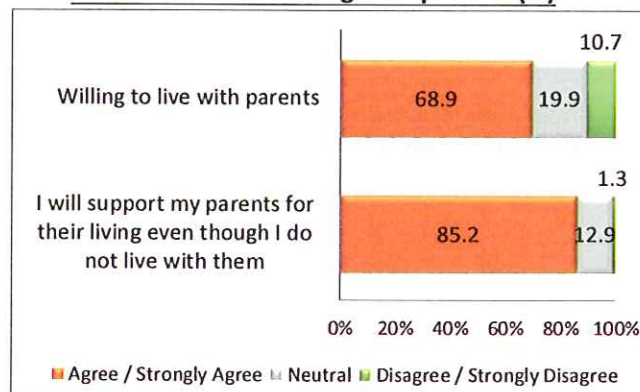


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## Attitudes towards living with parents

- 69% of the respondents were willing to live with parents.
- 85% agreed to support their parents' living even though they did not live with them.

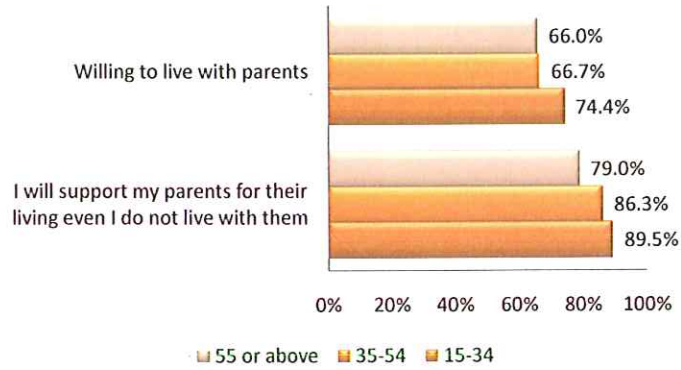
### Attitudes towards living with parents (%)



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## Attitudes towards living with parents

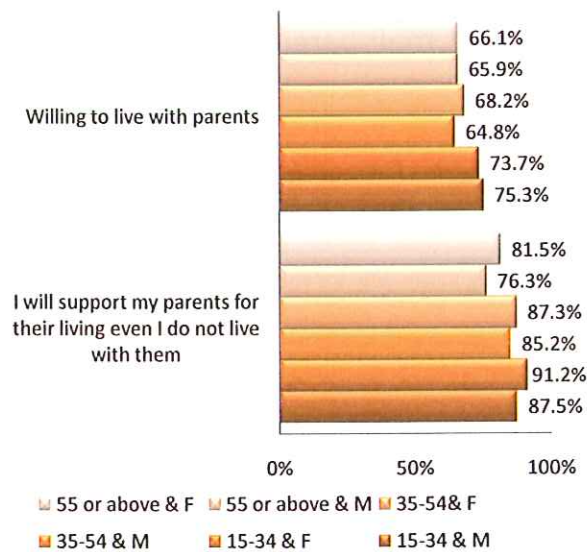
### By age group (Agree / Strongly Agree)



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## Attitudes towards living with parents

### By age group and gender (Agree / Strongly Agree)

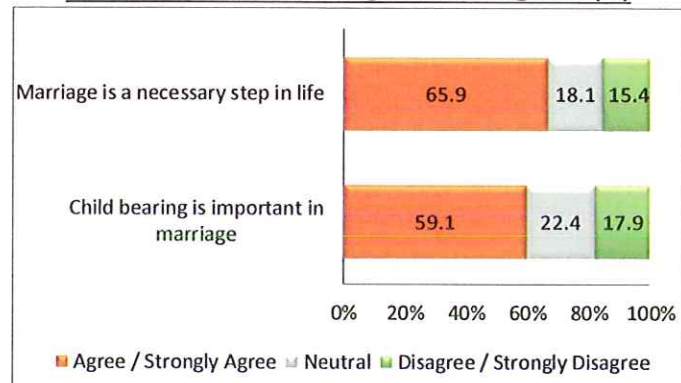


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## Most respondents agreed that marriage is a necessary step in life

- 66% of the respondents agreed that “marriage is a necessary step in life”.
- 59% agreed that “child bearing is important in marriage”.

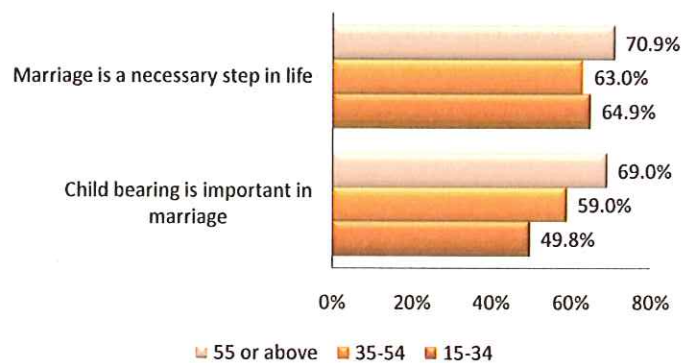
**Attitudes towards marriage and having child(%)**



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## Most respondents agreed that marriage is a necessary step in life

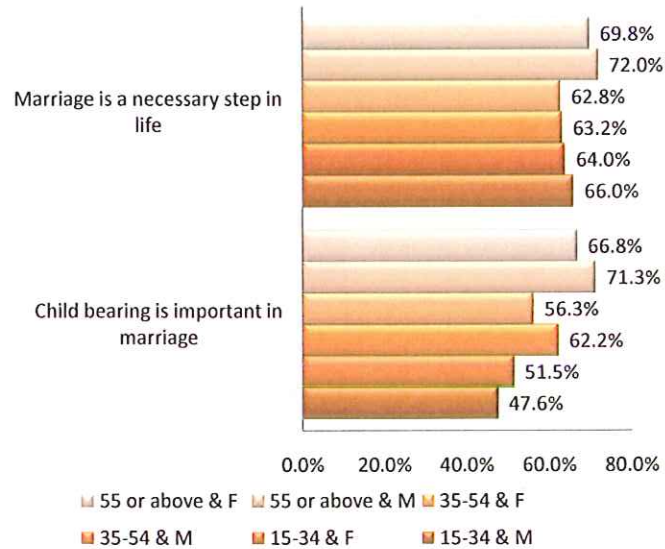
**By age group (Agree / Strongly Agree)**



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## Most respondents agreed that marriage is a necessary step in life

### By age group and sex group (Agree / Strongly Agree)

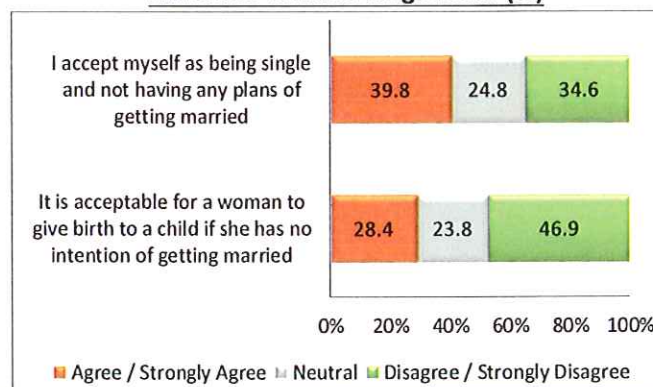


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## Regarding singlehood, attitudes of respondents also varied

- 40% accepted the view that “being single and not having any plan to get married”.
- At the same time, 47% of the respondents did not accept a woman to give birth to a child if she had no intention of getting married.

