MIRRORS AND WINDOWS:
MALTESE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND SOCIETY

aġenzija żgħażagħ

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FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to write the foreword for this publication that presents the findings of a study on the behaviors, attitudes and lifestyles of young people in Malta.

The partnership between Aġenzija Żgħażagħ and Żgħażagħ Ħaddiema Nsara has produced an invaluable study as it provides a picture in time of young people's lifestyles and of their attitudes to a wide range of issues, people and institutions, from fashion and work, to the internet and politicians. I am confident that you will find the study as absorbing and stimulating as I did.

Our National Youth Policy, which I launched in November 2009, includes the underpinning principle of Consultation (seeking ongoing consultation with young people, youth organisations and all those involved in the youth field) and Research (seeking accurate and up to date information on young people's needs, values and lifestyles). This study is a practical example of giving effect to these underpinning principles. It is also interesting to note that the vertical themes outlined in the National Youth Policy are complemented by those in the study: Education, Employment, Health and Well-being, Culture and Arts, Sport, Leisure, the Information Society, Transitions and Vulnerability.

The results of the study are a source of encouragement and hope for all of us working for and with young people. Young people in Malta display a positive attitude to life; they are family orientated with a strong focus on supportive human relationships and have in general a balanced attitude and response to the many challenges that young people face in today's global society. While the study highlights a number of challenges and concerns for people, professions and institutions working with young people, we can take encouragement from the fact that young people are open and enthusiastic about improving the quality of life for themselves, their families and their communities. As for government's part, the study's outcome makes us even more determined to continue in our efforts to meet the challenges and to address the concerns through the empowerment of young persons and the creation of opportunities for their full participation in economic, political and social life.

I congratulate all those involved in conducting and publishing the study, which I trust will be but the first of such regular studies in the coming years.

Hon. Clyde Puli MA BA MCIPR MIM MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Youth and Sport

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT
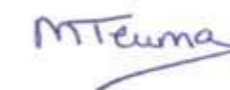
Hearing and listening to the voice of young people, their hopes and concerns, is one of the fundamental principles of youth work. The renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) takes due regard of this. For the effective implementation of the framework, a number of instruments have been adopted on a European-wide basis. Two of these instruments "consultations and structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations" and "knowledge building and evidence-based youth policy" are complementary and mutually supportive.

This approach at European level is also complemented by the aims and objectives of Aġenzija Żgħażagħ. One of the main objectives of the agency is greater participation, empowerment and dialogue for young people. Structured dialogue is an initiative, under its youth empowerment programme, in which Aġenzija Żgħażagħ is developing a space for debate to help young people reach an understanding and build consensus on the main challenges that confront them. It aims to find ways to improve youth policy and advance and strengthen partnerships between young people and policy makers by exploring issues and generating ideas. In addition and in support of this, the agency is undertaking and co-ordinating research into specific issues such as the current profile of young people in Malta and their attitudes and behaviours.

In 2011, the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth and Sport commissioned ZHN to carry out a study of young people in Malta. Under the auspices of ZHN, a research team comprising Fr. Joe Inguanez of *Discern* and his colleagues, Ms. Rebecca Gatt and Ms. Sandra Schembri Wismayer were appointed to carry out the study. Part of this study included a survey, in the form of a questionnaire and structured interview, with some 400 young people between the ages of 13 and 30. This publication presents the findings and an analysis of this study.

First, the aims and the methodology of the study are set out. Second, the young people who participated in the study are profiled in terms of age, gender and locality as well as in terms of education and employment. Third, the participants' perceptions of themselves, their families, communities and society are presented under a number of headings including: Behaviours and Motivation, Emotions and Feelings, the Family, Religion, Politics, Health and Well-being etc. Finally, an analysis and evaluation of the results of the study is presented.

As indicated in the final section on the analysis and results of the study, while all such studies have their limitations and imponderables, and are only a picture in time, they do offer all of us working for and with young people the opportunity to ponder and reflect on what young people feel and how they behave, what motivates them and what they think of the people, institutions and systems that impact on and influence their lives.

Miriam Teuma
Chief Executive Officer

1. AIM AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to gauge the self perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of a representative sample of young people in Malta between the ages of 13 and 30 on a wide range of life issues including, the family, religion, politics, and leisure.

A sample of 400 young people in Malta aged between 13 and 30 years of age (in April 2011), randomly selected, was provided by the National Statistics Office.

A formal letter, explaining how they were selected, what the objectives of the study were, and seeking their active participation, was sent to all 400 young people (hereafter referred to as the participants) in the sample.

From mid-June to the beginning of August 2011, trained research assistants visited the respective households of the 400 young people in the sample. Each questionnaire was filled in during a face-to-face interview, which lasted for approximately 50 minutes on average.

The data generated by these questionnaires was compiled and processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The results generated through SPSS are here presented both numerically and graphically through tables, charts and graphs. It should be noted that since it is almost impossible to get complete data in every instance, the "missing value" was noted down in each relevant case.

2. THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY

The 400 participants interviewed and who completed the questionnaire were between 13 and 30 years of age (some 5% of participants had reached their 30th birthday by the time of interview), evenly divided between males and females, almost all Maltese nationals, evenly distributed throughout the country;

64% of whom were single and 80% of whom were living at home with their parents. (Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

In terms of education, 48% of participants were still studying while 52% had completed their studies. (Figure 6)

Figure 1: *Age of participants*

30 and over 5%
13-14 8%
15-19 31%
20-24 31%
25-29 25%
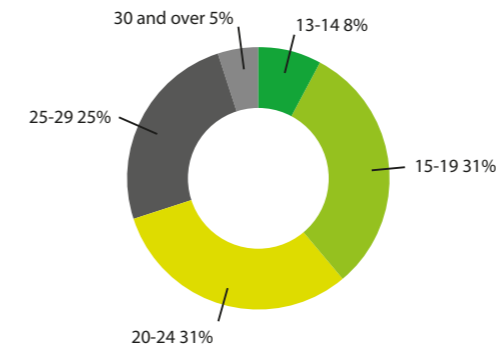
Figure 2: *Gender of participants*

48% Female
52% Male
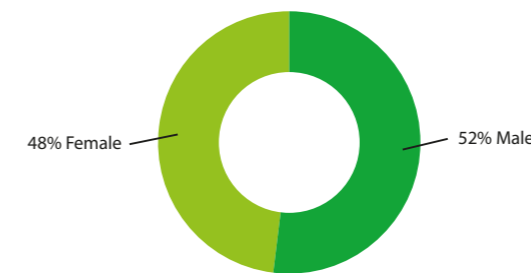
Figure 3: *Nationality of participants*

1% Other than Maltese
99% Maltese
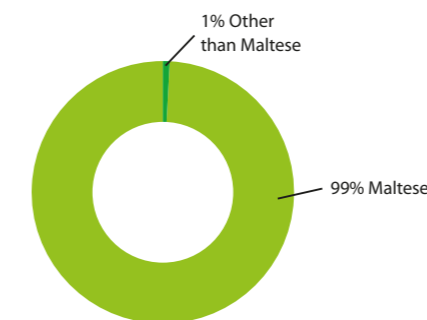
Figure 4: *Locality of participants*

Northern 16%
Southern Harbour 19%
Western 15%
Northern Harbour 32%
South Eastern 18%
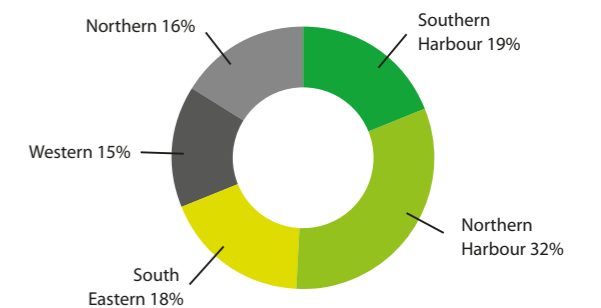
Figure 5: *Residence of participants*

No answer 1%
Not in my parents residence 19%
In my parents residence 80%
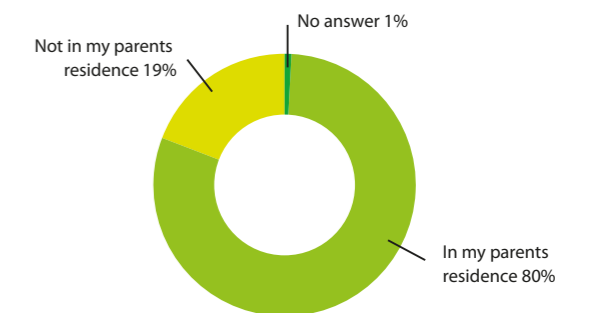
Figure 6: *Participants in education*

No 52%
Yes 48%
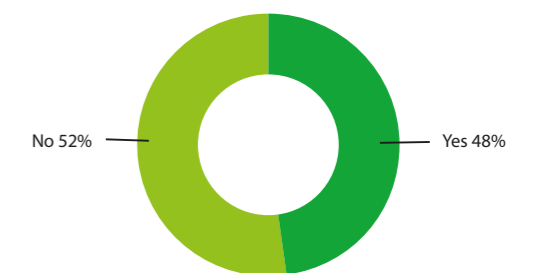
Of the 48% of participants still studying, 41% were in full-time education. Of the 52% of participants in employment, 23% were either skilled or semi-skilled workers, 17% were professional, senior or middle managers, while 12% were in junior management or administrative posts. Only 2% described themselves as unemployed and 3% were housewives. (Figure 7)

Figure 7: *Occupation of participants*

Senior professional, senior manager, senior civil servant	3%
Professional middle management with qualifications, principal officers	14%
Junior managers and all other non-manual positions	12%
Skilled manual worker	11%
Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers	12%
Housewife	3%
Unemployed	2%
No answer	2%
Full-time student	41%

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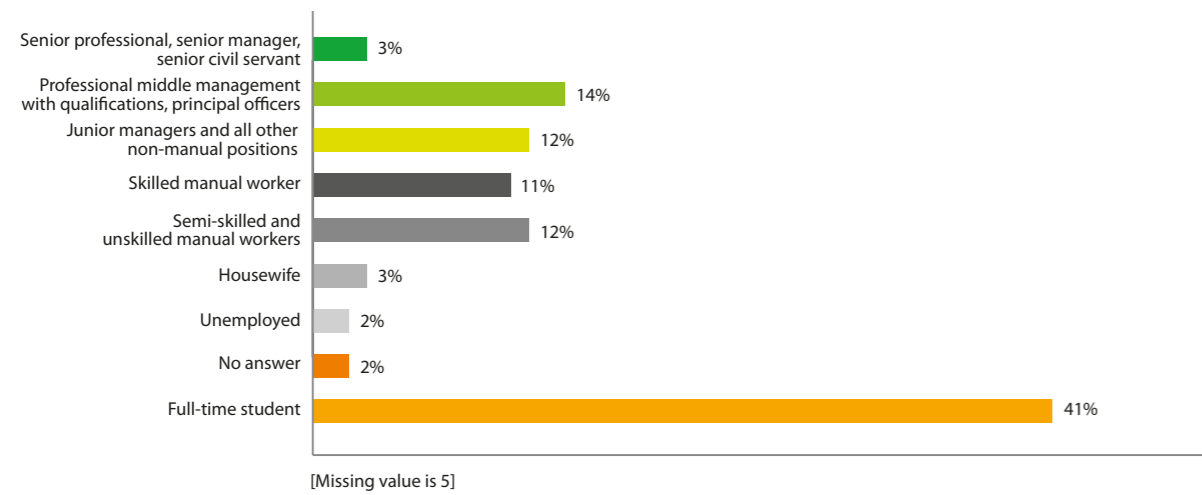
A comparative analysis was also made of their parents' occupations that is broadly reflective of the above in terms of fathers' occupations. However, almost 60% of mothers were described as housewives. (Figures 8, 9)

Figure 8: *Occupation of participants' fathers*

Senior professional, senior manager, senior civil servant	9%
Professional middle management with qualifications, principal officers	19%
Junior managers and all other non-manual positions	11%
Skilled manual worker	31%
Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers	24%
Unemployed	1%
No answer	5%

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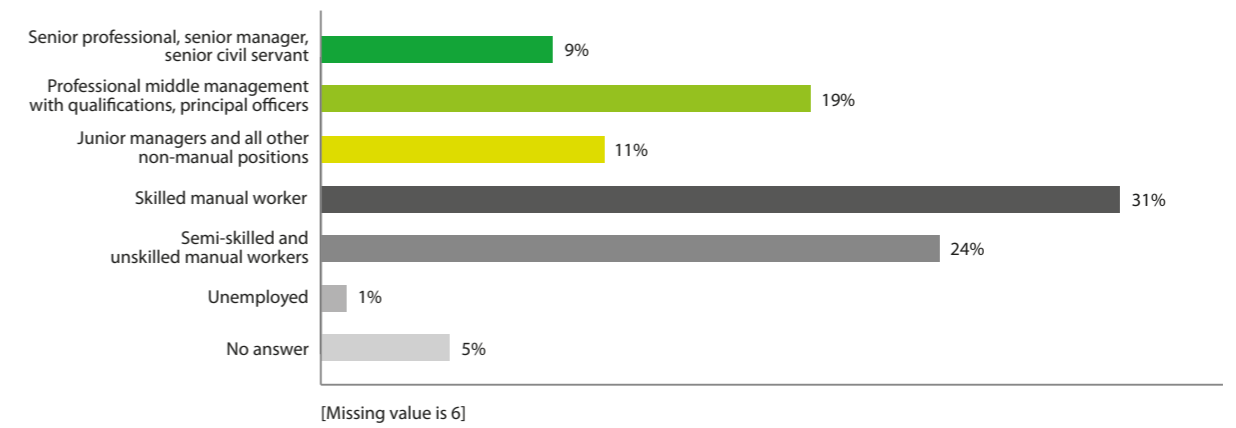
Figure 9: *Occupation of participants' mothers*

Senior professional, senior manager, senior civil servant	2%
Professional middle management with qualifications, principal officers	10%
Junior managers and all other non-manual positions	8%
Skilled manual worker	7%
Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers	11%
Housewife	59%
Unemployed	1%
No answer	2%

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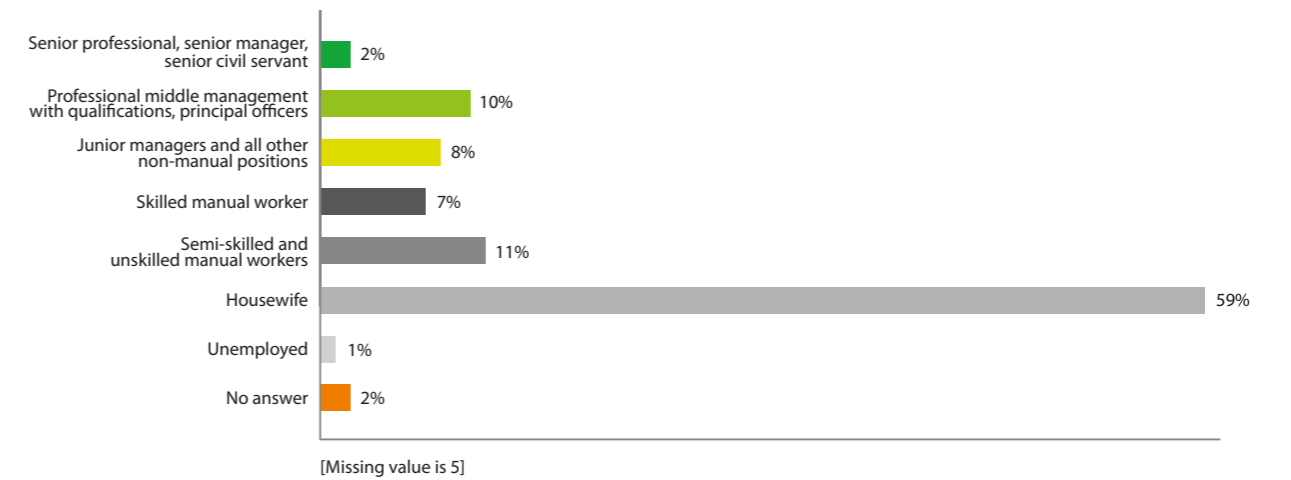
3. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The participants were asked a wide range of questions
in the course of the structured interviews relating to a
broad spectrum of topics: including their perception of
themselves as private and social beings, their behaviours
and their attitudes to the people, professions, institutions
and systems that impact on and influence their lives.

