

Young Hongkongers less happy and hopeful than Generation X

Post-1980s Hongkongers are less hopeful and unhappier than Generation Xs and baby boomers, a survey says.

From September to November, the Hong Kong Christian Service surveyed 402 employed people aged between 20 to 63 on the impact of the financial crisis on their work and mental health.

Generation Xs are aged 29 to 44 and baby boomers 45 to 63. Over 70 per cent of all respondents have post-secondary qualifications.

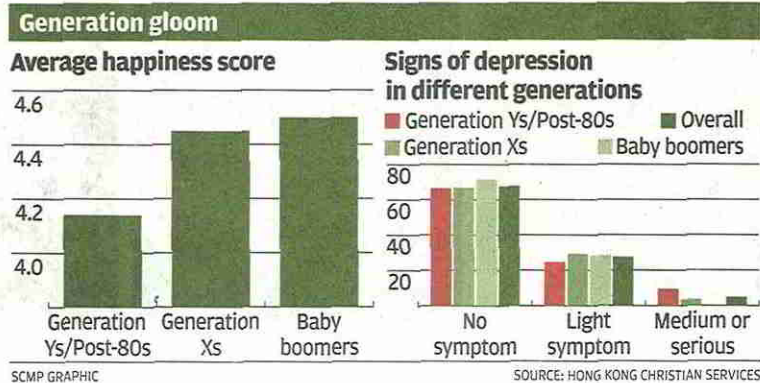
Using a psychometric test on subjective happiness, the NGO found that the post-80s scored 4.14 out of seven on happiness. A score from 4.5 to 5.5 is considered normal of the general population.

The baby boomers' happiness rating was 4.5 and Generation Xs' 4.45.

Natalie Cheung Yue, senior manager of the organisation's Employee Development Service, said: "The post-80s' happiness score is low because the environment is bad for them when they enter the job market. They have high qualifications but their salary is low, with long working hours."

Cheung said that the financial crisis also led to baby boomers delaying their retirement, making it more difficult for the post-80s to be promoted.

Almost half of all respondents



reported negative, personal change after the financial crisis, such as longer working hours. Around a quarter of all respondents reported negative, structural changes in their corporate setting, such as redundancy.

Also, researchers found that hopefulness increased with age, with the post-80s being the least hopeful.

Ten per cent of post-80s reported medium or serious depressive symptoms, compared to 3.6 per cent of Generation Xs and none among baby boomers.

Lai Kam-tong, the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management's past president, said

greater communication with people born in the 1980s was key to better understanding their needs and concerns.

The so-called post-80s were the product of baby boomers, who toiled to provide a better life for their children. But few of these twentysomethings knew what it meant to earn a living, he said. Lai said different people and generations had different views of jobs and job prospects. More work was needed to address these issues as there were longer-term implications for the post-80s generation, he said.

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