

# **Racial Acceptance Survey Report**

Hong Kong Unison

March 2012

## **1. Background**

- 1.1.** In 2009, the Census and Statistics Department published a Thematic Household Survey on racial acceptance (Report No. 39). The survey sampled some 10,000 households to analyse the degree of acceptance of Chinese towards various ethnic groups. The survey revealed a disconcertingly low level of acceptance towards South Asians, South East Asians, Africans and Arabians. The survey was not widely publicized and the raised little awareness in the public on the prejudices faced by certain ethnic groups in Hong Kong. Since 2007, Hong Kong Unison has collected surveys on racial acceptance that focus on the ethnic groups that are represented in the Hong Kong demographics. This report compiles the results of the surveys, with the hope to supplement the 2009 census survey, raise awareness in the issue of racial acceptance and bring about positive policy changes.
- 1.2.** According to the 2011 Census, 6.38% of the Hong Kong population is of non-Chinese minority ethnicities. Among them, the most represented minority ethnicities are Indonesian (133,377), Filipino (133,018), White (55,236), Indian (28,616) and Pakistani (18,042). Hong Kong Unison started to work with ethnic minorities in Hong Kong in 2001, and throughout the years, many have come to Hong Kong Unison with complaints of racial discrimination in various aspects of their lives.

## **2. Research Objective**

- 2.1.** To understand the acceptance of Hong Kong residents towards various ethnic groups in various aspects of everyday life.
- 2.2.** To explore the impressions Hong Kong residents have on ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.
- 2.3.** To make recommendations to the government on ways to combat prejudices and racial discrimination, and to raise the public's racial acceptance and sensitivity.

### **3. Methodology**

- 3.1.** This study employed quantitative research to gauge the respondents' acceptance towards minority ethnic groups in everyday situations. It also contained a short response section about the respondents' definition of a "Hong Konger" and their impressions on ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.
- 3.2.** The study mainly targeted ethnic Chinese Hong Kong residents who may encounter ethnic minorities in their professions. These include police recruits, teachers, secondary students and university students.
- 3.3.** This study employed a convenient sampling method. All respondents were participants of the Cultural Sensitivity talks and workshops conducted by Hong Kong Unison staff.
- 3.4.** The data was collected between 2007 and 2012.
- 3.5.** The Respondents: 1862 questionnaires were collected. The majority (54%) of respondents were police recruits in the Hong Kong Police College. 27.6% respondents were secondary school students, while 10.3% were teachers. These students and teachers are mainly from secondary schools that has enrolled ethnic minority students. The remaining 4.5% were university students.
- 3.6.** Limitation: The results of this study are not representative of the general population in Hong Kong as this study employed a convenient sampling method.
- 3.7.** Survey design: The survey consisted of two main parts. The first part was a short written response section that tapped into the respondents' own definition of "Hong Konger (香港人)" and their impressions on ethnic minorities in Hong Kong (香港的少數族裔). This part allowed respondents to write in short responses. The second part consisted of 13 multiple choice questions. Each question probed at the respondents' acceptance towards people with different ethnic labels. Respondents were asked to mark a tick next to all the ethnic labels to which the question statement applied. The various ethnic labels in the survey include American, African, Japanese, Pakistani, Filipino, Nepalese, Indian, Chinese and European.
- 3.8.** The survey also included a demographic section that collected information on respondents' gender, age and ethnicity. It was an anonymous survey and was

conducted in Chinese only. For a copy of the full questionnaire, please refer to *Appendix B*.

**3.9. Procedure:** The questionnaires were given to all participants of the Racial Harmony workshops. Respondents were given about 5 minutes to complete the questions without discussing them with their fellow participants. They were encouraged to record their initial impressions and not to over-think the questions. The questionnaires were then collected by staff of Hong Kong Unison before the workshop resumes.

## **4. Results: Multiple-Choice Section**

### **4.1. Background Information of Respondents**

4.1.1. A total of 1862 surveys were collected from 2007 to 2012.

4.1.2. The majority (54%) of respondents were police recruits in the Hong Kong Police College. 27.6% respondents were secondary school students, while 10.3% were teachers. These students and teachers are mainly from secondary schools that has enrolled ethnic minority students. The remaining 4.5% were university students.

4.1.3. The vast majority of the respondents were ethnic Chinese (99.37%). The mean age is 23.54. In terms of gender, 75.65% respondents are male<sup>1</sup>.

### **4.2. Acceptance in the Neighbourhood**

4.2.1. Three survey questions gauges the respondents' acceptance of ethnic minorities in their neighbourhoods. These questions are:

“I accept living with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same neighbourhood”

“I accept living with \_\_\_\_\_ on the same floor”

“I accept sitting next to \_\_\_\_\_ on public transportation.”

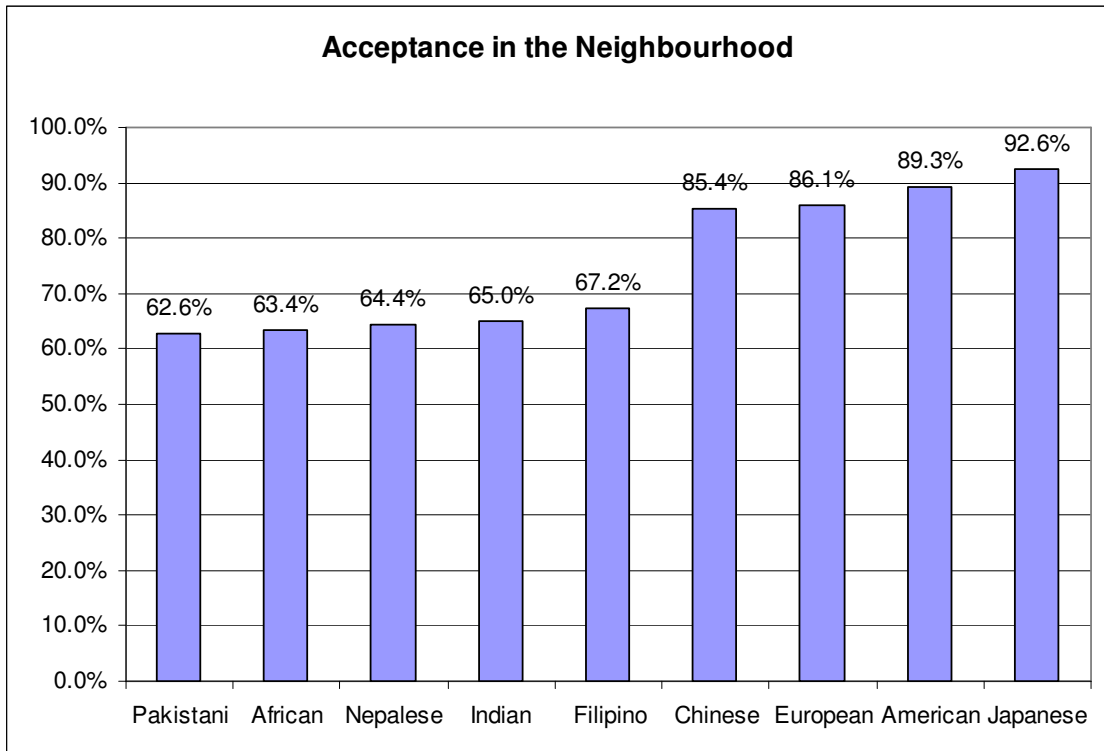
4.2.2. Only 62.6% respondents accepted Pakistanis in their neighbourhoods. In other words, 37.4% respondents did not indicate acceptance towards having Pakistanis in their neighbourhood. On the other hand, respondents are more

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<sup>1</sup> The demographic section was not present in the earlier versions of the questionnaire. The percentages in this demographic section are based on the 644 responses collected on demographics.

accepting to having Chinese (85.3%), Europeans (86.1%), Americans (89.3%) and Japanese (92.6%) in their neighbourhoods.

4.2.3. Figure 4.2 shows that the respondents accept certain ethnic labels (Chinese, European, American, Japanese) distinctively more than others (Pakistani, African, Nepalese, Indian and Filipino).



