

A Baseline Survey On Employment Situation Of Persons With A Disability In Hong Kong 1997 (Highlights)

Introduction

In order to fully appreciate the employment situation of persons with a disability in Hong Kong and to raise public awareness and concern about this situation, the Equal Opportunities Commission in 1997 commissioned the Hong Kong Council of Social Service to conduct a baseline survey on this subject in Hong Kong. The research consisted of an in-depth study of the employment situation of five disability groups, namely persons with a mental illness, persons with a mental handicap, persons with a physical handicap, persons with a visual impairment and persons with a hearing impairment.

The survey was the first of a series of studies to be conducted by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) to examine issues relating to equal opportunities for and discrimination against persons with a disability. The findings of this survey will provide a basis for recommending areas of improvement as well as for future comparisons.

Sampling and Limitations

A total number of 13,195 individual samples from four main sampling sources, the Central Registry for Rehabilitation (CRR), the Hospital Authority, the Labour Department and 29 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), were selected by simple random sampling procedures. Users of sheltered workshops and day activity centres and persons with a profound or severe mental handicap were excluded. In the end, a total number of 1,645 respondents from the five disability groups aged between 15 and 59 were interviewed.

The survey suffered from a number of limitations: absence of a central, reliable and updated database to form a sampling frame, the protracted period of data collection, the very low response rate (about 7.7%) and difficulties experienced by some respondents with certain disabilities in responding properly to some of the more complex questions.

Key Findings

This survey studied the vocational training that the five disability groups had received and the various characteristics of those who were employed and those who were not employed. Some of the key findings are presented in this booklet.

In the charts presented below the following abbreviations are used:

HI = hearing impairment

VI = visual impairment

MI = mental illness

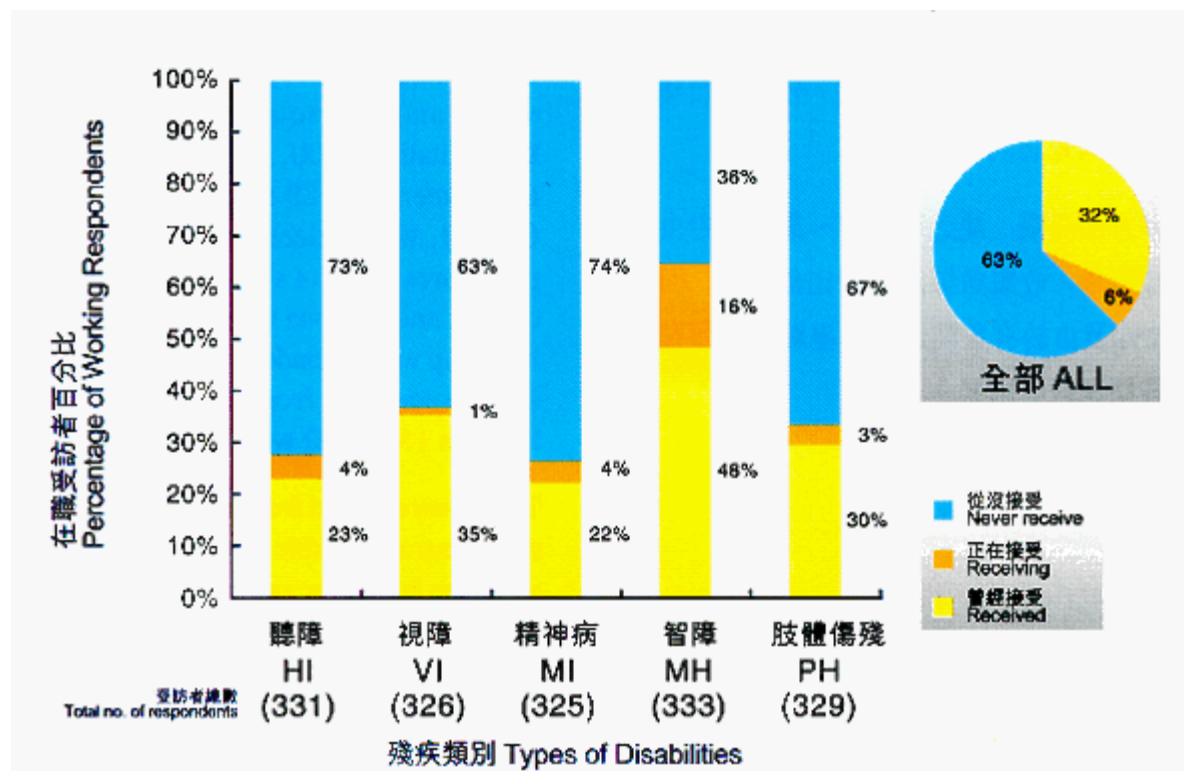
MH = mental handicap

PH = physical handicap

Vocational Training

Less than 40% of the respondents had attended or were attending vocational training. Many people in the hearing impairment, mental illness, visual impairment and physical handicap groups had never received any vocational training in the past (Fig. 1).

