

2014 Hong Kong Social Harmony Survey Report

Survey organized and published by :

Hong Kong Professionals and Senior Executives Association

Survey commissioned to :

School of Business, Hang Seng Management College



December 2014

Executive Summary

A. Basic Information

This survey has as its starting point the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's governing principle of building a harmonious society. It aims at understanding Hong Kong people's perception of social harmony in their society and exploring factors affecting social harmony as well as the extent of their influence.

Hong Kong Professionals and Senior Executives Association (HKPASEA) have been conducting the Hong Kong Social Harmony Survey bi-annually since 2006. This is the fifth survey in the series. Results of this survey were compared with those in previous surveys in order to understand the variations over time in people's perception of social harmony¹ and to explore the underlying factors. Recommendations on improving social harmony are proposed to the HKSAR Government.

B. Survey Methodology and Results

The survey fieldwork was conducted during 28 July to 13 August 2014. A sample of 1,051 local residents aged over 18 was interviewed in 30 systematically selected locations throughout Hong Kong. This sample was drawn up based on quota sampling by age, gender and family size.

Returns of questionnaire with serious omissions were discarded, leaving a total of 1,012 usable

¹For consistency with the previous surveys, interviewers did not provide any explanation of the concept and definition when they mentioned the term "harmony" during the intercepted-interview. Instead, interviewees were free to express their views on "harmony" based on their own understanding.

questionnaires for further analysis (the useable rate: 96.29%) at a confidence level of 95% and sampling error of $\pm 3.14\%$.

C. Survey Results

Overview

Evaluation of Social Harmony

	2012 Survey Result	2014 Survey Result		Low Harmony (0-3)	Medium Harmony (4-6)	High Harmony (7-10)
Current Social Harmony Index	4.58	4.33		31.8%	57.0%	11.2%
			Average	Weaken (-1)	Unchanged (0)	Strengthen (1)
Current social harmony situation, compared with that of two years before			-0.57	67.1%	22.6%	10.3%
Social harmony situation two years later compared with the current situation			-0.48	61.2%	25.5%	13.3%

Satisfaction Ratings of the Three Factors Affecting Social Harmony

Aspects of Governance	Average
The government maintains a sound legal system, including protection of personal freedom and property	5.12
The government maintains the freedom of markets, speech & media	4.79
The government remains corruption-free	4.75
The government seeks political harmony and reduces conflict	4.68
The government maintains a just administration	4.55
The government maintains an open attitude, and encourages the public to participate in formulation of public policy	4.46
The government maintains good relationship with its citizens	4.37
The government has vision and a sense of direction	4.37
The government's policy-making is transparent	4.36
The government holds itself accountable and shoulders responsibility	4.30
The government is sincere in communicating with people with different views	4.26
The government's effort in promoting democracy	4.20
The government maintains a level playing field and does not side with the business sector	4.19

Aspects of Society	Average
Diverse and Pluralistic (race, religion & culture)	5.65
Energetic	5.38
Contribution (including donations & voluntary work etc.)	5.36
Caring for the Environment	5.32
Innovative and progressive	5.29
Complimentary (openly praise good people & good deeds)	5.14
Optimistic and Positive	5.12
Team spirit and cohesion	5.06
Credibility and integrity	5.00
Mutual aid	4.92
Tolerant (accepting differences in opinion, forgiving & sympathetic)	4.89
Rational discussion and expression of ideas	4.87
Mutual respect	4.82
Mutual trust (trust between different levels of society & communities)	4.70
Aspects of Economy, Family & Work	Average
Harmony and cohesion within the family	5.33
Economic development	5.15
Employment opportunities	5.13
Personal job satisfaction	5.10
Employment relations	4.96
Protection of worker rights	4.94
Concern for People's Livelihood (helping the disadvantaged & the low-income group)	4.65
Distribution of wealth and income	4.39
Relationship between the public and large business conglomerates	4.19

Analysis by Subgroups (Part 1)

