

家庭是否還是青少年成長的支柱？

Is the Hong Kong Family the Cornerstone
of Adolescent Development?

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Is the Hong Kong Family the Cornerstone of Adolescent Development?

Summary Report

1 Introduction

The family is usually assumed to be the most basic and most important agent of socialization in the development of young people. Hence, young people's problems are usually blamed on the influence of their family. But in the absence of valid and reliable research it is difficult for us to be sure of the true strength of family influence. This question is of crucial importance to social workers, parents teachers and policy makers.

The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups has launched this survey in the International Year of the Family, as the first Youth Study Series of the year. It is hoped that it will add to our knowledge about young people's family relationships, family expectations and satisfaction, and also to developing measures in different areas such as those of psychological well-being, achievement motivation, interpersonal relationships, sexual identity and attitude to sex.

2 Objectives

The major aim of the study is to ascertain whether the family is critical in adolescent development. If it is, what kind of factors are they and how do they affect young people's development?

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- (1) explore the family relationships of the adolescent;
- (2) explore the adolescent's developmental status in the areas of psychological well-being, achievement motivation, interpersonal relationships, sexual identity and attitude to sex;
- (3) explore the relationship between developmental status and family factors.

3 Methodology

3.1 Target of Study

The major target of study was Hong Kong adolescents aged from 12 to 17. For the sake of sampling convenience, all respondents were selected from full-time secondary schools in Hong Kong. So the age bracket was not clear-cut and some of the respondents fell outside of the age range.

Using the secondary school population instead of the whole population was a compromise both of limited resources and manpower. Since the school attendance rate in the age range is quite high, the sample population was quite representative of the whole population.

3.2 Sampling

The survey used a *stratified cluster sampling* method to obtain a sample of respondents. The first level sampling frame was 448 full-time secondary schools in Hong Kong, excluding those on the out-lying islands and the international schools. All schools were stratified by school types and geographical districts. Thirty sample schools and another thirty for replacement were selected by random method. The second level of sampling was to select one to three classes among form 1 to form 5 in the schools which gave a positive reply, depending on the size of the school. Then trained interviewers were sent to administer the *self-report questionnaires* to each class.

In the end, 26 schools supported the study and 55 classes were surveyed. *The number of effective questionnaires was 2,087.* There were 24 unfinished questionnaires.

The limitation of the sampling:

- (1) Not all adolescents in the age range had an equal opportunity to be selected in the sample: This was, to a certain extent, a limitation of the cluster sampling method. This was also a compromise because of limited resources.
- (2) The secondary sample frame was the school class and this produced an age bias: the age of the students in different forms was not clear-cut, so the age of our sample was quite centralized at the age of 13 to 16.
- (3) Due to the inability to control the response from the schools, the respondents from private schools were under-sampled.
- (4) As form 5 students were busy working for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination, they were difficult to contact and under-sampled.

In general, the sample of the survey was representative. With a sample of 2,087 cases, the sampling error was less than 2.15%.

3.3 The Questionnaire

The survey used a *closed-end structured questionnaire* to collect data. Respondents were requested to *self-report* in school time with explanation and assistance from our trained interviewers.

Contents of the questionnaires:

- (1) The background information of the respondent;
- (2) The family status: composition, parents' background, relations with siblings, relations between parents, the level of concern from parents, the acceptance of control of the respondents, parents' performance on child-rearing practice, the motivation to seek help from parents, parent-child conflicts and management, the happiness in the family and general marking for parents.
- (3) Psychological well-being: using the *General Health Questionnaires 12* of Goldberg and a self-developed *achievement motivation scale* for test.
- (4) Interpersonal relationships: using the *UCLA Loneliness Scale* and questions about the number of friends to test the interpersonal relationships.
- (5) Sexual identity and attitudes to sex: questions about changing sex if possible, opinion on gender equality, the motivation to get along with opposite sex, attitudes towards various level of sexual contacts and help-seeking behaviour with problems to do with.

The reliability test of the various scales used in the questionnaires showed satisfactory level of internal reliability in these scales.

