

**“2025 Secondary School Students’ Well-being Survey”
Strong Link Between Secondary Students’ Well-Being and Academic Procrastination
Over One-Fifth Require Professional Support Due to Emotional Distress**

(31 August 2025, Hong Kong) The Mental Wellness Service for Children and Youth of the Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service regularly conducts mental health research among secondary students in Hong Kong, in hopes of assisting different social sectors in grasping the latest trend in youth mental health and relevant preventive measures. Since last year, our organisation has started incorporating a scale measuring well-being components into the research, furthering the investigation into the relationship between students’ well-being and mental health, and leading the public discussion on this designated yearly topic. Having observed the recently widespread phenomenon of academic procrastination among secondary students, this year’s research posits ‘academic procrastination’ as the theme, hoping to dissect in depth its impact on students’ mental health and academic performance.

The research was conducted from November last year to March this year, collecting in total 1,802 valid surveys of secondary students which have offered us insights in surveyed students’ well-being, overall mental health (the level of depression, anxiety, and stress), life satisfaction, and academic procrastination. Results demonstrates that the overall average score of well-being in the surveyed students is 2.9 (out of 5), similar to the situation last year where the level is still moderate. Notably, 33.6% of the students have their well-being reaching a high level, an increase of 7.3% compared to that of last year. Males (average score: 2.97) exhibit a significantly higher score in well-being than females (average score: 2.8).

As to the emotional health, the situation is similar when compared to last year. Around 20% of the surveyed students have demonstrated moderate to very severe level of depression (25.9%), anxiety (22%), and stress (20.8%), potentially demanding professional assistances and interventions.

On life satisfaction, the most dissatisfying aspects of life among students are, in order, time management (40.7%), academic performance (36.0%), and public examinations (33.6%). The most satisfying aspects are, in order, familial relationship (51.8%), physical health (46.9%), and interpersonal relationships (43.1%). Our analysis showed that interpersonal relationships, societal situation, and familial relationship are highly associated with students’ well-being.

Besides, our research also shows that around 30% of the surveyed students exhibit academic procrastination. The most common procrastination behaviours included ‘put off projects until the last minute’ (29.2%), ‘working only close to the deadline’ (28.4%), and ‘often being distracted by more interesting things’ (27.4%). Senior secondary school students score a high average score than junior secondary school students, but the scores are similar among male and female students. In addition, academic procrastination demonstrates a highly positive relevance to depression, anxiety, and stress. That is to say, the more negative emotions the student experiences, the larger the chance of academic procrastination emerging. On the other hand, the higher the level of well-being and life satisfaction, the smaller the chance of academic procrastination emerging.

In conclusion, academic procrastination is closely linked to emotional health. Our organisation proposes the need for enhancing family relations, peer support, strengthening school and community support, and promoting mental health education to improve the health and well-being of students holistically.

1. Research Findings

The survey investigates primarily secondary school students' well-being, emotional distress, life satisfaction, and academic procrastination. The results are shown in the following.

1.1 Overall well-being was still moderate

The Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF) applied commonly in academic research, it measures three types of well-being, including emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being (overall mean score termed as overall well-being).

The result shows that the average score of well-being in the surveyed students is 2.9 (out of 5), similar to that of last year. Around 33.6% of the students have their well-being reaching a high level, a 7.3% increase from last year. Males and junior secondary school students exhibit a significantly higher score in well-being than females and senior secondary school students respectively. Students score the highest in emotional well-being, indicating their feeling of happiness and interest and satisfaction in life.

1.2 Emotional distress maintained

● 26% had significant depression

Similar to last year's figure, the overall average depression score of the surveyed students was 5.61. Among them, 25.9% of the students reached a moderate to extremely severe level of depression, which may require professional assistance. The most common depressive symptoms among students were: 'There was nothing nice I could look forward to' (23.9%), 'I felt like I was no good' (23.1%) and 'I did not enjoy anything' (22.1%).

● Over 20% had severe anxiety

Similar to last year's figure, the overall average anxiety score of the surveyed students was 4.38. Among them, 22% of the students reached a moderate to extremely severe level of anxiety, which may require professional assistance. The most common anxiety symptoms among students were mostly related to physical warning signs, including 'I felt dizzy, like I was about to faint' (22.8%), 'I felt terrified' (21.7%), and 'I felt scared for no good reason' (15.9%).

● Stress level rose to over 20%

Similar to last year's figure, the overall average stress score of the surveyed students was 8.51. Among them, 20.8% of the students reached a moderate to very severe level of stress, an increase of 2.9% from last year, which is an alarming situation. The most common stress symptoms among students were: 'I got upset about little things' (50.8%), 'I was stressing about lots of things' (44.9%), and 'I got annoyed when people interrupted me' (36.5%).

1.3 Dissatisfaction with time management and academics

Results revealed that the life satisfaction areas where students were most satisfied were, in order: 'family relationships' (51.8%), 'physical health' (46.9%), and 'interpersonal



relationships' (43.1%). Conversely, the areas where students were most dissatisfied were, in order: 'time management' (40.7%), 'academic' (36%), and 'public examination (e.g., DSE, IB)' (33.6%).

