

Matching the **Skills,**
Knowledge and
Capabilities
of Designers to the Expectations and
Requirements of Employers

**DesignSmart Research Project
Final Report
2008**

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Principal Investigator

Dr. Eric W. T. Ngai
Associate Professor
Department of Management & Marketing, PolyU

Project Team Members

Prof. Edward J. Snape
Head of Department
Department of Management & Marketing, PolyU

Prof. Lorraine Justice
Swire Chair Professor of Design &
Director of School of Design,
School of Design, PolyU

Dr. Andy W. Chan
Associate Professor
Department of Management & Marketing, PolyU

Dr Thomas Leung
Associate Professor
Department of Management & Marketing, PolyU

Dr. Karen Moon
Assistant Professor
Institute of Textiles and Clothing, PolyU

Research Personnel

Mr. Fred Suk
Ms. Cindy Tang
Mr. Chris Chan
Ms. Dorothy Chau
Ms. Sammy Cheung
Ms. Ariel Lui

Disclaimer

Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material/event (or by members of the project team) do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Innovation and Technology Commission, the DesignSmart Secretariat or the Assessment Panel for the Design Support Programme.

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Preface

This report presents a summary of the key findings of the “*Matching the Skills, Knowledge and Capabilities of Designers to the Expectations and Requirements of Employers*” study, which was jointly conducted by the Department of Management & Marketing and The School of Design, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University with funding support from the DesignSmart Initiative, Innovation and Technology Commission.

In this report, we elucidate the background and objectives of the study. We then describe our research approach and methodology. Following this, we present the key study findings; specifically, the findings on: (1) the discrepancies between demand for and supply of manpower in the design industry, (2) the needs and wishes of design professionals and their employers, (3) the career development and training needs for the design profession, and (4) the situation regarding the use of and the need for design services in the Pearl River Delta region. Based on the findings, areas of improvement for manpower matching in the design industry are recommended. Finally, we make some concluding comments.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the funding party, project collaborators, participants in our focus group study and respondents to our survey study, project advisors and project team members for their continuous efforts and participation in the study.

Dr. Eric Ngai
Principal Investigator & Associate Professor
Department of Management & Marketing
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Executive Summary

An analysis of the supply of and demand for manpower resources is an important step in understanding optimal manpower matching for any industry. In this project, we collaborated with local design-related industries and associations with the aim of evaluating any possible discrepancies between the supply of and demand for design manpower in the design industry. Through this, we also examine the respective needs and wishes of designers and employers, in particular the career development and training needs of the design profession. In addition, with regard to the close economic relations between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, we examine if Hong Kong design industries can further capitalize on their design capabilities and competitive edge to export their design services to the PRD region. In so doing, we aim to understand the current situation concerning the uses of design services in the PRD region.

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, a focus group study was conducted to explore the current manpower matching situation in the design industry in Hong Kong and on the Mainland. The competence of design professionals, the effectiveness of pre- and post-qualification training, as well as potential opportunities and threats for the local design industry in the markets of the PRD region were discussed. Based on the findings from the focus group study, in the second phase we developed our questionnaire surveys. Two large-scale questionnaire surveys were conducted, in Hong Kong and on the Mainland respectively, to provide a better understanding of the issues raised in our research questions.

Our findings indicate that a majority of the Hong Kong survey respondents (92.5%) reported a mismatch in design manpower in the Hong Kong design industry. Concerning the nature of

this manpower mismatch¹, both designers and employers in Hong Kong agreed that there was a shortage of experienced and competent designers in the industry. In addition, for the proficiency of designers in the abovementioned qualities in the workplace, the survey results indicate that over 50% of the employers rated their designers as proficient in skills (61.9%), knowledge (50.7%), capabilities (62.0%) and attitudes (67.8%). These findings reflect that a number of designers in the workplace are not meeting the expected proficiency levels of their employers in terms of skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes.

In addition, the views of designers and employers on the causes of the manpower mismatch tended to be different. Designers attributed the mismatch to unfavourable workplace environments in which creative design is not encouraged due to a lack of encouragement of creativity, limited promotion opportunities, career development and staff training, and employer misunderstanding of the value of design services. Employers, in contrast, attributed the mismatch to courses taught in design institutions not being pragmatic enough to match market needs, to inadequate placement programmes to train up design graduates and to insufficient staff training in the workplace.

Concerning the needs and wishes for design competences, Hong Kong designers and employers consistently agreed on the usefulness of our mentioned design qualities in each of the four competence areas – skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes. However, perceptions from these two groups towards designers' proficiency in each of the four

¹ “**Manpower mismatch**” is defined from the following two perspectives as follows:

1. *Manpower Shortage or Excess in an Industry Market*

This refers to an imbalance between demand for and supply of manpower in a particular industry, in a way that demand for is greater than supply of or vice versa.

2. *Deficiency or Surplus of the Necessary Skills, Knowledge, Capabilities and Attitudes of Job Holders*

This concerns deficiency or surplus of skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes of a jobholder to competently manage his or her job according to the job specification in a particular industry.

competence areas tended to be different. Designers appeared to rate on their own proficiency in each of the mentioned design qualities more highly than employers did.

With regard to the needs for career development and training for designers, more than 93.6% of designers and 96.0% of employers in Hong Kong indicated schools should provide pragmatic, diversified and up-to-date courses to keep pace with the fast changing design market trends. Slightly more than one-third of the respondents (32.5%) indicated that staff training was provided to designers in their organisations. Concerning continuing education for designers, less than half of the designers (44.0%) were currently participating in forms of continuing education, but nearly all of employers (98.0%) considered continuing education as being important for their designers.

Concerning the design market in the PRD region, 166 designers (75.8%) and 83 employers (84.7%) agreed that the PRD region was a large potential market for the design industry. About two-fifths of the designers (39.1%) and half of the employers (54.4%) in Hong Kong indicated plans to start or extend their business on the Mainland within 1-2 years. According to the focus group study, mainland employers mentioned that the PRD market was focused on graphic design, handicraft design, software design and automobile design. However, over the years many mainland provinces, and in particular the PRD region, had expanded their real estate, financial, hi-tech, electronics and communications sectors. The growth of these sectors had generated a high demand for graphic design services such as corporate image design, packaging design and poster design.

Regarding the needs and expectations of the Hong Kong design industry and the potential of the mainland market, both designers and employers in Hong Kong consistently believed that

it was necessary to put more effort into uniting designers, design associations and design industries to create more synergic and cooperative relationships. Such unity could intensify the exchange of information amongst designers, which could lead to better development in the design industry. Moreover, unity could help to protect and promote the professionalism of designers, thus raising the social status of designers in Hong Kong and making the general public and entrepreneurs more aware of them.

Concerning trends in the design industry, both Hong Kong and mainland respondents generally believed that there was an increasing demand for professionals with a good mastery of design management and more attempts were being made for organisations to move from original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to original design manufacturer (ODM) or original brand manufacturer (OBM).

In view of the findings, recommendations are made for the key stakeholders in the design industry. We hope that the findings and recommendations of the study will help employers develop effective strategic human resources and training policies for the selection, placement, career development and retention of designers, while design professionals will benefit from learning how to upgrade their competences to meet employers' requirements. In addition, we also expect that our findings will clarify the use of and need for design services in the PRD region so that the Hong Kong design industry can further exploit the export of its design services to the region, and that they will provide insights for policy makers on effective strategies to compete in the global market and to maintain the pre-eminence of the design industry in Hong Kong and the PRD region.

Objectives

The purpose of the study was first to study the matching between the supply of and demand for design manpower in Hong Kong, and secondly to provide a better understanding of the use of and need for design services in the PRD region. Specifically, the four objectives of the study were to:

- identify and analyze the discrepancy between the supply of and demand for design manpower in the design industry;
- understand the respective needs and wishes of design professionals and employers;
- elucidate the career development and training needs of the design profession; and
- understand the situation regarding the use of and need for design services in the PRD region.

Research Method

We adopted both qualitative and quantitative research designs in the study. The research was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, a focus group study was conducted to examine the manpower matching situation in the design industry in Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland. The nature and possible causes of manpower mismatches in the design industry, the competence of design professionals, the effectiveness of pre- and post-qualification training, the potential opportunity and threats for the local design industry in the markets of the PRD, as well as the needs and trends of local design industry were discussed. In the second phase, based on the findings from the focus group study, we developed our survey questionnaires. Two large-scale questionnaire surveys were conducted, in Hong Kong and on the Mainland respectively, to provide an more quantitative evidence on the research questions.

Focus Group Study (Phase I)

Focus Group Study in Hong Kong

Twenty-seven focus group sessions were conducted between May and July 2006 and two additional supplementary focus group sessions were conducted in April 2008, of which fourteen sessions were for designers, and fifteen sessions were for employers. Sessions were held either on the PolyU campus or in the participants' offices. To ensure heterogeneous and diversified views, members of various design industries in Hong Kong were invited to the focus group discussions (see Appendix Table 1). All participants were recruited on a voluntary basis and no monetary compensation was given. Eventually, a total of 54 employers and 80 designers participated. The focus group discussions lasted for one to two hours, with the average of 1.12 (SD = 0.35) hours.

Focus Group Study on the Mainland

Four focus group sessions were conducted among Mainland employers or their representatives between July and September in 2006. As in Hong Kong employers in various design industries were invited to the sessions (see Appendix Table 2). Participation was voluntary and no monetary compensation was provided. A total of 25 employers participated. The discussions lasted for one to two hours, with the average being 1.85 (SD = 0.42) hours.

Questionnaire Survey (Phase II)

Questionnaire Survey in Hong Kong

As we did not know how many companies in Hong Kong have employed designers, nor did we have a complete sampling frame for the population of all of the organisations in Hong Kong, a sample of 6000 company addresses was drawn from the following sources:

- 1) the six-digit industry from “Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification Version 1.1” (HSIC V1.1) (Census and Statistics Department of HKSAR [C&SD], 2001);
- 2) the thirteen project collaborators included (1) the Hong Kong Designers Association, (2) the Hong Kong Jewellery and Jade Manufacturers Association, (3) the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, (4) the Hong Kong Optical Manufacturers Association Limited, (5) the Federation of Hong Kong Watch Trades and Industries Limited, (6) the Toys Manufacturer’s Association of Hong Kong Limited, (7) the Hong Kong Jewelry Manufacturers’ Association, (8) the Alumni Association of the School of Design in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and (9) the Design School of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE), (10) the Hong Kong Electronic Industries Association, (11) the Hong Kong Electronic Appliances Manufacturer, (12) the Hong Kong Apparel Society Limited, and (13) the Hong Kong Fashion Designers Association.