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Reliability Coefficient Cronbach's alpha</i>
Parent Concern	10	.8114
Acceptance of Control (respondents')	10	.8869
Performance of Child-rearing Practice	12	.8404
Psychological Well-being (GHQ 12)	12	.8385
Achievement Motivation	8	.8016
Interpersonal Relationship (Loneliness Scale)	20	.8774

4 Background Information of the Respondents

4.1 In view of the background information given by the respondents, the sample was quite balanced in different aspects. The gender ratio was fifty-fifty. The age distribution was a bit centralized between 13 to 16 and the mean age was 14.4.

4.2 Except for the under-sampled form 5 students, the respondents from form 1 to form 4 were quite evenly distributed. So, the sample can be representative for the students of this age.

4.3 Information about family status helped us to identify various types of families, for example, single parent families, single child families, different sizes of family, different numbers of siblings, whether living with parents, etc. These offered many platforms of analysis in the following sections.

5 Family Relationships

5.1 For sibling relationships, 58.8 per cent of the respondents reported a "good" or "very good" relationship with their siblings. About 30 per cent reported a "fair" relationship. Although 20 per cent of respondents quarrelled with their siblings, only 4.5 per cent reported a "poor" or "very poor" relationship. This showed that conflicts among siblings does not necessarily equate with a poor relationship.

5.2 Most of the respondents reported good relationship between their parents. 63.3 percent of respondents commented the quality of affection between their parents was "good" or "very good"; only 8.3 percent of parents quarrelled "frequently" or "very frequently".

5.3 Most of the respondents reported a good relationship with their parents. Those who have "poor" or "very poor" relations with father and mother were only 7.5 and 4.3 per cent respectively. The findings showed that most respondents had a better relationship with their mother than with their father.

The Parental Concern and Acceptance of Control

%	Are your parents concerned about the following, matters?				Do you think your parents should control you in the following matters?			
	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Rarely	Must	Should	Should not	Must not
What friends I get along with	46.0	40.5	9.2	4.3	8.8	65.7	20.6	4.9
Clothing	20.6	39.5	28.0	12.0	5.4	40.4	46.4	7.8
Obedying the law	50.8	27.2	14.9	7.1	38.3	55.0	5.1	1.7
Getting along with opposite sex	30.4	28.7	23.5	17.3	10.8	46.0	33.9	9.3
Care about family members	39.6	38.9	15.6	5.9	21.5	65.4	11.1	2.0
Share household work	34.4	38.6	17.6	9.5	14.4	64.5	17.7	3.5
Study hard	64.8	26.0	6.2	2.9	36.5	54.5	7.0	2.0
The performance in study	62.7	28.0	6.6	2.7	34.2	54.8	9.1	1.9
The relations with family members	36.7	41.8	15.7	5.8	24.0	65.1	9.1	1.8
Respect for seniors	45.9	37.9	11.9	4.4	29.0	62.2	6.7	2.0
	N = 1698				N = 1477			

5.4 Using the *Parent Concern Scale* and *Acceptance of Control Scale*, we discovered that most of respondents' parents were very concerned about the respondents and most respondents accepted their control very well. With the final scores of two scales, 86.9 per cent of the parent control scale scored at high or very high level; 61.9 per cent of the acceptance of control scale scored at high or very high level.

Score of Parental Concern Scale

	Frequency	%
Very High (10 - 17)	775	45.6%
High (18 - 24)	702	41.3%
Low (25 - 31)	182	10.7%
Very Low (32 - 40)	39	2.3%
Total	1698	100.0%

Lowest: 10 Highest: 40 Mean: 18.6 Median 18 $\alpha = .8114$

Score for Acceptance of Control Scale

	Frequency	%
Very High (10 - 17)	373	17.9%
High (18 - 24)	912	43.7%
Low (25 - 31)	165	11.2%
Very Low (32 - 40)	27	1.3%
Total	1477	100.0%

Lowest: 10 Highest: 40 Mean: 20.2 Median 18 $\alpha = .8869$

5.5 Using the *Performance of Child-rearing Scale*, the survey explored the child-rearing method and practice of the respondents' parents. Most respondents honoured the care and concern of their parents. On the negative side, many respondents complained that "parents didn't respect my privacy", "their thoughts were out of date", and "parents can't tolerate my faults". In general, the results of the parent performance scale indicated the good performance of parents. More than 80 per cent scored high or very high in the scale.