1.4 30% showed academic procrastination

According to the results of the Academic Procrastination Scale – Short Form (APS-S), the overall average score was 3.33 (with 5 being the most severe). The average score for senior secondary students was 3.53, higher than the 3.17 scored by junior secondary students. The most common procrastination behaviours included 'put off projects until the last minute' (29.2%), 'working only close to the deadline' (28.4%), and 'often being distracted by more interesting things' (27.4%).

It is worth noting that according to a similar survey conducted in 2020, which sampled 1,115 secondary school students in Hong Kong, the three-item version comprising the aforementioned most common behaviours yielded an average score of 3.14 (Wang, 2024). The present sample yielded a higher average score of 3.52 based on these three items.

2. Analysis and Suggestion

2.1 Early Attention to Student Procrastination Issues

The current research indicates that about 30% of students admit to procrastinating on their academic work. Students exhibiting more severe procrastination tendencies also reported greater emotional distress and lower subjective well-being, highlighting the potential negative impact of procrastination on students' mental and physical health.

Prof. Michael Wong Tak-hing, Chair of the Hong Kong Holistic Popular Mental Health Association and Honorary Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Hong Kong, points out that the causes of academic procrastination involve multiple layers, including 'external factors' such as the education system and societal expectations, as well as 'internal factors' like genetic and physiological conditions. He further explains that procrastination sometimes reflects students' evasive tendencies when facing stress or emotional difficulties. Therefore, he particularly emphasises the importance of 'early intervention' and calls on all sectors of society to work together to establish diversified support to help students effectively manage and overcome academic procrastination problems.

2.2 Simultaneous Intervention for Students and Parents

Mr. Jeff Kei Ching-nam, clinical psychologist at this organisation, notes that academic procrastination often presents a dilemma: students are aware that delaying tasks brings adverse consequences but still find it difficult to control themselves, which ultimately increases emotional stress and directly affects academic performance and mental health. He suggests simultaneous intervention from two perspectives: youth and family, to form a support network.

At the youth level, tasks can be broken down into small goals and completed step by step, combined with appropriate self-rewards to reduce psychological resistance; cultivate the habit of 'doing a little bit every day,' arrange fixed times and places for study to cultivate focused behaviour; and make good use of quiet, distraction-free environments, avoiding

phones and other distractions to improve efficiency.

In the family aspect, parents should lead an example by demonstrating good time management and concentration habits and creating a quiet environment. At the same time, they should replace blaming with affirmation, offer support and positive encouragement during their children's setbacks or doubts, and accompany them with an open attitude to explore solutions.

2.3 Multi-pronged Approach to Overcome Procrastination

Ms. Scarlet Poon Fung-oi, Assistant Chief Executive Officer of this organisation, noted that student 'procrastination' and 'laid-back' are not merely personal choices, but rather the result of an interaction between individual traits and environmental factors. She suggested tackling the issue from both school and societal perspectives to help young people regain motivation and overcome difficulties.

At the school level, projects linked to real-life contexts should be designed to afford students greater 'choice' and 'autonomy,' thereby enhancing learning motivation. Process-based assessments, e.g. group discussion, class engagement, project-based learning, should replace exam-centric models where a single test determines one's fate, emphasising the 'learning process' rather than solely the 'final outcome.' Curricula should incorporate executive function training, including time management, goal-setting using the SMART principle, task decomposition, and emotional regulation, to cultivate students' capacity to navigate challenges.

Regarding support systems, schools can establish preventive screening mechanisms and offer cognitive-behavioural psychoeducation courses, such as teaching students how to 'face failure' and 'accept imperfection.' Training peers to become 'emotional well-being ambassadors' can weave a peer support network. Campus culture should prioritise fostering a safe and supportive environment, emphasising collaboration and self-transcendence. By inviting alumni or community members to share experiences of life setbacks and seeking assistance, schools can normalise 'failure' and 'help-seeking' while establishing diverse models of success, enabling each student to discover their own value and position. Furthermore, schools should implement parental education programmes to help parents distinguish between 'laziness' and 'behaviour stemming from emotional distress,' thereby reducing misunderstandings.

At the societal level, media are advised to redefine 'success' and 'value' by reporting more diverse success stories. Public campaigns should promote awareness of 'mental health importance' and 'causes of procrastination' to reduce stigmatisation. In addition, intergenerational dialogue should be fostered to help society understand young people's circumstances rather than simply attributing issues to 'low resilience'. Within community development, support should be given to youth-led initiatives such as artistic creation, social enterprises, and innovative uses of vacant spaces to further empower the next generation.

Ms. Poon emphasised that only by simultaneously enhancing young people's internal skills (such as executive function and emotional regulation) and transforming external environments (schools, families, society) to be more supportive, inclusive, and diverse can

they truly believe their efforts hold meaning. This enables them to overcome adversity and forge their own path forward.