For convenience and clarity, the findings of the study are
presented below in coherent and interrelated clusters.
The first cluster deals with participants' general behaviour
and motivation as private and social beings, their feelings
and emotions and how they interact with those closest to
them, their parents, siblings and friends; as well as with
their physical and emotional health and well-being.

The second cluster deals with participants' attitudes
to those people and professions (teachers, doctors,
social workers etc.) and institutions (religious and
state) with whom they come into contact or are
conscious of. Central to this is the concept of trust:
to what extent did the participants have trust or
confidence in people, professions and institutions.

The third cluster looks at employment, money
and the participants as consumers.

The fourth cluster looks at the role that contemporary
communications technology and the information society
are playing in changing participants' behaviours and
lives; how participants spend their leisure time and
what their hopes and expectations are for the future.

3.1 BEHAVIOURS AND MOTIVATION

How young people behave and what motivates them are matters of ongoing interest and concern for parents, teachers, and all those who deal with and come into contact with young people. There is also extensive academic research and debate on the subject. Notwithstanding often conflicting evidence, views and expectations, there is merit in considering young people's own views on how they behave and what motivates them.

Two-thirds of the participants did not find it generally difficult to comply with society's norms of behaviour and most considered adherence to the law as being either important or very important. Three-quarters of participants also felt satisfied in observing laws and regulations. (Figures 10, 11, 12)

Figure 10: *How difficult do you find it to obey?*

I do not know	0.3%
So-and-so	35.5%
A little	23.3%
No not at all	32.5%
Yes a lot	7.8%

[Missing value is 3]
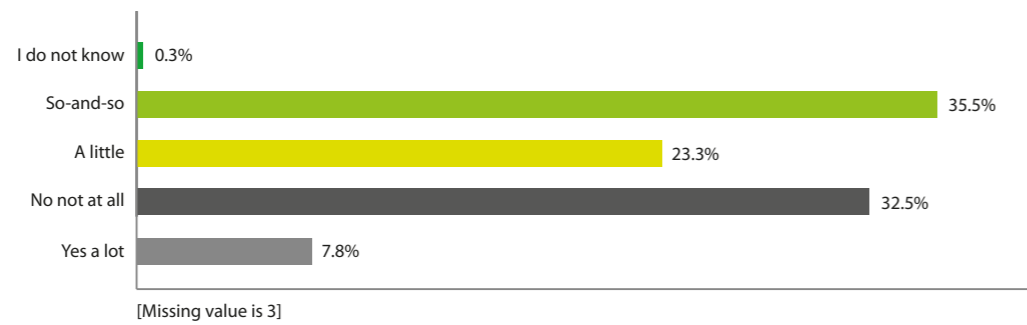
Figure 11: *Do you think that adherence to the law is important in society?*

I do not know	0.3%
Not important	1.3%
So-and-so	4.3%
Important	33.8%
Very important	60%

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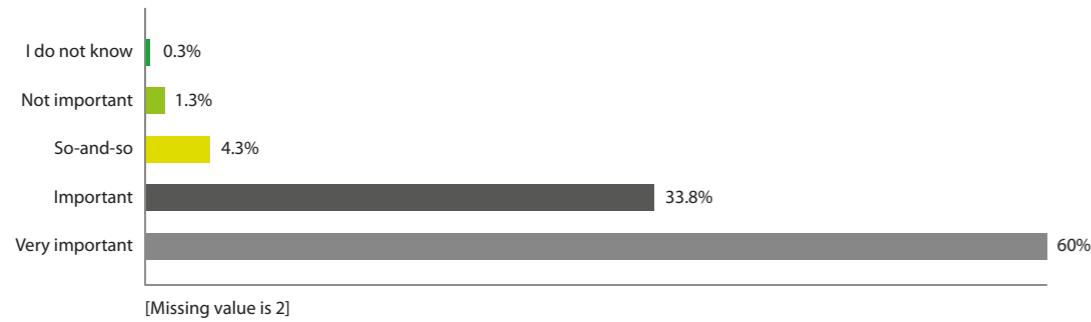
Figure 12: *How do you feel when you observe laws and regulations?*

I do not know	0.5%
No answer	0.3%
I feel they are being imposed on me	6.8%
I feel indifferent	15.8%
I feel satisfied	47%
I feel a sense of great satisfaction	29.3%

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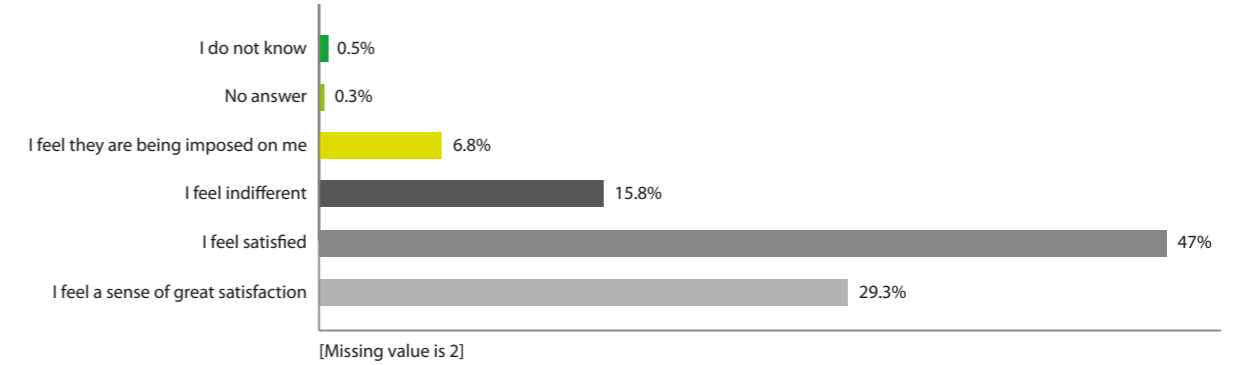
Peer pressure did not appear to be a significant issue for participants. When asked how difficult they found it not to behave like their peers, almost 40% did not find it at all difficult while only 8% found it very difficult. (Figure 13)

Figure 13: *How difficult do you find it not to behave like your peers (peer group)?*

No answer	0.8%
I do not know	1.5%
Not at all	39.3%
So-and-so	30.8%
A little	19.5%
A lot	8%

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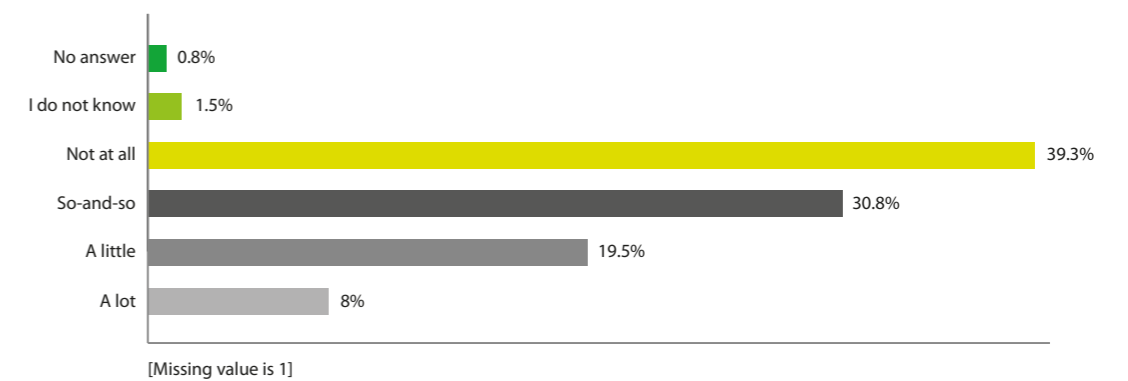
In terms of behaviour, participants were most influenced by their parents, wife/husband or girlfriend/boyfriend followed by their siblings and close friends. Study, work and religious faith were also important influences. (Table 1)

Table 1: *How much do the following influence your life? [The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]*

	MIN 1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		MAX 10		None	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Parents	2	0.5	4	1.0	2	0.5	8	2.0	12	3.0	17	4.3	39	9.8	59	14.8	104	26.0	148	37.0	4	1.0
Wife/Husband Girlfriend/Boyfriend	6	1.5	3	0.8	6	1.5	3	0.8	8	2.0	10	2.5	21	5.3	37	9.3	46	11.5	90	22.5	103	25.8
Siblings	6	1.5	7	1.8	10	2.5	6	1.5	39	9.8	33	8.3	72	18.0	105	26.3	62	15.5	50	12.5	7	1.8
Close Friends	11	2.8	4	1.0	8	2.0	16	4.0	40	10.0	50	12.5	83	20.8	96	24.0	53	13.3	36	9.0	3	0.8
Clergy & Nuns	95	23.8	32	8.0	24	6.0	43	10.8	52	13.0	36	9.0	35	8.8	20	5.0	7	1.8	9	2.3	44	11.0
Teachers	32	8.0	15	3.8	31	7.8	16	4.0	65	16.3	56	14.0	61	15.3	57	14.3	16	4.0	6	1.5	38	9.5
Groups you strive to imitate	91	22.8	28	7.0	35	8.8	34	8.5	61	15.3	27	6.8	22	5.5	20	5.0	6	1.5	4	1.0	64	16.0
Religious Faith	36	9.0	21	5.3	20	5.0	23	5.8	59	14.8	46	11.5	59	14.8	55	13.8	34	8.5	31	7.8	15	3.8
Astrology (horoscope, stars, fortune tellers)	176	44.0	37	9.3	24	6.0	11	2.8	14	3.5	5	1.3	10	2.5	3	0.8	3	0.8	2	0.5	111	27.8
Political Ideas	127	31.8	42	10.5	38	9.5	27	6.8	38	9.5	27	6.8	13	3.3	9	2.3	3	0.8	2	0.5	1	0.3
Band Club	167	41.8	16	4.0	15	3.8	7	1.8	12	3.0	5	1.3	7	1.8	10	2.5	5	1.3	3	0.8	142	35.5
Fire-works Club/Organisation	171	42.8	17	4.3	9	2.3	9	2.3	9	2.3	5	1.3	5	1.3	6	1.5	4	1.0	3	0.8	152	38.0
Festivities decorations Organisation	169	42.3	14	3.5	14	3.5	7	1.8	10	2.5	6	1.5	5	1.3	7	1.8	3	0.8	3	0.8	152	38.0
Youth club/Organisation/Centre	101	25.3	26	6.5	29	7.3	33	8.3	42	10.5	29	7.3	17	4.3	20	5.0	5	1.3	1	0.3	87	21.8
Sports	39	9.8	17	4.3	28	7.0	39	9.8	47	11.8	48	12.0	39	9.8	43	10.8	26	6.5	23	5.8	45	11.3
Media	23	5.8	16	4.0	39	9.8	37	9.3	71	17.8	70	17.5	61	15.3	38	9.5	8	2.0	8	2.3	24	6.0
Music	23	5.8	13	3.3	31	7.8	39	9.8	79	19.8	55	13.8	53	13.3	33	8.3	24	6.0	27	6.8	16	4.0
Work	17	4.3	2	0.5	2	0.5	14	3.5	25	6.3	34	8.5	53	13.3	74	18.5	67	16.8	34	8.5	60	15.0
Study	33	8.3	8	2.0	10	2.5	16	4.0	31	7.8	35	8.8	40	10.0	64	16.0	50	12.5	57	14.3	45	11.3

When asked if they felt a sense of guilt in refusing to do what is expected of them, participants felt this guilt most keenly in respect of their parents. (Table 2)

Table 2: *When you refuse to do what is expected of you by the following categories, do you feel or not feel any sense of guilt?*

	Yes		No		No Answer	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Friends	207	51.8	190	47.5	2	0.5
Parents	372	93.0	26	6.5	1	0.3
Girl friend/Boy friend	221	55.3	32	8.0	137	34.3
Teacher/s	175	43.8	99	24.8	118	29.5
Employer/Manager	215	53.8	59	14.8	113	28.3
Teaching of the Church	225	56.3	168	42.0	6	1.5
Political Party	37	9.3	344	86.0	15	3.8

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

Only half considered someone as a role model. (Figure 14)

Of those who said they had a role model, over 9 % said that their mother was their role model, 8.3% their parents and almost 7% their father. These were followed by other family members (3.5%), famous singers (3.5%), friends (3.3%), Christ and other religious personalities (3%), football players (2.5%), and girlfriend/ boyfriend (1.8%).

Figure 14: *Do you consider anyone as your role model?*

I don't know 2.8%

No 46.8%　　　　Yes 50.3%

[Missing value is 1]
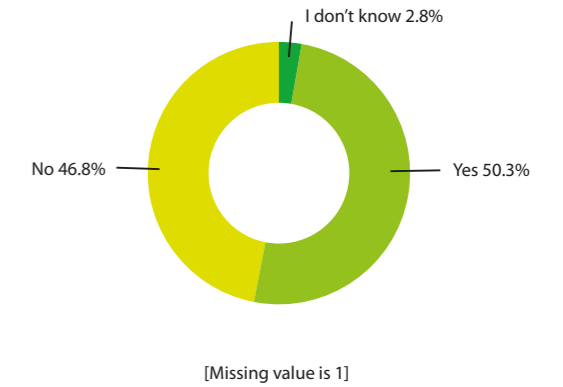
Participants in general indicated that they were positively motivated when initiating or carrying out activities relating to work, sport etc. (Figure 15)

In terms of self-expression, participants cited listening and expressing themselves to others as the most important, with expression through sports and electronic media also ranking high. Other modes of expression through the arts, religious and voluntary activities ranked lower. (Table 3)

Participants saw their parents, siblings and friends as well as by their values and actions as strong motivating agents. (Table 4)

Emotions and feelings were also strong motivating factors. (Figure 16)

Figure 15: *When you start any new activity (such as work, sport related activity, reading a book, drama, religious practice) do you normally feel a strong will to work on it?*

Yes a lot	80.5%
A little	8.3%
So-and-so	9.5%
Very often I find it hard to be enthusisttic	1.3%

[Missing value is 2]
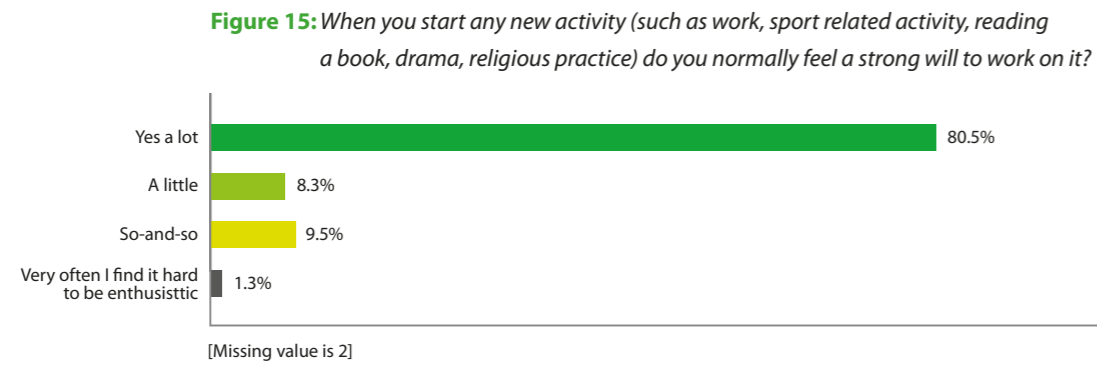
Table 3: *Which of the following do you carry out?*

	Freq.	%
Expressing my ideas in group	259	64.8
Singing	51	12.8
Writing for publication	11	2.8
Make a speech in public	21	5.3
Reading in public	34	8.5
Painting	76	19.0
Photography	62	15.5
Dancing	53	13.3
Listening to what others are saying	296	74.0
Sports	179	44.8
Drama	27	6.8
Activities associated with my religious convictions	79	19.8
Music practice	49	12.3
Playing games e.g. play station	182	45.5
Voluntary organisations	60	15.0
No answer	11	2.8

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

Table 4: *On a scale from 1 to 5 how much do each of the following enhance your motivation?*

	Least motivates me 1			2			3			4			Highly motivates me 5		
	Freq.	%	C%*	Freq.	%	C%	Freq.	%	C%	Freq.	%	C%	Freq.	%	C%
My friends	10	2.5	2.5	26	6.5	9.0	83	20.8	29.9	192	48.0	78.1	85	21.3	99.5
My values	3	0.8	0.8	8	2.0	2.8	39	9.8	12.6	136	34.0	46.9	211	52.8	100.0
The activity I am doing	2	0.5	0.5	11	2.8	3.3	59	14.8	18.2	160	40.0	58.6	163	40.8	99.7
My parents and siblings	6	1.5	1.5	10	2.5	4.0	44	11.0	15.1	111	27.8	43.0	227	56.8	100.0
The fear of being unsuccessful	42	10.5	10.6	58	14.5	25.1	110	27.5	52.8	123	30.8	83.7	63	15.8	99.5
The good that results from this activity	7	1.8	1.8	14	3.5	5.3	54	13.5	18.8	172	43.0	62.1	149	37.3	99.5
Knowledge about the matter at hand	5	1.3	1.3	13	3.3	4.5	65	16.3	20.9	165	41.3	62.5	148	37.0	99.7

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

*C% = Cumulative Percentage

Most participants saw the support of others as either important or very important in their lives. While only a small minority (6.5%) saw themselves as loners, most participants enjoyed the company of others while retaining the capacity to be alone. (Figures 17, 18).