5.6 In the area of help-seeking behaviour, 80 per cent of the respondents revealed that parents can help to solve problems in daily life. But the decision about seeking help depended very much on the nature of the issue. Dealing with problems of interpersonal relationship, such as "out-group by peers", "break-up with opposite sex partner" and "problems to do with sex", the respondents were less likely to seek parents' help.

The Tendency to Seek Help from Parents

Faced with the following problems, would you seek help from parents?	Surely Would	Probably would	Don't know / No idea	Probably No	Surely No	Total
Feel heavy stress	240 11.5%	484 23.2%	712 34.2%	426 20.4%	222 10.7%	2084 100.0%
Poor academic performance	327 15.7%	549 26.4%	533 25.6%	448 21.5%	223 10.7%	2080 100.0%
Being left out by peers	117 5.6%	261 12.5%	532 25.6%	684 32.9%	488 23.4%	2082 100.0%
Loneliness	150 7.2%	326 15.7%	506 24.3%	641 30.8%	458 22.0%	2081 100.0%
Problems to do with Sex	116 5.6%	160 7.7%	684 32.9%	458 22.0%	662 31.8%	2080 100.0%
Break-up with Opposite sex partner	76 3.7%	98 4.7%	577 27.7%	417 20.0%	913 43.9%	2081 100.0%

5.7 65.5 per cent of respondents reported conflict with their parents "sometimes" or "usually". 85.6 per cent of them might expressed their grievances by definite actions. The most common way of expressing themselves was to "keep silent" (54.7%) or to "initiate direct dialogue to show grievances" (50.8%). A sizeable proportion took aggressive action like "screaming", "going against their expectations" and "breaking things".

5.8 Most of the respondents (56.9%) reported a happy family life. Only 5.6 per cent reported an "unhappy" or "very unhappy" family life.

5.9 To indicate their satisfaction with their parents, most respondents marked very high scores. The median score for father and mother were both 80, whereas the mean for father was 73.1 and for mother was 79.3. It show that satisfaction with mother was generally higher than with father.

6 Further Analysis of Family Factors

6.1 The level of *concern of parent* and *acceptance of control* decreased with age. The *Pearson's r* were .2225 and .1834 respectively. It meant that, as the child grew up, parents might be less concerned and young people might accept less control. The discrepancy between the two scales showed some relation with conflict between parent and adolescent. The *Pearson's r* was .1379.

6.2 In families where the parents were separated or divorced, the respondents indicated that the family was less happy and the parents' marks were lower.

6.3 Using the method of *Multiple Regression*, we found out a lot of factors for "family happiness". The regression model had a high level of *Multiple R* at .71337 and R^2 at .50890. In other words, the family happiness of the respondents could be explained by the following sets of factor at 50.8 per cent confidence. It could be very useful for social workers, teachers and parents to identify the needs and expectations of adolescents as to the ideal family.

Regression Analysis for Family Happiness

Multiple R	.71337	
R ²	.50890	
Adjusted R ²	.50496	
Standard Error	.55755	
Variables in Regression Equation	Multiple Regression Coefficient B	β Coefficient
Parents concern me	.10377	.10906
Parents trust me	.09661	.11944
Courtship between parents	.12641	.15784
Relationship with siblings	.17167	.16617
Can parent help in solving daily problems?	.13150	.11640
Parents only punish me, seldom praise	-.66910	-.09398
Parents love me	.94967	.10915
Quarrel between parents	-.06011	-.07972
Parents thoughts are out of date	-.05744	-.07538
Parent reward and punish me fair	.05237	.06693
Parents are willing to listen to me	.04400	.06192
Parents are concerned about my relations with other family members?	.03850	.04213

7 Psychological Well-being

7.1 The survey used the *General Health Questionnaire* of Goldberg to measure the psychological health of respondents. Over 30 per cent of the respondents showed negative tendency as regards "psychological stress" (34.9%) and "being unhappy and bored" (32.4%). For "difficulty in concentration", "difficulty in getting to sleep", "manage their troubles", "lose self-confidence", etc., over 23 per cent of the respondents had negative tendency.