*Figure 4.2: Percentage of respondents who indicated that they accept ethnic minorities in their living neighbourhood.*

### 4.3. Acceptance in the Workplace

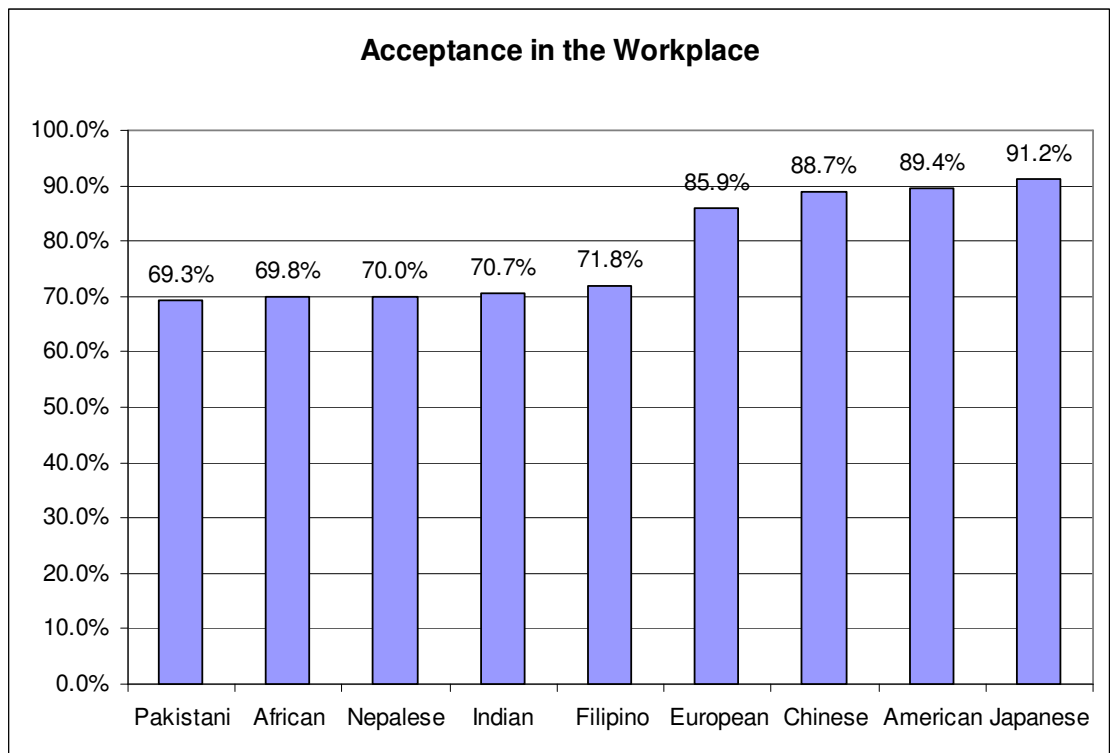


Figure 4.3: Percentage of respondents who indicated that they accept ethnic minorities in their workplace.

When asked if they would accept being colleagues with ethnic minorities, least respondents (69.3%) indicated that they would work with Pakistanis, while 69.8% and 70% indicated they would work with Africans and Nepalese respectively. Most respondents accept working with Japanese (91.2%), Americans (89.4%) and Chinese (88.7%).

### 4.4. Acceptance in schools

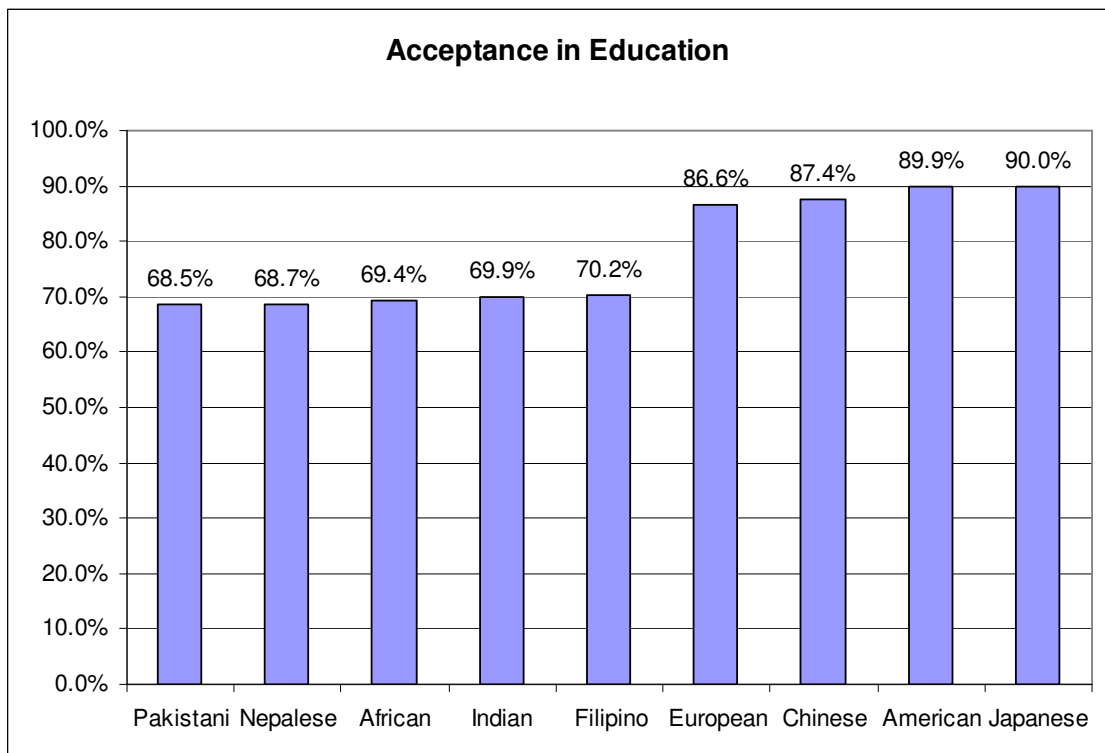
4.4.1. Four questions in the survey tapped into respondents' acceptance of ethnic minority labels in education.

"I accept studying with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same school."

"I accept studying with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same classroom."

"I accept having my children study with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same school."

"I accept having my children study with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same classroom."



*Figure 4.4a Percentage of respondents who indicated that they accept ethnic minorities in their schools and classrooms.*

4.4.2. Figure 4.4a shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they accept ethnic minorities in their own or their children’s schools and classrooms. Again there is a distinct difference between the respondents’ responses towards Pakistanis, Nepalese, Africans, Indians and Filipinos compared to that towards Europeans, Chinese, Americans and Japanese.

4.4.3. As shown in Figure 4.4b, the respondents were slightly more likely to accept studying alongside ethnic minorities than to accept having their children study alongside ethnic minorities.

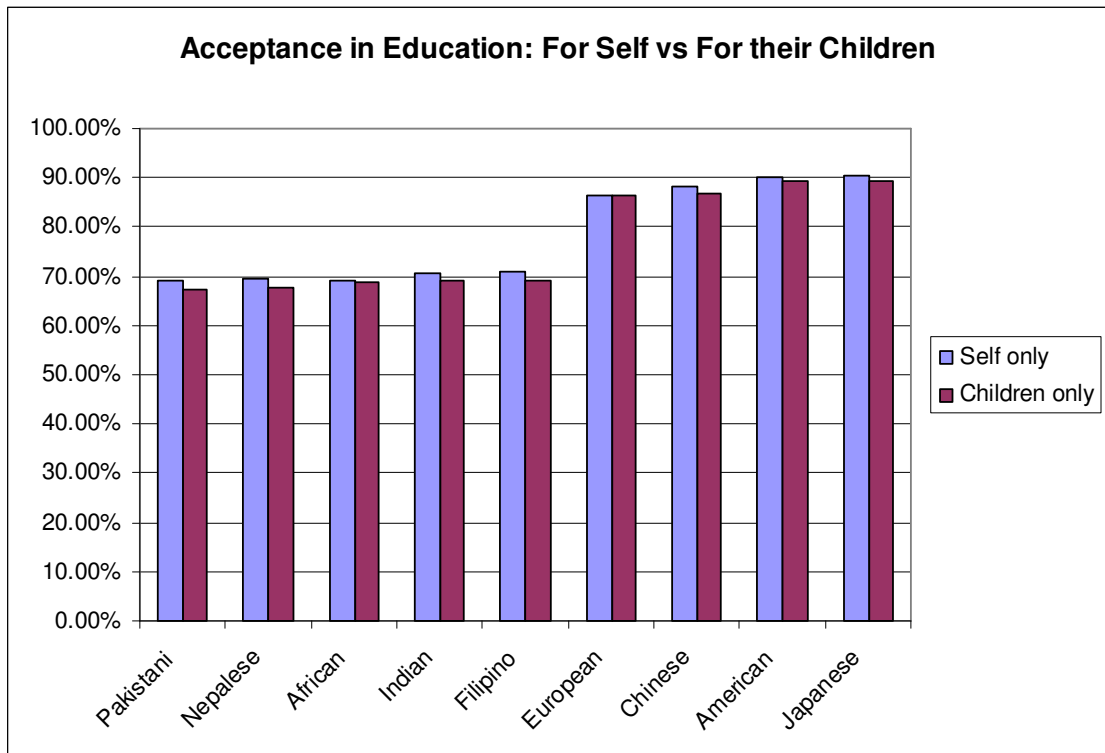


Figure 4.4b: Comparison: respondents' acceptance towards ethnic minorities for themselves versus for their children