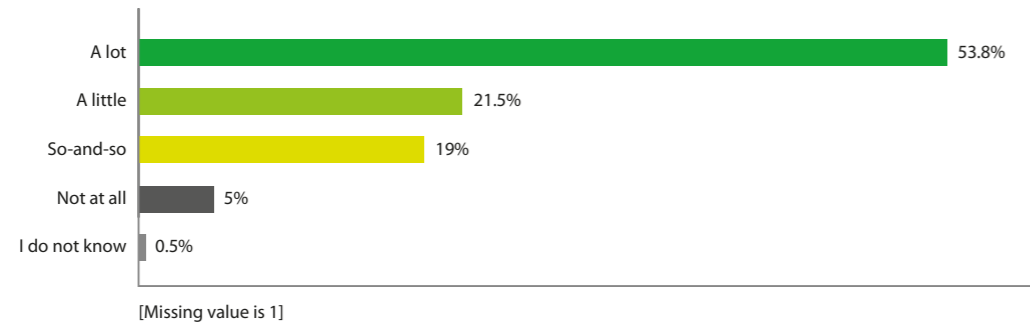**Figure 16:** *How conditioned is your motivation by your emotions/feelings?*

A lot	53.8%
A little	21.5%
So-and-so	19%
Not at all	5%
I do not know	0.5%

[Missing value is 1]

Figure 17: *How important is the support of others in your life?*

Not important	1.3%
So-and-so	5.8%
Important	31.3%
Very important	61.3%

[Missing value is 2]
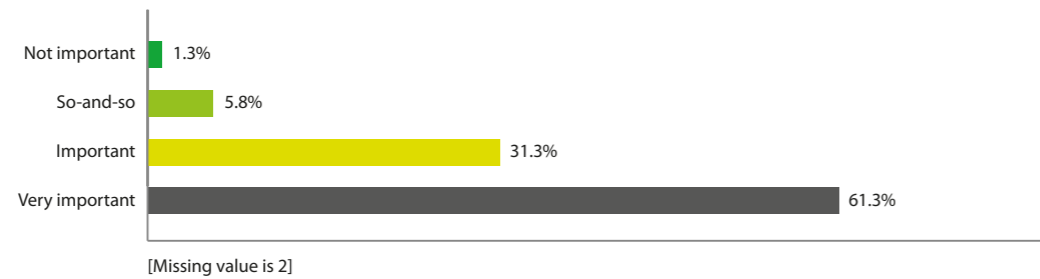
Figure 18: *Do you consider yourself a loner or do you enjoy being in the company of others?*

I can't bear to be alone	3.5%
I enjoy being in the company of others	40%
Sometimes a loner and sometimes I enjoy being in the compnay of otherss	49.3%
A loner	6.5%

[Missing value is 3]
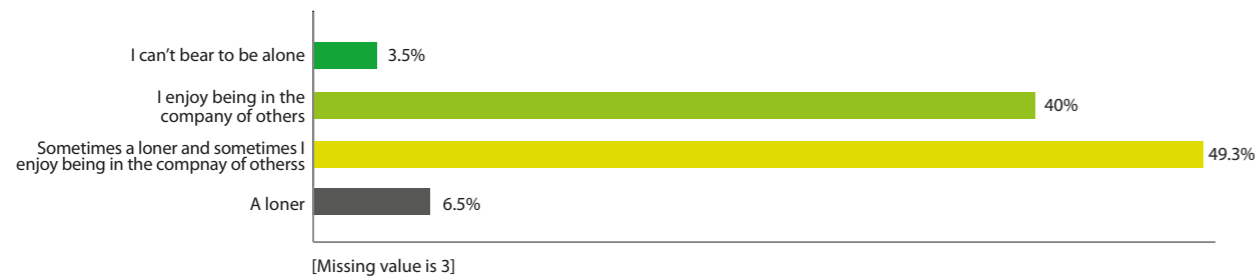
3.2 FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

The transition from childhood to adulthood is generally seen as a turbulent and defining period in a person's life. In particular, it is seen as a time of intensified and often confused feelings and emotions. Gaining some insight as to how young people feel is therefore an important indicator of their personal and social well-being.

Most participants described themselves as either happy or very happy. (Figure 19)

Family and friends were the main sources of happiness with success in studies and work and achieving one's goals also figuring prominently. Material and leisure/cultural sources of happiness ranked lowest. (Table 5)

Figure 19: *Do you feel happy?*

Quite sad 2%
0.3% Very sad
So-and-so 11.8%
Quite happy 24%
Very happy 61.8%

[Missing value is 1]
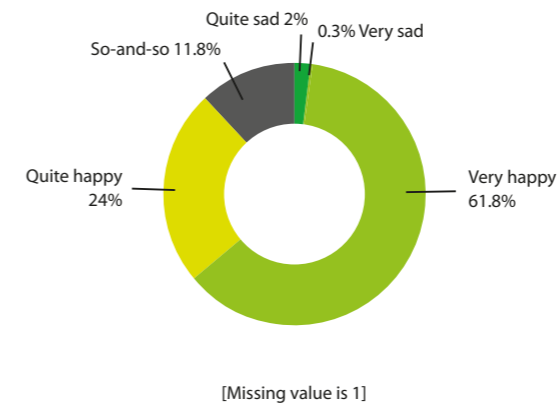
Table 5: *What is the greatest source of happiness in your life?*

	Freq.	%
The family / family unity	102	25.5
Socialising with my friends	40	10.0
When I proceed successfully in life (e.g. passing exams/successful in work)	29	7.3
Fulfilling my plans / reaching goals-desires	25	6.3
The sense of unity / love / peace with persons close to you	20	5.0
Life	20	5.0
Good health	16	4.0
Peace of mind	13	3.3
Girlfriend / Boyfriend	13	3.3
When I am practicing my hobbies	7	1.8
The satisfaction I find in my deeds	9	2.3
My work	8	2.0
Praying to God	8	2.0
Leisure	8	2.0
Spending time with boyfriend/girlfriend	7	1.8
Music / Arts	6	1.5
When my plans run smoothly	6	1.5
My own personality / my own character / myself	5	1.3
Fishing and Hunting	5	1.3
Car racing	5	1.3
Money	5	1.3
Sports	5	1.3
Other	29	7.2
No answer	5	1.3

[Missing value is 4]

Table 6: *What is the greatest source of sadness in your life?*

|	Freq.	%
Suffering (including illness and poverty)	48	12.0
Fighting (war), dispute and hypocrisy	39	9.8
Lack of success / Failure / Weaknesses / Under achievement	35	8.8
When I fight or have a disagreement with persons close to me and co-workers	32	8.0
Intentional harm	30	7.5
Family members who are sick / in pain / unhappy	24	6.0
Death	20	5.0
Problems / Trouble / Moral Issues	19	4.8
Injustice / Discrimination / Egoism	13	3.3
When things go against my will	11	2.8
Studying / Exams / Schooling / Books	11	2.8
When my finances are not enough (lack of means)	10	2.5
My work	10	2.5
People who do not care / insensitive	9	2.3
Stress caused due to a hectic life	8	2.0
Loneliness	8	2.0
The experience of cruelty (including animal cruelty)	7	1.8
Hatred	5	1.3
Other	50	12.3
No answer	5	1.3

[Missing value is 6]

Conversely, sources of sadness were more varied and less immediate and experiential. (Table 6)

Not surprisingly perhaps, participants were confident in expressing their emotions in private but less so in public (Figures 20, 21).

Figure 20: *Do you find it difficult to express your emotions in private?*

- I do not know 0.8%
- No not at all 45.5%
- So-and-so 26.8%
- A little 16.5%
- Yes a lot 10.3%
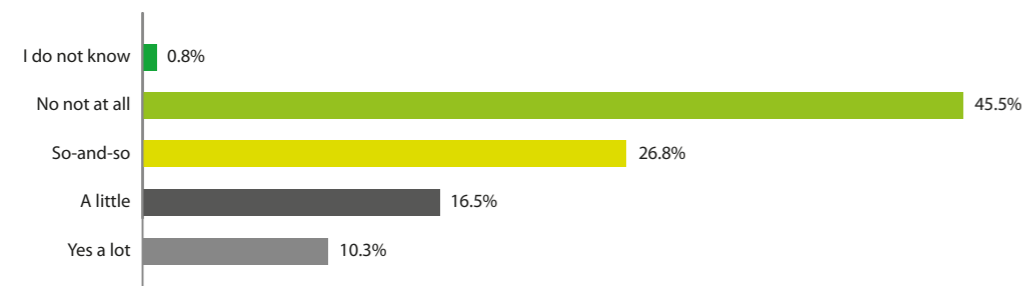
[Missing value is 1]

Figure 21: *Do you find it difficult to express your emotions in public?*

- I do not know 0.5%
- No not at all 12.8%
- So-and-so 29.3%
- A little 20.5%
- Yes a lot 36.8%
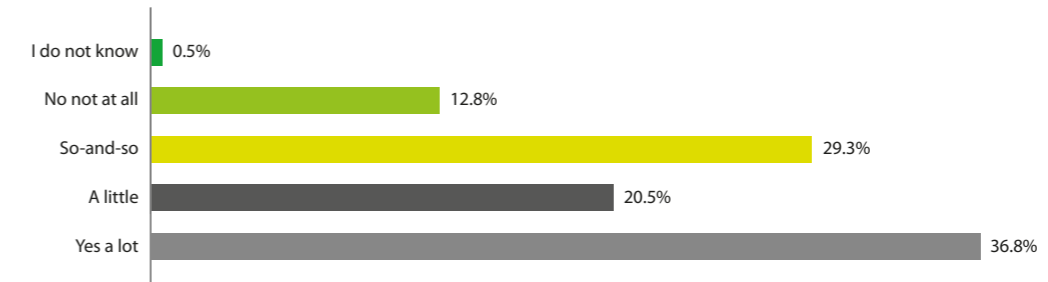
[Missing value is 1]

Parents, siblings and social friends ranked highest in terms of those with whom participants could share their feelings most easily. School mates and work colleagues ranked somewhat lower. (Table 7)

Table 7: *When you want to share your intimate feelings, with whom are you most comfortable with in doing so?*

	More comfortable		So-and-so		Less Comfortable		No Answer	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Parents	252	63.0	117	29.3	30	7.5	1	0.3
Siblings	163	40.8	182	45.5	50	12.5	3	0.8
Colleagues at work	56	14.0	122	30.5	75	18.8	129	32.3
School mates	104	26.0	103	25.8	45	11.3	134	33.5
Social friends	202	50.5	133	33.3	46	11.5	16	4.0

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

Table 8: *On a scale from 1 to 5 how do you rank yourself as follows?*

	Very Low 1		2		3		4		Very High 5	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
I am good at school	10	2.5	34	8.5	100	25.0	180	45.0	72	18.0
I am good at sports	53	13.3	83	20.8	95	23.8	117	29.3	45	11.3
I am good at drama	198	49.6	84	21.0	57	14.3	29	7.3	11	2.8
I am good at arts	172	43.0	76	19.0	69	17.3	43	10.8	24	6.0
I am good at my job	4	1.0	6	1.5	30	7.5	120	30.0	142	35.5
I am liked by others	0	0	3	0.8	46	11.5	194	48.5	150	37.5
My behaviour is accepted by others	2	0.5	5	1.3	41	10.3	200	50.0	146	36.5
I am attractive	13	3.3	27	6.8	131	32.8	169	42.3	43	10.8

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

Participants also displayed a positive attitude in terms of how they saw themselves as social beings and workers ranking themselves highest in terms of their job and relationship with others. School came somewhat lower in the ranking, with arts and drama ranking lowest of all. (Table 8)

A happy marriage was one of the most desired outcomes in life for participants, along with the understanding and company of their parents and job satisfaction while success in sport and the arts and politics ranked lowest. (Table 9)

It is interesting to note the nature of what was most desirable in life among the different age groups of the participants. For the youngest participants (aged 13/14) the company and understanding of their parents was by far the most important factor. A happy marriage rated much lower with sport generating as much interest. As the age profile of participants increased, the role of parents, while still significant, decreased. Conversely, the desirability of a happy marriage increased significantly the older the participants. Interestingly, job satisfaction rated consistently high among all age groups.

Table 9: *What do you desire most in life?*

	Min 1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		Max 10	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Enjoy my parents' understanding and company	4	1.0	0	0	3	0.8	5	1.3	10	2.5	36	9.0	32	8.0	92	23.0	78	19.5	133	33.3
To succeed in music	95	23.8	26	6.5	56	14.0	103	25.8	58	14.5	13	3.3	13	3.3	12	3.0	3	0.8	4	1.0
To succeed in drama	61	15.3	132	33.0	92	23.0	52	13.0	22	5.5	6	1.5	7	1.8	3	0.8	4	1.0	1	0.3
To succeed in arts	42	10.5	105	26.3	101	25.3	65	16.3	29	7.3	8	2.0	14	3.5	6	1.5	4	1.0	4	1.0
To succeed in politics	229	57.3	35	8.8	22	5.5	67	16.8	9	2.3	8	2.0	2	0.5	3	0.8	3	0.8	2	0.5
To succeed in sports	30	7.5	32	8.0	44	11.0	43	10.8	131	32.8	30	7.5	17	4.3	17	4.3	14	3.5	21	5.3
Parenthood (becoming a parent)	6	1.5	3	0.8	10	2.5	11	2.8	28	7.0	84	21.0	73	18.3	59	14.8	63	15.8	52	13.0
Wealth	1	0.3	1	0.3	3	0.8	6	1.5	31	7.8	102	25.5	104	26.0	67	16.8	34	8.5	42	10.5
Job Satisfaction	2	0.5	6	1.5	6	1.5	7	1.8	12	3.0	34	8.5	50	12.5	60	15.0	98	24.5	115	28.8
Happy marriage	6	1.5	6	1.5	4	1.0	7	1.8	20	5.0	26	6.5	40	10.0	58	14.5	69	17.3	152	38.0
None of the above	3	0.8%																		
I do not know	1	0.3%																		

[The missing value and the choice 'no answer' varied from one choice to another of this question] In this question, the respondents were asked to mark each statement in order of importance from 1 to 10 – 10 being the most important - any number from 1 to 10 could only be used once in the table.