Data were collected from questionnaires sent to the above selected groups of organisations. Certain measures were taken to avoid duplication in the selection of the samples. A reminder was sent to the non-respondents two weeks after questionnaires were mailed. The second follow-up was conducted by telephone.

Response Rate

The data were collected between November 2006 and January 2007. From our sample groups, 68 design employer returns and 44 designers' returns were received, giving an effective response rate of 1.9%. Whereas, for the project collaborators, 34 design employer returns and 190 designers returns were received, giving an effective response rate of 8.9%.

Questionnaire Survey on the Mainland

A total of 360 companies from Guangzhou (廣州) were invited to participate in the mainland survey. These companies were randomly selected from the National Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (NSIC, 2006) by using proportionate stratified sampling. Each of these selected companies was mailed an invitation letter and a hardcopy of the questionnaire and employers or their representatives were invited to join the survey.

Apart from the above-mentioned sample, 716 contacts from other sources were also invited to join the survey, 100 from Zhuhai (珠海), 200 from Foshan (佛山), 66 from Zhongshan (中山), 80 from Shenzhen (深圳) and 270 from Dongguang (東莞). Invitation letters and hardcopies of questionnaire were sent inviting employers to participate in the survey.

Response Rate

The data were collected between March and May 2007. From our NSIC sample group, 164 employers or representatives returns were received giving a response rate of 46.9%, whereas, from the other sources sampling group, 353 employers' or representatives' returns were received, giving a response rate of 49.3%. The overall response rate for these two groups was 48.0%.

1 Discrepancy between the Supply of and Demand for Design Manpower in the Design Industry in Hong Kong

In this part, we aim to identify and analyse the discrepancy between demand for and supply of manpower in the Hong Kong design industry. Designers and employers were asked to indicate their opinions on the manpower matching situation in the local design industry. Respondents agreeing that there was a manpower mismatch² were further asked to indicate their views on eighteen statements about the causes of the manpower mismatch. Following this, they were asked to further indicate their views on ten statements about the consequences of manpower mismatches in the local design industry.

After that, we aim to analyse and identify the discrepancy between employers' preferred educational level for their designers and their actual educational level. Our result reveals that there is a need to review the current training policy for design professionals.

1.1 The Situation of Manpower Mismatch in the Design Industry ...

In the questionnaire surveys, 333 participants (232 designers, 101 employers) expressed their views on the manpower matching situation in the Hong Kong design industry. Of the

² “**Manpower mismatch**” is defined from the following two perspectives as follows:

1. *Manpower Shortage or Excess in an Industry Market*

This refers to an imbalance between demand for and supply of manpower in a particular industry, in a way that demand for is greater than supply of or vice versa.

2. *Deficiency or Surplus of the Necessary Skills, Knowledge, Capabilities and Attitudes of Job Holders*

This concerns deficiency or surplus of skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes of a jobholder to competently manage his or her job according to the job specification in a particular industry.

designers, 94.8% agreed there was a mismatch problem, as did 87.1% of the employers, while 5.2% of the designers and 12.9% of the employers said no such mismatch existed.

As for the nature of the manpower mismatch, specifically from the point of view of employers, a relatively high percentage agreed there was a shortage of experienced (77.9%) and competent (77.0%) designers in the industry. Similarly, more than half the designers had the same view; those who responded agreed the industry had a shortage of experienced (53.2%) and competent (54.8%) designers.

In addition, regarding the necessary skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes of job holders to competently manage jobs, employers and designers had identical views. Less than 35% of the respondents rated the designers in the workplace as not proficient in skills (designers, 10.3%; employers, 26.2%), knowledge (designers, 6.9%; employers, 34.7%), capabilities (designers, 6.9%) and attitudes (designers, 4.2%; employers, 18.2%).

Additional and more detailed insights into the nature of the perceived mismatch are provided in the following comments from the focus groups.

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s)³ in the Focus Group Discussion

Excess Demand for Competent Designers (Designer's View)

“There is a resources mismatch. The most serious problem at the middle level, because there is a large number of designers at the entry level, while there is only a small number of designers at (the) advanced level.” (FGS05, Graphic Designer, P69, Hong Kong)

³ For each of the selected verbatim response in the focus group discussion, we supplemented its session ID, participant's job title, the assigned dummy ID and the location where the focus group session was held.

Excess Demand for Experienced Designers (Employer's View)

“I think the problem of manpower mismatch always exists because the **demand for experienced designers is always higher than the supply**. Even if all fresh graduates from different colleges and secondary schools entered the market, the manpower supply still could not match demand.” (FGD03, President, P8, Hong Kong)

Deficiency of Necessary Skills in Designers (Employer's View)

“Most of the graduates from design institutions have good ideas, but **their skills are relatively poor**. They cannot express what they think due to a lack of the required skills. Meanwhile, students from IVE have good design skills, but are poor at conception.” (FGD04, Vice President of a Toy Manufacturing Company, P13, Hong Kong)

1.2 Reasons for the Manpower Mismatch in the Design Industry...

The views of designers and employers on the causes of the design manpower mismatch appeared to be different. Designers attributed the mismatch to unfavourable workplace environments in which creative design was not encouraged due to a lack of encouragement of creativity, limited promotion opportunities, career development and staff training, and employer misunderstanding of the value of design services. Employers, in contrast, attributed the mismatch to courses taught in design institutions not being pragmatic enough to match market needs, to inadequate placement programmes to train up design graduates and to insufficient staff training in the workplace.

The three statements that designers and employers most agreed with regarding the reasons for the manpower mismatch were:

Reasons for Manpower Mismatch	
Designers' Views	Employers' Views
1. It is due to a lack of encouragement of creativity in the workplace (87.7%)	1. Courses taught in design institutions not pragmatic enough to match the market needs (73.0%)
2. It is due to employers' misunderstanding of the value of design services (84.0%)	2. Design institutions provide inadequate placement programmes to train up design graduates (71.9%)
3. It is due to limited promotion opportunities and career development in the design industry (81.8%)	3. Designers fail to set good career plan and goal (66.7%)

73.0% of employers agreed that the courses taught in design institutions were not practical enough to match market needs and 71.9% of employers agreed that there were inadequate placement programmes to train up design graduates.

From the designers' point of view, a relatively high percentage of them agreed that a lack of encouragement of creativity in the workplace (87.7%) and employer misunderstanding of the value of design services (84.0%) were the reasons for the manpower mismatch, as these factors may affect the willingness of experienced and competent designers to stay in the industry.

Supplementary View Point(s) from Respondent(s) in Questionnaire

Unfavourable Work Environment (Designers' Views)

"More designers have left the design industry because their **working environments are deteriorating**, e.g., long working hours, low salary, being compelled to take up non-design-related job duties." (Q34, Designers, Hong Kong)

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s)⁴ in the Focus Group Discussion

Employers' Misunderstanding of the Value of Design Services (Designer's View)

"**Most employers do not understand what design is.** They have no idea what they need; and believe that design is to beautify their products. As a result, the mismatch is due to the misunderstanding of employers. Nowadays, employers in Hong Kong think designers are omnipotent. they confuse the job of a graphic designer with that of a web-site programmer." (FGS05, Event Assistant, P68, Hong Kong)

Lack of Encouragement of Creativity in the Workplace (Designer's View)

"But in reality, the **employers do not want to invest in creative products** because they want to keep the cost down." (FGD09, Designer, P33, Hong Kong)

Relatively Unfavorable Social Status of Designers in Hong Kong (Employer's View)

"In Hong Kong, I would like to be a lawyer, doctor or manager, but not a designer. How can we upgrade the social status of designers? Actually, though designers can get a very high income but it is not the case for every designer. This leads to the problem of manpower mismatch. Will any good students to study design? Other foreign countries, like America or Europe, place a very high value on design. Only Hong Kong has this cultural issue." (FGD06, Senior Manager, P22, Hong Kong)

1.3 Consequences of the Manpower Mismatch in the Design Industry...

Concerning the consequences of the design manpower mismatch, views from designers and employers tended to be consistent. Both agreed that mismatches lead to a lack of design professionalism and originality; and to a reduction in the design market competitiveness of Hong Kong. Designers also suggested that mutual dissatisfaction and conflicts between

⁴ For each of the selected verbatim response in the focus group discussion, we supplemented its session ID, participant's job title, the assigned dummy ID and the location where the focus group session was held.

designers and their employers also arise because of the mismatch, and that this is likely to result in many designers eventually leaving the design industry. In addition, employers suggested that the mismatch would also lead to a decline in organisations' reputations and market share.

The three statements that designers and employers most agreed with regarding the consequences of manpower mismatch were:

Consequences of Manpower Mismatch	
Designers' View	Employers' View
1. There will be a decline in design professionalism (85.3%)	1. There will be a decline in design professionalism (84.3%)
2. There will be a decline in design originality (83.5%)	2. There will be a reduction in the competitiveness of the design industry in HK (83.1%)
3. There will be an increase in mutual dissatisfaction and conflicts among designers and their employers (77.9%)	3. There will be a decline in design originality (83.1%)

Selected Verbatim Response from Respondent in the Focus Group Discussion

Further Decrease in the Supply of Designers (Designer's View)

“When (I) first entered the company, (I) wanted to settle down so that I could earn a salary and at the same time, learn some new things. However, I found that my employer and I had a different set of values on design. My designs did not satisfy my employer's expectations, which led to conflict. After discovering that what I had learned at school was different from the reality, my ambitions remained unfulfilled. Consequently, I felt frustrated and left the company.” (FGS01, Product Designer, P44, Hong Kong)

1.4 Comparison of Employers' Preferred Educational Levels for Hong Kong and Mainland Designers and Their Actual Educational Levels...

In this section, we aim to analyse and identify the discrepancies between employer expectations and the actual and preferred education levels of their designers. We classify designers into three profession levels⁵, namely, design management, senior designer and junior designer. Employers were asked to provide the actual and preferred education levels of their designers across these three profession levels in their organisations. We then examined whether there was any significant discrepancy between employer expectations and the actual education levels of their designers.

⁵ *Design Management Level*
the major roles of this level are to create vision, formulate strategic goals and tactics for an organisation, and to be responsible for leading and

Senior Designer/ Designer Level

The major roles of this level are to conceptualise, produce designs and carry out design related tasks, Senior personnel are required to coach designers/junior designers and report to the design management.