#### 4.5. Acceptance in Personal Life

4.5.1. Five questions in the survey tapped into the respondents' attitudes towards ethnic minority labels in their personal lives. The questions are:

“I accept being friends with \_\_\_\_\_”

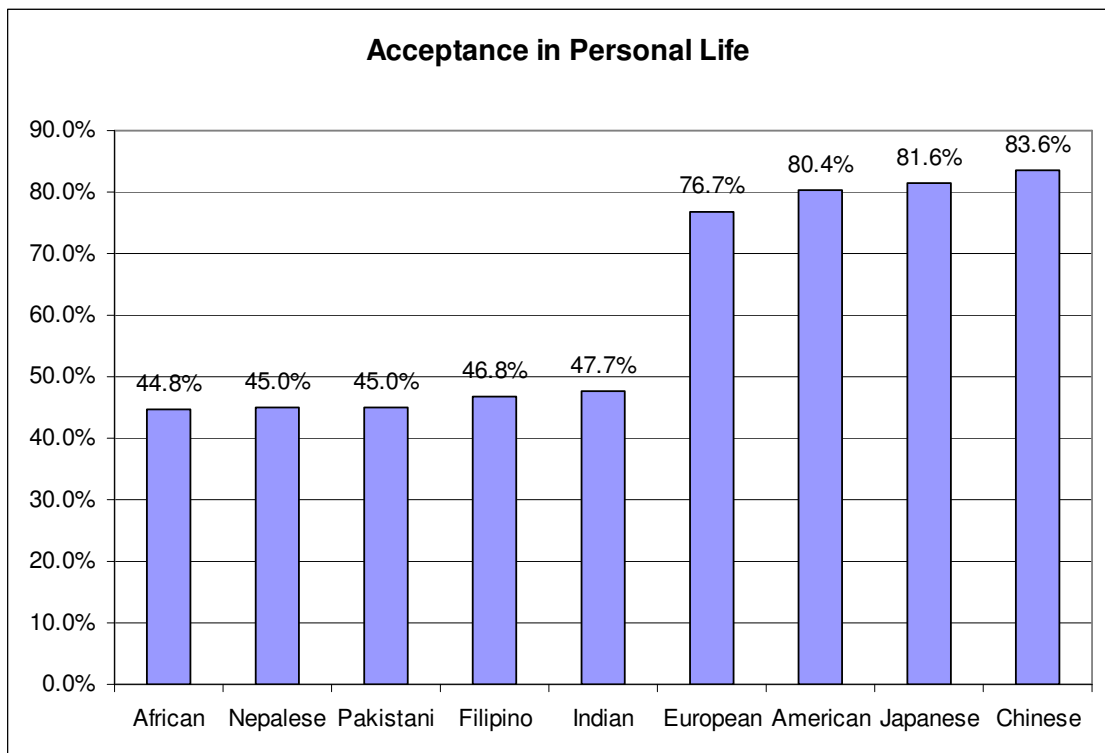
“I accept having my family members marry \_\_\_\_\_”

“I accept marrying \_\_\_\_\_”

“I accept having my children be friend with \_\_\_\_\_”

“I accept having my children marry \_\_\_\_\_”





*Figure 4.5: Percentage of respondents who indicated that they accept ethnic minorities in their personal lives.*

4.5.2. Least respondents accept Africans in their personal lives (44.8%), followed by Nepalese and Pakistani (both at 45.08%). Less than half of the respondents accepted Africans, Nepalese, Pakistani, Filipinos and Indians in their personal lives, while over 75% accepted Europeans, Americans, Japanese and Chinese.

#### **4.6. For Their Children**

4.6.1. To gauge how the respondents felt about having their children mingling with ethnic minorities, we considered the following four questions:

“I accept having my children study with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same school.”

“I accept having my children study with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same classroom.”

“I accept having my children be friend with \_\_\_\_\_”

“I accept having my children marry \_\_\_\_\_”

4.6.2. Less than 60% respondents accept having their children mingle with Pakistanis and Nepalese in their education and personal lives. The

respondents are significantly less acceptant to Pakistanis, Nepalese, Africans, Filipinos and Indians than to Europeans, Chinese, Japanese and Americans.

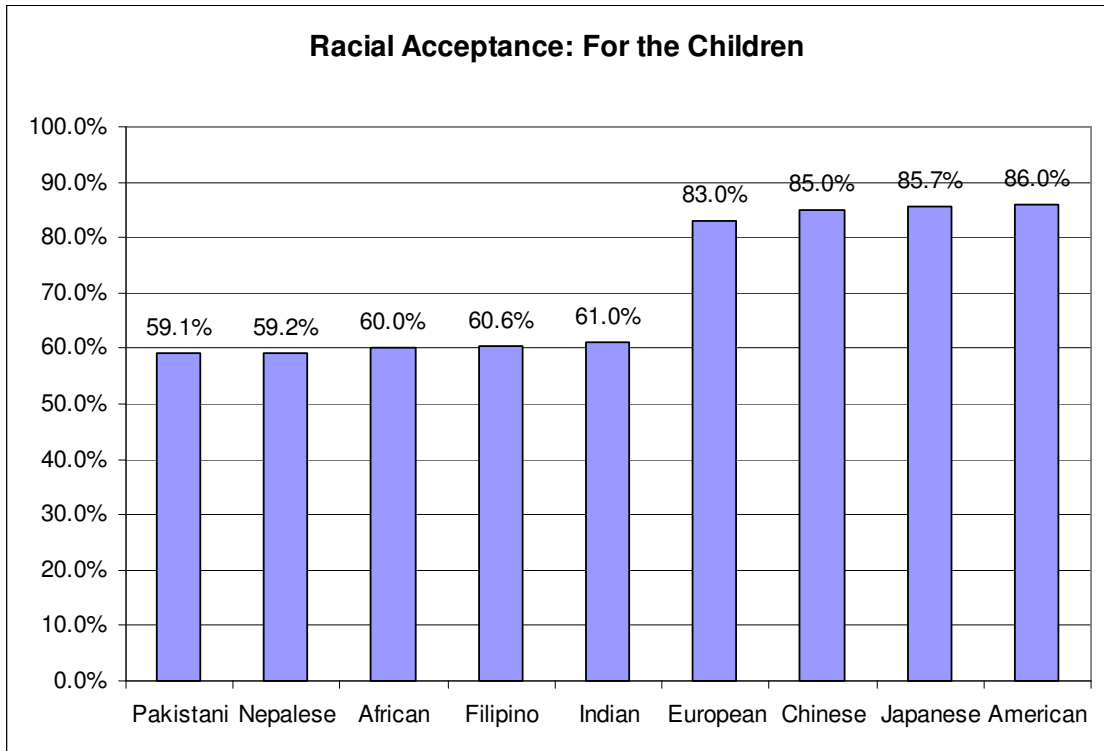


Figure 4.6: Percentage of respondents who indicated that they accept having ethnic minorities in their children's educations and personal lives. (Max. = 13)

#### 4.7. General Acceptance towards various ethnic minorities

4.7.1. To find out the respondents' general acceptance towards a specific ethnic minority group, we tallied the number of questions in which a respondent indicated acceptance towards an ethnic minority group. This is the General Acceptance Score. For example, a respondent can give a maximum General Acceptance Score of 13 to a particular ethnic group since the survey has 13 questions. The mean across respondents is taken as the Mean Score of General Acceptance for each ethnic minority group.

4.7.2. Given that the maximum mean score is 13, respondents have given Pakistanis the lowest acceptance at a score of 7.56. The next lowest are African and Nepalese at 7.61 and 7.63 respectively. The respondents had a

highest degree of acceptance towards Japanese (11.40), Americans (11.2) and Chinese (11.14).

