

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
The Centre for Quality of Life
Results of the Quarterly Survey (March 2017) on Public Perception of the
Economic Conditions

The Centre for Quality of Life at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) conducted a survey on the public perception of the economic conditions from March 24 to 28, 2017. A total of 503 Hong Kong residents aged 18 or above took part in the survey and answered questions about their family financial situation, their perception towards the business environment, the economic outlook, as well as their sentiment over consumption.

Table 1 presents the survey questions and results conducted in last December (4th quarter of 2016) and this March (1st quarter), respectively. It was revealed that 13.7% of the respondents said their families were financially “worse off” than a year ago, increased by 0.5 percentage points compared to the survey results in last December, while 24.3% said that they were “better off” than a year ago, showed an increase of 2.8 percentage points from the last survey results. There were 58.8% of the respondents said “the same” while about 3.2% said “don’t know or it’s difficult to tell”.

On consumer confidence, about 20.1% of the respondents thought it was a good time to buy major household goods, while 52.9% said the opposite and 27.0% said they “don’t know or it’s difficult to tell”. Comparing with the findings in the fourth quarter of last year, the percentage saying “yes” decreased by 1.4 percentage points and those saying “no” increased by 0.9 percentage points. Those uncertain answers (don’t know or it’s difficult to tell) increased by 0.5 percentage points.

There were 15.1% of the respondents believed they would be financially “better off” in the coming year, increased by 3.6 percentage points from the results in last December. About 16.5% believed their families would be “worse off” in the coming year, decreased by 1.9 percentage points from the previous result. Those believed that they would be “the same” accounted for 60.8% of the respondents, and about 7.6% said “don’t know or it’s difficult to tell”.

There were 55.3% and 21.3% of the respondents expected the business environment of Hong Kong in the coming year would be “mediocre” and “bad”, respectively. About 12.3% of the respondents perceived the business environment would be “good” in the coming year. Comparing with the figures in the fourth quarter of last year, the amount of pessimistic answers decreased by 2.2 percentage points while that of optimistic answers increased by 2 percentage points. The amount of giving “mediocre” answers remained unchanged compared to the last survey results. Besides, there were about 11.1% respondents said “don’t know or it’s difficult to tell”.

There were 21.9% of the respondents stayed “optimistic” about the economic conditions of Hong Kong for the coming five years; while 24.9% found themselves “pessimistic”. Comparing with the results in last December, the percentage of “optimistic” answers increased by 4.1 points and that of the “pessimistic” ones decreased by 2.8 points. Those believed that they would be “the same” accounted for 39.6%, and 13.7% of the respondents said “don’t know or it’s difficult to tell”.

The survey also found that 20.9% of the respondents expected the employment situation would “deteriorate” in the coming year and 13.1% thought it would “improve”. Comparing with the last survey, those choosing “deteriorate” decreased by 3.4 percentage points and those choosing “improved” increased by 2.6 percentage points. About 51.1% expected the employment situation would remain “the same”, increased by 1.5 percentage points compared with the previous result. About 14.9% said “don’t know or it’s difficult to tell”.

Indices of Consumer Confidence, Consumer Sentiment and Employment Confidence are reported in Table 2.

The Index of Consumer Confidence is compiled from the scores of questions number 3, 4 and 5. The higher the index, the stronger is people’s confidence about economic conditions.

The Index of Consumer Sentiment is compiled from the scores of questions number 1 to 5. A higher index indicates people are more optimistic about the present situation and future development of economic conditions.

The Index of Employment Confidence is compiled from the score of the sixth question. A higher index shows a stronger confidence about employment situation.

For the first two indices, the baseline is January 2000 (index = 100). For the Index of Employment Confidence, the baseline is February 2000 (index = 100).

In summary:

- *The Index of Consumer Confidence* in March was 82.4, increased by 4.7% from last quarter and increased by 9.2% from the same quarter of 2016.
- *The Index of Consumer Sentiment* in March was 90.2, increased by 3.2% from last quarter and increased by 4.3% from the same quarter of 2016.
- *The Index of Employment Confidence* in March was 81.3, increased by 5.3% from last quarter and increased by 15.1% from the same quarter of 2016.

