

## Annex

### **Research on Family-friendly Employment Policies and Practices in Hong Kong**

#### Key findings from the Employer Survey

1. Survey forms were sent electronically to 6,600 companies of different sizes and sectors. A total of 142 questionnaires were collected, of which 137 were valid samples. These companies represented 12 different industries and altogether employed about 160,000 employees, about 4.4% of the current working population in Hong Kong.
2. Among the valid samples, 10.2% were public utility companies or non-profit making organizations, 79.6% were private companies, whereas the remaining were unknown. In terms of company size, 38.0% of them were small and medium enterprises (SMEs) hiring 50 workers or less (or 100 workers for manufacturing companies). Another 58.4% were large enterprises hiring more than 50 workers (or 100 for manufacturers) and 3.6% unclassified.
3. The survey findings revealed that the awareness of FEPPs among the employers was low. In response to a question on whether the company was aware of FEPPs being implemented in Hong Kong, only 37.2% indicated in the positive, whereas 61.3% answered “no” and 1.5% did not response. A further analysis revealed that large enterprises were more aware of FEPPs than SMEs.
4. Besides, the low return rate to the survey exercise, i.e. 137 respondents out of 6,600 questionnaires sent, might also suggest a lack of interest in or awareness of FEPPs in Hong Kong.
5. The prevalence of FEPP in Hong Kong was also low - only 10.2% of the respondents had in place formal policy or guidance for FEPPs.
6. Among the companies that had adopted FEPPs, the most frequently implemented ones included compassionate leave (56.9%), flexible shift working (27.0%), and employee assistance programme such as counseling services (24.8%). Many of them also adopted five-day working week (43.8%) and perceived company-organized voluntary work (27.7%) as FEPPs.
7. The top 5 benefits after adopting FEPPs as quoted by the respondents were:
  - gained reputation of being an employer of choice;

- improved morale;
  - increased ability to attract high-performing and experienced employees;
  - improved working relationships among colleagues; and
  - reduced turnover.
8. The top 5 considerations for not adopting more FEPPs as quoted by the respondents were:
- Difficulties in manpower deployment;
  - Restricted by job nature;
  - Administrative/managerial difficulties;
  - Few market leaders adopting FEPPs; and
  - Difficulties in withdrawing any implemented polices.

### Key Findings from the Employee Survey

9. A total of 735 employees from 17 companies in 17 industries were invited to complete a self-administered questionnaire. In response, 680 questionnaires were collected, among which 653 were valid ones. The general demographic profile of the respondents is as follows:

#### By Gender:

Female	386	59.1%
Male	242	37.1%
Unknown	25	3.8%

#### By Marital Status:

Not married	234	35.8%
Married/Cohabited	389	59.6%
Divorced/Widowed	13	2.0%
Unknown	17	2.6%

#### By Position Level:

Director and managerial level	146	22.4%
Frontline supervisor	105	16.1%
Professional and Administration staff	147	22.5%
Service and clerical	190	29.1%
Others / unknown	65	10.0%

10. Among the respondents, 29.7% considered that the employment polices and practices of their companies as “family-friendly”, whereas 51.8% did not think so and the remaining had no comment. About 76.3% respondents supported the

implementation of more FEPPs, whereas 0.8% did not support and the remaining had no comment.

11. The top 5 benefits of FEPPs as reported by respondents who had utilized them were:
  - increased commitment to the company;
  - improved morale;
  - increased happiness;
  - improved working relationships among colleagues; and
  - reduced burn-out.
  
12. The top 5 FEPPs that were most wanted by the respondents were (there was no significant difference statistically between the two genders, except for the item on paternity leave):
  - flexible work (flexi-time);
  - compressed workweek;
  - home-based work;
  - family care leave; and
  - paternity leave.
  
13. The top 5 factors hindering employees from utilizing FEPPs as reported by the respondents were:
  - Difficulties in manpower deployment and job allocation;
  - Unaware of the benefits of utilizing FEPPs;
  - Restricted by job nature;
  - Administrative / managerial difficulties; and
  - Fear of being seen by boss as less committed.
  
14. Differences in work and family commitments between female and male respondents:

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Working hours each week *	45.0 hrs	50.7 hrs
Hours to take care of children *	9.2 hrs	6.7 hrs
Hours to do housework *	7.4 hrs	6.4 hrs
Hours to take care of other family members	1.7 hrs	2.5 hrs

*\* the differences were statistically significant for the first three items.*

15. Perceived work pressure by the respondents:

	<u>Strongly agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Slightly Agree</u>
– When asked if they usually felt that they were under a lot of pressure	8.4%	25.4%	40.1%
– When asked if they felt that the level of pressure at work was very high	7.0%	27.0%	38.1%

16. Further analysis to compare the two groups as referred to in item 10 above (i.e. employees who considered the employment policies and practices of their companies as “family-friendly” versus those who did not think so) revealed that the former group had reported:

- Less perceived work stress;
- Higher job satisfaction;
- Less physical/psychological symptoms;
- Less work / family imbalance;
- More work/life balance;
- More family satisfaction;
- Less inclination to resign; and
- Less absenteeism.

*\* the difference was statistically significant for all of the above items.*

17. In particular, the results revealed that a **culture and climate** to promote FEPPs would lead to more job satisfaction, more work/life balance, less inclination to resign and less work/family imbalance reported by employees. It was also found that **supervisor support** to family demands could lead to similar results, and in addition, it could result in less perceived work stress, less physical/psychological symptoms and more family satisfaction.