Junior Designer Level

The major role of this level is to assist designers along all stages of the design process.

Hong Kong Design Industry

At junior design level, about half of Hong Kong employers (43.8%) liked their junior designers to have at most an associate degree or equivalent. The other half of them (43.8%) preferred their junior designers to have a bachelor degree. However, the majority of the junior designers (74.0%) had obtained an associate degree or below only. Not many junior designers (23.3%) had acquired a bachelor degree.

At (senior) designer level, most of the employers (60.0%) preferred their (senior) designers to have a bachelor degree, but actually only about one-third of the (senior) designers (35.5%) had obtained this qualification.

At design management level, most of the employers preferred their design managers to have a master degree or above (48.6%), followed by a bachelor degree (40.5%), but actually only about two-thirds (68.2%) of the design managers had obtained these qualifications, in particular with a master degree or above (34.1%) and a bachelor degree (34.1%).

Chinese Mainland Design Industry

At junior design level, about half of mainland employers (55.53%) preferred their junior designers to have a bachelor degree. *At (senior) designer level*, about half of the mainland employers (56.1%) preferred their (senior) designers to have a bachelor degree. *At design management level*, about half of the mainland employers preferred their design managers to have a bachelor degree (52.8%).

Table 1.1 Hong Kong Employers' Views on the Actual and Their Preferred Education Levels for their Designers

Design Professional Levels	Actual Education Level			Preferred Education Level		
	Associate Degree or Below	Bachelor	Master or above	Associate Degree or Below	Bachelor	Master or above
Design Management	29.3%	34.1%	34.1%	5.4%	40.5%	48.6%
(Senior) Designers	62.7%	26.6%	8.9%	13.3%	60.0%	13.3%
Junior Designers	74.0%	19.2%	4.1%	43.8%	43.8%	6.3%

Table 1.2 Mainland Employers' Views on Preferred Education Levels for their Designers

Design Professional Levels	Preferred Education Level		
	Associate Degree or Below	Bachelor	Master or above
Design Management	7.5%	52.8%	37.8%
(Senior) Designers	11.6%	56.1%	30.6%
Junior Designers	36.1%	55.5%	6.8%

In sum, our findings indicate that both Hong Kong and mainland employers preferred their designers across all design profession levels to have higher education levels than they actually had. Specifically, most of the mainland employers preferred their designers across all three design levels to have obtained a degree, whereas Hong Kong employers preferred their design managers to have obtained a Master degree and junior designers to have a degree or above.

Our results reveal that there is a need to review the current training policy for the design professions. The offer of more design education up to the Bachelor's degree level or higher seems to be the way to match employer demands and the fast-paced growth of the design industry.

2 Respective Needs and Wishes of Designers' Skills, Knowledge, Capabilities and Attitudes

In this section, we aim to identify the gaps in expectations and the need for skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes between designers and employers. Deficiencies and surpluses in the necessary qualities of job holders in the design industry were then examined by comparing respondent ratings on the usefulness and proficiency that designers actually possess or have achieved.

Designers and employers were asked to indicate their opinions on four areas of Hong Kong designers' competences - skill, knowledge, capability and attitude. The top seven most frequently mentioned design qualities in each competence area were elicited based on the findings from the prior focus group study. Designers were asked to indicate the extent to which the categories of skills knowledge, capabilities and attitudes are important to designers in terms of their usefulness (1 = "not useful at all", 7 = "very useful") and proficiency (1 = "not proficient at all, 7 = "very proficient") respectively on a 7-point scale. We define usefulness as the extent to which designers' *skills, knowledge, capabilities* and *attitudes* are necessary for achieving successful job performance. Proficiency is defined as the degree of *skills, knowledge, capabilities* and *attitudes* that designers actually possess or have achieved.

The findings indicate that both designers and employers consistently agreed on the usefulness of the mentioned design qualities in each of the four competences areas.

However, regarding the corresponding ratings on designer proficiency in each of the four competence areas, the results of these two groups tended to differ. Designers appeared to rate their own proficiency levels for each of the mentioned design qualities higher than their

employers did. The proficiency ratings of the two groups on the mentioned qualities differed greatly.

Selected Verbatim Response from a Respondent in the Focus Group Discussion

Required Competence for Designers (Employer's View)

“It seems that **all four competences (skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes) are required.** The importance of different competences depends on the type of design. I think attitude is the most important no matter whether a designer is junior or senior. If you do not have interest in or enthusiasm to handle a job, you will not do it well.” (FGD06, Senior Manager, P22, Hong Kong)

2.1 Views from Designers and Employers on the Usefulness and Proficiency of Designers' Skills ...

Usefulness of Design Skills

334 respondents (232 designers, 102 employers) expressed their views on the usefulness of the design skills. The ratings of both groups were similar. They both indicated agreement on the usefulness of the mentioned design skills. Communication skill was indicated by both groups as being the most useful design skill.

Proficiency in Design Skills

On average, 334 respondents (233 designers, 101 employers) expressed their views on designers' proficiency in design skills. The ratings of both groups were much more diverse. Designers tended to rate their own proficiency in the mentioned design skills more highly than employers did. Computer/IT skills were rated by both groups as being the design skill that designers actually possessed or had acquired to the greatest extent.

The three most useful design skills and levels of proficiency of designers in those skills as rated by designers and employers were:

Usefulness and Proficiency of the Designers' Skills		
	Designers' Views	Employers' Views
Usefulness	1. Communication Skill (97.0%) 2. Presentation Skill (96.6%) 3.5 Language Skills (94.4%) 3.5 Time Management (94.4%)	1.5 Communication Skill (98.0%) 1.5 Computer/IT Skill (98.0%) 3 Time Management (97.1%)
Proficiency	1. Computer/IT Skill (84.5%) 2. Communication Skill (80.3%) 3. Presentation Skill (80.2%)	1. Computer/IT Skill (84.2%) 2. Presentation Skill (64.4%) 3. Hand Drawing Skill (64.0%)

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s) in the Focus Group Discussion

Required Skills for Designers (Designers' Views)

“**Time management** is very important.” (FGD04, Designer, P24, Hong Kong)

“Every department/industry has its own language. Designers **need different techniques** and act as lubricants **when communicating with technical or marketing people**. Designers need to know how to get along and deal with personnel from different departments.” (FGS05, Senior Product Designer, P.70, Hong Kong)

2.2 Views from Designers and Employers on the Usefulness of Knowledge Areas and the Proficiency of Designers in those Areas ...

Usefulness of Design Knowledge

333 respondents (232 designers, 101 employers) expressed their views on the usefulness of design knowledge. The ratings of both groups were consistent. Knowledge of the use of colour was rated by both groups as being the most useful area of design knowledge.

Proficiency of Designers in Areas of Knowledge

333 respondents (232 designers, 101 employers) expressed their views on the proficiency of designers in the areas of design knowledge. Both groups had a certain degree of rating diversity. As with design skills, designers tended to rate their own proficiency in the areas of design knowledge more highly than employers did. Knowledge of the use of colour was rated by both groups as being the area in which designers were the most proficient.

The three most useful areas of knowledge and proficiency of designers in those areas of knowledge as rated by designers and employers were:

Usefulness and Proficiency of the Designers' Knowledge		
	Designers' Views	Employers' Views
Usefulness	1. International Field of Vision (96.1%) 2. Manufacturing Production Workflow/ Processes (94.8%) 3. Using Color (94.4%)	1. Using Color (97.0%) 2. International Field of Vision (95.1%) 3. Manufacturing Production Workflow/ Processes (94.1%)
Proficiency	1. Using Color (81.5%) 2. Manufacturing Production Workflow/ Processes (72.4%) 3. International Field of Vision (67.1%)	1. Using Color (72.3%) 2. International Field of Vision (56.4%) 3.5 Manufacturing Production Workflow/ Processes (51.5%) 3.5 Fine Art (51.5%)

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s) in the Focus Group Discussion

Required Knowledge for Designers (Employers' Views)

“For a design, the most important coordinating section is in fact a design process. An all-round **designer should be able to understand marketing and even management**. This means he/she should know more about management.” (FGS07, Chief Design Consultant, P78, Hong Kong)

“Yes, especially **marketing skill**. The designers themselves are selling ideas. I mean the designers here are totally inadequate at selling themselves. They need to have this skill.” (FGS02, Digital Imaging, Architecture, Interiors Designer, P51, Hong Kong)

2.3 Views from Designers and Employers on the Usefulness and Level of Designers' Capabilities ...

Usefulness of Design Capabilities

On average, 333 respondents (231 designers, 102 employers) expressed their views on the usefulness of the listed design capabilities. The ratings of both groups were similar for the four common capabilities.

Proficiency in Design Capabilities

On average, 332 respondents (231 designers, 101 employers) expressed their views on the proficiency of designers with regard to the design capabilities. The ratings of both groups were different. Among the four common design capabilities rated by both groups, designers tended to rate their own design capabilities more highly than employers did.

The three most useful capabilities and proficiency in these design capabilities rated by designers and employers were:

Usefulness and Proficiency of the Designers' Capabilities		
	Designers' Views	Employers' Views
Usefulness	1. Independent Thinking (96.1%) 2. Quick Thinking (95.7%) 3. Analytical Skill (95.3%)	1. Creativity (99.0%) 2. Imagination (98.0%) 3. Quick Thinking (96.1%)
Proficiency	1. Common Sense (85.7%) 2. Creativity (85.3%) 3. Independent Thinking (81.9%)	1. Creativity (70.3%) 2. Imagination (68.3%) 3. Art Sense (63.4%)

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s) in the Focus Group Discussion

Required Capabilities for Designers (Employers' Views)

“Ideally, I want a designer who has **creativity**, and is more capable than me at coming up with new ideas. So, when I hire people, I will focus on whether they have these characteristics or not.”
(FGD02, Design Director, P6, Hong Kong)

“**Imagination** is the basic requirement for designers. This is the top priority and is more important than other capabilities. After that, designers should be able to turn their imagination into reality.”
(FGD03, Interior Design Director, P12, Hong Kong)

2.4 Views from Designers and Employers on the Designers' Proficiency and Usefulness of Designers' Attitudes ...

Usefulness of Designers' Attitudes

333 respondents (231 designers, 102 employers) expressed their views on the usefulness of the designers' attitudes. The ratings of both groups were similar.