3.3 PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The emergence of independent decision making and the changing relationship with their parents were seen as the most important features of emerging adulthood. Interpersonal and sexual relationships were also seen as important indicators while work, religious and political issues were seen as less important influences on emerging adulthood. (Table 10)

Table 10: *What do you think are the main indicators that you have reached young adulthood (excluding biological indicators)?*

	Freq.	%
The way I talk about politics	68	17.0
The way I speak about religion	134	33.5
The way I perceive my parents	275	68.8
The way I talk about sex	180	45.0
The way I conduct my sexual life	181	45.3
The fact that I can decide independent of my parents/guardians	270	67.5
The way I prioritise	295	73.8
The way I dress	189	47.3
The way I relate to boys/girls	214	53.5
The fact that I started smoking and/or drinking alcohol	25	6.3
The time I return home in the evenings	66	16.5
The amount of physical energy that I have	128	32.0
The fact that I work	136	34.0
The fact that I own a car	83	20.8
The fact that I go out with a boy friend/girl friend	66	16.5
I do not know	7	1.8
No answer	1	0.3

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

When it comes to societal change, most participants felt that some measure of change was needed in today's society with only a small minority feeling that things should remain as they are. (Figure 22)

Given that education is one of the principal means of personal and social development in young people's lives, almost 70% of participants expressed themselves as either satisfied or very satisfied with the present education system while only 8% stated that they were dissatisfied with it. (Figure 23)

Figure 22: *In general, if today's society needs change, what type of change do you think it needs most?*
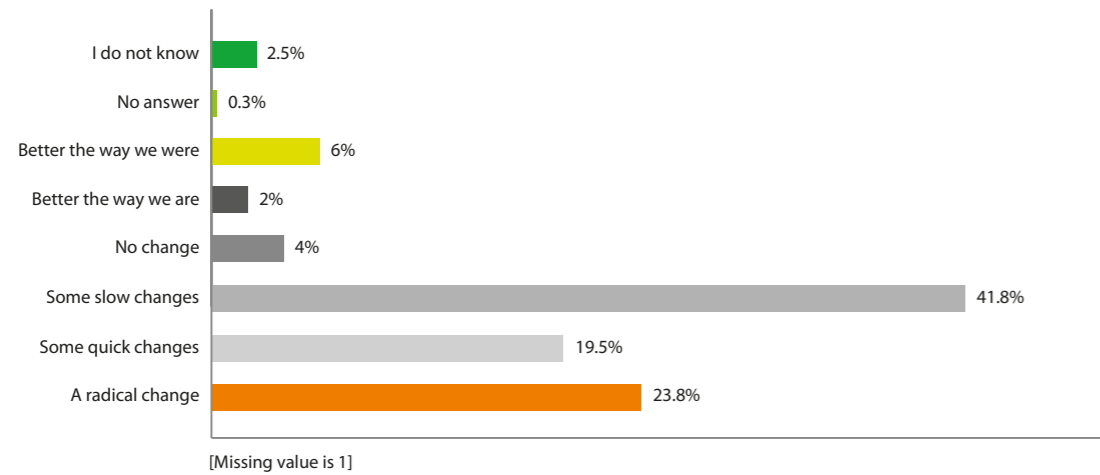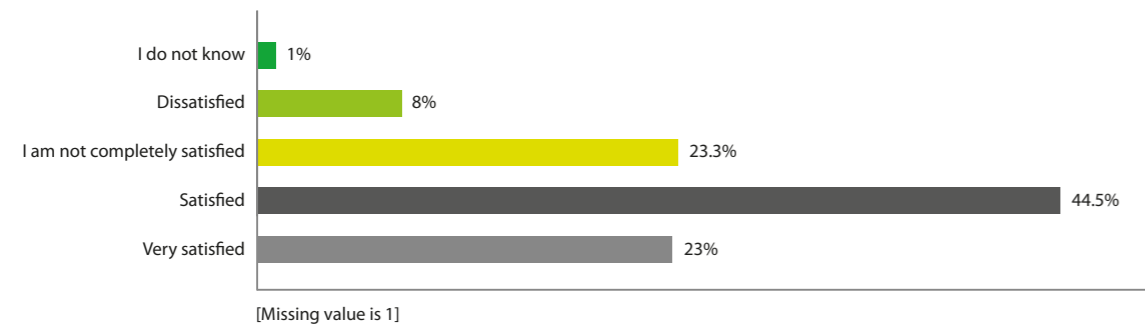
I do not know	2.5%
No answer	0.3%
Better the way we were	6%
Better the way we are	2%
No change	4%
Some slow changes	41.8%
Some quick changes	19.5%
A radical change	23.8%

[Missing value is 1]

Figure 23: *Are you satisfied with the Maltese education system?*

I do not know	1%
Dissatisfied	8%
I am not completely satisfied	23.3%
Satisfied	44.5%
Very satisfied	23%

[Missing value is 1]

3.4 FAMILY

Traditionally the family has been seen as the mainstay of personal and social life in Malta. But how do young people see the family? How important is it and what constitutes a family?

The significant role that family and family life play in the lives of the participants was evident in their responses to questions on the family. When asked as to the importance of family, almost 98% of participants described it as either important or very important. (Figure 24)

On the question of marriage, 55.5% of participants expressed the wish to marry, while 20% were less committed, but only a small minority (4.5%) expressed a wish not to marry. (Figure 25)

Participants were then asked a number of questions on whether cohabiting couples constituted a family. A majority of participants (57.5%) saw a cohabiting couple (man and woman) as constituting a family, but 38% did not. Single parents and their children were also seen by a majority of participants (76%) as constituting a family. However, on the issue of gay and lesbian cohabiting couples, 66.5% of participants did not see them as constituting a family. (Figures 26, 27, 28,)

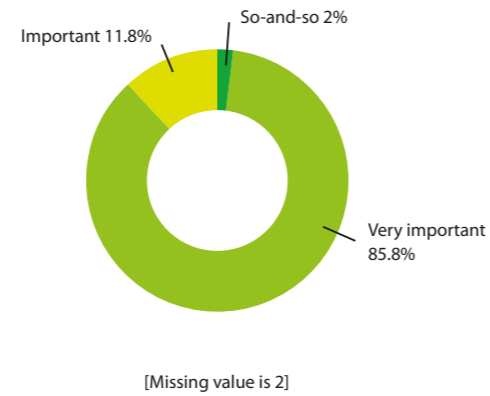**Figure 24:** *How important is the family for you?*

Important 11.8%
So-and-so 2%
Very important 85.8%

[Missing value is 2]

Figure 25: *If you are single would you like to marry?*

No answer 2.5%
I do not know 0.8%
I am not single 16.8%
Maybe 20%
Yes 55.5%
No 4.5%

[Missing value is 4]
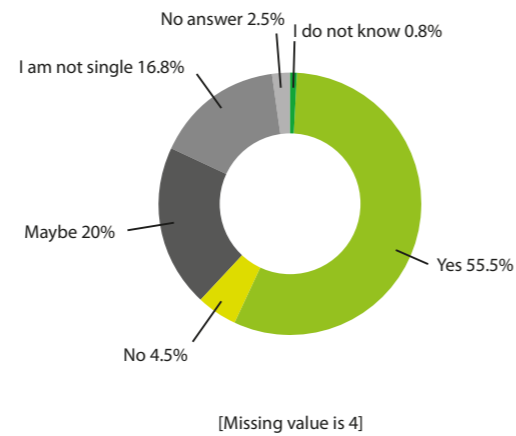
Figure 26: *In your opinion, does a cohabiting male and female couple constitute a family?*

No answer 0.3%
I do not know 4.3%
No 38%
Yes 57.5%
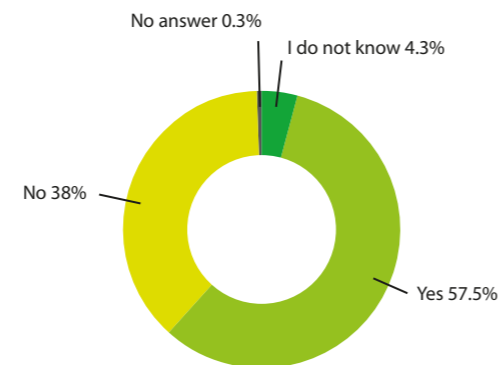
Religious belief was also seen as impacting on the quality of family life by a majority of participants (57%), but a substantial minority either disagreed or were less convinced. (Figure 29)

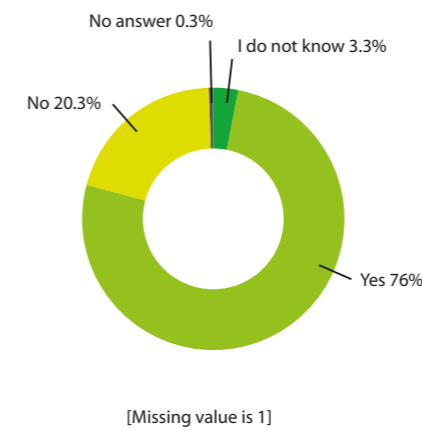**Figure 27:** *Does a single-parent and her/his child/children, constitute a family?*

No answer 0.3%
I do not know 3.3%
No 20.3%
Yes 76%

[Missing value is 1]

Figure 28: *Do you consider a cohabiting gay or lesbian couple as constituting a family?*

No answer 0.3%
I do not know 7.5%
Yes 25.5%
No 66.5%

[Missing value is 1]
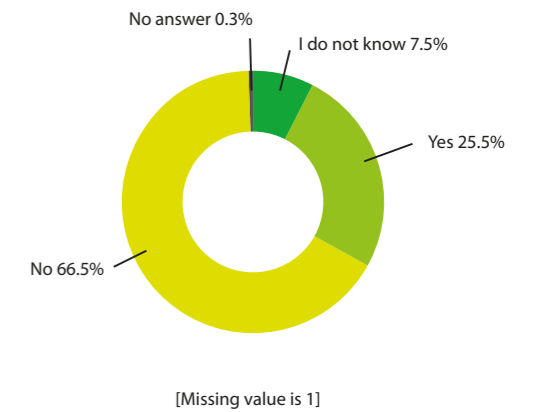
Figure 29: *Do you think that religious belief affects the quality of life in your family?*

No answer 0.3%
I do not know 28.3%
Yes 57%
No 14.3%

[Missing value is 1]
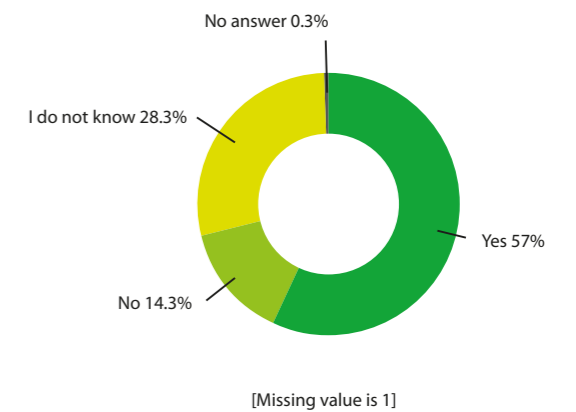
3.5 HEALTH AND WELL- BEING

Good health is commonly associated with youth. However, there is increasing international evidence that modern lifestyles, including increasing social and economic pressures, are impacting adversely on young people's lives and their physical and mental well-being.

When asked as to their physical fitness, while three-quarters of participants saw themselves as always physically fit, a similarly larger number described themselves as sometimes feeling under stress. (Table 11)

Table 11: *How are you feeling in terms of health and well-being?*

At present, do you feel…?	Always Freq.	%	Sometimes Freq.	%	Never Freq.	%	I don't know Freq.	%	No Answer Freq.	%
Physically fit	295	73.8	99	24.8	3	0.8	1	0.3	0	0
Under stress	34	8.5	303	75.8	57	14.3	1	0.3	1	0.3
A sense of inner void	7	1.8	140	35.0	244	61.0	4	1.0	1	0.3

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

In terms of physical exercise, two-thirds of participants said that they regularly or sometimes attend a gym or do physical exercise, but significantly a third indicated that they never do any physical exercise. (Figure 30)

Figure 30: *Do you attend a gym or pursue any physical exercise?*

- Yes regularly — 29.8%
- No never — 33.3%
- Sometimes / on irregular basis — 37%

65% of participants indicated that they never smoke, while only 6% admitted to smoking a lot. Similarly, only a small percentage (3.3%) of participants admitted to drinking alcohol a lot, while 71% drank regularly or occasionally and 25% admitted to never drinking alcohol. When it comes to use of drugs, 90% of participants said they never make use of drugs with only a tiny number (0.3%) admitting to frequent use of drugs. (Table 12)

A majority of participants (57.6%) also indicated that they eat health food on a regular basis.

Table 12: *Which of the following applies in your case (smoking, alcohol, substance abuse, healthy food)?*

Which of the following applies in your case?	A lot Freq.	%	So-and-so Freq.	%	Occasionally Freq.	%	Never Freq.	%	No Answer Freq.	%
Do you smoke?	23	5.8	46	11.5	69	17.3	260	65.0	1	0.3
Do you drink alcohol?	13	3.3	78	19.5	206	51.5	101	25.3	1	0.3
Have you ever taken any abusive substance apart from alcohol?	1	0.3	12	3.0	19	4.8	360	90.0	6	1.5
Do you eat healthy food?	230	57.6	135	33.8	28	70	5	1.3	1	0.3

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

Almost three-quarters of participants saw well-being as dependent to a greater or lesser extent on the level of freedom they enjoy. (Figure 31)

Figure 31: *Does your wellbeing depend on the level of freedom you enjoy?*

- Yes a lot — 46%
- No not at all — 5%
- A little — 19.5%
- So-and-so — 27.3%
- No answer — 0.3%
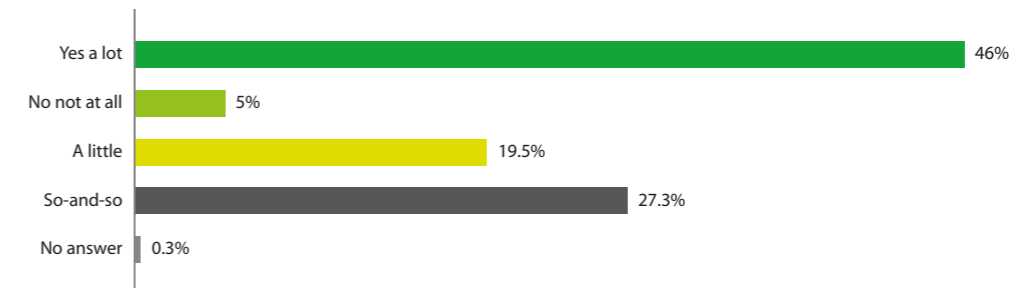
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3.6 TRUST

The issue of trust, or confidence, particularly in the professions and in related political and religious, as well as in public and private, institutions, is both a topical and pressing issue of public concern in many countries. The present economic crisis, public perceptions of politics and politicians and public attitudes to financial institutions appear to have brought into question the level of trust that people, and young people in particular, have in such professions and institutions.

On the question of trust, participants were asked to rank on a scale from 1 to 10 who they most trusted or least trusted among different categories of people: teachers, lawyers, politicians etc. Medical doctors and career advisors or guidance officers were the most trusted, followed by teachers, priests, social workers, and social guidance officers while members of parliament and politicians were the least trusted. (Table 13)

When it comes to trust in institutions rather than people or professions, participants were asked to rank again on a scale from 1 to 10 their level of trust with regard to 13 institutions. (Table 14)

The family and church schools were ranked the highest, followed by state and private schools, government hospitals, voluntary organisations, the police and the armed forces. The Church was ranked lower, followed by the media and the trade unions. The lowest ranking institutions were parliament, the Archbishop's Curia and the courts.