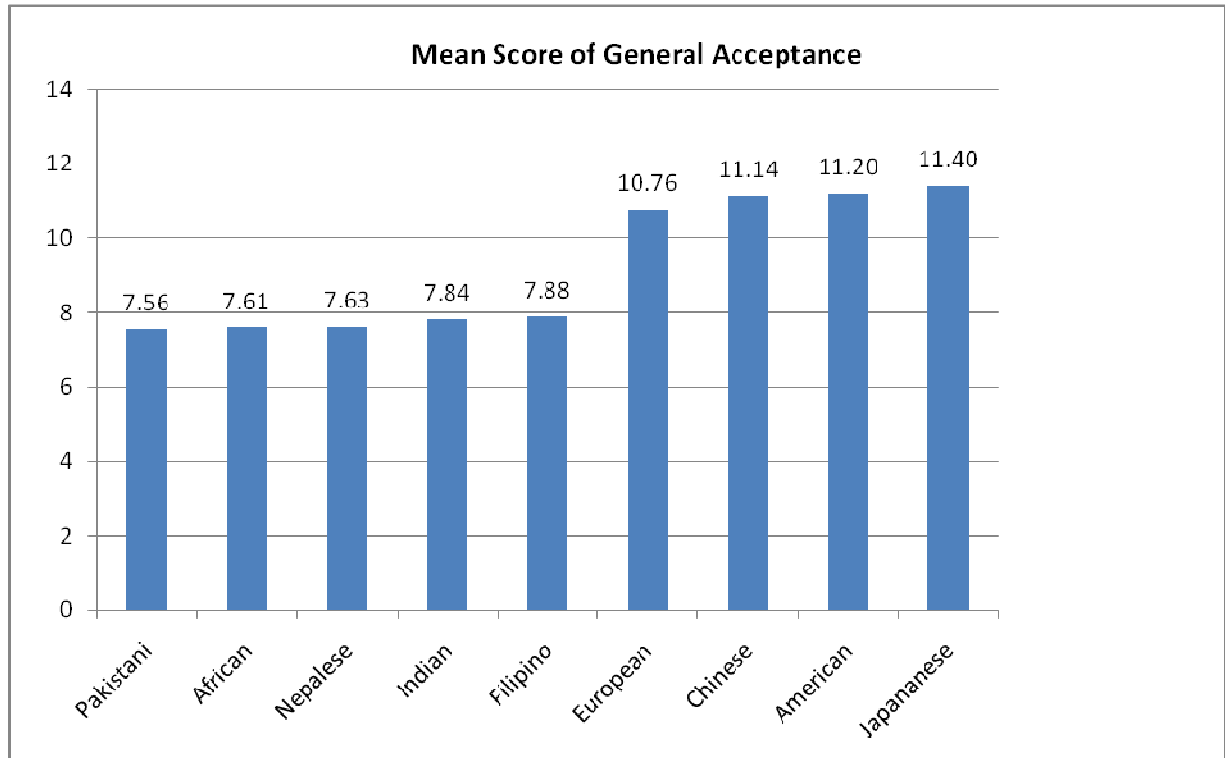


Figure 4.7: The mean number of questions in which the respondents accept

## 5. Results: Short-Response Section

**5.1.** From the question “what makes a ‘Hong Konger’” several common themes are seen from the respondents’ responses: being ethnic Chinese, Cantonese-speaking, and being born in Hong Kong. Below are the percentages of respondents that consider these factors as essential to the Hong Konger identity:

Characteristic	Percentage of respondents
Being ethnic Chinese	6.24%
Cantonese-speaking	5.09%
Born in Hong Kong	32.85%
One or more of the above	26.85%

The percentage of respondents who mentioned one or more of the above three criteria is 26.85%

**5.2.** Other characteristic mentioned include: treating Hong Kong as their long-term home; being knowledgeable about Hong Kong; conforming to the culture and behaviours of mainstream Hong Kong society; holding a valid permanent residents identity card; and having parents who were born in Hong Kong.

## **6. Discussion and analysis**

### **6.1. Wide discrepancy in the level of acceptance between ethnic groups**

This study finds that the public is less accepting to ethnic groups such as such as Pakistanis, Africans, Nepalese, Indians and Filipinos than to labels such as Japanese, Americans, Europeans and Chinese. This discrepancy is found in all of the aspects of daily life this study measured. This finding is also consistent with the findings of the 2008 Census Thematic Household Survey on racial acceptance. The 2008 Survey also showed that Arabians, South Asians, Africans and South East Asians are consistently less accepted than Chinese, Caucasians and Japanese/ Koreans.

### **6.2. Low Degree of acceptance towards Pakistanis**

Respondents indicated the lowest degree of acceptance towards the label “Pakistani.” Moreover, some respondents also associate the labels “ethnic minority” and “Pakistani” with characteristics such as “dirty,” “violent” and “criminal.” This finding has significant implications since the Pakistani population in Hong Kong is significant. According to the 2011 census, Pakistani is the fifth largest ethnic minority group in Hong Kong in terms of population, and is the group with the fastest growth rate (38.4% population increase from the 2006 census). In particular, police officers and teachers hold positions of power in their workplace, and are often in the role of help-providers. Prejudices and low degrees of acceptance may impair these workers’ professional judgement, and may deprive Hong Kong Pakistanis and other ethnic minorities of the fair and just treatments that they are entitled to.

### **6.3. Ethnic Minorities not accepted as Hong Kongers**

A fourth of the respondents' definitions of Hong Kongers may exclude ethnic minority and immigrant residents in Hong Kong (the definitions include being ethnic Chinese, able to speak Cantonese fluently, and being born in Hong Kong). If some ethnic Chinese Hong Kongers do not accept ethnic minorities as part of the Hong Kong society, they may not consider ethnic minorities as being entitled to the same rights and treatments that ethnic Chinese residents enjoy, thus leading to unfair treatments or discrimination.

## **7. Policy Suggestions**

Hong Kong Unison believes that discrimination stems from prejudices and ignorance. They are misguided values that are learned and acquired, and can be eradicated through continuous and systematic civic education. With this in mind, we propose the following policy suggestions:

### **7.1. Ethnic Group-Specific Public Education**

The Home Affairs Bureau and the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) should develop a civic education program that educates the mainstream public about specific minority ethnic groups, such as Pakistanis, Africans and Nepalese, that are less accepted within Hong Kong society. The programs should emphasize on cultural sensitivity and the unique circumstances faced by the specific ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong, with the goal to alleviate the prejudices and discriminations faced by these ethnic groups. These ethnic group-specific education programs are especially important for professionals such as police officers and teachers, whose personal attitudes towards certain ethnic minorities may affect their professional judgements.

### **7.2. Strengthen Professional Training for Frontline Police Officers**

To ensure that the practices of the police force is culturally sensitive and free of racial discrimination, the Hong Kong Police Force should provide on-the-job training to strengthen the cultural and racial sensitivity of frontline police officers.

It should also insert guidelines and sanction clauses into the Police General Order and the Force Procedure Manual to instruct the force on non-discriminatory and culturally sensitive practices and standards of conduct. Currently, there are no avenues for victims of racial discrimination to make complaints against the police force. There are no guidelines in the Police General Orders on racial discrimination. Moreover, clauses that renders discrimination by the Government unlawful (e.g. DDO Section 21: “it is unlawful for the Government to discriminate against a person with a disability in the performance of its functions or the exercise of its powers”) exist in the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, the Sexual Discrimination Ordinance and the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance, but are absent in the Racial Discrimination Ordinance.

### **7.3. Develop Pilot Education Program to Promote Racial Harmony**

The EOC should promote racial harmony to the young generation by developing a pilot education program for schools. The pilot program should include the program curriculum, systematic support on teaching materials and teacher training, and be implemented for 3 years in pilot schools.

### **7.4. General Studies and Liberal Studies Curriculum Unit on Racial Harmony and Cultural Sensitivity**

The Education Bureau (EDB) should insert units on racial harmony and cultural sensitivity into the primary school general studies and secondary school liberal studies curriculum. Such study units can alleviate prejudice and discrimination in youngsters, and make good use of the unique racial diversity in Hong Kong as a tool to enhance the students’ multi-cultural and international perspective.

### **7.5. Training and Education Guideline Packet for Teachers and Schools**

The EDB and teacher-training organizations should develop training and a resource packet about racial and cultural diversity for teachers. The packet should include resources for teachers to learn more about minority ethnic groups and their situations in Hong Kong, as well as lesson plans and teaching materials

for teachers to use in their classrooms.