(Figure 1) Whether received vocational training by disability groups

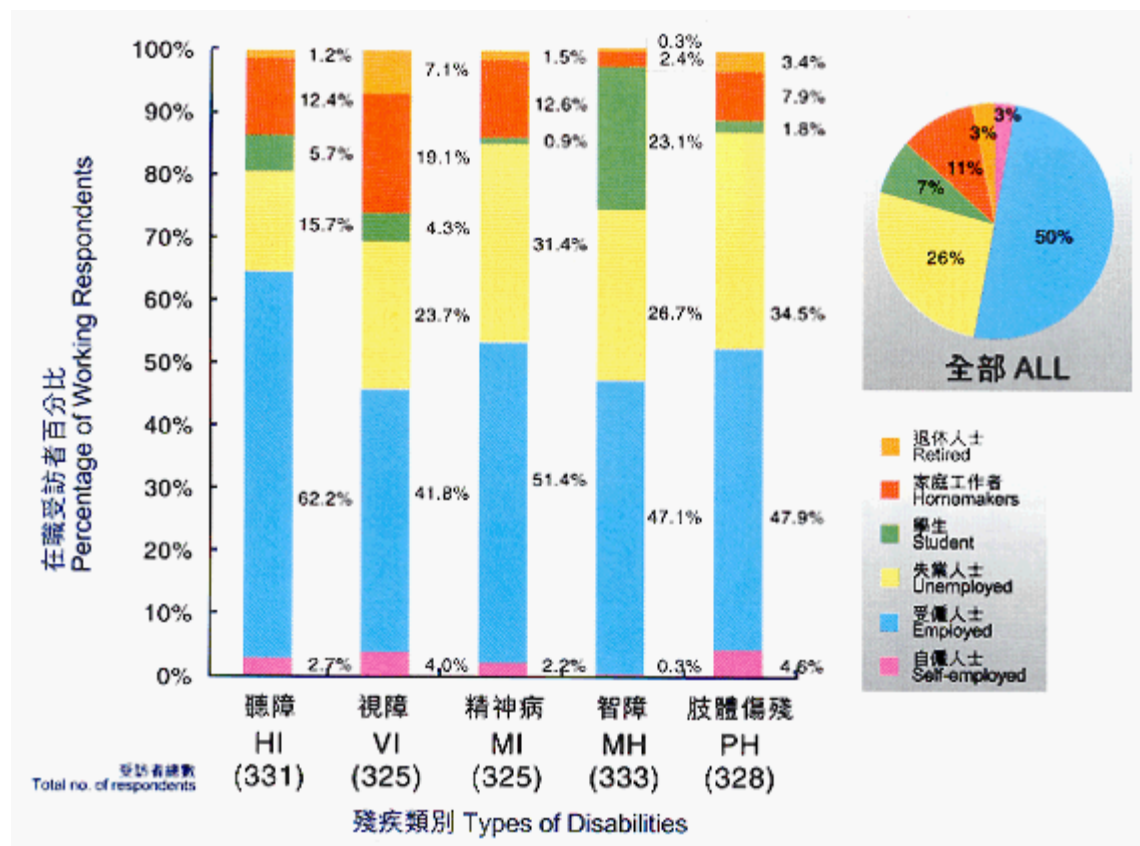


Characteristics of the Employed

Employment status of the respondents

Only half of the respondents (53%) were employed or self-employed at the time of the survey, whereas about one quarter (26%) were unemployed (the expression "working respondents" used in this summary hereafter indicates both those respondents who were employed and those who were self-employed). The employment rate for the respondents in the hearing impairment group (64.9%) was highest among the five disability groups (Fig. 2).

