

*macau daily*

# TIMES

Thursday

**20**

January 2011

20<sup>th</sup> day of the year in the  
Gregorian calendar

17\* day of the 12<sup>th</sup> lunar month

Administrator Kowie Geldenhuys • Director Rogerio Beltrao Coelho • Number 1216



10°C/14°C

70/95 %

# Locals' happiness above average': study

Page 3



Thursday 20 January 2011

# Locals' happiness 'above average'

by Vitor Quintã

**M**acau residents are on average happier than their Hong Kong counterparts, according to a study released yesterday. Locals' happiness level is "relatively high" and "above average" worldwide, said Ho Lok-sang, director of Hong Kong Lingnan University's Centre for Public Policy Studies.

The 1,010 respondents of the Happiness Index Study on Macau Residents posted an average score of 7.03 points out of 10. "It's very hard to compare it with results from other places because there are a lot of different methods," the Association of Economic Sciences chairman Joey Lao told Macau Daily Times.

However, it's not impossible, Ho added, as "most

studies share the same questions, which tend to be very standard," he stressed.

For instance, if MSAR were included in the World Database of Happiness 2000-2010, it would grab 32nd spot among 146 countries, higher than several developed countries (Germany, Italy and France) and some neighbours, namely mainland China (58th), Taiwan (61st) and Japan (62nd).

In comparison with a similar study conducted in Hong Kong, Macau residents are slightly happier (0.02 points more). However, this average hides a surprising gap between men and women. While Hong Kong men (6.92 points) are happier than Macau men (6.76 points), local women are happier (7.19 points) than their HKSAR counterparts (7.15 points).

## Family matters

Local women are happier than men, the study shows. While the female average score reached 7.19 points, the males lagged behind with 6.77 points. Furthermore, housewives are among the happiest group in Macau.

"Men are usually under more social pressure to do well, as they bear the economic responsibility for the family. This is a finding similar to other studies," Lao explained. "Housewives may have more workload but they can show their love while taking care of the family," Ho added.

In fact, the study shows a very significant connection between happiness and family ties. "The closer people are to their family, the happier they are," Lao said.

For instance, married people have a happiness index

almost half-point higher than singles, while the lowest score is found among divorcees (6.2 points). Moreover, couples with children are happier (0.24 to 0.33 points more) than other couples.

However, it was widows who reached the highest score, 7.69 points, a lot higher than their Hong Kong counterparts (6.54 points). "It's a strange statistic fact and we're still trying to explore," the study coordinator acknowledged.

## Wage woes

When it comes to monthly wages, people making MOP 3,000 or less had the lowest happiness index, 6.74 points. "The Government should establish a minimum wage," Lao suggested.

The Association of Economic Sciences chairman also called for a bigger in-

vestment on education and vocational training. While residents with a masters' degree post the highest score, 7.31 points, undergraduates had the lowest, 6.91. "They have high expectations so sometimes the discrepancies in reality makes them feel less happy," he explained.

Macau seems to be "a good environment for retirees," Lao said, as this group is the happiest one, with 7.71 points. Still, he called on the Administration to launch measures to improve "medical services and environmental issues".

On the other end are resi-

dents from aged between 25 to 34 (6.68 points) and 18 to 24 (6.77 points). "They are feeling a lot of pressure after finishing their studies, with the very rapid changes that brought high housing and commodity prices," he warned.

"The Government should try to improve its housing policy, perhaps learning from Chief Executive's [Fernando Chui Sai On] recent visit to Singapore."

Manufacturing workers are the happiest group, with 7.65 points, while the same cannot be said for both public servants and casino staff, who scored less than 6.8 points.



*People making MOP 3,000 or less had the lowest happiness index (6.74 points), find Association of Economic Sciences chairman Joey Lao said 'the Government should establish a minimum wage'*

# Survey: casino staff, construction workers & civil servants 'most unhappy' residents

## Staff Reporter

The findings of a survey on local residents' happiness show that casino staff, construction workers and civil servants are the city's top-three "most unhappy" residents.

The so-called "Happiness Index Research" was jointly conducted by the Macau Polytechnic Institute (IPM) and Macau As-

sociation of Economic Sciences (ACE).

The findings were made public by ACE Chairman Joey Lao Chi Ngai at the IPM campus in Zape yesterday.