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Table 1

	Survey questions	Answer	Dec 2016	Mar 2017	Change in %*
問題一	與一年前比較，你和家人目前的財政狀況是變好、變壞或跟一年前一樣？	變好	21.5%	24.3%	2.8%
		變壞	13.2%	13.7%	0.5%
		跟一年前一樣	60.3%	58.8%	-1.5%
		唔知道/好難講	4.9%	3.2%	-1.7%
問題二	你認為現在是否購買主要家庭用品(如傢具、電視機、冰箱、煮食爐等)的好時機？	係	21.5%	20.1%	-1.4%
		唔係	52.0%	52.9%	0.9%
		唔知道/好難講	26.5%	27.0%	0.5%
問題三	展望未來一年，你認為你和家人的財政狀況將會變好、變壞或跟現在一樣？	變好	11.5%	15.1%	3.6%
		變壞	18.4%	16.5%	-1.9%
		跟現在一樣	63.8%	60.8%	-3.0%
		唔知道/好難講	6.3%	7.6%	1.3%
問題四	展望未來一年，你認為香港的整體營商環境會好、差或一般？	好	10.3%	12.3%	2.0%
		差	23.5%	21.3%	-2.2%
		一般	55.3%	55.3%	0.0%
		唔知道/好難講	10.9%	11.1%	0.2%
問題五	你對香港未來五年的整體經濟表現是樂觀、悲觀或跟現在一樣？	樂觀	17.8%	21.9%	4.1%
		悲觀	27.7%	24.9%	-2.8%
		跟現在一樣	39.7%	39.6%	-0.1%
		唔知道/好難講	14.8%	13.7%	-1.1%
問題六	你認為香港未來一年失業情況會改善，惡化或跟現在一樣？	改善	10.5%	13.1%	2.6%
		惡化	24.3%	20.9%	-3.4%
		跟現在一樣	49.6%	51.1%	1.5%
		唔知道/好難講	15.6%	14.9%	-0.7%

Note. * The balance of change might not equal to zero due to rounding.

Table 2

	消費者信心指數 The Index of Consumer Confidence	消費者情緒指數 The Index of Consumer Sentiment	就業信心指數 The Index of Employment Confidence
January 2000	100.0	100.0	-
February 2000	101.1	103.3	100.0
March 2000	105.3	103.3	106.1
June 2000	84.1	85.6	84.7
September 2000	90.9	92.1	86.6
December 2000	89.8	91.7	88.8
March 2001	75.5	79.1	69.6
June 2001	78.0	81.3	66.1
September 2001	50.3	55.9	29.1
December 2001	70.5	77.2	45.0
March 2002	70.0	72.6	45.5
June 2002	65.5	69.4	45.0
September 2002	64.9	67.1	51.2
December 2002	70.0	72.9	77.2
March 2003	56.4	59.1	49.5
April 2003	55.0	57.4	40.9
May 2003	73.2	74.3	57.6
June 2003	70.7	73.8	47.8
September 2003	96.7	95.4	102.6
December 2003	103.4	103.2	118.8
March 2004	107.6	104.5	121.2
June 2004	99.2	100.4	114.4
September 2004	101.8	99.6	115.4
December 2004	106.1	105.2	115.6
March 2005	110.8	109.6	128.5
June 2005	114.6	112.6	129.3
September 2005	113.2	111.1	120.3
December 2005	113.7	114.7	118.1
March 2006	107.9	106.0	114.1
June 2006	109.2	109.9	116.7
September 2006	105.5	105.5	109.9
December 2006	108.9	112.2	111.2
March 2007	112.1	113.7	117.3
June 2007	115.7	116.9	112.8
September 2007	111.9	113.3	113.6

	消費者信心指數 The Index of Consumer Confidence	消費者情緒指數 The Index of Consumer Sentiment	就業信心指數 The Index of Employment Confidence
December 2007	110.4	111.8	119.5
March 2008	100.0	100.7	106.7
June 2008	78.4	78.1	76.5
September 2008	66.1	66.8	44.1
December 2008	67.7	70.5	27.1
March 2009	80.9	76.9	42.8
June 2009	87.4	86.4	61.4
September 2009	96.0	93.6	83.4
December 2009	96.0	94.8	93.1
March 2010	97.8	96.3	101.0
June 2010	96.3	96.2	91.9
September 2010	96.3	97.2	88.7
December 2010	95.0	95.6	87.6
March 2011	87.2	90.3	82.6
June 2011	80.6	84.4	80.0
September 2011	74.6	76.7	69.1
December 2011	70.9	75.2	68.6
March 2012	79.2	83.2	74.2
June 2012	74.9	78.1	71.2
September 2012	73.4	78.1	71.8
December 2012	79.6	84.5	75.9
March 2013	78.9	84.1	75.0
June 2013	75.0	82.3	72.5
September 2013	75.3	82.0	73.4
December 2013	75.6	81.8	76.4
March 2014	77.2	84.8	79.9
June 2014	76.5	84.2	77.6
September 2014	72.3	81.9	71.1
December 2014	77.4	88.7	71.3
March 2015	76.4	84.1	65.1
June 2015	77.9	85.3	72.8
September 2015	75.3	83.6	65.3
December 2015	74.6	88.2	66.1
March 2016	73.2	85.9	66.2
June 2016	69.2	78.5	62.1

	消費者信心指數 The Index of Consumer Confidence	消費者情緒指數 The Index of Consumer Sentiment	就業信心指數 The Index of Employment Confidence
September 2016	74.7	82.5	70.0
December 2016	77.7	87.0	76.0
March 2017	82.4	90.2	81.3
Change (Comparing with the figures of the previous quarter)	4.7	3.2	5.3

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