Table 13: *On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rank your trust in these categories of people?*

	LOW 1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		HIGH 10		None		Median Rank
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
Teachers	16	4.0	10	2.5	19	4.8	24	6.0	36	9.0	44	11.0	82	20.5	93	23.3	31	7.8	25	6.3	14	3.5	7
Public Officers	26	6.5	23	5.8	29	7.3	43	10.8	77	19.3	69	17.3	58	14.5	28	7.0	9	2.3	11	2.8	20	5.0	6
Medical doctors	5	1.3	4	1.0	8	2.0	11	2.8	23	5.8	31	7.8	72	18.0	111	27.8	77	19.3	52	13.0	2	0.5	8
Priests	53	13.3	29	7.3	36	9.0	29	7.3	52	13.0	41	10.3	46	11.5	50	12.5	21	5.3	22	5.5	15	3.8	7
Lawyers	44	11.0	35	8.8	40	10.0	44	11.0	52	13.0	50	12.5	46	11.5	31	7.8	22	5.5	10	2.5	19	4.8	6
Accountants	40	10.0	21	5.3	32	8.0	54	13.5	65	16.3	51	12.8	36	9.0	39	9.8	21	5.3	11	2.8	20	5.0	5
Social Workers	10	2.5	10	2.5	11	2.8	18	4.5	29	7.3	54	13.5	106	26.5	98	24.5	27	6.8	19	4.8	11	2.8	7
Career advisors /guidance officers	9	2.3	10	2.5	15	3.8	19	4.8	32	8.0	35	8.8	88	22.0	120	30.0	39	9.8	17	4.3	9	2.3	8
Social guidance	13	3.3	4	1.0	9	2.3	22	5.5	27	6.8	48	12.0	89	22.3	114	28.5	42	10.5	13	3.3	10	2.5	7
Nuns	54	13.5	38	9.5	30	7.5	31	7.8	45	11.3	51	12.8	44	11.0	41	10.3	17	4.3	19	4.8	23	5.8	6
Members of Parliament	80	20.0	53	13.3	47	11.8	24	6.0	51	12.8	45	11.3	22	5.5	15	3.8	11	2.8	1	0.3	40	10.0	2
Politicians	91	22.8	48	12.0	41	10.3	35	8.8	54	13.5	40	10.0	22	5.5	14	3.5	2	0.5	0	0	43	10.8	2
People in business	38	9.5	33	8.3	51	12.8	46	11.5	88	22.0	57	14.3	34	8.5	20	5.0	7	1.8	1	0.3	18	4.5	5
Journalists	33	8.3	19	4.8	30	7.5	56	14.0	82	20.5	86	21.5	55	13.8	12	3.0	5	1.3	1	0.3	14	3.5	5
Judges/magistrates	65	16.3	27	6.8	36	9.0	27	6.8	47	11.8	35	8.8	48	12.0	37	9.3	30	7.5	18	4.5	23	5.8	5
None of the above categories	1	0.3																					
I do not know	3	0.8																					

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

Table 14: *On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rank your trust in these institutions?*

	LOW 1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		HIGH 10		None		Median Rank
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
State Schools	6	1.5	6	1.5	13	3.3	17	4.3	27	6.8	28	7.0	70	17.5	83	20.8	90	22.5	51	12.8	4	1.0	8
Private Schools	17	4.3	10	2.5	12	3.0	21	5.3	39	9.8	47	11.8	49	12.3	96	24.0	59	14.8	30	7.5	13	3.3	8
Church Schools	15	3.8	4	1.0	11	2.8	8	2.0	27	6.8	24	6.0	51	12.8	99	24.8	87	21.8	52	13.0	14	3.5	9
Parliament	67	16.8	32	8.0	21	5.3	40	10.0	55	13.8	45	11.3	37	9.3	43	10.8	21	5.3	6	1.5	26	6.5	5
Government Hospitals	9	2.3	2	0.5	8	2.0	17	4.3	24	6.0	30	7.5	60	15.0	120	30.0	87	21.8	37	9.3	2	0.5	8
Church	44	11.0	23	5.8	18	4.5	26	6.5	36	9.0	45	11.3	44	11.0	69	17.3	41	10.3	37	9.3	9	2.3	7
Courts	53	13.3	40	10.0	21	5.3	30	7.5	47	11.8	45	11.3	46	11.5	53	13.3	33	8.3	15	3.8	9	2.3	4
Archbishop's Curia	52	13.0	24	6.0	28	7.0	20	5.0	36	9.0	45	11.3	45	11.3	61	15.3	29	7.3	20	5.0	12	3.0	5
Media	16	4.0	18	4.5	33	8.3	24	6.0	63	15.8	88	22.0	73	18.3	33	8.3	12	3.0	2	0.5	7	1.8	6
Police & Armed Force	15	3.8	6	1.5	8	2.0	23	5.8	41	10.3	51	12.8	86	21.5	81	20.3	62	15.5	20	5.0	2	0.5	8
Voluntary Organisations	12	3.0	13	3.3	13	3.3	21	5.3	34	8.5	40	10.0	48	12.0	94	23.5	75	18.8	41	10.3	1	0.3	8
Family	2	0.5	0	0	2	0.5	0	0	3	0.8	7	1.8	19	4.8	33	8.3	70	17.5	259	64.8	0	0	9
Trade Unions	50	12.5	40	10.0	47	11.8	27	6.8	52	13.0	53	13.3	55	13.8	33	8.3	10	2.5	14	3.5	9	2.3	6
None of the above institutions	1	0.3																					
I do not know	3	0.8																					

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

When asked as to the institutions that they felt had the greatest influence on their moral formation, participants ranked the family and the Church as the most important followed by school/university, work environment and voluntary organisations. The lowest ranking institutions were government, the mass media and political parties. (Table 15)

Table 15: *Which of the following institutions most influence you in judging between right or wrong, good or bad, fair or unfair?*

	LOW 1 Freq.	%	2 Freq.	%	3 Freq.	%	4 Freq.	%	5 Freq.	%	6 Freq.	%	7 Freq.	%	8 Freq.	%	HIGH 9 Freq.	%	Median Rank	Resp.* Rate (%)
Church	48	12.0	27	6.8	31	7.8	20	5.0	47	11.8	37	9.3	49	12.3	74	18.5	57	14.3	8	97.5
Family	2	0.5	6	1.5	3	0.8	5	1.3	9	2.3	19	4.8	29	7.3	82	20.5	241	60.3	8	99.0
The organisation where you work/study	19	4.8	28	7.0	26	6.5	33	8.3	50	12.5	83	20.8	65	16.3	69	17.3	15	3.8	7	97.0
Government	30	7.5	59	14.8	74	18.5	76	19.0	61	15.3	36	9.0	22	5.5	11	2.8	12	3.0	4	95.3
Media	17	4.3	66	16.5	77	19.3	63	15.8	63	15.8	34	8.5	38	9.5	15	3.8	8	2.0	3	95.3
Policy and Army	9	2.3	27	6.8	50	12.5	68	17.0	60	15.0	64	16.0	66	16.5	28	7.0	11	2.8	6	95.8
Political Parties	157	39.3	56	14.0	37	9.3	36	9.0	35	8.8	25	6.3	10	2.5	12	3.0	9	2.3	2	94.3
School/University	18	4.5	27	6.8	21	5.3	42	10.5	47	11.8	66	16.5	72	18.0	54	13.5	31	7.8	7	94.5
Voluntary Organisation	46	11.5	51	12.8	29	7.3	35	8.8	42	10.5	47	11.8	56	14.0	48	12.0	26	6.5	7	95.0
None of the above institutions	3	0.8																		
I do not know	1	0.3																		

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question] *Response Rate.

3.7 RELIGION

Religion, and the Catholic Church in particular, has long played an important and influential role in Maltese life. The role has not just been religious and spiritual but also social and cultural. How do young people feel about religion and the Church today? Is the influence of the Church on the decline as in other European countries, and if so what are the implications for society?

When asked as to their religious persuasion, almost 80% of participants described themselves as Roman Catholics, almost 18% as not belonging to any religious denomination and under 3% as belonging to other Christian Churches or religious denominations. (Figure 32)

When asked as to their level of religious commitment on a scale from 1 to 5, over 26% of participants were at the middle point on the scale, while 30% indicated less commitment and over 20% a higher level of commitment. Perhaps of some significance is that the number with the weakest level of commitment (18%) was almost four times greater than the number with the highest level of religious commitment. (Table 16)
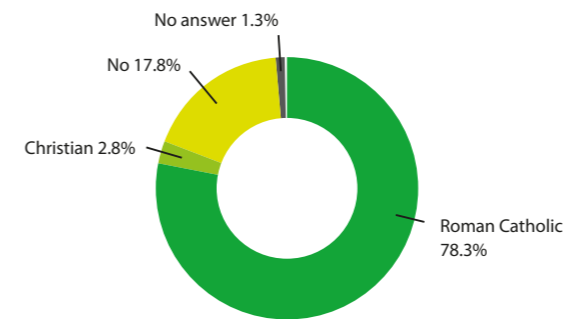
Table 16: *On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rank your commitment to your Church/Religious Denomination?*

|	Freq.	%
One – Lowest level of commitment	73	18.3
Two	47	11.8
Three	105	26.3
Four	63	15.8
Five – Strongest level of commitment	19	4.8
None	54	13.5
No Answer	21	5.3
I do not know	0	0

[Missing value is 18]

With regard to attendance at religious services, 58.5% of participants said that they attended Sunday mass or service, with small minorities attending either twice weekly (6.3%) or monthly (7%), while 21.3% said they never attend. (Figure 33)

Figure 32: *Do you belong to any Church/ Religious Denomination?*

No answer 1.3%
No 17.8%
Christian 2.8%
Roman Catholic 78.3%

Figure 33: *Apart from weddings, baptisms and funeral masses/services, do you attend religious services (e.g. mass – that is a religious service with a group of believers)?*

No answer 0.5%
Never 21.3%
Once a year 6.3%
Once a month 7%
Twice a week 6.3%
Sunday Mass (or Sunday Service) 58.5%
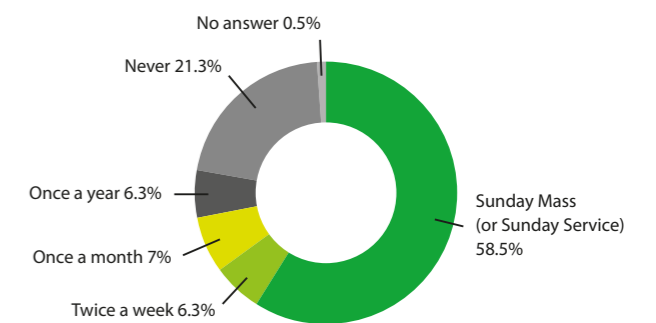
[Missing value is 1]

Figure 34: *How many, if any, religious youth talks, retreats, conferences or weekends have you participated in over the last 12 months?*

|	
No answer	0.3%
Never	68%
More than 5 times	4%
3 to 4 times	4.8%
1 to 3 times	23%
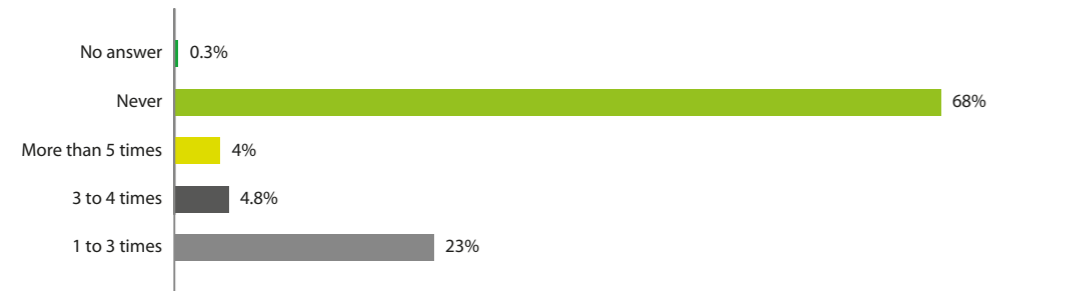
68% of participants never attend religious seminars, discussions or retreats. (Figure 34)

While a majority of participants made no distinction between religion and spirituality (53.8%), a significant minority did (42.3%). (Figure 35)

While 71.8% of participants indicated their interest in religion, this dropped to 55.5% when asked if they were interested in religion and the Church. (Table 17)
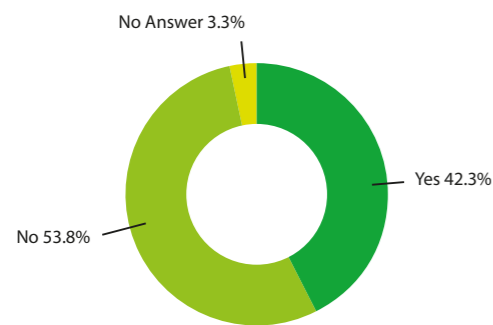
Table 17: *What is your level of personal interest in religion and politics?*

Are you interested in?	Yes		No		No Answer	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	%	Freq.
Politics but not political parties	141	35.3	255	63.8	1	0.3
Politics and political parties	85	21.3	310	77.5	0	0
Religion	287	71.8	104	26.0	2	0.5
Religion and the Church	222	55.5	168	42.0	4	1.0
Religion but not the Church	93	23.3	287	71.8	8	2.0
God but not the Church	157	39.3	221	55.3	7	1.8

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

Figure 35: *Do you make a distinction between religion and spirituality?*

No Answer 3.3%

Yes 42.3%

No 53.8%

[Missing value vis 3]

3.8 POLITICS

Some international evidence would suggest that while young people have a lively interest in the political dimension of such issues as the green environment, education and employment, and promoting international peace and human rights, there is a corresponding dearth of interest in politicians, political parties and political processes. Can young people in Malta be categorized in such terms?

When asked as to their level of commitment to a particular political party, 50% of participants either did not respond or said that they had no such commitment. Only a small minority of participants (2.1%) indicated any strong level of commitment (Table 18) while only 10.8% of participants said that they were members of a political party. (Figure 36)

Of some significance perhaps was that while there was a low level of membership of political parties (10.8%) interest in politics was much higher at 35.3%. (Table17)
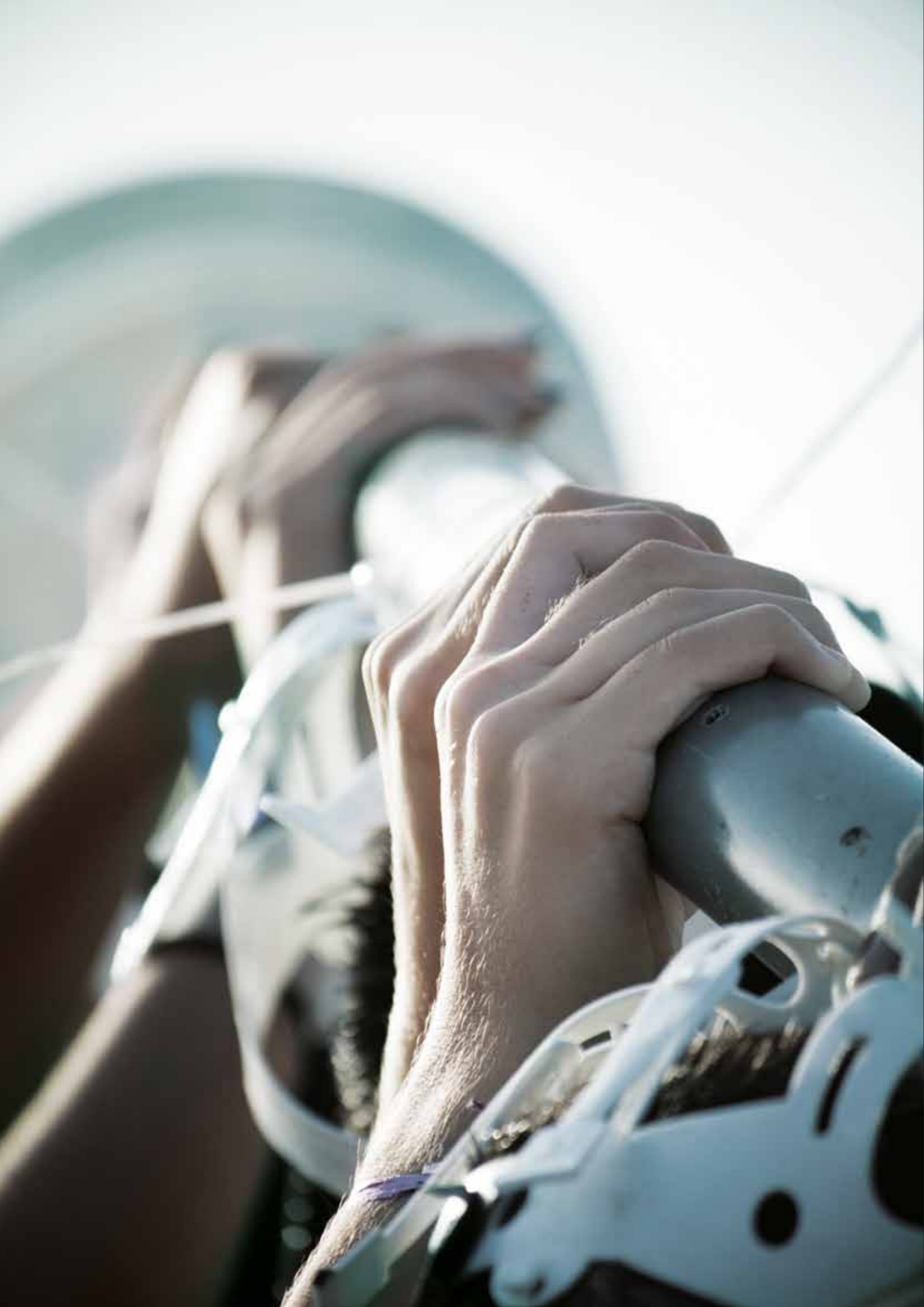
Table 18: *On a scale from1 to 5, how would you rank your commitment to your political party?*

	Freq.	%
One – Lowest level of commitment	30	7.5
Two	12	3.0
Three	12	3.0
Four	5	1.3
Five – Strongest level of commitment	3	0.8
None	74	18.5
No Answer	124	31.0
I do not know	0	0

[The missing value is 140]

Figure 36: Are you a member of a political party?

