

# **A Study on Family Status Discrimination in the Workplace in Hong Kong**

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**Center for Chinese Family Studies  
Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong**



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## **Research Team**

Principal Investigator

Prof. DAI Haijing

Associate Professor, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Co-investigators

Prof. SONG Jing

Assistant Professor, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Prof. TONG Yuying

Associate Professor, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Prof. WU Qiaobing

Associate Professor, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Prof. JIN Lei

Associate Professor, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Research Assistants

Ms. LI Nanxun

Ms. HU Min

Dr. LEUNG Miu Yee (City University of Hong Kong)

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **Background**

1. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has commissioned our research team to conduct ‘A study on family status discrimination in the workplace in Hong Kong’.
2. The research team adopted a mixed-methods design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from the employer and the employee sides. The research design incorporates territory-wide representative telephone surveys of employers and employees, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews of employers and employees, and a semi-experimental explorative survey of selected employers. Our target population for employers is all the hiring establishments in Hong Kong; the target population for employees is Hong Kong residents, at the age of 18 and above, and who have been employed in the past two years.
3. The sample sizes of the two representative telephone surveys of employers and employees were 407 and 1,003 respectively. Nine (9) employer representatives participated in the employer focus group, and six (6) employees joined the employee focus group. 21 in-depth interviews were conducted with employees and 20 were conducted with employer representatives. 102 employer representatives participated in the semi-experimental explorative survey. In the non-representative components of the research, we purposefully recruited participants from different demographic backgrounds and from establishments in different industries, of different employment sizes, and with different lengths of establishment.

## **Objectives of the study**

4. The research objectives of this study include the following:
  - i. To provide a review of local and overseas literatures on family status discrimination in the workplace. The review focuses on the prevalence, knowledge, awareness, experience, and attitudes towards family status discrimination, from the perspectives of employees, supervisors, and employers.
  - ii. To study the prevalence of family status discrimination in the workplace and the knowledge about the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) among employees and employers in Hong Kong.
  - iii. To identify the characteristics of incidents of family status discrimination in the workplace in Hong Kong.
  - iv. To discover the patterns and practices of family status discrimination in the process of job application in Hong Kong.
  - v. To examine the factors associated with the vulnerability of family status discrimination in the workplace in Hong Kong.

- vi. To understand the immediate responses of and actions taken when encountering family status discrimination and the reasons behind in Hong Kong.
- vii. To assess the take-up of family leave and the availability of family leave in the workplace in Hong Kong.
- viii. To gauge the views of employees, employers and supervisors on knowledge and opinions of family status discrimination in Hong Kong.
- ix. To give recommendations on enhancing public understanding of and knowledge about both family status discrimination and the FSDO, and to identify practices in redressing family status discrimination in the workplace.

## **Key findings from the representative telephone surveys of employers and employees**

### **Knowledge and awareness of family status discrimination**

- 5. Knowledge level of family status discrimination and the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) is not high among both employers and employees in Hong Kong. It is still lower on the employer side. Larger companies (with at least 50 employees) tend to have better knowledge; while employees who were born in Hong Kong and have higher levels of education tend to know them better.
- 6. Both employers and employees regard family status discrimination as not very prevalent in the workplace of Hong Kong. But they all agree that it is very likely to occur in leave application and leave taking.
- 7. Both employers and employees agree that it is understandable not to hire mothers caring for young children, compared with people with other types of family caring responsibilities. “Motherhood penalty” is generally not considered to be too problematic in the workplace in Hong Kong.

### **Incidents of family status discrimination in workplace**

- 8. Employers reported no incidents of family status discrimination in the workplace – in the hiring process, in the firing process, or every day at work. But on the side of the employees, a visible portion of the employees with family caring responsibilities experienced family status discrimination in the workplace in the past two years – 15.0% in hiring, 13.5% in quitting, and 7.8% at work. Overall, 7.8% of employee respondents with family caring responsibilities reported being discriminated on the ground of family status.
- 9. More importantly, as shown in the employee survey, very few of the cases of family status discrimination were reported by the employees. They either found it unnecessary to report or did not know how to appeal. In that sense, family status discrimination is very much a “hidden” discrimination in the workplace in Hong Kong.

### **Family status discrimination in hiring and firing/quitting processes**

10. In the hiring process, both employers and employees reported the practice of collecting information related to family caring responsibilities during interviews, and some employees felt that the rejection was based on this information. This practice was reported in all industries and in different types of companies. Employees who applied for clerical support jobs reported more cases in particular.
11. In the hiring and firing/quitting processes, employees in labor intensive industries (“Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail” and “Accommodation and Food Services” in particular) and in non-middle-class jobs reported more cases of family status discrimination. Larger enterprises have better institutions and policies to prevent possible discrimination, while employers in labor intensive industries are less likely to have these institutions.

### **Family status discrimination at work**

12. At work, employees in labor intensive industries (“Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail” and “Accommodation and Food Services” in particular) and in non-middle-class jobs also reported more cases of family status discrimination. Larger companies are more tolerant of employees with family caring responsibilities and see them as bringing fewer negative effects. But smaller enterprises, as well as enterprises with longer histories of operation, are more willing to make changes in policies (such as flexible working time and more paid leave) in the future to accommodate the needs of their employees.
13. At work, from both the employer and the employee sides, the biggest issue of workers with family caring responsibilities is leave application and leave taking. Employers viewed workers with family caring responsibilities as taking too many leave; while many employees reported difficulties in obtaining the leave they needed for caring for their family members. On average, employees reported taking 1-2 days off in one month for family caring responsibilities currently, and employers reported that they would in maximum allow 4-5 days off a month.

### **Factors affecting the vulnerability of family status discrimination in the workplace**

14. Employees reported experiences of family status discrimination in hiring, quitting, and at work share many similarities: female, lower in educational level, and receive no support to their care work at home.

### **Suggestions for policy changes**

15. Employers and employees welcome efforts from the government and public sector, the civil society, and the business sector to address, reduce, and prevent family status discrimination in the workplace. Smaller and younger enterprises would hope for more intervention from the government and public sector, while larger companies believe enterprises should take more responsibility.

## **Key findings from the semi-experimental explorative survey of selected employers**

16. This survey compares employers' preference of six categories of job applicants: male without caring responsibilities, female without caring responsibilities, father caring for young children, mother caring for young children, male caring for ageing parents, and female caring for ageing parents. In the evaluation of applicants' commitment and promotion potentials, male and female without caring responsibilities consistently receive lower scores than the other four categories. One explanation is that the applicants without caring responsibilities reported the need for leave to develop their hobbies, which is not welcomed in the job market of Hong Kong.
17. But surprisingly, when it comes to the decision of hiring, while male and female applicants without caring responsibilities are still not favored, mother caring for young children falls into this "un-favored" group as well. Female applicant caring for ageing parents and the two male applicants with different caring responsibilities score better in the probability of job offer.
18. When examined across different industries, in companies of different employment sizes, and in different job categories, the results show that female applicant caring for ageing parents is tolerated only in entry-level jobs. For management-level jobs, they are disadvantaged in job application, as the mother caring for young children. While male applicant without caring responsibilities is not favored in the general sample, he is given good scores of competence and promotion potentials and is preferred in financing and accounting sector. Mother caring for young children, however, is unlikely to get the job offer across different industries, in enterprises of different employment sizes, and for different job categories.

## **Key findings from in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions**

### **Knowledge and awareness of family status discrimination**

19. Consistent with findings from the telephone surveys, the majority of the respondents (both employers and employees) do not know the definition of family status discrimination. The ones who know the definition and the FSDO are usually from larger companies, which offer regular anti-discrimination training workshops and institutionalize anti-discrimination policies.
20. Many employers and a few employees find the definition of family status discrimination unclear and vague. They question the difference between a "reasonable treatment" (such as changes in job nature, career path, and bonus entitlement due to the need to care for family members) and the term "discrimination".
21. Most of the respondents have noticed and observed cases of family-work conflicts in their companies, but they are not sure whether those cases qualify for family status discrimination. Only three (3) employee respondents claim definitely that family status discrimination has taken place in their workplaces.



## **Incidents of family status discrimination in workplace**

22. Respondents often mention unfair treatment in job applications and cases of taking leave when asked to give examples to elaborate their experiences of family status discrimination. When an employee has family caring responsibilities, it usually means that longer periods of leave are needed, and this could cause conflicts and tensions in the workplace.
23. Employers are mainly concerned that there are not enough resources in the company to replace the employee during long leave and work cannot be done by time. If the employee is a valuable and productive member of the company, employers would try their best to accommodate the caring needs and work out flexible plans with the employee (such as flexible hours, allowance for hiring domestic helpers, no-pay leave, etc.).
24. Employee respondents often understand the caring needs of their colleagues, but they also worry that long periods of leave would create more work load and troubles for co-workers. Employees with caring responsibilities disclose that the pressure in getting long leave sometimes comes from colleagues, instead of the boss. Employees without family caring needs think it is acceptable for colleagues to take leave to take care of family, but mention that these colleagues need to figure out other ways to compensate their time and should not rely on co-workers to complete their job tasks.
25. Company culture plays an important role in employers' and employees' views of leave application and leave taking. In companies that emphasize equality and promote family-friendly work environment, employers are more tolerant of long leave to take care of family members, and employees with caring responsibilities are also less stressed or guilty to obtain longer periods of leave.

## **Gender and different family caring responsibilities**

26. The majority of the respondents (both employers and employees) claim that they do not see any differences in the treatment of employees of different sexes and with different family caring needs (e.g. men caring for ageing parents and mothers caring for young children). But when asked about observation of unfair treatment, they agree that women and particularly mothers of young children are usually the victims.
27. One rationale they give is that care work at home is usually performed by women, and men are not so affected by caring responsibilities. When comparing mothers and women caring for ageing parents, some respondents claim that motherhood should be a rational personal choice and mothers should plan ahead to make good arrangement. Ageing parents, on the other hand, are not a choice. Women caring for ageing parents therefore may receive more sympathy and understanding in Hong Kong. The latter observation echoes the results of the semi-experimental explorative survey.

## **Policy directions to address family status discrimination**

28. Both employers and employees find family-friendly leave policies, such as parental leave, family leave, and filial piety leave, appealing, but worry that they would be abused in the Hong Kong society because it is extremely difficult to develop good institutions to

supervise the implementation and the actual practice of the leave. Some larger companies have adopted the practice of paid family leave, and when adequately monitored, the policy can effectively relieve the stress of family caregivers in the labor force and create more friendly work places.

29. Employers, especially those of smaller employment size, are concerned that governmental subsidy is usually so limited in Hong Kong that such leave policies could be another financial burden on the enterprises. They worry that if adequate resources are not provided, these policies could merely stay on the paper. They also would prefer flexible negotiations with employees than strict legislations of family leave from the government.
30. Some employees with caring responsibilities, mostly mothers with young children, point out that they do not want to have additional leave because they would like to spend more time on their work. They prefer to have more care institutions (such as day-care centers and nursing homes), social service programs (such as after-school care programs), and mutual help groups in Hong Kong.

## **Recommendations**

31. More attention and resources need to be allocated to organize educational activities to promote the knowledge and awareness of the FSDO and family status discrimination in the workplace in Hong Kong. The Labor Department should consider providing resources and training to the public and employers, so that the basic definition of family status discrimination is clear and real life examples are explained. These programs are particularly crucial for small-and-medium-size enterprises (SMEs) and new-immigrant women employees of lower educational level. Educational programs need to focus on clear definitions of family status discrimination and contextualized examples of discrimination in different work settings in Hong Kong.

Employees need to be provided with sufficient information on the procedures of complaint (internal mechanism and external institutions such as EOC), once family status discrimination occurs. In addition, employers should be required to provide adequate information for their employees including readily available assistance for them to make valid complaints.

32. Smaller establishments in labor-intensive industries need to be encouraged and given more resources to cultivate a more family-friendly company culture. Low-skilled female workers in non-middle-class positions, who have no support for family care work, are at high risk of family status discrimination. More attention needs to be directed towards them to prevent cases of discrimination.
33. Collecting personal information related to family caring responsibilities is still a prevalent practice in the recruitment process in the labor market of Hong Kong. Better implementation of the legislation and careful supervision of the practices of employers are necessary to prevent family status discrimination.
34. Paid family leave can be a plausible policy direction in Hong Kong to address family status discrimination, but careful design, implementation, and supervision are needed.

To keep the total days of leave unchanged can generate more support from employers; detailed regulations should be set up to prevent abuse. The government needs to allocate more resources (e.g. financial subsidies) to enterprises to assist them in the implementation of family leave policies. Flexibilities and the option of individual-based negotiations should be allowed to SMEs, to create better relationships between employers and employees with family caring responsibilities. As suggested by many employers, instead of making it mandatory, the government could frame it as a good practice and encourage employers to consider this as one of the family-friendly employment approaches.

35. Motherhood penalty is a serious problem in Hong Kong and family status discrimination is often interwoven with sex discrimination. Mothers caring for young children face severe discriminatory treatment and little sympathy in the workplace. Educational projects to raise the consciousness of gender equality and rights of mothers are urgently needed, so as to propel cultural changes in Hong Kong's workplace. It is noteworthy that working mothers are not in favor of family leave policies because they reinforce the stereotypes that mothers cannot focus on career development. To better assist them in work-family balance, while high-quality and affordable day-care centers and after-school care programs are more desirable directions, more advocacy for men's participation in family domain would be a viable option.

# 1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) was passed in Hong Kong in 1997. Under the Ordinance, it is unlawful for a person or an organization to discriminate against another person on the basis of his/her family status. Family status is legally defined as the responsibility of a person for the care of an immediate family member, related by blood, marriage, adoption, or affinity. Although the law has existed in Hong Kong for two decades, knowledge of the prevalence, awareness, attitudes, and individual experiences of family status discrimination among the general public remains limited and mixed.

According to the surveys of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), on the one hand, complaints related to the FSDO were of low percentage and the general public seemed to hold a low degree of discriminatory views towards people with family status. On the other hand, a small proportion of the general public could correctly state the contents of the FSDO and among victims of discrimination, the percentage alleged being discriminated on the ground of family status was relatively high, especially when seeking a job or during work (EOC, 2012; 2015).

In this context, EOC commissioned the research team to conduct a comprehensive study of family status discrimination and the impacts of the FSDO in the workplace in Hong Kong. The research engages the views of both employers and employees, with the following specific objectives:

1. To provide a review of local and overseas literatures on family status discrimination in the workplace. The review focuses on the prevalence, knowledge, awareness, experience, and attitudes towards family status discrimination, from the perspectives of employees, supervisors, and employers.
2. To study the prevalence of family status discrimination in the workplace and the knowledge about the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) among employees and employers in Hong Kong.
3. To identify the characteristics of incidents of family status discrimination in the workplace in Hong Kong.
4. To discover the patterns and practices of family status discrimination in the process of job application in Hong Kong.
5. To examine the factors associated with the vulnerability of family status discrimination in the workplace in Hong Kong.
6. To understand the immediate responses of and actions taken when encountering family status discrimination and the reasons behind in Hong Kong.
7. To assess the take-up of family leave and the availability of family leave in the workplace in Hong Kong.

8. To gauge the views of employees, employers and supervisors on knowledge and opinions of family status discrimination in Hong Kong.
9. To give recommendations on enhancing public understanding of and knowledge about both family status discrimination and the FSDO, and to identify practices in redressing family status discrimination in the workplace.

## **2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research employs a mixed-methods design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from the employer and the employee sides. It starts with a thorough literature review of family status discrimination and policy efforts in Hong Kong and in other places of the world.

Two separate territory-wide representative telephone surveys of employers and employees were conducted on their experience, observation, awareness, attitudes, and knowledge of family status discrimination in the workplace and the FSDO. Our target population for employers is all the hiring establishments in Hong Kong; the target population for employees is Hong Kong residents, at the age of 18 and above, and who have been employed in the past two years. The sample sizes of the two representative telephone surveys of employers and employees were 407 and 1,003 respectively.

In addition, a semi-experimental explorative survey was carried out with a purposefully selected sample of 102 employers and supervisors, to explore their practices related to family status discrimination in processing job applications.

To further understand the mechanisms of family status discrimination in the workplace, qualitative focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted with employers and employees, to explore their opinions and experiences of family status discrimination, family leave, and the FSDO. In total, we completed one focus group discussion (9 participants) of employers, one focus group discussion (6 participants) of employees, 20 in-depth interviews with employers and 21 with employees.

In the non-representative components of the research, we purposefully recruited participants from different demographic backgrounds and from establishments in different industries, of different employment sizes, and with different lengths of establishment.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Family status discrimination in the workplace is recognized as a global social problem in the literature. Empirical studies suggest that caregiving responsibilities at home are often viewed as a devalued status in workplace settings, especially for women. Due to the view that family caregivers struggle between “family devotion” and “work devotion” (Blair-Loy, 2003), employers doubt both their “competence” and “effort”, and believe that they cannot be “ideal workers” (Williams, 2001; Hays, 1996; Dai, 2016). They are evaluated as less committed to their jobs, less dependable, and less authoritative, but more emotional and more irrational (Halpert, Wilson, & Hickman, 1993). These discriminative views of employers can start in the early process of job hiring and continue into later employment practices (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007).

Since family caring duties usually fall on women, family status discrimination is often interwoven with sex discrimination in the workplace. “Motherhood penalty” is widely recognized and discussed in the existing literature. An analysis of data from the 1982-1993 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth showed a wage penalty of 7 percent per child for mothers in the United States of America (Budig & England, 2001). Glass (2004) also argued that employed mothers are the group of women that now account for most of the “gender gap” in wages.

Besides wage disparity, mothers also suffer from various unfair treatments in the workplace, during job recruitment, work assignment, and promotion (Correll, Benard, & In, 2007). They are less likely to receive job offers and receive lower starting salaries; they are often sent to less important or temporary positions; and they have less opportunities of promotion (Budig, 2001).

While family status discrimination against mothers in the workplace is often identified, discrimination against men and employees caring for adult family members receives much less attention. Some researchers discovered “fatherhood premium” in empirical data. Fathers, perceived as responsible and reliable by employers, can obtain positive evaluations and have better opportunities of hiring and promotion than childless men (Killewald, 2013; Loh, 1996; Lundberg & Rose, 2000). But on the contrary, some researchers, arguing from the perspective of social expectations, believed that fathers would suffer from severe penalties in the workplace if they present themselves as family caregivers (Bear & Glick, 2017). If men reduce work hours for family reasons, they could experience a “flexibility stigma”, which significantly reduces their earnings and limits their future career opportunities (Coltrane, Miller, DeHaana & Stewart, 2013).

The research on the impacts of family status on men has not reached consensus, and studies on employees’ different types of family caring responsibilities are still rarer. Much ink has been spilt to investigate the effects of parenthood, and some scholars have started to examine employees who need to take care of adult family members. A study of 500 undergraduate students showed that among men and women who take leave to care for a newborn baby or elderly parents, fathers and elders caregivers are considered to be more responsible and are rated as more employable at work (Kmec, Huffman, & Penner, 2014).

The majority of the previous studies took place in the western contexts, yet some research efforts have emerged to inquire into family status discrimination in the workplace in Chinese

societies. In urban China 1990-2005, although motherhood did not appear to have a significant wage effect in the state sector, it imposed substantial wage losses for mothers in the non-state sector (Jia & Dong, 2013). In the local contexts of Hong Kong, while systematic examination of family status discrimination in the workplace is limited, Census data showed a declining trend of labor force participation of women after they reach the age of 30, and that the labor force participation rate for never married women is much higher than their married counterparts (Census and Statistics Department, 2016). Recent studies also suggested that women's availability to the labor market in Hong Kong is constrained by childrearing responsibilities (Tong & Chui, 2016). But it is still empirically unclear if married women withdraw from labor market due to family status discrimination in the workplace or other factors.

To address family status discrimination in the workplace, many nations and regions in the world have adopted policy measures and Hong Kong might learn lessons from those different policy approaches.

According the latest report ("*Maternity and paternity at work—Law and practice across the world*") released by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2014, globally 57 out of 185 countries (34%) fully meet the requirements of the **Maternity Protection** Convention 2000 (Executive Summary): they provide for at least 14 weeks of leave at a rate of at least two thirds of previous earnings, paid by social insurance or public funds or in a manner determined by national law, and practice where the employer is not solely responsible for payment. Conformity however is particularly low in Asia and the Middle East. Some form of **paternity and adoption leave** exist in at least 79 countries (International Labor Organization, 2014, Executive Summary).

Of the 165 countries for which information is available, all but 20 have explicit **prohibitions against discrimination** during pregnancy, leave and/or an additional prescribed period (International Labor Organization, 2014, Executive Summary). Legislation in 75 percent of the 160 countries provides for **breastfeeding breaks** in addition to regular breaks (International Labor Organization, 2014, Executive Summary).

**In the United States**, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of his or her personal characteristics including family status. US federal policy does not regulate paid maternity leave, but employees, who have worked for the employer for 12 months prior, are eligible for 12 weeks of leave that may be used for care of families under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993.

**In Canada**, mothers are offered a maximum of 15 weeks paid (and an addition 2-week unpaid maternity leave). In addition, two optional parental benefits are offered to parents with newborn or newly adopted children: a standard one with a maximum of 35 weeks paid (55% average weekly insurable earnings) in 12 months, or an extended one with a maximum of 61 weeks paid (33% of average weekly insurable earnings) in 18 months after the week the child is born or adopted.

Employment Insurance Program in Canada includes a component of Family Caregiver Benefit (FCB). FCB for adult family members allows eligible caregivers to receive up to 15 weeks of financial assistance to provide care or support to a critically ill or injured adult. Depending on the wages of the caregivers, they could receive up to CAD547 a week in 2018,



for up to 15 weeks. FCB for children allows eligible caregivers to receive up to 35 weeks of financial assistance to provide care or support to a critically ill or injured child. Depending on the wages of caregivers, they could receive up to CAD547 a week in 2018, for up to 35 weeks.

Compassionate care benefits are also included in Employment Insurance Program, paying people who have to be away from work temporarily to provide care or support to a family member who is gravely ill and who has a significant risk of death. A maximum of 26 weeks of compassionate care benefits may be paid to eligible people. The basic benefit rate is 55 percent of the average insurable earnings, up to a yearly maximum insurable amount (CAD51,700 in 2018).

**In the United Kingdom**, mothers are offered at least 2 weeks compulsory (or 4 weeks if one works in a factory) and up to 52 weeks Statutory Maternity Leave. Statutory Maternity Pay can be paid for up to 39 weeks with around 90% of one's average weekly earnings (before tax).

**In Australia**, Paid Parental Leave is available to working parents who meet the eligibility criteria. Eligible working parents can receive up to 18 weeks of government funded Parental Leave paid at the rate of the National Minimum Wage. Through Dad and Partner Pay for up to 2 weeks, the family of a child can receive a total up to 20 weeks of paid leave. A woman who returns to work after maternity leave has the right to return to the same job she had before. Employers need to make reasonable adjustments to assist employees with family responsibilities to do their jobs. This could include changing the hours they work or their starting or finishing times.

**In Japan**, maternity leave was introduced under the Labor Standards Act (Chapter VI) in 1947. The current duration is 98 days (14 weeks) for all female employees. If the employees are covered by the Employees' Health Insurance Scheme, they are entitled to paid maternity leave at a rate equivalent to two-thirds of the daily standard earnings of the employees. In other words, the cost of paid maternity leave is funded from a collective social insurance system.

**In Taiwan**, the Labor Standards Act (Article 50) grants 56 days (eight weeks) of maternity leave to employees. If the employees have served the company for at least six months, they are entitled to full-pay throughout the maternity leave. Employers should bear all the cost of paid maternity leave.

**In Singapore**, maternity leave was introduced under the Employment Act (Part IX) in 1968, with the duration of leave subsequently extended to 112 days (16 weeks) since 2008. Pregnant employees under continuous contracts for at least three months are entitled to full-pay (i.e. 100%) during the maternity leave. For the first and second child, although employers pay for the entire leave period, they can claim reimbursement from the government for the last eight weeks, subject to reimbursement ceiling of S\$10,000 (HK\$56,200) for every four weeks. For the third child and subsequent children, the government reimburses the paid leave throughout the 16-week period, subject to the same payment ceiling.

**In Mainland China**, paid leave for adult children to take care of ageing parents has been legislated in 8 provinces and cities, including Hubei, Henan, Heilongjiang, Fujian, Hainan,

Jiangxi, Guangzhou, and Chongqing. The length of the leave ranges from 10 to 20 days in different places and depending on whether the adult child is the only child in the family.

In our research, we examine employees with different types of family status in the workplace in the local contexts of Hong Kong, in a dialogue with existing literatures. We also explore the topic of paid family leave with our respondents for policy implications.

It is important to note that there are certainly many important domains in family status discrimination. The modern concept of family has been changing and in the study we will largely focus on the conventional nuclear family households. Alternative formations of families, such as remarried couples or single-parent households, and how they affect division of domestic labor and employment participation need to be examined in future research.

## 4. TELEPHONE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS

### Survey Design

Mercado Solutions Associates Ltd. conducted the survey of employers by the means of telephone interviewing method. A random sample of business telephone numbers was drawn from the latest business telephone directory of Hong Kong.

Fieldwork of the main survey was undertaken in August 2017. In total, 407 establishments (350 SMEs and 57 large corporations) were successfully interviewed, constituting an overall response rate of 29%. The enumeration results were summarized in the table below.

**Table 1 Enumeration results of the Employer Survey**

(A)	Total no. of telephone numbers attempted	2 300
(B)	No. of invalid cases (e.g. not operating numbers, fax numbers, non-target cases, etc.)	906
(C)	No. of valid cases (A - B)	1 394
<b>(D)</b>	<b>No. of successful interviews</b>	<b>407</b>
(E)	No. of refusal cases	573
(F)	No. of non-contact cases	414
Response rate [ D / C * 100% ]		29%

### Results

#### Profile of Employers in the Sample

Table 2 shows the distribution of industry of employer respondents. Among the 407 employers sampled, relatively more employers (192, 47.2%) were engaged in the Import/Export, Wholesale & Retail Trades, 106 employers (26.0%) in Information and Communications/ Financing & Insurance, 62 employers (15.3%) in Education, Human Health & Social Work activities, 15 employers (3.7%) in Accommodation & Food Services, 14 employers (3.4%) from Manufacturing, 12 employers (2.9%) for Transportation, Storage, Postal & Courier Services, 5 employers (1.2%) in Construction industry sectors, and 1 employer (0.3%) in Government and Public Administration. The sample distribution based on industry categories was generally consistent with the overall distribution of in Hong Kong, according to Table 2.

As government agencies largely declined to be interviewed, the representation of Government and Public Administration was very low in the sample. In data analysis, we combined it with the category of Social and Personal Service, and named the category as Public and Social Service. We also purposefully over sampled larger enterprises to understand their differences from small and medium-sized enterprises in family status

discrimination. Based on the statistics from the government, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) accounted for over 98% of the total business units, but in this study, the SMEs constituted about 86% of the total sample.

**Table 2 Characteristics of the sampled employers (N=407)**

Categories	n	%	Total number in HK*	% (Total number)
<b><i>Industry</i></b>				
Manufacturing	14	3.4	9,648	1.8
Construction	5	1.2	1,456	0.3
Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail	192	47.2	177,290	32.9
Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services	12	2.9	9,723	1.8
Accommodation and Food Services	15	3.7	17,992	3.3
Information and Communications/Finance and Insurance	106	26.0	39,468	7.3
Social and Personal Service	62	15.3	50,620	9.4
Government and Public Administration	1	0.3	169,027	31.3
Others	0	0	63,977	11.9
Total	407	100.0	539,201	100.0
<b><i>Years of Establishment</i></b>				
Less than 1 year	1	0.2		
1-4 years	17	4.2		
5-9 years	52	12.8		
10 years or above	336	82.6		
Missing data	1	0.2		
Total	407	100.0		
<b><i>Employment Size of Employers</i></b>				
Less than 10 persons	302	74.2		
10-49 persons	48	11.8		
50-99 persons	36	8.8		
100-299 persons	10	2.5		
300-499 persons	5	1.2		
500 persons or above	6	1.5		
#Less than 50 (SMEs)	350	86.0	327,539 <sup>^</sup>	The number accounted for over 98% of the total business units
# 50 or more (Larger Enterprises)	57	14.0		
Total	407	100.0		

Notes: \*1.The last two columns present the number of enterprises by industries and employment size in Hong Kong by the end of Sep. 2017, which are drawn from the “Quarterly Report of Employment and Vacancies Statistics” of HKSAR.

# 2. In this study, companies with less than 50 employees are categorized as small & medium size enterprises (SME), while companies with at least 50 employees are categorized as larger enterprises

<sup>^</sup>3. According to the Support and Consultation Centre for SMEs in Hong Kong, it defines that Manufacturing enterprises with fewer than 100 employees and non-manufacturing enterprises with fewer than

50 employees are regarded as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Hong Kong. And the latest number by the end of Sep 2017 was 327,539.

### **Family Status Discrimination in the Hiring Process**

The Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) was passed in Hong Kong in 1997. Under the Ordinance, it is unlawful for a person or an organization to discriminate against another person on the basis of his/her family status. Family status is legally defined as the responsibility of a person for the care of an immediate family member, related by blood, marriage, adoption, or affinity.<sup>1</sup> None of the respondents reported observing any cases of family status discrimination during the staff hiring process. But, as Table 3 reports, employers would collect employees' personal information regarding their family status.

Apart from age, applicants' marital status was frequently asked (67.6%, 275 employers), followed by 17.1% of the employers (70 employers) asking whether they have young children, and 9.6% (39 employers) asked about if they have elderly parents to take care of.

In total, **17.9% of the employers (73 employers) questioned applicants about their family status during the hiring process.** Even though it is less than one-fifth of the whole, it still shows that employers concern about employees' family status or family caring responsibilities to a certain extent in staff recruitment. There are no significant (statistical significance is defined as  $p < 0.05$ ) differences among types of industries, years of establishment and employment size.

**Table 3 Information Collected During Hiring Process**

Personal Information	n	% (out of 407)
Age	324	79.6
Marital Status	275	67.6
Young Children	70	17.1
Elderly Parents	39	9.6
Other Needy Family Members	21	5.2
Family Status Combined	<b>73</b>	<b>17.9</b>
None of Above	58	14.3

### **Family Status Discrimination in the Firing Process**

None of the employers in the sample reported observing any cases of family status discrimination during the firing process in their companies.

Table 4 illustrates whether the employers adopt policies for employees to articulate their reasons for quitting jobs. Half of the employers in the sample (51.5%,  $n=209$ ) reported having such policies. Table 5 demonstrates the contents of the policies for employees to

<sup>1</sup> The types of blood relationships covered include mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandmother, grandfather, grandchild, aunt, uncle, cousin, nephew and niece. The relationship of marriage is that of a husband and wife who are lawfully married. The relationship of adoption is that of a child who is lawfully adopted by a person who is not his/her natural parent. Relationships of affinity are those created by marriage, and include, for instance, mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law.

articulate their reasons of quitting. Two main policies included exit interviews with the Human Resources (HR) Department and discussion with the affiliated department of the employees.

**Table 4 Company Policies to Articulate Quitting**

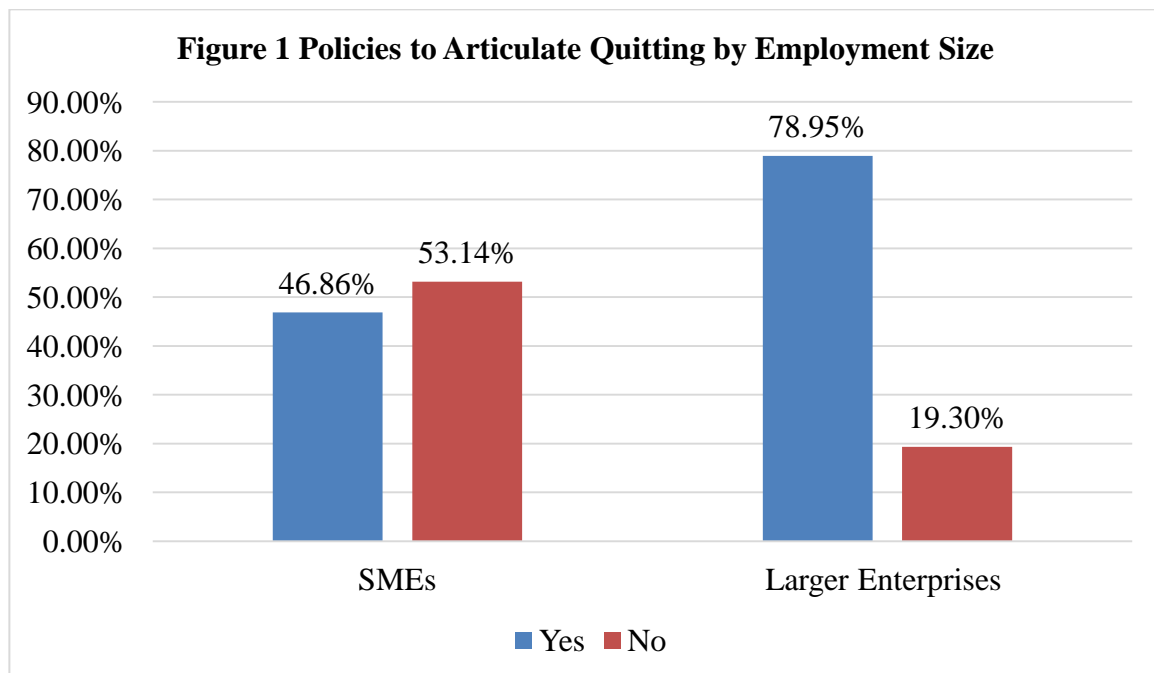
	N	%
Yes	<b>209</b>	<b>51.5</b>
No	197	48.5
Valid Total	406	100

**Table 5 Policy Contents**

	n	% (out of 209)
Exit interview with the HR Department	136	65.1
Discussion with the Affiliated Department of Employees	87	41.6
Internal Appeal	1	0.5

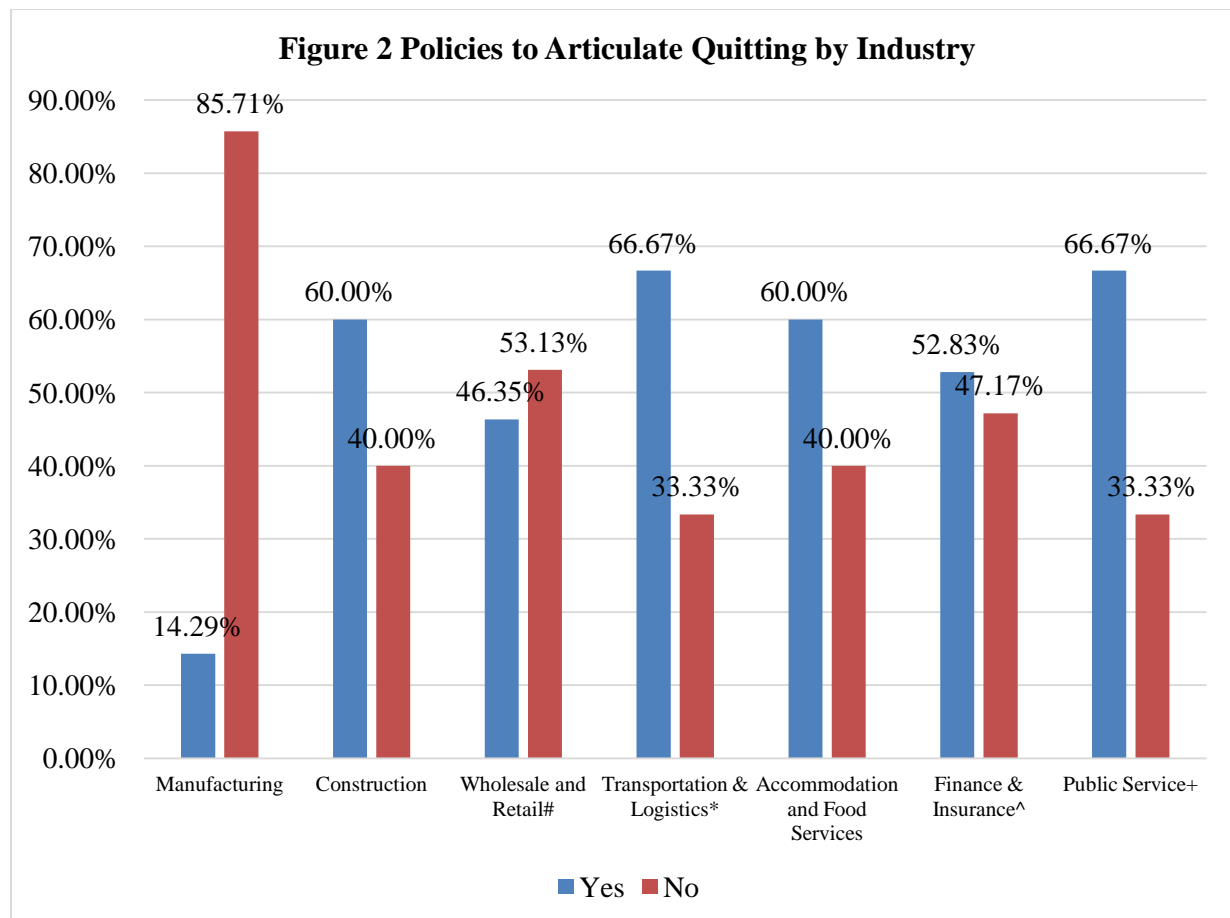
Note: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, and the total responses were summed 224, if adding all the valid percentages reported above, it would exceed 100%.