(Figure 2) Employment status by disability groups

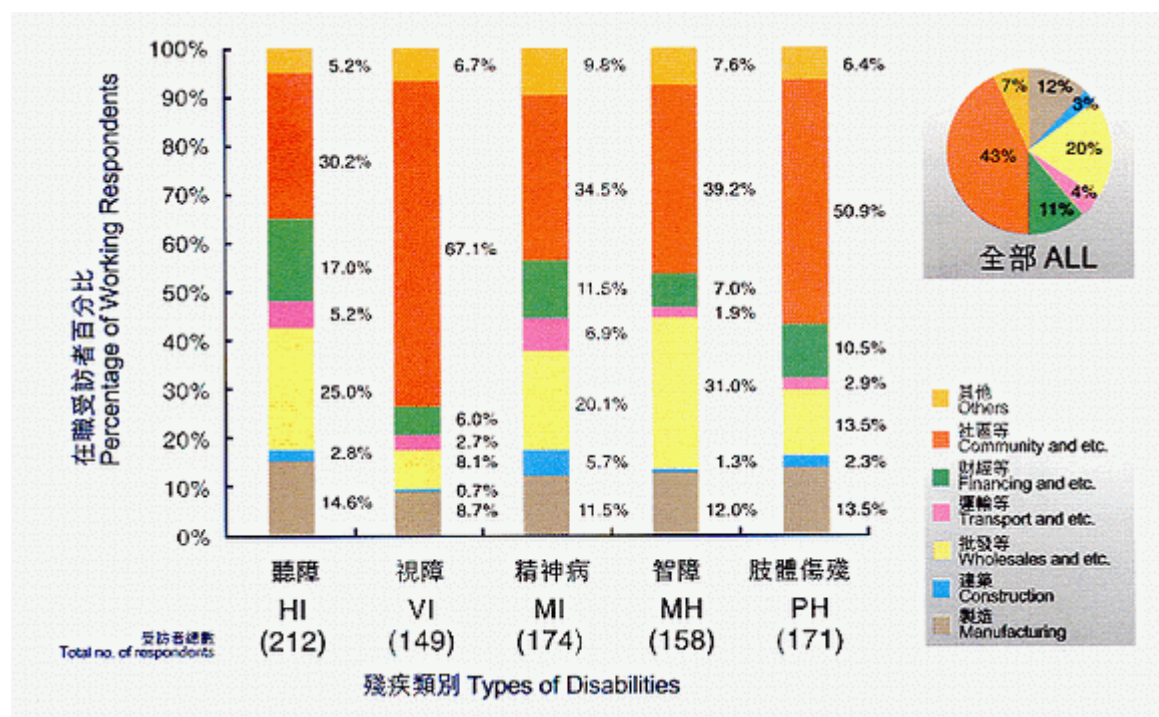


Types of industry

Most working respondents were employed in the industry group of "community, social and personal services" (43%). In the visual impairment and physical

handicap groups, over half of the respondents were working in this industry group. The second most important industry group was "wholesales, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels", which employed 20% of the working respondents (Fig. 3).

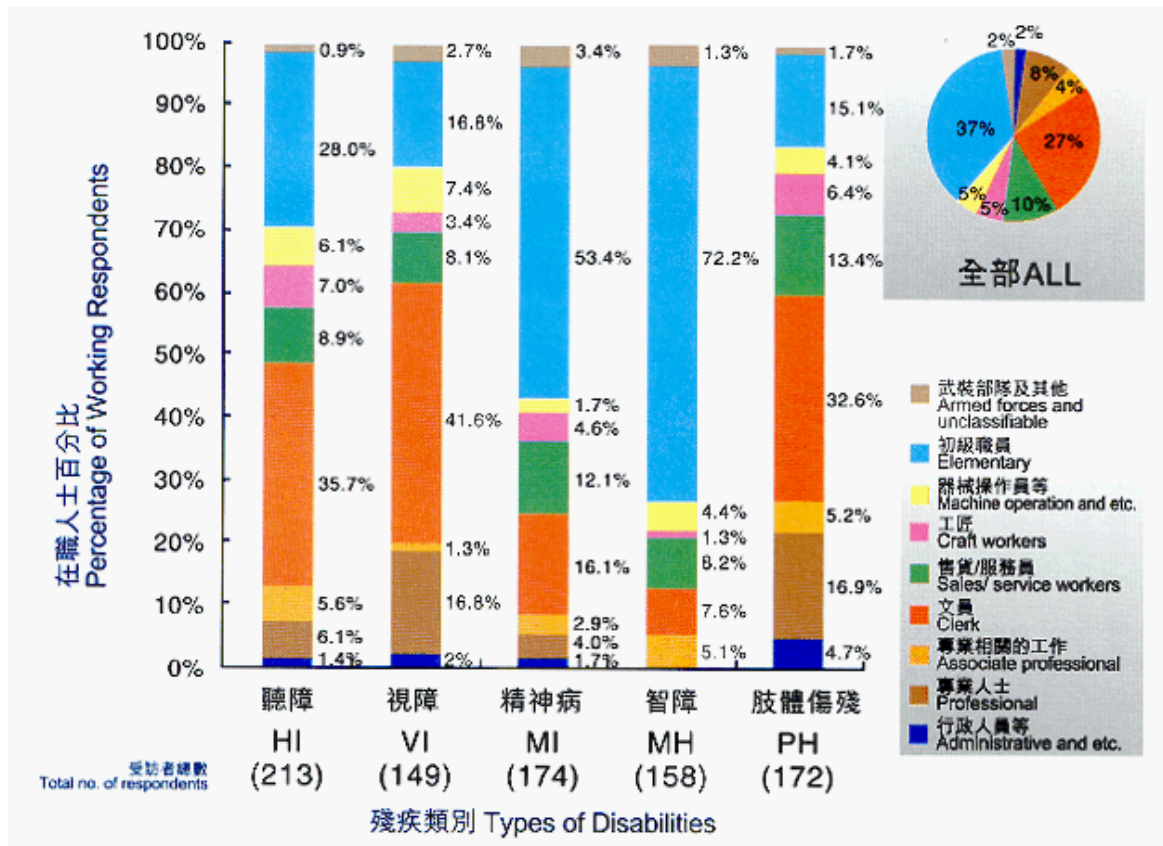
(Figure 3) Industry by disability groups



Occupational status

More than one third (37%) of the working respondents were working in elementary occupations and over a quarter of them (27%) were working as clerks. This was particularly true of persons with a mental handicap, 72% of whom were working in elementary occupations. Only a small proportions (14%) of the working respondents were working at the managerial or professional levels, with the physical handicap group (27%) and the visual impairment group (20%) faring better than the other groups (Fig. 4).