No Answer 0.3%

Yes 10.8%

No 89%
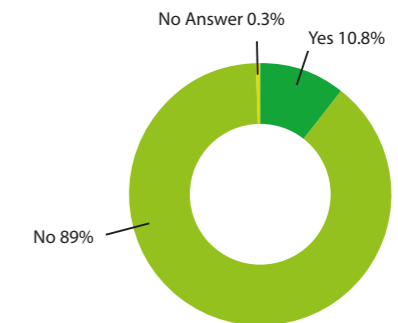
3.9 EMPLOYMENT

Job satisfaction was rated consistently high as one of life's most desired outcomes by all participants. Of those participants in employment, to what extent has this outcome been achieved?

When asked as to how well prepared they felt themselves to be for the transition from school to work, less than a quarter felt that they were well prepared, while of those who do work, a third of participants derived a lot of personal satisfaction and fulfillment from such work, with only a small minority (4%) deriving no satisfaction or fulfillment. Almost half of those in employment felt secure in their jobs to a greater or lesser extent with only a small minority (2.3%) feeling insecure. (Figures, 37, 38, 39)

Figure 38: *If you work: does your work give you personal satisfaction or fulfillment?*
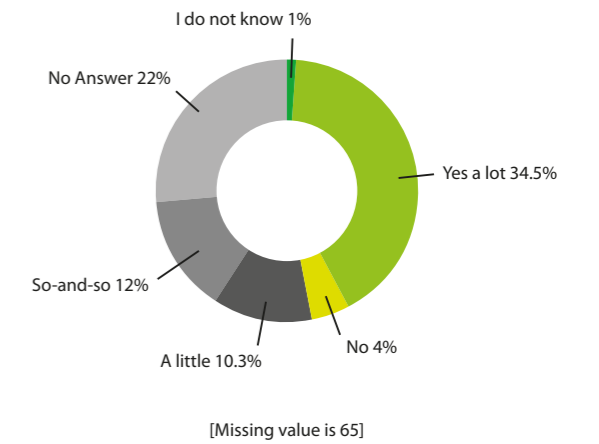
I do not know 1%
No Answer 22%
Yes a lot 34.5%
So-and-so 12%
No 4%
A little 10.3%

[Missing value is 65]

Figure 37: *If you work: do you feel you were prepared for the transition from school to work?*

I do not know 1%
No Answer 21.8%
Yes a lot 23%
So-and-so 20%
No 5.8%
A little 12.8%

[Missing value is 63]

Figure 39: *If you work: do you think your job is a secure one?*

I do not know 1%
No Answer 22%
Yes, a lot 35.3%
So-and-so 13%
No 2.3%
A little 9.3%

[Missing value is 69]
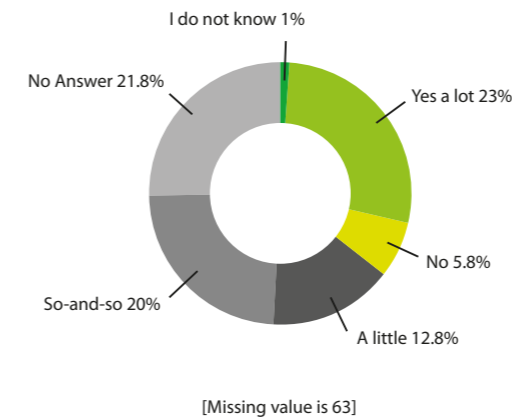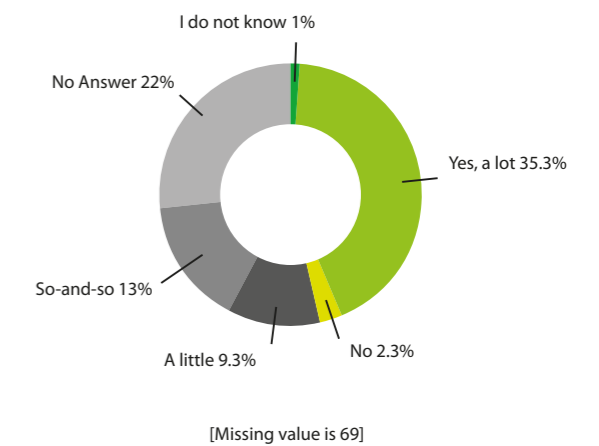
When asked about the extent to which their studies matched or prepared them for their work, a third of participants indicated a corresponding match but almost a quarter saw a mismatch. (Figure 40)

Participants' attitudes to job stability and opportunities indicated that 21.3% were afraid of losing their jobs while 34.3% would not hesitate to change their job for a better one. (Table 19)

Figure 40: *If you are in employment: do you feel that your work matches what you have studied, or do you feel that there is a mismatch?*

I do not know 2.8%
No Answer 24%
Yes, a lot 32.8%
So-and-so 23%

[Missing value is 70]
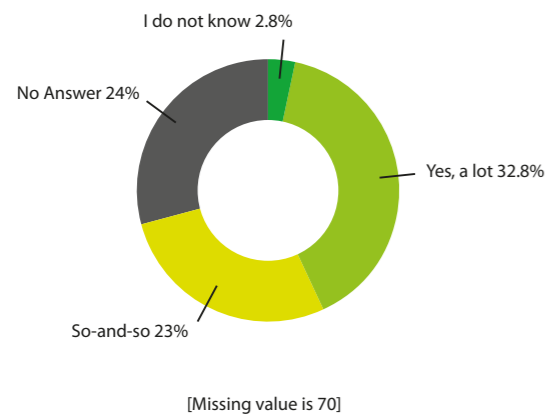
Table 19: *If you work: which of the following statements do you agree with?*

	Freq.	%
I am afraid to change my job for another	85	21.3
I would not hesitate to change my job for a better one	137	34.3
I am fed up with my present job and I would even accept a job with a lower pay	9	2.3
I do not aspire to work abroad	92	23.0
I am eager to work abroad on a permanent basis	52	13.0
I am eager to work abroad on a temporary basis	58	14.5
I have worked abroad on a permanent basis	4	1.0
I have worked abroad on a temporary basis	18	4.5
No Answer	96	24.0

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

3.10 MONEY MATTERS

There may be a popular perception that young people are free and easy with money, if not spendthrift. But what do they spend their money on? Is their spending a reflection of their youth, level of responsibilities and lifestyles rather than conforming to preconceived notions?

When asked as to how they spent the bulk of their income, participants indicated spending almost half on recreation, shopping, travel and beauty/cosmetic treatments. Essentials such as food, housing, transport and utilities constituted some 36% of expenditure, while education and health ranked lowest in terms of expenditure. (Table 20)

Table 20: *On what do you spend the bulk of your income?*

	Freq.	%
Food	53	13.3
My education	45	11.3
Recreation	107	26.8
House-rent or House-loan	40	10.0
Shopping for shopping's sake (shopaholic)	27	6.8
Car (including maintenance, insurance and related expenses)	34	8.5
Utility bills (including water, electricity, telephone, internet etc.)	15	3.8
Children's education	1	0.3
Health related expenses (including health insurance)	5	1.3
Travel for leisure	19	4.8
Cosmetic and beauty treatment	26	6.5
No Answer	19	4.8

[Missing value is 9]

Half of the participants admitted to buying things that they subsequently rarely use. (Figure 41)

61.8% of participants considered fashion to be either important or very important in their lives. (Figure 42)

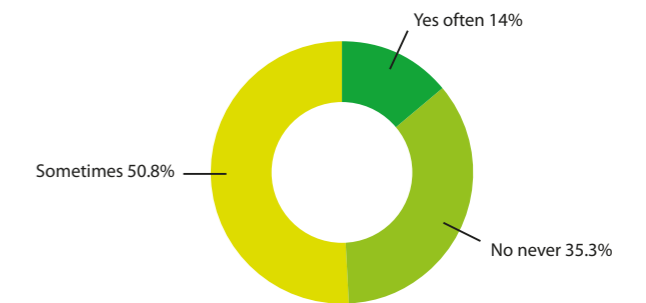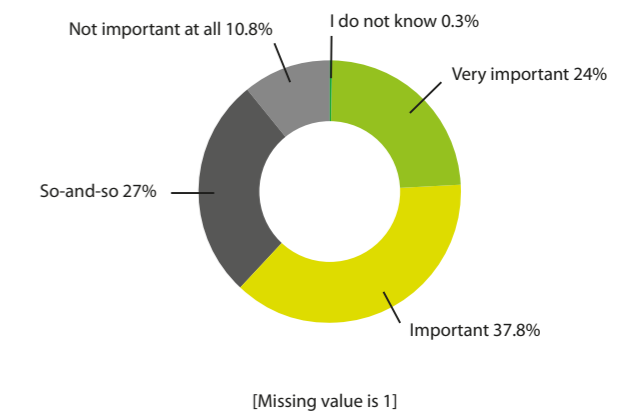**Figure 41:** *Do you buy things that you end up rarely using?*

Yes often 14%
Sometimes 50.8%
No never 35.3%

Figure 42: *How important is fashion in your life?*

Not important at all 10.8%
I do not know 0.3%
Very important 24%
So-and-so 27%
Important 37.8%

[Missing value is 1]

3.11 COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The role of communications technology and the Information Society looms large on the social, cultural and economic landscape worldwide. Its impact appears all pervasive and unrelenting, for good or ill. How is such a powerful instrument impacting on the lives of young people in Malta and to what extent is it influencing and indeed transforming their behaviours and attitudes?

Over 90% of participants had either a computer or laptop and access to the internet at home. (Figures 43, 44)

Figure 43: *Do you have a computer/laptop?*
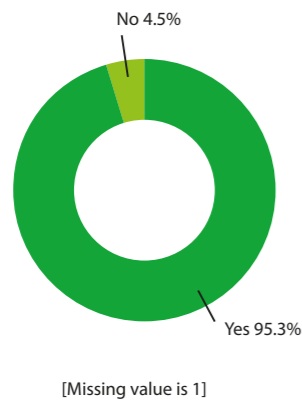
No 4.5%

Yes 95.3%

[Missing value is 1]

Figure 44: *Do you have internet access at home?*

No 3.8%   No answer 0.5%

Yes 94%

[Missing value is 7]
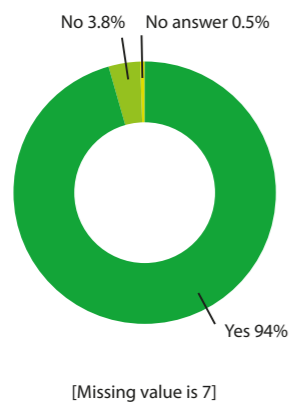
Table 21: *How frequently do you use the internet for the following?*

	Very frequently		Frequently		Not so frequently		No Answer	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Emails	140	35.0	99	24.8	129	32.3	8	2.0
Chatting	136	34.0	94	23.5	125	31.3	21	5.3
Research and/or study	150	37.5	108	27.0	74	18.5	38	9.5
Interactive games	54	13.5	78	19.5	163	40.8	70	17.5
Gambling	13	3.3	10	2.5	111	27.8	219	54.8
Shopping	51	12.8	81	20.3	142	35.5	95	23.8
Movies	67	16.8	67	16.8	119	29.8	113	28.3
Downloading podcasts	28	7.0	31	7.8	123	30.8	176	44.0
Pornography	2	0.5	11	2.8	102	25.5	232	58.0
Social networking (e.g. Facebook, Hi5, Twitter)	203	50.8	102	25.5	49	12.3	18	4.5
Reading on-line newspapers	67	16.8	79	19.8	106	26.5	117	29.3
Reading on-line magazines	31	7.8	47	11.8	134	33.5	146	36.5
I do not make use of the internet	46	11.5						

[The missing value varied from one choice to another of this question]

The internet was most frequently used for social networking, e-mails, chatting or study purposes. (Table 21)

Significantly, when confronted with controversial issues relating to internet use, participants were more circumspect. On the issue of internet gambling, over 50% of participants did not respond, while a small minority of under 6% admitted to using it for gambling purposes either frequently or very frequently. Similarly, on the issue of downloading pornography, almost 60% of participants did not respond, while a small minority (3.3%) admitted to either frequent or very frequent use for this purpose.

Almost all participants had a mobile phone with the majority acquiring their first mobile phone between the ages of 10 and 15. Over half of participants' mobile phones had access to the internet. (Figure 45, 46, 47)
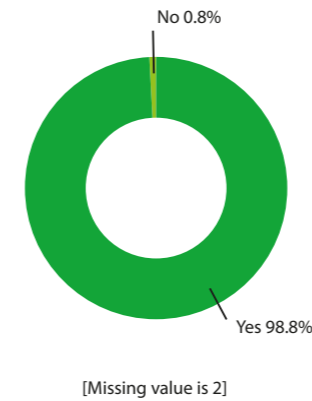
Figure 45: *Do you have a mobile phone?*

No 0.8%

Yes 98.8%

[Missing value is 2]

Figure 46: *How old were you when you bought or were given your first mobile phone?*

No answer 0.3%
19 to 24 years 5%   Less than 10 years 6%
16 to 18 years 23.8%
10 to 15 years 64%

[Missing value is 4]

Figure 47: *Does your mobile phone have internet access?*

No 45.5%   Yes 53.5%

[Missing value is 4]
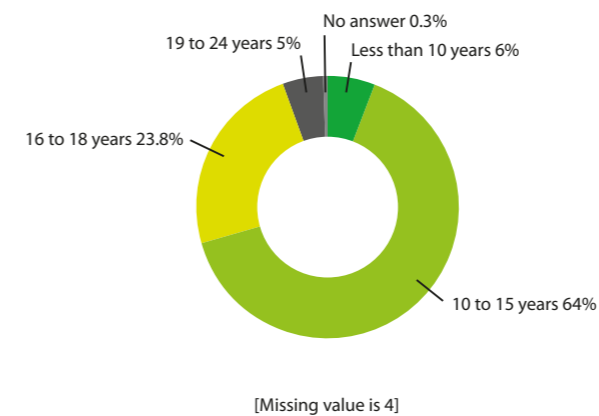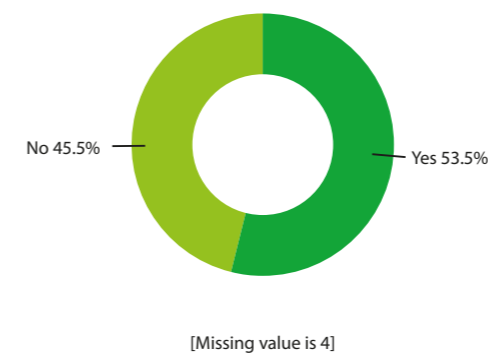
When asked as to the impact information technology had on their lives, over 70% of participants indicated that it had a significant impact. (Figure 48)

Figure 48: *How much do you think information technology (e.g. mobile phones, the internet, interactive information technology etc.) affects your life?*