Extent to which Designers Had/Exhibited these Attitudes

333 respondents (232 designers, 101 employers) expressed their views on the extent to which designers exhibited these attitudes. The ratings of both groups were different. Designers tended to rate their possession of these attitudes more highly than employers did.

The three most useful attitudes and the degree to which they are possessed by designers rated by designers and employers were:

Usefulness and Designers' Proficiency of the Attitudes		
	Designers' Views	Employers' Views
Usefulness	1. Professionalism (97.0%) 2. Attention to the Environment (96.1%) 3. Willingness to Learn (95.7%)	1.5 Willingness to Learn (98.0%) 1.5 Job Commitment (98.0%) 3.5 Open Mindedness (97.1%) 3.5 Eagerness to New Experience (97.1%)
Proficiency	1. Willingness to Learn (92.7%) 2. Open Mindedness (90.0%) 3. Humility (87.5%)	1. Diligence (73.0%) 2. Eagerness to New Experience (71.3%) 3. Job Commitment (70.3%)

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s) in the Focus Group Discussion

Required Attitudes for Designers (Employers' Views)

“Whether you are **interested in learning new things is very important**. Because you need to adjust fast, and also the attitude, you must be able to **accept new things**; you have to **know how to adapt...** “ (PFGS03, Assistant Design Manager, P119, Hong Kong)

“It seems that **all the four competences** (skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes) **are required**. The importance of different competences depends on the type of design. I think attitude is the most important no matter whether a designer is junior or senior. If you do not have interest in or enthusiasm to handle a job, you will not do it well”. (FGD06, Senior Manager, P22, Hong Kong)

As for the average rating of the usefulness of these qualities in the design industry, more than 90% of the employers agreed they were useful for designers (skills, 94.8%; knowledge, 89.7%; capabilities, 95.1%; attitudes, 95.0%).

Regarding designers' proficiency in these qualities in the workplace, designers tended to rate their own proficiency higher than employers did, as follows: skills (designers, 76.4%; employers, 61.9%), knowledge (designers, 62.9%; employers, 50.7%), capabilities (designers, 79.8%; employers 62.0%) and attitudes (designers, 86.8%; employers, 67.8%).

Specifically, the survey showed a higher degree of deficiency in designers' competence in the workplace. For certain types of knowledge, fewer than half the employers considered their designers had such competence. Specifically, for knowledge of marketing, knowledge of Mainland China, and knowledge of management, only 43.0%, 42.6% and 37.4% of the employers, respectively, agreed that their designers had acquired such knowledge.

3 Designers' Needs for Career Development and Training

In this part, we aim to understand the importance and needs for school training, staff training and continuing education to enhance the skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes required by a competent designer.

3.1 Need for Pre-career School Training ...

333 respondents (232 designers, 101 employers) expressed their views on this issue. Both groups had similar views on the training needs of designers at design school. Both groups preferred more diversified design courses that could cover the needs across various fields of design. They expressed the belief that design training course content taught at design schools needed to be updated. On the other hand, they also demanded more in-depth, comprehensive and focused design courses that could cater for a particular design field only.

The top three statements agreed with by designers and employers were:

Designers' Views	Employers' Views
1. To provide more pragmatic courses for college design students to train their design skills that can be directly applicable in the workplace (94.4%)	1. More diversified courses to cover the needs of various design industries (99.0%)
2. More diversified courses to cover the needs of various design industries (93.9%)	2. Up-to-date course content (97.1%)
3. Courses that are comprehensive and focused on a particular design sector only (93.6%)	3. More placement opportunities for college design students (96.0%)

The survey findings regarding the need for pre-career school training were consistent with both designer and employer responses in the focus group discussion. The major ideas of employers and designers are presented below.

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s) in the Focus Group Discussion

Need for More Diversified Courses (Designer's View)

“There are constraints on IVE (courses) due to the short course time. Higher diplomas only emphasise expression and presentation, but there is **not enough development of the courses on ideas, or advanced conception** generally. Because the training period of those students is short, when they come out into society and work, they can only be followers. If there is an experienced staff member at the company, he will lead the fresh graduates. Working practice is when fresh graduates obtain training.” (FGD08, Chief Design Consultant, P25, Hong Kong)

Need for Up-to-date Course Content (Designer's View)

“Quite often there is some knowledge required for different machines in the production process, however, the **educational institutions cannot keep up with changes** in industrial processes. Therefore, I think there is a need for the institutions to arrange for their students to have site visits to understand the running of the latest machines.” (FGS06, Fashion Designer, P74, Hong Kong)

Need for Up-to-date Course Content (Employer's View)

“Providing training and equipping teachers are important. There is a need to update market information. Every year, reviewing and updating of the courses' curricula are essential to avoid lagging behind the latest trends.” (FGD01, Department Head, P1, Hong Kong)

Need for More Placement Opportunities

“I suggest a **cooperation scheme** for schooling. For example, students may study one year, then have half a year of placement, and then study for another half year, Thus extending the length of a three-year program. There is no harm for the students in extending the length of the program. As the work experience of fresh graduates in their early twenties is not enough, their design foundation will be more concrete and they will understand the industry more if they have two or three years of practical experience”. (OFGD03, Vice Chairman, P122, Hong Kong)

Based on the findings of the survey and the focus group sessions, more diversified courses, up-to-date course content and the provision of placement opportunities were needed in pre-career school training in the design industry.

3.2 Staff Training for Designers...

Current Situation of Staff Training

Approximately one third (32.5%) indicated that staff training was available in the workplace. The most common form of staff training was design (27.3%), followed by IT (17.1%), management and marketing (13.9%) and engineering (11.4%), whereas accounting and finance (1.2%) were the least common courses.

Need for Staff Training

322 respondents (223 designers, 99 employers) expressed their views on this issue. Views from designers and employers on the needs for staff training in the workplace were consistent. Both groups agreed that more on-the-job training and site visits should be provided to designers. In addition, to encourage designers' continuing education, a favourable work environment should be fostered for designers as well.

More than two-thirds of local organisations do not provide staff training to designers. This finding did not match the views of designers on the need for staff training, as 90.6% of them would prefer more on-the-job training. Therefore, a more favourable work environment could be obtained by providing more training opportunities to designers.

3.3 Continuing Education for Designers ...

Current Situation of Designers' with Regard to Continuing Education

333 respondents (232 designers, 101 employers) expressed their views. Among designers, less than half of them (44.0%) were currently participating in continuing education. Nearly all of employers (98.0%) agreed with the importance of continuing education.

Most Preferred Mode of Continuing Education

Part-time courses were the most preferred mode of continuing education (30.4%), followed by seminars (20.4%) and workshops (18.8%). Full-time courses were the least (.2%) preferred mode of continuing education.

Courses Designers were Studying

Design was the most popular subject (33.4%), followed by languages (13.7%) and management and marketing (12.5%). Accounting and finance were the least common subjects being studied by designers (1.2%).

Preferred Courses for Continuing Education

Design was the most preferred course for continuing education (21.1%), followed by management and marketing (19.4%), languages (16.7%). Accounting and finance were the least preferred courses (2.8%).

Sponsorship for Designers

Around one third (27.1%) stated that sponsorship was offered by their organisations. Among those who received sponsorship, around one third (30.7%) stated that their organisations' sponsorship amounted to between 41% and 60% and one fourth (26.7%) stated that there was full reimbursement for course fees.

Selected Verbatim Response from Respondent in the Focus Group Discussion

Need for Continuing Education (Designer's View)

“(I wish (HK) had **more channels of education** as I think there are not many opportunities. The highest level for design is only a master degree.” (FGS10, Assistant Interior Designer of a Construction Design Company, Hong Kong)

Design was the most popular subject for both continuing education and designer courses, followed by management and marketing. Regarding the current situation of continuing education in the design industry, less than half of the designers participated in it, and only one-third of them were sponsored by their employers.

4 The Use of and Need for Design Services in the Pearl River Delta Region

In this part, we aim to examine the current business situation of the Hong Kong design industry on the Mainland. Hong Kong and mainland respondents were asked if the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region is a potential design market in the future. In addition, from the mainland employers' perspective, they were asked to indicate the competitive qualities of Hong Kong designers as compared to mainland designers.

4.1 Current Business Situation of Hong Kong Design Industry on the Mainland...

Current Business on the Mainland

116 designers (50.2%) and 67 employers (66.3%) had businesses on the Mainland and about a quarter of employers (28.8%) had their businesses there for 11-15 years. Shenzhen (深圳) and Dongguang (廣東) were the most popular cities for locating their organisations.

Future Business Plan on the Mainland

About two-fifths of the designers (39.1%) and half of the employers (54.4%) indicated plans to start or extend their business on the Mainland within 1-2 years.

Work on the Mainland

Slightly less than half of the designers (47.3%) stated that they were required to occasionally work on the Mainland, while more than half of designers (57.7%) said that they were willing to work on the Mainland. The remaining designers (42.3%) indicated their unwillingness to work there. Their reasons included their unfamiliarity with the mainland environment (23.4%); long travel time to the Mainland (23.0%) and poor physical environment on the Mainland (22.0%).

Selected Verbatim Response from Respondent in the Focus Group Discussion

Cooperation between Hong Kong and mainland on design services (Designer's View)

“The earlier design stage may be done in Hong Kong, but the latter part of the production line will be processed on the Mainland. Therefore, **designers need to travel frequently between Hong Kong and China to fully understand the progress of the production.**” (FGS07, Designer, P80)

4.2 Potential Design Market in the PRD region ...

A majority of Hong Kong respondents (designers (75.8%), employers (84.7%)) and mainland employers (91.3%) agreed that the PRD region was a large potential market for the design industry.

Views from Hong Kong and mainland respondents on whether the PRD region was a large potential market tended to be similar. Most of them generally agreed that an increasing demand for high quality design work was a prime reason for this potential market (HK designers (89.9%), HK employers (92.8%), mainland employers, (96.4%)), while simplified bureaucratic procedures for company setup attracted the least amount of agreement (HK designers (55.9%), HK employers (72.6%), mainland employers (73.8%)).