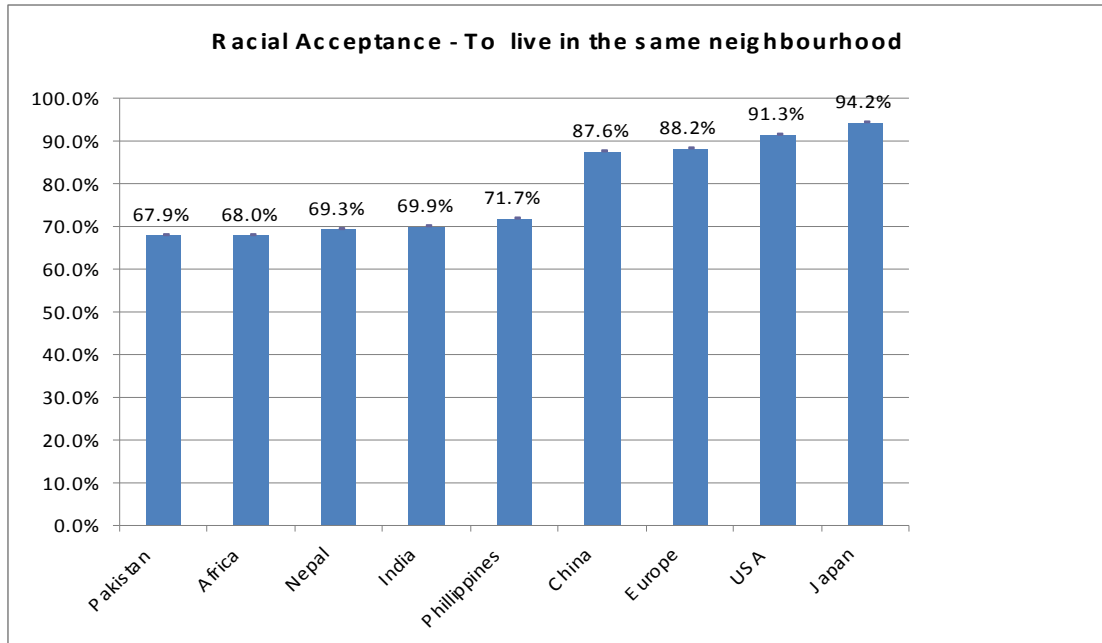
#### **7.6. Compile Code of Practice for Education**

The EOC should work with the EDB to compile a Code of Practice for Education under the Racial Discrimination Ordinance (RDO). The EOC compiled a code of practice for education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance to provide guidance to educators, students and parents on how to stay compliant to the DDO, and should do the same under the RDO.

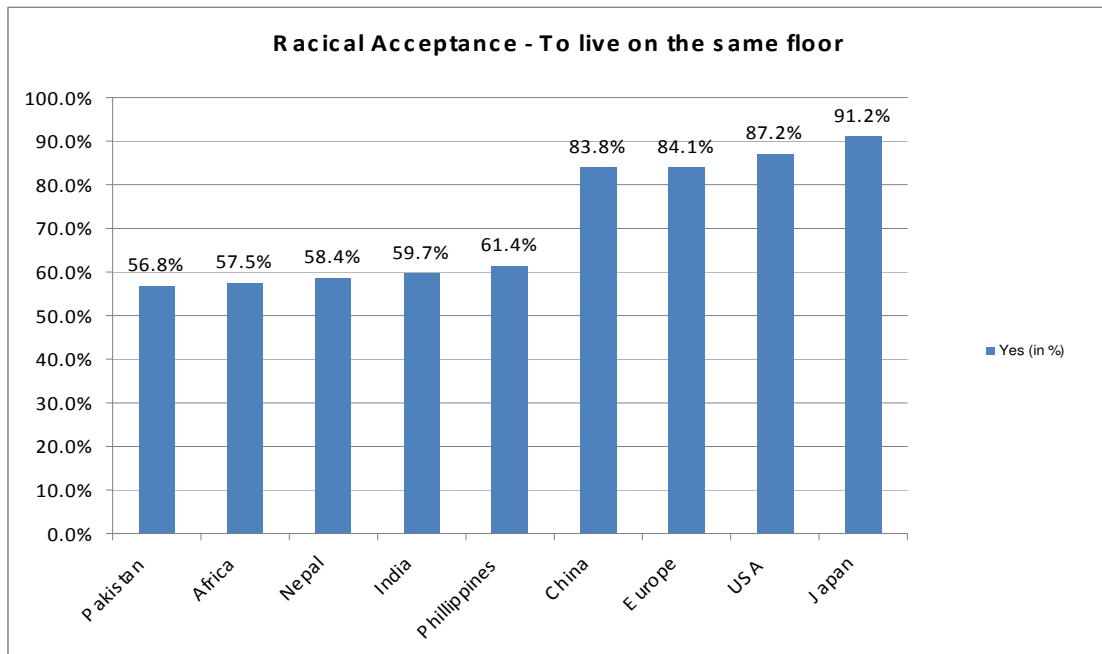
## Appendix A

Results for individual multiple-choice question

Q.1 I accept living with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same neighbourhood.

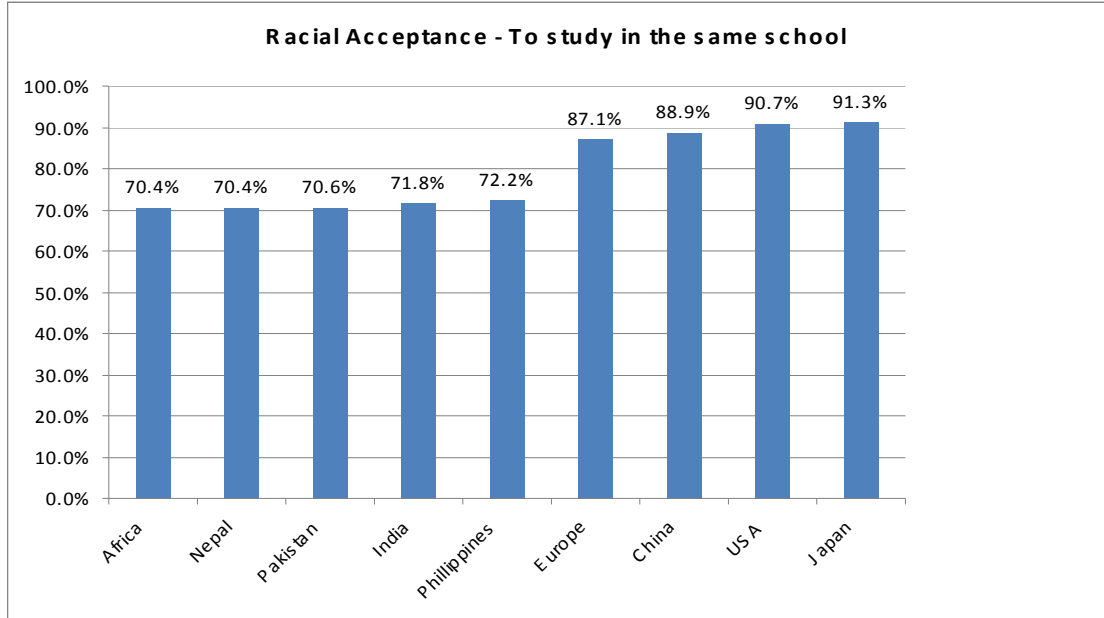


Q.2 I accept living with \_\_\_\_\_ on the same floor.