A little 4.3%   Nothing 1%
So-and-so 24.5%
A lot 70.3%
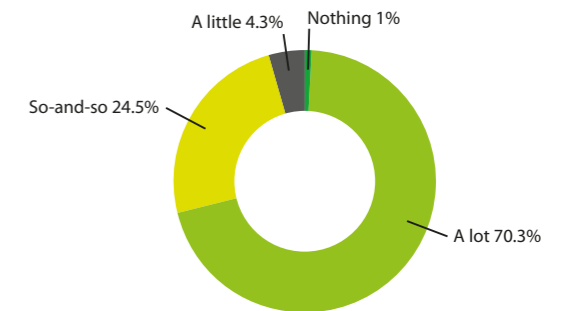
When asked as to how difficult life would be without access to media points, a large majority cited mobile phones (77%) and the internet (70%) as the most difficult to be without, but this reliance declined when it came to television (50%) and radio (23%). (Figures 49, 50, 51, 52)

Figure 49: *Would it be difficult for you to live without a mobile phone?*
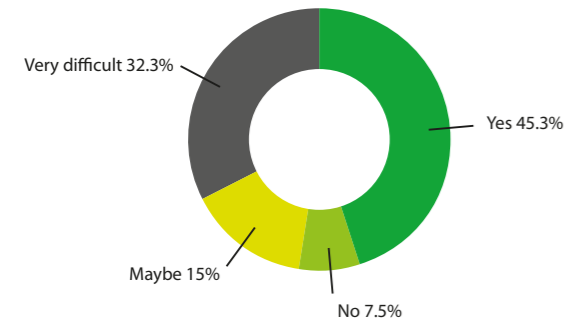
Very difficult 32.3%

Yes 45.3%

Maybe 15%

No 7.5%

Figure 50: *Would it be difficult for you to live without the internet?*

Very difficult 30.3%

Yes 39.8%

Maybe 16.5%

No 13.5%

Figure 51: *Would it be difficult for you to live without a television?*

Very difficult 13.3%

Yes 36.3%

Maybe 31.3%

No 19.3%

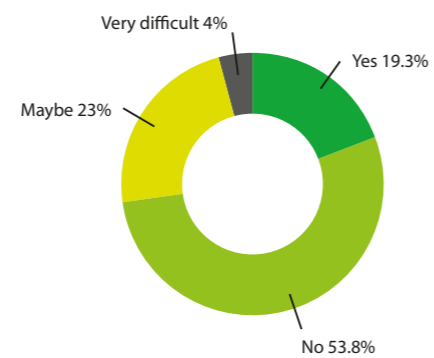**Figure 52:** *Would it be difficult for you to live without radio?*

Very difficult 4%

Yes 19.3%

Maybe 23%

No 53.8%
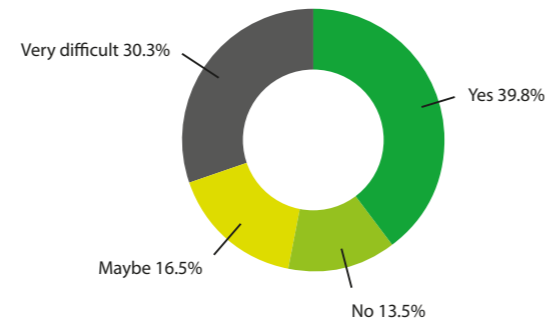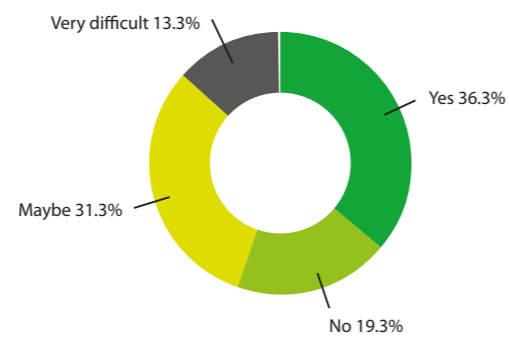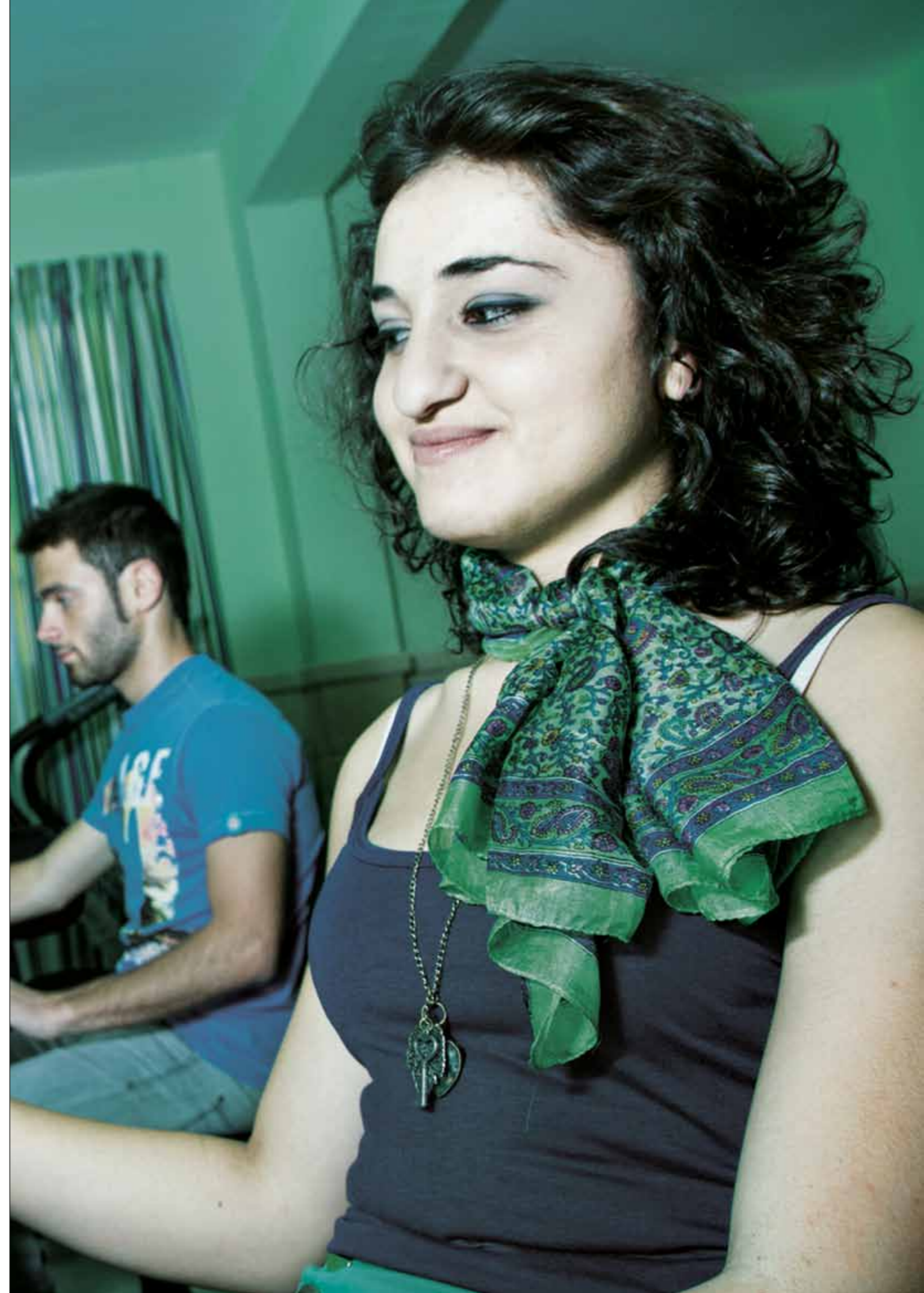
3.12 LEISURE

Leisure and youth appear synonymous in the popular imagination: to be young is to be free! But how do young people in Malta spend their free or leisure time? Does it conform to popular notions of how young people spend their leisure time and how has it been affected by modern innovations particularly communications technology?

A large percentage of participants spent most of their leisure time with family and friends. Watching television/ DVDs, surfing the internet, social networking, and phoning and texting friends were also common pursuits. Sporting and cultural activities however, figured considerably less frequently. (Table 22)
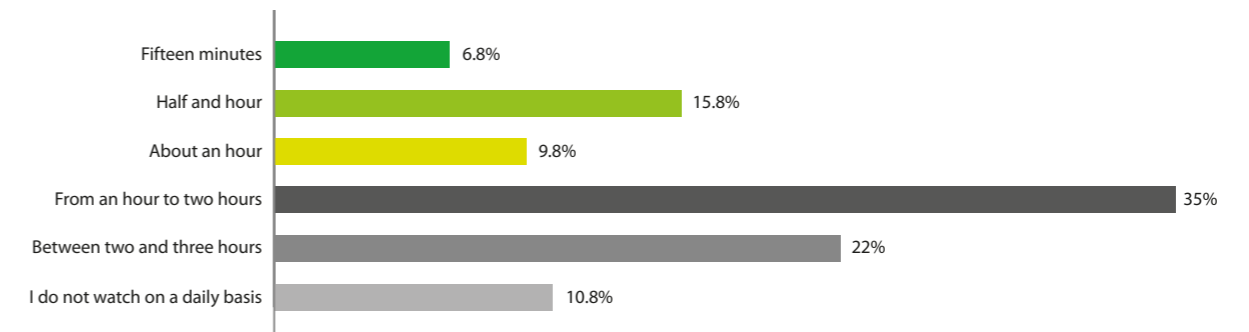
Participants were also asked the amount of time they spend watching television every day. Almost 67% spent an hour or more watching television on a daily basis, over 20% under an hour while almost 11% did not watch television on a daily basis. The most popular television programmes among participants were films (41%), documentaries (18.8%), news and current affairs (16.5%), and reality shows (10%). (Figures 53, 54)

The cinema was less popular among participants than television, who either went rarely (42%) or not at all (13.3%). (Figure 55)

Table 22: *On a daily basis which of the following activities do you carry out in your free-time?*

	Freq.	%
Watching television / movies on DVD	311	77.8
Playing a musical instrument	37	9.3
Practicing drama	13	3.3
Playing computer /laptop games	212	53.0
Surfing on the internet	286	71.5
Chatting on the internet using social networks	255	63.8
Being and/or talking with your family	347	86.8
Being and/or talking with your friends	304	76.0
Carrying out school-related work, projects and activities	114	28.5
Carrying out job-related work, projects and activities	117	29.3
On the phone / texting friends	299	74.8
Engage in sporting activities	104	26.0
No Answer	1	0.3

Figure 53: *How much time do you spend watching television every day?*

- Fifteen minutes — 6.8%
- Half and hour — 15.8%
- About an hour — 9.8%
- From an hour to two hours — 35%
- Between two and three hours — 22%
- I do not watch on a daily basis — 10.8%

Over 30% of participants read for an hour or more every day, while another 30% read for shorter periods, but significantly almost 38% did not read on a daily basis. When asked what their preferred language for reading was, over 44% cited English as their preferred language with 17% citing Maltese. (Figures 56, 57)

When it comes to newspapers, a significant number of participants, over 40%, admitted to not reading newspapers at all. Of those who did, local printed dailies and weeklies are read more than foreign ones and printed versions were read more frequently than digital editions. (Figure 58)

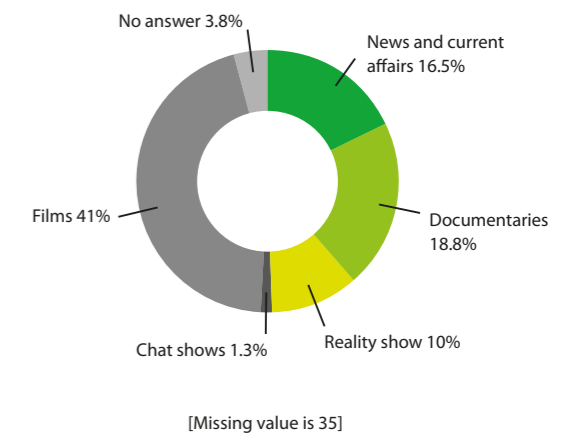**Figure 54:** *Which types of programmes do you mostly watch?*

- No answer 3.8%
- News and current affairs 16.5%
- Documentaries 18.8%
- Reality show 10%
- Chat shows 1.3%
- Films 41%

[Missing value is 35]

Figure 55: *How frequently do you go to the cinema?*

- No answer 0.3%
- Once a week 2.5%
- Every alternate weekend 10.8%
- I do not go to the cinema 13.3%
- Once a month 22.3%
- Twice a year 8.8%
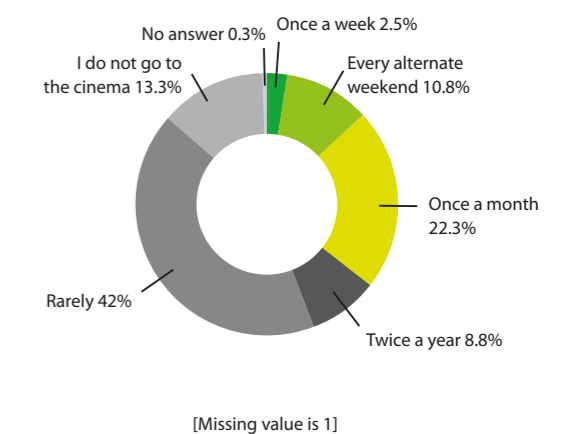- Rarely 42%

[Missing value is 1]

Figure 56: *Apart from school/university and/or work-related reading, how much time do you spend reading every day (including reading on the internet or e-books)?*
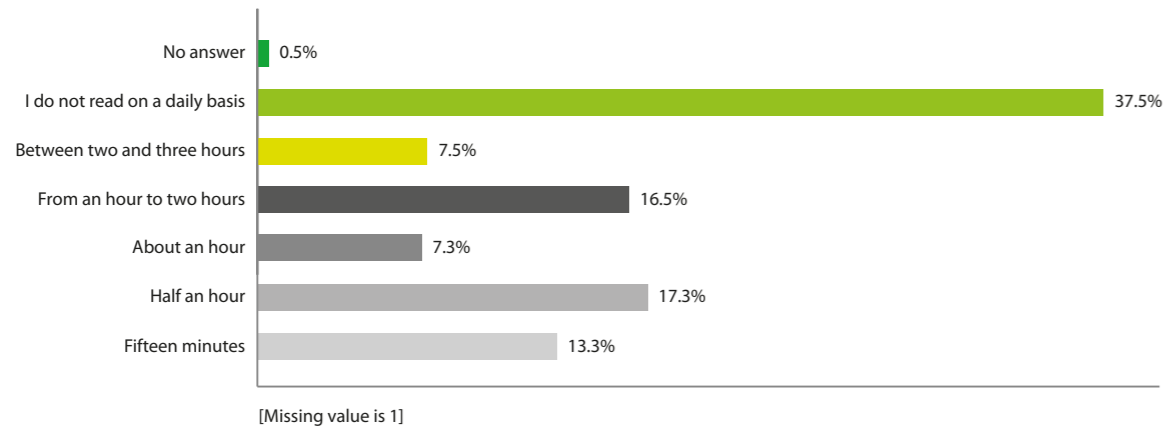
No answer	0.5%
I do not read on a daily basis	37.5%
Between two and three hours	7.5%
From an hour to two hours	16.5%
About an hour	7.3%
Half an hour	17.3%
Fifteen minutes	13.3%

[Missing value is 1]

Figure 57: *When reading, which is your preferred language (including reading on the internet or e-books)?*

No answer	17.8%
In other languages	1.3%
English	44.3%
Maltese	16.5%

[Missing value is 81]

Figure 58: *Which types of newspapers do you mostly read?*

No answer	0.8%
I do not read any newspapers	40.8%
Foreign weekly digital	1.3%
Local weekly digital	4.3%
Foreign weekly printed	0.5%
Local weekly printed	20.8%
Foreign daily digital	2.3%
Local daily digital	17.5%
Foreign daily printed	0.8%
Local daily printed	10.8%

[Missing value is 1]

When it comes to involvement in local activities, such as band clubs and festas, participants indicated a low level of involvement at odds perhaps with popular perceptions. Only 6.5% of participants were members of band clubs, 2.3% were members of fire works clubs and 4.5% were members of festivities decorations clubs. (Figures 59, 60, 61)
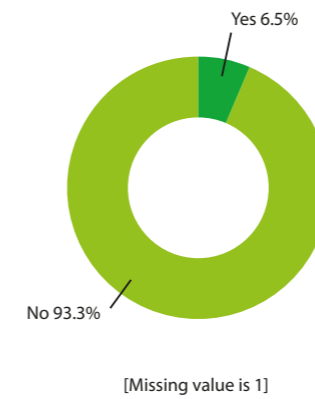
Figure 59: *Are you a member of a band club?*