		Current Social Harmony Index	Ratings on poverty alleviation, care for the elderly and support for the disadvantaged	Ratings on nurturing the next generation
Gender	Male	-	4.87	4.87
	Female	-	5.12	5.13
Age	18-29	4.11	4.79	4.87
	30-39	4.31	4.80	4.79
	40-49	4.24	4.69	4.71
	50-59	4.21	5.16	5.19
	60 or above	4.74	5.54	5.47
Educational Level	Primary or below	4.73	5.57	5.58
	Secondary	4.28	4.89	4.90
	Non-degree Tertiary Education	4.21	4.99	5.12
	University	4.28	4.80	4.77
	Master/Doctoral	3.94	5.88	5.56
Career	Manager or executive	-	-	-
	Professional	-	-	-
	Associate Professional	-	-	-
	Clerk	-	-	-
	Service-related job or sales	-	-	-
	Mechanic operation or installation technicians	-	-	-
	Non-technical worker or primary industry worker	-	-	-
	Businessmen	-	-	-
	Students	-	-	-
	Homemakers	-	-	-
	Retired	-	-	-
	Unemployed	-	-	-
Personal Income	Less than \$10,000	-	-	-
	\$10,000 - \$19,999	-	-	-
	\$20,000 - \$29,999	-	-	-
	\$30,000 or above	-	-	-

	Less than \$10,000	-	-	-
	\$10,000 - \$19,999	-	-	-
Family Income	\$20,000 - \$29,999	-	-	-
	\$30,000 - \$39,999	-	-	-
	\$40,000 or above	-	-	-
	Private housing purchased by oneself or family members	-	-	-
	Rental public housing	-	-	-
Residence	Rental private housing	-	-	-
	Public housing bought by oneself or family members	-	-	-
	Others (e.g. hostel, service apartment)	-	-	-
	1-2	4.24	-	4.82
Family Size	3-4	4.29	-	5.04
	5 or above	4.64	-	5.24

Note: Insignificant difference ($p < .05$) among groups is shown as ‘-’.

Analysis by Subgroups (Part 2)

		Ratings on land & housing	Ratings on transport	Ratings on environmental protection and conservation
Gender	Male	-	-	-
	Female	-	-	-
Age	18-29	3.72	4.71	4.76
	30-39	4.01	4.79	4.72
	40-49	3.98	4.73	4.73
	50-59	4.33	5.26	5.16
	60 or above	4.79	5.63	5.49
Educational Level	Primary or below	4.84	5.51	5.49
	Secondary	4.13	4.98	4.94
	Non-degree Tertiary Education	3.92	4.88	4.94
	University	4.00	4.86	4.73
	Master/Doctoral	4.13	5.69	5.38
Career	Manager or executive	4.08	4.98	4.80
	Professional	4.11	4.91	4.77
	Associate Professional	4.32	5.61	5.50
	Clerk	3.67	4.38	4.39
	Service-related job or sales	4.39	4.86	4.97
	Mechanic operation or installation technicians	4.16	5.18	5.02
	Non-technical worker or primary industry worker	3.78	5.14	5.04
	Businessmen	4.13	5.07	5.11
	Students	4.04	4.90	4.87
	Homemakers	4.01	5.38	5.19
	Retired	4.64	5.55	5.44
	Unemployed	4.80	5.33	5.47
Personal Income	Less than \$10,000	-	5.24	5.21
	\$10,000 - \$19,999	-	4.67	4.59
	\$20,000 - \$29,999	-	5.00	4.99
	\$30,000 or above	-	5.13	4.96

	Less than \$10,000	4.19	-	5.44
	\$10,000 - \$19,999	3.74	-	4.83
Family Income	\$20,000 - \$29,999	4.06	-	4.61
	\$30,000 - \$39,999	4.22	-	4.91
	\$40,000 or above	4.35	-	5.20
	Private housing bought by myself or family members	-	5.07	-
	Renting public housing	-	4.87	-
Residence	Renting private housing	-	5.56	-
	Public housing bought by myself or family members	-	4.86	-
	Others (e.g. hostel, service apartment)	-	4.54	-
	1-2	-	-	-
Family Size	3-4	-	-	-
	5 or above	-	-	-

Note: Insignificant difference ($p < .05$) among groups is shown as '-'.

