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Press Release

Lingnan University survey: Hong Kong people second happiest in seven years

Despite their dissatisfaction with the overall administration of public policy, the quality of public healthcare services, and other social problems, Hong Kong people are generally happier than last year, with the happiness index reaching 71.3, the second highest since 2005, the latest Hong Kong Happiness Index Survey reveals.

For the first time ever, young people aged below 30 are the happiest among the different age groups, with the index hitting 72.0, the highest in seven years. Females also reported a record-high happiness index of 73.6, which is far above the males' at 67.9.

Four key determinants of happiness, namely Love, Insight, Fortitude and Engagement (LIFE) were also surveyed. This year the scores for Love and Insight have slipped, Fortitude remained unchanged and Engagement soared (Please see Table 1 in Appendix). Engagement means having clear objectives in life and seizing opportunities to learn and fully utilise one's competences. It is also encouraging to see that the LIFE scores of the younger generation (those aged 21-29) have been rising steadily over the past four years (Please see Table 2 in Appendix).

Designed and conducted by the Centre for Public Policy Studies of Lingnan University, the Hong Kong Happiness Index Survey 2011 is the seventh of its kind. A total of 821 respondents aged 21 or above were interviewed by telephone through random sampling on 14-19 November.

Dissatisfaction with public governance prevails across all age groups

Respondents to the survey are generally dissatisfied with the administration of public policy in Hong Kong. All age groups have relatively low satisfaction on a scale of 0-10 (0-4 represents dissatisfaction while 6-10 denotes satisfaction). The highest reading came from those aged 50 or above, and it was a mere 5.01. Satisfaction levels of those aged 30-49 and below 30 read at 4.43 and 4.52 respectively.

The survey also finds that the better educated the respondents, the lower their satisfaction with the quality of public policy. However, university degree holders are somewhat more satisfied than those who only attained non-degree post-secondary education.

Mixed attitude towards cash handout

Many Hong Kong residents seem to have mixed feelings about the "Scheme \$6000"

cash handout programme. While most respondents would be happy if the cash rebates were made recurrent every year, nearly 80% of the respondents said they would rather see the billions of dollars involved to be spent on improving public healthcare services.

Fairly satisfied with healthcare services

According to the survey results, Hong Kong people are fairly satisfied with healthcare services. But they seem slightly more contented with private than with public healthcare services, with the former rated at 5.75 and the latter at 5.67.

When asked about their views on the proposed voluntary healthcare insurance programme, which will cost HK\$50 billion from public coffers in addition to private contributions, the respondents showed limited support. About 54% said they would rather see the funds to be allocated for enhancing public healthcare services.

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About Hong Kong Happiness Index Survey

Designed and conducted annually by the Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) of Lingnan University since 2005, the Hong Kong Happiness Index Survey traces and measures the level of happiness of Hong Kong residents on a scale of 0-100. Since 2008, the Survey also includes questions on Love, Insight, Fortitude and Engagement, the key elements of “mental capital” that help produce happiness.

Prof Ho Lok-sang, Director of the Centre for Public Policy Studies, would like to thank the Shih Wing Ching Foundation for its generous support to the survey this year.

About Centre for Public Policy Studies, Lingnan University

The Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) of Lingnan University was established in 1994 to provide coordination and support for public policy research and exchange of ideas pertinent to the Hong Kong context. Research fellows of the Centre have conducted research and published widely in many areas of public policy, including housing, labour, health, public finance, social security, industrial policy, and financial markets. Their expertise is widely recognised and provides a solid basis for both commissioned and self-initiated policy research.

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Appendix

Table 1: Engagement scores in Hong Kong Happiness Index Survey, 2008-2011

Year	Engagement score (Mean)	Number of respondents
2011	7.20	756
2010	6.73	808
2009	6.76	807
2008	6.29	793

Table 2: LIFE scores of respondents aged 21-29 in Hong Kong Happiness Index Survey, 2008-2011

Year	Love		Insight		Fortitude		Engagement	
	Score	Number	Score	Number	Score	Number	Score	Number
2011	7.64	144	6.90	144	7.13	144	7.35	143
2010	7.61	143	6.54	143	6.55	143	6.58	143
2009	7.02	181	6.88	175	6.63	152	6.84	180
2008	7.00	164	5.66	163	6.38	161	6.19	164