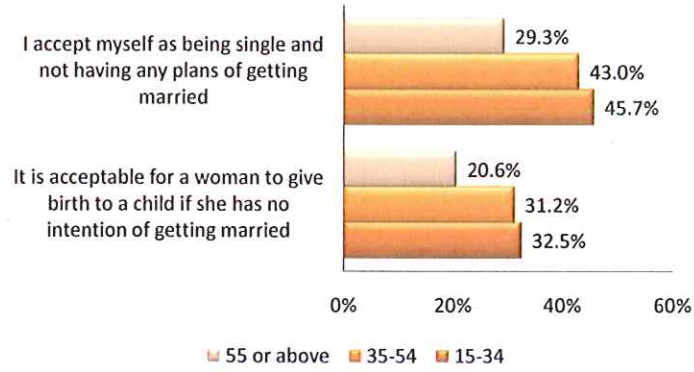
### Attitudes towards singlehood (%)



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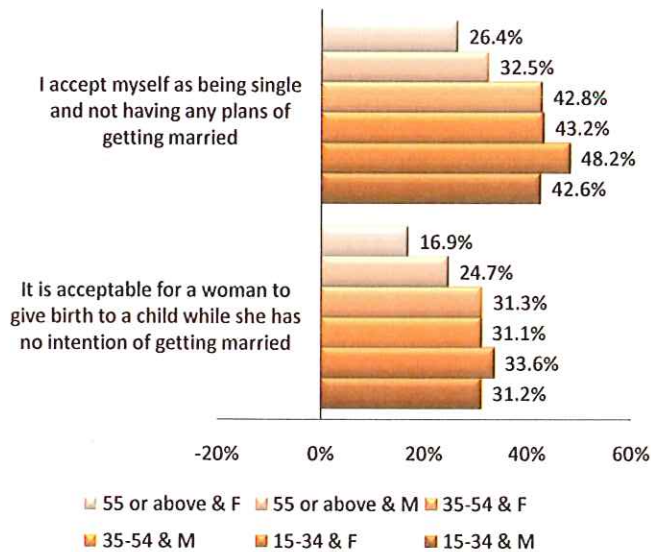
**Regarding singlehood, attitudes of respondents also varied**

**By age group (Agree / Strongly Agree)**



**Regarding singlehood, attitudes of respondents also varied**

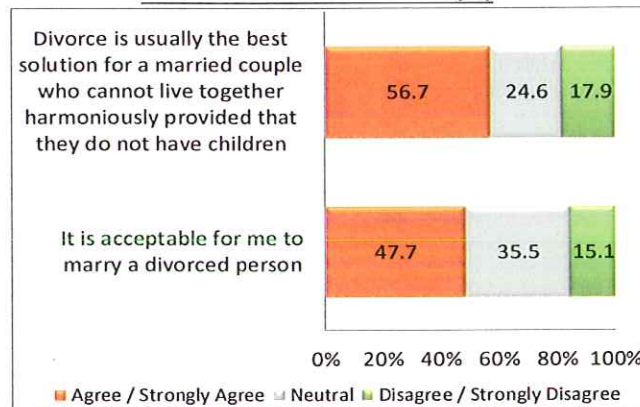
**By age group and gender (Agree / Strongly Agree)**



## Attitudes on divorce

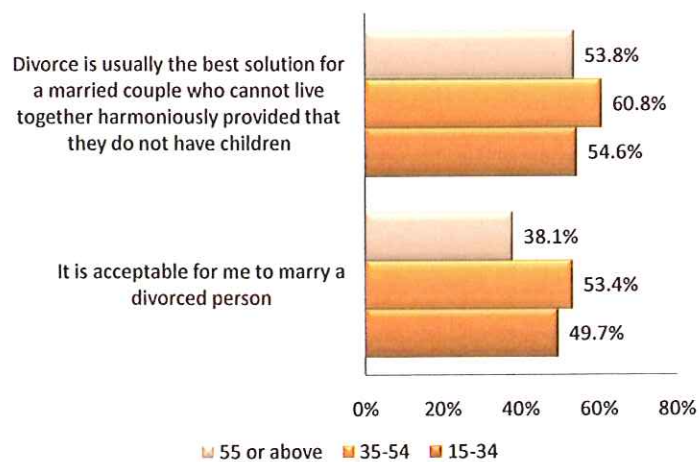
- 57% accepted “divorce being the best solution for a married couple who cannot live together harmoniously provided that they do not have children”.
- 48% of the respondents accepted marrying a divorced person.

**Attitudes towards divorce (%)**



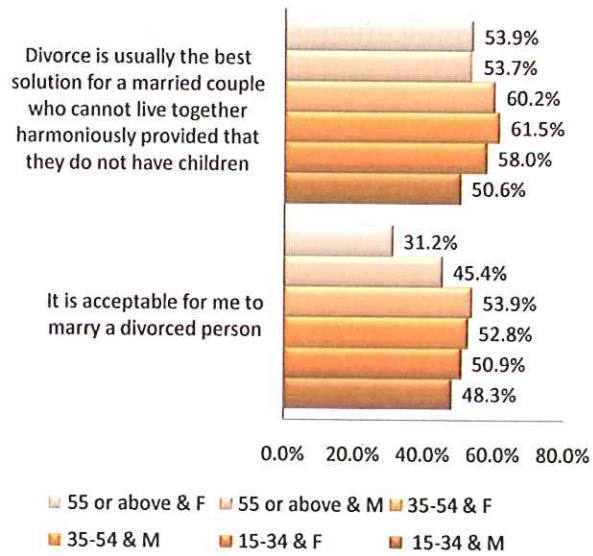
## Attitudes on divorce

**By age group (Agree / Strongly Agree)**



## Attitudes on divorce

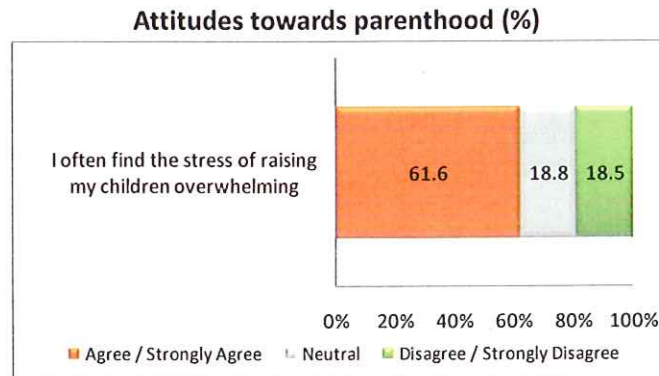
### By age group and gender (Agree / Strongly Agree)



## Parenthood

## Raising children was stressful

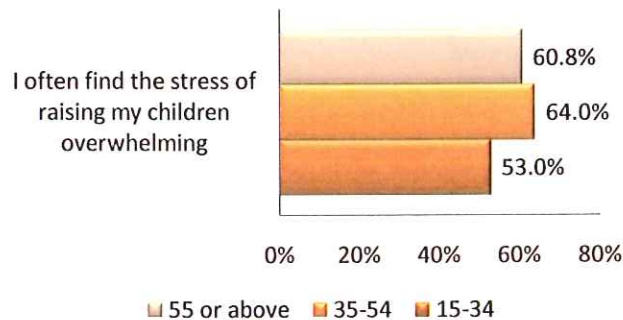
- 62% of the parents agreed that they often found the stress of raising their children overwhelming, indicating that most were not confident of their ability in both raising children and handling the associated stress.



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## Raising children was stressful

### By age group (Agree / Strongly Agree)

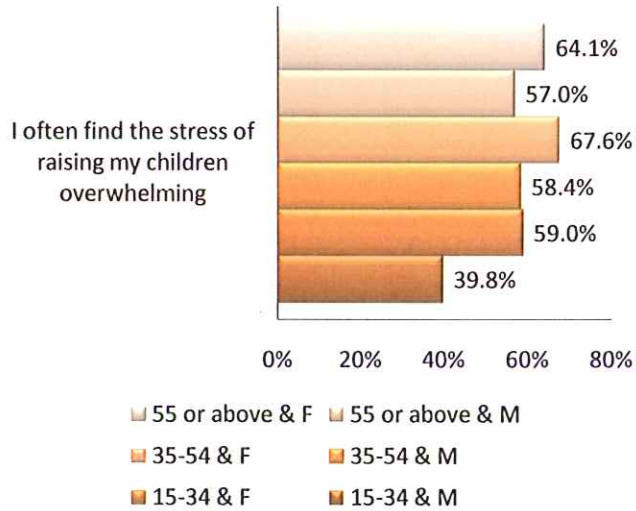


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## Raising children was stressful

### By age group and gender (Agree / Strongly Agree)

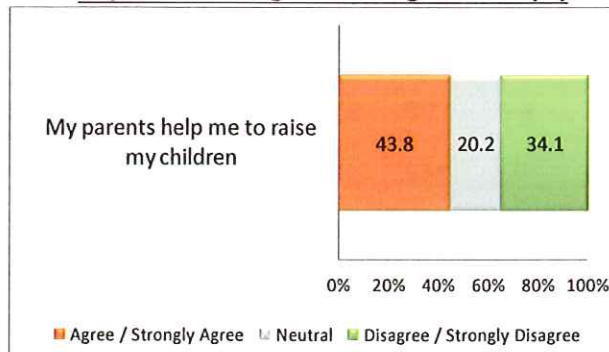


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## Views on raising their children by grandparents were diversified

- 44% of the respondents expressed that their parents rendered assistance in taking care of their children, whereas 34% did not.