(Figure 4) Occupation by disability groups

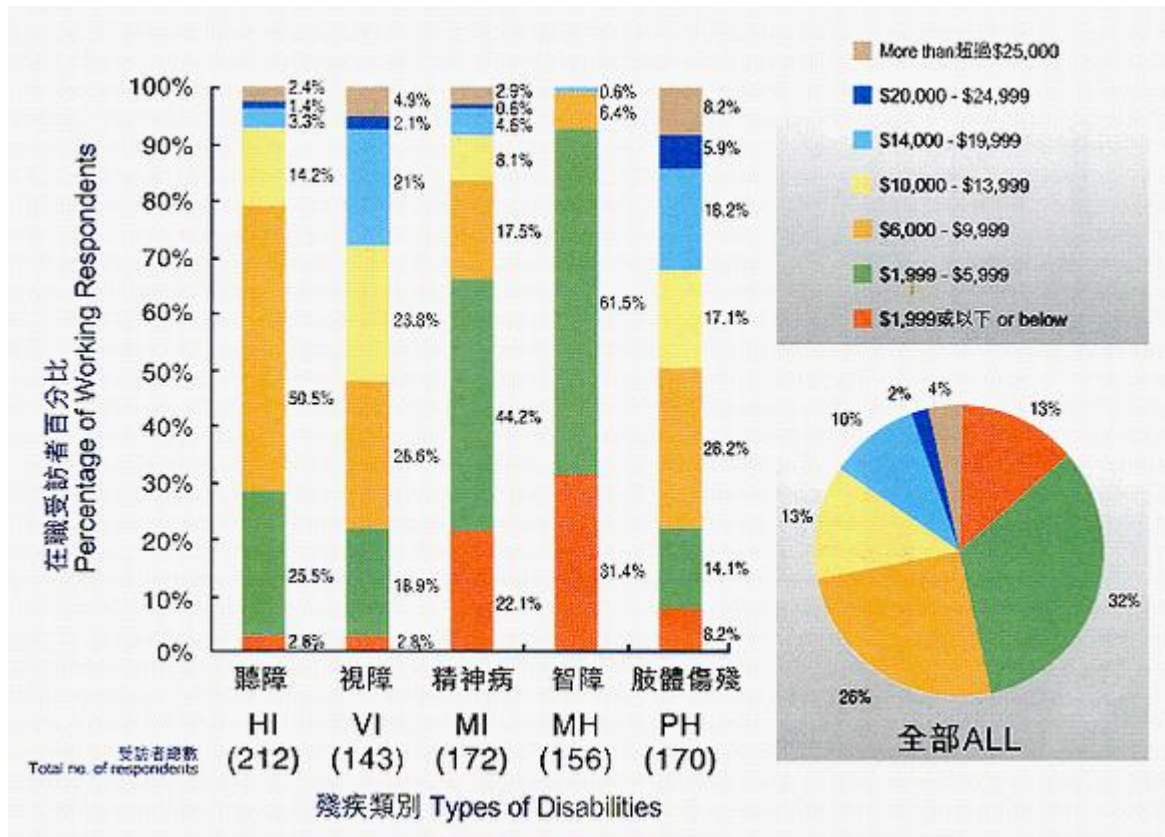


Monthly Employment Earnings

Over 40% of the working respondents fell into below \$6,000 per month income group. Approximately 27% of them were in the \$6,000 to \$9,999 per month group. As many as 92.9% of working respondents with a mental handicap were earning less than \$6,000 per month.

There was found to be a significant correlation between monthly employment earnings and both the educational attainment and occupations of the employed respondents. Compared to the other disability groups, the mental illness and mental handicap groups were skewed more towards elementary occupations, the majority of which being associated with monthly employment earnings below the \$6,000 level. However, the higher the educational attainment of the respondents, the more they earned from their employment (Fig. 5)

(Figure 5) Income by disability groups



Job Satisfaction

In general, more than 60% of working respondents in all five disability groups were either satisfied or very satisfied with their job in term of job nature, salary, relationship with colleagues and bosses, job benefits, work environment and working hours. On the other hand, on average, less than 30% of them were either satisfied or very satisfied with their job prospects or on-the-job training (Table 1).