Results from T-test and ANOVA-test discovered that whether employers adopt policies for employees to articulate the reasons for quitting jobs differs significantly by their employment size and industry. **Larger enterprises that employ at least 50 employees are more likely (79.0%) to adopt such polices than SMEs that employ less than 50 employees (46.9%),** as shown in Figure 1. This is possibly due to better institutions of human resource management in larger enterprises.



In terms of industry, **employers in import/ export, wholesale and retail (46.4%) and manufacturing (14.3%) are less likely to adopt such policies than other industries, as**

shown in Figure 2. In all the other industries, more than half of the employers would have these policies. Import/ export, wholesale and retail and manufacturing are labor-intensive industries with high turn-over rates, which might contribute to their lack of such policies.



Notes: #“Wholesale and Retail” was the short form of “Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail”;  
 \*“Transportation and Logistics” was the short form of “Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services”;  
 ^“Finance, Insurance & Real Estate” was the short form of “Information and Communications/Finance and Insurance”;  
 +“Public Service” was the short form of “Public Administration and Social Service”

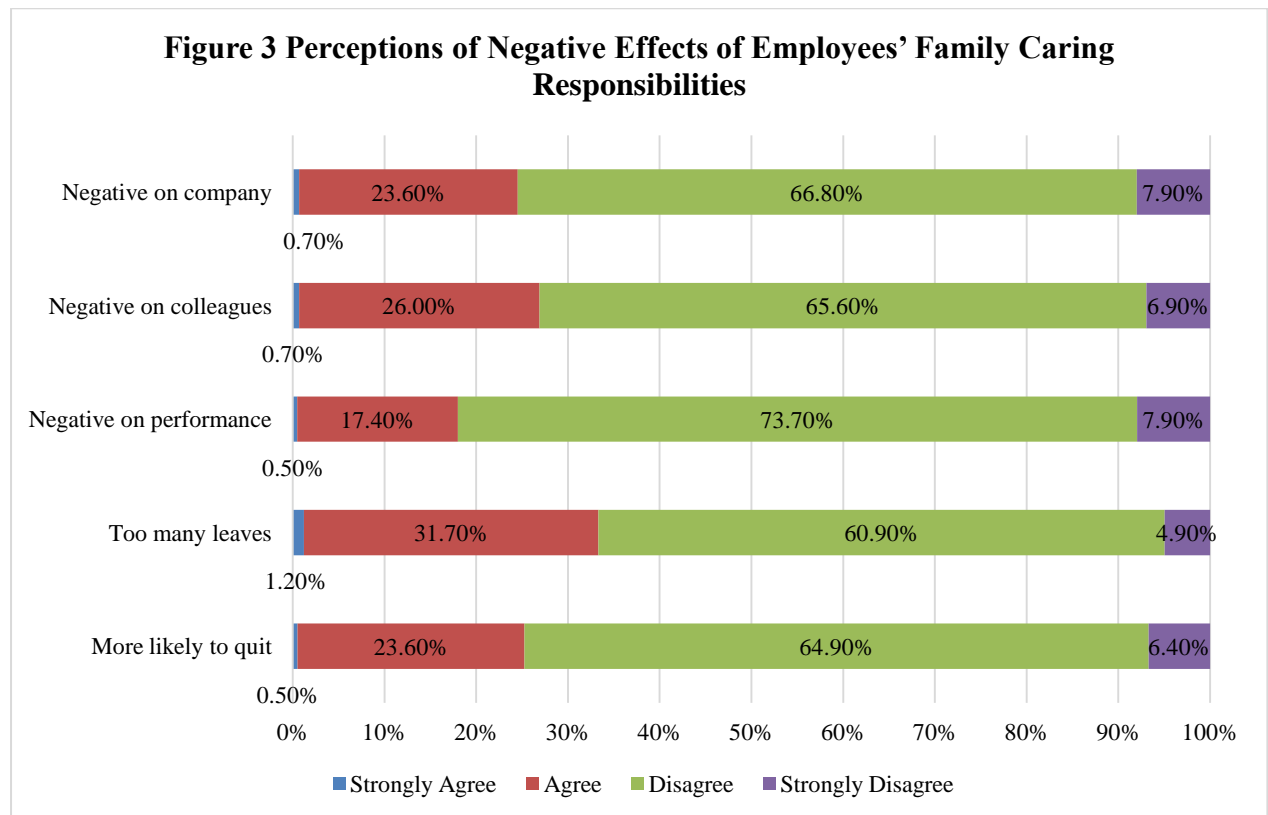
### **Family Status Discrimination at Work**

None of the employers reported observing any cases of family status discrimination in their companies during every day work.

Figure 3 unveils employers’ perceptions of the negative effects that employees with family status might bring to the workplace. Five categories of negative effects, including “negative impact on the company operations”, “negative impact on colleagues”, “negative impact on own performance”, “taking too many leave which affects the company’s operations” and these employees may be “more likely to quit”, were asked.

The majority of the employers tend to reject the idea that employees with family status would bring negative effects. But **they are more likely to agree that employees with family**

status are taking too many leave (32.9%) and less likely to agree that employees with family status have worse job performance (17.9%). Taking many leave is a major concern of employers of employees with family status.



As shown in Figure 4, on 4 out of the 5 categories of negative effects, including “negative impact on the company operations”, “negative impact on colleagues”; “negative impact on own performance”, and “taking too many leave which affects the company’s operations”, **larger enterprises are significantly less likely to regard employees with family status as burdens**, compared with SMEs. **Larger enterprises, with better employment institutions and more resources, are more tolerant of employees with family status.** There are no statistical differences among types of industries and years of establishment.



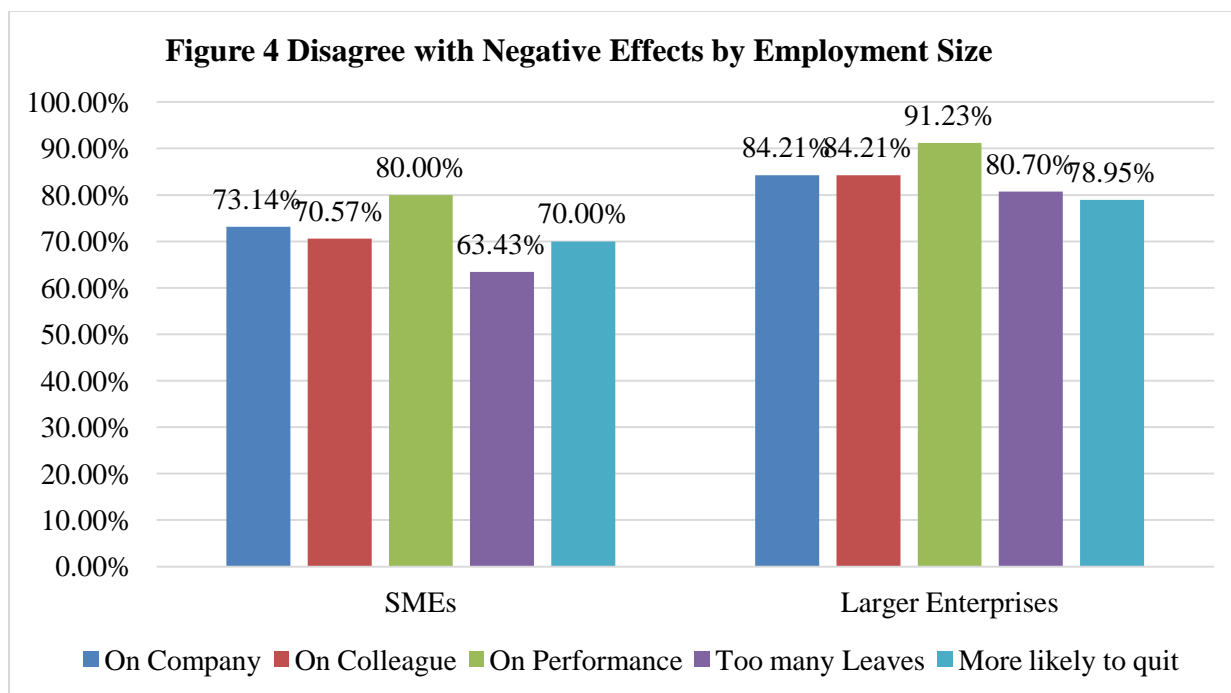


Table 6 illustrates the responses from the employers when asked if they adopt policies beyond labour law requirements to prevent family status discrimination in workplace. **Only 15.2% of the employers in the sample (n=62) reported having such policies**, while the majority do not have any. There are no significant differences among types of industries, years of establishment and employment size.

**Table 6 Have Policies beyond Law Requirements**

	n	%
Yes	<b>62</b>	<b>15.2</b>
No	345	84.8
Total	407	100.0

For the 62 employers who adopt policies to assist employees with family status or family caring responsibilities, some popular practices include flexible working hours, taking paid-leave in advance, and additional paid-leave, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7 Policies beyond Law Requirements**

Categories	n	% (out of 62)
Flexible working hours	43	69.4
Allowing application of taking paid-leave for next year in advance	20	32.3
Extra paid-leave	16	25.8
Good work-life balance to avoid family disputes due to busy working	13	21.0
Permission for working at home	9	14.5

Note: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, total answers were summed 101. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, it would exceed 100%.

Since the majority of the employers did not have such policies beyond law requirements, we further investigated whether they would plan for these policies in the future. **67% of the employers claimed that they would develop policies to provide support to employees with family caring responsibilities**, as demonstrated in Table 8. As for what type of policies they would plan to develop, the popular options include paid-leave in advance, flexible working hours, and work-family balance assistance, as shown in Table 9.

**Table 8 Develop Policies in Future**

	n	%
Yes	262	67.0
No	129	33.0
Valid Total	391	100.0

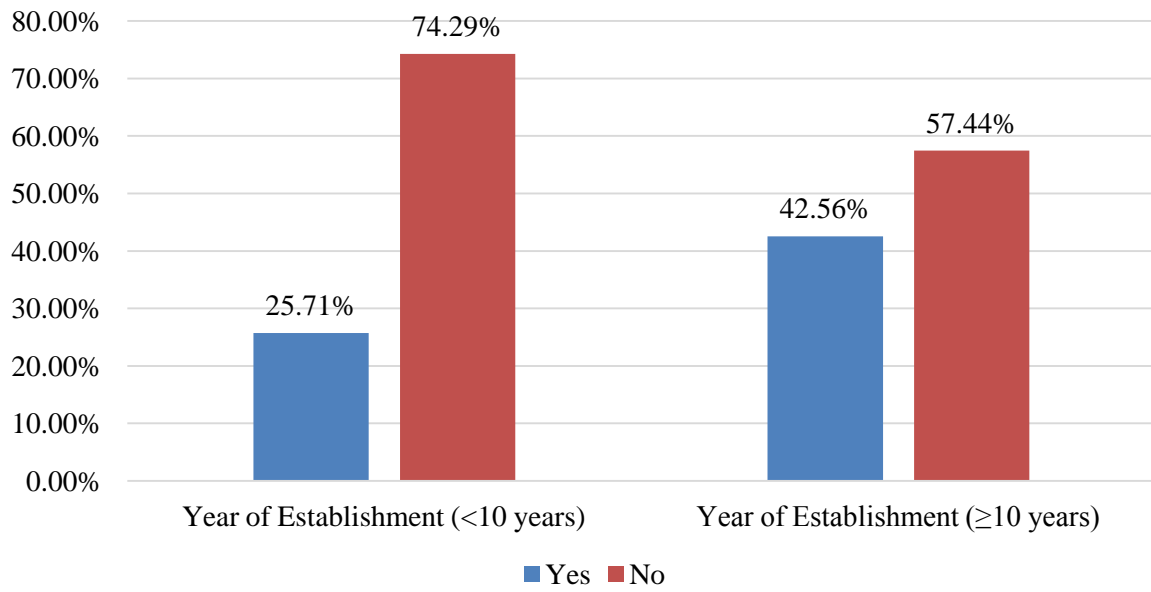
**Table 9 Policy Plans**

	n	% (out of 262)
Allowing application of taking paid-leave for next year in advance	170	64.9
Flexible working hours	161	61.5
Good work-life balance to avoid family disputes due to busy working	138	52.7
Extra paid-leave	58	22.1
Permission for working at home	54	20.6

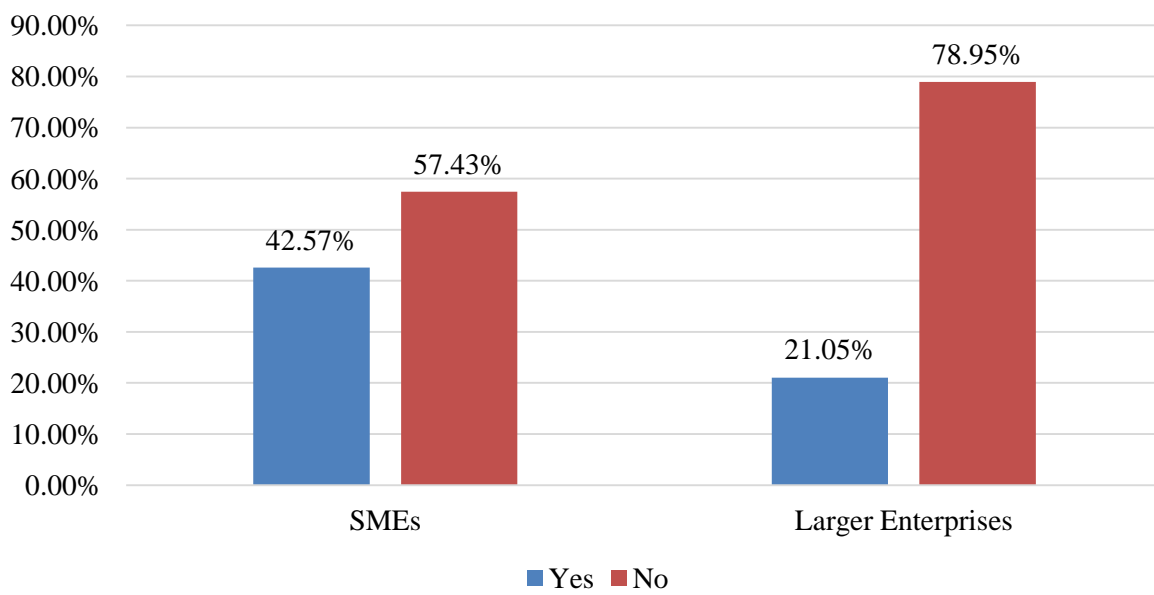
Note: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, total answers were summed 581. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, it would exceed 100%.

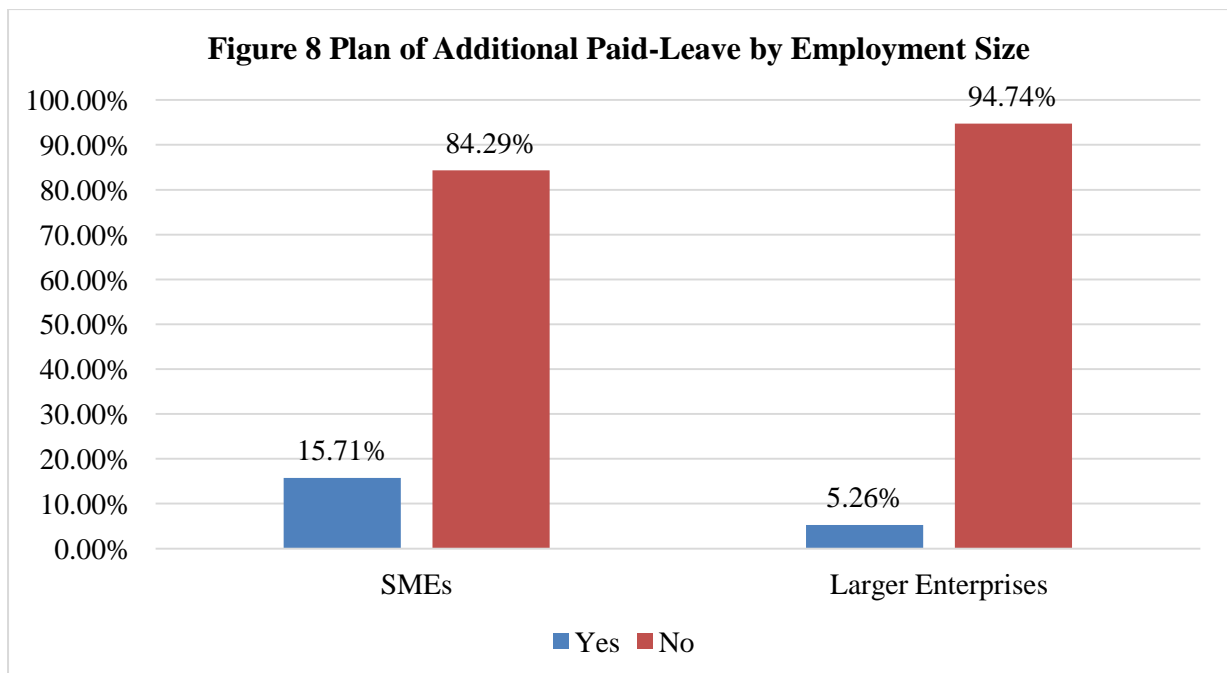
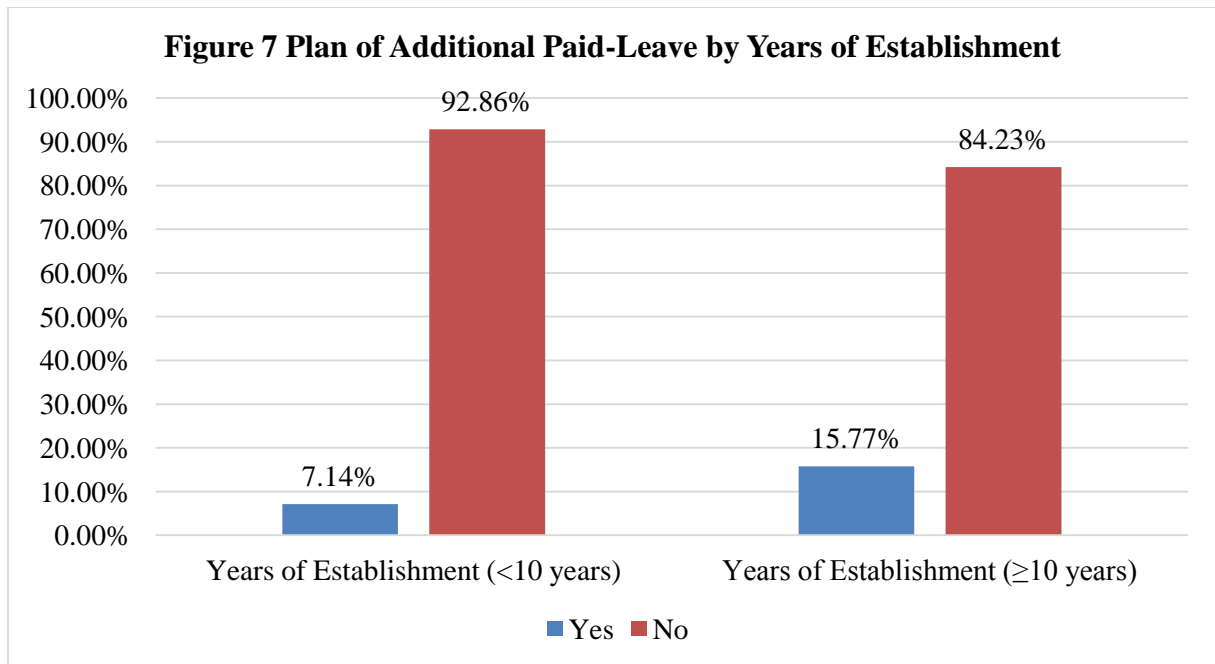
The future plans to adopt flexible working hours and additional paid-leave significantly differ by years of establishment and employment size of the employers, as shown in Figure 5 to Figure 8. **Employers with longer histories (more than 10 years) and smaller employment size (under 50) are more likely to plan for these practices to assist employees with family status or family caring responsibilities.** Enterprises with longer years of establishment may have better employment institutions, more resources, and more established company cultures, which would lead to plans for these family friendly policies. Smaller employment size, which cultivates closeness among employees and easy coordination among staff, can also lead to plans of such practices.

**Figure 5 Plan of Flexible Working Time by Years of Establishment**



**Figure 6 Plan of Flexible Working Time by Employment Size**





It is a big concern for employers that employees with family status would take a lot of leave, as illustrated in Figure 3. When asked how many days in a month in maximum they would allow for leave, the employers gave the responses shown in Table 10. The mean of the distribution is 2.72 (SD = 1.77), meaning that on average, **employers would allow about 4-5 days in a month** for employees with family status to take leave. And the mean does not differ significantly among employers in different industries, or with different employment sizes and years of establishment.

**Table 10 Days Allowed for Leave in One Month**

Day(s)	n	%
1-2	90	22.1
3-4	112	27.5
5-6	38	9.3
7-8	27	6.6
9-10	9	2.2
10+	56	13.8
Undecided	69	17.0
Not accept for leave	5	1.2
Total	407	100.0

**Knowledge and Awareness of Family Status Discrimination (FSD) and Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO)**

Table 11 shows the responses of the employers when asked if they heard about family status discrimination before. Only 158 employers out of 407 gave the Yes answer (**38.8%**), and they were further asked if Hong Kong has Family Status Discrimination Ordinance. 74 out of the 158 employers were sure that Hong Kong has the legislation, as demonstrated in Table 13. That constitutes 46.8% of the respondents who heard about family status discrimination before, and only **18.2%** of the employers in the whole sample. **The majority (61.2%) of the employers never heard about family status discrimination and fewer possess good knowledge of the FSDO, which was legislated in Hong Kong in 1997.**

**Employers' knowledge of family status discrimination significantly varies with their employment size (Table 12).** There were no significant differences among employers with different types of industries and history of establishment toward the knowledge of family status discrimination. As shown in Figure 9, 31 out of the 57 large enterprises (54.4%) heard about family status discrimination before, compared with 127 out of the 350 SMEs (36.3%) in the sample. Employers with larger employment size probably have more established management structures and institutions and hire HR professionals, and hence better knowledge of family status discrimination.

**Table 11 Heard about Family Status Discrimination Before**

	N	%
Yes	158	38.8
No	249	61.2
Total	407	100.0

**Table 12 Knowledge of Family Status Discrimination**

Variables	Have heard about FSD (n1=158, % out of 158)	Haven't heard about FSD (n2=249, % out of 249)
<b><i>Industry</i></b>		
Manufacturing	6 (3.8)	8 (3.2)
Construction	3 (1.9)	2 (0.8)
Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail	68 (43.0)	124 (49.8)
Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services	3 (1.9)	9 (3.6)
Accommodation and Food Services	6 (3.8)	9 (3.6)
Information and Communications/Finance and Insurance	9 (5.7)	21 (8.4)
Social and Personal Service	30 (19.0)	33 (13.3)
Government and Public Administration	0	0
Real Estate, Professional and Business services	33 (20.9)	43 (17.3)
<b><i>Years of Establishment</i></b>		
Less than 1 year	0	1 (0.4)
1-4 years	6 (3.8)	11 (4.4)
5-9 years	19 (12.0)	33 (13.3)
10 years or above	132 (83.5)	204 (81.9)
<b><i>*Employment Size of Employers</i></b>		
Less than 10 persons	105 (66.5)	197 (79.1)
10-49 persons	22 (13.9)	26 (10.4)
50-99 persons	16 (10.1)	20 (8.0)
100-299 persons	6 (3.8)	4 (1.6)
300-499 persons	4 (2.5)	1 (0.4)
500 persons or above	5 (3.2)	1 (0.4)
#Less than 50 (SMEs)	127 (80.4)	223 (89.5)
# 50 or more (Larger Enterprises)	31 (19.6)	26 (10.4)

Note: p\*\*\*<0.001, p\*\*<0.01, p\*<0.05

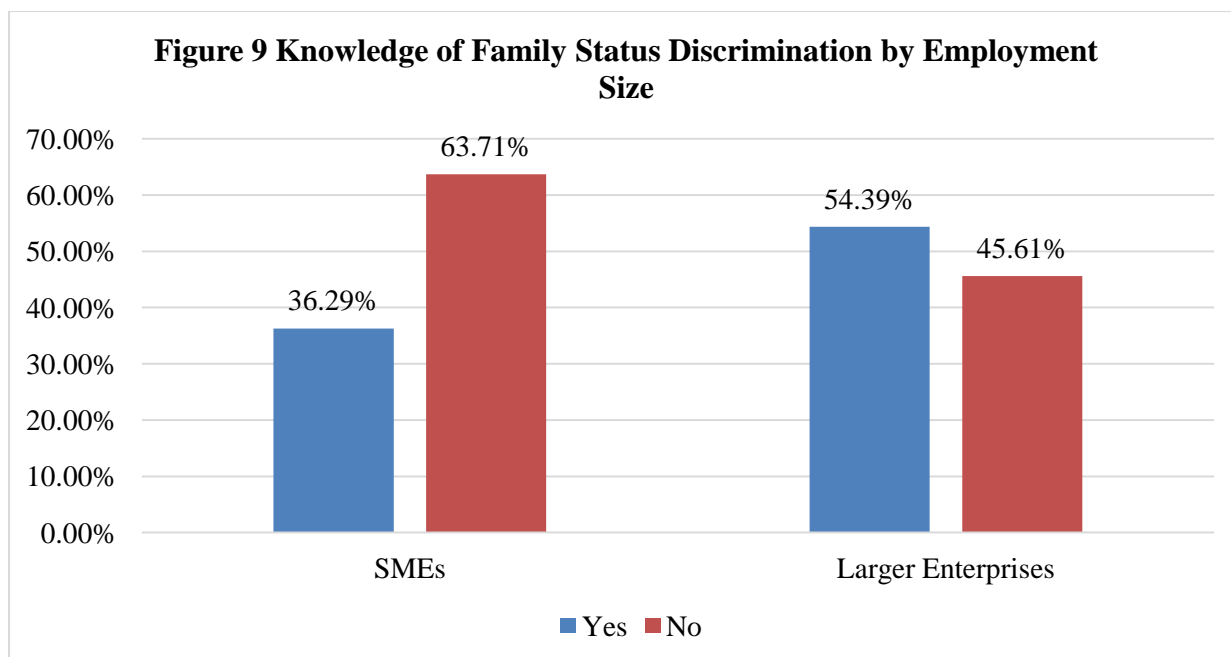


Table 13 shows that 74 employers knew Hong Kong has Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) and 84 did not know or were not sure about it. There were no significant differences regarding the knowledge of FSDO among types of industries, employment size and history of establishment, and details were presented in Table 14.

**Table 13 Hong Kong Has FSDO**

	n	%
Yes	<b>74</b>	<b>46.8</b>
No	<b>43</b>	<b>27.2</b>
Don't Know	41	25.9
Total	158	100.0

**Table 14 Knowledge of Family Status Discrimination Ordinance**

Variables	HK has FSDO (n1=74, % out of 74)	HK doesn't have FSDO/Not Sure (n2=84, % out of 84)
<b>Industry</b>		
Manufacturing	3 (4.1)	3 (3.6)
Construction	1 (1.4)	2 (2.4)
Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail	32 (43.2)	36 (42.9)
Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services	1 (1.4)	2 (2.4)
Accommodation and Food Services	2 (2.7)	4 (4.8)
Information and Communications/Finance and Insurance	6 (8.1)	3 (3.6)
Social and Personal Service	13 (17.6)	17 (20.2)
Government and Public Administration	0	0

Real Estate, Professional and Business services	16 (21.6)	17 (20.2)
<b><i>Years of Establishment</i></b>		
Less than 1 year	0	0
1-4 years	4 (5.4)	2 (2.4)
5-9 years	8 (10.8)	11 (13.1)
10 years or above	62 (83.8)	70 (83.3)
<b><i>Employment Size of Employers</i></b>		
Less than 10 persons	50 (67.6)	55 (65.5)
10-49 persons	11 (14.9)	11 (13.1)
50-99 persons	9 (12.2)	7 (8.3)
100-299 persons	1 (1.4)	5 (6.0)
300-499 persons	2 (2.7)	2 (2.4)
500 persons or above	1 (1.4)	4 (4.8)
#Less than 50 (SMEs)	61 (82.5)	66 (78.6)
# 50 or more (Larger Enterprises)	13 (17.7)	18 (21.5)

We then explored with 158 employers who heard about family status discrimination before about their perception of the prevalence of family status discrimination in the workplace of Hong Kong, and their responses are summarized in Table 15. **Over half of the employers (58.9%) regard family status discrimination as not very prevalent/totally not prevalent in the workplace of Hong Kong.** There are no significant differences among types of industries, years of establishment and employment size of enterprises.

**Table 15 Prevalence of Family Status Discrimination**

	n	%
Very Prevalent or Quite Prevalent	60	41.1
Not Very Prevalent or Totally not Prevalent	<b>86</b>	<b>58.9</b>
Valid Total	146	100.0

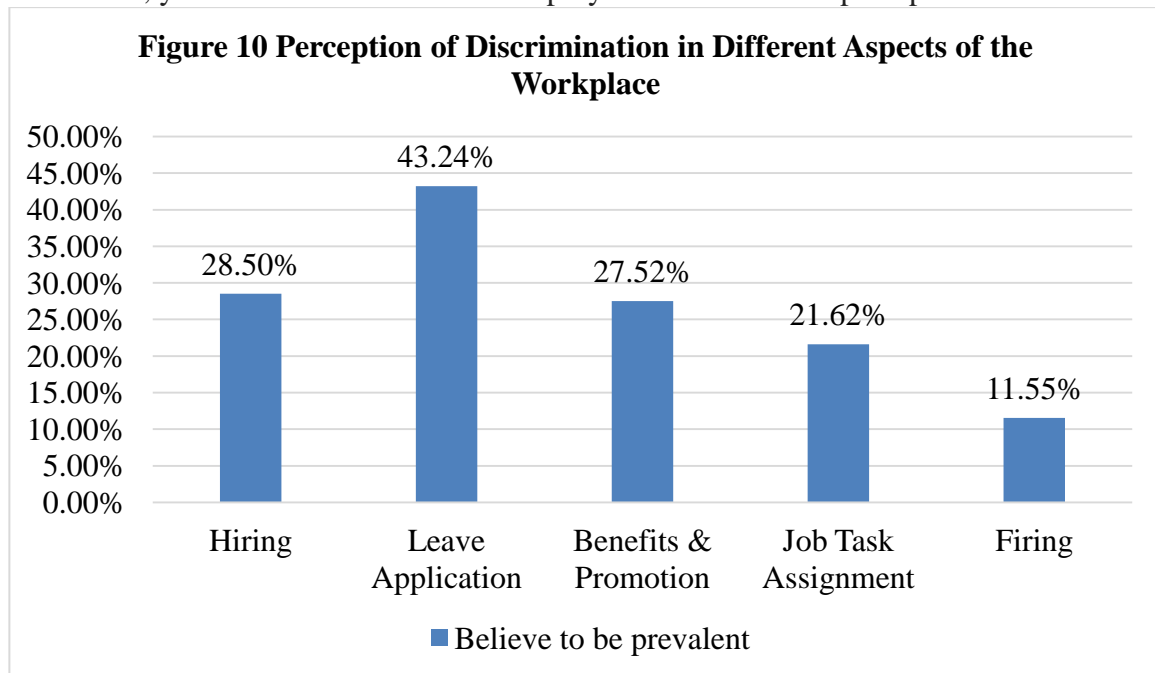
After given the definition of family status discrimination, all of them were asked how prevalent it is in five different aspects of the workplace: hiring process, leave application, benefits & promotion, job task assignment, and firing process. Table 16 illustrates the distribution of their responses: **for every aspect of the workplace, the majority of the employers believe that family status discrimination is not very prevalent.**



**Table 16 Prevalence of Family Status Discrimination in Different Aspects of the Workplace**

		Hiring	Leave Application	Benefits & Promotion	Job Task Assignment	Firing
Very Prevalent or Quite Prevalent	n	116	176	112	88	47
	%	28.5	43.2	27.5	21.6	11.5
Not Very Prevalent or Totally not Prevalent	n	274	221	278	306	343
	%	67.3	54.3	68.3	75.2	84.3
Don't Know	n	17	10	17	13	17
	%	4.2	2.5	4.2	3.2	4.2
Total	n	407	407	407	407	407
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

But their perception of prevalence is still different for the different aspects of the workplace. **Compared with other aspects, employers perceive more discrimination against employees with family status when they apply for leave, and less discrimination during the process of lay-off and firing.** The difference is presented in Figure 10, and the difference holds for employers in different industries with different employment size and years of establishment. This result is consistent with the conclusion above that employers see more negative effects of having employees with family status when they apply for too many leave. Leave application is one of the major concerns for employers when they employ workers with family status in Hong Kong. There are no significant differences among types of industries, years of establishment and employment size in these perceptions.



### Attitudes towards Different Family Statuses

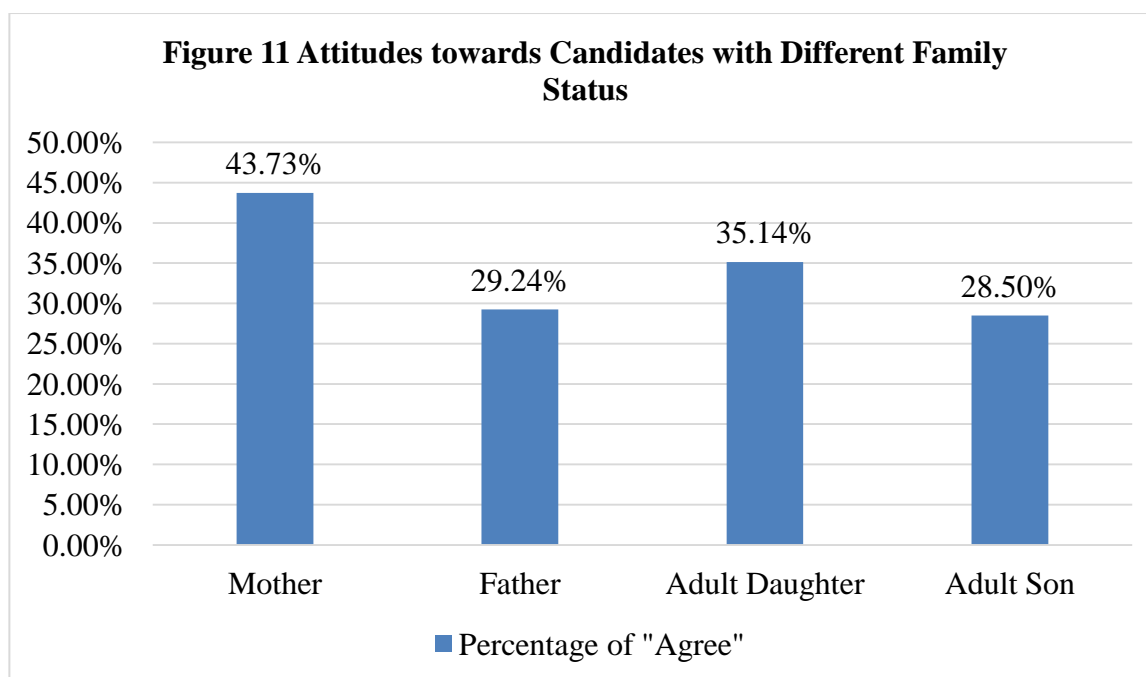
The employers were asked whether it is normal not to employ four types of job candidates with different family statuses/ family caring responsibilities: mother caring for children, father caring for children, adult daughter caring for ageing parents, and adult son caring for ageing parents. Their responses are summarized in Table 17.

**Table 17 Not To Employ People with Different Family Status**

	Mother (n=407)	Father (n=404)	Adult Daughter (n=404)	Adult Son (n=403)
	%	%	%	%
Strongly Agree	2.2	1.0	0.7	0.5
Agree	<b>41.5</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>28.3</b>
Disagree	51.8	64.4	60.9	66.0
Strongly Disagree	4.4	6.2	3.7	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In the views of the employers, among the four types of job candidates with family status, it is most understandable not to offer jobs to mothers caring for young children. It is quite normal not to offer jobs to adult daughters taking care of their ageing parents, but not so normal as to mothers. Compared with these two types of candidates, it is less normal and understandable not to offer jobs to fathers caring for children and adult sons caring for ageing parents. The comparison is presented in Figure 11. There were no significant differences among types of industries, years of establishment, and employment size of employers in these conclusions.

This result captures gender discrimination and family status discrimination in job application in Hong Kong. **Women with family status are more likely to be viewed negatively in the hiring process. Mothers caring for young children, in particular, are targets of more severe family status discrimination.** The comparison echoes the literature on “motherhood penalty”, based on empirical studies in other countries.