Analysis by Subgroups (Part 3)

		Ratings on healthcare	Ratings on culture, leisure and municipal services	Ratings on administrative & constitutional development
Gender	Male	-	-	-
	Female	-	-	-
Age	18-29	5.27	5.01	4.02
	30-39	5.16	4.99	4.54
	40-49	4.97	4.90	4.45
	50-59	5.57	5.48	5.08
	60 or above	5.83	5.70	5.36
Educational Level	Primary or below	-	5.68	5.45
	Secondary	-	5.16	4.62
	Non-degree Tertiary Education	-	5.10	4.62
	University	-	5.08	4.44
	Master/Doctoral	-	6.19	4.69
Career	Manager or executive	5.33	5.12	4.80
	Professional	5.41	5.22	4.51
	Associate Professional	5.57	5.36	4.79
	Clerk	4.94	4.83	4.23
	Service-related job or sales	5.29	5.12	4.86
	Mechanic operation or installation technicians	5.05	5.44	5.22
	Non-technical worker or primary industry worker	5.25	4.89	4.31
	Businessmen	5.26	5.20	4.69
	Students	5.30	5.08	4.19
	Homemakers	5.68	5.77	4.94
	Retired	5.79	5.53	5.07
	Unemployed	6.00	5.86	5.48
	Personal Income	Less than \$10,000	5.58	5.38
\$10,000 - \$19,999		4.96	4.97	-
\$20,000 - \$29,999		5.37	5.07	-
\$30,000 or above		5.44	5.35	-

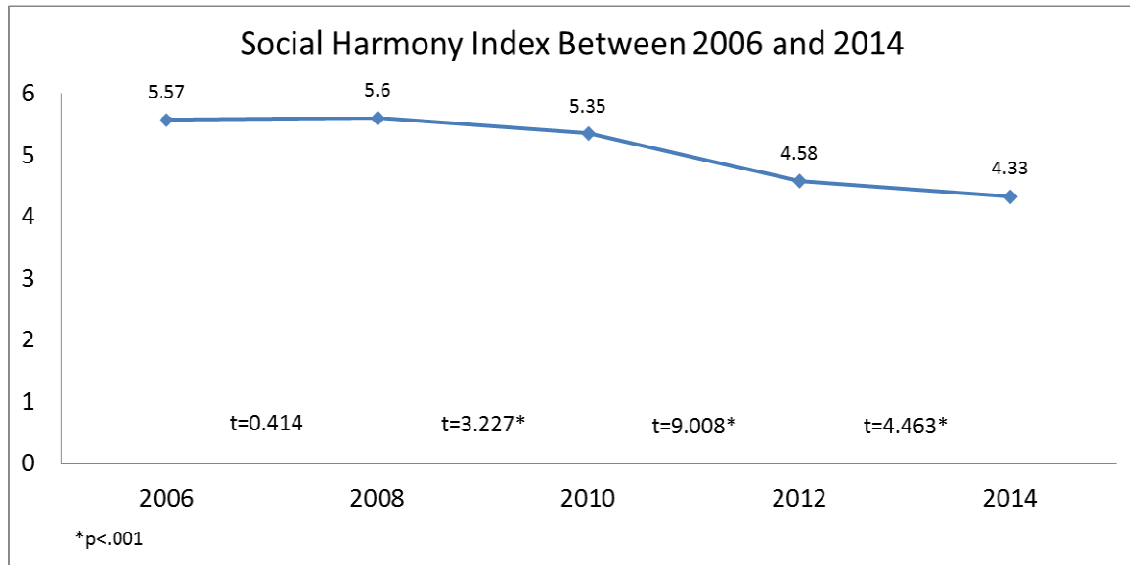
	Less than \$10,000	-	-	-
	\$10,000 - \$19,999	-	-	-
Family Income	\$20,000 - \$29,999	-	-	-
	\$30,000 - \$39,999	-	-	-
	\$40,000 or above	-	-	-
	Private housing bought by oneself or family members	-	-	-
	Rental public housing	-	-	-
Residence	Rental private housing	-	-	-
	Public housing bought by oneself or family members	-	-	-
	Others (e.g. hostel, service apartment)	-	-	-
	1-2	5.07	4.96	4.52
Family Size	3-4	5.47	5.26	4.73
	5 or above	5.60	5.55	4.91

Note: Insignificant difference ($p < .05$) among groups is shown as '-'.