The Psychological Health Questionnaire

	Better than Normal	Same as Normal	Worse than Normal	Worse very much	Mean
Concentration in all kind of work	10.7	62.2	24.2	2.9	2.20
Am worried and cannot get to sleep	45.8	31.2	20.2	2.9	1.80
Do everything well	10.6	66.0	20.6	2.8	2.16
Decide everything by myself	16.9	71.3	10.4	1.4	1.97
Feel psychological stress	20.4	44.6	28.4	6.5	2.21
Manage my troubles	17.0	58.2	21.4	3.4	2.11
Feel happy in daily living	18.1	58.9	19.0	4.0	2.09
Can face troubles positively	17.3	66.3	13.7	2.7	2.02
Feel unhappy and bored	29.2	38.4	25.8	6.6	2.10
Lose self-confidence	38.8	37.7	17.8	5.7	1.91
Feel useless	50.4	31.1	13.8	4.7	1.73
Feel quite happy in general	19.9	57.0	17.8	5.3	2.08
N = 2058					

7.2 The summative score of the scale showed that 58 per cent of the respondents had a "good" mark, 25.3 per cent had "very good" psychological health. The total percentage of negative tendency was 16.1 per cent.

Score for Psychological Well-being

	Frequency	%
Very good (12 - 20)	521	25.3%
Good (21 - 29)	1205	58.6%
Poor (30 - 38)	299	14.5%
Very Poor (39 - 48)	33	1.6%
Total	2058	100.0%

Lowest: 12 Highest: 48 Mean: 24.4 Median: 23 $\alpha = .8385$

7.3 Compared with the similar research done by Henry Mok (1989), where the negative tendency rate was 13.6%, the finding of this survey showed a 2.5 per cent increase for adolescents with probable psychological problems.

7.4 The findings also showed that the psychological health of female, older students, and respondents in higher forms had a higher negative tendency than other respondents. The correlation coefficients of sex, age and forms with the psychological health were .1139, .1526 and .1671 respectively.

7.5 The *Achievement Motivation Scale* showed that 90.3 per cent of the respondents scored "high" or "very high". The scale was not significantly related to general personal characteristics. Only academic performance was a bit related to achievement motivation.

8 Interpersonal Relationships

8.1 Testing with the *UCLA Loneliness Scale*, the reliability test revealed that the scale did not relate to the "loneliness" concept very much. So, the scale could not accurately measure the level of loneliness. It was more appropriate to measure interpersonal relationships with this scale.

8.2 With the scale result, 52.8 per cent of the respondents scored "good" and 24.7 per cent scored "very good". There were also 22.5 per cent of the respondents scored "poor" and "very poor".

Score of Interpersonal Relationship Scale

	Frequency	%
Very good (66 - 80)	492	24.7%
Good (51 - 65)	1050	52.8%
Poor (36 - 50)	419	21.1%
Very poor (20 - 35)	28	1.4%
Total	1989	100.0%

Lowest: 28 Highest: 80 Mean: 58.1 Median: 58 $\alpha = .8774$

8.3 As for the number of friends, most respondents reported that they had 3 to 10 friends. The median number was 9. For good friends with whom one could have a heart-to-heart conversation, the median number is only 2 and 12.5 per cent of the respondents reported "nil".

9 Sexual Identity and Attitude to Sex

9.1 Assuming the possibility of selecting their own sex, 11.5 per cent of the respondents chose to change to opposite sex. For female respondents, the percentage was much higher, at 19.3 per cent. This showed a negative tendency on sex identity.

9.2 42.3 per cent of all respondents and 49.0 per cent of female respondents felt that the status between the genders was not fair. This showed the respondents' grievances, especially the female, against gender inequality.

9.3 28.6 per cent of the respondents showed that they were interested in making friends of the opposite sex and 65.7 per cent felt "fair" interest. The median number of opposite-sex friends was 3 and 26.7 per cent reported "nil".

Respondents of Different Sexes on Changing Sex and Gender Equality

	Male	Female
Change sex if possible		
No Change	76.6	53.7
Don't know	19.7	27.0
Change sex	3.8	19.3
Total	100.0	100.0
N = 2068	Pearson's r = .2779	p = .00000
Is the status of different sexes fair?		
Fair	35.4	26.9
Don't know	28.9	24.1
Unfair	35.7	49.0
Total	100.0	100.0
N = 2079	Pearson's r = .1280	p = .00000

9.4 As to the experience of love and courtship, 24.7 per cent reported that they had been in love. Female and older respondents had more experience than other respondents.

