

# Thematic Household Survey Report No. 65 published

The Thematic Household Survey Report No. 65 is published by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) today (June 6).

This publication contains key findings of the Thematic Household Survey conducted during November 2017 to January 2018. The survey mainly collected information from Hong Kong residents on the educational history and employment profile of young and middle-aged persons (YMP), referring to persons aged 22 to 47 at the time of enumeration, i.e. those born between 1970 and 1995 (excluding foreign domestic helpers). At the time of enumeration, there were some 2 564 600 YMP in Hong Kong.

## Educational history

The survey results showed that at the time of enumeration, there were 1 266 700 (49.4%) YMP whose highest level of education completed was "secondary and below" (including "Diploma Yi Jin" and "craft level"), 268 700 (10.5%) YMP whose highest level of education completed was "post-secondary (non-degree)" (including technical/ vocational training) and 1 029 300 (40.1%) YMP whose highest level of education completed was "post-secondary (degree and above)".

Among the YMP whose highest level of education completed was "secondary and below", 356 700 (28.2%) had used various means, such as participation in occupation-related apprenticeship, acquisition of professional licences/ recognised qualifications, and participation in training of professional knowledge etc, to improve vocational skills. Among the YMP whose highest level of education completed was "post-secondary (non-degree)", the corresponding number was 59 800 (22.3%).

For the YMP whose highest level of education completed was "post-secondary (degree and above)", the majority (77.6%) had completed one degree course (including degree courses at bachelor, master and doctoral levels), 19.8% had completed two and 2.6% had completed three or more degree courses.

## Employment profile

The survey collected information regarding YMP's total duration of working experience accumulated in all full-time jobs in which YMP had been engaged for 6 months and over (referred to as "full-time working experience" hereunder), as well as information regarding the first full-time job in which YMP had been engaged for 6 months and over (referred to as "first full-time job" hereunder) and the full-time job in which YMP had been engaged at the time of enumeration for 6 months and over (referred to as "current full-time job" hereunder).

Of the 2 564 600 YMP, 2 331 300 (90.9%) ever had full-time working

experience, whereas 233 300 (9.1%) never had. At the time of enumeration, 1 880 400 YMP (73.3%) had a full-time job, with median monthly employment earnings at \$20,200. Employment earnings of YMP tended to increase with educational attainment. For those employed YMP whose highest level of education completed at the time of taking up their current full-time job were "secondary and below", "post-secondary (non-degree)" and "post-secondary (degree and above)", the median monthly employment earnings at the time of enumeration was \$16,800, \$19,200 and \$26,800 respectively.

YMP generally satisfied with current full-time job

Of those 1 880 400 YMP having a full-time job at the time of enumeration, over half (57.0%) of them were very satisfied or quite satisfied with their job, while only 2.2% were very dissatisfied or quite dissatisfied. Meanwhile, 40.7% considered job satisfaction as average. The level of job satisfaction was generally higher for employed YMP with higher educational attainment.

YMP with higher educational attainment or longer duration of working experience more likely to experience upward occupational mobility

By comparing the occupation that YMP were engaged in the current full-time job with that in the first full-time job, an attempt was made to study their occupational mobility. Among the 1 880 400 YMP having a full-time job at the time of enumeration, 1 307 100 (69.5%) had ever changed job since they took up the first full-time job. In particular, 296 100 YMP had experienced a relatively substantial upward occupational mobility, meaning that they were engaged in high-skilled occupation groups of managers and administrators; professionals and associate professionals for the current full-time job but in occupation groups of lower skills for the first full-time job. Meanwhile, it should be noted that, for YMP whose first and current full-time jobs were both in high-skilled occupation groups or both in non-high-skilled occupation groups, they might have also experienced occupational mobility, upward or downward, to certain extent.

Educational attainment and working experience may have an effect on the prospect of YMP to move upward in the occupation ladder. Among those 296 100 employed YMP with relatively substantial upward occupational mobility, a higher proportion of them (68.9%) had completed post-secondary education. This compared to 55.8% for all employed YMP taken together. Those employed YMP with relatively substantial upward occupational mobility also tended to have longer duration of full-time working experience, with 26.1% of them having full-time working experience of 20 years and over. The corresponding proportion for all employed YMP taken together was 19.3%.