Table 1

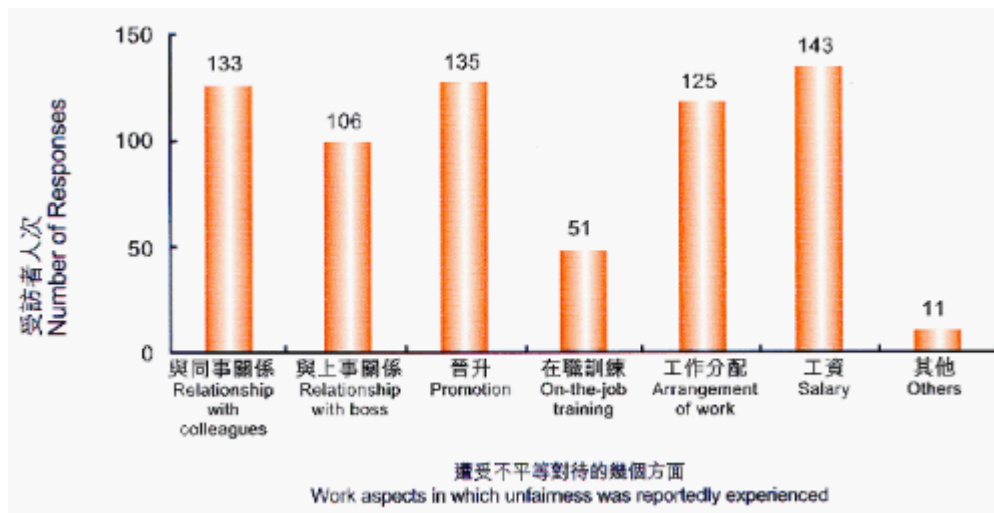
Percentage of working respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied by work aspects and disabilities.

	HI	VI	MI	MH	PH	Overall Average
Job nature	82%	84%	85%	86%	85%	84%
Salary	65%	79%	66%	71%	72%	71%
Relationship with colleagues	82%	87%	89%	71%	88%	83%
Relationship with boss	77%	77%	70%	82%	84%	78%
Job benefits	67%	78%	58%	61%	69%	67%
Job prospects	29%	34%	25%	27%	33%	29%
Work environment	74%	79%	80%	77%	80%	78%
Working hours	82%	91%	78%	80%	86%	83%
On-the-job training	26%	22%	23%	32%	21%	25%

Reported unfairness experienced due to disability and reasons for changing jobs

The most frequently reported work aspects in which working respondents experienced unfair treatment, in descending order of frequency, were "salary", "promotion", "relationship with colleagues", "arrangement of work" and "relationship with boss" (Fig. 6).

(Figure 6) Reports of unfairness experienced due to disability



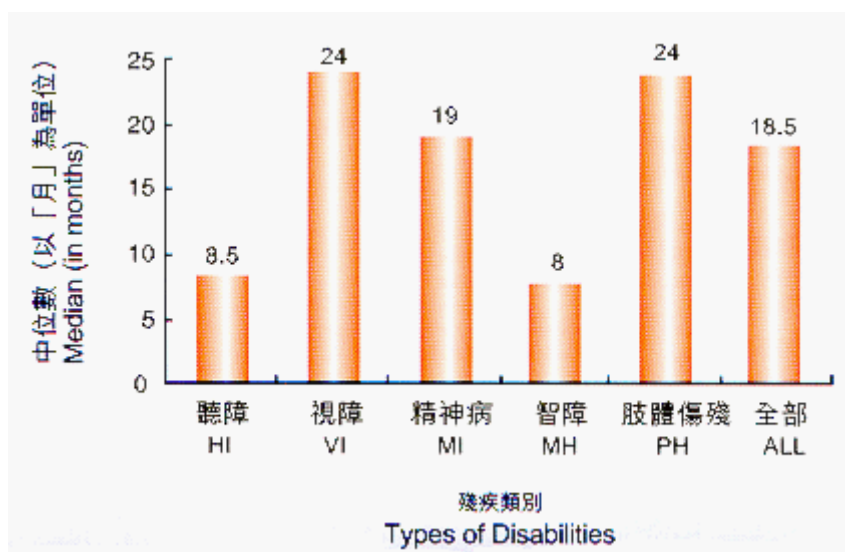
Of those respondents who had changed their jobs in the past, the reason most frequently cited by respondents with a hearing impairment, visual impairment, or physical handicap, was lower salary. The reasons most frequently cited by working respondents with a mental illness or mental handicap were health problems and being fired respectively.

Main Characteristics of Unemployed Job Seekers

Duration of unemployment

The median duration of unemployment of the unemployed job seekers was 18.5 months. For those with visual impairment and physical handicap, the median duration was 24 months (Fig. 7).