9.5 As to attitude to sex, with unmarried friends of the opposite sex, "holding hands" and "hugging and kissing" was more acceptable among respondents. "Caressing" and "sexual intercourse" before marriage were opposed by 45.2 and 59.1 per cent of respondents respectively.

9.6 Although the respondents rejected sex before marriage in principle, their positions on "should get married after sex" and "opinion on co-habitation before marriage" were not firm. Many respondents had "no idea". Only 27.7 per cent opposed co-habitation and 29.3 per cent held that people should get married after sex.

9.7 Most of the respondents reported that their major resolution of problems about sex were from schoolmates and friends. 43 per cent might ask school-mates and friends for help with sex. 36.3 per

cent would not ask anybody. Parents, books and social workers fell into a lower priority of those from whom they would seek help.

10 Factor Affecting Psychological Health

Regression Table for Psychological Health

Multiple R	.55336	
R ²	.30620	
Adjusted R ²	.30120	
Standard Error	4.64403	
Variables in Regression Equation	Multiple Regression Coefficient B	β Coefficient
Interpersonal relationship	-.20372	-.35818
Family happiness	.84040	.12019
Forms of study	.32881	.06769
Interest in getting along with the opposite sex	-.82788	-.10747
Sex of respondent	1.44515	.13007
Can parents help in daily problem	.61883	.07822
Achievement motivation	-.19912	-.10040
Academic performance in class	.53786	.07774
Mark for mother	-.02598	-.08248
Mark for father	.01537	.05769
Parents' concern	.05199	.05005

10.1 With *Regression Analysis*, we observed a lot of factors affecting respondents' psychological health. The regression equation had a R² of .30620. This model could be helpful in explaining the psychological health of young people.

10.2 Interpersonal relationships was a principle factor influencing psychological health. Those who had better interpersonal relationships were more likely to be psychologically healthy. The *Pearson's r* was -.41762.

10.3 Family relationships were proven to be a major factor for psychological well-being. The factors included family happiness, the ability of parents to help in life problems, the satisfaction with father and mother, and the concern level of the parents. They were some crucial and substantial areas of concern. Taking care of such factors could be important for young people's psychological health.

11 Factor Affecting Interpersonal Relationship

11.1 Using *Regression Analysis*, the interpersonal relationships of the respondents could be explained by their psychological health, parent performance, sex, achievement motivation, sibling relationships and relationship with father. the R² of the regression model was .25021.

Regression Table for Interpersonal Relationship

Multiple R	.50200	
R ²	.25201	
Adjusted R ²	.24946	
Standard Error	8.43816	
Variables in Regression Equation	Multiple Regression Coefficient B	β Coefficient
Psychological health	-.63377	-.35724
Child-rearing Performance of parents	-.20035	-.15503
Sex of respondent	2.60837	.13394
Achievement Motivation	.22060	.10671
Relation with sibling	-.86260	-.06945
Relation with father	-.42961	-.04515

11.2 Psychological health was a major correlating factor for interpersonal relationship. Those who are healthier psychologically might have better interpersonal relations.

11.3 Family factors were also important factors for adolescents' interpersonal relationships. The child-rearing performance was an important influence. The correlation coefficient was $-.31375$. The relations with the father and with siblings were also important for interpersonal relationships. So these factors could be of concern for those adolescents with difficulty in interpersonal relationships.

12 The Influence of Family Conditions

12.1 The comparison between families of different compositions showed there were problems for the respondents of special families. Those respondents from separated and divorced families had negative tendencies in many aspects. They had less concern from their parents and accepted less control. The parents' performance was worse. The psychological health, achievement motivation and interpersonal relationships were lower than with respondents from other kinds of families.

12.2 Respondents who did not live with their mother were in a similar situation. Lacking the day-to-day care of the mother, the respondent showed more negative tendencies.

12.3 The family financial situation may influence the result of *Parent Performance Scale* to a certain extent. The *Pearson's r* was $.1520$. In other words, economic factors might affect the parents in (1) care and assistance; (2) listening, understanding and talking; (3) love and acceptance; (4) trust; (5) autonomy; and (6) discipline.