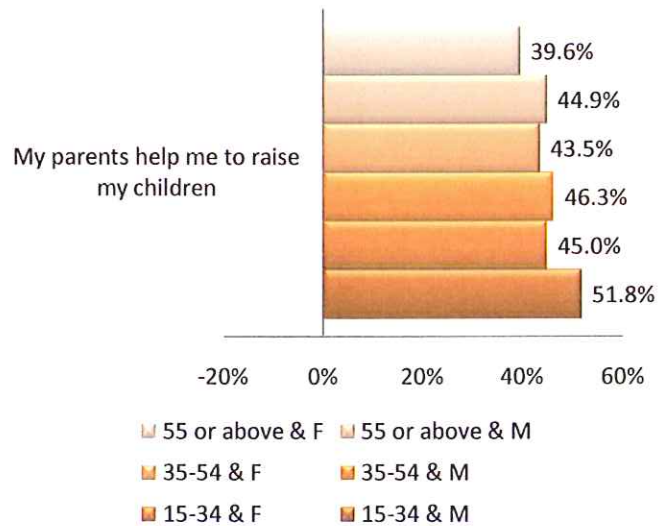
### Impact on having and raising children (%)



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**Views on raising their children by grandparents were diversified**

**By age and gender (Agree / Strongly Agree)**



**51% of those non-parents respondents (aged 35-54) had no intention to have children in the future, but 76% of those non-parents aged 15-34 indicated their intention to have children in the future**

**Intention to have children in the future among non-parents by age group (%)**

	15-34			35-54			55 or above		
	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F
Not at all likely	2.2	0.8	3.6	15.7	10.3	23.7	60.6	57.4	65.6
Not very likely	9.7	11.6	8.0	34.9	29.8	42.5	24.4	27.5	19.7
Somewhat likely	50.2	50.4	50.0	28.8	39.3	13.5	2.5	4.2	0.0
Very likely	25.8	27.9	23.9	6.6	6.7	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.0

**The major reasons for non-parent respondents for not having children were “I am too old” (31%) and “I do not have a partner/not married” (32%)**

**Reasons for those who had no children to have children in the future (%)**

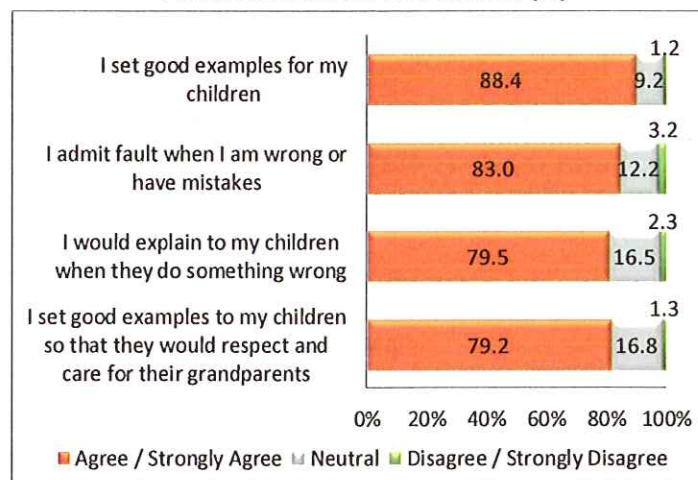
Reasons	All	Male	Female
I do not have a partner/Not married	32.0	32.8	31.2
We are too old	30.5	33.3	27.6
I do not want any/Do not like children	16.9	14.9	19.1
Wanted simply to enjoy life and experience more of it	10.8	11.0	10.7
Would not have time/Too busy	9.1	8.4	9.7
Wanted to be financially stable	8.8	9.1	8.4
Wanted to have house first	5.1	5.0	5.2
My spouse/partner was not ready	2.6	4.2	0.9
Wanted to get established in career	2.4	2.9	1.8
Wanted to but were unable to conceive	1.9	1.0	3.0
No one to take care the children	0.9	1.7	0.0
Others	6.4	5.2	7.7

**Most parents agreed to set role models for their children**

Majority of the parents agreed:

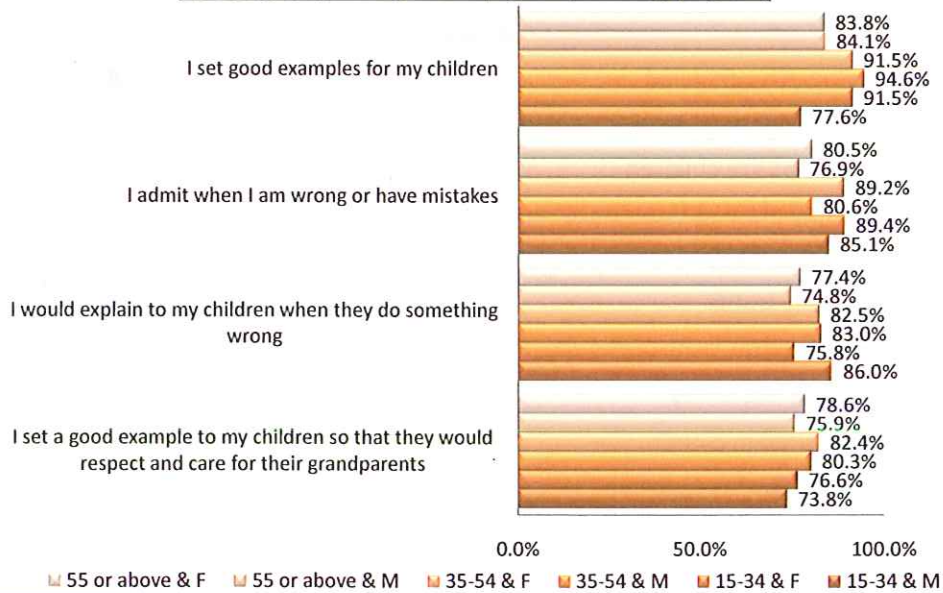
- a) to set good examples to their children (88%),
- b) to admit fault when doing wrong (83%),
- c) to explain to their children when they do something wrong (80%) and
- d) to set a good example to children so that they would respect and take care of their grandparents (79%).

**Attitudes towards role models (%)**



## Most parents agreed to set role models for their children

### By age group and gender (Agree / Strongly Agree)

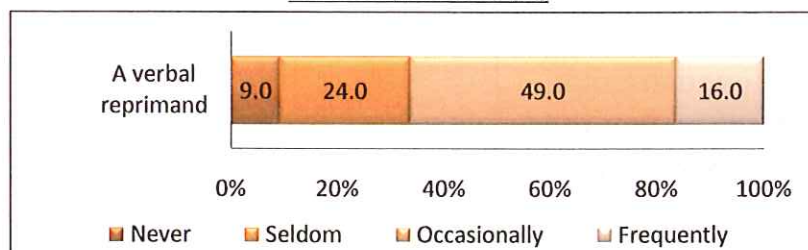


31

## Parenting methods were on the whole gentle

- Parents with children aged 18 or below indicated that they used non-physical approaches (i.e., a verbal reprimand, withdrawal of privileges, sending the child to his or her room and a “time out”) much more frequently when disciplining their children.
- 88% adopted verbal reprimand either frequently (16%), occasionally (49%) and rarely (24%) .

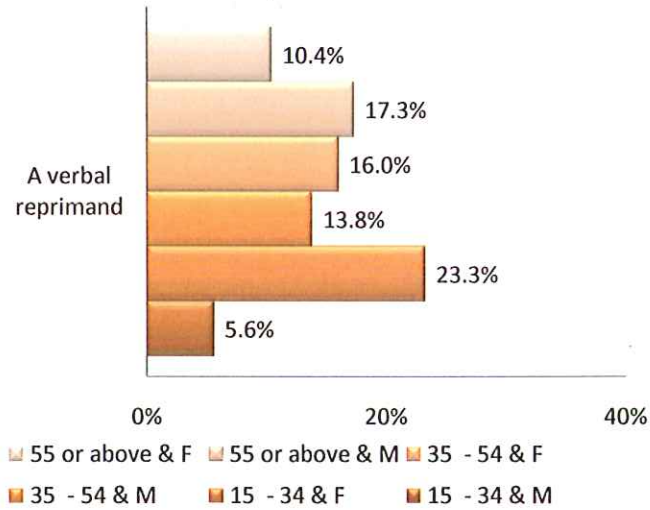
### Parenting method (%)