3. About the Survey

3.1 Sample Data

Between November 2024 and March 2025, valid self-administered questionnaires were successfully collected from 1,802 local secondary school students. Males and females accounted for 56% and 40% respectively (3.8% did not report their gender). The distribution by grade level is as follows:

Grade	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	N/A
Number of people	353	320	353	246	406	121	3
Percentage	19.6%	17.8%	19.6%	13.7%	22.5%	6.7%	0.2%

3.2 Measurement Instruments

● Well-Being

Measured by the Chinese version of the Mental Health Continuum – Short form (MHC-SF), assessing students' emotional, social, and psychological well-being. It contains 14 items, with students rating each item's frequency from 0 (never) to 5 (every day) over the past month. Higher scores indicate greater well-being.

● Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Levels

Measured by the Chinese version of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale – Youth (DASS-Y), assessing depression, anxiety, and stress in students. The scale includes 21 items, with students rating the frequency of symptoms in the past week from 0 (not true) to 3 (very true). Each scale has a total score of 21 points; higher scores represent more severe symptoms, as detailed below:

	Normal	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Extremely severe
Depression	0–6	7–8	9–13	14–16	17 or above
Anxiety	0–5	6–7	8–12	13–15	16 or above
Stress	0–11	12–13	14–16	17–18	19 or above

● Life Satisfaction

Measured by a questionnaire designed by the research team of this organisation, evaluating students' satisfaction with academics, future prospects, interpersonal relationships, societal situation, and appearance. It contains 12 items, rated from 0 (strongly dissatisfied) to 4 (strongly satisfied). Higher scores indicate greater satisfaction with each life domain.

● Academic Procrastination

Measured by the Chinese version of the Academic Procrastination Scale – Short form (APS-S), assessing students' overall tendency to procrastinate on academic tasks. It has 5 items, with students rating agreement from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree). Higher scores indicate a greater likelihood of academic procrastination.

4. Support Services

Our organisation has collaborated closely with the Education Bureau and schools across Hong Kong for many years to support the mental health needs of students. Our key initiatives include:

- Hi-Five Student Engagement Award Scheme

This programme promotes a mentally healthy school culture by establishing five areas of engagement: 'behavioural', 'intellectual', 'emotional', 'social', and 'family and community'.

For more details: <https://www.hi5.bokss.org.hk>

- Student Mental Health Ambassador Training

This programme offers psychoeducation and peer emotional support training to enhance students' skills and networks for supporting one another.

For more details: <https://bit.ly/3MqsYH6>

- YOUTHorizons

This service is designed to support young people aged 11 to 25 who are experiencing emotional or mental health challenges. Services include mental health assessments, early intervention and counselling, and parental support.

For more details: <https://www.bokss.org.hk/integrated-mental-health-services/service?id=57>

- GROWTHorizons

This service supports specifically for children affected by attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and emotional symptoms, along with their parents, through professional training and counselling services.

For more details: <https://www.bokss.org.hk/integrated-mental-health-services/service?id=323>

- HealHorizon Project

This project provides financial assistance to adolescents aged 6 to 24 who are suspected to suffer from emotional or mental health issues and let them obtain counselling and medical service at early stage.

For more details: <https://www.bokss.org.hk/integrated-mental-health-services/service?id=270>

- Re:Fresh Online Mental Health Self-Help Platform

The platform offers an online self-help experience for emotional wellbeing, including expert self-help courses, online workshops, and information on physical and mental health.

For more details: <https://refresh.bokss.org.hk/>

Additionally, our organisation regularly offers various types of seminars for students, parents and teachers, working through school-based services to jointly construct a mental health safety net for students. Addressing academic procrastination, we provide a seminar entitled 'Academic Procrastination and Emotional Wellbeing', covering fundamental concepts of procrastination, its relationship with emotional wellbeing, and time management techniques.

For any inquiries regarding our services, members of the public are welcome to contact us by phone at 2386 1717 or via email at mwcy@bokss.org.hk.



Caption : (From left)

Mr. Jeff Kei Ching-nam, Clinical Psychologist at ICCMW, Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service

Prof. Michael Wong Tak-hing, Chair of the Hong Kong Holistic Popular Mental Health Association and Honorary Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Hong Kong

Ms. Scarlet Poon Fung-oi, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service

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About Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service

Authorised by the Hong Kong Baptist Convention in 1978 and organised by Hong Kong Baptist University (formerly Hong Kong Baptist College), the organisation was officially established in 1982. Its services cover Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories, operating on a community-based approach and committed to providing diversified services to people of different ages. These include Integrated Children, Youth and Family Services, Integrated Elderly Services, Integrated Mental Health Services, Training and Employment Services, Clinical Psychological and Counselling Services, Pre-Primary School, Catering, Poverty Alleviation, etc. In 2009, the organization became an independent legal entity (a company limited by guarantee) under the Hong Kong Companies Ordinance and was approved by the Inland Revenue Department as a tax-exempt charitable institution under the Inland Revenue Ordinance. Website: www.bokss.org.hk