13 Discussion

13.1 The Family is the Cornerstone of Adolescent Development:

The findings of this study supported the thesis that the family is a major and significant support for young people's development with respect of their psychological health and interpersonal relationships. The regression analysis of the study helped us identify the supporting and hindering factors of the family on adolescents.

These findings would be meaningful in three aspects: (1) these factors could be helpful in observing and identifying an "at-risk" population with psychological or interpersonal problem;

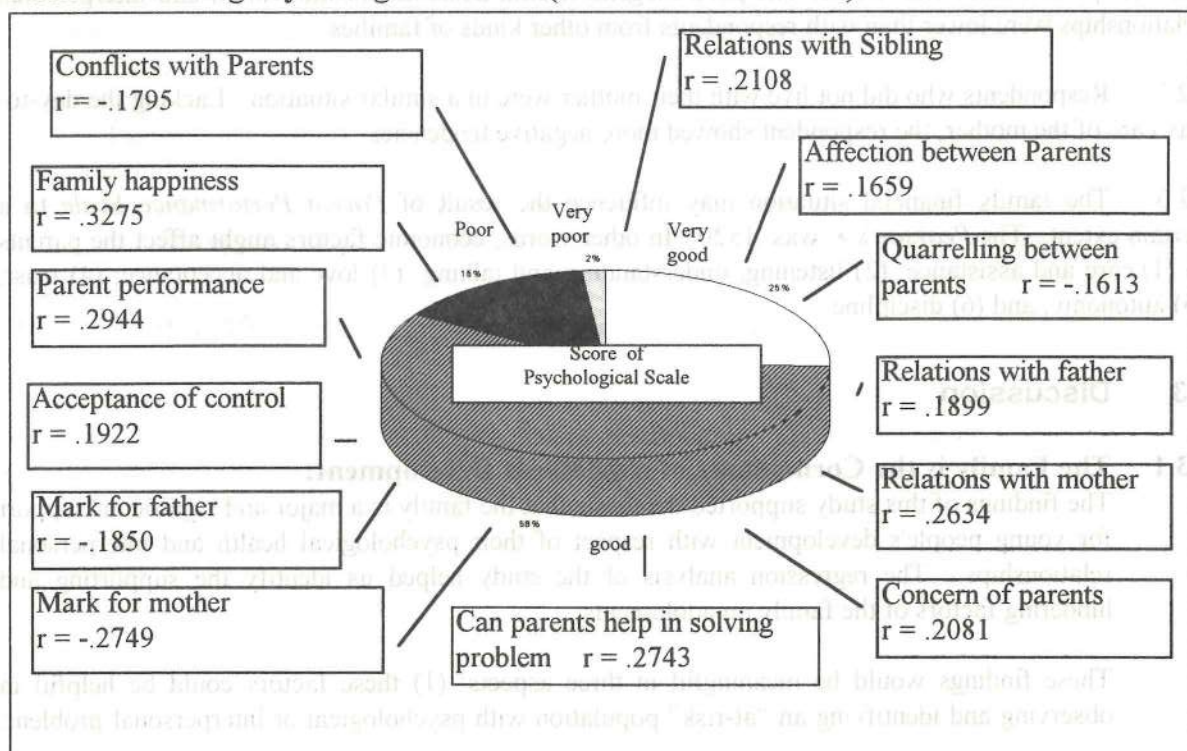
(2) the factors could be helpful for social workers or other professionals in giving aid to those adolescents with such problems; and (3) it also confirmed the importance of family services in the arena of social work for the young people, and that youth workers should pay more attention to services for the family.

Factors affecting Psychological Health	Factors affecting Interpersonal Relationship
Interpersonal relationship	Psychological health
Family happiness	Child-rearing performance of parents
Forms of study	Sex of respondent
Interest in getting along with the opposite sex	Achievement motivation
Sex of respondent	Relations with siblings
Parents' help with daily problem	Relations with father
Achievement motivation	
Academic performance in class	
Mark for mother	
Mark for father	
Concern of parents	