32

## Parenting methods were on the whole gentle

**By age group and gender (Agree / Strongly Agree)**



33

## Family Functioning

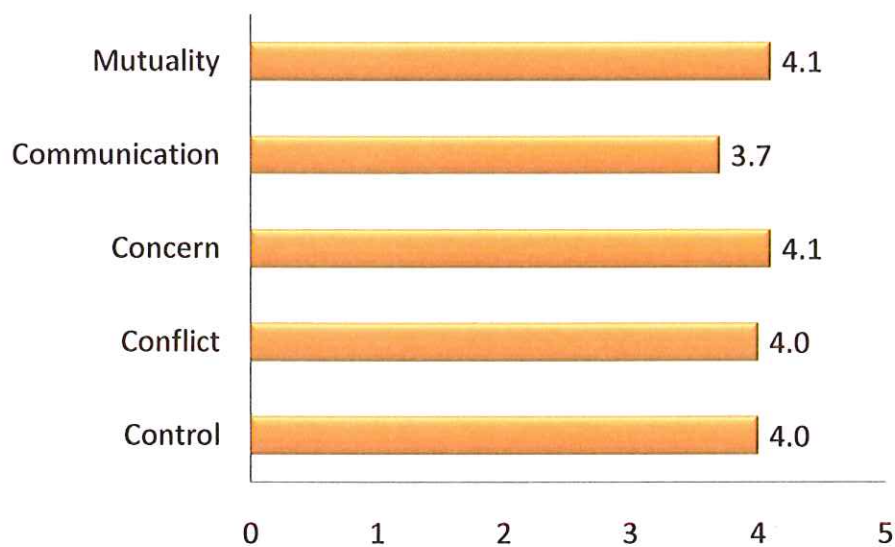
34

## Chinese Family Assessment Instrument (CFAI)

- The Chinese Family Assessment Instrument (CFAI) (Daniel T.L. Shek ) is a 33-item instrument which can be classified into the following five dimensions to assess family functioning:
  - (1) Mutuality,
  - (2) Communication and Cohesiveness
  - (3) Conflict and Harmony
  - (4) Parental Concern and
  - (5) Parental Control

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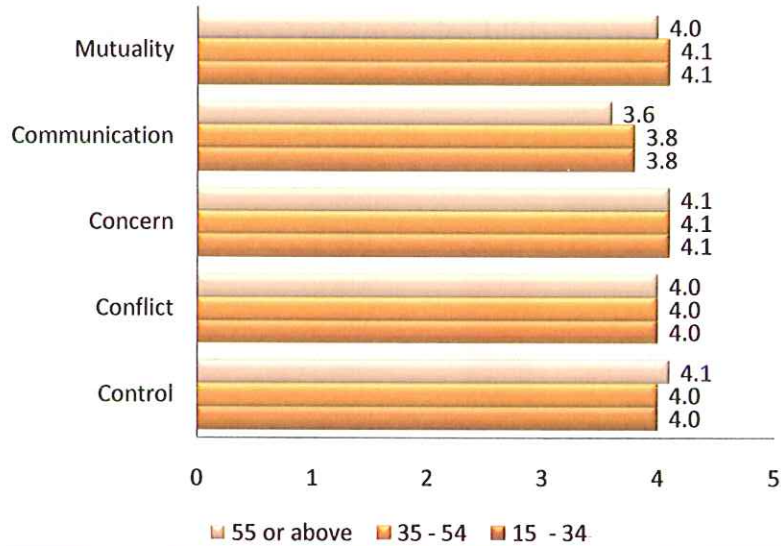
## Mean scores of the Chinese Family Assessment Instrument



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## Mean scores of the Chinese Family Assessment Instrument

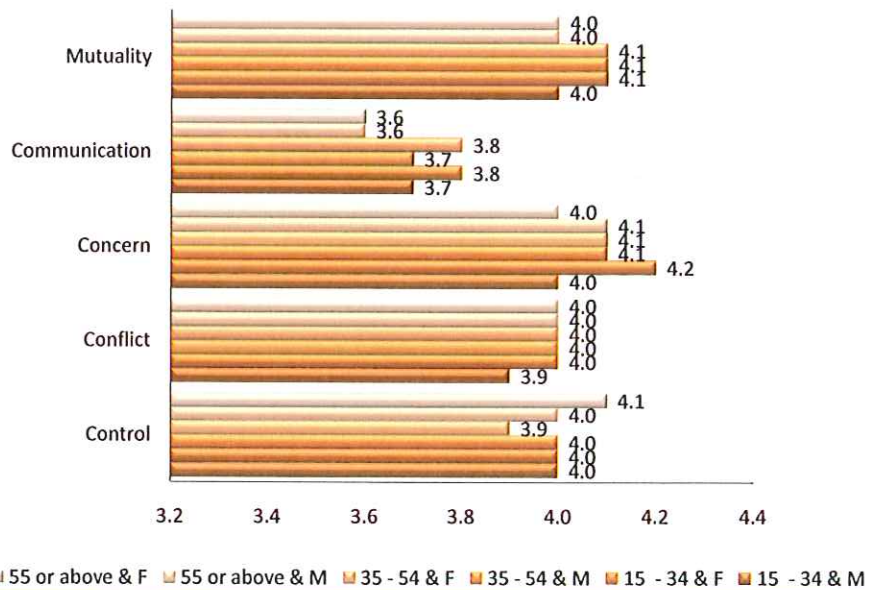
By age group



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## Mean scores of the Chinese Family Assessment Instrument

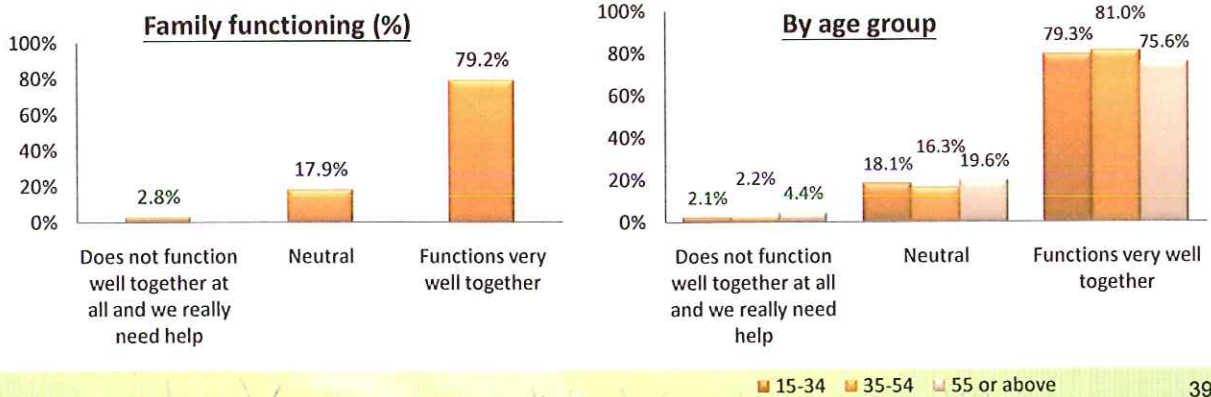
By age group and gender



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## Families functioned very well in general (79%)

- Respondents considered that
  - (a) there was mutual trust and concern among family members
  - (b) a very good parent-child relationship is maintained
  - (c) parent showed concern about their children
  - (d) they communicated quite well and their families were cohesive



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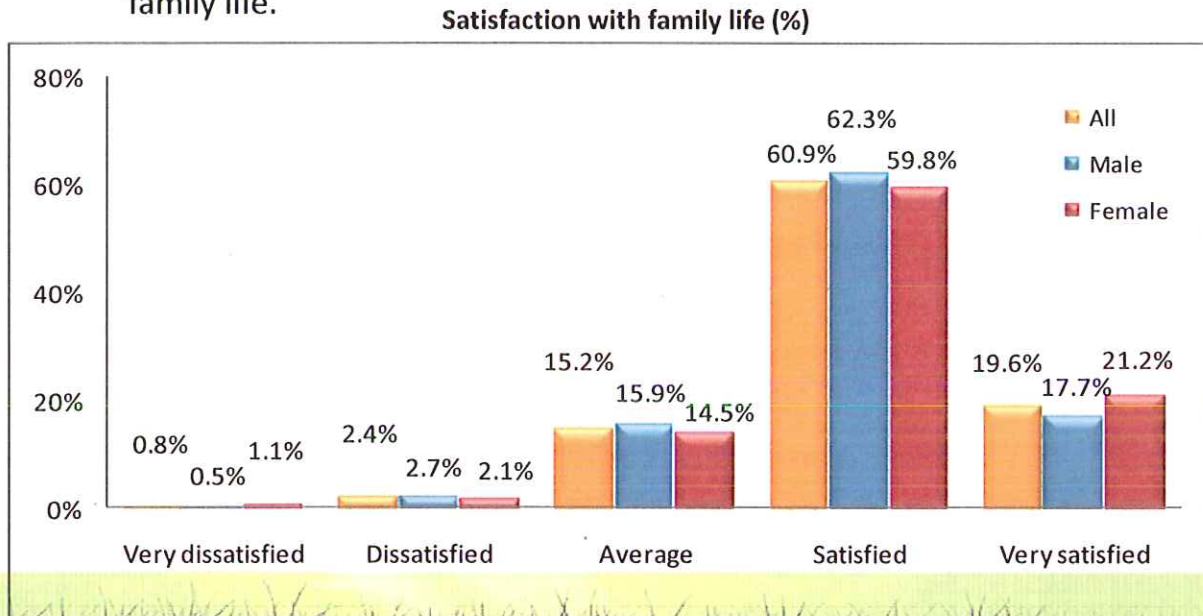
## Satisfaction with Family Life

