
**2006 Public Opinion Survey on
the Operation of the
Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance**

Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority

14 January 2008

Glossary of the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance

❖ Definition of “Article”

- Anything consisting of or containing materials to be read or looked at or both read and looked at
- Any sound recording, or any film, video-tape, disc or other record of a picture or pictures

❖ Classification of “Article”

- Class I : Neither obscene nor indecent
- Class II : Indecent
- Class III : Obscene

❖ Definition of “Obscenity” and “Indecency”

- Include violence, depravity and repulsiveness

Survey Objectives

- ❖ To gauge and analyse the prevailing standards of morality that are generally accepted by reasonable members of the community for the purpose of article classification under the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance (COIAO)
- ❖ To examine the public's views on the operation of the COIAO
- ❖ To examine the effectiveness of the relevant publicity and public education activities

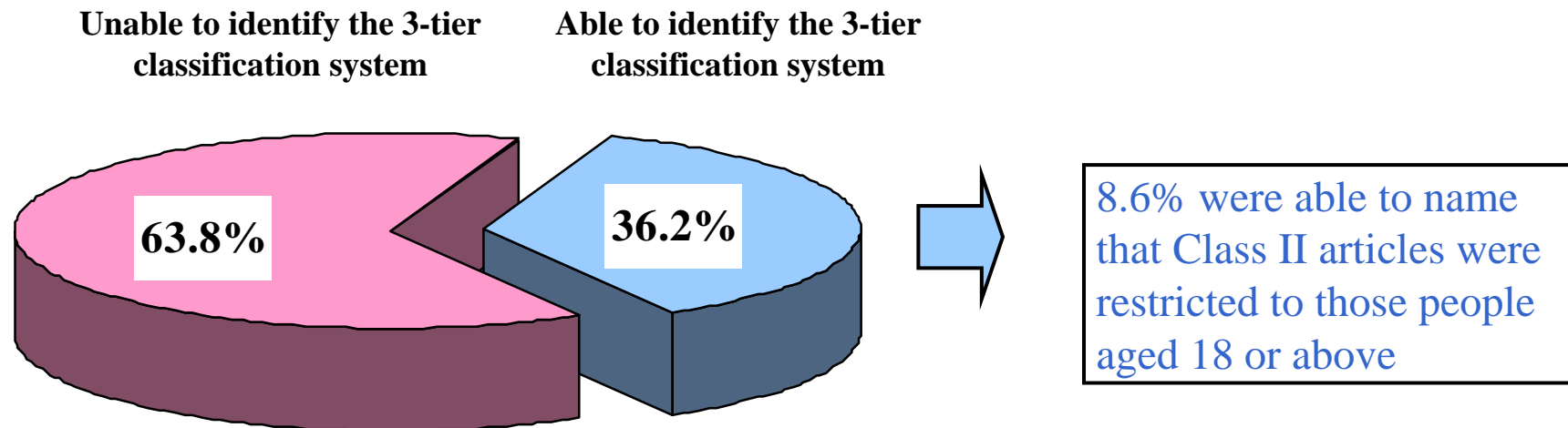
Fieldwork Period and Enumeration Results

- ❖ The Survey was conducted between 4 November 2006 and 7 January 2007
- ❖ Target respondents: Aged 15 to 65
 - Only respondents aged between 18 and 65 were invited for sorting sample articles
- ❖ A total of 1 501 face-to-face interviews were successfully conducted
- ❖ Overall response rate of 73.1% was attained