The top three statements agreed with by respondents were:

Hong Kong Designers' Views	Hong Kong Employers' Views	Mainland Employer's Views
<p>1. The demand of high quality design work on the Mainland is increasing (89.8%)</p>	<p>1. The demand of high quality design work on the Mainland is increasing (92.9%)</p>	<p>1. The demand for high quality design work on the Mainland is increasing (96.4%)</p>
<p>2. Trading environment on the Mainland has improved (88.1%)</p>	<p>2. There are rich resources on the Mainland (e.g. labour force, land, and huge client base) (92.8%)</p>	<p>2. Trading environment on the Mainland has improved (94.9%).</p>
<p>3. There are rich resources on the Mainland (e.g. labour force, land, and huge client base) (81.4%)</p> <p>Clients on the Mainland tend to favour more branded products with which Hong Kong designers have the advantage (81.4%)</p>	<p>3. Clients on the Mainland tend to favour more branded products with which Hong Kong designers have the advantage (85.7%)</p>	<p>3. There are rich resources on the Mainland (e.g. labour force, land, and huge client base) (92.8%)</p>

Generally, the majority of the respondents agreed that the Pearl River Delta (PRD) is a potential market. However, more than one-fourth of employers in Hong Kong and on the mainland disagreed with the statement, the “mainland has simplified the bureaucratic procedures for company setup”. This may become an obstacle to Hong Kong employers who would like to enter the mainland market. Policymakers may consider putting more effort into simplifying the bureaucratic procedures for company setup on the mainland.

Selected Verbatim Response from Respondent in the Focus Group Discussion

Need for Broader Vision (Employer’s View)

“Hong Kong designers must step forward and obtain a broader vision; they should not only concentrate on the path from design concept to production, which will obviously be shifted to the Mainland. The current emphasis is no longer solely on the **external design of the products; what matters most is if the product meets the target market’s needs, and the market price**”
(OFGD01, Design Manager, P101, Hong Kong)

4.3 Needs and Uses of Design Services in the PRD Region ...

The participants of the mainland focus group study indicated that design activities and business opportunities were not uniform across the different parts of the Mainland. The PRD market was more focused on graphic design, handicraft design, software design and automobile design. However, over the years many mainland provinces, and in particular the PRD region, had expanded their real estate, financial, hi-tech, electronics and communications sectors. The growth of these sectors had generated a high demand for graphic design services such as corporate image design, packaging design and poster design. Moreover, with the rise in living standards on the Mainland, people’s consumption habits were changing. In the past, consumption was driven primarily by actual need and utility, but now it was driven by outlook, design and quality. Demand for innovative and high-value products such as handicrafts, automobiles and software was thus continuing to grow.

These findings are consistent with the survey findings of increasing demand for high-quality design work on the mainland. They also further confirm the perception of the PRD as a potential market. All of these findings indicate the increasing opportunities for Hong Kong organisations to enter the mainland market with high-quality design services that may not be available from mainland organisations. Also, Hong Kong designers may seek opportunities in mainland organisations that demand high-quality design work, although the difference between Hong Kong and mainland salary standards may be a concern.

4.4 Competitive Qualities of Hong Kong Designers ...

From the mainland employers' perspective, compared to mainland designers, the top three competitive qualities of Hong Kong designers were good knowledge of international field of vision (93.8%), good creativity (91.3%) and good design concepts (88.4%).

Some insights from the focus group discussion are given below:

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s) in the Mainland Focus Group Discussion

Comparison of Designers Qualifications from Different Countries (Designer's View)

"We think that designers from Hong Kong, Singapore and other countries have **better qualifications** and more experience, and they have more exposure." (FGD02, Assistant General Manager of A Labour Market, The PRD region)

Difference between Hong Kong and Mainland Salary Standard (Designer's View)

"...If we employ Hong Kong designers, and the project is not under his sole control, it will be troublesome. It is because the **salaries of Mainland designers are lower**, e.g. RMB 3000-4000 compared with that of Hong Kong designers which are at least RMB 10,000-20,000. Even if the managers can afford it, other technical designers feel **upset because of the big differences in salary though the better paid designer has a similar working ability.** " (FGS01, Electronic Manager, P11, The PRD region)

The difference between these salary standards has presented an obstacle to Hong Kong designers seeking opportunities on the mainland. Worries about workplace conflicts, due to salary differences between Hong Kong and mainland employees, may hinder the willingness of mainland employers to employ Hong Kong designers. Despite these worries, cross-organisation cooperation between Hong Kong and mainland organisations in design services is still possible.

5 Needs and Trends of the Design Industry

In this part, we aim to understand the needs and trends of the design industry. Designers and employers in Hong Kong were asked to provide their opinions on eight statements about the needs and expectations of the Hong Kong design industry. Following this, Hong Kong and mainland respondents were asked to express their views on six statements about trends in the design industry. Furthermore, we report the results of the comparison of the number of designers' vacancies across different design-using industries and services in Hong Kong and the Mainland in the coming 12 months.

5.1 Needs and Expectations of the Hong Kong Design Industry ...

A total of 815 respondents (206 Hong Kong designers, 93 Hong Kong employers and 516 mainland employers) expressed their views on this issue. All of these groups believed that it was necessary to put more effort into uniting designers, design associations and design industries to create more synergic and cooperative relationships. Such unity could intensify the exchange of information amongst designers, which could lead to better development in the design industry. Moreover, this unity could help to protect and promote the professionalism of designers, which could raise their social status and produce greater awareness of Hong Kong design amongst the general public and entrepreneurs. In addition, designers hoped that the general public could be educated to understand and appreciate design starting from childhood and that more favourable work environments would be provided for designers. Employers believed that it was necessary to enhance Hong Kong designers' image through organising more international competitions and exhibitions, and providing more placement opportunities for design students before graduation.

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s) in the Focus Group Discussion –

Need for Uniting Designers, Design Associations and the Design Industry (Designers’ Views)

“Now some organisations, such as the Hong Kong Designers Association, lack the dynamics to unify the designers. I think the industry needs to convey this message and cultivate this aspect of knowledge. I do not know whether they will form themselves together, but **at least the industry has to achieve a coherent value.**” (FGD09, Creative director, P31)

“As for the industry, it is **necessary to unite, have more exchanges** and more participation in international competitions in order to have better development in the design industry. Unity can also make the general public and entrepreneurs know that Hong Kong designers are proficient. At present, Hong Kong designs are still not very well-known. Local designers need more understanding, recognition and opportunities to gain international fame.” (FGD10, Manager Director, P34)

The top three statements agreed with by the designers and employers were:

Hong Kong Designers’ Views	Hong Kong Employers’ Views	Mainland Employers’ View
1. Educating the general public to understand and appreciate design starting from childhood (94.0%)	1. Enhancing Hong Kong designers’ image through organising more international competitions and exhibitions (95.1%)	1. Providing more placement opportunities for design students before graduation (98.5%)
2. Providing more favourable work environments for designers (e.g. providing more staff	2. Providing more favourable work environments for designers (e.g. providing more staff	2. Providing more favourable work environments for designers (e.g. providing more staff

<p>training and room for creativity) (93.9%)</p> <p>3. Putting more efforts into uniting designers, design associations and design industries to create more synergic and cooperative relationships (92.6%)</p>	<p>training and room for creativity) (94.1%)</p> <p>3. Providing more placement opportunities for design students before graduation (93.1%)</p>	<p>training and room for creativity) (97.9%)</p> <p>3. Putting more efforts into uniting designers, design associations and design industries to create more synergic and cooperation relationships (93.4%).</p>
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With regard to the needs and expectations of the respondents towards the design industry, introducing a professional chartered system for designers to promote their professionalism and stricter legislation for the protection of intellectual property were chosen by 81.4% and 87.2% of the designers and 84.2% and 90.2% of the employers. The chartered system could regulate certain rights of, and ethical issues for, designers to unify them around a set of principles that protect and promote design professionalism.

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s) in the Focus Group Discussion

Seriousness of Plagiarism on the Mainland (Designers' Views)

“I am worried that **plagiarism has become prevalent**, not only in the film industry, but also in the design industry. In Chinese mainland, people are willing to **steal and copy ideas from design books for their clients**. We should not follow this practice and we should think more instead.”
(FGS03, Interior Design, P59, Hong Kong)

“Some new customers would ask for some samples of designs, but they may not cooperate with us in the end. However, **we had given them the designs, so the ideas of our designers were usually**

plagiarised and they produced our designs in another factory. Even if we signed a number of contracts and agreements, the binding is not significant enough because we cannot write the binding provisions in the contracts and agreements.” (FGD03, P11, Division Manager (Design))

Need for Design Competitions with Professional Standards (Designer’s View)

“There are **design competitions** in Hong Kong, but they are **not professional enough**. They should take a look at overseas design competitions and internationalise the contestants in their competitions so that everyone in the world knows about them.” (FGS07, Product Designer, P81, Hong Kong)

Seriousness of Plagiarism on the Mainland (Mainland Designer’s View)

“It is a fact that the market is growing. We do not value intellectual property rights much. Most of our enterprises want to keep costs low and produce fake products that help them to survive. Compared to Europe, we can produce the same shoe types and quality, but our labour costs are lower. If we are to create our own brands, then we need to be able to protect our intellectual property rights.” (FGS02, P1, Human Resources Manager)

5.2 Trends in the Design Industry ...

On average, 231 (100%) HK designers, 99 (97.1%) HK employers and 515 (99.6%) mainland employers expressed their views. All three parties generally believed that there was an increasing demand for professionals who had a good mastery of design management and that more attempts were being made for organisations to move from OEM⁶ to ODM or OBM. The shift from OEM to ODM or OBM has led to increasing demand for designers and high-quality design services in both the Hong Kong and mainland markets. The requirements for high-quality design services may not be sufficiently fulfilled by current designers who work in OEM organisations or by fresh graduates who, to a larger extent, were trained with

⁶ OEM Original Equipment Manufacturer

ODM Original Design Manufacturer

OBM Original Brand Manufacturer

technical skills. This transition period may intensify the discrepancy between the supply of and demand for design manpower in the design industry in Hong Kong.