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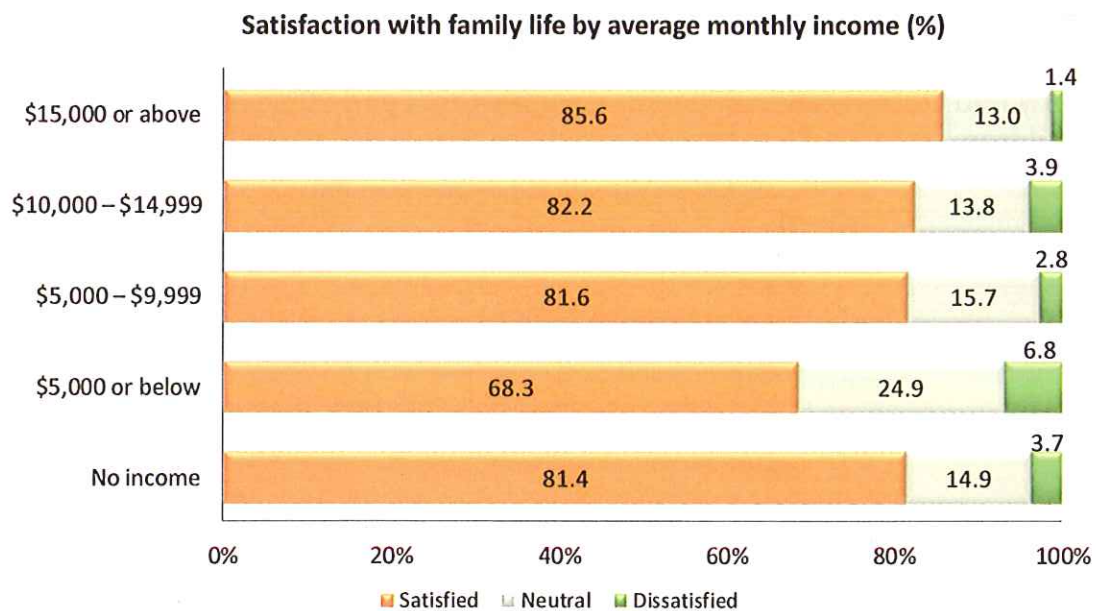


***On the whole, respondents were quite satisfied with their family life***

- 81% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their family life.

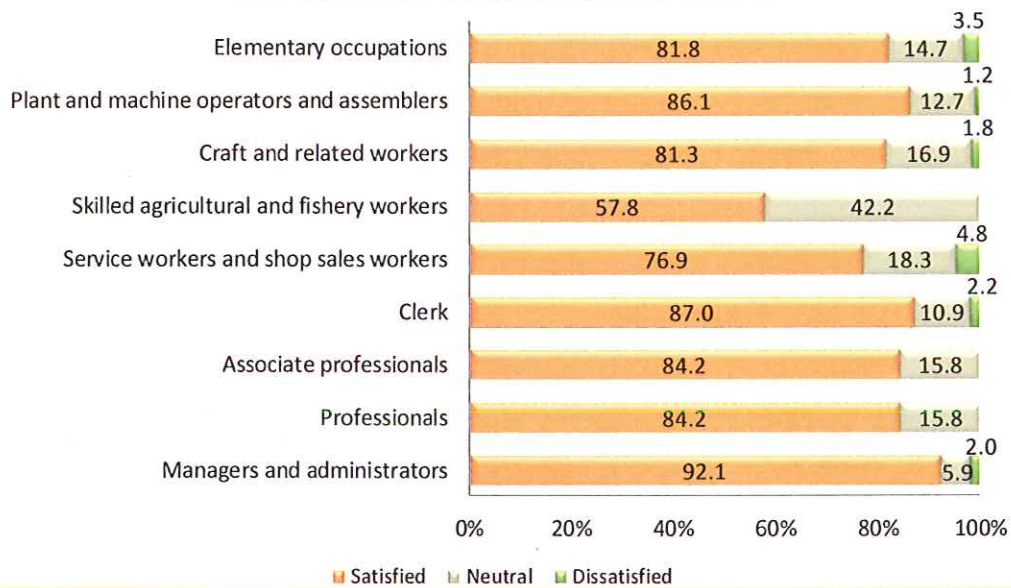


***Analysed by respondents' average monthly income, respondents with lower income tended to indicate their satisfaction with family life as low (68%)***



*Analysed by respondents' occupation, the managers and administrators tended to indicate that they were more satisfied with family life (92%), while just over half of the skilled agricultural and fishery workers reported that they were satisfied with family life*

**Satisfaction with family life by occupation (%)**



**Relationship with family members was fairly close in general**

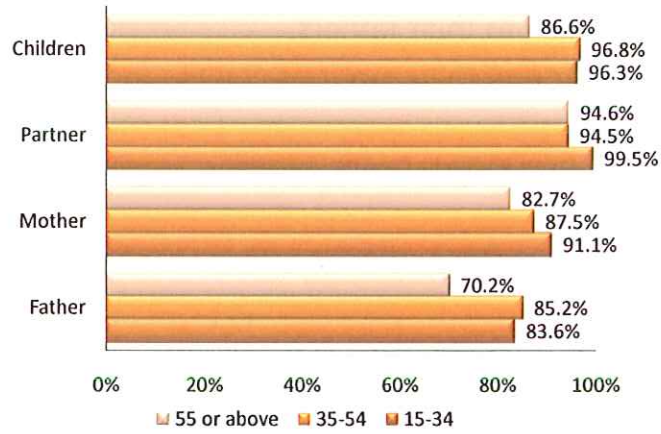
- 84% of the respondents considered their relationship close (fairly close and very close) with their fathers and 89% with their mothers.
- 95% had close relationship with their partners and 90% with their children.

**Relationship with family members (%)**



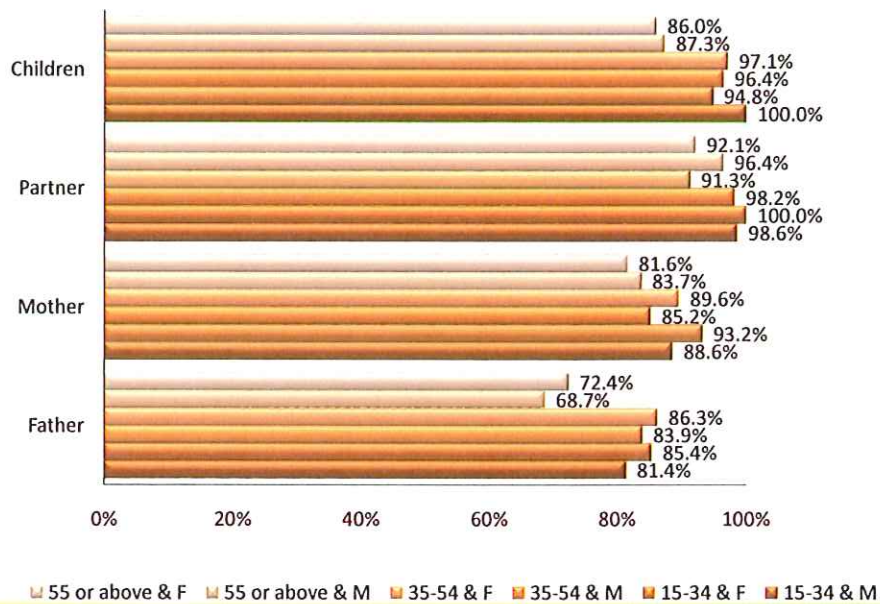
*Relationship with family members was fairly close in general*

**By age group (Close)**



*Relationship with family members was fairly close in general*

**By age group and gender (Close)**



*The survey results showed that time spent with parents was limited*

- 40% of respondents talked to their parents for less than 30 minutes a week.
- 23% had not talked to their fathers.
- 19% had not talked to their mothers at all in the week prior to enumeration.