(Figure 7) Median duration of unemployment for the unemployed job seekers by disability groups



Difficulties in job seeking

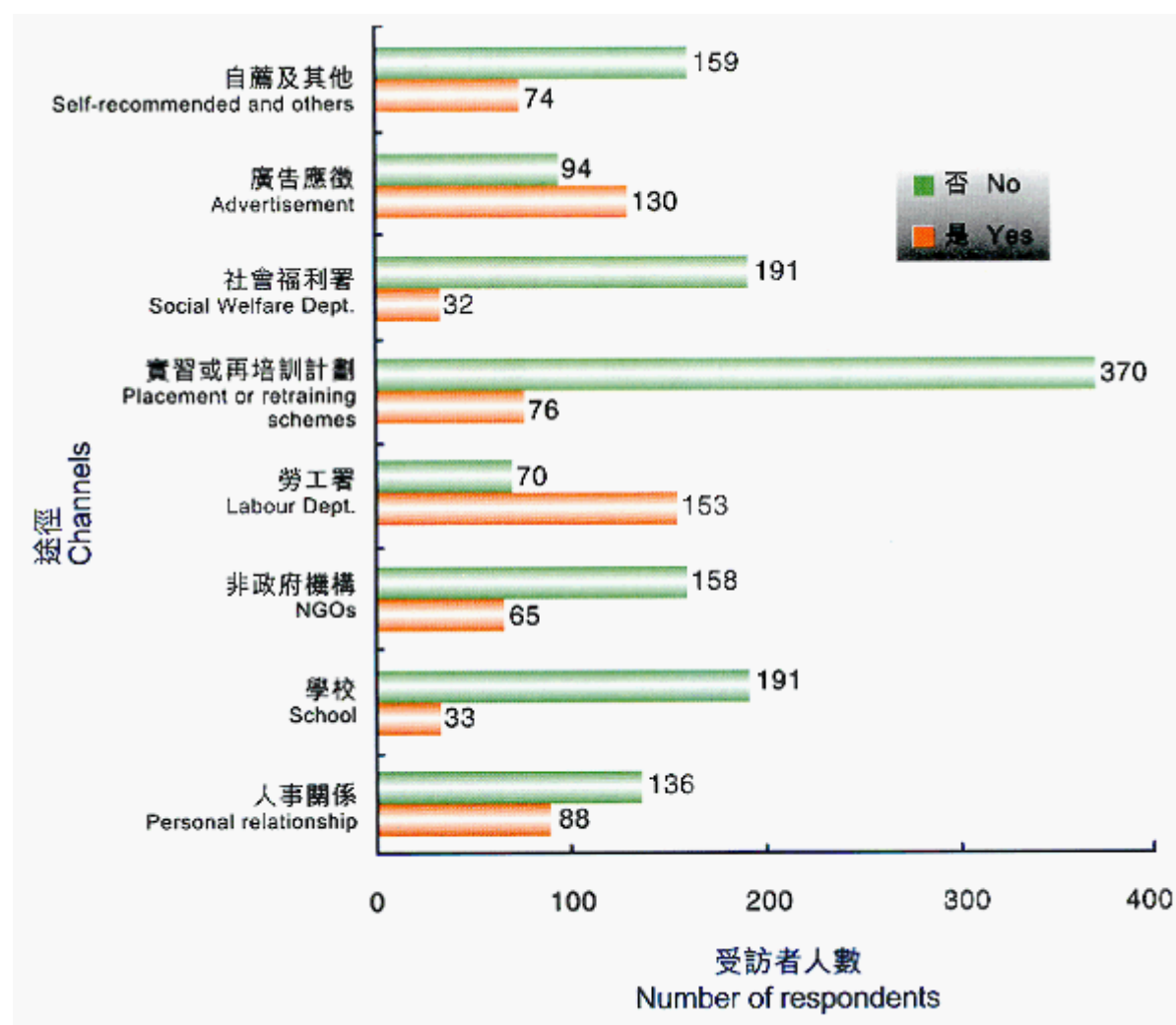
The two most-cited difficulties experienced in the job seeking process by the disability groups were: No suitable jobs and employer discrimination.

Disability group	Most cited difficulty	Cited by
HI	Employer discrimination	56.7%
VI	No suitable jobs	42.5%
MI	No suitable jobs	35.7%
MH	No suitable jobs	41.0%
PH	Employer discrimination	45.8%

Job-seeking channels used by unemployed respondents

Unemployed job-seeking respondents used different channels in the search for jobs. Over 68% had registered at the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department, 58% had responded to advertisements and around one third of them had used their personal contacts (Fig. 8).