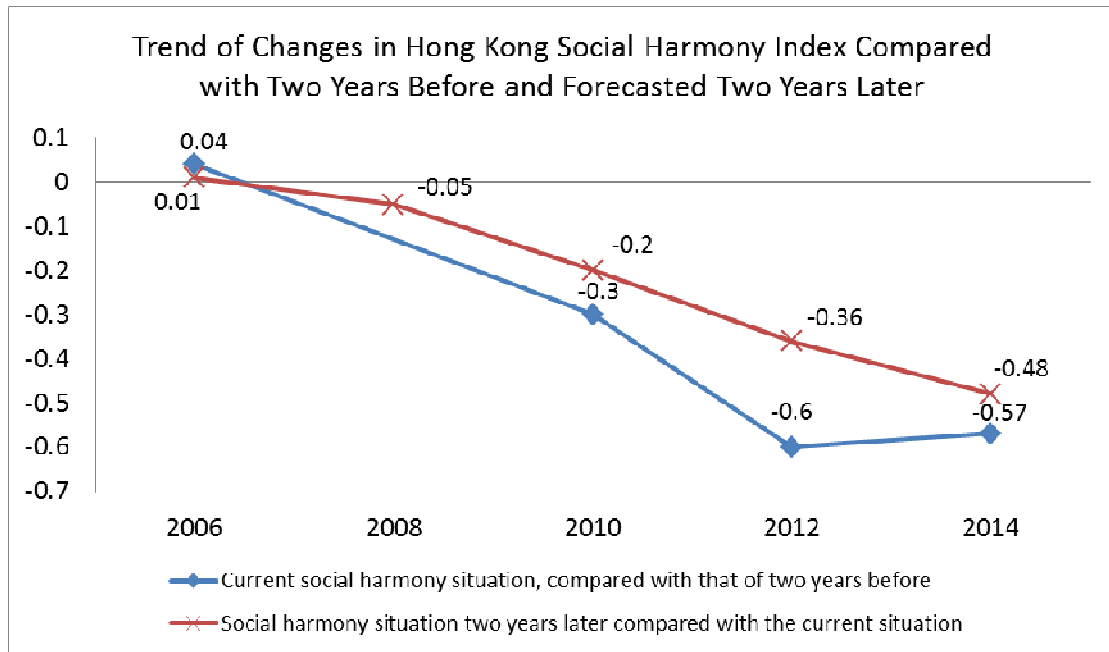
Descriptive Survey Results: Evaluation of the Hong Kong Social Harmony Index

The Social Harmony Index in 2014 is 4.33, which is below the medium level. In the five surveys since 2006, the Social Harmony Index was stable in the first three surveys. The Index first fell below the medium level in 2012 and declined further in the present survey. Reviewing the results of the 2012 survey, 55.3% of respondents thought then that social harmony two years later would be weaker. Given the average of -0.30^2 , respondents in the 2012 survey held the view that social harmony in 2014 would be weaker than in 2012. The latest survey finding indicates that the Social Harmony Index is lower than that in 2012

² Given the value of “weaken” is -1, “remain unchanged” is 0 and “strengthen” is 1. Please note that the value of “remain unchanged” is 0 does not mean that the item is meaningless. Instead, it means that respondents think that the social harmony situation remains unchanged compared with that of two years before.



Respondents considered that social harmony was relatively weak two years ago and expected it to remain weak two years after. The average of the Social Harmony Index in comparing with that two years before and the two years following is -0.57 and -0.48 respectively. Both values are negative, which implies that the perceived social harmony was weakened in the two years before and is expected to remain in a weak position for the coming two years. However, the value of a lower social harmony score is comparatively smaller between the past and the next two years. Among the five surveys between 2006 and 2014, the average has fallen below zero since 2008. These figures suggested that the drop in social harmony is expected by the majority of respondents.