**Time spent in talking with father and mother (%)**

	Father	Mother
No time	22.8	19.1
< 30 minutes	40.1	38.8
31 – 60 minutes	8.2	8.9
1 hour to < 2 hours	11.1	11.4
2 hours to < 4 hours	6.2	8.9
≥ 4 hours	11.6	12.8

*The survey results showed that time spent with parents was limited*

**By age group**

		15 - 34	35 - 54	55 or above
Father	< 30 mins	56.0	70.5	77.2
	31 – 60 mins	9.1	7.1	7.4
	> 1 hour	34.9	22.4	15.5
Mother	< 30 mins	44.5	68.5	74.6
	31 – 60 mins	10.7	7.7	5.8
	> 1 hour	44.9	23.8	19.6

*The survey results showed that time spent with parents was limited*

**By age group and gender**

	%	15 - 34			35 - 54			55 or above		
		Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
<b>Father</b>	< 30 mins	56.0	56.7	55.4	70.5	70.0	70.9	77.2	83.1	68.4
	31 – 60 mins	9.1	7.8	10.1	7.1	6.8	7.4	7.4	2.6	14.4
	≥ 1 hrs	34.9	35.4	34.5	22.4	23.2	21.7	15.5	14.3	17.2
<b>Mother</b>	< 30 mins	44.5	46.9	42.4	68.5	72.9	64.8	74.6	77.3	71.4
	31 – 60 mins	10.7	13.0	8.8	7.7	7.6	7.7	5.8	3.8	8.3
	≥ 1 hrs	44.9	40.1	48.8	23.8	19.5	27.5	19.6	18.9	20.4

*When compared with communication with parents, partners communicated with each other more frequently*

- Only 8% did not speak to each other.
- 30% talked to each other for more than 4 hours.
- 11% for 2 to 4 hours, 14% for 1 to 2 hours.
- 26% for less than half hour a week.
- 32% chatted with their children for less than 30 minutes a week and 21% did not talk to each other at all.

**Time spent in talking with partner and children (%)**

	Partner	Children
No time	8.4	20.5
< 30 minutes	25.5	32.0
31 – 60 minutes	11.2	10.4
1 hour to < 2 hours	14.1	10.6
2 hours to < 4 hours	10.7	7.5
≥ 4 hours	30.1	19.0

***When compared with communication with parents, partners communicated with each other more frequently***

**By age group**

		15 - 34	35 - 54	55 or above
Partner	< 30 mins	25.8	32.3	39.6
	31 – 60 mins	13.8	10.4	11.5
	> 1 hour	60.3	57.3	48.9
Child	< 30 mins	59.3	46.8	56.5
	31 – 60 mins	4.7	9.0	12.7
	> 1 hour	35.9	44.2	30.8

**By age group and gender**

	%	15 - 34			35 - 54			55 or above		
		Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
Partner	< 30 mins	25.8	30.9	23.2	32.3	30.8	33.7	39.6	39.1	40.3
	31 – 60 mins	13.8	14.2	13.7	10.4	11.1	9.8	11.5	12.9	9.8
	≥ 1 hrs	60.3	55.0	63.2	57.3	58.2	56.6	48.9	48.0	49.9
Child	< 30 mins	59.3	77.8	52.2	46.8	53.5	42.4	56.5	60.5	53.2
	31 – 60 mins	4.7	4.0	5.0	9.0	7.1	10.3	12.7	10.4	14.6
	≥ 1 hrs	35.9	18.3	42.7	44.2	39.4	47.3	30.8	29.2	32.2

***In general, home was considered comfortable and a place where family members loved to stay***

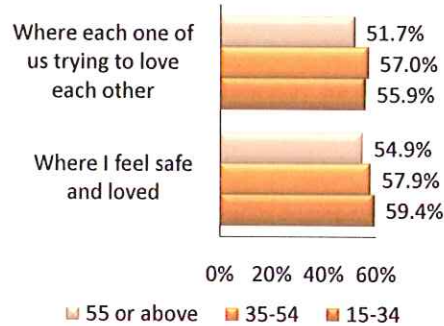
- About 58% of respondents frequently perceived their home as “a place where he/she feel safe and loved”; for another 37% sometimes.
- About 55% and 40% frequently and sometimes considered their home “a place where each one trying to love each other” respectively.

**The perception of home (%)**



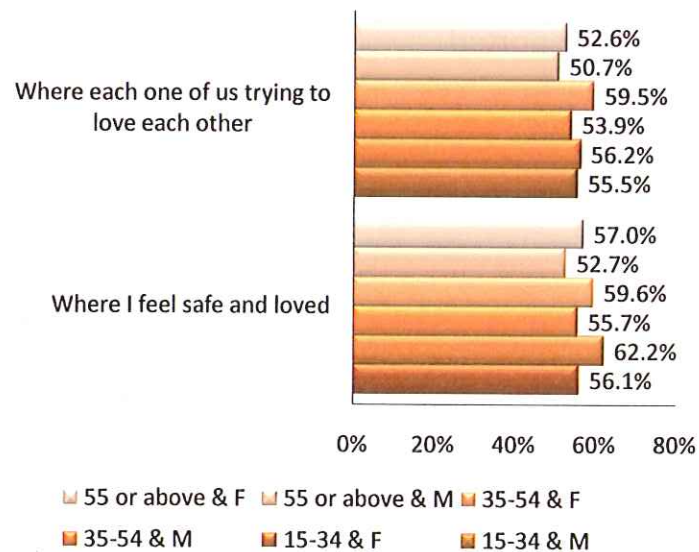
*In general, home was considered comfortable and a place where family members loved to stay*

**By age group**



*In general, home was considered comfortable and a place where family members loved to stay*

**By age group and gender**

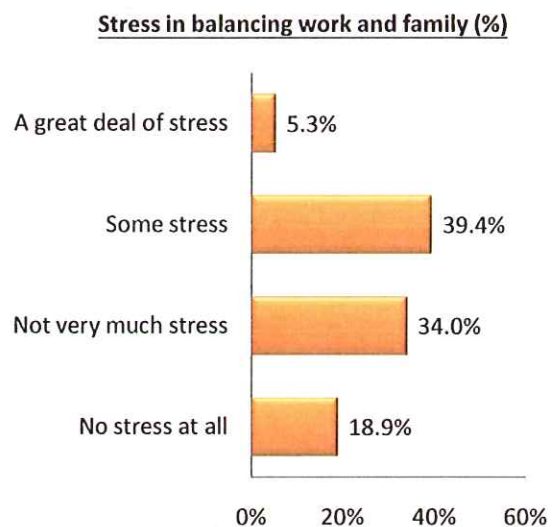


## *Balancing Work and Family*

55

### *Nearly half of those at work reported stress in balancing work and family*

- 44% of the respondents who were currently at work reported that the need of striking a balance of work and family caused them a great deal of stress or some stress.



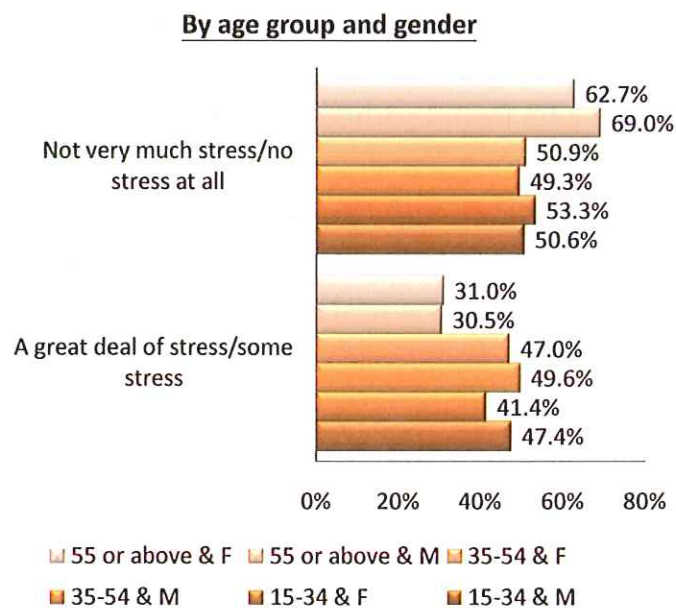
56



*Nearly half of those at work reported stress in balancing work and family*



*Nearly half of those at work reported stress in balancing work and family*



## ***Social Support Network***

59

***Majority of the respondents would seek help or advice from their “close friends” and “spouses” when they encountered difficulties***

- When financial problems were encountered, about 55% of the respondents would seek help from spouse, 28% from parents, 28% from close friends and 24% from brothers/sisters.
- When emotional problems were encountered, about 54% and 53% of the respondents sought help from spouse and close friends respectively.