**Actions Needed for Change**

Table 18 summarizes the responses from the employers when they were asked what needs to be done to prevent family status discrimination in the workplace of Hong Kong. Many of them believe that promotional activities of the government (80.6%), promotional activities of the EOC (78.9%), and participation of citizens through public consultation (78.4%) are important methods. Some (53.6%) also agree that companies should play a more active role in designing and implementing regulations. In the opinions of the employers, prevention of family status discrimination should be in collaboration of the government, the EOC, the civil society, and the business sector.

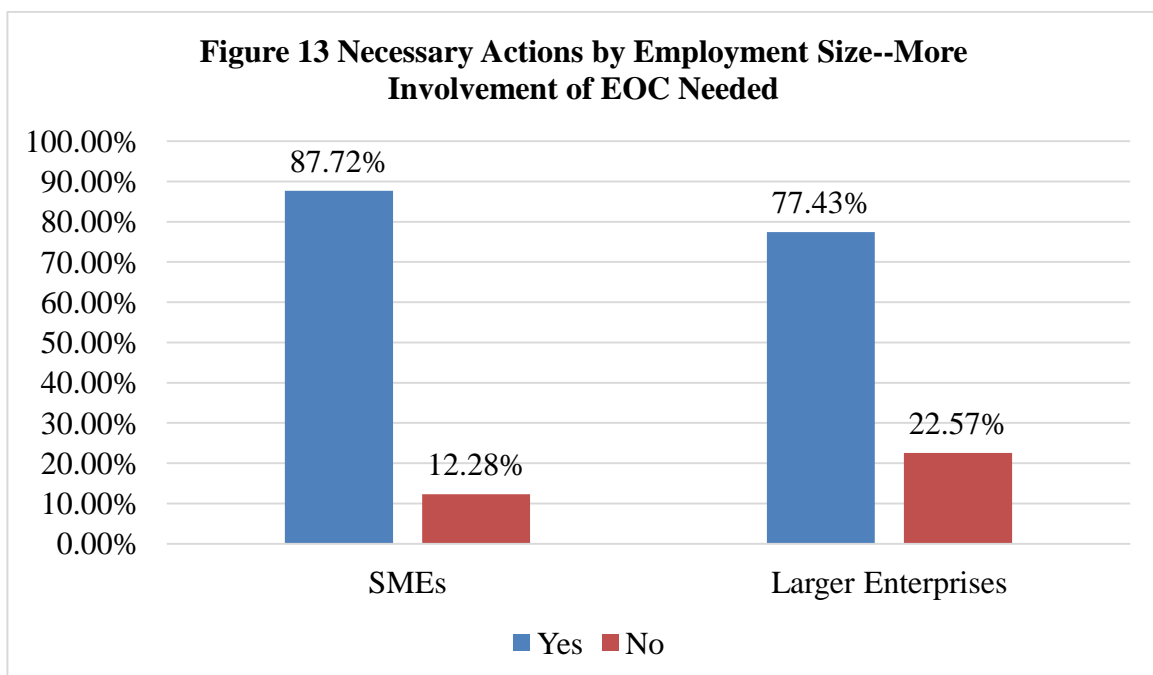
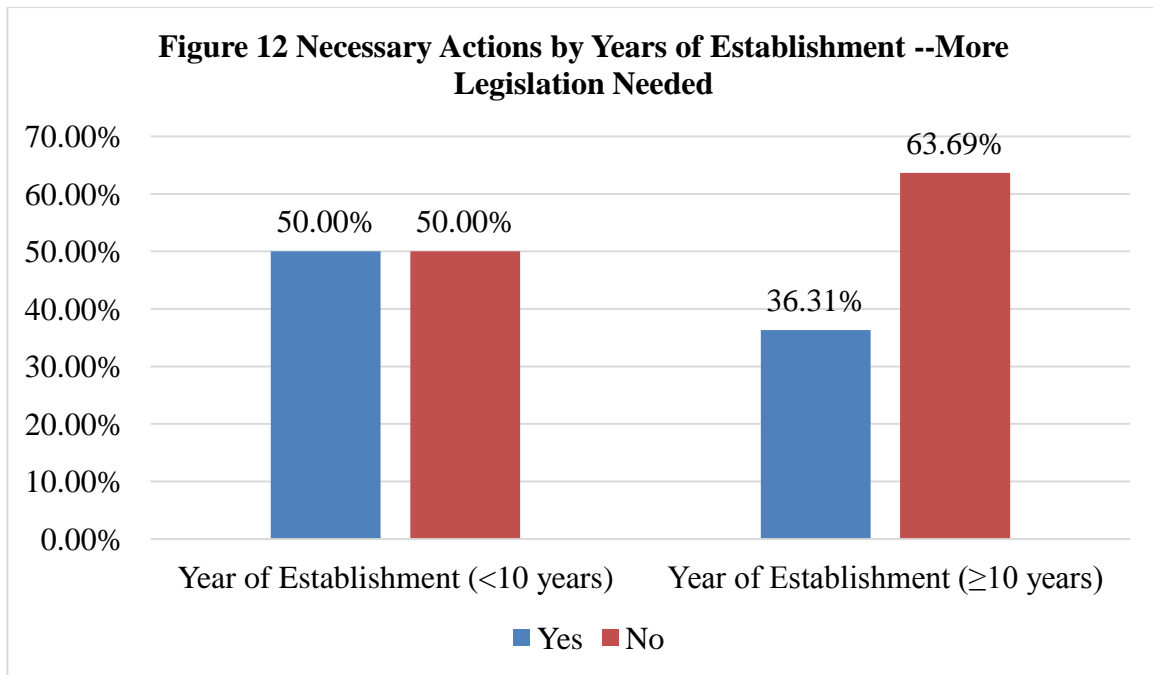
**Table 18 What Should Be Done to Prevent Family Status Discrimination**

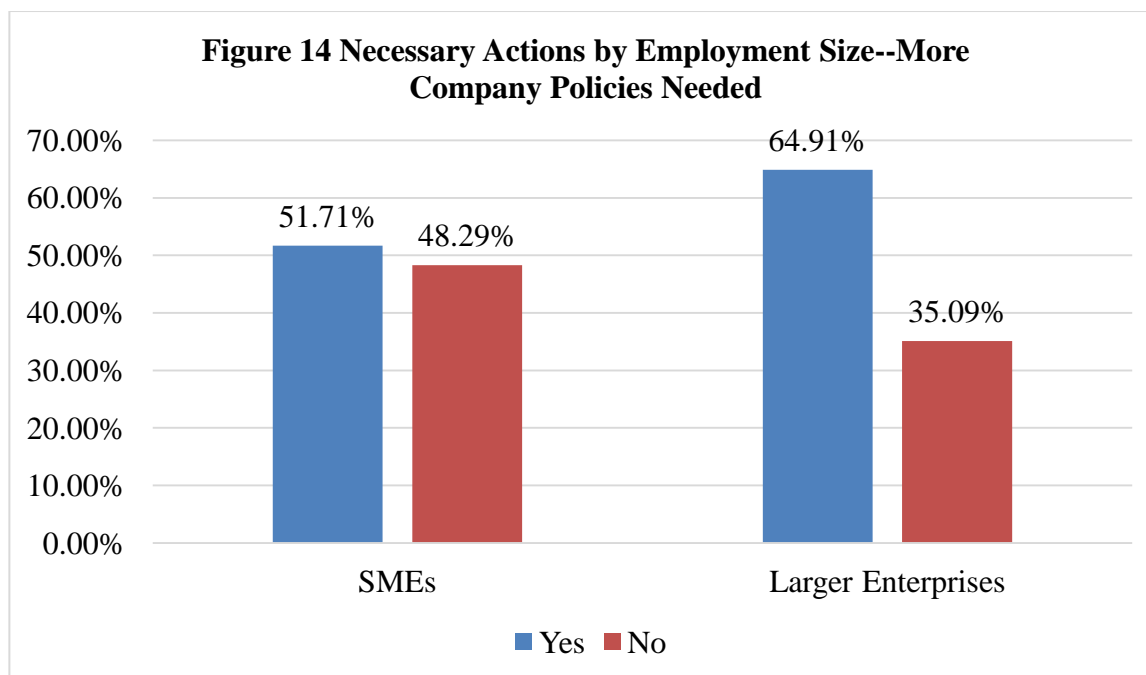
	n	%
More Legislation of Government	158	38.8
More Promotion and Consciousness Raising by Government.	328	<b>80.6</b>
More EOC Activities	321	<b>78.9</b>
More Public Consultation through Different Ways	319	<b>78.4</b>
Relevant Policies to be Formulated by Companies	218	53.6
No Need for Action	32	7.9

Notes: Multiple answers were allowed for this questions, total answers were summed 1,376. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, it would exceed 100%.

The employers' perceptions of necessary actions vary by employment size and years of establishment. As shown in Figure 12, 13 and 14, **younger companies (less than 10 years) are more likely to see governmental legislations as necessary, SMEs (under 50 employees) would like the EOC to be more involved in promotion, while larger enterprises (over 50 employees) believe companies should formulate relevant policies.**

Their views are related to their own resources: younger companies and SMEs, with limited resources, would like to have more intervention from the public sector as protection; larger companies with more resources and better established institutions tend to believe in their own responsibilities.



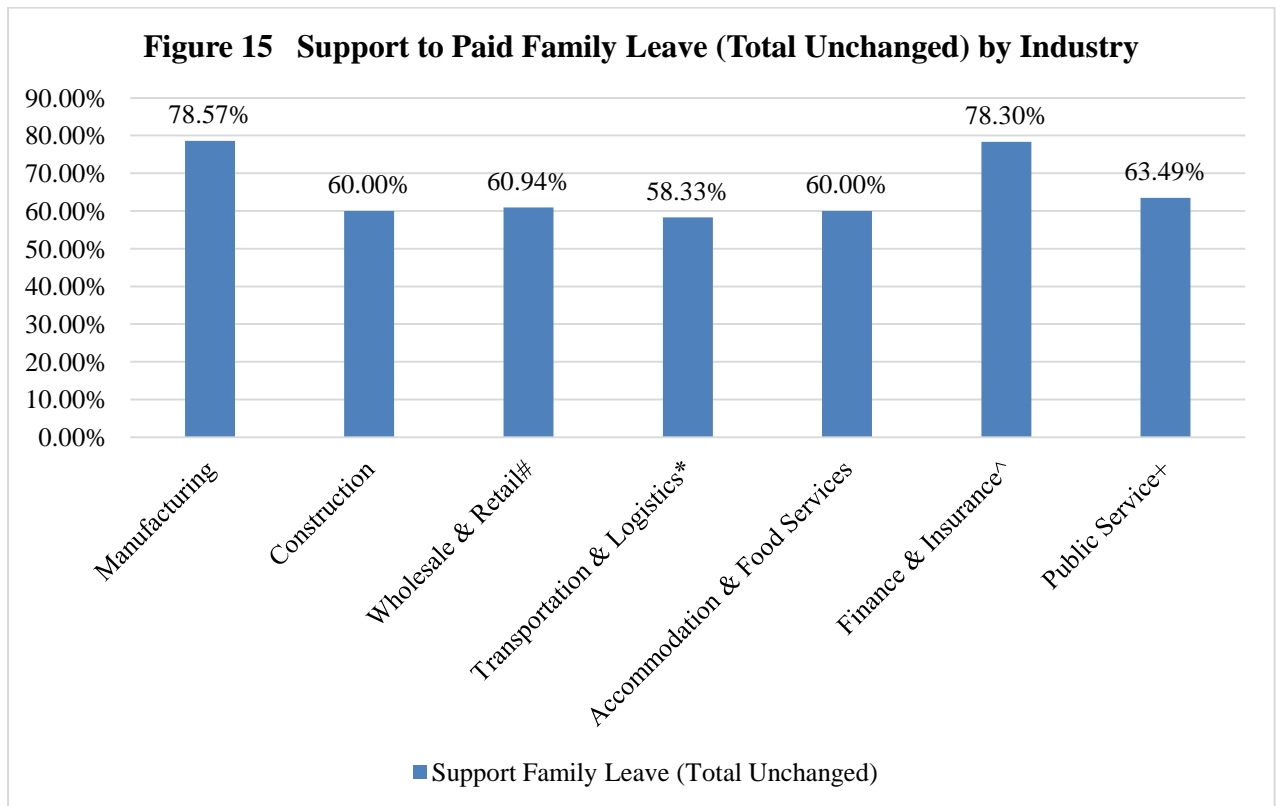


Since leave application and leave taking of employees with family status is a big concern of employers, we then explored whether employers would support Hong Kong to implement paid family leave, as in some other parts of the world. They were asked if they would support additional days of paid family leave in the leave package, and if they would support paid family leave when the total days of leave remain unchanged. The employers are generally supportive to the policy approach of paid family leave. As shown in Table 19, 55.3% would support additional days of paid family leave, and 66.3% would support paid family leave if the total days of leave are unchanged. **Keeping the total days of leave unchanged could generate increased support from employers to paid family leave.**

**Table 19 Paid Family Leave in Hong Kong**

	More Days Off		Total Unchanged	
	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	28	6.9	24	5.9
Agree	<b>197</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>60.4</b>
Disagree	139	34.2	100	24.6
Strongly Disagree	9	2.2	7	1.7
Don't know/No opinion	34	8.4	30	7.4
Total	407	100.0	407	100.0

When the total days of leave remain unchanged, the employers’ support to paid family leave varies significantly among industries. Figure 15 demonstrates that **employers in the industries of manufacturing (78.6%) and finance/insurance/real estate (78.3%) are more likely to support paid family leave when the total days of leave stay unchanged.**



Notes: #“Wholesale and Retail” was the short form of “Import/Export, Whole and Retail”;  
 \* “Transportation and Logistics” was the short form of “Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services”;  
 ^“Finance, Insurance & Real Estate” was the short form of “Information and Communications/Finance and Insurance”;  
 +“Public Service” was the short form of “Public Administration and Social Service”

The employers supportive to paid family leave were further asked to whom the leave should be given. As Table 20 and Table 21 present, the dominant majority of the employers believe that **paid family leave should be given to men and women employees equally (85.2%), and to employees with different family statuses equally (57.0%)**. Fairness to all is a principle that the employers, across industry, employment size, and years of establishment, would like to stick to in paid family leave.

**Table 20 Paid Family Leave to Whom**

	n	%
More to Female Employees	44	14.8
Both Male and Female Employees	<b>253</b>	<b>85.2</b>
Total	297	100.0

**Table 21 Paid Family Leave to Whom**

	n	%
To All Caregivers	<b>171</b>	<b>57.0</b>
More to Caregivers of Children	114	38.0
More to Caregivers of Elderly Parents	85	28.3
More to Caregivers of Spouse and Siblings	4	1.3
Total	300	100.0

## 5. TELEPHONE SURVEY OF EMPLOYEES

### Survey Design

The Telephone Survey Research Laboratory of Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies (CUHK) conducted the survey of employees during the period of 8<sup>th</sup> August to 26<sup>th</sup> September in 2017. Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) was used for collecting data.

### Population

The target population of the survey are adults (aged 18 or above) who have been employed in Hong Kong in the last two years and have a high language proficiency in Cantonese or Mandarin.

### Sampling

Two-stage random sampling was used to ensure the representativeness of the sample. At the first stage, the first four digits of telephone numbers were used from the Numbering Plan for Telecommunications Services in Hong Kong of The Communications Authority, then another four random digits were created by the computer to match the previous four digits, thus comprising the total sample of this telephone survey. At the second stage, eligible interviewees were selected. One household member was selected based on the aforementioned criteria. If there was more than one eligible respondent, “next birthday rule” was used to choose the particular interviewee. In total, 1003 respondents were interviewed and the response rate was 38.4%.

### Results

#### Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Table 22 illustrates the demographics of the employees (N=1003) in the survey, including age, gender, educational level, marital status, child status, and income level. There were more females (53.1%) than males (46.9%) in the sample, most of them were married (69.0%), aged between 45-54 (30.2%) with an educational level of tertiary or above (40.5%), and had personal monthly income level between HK\$15,000 and HK\$20,000 (20.7%). Meanwhile, 73% of the respondents were born in Hong Kong, and only 0.8% of the employees in the sample have been living in Hong Kong for less than 7 years.

**Table 22 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents based on Family Status Discrimination (N=1003)**

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Sex</i>		
Men	470	46.9
Women	533	53.1
<i>#Age (Mean=3.46, SD=1.27)</i>		
18-24	76	7.6



25-34	167	16.7
35-44	235	23.4
45-54	303	30.2
55-64	190	18.9
65 or above	32	3.2
<b>#Educational Level</b> (Mean=4.72, SD=1.26)		
Kindergarten or below	6	0.6
Primary	43	4.3
Lower secondary	117	11.7
Upper secondary	301	30.2
Tertiary (Non-degree)	126	12.6
Tertiary (Degree)	404	40.5
Missing	6	0.6
<b>Place of Birth</b>		
Hong Kong	732	73.0
Others	268	26.7
Missing	3	0.3
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Never married	280	28.0
Married	690	69.0
Separated/ Divorced/ Widowed	30	3.0
Missing	3	0.3
<b>Whether having child aged under 18?</b>		
Yes (aged under 18)	362	36.2
No (aged above 18)	270	27.0
No children	368	36.8
Missing	3	0.3
<b>#Personal Monthly Income (HK\$)</b> (Mean=5.12, SD=2.40)		
Less than 5,000	36	3.8
5,000-less than 10,000	75	8.0
10,000-less than 15,000	142	15.1
15,000-less than 20,000	194	20.7
20,000-less than 25,000	143	15.2
25,000-less than 30,000	87	9.3
30,000-less than 40,000	92	9.8
40,000-less than 50,000	61	6.5
50,000-less than 60,000	35	3.7
60,000 or above	73	7.8
Missing	65	6.5
<b>Whether receiving caring support from others</b>		
Yes	474	75.4
No	155	24.6
Not applicable	373	37.2
Missing	1	0.1

Note: #Age, educational level, and monthly income level were taken as interval variables for comparing the differences in “means” and “standard deviations” in later analysis, though they were shown as categorical variables in the questionnaire.

Among the 1003 respondents, 630 reported having family status, which means that they need to take care of members in immediate families. When comparing with the total sample, more of them were married (81.4%), female (56.3%), and having children under 18 (52.5%). Most of them were aged between 45 and 54 (37.3%), with an educational level of tertiary with degree (38.9%), and monthly income level between HK\$15,000 and HK\$20,000 (19.0%). Their age (mean=3.62) and personal monthly income (mean=5.37) were slightly higher than those of the total sample as well. When comparing with non-caregivers (Table 23), most of them are older females with a lower educational level (mean=4.67) but higher level of personal monthly income (mean=5.37).

As shown in Table 24, the majority of these 630 respondents reported having to take care of children (69.5%), parents (44.4%) and spouse (27.9%). 474 of them (75.4%) claimed having other support in care-giving, mainly from other family members (87.1%) and foreign domestic helpers (31.2%).

**Table 23 Comparison of Characteristics of Caregivers and Non-caregivers**

	Caregivers (N1=630) (%)	Non-caregivers (N2=373) (%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Men	43.7	52.3
Women	56.3	47.7
<b>Age (mean=3.62 for N1, 3.19 for N2)</b>		
18-24	2.1	16.9
25-34	11.7	24.9
35-44	30.0	12.3
45-54	37.3	18.2
55-64	16.3	23.3
65 or above	2.5	4.3
<b>Educational Level (mean=4.67 for N1, 4.80 for N2)</b>		
Kindergarten or below	0.6	0.5
Primary	4.6	3.8
Lower secondary	11.6	11.8
Upper secondary	32.5	26.0
Tertiary (Non-degree)	11.8	13.9
Tertiary (Degree)	38.9	42.9
<b>Place of Birth</b>		
Hong Kong	71.4	75.9
Others	28.6	23.6
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Never married	16.1	48.0
Married	81.4	48.0
Separated/ Divorced/ Widowed	2.5	3.8
<b>Whether having child aged under 18?</b>		
Yes (aged under 18)	52.5	8.6
No (aged above 18)	25.6	29.2
No children	21.8	61.9

<b>Personal Monthly Income (HK\$)</b>		
<i>(mean=5.37 for N1, 4.69 for N2)</i>		
Less than 5,000	2.4	3.8
5,000-less than 10,000	6.6	8.0
10,000-less than 15,000	15.1	15.1
15,000-less than 20,000	19.0	20.7
20,000-less than 25,000	14.4	15.2
25,000-less than 30,000	10.7	9.3
30,000-less than 40,000	12.0	9.8
40,000-less than 50,000	7.6	6.5
50,000-less than 60,000	4.1	3.7
60,000 or above	8.3	7.8
<b>Whether receiving caring support from others</b>		
Yes	75.4	0
No	24.6	0

**Table 24 Care for Whom**

	N	%
Parents	280	44.4
Spouses	176	27.9
<b>Children</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>69.5</b>
Siblings	27	4.3
Others	18	2.8

Notes: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, and the total number was summed as 939. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, the results will exceed 100%

**Family Status Discrimination in the Hiring Process**

As Table 25 demonstrates, 282 respondents have searched for jobs in the last two years, among whom 140 have family status. 21 respondents, all with family status, reported experiencing family status discrimination (FSD) in the hiring process, constituting 7.5% of all the job hunters and 15.0% of job hunters with family status.

**Table 25 Searching for Jobs in the Past Two Years**

	Have you searched for jobs during the last two years?				
	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Have family status	140	22.2	490	77.8	630
Do not have family status	142	38.1	231	61.9	373
Total	282	28.1	721	71.9	1003

For respondents who experienced family status discrimination in the hiring process, most of them are women (66.7%), married (66.7%), age between 45 and 54 (38.1%), with an educational level of upper secondary (47.6%) and their monthly income range from

HK\$15,000 and HK\$20,000 (36.8%). Table 26 compares the demographic characteristics of the respondents who have experienced FSD or not during the hiring process.

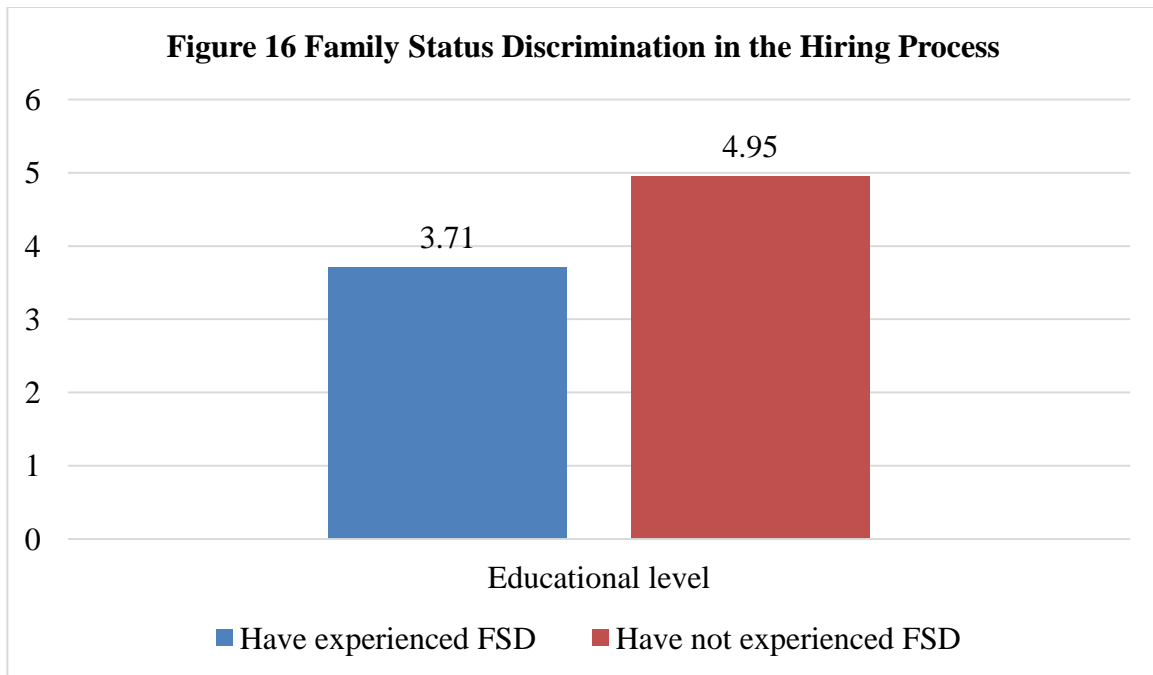
Compared with other employees with family status, **respondents who experienced family status discrimination in the hiring process have lower educational level** (mean=3.71, SD=1.15) **and receive less support with care work at home**, as shown in Figure 16 and Figure 17.

**Table 26 Comparison of Employees Experienced FSD or not during the Hiring Process**

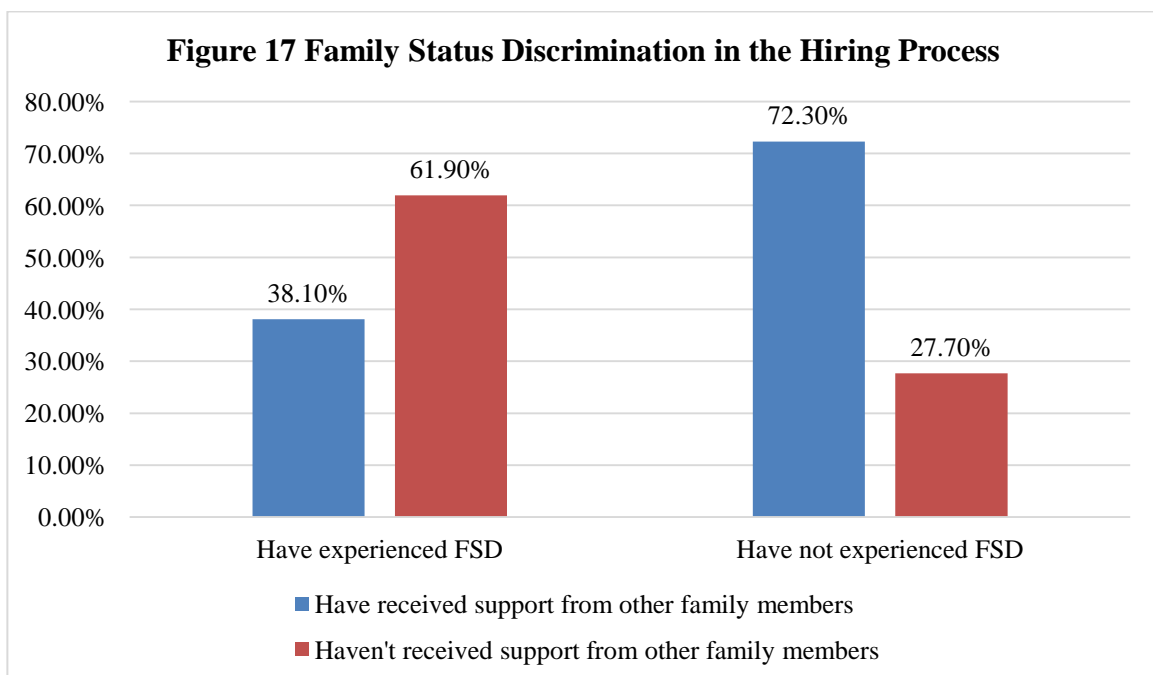
<i>Variables</i>	Have experienced FSD (n1=21,% out of 21)	Haven't experienced FSD(n2=119, % out of 119)
<i>Sex</i>		
Men	7 (33.3%)	45 (37.8%)
Women	14 (66.7%)	74 (62.2%)
<i>Age</i>		
Mean	3.24	3.18
SD	1.26	1.21
18-24	2 (9.5%)	8 (6.7%)
25-34	5 (23.8%)	30 (25.2%)
35-44	3 (14.3%)	34 (28.6%)
45-54	8 (38.1%)	29 (24.4%)
55-64	3 (14.3%)	15 (12.6%)
65 or above	0	3 (2.5%)
<i>* Educational Level</i>		
Mean	3.71	4.95
SD	1.15	1.27
Kindergarten or below	1 (4.8%)	1 (0.8%)
Primary	2 (9.5%)	11 (9.2%)
Lower secondary	4 (19.0%)	17 (14.3%)
Upper secondary	10 (47.6%)	31 (26.1%)
Tertiary (Non-degree)	3 (14.3%)	11(9.2%)
Tertiary (Degree)	1 (4.8%)	48 (40.3%)
<i>Personal Monthly Income Level (HK\$)</i>		
Mean	3.68	4.66
SD	1.42	2.47
Less than 5,000	1 (5.3%)	7 (6.0%)

5,000-less than 10,000	4 (21.1%)	14 (12.0%)
10,000-less than 15,000	2 (10.5%)	30 (25.6%)
15,000-less than 20,000	7 (36.8%)	16 (13.7%)
20,000-less than 25,000	3 (15.8%)	11 (9.4%)
25,000-less than 30,000	2 (10.5%)	4 (3.4%)
30,000-less than 40,000	0	18 (15.4%)
40,000-less than 50,000	0	8(6.8%)
50,000-less than 60,000	0	3 (2.6%)
60,000 or above	0	6 (5.1%)
<b><i>Marital Status</i></b>		
Never Married	6 (28.6%)	29 (24.4%)
Married	14 (66.7%)	87 (73.1%)
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	1 (4.8%)	3 (2.5%)
<b>* <i>Whether receiving caring support from others</i></b>		
Yes	8 (38.1%)	86 (72.3%)
No	13 (61.9%)	33 (27.7%)
<b><i>Place of Birth</i></b>		
Hong Kong	15 (71.4%)	79 (66.4%)
Others	6 (28.6%)	40 (33.6%)
<b><i>Whether having child aged under 18?</i></b>		
Yes (aged under 18)	11 (52.4%)	45 (37.8%)
No (aged above 18)	4 (19.0%)	33 (27.7%)
No children	6 (28.6%)	41 (34.5%)

Note: p\*\*\*<0.001, p\*\*<0.01, p\*<0.05



Note: For employees who have experienced FSD, the mean of their educational level is 3.71, which is between lower secondary and upper secondary, for those who have not experienced FSD, the mean of the educational level is 4.95, between upper secondary and Tertiary (non-degree).



For respondents who experienced family status discrimination during hiring process, they can provide multiple answers for reporting patterns of FSD. Table 27 shows that the most prevalent pattern of family status discrimination in the hiring process (52.4%) is **not considering candidates who have disclosed the need to take care of family members**. Candidates applying for “Clerical support workers” reported most cases (42.9%) of family status discrimination in the hiring process, as shown in Table 28. Many of the cases of

family status discrimination in the hiring process took place in the industries of “Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail” (23.8%) and “Public Administration and Social Services” (23.8%).

**Table 27 Patterns of Family Status Discrimination in the Hiring Process**

	N	%
Only considering candidates with no “family status” on job advertisement	3	14.3
No interview opportunities or invitation due to “family status”	2	9.5
<b>Unsuccessful interviews when disclosing the need to take care of family members</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>52.4</b>
Inferior employment conditions because of “family status”	5	23.8
Others	1	4.8

Notes: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, and the total cases were 22. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, the results will exceed 100%.

**Table 28 Family Status Discrimination Cases in the Hiring Process**

	Positions	
	n	%
Manager and administrators	1	4.8
Professionals	1	4.8
Associate professionals	1	4.8
Clerical support workers	9	42.9
Service and sales workers	3	14.3
Craft and related workers	1	4.8
Elementary occupations	4	19.0
Skilled workers in fishing and agricultural industries	1	4.8
Types of industries		
Manufacturing	1	4.8
Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail	5	23.8
Accommodation and Food Services	4	19.0
Information and Communications/Finance and Insurance	4	19.0
Real Estate	2	9.5
Public Administration and Social Services	5	23.8
Employment Size		
Less than 10 persons	3	14.3
10-49 persons	7	33.3

50-99 persons	3	14.3
100-299 persons	3	14.3
300-499 persons	1	4.8
500 persons or above	3	14.3

After experiencing unfair treatment in the hiring process due to family status, **only 1 out of the 21 respondents took actions** by filing complaints to the company. In other words, no one reported the incident to the EOC. The other 20 respondents did not take any actions mainly because they deemed it unnecessary or they did not know how to appeal such cases.

**Table 29 Why Did Not Take Actions**

	n	%
<b>It is unnecessary to take actions and I can find other jobs</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>60.0</b>
I do not know how to appeal	8	40.0
Afraid of the retaliation from the employer	0	0
Worrying about future employers' view on such actions	2	10.0
Others	2	10.0

Notes: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, total answers were summed as 24. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, the results will exceed 100%.

**Family Status Discrimination in the Quitting Process**

In the past two years, 239 respondents (23.8%) have quit their jobs, among whom 133 have family status. 18 respondents, all with family status, reported experiencing family status discrimination in the quitting process, constituting 7.5% of employees who have quit their jobs and 13.5% of employees with family status who have quit their jobs. The results can be found in Table 30.

**Table 30 Have Quitted Jobs in the Past Two Years**

	Have you quitte d for jobs during the last two years?				
	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Have family status	133	21.1	497	78.9	630
Do not have family status	106	28.4	267	71.6	373
Total	239	23.8	764	76.2	1003

Most of the respondents who experienced family status discrimination in the quitting process are married (77.8%), women (72.2%), age between 45 and 54 (38.9%), have no support with care work at home (66.7%), with upper secondary educational level (61.1%) and their



monthly income level is between HK\$15,000 and HK\$20,000 (43.8%). Table 31 compares the demographic characteristics of respondents who have experienced FSD or not during the quitting process.

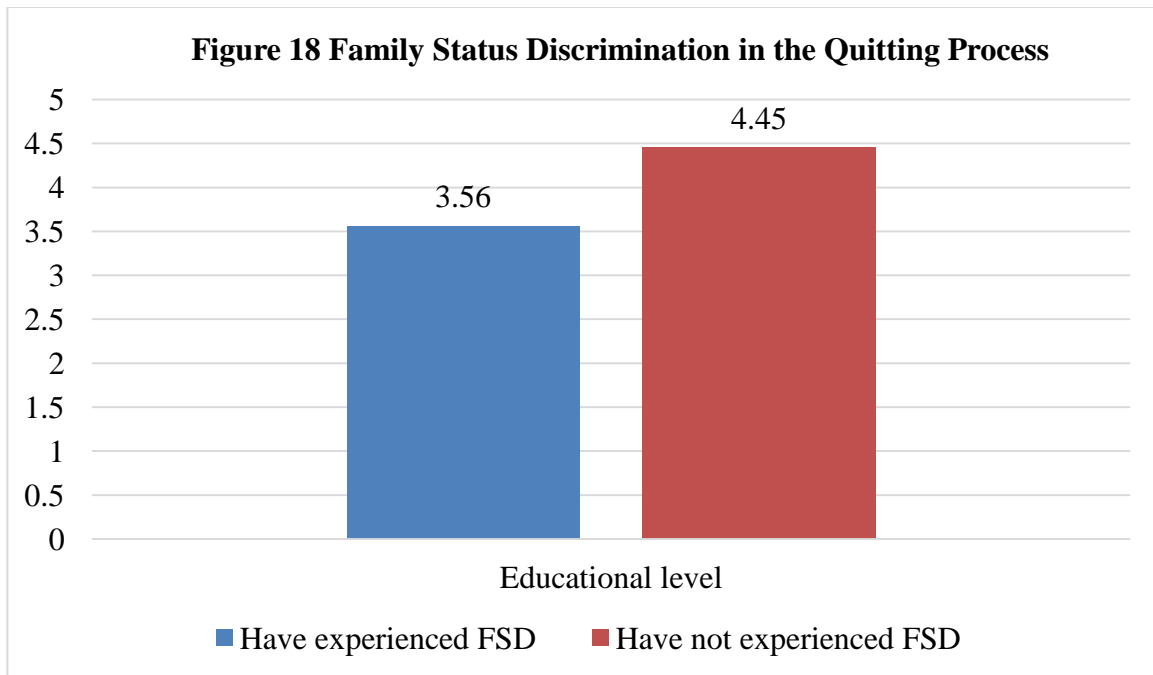
Compared with other employees with family status, respondents who experienced family status discrimination in the quitting process have **lower educational level** (mean=3.56, SD=0.92) (Figure 18) and have received **less support from other family members** (Figure 19).