YMP more likely to be engaged in jobs matching with their educational attainment upon accumulating more working experience

Results of the survey showed that, at the time of taking up their current full-time job, about 30% (29.9%) of YMP employees whose highest level of education completed was "post-secondary (degree and above)" were engaged in job with lower academic requirement than their educational attainment. As

for YMP employees whose highest level of education completed was "post-secondary (non-degree)", the corresponding proportion was about 50% (49.2%). The two proportions were both lower than the corresponding proportions (at 41.6% and 55.6% respectively) when similar comparison is made in respect of the first full-time job of YMP employees. This reflected that with the accumulation of working experience, it became more common for YMP employees to be engaged in jobs that matched with their educational attainment.

#### Effect of family background

The survey also collected information about the family background of the YMP in an attempt to study how the socio-economic characteristics of YMP were related to those of their parents.

YMP more likely to have completed higher education if parents had completed higher education

Amidst the expansion in education opportunities over the past few decades, the highest level of education completed by YMP was in general higher than their parents.

Yet the survey results showed that the educational attainment of YMP was correlated with that of their parents to some extent. Among those YMP whose father had completed post-secondary education at degree level, 85.2% attained such level of education as well. As for those YMP whose father had completed primary education and below, only 25.4% attained post-secondary education at degree level. A similar picture was observed when comparing the highest level of education completed by YMP and their mother.

YMP more likely to be engaged in high-skilled occupation groups if parents had worked in high-skilled occupation groups when they were young

Along with the higher demand for working population with better knowledge and skills as a result of the structural change of Hong Kong towards a knowledge-based economy, the proportion of employed YMP engaging in high-skilled occupation groups increased notably in the past few decades. The proportion of employed YMP engaging in high-skilled occupation groups was higher than their father when YMP were 15 years old (46.2% vs 19.5%).

Notwithstanding the above, the survey results showed that the occupation of YMP was somewhat correlated with that of their parents. For employed YMP whose father had worked in non-high-skilled occupation groups when YMP were 15 years old, 8.9% to 13.6% of them worked as managers and administrators; and 26.4% to 39.4% as professionals and associate professionals at the time of enumeration. As for those employed YMP whose father had worked in high-skilled occupation groups, notably higher proportions worked as managers and administrators (26.4%); and professionals and associate professionals (43.2%) at the time of enumeration. When comparing the occupation groups of employed YMP and their mother, except that more than half (53.8%) of YMP's mother were non-working when the YMP were 15 years old, a similar picture was also observed.

## Self-perceived social class and degree of life satisfaction

YMP in the enumerated households were also asked about their self-perceived social class and degree of life satisfaction in the survey. As the rate of non-response of these opinion-type questions was relatively high, the results should be interpreted with caution.

Among YMP respondents who answered the questions on self-perceived social class, less than 1% (0.4%) perceived themselves as upper class; 5.3% perceived themselves as upper middle class; 40.3% as middle class; 34.8% as lower middle class; and 19.1% as lower class.

In rating their degree of satisfaction with their current life, YMP respondents were asked to give a score from 0 to 10. The degree of satisfaction gradually increased from 0 score (meaning that they were not at all satisfied with life) to 10 scores (meaning that they were completely satisfied with life). Among those YMP who answered this question, the average score was 6.2, with 2.5% giving 10 scores; 43.4% giving 7 to 9 scores; 47.0% giving 4 to 6 scores, 6.0% giving 1 to 3 scores and 1.1% giving 0 score.

## Other information

The survey successfully enumerated target respondents in some 10 000 households in accordance with a scientific sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong.

Detailed findings of the survey, together with the population coverage and concepts/definitions of key terms, are presented in the publication. Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp140.jsp?productCode=B1130201](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp140.jsp?productCode=B1130201)).

Enquiries about the contents of the publication can be directed to the Social Surveys Section (2) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 0592 or email: [thematic@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:thematic@censtatd.gov.hk)).