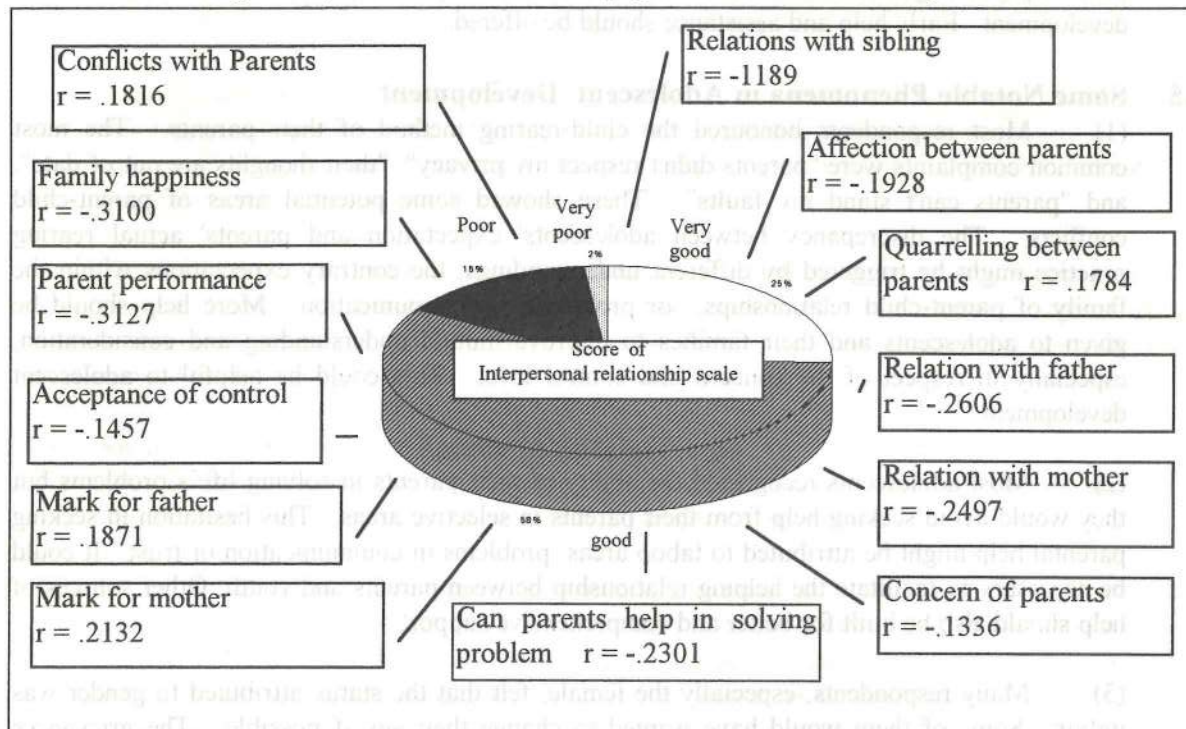
13.2 Family Factors Affecting Young People's Development

With correlation analysis, young people's development with respect to psychological health and interpersonal relationships had no significant relationship with social class. The correlation of psychological health and interpersonal relationships with *family finance, parents' age, education and occupation* was not significant. Other factors like *the number of family members, number of siblings and birth order* had little effect on psychological and interpersonal development.

Factors Affecting Psychological Health (r denotes Pearson's r)



Factors Affecting Interpersonal Relationship (r denotes Pearson's r)



The major family factors affecting young people's development were those *relationship factors*, for example, relations with mother, concern from parents, parent performance, etc. which had considerable influence on development. More attention paid to these factors would be helpful for adolescent development.

13.3 Adolescents in a Single-parent Family Had a Higher Probability of Negative Tendencies

The findings showed that young people with separated / divorced parents, and young people not living with their mothers had a higher percentage of negative aspects. Although not all single-parent families were problematic, the detrimental influence of not enough concern from the parents needed more attention. Parents, social workers, teachers and policy makers should pay more attention to these kind of families and give them more support.

13.4 A Notably High Percentage of Young People had Negative Tendencies in Psychological Health

The finding showed that 16.1 per cent of the respondents had negative tendency in the *Psychological Health Scale*. This meant that the respondents' psychological status was worse than before. There was also 1.6 per cent of the respondents who scored "very poor" in psychological health.

Compared with similar survey conducted in 1989, the percentage of those with negative tendencies increased by 2.5 percent. It denoted an increase in young people who had a potential need of professional counselling and support. With such a rate of potential needs, the services of personal social work, including school social work and family life education are under-provisioned. The discrepancy between the demand and supply needs to be resolved.