Views and Knowledge of the COIAO

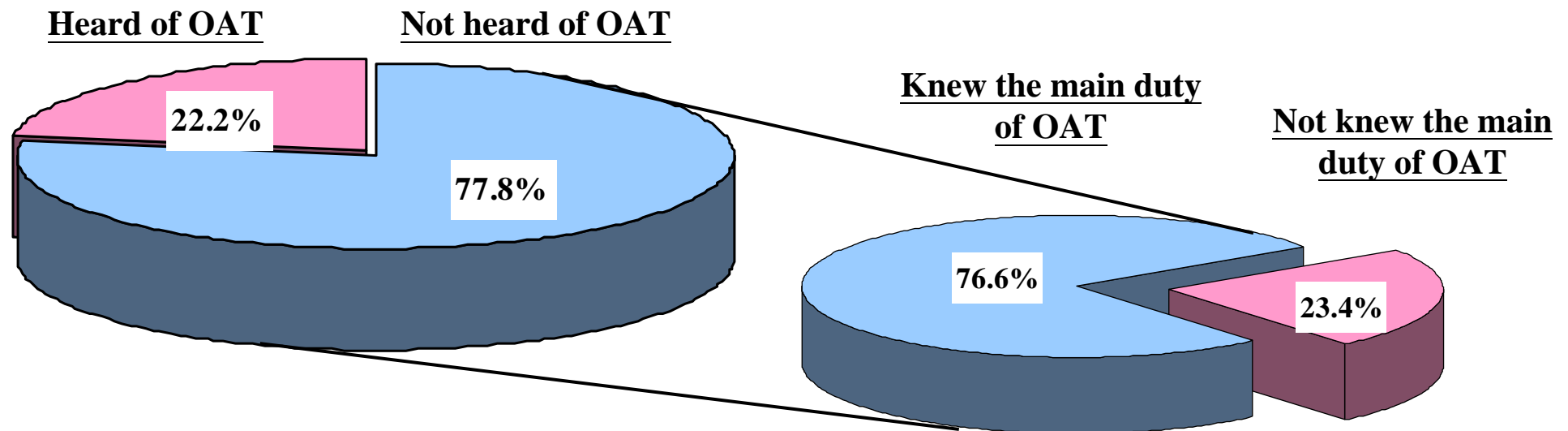
Knowledge of the COIAO

- ❖ 82.1% of the respondents were aware that there was an ordinance governing the control of obscene and indecent articles in Hong Kong
- ❖ 36.2 % knew there were three categories in the classification. Among these people, 8.6% had proper knowledge of the COIAO



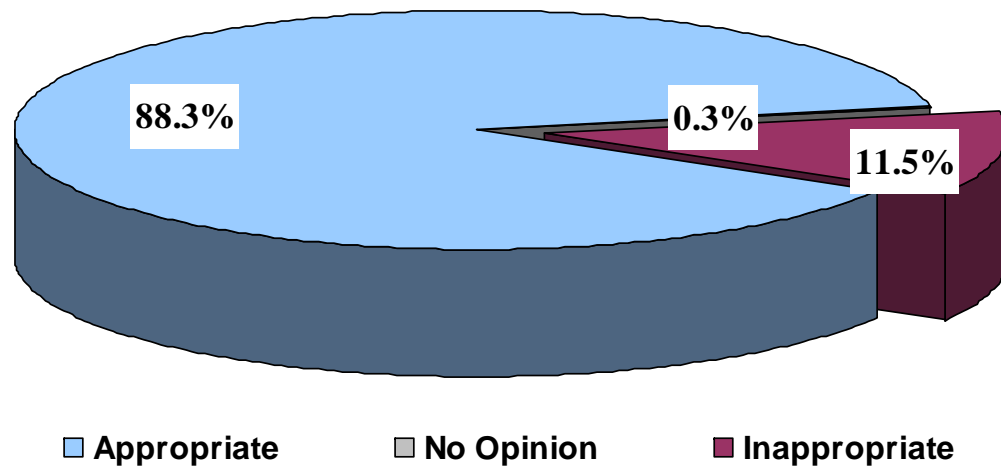
Knowledge of the Obscene Articles Tribunal

- ❖ 77.8% of the respondents had heard of the “Obscene Articles Tribunal” (OAT). Among these people, 76.6% knew the main duty of the OAT