Selected Verbatim Response(s) from Respondent(s) in the Focus Group Discussion

Shift from OEM to ODM or OBM (Designer's View)

“I think that most employers would like the designers to **have more new ideas**, so that they can gradually **transform** their businesses from ODM to OBM.” (FGD06, Senior Lecturer, P20)

Shift from OEM to ODM or OBM (Mainland Designers' Views)

“We have two production approaches now. One is OEM, in which clients give us samples, and we produce the packaging design. This year, we began to design our own brands, and did the proposal planning and design concept ourselves.” (FGS01, P3: Manager, Cosmetics Manufacturer)

“With the rapid development of the PRD region, there is no prospect for you if you do not create your own brands. Thus, I think strategies need to be changed. Companies will not be able to remain in the market if they just follow other brands, as happened with our electronic products. Honestly, how will people be able to compete with you [if you have your own brand]? You will have invisible assets. If you have the ability, then why not invent your own brand?” (FGS01, P1: Human Resources Manager)

More designers believed that cooperation between Hong Kong and mainland designers should provide a competitive edge, as Hong Kong designers could be involved in design concept creation while mainland designers could be involved in design implementation. Meanwhile, both Hong Kong and mainland employers expressed the view that the design industry of Hong Kong should continue to serve as a bridge for foreign enterprises to enter the PRD market.

The top three statements agreed with by the designers and employers were:

Hong Kong Designers' View	Hong Kong Employers' view	Mainland Employers' view
<p>1. There is an increasing demand for professionals who have a good mastery of design management. (89.7%)</p>	<p>1. There is an increasing demand for professionals who have a good mastery of design management. (91.2%)</p>	<p>1. There is an increasing demand for professionals who have a good mastery of design management (94.6%)</p>
<p>2. More attempts are being made for organisations to move from OEM to ODM or OBM. (82.8%)</p>	<p>2. More attempts are being made for organisations to move from OEM to ODM or OBM. (86.3%)</p>	<p>2. There are more attempts are being made for organisations to move from OEM to ODM or OBM (82.7%).</p>
<p>3. There are more co-operations between Hong Kong and mainland designers. (79.6%)</p>	<p>3. Hong Kong should continue to serve as a bridge for foreign enterprises to enter the PRD market. (84.3%)</p>	<p>3. Hong Kong should continue to serve as a bridge for foreign enterprises to enter the PRD market (81.4%)</p>

Selected Verbatim Response from Respondent(s) in the Focus Group Discussion

Changes to More Focus on Design on the Mainland (Mainland Designer's View)

“I have been working on the Mainland for ages. I used to be concerned more with the technical side such as the sample making, but I am now concerned more with the design. Nowadays, the trend is that the levels of skills are similar in Hong Kong and on the Mainland. So we have to work hard on the designs, to think about how we can make new styles to satisfy our clients' needs (more focus on ODM).” (OFGS04, Designer of Jewellery Industry, P.125, Hong Kong)

Outsourcing as a Trend in the Mainland Design Industry (Employer's View)

“It [would] be a good idea if a Hong Kong enterprise established a firm here; then we can outsource some design jobs that we do not have the skill to do or [have] not done yet.” (FGD01, Factory Chief of a Leather Product Company, P9, The PRD region)

Outsourcing as a Trend in Hong Kong Design Industry (Employer's View)

“Our industry needs many designers, but we have only one in our company. All other designs are from outside design companies. I think this will be a trend as we do not need so many designers all the year round.” (FGD09, Manager, Creative & Culture, P.32, Hong Kong)

5.3 Demand for Designers in the Coming 12 Months in the Hong Kong and Mainland by Design Industries ...

Hong Kong Design Industry

In general, more than 90% of the Hong Kong employers indicated that less than **three** designer vacancies were available in their organizations either at the date of our survey (97.0%) or in the coming 12 months (94.3%).

Among the 264 organisations we surveyed, the average number of designer vacancies per organisation was 1.3 (SD = 0.5) in the coming 12 months, of which the Education/Training sector offered the highest number of 2.5 vacancies whereas Information Technology industries provided the lowest number of 0.7 vacancies only.

Among the three design professional levels, demands for designers across different design-using industries were not the same. Design management had the lowest demand whereas the demand for (senior) designers and junior designers varied by industry.

In the Building/Architecture, Trading and Others industries, demand for junior designers

(50.0%, 46.1% and 54.6%) was slightly higher than that for (senior) designers (40.0%, 38.1% and 34.0%).

In the Consultancy, Engineering and Recreational industries, demand for (senior) designers (45.8%, 50.0% and 50.0%) was slightly higher than that for junior designers (37.5%, 40.0% and 32.5%).

Mainland Design Industry

More than one-fifth of the mainland employers indicated that three or more designer vacancies were available in their organizations either at the date of our survey (21.8%) or in the coming 12 months (36.3%).

Among the 835 organisations we surveyed, the average number of designer vacancies was 5.8 (SD = 2.7) in the coming 12 months, of which the Information Technology industry offered the highest number of 13.7 vacancies while Consultancy industries provided the lowest number of 3.2 vacancies only.

Demand for designers was not the same across the three design professional levels. In the Building/Architecture industry, demand for (senior) level designers (44.3%) was greatest. In the Consultancy industry, demand for management level designers (50.5%) was greatest. In the Design (59.9%), Engineering (56.2%), Information Technology (62.2%) and Manufacturing (54.1%) industries, demand for junior level designers was greatest.

On average, demand for design managers in each of the mainland industry sectors was higher than in the equivalent Hong Kong industries. Specifically, in the consultancy industry in

Hong Kong , demand was greatest for (senior) designers (45.8%) whereas in the mainland , it was greatest for design managers (50.5%); in the trading industry in Hong Kong , demand was greatest for junior designers (46.1%) whereas in the mainland design managers were most in demand (38.5%).

These findings reveal certain degrees of design manpower distributions in the coming 12 months in both the Hong Kong and mainland design industries. The amount of designer vacancies not only reflects designer opportunities in the design industries, but also employer perceptions towards the prospects of the design industry in the near future. The substantial projected vacancies in the mainland industry further support employer perceptions of the PRD market’s potential. Despite this, the nature of this demand needs further investigation.

Table 5.1 Number of designer vacancies across different design-using industry sectors in **Hong Kong**

Industry	Date	Total No. of Designer Vacancies	No. of Companies which constitutes the Vacancies	Vacancy Breakdown		
				Design Management	Senior Designer/ Designer	Junior Designer
Building/ Architecture	At date of survey	2	2	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	In coming 12 months	10	5	10.0%	40.0%	50.0%
Consultancy	At date of survey	11	8	18.2%	45.5%	36.4%
	In coming 12 months	24	16	16.7%	45.8%	37.5%
Design	At date of survey	36	25	15.8%	50.0%	34.2%
	In coming 12 months	66	42	12.1%	45.5%	42.4%
Engineering	At date of survey	2	2	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	In coming 12 months	10	6	10.0%	50.0%	40.0%
Information Technology	At date of survey	2	2	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	In coming 12 months	6	6	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Manufacturing	At date of survey	27	17	14.8%	44.4%	40.7%
	In coming 12 months	44	25	9.1%	45.5%	45.5%
Public Relations Related	At date of survey	23	19	22.5%	32.5%	45.0%
	In coming 12 months	44	29	13.7%	43.2%	43.2%
Recreational	At date of survey	6	5	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%
	In coming 12 months	14	9	17.5%	50.0%	32.5%
Trading	At date of survey	27	20	12.9%	38.4%	48.7%

	In coming 12 months	56	38	15.8%	38.1%	46.1%
Others	At date of survey	8	6	6.7%	46.7%	46.7%
	In coming 12 months	15	9	11.4%	34.0%	54.6%

Table 5.2 Number of designer vacancies across different design-using industry sectors in the **Mainland**

Industry	Date	Total No. of Designer Vacancies	No. of Companies which constitutes the Vacancies	Vacancy Breakdown		
				Design Management	Senior Designer/ Designer	Junior Designer
Building/ Architecture	At date of survey	363	39	20.1%	36.9%	43.0%
	In coming 12 months	490	53	22.7%	44.3%	33.1%
Consultancy	At date of survey	43	17	39.5%	34.9%	25.6%
	In coming 12 months	93	21	50.5%	32.3%	17.2%
Design	At date of survey	277	57	9.0%	32.5%	58.5%
	In coming 12 months	312	74	9.9%	30.1%	59.9%
Engineering	At date of survey	228	51	12.3%	26.3%	61.4%
	In coming 12 months	463	71	18.1%	25.7%	56.2%
Information Technology	At date of survey	231	25	10.0%	27.7%	62.3%
	In coming 12 months	577	42	11.1%	26.7%	62.2%
Manufacturing	At date of survey	388	99	11.3%	33.8%	54.9%
	In coming 12 months	1,056	160	11.9%	34.0%	54.1%
Public Relations Related	At date of survey	131	69	25.1%	39.0%	35.8%
	In coming 12 months	393	97	34.0%	31.9%	34.1%
Recreational	At date of survey	46	14	42.9%	25.8%	31.3%
	In coming 12 months	128	22	28.2%	33.1%	38.7%
Trading	At date of survey	142	49	39.3%	29.5%	31.2%
	In coming 12 months	491	80	38.5%	28.5%	33.0%
Others	At date of survey	325	52	13.2%	41.3%	45.5%
	In coming 12 months	486	77	19.1%	43.4%	37.6%

Notes

- Trading includes (1) Merchandizing/ Purchasing, (2) Trading/Wholesales and (3) Retailing.
- Public Relations Related includes (1) Advertising and (2) Media/ Communication.
- Recreation includes (1) Entertainment/Arts/Recreation, (2) Hotel/Tourism
- Others include (1) Transportation/logistics, (2) Property/Real Estate, (3) Environmental Industry, (4) Banking/Finance/Insurance, (5) Government and Related, and (6) Others (including (6.1) Printing, Jeweler, (6.2) Decoration for Functions, and (6.3) industries that were not specified by the respondents).

5.4 Demand for Designers in the Coming 12 Months in Hong Kong and the Mainland by Design Services...

Hong Kong Design Industry

More than 65% of the employers indicated that fewer than **three** designer vacancies were available in their organizations either at the date of our survey (97.3%) or in the coming 12 months (93.0%).

Among 231 organisations we surveyed, the average number of designer vacancies was 1.4 (SD = 0.69) in the coming 12 months, of which Education Design service offered the highest number of 2.8 vacancies per organisation whereas Entertainment Design service provided the lowest number of around 0.8 vacancies per organisation only (when excluding the option Others).

Across all types of design services, demand for design managers was the least whereas the demand for (senior) designers and junior designers varied by industry the proportionate demands for different ranks of designers were in either junior or (senior) designers

In Architecture design, Printing/Paper design, Entertainment design and Textile design services, the demand for junior designers (48.3%, 50.0%, 57.5% and 60.7%) was slightly higher than that for (senior) designers (40.6%, 36.4%, 32.5% and 33.0%).