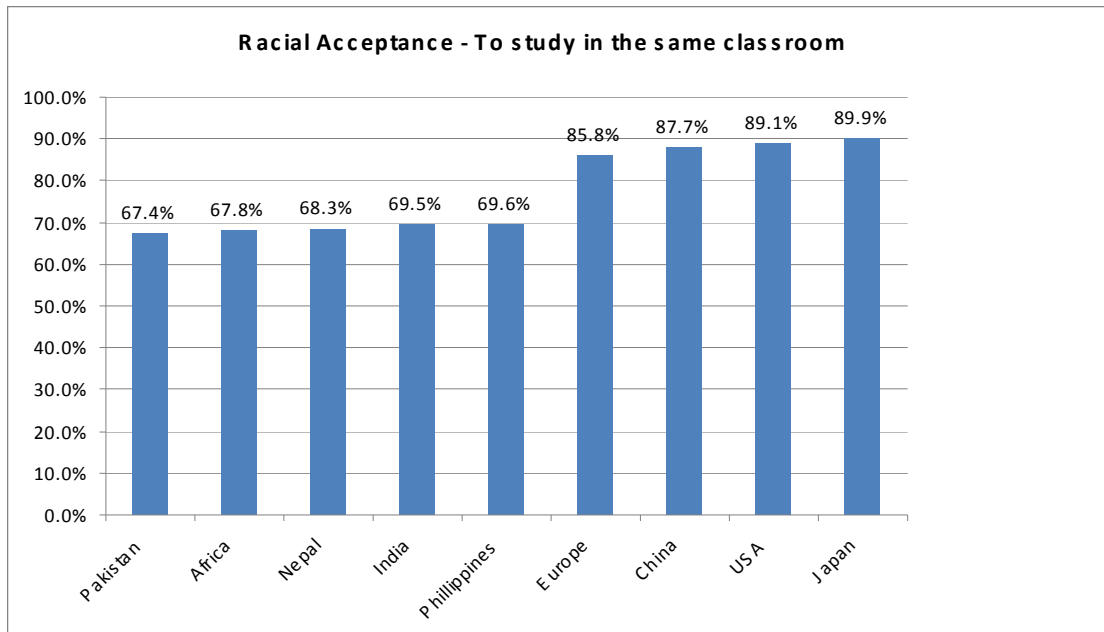




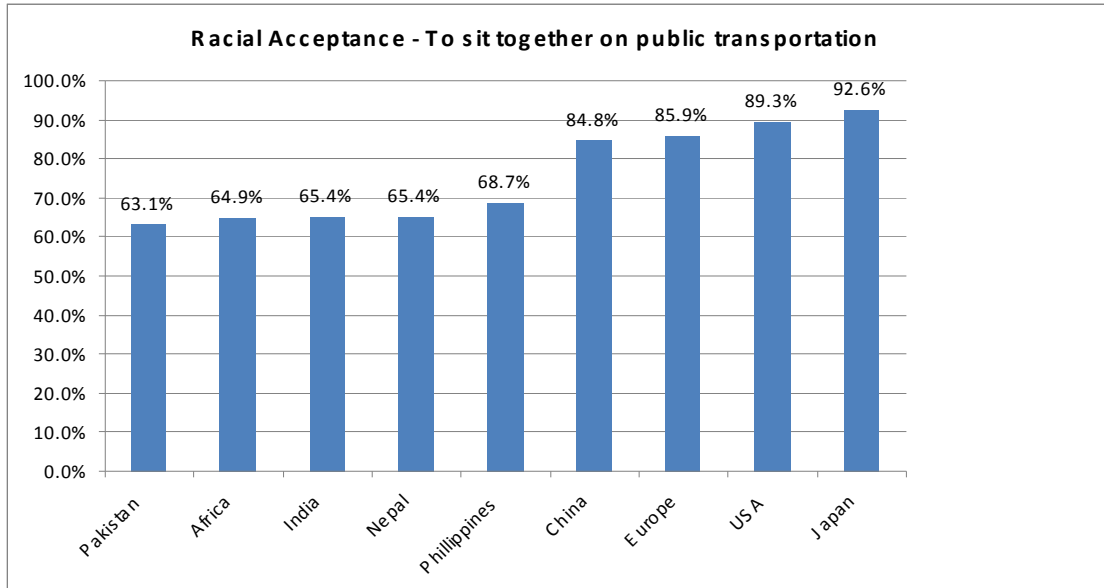
Q.3 I accept studying with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same school.



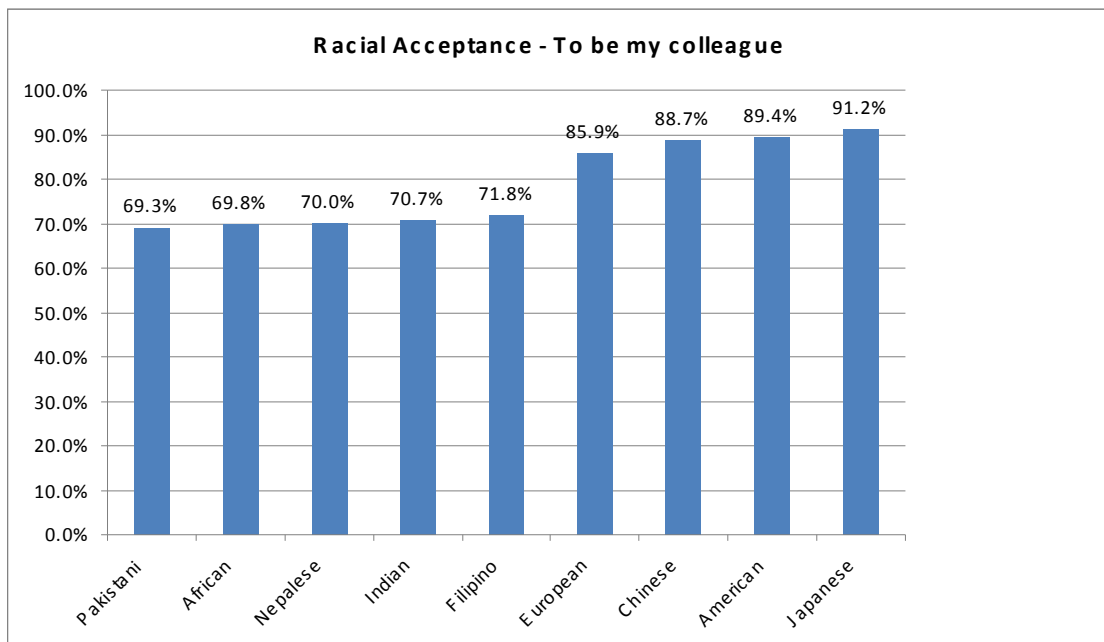
Q.4 I accept studying with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same classroom.



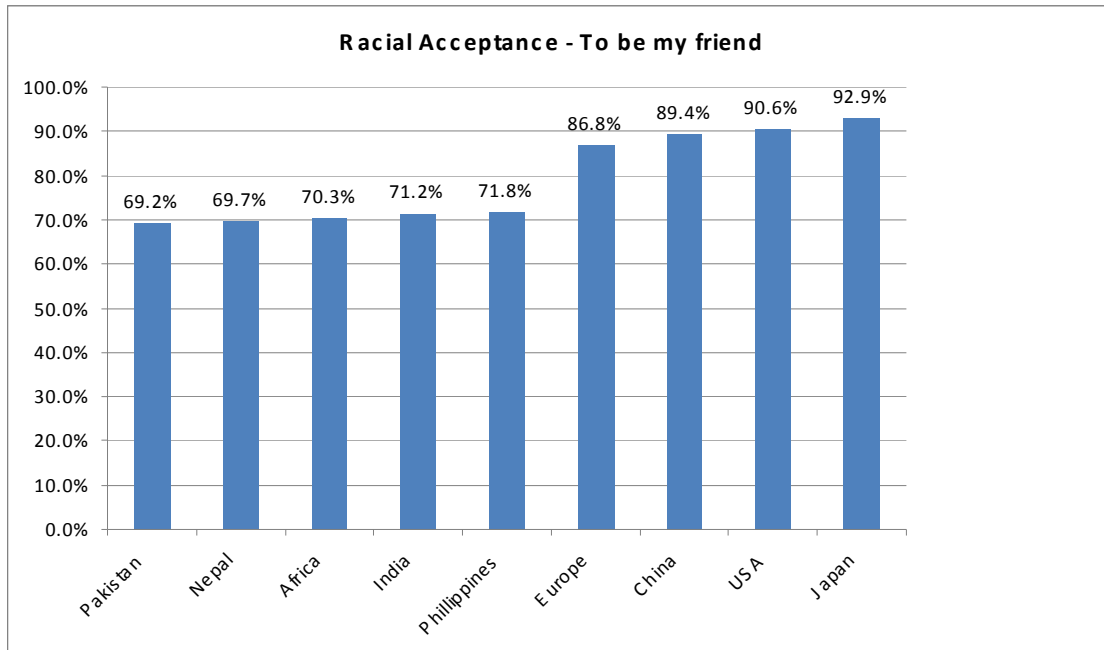
Q.5 I accept sitting next to \_\_\_\_\_ on public transportation.