**Table 31 Comparison of Employees Experienced FSD or not During the Quitting Process**

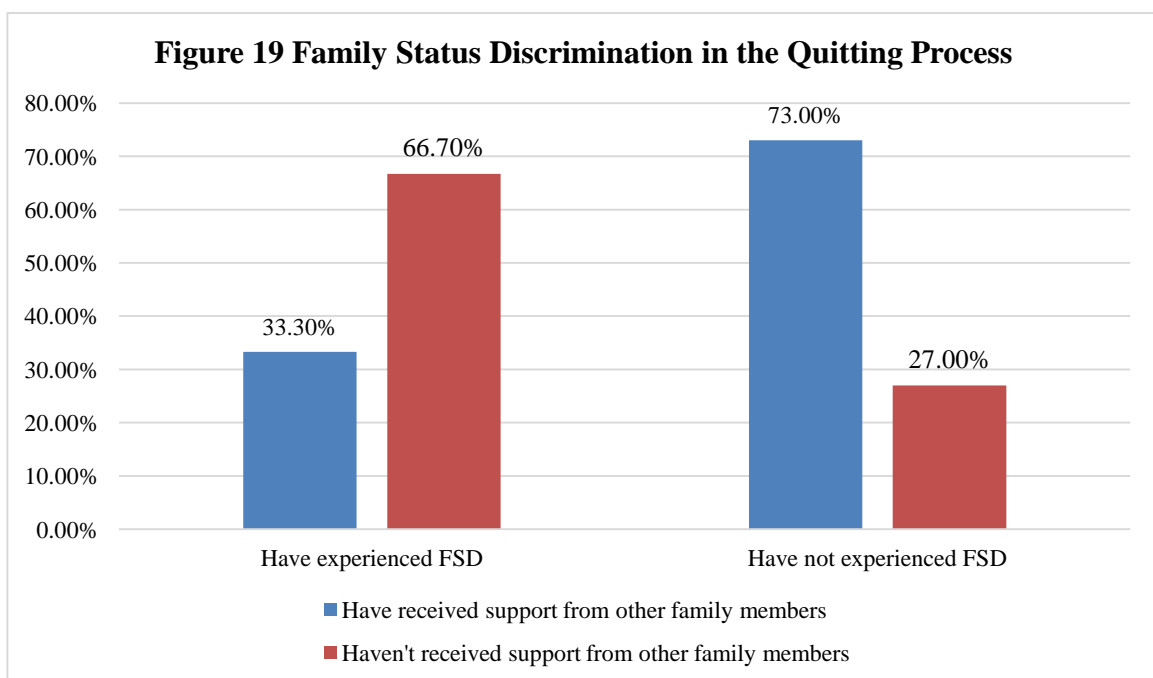
<i>Variables</i>	Have experienced FSD (n1=18,% out of 18)	Haven't experienced FSD(n2=115, % out of 115)
<i>Sex</i>		
Men	5 (27.8%)	47 (40.9%)
Women	13 (72.2%)	68 (59.1%)
<i>Age</i>		
Mean	3.17	3.57
SD	1.04	1.36
18-24	1 (5.6%)	7 (6.1%)
25-34	4 (22.2%)	21 (18.3%)
35-44	5 (27.8%)	28 (24.3%)
45-54	7 (38.9%)	25 (21.7%)
55-64	1 (5.6%)	26 (22.6%)
65 or above	0	8 (7.0%)
<i>* Educational Level</i>		
Mean	3.56	4.45
SD	0.92	1.43
Kindergarten or below	1 (5.6%)	1 (0.9%)
Primary	1 (5.6%)	13 (11.3%)
Lower secondary	4 (22.2%)	16 (13.9%)
Upper secondary	11 (61.1%)	30 (26.1%)
Tertiary (Non-degree)	1 (5.6%)	13(11.3%)
Tertiary (Degree)	0	42 (36.5%)
<i>Personal Monthly Income Level (HK\$)</i>		
Mean	3.44	4.92

SD	1.03	2.49
Less than 5,000	0	3 (2.8%)
5,000-less than 10,000	4 (25.0%)	13 (11.9%)
10,000-less than 15,000	3 (18.8%)	26 (23.9%)
15,000-less than 20,000	7 (43.8%)	15 (13.8%)
20,000-less than 25,000	2 (12.5%)	14 (12.8%)
25,000-less than 30,000	0	5 (4.6%)
30,000-less than 40,000	0	15 (13.8%)
40,000-less than 50,000	0	7(6.4%)
50,000-less than 60,000	0	2 (1.8%)
60,000 or above	0	9 (8.3%)
<b><i>Marital Status</i></b>		
Never Married	3 (16.7%)	26 (22.6%)
Married	14 (77.8%)	85 (73.9%)
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	1 (5.6%)	4 (3.5%)
* <b><i>Whether receiving caring support from others</i></b>		
Yes	6 (33.3%)	84 (73.0%)
No	12 (66.7%)	31 (27.0%)
<b><i>Place of Birth</i></b>		
Hong Kong	13 (72.2%)	76 (66.1%)
Others	5 (27.8%)	39 (33.9%)
<b><i>Whether having child aged under 18?</i></b>		
Yes (aged under 18)	12 (66.7%)	40 (34.8%)
No (aged above 18)	3 (16.7%)	40 (34.8%)
No children	3 (16.7%)	35 (30.4%)

Note: p\*\*\*<0.001, p\*\*<0.01, p\*<0.05



Notes: For employees who have experienced FSD, the mean of their educational level is 3.56, which is between lower secondary and upper secondary, for those who have not experienced FSD, the mean of the educational level is 4.45, between upper secondary and Tertiary (non-degree).



As shown in Table 32, many of the cases of family status discrimination in the quitting process took place in **non-middle-class positions (94.1%)** and in the industries of **“Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail” (47.1%)**. Non-middle-class workers in labour intensive industries tend to become victims of family status discrimination in the quitting process.

**Table 32 Family Status Discrimination Cases in the Quitting Process**

Positions	n	%
Manager and administrators	1	5.9
Professionals	0	0
Associate professionals	0	0
Clerical support workers	4	23.5
Service and sales workers	6	35.3
Craft and related workers	0	0
Elementary occupations	6	35.3
Skilled workers in fishing and agricultural industries	0	0
<b>Types of industries</b>		
Manufacturing	1	5.9
Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail	8	47.1
Accommodation and Food Services	3	17.6
Information and Communications/Finance and Insurance	2	11.8
Real Estate	1	5.9
Public Administration and Social Services	2	11.8
<b>Employment Size</b>		
Less than 10 persons	4	23.5
10-49 persons	5	29.4
50-99 persons	3	17.6
100-299 persons	3	17.6
300-499 persons	2	11.8
500 persons or above	1	missing

When asked about the unfair treatment they received during the quitting process, many of the 18 respondents (44.4%) who experienced family status discrimination reported that they received inferior treatment and changed employment conditions, as shown in Table 33.

**Table 33 Patterns of Family Status Discrimination in the Quitting Process**

	n	%
A layoff target due to structural reorganization	5	27.8
<b>Given inferior treatment or changing employment conditions</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>44.4</b>
Was assigned to a lower position or was reduced to responsible work	3	16.7
Received firing announcement directly	3	16.7

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Others	3	16.7
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Notes: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, total answers were summed 22. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, the results will exceed 100%.

After experiencing family status discrimination in the quitting process, **only 1 out of the 18 respondents took actions** by making a complaint to this company and none of them made a report to the EOC. The rest 17 respondents did not take actions, mainly because they found it unnecessary or they did not know how to appeal the cases, as shown in Table 34.

**Table 34 Why Did Not Take Actions**

---

	n	%
<b>It is unnecessary to take actions and I can find other jobs</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>64.7</b>
I do not know how to appeal	6	35.3
Afraid of the retaliation from the employer	0	0
Worrying about future employers' view on such actions	1	5.9
Others	1	5.9

---

Notes: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, total answers were summed 19. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, the results will exceed 100%.

**Family Status Discrimination at Work**

53 respondents reported experiencing family status discrimination in the workplace, among whom 49 have family status, constituting 5.28% of the total sample and 7.78% of employees with family status. 4 respondents claimed that they do not have family status, but experienced family status discrimination at work. Our best guess of this contradiction is that these 4 respondents are not regular caregivers at home, but may need to take care of family members occasionally. And they felt family status discrimination on those occasions.

Table 35 compares the demographic characteristics of respondents who have experienced family status discrimination at work and those who have family caring responsibilities but have not experienced family status discrimination at work.

Compared with the other respondents with family caring responsibilities, the 49 respondents who have experienced family status discrimination at work are more likely to be **women** (73.5%), **have lower educational level** [mean=4.29, most of them (38.8%) with upper

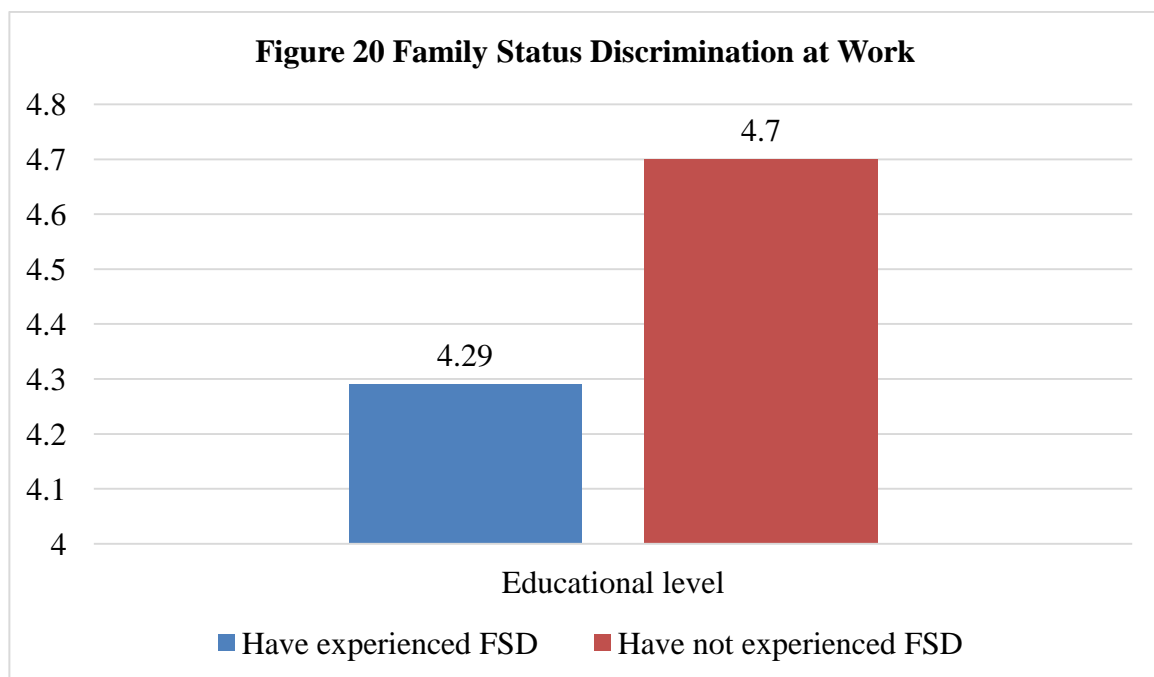
secondary educational level] **and receive less support with care work at home (59.2%)**, as shown in Figure 20, Figure 21 and Figure 22.

**Table 35 Comparison of Employees Experienced Family Status Discrimination or not at work**

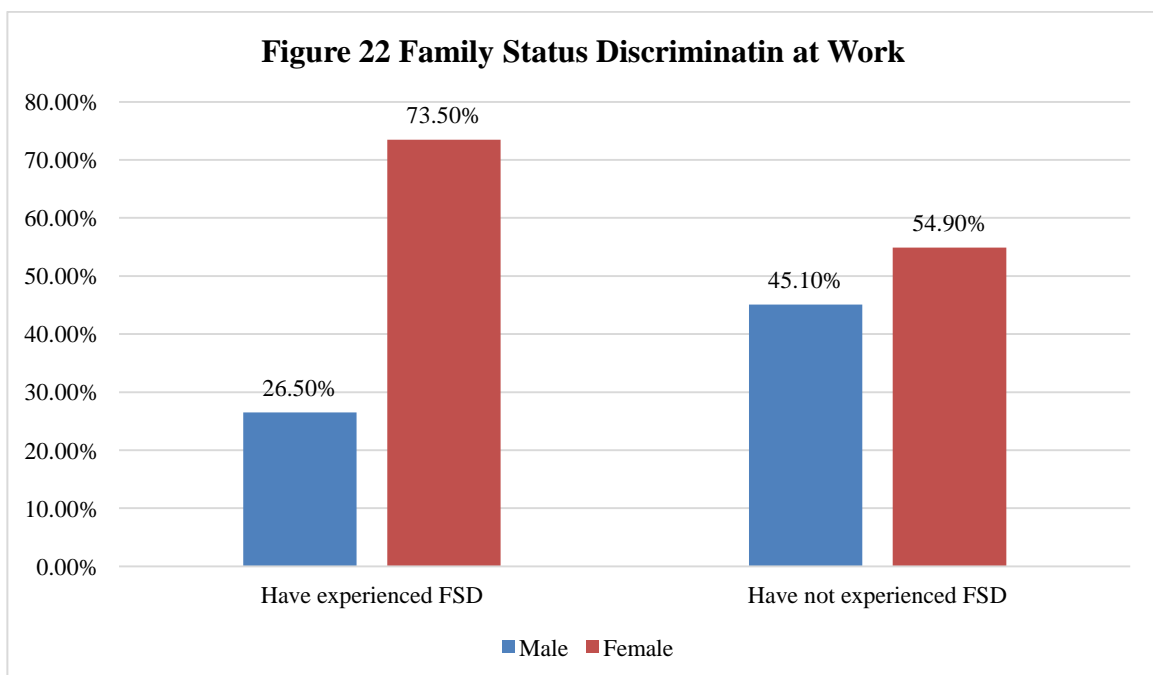
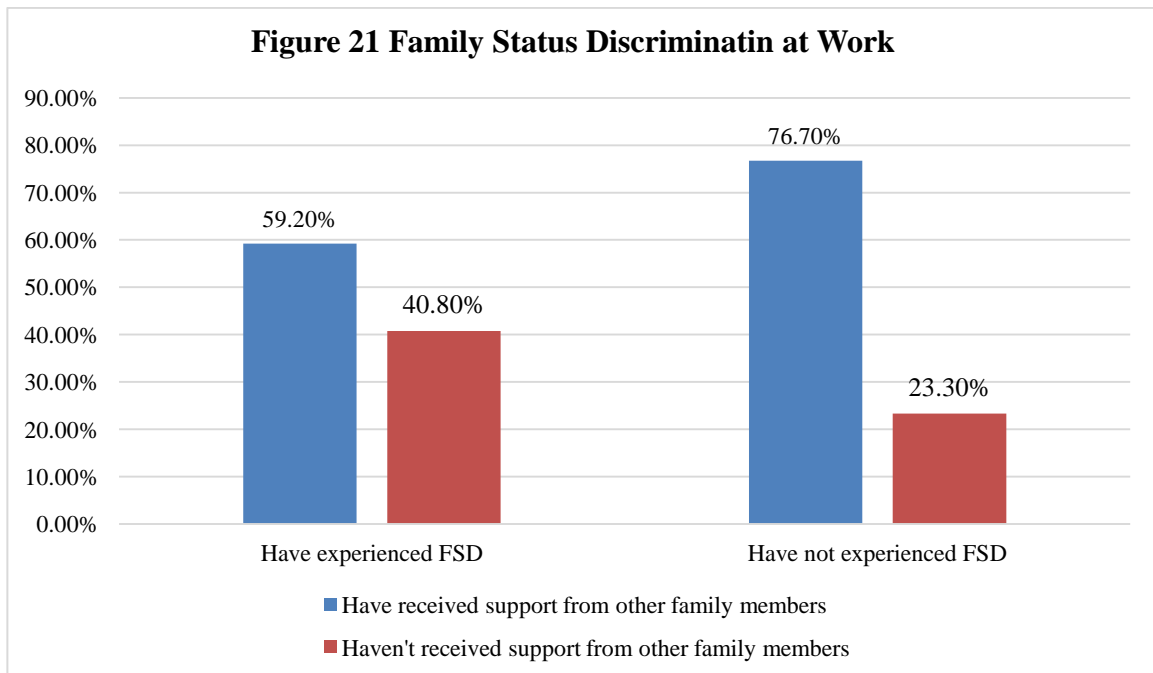
<i>Variables</i>	Have experienced FSD (n1=49,% out of 49)	Haven't experienced FSD(n2=581, % out of 581)
<b>* Sex</b>		
Men	13 (26.5%)	262 (45.1%)
Women	36 (73.5%)	319 (54.9%)
<b>Age</b>		
Mean	3.27	3.65
SD	1.10	1.03
18-24	4 (8.2%)	9 (1.5%)
25-34	8 (16.3%)	66 (11.4%)
35-44	12 (24.5%)	177 (30.5%)
45-54	21 (42.9%)	214 (36.8%)
55-64	4 (8.2%)	99 (17.0%)
65 or above	0	16 (2.8%)
<b>* Educational Level</b>		
Mean	4.29	4.70
SD	1.31	1.25
Kindergarten or below	1 (2.0%)	3 (0.5%)
Primary	2 (4.1%)	27 (4.7%)
Lower secondary	10 (20.4%)	63 (10.9%)
Upper secondary	19 (38.8%)	185 (32.0%)
Tertiary (Non-degree)	3 (6.1%)	71 (12.3%)
Tertiary (Degree)	14 (28.6%)	230 (39.7%)
<b>Personal Monthly Income Level (HK\$)</b>		
Mean	4.78	5.42
SD	2.39	2.37
Less than 5,000	1 (2.2%)	13 (2.4%)
5,000-less than 10,000	4 (8.9%)	35 (6.4%)
10,000-less than 15,000	11 (24.4%)	78 (14.3%)

15,000-less than 20,000	12 (26.7%)	100 (18.3%)
20,000-less than 25,000	4 (8.9%)	81 (14.8%)
25,000-less than 30,000	1 (2.2%)	62 (11.4%)
30,000-less than 40,000	5 (11.1%)	66 (12.1%)
40,000-less than 50,000	2 (4.4%)	43 (7.9%)
50,000-less than 60,000	2 (4.4%)	22 (4.0%)
60,000 or above	3 (6.7%)	46 (8.4%)
<b><i>Marital Status</i></b>		
Never Married	9 (18.4%)	92 (15.9%)
Married	39 (79.6%)	472 (81.5%)
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	1 (2.0%)	15 (2.6%)
<b>* <i>Whether receiving caring support from others</i></b>		
Yes	29 (59.2%)	445 (76.7%)
No	20 (40.8%)	135 (23.3%)
<b><i>Place of Birth</i></b>		
Hong Kong	30 (61.2%)	419 (72.2%)
Others	19 (38.8%)	161 (27.8%)
<b><i>Whether having child aged under 18?</i></b>		
Yes (aged under 18)	25 (51.0%)	305 (52.7%)
No (aged above 18)	14 (28.6%)	147 (25.4%)
No children	10 (20.4%)	127 (21.9%)

Note: p\*\*\*<0.001, p\*\*<0.01, p\*<0.05



Notes: For employees who have experienced FSD, the mean of their educational level is 4.38, which is just above upper secondary level, for those who have not experienced FSD, the mean of the educational level is 4.70, which is near Tertiary (non-degree) level.



Similar to family status discrimination in the quitting process, the discrimination at work also concentrates in the industries of **“Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail” (26.9%)** and in the positions of **non-middle-class jobs (70.6%)**. Non-professional workers in labour intensive industries are more likely to encounter family status discrimination at work, as shown in Table 36.



When asked about the unfair treatment they received at work due to family status, the 53 respondents reported most cases in leave application (32.1%) and leave taking (34.0%), as shown in Table 37.

**Table 36 Family Status Discrimination Cases at work**

Positions		
	n	%
Manager and administrators	6	11.8
Professionals	3	5.9
Associate professionals	6	11.8
Clerical support workers	4	7.8
Service and sales workers	20	39.2
Craft and related workers	1	2.0
Elementary occupations	11	21.6
Skilled workers in fishing and agricultural industries	0	0
Types of industries		
Manufacturing	1	1.9
Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail	14	26.9
Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services	2	3.8
Accommodation and Food Services	12	23.1
Information and Communications/Finance and Insurance	4	7.7
Real Estate	4	7.7
Sciences and Professional activities (eg.law, accounting, design and so on)	2	3.8
Education	4	7.7
Public Administration and Social Services	9	17.3
Employment Size		
Less than 10 persons	4	7.7
10-49 persons	19	36.5
50-99 persons	5	9.6
100-299 persons	5	9.6
300-499 persons	0	0
500 persons or above	18	34.6

**Table 37 Patterns of Family Status Discrimination at Work**

	N	%
Less salary in the same position (comparing with others)	4	7.5
Was rejected to attend training	4	7.5
Lost the opportunity to get promotion	8	15.1
Reduced responsibility	4	7.5

Lost/Reduced work benefits	2	3.8
<b>Was not approved for taking leave</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34.0</b>
<b>Experienced unfair treatment when applying for leave</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32.1</b>
Employees without family status received more favourable treatment from company, forgiveness and not be held accountable	4	7.5
Others	14	26.5

Notes: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, total answers were summed 78. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, the results will exceed 100%.

However, **only 4 out of the 53 respondents took actions** after experiencing family status discrimination at work, by filing complaints to the company and to the EOC. For the other 49 respondents, there are 3 main reasons why they did not take actions: “worrying about future employers’ view on such actions” (30.6%), “do not know how to appeal” (28.6%), and “it is unnecessary to take actions and I can find other jobs” (26.5%), as shown in Table 38.

**Table 38 Why Did Not Take Actions**

	N	%
<b>It is unnecessary to take actions and I can find other jobs</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26.5</b>
<b>I do not know how to appeal</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28.6</b>
Was afraid to be retaliated by this company	8	16.3
<b>Worrying about future employers’ view on such actions</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30.6</b>
Others	8	16.2

Notes: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, total answers were summed 58. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, the results will excess 100%.

Table 39 summarized the percentages of respondents with caring responsibilities who have encountered family status discrimination during the hiring, quitting process and at work. 49 out of 630 respondents have experienced family status discrimination at least once during the above three processes. Among them, 12 and 11 respondents have also experienced family

status discrimination during hiring and quitting processes respectively. 6 out of 49 respondents have experienced family status discrimination in all three processes.

**Table 39 Percentage of respondents with caring responsibilities who have been discriminated in hiring, quitting process and at work**

Discrimination faced during:	N	%
Hiring process	21 out of 140	15.0
Quitting process	18 out of 133	13.5
At work	49 out of 630	7.8
Overall	49 out of 630	7.8

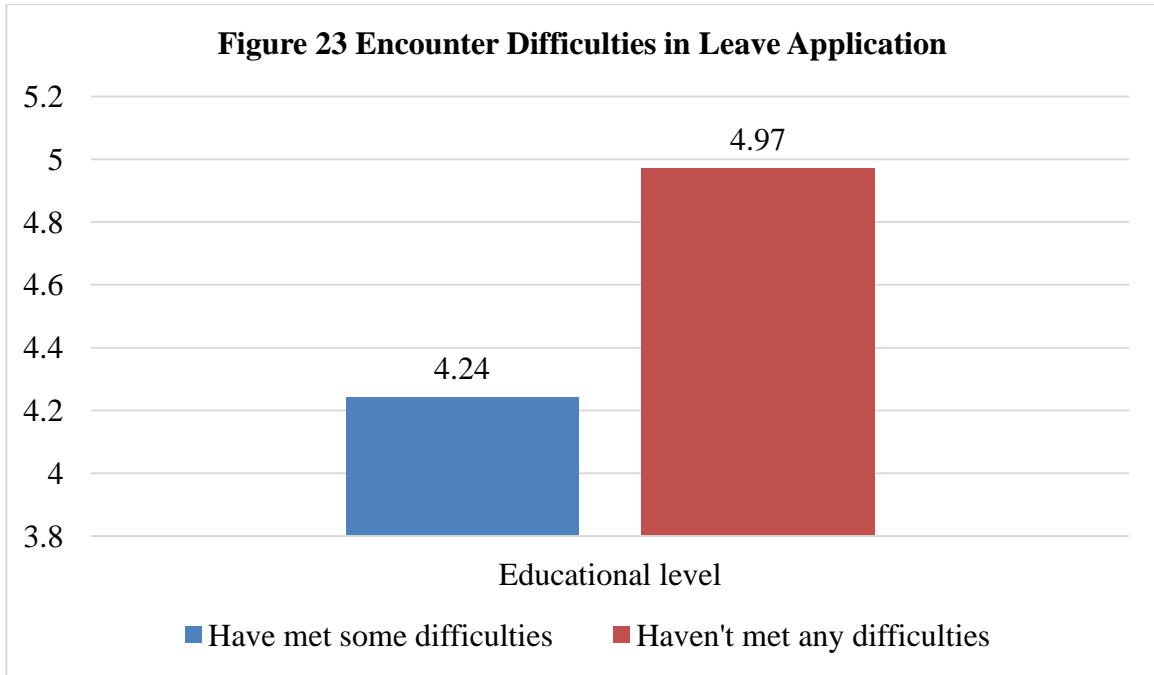
Note: The overall 49 respondents were the same group of people encountered FSD at work.

Since leave application and leave taking appear to be a big issue in family status discrimination at work as shown in Table 37, we further explored in this area. 527 respondents reported applying for leave to take care of family members in the workplace, and 441 (83.7%) of them have family status. Most of the 527 (58.4%) respondents took **one or two days** leave to address their family status.

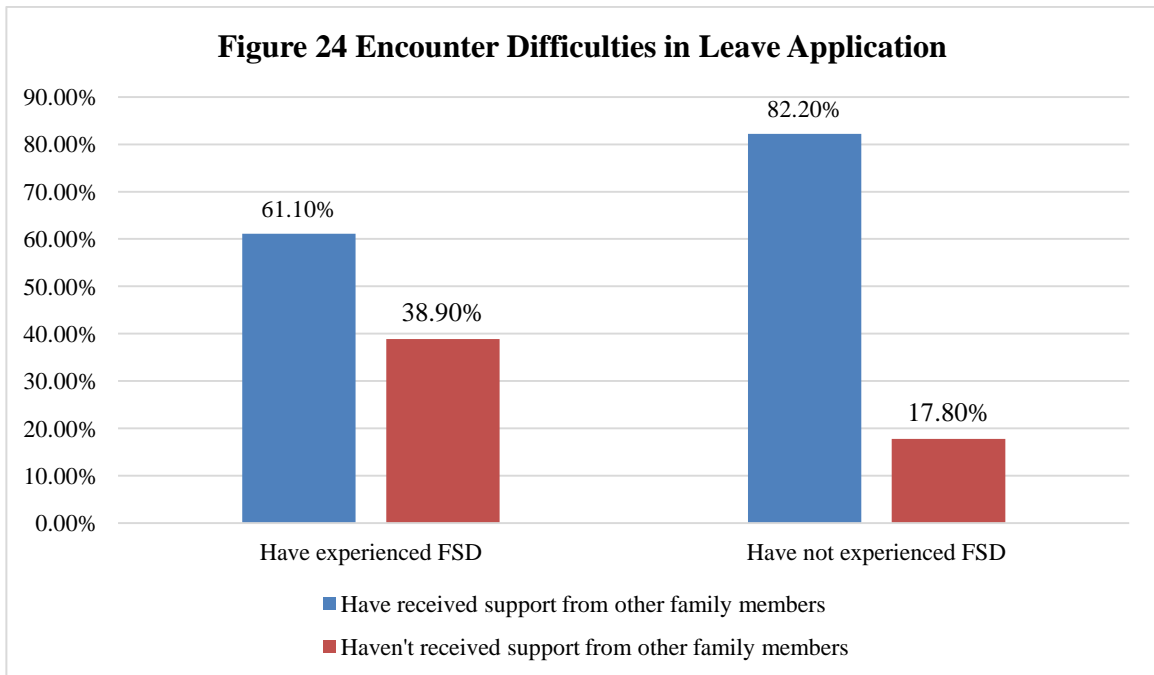
**Table 40 Days Applied For Leave in One Month**

Day(s)	n	%
1-2	307	58.4
3-4	109	20.7
5-6	35	6.7
7-8	29	5.5
9-10	8	1.5
10+	21	4.0
Don't know or forgot	17	3.2
Valid Total	406	100.0

119 out of the 527 employees (22.3%) reported encountering difficulties when applying for leave at work. Those **with lower educational levels** (mean=4.24), and who **receive less support from other family members** were more likely to report difficulties when applying for leave, as demonstrated in Figure 23 and Figure 24.



Notes: For employees who have encountered difficulties in leave application, the mean of their educational level is 4.24, which is just above upper secondary level, for those who have not experienced FSD, the mean of the educational level is 4.97, which is near Tertiary (non-degree) level.



As summarized in Table 41, the most frequently occurred difficulties when the employees applied for leave to take care of family members were negative attitudes from supervisors and colleagues (67.2%).

**Table 41 Difficulties in Leave Application**

	N	%
Leave applied in advance were not approved.	15	12.6
Leave applied for today or temporary leave were not approved.	27	22.7
<b>Negative attitudes from respondents' supervisors and colleagues</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>67.2</b>
Others	22	18.4

Notes: Multiple answers were allowed for this question, total answers were summed 144. If adding all the valid percentages reported above, the results will exceed 100%.

**Knowledge and Awareness of Family Status Discrimination (FSD) and Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO)**

Before this survey, 539 out of the 1003 employees in the sample (**53.7%**) heard about family status discrimination. Logistic regression was used to examine whether a series of variables have significant effects on respondents' knowledge of family status discrimination, including gender, age, marital status, child status, birth place, educational level, monthly income level, family status and leave taking during the last two years. Results show that only educational level and birth place are significant in predicting the probability that the employees knew family status discrimination. As presented in Table 42, **employees who were born in Hong Kong and with higher educational level (mean=5.01) were more likely to know family status discrimination before this survey.** The comparisons are also illustrated in Figure 25 and Figure 26.

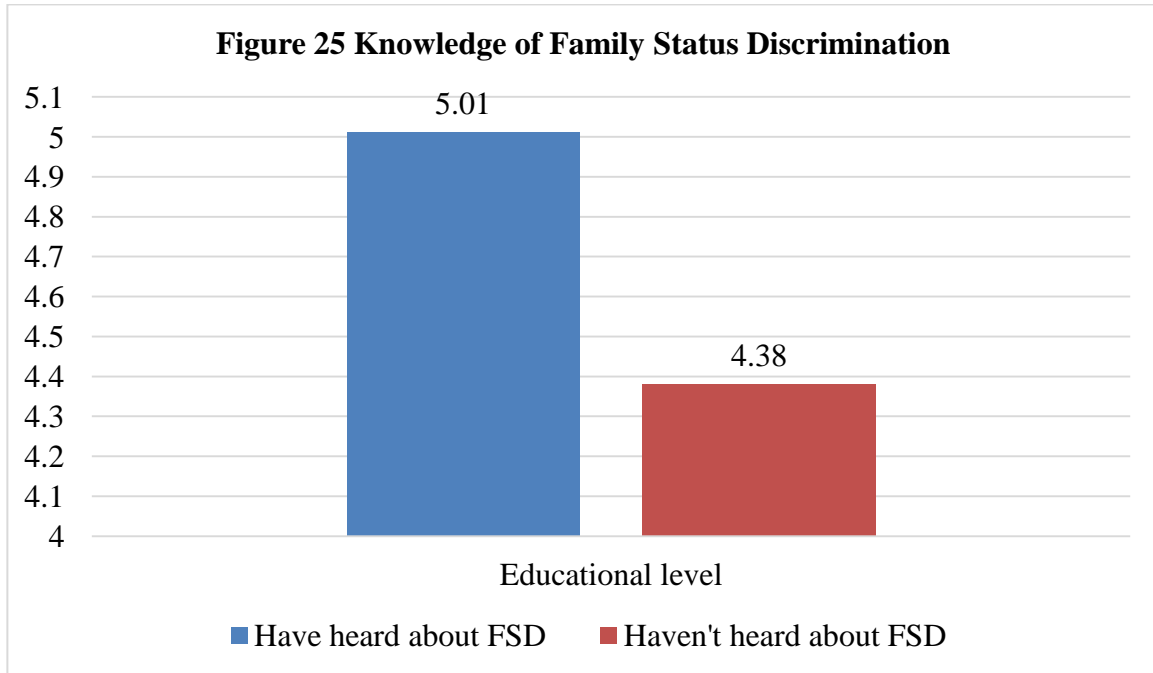
**Table 42 Knowledge of Family Status Discrimination**

<i>Variables</i>	Have heard about FSD (n1=539,% out of 539)	Haven't heard about FSD (n2=464, % out of 464)
<b>Sex</b>		
Men	253 (46.9%)	217 (46.8%)
Women	286 (53.1%)	247 (53.2%)
<b>Age</b>		
Mean	3.29	3.66
SD	1.20	1.32
18-24	37 (6.9%)	39 (8.4%)

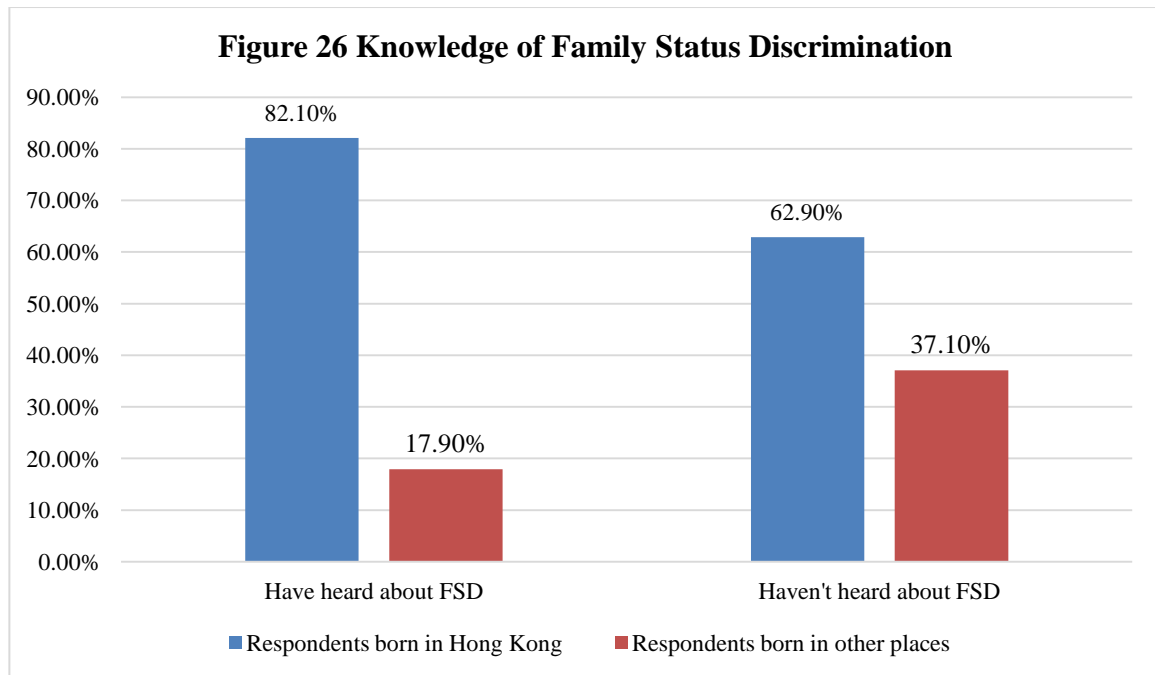
25-34	144 (21.2%)	53 (11.4%)
35-44	139 (25.8%)	96 (20.7%)
45-54	167 (31.0%)	136 (29.3%)
55-64	70 (13.0%)	120 (25.9%)
65 or above	12 (2.2%)	20 (4.3%)
<b>** Educational Level</b>		
Mean	5.01	4.38
SD	1.12	1.32
Kindergarten or below	2 (0.4%)	4 (0.9%)
Primary	9 (1.7%)	34 (7.4%)
Lower secondary	40 (7.4%)	77 (16.7%)
Upper secondary	140 (26.0%)	161 (34.9%)
Tertiary (Non-degree)	87 (16.1%)	39 (8.5%)
Tertiary (Degree)	258 (47.9%)	146 (31.7%)
<b>Personal Monthly Income Level (HK\$)</b>		
Mean	5.48	4.70
SD	2.41	2.32
Less than 5,000	12 (2.4%)	24 (5.6%)
5,000-less than 10,000	30 (5.9%)	45 (10.4%)
10,000-less than 15,000	63 (12.5%)	79 (18.3%)
15,000-less than 20,000	108 (21.3%)	86 (19.9%)
20,000-less than 25,000	74 (14.6%)	69 (16.0%)
25,000-less than 30,000	58 (11.5%)	29 (6.7%)
30,000-less than 40,000	51 (10.1%)	41 (9.5%)
40,000-less than 50,000	37 (7.3%)	24 (5.6%)
50,000-less than 60,000	23 (4.5%)	12 (2.8%)
60,000 or above	50 (9.9%)	23 (5.3%)
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Never Married	184 (34.3%)	96 (20.7%)
Married	340 (63.4%)	350 (75.4%)
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	12 (2.2%)	18 (3.9%)
<b>Whether receiving caring support from others</b>		
Yes	267 (79.0%)	207 (71.1%)
No	71 (21.0%)	84 (28.9%)
<b>** Place of Birth</b>		

Hong Kong	441 (82.1%)	291 (62.9%)
Others	96 (17.9%)	172 (37.1%)
<b><i>Whether having child aged under 18?</i></b>		
Yes (aged under 18)	204 (38.1%)	158 (34.1%)
No (aged above 18)	110 (20.5%)	160 (34.5%)
No children	222 (41.4%)	146 (31.5%)

Note: p\*\*\*<0.001, p\*\*<0.01, p\*<0.05



Notes: For employees who have heard about FSD, the mean of their educational level is 5.01, which is above Tertiary (degree) level, for those who have not heard about FSD, the mean of the educational level is 4.38, which is just above upper secondary level.