D. Integrated Analysis and Policy Recommendations

I. Integrated Analysis

- 1) **It is the second time that the Social Harmony Index falls below 5 (4.33) in 2014 indicating a medium-low level of social harmony**

The Social Harmony Index was flat for the earlier surveys. The index fell below 5 for the first time in 2012 and slightly further to 4.33 in 2014. The current Social Harmony Index was lower by 0.25 points compared with that of 2012. It is worth noting that the majority of respondents (31.8%) this year gave the Social Harmony Index a lower score (0-3) while the minority (11.2%) gave the Index a higher score (7-10). The percentage of respondents giving a medium score (4-6) was approximately the same as in the last survey at 56.9%.

Reviewing the survey results of 2012, respondents at that time thought that the social harmony

index would drop two years later (average -0.36). The latest survey result has vindicated that belief.

In the 2014 survey, the majority of respondents (61.2%) also believe that the Social Harmony Index will drop further with an average change of -0.48. To conclude, respondents hold a pessimistic view of the current social harmony situation and the change in social harmony in the coming two years.

2) Public Governance Dimension: Ratings of all items fell by different extent

Satisfaction ratings of all thirteen items in Public Governance dimension fell by different extent (ranging from -5.3% to -17.7%) compared with the result in 2012. It reflects a weakening in the respondents' satisfaction with various aspects of governance. Ratings and rankings of "The government maintains good relationship with its citizens" (-17.7% and a drop by 4 ranks compared with 2012) and "The government maintains a level playing field and prevents collusion with the business sector" (-16.0% and a drop by 5 ranks) decrease significantly, calling for greater attention by the Government on these two items. According to the factor analysis, "The government's effort in promoting democracy" (0.842), "The government's policy-making is transparent" (0.831) and "The government maintains an open attitude, and encourages the public to participate in civil affairs" (0.827) are the three top-weighted factors among all items in Public Governance and assuming greater importance than the rest of the Public Governance factors.

3) Society Dimension: Ratings of 70% of the items fell by different extent

Among the nine different items in Society dimension, only four items' ratings slightly increase

while the overall satisfaction is weaker compared with the result in 2012. "Mutual trust (trust between different levels of society & communities)" increases by the largest extent (+6.3%) and yet it ranks lowest in terms of sub-item rankings, which calls for concern. On the other hand, "Diversity and multi-values (race, religion & culture)" remains at the top of the ratings, although its sub-item rating decreases by the largest extent (-12.5%). According to the factor analysis, "Energetic" (0.811), "Team spirit and cohesion" (0.789) and "Credibility" (0.780) are the three top-weighted factors among all items and reflect the importance of these sub-items in Society dimension.

4) Economy, Family and Work Dimension: Downward trend in items' ratings

In the nine items of the "Economy, Family and Work" dimension, the decrease in the satisfaction rating of "Employment Opportunities" is very obvious (-8.4%). Though the satisfaction rating of "Relationship between the public and large business groups" has risen (4.19, 16.1%), it ranked last in all the surveys. According to the factor analysis, "Employment relations" (0.755), "Protection of worker rights" (0.741) and "Personal job satisfaction" (0.685) are the three top-weighted factors and reflects their importance in the "Economy, Family and Work" dimension.

5) Youngsters are pessimistic about Hong Kong's social development

Based on the demographic analysis, 72.8% and 67.2% of young respondents aged 18-29 think that the current social harmony situation has worsened compared with the situation two years

before and will further worsen in two years' time. These percentages are significantly higher than the other age groups.

In terms of satisfaction with Government's policies, young respondents' (aged 18-29) satisfaction ratings for "housing land supply" (3.72) and "administrative & constitutional development" (4.02) are significantly lower than the other age groups.

To conclude, youngsters (aged 18-29) are more pessimistic about the change in social harmony compared with the other age groups.