According to Lao, the survey interviewed 1,010 local residents, aged 18 and above, by phone last year, but the exact date when the survey was being carried out was

not disclosed.

According to the findings, which were distributed to members of the media during yesterday's announcement, the survey's segment categorised by occupations found that casino staff ranked the most-unhappy group, scoring just 6.77 points out of 0 to 10 happiness index.

Coming second in this seg-

ment were constructions workers, with 6.78 points, followed by civil servants, Macau's top earners, who scored only 6.8.

In terms of education level, those possessing a bachelor's degree or other tertiary education certificates but below postgraduate levels were found most unhappy, with 6.91 points. Those with a master's degree or above felt most happy, with 7.31 points, according to the results.

Locals who only finished primary school or even below were in fact happier than those formally "more-qualified" than them, scoring 7.06 points.

Lao said that those with a bachelor's degree "are usually over-expecting themselves ... they think that they, being gradu-

ates from a university, should have a better [career] development."

He also said that, after comparing the findings with those of a similar survey conducted in Hong Kong last year, the two surveys' overall "happiness index" was very close - Macau scored 70.3 and Hong Kong stood at 70.1.

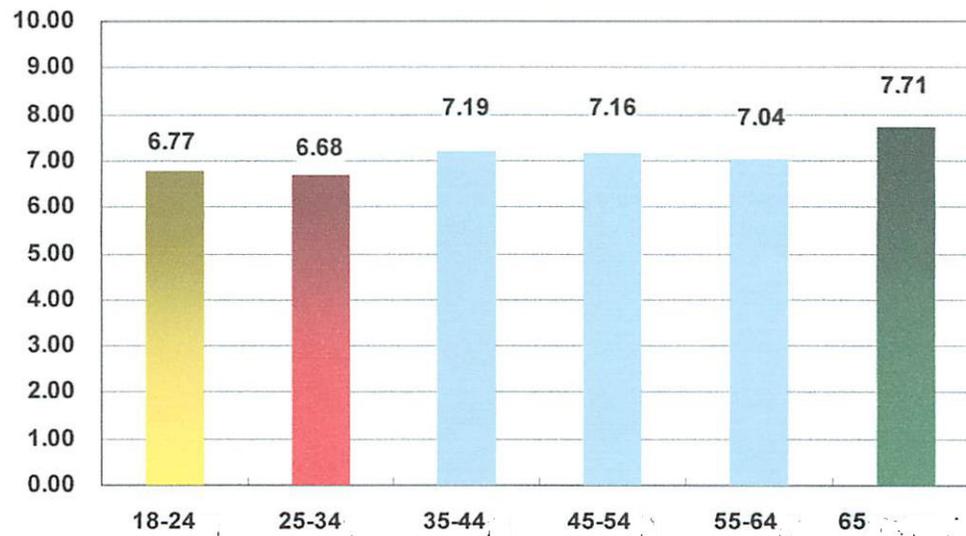
Last November, a similar research was done by the Macau Polling Research Association (MPRA), initiated by lawmaker Melinda Chan Mei Yi. The MPRA survey's overall "happiness index" stood at 72.

Coincidentally, the MPRA survey and yesterday's ACE survey found that the happiest group in town are senior citizens. ■

**Distribution of Rating of Overall Happiness in Macau**

**Calculation of Happiness Index**

score	No. of responses	%	Effective percentage	Cumulative percentage	frequency	weighted score
0	14	1.4	1.4	1.4	14	0
1	2	.2	.2	1.6	2	0,002008032
2	11	1.1	1.1	2.7	11	0,022088353
3	19	1.9	1.9	4.6	19	0,057228916
4	22	2.2	2.2	6.7	22	0,088353414
5	139	13.8	13.8	20.5	139	0,697791165
6	132	13.1	13.1	33.6	132	0,795180723
7	223	22.1	22.1	55.6	223	1,567269076
8	239	23.7	23.7	79.3	239	1,919678715
9	80	7.9	7.9	87.2	80	0,722891566
10	115	11.4	11.4	98.6	115	1,154618474
Don't know/ difficult to tell	14	1.4	1.4	100.0		
Total	1010	100.0	100.0		996	7,027108434



Happiness indices by Age distribution