In terms of the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) in Hong Kong, 324 respondents know about it, 350 respondents do not know, and the remaining 329 respondents are not sure about it, as Table 43 shows. Only **32.3%** of the employees in the sample are sure about the existence of FSDO in Hong Kong.

**Table 43 Family Status Discrimination Ordinance in Hong Kong**

	n	%
Yes, Hong Kong has it.	324	32.3
No, Hong Kong doesn't have it.	350	34.9
Not sure	329	32.8
Total	1003	100.0

Employees' income level significantly predicts the probability that they know about FSDO in Hong Kong, as shown in Table 44. Respondents with **higher personal monthly income levels (mean=5.78)** are more likely to feel certain that Hong Kong has the FSDO, as shown in Figure 27.

**Table 44 Knowledge of Family Status Discrimination Ordinance**

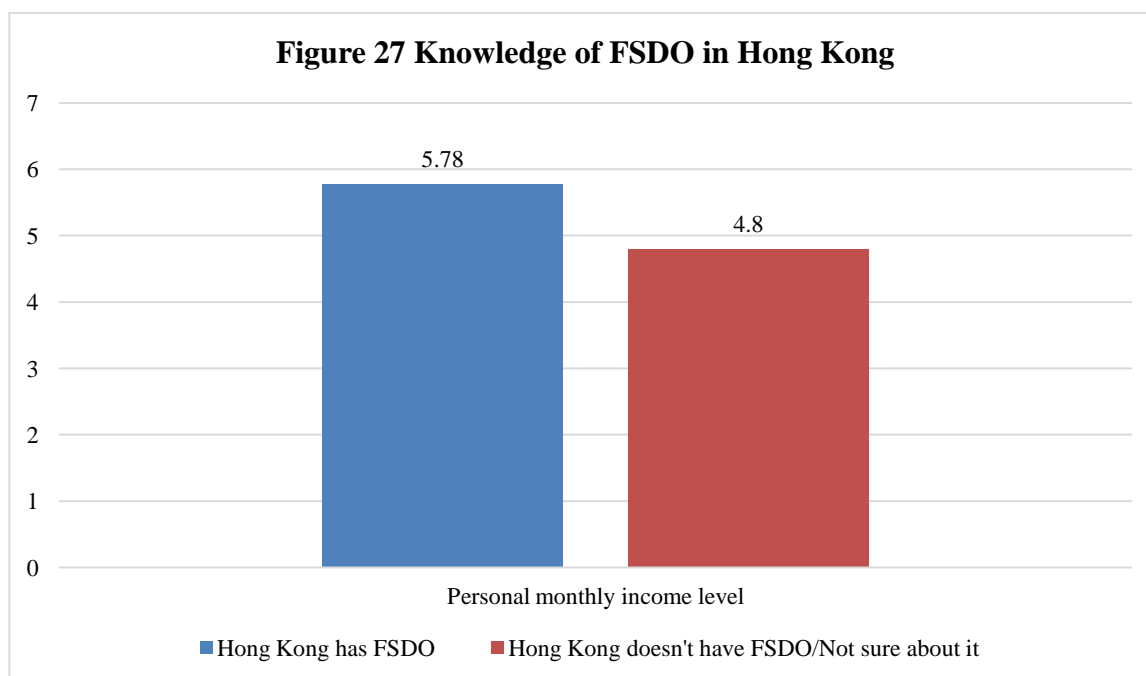
<i>Variables</i>	Yes, HK has it (n1=324, % out of 324)	No, HK doesn't have it/Not sure (n2=649, % out of 679)
<i>Sex</i>		
Men	154 (47.5%)	316 (46.5%)
Women	170 (52.5%)	363 (53.5%)



<i>Age</i>		
Mean	3.25	3.56
SD	1.18	1.30
18-24	23 (7.1%)	53 (7.8%)
25-34	70 (21.6%)	97 (14.3%)
35-44	87 (26.9%)	148 (21.8%)
45-54	95 (29.3%)	208 (30.6%)
55-64	45 (13.9%)	145 (21.4%)
65 or above	4 (1.2%)	28 (4.1%)
<i>Educational Level</i>		
Mean	5.07	4.54
SD	1.12	1.29
Kindergarten or below	2 (0.6%)	4 (0.6%)
Primary	2 (0.6%)	41 (6.1%)
Lower secondary	25 (7.7%)	92 (13.6%)
Upper secondary	81 (25.0%)	220 (32.5%)
Tertiary (Non-degree)	42 (13.0%)	84 (12.4%)
Tertiary (Degree)	169 (52.2%)	235 (34.8%)
**	<i>Personal Monthly Income Level (HK\$)</i>	
Mean	5.78	4.80
SD	2.42	2.33
Less than 5,000	4 (1.3%)	32 (5.0%)
5,000-less than 10,000	11 (3.6%)	64 (10.1%)
10,000-less than 15,000	38 (12.5%)	104 (16.4%)
15,000-less than 20,000	65 (21.4%)	129 (20.3%)
20,000-less than 25,000	41 (13.5%)	102 (16.1%)
25,000-less than 30,000	32 (10.5%)	55 (8.7%)
30,000-less than 40,000	34 (11.2%)	58 (9.1%)
40,000-less than 50,000	25 (8.2%)	36 (5.7%)
50,000-less than 60,000	19 (6.3%)	16 (2.5%)
60,000 or above	35 (11.5%)	38 (6.0%)
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Never Married	113 (35.2%)	167 (24.6%)
Married	201 (62.6%)	489 (72.0%)
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	7 (2.2%)	23 (3.4%)

<i>Whether receiving caring support from others</i>		
Yes	158 (81.0%)	316 (72.8%)
No	37 (19.0%)	118 (27.2%)
<i>Place of Birth</i>		
Hong Kong	263 (81.7%)	469 (69.2%)
Others	59 (18.3%)	209 (30.8%)
<i>Whether having child aged under 18?</i>		
Yes (aged under 18)	119 (37.1%)	243 (35.8%)
No (aged above 18)	66 (20.6%)	204 (30.0%)
No children	136 (42.4%)	232 (34.2%)

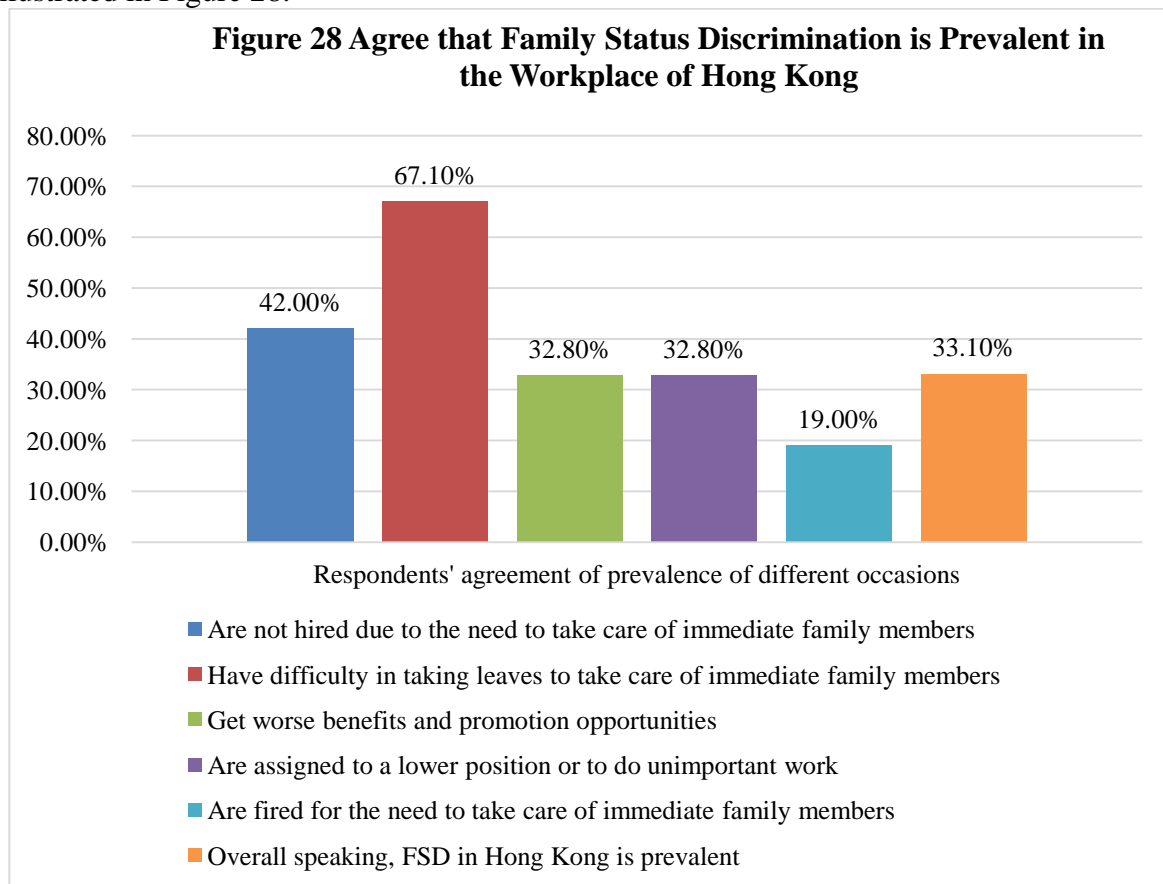
Note: p\*\*\*<0.001, p\*\*<0.01, p\*<0.05



Notes: For employees who had knowledge about FSDO, the mean of their personal monthly income level is 5.78, which is between HK\$25,000 and HK\$30,000, for those who considered Hong Kong does not have FSDO or not sure about this question, the means of the personal monthly income level is 4.8, which is between HK\$20,000 and HK\$25,000.

We then explored the employees' perceptions of the prevalence of family status discrimination in the workplace of Hong Kong. They were asked about the general prevalence of family status discrimination, as well as family status discrimination in five different aspects of the workplace: the hiring process, leave taking, benefits and promotion, job task assignment, and the firing process. In general, about a third of the respondents (33.1%) agree that family status discrimination is prevalent in the workplace of Hong Kong. Among the five different aspects, significant differences have been found in the leave taking and firing process and there is no significant difference among the other three aspects. More employees agree (67.1%) that there is family status discrimination in leave taking, and fewer

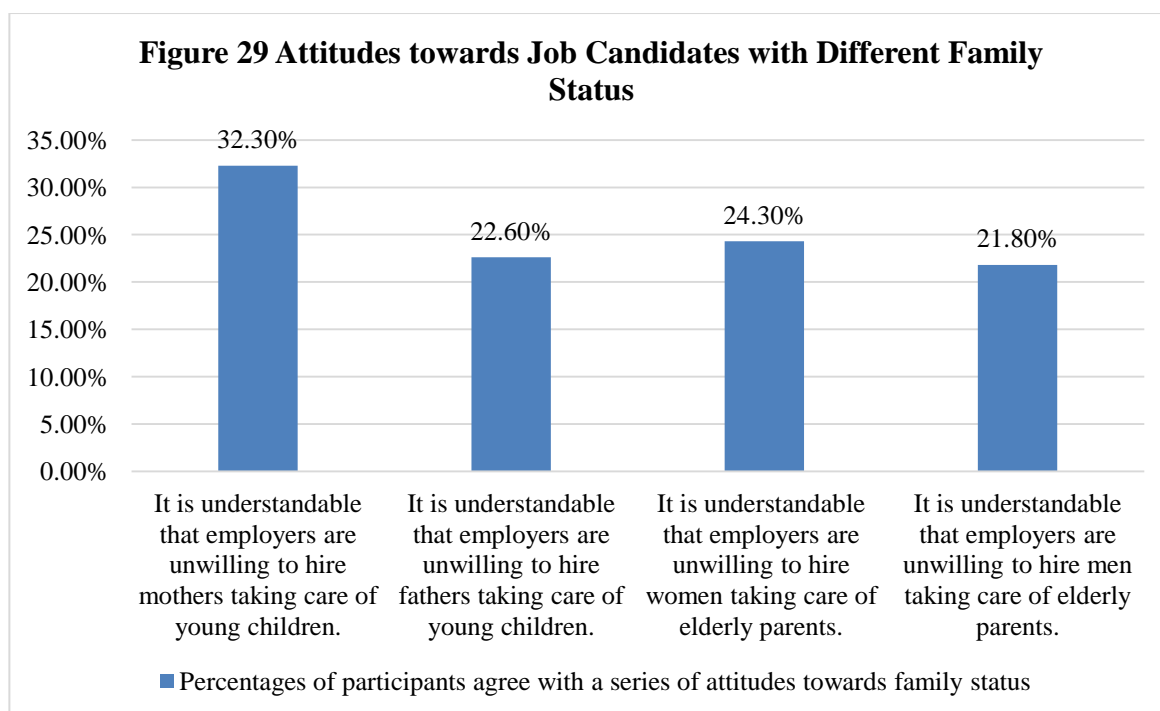
agree (19%) that the discrimination is prevalent in the firing process. The comparison is illustrated in Figure 28.



### *Attitudes towards Different Family Statuses*

In order to examine the employees' attitudes towards people with different family caring responsibilities, they were asked if it is normal and understandable not to offer jobs to candidates with four different types of family status: mothers caring for young children, fathers caring for young children, adult daughters caring for elderly parents, and adult sons caring for elderly parents.

As illustrated in Figure 29, significantly more employees agree that it is understandable that jobs are not offered to **mothers caring for young children**, while there is no significant difference in the attitudes towards candidates with the other three types of family status. These results again demonstrate “motherhood penalty” in job application, and reveal that mothers caring for young children are faced with more severe family status discrimination in the workplace of Hong Kong.



### **Actions Needed for Change**

The employees were asked what should be done to reduce and prevent family status discrimination in the workplace of Hong Kong. Respondents found the efforts of the government in legislation and promotion, efforts of the EOC in promotional activities, public consultation in the civil society, and the efforts of enterprises are all important. Their responses are summarized in Table 45.

The employees across gender, age, marital status, family status, educational level, and income level all would appreciate the inputs and efforts of the different sectors of the society, including the government and public sector, the civil society, and the business sector.

**Table 45 Actions Needed to Address Family Status Discrimination**

	n	%
The Government should strengthen legislation.	467	46.6
The Government should enhance the promotion of FSDO.	592	59.0
EOC should organize more activities in order to raise public awareness towards family status discrimination.	505	50.3
Public consultation and other ways for citizens to express	423	42.2

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their opinions of family  
status discrimination.

Enterprises should formulate  
policies to reduce and  
prevent family status  
discrimination.

504

50.2

Others

11

1.1

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## **6. EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF HIRING**

As demonstrated by the statistical data from the two telephone surveys, it is a fairly common practice in Hong Kong for employers to enquire the family status of potential employees during the hiring process. In order to understand whether disclosure of such information would affect employers' evaluation of candidates and their decision of hiring, we conducted an exploratory study.

### **Research Instrument – Semi-experimental Survey**

For this explorative part of the project, we used a semi-experimental survey, which consists of six manipulated CVs of job applicants and an evaluation score sheet. We targeted at employers in four major industries in Hong Kong, namely (1) Finance and Accounting (2) Public Services, (3) Retail, Food & Beverage and Accommodation, and (4) Information Technology, Logistics, and Transportation.

In each industry, we prepared CVs applying for jobs at either entry level or mid-management level, except in finance and accounting. In the latter industry, the position of “assistant manager” covers a wide range of jobs, and is applicable to applicants at an age possible for childcare and elderly care. Therefore, only “assistant manager” was used in the industry of finance and accounting. In total, seven sets of CVs were compiled for seven categories of jobs: Assistant Manager in finance and accounting, entry-level and mid-management level jobs in public service, entry-level and mid-management level jobs in retail, and entry-level and mid-management level jobs in Information Technology, Logistics, and Transportation.

In each set, there were six different CVs indicating different gender and family status. We first prepared CVs equivalent in qualifications, and then manipulated on gender and family status. The equivalence of the CVs was checked and assured by non-participants of the study outside the research team. For each job category, we presented the following six different CVs: man with childcare, woman with childcare, man with elderly care, woman with elderly care, man without family status, and woman without family status. Gender was indicated by the English name of the candidate, and family status showed in the section “special requests” on the CV.

The respondents were instructed to use his/her own professional judgement in reviewing the CVs for a hypothetically position for which he or she often recruits, and give evaluations in four domains of employment: competence, commitment, potential of promotion, as well as decision of hire. A sample set of CVs together with the evaluation score sheet is in Appendix 3.

### **Sampling Strategy**

We used convenient sampling and snow-ball strategies to recruit the respondents, through personal and professional networks. We outreached to different employers to keep adequate variances in industry, employment size, and job category (entry or mid-management level) in the sample. In total, we sampled 102 employer (or employer representative) respondents for the exploratory study.

## Results

### Profile of the Respondents

Table 46 shows the distribution of employer respondents among different industries, from establishments of different sizes, and for the categories of positions that they reviewed. We aimed to sample respondents from diverse backgrounds to evaluate different categories of job positions, and the goal is achieved in the sample.

However, respondents in the industry of Finance and Accounting, and from smaller companies are under-represented, because it is difficult to reach those employer representatives and obtain their consent to participate in the study. Supervisors in the industry of Finance and Accounting often have confidentiality agreements with their companies and therefore declined our survey invitation. Employers in small-size establishments often refused to respond to our survey requests or claimed their enterprises as unqualified for the study. Our sample, in general, generates adequate variances for comparative analysis.

**Table 46 Profile of Respondents (N=102)**

Types of Industry		
	n	%
Finance and Accounting	20	19.6
Public Services	28	27.5
Retail, Food & Beverage and Accommodation	37	36.3
Information Technology, Logistics, and Transportation.	17	16.7
Employment Size		
Under 50 people	39	38.2
Equal or above 50 people	63	61.8
Job Category		
Junior Position	57	55.9
Senior Position	45	44.1

### Employers' Evaluation

Table 47 and Figures 30 - 33 summarize the mean scores the 6 job candidates receive from employers, in the areas of competence, commitment, promotion potentials, and hiring probability. Mean-comparison tests reveal that although fathers caring for young children receive higher scores than the other five candidates, the difference is not statistically significant. In competence, employers do not view the 6 applicants as significantly different from one another, which demonstrates the validity of our manipulation of the CVs.

For commitment and promotion potentials, man and woman without family caring responsibilities receive significantly lower scores, compared with their counterparts with different caring needs at home ( $p < .05$ ). It is probably because they claim they will take leave to develop their personal hobbies, which is perceived as irresponsible and undesirable in the workplace of Hong Kong. Women with caring needs at home receive lower scores than their male counterparts in commitment and promotion potentials, but the differences are not statistically significant.

In hiring probability, together with man and woman without family caring responsibilities, woman caring for young children (mother) is significantly less likely to be offered a job than the other three candidates (father, and man and woman caring for elderly parents). Woman with elderly care needs also get lower scores than the two male candidates with caring responsibilities, but the difference is not significant.

The mean comparison evinces that disclosure of family caring needs might not significantly affect employers' perception of applicants' competence, commitment, and promotion potentials. Compared with disclosure of commitment to personal hobbies, caring responsibilities may still generate positive impressions from employers in Hong Kong, particularly for male candidates.

But, in the hiring decision, although employers may consider mothers as competent, committed, and with good potentials, they are not willing to offer them job opportunities. This interesting finding echoes the literature on "motherhood penalty" and complicates the understanding of the reasons for the penalty. Our data show that employers are not willing to hire mothers, not because they see them as incompetent, uncommitted, or having no potentials, as previous research often suggested. This rejection may be related to institutional constraints in companies and cultural meaning of motherhood in Hong Kong.

Woman caring for ageing parents, on the other hand, receives lower scores than men with different caring responsibilities, but is not significantly victimized in the hiring decision of employers. Motherhood and filial pious daughters can have different meanings for employers in Hong Kong, although they are both women with caring responsibilities. This difference is demonstrated in our qualitative data as well.

**Table 47 Employers' Evaluation Results among 6 Candidates**

Gender & Family Status	Competence	Commitment	Promotion	Hiring Decision
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Probability
Man without family status	6.68 (1.97)	5.60 (2.08)	5.46 (2.04)	0.48
Woman without family status	6.61 (1.69)	5.84 (1.73)	5.40 (2.06)	0.37
Man with childcare	7.02 (1.67)	6.41 (1.77)	6.33 (1.85)	0.70

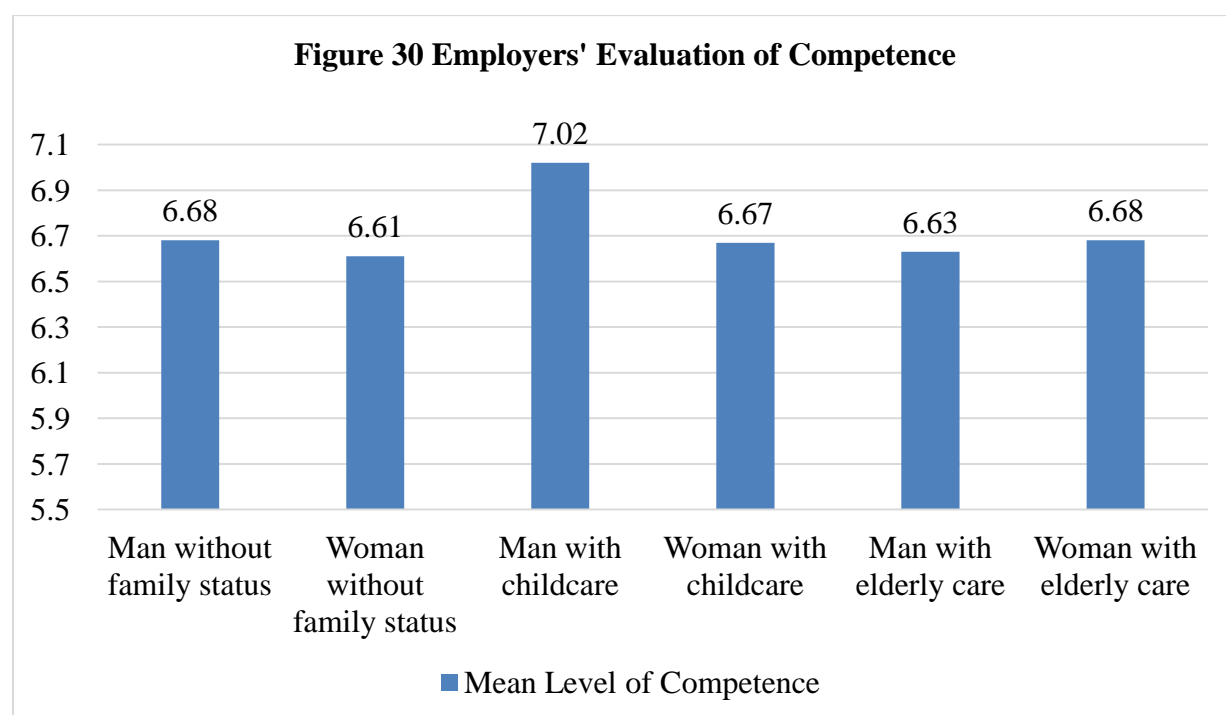


Woman with childcare	6.67 (1.77)	6.22 (1.93)	5.96 (1.93)	0.47
Man with elderly care	6.63 (1.65)	6.47 (1.55)	6.20 (1.81)	0.60
Woman with elderly care	6.68 (1.99)	6.19 (1.97)	6.05 (1.85)	0.60

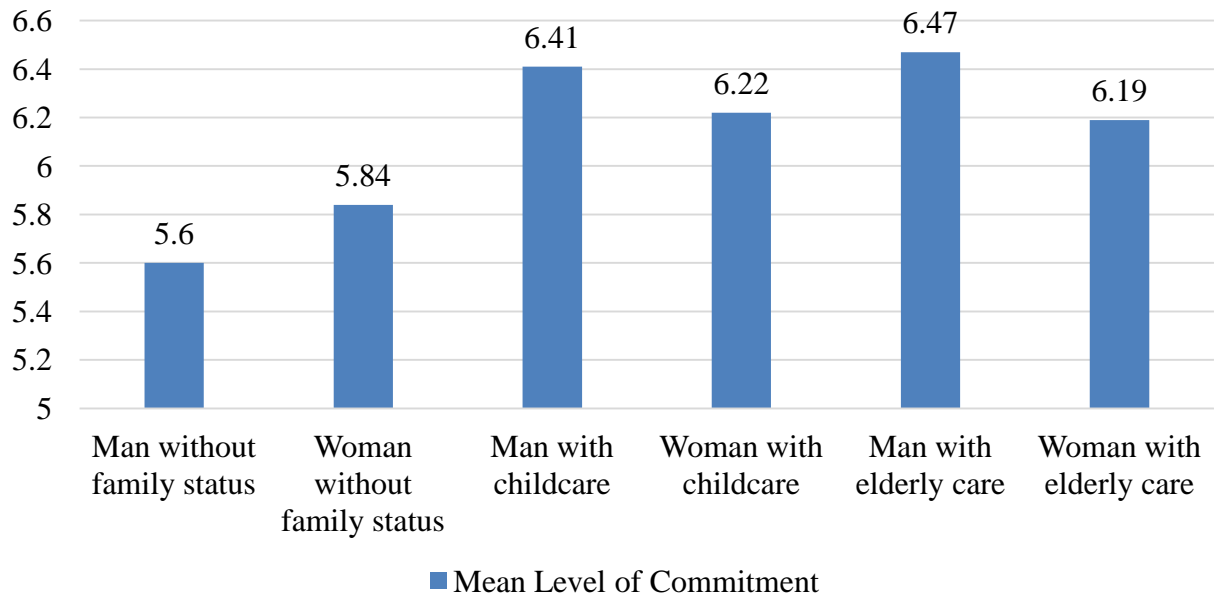
Notes: 1. The level of competence/commitment were scored from 1 to 10, higher score means higher level of competence/commitment. 1=least competent/committed, 10=most competent/committed.

2. The potential of promotion in 3 years was scored from 1 to 10, higher score means higher potential of promotion. 1=least likely to be promoted in 3 years, 10=most likely to be promoted in 3 years.

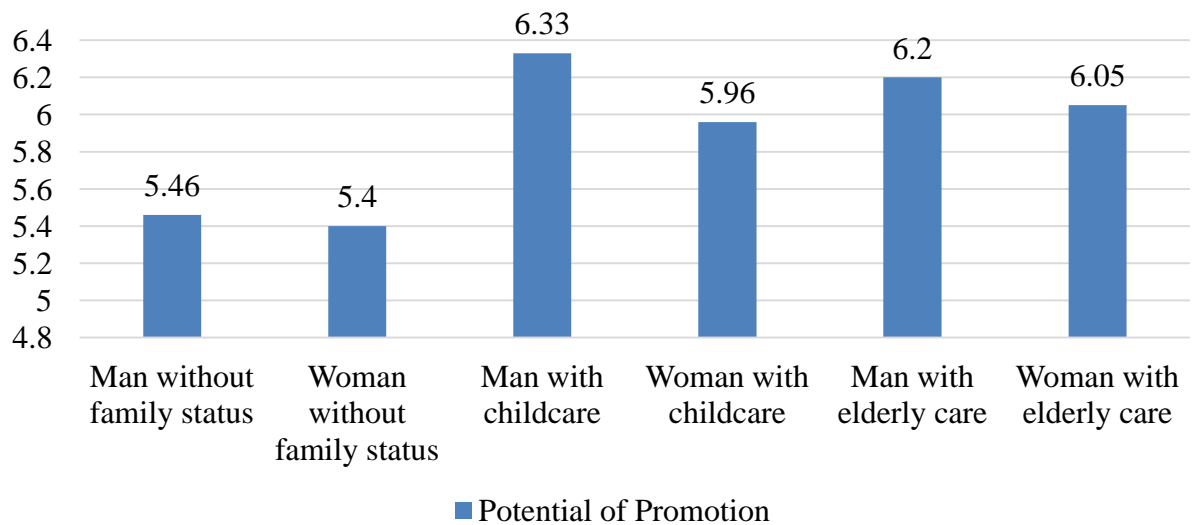
3. The hiring decision was defined as a categorical variable in the study (0=No, 1=Yes), however, we would regard it as a dummy variable in the mean analysis, presenting the probability that the candidate will be hired or not. The higher score means the more likely he/she will be hired by the employer.

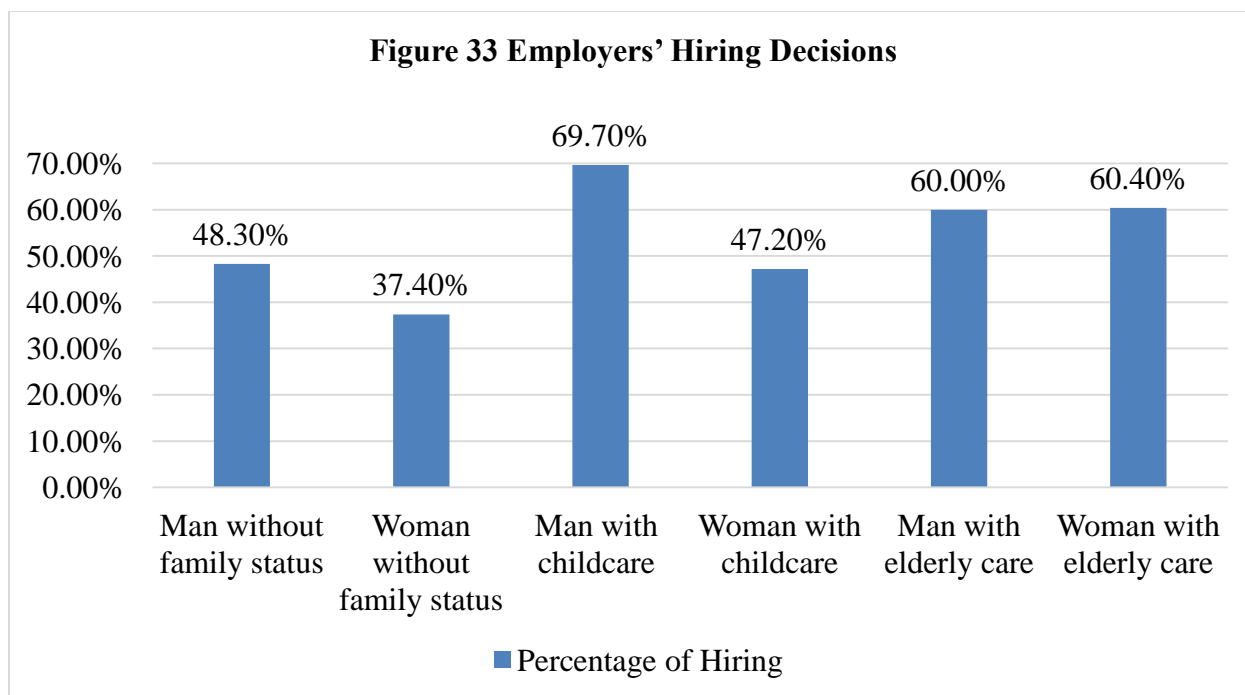


**Figure 31 Employers' Evaluation of Commitment**



**Figure 32 Employers' Evaluation of Promotion Potentials**





**Comparison of Industries**

We further examine the data in the four different industries. In Public Services, Retail, Food & Beverage and Accommodation, and Information Technology, Logistics, and Transportation, the comparison of the 6 job candidates follows similar patterns as in the general sample: man and woman without caring needs receive unfavourable evaluations in commitment, promotion potentials, and hiring decision; mother caring for young children are also less likely to get a job offer. But in the industry of Finance and Accounting, the contrasts are different as man without caring responsibilities receives much more favourable treatments, as shown in Table 48 and Figures 34 - 37.

In competence, men with or without family care responsibilities score significantly higher than their female counterparts. Man without caring needs and father caring for young children receive the best evaluations among the 6 candidates. In commitment, while candidates caring for ageing parents receive higher scores, the differences among the 6 candidates are not significantly different. Man and woman without caring needs, in other words, are not disadvantaged in the evaluation of commitment. In the evaluation of promotion potentials, the 3 male candidates again receive much higher scores than their female counterparts. Man without caring needs scores at the top in the possibility of promotion. In hiring decision, man without caring responsibilities at home and father caring for young children are the most likely to receive job offers among the 6 applicants. Women, especially mother caring for young children, are much less likely to be hired.

Sex discrimination and motherhood penalty are highly apparent in the data in the industry of Finance and Accounting. With or without family caring responsibilities, male candidates are strongly preferred by employers. Mother caring for young children is still less likely to get a job in the industry, compared with women without or with other types of caring responsibilities.

Compared with other industries, Finance and Accounting is particularly friendly to man without caring responsibilities and committed to personal hobbies, by believing him to be more competent and more likely to be promoted. In this industry, this type of male candidate is probably perceived as more competitive and risk-taking. Mother caring for young children, as consistently in other industries, can be victimized by sex and family status discrimination.

**Table 48 Employers' Evaluation Results in Finance and Accounting Industry**

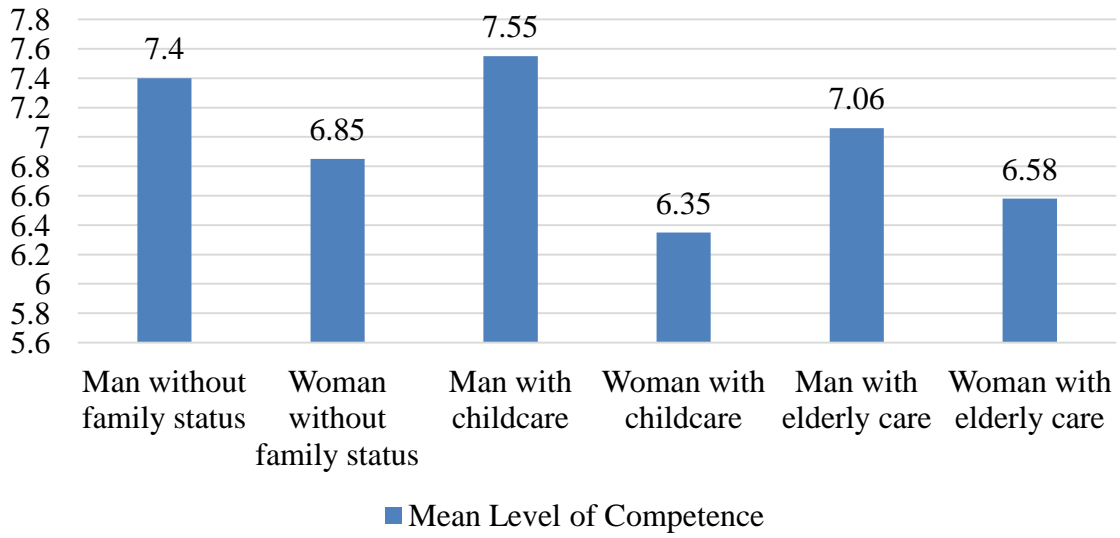
Gender & Family Status	Competence	Commitment	Promotion	Hiring Decision
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Probability
Man without family status	7.40 (1.47)	6.25 (1.89)	6.06 (1.70)	0.72
Woman without family status	6.85 (1.73)	6.30 (1.56)	4.94 (2.29)	0.39
Man with childcare	7.55 (1.32)	6.45 (1.47)	5.89 (2.05)	0.72
Woman with childcare	6.35 (1.73)	6.20 (1.82)	5.28 (1.90)	0.17
Man with elderly care	7.06 (1.61)	6.88 (1.26)	6.07 (1.69)	0.43
Woman with elderly care	6.58 (1.63)	6.75 (1.29)	5.36 (1.92)	0.50

Notes: 1. The level of competence/commitment were scored from 1 to 10, higher score means higher level of competence/commitment. 1=least competent/committed, 10=most competent/committed.

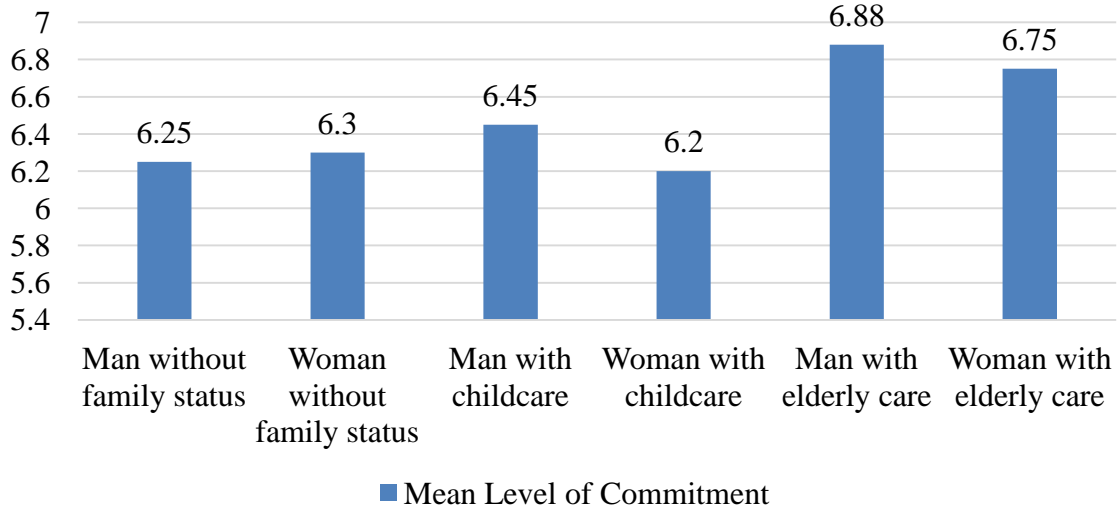
2. The potential of promotion in 3 years was scored from 1 to 10, higher score means higher potential of promotion. 1=least likely to be promoted in 3 years, 10=most likely to be promoted in 3 years.