6) Multiple Regression Analysis: Public Governance factor impacts more on social harmony than the Society factor; while Economy, Family and Work factor is the third influential factor.

Using factor analysis, 36 items of three factors (Public Governance, Society, Economic, Family and Work) are re-categorized. On this basis, using the multiple regression analysis, the research team examined the impact of demographic characteristics and these three different factors on social harmony. The results show that these three factors exhibit a significant positive relationship with the Social Harmony Index. The reported beta values are 0.486, 0.336 and 0.227 respectively which means increasing each of these factors by one unit, the Social Harmony Index will increase by 0.486, 0.336 and 0.227 units correspondingly.

Unlike the survey results in 2012, Public Governance replaces Society as the factor that impacts most on social harmony. Economy, Family and Work's impact is less than Public Governance

and Society. In general, respondents tend to evaluate social harmony from the perspective of governance first; social factor comes second while personal factor is also important.

II. Policy Recommendations

Based on the above statistical analyses and the underlying factors in Public Governance, Society and Economy, Family and Work that affect the current social harmony of Hong Kong, the six critical items with the lowest ratings or biggest drop in ratings are “The Government maintains a level playing field and prevents collusion with the business sector”, “The Government is willing to communicate with people with different views”, “Mutual trust”, “Mutual respect”, “Distribution of wealth and income” and “Relationship between the public and large business groups”. Their correlation coefficients are considerably high from 0.457 to 0.833 (correlation coefficients range from -1 to 1, the higher the value, the higher the correlation coefficients). It shows that they are greatly interrelated. In light of the above, HKPASEA submits to the Government the following recommendations:

1) Improve transparency of administration and Strengthen communication with different parties

HKPASEA recommends the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government should, having regard to the above correlations, enhance the transparency of its administration, report its work regularly, and strengthen the interaction with different parties. This would help citizens understand that the Government is trying hard to balance the interests of different

stakeholders while striving for the good of the entire society. The Government has to gain the understanding and support from Hong Kong citizens in promoting social harmony.

The Association also recommends the HKSAR Government to strengthen its policy research and public opinion polling to get a better grasp of public aspirations, advantages and disadvantages of related policies and public acceptance of new policies. When conducting the policy research, the Government is advised to retain the services of independent bodies with credibility whilst a dedicated unit such as the Central Policy Unit should be responsible for coordinating and assisting the policy bureaux in the publication and promotion of their policies. Policy research analysis and public opinion poll data will become the foundation of policy implementation. These measures will demonstrate the serious attention the Government pays to voices from different groups in the society.

Moreover, the Government is recommended to enhance the current consultation mechanism so as to coordinate the recommended policy research and public opinion poll through different channels like media, new electronic media, and social network to deepen and extend the explanation and communication at the district level. Special attention has to be paid on policy consultation works with a high public expectation such as “housing land supply” (4.17), “administration and constitutional development” (4.69), and “environmental protection and conservation” (4.98) (see Chapter 3.5 for details). The Government is encouraged to sincerely communicate with different stakeholders especially youngsters (aged 18-29) in the society and promote a balanced social

participation to show its sincerity in communication and solicit citizens' supports.

2) Maintain fair competition: Create opportunities

The Association recommends the Government to enhance its promotion in newly added measures and regulations on fair competition and strengthen its helps and support to Hong Kong enterprises especially the small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs). Sustainable economic development has to be propelled by creating business opportunities, expanding rooms for business development, and providing more job opportunities. By using the visible market and job opportunities to raise the citizens' confidence in Hong Kong is beneficial to building a harmonious society.

3) Proactively promote livelihood measures that are beneficial to social development

It is worth noting that the rating on "Distribution of wealth and income" under the Economy, Family & Work dimension is relatively low in this year's survey. The Association suggests the Government continues to improve the livelihood of grass-root families. The Government has to help the grass-root families leave the social security "safety net" through education or re-training and regain their confidence in the future and enthusiasm for living. It helps to eliminate the negative emotions found in society and is favorable to the harmonious development of Hong Kong.