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## Help seeking behavior (%)

	Financial problems			Emotional problems		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Spouse (for those married)	54.8	46.2	62.5	53.7	55.6	51.9
Close friends	28.3	33.3	24.1	53.3	55.3	51.6
Parents	27.7	27.9	27.6	18.6	16.2	20.6
Brothers/ sisters	24.2	22.7	25.4	23.4	17.5	28.5
Children (for those having children)	23.3	17.7	27.1	21.9	14.8	26.8

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## Help seeking behavior (%)

By age group				By age group			
Top 5 parties	15-34	35-54	55 or above	Top 5 parties	15-34	35-54	55 or above
Financial problems				Emotional problems			
Parents	61.5	18.6	4.0	Parents	40.8	13.0	2.4
Brothers/ sisters	28.9	28.6	13.3	Brothers/ sisters	29.9	25.6	13.7
Spouse (for those married)	19.4	44.0	26.3	Spouse (for those married)	17.0	40.5	31.4
Children (for those having children)	0.0	10.2	54.9	Children (for those having children)	2.5	14.5	41.8
Close friends	42.3	29.4	12.1	Close friends	72.4	54.4	31.6

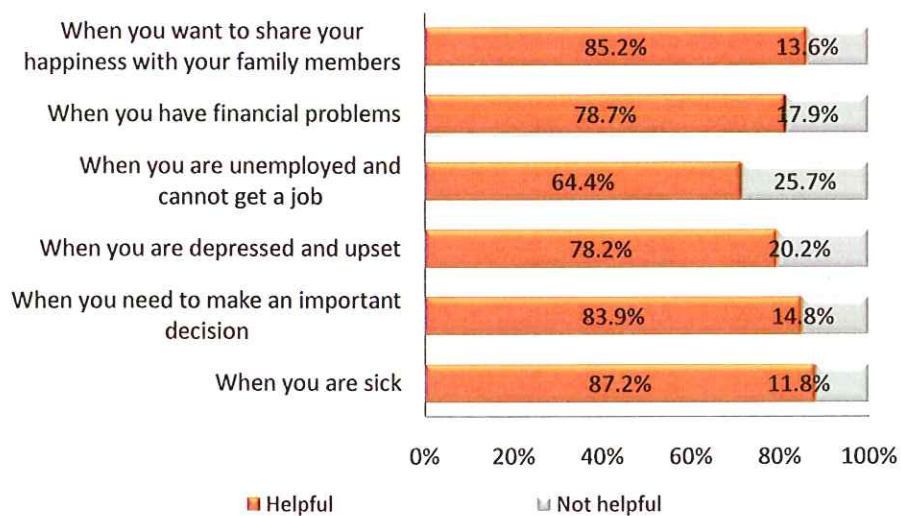
62

## *When problems encountered, family members were helpful and supportive*

- The respondents considered that their family members were supportive
  - a) when they were sick (72%)
  - b) when they wanted to share the happiness with their family members (67%)
  - c) when they needed to make an important decision (64%)
  - d) when they had financial problems (59%) and when they were depressed and upset (54%).

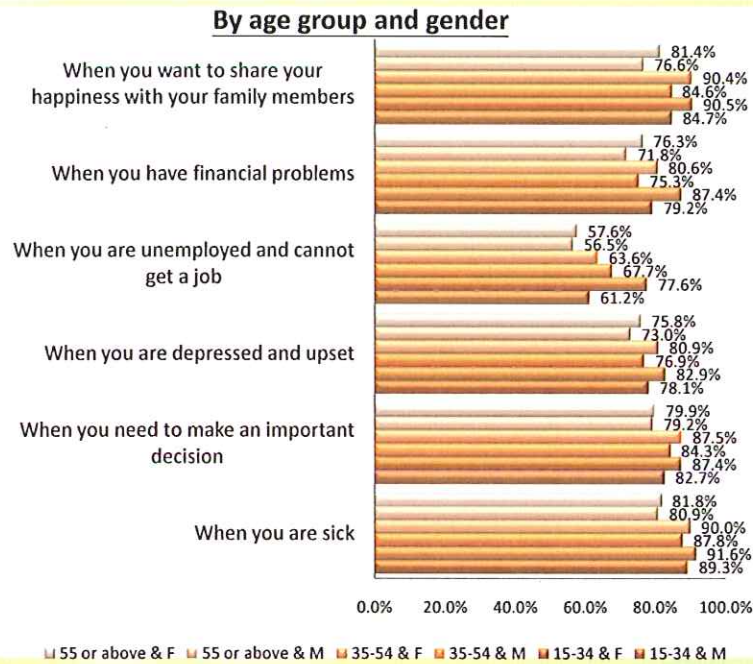
63

## **Availability of assistance (%)**



64

## Availability of assistance (%)



65

65

## Awareness and Participation of Family-related Programmes

66

66

***Half of the respondents were not aware of any family-related activities organized by the Government or NGOs***

- 50% of the respondents were not aware of such programmes.
- 40% had heard of such programmes but had not participated.
- Only 8% had participated in programmes organized by government or NGOs.

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**Awareness of family-related activities (%)**

**By gender**

	All	Male	Female
Participated in the activities/ programmes	7.8	6.6	8.9
I have heard about such activities/ programmes but did not participate	39.7	41.8	37.9
Not aware of those activities/ programmes	49.8	49.1	50.4

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## Awareness of family-related activities (%)

### By age group

	15-34	35-54	55 or above
Participated in the activities / programmes	4.1	10.5	8.2
I have heard about such activities/ programmes but did not participate	36.7	43.4	37.9
Not aware of those activities/ programmes	55.5	43.7	51.9

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### *Participation in family-related activities organized by government or NGOs correlated positively with traditional family values and satisfaction with family life*

- Those who had participated in such programmes rated the importance of all traditional family values as high.
- Likewise, those who are not aware of these programmes gave a lower importance rating for all core values.
- Similar pattern was also observed for rating on “satisfaction with family life”.

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## Correlation between family-related programmes and importance of family (%)

Family core value	Degree of importance	Participated in family-related programmes	Heard about family-related programmes but did not participate	Not aware of family-related programmes
Love	High	97.7	91.8	90.2
Care	High	96.1	91.8	90.7
Respect	High	96.1	92.0	91.3
Responsible	High	93.7	90.5	88.4
Filial piety	High	96.6	89.7	87.5
Tolerance	High	87.9	86.1	82.7
Communication	High	92.6	88.6	87
Harmony	High	93.8	89.9	88.5

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## Correlation between family-related programmes and satisfaction with family life (%)

Satisfaction with family life	Participated in family-related programmes	Heard about family-related programmes but did not participate	Not aware of family-related programmes
Satisfied	84.7	84.7	77.6
Average	12.8	12.2	17.6
Dissatisfied	2.5	2.4	4.0

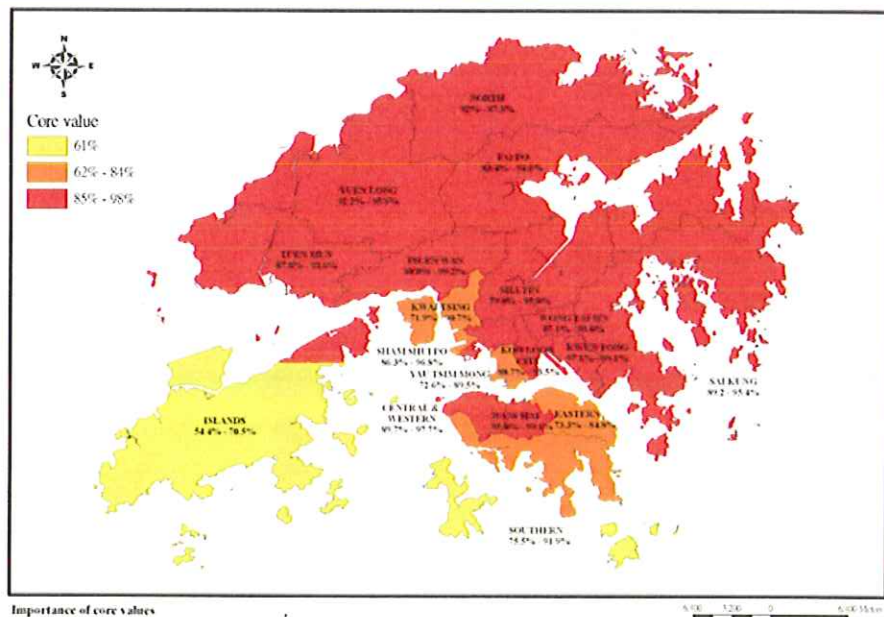
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# Analysis at District Level

## Importance of Core Values

Most people still considered family core values as important across all districts.