3. The hiring decision was defined as a categorical variable in the study (0=No, 1=Yes), however, we would regard it as a dummy variable in the mean analysis, presenting the probability that the candidate will be hired or not. The higher score means the more likely he/she will be hired by the employer.

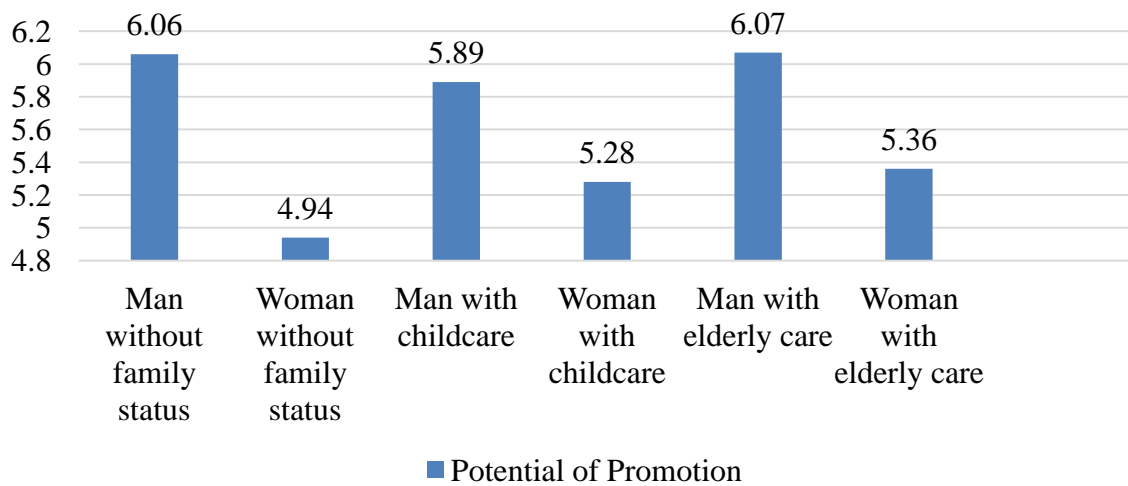
**Figure 34 Employers' Evaluation of Competence (Finance and Accounting Industry)**



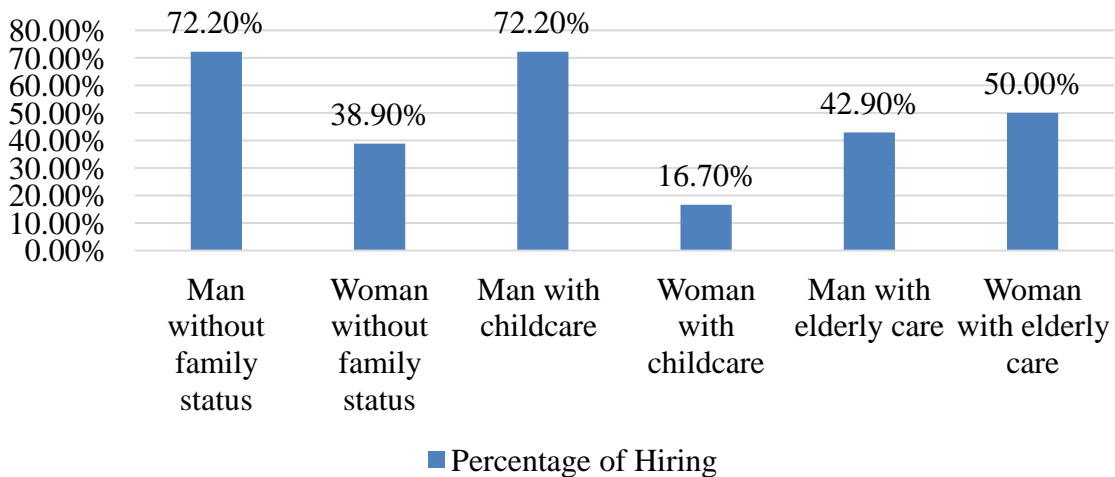
**Figure 35 Employers' Evaluation of Commitment (Finance and Accounting Industry)**



**Figure 36 Employers' Evaluation of Promotion Potentials (Finance and Accounting Industry)**



**Figure 37 Employers' Hiring Decisions (Finance and Accounting Industry)**



**Comparison of Employment Sizes**

Employers from larger companies (50 or more employees) and SMEs (less than 50 employees) give consistent scores to the 6 job candidates in competence, commitment, promotion potentials, and hiring decision. They both give unfavourable scores to man and woman without caring needs at home in commitment, promotion potentials, and hiring decision. They also rank mother caring for young children lower in the probability of hiring.

The comparison is consistent with the general sample and there is no significant difference between employers of larger sizes and SMEs.

### *Comparison of Job Categories*

For both entry-level jobs and management-level jobs, employers give consistent scores to the 6 job candidates in competence, commitment, and promotion potentials. They give unfavourable scores to man and woman without caring needs at home for both types of jobs, and slightly (not statistically significant) prefer man caring for young children.

But in hiring decision, while the general pattern (disadvantaged scores to man and woman without family caring needs and mother caring for young children) is followed among applicants for junior entry-level positions, the three female candidates are significantly less likely to be hired in senior management-level positions, as shown in Table 49 and Figures 38-39.

For man without caring needs, although his probability of obtaining a senior-level job is still lower than the two male candidates with different caring responsibilities, his disadvantage is not statistically significant. Compared with all the three female applicants, he is more likely to be hired in senior positions. Woman without caring needs and mother caring for young children remain unlikely to get a job offer, now together with woman caring for ageing parents. Woman with the need of elderly care is much preferred in junior positions, but her immunity to family status discrimination in hiring decisions does not sustain for senior positions.

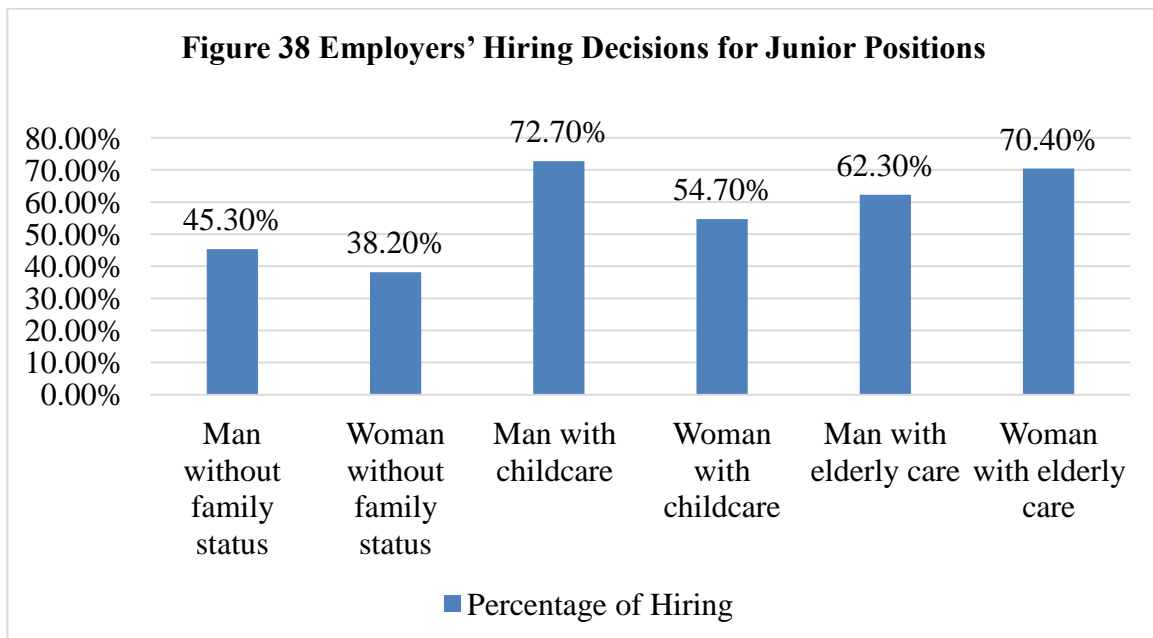
As demonstrated in Table 50, independent samples T-test also confirms that when a woman caring for ageing parents applies for senior management-level jobs, the probability for her to obtain an offer is 24.5 percentage points lower than when she applies for entry-level jobs. The difference is statistically significant.

While father caring for young children and man caring for ageing parents receive positive evaluations from employers for both junior and senior positions, employers tend to offer junior positions to woman caring for ageing parents, and senior positions to man without caring needs. Mother caring for young children, together with woman without caring needs, are disadvantaged in hiring decisions for both junior and senior job positions.

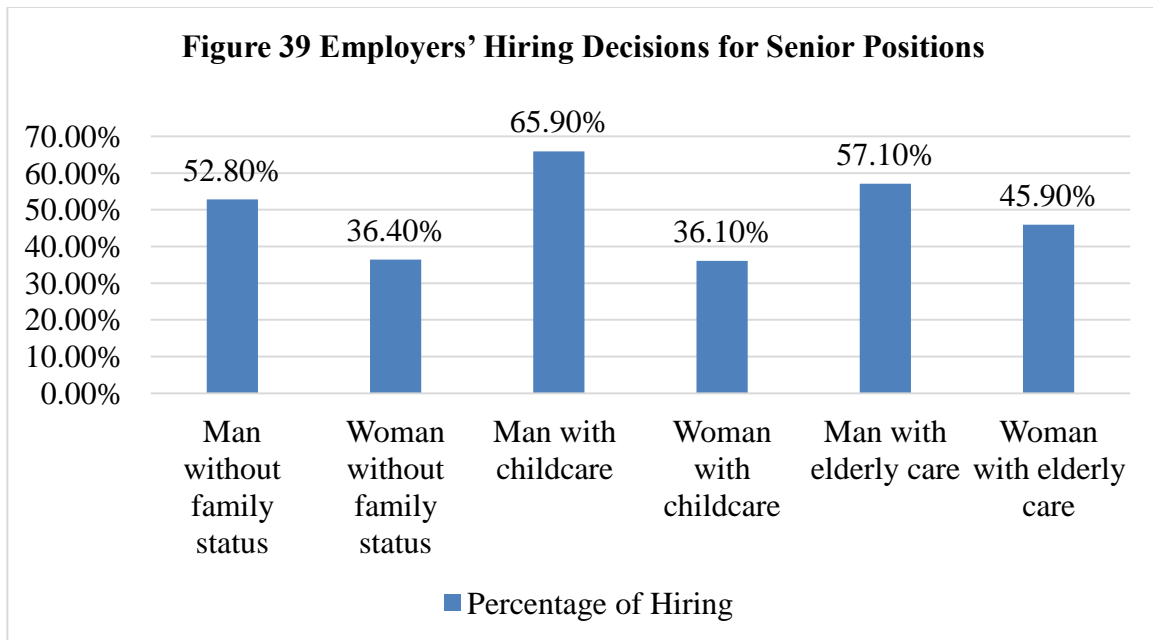
Man without caring needs but committed to personal hobbies may not be favoured for entry-level jobs, but his desirability is increased as he applies for more senior positions. Compared with mothers, women caregivers of ageing parents might not experience such severe family status discrimination in hiring decisions in general, but this immunity is restrained in entry-level jobs. When they apply for management-level jobs with better income and benefits, employers would strongly prefer not to hire them. There is a “glass ceiling” for female applicants caring for ageing parents in the workplace of Hong Kong.

**Table 49 Employers' Hiring Decisions for Junior and Senior Positions**

Gender & Family Status	Junior Position	Senior Position
	Probability	Probability
Man without family status	0.45	0.53
Woman without family status	0.38	0.36
Man with childcare	0.73	0.66
Woman with childcare	0.55	0.36
Man with elderly care	0.62	0.57
Woman with elderly care	0.70	0.46







**Table 50 Independent Samples T-Test**

Testing area	Comparison between different positions	Mean difference	p-value
CV6 Hiring Decisions	Junior position > Senior position	0.24	0.022*

Notes: 1. CV6: Woman with elderly care  
 2. p\* < 0.05, p\*\* < 0.01, p\*\*\* < 0.001

## 7. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

In order to further explore employers' and employees' knowledge, attitude, and experiences of family status discrimination and their policy suggestions, we carried out the qualitative parts of the study. Between November 2017 and March 2018, we conducted one focus group with employers (9 participants), one focus group with employees (6 participants), 20 in-depth interviews with employers, and 21 in-depth interviews with employees. Each of the focus group lasted for about 120 minutes and the length of in-depth interviews ranged from 20 to 50 minutes.

### Sampling Strategy

We used convenient sampling and snow-ball strategies to reach the participants in in-depth interviews and focus groups. We started with participants in the two telephone surveys who expressed interest in taking part in the qualitative studies, as well as acquaintances through personal and professional networks, and asked them to refer us to other possible respondents. In the sampling process, we made efforts to keep variances in the industry categories and employment size of the employers, and in the demographic distributions of the employees (see Appendices 8 and 9).

### Question Guides

Semi-structured question guides were used for in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions. The guides covered three important topic areas: 1) Knowledge, experience and attitudes towards family status discrimination in the workplace; 2) Current company policies that address family status discrimination; and 3) Suggestions to government and other sectors for future actions. While topic area 1) was much emphasized during in-depth interviews because of its personal nature, we spent more time to discuss topic areas 2) and 3) in focus groups, in dialogues that engage employers and employees from different backgrounds. Question guides for the focus groups and in-depth interviews are in Appendices 5 and 4 respectively.

## Results

### Knowledge of Family Status Discrimination and the FSDO

As consistent with the telephone survey data, only a very small portion of the respondents possess the knowledge of family status discrimination and the FSDO. Some employers and employees have their own understanding and interpretation of family status discrimination, which are not in accordance with the official definition. One employer of a small company in the Finance Industry claims:

*“I think, for those managers who put a lot of emphasis on job performance and actual outputs, they would find negative impacts on their business if someone frequently asks for leave because of his or her family caring responsibility. Is that what you are talking about?” (Employer Interview 5)*

Employees on the other hand propose that family status discrimination means “*men as breadwinners and women as caregivers*” (Employee Interview 3) or “*family division of labor*” (Employee Interview 9).

The ones who have heard about family status discrimination before or known the contents of the FSDO are from **larger corporations** (50 and above employees), which offer regular anti-discrimination training programs and have established institutions to address harassment and discrimination. One of the employees who have good knowledge of family status discrimination and the FSDO discloses:

*“We have annual training workshops on discrimination in the workplace. Every department would assign someone to attend and then come back and share with the colleagues. I participated in the training about 3 years ago and I did learn about family status discrimination.”* (Employee Interview 17)

Both employers and employees find the definition of family status discrimination very vague and unclear. They feel that in the Hong Kong contexts, it is difficult to distinguish between **reasonable treatments to employees and the term discrimination**. Employers give examples in their elaboration:

*“If I say to a mother, you should consider whether you can do this job, given that you have two children at home. Is that discrimination? Or just a kind reminder out of good will?”* (Employer Focus Group)

*“Say, for example, your parent passed away. Then how many days do you need to mourn? Three days, five to seven days, or 14 days are barely enough? Then how do you define discrimination? Also, if someone needs to take care of a child – that would be around 18 years of care. Can you really say that the company should keep giving me additional benefits for the 18 years? I am just not sure.”* (Employer Interview 16)

Employees, similarly, feel confused when and how an incident could be defined as family status discrimination:

*“I was away for a while (to take care of my mother). Then I really did not do the work, right? I did not make the same contribution. I did not receive very high evaluation that year. So I think, OK, it was a reasonable assessment, not really discrimination.”* (Employee Interview 13)

*“After I gave birth to my child, I took a long leave of 6 months. Then I went back to work, still in the same position. That year, I did not get the promotion. Was that related to my leave? I do not know. I took this long leave and I was not in the company for 6 months. I would not say it was not related with the promotion decision, but I would not blame the company either. The company granted me such a leave, right?”* (Employee Interview 17)

Many of the employee respondents can talk about the conflicts between work and family caring duties they have experienced, but only 3 claim that they are victims of family status discrimination (Employee Interview 5, 8, & 9). The others state that they receive reasonable

judgement and evaluation from the employers and do not feel there is a problem of discrimination.

Some employers, when discussing about the FSDO, declare that if those reasonable treatments are all framed as family status discrimination, this term would be very biased, favouring the employee side.

*“As employers, we do not want to discriminate anybody. It is actually very easy for employees to use these regulations to take advantage of employers, to make them feel that they are problematic... The regulations, in that way, are usually favouring the employees.”* (Employer Focus Group)

### **Awareness and Attitudes towards Family Status Discrimination**

As in the telephone survey sample, respondents in focus groups and in-depth interviews also agree that family status discrimination does not appear to be too prevalent in Hong Kong. Although there are two respondents who assume the discrimination could be more severe for men, because it is more socially awkward for men to take time off from work for family care needs, the dominant majority of the respondents think **women** are more likely to be victims of family status discrimination.

Both employers and employees recognize that in the social contexts of Hong Kong, there exists a common division of labour in families, which assigns women the responsibilities of housework chores and caring duties. Since those responsibilities compel them to spend less time and energy on work, women would be put in a disadvantaged position in the workplace. One employer says:

*“I think usually women. It is just natural that they would need to spend more time on caregiving at home – when kids are sick, when there is a parental meeting, or when there is something going on at school, they just need to be there. Then, they cannot be at work.”* (Employer Interview 6)

An employee also agrees this point of view and further elaborates how family caring responsibilities can affect work performance:

*“Mostly women take care of family, so it is found that some women need to take leave or leave early for family needs. From the perspective of many employers in Hong Kong, these women are incompetent. Particularly in some industries, like accounting, where overtime is such a norm. When all the other employees stay late, you go back early –the boss would think you are not committed to the company or diligent enough. This has effects. Absolutely.”* (Employee Interview 13)

When asked to compare employees with different family caring needs, the respondents would first claim that they are similar in experiencing family status discrimination. But when they elaborate their different caring responsibilities and give examples of discrimination, mothers are usually identified as the victims. **Motherhood** is regarded as an extremely important duty, for which employees are sometimes willing to sacrifice their career development.

*“To be a mom is a responsibility, for the child. And women are so much better at childcare... So after I was pregnant, I would never say I’d put all my efforts in work. My child is important and I need to plan my time for her.”* (Employee Interview 6)

Meanwhile, from the perspective of employers, motherhood is a personal choice, which should require sufficient planning beforehand. Compared with motherhood, caring needs for ageing parents are not based on the wills of employees and can hardly be planned. One employer is very explicit in this point:

*“In my opinion, people choose to be mothers, you see, and should be responsible for that choice. Probably should have some planning ahead – part-time job or to some positions, for instance... Ageing parents are not choices – that could happen all of a sudden. Then people do not have the time to arrange everything and need some help... Yes, I am more sympathetic and tolerant of those who take care of their elderly parents.”* (Employer Focus Group)

The qualitative data show good support to “motherhood penalty”, which is also demonstrated with statistical significance in our telephone surveys and explorative survey. The prevalence and seriousness of motherhood penalty in the workplace of Hong Kong is confirmed in this research.

### **Incidents of Family Status Discrimination in the Workplace**

In focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, respondents are encouraged to share their experiences and observations of family status discrimination. From the employee side, the discrimination takes place mainly in two scenarios: **job application and leave application**. During job interviews, interviewers would ask family status-related questions and some employees feel they are denied the job opportunities because of that. Sometimes, employers promise to give the job offer, but would withdraw it after learning about family caring responsibilities of employees. Here are two examples:

*“(The HR) asked me whether I was married and whether I had kids. I answered then they did not give me the job. I don’t know if that was the reason, but they were not supposed to ask that.”* (Employee Interview 8)

*“I have heard that a friend wanted to change her job. An employer asked her to come to work next week. They had orally confirmed where to work. But then she told the employer that she needed to take her child to the health centre in the next few days, so she needed to take leave. Then the employer said that they could not accommodate the leave and later on, they asked her not to go to work.”* (Employee Interview 19)

For leave taking, employees with family caring needs report that their supervisors and the HR staff often doubt why they need so many leave days and can be quite unfriendly if they ask for leave frequently in a period of time. Some cannot obtain the leave they need for family caring needs because employers do not believe them.

*“After having the baby, I needed to take more leave. And sometimes I asked for sick leave because I was not feeling very well, but the department manager did not believe it. She just assumed that I would take sick leave to take care of my child.”* (Employee Interview 9)

*“I once wanted to take leave to take my mother to see a doctor. The manager said, very suspiciously, you have all those siblings at home, why you? I could only tell him that we have many people at home, but few could help. I begged him for the leave for a long time, but she (immediate supervisor) did not approve it. And my mother did not get to see the doctor that day and we had to reschedule...”* (Employee Interview 9)

Employer respondents do not talk much about the recruitment process, but focus their concerns with employees’ family caring responsibilities on **leave takings**. They complain that employees with family status can ask for too many leave, which would make it difficult for them to manage their enterprises.

*“If it is only for a few days, I think that is OK. But if it is very often, then it is difficult. Hong Kong is a commercial society after all, and for me, I need people to come to work. If there is such complexity at your home, I would need to re-consider your position.”* (Employer Interview 7)

*“I think if someone is always taking leave, he is not committed enough to work. He would give me very bad impressions. And that bad impression would sustain in my opinion of this particular employee.”* (Employer Interview 11)

Taking many leave, from the perspective of employers, would also profoundly affect employees’ chances of training and promotion. They claim that employees with family caring needs do not obtain these opportunities not because of their family status, but because of their often absence from their work. One employer explains:

*“We will not say like, you have family status, then we will not promote or train you, it is not like that. On the contrary, we look at the productivity and performance of employees. If you are on leave often, then you are not contributing enough in your performance... Also, in our company, employees need to apply for training programs for promotion and they participate voluntarily. If you do not have the time and cannot attend the training, this is your choice. We will not push you to training or promotion, if you choose not to.”* (Employer Interview 14)

Employers have concerns with employees taking too many leave to take care of family members, mainly because they worry about the resources needed to cover those leave, especially in smaller enterprises.

*“With family duties, it is hard for them to do OT (overtime), then the work cannot be finished. I will need to find someone else to cover that part. It is hard to arrange and I do not like that. We are a small company. If we have a few employees asking for leave to take care of family, we do not have extra help to do their work, and the company would get into trouble. That is the reality.”* (Employer Interview 18)

This complaint occurs with high frequency in the interview data, as employers explain why they are reluctant to hire employees with family caring needs. Another reason is that if one employee with family status takes up many leave, other employees would feel unsatisfied and make complaints. Here is an example:

*“For mothers, if they want to take leave for their sick kids, I would try to be understanding. But what about the colleagues? You are always on leave and it is not fair to us – they would just say it sometimes in front of the colleagues on leave, or come to us to complain. It is really hard to deal with such complaints, you see. I think they are valid complaints but I don’t want to be very harsh in the workplace.”*  
(Employer Interview 1)

The pressure from co-workers is also mentioned in the data of employees, when they disclose that their bosses and supervisors are not the only sources of their stress at work. Colleagues can have negative attitudes towards them if they take many leave for family caring responsibilities. One of them says:

*“If one takes a lot of leave, colleagues would show care and concerns. They would ask questions – looks like they are showing care, but really, they are not very happy. They interrogate about the details of the family situations because they want to judge whether you really need those special leave or you are just being lazy and not working very hard.”* (Employee Interview 5)

In some cases, co-workers hate the extra work created by the employee with family status so much that they adopt strategies to push the employee to resign. One employee shares a story of her friend:

*“Her child was young and not very healthy. So she took a lot of leave to take care of the baby. Her co-workers first complained, then left a lot of work for her when she came back – more than reasonable. In the end, she could not bear it anymore and quit. The co-workers do not really need to confront you in face – there are a lot of things they can do to make you feel uncomfortable.”* (Employee Interview 8)

Employers and employees do not have consensus on where family status discrimination is more likely to take place. Some believe that larger enterprises have institutions and resources to accommodate employees’ needs of family caring responsibilities (e.g. Employee Interview 1 and Employer Focus Group) while some think it is easier for SMEs to arrange co-workers to cover the leave of employees with family status (e.g. Employer Interview 11). Some argue that it is not about the employment size of the enterprise, but the industry category and the job nature. For instance, one employer mentions:

*“Service industry is very different from office jobs. Here, we face real customers but the paperwork. If one employee is on leave, in the office, you can ask another to take over. But in sales, everyone is dealing with his or her own customers. You may bring documents home and work on them, but how can you bring customers home? It really depends on the industry and the job, I think.”* (Employer Interview 15)

One point the employer and employee respondents all agree is that family status of employees should and need to be tolerated, as long as their **work performance** demonstrates

satisfactory contribution to the companies. This discourse is so strong that it appears in almost every discussion and interview. The neo-liberalist ideology of productivity and market value is highly evident in the qualitative data.

Employers are sometimes willing to accommodate employees' requests for additional leave, flexible working hours, and other subsidies, but only to those employees of great value to the enterprise.

*"If someone is this good that has a sick parent at home that they need to be at home by a certain time every day and take them to the doctor on a Wednesday morning. Yes, we will deal with it. Yeah, then we make a decision because it's at a high value, it's at the margin. Right? We are not talking about, you know, waiter or waitress. That is very different."* (Employer Interview 5)

*"It really depends on the value of the employee. I have an employee with very strong performance. She needs to care for her new-born child and considers quitting. Then I ask her to hire a helper and the company would pay some subsidies, like HK\$3,000 a month for the helper. If she does not have this performance, I may just let her go."* (Employer Focus Group)

Employers, with or without family caring responsibilities, would appreciate these family-friendly measures to hardworking staff, who do not let family caring duties impede their work performances.

*"When my child was young, I stayed in the company and worked part-time. But I performed really well and could get the work done. So when my child went to school, I switched to full-time. The company is very tolerant because I can do the job and all the customers like me and I do not cause problems for the employer."* (Employee Interview 20)

*"Co-workers can take leave for family needs. But when they are on leave, it is better to still stay in touch or get some work done through the internet. Just don't be the burdens to the team or slow down the work pace too much... As far as they can manage that, I think it is totally fine."* (Employee Interview 2)

### **Current Policies in Enterprises**

Although public knowledge and awareness of family status discrimination is fairly low in Hong Kong, many employers have adopted family-friendly practices to address the needs of family caring of employees, especially in larger enterprises. Some **good practices include:** Breastfeeding Rooms; Lactation Break; Paternity Leave (before legislation); Employee-Assistance Program; Flexible Leave; Flexible Working Time/ Work from Home; Long-term No-Pay Leave; Subsidies for Domestic Helpers; and Discrimination Hotlines. Here are two examples:

*"Our company adopts an Employee-Assistance Program, through which employees can meet with counselors or psychiatrists. They can then discuss about their family needs, family problems, and emotional problems. This program can help employees to think and evaluate their circumstances. Sometimes, they are not*



*willing to share with the employer as they are afraid of being discriminated because of that. Given an opportunity to talk with a third-party, they will get good advice and better solve their problems.” (Employer Focus Group)*

*“I took the regular maternity leave in Hong Kong and then sick leave, and then no-pay leave. In total, I was away from work for 6 months without getting paid. I applied for long leave, because I did not deliver my child in Hong Kong – the company considered the situation and approved my leave. After that, I came back to work, still in the same position. The company is willing to consider your family’s circumstances and longer leave are always possible.” (Employee Interview 17)*

Employers and employees agree that compared with official company policies, it is more important to cultivate a **family-friendly company culture** to address family status discrimination. Such culture would also allow more flexibility in dealing with different individual cases. Here are some views from employers:

*“To address these problems, we usually do not set up particular policies, but try to build up a culture in the company that we are family-friendly and people with those needs can feel comfortable here... Like someone is breastfeeding and needs to pump the milk. We just set up a small room near the pantry and put in a massage chair. There is no need to declare that we must have breastfeeding rooms or so, just have a relaxing space that people need it can use it... I think that is a better approach...” (Employer Interview 4)*

*“It is important that people care and communicate. To set up too many rules does not really help. In my company, usually people have 7 days off in a month and co-workers will negotiate and pick their days beforehand. If someone really needs to take the day off, colleagues can talk to each other and see if people can switch. That kind of flexibility and care for each other is better than policies.” (Employer Interview 6)*

Employees also feel that within a company culture of caring and communication, it feels more comfortable to request leave for family caring duties and maintain work-family balance.

*“There is a culture of caring in my company. Supervisors respect the employees and people often communicate with one another... So when I need leave to take care of my family, I am not very scared or worried. We can talk and negotiate – I know they care employees.” (Employee Interview 17)*

### **Government Intervention and Policy Directions**

When talking about **extended and paid family leave** policies, the majority of employers and employees agree that they could help to reduce the burdens of employees with family caring duties, but they have their own concerns and reservations with implementing such policies in Hong Kong. One employer completely disagrees with the approach of offering family leave:

*“I find it ridiculous. It is too nice to the employees and too good to be true. It is your own responsibility to take care of your family after all. If there is some*

*problem in your family and you need to seek help from employers, it is ridiculous!”*  
(Employer Interview 20)

Some employers are worried that in the contexts of Hong Kong, such leave policies can be abused and hence hard to implement. Although there are good practice examples of the leave policies in other places of the world, they deem them unfit with the social and cultural contexts of Hong Kong. Statements as below are common in the data.

*“Yes, I know in UK, family is very much emphasized in the workplace. For example, the Statutory Maternity Leave can benefit most of the people. Whatever industry you are in, family can be a first priority. One should not be discriminated or fired based on that, otherwise the employer would be seriously punished. But can the same thing be implemented in Hong Kong? I don’t think so. It is so easy for people to file a complaint here – every employer will be seriously complained if we have the policy here... Hong Kong is a very competitive place. We need to spend every minute and every second very full and a very high responding level is expected. This is the special thing of Hong Kong and we cannot allow such leave policies.”* (Employer Interview 1)

*“So you give leave for children, for ageing parents, and for other family members. Then you need the proof, the documentation, right? If there are 600 to 1,000 employees in the company, how can you prevent abuse? How many days? It is highly possible people will find loopholes...”* (Employer Interview 9)

Employers of SMEs are particularly concerned that their enterprises would not have enough financial and human resources to cover additional family leave. They propose that if the government wants to legislate paid family leave, subsidies and assistance must be offered to SMEs.

*“In Hong Kong’s context, the majority of the businesses are SMEs. If all of a sudden, there is this legislation in the society, I think many of the SMEs that do not have adequate resources to deal with it. I feel that there needs to be a balance. Yes, we have a good cause for the legislation and the cause is verified. But is the Hong Kong society ready to have some consensus in the issue? Will it affect the competitiveness of the local society? I think we need to sit down and look into the problems very carefully before making any decisions.”* (Employer Interview 14)

*“The government should offer more support to employers if they want to legislate family leave. I am calculating my cost every minute. If the employees take family leave, one after another, how can I cover my cost? In a small company, it is almost impossible to accommodate that without subsidies...”* (Employer Interview 1)

Some employers, especially those of SMEs, find the legislation approach unnecessary and undesirable. They prefer more flexibility and a case-by-case approach in dealing with employees with family caring responsibilities.

*“In my small company, I would prefer more communication and flexible negotiation with employees. There is no need for legislation. I think we have enough leave already. Many people will tell lies to maximize their leave benefits.”*

*It is better to deal with every individual case with flexibility – no need to put down everything on paper.” (Employer Focus Group)*

Employees, on the other hand, are more welcoming of paid family leave as employment benefits. Some of the employee respondents have the experience of working abroad and find the legislation of paid family leave in Hong Kong incompatible with its economic development.

*“I have worked in Australia before....The benefit there is lot better than Hong Kong. ... I got one year of maternity leave. For the whole year, the boss could not fire me and the position was reserved for me to go back. The company hired a part-time in that position when I was on leave. There is no such thing in Hong Kong.” (Employee Interview 8)*

*“I used to work in the UK and my son was five or six years old then. Once he cut his hand and was sent to the hospital by the school. The school called me and I asked my supervisor if I could go to see him. The supervisor was like, of course, go! He did not even ask me to apply for leave or anything and just let me go to see my son. I applied for emergency family leave only after I came back to work and it was fine. It was their culture that family is very important... No, it is not like this in Hong Kong. I guess the boss would keep asking, how bad is the cut, what kind of leave you want to take, for how long, etc. It would not be that easy and convenient at all, although this place is pretty wealthy and developed in other senses.” (Employee Focus Group)*

*“My friend works in Australia and I think there are very good employment policies. There is flexible working time– she does not need to follow the regular working hours of the company and can go early and leave early. There is also the choice of home office. If you can do the work at home, then you may just stay at home. I appreciate these policies” (Employee Interview 10)*

Some of the employee respondents, as their employer counterparts, are concerned that paid family leave policies can be abused and need careful design and implementation to achieve fairness. For example, one of them suggests:

*“I think it is necessary to make a boundary. You cannot say that all the newly hired employees should all have this benefit. If you come in for just 10 days or a few days and then you get so many benefits, I do not think it is fair for the employer or the other employees. We should discuss a timeline, half a year or a whole year – you need to be a long-term employee to have this benefit. That is fair to everybody.” (Employee Interview 13)*

Some also worry that the policy idea of paid family leave, borrowed from the west, cannot take roots in the social contexts of Hong Kong. Therefore good plans of change and practice are necessary.

*“So you can only borrow policy ideas from other places, but the contexts are different and we cannot exactly replicate them. Moreover, the current policies in Hong Kong are here for so many years and match with the welfare system and the social values. We cannot say the current policies are perfect, but at least, this is a*

*consistent system and people accept it and understand how it works. We should make improvements based on that, not completely change the system. In some areas, there definitely needs improvement, especially this year, the government has surplus in budgetary plan...”* (Employee Interview 18)

Some employees believe that paid family leave policies might negatively affect employees in some ways and we need to be cautious of those effects in policy making.

*“For some small companies, if they cannot afford these leave policies, they would not hire certain groups in the first place, or find ways to fire those people. ... Particularly for those grassroots jobs, when those leave policies are in place, the employers would be less likely to consider candidates with family caring burdens...”* (Employee Interview 1)

Some employees, mostly working mothers, prefer the social service approach of care institutions than additional leave. From their perspective, this approach better addresses the discrimination against mothers and promotes true equality.

*“I sometimes do not want additional leave. I do not want to reduce my work time and put more burdens on my teammates. I think if there has a trustworthy day care organization sponsored by the government for me to put my children in, I can go to work without any worries. That is the best arrangement.”* (Employee Interview 17)

## 8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While employers often do not observe incidents of family status discrimination in the workplace in Hong Kong, a visible portion of employees with family caring responsibilities have experienced family status discrimination in the past two years – 15.0% in hiring, 13.5% in quitting, and 7.8% at work. But few of them would report the cases of discrimination because they find it unnecessary or do not know how to appeal. Family status discrimination is very much a “hidden” discrimination in the workplace in Hong Kong.

Incidents of family status discrimination often take place during job recruitment and leave application, in labor-intensive industries and among non-middle-class workers. Women of lower educational levels and with no support to care work at home are particularly vulnerable to various forms of family status discrimination. Larger companies usually have more established institutions and mechanisms to prevent family status discrimination than SMEs. More attention needs to be directed to low-skilled female workers in labor-intensive SMEs in the investigation of family status discrimination.

Among all employees with family caring responsibilities, mothers of young children are at high risk of becoming victims of family status discrimination. Employers and fellow employees all find it fairly normal not to give good opportunities to mother employees. “Motherhood penalty”, although recognized, is widely accepted in the workplace of Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, the public’s knowledge and awareness of family status discrimination in the workplace is low in Hong Kong. Both employers and employees find the definition of family status discrimination vague and hard to understand and the FSDO difficult to implement. This also affects their reporting of cases of family status discrimination.

In the understanding of family status discrimination, neo-liberal ideologies of productivity and market value are prevalent among employers and employees. Job benefits to staff with family caring responsibilities are often regarded as rewards to their productivity and continuous contributions to companies, instead of their rights.

For policy directions, although employees would welcome paid family leave, they, together with employers, are concerned with the policy’s negative effects on the efficiency of company management and productivity. Employers hence would prefer flexible and case-by-case negotiation with employees with family caring duties to assist them in employment. To address “motherhood penalty”, additional paid family leave might not be the only desirable direction either. Working mothers would like to have more care services available in Hong Kong, so as to help them to stay in the labor force.

The current study mostly focuses on the caring responsibilities of those living in nuclear family context. New forms of household formation, such as unmarried couples, have emerged and their implications on caring responsibilities and family status discrimination need to be examined in the future. We present the prevalence of discrimination and have not investigated how employers’ discriminatory attitudes are formed or developed, and this could be an important direction for future studies as well.