In the Graphic design, Design consultancy and Design education services, the demand for (senior) designers (50.9%, 50.0% and 57.1%) was slightly higher than that for junior designers (40.4%, 35.7% and 35.7%).

Mainland Design Industry

More than one-fifth of the employers indicated that three or more vacancies for designers were available in their organizations either at the date of our survey (22.1%) or in the coming 12 months (32.9%).

Among 960 organisations we surveyed, the average number of designer vacancies was 2.6 per organisation (SD = 2.25) in the coming 12 months, of which the Entertainment Design services offered the highest number of 6.6 vacancies per organisation whereas Textile Design services industries provided the lowest number of 0.3 vacancies only.

In Design Consultancy and Design Education services, demand for design managers (46.8% and 63.6%) was greatest across the three professional levels.

Table 5.3 The number of vacancies across different ranks of designers and different industry sectors in **Hong Kong**

Service	Date	Total No. of Designer Vacancy	No. of Companies which constitutes the Vacancies	Vacancy Breakdown		
				Design Management	Senior Designer/ Designer	Junior Designer
Product Design	At date of survey	51	30	15.1%	52.3%	32.7%
	In coming 12 months	89	52	11.1%	44.8%	44.1%
Graphic Design	At date of survey	35	24	17.1%	51.4%	31.4%
	In coming 12 months	57	37	8.8%	50.9%	40.4%
Image Design	At date of survey	37	27	15.8%	38.7%	45.5%
	In coming 12 months	77	51	7.6%	45.7%	46.7%
Architectural Design	At date of survey	18	12	6.7%	46.7%	46.7%
	In coming 12 months	49	24	11.1%	40.6%	48.3%
Design Consultancy	At date of survey	26	16	19.2%	53.8%	26.9%
	In coming 12 months	42	26	14.3%	50.0%	35.7%
Printing/Paper Design	At date of survey	11	8	18.2%	36.4%	45.5%
	In coming 12 months	22	15	13.6%	36.4%	50.0%
Entertainment Design	At date of survey	3	2	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	In coming 12 months	9	6	10.0%	32.5%	57.5%
Textile Design	At date of survey	6	4	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%
	In coming 12 months	15	8	6.3%	33.0%	60.7%
Design Education	At date of survey	11	5	18.2%	63.6%	18.2%
	In coming 12 months	14	5	7.1%	57.1%	35.7%
Information Technology	At date of survey	2	2	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	In coming 12 months	7	5	14.3%	42.9%	42.9%
Others	At date of survey	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	In coming 12 months	5	2	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%

Table 5.4 The number of vacancy across different rank of designers and different types of design services on the **Mainland**

Industry	Date	Total No. of Designer Vacancy	No. of Companies which constitutes the Vacancies	Vacancy Breakdown		
				Design Management	Senior Designer/ Designer	Junior Designer
Product Design	At date of survey	508	124	21.7%	45.8%	32.5%
	In coming 12 months	1316	170	22.1%	33.4%	44.5%
Graphic Design	At date of survey	126	61	14.3%	37.3%	48.4%
	In coming 12 months	367	89	18.3%	33.8%	48.0%
Image Design	At date of survey	316	118	19.5%	37.5%	43.0%

	In coming 12 months	854	170	25.5%	29.5%	44.9%
Architectural Design	At date of survey	802	121	18.1%	36.7%	45.2%
	In coming 12 months	1116	156	20.6%	42.3%	37.2%
Design Consultancy	At date of survey	50	16	34.0%	40.0%	26.0%
	In coming 12 months	109	29	46.8%	35.8%	17.4%
Printing/Paper Design	At date of survey	37	27	18.9%	43.2%	37.8%
	In coming 12 months	58	36	17.2%	39.7%	43.1%
Entertainment Design	At date of survey	146	14	18.8%	35.8%	45.4%
	In coming 12 months	144	19	15.8%	38.0%	46.2%
Textile Design	At date of survey	7	9	0.0%	28.6%	71.4%
	In coming 12 months	14	14	0.0%	28.6%	71.4%
Design Education	At date of survey	23	6	60.9%	26.1%	13.0%
	In coming 12 months	66	29	63.6%	28.8%	7.6%
Information Technology	At date of survey	365	37	10.1%	28.6%	61.3%
	In coming 12 months	679	61	10.8%	28.5%	60.7%
Others	At date of survey	11	38	6.3%	58.3%	35.4%
	In coming 12 months	70	71	18.1%	39.4%	42.5%

Notes

- Product Design includes (1) Jewellery/Precious Stones/Metals Design, (2) Toy Design, (3) Watch/Clock Design, (4) Electronic Product Design, (5) Electrical Product Design, (6)Optical Product Design and (7) Other Product Design (including (7.1) Books, (7.2) Furniture, (7.3) Lighting, (7.4) Accessories, (7.5) Gifts, (7.6) Premium Gifts and (7.7) Handbag).
- Image Design includes (1) Advertising Design, (2) Creative Media Design and (3) Personal/Corporate Image Design
- Architectural Design includes (1) Architectural Design and (2) Interior Design.
- Entertainment Design includes (1) Film/Music Design and (2) Theatre/Stage.
- Textile Design includes (1) Textile Design and (2) Fashion design.
- Information Technology includes (1) Computer Game Design and (2) Computer Software Design.
- Others include (1) Sculpture Design, and (2) Others (included (2.1) Display Design, (2.2) Exhibition Design, (2.3) Fabric Design (2.4) Festival Decoration, (2.5) Photography and (2.6) Services that were not specified by the respondents).

Recommendations

In view of the above findings, the following recommendations are made for the key stakeholders in the design industry to help sustain and continue improving the prosperity of the industry:

Designers are advised to:

- observe their professional design ethics and respect design originality. They should not copy original designs and should work to make original design contribution. (refer to Section 5.1)
- enhance Hong Kong designers' international image and exchange design ideas with overseas designers and are encouraged to participate more in international design competitions. (refer to Sections 4.4 and 5.1)
- meet the expectations of Hong Kong employers by continuing their education. Designers should select courses up to bachelor degree or above in order to effectively enhance their core design competences. They are advised to better equip themselves with other competences such as communication skills, knowledge of the use of colour, business and management knowledge, etc. (refer to Sections 1.4 and 5.1)
- meet the expectations of mainland employers, by improving their language skill in Mandarin and their knowledge of Chinese culture. (refer to Sections 3.3 and 4.2)

Employers are advised to:

- request original design and uphold professional design ethics. (refer to Section 1.2)
- enhance the loyalty and commitment of their designers by fostering mutual respect and trustful working relationships with their designers. (refer to Section 1.2)

- provide supportive environment for designers in the business culture and suggest it should be top-down, from the top management. (refer to Section 1.2)
- give clear career paths for designers and set a transparent and fair appraisal system for the evaluation of designers' performance. Systematic and well-structured staff trainings and continuing education are recommended to continuously enhance their designers' competences. (refer to Sections 1.2 and 5.1)
- set up a mentorship system to help designers improve their capabilities and attitudes through on-the-job guidance. (refer to Section 5.1)
- exercise care when planning to enter the mainland market for business and need to be careful for some potential problems like intellectual property protection, bad debt, cultural differences, etc. (refer to Section 5.1)
- collaborate with mainland designers to create more synergy. (refer to Sections 5.1 and 5.2)

Policy Makers are advised to:

- introduce stricter legislation to protect intellectual property and promote more civic education to encourage more creativity in the local community. (refer to Section 5.1)
- provide business, financial (e.g. recurrent funding) and loan supports for young designers and design entrepreneurs to improve their product/brand/business diversification and brand establishment. (refer to Section 5.2)
- address the discrepancy expressed in the employers' views between the preferred and actual educational qualifications of their designers across various design profession levels. More financial support appears necessary for design education institutions to provide additional continuing education and programmes up to the bachelor's degree or above. (refer to Section 1.4)

- address individual industry needs, such as jewellery, watches and clocks, electronics, architecture and interior designers and so forth, to learn about the specific design needs in their industries. (refer to Section 5.4)
- take a leading role as a bridge to the Mainland design industry to explore more business opportunities for Hong Kong's design industry. (refer to Sections 5.1 and 5.2)
- give publicity and institute culture and art value education, starting from childhood, for the general public so that they understand and appreciate design, as public awareness and appreciation are main concerns of the design practitioners. (refer to Section 5.1)

Educational Institutions are advised to:

- better equip design students with knowledge of manufacturing production workflow/processes. It is advised that more placement opportunities not limited to internships, out-reach activities, exchange programmes or cooperative workshops be organised. (refer to Sections 3.1 and 5.1)
- provide more pragmatic, diversified, and up-to-date courses so that design students can meet the various needs of the industry. (refer to Section 3.1)
- offer more in-depth design courses that cater to a particular design field only, including instruction in preparing quotations and drafting contracts for interior designers, and regulations and ordinances of a particular field, apart from a diversified design curriculum that covers the needs across the various fields of design. (refer to Section 3.1)
- instil more professional ethics and core values of the design profession into design students. (refer to Section 5.1)
- organize more courses especially at the higher levels, such as bachelor's degree or above, to nurture design professionals and give them good mastery of design management to

meet the industry's needs, such as striving for a balance between art/practical and best-selling designs. (refer to Sections 1.4 and 5.2)

- support a design research culture is suggested as a strategic move for institutions when developing future curricula. In addition, design research should be integrated into and synchronised with the teaching curriculum and with industry trends. (refer to Section 5.4)
- respond to the needs of a particular design sector in Hong Kong, for example, the relatively high demand for design managers in the public relations sector and for junior designers in textile design services (currently around 200 graduates per year). Design educational institutions are advised to provide design courses that particularly cater to the needs of these industries, as no MPhil and only one PhD design graduates were trained each year by only one institution (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University) in Hong Kong. (refer to Sections 1.4 and 5.3)
- provide more design management training and courses, for instance, an MA in Design Management/Design Risk Management/Environmental and Spatial Design, be provided for Hong Kong designers to upgrade their knowledge and skills in design management areas. We expect this would facilitate the employment of more Hong Kong designers in the Mainland and would help them to seek higher job positions in the Mainland design industries. (refer to Section 5.3)

Design Industry is advised to:

- put more effort into uniting designers, local and overseas design associations, and design industries to create more synergic and cooperative relationships. (refer to Section 5.1)
- organize more international competitions, exhibitions, (collaborative) workshops and seminars to promote Hong Kong design brand names and images. (refer to Section 5.1)

- invite more leading and famous worldwide design practitioners and scholars to come to Hong Kong to exchange design ideas. (refer to Section 5.1)
- promote design professionalism (e.g., ensuring technical knowledge, including rules and regulations and normal industry practices) and (re)consider implementing and evaluating the professional chartered system for designers. (refer to Section 5.1)
- position itself strategically in creating a local design culture, especially in design research culture. Sufficient investment should be provided to conduct research in pursuing a local design culture and high quality design work. (refer to Sections 5.1 and 5.4)

Concluding Remarks

This study has revealed there is a manpower mismatch problem in the Hong Kong design industry. Views from designers and employers on the causes of the mismatch were largely different. With regard to design skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes, the ratings on the level of proficiency in these competences from designers themselves and from their employers showed significant differences. Employers tended to rate their designers at a lower level of proficiency than their designers themselves did. On the other hand, both groups pointed out that design education was not pragmatic and broad enough to furnish designers for the fast-changing industry. They recommended providing more placement opportunities and design programs to cover the needs of various design fields. Concerning the potential design market in the PRD region, the respondents generally agreed that the PRD region was a large potential design market. Lastly, we also examined the needs and trends of the design industry. Based on the findings, recommendations were made for the key stakeholders of design industry to help sustain and continue improving the prosperity of the industry.

