

**Legislative Council Panel  
On Information Technology and Broadcasting**

**2002 Public Opinion Survey  
on Film Classification System**

**PURPOSE**

This paper informs Members of the findings of the 2002 Public Opinion Survey on the Film Classification System.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA) conducts a large-scale public opinion survey on the film classification system on a biennial basis. The main objective of such a survey is to assess the community's acceptance of the existing film classification system (including film classification standards). The last survey was conducted in 2000.

**METHODOLOGY OF THE SURVEY**

3. In line with past practices, the 2002 Public Opinion Survey was commissioned to a research company. The survey comprises a main survey to collect views from the general public, and two supplementary surveys on the panel of public advisers and moviegoers respectively. Fieldwork for the survey was conducted between June and August 2002.

4. The main survey covered 607 members of the public (aged 13 to 59) of which 548 were adults. The sample was selected in close resemblance to the demographic profile of the Hong Kong population in terms of age, sex and occupation. Apart from completing a questionnaire on the film classification system, respondents were invited to give their views on the classification of 30 film segments featuring sexuality, violence, horror, offensive behaviour or triad depiction.

5. The supplementary survey on the panel of public advisers involved 90 public advisers from the 270-member panel of public advisers who are volunteers appointed by the Film Censorship Authority (FCA) to view films with censors and advise on film classification. These 90 adult respondents went

through the same survey process as the main survey group.

6. The supplementary survey on moviegoers involved 502 moviegoers (of which 78 were young persons aged 13-17 and 424 were adults) that had viewed six selected commercial films. Telephone interviews were conducted to collect their views on film classification standards in general and on the selected films they had viewed.

7. Two copies of the full report of the survey have been deposited with the Legislative Council Secretariat for perusal by Members. The executive summary of the report is at Annex.

## **SURVEY FINDINGS**

8. In brief, the 2002 Public Opinion Survey on the Film Classification System revealed that:

- (a) there is general community support and acceptance of the existing film classification system;
- (b) the existing film classification standards are generally in line with the expectations of the community; and
- (c) the film classification system is generally regarded by members of public as a useful guide for selecting films for their children.

Details of the findings are elaborated in paragraphs 9 to 16 below.

## **THE MAIN SURVEY**

### **Knowledge of Film Classification System**

9. The survey revealed that all respondents were aware of the film classification system and 81% were able to identify the existing classification system with its Categories and classification notices.

### **Role of Classification System in Film Selections**

10. The film classification system has provided useful guidance to the public in selecting films for viewing. 65% of the adult respondents would refer

to the category which a film is classified when selecting films. 51% of the respondents aged 13-17 would also refer to the category.

### **Parental Guidance**

11. The advisory Category IIA (i.e. not suitable for children) and Category IIB (i.e. not suitable for young persons and children) proved to be useful to parents in selecting films for viewing by their children. 80% of the adult respondents considered the advisory Categories IIA and IIB useful as a tool for exercising parental guidance and 73% of the parent respondents would make use of these advisory Categories when selecting films for their children.

### **Access to Category III Films by Young Persons**

12. Some 53% of the respondents aged 13-17 had seen Category III films (i.e. for persons aged 18 or above only) at their friends' homes (65%), at their own home (58%) or at cinema (6%). The main reason for viewing was curiosity (70%).

### **Views on Film Classification Standards**

13. 29% of the respondents considered the current film classification standards just right, 19% a bit strict and 33% a bit lenient. Despite these views, 97% of the respondents considered that the current film classification standards were in general acceptable.

### **Views on Category III Film Titles and Advertising Materials**

14. The survey results confirmed that the existing classification standards on Category III film titles and advertising materials were generally in line with the community standards. Respondents were shown twelve such film titles and they considered FCA's decisions appropriate in eleven cases and lenient in one case. They were also shown six posters and they considered FCA's decisions appropriate in four cases and strict in two cases. Of the six video/laserdisc packages shown to them, respondents considered FCA's decisions appropriate in five cases and strict in one case.

## **THE SUPPLEMENTARY SURVEYS**

### **Survey on Public Advisers**

15. The survey revealed that views of public advisers on the

classification standards were largely the same as those expressed by the general public in the main survey. This suggests that the classification standards of public advisers are fairly representative of the community standards.

### **Survey on Moviegoers**

16. Some 48% of the respondents considered the existing film classification standards appropriate, 10% a bit lenient and 17% a bit strict. 97% of the respondents considered that the current film classification standards were in general acceptable.

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