On the other hand, the high correlation between psychological health and interpersonal relationship meant that those who had psychological problems would be more likely to have poor in psychological health. Problems in both areas might be quite hazardous to adolescent development. Early help and assistance should be offered.

13.5 Some Notable Phenomena in Adolescent Development

(1) Most respondents honoured the child-rearing method of their parents. The most common complaints were "parents didn't respect my privacy", "their thoughts are out of date", and "parents can't stand my faults". These showed some potential areas of parent-child conflicts. The discrepancy between adolescents' expectation and parents' actual rearing practice might be triggered by different understandings, the contrary expectations within the family of parent-child relationships, or problems of communication. More help should be given to adolescents and their families to improve mutual understanding and consideration, especially in respect of the concern and control level. This could be helpful to adolescent development.

(2) Most adolescents recognized the ability of their parents in solving life's problems but they would avoid seeking help from their parents in selective areas. This hesitation in seeking parental help might be attributed to taboo areas, problems in communication or trust. It could be necessary to facilitate the helping relationship between parents and youth. Other sources of help should also be built for better and comprehensive support.

(3) Many respondents, especially the female, felt that the status attributed to gender was unfair. Some of them would have wanted to change their sex if possible. The grievances reflected the pressure and stress of gender inequality among adolescents. Sex-role stereotyping and unfair opportunities might worsen the situation. This could be also hazardous to development. So the helping professionals should prepare more support and assistance for this population. In addition, the society should be more aware of the problem of gender inequality and the negative effects on adolescents.

(4) The major source of resolution on problem about sex was school-mates and friends. More than 35 per cent would not ask anybody. This showed the limitation of young people's help-seeking in problems about sex. Peers would not be a reliable and objective source of information. When in difficulties, the helping resources of peers were very limited. So, the roles of parents, social workers and teachers in sex education should be further strengthened.

14 Recommendations

14.1 The Problem of Adolescents' Psychological Health and Interpersonal Relationship is Irrespective of Social Classes. A Comprehensive Plan for all Kinds of Youth is Needed.

The findings showed that the psychological and interpersonal problems among adolescents were not significantly related to socio-economic status. It is not appropriate to attribute adolescents' problems to "poverty" or "under-educated parents". Similar problems may occur among adolescents in all classes. So, the planning for youth services should be more comprehensive. Except for considering special needs of those "under-privileged groups", the needs of the whole population, irrespective of social class, should be attended to.

14.2 The Manpower and Resources for Personal Social Work Should be Improved.

The findings revealed that 16.1 per cent of adolescents had a negative tendency in psychological health. The need for psychological and social support was increasing. The service of school social work was very under-provisioned.

Although the government had promised the one to two thousand ratio for school social workers, this rate is still unreasonable. The Federation recommended an increase in resources, in order to expand the service and reach the standard of "one school, one social worker". This ratio can facilitate better remedial and preventive programmes.

The newly developed *integrated team* of children and youth services, having larger population to serve, needs more planning and resources in responding to the potential psychological and interpersonal problems. Should there be difficulties in resources. It would be justified to expand for the need in personal social work.

14.3 Supportive Service for Family in Special Needs.

The findings showed some negative influence of single-parent family on adolescent development. Social services to support these families were needed.

Except for the family life education workers, the roles of children and youth centres and integrated social service team would be important. Centres could be a neighbourhood source of support. Networking, volunteer service, educational and direct services could be possible. Youth workers in centres should be more aware of their roles in family support in the future.

14.4 The Government Should have Accurate and Up-to-date Assessment of Young People's Need.

The decision-making body of the government needs a comprehensive review of the demand for youth services. The lack of up-to-date, accurate and systematic assessment makes it difficult to plan appropriate services.

The government should put more effort into studying the needs and demands of personal social work or other services. It would be helpful in planning appropriate services.

14.5 The Problem of Adolescents' Gender Identity Need More Concern.

The findings showed the problem of adolescents' gender identity, especially for females. This can be hazardous to adolescent development.

The adolescents' identity with and enjoyment of their own sex should be enhanced. First, the education against sex-role stereotyping should start early in childhood. The school syllabus should be more aware of the gender bias. Second, the education for young people should include positive and fair perception on both sexes. These may help young people to have the opportunity to free themselves from gender limitations.

End of Report