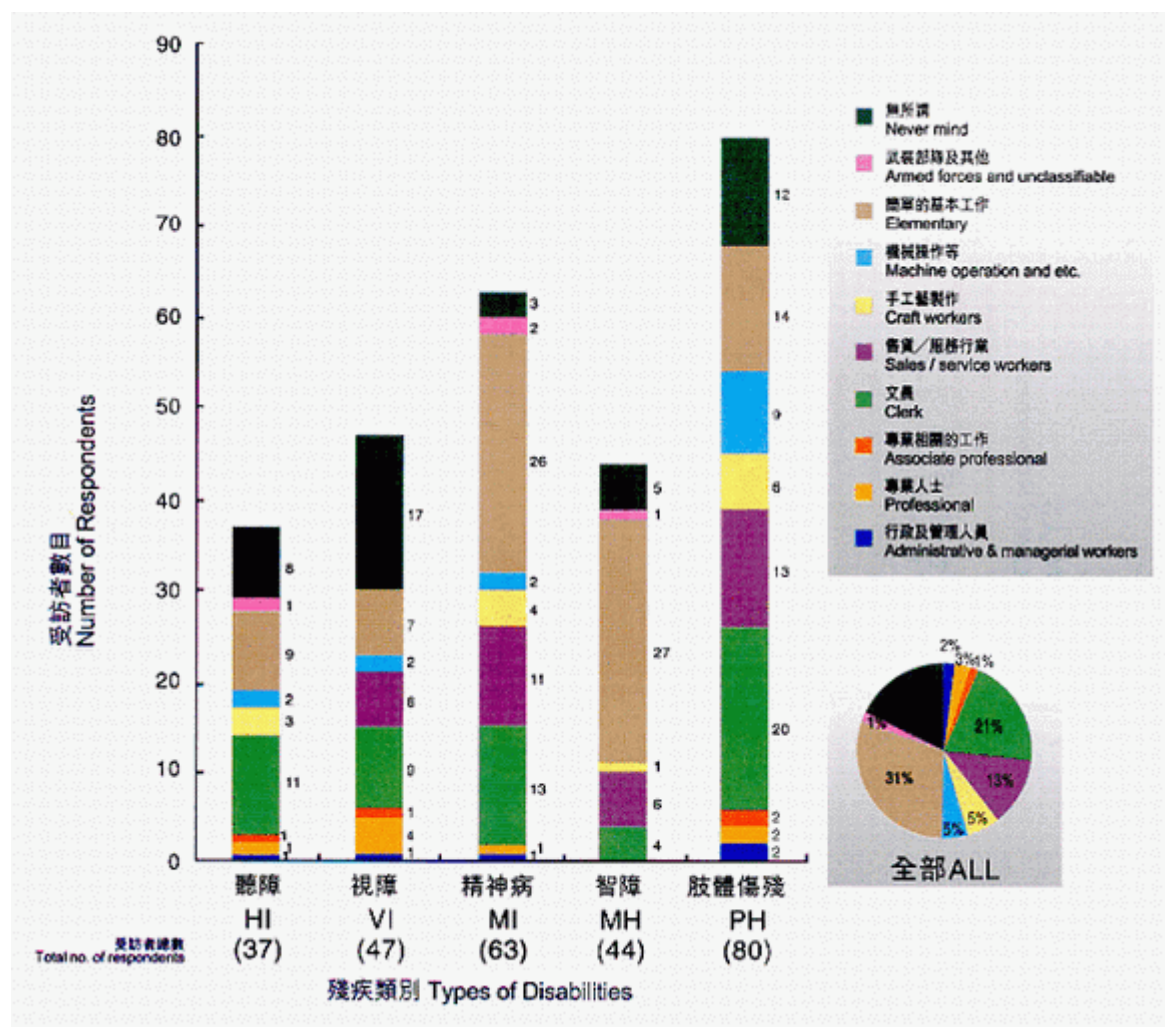
(Figure 8) Channels of seeking jobs



Types of job preferred by unemployed respondents

Elementary occupations and clerical jobs were two major types of job preferred by the unemployed job seekers in the study. Clerk and elementary occupations were more preferred by those with a hearing impairment, visual impairment, mental illness, and physical handicap. Respondents with a mental handicap preferred elementary occupations only (Fig. 9).