Views on the Obscene Articles Tribunal

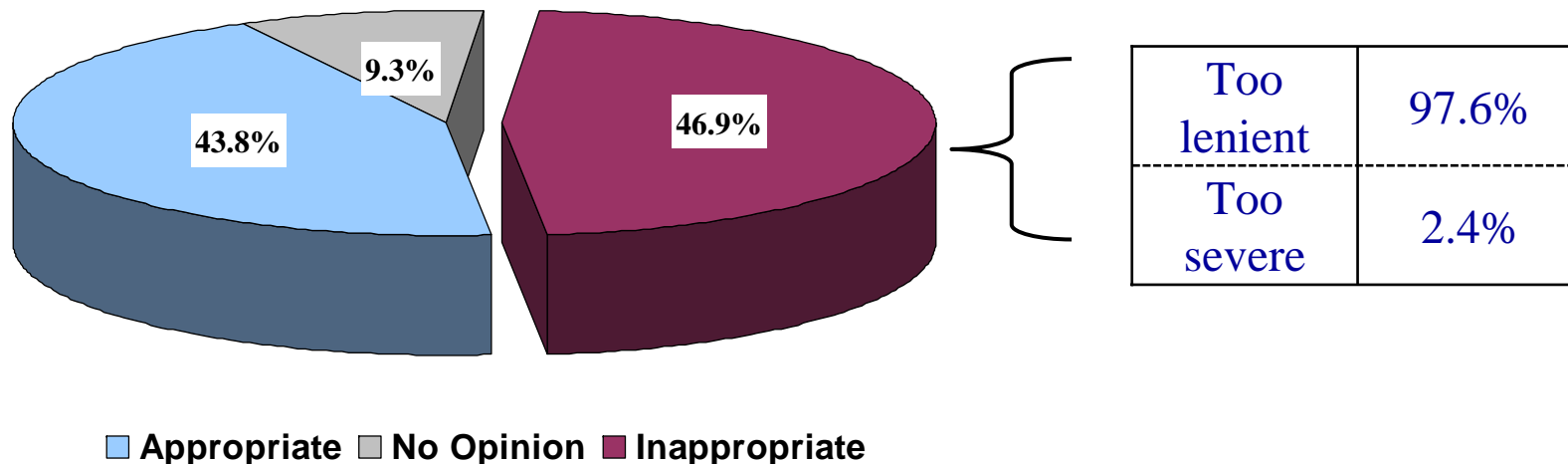
- ❖ 88.3% considered **the composition of the OAT** (i.e. a presiding magistrate and a few members of the public participated in the classification of articles) **appropriate**
- ❖ Among those who considered the composition not appropriate, they expressed concerns about **the potential differences in moral standards, lack of relevant knowledge and cultural differences of the public**



Differences in moral standards	67.2%
Lacking relevant knowledge for correct classification	60.6%
Differences in cultural backgrounds	60.5%

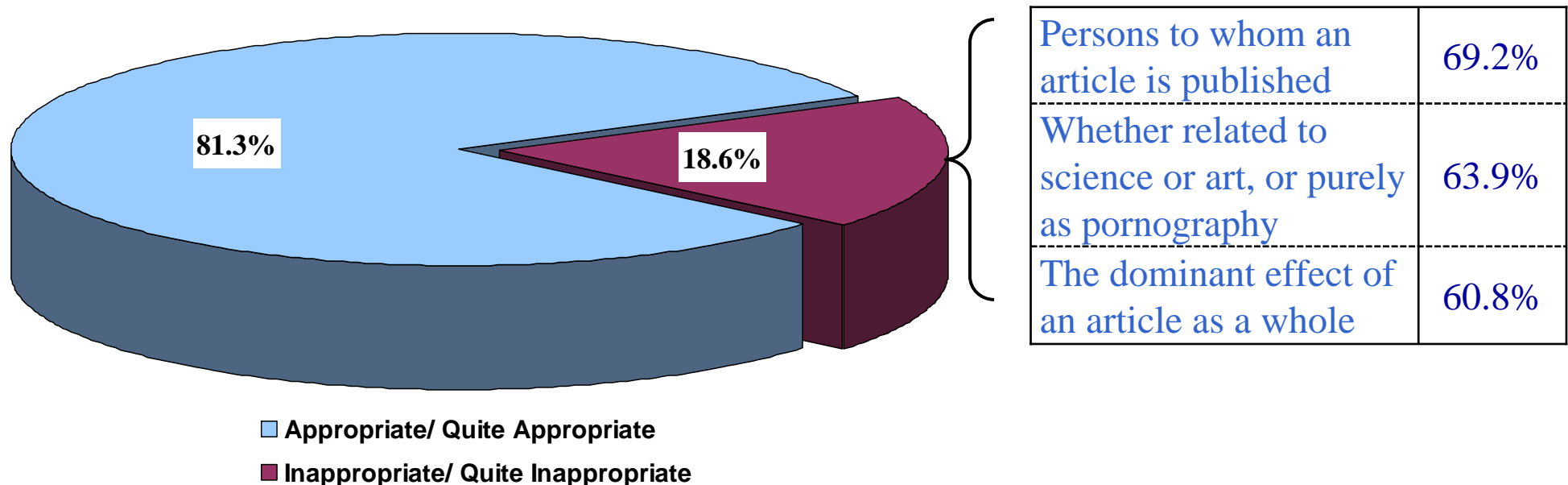
Awareness of Convictions

- ❖ 67.6% had heard of the convictions of publishing indecent articles in breach of the COIAO
- ❖ Among those who were aware of the penalties of the convictions, 43.8% considered the penalties appropriate and 46.9% considered the penalties inappropriate
- ❖ Majority of those who considered the penalties not appropriate, mentioned the penalties were too lenient