Based on the critical findings from the different components of the current study, we thus make the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** More attention and resources need to be allocated to organize educational activities to promote the knowledge and awareness of the FSDO and family status discrimination in the workplace in Hong Kong. The Labor Department should consider providing resources and training to the public and employers, so that the basic definition of family status discrimination is clear and real life examples are explained. These programs are particularly crucial for small-and-medium-size enterprises (SMEs) and new-immigrant women employees of lower educational level. Educational programs need to focus on clear definitions of family status discrimination and contextualized examples of discrimination in different work settings in Hong Kong.

Employees need to be provided with sufficient information on the procedures of complaint (internal mechanism and external institutions such as EOC), once family status discrimination occurs. In addition, employers should be required to provide adequate information for their employees including readily available assistance for them to make valid complaints.

**Recommendation 2:** Smaller establishments in labor-intensive industries need to be encouraged and given more resources to cultivate a more family-friendly company culture. Low-skilled female workers in non-middle-class positions, who have no support for family care work, are at high risk of family status discrimination. More attention needs to be directed towards them to prevent cases of discrimination.

**Recommendation 3:** Collecting personal information related to family caring responsibilities is still a prevalent practice in the recruitment process in the labor market of Hong Kong. Better implementation of the legislation and careful supervision of the practices of employers are necessary to prevent family status discrimination.

**Recommendation 4:** Paid family leave can be a plausible policy direction in Hong Kong to address family status discrimination, but careful design, implementation, and supervision are needed. To keep the total days of leave unchanged can generate more support from employers; detailed regulations should be set up to prevent abuse. The government needs to allocate more resources (e.g. financial subsidies) to enterprises to assist them in the implementation of family leave policies. Flexibilities and the option of individual-based negotiations should be allowed to SMEs, to create better relationships between employers and employees with family caring responsibilities. As suggested by many employers, instead of making it mandatory, the government could frame it as a good practice and encourage employers to consider this as one of the family-friendly employment approaches.

**Recommendation 5:** Motherhood penalty is a serious problem in Hong Kong and family status discrimination is often interwoven with sex discrimination. Mothers caring for young children face severe discriminatory treatment and little sympathy in the workplace. Educational projects to raise the consciousness of gender equality and rights of mothers are urgently needed, so as to propel cultural changes in Hong Kong's workplace. It is noteworthy that working mothers are not in favor of family leave policies because they reinforce the stereotypes that mothers cannot focus on career development. To better assist them in work-family balance, while high-quality and affordable day-care centers and after-school care

programs are more desirable directions, more advocacy for men's participation in family domain would be a viable option.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1 Telephone Survey Questionnaire (Employer)



Q Type: Employer long  
Sch code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ref: code: \_\_\_\_\_

### Telephone Survey of Employers: Family Status Discrimination in Workplace in Hong Kong

#### I. Screener

S1. Are you in charge of recruitment and evaluation of employees' performances in your company?

1.  Yes      2.  No      3.  Refuse to answer

(If the answer is 2 or 3, please read: Could you please tell me the person in charge and transfer the call to him/her? Thanks!)

S2. Sex of respondent

1.  Male    2.  Female **【Filled by the interviewer】**

#### II • Background Information

INDUST\_CU. Which type of industry does the company engage? [if necessary, please read out 1-11]

1.  Government and Public Administration    2.  Manufacturing    3.  Construction  
4.  Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail    5.  Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services  
6.  Accommodation and Food Services    7.  Information and Communications  
8.  Finance and Insurance    9.  Real Estate, Professional and Business Services  
10.  Social and Personal Services  
11.  Agriculture, Mining, Electricity and Gas Supply    12.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
99.  Refuse to answer

Size\_CU. How many years has the company been established in Hong Kong?

1.  Less than 1 year    2.  1-4 years    3.  5-9 years    4.  10 years or above

SCALE\_CU. How many employees are employed in the company in Hong Kong currently? (Including all branch staff)

1.  Less than 10 persons    2.  10-49 persons    3.  50-99 persons    4.  100-299 persons  
5.  300-499 persons    6.  500 persons or above    7.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
8.  Don't know    9.  Refuse to answer

### III. Knowledge and Insight about Family Status Discrimination

In this part, we will ask questions about “family status” of employees’. Family status is legally defined as the responsibility of a person for the care of an immediate family member, related by blood, marriage, adoption or affinity. The types of blood relationships covered include mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandparents and other relatives.

AQ1. Have you heard about family status discrimination before?

1.  Yes (Continue to AQ2)                      2.  No (Skip to AQ4)

AQ2. In your view, does Hong Kong have the “Family Status Discrimination Ordinance”?

1.  Yes            2.  No            8.  Don’t know

AQ3. In your view, is family status discrimination prevalent in Hong Kong?

1.  Very Prevalent    2.  Quite Prevalent    3.  Not Very Prevalent    4.  Totally not Prevalent    8.  Don’t know

AQ4. As far as you know, are the following situations prevalent in the workplace in Hong Kong?

a) Job applicants will not be hired because of the need to take care of immediate family members.

1.  Very Prevalent    2.  Quite Prevalent    3.  Not Very Prevalent    4.  Totally not Prevalent    8.  Don’t know

b) Employees who need to take care of immediate family members face difficulties in leave application.

1.  Very Prevalent    2.  Quite Prevalent    3.  Not Very Prevalent    4.  Totally not Prevalent    8.  Don’t know

c) Employees receive less benefit compared with colleagues of the same level (E.g. salary, welfare benefits, promotion, bonus or training opportunities).

1.  Very Prevalent    2.  Quite Prevalent    3.  Not Very Prevalent    4.  Totally not Prevalent    8.  Don’t know

d) Employees are assigned to lower positions or take charge of unimportant job tasks because of the need to take care of immediate family members.

1.  Very Prevalent    2.  Quite Prevalent    3.  Not Very Prevalent    4.  Totally not Prevalent    8.  Don’t know

e) Employees are fired because of the need to take care of immediate family members.

1.  Very Prevalent 2.  Quite Prevalent 3.  Not Very Prevalent 4.  Totally not Prevalent 8.  Don't know

#### IV. Current Situations of “Family Status Discrimination” in the Company

##### A. Staff Recruitment

AWQ1. During the hiring process, does the company collect and record the following information in the job application forms? [Read out 1 – 5] (Please mark all the answers that apply)

1.  Age 2.  Marital Status 3.  Need of caring for children 4.  Need of caring for elderly parents 5.  Need of caring for other family members 6.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 9.  None of the above

AWQ2. In the past two years, has the company received complaints related to family status discrimination in the hiring process?

1.  Yes (Continue to AWQ3)  
2.  No ( Skip to BQ1 ) 3.  Don't know ( Skip to BQ1 )  
9.  Refuse to answer ( Skip to BQ1 )

AWQ3. In the most recent incident, what happened? (If necessary, read out 1 – 4) (Please mark all the answers that apply)

1.  Job applicant was dissatisfied with job advertisements and then filed a complaint with us  
2.  Job applicant was not notified of the interview and then filed a complaint with us  
3.  Job applicant was not hired by the interview and then filed a complaint with us  
4.  During the job interviews, as the company considered whether the applicant needed to take care of family members and made it as one of the employment conditions, the job applicant then filed a complaint with us  
5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

AWQ4. Which position did the applicant apply for at that time?

1.  Manager and administrators 2.  Professionals 3.  Associate professionals 4.  Clerical support workers 5.  Service and sales workers 6.  Craft and related workers 7.  Machine operators and assemblers 8.  Elementary occupations 9.  Skilled workers in fishing and agricultural industries 10.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

AWQ5. What actions did the company take? [If necessary, read out 1 - 5] (Please mark all the answers that apply)

1.  Explained the recruitment procedure to the applicant immediately 2.  Referred the applicant to a colleague in-charge (e.g. Public Relations Department) 3.  Requested the Personnel Department to follow up the case and review it 4.  Responded to Management 5.  Registered with the EOC 6.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 9.  Did not take any actions 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

## B. At Work

BQ1. From the employer's point of view, do you agree with the following statements?

a) Employees with family status increase burdens on the company.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

b) Employees with family status bring troubles and burdens to colleagues.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

c) Employees with family status do not have any work ethics.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

d) Employees with family status need to take leave regularly to care for family members, which would heavily influence the daily operation of the company.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

e) Employees with family status have difficulties balancing work and family and will usually change the job.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

BQ2. Besides the general labor protection regulations, does the company have other policies beyond law requirements that protect employees with family status?

1.  Yes (Continue to BQ3)  
 2.  No (Skip to BQ4a)  
 3.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) (Skip to BQ4a)  
 9.  Refuse to answer (Skip to BQ4a)

BQ3. What kind of policies ? \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

[Do not read out the answers and ask if there are any other policies suggested by the respondent] (Please mark all that apply)

1.  Extra paid leave
2.  Flexible working hours
3.  Permission for working at home
4.  Allowing application of taking paid leave for next year in advance
5.  Good work-life balance to avoid family disputes
6.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
88.  Don't know/No idea
99.  Refuse to answer

BQ4. Will the company plan for developing policies to support employees with family status?

1.  Yes (Continue to BQ4a)
2.  No (Skip to BQ5)
3.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) (Skip to BQ5)
9.  Refuse to answer (Skip to BQ5)

BQ4a. Will the company plan for developing the following policies to support employees with family status in future? [Read out 1 – 5] (Please mark all that apply)

1.  Extra paid leave
2.  Flexible working hours
3.  Permission for working at home
4.  Allowing application of taking paid leave for next year in advance
5.  Good work-life balance to avoid family disputes
6.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
88.  Don't know/No idea
99.  Refuse to answer

BQ5. During the past two years, has the company received any enquires or complaints and conducted investigations about “family status discrimination” at work?

1.  Yes (Continue to BQ7)
2.  No (Skip to CQ1)
3.  Don't know (Skip to CQ1)
9.  Refuse to answer (Skip to CQ1)

BQ6. In the most recent case, what happened? [Read out 1 - 8] (Please mark all that apply)

1.  Employees with family status received less salary than others in the same position.
2.  Employees with family status were rejected to participate in trainings.
3.  Employees with family status lost the chance for promotion
4.  Employees with family status were reduced in work responsibilities.
5.  Employees with family status lost the job benefits.
6.  Employees with family status were not approved for leave application.
7.  Employees with family status received unfair treatment for leave application
8.  Behaviors of employees without family status often received corporate favors.
9.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
99.  Refuse to answer

BQ7. What position did the disgruntled employee take at that time ?

1.  Manager and administrators
2.  Professionals
3.  Associate professionals
4.  Clerical support workers
5.  Service and sales workers
6.  Craft and related workers
7.  Machine operators and assemblers
8.  Elementary occupations
9.  Skilled workers in fishing and agricultural industries
10.  Others (Please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)
88.  Don't know/Forget
99.  Refuse to answer

BQ8. Did the company take the following actions? [Read out 1 - 4](Please mark all that apply)

1.  Explained the promotion, training opportunities and procedures of leave application to the disgruntled employee immediately.
2.  Referred the disgruntled employee to the Personnel Office.
3.  Reported to management
4.  Registered with the EOC
5.  Others (Please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)
9.  Did not take any actions
88.  Don't know/Forget
99.  Refuse

### C. Firing Staff

CQ1. Does the company have any policies for leaving staff to voice out the reasons for their leaving? (Eg. because of the family status to take care of family members)

1.  Yes (Continue to CQ2.)
2.  No (Skip to CQ3)
3.  Don't know (Skip to CQ3)
9.  Refuse to answer (Skip to CQ3)

CQ2. What kind of policies? [Do not read out the answers and ask if there is any other policies suggested by the respondent] (Please mark all that apply.)

1.  Exit interview with the Personnel Department
2.  Employees' complaint procedures to the company (Grievance)
3.  Discussion with the affiliated Department of employees
4.  No policies
5.  Others (Please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)
88.  Don't know/No idea
99.  Refuse to answer

CQ3. During the past two years, has the company received any notification of leaving that is related to the complaint about family status discrimination ?

1.  Yes (Continue to CQ4)
2.  No (Skip to KWQ1)
3.  Don't know (Skip to KWQ1)
9.  Refuse to answer (Skip to KWQ1)

CQ4. What position did the disgruntled employee take in the most recent incident ?

1.  Manager and administrators
2.  Professionals
3.  Associate professionals
4.  Clerical support workers
5.  Service and sales workers
6.  Craft and related workers
7.  Machine operators and assemblers
8.  Elementary occupations
9.  Skilled workers in fishing and agricultural industries
10.  Others (Please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)

88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

CQ5. What happened at that time? [Read out 1 - 4](Please mark all that apply)

1.  The resigned staff quit the job due to family status.
2.  The resigned staff quit the job because he/she lost the chance of promotion due to family status.
3.  The resigned staff quit the job because he/she lost training opportunities due to family status.
4.  The resigned staff switched to part-time position because of family status.
5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

CQ6. Did the company take any of the following actions? [Read out 1 - 4] (Please mark all that apply)

1.  Provided various kinds of jobs (half-time or part-time)
2.  Increased training opportunities for staff (half-time or part-time)
3.  Followed up the case with Personnel Department and reviewed the promotion procedures and policies.
4.  Communicated more with staff who have family status to understand the situation.
5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
9.  Did not take any actions 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

## V. Attitudes towards “Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO)”

KWQ1. In order to promote the awareness and understanding of “family status discrimination” in company, which of the following actions do you think should be taken? [Read out 1 - 5](Please mark all that apply)

1.  More legislation of government
2.  More promotion by the government to raise the public awareness of FSDO
3.  More EOC activities to raise the awareness of FSDO among the public.
4.  More public consultation to collect views on FSDO through different ways.
5.  Relevant policies to be formulated by companies to redress family status discrimination
6.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
9.  No need for action 88.  Don't know/No idea 99.  Refuse to answer

KWQ2. Does your company support to formulate and implement any paid family leave policies like in other countries?

(Read out : For example, in Australia, in order to support working parents to take full care of their newborn babies or adopted children, after passing the mean test, qualified parents can receive a vacation holiday allowance that is paid by the government or employer for up to 18 weeks equal to the minimum wage.)

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

KWQ3. If Hong Kong implements "paid family leave" but need to reduce other holidays from the annual leave of the employed staff (total days of leave remain unchanged), will your company support it? (Please specify it as "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree"?)

1.  Strongly agree (Continue to KWQ4)
2.  Agree (Continue to KWQ4)
3.  Disagree (Skip to KWQ6)
4.  Strongly disagree (Skip to KWQ6)
8.  Don't know/No idea (Continue to KWQ4)

KWQ4. In terms of the aforementioned "paid family leave", which group of people do you think should be applied in your company? (Read out 1-3)

1.  More to female employees
2.  More to male employees
3.  Both male and female employees
4.  No idea
8.  Don't know/No idea

KWQ5. In terms of the aforementioned "paid family leave", which type of family status should be applied in your company? [Read out 1 - 4](Please mark all that apply)

1.  More to caregivers of young children
2.  More to caregivers of elderly parents
3.  More to caregivers of spouse and siblings
4.  To all caregivers
5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
6.  Don't know/No idea

KWQ6. Do you agree with the following statements?

a) In general, it is understandable not to employ mothers with childcare responsibilities in Hong Kong.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

b) In general, it is understandable not to employ fathers with childcare responsibilities in Hong Kong.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

c) In general, it is understandable not to employ women taking care of ageing parents in Hong Kong.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea



d) In general, it is understandable not to employ men taking care of ageing parents in Hong Kong.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 8. Don't know/No idea

## **VI. Participation in the in-depth interview and focus group interview**

In order to collect more suggestions on “Family Status Discrimination Ordinance” from your company and understand the brought impact of the ordinance, the Department of Social Work, CUHK, would like to invite your company to participate a meeting for about 1-2 hours (time, venue and data will be notified later). Through this meeting, your company can raise up opinions about this policy. In order to thank for your support, we will give allowance to the representative of your company.

FOLLOW 1. Would you like to participate in the in-depth interview or focus group interview related to this study?

1. Yes 2. No (Thanks! End of the questionnaire.)

FOLLOW 2. Do you want me to contact you for the interviews through mobile phone?

1. Yes (Continue to 2a) 2. No (Thanks! End of the questionnaire.)

FOLLOW 2a. Your mobile phone number?\_\_\_\_\_

FOLLOW 3. Do you want me to contact you by other means?

1. Email\_\_\_\_\_

2. Tel (Office) \_\_\_\_\_ 3. WhatsApp \_\_\_\_\_

5. Others (Please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)

End of the questionnaire, thanks!

## Appendix 2 Telephone Survey Questionnaire (Employee)



No need to fill in this  
Q Type: Employee long  
Sch code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ref: code: \_\_\_\_\_

### Telephone Survey of Employees: Family Status Discrimination in Workplace in Hong Kong

#### I. Screener

S1. Are you aged 18 or above and have you been employed in the past two years?

【Being employed includes full-time and part-time employment, but does not include self-employed and being employers. If the respondent has been employed in the past two years, no matter he/she is now unemployed, retired, doing housework, or not participated in the labor market due to illness, the respondent is qualified for the survey.】

1.  Yes 2.  No 【End of the questionnaire. Thanks!】

S2. Sex of the respondent 1.  Male 2.  Female 【Filled by staff】

#### II. Family Status Discrimination and Knowledge

In this part, we will ask questions about “family status discrimination” that may happen in the workplace, which means someone was treated unfairly due to family status responsibility (that is, taking care of immediate family members). Family status is legally defined as the responsibility of a person for the care of an immediate family member, related by blood, marriage, adoption or affinity. The types of relationships covered include mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandparents and other relatives.

AWQ1. Have you heard about “family status discrimination” before?

1.  Yes 2.  No

AWQ2. As far as you know, does Hong Kong have the “Family Status Discrimination Ordinance”?

1.  Yes 2.  No 8.  Don't know

AWQ3. From your point of view, is family status discrimination prevalent in Hong Kong?

1.  Very Prevalent 2.  Quite Prevalent 3.  Not Very Prevalent 4.  Totally not Prevalent  
8.  Don't know

AWQ4. From your point of view, are the following situations prevalent in Hong Kong?

a) Someone is not hired because of the need to take care of immediate family members.

1.  Very Prevalent 2.  Quite Prevalent 3.  Not Very Prevalent 4.  Totally not Prevalent  
8.  Don't know

b) Employees who need to take care of immediate family members face difficulties in

leave application.

1.  Very Prevalent 2.  Quite Prevalent 3.  Not Very Prevalent 4.  Totally not Prevalent 8.  Don't know

c) Employees who need to take care of immediate family members receive fewer benefits compared with colleagues of the same level (E.g. salary, welfare benefits, promotion, bonus or training opportunities).

1.  Very Prevalent 2.  Quite Prevalent 3.  Not Very Prevalent 4.  Totally not Prevalent 8.  Don't know

d) Employees are assigned to lower positions or taking charge of unimportant job tasks because of the need to take care of immediate family members.

1.  Very Prevalent 2.  Quite Prevalent 3.  Not Very Prevalent 4.  Totally not Prevalent 8.  Don't know

e) Employees are fired because of the need to take care of immediate family members.

1.  Very Prevalent 2.  Quite Prevalent 3.  Not Very Prevalent 4.  Totally not Prevalent 8.  Don't know

### **III. Experience of “family status discrimination” in the workplace**

1. Do you need to take care of family members?

1.  Yes (Type of care receivers, please mark all that apply): 1.  Parents 2.  Spouse 3.  Children 4.  Siblings 5.  Other family members (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) (Please continue to 2 and the remaining questions of Part III)

2.  No (Skip to Part IV)

9.  Refuse to answer (Skip to Part IV)

2. Do you receive caring support from others?

1.  Yes (Types of other caregivers, please mark all that apply) 1.  Foreign domestic workers 2.  Hourly-based workers 3.  Family members 4.  Friends or neighbors 5.  Social service organizations 7.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

2.  No

#### **A. Family status discrimination in the hiring process in the past two years.**

AQ1. Have you searched for jobs in the past two years?

1.  Yes (Continue to AQ2) 2.  No (Skip to **Part B**)

AQ2. Have you encountered family status discrimination in the hiring process?

1.  Yes (Continue to AQ3) 2.  No (Skip to **Part B**)

AQ3. When did you experience family status discrimination in your last job search?

1.  Less than 3 months ago 2.  3- less than 6 months ago 3.  6- less than 12 months ago 4.  1-2 years ago 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

AQ4. What happened at that time? (Read out 1-5 and please mark all that apply.)

- 1.  Only applicants without family status would be considered on the job advertisement.
- 2.  No interview opportunities or invitations due to family status.
- 3.  Unsuccessful interviews due to disclosing the need to take care of family members.
- 4.  Inferior employment conditions due to family status
- 5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- 88.  Don't know/Forget                      99.  Refuse to answer

AQ5. What type of industry did the company engage?

- 1.  Government and public administration    2.  Manufacturing    3.  Construction    4.  Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail
- 5.  Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services
- 6.  Accommodation and Food Services    7.  Information and Communications
- 8.  Finance and Insurance    9.  Real Estate, Professional and Business Services
- 10.  Social and Personal Services    11.  Agriculture, Mining, Electricity and Gas Supply
- 12.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- 88.  Don't know/Forget    99.  Refuse to answer

AQ6. What was the employment size of that company in Hong Kong?

- 1.  Less than 10 persons    2.  10-49 persons    3.  50-99 persons
- 4.  100-299 persons    5.  300-499 persons    6.  500 persons or above    7.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- 88.  Don't know/Forget    99.  Refuse to answer

AQ7. What position did you apply at that time?

- 1.  Manager and administrators    2.  Professionals    3.  Associate Professionals    4.  Clerical support workers
- 5.  Service and sales workers    6.  Craft and related workers
- 7.  Machine operators and assemblers    8.  Elementary occupations    9.  Skilled workers in fishing and agricultural industries
- 10.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- 88.  Don't know/Forget    99.  Refuse to answer

AQ8. Did you take any actions after that?

- 1.  Yes (Continue to AQ9.)    2.  No (Skip to AQ10.)    8.  Don't know/Forget (Skip to **Part B**)

AQ9. What actions did you take? (Read out 1-8 and mark all that apply.)

- 1.  Make a complaint to that company    2.  Confront with the discriminator in face    3.  Make a complaint to EOC
- 6.  Make a complaint to labour unions or political party members    7.  Make a report to the court
- 8.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- 88.  Don't know/Forget    99.  Refuse to answer (Skip to **Part B**)

AQ10. Why didn't you take any actions? (Read out 1-5 and mark all that apply):

- 1.  It was unnecessary to take actions and I could find other jobs    2.  I did not know how to appeal
- 3.  Afraid of retaliation from that company.    4.  Worried about future employers' view on such actions
- 5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- 88.  Don't know/Forget    99.  Refuse to answer

## **B. Family status discrimination in the quitting process in the past two years**

BQ1. Have you quit your job in the past two years (including voluntary and involuntary) ?

- 1.  Yes (Continue to BQ2)    2.  No (Skip to **Part C**)

BQ2. Have you experienced family status discrimination in the quitting process?

1.  Yes (Continue to BQ3)      2.  No (Skip to **Part C**)

BQ3. When did you quit the job due to experiencing family status discrimination?

1.  Less than 3 months ago   2.  3- less than 6 months ago   3.  6- less than 12 months ago  
4.  1-2 years ago   8.  Don't know/Forget

BQ4. What happened at that time? (Read out 1-5 and please mark all that apply.)

1.  A layoff target due to structural reorganization  
2.  Given inferior treatment and employment conditions  
3.  Was assigned to a lower position or work responsibilities was reduced.  
4.  Received dismissal notification directly.  
5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
88.  Don't know/Forget      99.  Refuse to answer

BQ5. What type of industry did the company engage?

1.  Government and public administration   2.  Manufacturing   3.  Construction   4.  Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail   5.  Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services  
6.  Accommodation and Food Services   7.  Information and Communications  
8.  Finance and Insurance   9.  Real Estate, Professional and Business Services  
10.  Social and Personal Services   11.  Agriculture, Mining, Electricity and Gas Supply  
12.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
88.  Don't know/Forget   99.  Refuse to answer

BQ6. What was the employment size of that company in Hong Kong?

1.  Less than 10 persons      2.  10-49 persons      3.  50-99 persons  
4.  100-299 persons   5.  300-499 persons   6.  500 persons or above   7.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
88.  Don't know/Forget   9.  Refuse to answer

BQ7. What position did you take at that time?

1.  Manager and administrators      2.  Professionals      3.  Associate Professionals      4.  Clerical support workers  
5.  Service and sales workers      6.  Craft and related workers  
7.  Machine operators and assemblers   8.  Elementary occupations   9.  Skilled workers in fishing and agricultural industries  
10.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)   88.  Don't know/Forget   99.  Refuse to answer

BQ8. Did you take any actions after that?

1.  Yes (Continue to BQ9.)      2.  No (Skip to BQ10.)      8.  Don't know/Forget (Skip to **Part C**)

BQ9. What actions did you take? (Read out 1-8 and mark all that apply.)

1.  Make a complaint to that company   2.  Confront with the discriminator in face   3.  Make a complaint to EOC   6.  Make a complaint to labour unions or political party members  
7.  Make a report to the court   8.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)   88.  Don't know/Forget   99.  Refuse to answer (Skip to **Part C**)

BQ10. Why didn't you take any actions? (Read out 1-5 and mark all that apply):

1.  It was unnecessary to take actions and I could find other jobs 2.  I did not know how to appeal 3.  Afraid of the retaliation from the previous employer. 4.  Worried about future employers' view on such actions 5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

### C. Family status discrimination at work in the past two years.

CQ1. Have you experienced family status discrimination at work in the past two years?

1.  Yes (Continue to CQ2) 2.  No (Skip to **Part IV**)

CQ2. When did you experience the family status discrimination at work?

1.  Less than 3 months ago 2.  3- less than 6 months ago 3.  6- less than 12 months ago  
4.  1-2 years ago 8.  Don't Know/Forget

CQ3. What happened at that time? (Read out 1-9 and please mark all that apply.)

1.  Less salary in the same position compared with others  
2.  Was rejected to attend training  
3.  Lost the opportunity to get promotion  
4.  Reduced responsibility  
5.  Lost/Reduced work benefits  
6.  Was not approved for taking leave  
7.  Experienced unfair treatment when applying for leave  
8.  Employees without family status received more favorable treatment from company  
9.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 98.  Refuse to answer

CQ4. What type of industry did the company engage?

1.  Government and public administration 2.  Manufacturing 3.  Construction 4.  Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail 5.  Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services  
6.  Accommodation and Food Services 7.  Information and Communications  
8.  Finance and Insurance 9.  Real Estate, Professional and Business Services  
10.  Social and Personal Services 11.  Agriculture, Mining, Electricity and Gas Supply  
12.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

CQ5. What was the employment size of that company in Hong Kong?

1.  Less than 10 persons 2.  10-49 persons 3.  50-99 persons 4.  100-299 persons  
5.  300-499 persons 6.  500 persons or above 7.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
88.  Don't know/Forget 9.  Refuse to answer

CQ6. What position did you take at that time?

1.  Manager and administrators 2.  Professionals 3.  Associate Professionals  
4.  Clerical support workers 5.  Service and sales workers 6.  Craft and related workers  
7.  Machine operators and assemblers 8.  Elementary occupations 9.  Skilled workers in fishing and agricultural industries  
10.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

CQ7. Did you take any actions after that?

1.  Yes (Continue to CQ8.) 2.  No (Skip to CQ9.) 8.  Don't know/Forget (Skip to **Part IV**)

CQ8. What actions did you take? (Read out 1-8 and please mark all that apply.)

1.  Make a complaint to colleagues 2.  Confront with the discriminator in face 3.  Make a complaint to the immediate supervisor 4.  Make a complaint to the management 5.  Make a complaint to the EOC 6.  Make a complaint to labour unions or political party members 7.  Make a report to the court 8.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer (Skip to **Part IV**)

CQ9. Why didn't you take any actions? (Read out 1-5 and mark all that apply):

1.  It was unnecessary to take actions and I could find other jobs 2.  I did not know how to appeal 3.  Afraid of the retaliation from the previous employer. 4.  Worried about future employers' view on such actions 5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

#### **IV. Knowledge and attitudes towards "Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO)"**

KWQ1. In your opinion, how can we reduce family status discrimination? (Read out 1-6 and please make all that apply.)

1.  More legislation of government  
2.  More promotion by the government to raise the public awareness of FSDO  
3.  More EOC activities to raise the awareness of FSDO among the public.  
4.  More public consultation to collect views on FSDO through different ways.  
5.  Relevant policies to be formulated by companies to redress family status discrimination  
6.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
9.  No need for action 88.  Don't know/No idea 99.  Refuse to answer

KWQ2. Do you support to formulate and implement any paid family leave policies in Hong Kong as in other countries?

(Read out : For example, in Australia, in order to support working parents to take full care of their newborn babies or adopted children, after passing the means test, qualified parents can receive a vacation holiday allowance that is paid by the government or employer for up to 18 weeks equal to the minimum wage.)

1.  Strongly agree (Continue to KWQ3.) 2.  Agree (Continue to KWQ3.) 3.  Disagree (Skip to KWQ6.) 4.  Strongly disagree (Skip to KWQ6.) 88.  Don't know/No idea (Continue to KWQ3.)

KWQ3. If Hong Kong implements "paid family leave" but need to reduce other holidays from the annual leave of the employed staff (total days of leave remain unchanged), will you support it?

1.  Strongly agree (Continue to KWQ4.) 2.  Agree (Continue to KWQ4.)  
3.  Disagree, just want extra leave (Skip to KWQ6.) 4.  Strongly disagree, just want extra leave (Skip to KWQ6.) 88.  Don't know/No idea (Continue to KWQ4.)

KWQ4. In terms of the aforementioned “paid family leave”, which group of people do you think should be applied? (Read out 1-3)

1.  More to female employees 2.  More to male employees 3.  Both male and female employees 4.  No idea 8.  Don't know/No idea

KWQ5. In terms of the aforementioned “paid family leave”, which type of family status do you think should be applied? [Read out 1 - 4] (Please mark all that apply)

1.  More to caregivers of young children 2.  More to caregivers of elderly parents 3.  More to caregivers of spouse and siblings 4.  To all caregivers 5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) 6.  Don't know/No idea

KWQ6. Do you agree with the following statements?

- a) It is understandable that employers do not want to employ mothers with childcare responsibilities in Hong Kong.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

- b) It is understandable that employers do not want to employ fathers with childcare responsibilities in Hong Kong.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

- c) It is understandable that employers do not want to employ women taking care of ageing parents in Hong Kong.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

- d) It is understandable that employers do not want to employ men taking care of ageing parents in Hong Kong.

1.  Strongly agree 2.  Agree 3.  Disagree 4.  Strongly disagree 8.  Don't know/No idea

## V. The information about the currently employed/or last job

WORK. Are you currently employed?: \_\_\_\_\_

1.  Yes 2.  No: (Please ask: 3  Unemployed 4  Student 5.  Housekeeping 6.  Retirement) 9.  Refuse to answer

INDUST\_CU. What type of industry does/did the company engage?

1.  Government and public administration 2.  Manufacturing 3.  Construction 4.  Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail 5.  Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services 6.  Accommodation and Food Services 7.  Information and Communications



8.  Finance and Insurance 9.  Real Estate, Professional and Business Services  
 10.  Social and Personal Services 11.  Agriculture, Mining, Electricity and Gas Supply  
 12.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

SCALE\_CU. What is/was the employment size of that company in Hong Kong (including all branch staff)?

1.  Less than 10 persons 2.  10-49 persons 3.  50-99 persons 4.  100-299 persons  
 5.  300-499 persons 6.  500 persons or above 7.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
 88.  Don't know/Forget 9.  Refuse to answer

OCCUP\_CU. What position do/did you take?

1.  Manager and administrators 2.  Professionals 3.  Associate professionals  
 4.  Clerical support workers 5.  Service and sales workers 6.  Craft and related workers  
 7.  Machine operators and assemblers 8.  Elementary occupations 9.  Skilled workers in fishing and agricultural industries  
 10.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
 88.  Don't know/Forget 99.  Refuse to answer

## VI Personal Information

AGE. What's your age?

1.  18-24 2.  25-34 3.  35-44 4.  45-54 5.  54-64 6.  65 and above 9.  Refuse to answer

MARRIED What's your marital status?

1.  Never married 2.  Married 3.  Separated/Divorced/Widowed 9.  Refuse to answer

CHILD. Do you have children?

1.  Yes (Please answer CHILD1) 2.  No (Skip to BIRTH) 9.  Refuse to answer (Skip to BIRTH)

CHILD1. Have \_\_\_\_\_ children under age of 6.

CHILD2. Have \_\_\_\_\_ children between age of 6 and 11.

CHILD3. Have \_\_\_\_\_ children between age of 12 and 17.

BIRTH. Where is your birth place?

1.  Hong Kong (Skip to EDU) 2.  Mainland China 3.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
 9.  Refuse to answer

BIRTH. How many years have you been living in Hong Kong?

1.  Less than 7 years 2.  7-less than 10 years 3.  10-less than 15 years 4.  15 years or more 9.  Refuse to answer

EDU. What is the highest educational level you have attained?

1.  Kindergarten or below 2.  Primary school 3.  Lower secondary (F.1-F.3) 4.  Upper secondary (F.4-F.7) 5.  Tertiary (non-degree) (including diploma, associate degree or IVE) 6.  Tertiary (Degree) (including bachelor, master or doctoral degree)

9.  Refuse to answer

INCOME. What is your median personal monthly income in the past two years?

1.  Less than HK\$4,999    2.  HK\$5,000 – HK\$9,999    3.  HK\$10,000 – HK\$14,999  
4.  HK\$15,000 – HK\$19,999    5.  HK\$20,000 – HK\$24,999    6.  HK\$25,000 –  
HK\$29,999    7.  HK\$30,000 – HK\$39,999    8.  HK\$40,000 – HK\$49,999  
9.  HK\$50,000–HK\$59,999    10.  HK\$60,000 or above    99.  Refuse to answer

## **VII. Participation in the in-depth interview and focus group interview**

In order to collect more suggestions on “Family Status Discrimination Ordinance” from you and understand the brought impact of the ordinance, the Department of Social Work, CUHK, would like to invite you to participate in a meeting for about 1-2 hours (time, venue and data will be notified later). We will give you allowance in order to thank you for your support.

FOLLOW 1. Would you like to participate in the in-depth interview or focus group interview related to this study?

1.  Yes    2.  No (Thanks! End of the questionnaire.)

FOLLOW 2. Do you want to be contacted for the interviews through mobile phone?

1.  Yes (Continue to 2a)    2.  No (Thanks! End of the questionnaire.)

FOLLOW 2a. Your mobile phone number? \_\_\_\_\_

FOLLOW 3. Do you want us to contact you by other means?

1.  Email \_\_\_\_\_  
2.  Tel (Office) \_\_\_\_\_    3.  WhatsApp \_\_\_\_\_  
5.  Others (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

End of the questionnaire, thanks!

## **Appendix 3 Sample Questionnaire of Explorative Study (Employer)**

### Introduction of the Survey

Please imagine that your company is recruiting a post of **Assistant Manager** in **Sales Department**.

The following six (6) CVs are from the six applicants that have been shortlisted. Please read them carefully and fill out the score sheet on Page 9. If you are unsure of the exact answer, please provide your best guess to represent your company's choice.

Thank you very much!

# Chan Yuk Shing, Marcus

Phone: 6473 8839

Email: marcus\_cys@yahoo.com.hk

Target Position: Assistant Manager

## Working Experience

---

### Hotel Stage

*Jun 2014 – Present*

*Corporate Sales Assistant Manager*

- Targeted and increased revenue by 84% in the SMERF market sector
- Initiated resulted in a 54% increase in sales. New business development increased by 26%
- Used customer relationship management tools to track hotel performance, track personal benchmark, store data and manage daily inventory of products

### Twenty One Whitfield

*Apr 2009 – Jun*

*2014 Hotel Sales Executive*

- Successfully completed company's Manager Development Program (MDP)
- Reviewed hotel performance and aim at exceeding targets of the company
- Data entry and tracking of all group bookings in the LMS and Delphi System

### Genesis Group

*Aug 2006 – Mar 2009*

*Accounts and Administration Assistant*

- Responsible for maintaining company and customer relationships
- Coordinated business contact and handled customer operation process

## Education

---

**The Hong Kong Polytechnic University**

*2003 - 2006*

*Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons) in Management*

**ELCHK Lutheran Secondary School**

*1996 - 2003*

## Language and Technical Skills

---

Computer proficiency: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook,

Languages: Cantonese (Native), English (Fluent; IELTS overall 8.0), Putonghua (Fluent)

## Special Request

---

I have a one-year-old baby at home. In case of emergency, I might need to take leave to take care of her.