We hope that the findings and recommendations of the study will help employers develop effective strategic human resources and training policies for the selection, placement, career development and retention of designers, while design professionals will benefit from learning how to upgrade their competences to meet employers' requirements. In addition, we expect that our findings will clarify the use of and need for design services in the PRD region so that the Hong Kong design industry can further explore the opportunities to export its design services to the region. Also, our findings will provide insights for policy makers on effective strategies to compete in the global market and to maintain the pre-eminence of the design industry in Hong Kong and the PRD region.

Appendices

Table 1 Focus Group Participants in Hong Kong, by HSIC ⁷

No.	HSIC	Industries	No. of Participants Engaged
1	320	Wearing apparel (excl. footwear), manufacturing *	22
2	322	Wearing apparel (excl. footwear), manufacturing	1
3	323	Leather and leather products (excl. footwear and wearing apparel), manufacturing	1
4	332	Furniture and fixtures (excl. primarily of metal, i.e., major industry groups 380 and 381), manufacturing	1
5	342	Printing, publishing and allied industries	2
6	356	Plastic products, manufacturing	9
7	383	Radio, television and communications equipment and apparatus, manufacturing	1
8	385	Electrical appliances and houseware and electronic toys, manufacturing	21
9	386	Machinery, equipment, apparatus, parts and components n.e.c., manufacturing	2
10	389	Professional and scientific, measuring and controlling equipment n.e.c., and photographic and optical goods, manufacturing	3
11	390	Manufacturing industries n.e.c.**	5
12	391	Manufacturing industries n.e.c.	1
13	531	Decoration, repair and maintenance	16
14	833	Business services (excl. rental of machinery and equipment)	34
15	931	Education services	14
16	935	Business, professional and labour associations	8
17	940	Motion pictures and other entertainment services***	1
18	941	Motion pictures and other entertainment services	1
19	942	Libraries, museums, gardens and cultural services	3
20	959	Miscellaneous personal services	2

⁷ Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification Version 1.1

→ Total	148
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Notes

- (1) A participant can be involved in more than one industry.
- (2) Two participants asked to keep the industry in which they are involved confidential.
- (3) n.e.c. = not elsewhere classified.
- (4) * refers to Industry Code 320 – 322 “Wearing apparel (excl. footwear), manufacturing”
- (5) ** refers to Industry Code 390 – 391 “Manufacturing industries n.e.c.”
- (6) *** refers to Industry Code 940 – 941 “Motion pictures and other entertainment services”

Table 2 Focus Group Participants on the Mainland, by NSIC

No.	NSIC	Industries	No. of Participants Engaged
1	192	Manufacture of Leather Product (皮革製品製造)	6
2	243	Manufacture of Musical Instrument (樂器製造)	1
3	245	Manufacture of Artistic and Entertainment Product (遊藝器材及娛樂用品製造)	2
4	299	Manufacture of Other Rubber Products (其他橡膠製品製造)	1
5	364	Manufacture of Printing, Pharmacy, Daily Chemical Commodity (印刷、制藥、日化生產專用設備製造)	1
6	395	Manufacture of Domestic Electrical Appliance (家用電力器具製造)	1
7	403	Manufacture of Broadcasting and Television Product (廣播電視設備製造)	1
8	411	Manufacture of General Measuring Equipment (通用儀器儀錶製造)	1
9	412	Manufacture of Specific Measuring Equipment (專用儀器儀錶製造)	1
10	421	Manufacture of Artistic Product and Craft (工藝美術品製造)	1
11	429	Other Manufacturing Industries (其他未列明的製造業)	1
12	637	Machinery Equipment, Metallic Electrical Appliance and Electronic Product Wholesale (機械設備、五金交電及電子產品批發)	1
13	741	Corporate Management Service (企業管理服務)	2
14	746	Career Agency (職業仲介服務)	4
15	752	Engineering and Technological Research & Experimental Development (工程和技术研究与试验发展)	1
→ Total			25

Demographic Data of Hong Kong Questionnaire Survey

Designers' demographic information...

Among 231 designers, their demographic information was as follows:

(1) Age and gender of the designers

- a majority aged between 20-29 (62.2%) and;
- male (51.8%); female (48.2%)

(2) Highest education level

Most of them (38.1%) had obtained a bachelor degree or above:

- bachelor (22.0%),
- master (15.6%) and;
- doctoral (0.5%).

(3) Job position

- slightly more than half (58.0%) were senior designer/designer level.

(4) Years of work experience

- about half (56.9%) less than 3 years' work experience in the *design industry*;
- a majority (76.1%) had been working for *their current organisations* for less than 3 years.

(5) Monthly income

- 44.6% of them had monthly income HK\$ 10,000 or less;
- 32.8% of them were between HK\$ 10,001 and 20,000.

Employers' demographic information ...

Among 102 employers, their demographic information was as follows:

(1) Job position

- Half (53.9%) were at the top management level like CEO.

(2) Business nature

- A majority (60.9%) adopted combined business model. The widely adopted models were:
 - ODM (26.1%),
 - ODM and OBM (23.1%) and;
 - OEM, ODM and OBM (21.7%).

(3) Year of establishment

- Out of the 35 responses, 28.6% of them were established for < 10 years.

(4) Source of client bases

- a majority (40.2%) indicated their clients were from overseas and;
- slightly more the one-third (33.5%) were from Hong Kong.

(5) Types and number of designers in the organisations

- In Hong Kong the number of full-time designers was ranging from:
 - 1-10 (86.2%) to 21 or above (10.3%).
- In their mainland offices, the number of full-time designers was ranging from:
 - 1-10 (72.7%) to 21 or above (27.3%).

Respondents' major business...

Major businesses and types of design services respondents were offering:

(1) Top three business areas

- design (27.6%),
- manufacturing (20%) and;
- trading (16.8%).

(2) Main types of design services offered

- product design (35.0%),
- graphic design (16.0%) and;
- image design (13.7%).

Demographic Data Analysis of the Mainland Respondents

Employers' Demographic Information...

517 respondents' organisation information was collected as follows:

(1) Job position

- more half of employers (56.3%) were at the top management level

(2) Business nature

- The majority (76.4%) of the employers adopted single business model. And the widely adopted models were:
 - ODM (37.8%),
 - OBM (24.1%) and;
 - OEM (14.5%).

(3) Year of organisations establishment

Out of the 517 responses,

- 49.3% of them were established for <10 years and;
- 33.1% of them were established for 11-20 years.

(4) Clients served:

Among 972 responses:

- the majority of them (37.9%) indicated PRD region was their clients' bases and;
- slightly more the a quarter of their clients (26.1%) were located in the other parts in China.

(5) Types of employees and the number of designers in the organisations

- At their mainland offices:

The number of the mainland designers:

- the percentage of full-time designers ranging from 1-10 was 56.4% and 11-20 was 15.9% and;
- the percentage of part-time designers ranging from 1-10 was 80.5%).

The number of Hong Kong designers:

- 1-10 (88.5%).

Respondents' major business...

Major businesses, types of design services they were offering and the sources of :

(1) Top three business sectors were:

- manufacturing (25.8%),
- public relations related (11.5%) and;
- trading (11.4%).

(2) Main types of designer services offered were:

- product design (22.2%),
- architectural design (19.0%) and;
- image design (18.7%).

Supplementary Table: Number of Full-Time Design Graduate in Hong Kong (IVE and PolyU)

Award	Institute	Area	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07
Diploma	IVE	Fashion Design	233	215	119	9
		Digital Media	76	59	5	2
		Visual & Communication Design	37	29	37	27
		Product Design	40	31	34	22
		Interior Design	31	30	29	19
	PolyU	Design	47	50	54	51
	<i>Diploma Total</i>		464 (46.4%)	414 (39.2%)	278 (24.1%)	130 (11.5%)
High Diploma	IVE	Fashion Design	n/a	n/a	165	204
		Digital Media	90	143	217	232
		Visual & Communication Design	85	65	73	71
		Product Design	47	66	67	65
		Interior Design	52	64	69	67
	PolyU	Multimedia Design and Technology	125	128	119	134
		Product Innovation Technology	35	37	36	37
		<i>High Diploma Total</i>	434 (43.4%)	503 (47.7%)	746 (64.7%)	810 (71.8%)
BA	PolyU	Environment and Interior Design	15	12	14	34
		Fashion Design	21	27	1	n/a
		Industrial and Product Design	28	29	33	37
		Visual Communication	24	37	52	66
		Art and Design in Education	2	30	23	51
		Other Disciplines	11	3	6	n/a
		<i>BA Total</i>	101 (10.1%)	138 (13.1%)	129 (11.2%)	188 (16.7%)
Taught Master	PolyU	Multimedia and Entertainment Technology	2	30	23	51
		Design	n/a	n/a	41	41
		<i>Master Total</i>	2 (0.2%)	30 (2.8%)	64 (5.6%)	92 (8.2%)
<i>Grand Total</i>		999 (100.0%)	1055 (100.0%)	1153 (100.0%)	1128 (100.0%)	

Source:

The raw figures are provided by School of Design, PolyU and Department of Design, ShaTin, IVE.