Views on the Classification of Articles

- ❖ 81.3% considered it was appropriate for the OAT to determine the classification of articles based on standards of morality that were generally accepted by reasonable members of the community
- ❖ 18.6% considered other factors more appropriate



Views on Publicity and Public Education Activities

Publicity and Public Education Activities for the COIAO

- ❖ Among those who were aware of the COIAO, the major sources of awareness were TV and newspapers

Those who were aware of the COIAO	
TV	83.8%
Newspapers	71.1%
Radio	22.1%
Magazines	13.7%
Internet	9.3%
School events	5.1%
Promotional leaflets	2.5%
Community events	2.4%
Others* (e.g. talks & seminars, posters, exhibitions etc)	9.8%

*Less than 2% for each channel

Publicity and Public Education Activities for the COIAO

- ❖ Among those who were aware of the COIAO, 6.0% of them were aged 15-17
- ❖ A relatively higher proportion of those aged 15-17 learned about the COIAO from school events or the Internet

Channels of Learning about the COIAO		
	All respondents who were aware of the COIAO	All those aged 15-17 who were aware of the COIAO
TV	83.8%	86.8%
Newspapers	71.1%	57.9%
Radio	22.1%	7.4%
Magazines	13.7%	9.9%
Internet	9.3%	23.9%
School events	5.1%	31.9%

Publicity and Public Education Activities for the COIAO

- ❖ TV/ radio was chosen by most respondents as effective channel

Effective Channels	
TV / Radio (91.2%)	
Newspapers / Magazines (48.7%)	➔ A higher proportion of persons aged 25 or above
Internet (20.2%)	➔ A higher proportion of persons aged 15-24

Public Views on Moral Standards

Public views on Moral Standards

- ❖ 14 out of 22 sample articles that had been classified by the OAT received the same sorting class from respondents using highest relative proportion calculation

	OAT Classification	Overall Classification*
Class I	6	1
Class II	12	9
Class III	4	4
Total:	22	14

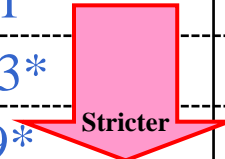
- For five out of six Class I sample articles, there were more respondents sorting these articles as Class II (than Class I)
- For three out of 12 Class II sample articles, there were more respondents sorting these articles as Class III (than Class II)
- For Class III sample articles, the standards of OAT classification were in line with the expectation of the general public

*By the highest relative proportion among Class I, Class II and Class III

Public views on Moral Standards

- ❖ **Females** tended to apply stricter standards than the average respondents

Classifications	OAT	Female	Male
Class I	6	1	3
Class II	12	13*	15
Class III	4	9*	4



- ❖ Respondents with **degree or above education** tended to use more lenient standards
 - In particular towards the classifications of Class III articles, as a significantly smaller proportion of them sorted all four Class III sample articles as Class III

* one article was sorted by the same proportion of respondents as Class II and Class III materials

Public views on Moral Standards

Reasons for sorting sample articles as Class II & not Class I	
To protect the under-aged	83.3%
The articles may induce under-aged persons to commit crime	73.2%
The articles are against moral standards of the community	71.6%
The articles are sickening and disturbing	67.5%

Reasons for sorting sample articles as Class III & not Class II	
The articles are severely against moral standards of community	82.7%
The articles are extremely sickening and disturbing	79.5%
The articles are extremely likely to induce readers/ viewers to commit crime	73.2%

Survey Observations

Survey Observations

- ❖ Most respondents were aware of the COIAO and possessed certain degree of understanding
- ❖ Understanding of the COIAO was not in depth
- ❖ Interest in penalty-related understanding was not overwhelming
- ❖ Respondents held different views on the appropriateness of the penalties. The majority of those who regarded the penalties inappropriate claimed the penalties were too lenient
- ❖ Most respondents considered the composition of the OAT and the main criteria of classifying the articles based on standards of morality generally accepted by reasonable members of the community appropriate

Survey Observations

- ❖ Differences between the prevailing standards of OAT classifications and the standards of morality generally accepted by the public were observed
 - Class III articles:
The standards of OAT classifications were in line with the expectation of the community
 - Class II articles:
The respondents applied slightly stricter standards than that of OAT classifications
 - Class I articles:
The respondents in general displayed stricter standards with regard to sorting articles that were suitable for people of all ages
- ❖ TV and newspapers were chosen by most people as effective channels for publicizing the COIAO
 - The Internet was considered by a significantly higher proportion of individuals aged 15-24 or students as an effective channel other than TV/ Radio and newspapers/magazines

Thank you