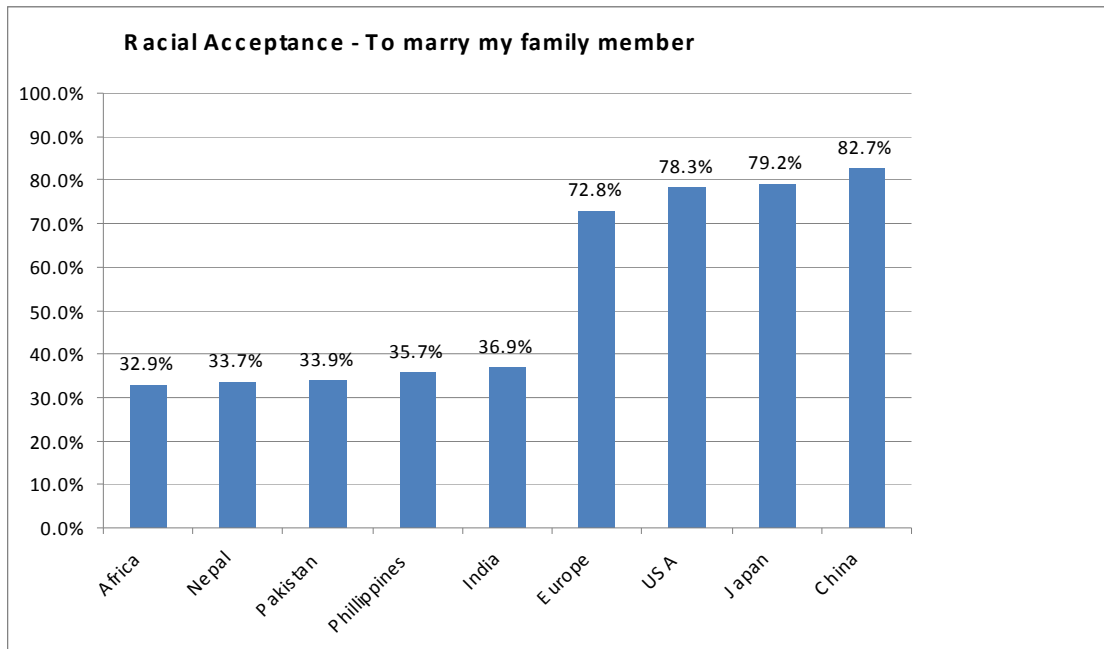
Q.6 I accept being colleagues with \_\_\_\_\_.



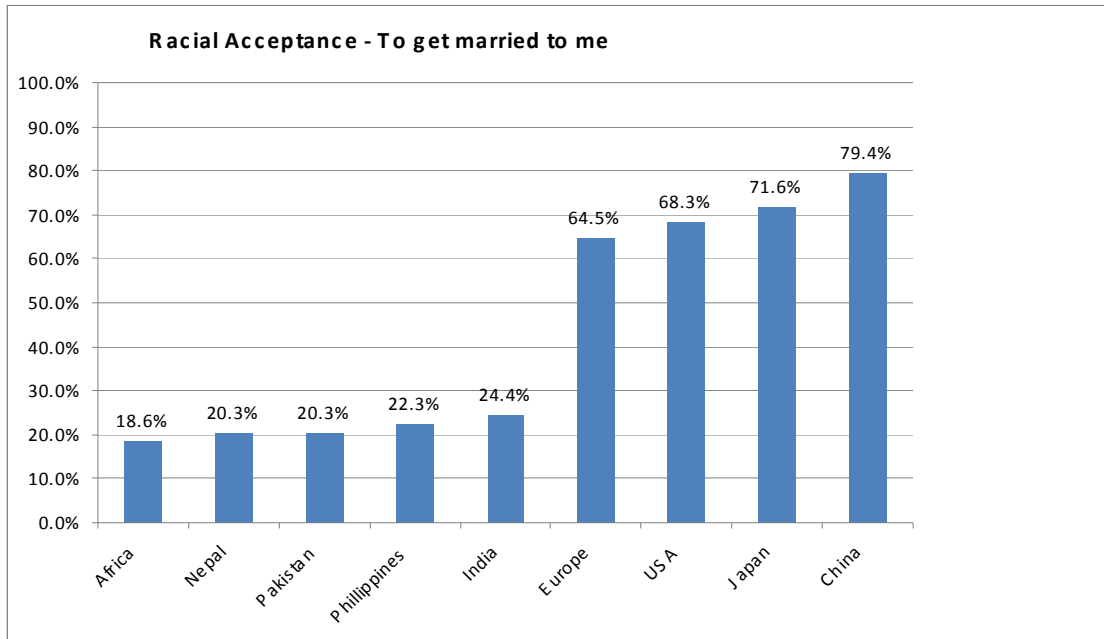
Q.7 I accept being friends with \_\_\_\_\_.



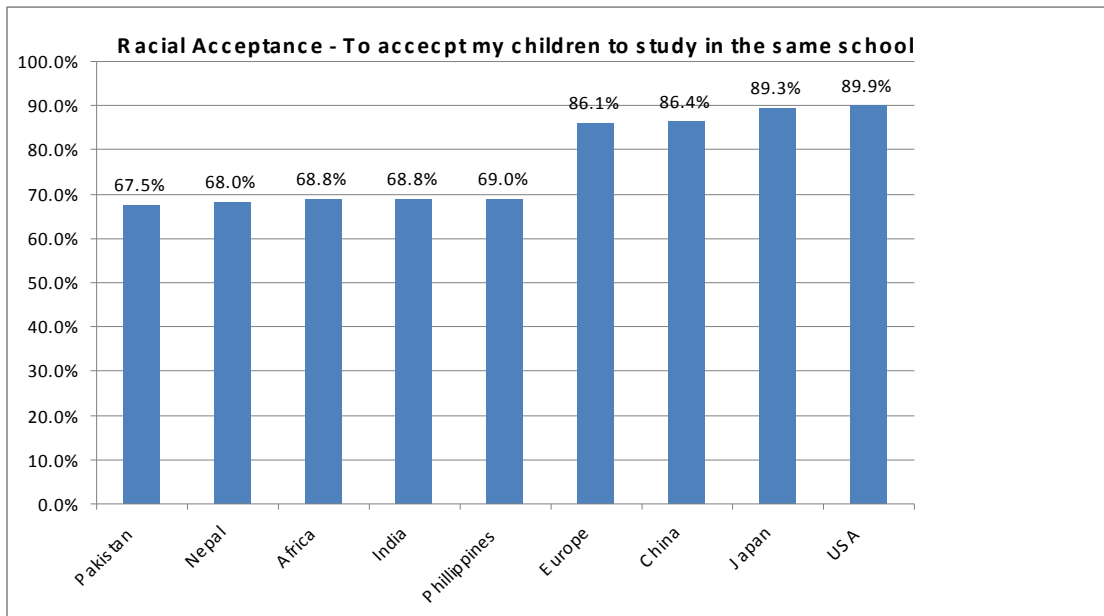
Q.8 I accept \_\_\_\_\_ marrying my family members.



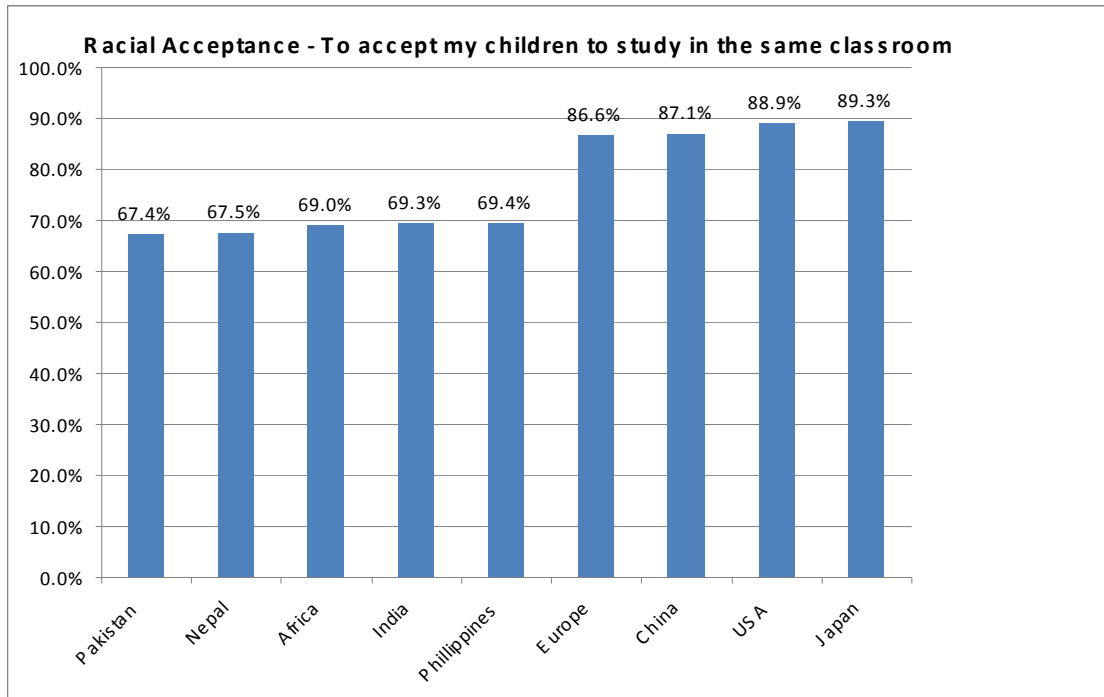
Q.9 I accept marrying \_\_\_\_\_.