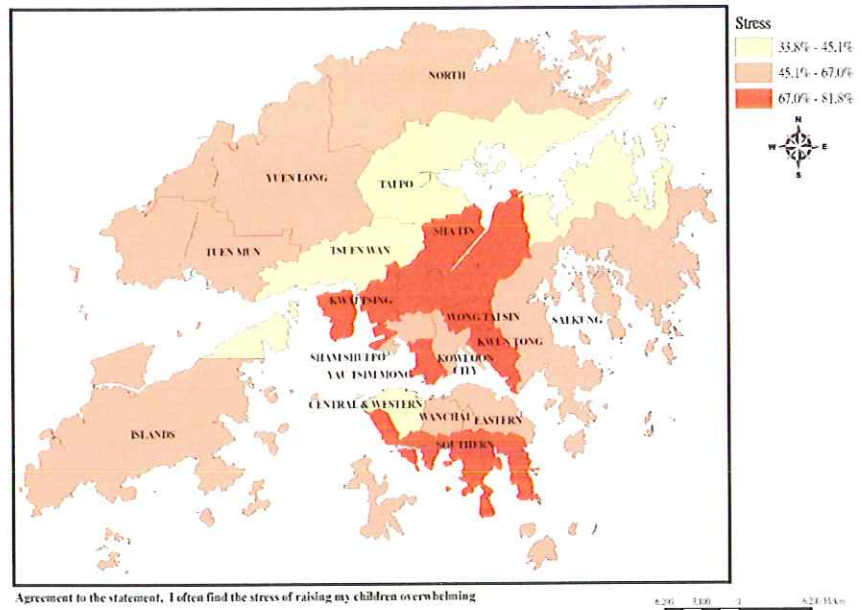
Importance of core values

## Stress of raising the children

A higher proportion of respondents living in

- Kwai Tsing (82%),
- Shatin (75%),
- Kwun Tong (74%),
- Wong Tai Sin (70%),
- Southern (70%) and
- Yau Tsim Mong (68%)

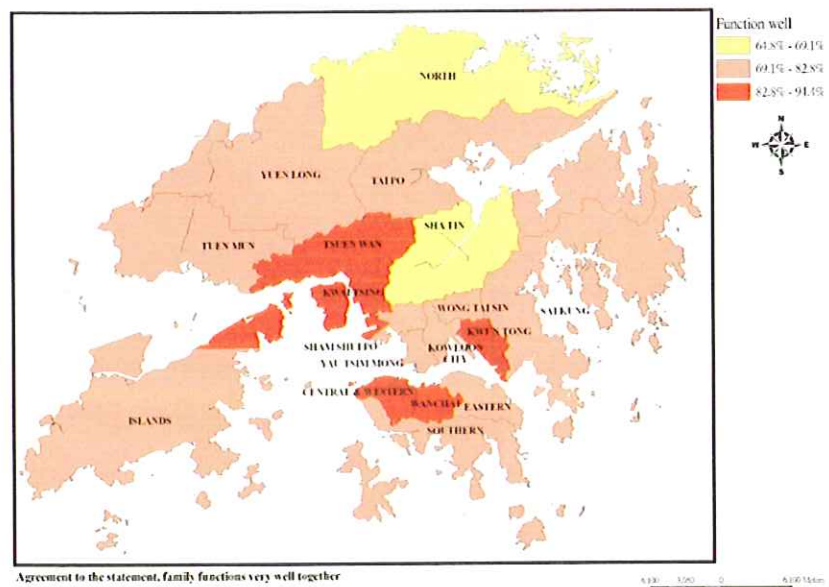
tended to find the stress of raising their children overwhelming.



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## Family functioning

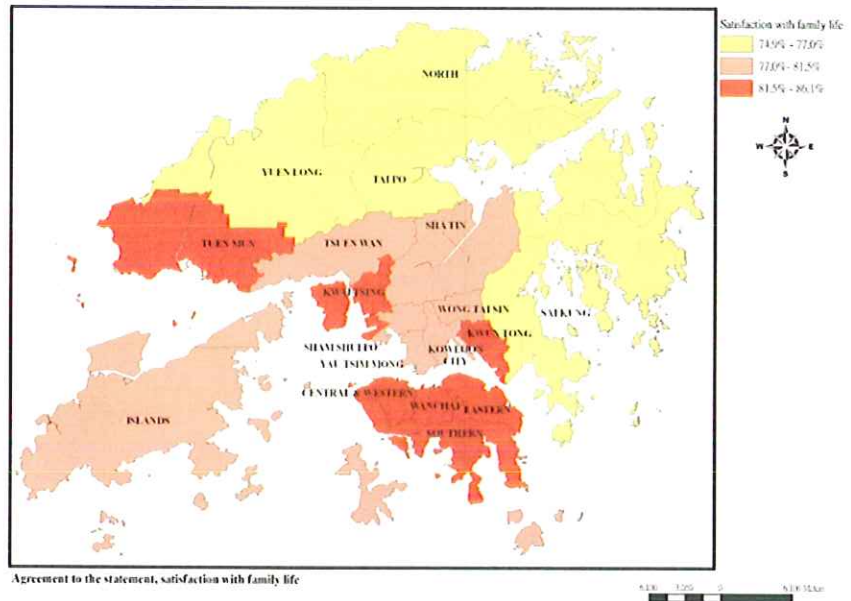
Most of the families functioned very well across all districts. Relatively speaking, North and Shatin had a highest proportion of respondents who reported their family does not function well together.



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## Satisfaction with Family Life

- Yuen Long (75%)
  - North (76%)
  - Sai Kung (76%) and
  - Tai Po (77%)
- had a relatively lower proportion of respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied with their family life.



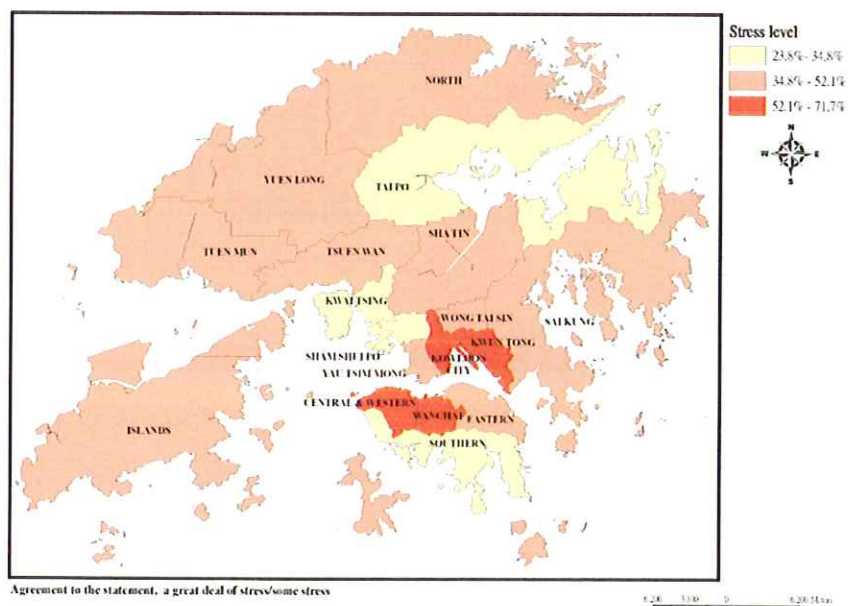
77

## Balancing Work and Family

Respondents living in

- Kowloon City (72%),
- Kwun Tong (59%),
- Wan Chai (58%) and
- Central & Western (56%)

were found more stressful to balance work and family.

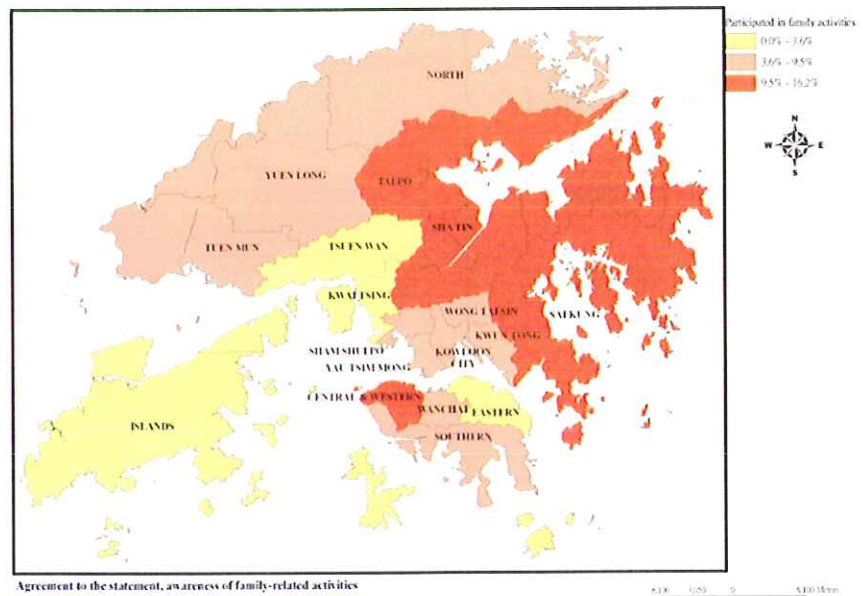


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## Awareness of Family-related Programmes

Participation rate for family-related programmes were the highest for respondents living in

- Shatin (16%),
- Tai Po (15%),
- Central and Western (13%)
- Sai Kung (12%)



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## Recommendations

- Promotion of Family-friendly Policy amongst employers on a continuous basis
- Strengthening of Parent Education
- Promotion of Family-related Activities

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