(Figure 9) Job preferred by unemployed job-seekers by disability groups



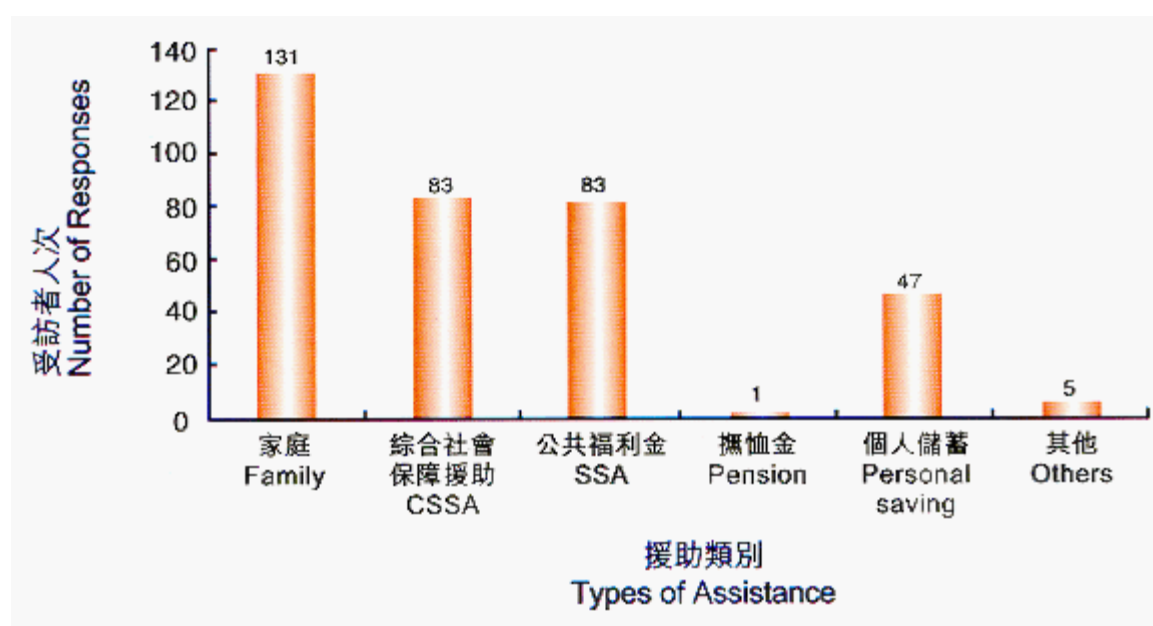
Financial support for job seekers

The main financial supports for job-seeking respondents came from family, Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), Social Security Allowance (SSA), and personal savings. Those receiving CSSA included 52.5 % of those

with a visual impairment, 45.6 % of those with a mental illness and 44.1% of those with a physical handicap. In addition, 60% of those with a hearing impairment, 47.5% of those with a mental handicap and 37.3% of those with a physical handicap were receiving SSA.

Over half of the job-seeking respondents indicated that these types of financial support were not sufficient to enable them to maintain their standard of living. In particular, over 70% of those with a physical handicap said that their financial support was insufficient (Fig. 10).

(Figure 10) Financial support of job seekers

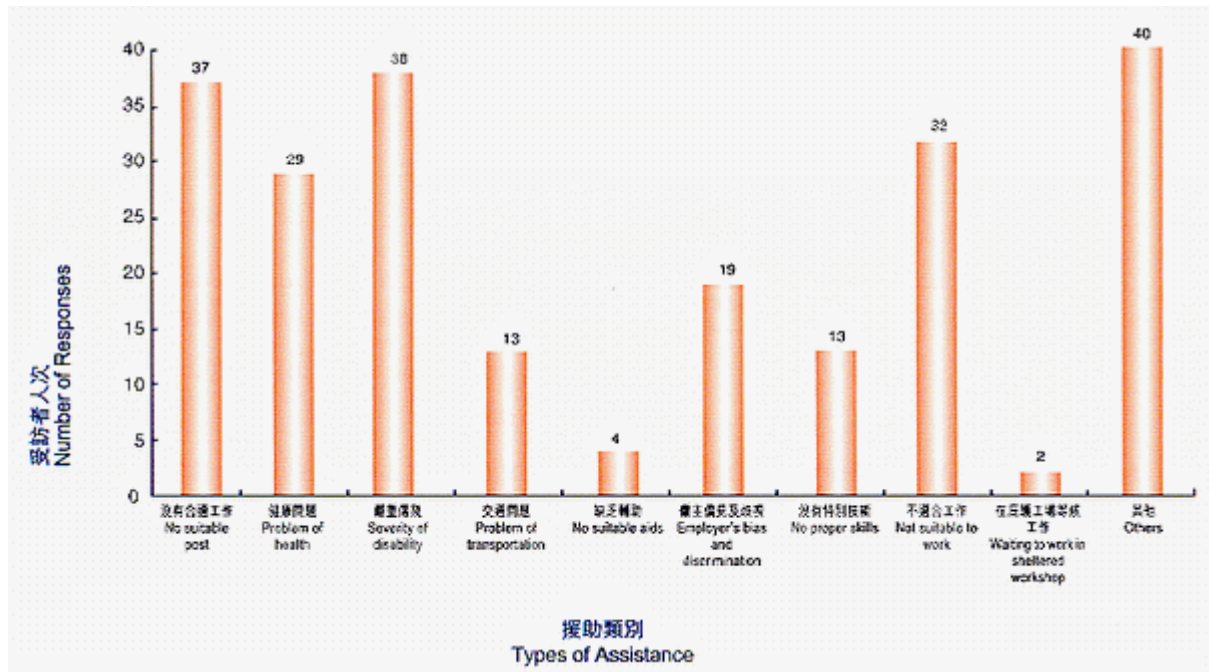


Main Characteristics of Unemployed Non-job Seekers

Reasons for not seeking job

The reasons for not seeking work most frequently cited by unemployed respondents who were not seeking work were "severity of disability", "no suitable post" and "not suitable for work" (Fig. 11).

(Figure 11) Reasons for not seeking job



Financial support for the non-job seekers

The main sources of financial support for those unemployed non-job seekers were family, CSSA and SSA. About 85% of unemployed non-job seekers with a hearing impairment or a mental handicap said that family was their source of financial support. Over 40% of the unemployed non-job seekers claimed that their sources of financial support were insufficient (Fig. 12).

(Figure 12) Financial support for non-job seekers