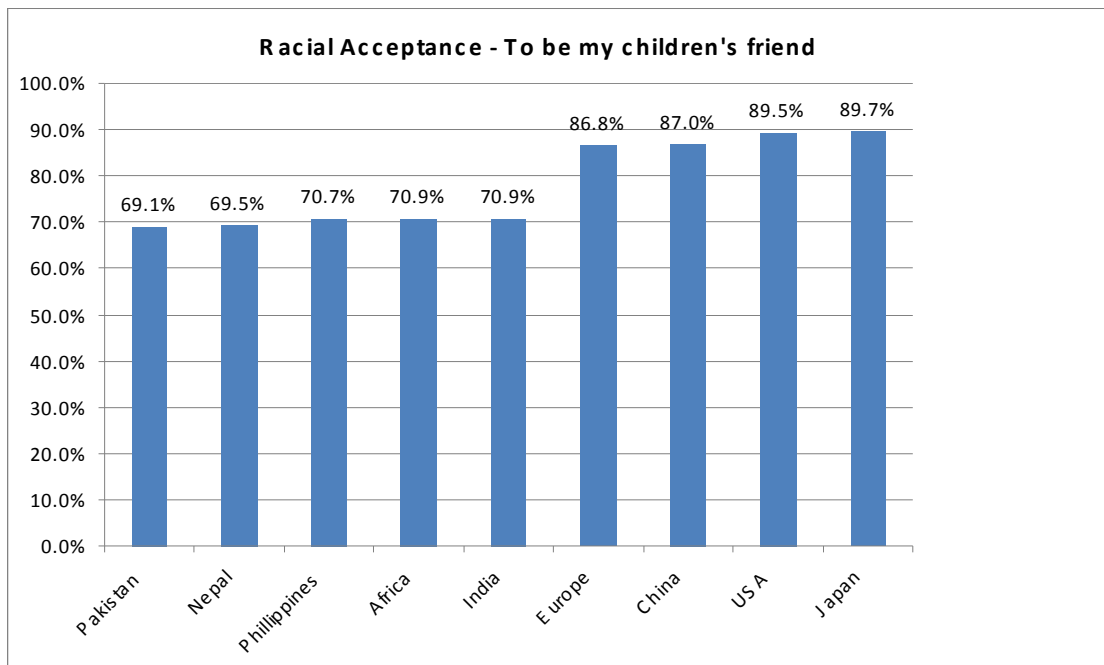
Q.10 I accept having my children studying with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same school.



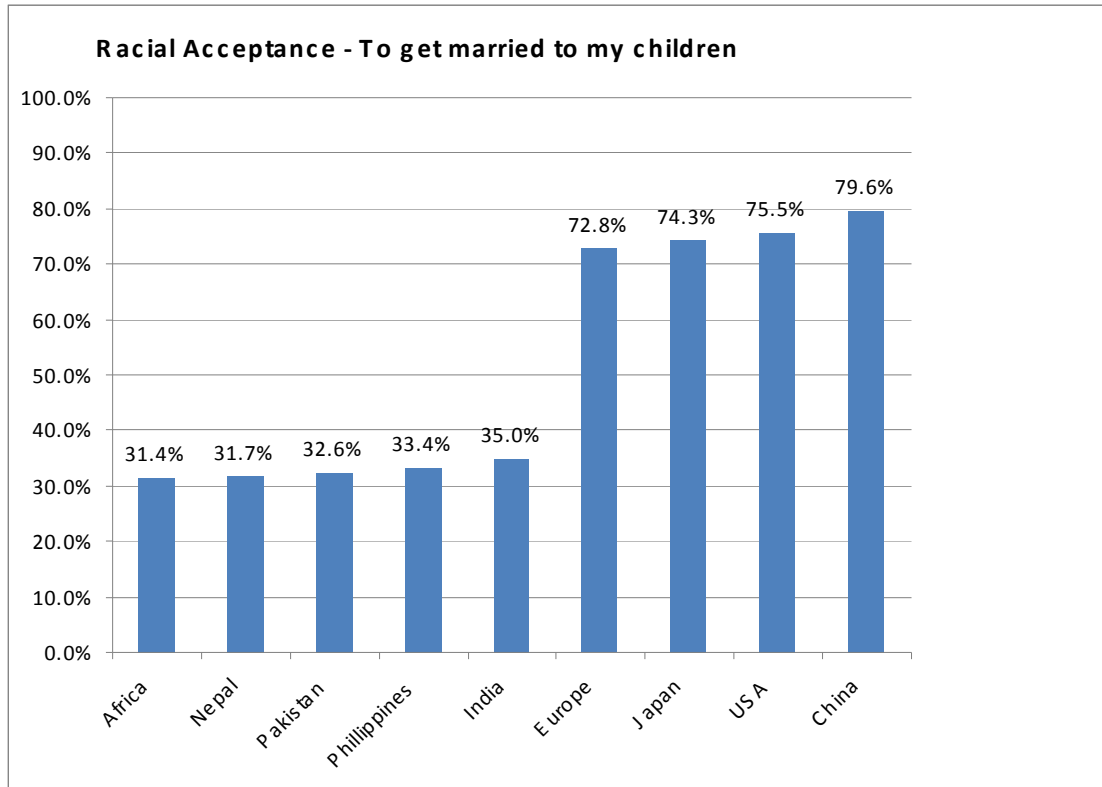
Q.11 I accept having my children studying with \_\_\_\_\_ in the same classroom.



Q.12 I accept having my children be friends with \_\_\_\_\_.



Q.13 I accept having my children marry \_\_\_\_\_.



## Appendix B

### Full questionnaire

By HK Unison on date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: M/F Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnic: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 甲部

1. 甚麼叫‘香港人’? \_\_\_\_\_

2. 當有人提起香港的少數族裔, 你想到甚麼? \_\_\_\_\_

	美 國	非 洲	日 本	巴 基 斯 坦	菲 律 賓	尼 泊 爾	印 度	中 國	歐 洲
1. 我接受與_____人同住一個社區	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
2. 我接受與_____人同住一層樓	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
3. 我接受與_____人同讀一間學校	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
4. 我接受與_____人在同一課室上課	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
5. 在公共交通工具上, 我接受_____人坐我隔離位	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
6. 我接受與_____人做同事	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
7. 我接受與_____人做朋友	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
8. 我接受我的家人與_____人結婚	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
9. 我接受與_____人結婚	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
10. 我接受我的子女與_____人同讀一間學校	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
11. 我接受我的子女與_____人在同一課室上課	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
12. 我接受我的子女與_____人做朋友	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
13. 我接受的的子女與_____人結婚	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

The original questionnaire is in Chinese. Below is a translated version.

By HK Unison on date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: M / F

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: Chinese / Non-Chinese

Part A

1. What is a “Hong Konger?” \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. When you hear “ethnic minorities in Hong Kong,” what impressions do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Part B

Please mark with a ✓

	American	African	Japanese	Pakistani	Filipino	Nepalese	Indian	Chinese	European
1. I accept living with _____ in the same neighbourhood.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
2. I accept living with _____ on the same floor.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
3. I accept studying with _____ in the same school.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
4. I accept studying with _____ in the same classroom.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
5. I accept sitting next to _____ on public transportation.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
6. I accept being colleagues with _____.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
7. I accept being friends with _____.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
8. I accept _____ marrying my family members.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
9. I accept marrying _____.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
10. I accept having my children studying with _____ in the same school.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
11. I accept having my children studying with _____ in the same classroom.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
12. I accept having my children be friends with _____.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
13. I accept having my children marry _____.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )