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Press Release (3 Pages)

**Lingnan University “Hong Kong Happiness Index 2010” Survey
Happiness Indices hover at high levels of 70+**

Lingnan University’s Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) today announced survey findings of the “Hong Kong Happiness Index 2010”. According to the survey, Hong Kong people in 2010 continue to enjoy high levels of happiness similar to what they enjoyed in the previous year, with the overall happiness index at 70.1, not much different from the 2009 level of 70.6 and well above the trough of 67.2 seen in 2007.

The survey was conducted by CPPS from Oct 18 to Oct 22 2010 via randomized phone calls. The research team successfully interviewed 834 Hong Kong residents aged 21 or above. On a scale of 0 to 100, an index above 50 suggests that people are happy and an index below 50 indicates unhappiness.

Director of CPPS Prof Ho Lok-sang noted a significant increase in happiness among income earners within the lowest income group, and a considerably smaller increase among the highest income group, while happiness for other income groups declined slightly.

In 2010 many more people reported an improvement in financial conditions in the household than those who reported a decline. Those who reported bigger improvement also reported higher happiness indices. Financial stress continued to be an important factor for those who reported low happiness indices. As before, the unemployed reported significantly lower happiness indices.

Those who cited investing and making money as their most favourite activity reported much higher happiness this year than in the last year, at a respectable 74.3, up from 62.7 in the previous year. This is likely related to the recent good performance in financial markets. However, such happiness is “fleeting”, in contrast to the much more stable and still high happiness indices (~72-73) for those who cited spending time with their family or volunteering as their top favourite activities.

Since 2008, the survey has included questions related to LIFE scores, i.e., Love, Insight, Fortitude, and Engagement. For three consecutive years and for all age categories, females outperformed males in these scores and provide one reason why females consistently report higher happiness.

In 2010 we found that the scores for Love, Insight, and Fortitude all increased noticeably, but the score for Engagement declined slightly — all because the 21-29 age group showed a notably lower Engagement Index. We also found that both Love and Insight increase with age. In particular the 21-29 age group underperformed other age groups in Love, Insight, and Fortitude, and outperformed the elderly group only in Engagement. In addition, we found a significant positive relation between volunteering and happiness.

We tested the happiness formula for the various age groups, and found that it predicted the happiness indices for all age groups really well, thus validating it.

As in the previous two years, we did a Three Happiness regression, and confirmed the importance of retrospective happiness particularly for the elderly, suggesting that being satisfied or dissatisfied with what one has done has an important effect on happiness over the long term.

Since 2005, Lingnan University's annual Happiness Index Survey has aimed to study the impacts of economic, political and social factors on Hong Kong people's happiness and to provide a measurable indicator of happiness. It is hoped that the study will inform policy makers and the public, leading to better policies and ultimately a happier society.

The survey was supported by a special grant from the University. The Centre is glad and grateful to announce that the Shih Wing Ching Foundation will sponsor this annual survey starting from 2011.

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