Yes 6.5%
No 93.3%

[Missing value is 1]

Figure 60: *Are you a member of a fireworks club/ organisation?*

Yes 2.3%
No 97.3%

[Missing value is 2]

Figure 61: *Are you a member of a festivities decorations club/committee?*

No answer 0.5%   Yes 4.5%
No 94.3%

[Missing value is 3]
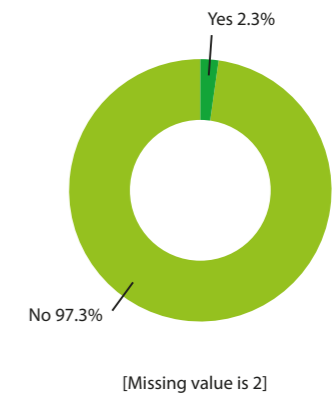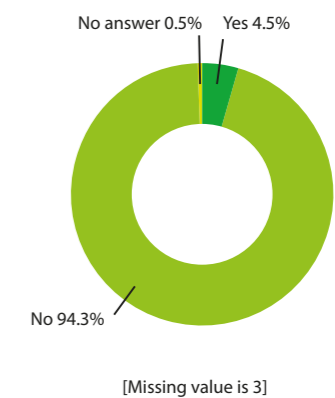
Sports on the other hand were more popular among participants with 22% indicating that they were members of a nursery or sports training club, while over 30% indicated that they were members of youth clubs or engaged in other voluntary activities. (Figures 62, 63)

A minority, but a significant minority (36%) of participants had never been abroad on holiday. (Figure 64)

Figure 63: *Are you a member of a youth club/organisation?*

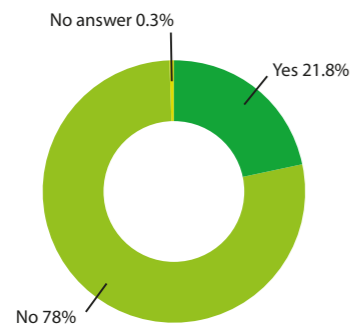

Yes 16.8%

No 83.3%

Figure 62: *Are you a member of a nursery or sports training club?*

No answer 0.3%

Yes 21.8%

No 78%

Figure 64: Last year, how often were you abroad for a holiday (excluding Gozo)?

Once (1) 41.3%
Twice (2) 15.5%
Three times (3) 3.8%
More than three times (more than 3) 1.5%
I have never been abroad on holiday 36%
No answer 1.8%

[Missing value is 1]
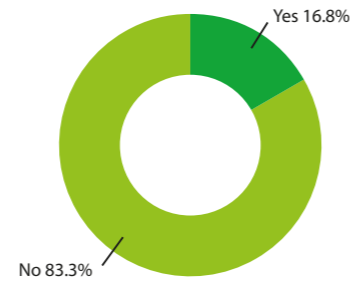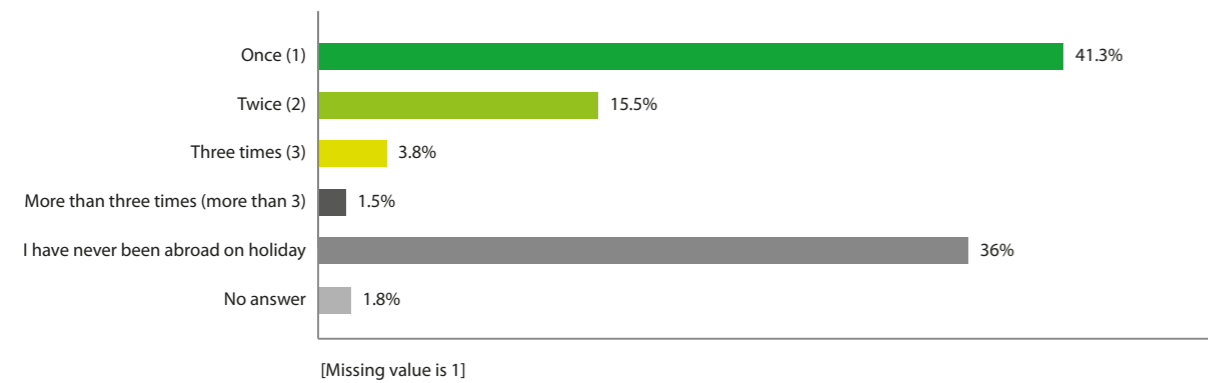
3.13 THE FUTURE

Young people are often heralded as the future or as the future of society. But how do they view the future? Are they optimistic or pessimistic? How do they see their own future and how does it relate to how they view the future of society as a whole?

Most participants (85.3%) were either satisfied or reasonably satisfied with contemporary society. When asked as to the future of society, slightly more participants felt that it would be worse rather than better, with roughly the same number seeing no perceptible change. (Figures 65, 66)

Figure 65: *How satisfied are you with regard to contemporary society?*
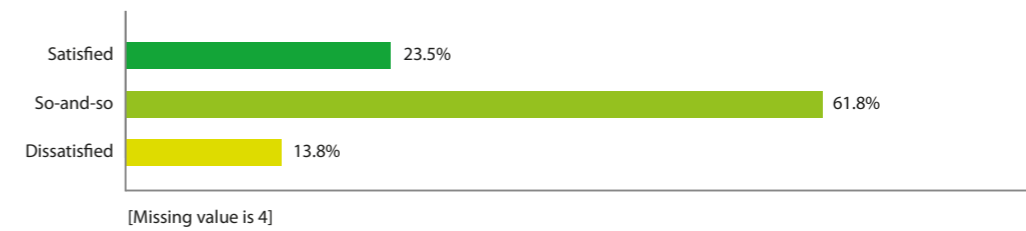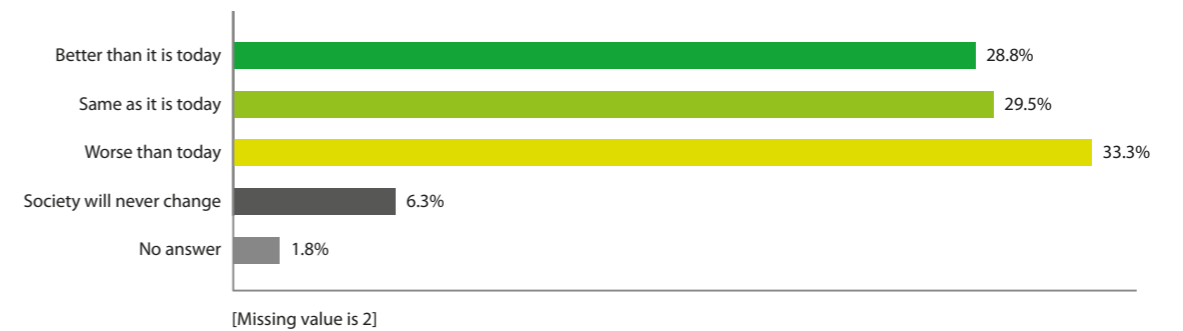

Satisfied 23.5%
So-and-so 61.8%
Dissatisfied 13.8%

[Missing value is 4]

Figure 66: *Do you think that in the future, society will be better or worse than it is today?*

Better than it is today 28.8%
Same as it is today 29.5%
Worse than today 33.3%
Society will never change 6.3%
No answer 1.8%

[Missing value is 2]

However, participants were more positive as to their own personal prospects. When asked if they envisaged a better or worse future for themselves, almost two-thirds cited a future better than the present, with only a small minority signaling a worse future. (Figure 67)

They were optimistic rather than pessimistic and felt well prepare for the future. (Figures 68, 69)

As to that future, what participants aspired to most was a happy family, and success in school and at work. Material acquisition figured less strongly, but so also did business initiative and sporting achievement. (Table 23)

Figure 67: *For yourself, do you envisage a better future or a worse future, than at present?*
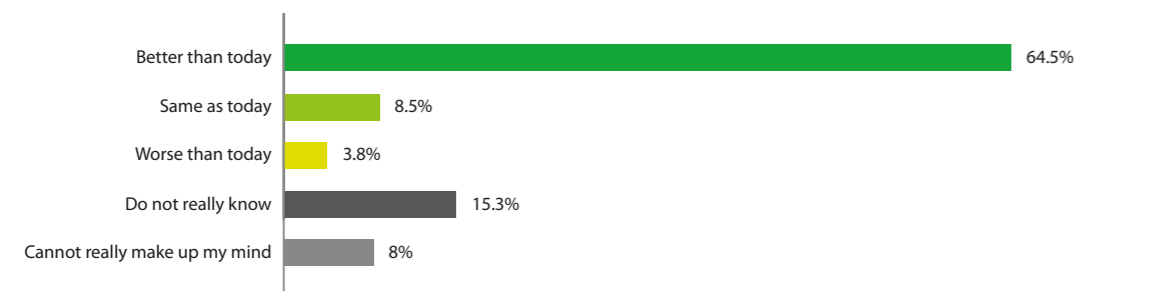

Better than today	64.5%
Same as today	8.5%
Worse than today	3.8%
Do not really know	15.3%
Cannot really make up my mind	8%

Figure 68: *Are you pessimistic or optimistic about the future?*

Pessimistic	17.5%
Optimistic	63.8%
Cannot really make up my mind	18.5%
No answer	0.3%

Figure 69: *Do you feel prepared for the future?*

Yes a lot	24.8%
No not at all	5.3%
Considerably	42.8%
So-and-so	25.8%
I do not know	1.3%
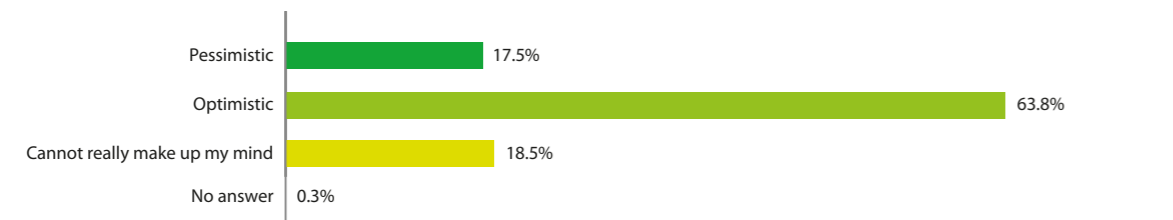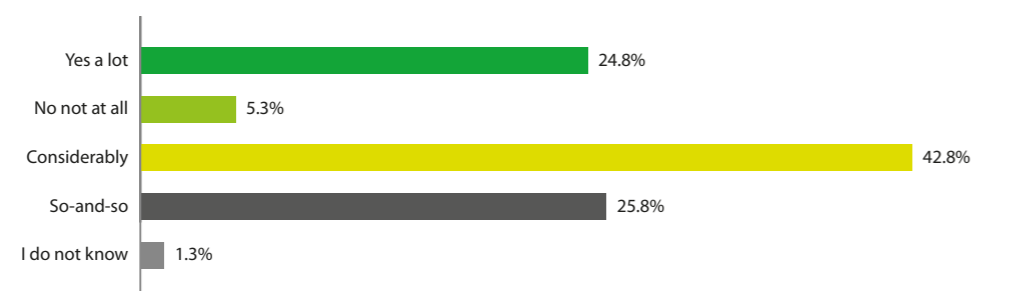
[Missing value is 1]

Table 23: *What do you aspire to in the future?*

	Freq.	%
To progress in my career	48	12.0
To have a good job	43	10.8
To start or continue having a happy/healthy family	104	26.0
That I will be loved by others	1	0.3
To win a good sum of money / to become rich	6	1.5
I wish that my parents reunite as a family	2	0.5
To become a successful driver	1	0.3
That my relationship with my wife/husband/children will flourish	8	2.0
To have enough money to buy and do what I want	4	1.0
To succeed in sports and achieve international recognition	3	0.8
To have a good holiday / travel	9	2.3
To buy a house / get the house ready	8	2.0
To be successful in everything that I'll do in the future	15	3.8
To be successful in my studies	45	11.3
To start a love relationship	3	0.8
To open a business	4	1.0
To live outside the Western World	1	0.3
To have enough means to retire at a young age from work	4	1.0
Easy life / Peace of mind	12	3.0
To be able and spend more time with animals	1	0.3
Good parenthood	2	0.5
Happiness	18	4.5
To be able and practice my hobby	2	0.5
Work satisfaction (e.g. also by working in a team)	3	0.8
Good health	20	5.0
To work and/or settle overseas	10	2.5
Do not know	2	0.5
Other	7	1.8
No Answer	2	0.5

[Missing value is 12]

4. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This is first comprehensive study of the self-perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of young people in Malta. The sample of 400 young people, who participated in the study, provides us with a reliable representative sample of all young people in Malta. As such, it offers us all the opportunity to consider and reflect on how young people see themselves, how they feel and behave, what motivates them, what their attitudes are to such diverse issues as the family, marriage, religion, politics, the internet, sport, alcohol, smoking, money and fashion.

The results of the study can be a source of encouragement and hope for all young people in Malta, their families and communities as well as the wider society. The results have been categorised, as below, under positives, challenges/opportunities and concerns. This approach is not meant to be prescriptive, but using this categorisation may prove useful in helping all those working with and for young people to reflect on what young people are telling them and how they can best support them in building their future as responsible, caring and productive individuals and citizens.

THE POSITIVES

Young people are, in general, well behaved and law-abiding, with strong relationships with their parents and siblings. They are motivated, concerned with and supportive of others and display a need and a desire to communicate and foster human relationships. They are for the most part happy, healthy and well-educated, respectful and tolerant, religious and spiritual. They are positive and optimistic about their future. In material terms, most live at home, have computers/laptops, mobile phones and access to the internet and spend half their money on recreation, shopping and travel.

THE CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

Young people see independent decision making and the changing relationship with their parents as the most important features of emerging adulthood. Inter-personal and sexual relationships are also seen by them as important indicators. While tolerant in their views on what constitutes a family, they are less so when it comes to same sex couples. While interested and participative in religion, and somewhat less so in politics, they are less attracted by institutionalised religion and politics. The growing importance and omnipresence of communication technology – the internet and mobile phones – in young people's lives is most noticeable. Conversely, voluntary and community work, cultural and artistic pursuits and sporting activities are not as common as might be generally thought or desired. These are not only challenges but also opportunities for all those who work for and with young people and in particular: parents, teachers, youth workers, social workers and career guidance officers, priests and those in the religious life, and politicians. At institutional level, the education system, government departments and agencies, NGOs, the voluntary and community sector, the Church and political parties all have a role to play and a vested interest in meeting the challenges and in grasping the opportunities.

THE CONCERNS

The results of the study are for the most part
positive and encouraging. However, there are a
number of issues that must be a matter of general concern
and of particular concern for those directly involved
or responsible. While generally healthy and fit, stress
appears to be a common experience of young people.
There also appears to be a lack of physical exercise among
a significant minority of young people. While heavy
smoking and drinking, and substance abuse, appear
to be common among only a small minority of young
people; nonetheless they are a reality. While educational
attainment among young people is high and they have
a positive attitude to the education system, a substantial
minority appear to regard the education and training
system as not adequately preparing them for the world
of work. There also appears to be a lack of interest in
setting up businesses and in entrepreneurship. Also
noticeable is the relative decline in interest in reading
and the written word, with a substantial minority of
young people not reading on a daily basis and not
reading newspapers at all. Whether this is a result of the
omnipresence of communications technology or
other factors is unclear. It is also noteworthy that
two and a half times as many participants preferred
to read in English rather than in Maltese.

While this is the first study of its kind in Malta, and
like all such studies has its limitations and
imponderables, it has proved a useful exercise in garnering
information on how young people see themselves and
the people and institutions they interact with, what
their attitudes are, and how they behave. The study
also provides the framework for further developing
and expanding our knowledge and evidence base for
policy and decision making on issues that impact on
the lives of young people. The study will hopefully be
a fruitful resource for consideration and reflection by
all those concerned and working with young people
in enhancing the positives, meeting the challenges,
grasping the opportunities and tackling the concerns.