# Cheng Tsz Yan, Catherine

Phone: 6883 0265

Email: tycheng\_catherine@gmail.com

Target Position: Assistant Manager

## Working Experience

---

### The Royal Pacific Hotel & Towers

Feb 2014 – Present

*Hotel Sales Assistant Manager*

- Managed 25 sales agents
- Increased territory by 29% in 2015, 15% in 2016 by developing new strategic channels
- Accomplished assistant manager with generating sales over \$ 250,000 in revenue

### Rosedale Hotel Group

Jan 2009 – Jan 2014

*Corporate Communications Executive*

- Negotiated and closed contracts with Fortune 500 companies, including P&G, ACT and University of Hong Kong
- Prepared and presented sales proposals to prospective clients, highlighting hotel service features and qualities

### Jibpool international Ltd

Aug 2006 – Jan 2009

*Sales Administrative Officer*

- Handled incoming calls and correspondence, alerting representatives to any urgent issues
- Maintained sales records and update customer records
- Responsible for processing orders by telephone, email or mail and check details of customer orders

## Education

---

### Hong Kong Baptist University

2003 - 2006

*Bachelor of Business Administration - Marketing Concentration*

### Hoi Ping Chamber of Commerce Secondary School

1996 - 2003

## Language and Technical Skills

---

Computer proficiency: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook,

Languages: Cantonese (Native), English (Fluent; IELTS overall 8.0), Putonghua (Fluent)

## Special Request

---

I have a six-month-old baby at home. I may need to take leave in case of emergency.

# Lai Chun Yin, Michael

Phone: 9527 8100

Email: michael\_lai@hotmail.com

Target Position: Assistant Manager

## **Working Experience**

---

### **Emperor Hotel (HK) Limited**

*Aug 2015 – Present*

*Assistant Sales Manager*

- Supervised 4 of 10 full-time sales staff
- Develop and monitor Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to ensure sales associates' success
- Generate an average of \$50,000/month in sales

### **Regal Airport Hotel**

*Jan 2008 – Jul 2015*

*Marketing Communication Officer*

- Managed a communication budget of over \$100,000 with 50,000 in communication contracts
- Participated in sales calls with members of sales team to acquire new business and/or close on business
- Updated action plans and financial objectives quarterly

### **Royal View Hotel**

*Aug 2005 – Jan 2008*

*Sales Executive*

- Identified business opportunities by identifying prospects and evaluating position in the industry
- Assisted in organizing and scheduling convention space for contracts ranging between \$200,000 to \$3 million
- Maintained quality service by establishing and enforcing organization standards

## **Education**

---

### **The City University of Hong Kong**

*2002 - 2005*

*Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing*

### **United Christian College (Kowloon East)**

*1995 - 2002*

## **Language and Technical Skills**

---

Computer proficiency: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook,

Languages: Cantonese (Native), English (Fluent; IELTS overall 8.0), Putonghua (Fluent)

## **Special Request**

---

My mother has serious heart diseases. In case of emergency, I may need to take leave to take care of her.

# Leung Wing Yi, Stephanie

Phone: 9317 9399

Email: stephanie.leung@gmail.com

Application for Assistant Manager

## **Working Experience**

---

### **Regal Kowloon Hotel**

*Mar 2015 – Present*

*Assistant Manager*

- Developed incentive programs that generated over \$250,000.00 in additional revenue in 2 years
- Increased customer satisfaction scores by 65% in first six months
- Contributed to initiatives to develop business, improve staff skills and guest satisfaction

### **Asia Standard Hotel Group Limited**

*May 2010 – Feb 2015*

*Hotel Sales Executive*

- Increased 60% of sales from 2010 to 2014
- Created all contracts for tentative groups. Send out the contracts and follow up with group contact

### **Horizon Hotels & Suites Limited**

*Aug 2008 – Apr 2010*

*Sales Executive*

- Sales volume of 5 million, increased 23% over 2 years
- Displayed efficiency in gathering market and customer info to enable negotiations regarding variations in prices, delivery and customer specifications

## **Education**

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### **The City University of Hong Kong**

*2005 - 2008*

*Bachelor of Business Administration in Management*

### **Buddhist Kok Kwong Secondary School**

*1998 - 2005*

## **Language and Technical Skills**

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Computer proficiency: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook,

Languages: Cantonese (Native), English (Fluent; IELTS overall 8.0), Putonghua (Fluent)

## **Special Request**

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My mother suffered from lung cancer and needs to do chemotherapy regularly. In case of some emergency, I may need to take leave to accompany her.

# Wong Hoi Ching, Ella

Phone: 6459 8843

Email: ellawonghc@gmail.com

Target Position: Assistant Manager

## Working Experience

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### W Hong Kong

Mar 2012 – Present

*Sales Supervisor*

- Achieved 35 percent growth in 3 years and was expecting the trend to continue
- Managed staff of 75 including scheduling and payroll
- Nominated for employee of the month within the first 6 months of employment

### Kerry Hotel Hong Kong

May 2008 – Feb 2012

*Marketing Communication Officer*

- Leveraged strengths in cost-effective marketing management and vendor negotiations to end each year an average of 15% under budget
- Specific emphasis on budgeting, inventory, procurement, and management of over \$2 million worth of communications equipment.

### Hong Kong Gold Coast Hotel

Aug 2006 – Apr 2008

*Sales Executive*

- Prepared reports by collecting, analyzing, and summarizing information Sold products by establishing contact and developing relationships with prospects
- Achieved 30% year-to-year increase sales volume
- Conducted daily sales calls and arrange site inspection trips to hotels by corporate clients

## Education

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### The City University of Hong Kong

2003 - 2006

*Bachelor of Business Administration in Global Business*

### TWGHs Chang Ming Thien College

1996 - 2003

## Language and Technical Skills

---

Computer proficiency: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook,

Languages: Cantonese (Native), English (Fluent; IELTS overall 8.0), Putonghua (Fluent)

## Special Request

---

I am a semi-professional basketball player. I may need to take leave to take part in matches.



# Kwok Wai Hung, Alvin

Phone: 6430 6433

Email: kwok.alvin\_kwh@gmail.com

Target Position: Assistant Manager

## Working Experience

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### Langham Hotels International Ltd

*Dec 2014 – Present*

*Administrative Assistant*

- Received Service Excellence Award - 2nd Quarter 2014
- Responsible for creating the weekly schedule for a staff consisting of over 40 employees
- Building relations with many return/high profile guests and ensuring requests quality service. Oversee F&B Department Operations and balance budget with P&L.

### Popway Hotel

*Nov 2009 – Nov 2014*

*Hotel Sales Executive*

- Implemented sales plan which improved sales from 300k to 800k a month
- Accompanied sales team on sales calls to potential clients to assist in development of the account and to access the effectiveness and sales skills of the sales person

### Eaton Residences

*Aug 2007 – Oct 2009*

*Sales Executive*

- Property's TripAdvisor rankings increased from 49 to 8 in one year

## Education

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### The City University of Hong Kong

*2004 - 2007*

*Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons) in Accounting & Finance*

### Shatin Tsung Tsin Secondary School

*1997 - 2004*

## Language and Technical Skills

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Computer proficiency: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook,

Languages: Cantonese (Native), English (Fluent; IELTS overall 8.0), Putonghua (Fluent)

## Special Request

---

I am a member of a golf club. I may need to take leave to join the club tournaments.

### SCORE DATASHEET

Please fill up the following score sheet regarding the six applicants, in the areas of (i) competence, (ii) commitment, (iii) potential of promotion and (vi) decision recommended in hiring for your company. **Please treat each applicant as an independent case in evaluation. Equivalent scores and answers can be given to different applicants.**

	<u>COMPETENCE</u> (1-10) 1 = least competent 10 = most competent	<u>COMMITMENT</u> (1-10) 1 = least committed 10 = most committed	<u>POTENTIAL OF PROMOTION in 3 YEARS</u> (1-10) 1 = least likely to be promoted in 3 years 10 = most likely to be promoted in 3 years	<u>DECISION RECOMMENDED IN HIRING</u> (Yes/No)
CV (1) Chan Yuk Shing, Marcus				
CV (2) Cheng Tsz Yan, Catherine				
CV (3) Lai Chun Yin, Michael				
CV (4) Leung Wing Yi, Stephanie				
CV (5) Wong Hoi Ching, Ella				
CV (6) Kwok Wai Hung, Alvin				

## REFERRING TO OTHER PARTIES

For this snow-ball exploratory survey, we need to invite more participants to increase the validity, reliability, and representativeness of our study. If you think some of your friends and acquaintances may be interested in participating, could you please kindly refer them to us?

If you could, please give us their contact information below. Your help is needed and appreciated. Thank you so much!

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4 Question Guide for In-depth Interviews (Employer & Employee)

### Study on “Family Status Discrimination” in the workplace in Hong Kong : Guidelines for Employers’ In-depth Interview (About 60 minutes)

Hello! Thank you for participating in this interview. (Briefly introduce this study and sign the informed consent with the interviewee.)

#### Part I : Understanding and Observation of “Family Status Discrimination” (About 20 mins)

First, let’s discuss “family status discrimination”.

1. Do you know what “family status discrimination” is? Can you share your understanding and opinions about it? (**Tips**: What is “the responsibility of caring for immediate family members”?)  
(Inform the participant about the definition of “family status discrimination” after his/her response)
2. Have you heard of the EOC? Do you know the “Family Status Discrimination Ordinance”?
3. In your opinion, is “family status discrimination” (Tips : fired by employers, assigned to certain job tasks, or lose the promotion opportunities etc. based on family status ) prevalent in the workplace of Hong Kong?
4. In which industries is it more prevalent, and why?
5. Which groups of people are more likely to be discriminated in the workplace due to taking care of immediate family members (including parents and children)?
6. Please try to list out different types of unfair treatment. (**Tips**: Do employees with caring responsibilities, such as parents or children, receive differential treatment in the workplace?)

#### Part II Company’s policies and “Family Status Discrimination” ( About 25 mins )

7. In which industry are you working (**Tips** : Industry of the current company?) What are your main job responsibilities?
8. Does your company employ any staff with family status (which means the need to take care of children, parents and other immediate family members)? Do you think family care responsibility will influence their working performance? How does it influence? (**Tips** : Is the influence short-term or long-term? What is the extent of the influence? Please give an example.)
9. Has your company dealt with any complaints related to family status discrimination?
  - (a) Staff Recruitment  
(**Tips** : In job interviews, will your company ask for personal information (eg. marital status, family status or the plan of caring for immediate family members) from job applicants and will the company tell them the policy and regulation about leave arrangement?)
  - (b) Day-to-Day work  
(Tips: What does the company think of employees who need to take leave frequently due to the need to take care of immediate family members (such as children, parents, or other family members)? What actions has the company taken? Does the company have limit for leave application?)
  - (c) Promotion

(Tips : Has the company given more promotion opportunities to employees without “family status”?)

(d) Training & Development

(**Tips:** Does the company only encourage or subsidize employees without “family status” to participate in trainings?)

(e) Resignation

(**Tips:** Have any employees in your company quit their jobs due to the need to take care of immediate family members? Have they raised the request for adjusting work arrangements to care for immediate family members at the same time but were not approved by the company?)

**[If respondents have received such complaints, then ask “What were the details of that situation?” “How did your company handle it? What was the result? Did the employee take any further actions?]**

10. Does your company have policies or measures to avoid or reduce “family status discrimination” (discrimination due to the responsibility of taking care of immediate family members) currently? Please list out the concrete measures in the following aspects and illustrate whether these policies or measures have been implemented.

(a) Staff Recruitment

(b) Day-to-Day work

(c) Promotion

(d) Training & Development

(e) Resignation

11. Are those policies and measures fair? What’s the reaction of employees? Are employees without family status (have no responsibility to take care of immediate family members) happy with those policies?

12. Has your company encountered any difficulties in the implementation of these policies and measures? Do you think those policies and measures are sufficient to support the need of employees with family status (responsibility to take care of immediate family members)?

13. Do these policies bring any benefits to your company? (**Tips** : From the company’s point of view, do these policies increase the operation cost?)

14. Does your company plan to implement more policies or measures to reduce family status discrimination (discrimination due to responsibility of taking care of immediate family members) in the future? What kind of difficulties you may face in the process of formulation and implementation of the policies? What’s your opinion?

15. [If the respondents is responsible for staff supervision, ask] As a manager, do you face more difficulties or pressure in the implementation of these policies or measures? Do you personally support the policies or measures for reducing family status discrimination?

### **Part III Support from the government and company (About 15 mins)**

16. From the employer’s point of view, do you think the government has done enough? Does the government have enough resources to support companies to recognize and understand the family status discrimination and to reduce the discrimination due to responsibilities of caring immediate family members?

17. Do you have any suggestions for the industries or the government in this aspect?

18. From the employer’s point of view, do you think the EOC has done enough for reducing family status discrimination (discrimination due to taking care of immediate family members), such as promotion or law enforcement?

19. Other countries have implemented different policies targeting family status discrimination and supporting employees with family status (employees with the need to take care of immediate family members), for example, parental leave in Australia and compensatory leave in Canada (make a brief introduction). Do you think Hong Kong can implement similar policies or measures? If those policies are implemented in Hong Kong, what might be the biggest obstacle? Will the government, employers and employees support them?
20. Do you have any other experiences related to “family status discrimination” to share?

Thank you for your participation and a HK\$50 supermarket voucher is a gift for you. Thanks again for your participation and valuable views!

### **Study on “Family Status Discrimination” in Workplace of Hong Kong: Outline of In-depth Interview of Employees (about 60 minutes)**

Hello! Thank you for accepting our interview. (Briefly introduce the research and then give a consent form to the interviewee to sign.)

#### **Part 1: Knowledge and Experiences of “Family Status Discrimination” (about 30 minutes)**

At first, let’s talk about what is “family status discrimination”.

1. Do you know about “family status discrimination”? What is your understanding? What is your opinion? Could you share with me? (**Hint:** What is “the responsibility of taking care of immediate family members”?)  
(After the interviewee answers, tell him or her about the definition of “family status discrimination”)
2. Have you heard of EOC? Do you know the “Family Status Discrimination Ordinance”?
3. Do you think the situations that employees get discriminated against (**Hint:** fired by the employer, assigned to certain job tasks, no chances of promotion and so on) due to their responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members are common in Hong Kong workplace?
4. In which industry is the discrimination more prevalent? Why?
5. Which groups of people do you think are more likely to be discriminated in workplace due to their responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members including parents, children and so on?
6. Please try to list different forms of unfair treatment. (**Hint:** Whether the employees who need to take care of children, parents and other immediate family members are treated differently in workplace?)
7. What is your current (or previous) work? (e.g., industry, position, the number of working years and so on).
8. Do you have “family status” (namely taking care of your children, parents and other immediate family members)? Do you have others to help or share the responsibility (**Hint:** e.g., getting help from foreign domestic workers and family members)?
9. Do you think these responsibilities influence your work performance? [**Follow-up questions:** What is the influence? Please give examples.] [**If the interviewee answers that he or she does not have the responsibility of “family status”, then ask:** if you have “family status”, do you think these responsibilities of “family status” will influence your work performance?]

10. Have you, your relatives or friends suffered from “family status discrimination” in workplace?

(a) Job Search

**(Hint:** In interviews, have employers asked about interviewees’ marriage status, family situations or arrangement of taking care of their immediate family members and told them the policy and regulations about leave arrangement?)

(b) Day-to-Day Work

**(Hint:** Have employers given unfair treatment to employees who need to take care of their immediate family members (e.g., children, parents, or other family members)? For example, do they hold certain opinions of the employees who always take leave? How do these employers deal with the employees? Have the employers limited leave taking of these staff or carried out other actions?)

(c) Promotion

**(Hint:** Have employers provided more opportunities for employees who do not have “family status” (namely the employees who have no responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members)?)

(d) Training & Development

**(Hint:** Have employers only encouraged or subsidized employees who have no “family status” to participate in training for development (namely encourage or subsidize the employees who have no responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members to participate in training for development)?)

(e) Resignation

**(Hint:** Have you, your relatives or friends resigned because of taking care of your/their immediate family members? Before resignation, did the person who resigned ask for adjusting his or her work arrangement to handle the responsibility of taking care of his or her immediate family members? How did the employer deal with this? Did the employer approve this? )

**[If there were participants answering that this kind of case happened, then ask further: How was the case? How did the company deal with it? What was the result? Has the employee taken any actions?]**

## **Part 2: Companies’ Policies and “Family Status Discrimination” (about 20 minutes)**

11. Does your current company have policies and measures to prevent or to lessen “family status discrimination” (discrimination based on the responsibility of taking care of immediate family members)? Please list specific measures in following aspects and talk about whether they have been implemented.

(a) Job Search

(b) Day-to-Day Work

(c) Promotion

(d) Training & Development

(e) Resignation

12. From the perspective of employees, are these policies and measures fair? What are their reactions? Is it welcome by the employees without the responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members (namely the employees having no “family status”)?

13. From the perspective of employees, do you think these policies and measures are enough to support employees with “family status” (namely the employees who need to take responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members)? How have these policies and measures affected you?

14. What policies and measures do you think your company can formulate to reduce “family status discrimination”? What might be the difficulties of formulating and implementing such policies? What is your opinion?
15. Do your supervisors and other frontline managers support the policies and measures to reduce “family status discrimination” (namely the occurrence of discrimination due to the responsibility of taking care of immediate family members)? Are they willing to implement these policies and measures?

**Part 3: Support from the government and companies (about 10 minutes)**

16. From the perspective of employees, do you think the government has done enough? Has the government provided enough resources for employees to help them know about “family status discrimination” and to support employees with “family status” (namely the employees who need to take responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members) (e.g., increase the duration of paternity leave)?
17. In this aspect, do you have any suggestions for employers, labour unions, or the government?
18. Do you think EOC has done enough on “family status discrimination” (discrimination due to the responsibility of taking care of immediate family members) (e.g., promotion and enforcement of the Ordinance and so on)?
19. Other countries have implemented different policies and provided support for employees who have “family status” (namely the employees who need to take responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members) to deal with “family status discrimination”: For example, Australia’s parental leave, Canada’s compensatory leave and so on (need to briefly introduce them first). Do you think Hong Kong can implement similar policies or measures? If these policies and measures need to be implemented in Hong Kong, in your view, what is the biggest obstacle? Will the government, employers and employees support them?
20. Do you have any other experience relevant to the topic “family status discrimination” to share?

Thanks for your participation! Now to thank for your participation and sharing, we give you a HK\$50 supermarket voucher.



## Appendix 5 Question Guide for Focus Group Discussions (Employer & Employee)

### Study on “Family Status Discrimination” in the workplace in Hong Kong : Guidelines for Employers’ Focus Group Interview (About 90 minutes)

Hello everyone, thank you very much for participating in the focus group discussion today on behalf of your company and particular industries. This study is designed and proposed by Prof. Dai Haijing, and aims to understand the family status discrimination in the working organizations in Hong Kong. I’m Dr. Cathy Leung, MC of today’s focus group discussion. Could you please briefly introduce yourself? (e.g. Industry, position and years of work)

#### Part I : Understanding and Awareness of “Family Status Discrimination” (Make sure that everyone joins the discussion.)(About 35 mins)

First, let’s discuss “family status discrimination” together.

1. Do you know what “family status discrimination” is? Can you share your understanding and opinions about it? (**Tips:** What is “family status discrimination”?)  
(Inform the participants about the definition of “family status discrimination” after the discussion to see if more explanations will be needed)
2. Have you heard of the EOC? Do you know the “Family Status Discrimination Ordinance”?
3. In your opinion, is “family status discrimination” prevalent in the workplace in Hong Kong?
4. In which industries is it more prevalent, and why?
5. Which groups of people are more likely to be discriminated in the workplace due to taking care of immediate family members? (**Tips:** Employees who have to take care of “immediate family members” (such as parents and children) )
6. Please try to list out different types of unfair treatment. (**Tips:** Do employees with caring responsibilities for immediate family members, such as parents or children, receive unequal treatment in the workplace?)
7. Has your company received any complaints about “family status discrimination”?
  - (a) Staff Recruitment  
(**Tips :** Will your company ask for personal information (e.g. marital status, family status or the plan of caring for immediate family members) from job applicant?)
  - (b) Day-to-Day work  
(**Tips:** What does the company think of employees who need to take leave frequently due to the need to take care of immediate family members (such as children, parents, or other family members)? What actions has the company taken? Does the company have limit for leave application?)
  - (c) Promotion  
(**Tips :** Has the company given more promotion opportunities to employees without “family status”?)
  - (d) Training & Development  
(**Tips :** Does the company only encourage or subsidize employees without “family status” to participate in trainings?)
  - (e) Resignation  
(**Tips:** Have any employees in your company quit their jobs due to the need to take care of immediate family members? Have they raised the request for adjustment of work arrangements to care for immediate family members at the same time? Has it been approved or not?)

**[If respondents have received such complaints, need to ask “how does your company handle it? What was the result?]**

**Part II Company’s policies and “Family Status Discrimination” (Make sure that everyone joins the discussion.)(About 25 mins)**

8. Does your company have policies or regulations to avoid or reduce family status discrimination (discrimination due to the responsibility of taking care of immediate family members) currently? Please list out the policies in the following aspects and illustrate whether these policies have been implemented.

- (a) Staff Recruitment
- (b) Day-to-Day work
- (c) Promotion
- (d) Training & Development
- (e) Resignation

9. From the company’s point of view, are those policies fair? What’s the reaction of employees? Are employees without family status (have no responsibility to take care of immediate family members) pleased with those policies?

10. Has your company encountered any difficulties in the implementation of these policies and regulations? Do you think those policies are enough to support the need of employees with family status (responsibility to take care of immediate family members)?

11. Do these policies bring any benefits to your company? (**Tips** : From the company’s point of view, do these policies increase the operation cost?)

12. Does your company plan to implement more policies or regulations to reduce family status discrimination (discrimination due to responsibility of taking care of immediate family members) in the future? What kind of difficulties you may face in the process of formulation and implementation of the policies? What’s your opinion?

13. [If any of the respondents is responsible for management, ask : ] According to your observation and experience, will the frontline managers face more difficulties or pressure in the implementation of these policies or regulations? Have you heard about such situations? Do these frontline managers support the policies or regulations for reducing family status discrimination?

**Part III Support from the government and company (Reserved 30 mins)**

14. Do you think the government has done enough? Does the government have enough resources to support companies to recognize and understand the family status discrimination? And to reduce the discrimination due to responsibilities of caring immediate family members?

15. Do you have any suggestions for the industries or the government in this aspect?

16. Do you think the EOC has done enough for the family status discrimination (discrimination due to taking care of immediate family members), such as promotion or law enforcement?

17. Other countries have implemented different policies targeting family status discrimination and supporting employees with family status (employees with the need to take care of immediate family members), for example, parental leave in Australia and compensatory leave in Canada (make a brief introduction). Do you think Hong Kong can implement similar policies or regulations? If those policies are implemented in Hong Kong, what might be the biggest obstacle? Will the government, employers and employees support it?

18. Do you have any other experiences related to “family status discrimination” to share with us?

Thank you for your participation! Now you will be given HK\$200 as transportation allowance for today’s interview. Thanks again for your participation!

**Study on “Family Status Discrimination” in Workplace of Hong Kong:  
Outline of Focus Group of Employees (about 90 minutes)**

Hello! Thank you for your participate in this focus group to share your knowledge, experiences and feelings about “family status discrimination”. Ideas and goals of this project were designed and implemented by Prof. Dai Haijing. Thanks for her participation, opinions and guidance for this time. This research project was commissioned by Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), aiming at knowing about situations of family status discrimination in different working organizations in Hong Kong. I, Dr. Leung Miu Yee, will conduct this focus group. You could briefly introduce yourself first (e.g., industry, position, the number of working years and so on)

**Part 1: Knowledge and Experiences of “Family Status Discrimination” (make sure everyone participates) (about 35 minutes)**

At first, let’s discuss your views on “family status discrimination”:

1. Do you know about “family status discrimination”? What is your understanding? What is your opinion? Could you share with us? (**Hint:** What is “the responsibility of taking care of immediate family members”?)

(After every participant expresses, tell them the definition of “family status discrimination” and find out whether they have questions for further explanation.)

2. Have you heard of EOC? Do you know about “Family Status Discrimination Ordinance”?
3. Do you think the situations that employees get discriminated against due to their responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members are prevalent in the workplace in Hong Kong?
4. In which industry is the discrimination more prevalent? Why?
5. Which groups of people do you think get discrimination in workplace due to their responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members including parents, children and so on? (**Hint:** The employees who need to take care of their “immediate family members” including parents, children and so on)
6. Please try to list different forms of unfair treatment. (**Hint:** Whether the employees who need to take care of children, parents and other immediate family members are treated differently in workplace?)

Do you have “family status” (namely taking care of your children, parents and other immediate family members)? Do you have others to help or share the responsibility (Hint: e.g., getting help from foreign domestic workers and family members)?

8. Have you, your relatives or friends suffered from “family status discrimination” in workplace?
- (a) Job Search

**(Hint:** In interviews, have employers asked about interviewees' marriage status, family situations or arrangement of taking care of their immediate family members and told them the policy and regulations about leave arrangement?)

(b) Day-to-Day Work

**(Hint:** Have employers given unfair treatment to employees who need to take care of their immediate family members (e.g., children, parents, or other family members)? For example, do they hold certain opinions of the employees who always take leave? How do these employers deal with the employees? Have the employers limited the leave taking of their employees or carried out other actions?)

(c) Promotion

**(Hint:** Have employers provided more opportunities for employees who do not have "family status" (namely the employees who have no responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members)?)

(d) Training & Development

**(Hint:** Have employers only encouraged or subsidized employees who have no "family status" to participate in training for development (namely encourage or subsidize the employees who have no responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members to participate in training for development)?)

(e) Resignation

**(Hint:** Have you, your relatives or friends resigned because of taking care of your/their immediate family members? Before resignation, did the person who resigned ask for adjusting his or her work arrangement to handle the responsibility of taking care of his or her immediate family members? How did the employer deal with this? Did he or she approve this? )

**[If there were participants answering that this kind of case happened, then ask further: How was the case? How did the company deal with it? What was its result? Has the employee taken any actions?]**

**Part 2: Companies' Policies and "Family Status Discrimination" (make sure everyone participates) (about 25 minutes)**

9. Does your current company have policies and measures to prevent or to lessen "family status discrimination" (discrimination due to the responsibility of taking care of immediate family members)? Please list specific measures in following aspects and talk about whether they have been implemented.
  - (a) Job Search
  - (b) Day-to-Day Work
  - (c) Promotion
  - (d) Training & Development
  - (e) Resignation
10. From the perspective of employees, are these policies and measures fair? Is it welcome by the employees without the responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members (namely the employees having no "family status")?
11. From the perspective of employees, do you think these policies and measures are sufficient to support employees with "family status" (namely the employees who need to take responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members)? How have these policies and measures affected you?
12. What policies and measures do you think your company can formulate to reduce "family status discrimination"? What might be the potential difficulties in formulating and implementing such policies? What is your opinion?

13. Do your supervisors and other frontline managers support the policies and measures to reduce “family status discrimination” (namely the occurrence of discrimination due to the responsibility of taking care of immediate family members)? Are they willing to implement these policies and measures?

**Part 3: Support from the government and companies (reserve 30 minutes to discuss this part)**

14. From the perspective of employees, do you think the government has done enough? Has the government provided enough resources for employees to help them know about “family status discrimination” and to support employees with “family status” (namely the employees who need to take responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members) (e.g., increase the duration of paternity leave)?
15. In this aspect, do you have any suggestions for employers, labour unions, or the government?
16. Do you think the EOC has done enough on “family status discrimination” (discrimination due to the responsibility of taking care of immediate family members) (e.g., promotion and enforcement of the Ordinance and so on)?
17. Other countries have implemented different policies and provided support for employees who have “family status” (namely the employees who need to take responsibility of taking care of their immediate family members) to deal with “family status discrimination”: For example, Australia’s parental leave, Canada’s compensatory leave and so on (need to briefly introduce them first). Do you think Hong Kong can implement similar policies or measures? If these policies and measures need to be implemented in Hong Kong, in your view, what is the biggest obstacle? Will the government, employers and employees support them?
18. Do you have any other experience relevant to the topic “family status discrimination” to share?

Thanks for your participation! Now please stay for a while. We will give each of you HK\$200 for subsidizing your traffic expenses.

## Appendix 6 Consent Form for Explorative Study

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you very much for your participation in our study which explores the workplace in Hong Kong. Commissioned by the Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC) of Hong Kong, this research is carried out by the Center for Chinese Family Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Your participation is highly appreciated and will contribute to our understanding of the Hong Kong society.

Our interviewer will conduct a survey with you, which will last for about 30 minutes. Please read the set of questionnaire and complete the page of score sheet. As a token of gratitude, we would like you to accept a supermarket coupon of 50 Hong Kong Dollars from us.

Should you have any questions about the survey or the research project, please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Dai Haijing through e-mail ([hjdai@swk.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:hjdai@swk.cuhk.edu.hk)) or by phone (3943 1830), or Dr. Cathy Leung through e-mail ([myleung@swk.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:myleung@swk.cuhk.edu.hk)) or by phone (3943 3450).

Again, thank you very much for your participation!  
The CUHK Research Team

### DECLARATION

- I agree to participate in this exploratory survey.
- I acknowledge to have received the coupon valued at 50 Hong Kong Dollars.

Signature

Date

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## Appendix 7 Consent Form for Focus Group Discussion and In-depth Interviews

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

Thank you very much for your participation in our study which explores the workplace in Hong Kong. Commissioned by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) of Hong Kong, this research is carried out by the Center for Chinese Family Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Your participation is highly appreciated and will contribute to our understanding of the Hong Kong society.

We will conduct a Focus Group interview with you, which will last for about 90 minutes. As a token of gratitude, we would like you to accept a supermarket coupon of HK\$200 from us.

We would like to assure you that all data collected will remain anonymous and be treated as confidential. Aggregate data will be presented for research purposes only. No commercial use of the data will be allowed.

Should you have any questions about the interview or the research project, please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Dai Haijing through e-mail ([hjdai@swk.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:hjdai@swk.cuhk.edu.hk)) or by phone (3943 1830), or Dr. Cathy Leung through e-mail ([myleung@swk.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:myleung@swk.cuhk.edu.hk)) or by phone (3943 3450).

Again, thank you very much for your participation!  
The CUHK Research Team

### DECLARATION

- I agree to participate in this focus group interview. The interview will be recorded.
- I acknowledge to have received the coupon valued at HK\$200.

**Signature**

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

Thank you very much for your participation in our study which explores the workplace in Hong Kong. Commissioned by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) of Hong Kong, this research is carried out by the Center for Chinese Family Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Your participation is highly appreciated and will contribute to our understanding of the Hong Kong society.

We will conduct a Focus Group interview with you, which will last for about 60 minutes. As a token of gratitude, we would like you to accept a supermarket coupon of HK\$50 from us.

We would like to assure you that all data collected will remain anonymous and be treated as confidential. Aggregate data will be presented for research purposes only. No commercial use of the data will be allowed.

Should you have any questions about the interview or the research project, please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Dai Haijing through e-mail ([hjdai@swk.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:hjdai@swk.cuhk.edu.hk)) or by phone (3943 1830), or Dr. Cathy Leung through e-mail ([myleung@swk.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:myleung@swk.cuhk.edu.hk)) or by phone (3943 3450).

Again, thank you very much for your participation!  
The CUHK Research Team

#### **DECLARATION**

- I agree to participate in this focus group interview. The interview will be recorded.
- I acknowledge to have received the coupon valued at HK\$50.

**Signature**

**Date**

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## Appendix 8 Employer Participants' Socio-demographic Information (In-depth Interviews & Focus Group Discussion)

Demographic and Personal Information of Employer Respondents (In-depth interviews)							
No.	Gender	Age	Educational Level	Industry	Position/Duties	Employment Size	Years of Establishment
1	Female	30-40	Degree or above	Public Relations & Marketing	Senior Manager/Administration	<50 people	>10 years
2	Male	30-40	Master's Degree	Trading	Treasury Manager/Financing	<50 people	>10 years
3	Female	40-50	Degree or above	Education	Director, Course development & promotion/Enrollment	<50 people	>10 years
4	Male	40-50	Master's Degree	Retail & Wholesale	CEO/Business development	<50 people	>10 years
5	Male	40-50	Degree or above	Finance & Insurance	CEO	<50 people	>10 years
6	Male	30-40	Degree or above	Retail	Manager	>50 people	>10 years
7	Male	40-50	Degree or above	Food & Beverage	Manager	>50 people	>10 years
8	Female	40-50	Degree or above	Retail	Owner	<50 people	>10 years
9	Male	40-50	Degree or above	Property Developer	Manager	>50 people	>10 years
10	Male	30-40	Degree or above	Food & Beverage/Restaurant	Manager	>50 people	>10 years
11	Male	50-60	Degree or above	Marketing Service	Owner	<50 people	<10 years
12	Female	30-40	Degree or above	Retail	Manager	>50 people	>10 years
13	Female	40-50	High School	Retail	Senior Manager	>50 people	>10 years
14	Male	50-60	Master's Degree	Entertainment/Sports Industry	HR Manager	>50 people	>30 years
15	Female	35-40	Degree or above	Retail/Fashion Industry	Area Manager	≈50 people	>15 years
16	Male	40-50	Degree or above	Real Estate	Manager	>50 people	>10 years

<b>17</b>	Male	40-45	Doctoral Degree	Higher Education	Program Director /Teaching & Administration	>50 people	>10 years
<b>18</b>	Male	35-40	Degree or above	Telecommunication/Sales	Assistant Manager	>50 people	>10 years
<b>19</b>	Male	40-45	Degree or above	Retail/Wholesale	Owner	<50 people	>10 years
<b>20</b>	Male	25-30	Degree or above	Retail/Sports Industry	Manager/Supervisor	<50 people	>10 years

**Demographic and Personal Information of Employer Respondents (Focus Group Discussion)**

<b>1</b>	Female	40-50	Degree or above	IT	Manager	>50 people	>10 years
<b>2</b>	Female	40-50	Master's Degree	Education	Program Manager	>50 people	>10 years
<b>3</b>	Male	40-50	Degree or above	IT	Owner/Chief Consultant	<50 people	<10 years
<b>4</b>	Male	50-60	High School	Food & Beverage	Owner	<50 people	<10 years
<b>5</b>	Male	20-30	Master's Degree	Banking	Manager	>50 people	>10 years
<b>6</b>	Male	40-50	Degree or above	Import/Export, Retail/Wholesale	Manager	>50 people	<10 years
<b>7</b>	Female	40-50	Degree or above	Social & Personal Services	Manager	>50 people	Missing
<b>8</b>	Male	30-40	Missing	Construction	Senior Officer	>50 people	<10 years
<b>9</b>	Male	50-60	Missing	Import/Export, Retail/Wholesale	Owner	<50 people	Missing

## Appendix 9 Employee Participants' Socio-demographic Information (In-depth Interviews & Focus Group Discussion)

<b>Demographic and Personal Information of Employee Respondents (In-depth Interviews)</b>						
<b>No.</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Position/Duties</b>	<b>Family Status</b>
1	Male	20-30	Master's Degree	Higher education institution	Research staff	Newborn baby
2	Female	50-60	Degree or above	Property agents	Officer	Mother with diabetes
3	Female	50-60	Middle school	Retail store	Sales assistant	Adult Children
4	Male	50-60	Master's Degree	Education institution	Lecturer	1) Teenage Daughter 2) Father-in-law with dementia
5	Female	20-30	Degree or above	Engineering company	Company secretary	Mother
6	Female	20-30	High school	Ice-cream/Food & Beverage	Shop supervisor	1-year-old daughter
7	Female	40-50	Middle school	Restaurant/Food & Beverage	Cashier	80-year-old mother
8	Female	30-40	Degree or above	Public Administration	Training branch	Ageing parents
9	Female	40-50	Form 3	Public Administration	Clerk	1) Mother with Hemiplegia before (now passed away) 2) Younger sister's child
10	Female	40-50	Degree or above	Higher education institution	Course coordinator	Teenage children
11	Male	20-30	Degree or above	Earning management audit firm	Auditor	Ageing Parents
12	Female	30-35	Degree or above	Audit Firm	Audit manager	Mother
13	Male	35-40	Master's Degree	Listed company	Financial controller	Young child
14	Female	40-45	Master's Degree	Ferry company	Manager	8-year-old child

15	Male	30-35	Middle school	Bank	IT worker	2 young children
16	Male	30-35	Degree or above	Investment Bank	Listing sponsor	Parents
17	Female	35-40	Master's Degree	Bank	Banking manager	6-year-old child
18	Male	35-40	Master's Degree	Insurance	Financial planner of insurance	2 young children
19	Male	30-40	High school	Retail	Sales	Ageing parents
20	Male	25-30	Diploma	Retail of clothing	Adviser	Ageing Parents
21	Female	30-40	Degree or above	Sales of clothing	Sales adviser	Ageing Parents
<b>Demographic and Personal Information of Employee Respondents (Focus Group Discussion)</b>						
1	Male	40-50	PhD	Education institution	Program manager	2 children.
2	Male	40-50	Master's Degree	Social services	Program officer	2 children
3	Male	50-60	Degree or above	Social services	Senior staff	Adult son
4	Female	20-30	Degree or above	Accounting	Accounting staff	No
5	Female	30-40	Missing	Government	Administrative staff	1 Child
6	Female	20-30	Degree or above	Retail	Operating retail trainee	Disabled sibling